



TCHC Response to OCHE Bi-Annual Update

Item 8C

December 8, 2022

Board of Directors

Report: TCHC:2022-81

To: Board of Directors (the "Board")

From: Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")

Date: December 1, 2022

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an overview of the actions taken at Toronto Community Housing ("TCHC") to maintain tenancy through the management of arrears and through recommendations from the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity ("OCHE") Bi-Annual Update for January 1, 2022-June 30, 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

TSC:

This report was received by the TSC on December 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2014, the OCHE was established with the primary mandate of supporting the prevention of evictions through enhanced interactions with seniors and vulnerable tenants who face loss of subsidy or rental arrears. In parallel, TCHC implemented a revised arrears collection process ("ACP") that emphasized early intervention, required increased personal contact with tenants in arrears, and focused staff efforts on signing repayment agreements with tenants to manage or resolve their arrears. TCHC staff work

with tenants to help them meet the responsibilities of their tenancies and, where feasible, leverage the resources and support of the OCHE to work towards positive outcomes.

In doing so, OCHE reviews each tenant file, identifies process gaps and provides applicable systemic recommendations. With over seven years since the development of the OCHE, many of the key systemic recommendations have played a vital role in delivering tenants support to prevent evictions and maintain tenancies.

In 2019, the restructuring efforts in the Operations division led to the creation of regional operations teams and tenant service hubs; this provided the opportunity to revise the ACP based on previous observations and systemic recommendations from the OCHE.

RESPONSE TO OCHE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Administration Delays and Inefficient Use of Resources

TCHC's Operations and Finance divisions are working together to resolve process issues impacting the Arrears Collection Process. This includes developing and providing clear communications and standard operating procedures ("SOP") to frontline staff. TCHC Operations is also incorporating Kaizen principles and recommendations into the Arrears Collections Process. The aim is to enhance process efficiency and compliance to support arrears improvements.

To improve internal file reviews, Operations is currently partnering with Learning and Organizational Development ("L&OD") to develop training modules to empower frontline staff to better identify fraudulent file submissions and minimize administrative errors. Initial training sessions will be provided to Tenancy Management staff in Q4 2022 and will set the framework for ongoing module training throughout 2023

2. Non-Compliance with Policies and Procedures

Enhancing oversight and monitoring by the Arrears Collection Clerks ("ARC") will allow continuous monitoring and evaluation of the new ACP and identify further capacity-building needs through training and oversight. The ARC provides oversight of the referral and return of files to OCHE for all regions, which includes an inventory of recommendations they have provided. Quarterly, management will review these recommendations to identify

training needs and/or to inform future ACP process reviews. Training provided by L&OD will also minimize administrative delays, ensure greater compliance with the ACP, and set staff up with better documentation standards. OCHE staff will now join the regular Operations Leadership meetings at a minimum of once monthly to present their findings and problem solve with leaders

3. *Unreliable Internal Information*

In Q3 2022, TCHC launched an Arrears Task Force (“ATF”) to develop an arrears reduction plan in order to stabilize and reduce total arrears over time. Part of this work involves advancing key performance indicators (“KPI”) and evidence to measure outcomes by ensuring clean and transparent data is leveraged through HoMES.

4. *Quality of Services*

Operations is working with the L&OD team on a Tenancy Management Training Advisory Committee to identify and prioritize training needs. The L&OD team plans to deliver training on the revised Arrears Collection Process in Q1 2023. Operations and L&OD staff will be engaging OCHE staff in the development of the training sessions, with the goal of improving the quality of local engagement in the Arrears Collection Process.

TCHC ACTIVITIES

TCHC has launched some initiatives that will support enhanced oversight and response to all recommendations of OCHE, which include:

Kaizen Review

TCHC is undertaking a review with an external vendor, carrying out “Lean Six Sigma” Kaizens associated with the Arrears Collection Process. TCHC is engaging OCHE to participate in these sessions, and will be using it as a broader system process review. The vendor will support the implementation of critical Kaizen events while simultaneously providing process mapping support to TCHC teams. This will allow staff to identify and implement a number of actionable and meaningful changes to the Arrears Collection Process. The anticipated result is a streamlined process that will deliver on reduced arrears, while continuing to support tenancy stabilization.

Training

With the implementation of the new ACP, the multi-disciplinary team and OCHE partnered with L&OD to thoroughly document the new procedures and support the development and implementation of a training program. Operations is engaged with L&OD to identify methods to implement module training based on OCHE's recommendations.

Arrears Task Force ("ATF")

TCHC developed an Arrears Task Force in Q3 2022 to develop an arrears reduction plan in order to stabilize and reduce arrears over time, as well as monitor the implementation of the arrears reduction plan. The goal of the Task Force is to reduce arrears by advancing KPIs and evidence to measure arrears outcomes, identify strategies to effectively target resources to improve KPIs, and translate strategy into action in partnership with Operations staff.

NEXT STEPS:

TCHC and the OCHE will continue to take steps to strengthen their partnership and approach to preventing eviction and maintaining tenancies. Continued emphasis needs to be placed on the practical and timely follow-up of arrears, as it is essential in limiting the risk and impact to tenants. Through the regular oversight and process reviews by TCHC, with the input of key partners such as the OCHE, it will allow for increased opportunities to support and stabilize at-risk tenancies through the timely and appropriate provision of support to tenants

SIGNATURE:

"Nadia Gouveia"

Nadia Gouveia
Chief Operating Officer (Acting)

STAFF CONTACT:

Richard Grotsch, Senior Director, Business Operations (Acting)
416-981-4054
Richard.Grotsch@torontohousing.ca