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Update on TCHC's Implementation of Recommendations from Ombudsman Toronto's Investigation of the Medical and Safety at Risk Priority Transfer Process for Tenants

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Presentation to Toronto City Council

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The January 2018 Investigation Report

Ombudsman Toronto investigated TCHC's priority transfer process for tenants whose units put their health or safety at risk.

We found the process was unfair.

- It was bloated and inefficient: more than 1,400 households were on the waitlist, 55% had been waiting more than five years
- It did not identify or prioritize those with the most urgent needs
- TCHC handled applications inconsistently and without due process

We made 21 recommendations, including that TCHC:

- Create a new Crisis category for the most serious cases, ranking above Overhoused
- Develop a fair application, evaluation and communication process
- Design a fair outcome for tenants on the legacy waitlist



TCHC's Implementation of the Recommendations

- **February 2018:** TCHC began to develop the new Crisis transfer category and procedures for reviewing applications, providing decisions and moving approved tenants promptly.
- **June 2018:** TCHC announced the new Crisis priority transfer plan to tenants.
- **July 1 2018:** TCHC implemented the new Crisis transfer category and priority transfer process and began accepting applications.
- **November 2018:** TCHC announced a one-time unit selection and matching process for tenants on the legacy waitlist. Four hundred and thirty-four (434) households participated; 257 were matched with available units. A second round of offers is currently underway.





Implementation Challenges

Objective verification for tenants claiming to be victims or witnesses suffering intimidation

- This criterion requires a “deliberate, continued, verifiable and immediate” risk of death or serious bodily injury.
- To address the need for an independent assessment of risk, TCHC designed a Crisis questionnaire for police to complete.
- Officers complete the factual parts of the questionnaire, but they will not provide a risk assessment, because of liability concerns.
- TCHC continues to work with Toronto Police Services on a different arrangement that will address both parties’ needs. This should be a priority for TCHC management and its Board.



Complaints to Ombudsman Toronto About The New Process

From July 1 to December 31, 2018, Ombudsman Toronto received 46 complaints about the new Crisis priority system. Most (30) were premature.

In the other cases, the complaints were primarily about:

- delays in the adjudication process, and
- claims that applications had been unfairly denied.

We were able to resolve each complaint to Ombudsman Toronto's satisfaction. In the process, we helped TCHC fine tune its new process and improve service for tenants.



Findings and Recommendations

- TCHC has directly addressed all of Ombudsman Toronto's Investigation recommendations in a timely way and is responding with reasonable care to challenges during implementation.
- TCHC management set tight timelines for the creation and implementation of the new program and have met them. We commend them for this.
- Ombudsman Toronto recommends that City Council accept this report and request any further updates on the Crisis Priority Transfer system from TCHC directly.



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