

1. What is Social Diversion?

- In the Red Deer context, social diversion refers to the creation of a delivery model for at-risk, high-need individuals that, in a time of crisis, require an intervention-based non-emergency response. The needs of individuals are often directly related to mental health, addictions and housing-related challenges.
- The primary objective of social diversion is to respond to people in Red Deer who are exhibiting distress, but require non-emergency support; this can free up both law enforcement and medical responders to focus on emergency situations.
- The Social Diversion team will deliver an integrated community response to non-emergency crisis situations, providing the public with a resource to call.

2. What is the Social Diversion team (SDT)?

- The Social Diversion team consists of specially-trained professionals that can provide front line assessment, intervention and support. The Social Diversion team can connect people in crisis with the social services they need, such as housing supports, mental health supports, detox programs and harm reduction resources.
- Currently, the Social Diversion team consists of two teams of two individuals: one Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and a Social Diversion Specialist. These two individuals are resourced by Safe Harbour, as contracted by The City of Red Deer.
 - The team will operate 7a.m. – 7 p.m. (at the onset). These hours were determined based on call volume data analysis and could be adjusted.
- 211 will dispatch the SDT, as contracted by The City of Red Deer.
 - An agent will assess the caller's information to ensure the right resource is dispatched. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - Outside of the Social Diversion team operating hours, callers will be provided with either a community referral, crisis intervention support, connected to 911 or non-emergency line, or offered a follow-up.

3. How does the SDT work?

- SDT will work with the individual to assess their needs. Some of the potential outcomes may be:
 - Transporting to a partner organization that can provide clothing, blankets, meals, personal care items, etc.
 - Providing supportive conversation, warm transfers to appropriate services.
 - Providing First Aid or connection to harm reduction supplies.
 - Providing connection to culturally appropriate supports.

4. Who will call the SDT?

- 1st Party Callers: those looking for support for themselves (i.e. emotional, mental or physical distress, addictions challenges, or housing/nutrition-related challenges)
- 3rd Party Callers: those looking for support for family or friends, or a concerned citizen looking for support for a stranger.
- Emergency responders: looking to divert or hand over an event when the SDT is the more suitable responding agency. (i.e.: officer providing a warm hand-off to SDT to support individual with transportation, emotional support, etc.)

5. When should someone call 2-1-1 (press 2)?

If you see someone who is:

- Experiencing a mental health or medical (non-emergency) crisis
- Intoxicated or otherwise impaired
- Requiring transport to appropriate services (i.e. a shelter)
- Sleeping in an unsafe space and/or inappropriately dressed for the weather
- Requiring social services (i.e. housing, nutrition, health or community supports)
- Likely to come to harm without intervention

If the individual is not posing an immediate harm to themselves or others, call 2-1-1 and press 2.

6. How was the Social Diversion team created?

- Social Diversion was one of the top local priorities identified during 2019 Community Safety Summit workshops, led by the Systems Leadership Team*.
- In the summer of 2020, the Systems Leadership Team* submitted a letter for City Council's consideration, recommending The City fund approximately \$525,235 as one-time funding. This will allow for a one-year trial of Red Deer's social diversion service delivery model. Its impact will be monitored and reported back to Council and the community.

7. How will the team help improve community safety?

- This investment in street-level response aims to reduce law enforcement and medical emergency response, including a reduction in calls to 9-1-1.
- Social diversion will provide support to concerned citizens and business owners, contributing to a continuum of supports for community safety.
- The team will provide service to at-risk, high-need individuals that, in a time of crisis, require an intervention-based, non-emergency response. The team's specialized training allows them to evaluate and connect clients to the social resources that best respond to their needs.

- This service model has had great success in other communities facing similar social issues.

8. Who is the Systems Leadership Team* (SLT)?

- In 2016, City Council adopted the Community Safety Strategy which identified the need for a central model to bring the major government “systems” together to help stimulate and drive change in Red Deer related to community safety. This led to the formation of the System Leadership Team (SLT), which has been operational since 2017.
- The SLT includes: City of Red Deer administration, Red Deer RCMP, Urban Aboriginal Voices Society, Red Deer Regional Catholic Schools, Red Deer Public Schools, Alberta Justice Red Deer, Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General, Red Deer College, Central Region Ministry of Children’s Services, Alberta Health Services Central Zone, and Alberta Works Red Deer.

9. What is 211?

211 is an easy-to-remember 3-digit number that connects Albertans to a full range of community, government and social services across the province. For more information about 211, visit ab.211.ca.