



Community Standards

Item 3
September 25, 2009

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To: Board of Directors
From: Communities Committee
Date: September 11, 2009

Report: TCHC:2009-112

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PURPOSE:

To seek approval from the Board of Directors for the adoption of Community Standards for Toronto Community Housing.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Directors approve the Community Standards Report.

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

At its meeting on September 11, 2009, the Communities Committee adopted the Community Standards and recommended it be forwarded to the Board of Directors for approval.

BACKGROUND:

Toronto Community Housing is focused on improving tenant perceptions of community safety and livability, as part of its commitment to supporting the growth of strong, healthy communities. During building meetings, consultations and other interactions with staff, tenants have consistently raised issues regarding anti-social behaviours of tenants and other members of the community, as well as Toronto Community Housing's role in addressing these concerns.

In response to tenant feedback, in its 2008-2010 Community Management Plan, Toronto Community Housing stated that it would work with tenants and communities to:

- 1) identify anti-social behaviours;
- 2) develop protocols on acceptable standards of community behaviour; and
- 3) create expectations for staff and tenants related to these behaviours.

These protocols will form consistent “community standards” for Toronto Community Housing, set across all communities.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Development Process

The development of the Community Standards relied on a strong foundation of consultation with tenants, staff and community partners, that built upon the work that has been and is being done with Toronto Community Housing. The process was led by an interdisciplinary Community Standards Advisory Committee composed of staff and tenants and was supported by a consultant. Coordination with the Mental Health Framework which was being developed concurrently with the Community Standards ensured that appropriate linkages were made. The Standards were also corroborated with various related Toronto Community Housing policies, including *the Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy, Tenant Complaint Process*, as well as the Tenant Handbook.

Work included:

- the formation of an advisory committee;
- a literature review of best practices;
- key informant interviews;
- focus groups of identified stakeholders within Toronto Community Housing (site staff and representatives from the Community Health and Community Safety Units, seniors, youth and Tenant Leaders); and
- a consultation kit which allowed staff and tenants to complete a survey online (see *Appendix 1*).

The information garnered from all of these sources was compiled and shared with staff and tenants in a user-friendly brochure which summarized the key findings (see *Appendix 2*).

Tenants and staff were then invited to a series of open forums. During the forums, they were asked to categorize the various behaviours identified by them as undesirable. They were also presented with case studies of behaviours which had been identified as undesirable, and asked to resolve them. The forum format engaged tenants and staff to work together on complex challenges and provided clear direction to the Advisory Committee regarding how tenants and staff wanted to see such issues resolved. These directions were then integrated into the development of the Standards, which were then fed back to tenants and staff in two sessions for final input.

Final feedback was then received from community partners. During the development process, feedback and direction were also sought from Toronto Community Housing's Community Health Steering Committee and the Community Safety Unit's Steering Committee. Finally, exposure to the concept of Anti-social Behaviour Units and Safer City Councils in the United Kingdom provided a useful context, as Toronto Community Housing's work mirrors much of the efforts which have evolved from the United Kingdom's rich tradition of social housing and related community development.

KEY FINDINGS

Anti-Social Behaviour

Tenants and staff who participated in the consultations identified a range of anti-social behaviours that undermine the safety and livability of Toronto Community Housing communities. These behaviours range from:

- the **less serious, nuisance behaviours**, including those that unreasonably disrupt the rights of residents to enjoy their homes, staff to work in a respectful work environment, or which affect community cleanliness (e.g. littering and excessive noise);
- those which cause a **significant disturbance** to tenants, staff and other community members (e.g. graffiti, threatening behaviors); and
- those that **endanger the safety, health or well-being** of tenants, staff and/or the larger community (e.g. operation of illegal businesses, vandalism, domestic and gang-related violence).

While many of those who participated in the consultations acknowledged that only a small number of tenants participate in these more serious behaviours, they recognized that it only takes a few bad units to undermine the safety and well-being of an entire building or community.

Factors Contributing to Anti-Social Behaviours

There was much agreement during the consultations about the issues that contribute to anti-social behaviours, as well as those which undermine Toronto Community Housing's ability to effectively deal with these behaviours.

Tenants and staff attributed the causes of these behaviours to various factors. These include:

- **societal forces** that Toronto Community Housing has little control over, including poverty, unemployment, lack of community supports for people with mental health issues, and the lack of programs for children and youth;
- **individual factors** that may contribute to these behaviours, including poor life skills, apathy, and lack of parental involvement; and
- **organizational factors**, including lack of enforcement of the *Residential Tenancies Act*, limited staffing resources, and a lack of organizational coordination, supports and protocols.

While the focus of the Community Standards is on anti-social behaviours, living conditions have an impact on the health and livability of Toronto Community Housing communities. The conditions in which tenants are allowed to live affects their safety, their perception of safety, as well as their behaviours. In addition, poor maintenance and landscaping can create unsafe conditions for tenants and staff. Neglected communities, in turn, become magnets for crime.

It is possible that people living in such conditions will withdraw from participating in their community. If they do not feel safe, or if they expect their stay in Toronto Community Housing to be short-term, they may not engage and may not take responsibility for what happens in the community. In such communities, the challenge is to get tenants and staff to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to their community.

Consultation Summary

Throughout the consultations, some participants raised the view that enforcement is the key to making Community Standards work. Many staff and tenants expressed skepticism about how enforceable the Community Standards could be and how effectively they could be enforced, given legislative and other restraints. Both tenants and staff agreed that, in order for the Standards to be effective, there needs to be:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- clear protocol;
- local resolution of issues;
- increased staff presence in communities;
- increased supports for vulnerable tenants, tenants with mental health issues, parents, youth, and those seeking employment;
- enhanced communication and information-sharing between Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Police Services and tenants about community issues / safety incidents and complaint feedback;
- enhanced commitment and follow through from Toronto Community Housing;
- increased relationship building between tenants and staff to enable them to work together to address issues of concern;

- staff training and accountability for enforcing the Standards; and
- increased tenant involvement and accountability, as the people who live in the community need to be equal partners in making the community safe.

Nature of the Community Standards

Tenants and staff offered a range of input into the nature of the Community Standards.

They indicated that the Community Standards should:

- **Be inclusive of the diversity of the tenant and staff population** – The standards should recognize the diversity within the Toronto Community Housing community and should accommodate ethno-racial and other cultural differences, mental health concerns, seniors and youth issues, and family composition.
- **Focus on acceptable behaviours** – The standards should not be negatively worded, but should focus on the positive types of behaviours.
- **Address both staff and tenant behaviours** – Both tenants and staff agreed that the standards should address the behaviours of both staff and tenants.
- **Provide remedies and consequences, not penalties** – Approaches should not be punitive. Instead, the focus should be on supporting tenants and staff to change behaviours. The standards should take into account a person's personal situation and any underlying issues, rather than impose penalties equally to everyone.
- **Be fair and consistent** – The standards should allow for a fair assessment of the issues and should be consistently applied to everyone in Toronto Community Housing communities.

Tenants and staff also suggested that the standards should be a contract between the landlord and tenant, and between employer and staff, and should be signed by both parties. They suggested that the document be reviewed with all new and existing tenants and staff. Once signed, a copy should be maintained on file and provided to the employee or staff.

There was also concern that the document needs to be accessible to everyone, including those with literacy issues, those whose first language is not English, as well as those with visual impairments. As such, it was suggested that the Community Standards take many forms, including a handbook, pamphlet, posters and DVD.

THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The Community Standards consist of five general standards which define the communities in which tenants want to live and staff want to work (see *Appendix 3*). They are prefaced by an introduction which outlines the purpose of the standards and the guiding principles, followed by definitions of unacceptable behaviours and parameters regarding who they apply to, responsibilities of various stakeholders, and a complaint process, which is itself prefaced by principles and considerations. The five standards are:

Community Standards

The way we live and work in Toronto Community Housing communities

We, the staff and tenants of Toronto Community Housing, value our communities and the enrichment of these communities by staff and tenants from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We recognize and value the diversity of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family and marital status, ethnic origin, place of origin, physical or mental disability in our communities. We also understand that this diversity challenges us to create and maintain Community Standards which balance the rights of all members of our communities

We, the staff and tenants of Toronto Community Housing, adopt the following standards for our communities and hold each other accountable for upholding these standards.

Standard 1: *We treat each person with respect and courtesy, and value the diversity within our communities.*

Standard 2: *We promote peaceful, healthy and safe communities.*

Standard 3: *We respect all property within Toronto Community Housing communities, including rental units, personal property, common spaces and business offices.*

Standard 4: *We are responsible for our actions and the actions of our children, family members, guests and pets.*

Standard 5: *We respect and uphold Toronto Community Housing policies, the Lease Agreement and all applicable laws.*

Response to Community Standards-Related Concerns

While many protocols for addressing undesirable behaviour already exist at Toronto Community Housing, a common complaint is that they are not implemented. Community Standards builds on this base, while providing ways to ensure that the existing protocols are followed and can be documented. The Community Standards protocol has integrated an initial 3-day turn-around period in which the tenant receives a response with an Easytrac record, and a following 15-day period at the end of which there is follow-up with the tenant. Responsibility for doing this is clearly identified, and the expectations are clearly laid out, so that both tenants and staff are aware of the parameters for response and accountability.

Implementation

The effective implementation of the Community Standards will require a fairly significant organizational change effort. Once these standards are communicated to tenants and staff, sufficient supports need to be in place to support positive behaviours as well as to investigate and address anti-social behaviours when they do occur. While there may be issues with the behaviours of individuals, there may also be a need for community development supports to address more systemic and widespread issues. Organizational supports will also be required, including appropriate reporting and changes to the EasyTrac system that will need to be developed to support the implementation of the standards.

The Community Standards will be a new articulation of the way tenants and staff wish to live and work in Toronto Community Housing communities. While the Tenant Handbook makes some attempt at articulating standards, these Community Standards will be new to Toronto Community Housing staff and tenants.

As noted, procedures already exist (e.g. *Human Rights*, *Tenant Complaint Process*, etc.) or are being developed (e.g. *Mental Health Framework*, *Eviction Prevention Policy* for non-arrears) to address complaints about a range of staff and tenant behaviours. Together, these procedures cover the full range of possible anti-social behaviours. As such, the Community Standards complaint process simply provides a framework around these procedures to ensure consistent tracking and communication back to the complainant. This approach eliminates the need to create and communicate new investigation procedures, and allows for more attention to be placed on ensuring that EasyTrac is able to adequately track and report on Community Standards complaints.

The implementation of the Community Standards will require a multi-pronged approach that will include the following:

- **Piloting the standards** within three communities (October to December, 2009)
- **Determining pilot outcomes and developing outcome measures** to review and evaluate progress
- **Continuing the Community Standards Advisory Committee** to oversee the introduction of the standards and the start of the pilots
- **Developing a communications strategy** and appropriate communications materials for the pilot communities and for the 2010 implementation of the community standards
- **Forming a Community Standards Committee** to receive reports on the resolution of complaints
- Working to ensure that EasyTrac is able to adequately **track and report on Community Standards complaints**

Piloting of the standards in three communities will enable staff to gain a better understanding of what is needed to successfully implement the standards throughout Toronto Community Housing communities, including:

- training and skills building opportunities for staff and tenants;
- specific actions, initiatives, networks and linkages throughout the organization and with community partners to support the successful implementation of the standards; and
- additional supports needed within the organization.

A report on the progress of the pilot projects and the implementation strategy will be forwarded to the Communities Committee in 2010.

The pilot projects will be evaluated and will identify successful practice, challenges and potential policy and resource implications for the organization. The success of the implementation process will be evaluated by measuring factors such as:

- The scope and effectiveness of communication of the standards to tenants and employees
- Stakeholder understanding of roles and responsibilities
- The delivery of training and orientation programs to relevant stakeholders including staff
- Tenant satisfaction with the complaint process
- The role of the Advisory committee

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The development of Toronto Community Housing's Community Standards involved an extensive consultation process with tenants, staff and community partners. In addition to building on existing work, input was also received from the following sources:

Working Group – A Working Group was convened to work with the consultant on the consultation process and the development of the Standards. This Working Group was comprised of staff from the Community Safety Unit, Community Health Unit, Planning, and Community Health.

Advisory Committee – An Advisory Committee was formed to provide input at each stage of the process. This committee included tenant and staff representation, and included representation from various Toronto Community Housing Divisions/Units such as Community Housing, Organizational Development, Legal, Community Health, Public Affairs, Training, Human Rights and Asset Management as well as union representation.

Document review – Relevant policies and practices were reviewed. This included a review of overlapping projects and strategies to ensure alignment of existing Toronto Community Housing policies and procedures.

Review of best practices – This review of best practices helped to identify similar activities in other jurisdictions. This information was summarized and provided to the Advisory Committee to inform the development of the Community Standards.

Key informant interviews – One-on-one interviews were conducted with a number of stakeholders, including: the Chief Operating Officer; Operational Directors; and representatives of various business units such as Legal and Community Safety.

Focus groups – Six focus groups were held with tenants and staff, including: seniors; youth; tenant leaders; Community Safety Unit; Community Health staff (including Health Promotion Officers, Youth Engagement Coordinators, Community Safety Promotion Officers); and site staff (including Tenant Services Coordinators, superintendents).

On-Line Consultation kit – A consultation kit was developed and posted on Toronto Community Housing's website to allow tenants and staff who were unable to attend the focus groups to complete a survey.

Open space sessions – Once information was collected through the focus groups and consultation kit, open space sessions were conducted to develop the Community Standards, develop the procedure for addressing anti-social behaviours, and determine expectations for staff and tenants in dealing with these behaviours.

Feedback sessions – Two further feedback sessions were held with tenants and staff to gather feedback and additional input into: (1) the Community Standards; and (2) the complaint process.

Consultation with community partners – Once the final draft of the Community Standards and the complaint process were developed, consultations were held with community partners to seek their input and feedback.

CONCLUSION:

The Community Standards are long awaited. The developmental process has raised expectations and provided tenants with many good examples of effective staff-tenant interaction. It is critical that resources be provided to ensure the effective implementation of the Standards, as a few early ‘successes’ will demonstrate that the Standards are not ‘just another policy’, but rather an effective tool for tenants and staff to shape the communities in which they live.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The implementation of the Standards will involve significant investment of staff time, and the development of user-friendly promotional material. Launching the standards, communication to staff and tenants and orientation will incur some costs, as will the subsequent implementation of the Standards.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Toronto Community Housing’s Legal department has participated in the development of the Standards. No legal implications have been identified.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

A detailed communication plan has been developed to support the implementation of the Community Standards.

Keiko Nakamura
A/Chief Executive Officer

- Attachment:**
- 1: Community Standards Consultation Kit
 - 2: Community Standards Brochure
 - 3: Community Standards

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Developing Community Standards Toronto Community Housing

CONSULTATION KIT

Toronto Community Housing is committed to supporting the growth of strong, healthy communities. To do this, we would like to develop Community Standards.

What are Community Standards?

Community Standards would apply to all TCHC communities and would identify:

- (1) What type of community we want to live in;
- (2) What behaviours are unacceptable in TCHC communities;
- (3) What each of us can do to make TCHC communities better;
- (4) What the consequences are for unacceptable behaviour.

This Kit is one way for you or your group to tell us what you think.

Where did this idea come from?

In developing the Community Management Plan, tenant and community members said that anti-social behaviours of tenants and others in the community make them feel unsafe and make TCHC communities less enjoyable places to live. These behaviours often leave tenants, particularly women and children, feeling unsafe and vulnerable.

Why do we need your input?

We need your help in improving the quality of life for tenants. We want to hear from you about how to make our communities a better place to live, where tenants feel safe and respected.

What will we do with the information?

We will review all the input provided by tenants, staff and our community partners. This input could be provided through the focus groups, online, or you could complete this kit yourself and send it back to us. This information will be consolidated to help us prepare the Community Standards that will apply to all TCHC communities.

In order for us to consider your thoughts and ideas, we need to hear back from you by March 23rd, 2009.

How to use the kit:

There are a number of questions that we would like you to respond to. Everyone can use this kit – tenants of all ages, tenant representatives, staff, groups, a couple, businesses, clubs and community organizations.

You can answer these questions in this Kit or use another sheet of paper. You can take your answers to your OU office or mail it to the address on the below.

You can also send your input to: community.standards@torontohousing.ca

You can also keep this Kit, or pass it on to someone you think might be interested.

What do we mean by “anti-social behaviour”?

Anti-social behaviour means different things to different people – in general, it is behaviour that disturbs your quality of life. It could mean noisy neighbours who disturb the lives of those around them, litter and graffiti, people threatening and intimidating others, or people using fireworks as weapons.

Anti-social behaviour makes us feel unsafe, unwelcome and vulnerable in our own community. It can also create an environment in which serious crime can happen.

What do we mean by “crime”?

Crime includes crimes against individuals, such as assault, drug use and sale, and gun play. It also includes property crime, such as vandalism and burglary.

What do we mean by “promoting community safety”?

When we talk about promoting community safety, we mean the things that can be done to make you feel better about and safer in your community. It is not just about addressing unacceptable behaviour, but is about encouraging acceptable behaviour.

We would like to hear your responses to these questions:

Unacceptable Behaviours in TCHC Communities

1. Which behaviours create the three most important community safety / crime prevention issues in your community?
2. What do you think causes these behaviours?

3. What are some of the things that can be done to stop these behaviours?

The role of Toronto Community Housing

4. What should **Toronto Community Housing** be doing to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in TCHC communities?
5. What should Toronto Community Housing be doing to promote community safety?

The role of TCHC staff

6. What should **TCHC staff** be doing to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in TCHC communities?
 - a. What should the day staff be doing?
 - b. What should the night staff be doing?
7. What should staff be doing to promote community safety?
 - a. What should the day staff be doing?
 - b. What should the night staff be doing?
8. When crime does occur, what can staff do to reduce the negative impact of crime on the community?

The role of tenants

9. What should **tenants** be doing to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour?
10. What should tenants be doing to promote community safety?
11. When crime does occur, what can tenants do to reduce the negative impact of crime on the community?

The role of the police and others

12. What is the role of police in TCHC communities?
13. What is the role of police in preventing and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in TCHC communities?
14. What is the role of the police in promoting community safety within TCHC communities?

15. Who else has a role? What should they be doing?

Developing the Community Standards

16. Once the community standards have been developed, what should the document look like?
17. What should happen if someone violates these standards?
18. What would make you feel empowered to hold others in TCHC communities to these standards?
19. What suggestions do you have for what we can do to make the Community Standards work within all TCHC communities?

Tell us about yourself

I am a TCHC tenant:

- Youth
- Senior
- Tenant representative
- Other

I am TCHC staff:

- Community Health (HPO, YEC, CSPO)
- Site staff (TSC, Superintendents, other)
- Community Safety Unit staff
- Other

- I am a community partner
- I am a business owner / operator

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Your contribution to this process is appreciated.

Other opportunities to participate in the development of the Community Standards will be communicated through your OU office.

Contact us:

By email: community.standards@torontohousing.ca

By phone: 416 981-4361

By mail:
Community Standards
TCHC,
931 Yonge Street, 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON
M4W 2H2

By fax: 416 981-4150

WHAT WE NEED TO FEEL EMPOWERED

- Commitment and follow through from Toronto Community Housing and staff
- Shared understanding of expectations
- Understanding of procedures
- Know that the standards can be enforced
- Clear protocols / reporting process
- Commitment of the organization
- Understand the relationship between themselves and other staff
- Inter-professional collaboration

ROLE OF POLICE

- Have a supportive role in making TCHC communities safer
- Need to be sensitive to how we engage police
- Police patrols are inconsistent across TCHC communities
- Relationship varies between police and different communities and buildings

Toronto Community Housing



NATURE OF COMMUNITY STANDARDS DOCUMENT

- Inclusive of the diversity of the tenant population
- Focus on acceptable behaviours
- Address both staff and tenant behaviours
- Provide remedies and clear consequences, not penalties
- Need to be fair, consistent

CONTENT OF THE DOCUMENT

- Detail on procedures, consequences
- How to document - What to do if... Who to call if...
- Provide tips and strategies on how to be a good neighbour
- Clearly set out steps from incident to response
- Contract between landlord and tenant



Toronto Community Housing Tenants and Staff of Toronto Community Housing Provide Feedback about Community Standards



Stakeholder Feedback Session

Join us for a final feedback session on August 19, 2009
9:00- 11:30
931 Yonge St, Conference Room

RSVP, please call (416)981-4361 or email Elvira.Vigo@torontohousing.ca

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY STANDARDS?

Community Standards are guidelines for acceptable conduct. Toronto Community Housing is working with staff and tenants to create community standards based on long-standing tenant concerns about the behaviour of other tenants in the community that have a negative impact on the community perception of safety and the livability of communities. Community standards will go beyond 'safety', providing tenants and staff with options that allow them to play an active role in building communities that they want to live and work in, creating new relationships and expectations between tenants, between tenants and staff, and between key stakeholders who visit Toronto Community Housing communities. Standards will embrace the diversity of tenants and individuals who live in, work and visit Toronto Community Housing communities.

WHAT TYPES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS DO TENANTS NOT WANT TO SEE?

- Opening doors for anyone
- Disrespectful attitudes
- Substance abuse and related illegal activity
- Sex trade and related illegal activity
- Spreading rumours / lies about others
- Lack of respect for seniors and people with disabilities, including those with mental health issues
- Intimidating behaviours
- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Loitering
- Littering
- Young children unsupervised
- Hoarding
- Domestic violence
- Barking dogs, unleashed dogs

WHICH ARE THE CAUSES OF THESE BEHAVIOURS?

- Lack of enforcement of RTA
- Parental neglect
- Lack of programs for children and youth
- Overwhelmed staff
- Lack of organizational supports and protocols
- Poverty / unemployment
- Apathy
- Lack of community supports for people with mental health issues
- Poor life skills

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

- Poor living conditions affects tenants psychologically
- Poor maintenance and landscaping create unsafe conditions
- Neglected communities become crime magnets



WHAT TENANTS NEED?

- Enforcement
- Protocols
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Staff accountability
- Staff training
- Increased staff presence
- Better maintenance of buildings
- Tenant involvement / accountability
- Increased supports for vulnerable tenants
- Better communication
- Better relationships

WHAT STAFF NEED?

- Clarify Toronto Community Housing / staff roles and responsibilities
- Increased accountability
- Protocols / Consistency
- Enforcement
- Better communication
- Better relationships
- Staff training
- More staff



TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Aug 31

Introduction

Toronto Community Housing is committed to ensuring safe and healthy communities. We all want to live and work in a friendly and safe community that is free from violence and fear. Each member of the community has both rights and responsibilities for maintaining a livable community and must be an active participant in maintaining the standards of the community.

As noted in the Community Management Plan (Communities – Good Places to Live) tenants have identified that anti-social behaviours of tenants, employees, and others in the community have a negative impact on their perception of safety and the livability of communities. These Community Standards were developed in order to address these behaviours and improve the livability of Toronto Community Housing communities.

These Community Standards were created through extensive consultation with tenants and employees to be clear about how we expect to live and work together in Toronto Community Housing communities. This document describes our Community Standards, responsibilities for maintaining these standards, and the various options that are available to address violations of these standards.

The Community Standards make it possible for a diverse community to live, work and interact together in ways that promote a healthy community. They are guidelines by which tenants, employees, contract property managers, community partners and contractors agree to live and work in Toronto Community Housing communities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Standards is to:

- Motivate positive behaviour, enhance respect for individual differences and emphasize a commitment to a healthy community;
- Define unacceptable behaviours;
- Identify options for addressing unacceptable behaviours that reflect the severity and persistence of these behaviours and the impact on others; and
- Assist employees, tenants, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing in taking ownership of building healthier communities by responding appropriately to unacceptable behaviours.

Guiding Principles

The vision for how we live and work in Toronto Community Housing communities is based on the following Guiding Principles:

- 1. Right to a safe and healthy community**
Tenants, employees, community partners, and those providing services of behalf of Toronto Community Housing (including contract property managers and contractors), have the right to live and work in a healthy and respectful environment, free from harassment, intimidation, threats and violence.
- 2. Respect for diversity**
We recognize the different values and beliefs that are inherent in a diverse community and that what one person thinks is appropriate and acceptable, may be offensive to another. To support livable communities that are made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds, we must respect the rights of all groups to live out their beliefs, while also ensuring the protection of all groups and individuals from intolerance.
- 3. Neighbourhood engagement**
Increased interaction between and among employees and tenants will make our communities friendlier and safer places to live and work. The safest buildings are where people know their neighbours, participate in social activities and work together for the good of their community.
- 4. Participatory decision-making**
Toronto Community Housing creates opportunities and encourages participation in decisions that affect our communities. The participation of employees, tenants and community partners is essential to ensure sustainable implementation of these standards throughout Toronto Community Housing communities.
- 5. Shared responsibility**
Employees, tenants, and community partners share the responsibility for the health and safety of Toronto Community Housing communities. Employees, tenants, and community partners all have a role in helping change attitudes, behaviours and practices that contribute to anti-social or criminal behaviour in Toronto Community Housing communities.
- 6. Personal accountability**
Employees, tenants, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing who violate the Community Standards will be held accountable for their actions. Personal accountability includes identifying, seeking and accepting the support needed to meet these standards. There is a shared responsibility amongst employees, tenants and community partners to ensure these supports are available.

7. A balanced approach

The implementation of the Community Standards will balance efforts to prevent and reduce unacceptable behaviour and promote community health. This will occur by establishing procedures, protocols and mechanisms at the individual, group and community level for early identification of risk, and implementation of positive prevention and engagement practices.

8. An integrated approach

Reducing anti-social and criminal behaviours requires recognizing factors contributing to these behaviours. Community problems are multi-dimensional. For example they can be related to social, employment, service delivery, education, physical and mental health, or justice issues. Therefore, efforts will be made to coordinate within Toronto Community Housing, as well as with multiple and relevant stakeholders to prevent and reduce unacceptable behaviour and promote community health.

9. Clear and enforceable consequences

Consequences for violating the Community Standards must be made clear to employees, tenants, community partners and stakeholders. These standards must also be enforceable, and as such, must be clearly linked to the *Lease Agreement*, the *Residential Tenancies Act*, staffing policies, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and any other relevant laws.

10. Measurable progress over time

These standards will make changes that will have a positive and measurable impact on our communities. To ensure the effectiveness of these standards, sustained, long-term commitment by Toronto Community Housing, employees, tenants, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing is needed to support the implementation of these standards, monitor and measure change, share positive practices, and periodically review and revise these standards.

Community Standards

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We adopt the following standards for our communities and hold each other accountable for upholding these standards.

Standard 1: We treat each person with respect and courtesy, and value the diversity within our communities.

Standard 2: We promote peaceful, healthy and safe communities.

Standard 3: We respect all property within Toronto Community Housing communities, including rental units, personal property, common spaces and business offices.

Standard 4: We are responsible for our actions and the actions of our children, family members, guests and pets.

Standard 5: We respect and uphold Toronto Community Housing policies, the *Lease Agreement* and all applicable laws.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Unacceptable behaviours are those that violate these Community Standards and include:

- Behaviours that are a **nuisance**, which unreasonably disrupt the rights of residents to enjoy their homes, employees, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing to work in a respectful work environment, or which affect the cleanliness of the property. Examples of these behaviours include littering, excessive noise, and swearing;
- Behaviours that may be considered a **significant disturbance** to a tenant, employee, community partner, those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing or to the Toronto Community Housing community. Examples of these behaviours include graffiti and threatening behaviours; and/or
- Behaviours that **endanger** the safety, health or well-being of tenants, employees, community partners, those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing and/or the Toronto Community Housing community, including those which are illegal. Examples of these behaviours include operating illegal businesses, vandalism, domestic violence and gang related activity.

Consequences for violating these Community Standards will reflect the severity and persistence of these behaviours and the impact on others and to the larger Toronto Community Housing community.

Who do these standards apply to?

The Community Standards apply to all Toronto Community Housing employees, including any individual who is providing service on behalf of Toronto Community Housing, such as contract property managers, contractors, students and volunteers.

These standards apply to all tenants of Toronto Community Housing communities, including those listed on the *Lease Agreement* as well as visitors or guests of the leaseholder.

These standards also apply to our community partners and stakeholders, who provide services to tenants on Toronto Community Housing property.

Responsibilities

Toronto Community Housing tenants, employees, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing all have a role in creating and maintaining healthy communities.

Toronto Community Housing

Toronto Community Housing is responsible for:

- Ensuring its buildings are clean and in a good state of repair;
- Promoting a culture in Toronto Community Housing communities that welcomes diversity, practices inclusion, fosters safety, builds bridges, models accountability and celebrates community in all forms;
- Promoting a positive image of Toronto Community Housing communities;
- Informing employees, tenants, community partners and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing about these standards;
- Creating opportunities and encouraging neighbours to get to know each other;
- Implementing a community-based management approach that engages tenants in decisions that affect them, their homes and their neighbourhoods;
- Documenting and analyzing statistics on occurrences of anti-social and criminal behaviour in Toronto Community Housing communities in order to understand, measure and develop appropriate strategies to address these issues;
- Ensuring that these standards are reviewed with and understood by employees, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing during orientation to their roles;
- Ensuring these Community Standards are reviewed with and understood by all new tenants at the time of the lease signing and are communicated to existing tenants;
- Supporting and assisting all employees by providing the management, supervision, training and information they need to implement and uphold these standards;
- Engaging community partners to ensure the appropriate resources are available to tenants and employees to ensure these standards are upheld;
- Enforcing fair and progressive consequences where there is a violation of these standards;
- Responding in a timely manner to complaints; and
- Ensuring there are no reprisals to tenants and employees for making a complaint.

Employees

Toronto Community Housing employees, along with those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing such as contract property managers and contractors, are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Community Standards;
- Where possible, if the situation warrants and if their safety is not compromised, respectfully communicating with the person (including co-workers, tenants, contractors, etc.) who is violating the Community Standards and trying to resolve the situation informally;
- Reporting violations of these standards to an appropriate employee, the Community Safety Unit and/or police if the situation warrants;
- Fulfilling their duties and respecting the rights of tenants to live in a clean and healthy environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence;
- Respecting the rights of all employees, community partners and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing to work in a respectful, clean, environment, that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence; and
- Supporting and encouraging tenants to participate in their community.

In order to thoroughly investigate a complaint, complainants are encouraged to identify themselves when making a complaint. Where the personal safety of the complainant may be compromised, their identity will not be shared with the respondent(s). In the case of Human Rights complaints, the complainant must identify themselves

Employees are also responsible for adhering to the following:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy
- Ontario *Human Rights Code*

Tenants

Each tenant has the responsibility for:

- Adhering to the Community Standards;
- Their own behaviour as well as that of their family members, children, guests and pets;
- Where possible, if the situation warrants and if their safety is not compromised, respectfully communicating with the person who is violating the Community Standards and trying to resolve the situation informally;
- Reporting violations of these standards to an appropriate employee, the Community Safety Unit and/or police if the situation warrants;
- Respecting the rights of other tenants to live in a clean and healthy environment, that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence;
- Respecting the rights of employees, community partners and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing to work in a clean and healthy environment, that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence; and
- Positively contributing in their own way to help build a healthier community, e.g. by participating in community meetings and social activities.

In order to thoroughly investigate a complaint, complainants are encouraged to identify themselves when making a complaint. Where the personal safety of the complainant may be compromised, their identity will not be shared with the respondent(s). In the case of Human Rights complaints, the complainant must identify themselves.

Tenants are also responsible for adhering to the following:

- Lease Agreement
- Tenant Handbook
- Human Rights, Harassment and Fair Access Policy

Community partners

Community partners and third parties who provide services to tenants on Toronto Community Housing property are responsible for:

- Reading, understanding and informing their employees of the Community Standards;
- Ensuring that the behaviour of their employees is consistent with the Community Standards;

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- Reporting violations of these standards to their immediate supervisor, appropriate Toronto Community Housing employees, the Community Safety Unit and/or police if the situation warrants;
- Respecting the rights of tenants to live in a clean and healthy environment, that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence;
- Respecting the rights of tenants and Toronto Community Housing employees, community partners, and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing to live and work in a clean and healthy environment, that is free from harassment, intimidation, fear and violence; and
- Positively contributing in their own way to help build a healthier community.

Complaint Procedure

Purpose

Toronto Community Housing recognizes that conflict among people who live and work together is normal. As such, Toronto Community Housing wants to help communities and individuals to:

- Deal with conflict in a positive way;
- Find informal ways to resolve conflict; and
- When informal methods haven't worked, make use of formal methods to resolve conflict that are fair and open.

The purpose of these complaint procedures is to ensure that complaints about behaviours that are not consistent with the Community Standards are dealt with in a consistent, transparent, fair and timely manner. The procedures will ensure that complaints are heard, the facts of complaints are established, and appropriate action is taken.

These procedures will also ensure that appropriate linkages are made to other Toronto Community Housing policies, including *Human Rights and Fair Access Policy*, *Code of Conduct*, etc., as well as the *Lease Agreement*.

Toronto Community Housing has a Tenant Complaint Process in place. These set of procedures are not to override the current process, but to complement it.

Principles of the Complaints Process

The process for dealing with unacceptable behaviours will be consistent with the following principles:

1. **Promoting positive behaviours**

The ultimate goal is to change negative behaviours and attitudes, promote positive behaviours, and support positive relations among and between tenants, employees, community partners and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing. The goal is to maintain individual tenancies and have healthy workplaces. As such, eviction and appropriate discipline will be used as a last resort to resolve problems.

Unacceptable behaviours will be dealt with in a way to encourage appropriate behaviours and to foster respect for the rights of others. Throughout the complaint process, Toronto Community Housing will attempt to work with the person to understand the reasons for the unacceptable behaviour, connect the person to appropriate supports and resources, help the person to understand how the

behaviour impacts others and the community as a whole, and help the person understand how the behaviour violates the Community Standards, other Toronto Community Housing policies, the *Lease Agreement*, and/or any relevant laws.

2. Tenant and employee involvement

The process will recognize tenants, employees, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing as responsible and active participants in the process of resolving complaints of unacceptable behaviours.

3. Consistency with existing policies, procedures and laws

These procedures will be consistent with and respect human rights, privacy and any other related legislation, relevant Toronto Community Housing policies and procedures, the *Lease Agreement*, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

4. Fair process

Any fact-finding or investigation of a complaint will be, and will appear to be, impartial and objective. Decisions made about consequences will be based on reliable documented facts.

5. Transparent and timely process

Both the complainant and the respondent will be supported in understanding the process for resolving complaints and are entitled to information on the status of the complaint. The respondent is entitled to know the details of the complaint and be given the opportunity to respond.

While transparency is desired, when disclosing any information about a complaint, the privacy and safety of the complainant and respondent will be considered and respected. Personal information will not be disclosed without the consent of the complainant and/or respondent.

Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to the timely resolution of the complaint.

6. Appropriate use of informal and formal processes

Toronto Community Housing recognizes that conflict among people who live and work together is normal. Toronto Community Housing will help communities and individuals to find informal ways to resolve conflict. When informal ways haven't worked, use of formal ways to resolve conflict that are fair and open will be utilized.

7. Resolution at the local level

Staff at the local level should have the opportunity to address a complaint about someone within their community.

Operating Unit Managers and Community Health Managers are ultimately accountable for their community and as such, will have the opportunity to resolve or address complaints within their community.

The Community Standards complaint process is not intended to replace the normal interactions that will occur between tenants, employees, community partners and those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing. If the situation warrants and their safety is not compromised, individuals are encouraged to engage in respectful discussions with the person who is violating the Community Standards to try to resolve the situation informally. Where this does not or cannot occur, these procedures should be used to resolve the situation.

8. **Monitoring**

Complaints and complaint resolution will be tracked and reported on, consistent with other performance measures for the organization.

Available actions for resolving complaints

Employees and tenants have a range of actions that are available to them to resolve complaints under the Community Standards. How an issue is dealt with will be consistent with the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour.

Where the issue can be easily resolved, with minimal intervention, the following **informal** methods can be used to address unacceptable behaviour:

- Talking over a problem between two parties
- Role modeling ways of dealing with conflict
- Verbal warnings
- Reminding people of consequences that may happen if problems continue
- Providing information or explanations about the rights and responsibilities of tenants and employees
- Making rules or expectations clear
- Issuing notices to all building tenants and employees
- Helping tenants and/or employees to understand how mental health issues may play a role in the conflict

The following **formal** methods can be used when informal methods have not worked, or a matter is too serious to use an informal approach:

- Written warnings
- Mediation by an employee or an outside agency
- Formal meetings with the individual to explain the rights and responsibilities of tenants, employees, community partners and those who provide services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing

- Building meetings to give tenants and employees an opportunity to discuss issues
- Making formal discrimination or harassment complaints
- Conducting fact finding and investigations
- Contacting the police and/or Community Safety Unit
- Beginning eviction proceedings under the *Residential Tenancies Act*

Regardless of the methods used, all complaints must be entered into EasyTrac to allow for tracking and monitoring of complaints and issues across Toronto Community Housing communities.

Considerations when determining appropriate actions to resolve complaints

- **Malicious complaints.** Where complaints are deemed to be solely motivated by malice, discriminatory attitudes, or with the intent to harass, no action will be taken against the person complained about. When a complaint has been found to be malicious, the complainant will be notified in writing and it will be noted in the complaint tracking system.
- **Reprisals.** No one who makes a legitimate complaint will receive any form of reprisal. Reprisals will be considered a violation of the Community Standards.
- **Community development.** Some situations may require some community development follow up. When such a situation is identified, it will be reported to the appropriate employee for action.
- **Outside Toronto Community Housing authority.** If the complaint deals with behaviour that Toronto Community Housing has no authority to deal with, the complainant will be referred to the appropriate organization.
- **Available resources.** Tenants and employees will be advised of resources within the community that may be able to assist them. These services may include legal clinics, transitional housing support workers, mediation services, community health centres, etc.
- **Duty to report to the Children's Aid Society.** If a tenant, employee, community partner or those providing services on behalf of Toronto Community Housing is concerned about the physical and/or emotional safety of a child, they have a duty to report their concerns to one of the four Children's Aid Societies operating in Toronto.
- **Duty to accommodate.** Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, Toronto Community Housing has a duty to accommodate tenants and employees based on any ground in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* in a manner that would most

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respect the dignity of the person, unless accommodation would cause undue hardship to Toronto Community Housing.

Accountability

A Community Standards Committee will be formed to:

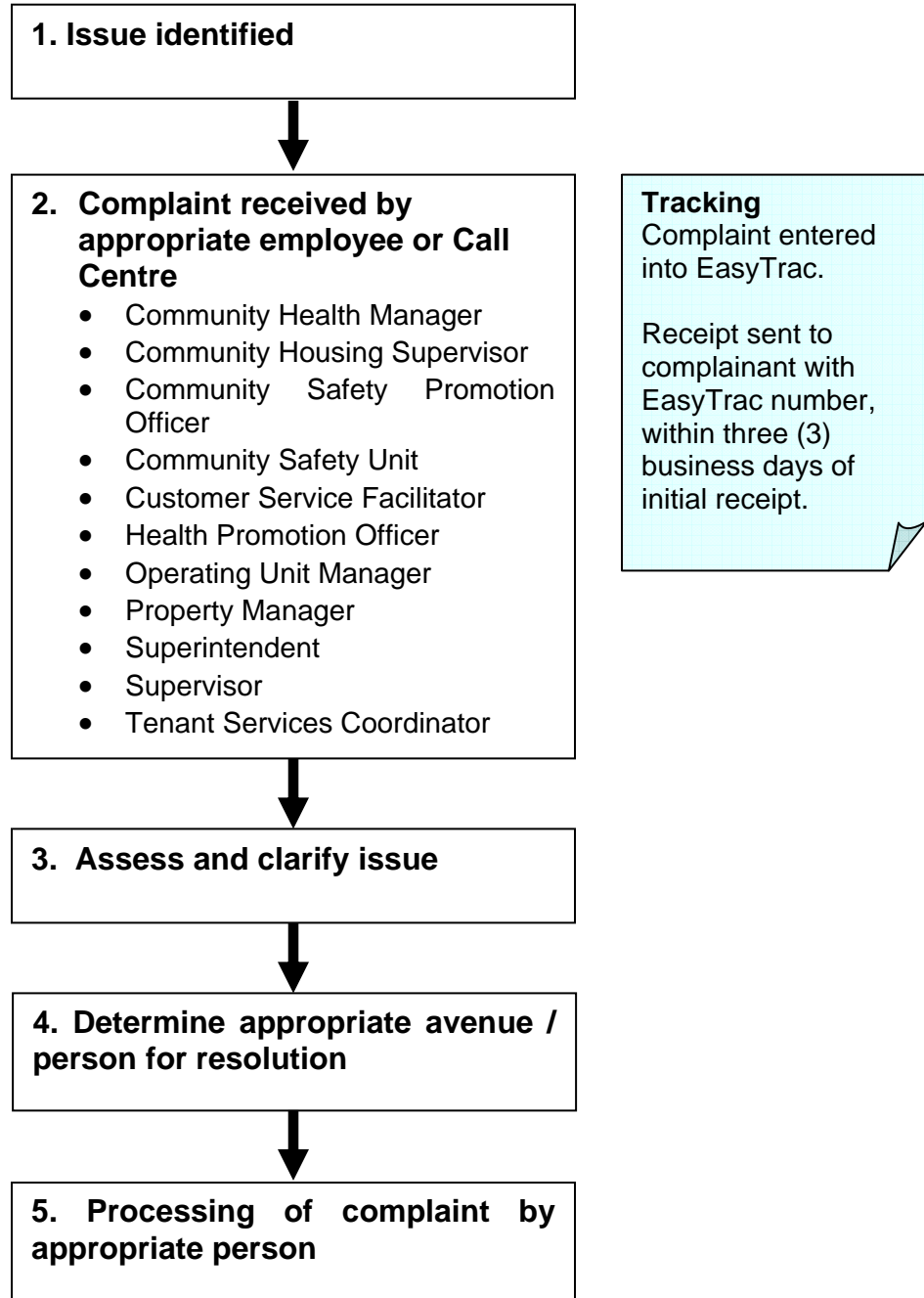
- monitor the implementation of the Community Standards;
- review complaint statistics to assess the effectiveness of these complaint procedures; and
- recommend changes to the Community Standards and the complaint process.

The Committee will be a joint employee-tenant committee, and will include three employee representatives and three tenants. It will be chaired by an external community partner.

The Complaint Process

The process for accepting and handling complaints is outlined in the chart which follows.

Community Standards Complaint Process



[continued on next page]

