

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):  
Physical Distancing Centre for Women – Friel Street Location;  
operated by Cornerstone  
December 2020**

The City has identified physical distancing sites to provide additional capacity in the emergency shelter system. Planning is now moving from an immediate response to one that can be sustained over the medium-term.

In December, three programs serving single women experiencing homelessness will be temporarily consolidated into one physical distancing site at 240 Friel Street, with an initial capacity of over 100 people. The site will be operated by Cornerstone Housing for Women and serve clients from Cornerstone, Shepherds of Good Hope, and overflow services.

This approach will meet the need for physical distancing in the singles emergency shelter system and the potential increased demand in the single women's shelter system, as well as providing an environment that is more conducive to preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

**Q. When will the new site open?**

The movement of operations and clients will be phased and take place starting in December.

**Q. How many single women can be supported at the temporary physical distancing site?**

The site will initially support over 100 single women. Additional rooms are available if needed.

**Q. What types of clients will be using the physical distancing site for single women?**

The criteria will be the same as Cornerstone Women's shelter: Single women, aged 18 years and older. Clients with high needs **will not** be transferred to this location.

**Q. Why can't people continue to be served at the regular emergency shelter locations?**

The current shelters continue to have limited beds to respond to the recommended physical distancing guidelines and potential increases in demand.

Given the health and safety requirements resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the significant risk to shelter users' health and well-being under the traditional physical shelter set-up, it is necessary to find an alternate temporary site to decrease the risk of transmission among people.

**Q. How long will the new site be used as a physical distancing site?**

The site is temporary and will be used until summer 2021. The City continues to explore other long-term solutions to create extra capacity within the singles emergency shelter system, and transition people to permanent housing.

**Q. What amenities and support will be available at this location?**

Women will have their own rooms or share rooms but will be safely physically distanced and will have private washrooms. The location will offer all the same supports as Cornerstone Housing for Women's previous shelter location (172 O'Connor St), including food service, laundry, dining space, and access to computers, Wi-Fi and televisions.

Staff will also provide individuals with general case management supports on site which includes housing, social assistance applications, coordinating medical appointments and supporting with employment search where needed.

**Q. Is there staff and/or security on site?**

Yes. Cornerstone Housing for Women will operate the facility with 24 hour a day staff and security available to support clients.

**Q. How will preventative COVID-19 measures be practiced at the physical distancing site?**

The set-up and the capacity of the site will reduce the risk of any potential transmission by providing single occupancy rooms or shared rooms with the space to allow physical distancing.

All Ottawa Public Health recommendations will be implemented on site, including but not limited to:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for all staff and clients including masking in common areas;
- Enhanced cleaning procedures on high-touch surfaces;
- Availability of hand sanitizers throughout the site;
- Physical distancing in common areas;
- Signage featuring guidelines for COVID-19 prevention procedures; and
- Screening protocols for staff, clients and visitors.

**Q. What happens if someone needs to isolate or tests positive for COVID-19?**

Women who test positive and/or are required to self-isolate will be referred for placement at the Routhier Isolation Centre. Should a woman need to isolate, staff will work closely with Ottawa Inner City Health and Ottawa Public Health to support them.

**Q. Is the Ottawa Police Service aware of the physical distancing site opening at the new site?**

Yes, Housing Services has been in contact with both the Ottawa Police Service, Emergency Response Services and By-law and Regulatory Services to inform and discuss operations at the site.

**Q. What was the City doing previously to support physical distancing in the single women's shelter system and why is the approach being changed?**

The City has been using hotel rooms to support physical distancing for single women experiencing homelessness.

The approach is now shifting from an immediate response to one that can be sustained over the medium-term. The new site will allow partners to better serve women, as it is being used exclusively for this purpose. Its availability over the medium-term has been confirmed (until the summer of 2021).

**Q. How do I access service at this site?**

To make a request for placement, please call:

- Cornerstone Housing for Women at 613-237-4669 or shelter-reception@cornerstonewomen.ca.
- The City at 3-1-1 or Toll-Free: 1-866-261-9799.

**Q. Who do I contact if I have questions?**

Should you have any questions please contact Rachel Ladouceur at: [Rachel.Ladouceur@ottawa.ca](mailto:Rachel.Ladouceur@ottawa.ca)