

Standards for Serving People Experiencing Homelessness in Shelters Throughout Newfoundland and Labrador

Prepared for:
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

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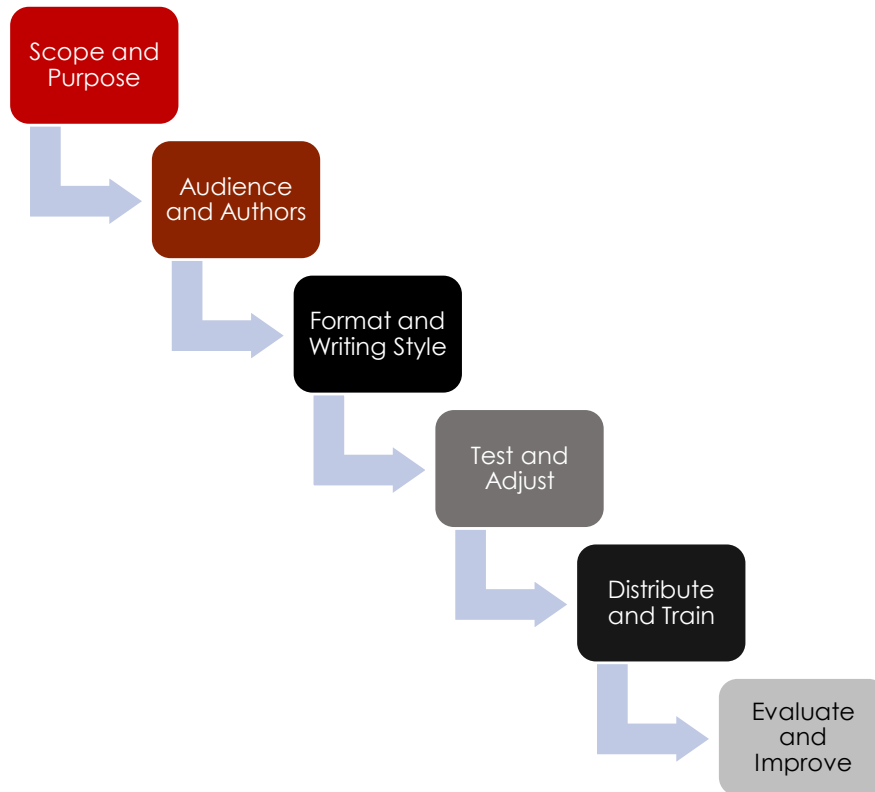


BACKGROUND

Communities throughout Canada are actively engaged in shelter transformation activities that promote low-barrier, housing focused shelter approaches intended to ensure that stays are rare, brief, and non-recurring and guests are actively pursuing a variety of suitable housing options. A housing-focused shelter will be low-barrier, working to accommodate people with a range of often complex and co-occurring needs and ensuring that easy access to shelter is not thwarted by unnecessary demands or rules that are not aligned to safety. In fact, in a low-barrier shelter environment the availability, presence and engagement between shelter staff and guests is critical to promoting emotional and physical safety within the shelter.

Research has demonstrated that a low-barrier, housing focused shelter response is critical to a community response to prevent and reduce homelessness. This “living” document outlines the standards of care to support Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NL Housing) and the shelter operators that support people experiencing sheltered homelessness across the Province. As Newfoundland and Labrador’s homeless serving sector evolves to meet the changing needs of people experiencing housing crises and homelessness, it is expected that these shelter standards are updated as needed.

As one of the primary pillars of performance management, service standards guide continuous improvement initiatives and quality assurance activities. The design and implementation of service standards involves an iterative six-step process. This project incorporated the first four of these steps that involved working with NL Housing, its Steering Committee, shelter partners and people with lived experience to define the scope and purpose of the work, as well as the primary audiences for the standards. To meet the needs of the audience, clear and operational language has been incorporated into the document and then the draft standards were adjusted to incorporate feedback from shelter operators and community/sector leadership.



The last 2 steps of the shelter standards design and enhancement process – training and implementation as well as evaluation and continuous improvement - will be the next priorities for NL Housing and its partners in their shared vision of improving emergency shelter services.

PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHELTER STANDARDS

NL Housing as funders of this project and OrgCode Consulting Inc. as the contracted facilitator of this Shelter Standards Project conveys its thanks to the individuals, organizations and community partners that participated in the engagement to develop the first Shelter Standards for Newfoundland and Labrador. Your candor, feedback and insights on opportunities for enhancement were invaluable. Participants included:

- Individuals with living experience of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness regarding their past and/or present experiences with the NL shelter system.
- The thirty-three staff and volunteers delivering shelter services and/or supports to shelter guests (both private and not-for-profit operators) on

the Avalon Peninsula, throughout Central and Western Newfoundland as well as the two operations supporting people seeking shelter in Labrador.

- The thirty-eight respondents from across the province that responded to the NL Shelter Standards Project – Feedback Survey from October 20-November 23, 2023.
- The twelve organizations that participated in focus groups and the additional twenty partners that participated in key informant interviews.
- The Indigenous partners that provided guidance on the importance of cultural safety within the shelter system.
- End Homelessness St. John's staff and the Community Advisory Board that guides the Reaching Home programming and investments locally.
- The City of St. John's Planning, Engineering and Regulatory Services Department that provided guidance on building codes and inspections, minimum life safety standards for shelter spaces as well as opportunities to improve collaboration with local community and government partners serving people experiencing homelessness.
- The staff members and management of NL Housing that provided documentation, information and guidance on the delivery of shelter services across the province and the realities of operating a centralized Emergency Shelter Line.
- Project Steering Committee Membership: Shelter operators, community partners and health department staff from across Newfoundland and Labrador provided guidance throughout the design and facilitation of the NL Shelter Standards project. Participating agencies included NL Housing, Naomi Centre, Choices for Youth, Ben Said Housing, The Gathering Place, Connections for Seniors, NL Health Services, End Homelessness St. John's, Thrive, St. John's Homestead Inc., the Community Education Network and the Nunatsiavut Government - Department of Health and Social Development.

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1. Introduction

As is the reality across Canada, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is experiencing increased demand for homelessness responses, including emergency shelter services and drop-in centres for access to basic needs within a safe, supervised environment. Currently, NL Housing is responsible for the administration of shelter services across the Province. However, what constitutes an “emergency shelter” across the province ranges from hotel stays, private shelter operators that accommodate shelter guests in private residences, overnight and seasonal shelters to the traditional 24-7 shelter operation that may provide dormitory style or single room shelter spaces for shelter guests. As communities struggle to meet the increasing number of people seeking shelter, often with co-occurring physical health, mental wellness and substance use concerns, the creation of the shelter standards will provide safeguards, clarity and consistency for operators, individuals experiencing homelessness, funders and the wider community with the goal that homelessness in NL is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Province-wide shelter standards aim to ensure any person receiving shelter services anywhere in the province receives the same quality of service regardless of location, size of shelter, the population(s) served by the shelter, the type of building, or whether the shelter operator is a non-profit or for-profit entity. The adoption and monitoring of standards across all shelter operators ensures the delivery of consistent, evidence-informed and compassionate service for the people experiencing housing crises and homelessness. Although not a one size fits all solution to address all of the challenges and local nuances of shelter provision across the Province, the inclusive and participatory approach to develop these standards provides an opportunity to improve the culture of safety and service to local shelter guests. The development of shelter standards will support the efforts of continued transformation of the shelter system with an increasing emphasis on shelter diversion, housing focused shelters operating under the umbrella of a low-barrier model of service that meets individuals where they are, while balancing safety and well-being for shelter guests, staff and service providers.

Shelter standards are a transparent way of communicating with shelter guests, other parts of the system of care and the general public what occurs in shelter and how it occurs. In addition to advancing open communication objectives, it enhances accountability. The implementation of standards demonstrates the commitment of the diverse shelter operations to ensure that shelter guests are assisted and served with dignity and respect.

The standards emphasize three important aspects of sheltering:

- Quality and safe operations that ensures that basic needs are met as shelter guests work to develop and secure housing solutions.
- Lowering barriers to shelter access, so that vulnerable people, often with multiple co-occurring needs, can be safely supported in shelter.
- The need to be housing-focused and supporting shelter guests to connect to appropriate workers or community resources that can assist with decreasing lengths of shelter stays while increasing connections to safe and appropriate destinations outside of shelter.

These provincial shelter standards should be viewed as a living document. In order to maintain the relevance of the shelter standards to the evolving realities of shelter service delivery, the standards will be subject to amendment. Proposed amendments will be reviewed by NL Housing in consultation with the implementation committee to determine feasibility and impact. NL Housing will support the implementation of the standards, monitor adherence to the standards, and guide any future process of refinement. Building upon the engagement and consultation efforts to date, continuation of the Implementation Committee would assist in prioritizing and guiding the operationalization of these standards.

Ongoing implementation of these standards should occur in tandem with wider efforts to grow the housing continuum and expand transitional and supportive housing throughout the province. As the only solution for homelessness is appropriate housing options, projects such as the

Transitional Supportive Housing Initiative (106 Airport Rd, St. John's) and the Integrated Health, Housing, Treatment, and Supportive Services Hub (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) will provide more appropriate housing options and critical wrap around supports for individuals experiencing homelessness.

2. Application of Shelter Standards

- 2.1 All the standards contained herein apply to all shelters that receive provincial government funding for the purposes of providing shelter to people experiencing homelessness anywhere in the province.
- 2.2 The standards apply to non-profit and private (for profit) shelter operators.
- 2.3 The standards apply to all types of buildings that are used across the province for the purpose of providing shelter services to people experiencing homelessness.
- 2.4 In extenuating circumstances, an exemption of a particular standard(s) may be granted by NL Housing, with such exemptions noted in writing. This would include such exemptions related to the use of a hotel. For such exemption, NL Housing will require the operator to adhere to principles of these standards as appropriate.

3. Guiding Principles for Shelter Standards

- 3.1 Guiding principles provide direction for the implementation of standards of care and service. The overarching model of care is the provision of a low-barrier shelter system which meets individuals where they are. The following principles are outlined and intended to align with the wider vision of creating a system which is both low-barrier, housing focused and supporting the provision of safe and quality shelter responses. The adoption of principles also creates a mechanism for all shelter operators and staff to determine if decisions, policies and practices are evidence-informed and appropriate for the shelter guests served. Reflective of the participatory methodology

of this shelter standards project, the following principles are provided to reflect the values, mission and service quality expected, as depicted by NL Housing, shelter staff and community partners:

- **Trauma Informed:** Rates of trauma exposure are extraordinarily high for people experiencing homelessness, especially sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Many have experienced violence, marginalization, stigma, loss, dislocation and disconnection from important people, locations, cultures, safety and security. Intergenerational, racial and gender-based trauma shapes the responses and engagements displayed by the people we have the privilege of serving. Shelter operators and staff will strive to recognize indicators of trauma – including intergenerational as well as racial and gender trauma - and avoid re-traumatization of shelter guests.
- **Harm Reducing and Compassionate Service:** Due to the impact of trauma on coping strategies, expectations of others and survival instincts, as well as the ability to trust, it is no surprise that rates of compromised mental wellness and substance use concerns are higher for people experiencing homelessness and housing crises. Low-barrier, housing focused shelter advances the ability to reduce harm in any area of a shelter guests' life that may be considered higher risk. In work with shelter guests, the reduction of harms should be emphasized. The distribution of harm reduction supplies is important. So too is the education that accompanies the distribution of supplies. Engagement of community and/or health services is encouraged. The Safe Works Access Program (SWAP) is a health promotion and education service for people who use drugs. SWAP provides safe drug using equipment throughout the province <https://acnl.net/services/swap>
- **Person-Centred and Strengths-Based Care:** It is recognized that each shelter guest is unique and that their experiences, beliefs, and goals should be central to the delivery of supports. Person-centred care is particularly important in supporting people experiencing chronic or long-term health conditions, mental health care, or chronic homelessness. Person-centred and strengths-based approaches help to

promote safety, collaboration, and solution-focused shelter experiences that respect the dignity and autonomy of each shelter guest served.

- **Motivational and Hopeful Service Delivery:** With a solid relationship foundation established with a person who is sheltered, the focus is on assisting the person to realize positive change in their life. A person is more likely to succeed in the long-term when change is personally motivated and not imposed or demanded. Approaches like “three strikes and you’re out” are most often not successful so the emphasis is on assertive engagement that aligns with motivational and hopeful service approaches.
- **Rights-Based Service:** Being homeless is not illegal nor does it render a person without rights or nullify the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A rights-based approach to shelter service recognizes the inherent value of each person, regardless of background, where they live, what they look like, what they think or what they believe. Shelter operations are committed to protecting the rights to life, liberty and security for all shelter guests. Principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect guide all engagements within the shelter setting.
- **Inclusive Low-Barrier Service Delivery:** Shelter services will be sensitive to the diversity of the people being served, especially for shelter seekers that experience higher rates of discrimination and exclusion due to societal biases and systemic inequities. Creating an inclusive, low-barrier approach within shelters that meets people where they are and preserves their safety and dignity is a priority. Equally, creating a system that also respects diversity of culture, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, housing history, income, substance use, ability, etc. and intersections of these realities is an exercise in intentional inclusiveness. A one size fits all approach, by contrast, would fail the people it intends to serve, excluding various unique realities of certain populations within the overall sheltered population such as seniors, youth, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, child-free couples, survivors of gender-based violence and gender diverse people that identify as LGBTQI2S+.

- **Culturally Safe Environments:** Services to shelter guests (from intake, establishment of expectations, daily routines, access to community supports, communication and engagement approaches) are culturally appropriate and strive to enhance safety and inclusion for all. For newcomers to Canada, this often means an appreciation of customs, language, traditions, and/or religion. For Indigenous Peoples this often means an appreciation and understanding of historical traumas and injustices, the ongoing oppression of stigma and racism, and an appreciation of customs and traditions. Shelter services that reflect, to the best of the ability of the workforce, the people served, is strongly recommended.
- **Housing Focused:** The intention of shelter services is to provide short-term emergency shelter and to help shelter guests achieve more stable housing outcomes within the community. Throughout the stay, shelter guests are encouraged and supported to consider all appropriate housing options like reuniting with family or friends when safe and appropriate to do so, shared living experiences, as well as specialized housing and supports accessed via Coordinated Access¹. It is not sufficient to simply maintain people in a state of homelessness, rather our collective efforts should work towards realizing housing as an outcome. Shelter staff and community partners supporting shelter guests on-site will lead and reinforce the intended housing outcome.
- **Pragmatic and Innovative:** In delivering shelter services that are dedicated to solving housing crises, the “ideal” housing solution may not be achieved at the outset. Success is amplified by examining the current reality, the resilience of, and resources connected to, the shelter guest and identifying any safe housing options that are possible in the circumstances. For example, staying in shelter while awaiting a rent-geared-to-income unit is not always practical and may increase exposure to additional traumatic experiences as homelessness continues. Exploring other units that may consume a large percentage

¹ [Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada - About Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#)

of the monthly income may be manageable if, for example, roommate options are possible or access to a rent supplement can be organized in a timely fashion to increase the sustainability of this more costly option. To ensure a commitment to assisting shelter guests in resolving their homelessness, testing innovative housing location strategies and partnerships is a key ingredient for success. For example, the pursuit of shared housing has proven to be a responsive solution for many shelter guests with lower income while supportive bridge housing options may be time-limited but enables activities like documentation readiness or wait listing for a more permanent option. Regularly brainstorming and then exploring all possible housing options with shelter guests is essential.

- **Deliberate and Strategic:** People experiencing sheltered homelessness may benefit from help prioritizing the tasks and activities that will help them exit homelessness. With the assistance of shelter-based supports (including external staff that provide supports to shelter guests within the shelter), individualized housing plans will focus on documentation readiness, brainstorming a wide variety of housing options, and housing location activities. Given the increasing demand for shelter services, shelter guests that have experienced homelessness for the longest duration should be prioritized for available shelter and community-based supports, including prioritization, matching and referral processes embedded within Coordinated Access.

4. Service Orientation for Shelter Operations

4.1 All shelters are required to align their service delivery to:

- Serve people in a manner that is non-judgmental and compassionate
- Be trauma informed
- Practice harm reduction to reduce harms of substance use and any higher risk activity
- Progressively engage with shelter guests in ensuring rapid resolution of the housing crisis
- Use a strengths-based and person-centred approach to engagement and service delivery
- Be culturally appropriate and safe
- Motivate positive change as individuals contemplate and/or prepare to improve their housing status
- Appropriately serve people with complex and co-occurring service needs in a manner that is compassionate and lower barrier
- Respect a shelter guest's autonomy and empower them to make decisions in their own life

ACCESSING SHELTER SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

5. Intake and Admission

- 5.1 All referrals for shelter will go through the provincial Emergency Shelter Line for intake assessment and placement approval. Unless a separate, agreed upon intake process is identified with NL Housing, an intake and admission cannot be completed unless the referral to shelter came through the Emergency Shelter Line (1-833-724-2444).
- 5.2 In the event that contact with the Emergency Shelter Line staff is delayed or shelter guests have accessed a shelter after hours, shelter operators will collaborate with NL Housing to identify the process to be used to support the shelter seeker that night. This agreed upon process could include clarifying the person's eligibility, gathering the minimum information/data points, signing appropriate consents for the gathering of information and the sharing of the information with NL Housing, assigning of bed for one night (two nights if this occurs over a weekend) and the scheduling of an appointment with the Emergency Shelter Line to determine next steps for homelessness prevention, diversion and/or shelter provision. These shelter guests will be included in the daily shelter roll call.
- 5.3 Upon receiving a new shelter guest in person, the shelter operator will:
- Get a Client Consent Form (Emergency Housing) signed in order for the guest to receive shelter services, and remit to NL Housing via docs@nlhc.nl.ca within 24 hours
 - As identified through agency-based intake processes, complete a signed Release of Information form to share information with other identified/relevant service providers that will be supporting housing-focused activities
 - If shelter operator has system access, create or update client/shelter guest record in Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)²

² [Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada - About Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#)

- Explain the shelter rules/expectations and provide a written copy of the rules/expectations to the shelter guest
- Provide an orientation to the shelter, including but not limited to:
 - Fire safety planning and muster station
 - Trash removal
 - Access to hygiene facilities (for example, bathroom, shower and laundry) and essential hygiene products needed for the first 24 hours in the shelter
 - Access to bed linens, towels, face cloths and any essential clothing that shelter guest may require for the first 24 hours in the shelter
 - Food access
 - Safe use of appliances
 - How to access staff

6. Denying or Modifying Service Access in the Shelter

- 6.1 The delivery of low-barrier shelter service promotes the provision of dignity and respect for all shelter guests, regardless of substance use, compromised wellness, historical restrictions to shelter access, etc. Although the need to deny or modify service access is rare, it is acknowledged that for the safety and well-being of guests and staff, there are scenarios that may result in restrictions.
- 6.2 Shelter operators will develop and implement a policy for denial or modification to service access in the shelter, including an appeal process.
- 6.3 Shelter operators may issue service modification to shelter guests to address incidents involving violence, threats of violence; behaviours that pose a health and/or safety risk to other shelter guests, staff and/or the facility, and other scenarios identified by shelter operators and approved by NL Housing.
- 6.4 Upon admission into shelter, staff will review rules/expectations of staying in the facility with shelter guests. Rules/expectations must also be posted in a conspicuous place. Implications for not adhering to a

rule/expectation will be communicated in advance. Orientation to rules and expectations is presented in an effort to manage the safety and well-being of residents, staff and other parties.

- 6.5 A shelter may deny or modify service access for any shelter guest that violates rules/expectations and cannot be remedied in any other safe or appropriate manner. Modifying service (e.g., denying access during the daytime but allowing overnight stay) is always preferred whenever safe and appropriate to do so. Denying service for one or more nights is always a last resort and is reserved for the most serious occurrences in a shelter (e.g., violence against staff, arson, bomb threat, using a weapon, sexual assault, intentional damage to property, major theft).
- 6.6 If a shelter guest is issued a denial of service or modification to services notice, this will be verbally communicated to the impacted individual, recorded in a case note, and whenever possible a rationale is to be provided in writing to the individual. Communication will clearly outline the reason for denial or modification, the effective dates of the denial or modification (both start and end dates), the process to appeal/grieve the decision, other possible resources the impacted individual may avail of, and what conditions, if anything, beyond the expiry of the restriction needs to occur for the person to be eligible for re-entry into the shelter in the future.
- 6.7 Shelter operators should not prohibit client access to other services and programming delivered at the shelter site unless the service modification or denial is agency-wide due to the severity of the actions of the shelter guest. Such restrictions to these other on-site services and programming should be implemented as a last resort.
- 6.8 Denial or modification to services is intended to be rehabilitative, not punitive. As such, service denial or modification timelines should be provided that limit the amount of time away from services and supports. Except for serious incidents as identified above, restrictions, where required, should be for the shortest time possible (for example,

hours, days, or a week maximum). Anything more than this should be limited to very serious safety concerns. Lengthy and/or lifetime bans should not exist, except under severe situations that are discussed and approved by NL Housing. Shelter providers shall welcome people back after their time away from shelter, review the rules/expectations again, develop a plan if necessary to support the person in meeting the rules/expectations going forward, and whenever possible, engage in a restorative justice approach to making amends for past behaviour.

- 6.9 Decisions to deny or modify an individual's access to shelter services, that impact shelter bed availability for other shelter seekers must be immediately communicated to the Emergency Shelter Line via rollcall@nlhc.nl.ca.

7. Holding Beds

- 7.1 At the time a bed is secured through the Emergency Shelter Line, a potential shelter guest will be provided a time to arrive at the shelter for intake. Beds not accessed within 2 hours after this appointed time (and without approval from the NL Housing Shelter Line) are open again to new admissions. For a shelter seeker travelling to a different community to access shelter, the Emergency Shelter Line will notify the shelter operator of the expected arrival time and provide instructions regarding notification of no-shows so that the bed can be assigned to another shelter seeker.
- 7.2 In consultation with NL Housing, shelter operators will clarify the expectations regarding holding beds for shelter guests who will be absent for a short time. Generally, the following standards are frequently followed in Canadian communities:
- In extenuating circumstances shelter providers may grant overnight leaves from shelter without the individual having to be concerned about losing their secured bed. Unless exceptions have been approved by NL Housing, if the individual does not return for night two, the bed is released for new admissions.

- If a shelter guest is hospitalized or incarcerated for a short period of time, and it is communicated directly to shelter operator or staff by the individual or their designate, a bed can be held for up to two consecutive nights. Situations where a shelter operator may consider holding a bed for more than 2 nights should be approved by NL Housing. To accommodate emergency placements, the Emergency Shelter Line should be informed of all held beds.

8. Staff Engagement: Creating and Sustaining a Housing Focus in Sheltering

- 8.1 Shelters will be knowledgeable of Housing Focused Sheltering, adhere to the practices to the best of its ability as outlined in resources from the Canadian Shelter Transformation Network³, and train their staff and volunteers in accordance with the Housing-Focused approach.
- 8.2 Low-barrier, housing-focused shelter is not a passive environment. Staff intentionally seek to engage with shelter guests to work on resolving their homelessness as rapidly as possible.
- 8.3 It is expected that shelter staff or community-based staff supporting shelter guests on-site will engage with the individual the first morning after the first night in shelter. The intention of the engagement is to start developing and activating a plan for shelter exit as rapidly as possible to a safe and appropriate destination.
- 8.4 During the first four weeks of a shelter stay, staff engagement is expected to occur daily. While the engagements may be short in duration (less than 10 minutes at a time), the intention is to share resources, make referrals, identify barriers and problem-solve to assist the individual in exiting homelessness. If a shelter stay continues past four weeks, it is expected that the shelter guest has been referred through Coordinated Access processes for matching and referral processes for dedicated re-housing supports. Shelter staff will continue to support the shelter guest with housing focused resolution

³ [CSTN & CAEH Low-Barrier Housing Focused Shelter 2022 FINAL](#)

services and ensure that referrals for Coordinated Access processes are up-to-date and active.

- 8.5 Through an active housing-focused engagement model, shelter staff are expected to circulate through the shelter on a regular basis and engage with shelter guests rather than wait for shelter guests to reach out to staff.
- 8.6 Every shelter is required to assist shelter guests with exiting homelessness either through direct staff engagement or referrals to community-based organizations, Coordinated Access where available, and/or provincial government departments.
- 8.7 All shelters, either directly through their own staff or partnerships with community non-profits, will assist shelter guests in securing income or government benefits if they are not currently in receipt, and documents that are necessary for housing applications.
- 8.8 Shelters may not offer multi-week or multi-phased programming that will lengthen shelter stays. Any programming that is offered will be brief and discrete (e.g., a housing workshop that lasts two hours on a Tuesday morning).
- 8.9 Shelter staff and/or dedicated community partners will engage shelter guests at least twice per week in a dedicated conversation about housing.
- 8.10 As part of the homelessness resolution process, shelters shall engage in conversations with shelter guests regarding reunification or re-engagement with family or friends, if appropriate. For shelters that do not have staffing on-site, community-based staff will complete these homelessness resolution engagement activities. Shelter operators will support the delivery of housing support activities within their shelter locations.
- 8.11 Shelters are expected to connect shelter guests to the Coordinated Access (CA) system in their community, where one exists. This may

include providing CA community partners with regular access to the shelter to accommodate inclusion and connection to community resources. Shelters in those communities are expected to be conversant in the requirements and steps for helping a shelter guest get on the By-Name-List and maintaining active status on the list.

8.12 For communities without a Coordinated Access system, shelter staff and/or community partners shall:

- Help the shelter guest apply for rent-geared-to-income housing
- Provide listings of rental units available within and close to the community where the person is experiencing homelessness
- Assist the individual in securing income or government benefits
- Complete an assessment of strengths and needs related to housing and the supports likely needed to retain housing
- Assist with contacting landlords with units for rent and booking unit viewings
- Accompany the individual to the unit viewing if requested/needed. At a minimum, assisting shelter guest in exploring transportation options would be expected.
- Help the individual review the lease if the rental is going to proceed
- Assist with securing move-in supplies, furniture and food

9. Ratio of Staff to Shelter Guests

9.1 NL Housing should work with each shelter operator to identify the current staffing models and assess the staff to shelter guest ratio required to meet the needs of the population served as well as the size and layout of the shelter. This assessment should be guided by the following staff to shelter guest ratio which is recognized as an industry standard:

- On a nightly basis, each small and medium sized shelter (ranging from 1 bed to 50 beds) will have a minimum of two shelter staff⁴ on duty at all hours that the shelter is operational. Additional staff are recommended during peak engagement times such as mealtimes and evening hours before lights out.
- A larger shelter with 51 or greater shelter guests will have at least one additional staff for every 30 additional shelter guests.

⁴ "Shelter staff" may include a wide range of positions, including management and/or security to provide for the 2nd shelter staff person so long as they are able to assist with operational tasks as necessary, and to respond to emergencies without delay (co-located in the same building or in close proximity).

BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES

10. Beds

- 10.1 Upon entry to shelter, the shelter provider shall instruct the person which bed is theirs to use. Some shelter operators will require specialized beds and items to serve their clients. Shelters requiring such equipment should consult with NL Housing regarding the unique needs of their clients.
- 10.2 Each bed will include a mattress in useable condition (for example, no tears or holes) that is twin-sized and no less than 0.76 m. x 1.82 m. x 0.089 m. Overflow responses in extenuating circumstances may use cots or floor mats in place of bed but requires preapproval from NL Housing.
- 10.3 Mattresses must be pest resistant and fire/moisture retardant or covered in a material such as a mattress cover designed to achieve the same qualities.
- 10.4 Upon entry to shelter, the shelter provider shall ensure the person using the shelter services is provided the following:
 - One fitted sheet
 - One bed sheet
 - One pillow
 - One pillowcase
 - One blanket
 - One bathing towel
 - One face cloth
 - Additional bedding will be provided as necessary

11. Access to Hygiene Supplies

11.1 Every shelter will make the following hygiene supplies available to shelter guests:

- Soap or body wash
- Shampoo and as requested Conditioner
- Deodorant or anti-perspirant
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Razor
- Shaving cream
- Menstrual hygiene products, as appropriate
- Comb/brush

12. Clothing Access and Laundry

12.1 Shelter providers are expected to have at least a limited amount of essential underclothing items on an as-needed basis. Essential underclothing items include underwear, bras, and socks – in a range of sizes.

12.2 Shelter providers will be knowledgeable of where else in the community a shelter guest can access free or low-cost seasonably appropriate clothing and provide referrals to those resources as necessary.

12.3 It is recommended that shelter providers make laundry facilities available to shelter guests. If laundry facilities are made available, the shelter provider may limit the number of loads that can be completed or length of time the equipment is used but may not charge additional fees for laundry access. Instructions on how to safely use the laundry facilities should be posted. If shelter guests are expected to launder their own clothing, bedding and linens, laundry detergent supplies will be provided by the operator.

13. Communal Sleeping Areas⁵

- 13.1 Each sleeping area will provide a minimum of 3.5 square metres (37.7 square feet) per person⁶.
- 13.2 In sleeping areas with more than one bed, ideally separation between beds is 2 metres but a minimum separation of 0.75 metres (2.5 feet) is mandatory between the edge of one bed and the next bed.
- 13.3 Although shelter operators would ideally avoid the use of bunk beds, in the event they are used, there will be a vertical separation of at least 1.1 metre (3.6 feet) between the beds on the bunk bed, and between the top bunk and the lowest hanging fixture or ceiling.
- 13.4 Family shelters are exempt from meeting the lateral separation requirements of sleeping areas in rooms where only one family is assigned.
- 13.5 Beds will be configured in the room such that there is easy egress from the room in the event of an emergency, does not block windows, does not block air vents, does not block doorways, is not underneath shelving or non-anchored furniture, and does not block access to building infrastructure such as a control panel.

14. Communal/Shared Bathrooms:

- 14.1 In communal/shared bathrooms, shelters are encouraged to have at least one bathroom that is non-gender specific.
- 14.2 There must be at least one shower for every 20 shelter guests. Shelter providers will ensure that communal showers have shower curtains or equivalent privacy features.

⁵ Shelter operators that use partitions for increased privacy and safety should strive to meet the above standards for sleeping areas. Variations to sleeping areas must be discussed and approved by NL Housing and/or other relevant health and safety partners for an exception to this standard.

⁶ St. John's Regional Fire Department references Canadian Red Cross Shelter Set-Up Guidelines that provide a minimum floor area of 3.5 m² (40 ft² rounded up) of personal space per client.

- 14.3 There must be at least one toilet for every 15 shelter guests. Urinals may take the place of up to half of the toilets in bathroom facilities serving men.
- 14.4 There must be at least one sink for every 15 shelter guests with a soap dispenser no further away than 0.6m.
- 14.5 There must be access to soap, paper towels and/or a hands-free dryer and toilet paper in each bathroom at all times.

15. Common Areas

- 15.1 Common areas include the likes of foyers, hallways, sitting rooms, all-purpose rooms, tv rooms, and lounges. It is the responsibility of the shelter operator to keep common areas clean and free of clutter.
- 15.2 Access to some common areas such as a sitting room or tv room may have limitations on the hours of the day it is available due to cleaning and/or other operational requirements. This will be transparently shared with all shelter guests and applied consistently and fairly.
- 15.3 Shelters must be aware of the maximum occupancy of any particular room used as a common area and not exceed the maximum capacity for fire safety reasons.

16. Food Nutrition

- 16.1 Shelters are expected to provide food that aligns with Canada's Food Guide. Weekly meal plans will demonstrate a balanced menu and are to be posted in a visible location on-site and shared with NL Housing via partners@nlhc.nl.ca
- 16.2 Shelters must provide access to safe, clean drinking water.
- 16.3 Shelter operators that operate a 24-hour shelter service will ensure that shelter guests have access to three well-balanced meals per day. This will also include the provision of an evening snack. Meals

and snacks are to be provided at consistent and scheduled times. Snacks are to be available on-site for shelter guests to access throughout the day.

- 16.4 Shelters that operate under the overnight model and are open less than 24 hours per day will offer breakfast, an evening meal (may be a bagged meal) and a night-time snack. Operators are encouraged to provide information to shelter guests on supplemental meals provided by community organizations throughout the day.
- 16.5 If a shelter provides food as a part of the shelter placement by NL Housing, an outline of the menu will be posted for shelter guests to preview.
- 16.6 Shelter's meal plans will provide between 2,000-2,400 calories per adult per day⁷. Food planning should include a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables. Shelters will limit the use of highly processed foods, especially those high in sodium, fat, and/or artificial sweeteners.
- 16.7 Shelter guests that miss served meals for valid reasons such as late book-in, employment, appointments, etc. are provided with a to-go meal option such as a bagged lunch.
- 16.8 Food that is offered will accommodate people that do not eat meat, people that do not eat certain foods for religious or cultural reasons, and food allergies. A nutritious alternative to what is being served to other shelter guests will be available. Traditional food improves diet quality among Indigenous People and should be accommodated whenever possible.

⁷ Caloric intake needs vary from person to person. In general, the average adult needs 2000-2400 calories per day. Children (ages 4 to 12) need an average of 1500 calories per day.

17. Shelter-Based Food Preparation & Access to Food

- 17.1 All food (including donated food) shall be stored, handled, prepared and served in accordance with local safe food handling guidelines.
- 17.2 A shelter shall not deny access to food as a form of punishment or behavioural control of any shelter guest.
- 17.3 If shelter guests currently prepare their own meals in the common kitchen, safe food handling and clean-up instructions will be posted in the kitchen.
- 17.4 Cleanliness and safety inspections will be completed regularly by shelter operators. Documentation of such inspections must occur at a minimum quarterly and provided to NL Housing upon request.
- 17.5 Shelters are expected to have emergency food access for intakes into shelter that occur late in the day or after meal and snack times. The emergency food access may be modest such as access to a fresh sandwich and a snack.

18. Storage of Personal Belongings of Shelter Guests

- 18.1 A shelter may reasonably limit the amounts of personal belongings that a shelter guest can bring into the shelter environment. This is subject to the amount of personal storage space (e.g., lockers, totes) available in the facility.
- 18.2 In the event a shelter guest leaves the shelter and leaves personal belongings behind, it is the responsibility of the shelter operator to bag and tag the item with the shelter guest's name and date of exit. After a 14-day period, unless other arrangements have been made directly with the former shelter guest, the personal belongings may be discarded.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

19. Core Competencies of Staff Supporting Shelter Guests

19.1 Shelter staff and community-based partners that are involved in direct social service supports with people staying in shelters are required to be trained in the following areas:

- Trauma-informed care
- Harm reduction
- Housing Focused Sheltering
- Progressive engagement
- Person-centred care
- Strengths-based approach
- Motivational Interviewing
- First Aid and CPR
- Mental Health First Aid
- ASIST
- Naloxone training
- WHMIS
- De-escalation
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (as appropriate)
- Safe food handling certification, if meals prepared onsite
- Local homelessness response system and available resources

The above is not intended to be exhaustive but rather a core series of trainings. Supplemental and population specific training for key target groups served in particular shelter environments is strongly encouraged.

19.2 All staff in any shelter environment should be trained to respond to situations involving the application of First Aid, CPR and naloxone administration. WHMIS training is mandatory for everyone.

20. Maximum Shelter Capacity

- 20.1 The maximum capacity for a shelter facility is determined by the local fire department and other municipal planning and enforcement bodies. Maximum capacity may be determined by the number of people that can sleep in the shelter, or by the total number of individuals in the facility (shelter guests + staff + volunteers + visitors). Depending on the type of shelter facility – congregate, dormitory, lodging houses, etc., building codes and life safety standards will apply.
- 20.2 For private shelter operators that use private residences for shelter, the municipal planning, engineering and/or regulatory services department will establish maximum capacity for residences based on industry legislation including Residential Property Standards, National Building Code and Life Safety Standards.
- 20.3 Shelters must not surpass the maximum capacity established by regulatory bodies.

21. Providing a Secure Environment

- 21.1 Shelter providers are required to ensure there is safe entry and exit from the facility. Uncontrolled access is not permitted. Only shelter guests or other authorized persons may enter the shelter at any time.
- 21.2 A curfew may be put in place by any shelter provider. Shelter guests should be notified of the curfew and any unplanned discharge that may result from missing curfew. However, exceptions may be granted by the shelter provider for any individual that is expected to be late such as being at work, being at the hospital, or attending to a family matter. If an individual is approved to return after the curfew but fails to return or contact the shelter operator, the individual may be discharged from the shelter.
- 21.3 During the curfew period, shelters will allow any shelter guest to sign out for a short period of time (for example, 15-minute increments) to

allow shelter guests to go outside. The shelter may limit the number of shelter guests granted short periods outside during the curfew period.

- 21.4 Bag inspections are not recommended. Instead, guests will retrieve any appropriate personal effects and securely stow their baggage and all other personal belongings in a locker or in secure space within the shelter environment.⁸ Guests may retrieve and or return personal effects to their baggage under the guidance of staff.
- 21.5 To increase safety, weapons prohibited under law are not permitted to be brought into the shelter by guests, shelter operators nor staff. Staff should consult law enforcement as appropriate. For other types of weapons such as knives, or prohibited items (includes, but are not limited to alcohol, drugs and drug paraphernalia), safe storage may be provided by the shelter with a release of the weapon or items when the individual exits the shelter.
- 21.6 All shelter operators and staff will be adequately trained in de-escalation strategies that are applicable to a shelter setting.

22. Bed Counts

- 22.1 Within shelters that have on-site staff: For safety purposes in the event of an emergency, bed counts are to be conducted two times during the overnight period:
- Once within one hour of lights-out at the shelter.
 - Once between the hours of 2am and 5am.
- 22.2 Bed counts are to be recorded in the shelter log and the information on number of people expected to be present at the shelter will be shared with Fire/First Responders in the event of an emergency response.

⁸ Should shelters identify the need to perform bag inspections, the following guidance is provided. Shelters may ask shelter users coming into the facility to empty pockets and open backpacks etc. for staff to look into for the purpose of keeping items out of the shelter that may cause harm. Shelter staff are not to touch the possessions with their hands, but rather use a rod and flashlight to look in bags. Should Shelter staff wish to inspect any of the contents further, the shelter guest will be requested to remove the item from the bag. All bag inspections and inspection of contents of pockets shall occur in a discrete location, out of the view of other shelter users.

22.3 In the event that an evacuation occurs, and shelter guests congregate at the muster point, the bed log will be used to determine if all people are accounted for after the evacuation.

23. Bed Checks

23.1 In shelters with onsite staff, from at least 30 minutes prior to lights out in the shelter and until at least 30 minutes after lights on in the shelter, shelter staff shall conduct bed checks a minimum of once per hour to ensure safety and wellness.

23.2 During the bed check, staff are expected to undertake a cursory examination to confirm a bed is occupied, ensure people are safe and are staying in their own bed, help enhance safety within the environment (decrease theft within the shelter by being visible), and respond to any emergency experienced by any shelter guest or staff.

23.3 In shelters with onsite staff, should it be known that any shelter guest currently in shelter is sick, intoxicated or experiencing withdrawal and would benefit from enhanced support and supervision, they shall be checked in on more frequently than once per hour. Shelter staff should notify the shelter guest that more frequent bed checks will be made to enhance their safety.

23.4 For shelters that do not have staff on-site, shelter operators or community-based staff that support shelter guests will complete a wellness and safety plan with shelter guests to ensure that shelter guests, their privacy and their property are as safe as possible in the absence of on-site supervision and support. These wellness and safety plans will be reviewed with shelter guests regularly and updated when needed.

24. Maintenance and Cleanliness

24.1 Shelters may require, as a condition of stay, that shelter guests maintain cleanliness and order in their designated shelter space and

may encourage participation in other chores so long as the chores required of shelter guests:

- Do not require using equipment that requires special training
- Are provided with all cleaning supplies by the shelter operator
- Does not use chemicals that require special handling or precautions
- Can be completed by a shelter guest regardless of ability or life skills
- Are covered by the shelter's insurance provider and the shelter operator can provide proof of coverage to NL Housing.

24.2 Shelter operators will ensure that kitchens and dining areas are cleaned and sanitized in compliance with Food Premises Regulations (2021).

24.3 Every shelter operator will have a plan for how beds are cleaned, sanitized and disinfected between uses. Each operator should include this cleaning process into their internal policy manual.

24.4 Shelter operators will have a scheduled, documented and recorded mattress replacement plan that will include an inspection schedule for bed bugs and common defects (e.g. stains, rips and tears).

24.5 Shelter operators will establish a schedule for regular laundering and changing of all bedding and towels that account for regular use, soiling and contamination. Shelter operators will provide laundering facilities onsite or have a contract in place with a laundering service for bedding and linens. All bedding and towels are to be laundered by the shelter operator a minimum of once per week, and more frequently if requested by the shelter guest or if staff notice the bedding and/or towels are soiled. Upon turning the shelter bed over to a new/different shelter guest, bedding and linens will be laundered.

24.6 Shelter operators will clean and sanitize sleeping areas every time a bed turns over to another person. If the bed remains occupied for a

duration lasting longer than 7 consecutive nights by the same person, the sleeping area should be cleaned and sanitized prior to the 8th night using the bed, especially in communal sleeping areas. Cleaning and sanitizing should occur more frequently if the bed occupant is ill or there are hygiene concerns regarding the individual.

24.7 Shelter operators will clean common areas at least once daily. High contact surface areas in the common areas (e.g., tabletops, doorknobs, television remote) must be sanitized during the cleaning process.

24.8 All shelter operators will have a pest control policy and procedure that specifically addresses bed bugs and an integrated pest/rodent control process that includes, at a minimum:

- Communication and documentation process of all pest sightings by staff and shelter guests
- Regularly scheduled inspections and treatments by professional pest control services provided on-site. The frequency of the inspections will be identified in cooperation with the pest control company. Based on recommendations of pest control specialists, shelter operators will make timely repairs to decrease access points for pests.
- A communication procedure to inform all shelter guests of treatment plans, including the timing of and precautions for the treatment.
- Shelter guests will not be tasked with any components of pest control.
- Shelter operators will maintain cleaning and sanitization standards when pest control concerns have been identified to decrease re-infestations. The shelter operator is required to provide a copy of the pest control report to NL Housing via partners@nlhc.nl.ca

24.9 Shelter operators will ensure that communal bathrooms that are in operation and actively accessed by shelter guests are inspected by operators/staff and then cleaned and sanitized as required according to the following schedule:

- Shelters with 6 or fewer beds: a minimum of twice daily when shelter guests are present
- Shelters with 7-20 beds: a minimum of four times daily when shelter guests are present
- Shelters with 21 or more beds: a minimum of once every two hours daily when shelter guests are present

24.10 Biohazard containers for sharps disposal will be available in easily accessible locations within the shelter and replenished whenever full.

24.11 Clean-up of bodily fluids shall occur in the following manner:

- Clean-up will be completed by shelter operator, shelter staff or custodial staff
- Shelter operator and/or staff involved in cleaning will wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Absorbent disposable towels will be used to first clean up the fluids
- Washing of the area with water and detergent shall then occur in the affected area
- Disinfecting with the appropriate cleaning product for the bodily fluid in question will then be applied
- All materials used in the clean-up will be secured in a tied plastic bag
- For shelters that do not have staff on-site, instructions on the appropriate clean-up procedures, cleaning supplies, and personal protective equipment will be available for shelter guests. Incidents of clean-up of bodily fluid or biohazards should be reported to the shelter operator immediately so that proper cleaning and sanitizing is completed, and supplies can be replenished.

25. Other Health and Safety Measures

25.1 Every shelter shall have an adequately stocked First Aid kit.

25.2 Every shelter shall have functioning smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers and be compliant with governing fire and life safety regulations

- 25.3 Every shelter shall have an eyewash station.
- 25.4 All shelters shall follow all instructions related to chemical use and handling for cleaning supplies.
- 25.5 Shelters are encouraged to have a defibrillator on-site, and training as appropriate.
- 25.6 To reduce the spread of infectious illness, shelters should have face masks and other personal protective equipment available on-site for shelter guests and staff, as appropriate.
- 25.7 It is recommended that shelter operators have a sick leave policy for staff and share this policy for review with NL Housing. Such policies should include circumstances where staff have been confirmed as having an infectious illness by a health care professional and when shelter visits would be required to be completed by an alternate appropriate staff member/delegate authorized and appropriate to assist shelter guests in such circumstances.
- 25.8 In the event a shelter guest is ill, on-site shelter staff shall monitor and, as necessary, make referrals to health care providers in the community. Ill shelter guests may be offered a bed to rest in during daytime hours in shelters that operate 24 hours. For shelters that do not have on-site staff, ill shelter guests should be encouraged to access community-based health care services on an as-needed basis and assistance provided to identify appropriate drop-in and/or day services where they can rest during the day. If the condition worsens to the point where the person has difficulty breathing, feels pain in their chest, experiences dizziness, etc. then 911 must be called.
- 25.9 Should a group of shelter guests get ill at the same time and demonstrate comparable symptoms, the Outbreak Management Protocol must go into effect.

26. Medication

- 26.1 Shelters may not purchase and provide access to “over the counter” medications to shelter guests. For example, shelter staff cannot distribute cough syrup, acetaminophen, or allergy medications. If the shelter guest purchased the over-the-counter medications, then shelter staff can store as outlined below.
- 26.2 Shelter guests will be encouraged to manage their own medications, but - If staffing and storage space exists - the shelter operator may offer safe storage of medication while in the shelter.
- 26.3 Shelter operators and/or staff may not distribute medications. It is the responsibility of the shelter guest to open the container provided by the pharmacy and determine the dosage to be taken at that interval.
- 26.4 Shelter operators and/or staff may not deny access to medications that are stored, even if the individual is choosing to take medication at a time other than advised by a health professional. Staff may inquire if the person knows when they last took their medications but cannot prevent a shelter guest from using differently than recommended by a health care provider.
- 26.5 Shelters can provide reminders to shelter guests to take their medications but cannot require shelter guests to take their medication as a condition of stay. Furthermore, shelters cannot withhold the likes of food, access to a common area, or access to another amenity like laundry as a condition of taking medication.
- 26.6 Shelter operators that provide storage of medications will develop, implement and regularly review policies and procedures to ensure that shelter guests have access to their medication when needed.

27. Response to Medical Incidents

- 27.1 Staff on shift must have current certification in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

- 27.2 The staff providing First Aid will determine if 911 is to be called. In instances when CPR is performed, 911 is to be called.
- 27.3 Staff will verbally try to clear other shelter guests out of the area where the medical incident is happening.
- 27.4 Staff NOT providing First Aid or CPR are required to meet the First Responders at the door to the shelter and escort the First Responders to the location in the shelter where the medical incident is occurring.
- 27.5 Every direct service shelter staff member must carry Naloxone on their person at all times and be trained on the most appropriate response to suspected drug poisonings.

28. Infection Prevention and Control & Outbreak Management

- 28.1 Shelter operators will provide staff with information about communicable disease management and infection control practices including the internal precautions, communication and reporting expectations, etc.
- 28.2 Every shelter shall have an Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) plan. The IPAC should be developed with input from the local public health unit.
- 28.3 Every shelter shall have an Outbreak Management Plan (OMP). The OMP should be developed with input from the local public health unit.
- 28.4 Shelter operators and staff shall be trained on implementing the IPAC and OMP.
- 28.5 A copy of the IPAC and a copy of the OMP should be in a conspicuous place for any shelter guest to peruse.

- 28.6 Shelter operators will recommend that all shelter staff consult their health care professional to update vaccinations and complete any relevant screening (i.e. tuberculosis, etc.).
- 28.7 Shelter operators will monitor Public Health updates and provide information, educational updates and/or training to staff as required.
- 28.8 Every shelter shall make hand sanitizer available to shelter guests to supplement handwashing in high contact areas such as reception areas, doorways, near the dining area, and near bathroom facilities. Shelter operators will take appropriate measures to control/prevent the misapplication and/or misuse of alcohol-based hand sanitizer products.
- 28.9 Hand soap and hot water must be available for handwashing in all bathrooms.
- 28.10 Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks and face shields must be available to all staff, community-based staff supporting shelter guests on-site and affected shelter guests in the event of an infectious disease detected at the shelter or an outbreak.

29. Emergency Preparedness

- 29.1 Every shelter is required to have a Fire Safety Plan. The Plan is to be known by all staff on shift. What to do in the event of a fire is to be communicated to all shelter guests upon intake.
- 29.2 Every shelter is required to have an emergency evacuation plan for any type of emergency requiring shelter guests and staff to vacate the building. Options for exiting the building and muster points must be clearly identified. The emergency evacuation plan will be explained to shelter guests during the intake process and posted in conspicuous places throughout the shelter. All emergency evacuation plans will incorporate strategies for assisting shelter guests or staff with mobility limitations in accordance with Provincial occupational health and safety guidelines.

29.3 Shelters will be prepared and have suitable plans for a wide range of possible emergency situations, including but not limited to:

- Weather related emergencies (e.g., blizzards, hurricanes)
- Human caused emergencies (e.g., bomb threat)
- Infrastructure and essential equipment emergencies (e.g., power outage, broken heating system, plumbing or loss of water)
- Fire related emergencies (e.g., arson, electrical fire)
- Toxic exposure emergencies (e.g., chemical spills)

ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

30. Legislation and Regulatory Compliance

30.1 All shelters must follow all relevant federal, provincial and municipal legislation and regulations.

31. Grievances and Issue Resolution for Guests

31.1 Every shelter will have a process in place for shelter guests to file a grievance if that person feels they are not receiving shelter services in accordance with the standards or feels that their rights or needs are not being met appropriately. The sharing of expectations, rights and responsibilities with shelter guests during intake is important to reduce issues and grievances.

31.2 Internal processes for issue resolution based upon a grievance should have an escalating resolution mechanism that begins internally within the shelter operation and its Board. Should the issue remain unresolved or may result in serious impacts for the shelter service delivery, the grievance should then escalate to NL Housing. If a shelter operator does not have an internal issue resolution process, the following activities would be expected: The grievance or issue is first addressed by direct service staff; if direct service staff are unable to effectively rectify the issue it goes to management staff; if management staff are unable to effectively rectify the issue it goes to executive staff and/or Board of the shelter operation; and if executive staff and/or Board are unable to effectively rectify the issue, it is recommended that the shelter operator communicate the grievance to NL Housing. The shelter guest has the right to escalate the concern to NL Housing which will initiate the issue resolution process of the Corporation.

32. Staff and Organizational Code of Conduct

32.1 Each shelter operator is expected to have a staff code of conduct. The staff code of conduct is expected to be comprehensive and including the following at a minimum:

- Appropriate attire/dress expectations for staff
- Being ready at the start of the shift
- Sobriety requirements when on shift
- Personal boundaries with shelter guests
- Appropriate engagement with colleagues
- Use of personal smartphome, tablet or computer during shift
- Dispute resolution expectations to address issues that may arise between staff, staff and their supervisors, staff and shelter guests as well as amongst individuals staying in the shelter
- Protection of personal and health information and privacy of all individuals in alignment with Provincial and Federal privacy legislation. This would include but not limited to access to, storage, security and confidentiality of shelter guest information, as well as the removal of, destruction of, information and shelter guest access to personal information and records and development of a privacy breach protocol.
- All Staff and volunteers are to have approved Criminal Record Screening Certificate and Vulnerable Sector Check

33. Confidentiality and Personal Privacy

- 33.1 Electronic data containing confidential and personal information of shelter guests will be password protected. Access to electronic data containing confidential and personal information should be limited exclusively to those shelter staff that need to have access to the information for the purpose of performing their job duties.
- 33.2 Hard copy data containing confidential and personal information of shelter guests will be in a locked cabinet with restricted access exclusively for those shelter staff that need to have access to the information for the purpose of performing their job duties.
- 33.3 Shelter staff may not store any confidential or personal information of shelter guests on a personal electronic device or in a personal notebook.

- 33.4 Shelter staff are restricted from sharing any information about a shelter guest with any third party unless there is informed consent explicitly provided by the shelter guest or required by law.
- 33.5 Every shelter funded through NL Housing will have a policy and action plan in the event of a privacy breach of personal information of shelter guests.

34. Documentation and Data Entry Requirements

- 34.1 All shelters are required to submit a daily roll call to NL Housing via rollcall@nlhc.nl.ca
- 34.2 All shelters are encouraged to use HIFIS and submit monthly reports to NL Housing via rollcall@nlhc.nl.ca
- 34.3 All shelters are required to complete necessary data entry on shelter activities within 24 hours of an engagement with a shelter guest. Where HIFIS is available, necessary data entry requirements are outlined in HIFIS training that all shelter staff are required to complete. Alternate formats and metrics may be approved by NL Housing.
- 34.4 All data entry and documentation will be factual and without conjecture or opinion.
- 34.5 Case notes documentation will be securely stored as per section 33 and will include:
- The author's name (in 3rd person)
 - The program participant's full name, preferred name, gender identity, and date of birth
 - Details of the provided service, observations made, or documentation received
 - Date and time of the service
 - Duration of the service
 - Specific location of the engagement
 - Identification of the type of service, the need, and purpose
 - Explanation of why a particular course of action was taken

- Record of follow-up information, including next steps and expected outcomes

34.6 Shelters may store vital documents (e.g., birth certificates, government-issued photo identification, etc.) for program participants, but doing so is voluntary and not a requirement for a shelter guest. In the event the shelter stores the vital document:

- It is only done with the informed consent of the shelter guest
- The documents are stored in a secure location with restricted access
- The shelter guest is informed of when and how they can access the document(s)
- The shelter has a process for documents left behind after a shelter guest has left that are unclaimed, and shelter guest is advised of these before consenting to storage

34.7 Each shelter will have a process for assisting shelter guests in accessing vital documents that the shelter guest does not have in their possession. Such a process can include shelter staff assisting directly in the process or making referrals to other organizations in the community that can assist.

35. Photography, Videography, Audio Recording, Social Media, and Digital Sharing

35.1 All people entering the shelter will be advised that all forms of photography, videography and audio recording are not permitted in the shelter. This is to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all people using or working in the shelter.

35.2 All people entering the shelter will be advised that posting to social media, or other digital sharing such as posting on a website, that would disclose the identity of shelter guest, staff or volunteer, is not permitted. This is to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all people using shelter.

- 35.3 Shelter operators engaging in Public Relations using social media or a website may not post any images of people that use shelter – past or present – and may not share personal details regarding any shelter guest's experience of homelessness. Each shelter operator that receives funding through the provincial government that uses social media is expected to have an internal social media policy governing how social media is used by the organization in relation to the provision of shelter services.
- 35.4 No employee of a shelter is permitted to post anything regarding the services provided or people served on a personal social media account, nor can that employee post or share digital content elsewhere. Each Shelter operator that receives funding through the provincial government is expected to have an internal policy related to employee use of social media or sharing digital content related to shelter operations and people served in shelter.

36. Guests, Visitors, and External Contractors

- 36.1 Shelters may not permit guests of people staying in shelter to enter the facility, unless there is a separate designated area with appropriate guest management policies and procedures. This is to ensure the safety, privacy and confidentiality of all people using shelter.
- 36.2 Visitors to the shelter, including staff from NL Housing, as well as other funders or service providers in the community must sign in and out of the facility, with a stated business purpose for being present in the shelter. This is to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all people using shelter.
- 36.3 For visitors and external contractors (for example, consultants, evaluators, researchers), the shelter must have a confidentiality agreement for them to agree to, date and sign.

37. Volunteers

- 37.1 Volunteer, for the purpose of the standards, is defined as an individual that is leading or participating in any activity at the shelter (for

example, food service, greeting, leading social activities) that is not direct staff, or a registered shelter guest.

- 37.2 All volunteers must have a Criminal Record Screening Certificate and Vulnerable Sector Check completed prior to working with vulnerable populations. These records need to be on file with shelter administration prior to entry and should be updated every 18-24 months.
- 37.3 Volunteers will be appropriately trained for the task(s) they are performing at the shelter.
- 37.4 If using volunteers in shelter operations, the shelter provider is required to have adequate insurance coverage for the role the volunteers are performing at the shelter, and proof of adequate insurance may be requested by NL Housing.

38. Incident Reporting

- 38.1 All incidents (an event that may compromise the health, safety and/or well-being of staff, approved community partners delivering services on-site, shelter guests, guests, or volunteers on property) will be documented by the shelter within 24 hours to ensure accurate reporting of the incident internally. Summary reports to NL Housing via partners@nlhc.nl.ca will occur on a quarterly basis.
- 38.2 Incidents that meet the threshold of serious occurrence (death, fire, serious assault, use of a weapon, unexpected death of a shelter guest, bomb threat, serious situations where the police are called regarding the actions of staff, shelter guests, volunteers, etc. that result in criminal charges being laid, etc.) must be reported to NL Housing within 24 hours. Notifications are to be submitted to: partners@nlhc.nl.ca
- 38.3 Shelter providers are expected to review incidents as they occur and quarterly to assess any possible trends that may require changes in

procedures, operations and/or policies with the objective of reducing such incidents in the future.

39. Contract Compliance

- 39.1 All shelter operators contracted by the provincial government will be monitored by the funder or its delegate for compliance to contract conditions.
- 39.2 Shelter operators are required to provide access to NL Housing staff to conduct on-demand and quarterly inspections of each shelter. Inspections will include but are not limited to assessment of compliance with life safety conditions such as functional fire and smoke detection, cleanliness, access to appropriate food and water, privacy and confidentiality standards, and other provisions outlined in these standards or, as appropriate, contracts.
- 39.3 In the event a shelter operator is not in compliance, required corrective actions will be documented by the funder and provided to the shelter operator with a timeline for remediation, unless an immediate closure of the shelter is required because, in the opinion of the funder, the matter not in compliance cannot be resolved in another manner.
- 39.4 Failure to appropriately resolve noted corrective actions may result in suspended funding, reduced funding, or cessation of funding for shelter operations.

40. Other Accountabilities

- 40.1 Non-profit shelter operators (with or without charitable status) must maintain a functioning Board of Directors and satisfy all the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) as well as maintain good standing with the NL Registry of Companies and Deeds Online (CADO) on an annual basis.
- 40.2 For-profit shelter operators must maintain their business license in the community within which they operate and satisfy all the requirements

of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and maintain good standing with the NL Registry of Companies and Deeds Online (CADO) on an annual basis.

40.3 All shelter operators (non-profit and for-profit) are required to submit data and respond to information requests in a timely manner (e.g. 24 hours) made by NL Housing. This specifically includes:

- The provision of a daily shelter roll call to NL Housing: rollcall@nlhc.nl.ca.
- Where available, monthly HIFIS reports, as detailed by NL Housing and community system of care requirements.
- Provision of access to NL Housing staff to conduct on-demand and quarterly inspections.
- A minimum of monthly client check-ins on documentation readiness and housing location activities.