

September 2019

# Margaret Mitchell Place Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes

Results at Six Months after Opening



**BC HOUSING**

**RESEARCH CENTRE**



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### **RESEARCH CENTRE**

BC Housing's Research Centre works in collaboration with housing sector partners to foster excellence in residential construction and find innovative solutions for affordable housing in British Columbia. Sharing leading-edge research and advances in building science and new technologies encourages best practices.

The Research Centre identifies and bridges research gaps to address homelessness, housing affordability, social housing challenges and the needs of distinct populations. Mobilizing knowledge and research expertise helps improve the quality of housing and leads to innovation and adoption of new construction techniques, Building Code changes, and enhanced education and training programs.

Learn more about the Research Centre at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org). Sign up to receive the latest news and updates at [www.bchousing.org/subscribe](http://www.bchousing.org/subscribe).

## Acknowledgements

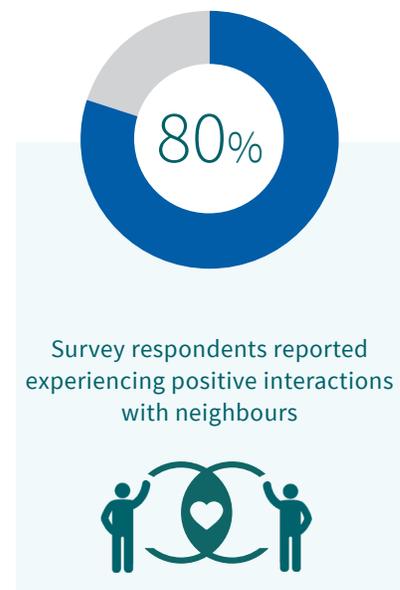
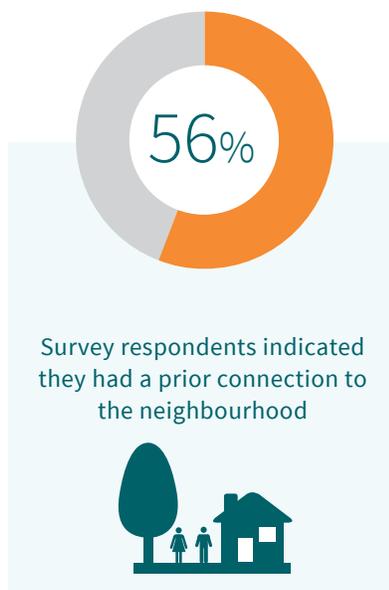
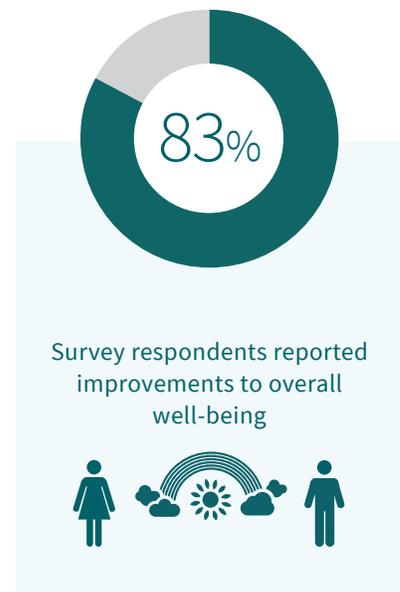
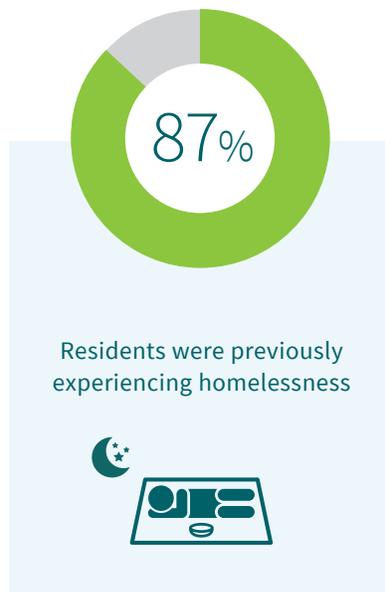
BC Housing gratefully acknowledges PHS Community Services Society for sharing their insights on Margaret Mitchell Place and for supporting this study. We also acknowledge the contribution of the City of Vancouver for assisting in the development of this research and for reviewing the data and this report. We would like to sincerely thank all the residents who shared their perspectives through the resident survey as part of this study.

In Vancouver, the Rapid Response to Homelessness program is delivered as Temporary Modular Housing (TMH).



This snapshot shows outcomes for residents of Margaret Mitchell Place (Margaret Mitchell) a modular supportive housing development in Vancouver, B.C., six months after the building opened.

Please refer to page 15, Research Methodology for information about data sources.



# MARGARET MITCHELL PLACE



Housing provider, PHS Community Services Society (PHS) operates Margaret Mitchell, providing on-site support coverage twenty-four hours every day of the week and helping residents to:

- › Maintain their units
- › Enhance their life skills, including learning to cook
- › Connect with education, employment, health, and independent housing
- › Access community information, social and recreational programs
- › Participate in case planning and needs assessments
- › Access income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, and apply for BC Identification
- › Open a bank account
- › Access food

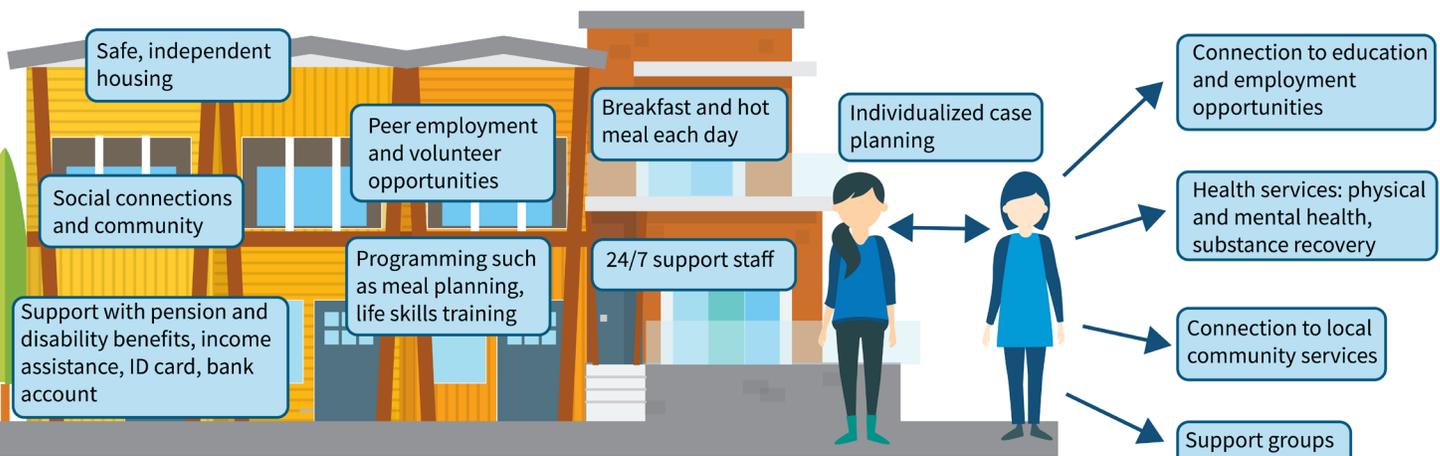
## Modular units funded under Rapid Response to Homelessness program deliver results

Margaret Mitchell Place (Margaret Mitchell) opened in August 2018 and is funded under the Rapid Response to Homelessness program.

Margaret Mitchell provides 52 units for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The building is located in the False Creek neighbourhood of Vancouver.

The Government of British Columbia announced the Rapid Response to Homelessness program in 2017 as an immediate response to homelessness across the province. The Province committed \$291 million over two years to build 2,000 modular supportive housing units for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition, \$170 million was committed over three years to provide staffing and support services for residents.

Each self-contained studio apartment is 320 square feet and includes a 3-piece bathroom, 2-burner stovetop and a full-height fridge. The building includes 2,000 square feet of amenity space with an oven for social gatherings and meals. Six units on the first floor are wheelchair accessible.

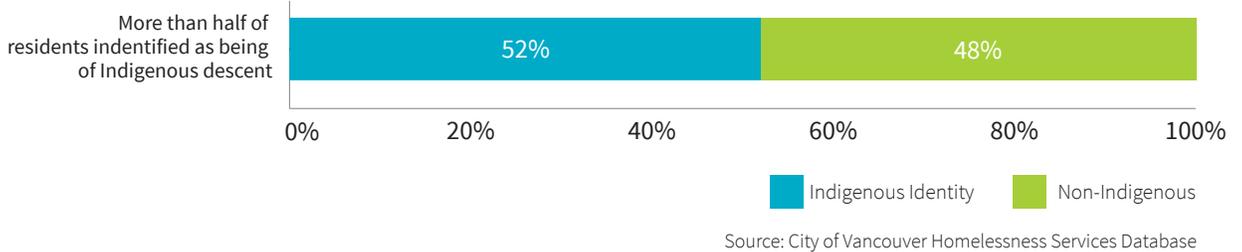
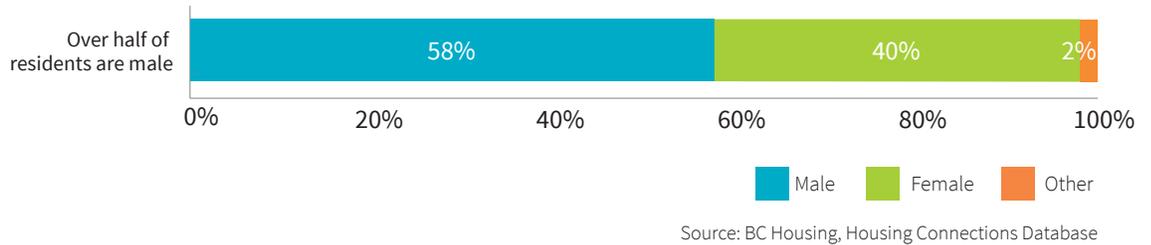
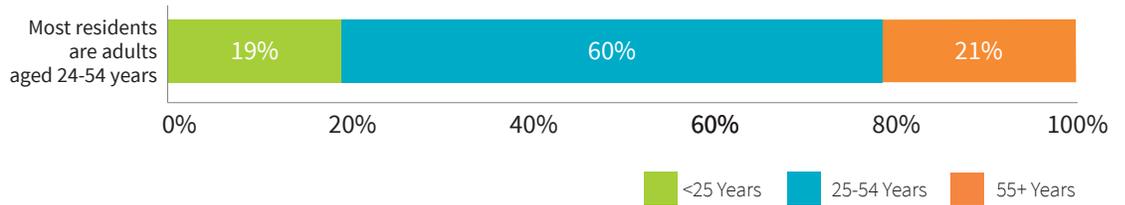


## Resident Profile

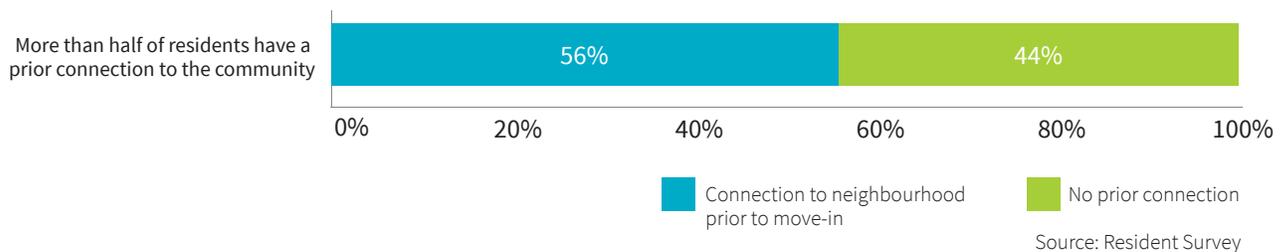
Margaret Mitchell provides housing for a mixed community of residents. This includes residents with different genders, ethnicities, and ages. Residents also have a mix of vulnerabilities and support needs. Staff reported that they were aiming for gender parity in the building and that they also house a cohort of younger individuals, including youth aging out of the foster care system. They also house a number of senior residents.

*“The mix of residents is working beautifully.”*

– Margaret Mitchell staff member



Fifty-six per cent of survey respondents indicated that they had a prior connection to the neighbourhood. These connections included living in the neighbourhood either immediately prior to moving to Margaret Mitchell or in the past, having friends or relatives in the neighbourhood, and using services located in the neighbourhood.



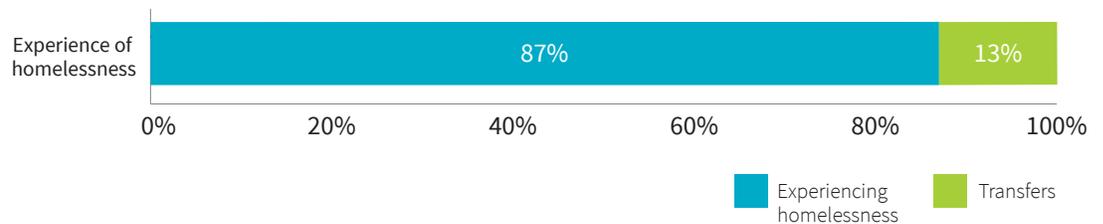
## Experience of Homelessness

### OUTCOME: DECREASED

Eighty-seven per cent of residents were experiencing homelessness immediately prior to moving into their Margaret Mitchell unit.

Thirteen per cent of residents were living in housing that did not meet their support needs.

Because units were vacated by people who moved to Margaret Mitchell, others living on the street or in shelters took their places, strengthening the positive impact of the modular supportive housing program.



Source: City of Vancouver Homelessness Services Database

## Housing Stability

### OUTCOME: INCREASED

Eighty-eight per cent of the first Margaret Mitchell residents to move into the building remained housed there six months after moving into their units.

The majority of residents who were no longer housed at Margaret Mitchell passed away due to pre-existing medical conditions. One resident was housed in a building that was better suited to their support needs.



Source: City of Vancouver

## Quality of Life for Residents

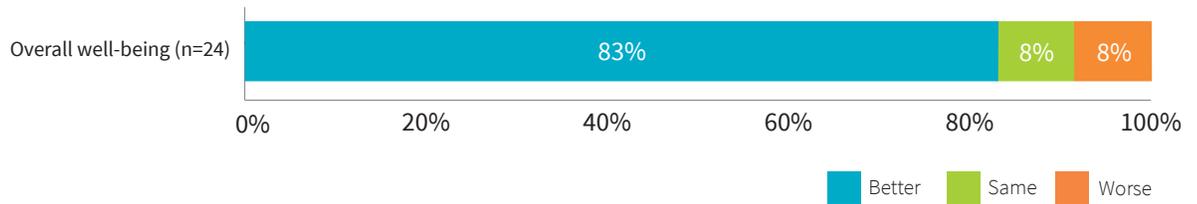
### OUTCOME: IMPROVED

#### Overall Well-being

Eighty-three per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their overall well-being. Staff reported that the greatest improvement they have seen in the 6 months that the building has been open, is an increase in stability in resident's behaviour.

*"We see stability, we see the capacity for food security and health. We also see the capacity to be working on future life goals. When survival is your daily life, future life goals are an impossibility because you are in a crisis mode."*

– Margaret Mitchell staff member



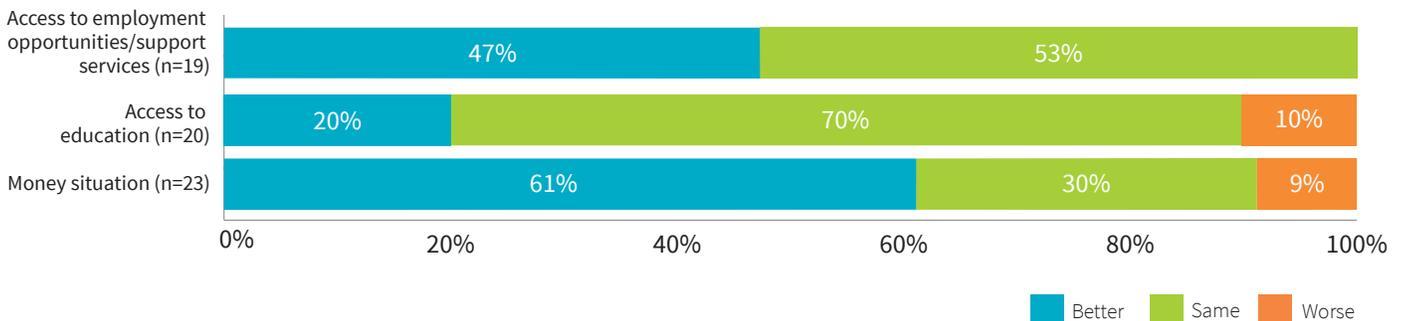
Source: Resident Survey

#### Employment, Income and Education

Staff reported that a high percentage of residents are employed in honorary employment with the organization. Many residents perform garbage collection and sharps collection in the neighbourhood. This type of dignified employment allows residents to feel they are making a positive contribution to the neighbourhood. PHS offers a continuum of employment types so that clients can move on from the clean team to other employment.

In the resident survey, 47 per cent of respondents reported better access to employment opportunities since their move, while 20 per cent reported better access to education. Staff noted that in the first 6 months, the priority for residents has been medical stability and defining long-term goals.

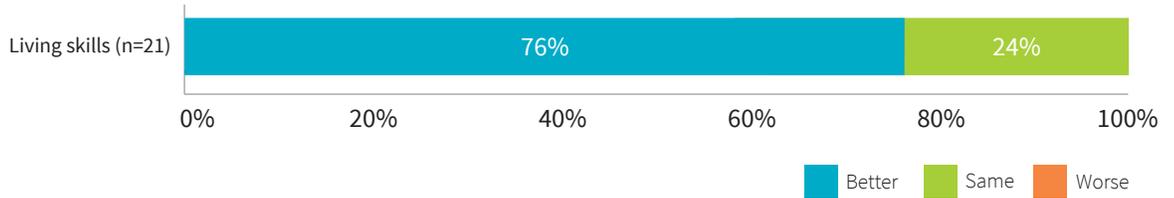
Sixty-one per cent of survey respondents reported that their money situation had improved.



Source: Resident Survey

## Living Skills

Seventy-six per cent of survey respondents reported that their living skills had improved. No survey respondents reported a worsening in this area.

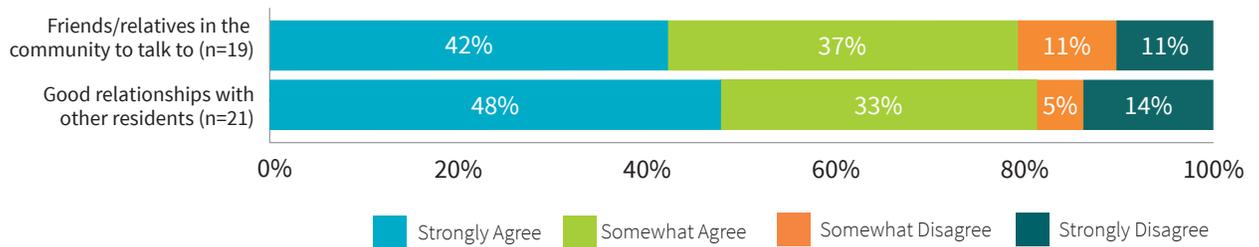


Source: Resident Survey

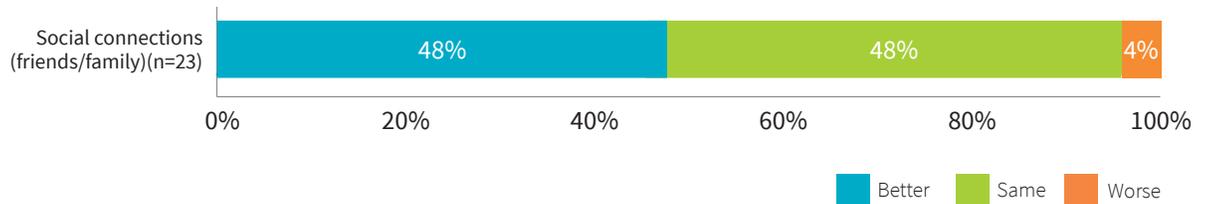
## Social Connections

Margaret Mitchell residents also reported improved social connections. Seventy-nine per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they had friends or relatives in the community to talk to, while 81 per cent reported good relationships with other residents. Forty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in their social connections.

Staff noted that residents have created relationships with other people in the building and with staff. The staff have also observed residents reconnect with family members now that they have a stable place to live. The trust that has developed between staff and residents was emphasized as part of the success of the program.



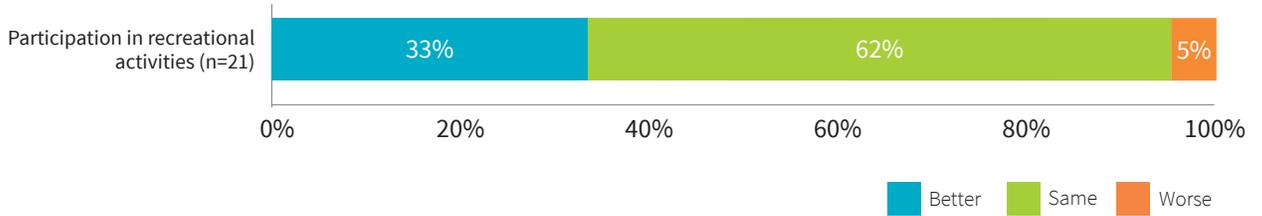
Source: Resident Survey



Source: Resident Survey

## Recreation

In the resident survey, 33 per cent of respondents reported improved participation in recreational activities.

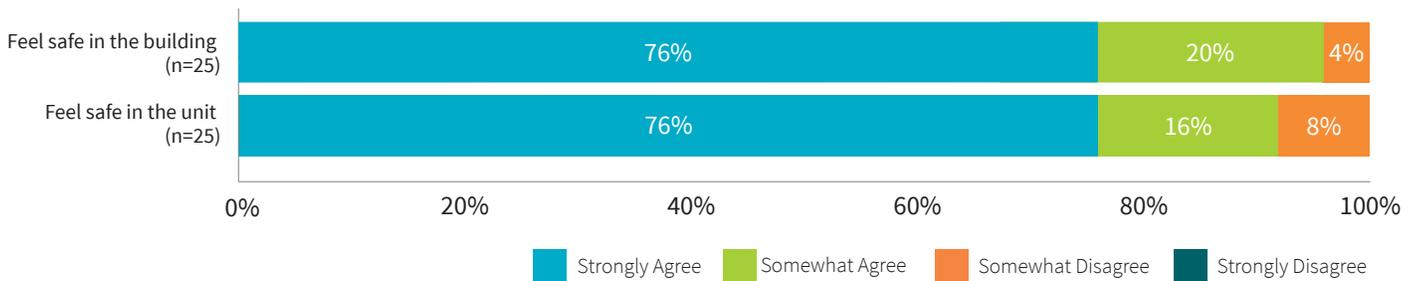


Source: Resident Survey

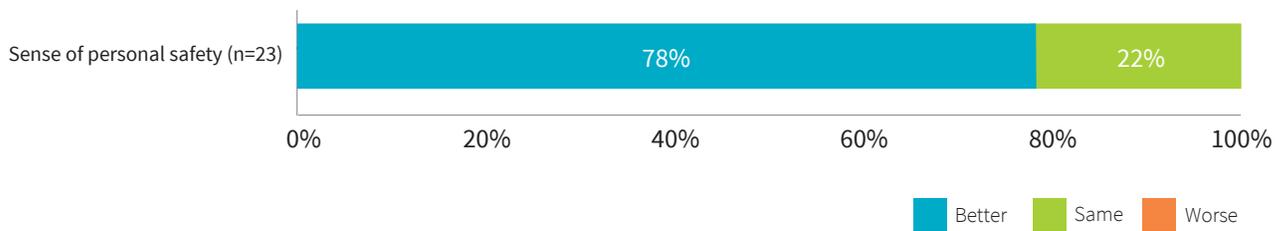
## Safety

The majority of survey respondents (96 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they felt safe in the building, while 92 per cent agreed that they felt safe in their unit.

The majority of survey respondents (78 per cent) reported an improvement in their sense of personal safety. No survey respondent reported a worsening in this area.



Source: Resident Survey



Source: Resident Survey

## Satisfaction with Housing and Supports

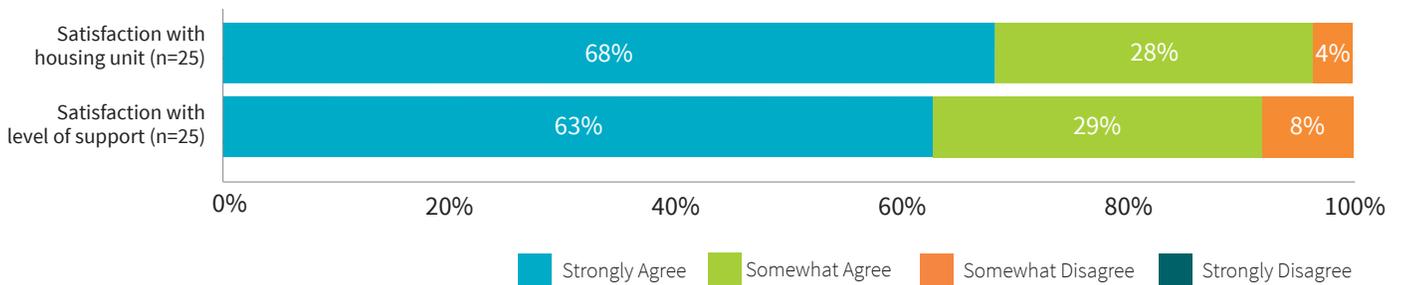
Staff reported that the majority of residents are satisfied with their housing situation at Margaret Mitchell and that residents have developed a lot of pride in the building. Staff commented that the location is ideal for many residents as it is in a quiet neighbourhood but still close to services.

The resident survey supports staff perceptions that residents are satisfied with their housing and supports. Most survey respondents (96 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their

*“I think people are happy to have a nice space. Not just a tiny little spot that they are shoved into. This is real housing.”*

– Margaret Mitchell staff member

housing unit, while 92 per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the level of supports they receive at Margaret Mitchell.

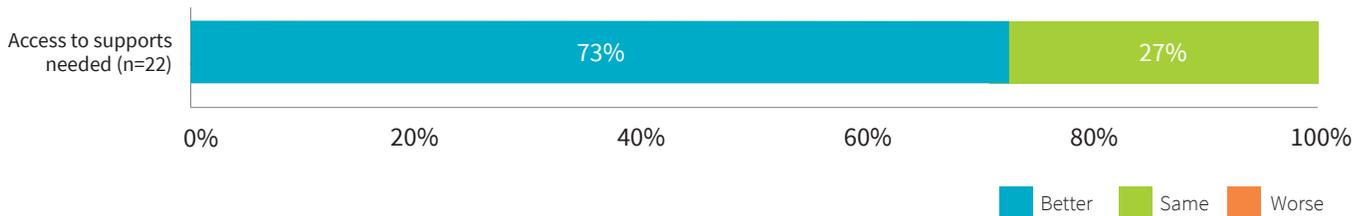


Source: Resident Survey

Most survey respondents (73 per cent) reported that access to the supports they need has improved, while 27 per cent reported that access has stayed the same. Margaret Mitchell staff reported that residents have been supported in getting their ID cards, and have been able to access referrals for glasses, dentistry, tax assistance, and health care services.

*“For the most part, people are overjoyed to be indoors and secure.”*

– Margaret Mitchell staff member



Source: Resident Survey

## Challenges

Margaret Mitchell residents have experienced some challenges since moving to their new unit. For many, the transition from an independent outdoor lifestyle to living in a building with rules required an adjustment period. Staff also reported that it took time for some residents to learn to trust staff, and that for some, it is an ongoing process. Staff have found that services that would deliver to the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood will not come to

Margaret Mitchell as it is outside of their service area. Staff have been working to find pharmacies that will deliver medication to residents in their new housing. Margaret Mitchell staff also identified challenges related to the modular building design, including:

- The design of the entranceway, which has a very steep ramp and is a concern for residents with mobility scooters.

## Residents' Health

### OUTCOME: IMPROVED

Seventy per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have better access to healthy food since their move to Margaret Mitchell. The staff mentioned that the food program at Margaret Mitchell is a highlight for residents. The cooks are personable and respectful and provide another positive relationship for residents.

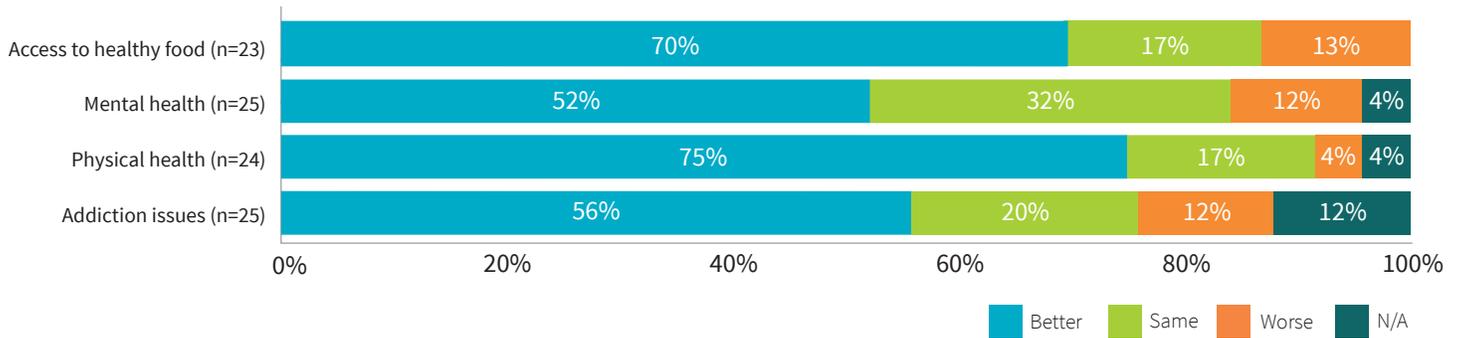
Fifty-two per cent of survey respondents reported improvements to their mental health since moving into

their modular unit and 75 per cent of survey respondents reported an improvement in their physical health.

Fifty-six per cent of survey respondents reported improvements in addiction issues, while 20 per cent reported that their addiction issues had remained the same, and 12 per cent reported that this question did not apply to them.

*“Residents know that they can come home from work and there will be a meal saved for them.”*

-Margaret Mitchell staff



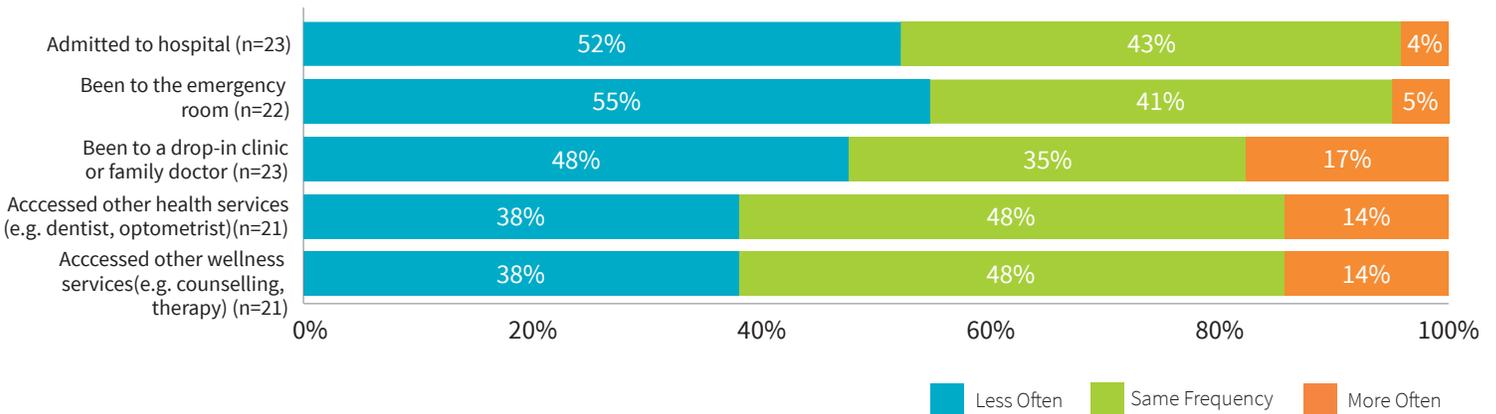
## Health Care System Usage

### OUTCOME: REDUCED USE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Some residents reported that their use of emergency health services has decreased. Fifty-two per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have been admitted to hospital less often since moving to Margaret Mitchell, while 43 per cent reported they had been admitted to hospital with the same frequency.

A similar trend was seen in trips to the emergency room, with 55 per cent of survey respondents reporting they had been to the emergency room less often, and 41 per cent reporting they had been to the emergency room with the same frequency.

Forty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported that they had been to a drop-in clinic or family doctor less often since moving into Margaret Mitchell. Thirty-eight per cent of survey respondents reported accessing other health services (such as dentist, optometrist, counselling, and therapy) less often since moving into Margaret Mitchell, while 14 per cent of survey respondents reported increasing their access to these services.



Source: Resident Survey



*“Housing is medicine. Trying the same thing over and over for years is insanity if we assume we will get different results. If we continue this pathway we can alleviate the pressures and make for a more liveable city for all.”*

-Margaret Mitchell staff

## Community Relations

### OUTCOME: POSITIVE

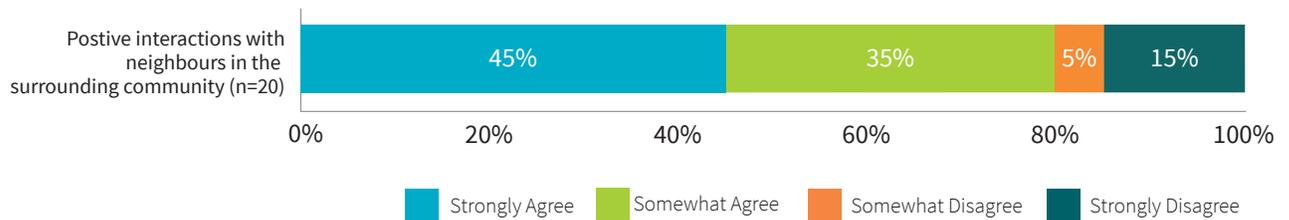
Margaret Mitchell staff indicated that the relationship with the wider community is fairly positive. They reported that neighbours of the building have dropped off all sorts of items for the residents, including cookies, flowers, and seeds for the community garden.

Staff reported that neighbours are appreciative of the clean-up crew that goes out daily to pick up needles and other garbage in the neighbourhood.

*“We had 1,100 people tour this site before it opened. Some with concerns, others as supporters. This community has been tremendously welcoming to this building.”*

-Margaret Mitchell staff

Resident survey responses supported staff perceptions. The majority of survey respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they have experienced positive interactions with the surrounding community (80 per cent).

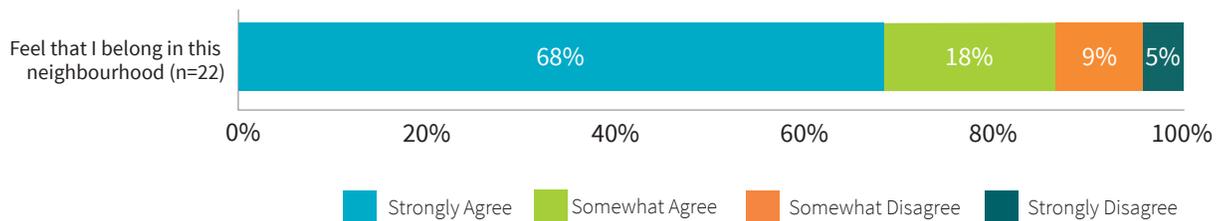


Source: Resident Survey

*“The residents already lived in this community. Now they are housed.”*

-Margaret Mitchell staff

Eighty-six per cent of survey respondents felt that they belong in the neighbourhood.

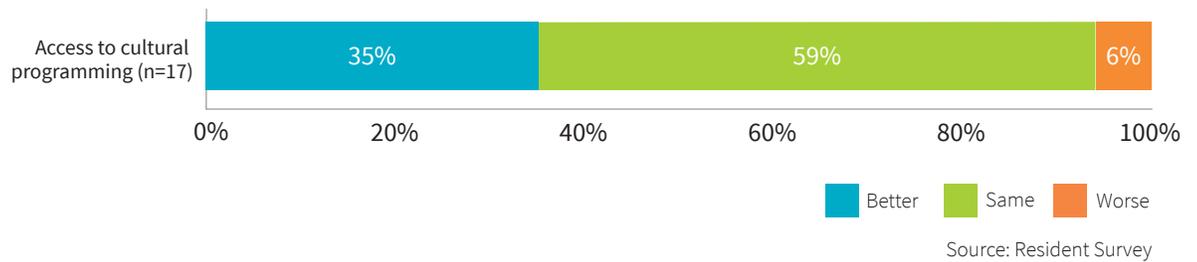
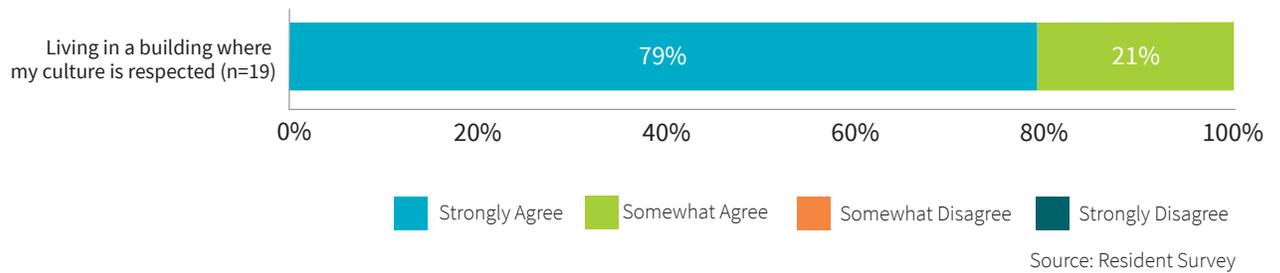


Source: Resident Survey

## Access to Cultural Programming

### OUTCOME: POSITIVE

Margaret Mitchell houses individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds. All survey respondents reported that they feel their culture is respected at Margaret Mitchell. Thirty-five per cent of survey respondents felt that their access to cultural programming had improved, while 59 per cent of survey respondents felt their access had remained the same.



# RESULTS AT SIX MONTHS

Data provided in this report was collected six months after Margaret Mitchell Place opened. The outcomes are based on the residents who moved into the building when it opened. Outcomes may change over time as the resident mix in the building changes.

## Resident Survey

A resident survey was made available to Margaret Mitchell residents in March 2019. The objective of this survey was to measure the change in well-being and quality of life that residents have experienced because of the supportive housing development. The resident survey results are self-reported by residents.

- Forty-eight per cent of Margaret Mitchell residents responded to the resident survey.
- Not all survey respondents chose to answer all questions.
- Data for each question is based on those who answered.

## Housing Provider Interviews

Housing provider interviews were conducted with three PHS staff in March 2019. The objective of these interviews was to gather information about the change in well-being and quality of life that residents have experienced because of the supportive housing development.

## Housing Connections Data

Data on housing stability, and some demographic information was sourced from BC Housing's Housing Connections Database for the first residents who moved into the building. Percentages presented in this report are based on those individuals for whom data was available.



## City of Vancouver Data

Data on some resident demographic information and previous living situation was accessed from the City of Vancouver Homelessness Services Database.

## Partners

This study is being undertaken at modular supportive housing developments across the province in collaboration with non-profit housing societies and other partners. In Vancouver, the Rapid Response to Homelessness program is delivered as Temporary Modular Housing (TMH).

Contact: **Research Centre** Email: [research@bchousing.org](mailto:research@bchousing.org) Phone: **604-439-4135**

For more information, visit our website at: [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org)