

May 13, 2026

# Community FAQ

## Shelter Service Updates – East Hastings Street and Commercial Drive, Vancouver

### **What is happening at 1726 East Hastings Street?**

- BC Housing purchased the building at 1726 East Hastings Street in 2024. We are currently renovating the 2-storey building to serve as a 40-bed shelter. This shelter will include common indoor areas, kitchen, washroom and laundry facilities and storage.
- We currently expect this new shelter to open in fall 2026.

### **Who will operate the new shelter at 1726 East Hastings Street?**

- BC Housing has selected Lookout Housing and Health Society (Lookout) to operate the new shelter at 1726 East Hastings Street. Experienced staff will manage the building and provide services to the guests.
- Lookout is an experienced non-profit operator offering shelter and housing services across Metro Vancouver. Learn more about Lookout by visiting [lookoutsociety.ca](https://lookoutsociety.ca).

### **What will happen to the other shelters in the East Hastings and Commercial Drive area?**

- The 20-bed overnight shelter currently operating at 1738 East Hastings Street will close on June 1, 2026. We will offer these guests spaces in the nearby shelter at 1660 East Hastings Street.
- As of June 1, 2026, the shelter at 1660 East Hastings Street will shift to 24/7 operations. Lookout will operate this shelter. Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society will move into their new mixed-use building at 1015 East Hastings Street.

### **What are the benefits of a 24/7 shelter versus an overnight shelter?**

- 24/7 shelters offer access and services to guests seven days a week, 24 hours per day.
- Benefits for guests include additional staffing, case planning and programming as well as more consistent access to meals, hygiene, health supports, case planning and other social services.
- In the community, 24/7 shelter operations reduce congregating and sheltering outdoors as well as pressures on emergency and outreach services.
- Developing a new shelter and shifting all shelter operations in the area to 24/7 are key steps we are taking to better support people experiencing homelessness in the East Hastings Street and Commercial Drive area.

### **How are you considering safety in and around these shelters?**

- Shelters are an important part of community safety. Having safe, accessible and low-barrier shelters in a community means there are fewer people sheltering outdoors. This increases people's personal safety and well-being and contributes to community safety overall.

- Expanding shelter services in a community from overnight to 24/7 has shown to reduce congregating and sheltering outdoors as well as pressures on emergency and outreach services.
- BC Housing and Lookout are committed to being good neighbours. We will share a direct phone number for the shelter when it opens and address any concerns regarding our shelter sites quickly and collaboratively.
- For safety concerns beyond our sites, we commit to working openly with bylaw, law enforcement, or other emergency services for whom public safety is their mandate.
- As in any community, for emergencies such as urgent medical needs, crimes in progress or active fires, neighbours should call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

### **Will guests be allowed to use substances at the shelter?**

- Stable shelter is crucial in a person's health journey, including recovery from substance use disorders. After a person who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being, including accessing health care such as substance use treatments.
- It is important to note that not all people experiencing homelessness use substances.
- If a shelter guest chooses to use substances onsite, Lookout will follow a harm reduction approach. They can also connect guests to mental health and substance use recovery services.
- Harm reduction is an important life-saving health care practice, especially in the current toxic drug crisis. When people use substances alone or outside, it does not benefit communities and often leads to tragic outcomes.
- Harm reduction programs and services are proven to not only reduce harms such as infections, injuries and deaths, they have also been proven to increase social and vocational functioning, and to reduce public disorder. Learn more about the importance of harm reduction and how it works by visiting [vch.ca/en/health-topics/harm-reduction](https://vch.ca/en/health-topics/harm-reduction).

### **Who will be responsible for keeping the properties clean?**

- BC Housing and Lookout are committed to being good neighbours. Staff will work to keep the shelter properties maintained with a daily clean-up.
- BC Housing and Lookout will establish and communicate clear expectations with shelter guests regarding respectful behaviour in the surrounding neighbourhood.
- We will share a direct phone number for the new shelter with neighbours when it is available. We will work with shelter guests, staff and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any concerns about cleanliness on the shelter property.
- The City of Vancouver will maintain public spaces as in any other neighbourhood. For waste and sanitation concerns, neighbours can call the City of Vancouver's 311 system. Once received, city crews can respond to 311 reports within 24 to 28 hours.
- City crews regularly service the area for ongoing clean up as per the regular sanitation schedule, and a peer program clean-up team will be funded through shelter operations as part of the regular shelter maintenance schedule.