



NEWS RELEASE

New Emergency Response Centre in Abbotsford

ABBOTSFORD – April 23, 2020: A new Emergency Response Centre (ERC) will be opening in Abbotsford to support vulnerable individuals with support from BC Housing and Fraser Health. The Centre will be operated by Lookout Housing & Health Society at the Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church (Clearbrook Road) and individuals will be referred and supported through Fraser Health.

This centre is closed to the public and already provides numerous supports such as mobile showers initiative and weekly meal service. As an emergency shelter this site will allow for increased isolation spaces that follow physical distancing. Fraser Health will also be providing support to the centre through their Integrated Response Team. This is an interdisciplinary team that supports people along the referral process and with addressing their health care needs at the site. The team is able to connect people at the emergency response centre with primary care, cultural supports, harm reduction and overdose prevention services, psychiatry and addiction medicine through virtual health, and if Home Health support is required, they help arrange it as needed.

This ERC is part of the Abbotsford Homelessness Prevention and Response System; a network that was developed and implemented in collaboration with senior levels of government, local service providers and community organizations.

Background:

What is an emergency response centre?

- An emergency response centre is a temporary reassignment of an existing building – such as community centre – to provide additional capacity and a safe supportive space to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among people living on the streets and in the shelters.
- Adding more capacity allows the existing shelters to temporarily reconfigure to allow for appropriate physical distancing measures to reduce the risk of transmission among shelter guests.
- The new emergency response centre is referral-only and will be staffed 24/7.

Quotes:

“The need for safe, secure housing has never been more important. In partnership with local governments and health authorities, spaces like these are helping us mitigate the effects of this virus and support vulnerable people in communities across the province.”

*Selina Robinson
Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing.*

“The work of the Abbotsford Homelessness Prevention and Response System has been critical in supporting the most vulnerable in our community, especially with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Emergency Response Center is a welcome contribution and we appreciate the support from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, BC Housing, and Fraser Health, Lookout Housing & Health Society and the Bakerview Church in bringing this much needed resource to fruition.”

Henry Braun
Mayor, City of Abbotsford

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