

COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND SAFETY SUPPORT TOOLKIT

DOWNTOWN LONDON
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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WELCOME

Downtown London is a welcoming place that serves residents, workers, visitors, students, and people experiencing hardship. Businesses play an important role in creating a safe, welcoming downtown for everyone. This toolkit provides practical guidance to help businesses respond safely, confidently and compassionately when challenging situations arrive.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

THIS TOOLKIT WILL HELP YOU:

- ☑ **Recognize different situations**
- ☑ **Decide who to call**
- ☑ **Keep staff safe**
- ☑ **Support individuals experiencing crisis**
- ☑ **Prevent recurring issues**



This toolkit is intended to serve as a reference guide, NOT a replacement for emergency services or professional training.

INTRODUCTION

Downtown businesses regularly encounter individuals and situations involving mental health, homelessness, substance use, property damage, and other complex social challenges. These situations can be unpredictable and difficult to navigate, particularly when there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of employees, customers, or members of the public. Knowing how to respond appropriately can help prevent situations from escalating while ensuring that everyone involved is treated with dignity and respect.

This toolkit provides practical guidance to help businesses recognize common situations, respond safely and compassionately, identify appropriate community resources, and understand who to contact when additional assistance is needed. It is designed to build confidence by offering clear, practical information that supports informed decision-making in a variety of circumstances.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Businesses are not expected to fulfill the responsibilities of social workers, healthcare professionals, or law enforcement personnel. Businesses can play a supportive role by utilizing connections to available municipal and community services. Working collaboratively with community partners and service providers enables businesses to make a meaningful contribution to community wellbeing and safety.

BUSINESSES' RESPONSIBILITIES

THEIR ROLE IS TO:

- **Recognize when someone needs assistance**
- **Respond in a calm and respectful manner**
- **Keep employees and customers safe**
- **Connect individuals with appropriate resources when possible**
- **Know when to step back and call for professional assistance**

WHO DO I CALL IF...

THERE IS AN EMERGENCY

An unexpected, serious, or dangerous situation that poses an immediate risk to life, health, property, or the environment.

FIRE
•
CRIME
•
MEDICAL

CALL 9-1-1

SOMEONE IS SLEEPING IN MY DOORWAY

Are they having a medical emergency?

YES • NO

COORDINATED INFORMED RESPONSE TEAM
Service.London.ca
519-661-4570

and/or

LONDON POLICE COMMUNITY FOOT PATROL
519-933-1542

THERE IS LITTER AROUND MY ESTABLISHMENT

There is garbage/vandalism in or around your property that was not left by you.

LITTER
•
NEEDLES
•
GRAFFITI
•
BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT

SERVICE LONDON
Service.London.ca
519-661-4585

and/or

LDBA CLEAN TEAM
Info@DowntownLondon.ca
519-663-2002

I NEED TO REPORT A NON-EMERGENCY

An illegal act that has already occurred, involves no immediate danger to life or property.

THEFT
•
NUISANCE ISSUES
•
VANDALISM

LONDON POLICE
519-661-5670

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU ARE SEEING

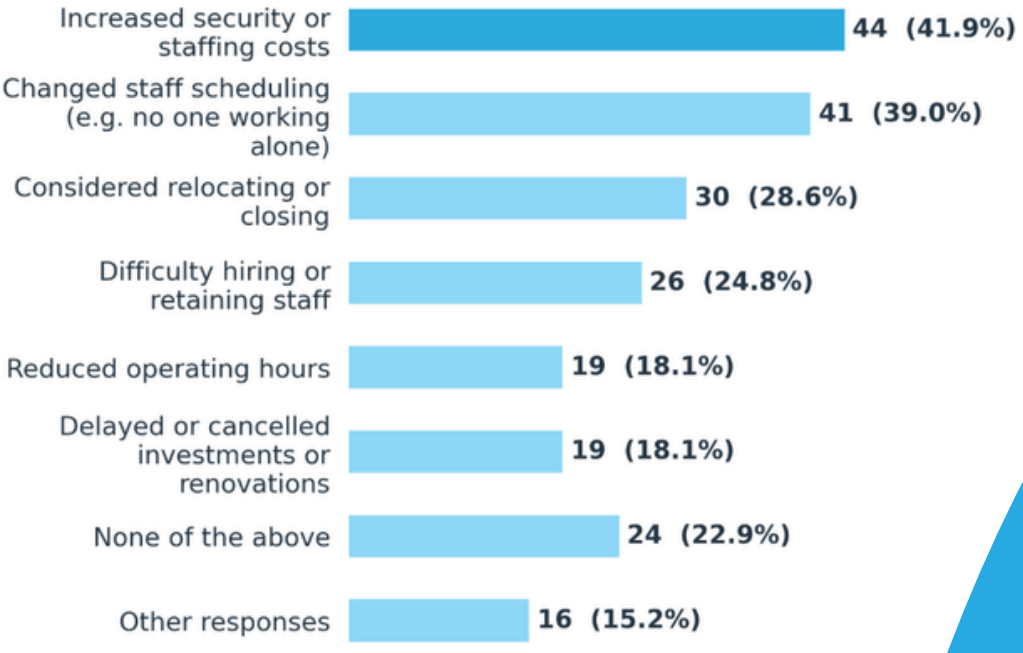
UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY WELLBEING

2026 Community Wellbeing Survey Results

In 2026 Downtown London asked for community input on the safety and wellbeing issues affecting our downtown. The survey received 111 responses from LDBA members, which include downtown businesses and property owners. Respondents were asked about the frequency and nature of impacts experienced during the past year, including street-level activity, safety concerns, cleanliness, property damage, vandalism, theft, discarded drug paraphernalia, trespassing, emergency service calls, personal belongings left on sidewalks or near entrances, direct costs, and changes to business operations.

Nearly 80% of respondents indicated that street issues impact their business operations frequently or sometimes, with 67% of respondents reporting that they had experienced some form of property damage or vandalism in the past year. The impacts of community wellbeing and safety issues are felt throughout the community. Understanding these issues and knowing how to respond appropriately is important for improving these conditions effectively.

Business decisions affected by social issues



WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a complex and growing issue that impacts communities across Canada, including London.
The impacts of homelessness are felt not only by those experiencing housing insecurity but also by residents, businesses, service providers, and the broader downtown community.

Business owners and employees in particular have expressed concerns related to issues such as litter, discarded drug paraphernalia, vandalism, theft, public safety concerns, and challenges in responding to individuals who may be experiencing mental health crises or substance use issues. These challenges can affect customer experiences, employee wellbeing, and the overall perception of the downtown area.

At the same time, homelessness is a deeply human issue that cannot be addressed through enforcement alone. Many individuals experiencing homelessness are also facing complex barriers such as mental health challenges, addictions, poverty, trauma, and limited access to affordable housing and support services. This toolkit helps businesses, organizations, and community members better understand the supports and resources available in London.

By understanding how different services and systems work together, individuals can feel more confident in responding appropriately when concerns arise or when someone experiencing homelessness may need assistance. The toolkit also provides practical guidance, local contacts, and up-to-date information on whom to call for specific situations related to homelessness, outreach, safety concerns, and community support within London's downtown.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

"Why can't people that are unhoused in the BIA just be taken to a place that can help them?"

Questions like this often come from a place of both concern and frustration. People experiencing homelessness, or those perceived to be homeless, are frequently encountered within the BIA. Customers, business owners, and BIA members may feel worried, uncomfortable, or concerned, while also wanting to ensure people have access to appropriate support, food, and safe shelter.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Services for people experiencing homelessness are voluntary

Accommodations are limited, and there is no legal authority to force someone to access community services or remain in a shelter. While outreach workers and professionals may use supportive engagement techniques to encourage people to accept help, individuals must ultimately make their own informed decisions about receiving services.

The exception is when someone poses a danger to themselves or others

Ontario's Mental Health Act outlines the responsibilities and authority of psychiatric facilities, police officers, and Justices of the Peace in situations where a person may require a psychiatric assessment. The Act establishes the criteria for the power of police officers and Justices of the Peace to make orders for an individual to undergo psychiatric examination by a mental health professional.

Being homeless is not illegal

In 1994, Canadian courts ruled that portions of vagrancy laws were unconstitutional because they violated rights related to life, liberty, and personal security. While certain actions or behaviours may still fall under existing laws or municipal by-laws, simply lacking permanent housing does not remove an individual's legal rights or protections under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



If customers or BIA members feel unsafe or witness criminal activity, they should call 9-1-1 immediately.

DE-ESCALATION TACTICS

DO

- ☑ Speak in a calm tone at a low volume
- ☑ Maintain a safe distance
- ☑ Ask “how can I help you?”
- ☑ Make yourself visible to others
- ☑ Call for support
- ☑ Have an escape route
- ☑ Call 9-1-1 if an individual threatens THE safety of you or others

DON’T

- ☒ yell or speak in an aggressive tone
- ☒ overcrowd the individual
- ☒ use antagonizing phrases like “calm down”
- ☒ go into an isolated area
- ☒ deal with the situation alone
- ☒ let the individual block your exit path
- ☒ touch or use physical force on the individual

These tactics are intended to help business owners and employees understand how to handle a situation involving a challenging individual entering their establishment. These tips are approved by safety experts and are meant to help support personal safety while support is on the way. *Call 9-1-1 if any individual entering the establishment threatens the safety and wellbeing of you or others.*

COMMON SITUATIONS

THERE IS AN EMERGENCY

An unexpected, serious, or dangerous situation that poses an immediate risk to life, health, property, or the environment.

FIRE
•
CRIME
•
MEDICAL

CALL 9-1-1

SOMEONE APPEARS INTOXICATED

Do they threaten the wellbeing of you or others?

YES • NO

COORDINATED INFORMED RESPONSE TEAM
Service.London.ca
519-661-4570

and/or

LONDON POLICE COMMUNITY FOOT PATROL
519-933-1542

I FIND DRUG PARAPHERNALIA

You find any drug paraphernalia in/around your building.

DRUGS
•
NEEDLES

SERVICE LONDON
Service.London.ca
519-661-4965

SOMEONE IS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL WELLBEING

Who to contact if someone is experiencing a non-emergency mental health crisis.

YELLING
•
PSYCHOSIS
•
HALLUCINATIONS

LONDON CARES HOMELESS RESPONSE TEAM
519-667-2273

CPTED

(Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)

Territorial Reinforcement

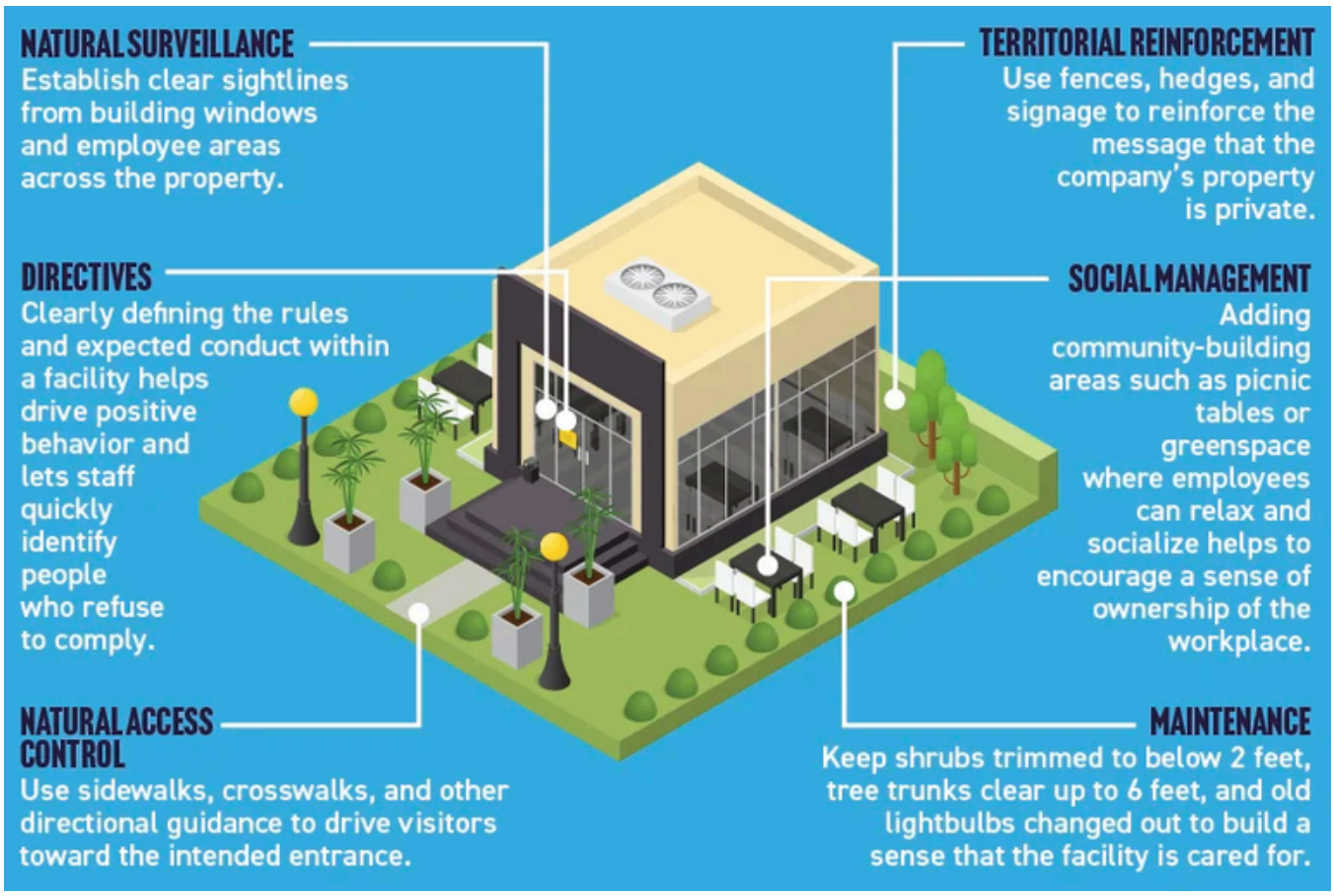
Territorial Reinforcement is a design concept that recognizes that physical design can influence users so that they develop a sense of proprietorship that is noticeable to the offender. Used properly, it can help people develop a sense of pride in a space, often encouraging people to call out bad behaviour.

Access Control

Access control is a design concept that is directed at decreasing crime opportunity. It is based on the premise that a person who is confronted with a clearly defined boundary will typically respect the way it guides their movement as they transition from public to private space.

Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance is a design strategy that is directed at keeping intruders under observation. It is based on a simple premise that a person inclined to engage in criminality will be less likely to act on their impulse if he or she can be seen.



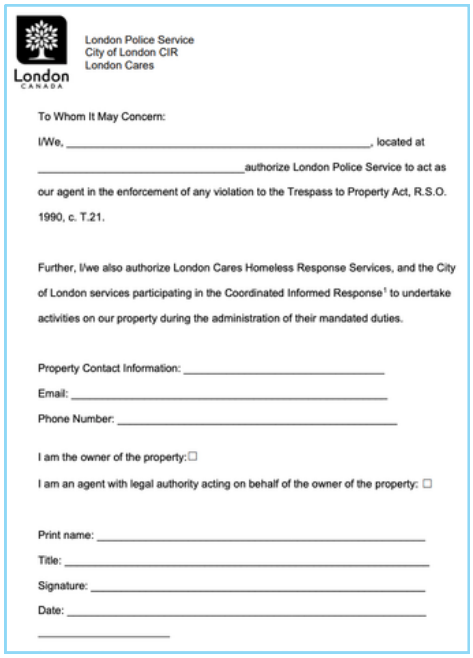
CPTED Blueprint sourced from Growing a Sense of Ownership with CPTED

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

CITY OF LONDON

Trespass Agreement Program (TAP)

The Trespass Agreement Program allows **Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) and London Police Service Foot Patrol** to assist when issues involving individuals experiencing homelessness occur on private property.
The program requires consent from the property or business owner. Owners can provide consent by **completing the Trespass Agreement Program registration form and submitting it to CIR@London.ca.**
Once registered, the property will receive a window sticker confirming that CIR and Foot Patrol officers have consent to enter the private property and provide assistance.
For more information and to register, **visit London.ca/TAP**.



London Police Service
City of London CIR
London Cares

To Whom It May Concern:

I/We, _____, located at _____ authorize London Police Service to act as our agent in the enforcement of any violation to the Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21.

Further, I/we also authorize London Cares Homeless Response Services, and the City of London services participating in the Coordinated Informed Response[1] to undertake activities on our property during the administration of their mandated duties.

Property Contact Information: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____

I am the owner of the property: ☐
I am an agent with legal authority acting on behalf of the owner of the property: ☐

Print name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Coordinated Informed Response Trespass Agreement Form

DOWNTOWN LONDON BIA INCENTIVES

CPTED Audit

Businesses downtown can get a FREE CPTED audit through The City of London.
A main objective of CPTED is to reduce/remove the opportunity for crime to occur in an environment and promote positive interaction with the space by legitimate users. CPTED is a preventative, proactive model, and not a reactive one. To request a free CPTED audit or get more information, email Judith@DowntownLondon.ca.

Property Damage Grant

Commercial property or business located within the Downtown London BIA boundary can apply for a grant to help with costs incurred for repairs related to damage due to vandalism. Contact Judith@DowntownLondon.ca to see grant eligibility.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

519-663-2002
DowntownLondon.ca
Info@DowntownLondon.ca
114 Dundas St, Suite 400

HOUSING & SHELTER RESOURCES

HOUSING AND STABILITY SUPPORTS

Housing and stability supports are useful for individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These programs help connect people to helpful resources for affordable and long-term housing.

COORDINATED ACCESS TO HOUSING SUPPORTS

519-661-4663
355 WELLINGTON ST. #248

HOUSING STABILITY BANK

519-661-4663
281 WELLINGTON ST.

DROP-INS

Drop-in programs provide a supportive and accessible environment where individuals can meet essential daily needs such as food, showers, laundry facilities, and personal hygiene supplies.

ARK AID STREET MISSION

519-667-0322
696 DUNDAS ST

LONDON COFFEE HOUSE

519-204-4719
371 HAMILTON RD

MY SISTER'S PLACE (WOMEN)

519-679-9570 EXT. 5510
566 DUNDAS ST

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED (16-24)

519-432-1112
332 RICHMOND ST

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

519-432-3781
485 WINDERMERE RD

ATLOHSA

519-438-0070
343 RICHMOND ST

LONDON CARES

519-667-2273
602 QUEENS AVE

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Emergency shelters provide short-term housing, meals, and access to essential hygiene services such as showers and laundry facilities. In addition to meeting immediate basic needs, shelters often connect individuals and families with support services.

ROTHOLME FAMILY SHELTER

519-661-4663
42 STANLEY ST

UNITY PROJECT FOR RELIEF

519-433-8700
717 DUNDAS ST

ANOVA (WOMEN)

519-642-3000
101 WELLINGTON RD

SALVATION ARMY CENTRE OF HOPE (WOMEN & MEN 16+)

519-661-0343
281 WELLINGTON

ZHAAWANONG (INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN)

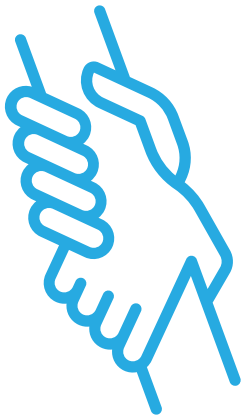
519-432-2270
256 HILL ST

MEN'S MISSION (16+)

519-672-8500
459 YORK ST

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

No single worker or organization can meet every need a person experiencing crisis may have. Understanding how different services and supports connect can help ensure that concerns, questions, and requests for assistance are directed to the most appropriate resources and organizations. Overall community wellbeing and safety depends on the collaboration of all community members. By understanding the different supports available we can help foster a stronger and safer downtown for all.



The City of London:

- Outreach services to individuals experiencing homelessness
- Housing supports
- Enforces municipal by-laws related to parks and public properties
- Cleans up litter and waste in parks and public properties
- Social Assistance
- Identifies specific areas where more CIR support is needed
- Homeless Prevention and Housing

Community Agencies:

- Emergency shelter beds, transitional, supportive and affordable housing
- Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response
- Assist with finding permanent housing
- Meals and laundry services
- Drop in services
- Outreach supports

Health Care Workers:

- Connect clients with mental health and addiction supports
- Provide street-level outreach
- Mobile clinics
- 24/7 care in transitional and high acuity housing facilities to stabilize at-risk individuals



London Police Service:

- Respond to criminal activity
- Assist with CIR and Foot Patrol supports
- Collaborative multi-agency partnerships
- Specialized outreach teams
- Diversion strategies

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAMS

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

- **Coordinated Informed Response (CIR)**

Coordinated Informed Response (CIR) is a trained, highly-engaged team of City of London employees augmented with London Police Service, and contracted outreach agencies. CIR is on the streets and in the community every day, offering support and services to Londoners living unsheltered. This team also works closely with London businesses to help address challenges related to individuals that live unsheltered. For more information, visit London.ca/CIR

- **Downtown Response Team**

The Downtown Response Team is part of the City of London's Coordinated Informed Response (CIR). They provide an on-the-ground presence along Dundas Street from the Fork of the Thames to Quebec Street, as well as along Richmond Street from Oxford Street to Dundas Street. The officers help businesses navigate City services and ensure requests are directed to the right team.

- **LPS Foot Patrol**

To increase foot patrol presence in the Downtown, officers work alongside community partners to connect individuals facing addiction or homelessness with vital health and social supports. They aim to encourage the public to feel more comfortable approaching officers in community spaces, thereby strengthening public trust in community safety without raising unnecessary concerns.

OUTREACH TEAMS

- **London Cares**

London Cares is an organization founded to respond to individuals experiencing chronic and persistent homelessness in London. Their 24/7 teams are on the streets providing vital support to these individuals.

- **519Pursuit**

519Pursuit is a community-owned, grassroots movement to support those experiencing homelessness in London. Their team is on the ground every day providing many services such as: food, socks, hygiene products and seasonal gear.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAMS

CLEAN TEAM

- **Downtown London Business Association**

Manager of Public Realm and Activations, Judith Smith, works alongside the Downtown London Clean Team to keep the City's streets clean everyday. Walking the streets of downtown the Clean Team from Goodbye Graffiti remove loose litter, sharps, and graffiti off of business storefronts.
To learn more, contact: Judith@DowntownLondon.ca.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Help Yourself Through Hard Times**

People going through times of financial, emotional or mental hardship need access to reliable and accurate information so they can receive supports to help them recover and thrive in our community. Help Yourself Through Hard Times has been a trusted resource in London and Middlesex County for over 20 years, putting information about basic material aids and social supports directly into the hands of people who need it.

- **Service London**

Provides a single, easy-to-use portal and phone line where you can report local problems, pay fees, or ask questions without needing to know which specific City department to contact. Any maintenance requests including the removal of needles, on City property should be reported at ServiceLondon.ca or call 519-661-4585

- **City of London Dispatch**

For public works, municipal compliance, and urgent City infrastructure issues (like water main breaks, traffic light outages, or severe road conditions), contact the City of London's 24/7 municipal dispatch at 519-661-4965.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

519-663-2002
DowntownLondon.ca
Info@DowntownLondon.ca
114 Dundas St, Suite 400


DOWNTOWN
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