

# New Westminster Emergency Response Centre



## **New Westminster Emergency Response Centre**

BC Housing, the City of New Westminster, School District 40, Lookout Housing and Health Society and Fraser Health have partnered to open a new temporary Emergency Response Centre (ERC) at the Massey Complex in New Westminster. The ERC will provide up to 40 safe spaces for vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **What are Emergency Response Centres?**

Not everyone has a home. People experiencing homelessness face the reality every day that they don't have a safe space to call their own. Many people experiencing homelessness are living in situations where the COVID-19 virus could spread more quickly. They also have higher rates of health concerns and may be at greater risk if exposed to the virus.

Emergency Response Centres (ERCs) are a temporary reassignment of existing buildings – such as community centres – to provide a safe supportive space and access to hygiene facilities. This temporary ERC will add more spaces for people living on the streets and in shelters to stay indoors, practice physical distancing and help slow the spread of COVID-19.

While this is an unprecedented use of public buildings, this initiative will form part of our collective efforts to try to prevent the spread of the virus and mitigate the demand on our healthcare system.

## **Who will live here?**

The New Westminster ERC will provide up to 40 safe spaces for individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have been assessed and tested by Fraser Health. The ERC will be closed to the public. Individuals will be referred by Fraser Health and walk-ups are not accepted.

## **How will it be operated?**

Lookout has significant experience working with vulnerable populations and will oversee the day-to-day management of the ERC. Staff will be onsite 24/7 and will provide daily meals and cleaning services. Health care will be provided by Fraser Health for those who require support. Guests will also have access to food, showers, entertainment, and social supports and service connections.

## What security measures are in place to ensure safety for guests and the surrounding community?

A minimum of two staff will be on-site 24/7 to support residents, manage building operations and be available to respond to concerns in a timely manner. During daytime hours several staff will be on hand, including an on-site supervisor, janitor, up to four security staff and supports from other partners providing specialized services.

Security will be onsite 24/7 to respond to any concerns that may arise, working both inside the shelter space and patrolling the exterior to ensure everyone's safety and security.

These sites also follow the Public Health guidelines and every effort is made to protect the safety of the people experiencing homelessness, support staff who are assisting them, and members of the surrounding community.



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## What happens when the crisis is over, and the Massey Complex is returned to normal use?

Buildings are being used as ERCs on a temporary basis in response to the COVID-19 crisis. As part of the contract, BC Housing has committed to professional and rigorous cleaning of the Massey Complex, with cleaning procedures outlined by Infection Protection and Control prior to handing them back to the School District.



## What if I have more questions?



Any questions can be directed to BC Housing at:  
**communityrelations  
@ bchousing.org**



For more information visit:  
**www.bchousing.org/  
COVID-19**