



## Tenant Complaints Update

Item 6E

November 18, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report:** TSC:2021-73

**To:** Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

**From:** Chief Operating Officer

**Date:** October 31, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

To provide the TSC with an update on complaints data and program enhancement to the Solutions team, the centralized department that manages escalated tenant complaints.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

### **BACKGROUND:**

Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) is committed to providing a positive experience for our tenants. TCHC has adopted a single-stage escalation model for tenant complaints, which is supported by the Solutions team.

### **PROGRAM UPDATES:**

The following provides an update on program enhancements that the Solutions team continues to implement to improve service delivery:

1. **Standardizing Practices:** The Solutions Team continues to lead the refresh of the Tenant Complaints policy. The policy will outline the

organization's principles and approach to the management of complaints to resolution.

As part of this work, the Solutions team is building on the feedback provided through the tenant engagement and consultation sessions held earlier in the year. In total, 55 tenants participated and provided key feedback on improvement opportunities in the areas of transparency, accountability, communication, and confidentiality. As well, the Solutions Team is completing the final round of reviews of the policy, including ensuring that the policy is reviewed from an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion ("EDI") and Confronting Anti-Black Racism ("CABR") perspective, and that corresponding feedback is integrated into the policy. The updated TCHC Complaints policy will be brought to the TSC in Q1 2022.

2. **Improving Internal Processes:** The Solutions team is completing an internal review of processes related to complaints documentation and communication to ensure consistency of approach in service provided. It includes the following:
- The response that is provided to tenants upon submission of complaints has been updated to include details of the complaint resolution process for increased awareness and transparency;
  - Internal job aide documents are being created and implemented to support new Complaint Resolution Specialists; it outlines key support staff and key considerations when working to resolve tenant concerns; and
  - Final resolutions will be communicated in writing, specifically on complex files; this is in alignment with the recommendation from Ombudsman Toronto.

## **COMPLAINTS DATA & TRENDS**

In September 2021, Solutions received 109 complaints, which represents a year-over-year decrease of 117 complaints. Of these complaints, the top complaints categories were: 38% (41) Building Service, 17% (18) Anti-Social Behaviour, and 9% (10) Account Management complaints

**Table 1: Total & Top 3 Complaints, September 2020 & 2021**

	<b>Sept 2021</b>	<b>Sept 2020</b>	<b>YOY Change</b>	<b>2021 YTD</b>
<b>Total Complaints</b>				
Total	109	226	- 117	1,202
<b>Top 3 Complaints</b>				
Building Service	41	67	- 26	323
Anti-Social Behaviour	18	48	- 30	306
Account Management	10	18	- 8	104

**LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS**

TCHC continues to use tenant complaints and staff feedback to support a learning and continuous improvement culture to improve service delivery. As a service-oriented organization, TCHC views complaints as valuable feedback ‘gifts.’ It represents key opportunities to uncover challenges and take the appropriate actions to strengthen service delivery to our tenants and communities.

**1. Consistently Providing a Reference Number for Service Requests**

As TCHC tenants call into the Client Care Centre (“CCC”) to request maintenance or tenancy management services, they are to be provided an EasyTrac (“ET”) reference number. However, complaints were received that this practice was inconsistent, which resulted in tenants having difficulty following-up on their service request as they were unable to reference their ET reference number. As a result, the CCC leadership team documented this requirement for CCC agents when handling tenant inquiries and requests; it focused on ensuring consistency in providing an ET reference number, as part of their closing statement on tenant calls. In addition, CCC is working with the Information Technology (“IT”) team to add a field in ET, which would require staff to document and confirm that a reference number was provided to the tenant.

## **2. Ensuring Timely & Consistent Vendor After-Hours Services**

As vendors are called into TCHC buildings after-hours to provide after-hours maintenance services, they often require access to specific areas including electrical closets, garbage enclosures, mechanical rooms, and other areas. In order to gain access, TCHC sites are equipped with vendor key boxes. However, complaints were received that vendors were not always returning the key into the vendor key boxes after the service was completed; this would mean that subsequent vendors would have no means to enter the building, which delayed services for TCHC tenants. CCC collaborated with the Vendor Management team to develop a new procedure to increase accountability on vendors to return keys to the vendor box. This involved outlining a process to vendors for accessing and returning keys and training for CCC staff to enforce the procedure with vendors. The enhanced oversight on the vendor key boxes will be implemented in November 2021.

## **3. Standardizing Emergency Incident Response and Tenant Supports**

As emergency incidents occurred that resulted in tenant displacement, TCHC would often engage and provide supports to the impacted tenants and households. However, complaints were received from tenants that there have been instances following a fire or flood incident where TCHC did not engage with them or provide supports. After further review, it was determined that staff responding to emergencies after-hours often did not possess a list of tenants in a readily accessible form. As a result, Regional Operations, Fire Life Safety & Emergency Management, CCC partnered with IT to develop a standardized document and list so that staff would be able to readily access list of tenants impacted by an emergency. The standardized document and list included additional fields to allow staff to document the provision of supports to tenants: door knocks, laundry cards, grocery cards, cleaning, family supports, and commercial lodging. As part of the implementation, procedures were established and communicated to all Operations and CCC staff.

## **4. Improving Building Lighting and Security**

The East Regional and Solutions team received complaints from tenants about the lack of lighting and cameras around the exterior of their buildings. In response, the East Regional team worked with tenants and tenant leaders

to address their concerns and gathered recommendations on where they felt proper lighting and cameras should be installed throughout the community. In doing so, a community safety walk was organized and conducted at two sites, 3485 and 3479 St. Clair, during the evening hours to determine gaps in lighting coverage and where improvements could be made. The community safety walk was attended by East Region community safety advisor, community services coordinator of engagement, tenants, and tenant leaders. As a result, the group was able to identify gaps in lighting coverage and a subsequent request was provided to Facilities Management to fix broken lights and install brighter lights. In addition, the CSA is working with the East Region to submit a request for additional cameras in selected buildings.

**SIGNATURE:**

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