

Shelter Safety Action Plan and Contract Amendments Report

Economic and Community Development Committee
Toronto Shelter and Support Services

November 26, 2024



Context

- On April 30, 2024, Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC) adopted EC12.13 requesting Toronto Shelter and Support Services to report back on the development of a **Shelter Safety Action Plan** that responds to the CAMH Shelter Safety Study.

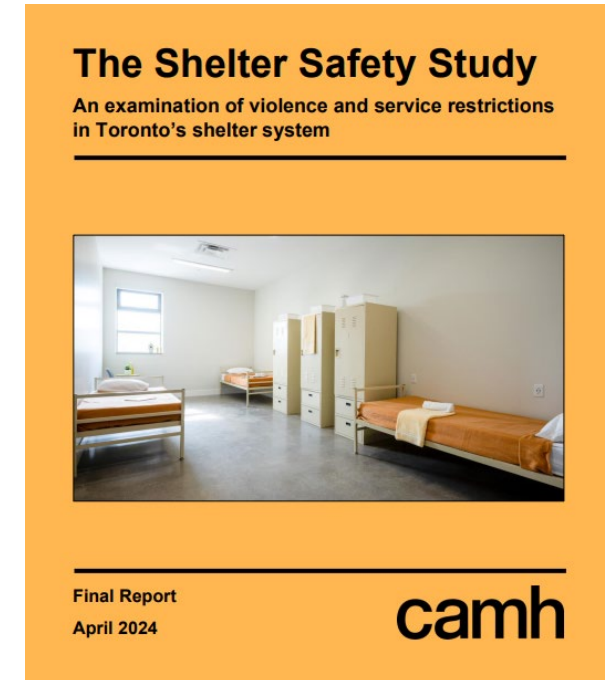
Report Overview

This report:

- Provides a report back to Council on the development of a Shelter Safety Action Plan.
- Requests Council authority to develop and implement tools to support with notifying and collecting information related to Anti-Black racism, as part of efforts to advance staff safety as part of the Shelter Safety Action Plan.
- Provides an update on efforts to make physical shelter infrastructure safe and improve community safety efforts, as part of the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS).
- Requests Council authority to amend and extend three contracts for community safety team services and the Canadian Red Cross Society to continue to provide temporary lodging to refugees.
- Provides a report back on work to enhance harm reduction and overdose prevention services at large temporary shelter hotels and enhance mental health outreach and case management for people living outdoors.
- Requests Council authority to reimburse churches and community organizations that supported refugees in until December 31, 2023.

Background on Shelter Safety

- To better understand this issue, TSSS reached out to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to conduct **research on shelter safety** in Toronto's shelter system.
- A two-year (2022-2024) study examined factors that contribute to physical and psychological safety in shelters for staff and service users with the goal of **developing evidence and recommendations** to support and guide continued improvements in Toronto's shelter system.
- CAMH's Final Report, adopted by ECDC in April 2024, proposed 22 **recommendations to advance safety** in the shelter system.



Development of the Shelter Safety Action Plan

TSSS developed a **Shelter Safety Action Plan** informed by recommendations made in the CAMH Shelter Safety Study and a set of targeted consultations held between July and October 2024 with:

- **Shelter providers** via the Toronto Shelter Network
- **People with lived experience** residing in Toronto's shelter system
- **Housing Rights Advisory Committee**, *Supporting People who are Unhoused* working group
- Roundtable on Safety and Mental Health Supports in Shelters and for People Living Outdoors with **health and mental health service providers and City divisions**



What We Heard



Key **themes and insights** included a need for:

- Staff to receive **adequate trauma-informed** training
- Enhanced ability to do **crisis intervention and de-escalation**
- Supports for **mitigating staff burnout**, as well as creating ways to systemize debriefs following incidents
- Greater access to **mobile mental health teams and addictions services** that meet clients where they are at



Consultations completed for the plan validated the recommendations made by the CAMH Shelter Safety Study

Shelter Safety Action Plan

To maintain, advance, and enhance shelter safety, the plan identifies **14 actions** under **3 key areas** to be undertaken over 36-months.



1.0 Supporting Staff Safety



2.0 Supporting Client Safety



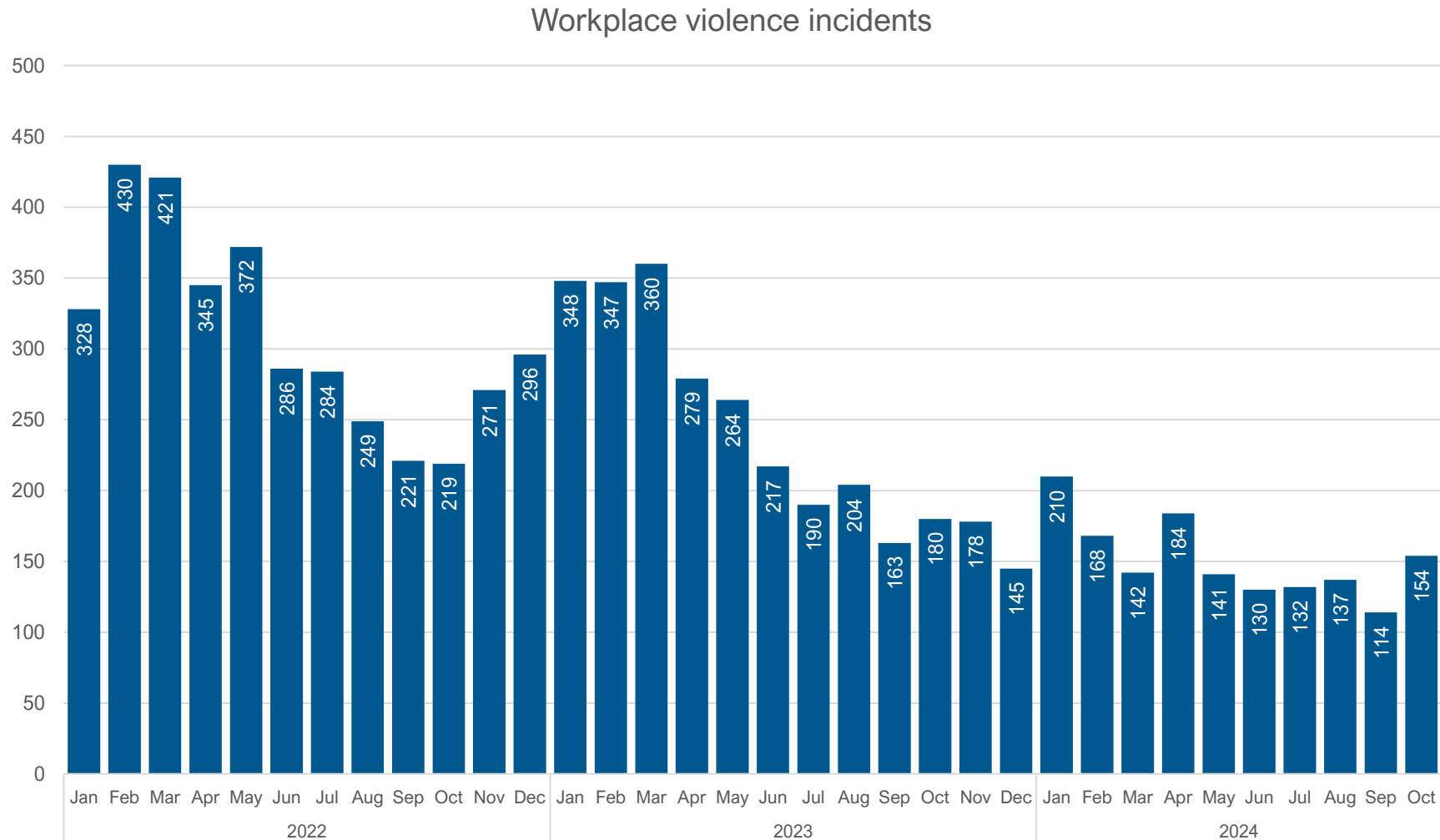
3.0 Improving System-wide Oversight on Safety

Supporting Staff Safety



- Actions to advance staff safety include:
 - Continue measures to **protect the physical and psychological well-being and safety of staff**, particularly Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ staff
 - Review and strengthen **training for staff**, including training in targeted areas such as supporting clients who use methamphetamines.
- To support implementation of key actions and the City's ongoing commitment to confronting anti-Black racism, TSSS is requesting authority to:
 - Embed a Anti-Black Racism **Notification tool** as part of the Shelter Management Information System
 - Launch a Anti-Black Racism Reporting Tool to **document and track staff experiences of anti-Black racism** towards Black Staff and from client to client.

Workplace Violence Incidents



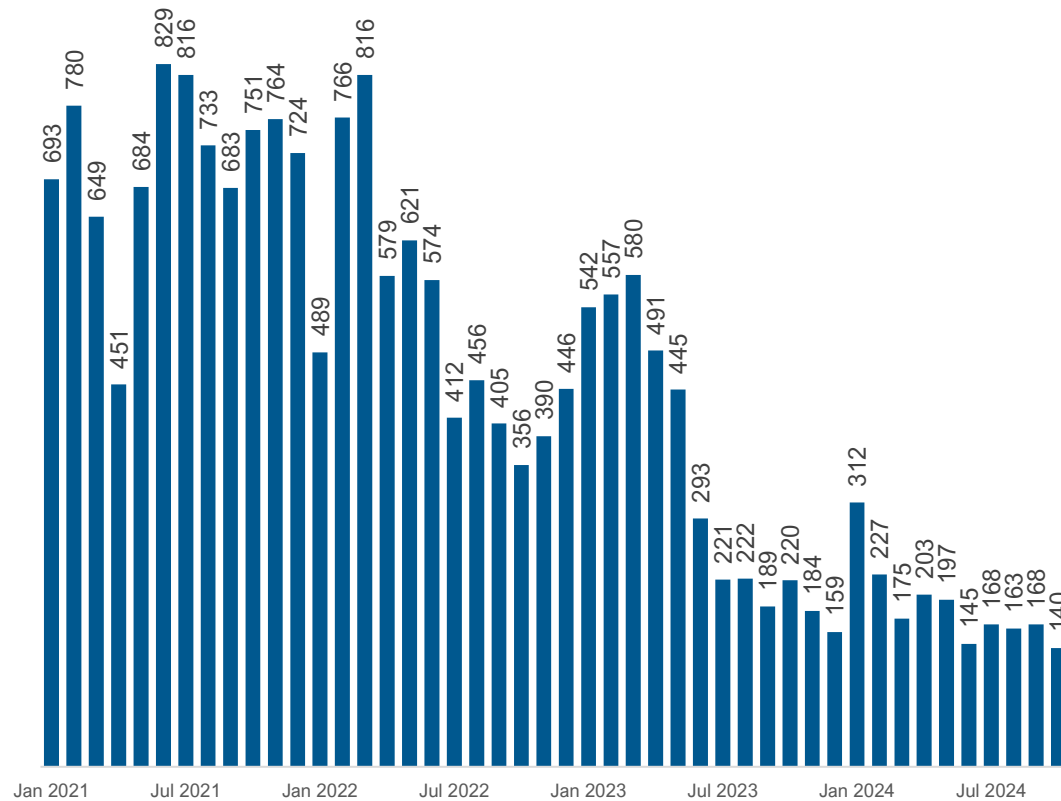
Supporting Client Safety



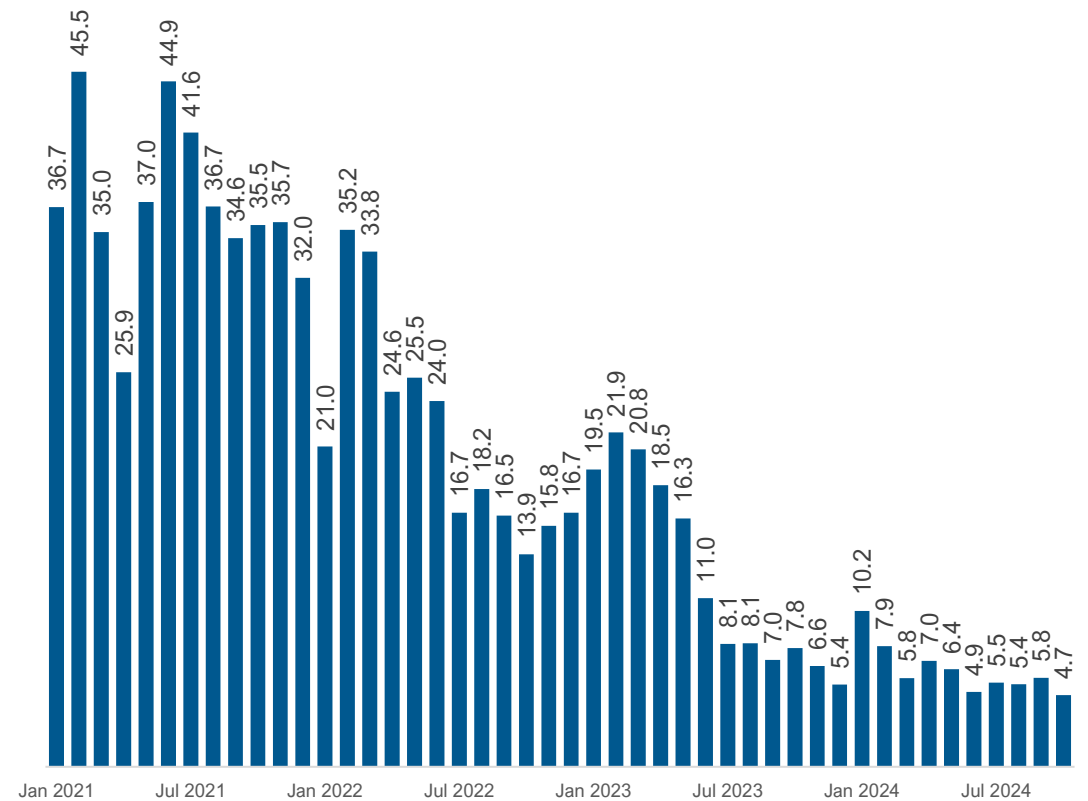
- Actions to advance client safety include:
 - Facilitate and **expand access** to health care, mental health supports, crisis intervention and enhanced harm reduction services
 - Ensure appropriate **housing linkages** for clients with high rates of incidents and service restrictions
 - Develop **specialized programs** to support people with extensive histories of violence and service restrictions.
- Initiatives underway to address client safety include:
 - Expanding **substance use and overdose prevention** programming in large temporary shelter hotels.
 - Continuing to work with partners to deliver low-barrier **mental health, addictions and clinical care** for people staying outdoors.

Service Restrictions from Bedded Programs

Service restrictions, bedded programs



Service restrictions per 10,000 bed nights



System-wide Oversight on Safety



- Actions to advance system-wide oversight on safety include:
 - Improve policy guidance for the shelter sector on the use and consistency of **service restrictions**
 - Strengthen the process for clients to **access information** on their service restrictions
 - Monitor the Behavioural Risk Alert Safety System which increases information sharing about clients with histories of violent behaviour.
- Initiatives underway to improve safety in and around shelters include:
 - Implementing the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) to make **physical shelter infrastructure** accessible, safer, and better aligned to respond to the diverse needs of shelter clients, staff, and the surrounding community
 - Using **Community Safety Teams** to support the Enhanced Service Model for encampments and specific high-needs Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings.

Thank you!