

Toronto Community Housing



2022 Annual Unit Inspections Report

Item 10D

March 28, 2023

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2023-19

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: February 28, 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with information regarding Toronto Community Housing Corporation’s (“TCHC”) Annual Unit Inspection (“AUI”) process and results for 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

Annual unit inspections are required by law. They are considered essential work to prevent property damage or the development of hazardous and unhealthy unit conditions. It is a time for TCHC to check for capital repair needs and compliance with municipal licensing and standards. These inspections are an important part of our commitment to the health and safety of our tenants.

The AUI Inspection process affords TCHC its most substantial opportunity to assess potential vulnerability. Effective management of the process assists

in supporting successful tenancies and identifying at-risk tenancies, which may require integrated team interventions.

2022 AUI PROCESS

The AUI inspection process commenced in July 2022 and concluded on January 15, 2023, during which time 41,650 AUIs were completed.

2022 was the first year that the AUI process was fully integrated with the HoMES system and aligned with the HoMES Track 2b launch. AUI results were collected in real-time utilizing available technologies such as tablets and cellphones rather than manual entry, as was used in previous years. This eliminated the delay in transcribing results from paper form to application software, reducing the opportunity for errors and ensuring issues of an urgent nature were identified in real-time.

Each item on the inspection form has a built-in automated follow-up process where issues related to general maintenance and unit condition violations can be flagged promptly. The software automatically generates a series of work orders for follow-up and allows the inspecting staff member to document the conditions with photography options. As such, the workload related to inspections and follow-up processes is distributed throughout the year, with service level standards associated with follow-up interventions.

These changes resulted in better quality inspections and, where issues are identified, allowed for more focused interventions and monitoring by integrated teams.

Prior to its launch, TCHC developed a User Guide for front line staff to provide guidance and clarity on how to conduct the 2022 AUIs, and for staff to be able to complete unit inspections uniformly and apply the criteria of each inspection category in a consistent manner. Additionally, frontline (Local 416 and Local 79) staff also received training on how to utilize the technology and systems now available.

During the 2020 and 2021 AUI process, TCHC limited tenant disruptions and focused on inspection items that are legislated requirements related to fire and life safety. In Q2 2022, TCHC ceased emergency COVID-19 measures and the 2022 AUI inspection template was revised to align with

the more detailed pre-pandemic AUI template. For 2022, TCHC had two AUI inspection templates; one for apartment units and one for townhomes. At the launch of the AUI process, a tenant communications campaign was launched and included posters, flyers and an FAQ to inform tenants of changes to the inspection process and options for maintaining social distancing during the inspection.

2022 AUI RESULTS

Table 1 data is reflective of AUI completion results as of February 2023. TCHC has undertaken a comprehensive review of the overall AUI completion rates and identified that these include administrative errors and reduced access to unit compliance. Staff continue to engage with households to complete AUIs, and address and resolve administrative errors. As a result of diligent and ongoing work, completion rates continue to improve.

With the implementation of HoMES and recognition of the return to the detailed pre-pandemic AUI template, TCHC took the opportunity to develop and deliver comprehensive in-class training. Alongside the in-person training, staff were provided with a detailed User Guide, which provided guidance and clarity on how to identify and rate potential areas of concern within a unit. This contributed to an increased awareness and is reflected in the AUI results, particularly in the unit condition and balcony clutter categories. Regional staff are focused on engaging with households where there were unit condition concerns and balcony clutter in efforts to resolve these identified issues.

Table 1: 2022 AUI Results

	<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>		<u>Central</u>	
	# of Units	% of Units	# of Units	% of Units	# of Units	% of Units
Annual Unit Inspection Completion Rate						
Total # of Units for Inspection	14,812		13,833		14,363	
Inspections Completed	14,284	96.4%	13,533	98%	13,833	96.3%
Inspections Not Completed	528	3.6%	300	2.2%	530	3.7%
Life Safety Inspection Points						
Smoke Alarms Repaired/Replaced	124	0.9%	216	1.6%	78	0.6%
Window Locks and Screen Repaired	319	2.2%	310	2.3%	250	1.8%
Visible Mould, Mildew "Major" and "Minor"	205	1.4%	377	2.8%	16	0.1%
Fire Safety Inspection Points						
Units with any Fire Safety Issue Identified	177	1.2%	216	1.6%	186	1.3%
Units Condition Inspection Points						
Units with Clutter Level 7-9	106	0.7%	121	0.9%	165	1.2%
Units with Housekeeping Issues	336	2.4%	373	2.8%	403	2.9%
Units with Major Level of Balcony Clutter	208	1.5%	132	1%	177	1.3%
Water Penetration Inspection Points						
Units Flagged for Water Penetration (Foundation, Roofing, Cladding, Window/ Seal)	167	1.2%	282	7.4%	337	2.4%

Table 2: 2022 vs. 2021 Totals and Percentage of Change in 2022

	2022 AUI		2021 AUI		
	# of TCHC Units	% of TCHC Units	# of TCHC Units	% of TCHC Units	% change in 2022 AUI TCHC
Annual Unit Inspection Completion Rate					
Total # of Units for Inspection	43,008		43,587		
Inspections Completed	41,650	96.8%	42,975	99%	-2.2%
Inspections Not Completed	1,358	3.2%	612	1.4%	+129%
Fire Safety Inspection Points					
Units with any Fire Safety Issue Identified	579	1.4%	583	1.4%	0%
Units Condition Inspection Points					
Units with Clutter Level 7-9	392	0.9%	442	1%	-10%
Units with Housekeeping Issues	1,112	2.7%	1,126	2.6%	+3.8%
Units with Major Level of Balcony Clutter	517	1.2%	378	0.9%	+33.3%
Water Penetration Inspection Points					
Units Flagged for Water Penetration (Foundation, Roofing, Cladding, Window/ Seal)	786	1.9%	2,615	6.1%	-69%

UNIT CONDITION & EXCESSIVE CLUTTER

“Hoarding” is defined as an excessive accumulation of personal and acquired belonging/items, which are being stored within a dwelling in such quantities as to make the areas unsafe and unusable for their intended purpose. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders identifies hoarding as a separate and distinct mental health disorder.

Although staff often identify conditions consistent with the description noted above, they cannot diagnose or treat the root medical disorders. However, staff are given tools to identify units with excessive clutter to ensure that unsafe conditions are identified, further damage or deterioration is mitigated, and social supports are offered to maintain successful tenancies where possible.

Staff were provided with identification tools, including the clutter image rating tool widely used throughout the health and social service sector. Training was delivered to reinforce both the need to identify clutter and calibrate how to evaluate units

2022 UNIT CONDITION PRIORITY RESULTS

The clutter image rating tool provides a 1–9 rating; units receiving a rating of 6 are considered “at risk,” and units that receive a score of 7 or higher are deemed to be a priority for follow-up. The number of units identified with a clutter rating of 7–9 is similar to 2021 and held steady at 0.9%.

Unit Condition	Total TCHC Units	Percentage of Total TCHC Units
Excessive Clutter (7-9)	392	0.9%

Units identified with a clutter rating of 7–9 are automatically flagged for follow-up through the HoMES system.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

The Operations Division uses an integrated approach to provide follow-up that addresses the range of services required to remediate unit condition or unit clutter issues.

- Regular in-home visits with tenants;
- Interdisciplinary staff teams coordinating service connections;
- Engaging external partners to access funding and resources;
- Pest control treatments where applicable; and

- Referrals to the Complex Tenancy team.

The goal of the program is to keep tenants housed in a clean and safe unit. Staff have found through experience that intervening early and often enables better overall outcomes for the tenant. Staff conduct follow-up inspections to ensure that the tenant maintains the unit at an acceptable standard. This allows staff to initiate early interventions before clutter levels reach unsafe conditions.

EXTERNAL PARTNER SUPPORT

A critical feature of successful excessive clutter management is the support of sector partners and resources. Operations staff often encounter tenants who may be experiencing vulnerability when they intervene on excessive clutter cases. Successful resolutions of excessive clutter and unit condition cases require regular coordination and collaboration with external resources to establish a sustainable outcome.

TCHC actively collaborates with many external resources. Some of our partners include:

- SPIDER Program;
- Extreme Clean Programs;
- Municipal Licensing and Standards;
- Toronto Fire Services;
- Toronto Public Health;
- Toronto Hoarding Support Network; and
- Broader health and social services networks.

The Operations Division is actively engaged in establishing new and innovative partnerships advocacy for system improvements and system reform, which will reduce instances of excessive clutter and promote successful tenancies.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The effective follow-up and management of excessive clutter mitigates the risks related to life safety, fire safety and compliance with legislated building standards. Failure to adequately manage these risks could result in fines from regulators and, in worst-case scenarios, injury or death of a tenant or staff member. Timely and appropriate resources are required to maintain safe unit conditions and support successful tenancies. Delayed follow-up on deficiencies or failed service levels can impact tenants in

neighbouring units, overall building conditions and inflate costs to remediate and maintain unit conditions at acceptable levels.

TCHC has a legal obligation to enter every unit on an annual basis to ensure that fire and life safety equipment is in good working order. Failing to follow-up and gain access to units is a risk and liability for TCHC, thus TCHC must, and does, prioritize taking action where unit access is not granted to mitigate risk.

SIGNATURE:

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