



Integrated Service Model

2021 Evaluation Report

Working with tenants to drive change

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We wish to acknowledge the partnership of staff and leadership at Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, who provided important context, information, and advice to support this evaluation.

We also acknowledge the staff in the Seniors Services and Long-Term Care Division who conducted in-person and virtual engagements with senior tenants and staff over the spring and summer of 2022. Their concerted effort helped to gather the rich expertise of tenants and staff, which formed the basis of this report.

Finally, we recognize the contributions of over 200 senior tenants who shared their time and experiences to inform this evaluation and drive change in the Integrated Service Model.



Executive Summary

The new Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation operates 83 buildings across the city, home to approximately 15,000 senior tenants (age 59+). The Integrated Service Model (ISM) was designed as a new way to support these tenants. The goal of the ISM is to promote ageing in place with dignity, respect, comfort, and the services necessary for tenants to remain independent and engaged in vibrant, active, and inclusive communities. As part of the City of Toronto's efforts to support the new Corporation's success, the Seniors Services and Long-Term Care Division (hereafter 'the City') led this evaluation on the first year of implementation of the ISM (December 2020 – December 2021).

This evaluation responds to the **2021 ISM Annual Program Report**,* which tracked progress and achievements on intended ISM outcomes related to staff and training, policies and procedures, health and wellness initiatives, alignment of Care Coordinators, and tenant engagement.

* Toronto Community Housing (former Seniors Housing Unit), 2021 Integrated Service Model Annual Program Report, 2022 <https://www.torontohousing.ca/residents/Tenants-First/PublishingImages/ism/2021%20ISM%20Annual%20Program%20Report.pdf>

Based on the 2021 ISM Annual Program report, activities and outputs from the first year of implementation included:

- **Staffing and Training:** Two new tenant-facing and administrative roles were introduced (Seniors Services Coordinators and Tenant Service Administrators), with a total of 47 staff hired and two seniors-specific staff training modules delivered (Understanding Dementia and Seniors Mental Health Awareness).
- **Senior-Specific Policies and Procedures:** Nine procedures were tested and implemented (e.g., Tenant Needs Assessment, Tenant On-Boarding) and four procedures were under development (e.g., Rent Review, Complex Tenancy Management).
- **Seniors Health and Wellness:** Building on important tenant feedback, the City engaged Health Commons Solutions Lab to conduct an independent review of the Seniors Health and Wellness innovation of the ISM, underscoring the need for tenant voices to shape the design and delivery of health and wellness supports.
- **Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships:** A total of 62 Care Coordinators were assigned to buildings, and partnerships were formed with Ontario Health Teams and community service agencies to deliver COVID-19 relief programs, including vaccination clinics and distribution of masks and food.
- **Tenant Engagement:** Tenants were engaged through Senior Tenant Advisory Committee meetings, focus groups to provide input on the transition to the new Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, the delivery of quarterly “Seniors Speak” newsletters to tenants, and two tenant information sessions during the ISM.

Building on this work, the City engaged over 200 senior tenants and staff in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings over spring and summer 2022 to understand how well the ISM was implemented and to generate concrete, actionable recommendations for improvement. This report also brings together other evaluation activities conducted on the ISM to build on previous work and reinforce tenant priorities reported elsewhere.

Recommendations

The recommendations in this report are based on input gathered from senior tenants, tenant leaders, the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee, and staff. The City used this input to generate 12 high-level recommendations for action to improve the delivery of the ISM across the four innovations of the model, tenant engagement and key performance indicators.



Innovation 1 – Staffing and Training

1. Improve and expand methods of communication and knowledge sharing among staff and tenants
2. Enhance recruitment, training, and retention of staff to meet building-level and regional needs



Innovation 2 – Seniors-Specific Policies and Procedures

3. Facilitate communication and engagement with tenants and staff on the development and dissemination of policy changes
4. Focus proactive policy and procedure revisions on priority areas identified by tenants and staff
5. Co-develop proactive interventions to address urgent issues identified by tenants, including building security, pest management, maintenance requests, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)



Innovation 3 – Seniors Health and Wellness Initiatives

6. Engage tenants to translate the Seniors Health and Wellness Report from Health Commons into practice



Innovation 4 – Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships

7. Enhance tenant access, awareness and utilization of Care Coordinators
8. Improve tenant awareness of and access to supports provided by health partners



Tenant Engagement and Communication

9. Enhance accessibility of information on the ISM for tenants
10. Enhance opportunities for tenant engagement and leadership



Key Performance Indicators

11. Work with tenants and staff to develop additional key performance indicators and related data collection tools that measure tenant-staff relationships
12. Establish data collection guidance for key performance indicators to promote quality and consistency

Opportunities to advance the recommendations

This report describes “ideas from tenants and staff,” which highlight opportunities to advance recommendations in the short-, medium-, and long-term. Ideas are gleaned directly from the input of tenants and staff, to ensure voices of those living and working in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings are centred in this report.

The City also worked to identify opportunities for partnership between the City and the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to advance the recommendations. These “ideas from City partners” are included throughout the report and reflect opportunities for Toronto Seniors Housing to leverage the City’s knowledge of seniors’ services to improve the ISM and better address tenant needs.

This report also references existing resources (e.g., reports, guidance, tools or directories) identified by tenants, staff, and the City that complement the evaluation findings. These resources also provide tools the Corporation can draw upon to advance recommendations at little-to-no cost.

Finally, this report “spotlights” activities and initiatives underway at Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation that may begin to address tenant priorities that emerged through this evaluation. These spotlights identify where and how the City’s recommendations align with and enrich existing efforts to improve the ISM and tenant communities.

Reflections on the way forward

This report reinforces the vital importance of ongoing and meaningful tenant engagement to promote the success of the ISM. Indeed, most recommendations and ideas brought forward include a tenant engagement or partnership component, highlighting that senior tenants are the experts of their own experience and represent an invaluable asset in designing and delivering services that address their needs.

The senior tenants we engaged consistently voiced that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for the changes they desire in their buildings. Each of the 83 buildings represents a unique community with a rich diversity of experiences, needs, and aspirations. As such, the central message of this report is to proactively harness the expertise of senior tenants to create tailored solutions that address priorities at the unit-, building-, and regional-level. The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is in the process of co-developing a new tenant engagement model, with input from tenants. An effective tenant engagement model will be crucial in realizing these recommendations and ensuring the ISM meaningfully responds to the diverse needs of senior tenants across the 83 buildings.

This report can signal a turning point and opportunity for transformative change in social housing for Toronto seniors. With this report, the City identifies opportunities to advance the priorities of senior tenants in the short-, medium- and long-term, with recognition that full implementation will depend on budgetary and resource considerations. All recommendations are derived from the experiences and thoughtful input of senior tenants engaged throughout this evaluation, and this report would not have been possible without them.

Building on this foundational engagement, the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation must establish a central role for senior tenants to support implementation of these recommendations and, together, work towards the continued success of the ISM.



Introduction to the Integrated Service Model

Overview of the Integrated Service Model (ISM)

Goals and Objectives of the ISM

The Integrated Service Model (ISM) was designed to support ageing in place for over 15,000 senior tenants (age 59+) living in the 83 seniors-designated buildings, operated by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation and owned by Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The goal of the ISM is to support senior tenants to age in their homes with the dignity, respect, comfort, and the services they need to remain engaged in vibrant, active, and inclusive tenant communities.

Safe, affordable, and quality housing is a profound determinant of health for seniors,¹ who experience increased risk for housing instability, homelessness, and related health and social impacts. Seniors also possess a wealth of lived experience to enrich their communities and improve services through advocacy, education, and organizing. Informed by these challenges and strengths, the ISM provides a new way of operating seniors buildings by bringing together housing, health, and community services to support ageing in place and promote the physical, mental, and psycho-social health and wellness of senior tenants.

1 Toronto Public Health, 2016 <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-97428.pdf>

The three objectives of the ISM are:

1. Build relationships of trust between senior tenants and housing staff
2. Improve the delivery of housing services, with an increased focus on issues that impact housing stability for seniors
3. Increase access to health and community support services through enhanced partnership with community agencies

Origin of the ISM

The ISM was jointly developed by Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the City of Toronto, and provincial health partners. The model originated in July 2017 through the City Council-directed Tenants First strategy,² which aims to improve the delivery of Toronto Community Housing Corporation supports. Under Tenants First, Council approved the creation of a new standalone seniors housing and services entity that would be responsible for the management of 83 seniors-designated social housing buildings in Toronto.

To advance Tenants First, City Council approved the implementation of the ISM in seniors-designated buildings across Toronto in 2020.³ Under the same motion, Council directed the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, to report to the Executive Committee by spring 2021 with timelines for the creation of a new Seniors Housing Corporation.

The implementation of the ISM began in December 2020, in a select sample of 18 seniors-designated buildings in the Southeast Region. In May 2021, City Council authorized the establishment of the new Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation.⁴ As of June 1, 2022, the new Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation assumed operations of the 83 seniors-designated buildings. The new corporation's Board of Directors and Leadership team are the key audience for this evaluation report.

2 City of Toronto, Tenants First <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/tenants-first/>

3 City Council, Implementing Tenants First: 2020 Action Updates (2020 EX17.2), 2020 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX17.2>

4 City Council, Implementing Tenants First: Creating a Seniors Housing Corporation (2021 EX23.4), 2021 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX23.4>

Innovations of the ISM

The ISM is underpinned by four innovations:



1. A new staffing and staff training model

- Creation and hiring of two new positions: A tenant-facing Seniors Service Coordinator (SSC) who works within the buildings as a main point of contact for tenant concerns (e.g., tenancy services, referrals to services), and a Tenant Service Administrator (TSA) who works out of an area office to support routine correspondence, rent assessments, collection of arrears, and other data.
- Consistent assignment of staff to specific buildings to enable closer connections between tenants and staff.
- Increased staffing levels and expanded training on seniors-specific issues.



2. Seniors-specific policies and procedures

- Review, revision, and development of policies and procedures to address senior-specific needs.



3. Seniors health and wellness initiatives

- Partnerships with a range of health, social and wellness services delivered by external community agencies.



4. Designated Care Coordinators[†] and health partnerships

- Identification and alignment of Care Coordinators with the 83 seniors-designated buildings to streamline access to health and social services for senior tenants.

Ongoing and meaningful tenant engagement is integral to the ISM and necessary for the implementation of tenant-driven supports and services across the 83 buildings. Gathering and applying the expertise of senior tenants ensures that all aspects of the ISM (including implementation, evaluation and quality improvement) are aligned with tenant priorities.

[†] **Care Coordinator:** Provincial staff that act as the contact between clients and various community agencies and providers. Within the ISM, Care Coordinators are identified for each building to provide a more direct connection from tenants to healthcare services and social supports.



One existing avenue for gathering input from senior tenants on the ISM is through the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee and Tenant Directors. The Senior Tenant Advisory Committee comprises 17 tenants living across the 83 seniors-designated buildings. Members bring their lived experience, knowledge, and skills to assist in the development of age-equitable best practices and approaches for senior tenant engagement, and to prioritize the health and well-being of all Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation tenants. Similarly, Tenant Directors are tenants who contribute their experience, knowledge and skills through their seat on the Corporation’s Board of Directors.

A detailed overview of the ISM is summarized in the ISM Logic Model in **Appendix 1**. For more information on the goals and activities of the ISM, please see the Accountability Framework,⁵ or the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation webpage on the ISM.⁶

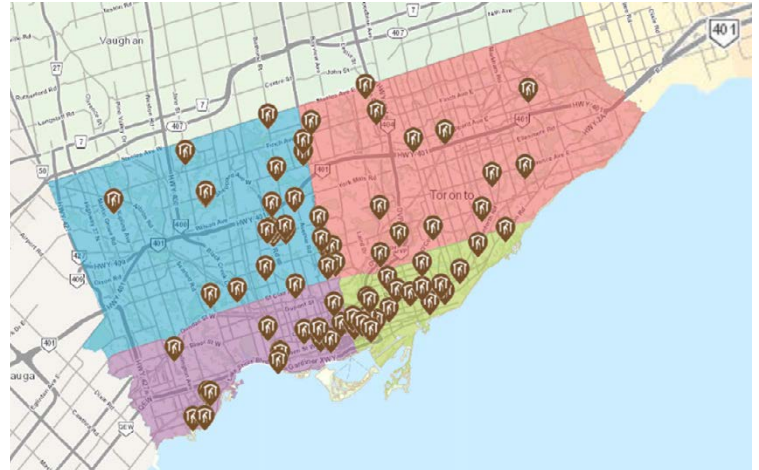
⁵ City of Toronto, Accountability Framework for the Integrated Services Model, 2020 <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-157311.pdf>

⁶ Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, Our Integrated Service Model, 2022 <https://www.torontoseniorshousing.ca/health-and-community/our-integrated-service-model/>

Phased Implementation of the ISM

Implementation of the ISM occurred over three phases between 2020 and 2022:

1. **Phase 1 (December 2020):** 18 buildings in the South East Region. During this pilot phase, buildings were still under the operation of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation.
2. **Phase 2 (September 2021):** 26 buildings in the North West Region and another 8 buildings in the South East Region. In December 2021, the implementation of one of the ISM innovations (Seniors Health and Wellness Initiatives) was paused and an independent review was undertaken by the Health Commons Solutions Lab.
3. **Phase 3 (March/April 2022):** Remaining 39 buildings in the South West and North East regions adopted the model. In June 2022, operation of all 83 seniors-designated buildings transitioned to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation.



This evaluation focuses on the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings that implemented the ISM during the first year of implementation, between December 2020 and December 2021.

Purpose of this Evaluation

Building on Toronto Seniors Housing's 2021 ISM Annual Program Report⁷, which focuses on the 'what' and 'how much' of ISM implementation, the City of Toronto's Seniors Services and Long-Term Care Division (hereafter "the City") undertook this evaluation to understand how well the ISM was implemented and if anyone is better off as a result.

⁷ Toronto Community Housing (former Seniors Housing Unit), 2021 Integrated Service Model Annual Program Report, 2022 <https://www.torontohousing.ca/residents/Tenants-First/PublishingImages/ism/2021%20ISM%20Annual%20Program%20Report.pdf>

This evaluation examines the first year of ISM implementation, with two main objectives:

1. Understand how well the ISM is being implemented, with a focus on identifying outcomes, successes, and challenges from the first year.
2. Generate concrete, actionable recommendations to support the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's successful delivery of the ISM moving forward.

Through this evaluation report, the City is advancing a collective interest in the ongoing success of Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation as a self-sustaining social housing provider. This report works toward a future in which the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation leads and implements the ISM as Council intended, in true collaboration with tenants, staff, and municipal, community and health partners.

Considerations for this Report

This report details the first year of ISM implementation. However, it is important to recognize several contextual factors that impacted implementation, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the phased nature of implementation.

The ISM began during the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented novel challenges for staff and tenants (e.g., physical distancing, stay-at-home orders, gathering limits). The pandemic also delayed the model's phased implementation and disrupted the delivery of services and supports. These challenges may have impeded the measurable impacts of the ISM.

It is also important to consider that the implementation period covered in this report represents a year of learning and growth for staff and senior tenants alike. The ISM is multi-faceted, including a new staffing model, the examination of policies and procedures through a seniors-specific lens, the design and implementation of health and wellness initiatives, and the alignment of provincially-funded staff to seniors-designated buildings. While much progress has been achieved, full implementation of these innovations and observation of their impacts will require more than one year.



Our Approach

To support this evaluation, the City collected, analyzed, and integrated three key types of information.

1) Learning from Tenants and Staff – Direct Engagements to Gather Input on the ISM

From May to August 2022, the City engaged over 200 tenants (including senior tenants, tenant representatives, Senior Tenant Advisory Committee, and Tenant Directors), and 18 staff (including superintendents, Senior Services Coordinators, and Tenant Services Administrators).

Who We Spoke To

Direct engagements focused on gathering input from tenants and staff in buildings that rolled out the ISM between December 2020 and December 2021. See **Table 1** for an overview of participation.

Engagement was conducted through lobby intercepts (10-15 minute mini-interviews), in-depth individual interviews (1 hour), and focus groups (1-1.5 hours). Lobby intercepts were conducted in a random selection of buildings in the buildings that implemented the ISM in Phase 1 and 2. This resulted in a selection of 5 buildings in the South East region, 9 buildings in the North West, and 1 building in the North East (which was included in the South East region during the first year of implementation). Notices were put up across the buildings selected for lobby intercepts, and in some cases these were translated to common languages spoken in the building.

City staff developed a referral package to use during direct engagements, including important phone lines (e.g., Tenant Support Centre, Complaints Solutions Team, Toronto Seniors Helpline) and staff contact information to support tenants requiring follow-up.

All tenants engaged in lobby intercepts and interviews/focus groups received an honorarium in the form of \$5 or \$25 gift cards, respectively.



Table 1. Overview of qualitative input on the ISM collected from tenants and staff through direct engagements led by the City of Toronto

Who was engaged?	How were they engaged?	Date and number of participants
Senior tenants in 16 buildings	Lobby intercepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May – June 2022 (155 tenants)
Senior Tenant Advisory Committee and Tenant Directors	Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 6, 2022 (11 participants) • May 30, 2022 (9 participants) • June 16, 2022 (10 participants) • September 30, 2022 (12 participants) • November 4, 2022 (10 participants) • December 2, 2022 (5 participants)
Tenant Representatives	Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 4, 2022 (17 tenant representatives)
ISM staff (Senior Services Coordinators, Tenant Services Administrators)	Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 11, 2022 (13 staff)
Superintendents	Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 11, 2022 (2 superintendents)
Tenants who identify as Black	Focus group and interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews on July 12, 14, 18 and 19, 2022 (10 participants) • Focus group on July 12, 2022 (9 participants)
Care Coordinator Informants	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2022 (3 informants)

What We Asked

The direct engagements with tenants were guided by questions on the four ISM innovations as well as tenant engagement and communication. The questions were drafted in consultation with the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee and Tenant Directors. A comprehensive list of questions was used to generate conversation and gather input on the ISM during focus groups and interviews. A shorter list of select questions was adapted for the lobby intercept format. See **Appendix 2** for the list of questions used to gather input on the ISM.

A separate set of questions were used to guide direct engagements with staff (i.e., Senior Services Coordinators, Superintendents; see **Appendix 2**). Similar to the list of questions above, the questions for staff also aligned with the ISM innovations.

Gathering Diverse Perspectives

Several steps were taken to ensure that the direct engagements with staff and tenants captured the rich diversity of buildings. Frontline staff, including regional managers and Senior Services Coordinators, supported the City in identifying equity-deserving tenants to engage across the buildings. As a result, 19 tenants who identify as Black participated in a mix of focus groups and interviews, based on their preferred engagement modality.

Live translation was available through the 911 Interpretation Service at all lobby intercepts to ensure tenants had the opportunity to participate in their primary language. In some cases, tenants stepped forward and volunteered their time to provide interpretation during lobby intercepts. Through these supports, engagement was conducted in 11 languages other than English: Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Mandarin, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Romanian, Russian, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese.

2) Learning from the Past – Reviewing Previous Input on the ISM

In addition to direct engagements, this evaluation integrated and built on tenant and staff input on the ISM previously shared through other evaluation activities.

2021 ISM Annual Program Report⁸

The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report was the first annual report on the ISM prepared by Toronto Community Housing's former Seniors Housing Unit. This report describes the first year of implementation, plans for 2022, and appends important feedback from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee.

Report on Tenant Engagement⁹

Principles And Methods for a Tenant Engagement System: Recommendations from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee (Compiled by Joy Connelly). This report responded to City Council direction for the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services through the Tenants First initiative, to “engage with the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Directors of the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation on the principles and methods for a tenant engagement system.” The principles and methods derived from this report provided a foundation for the recommendations on tenant engagement reported here.

Health Commons Solutions Lab Report¹⁰

Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life (Health Commons Solutions Lab) responds to Council direction and the tenant-identified need to review the Seniors Health and Wellness component of the ISM. This targeted review asked seniors what they need to support their health, wellness, and ability to age well at home, and developed recommendations for transforming the seniors health and wellness component of the ISM.

⁸ Toronto Community Housing (former Seniors Housing Unit), 2021 Integrated Service Model Annual Program Report, 2022 <https://www.torontohousing.ca/residents/Tenants-First/PublishingImages/ism/2021%20ISM%20Annual%20Program%20Report.pdf>

⁹ Principles And Methods for a Tenant Engagement System: Recommendations from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee (Compiled by Joy Connelly), 2022 <https://www.torontoseniorshousing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/QTEC-June-13-2022-Public-Agenda-package.pdf>

¹⁰ Health Commons Solutions Lab, Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life, 2022 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62ff6f02b371544df8193c2d/t/63322e7ffe673663990d9ba3/1664233409931/Seniors-Health-and-Wellness-Initiative-Full-Report-%28August-2022%29.pdf>

Summaries from Other Engagements with Tenants

Summaries from engagements, deputations and presentations with tenants and ISM partners were also reviewed. These included tenant deputations at Toronto Community Housing and Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation Committees (i.e., Tenant Services Committee, Quality and Tenant Engagement Committee, Toronto Seniors Housing Board of Directors), presentations to the ISM Strategy Table, feedback from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee on the 2021 Annual ISM Program Report, and engagements with tenants to support the transition of building operation from Toronto Community Housing Corporation to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation. This report also draws upon research with tenants and community partners conducted through a partnership between the City and Sunnybrook Research Institute.



3) Learning from the Data – Outputs and Key Performance Indicators

The City collected outputs and key performance indicators from ISM partners to understand the early activities and impacts of the ISM.

In total, we examined eight outputs (see **Table 2**) from Toronto Seniors Housing to reflect concrete ISM activities and initiatives implemented over the first year. We also examined 18 key performance indicators from partners, including Toronto Fire, Toronto Paramedics, Toronto Police, and Ontario Health Toronto Region (formerly Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network; see **Table 3**) to observe whether they were trending in the expected direction, as set out in the ISM Accountability Framework.

The key performance indicators included in this report represent data collected within the 18 Phase 1 buildings. Buildings that implemented the ISM in Phase 2 were omitted from the reporting of key performance indicators, as we would not expect meaningful change in quantitative indicators in the short time between September 2021 (start of Phase 2) and December 2021 (end of first year of ISM implementation).

Table 2. Quantitative outputs from the ISM

Partner	Outputs
Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net staff hired • Staff-to-tenant and staff-to-unit ratios • # of staff training modules implemented • # of policies and procedures revised and created • # of Care Coordinators aligned to buildings • # of health and social support partnerships formed • # of tenant newsletters circulated • # of meetings with the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee



Table 3. Key performance indicators included in this report (data collected from Phase 1 buildings, December 2020 to December 2021)

Partner	Key Performance Indicators
Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of units in arrears • Dollar value of arrears • Vacancy rate • # of maintenance work orders created • # of pest control work orders created • # of work orders completed in five business days • # of community safety unit events • # of requests for Tenant and Community Services • Tenant Experience Survey
Toronto Fire Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of calls attended
Toronto Paramedic Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of calls attended
Toronto Police Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of calls attended • Type of calls attended
Ontario Health – Toronto Region (formerly Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of emergency department visits among tenants • # of low urgency emergency department visits among tenants • # of tenants who have an active home care referral • # of tenants who are active home care clients • # of tenants who accessed Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network-funded services • # of times tenants accessed Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network-funded services†



Our Findings

This section brings together the quantitative and qualitative information collected through this evaluation, with a central focus on 12 recommendations to improve ISM implementation. The recommendations are categorized according to the four ISM Innovations, tenant engagement, and key performance indicators.

Each of the following sub-sections includes several features to contextualize evaluation findings, advance recommendations, and inform next steps towards ISM improvement.

Features of the Findings



What was implemented – Outputs

Tangible initiatives and activities undertaken during the first year of ISM implementation to achieve objectives.



What we learned from the data – Key performance indicators

Quantitative indicators analyzed and interpreted by Toronto Seniors Housing and the City to understand the early impacts and challenges of the ISM during the first year of implementation.



What we learned from tenants and staff

Qualitative input gathered from tenants and staff through the direct engagements led by the City over spring and summer 2022. This input provides additional depth to the interpretation of key performance indicators and forms the basis of the recommendations.



Recommendations

12 high-level recommendations for action. These recommendations will guide implementation improvements and reinforce themes that emerged from the input of tenants, the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee, and ISM staff.



Ideas from tenants and staff

Suggestions from tenants and staff to advance the recommendations in the short-, medium-, and long-term, with attention to ensuring that next steps reflect the voices of those living and working in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings.

Short-term ideas: Quick wins, 3-6 months to implement

Medium-term ideas: Require more time and resources, 6-12 months

Long-term ideas: Require substantial time and financial resources, 12+ months



Ideas from City partners

Opportunities identified by the City to advance recommendations in the short-, medium- and long-term. These reflect the City's knowledge of seniors' supports and services and provide potential opportunities to partner with the City in the delivery of the ISM.



Resources

Existing resources (e.g., reports, guidance, tools, directories) that reinforce key themes from the evaluation and can be leveraged at little-to-no-cost by the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to advance recommendations.



Spotlights

Activities and initiatives underway at Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation that may begin to address tenant priorities. Including these "spotlights" can help identify where and how recommendations fit into and enrich existing efforts at Toronto Seniors Housing to better meet the needs of senior tenants.

Overview of Recommendations



Innovation 1 – Staffing and Training

1. Improve and expand methods of communication and knowledge sharing among staff and tenants
2. Enhance recruitment, training and retention of staff to meet building-level and regional needs



Innovation 2 – Seniors-Specific Policies and Procedures

3. Facilitate communication and engagement with tenants and staff on the development and dissemination of policy changes
4. Focus proactive policy and procedure revisions on priority areas identified by tenants and staff
5. Co-develop proactive interventions to address urgent issues identified by tenants, including building security, pest management, maintenance requests, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)



Innovation 3 – Seniors Health and Wellness Initiatives

6. Engage tenants to translate the Seniors Health and Wellness Report from Health Commons into practice



Innovation 4 – Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships

7. Enhance tenant access, awareness and utilization of Care Coordinators
8. Improve tenant awareness of and access to supports provided by health partners



Tenant Engagement and Communication

9. Enhance accessibility of information on the ISM for tenants
10. Enhance opportunities for tenant engagement and leadership



Key Performance Indicators

11. Work with tenants and staff to develop additional key performance indicators and related data collection tools that measure tenant-staff relationships
12. Establish data collection guidance for key performance indicators to promote quality and consistency



Innovation 1: Staffing and Training

Targeted Outcomes of ISM Innovation 1: Improved staff-to-tenant ratios, better alignment of staff to buildings, increased staff knowledge of senior issues, increased tenants awareness of staff, increased levels of trust and better communication.



What was Implemented – ISM Outputs

The 2021 Annual ISM Program Report includes outputs related to staffing, hiring, and training, achieved by the end of 2021.¹¹

Two new roles were created as part of the staffing and training innovation: *Senior Services Coordinator* and *Tenant Services Administrator*. By December 2021, these roles were fully implemented in Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings. This hiring improved staff-to-tenant and staff-to-unit ratios from the pre-ISM staffing model in seniors-designated buildings (see **Table 4**).

A net total of 47 staff across various positions were hired in 2021. In addition to the Senior Services Coordinators and Tenant Services Administrators, 7 new staff were hired to complete the management team, including 4 *Tenant Engagement and Services Supervisors* (1 per region), 2 *Regional Managers* in the South East and North West regions, and 1 new *Assistant General Manager*. The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation also implemented two new staff training modules in 2021: *Understanding Dementia and Seniors Mental Health Awareness*.



¹¹ Toronto Community Housing (former Seniors Housing Unit), 2021 Integrated Service Model Annual Program Report, 2022 <https://www.torontohousing.ca/residents/Tenants-First/PublishingImages/ism/2021%20ISM%20Annual%20Program%20Report.pdf>

Table 4. Staff ratios in buildings included in ISM Phase 1 and 2 before and after the implementation of the Integrated Service Model

Role (before and after ISM)	Staff-to-Tenant Ratio	Staff-to-Unit Ratio
Before: Community Services Coordinator	1:2,266	1:2,154
Before: Tenant Services Coordinator	1:425	1:404
After: Senior Services Coordinator (SSC), formerly Community Services Coordinator	1:378	1:359
After: Tenant Services Administrator (TSA), formerly Tenant Services Coordinator	1:755	1:718



What We Learned from the Data – Key Performance Indicators

One of the three objectives of the ISM is to improve the delivery of housing services, with an increased focus on issues that impact seniors housing stability. Together with the other innovations, the staffing and training model was expected to produce the following trends in housing service indicators.

Expected Trends – Tenancy Management

The number of arrears, value of arrears, and the number of vacancies were expected to decrease. The ISM's staffing and training model introduced new and enhanced measures to prevent tenant arrears, including education on annual rent reviews and referrals to income supports. The new tenant-facing Senior Services Coordinators and administrative-focused Tenant Services Administrators, and expected improvements to staff-to-tenant ratios, should lead to increased capacity to proactively identify and support tenants at risk of arrears.

Key Performance Indicators – Tenancy Management

The number of households in arrears steadily increased while the dollar value of arrears across the households decreased during the first year of implementation (**Figure 1, Appendix 3**). The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report suggests that this may be due to the COVID-19 eviction moratorium, which maintained housing for tenants who may have otherwise faced eviction due to arrears. The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report also suggests that the decrease in dollar value of arrears may be due to the updated, seniors-specific Arrears Collection and Evictions Prevention procedure (see Innovation 2) implemented in July 2021, which supports proactive identification of arrears.

The vacancy rate was trending upward in 2021, and remained above the target of 2.3%. (**Figure 2, Appendix 3**). The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report states that this trend may be due in part to staff's transition to a new centralized waiting list technology and a new tenant management system, which presented challenges in filling unit vacancies while new business processes were established.



What We Learned from Tenants and Staff

Despite appreciation for the efforts to recruit and introduce new roles, tenants reported inconsistent awareness of and relationships with staff at the building-level. For instance, some tenants knew and liked their Senior Services Coordinator, while others did not. Some knew their Senior Services Coordinator by name, but knew little or nothing about their role or scope of support.

While the staff-to-tenant ratios improved with the hiring of Senior Services Coordinators, these ratios were reportedly still overwhelming. Tenants and staff alike recognized that high caseloads and other demands on frontline staff made it difficult to sufficiently address tenant needs or develop trusting relationships, especially for those working part-time or across multiple buildings.

The competing demands and misalignment of staff also appear to be undermining the potential for trusting relationships. Tenants expressed a desire to see superintendents, Senior Services Coordinators, and Tenant Services Administrators who work across multiple buildings at least share the same buildings, (i.e., a Senior Services Coordinator may work across two buildings, each with separate superintendents and/or Tenant Services Administrators). Tenants believed that sharing buildings would promote better communication with tenants and among staff.

Staff, too, spoke to a frustration with building alignment and barriers to communication:

“Supers receive [a] lot of concerns which are Seniors Service Coordinator-related, and [the] super can direct them faster if the same super and Seniors Service Coordinator share the building.” – Staff, focus group

Positive and accessible staff-tenant communication also continues to present a challenge, especially for tenants with limited English proficiency. Given the significant linguistic diversity across buildings, there is an urgent need for improved access to translation and interpretation services.

Some tenants perceived staff training to be inadequate and inconsistent with their needs and priorities. The new modules on dementia and mental health, while important, were considered by some to be stigmatizing and chosen based on availability, rather than quality or relevance. Tenants urged Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to offer training that would build staff knowledge and skills on the issues important to them, including confronting ageism; prevention of bullying, harassment, and elder abuse; active listening; conflict management; and respectful communication.

Overall, the challenges identified by tenants and staff – including inconsistent relationships, high caseloads, communication barriers, misalignment, and training gaps – may help to explain why the new staffing and training model did not produce desired changes in vacancy rates and arrears over the first year of implementation.

Recommendations for Change – Staffing and Training



RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve and expand methods of communication and knowledge sharing among staff and tenants



Ideas From Tenants and Staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 1a. Coordinate monthly meetings between Senior Services Coordinators, superintendents, and a tenant representative (e.g., formal tenant rep, tenant leader, committee member, or other tenant) for each building to discuss building-level, regional and corporate concerns, programs, and how things are progressing overall; summary of the meeting to be drafted and circulated
- 1b. Develop anonymous channels (e.g., suggestion boxes) for tenants to communicate with staff about building-level, regional and corporate needs and concerns

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 1c. Design and prominently display standardized posters with information about Senior Services Coordinators and building Superintendents (e.g., name, photo, scope of support, contact info) with translations into applicable languages; where needed, posters should be placed in locked, secure bulletin boards maintained by staff
- 1d. Fund, develop, and deliver informal opportunities for staff-tenant face-to-face interaction (e.g., door knocking programs, tea and muffin sessions, or picnics/BBQs)
- 1e. Develop and implement staff-to-tenant communication standards to ensure all communications with tenants are simple, accessible, and available through multiple channels (including preferred methods of communication, and easy-to-use accessibility guidance similar to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requirements)



Spotlight

The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is launching three Quality Improvement Projects in November and December 2022, and January 2023. One of these projects is focused specifically on improving trust and staff and tenant relations. This priority was identified through consultation and engagement activities with tenants. The project will continue into 2023 with leadership from a joint team of tenants and staff, and should be informed by the ideas presented above.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Enhance recruitment, training, and retention of staff to meet building-level and regional needs



Ideas from Tenants and Staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 2a. Complete the hiring of at least one Engagement Community Service Coordinator per region, and assess feasibility for increasing the number of positions over time to improve workload and facilitate more engagement at the building-level
- 2b. Enhance alignment of staff to buildings (i.e., ISM staff assigned to the same buildings)

"Rec rooms get monopolized and we need to be able to use it...[we] need some kind of coordinator with authority to manage the use of this space."

–Tenant, focus group

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 2c. Invest in wellness programs to prevent staff burnout, increase capacity for development of trusting relationships, and celebrate staff achievements (e.g., building-level recognition events)

- 2d. Develop and deliver staff training or form educational partnerships to advance staff knowledge on priority topics identified by senior tenants (e.g., respectful communication skills, mental health, prevention of bullying and harassment, prevention of elder abuse, active listening, anti-ageism, and conflict management)

Long-term (12+ months)

- 2e. Hire additional Senior Services Coordinators and Tenant Services Administrators to improve staff-to-tenant ratios and reduce caseloads, aiming to reach optimal levels
- 2f. Assess need for building-level staff (e.g., maintenance, security) to support tenant safety



Resources

Health Commons Solutions Lab –Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life¹² contains recommendations that align with those in this report, highlighting ongoing issues and priorities for tenants. For example, recommendation 16 in the Health Commons report states that there should be dedicated building staff in Toronto Seniors Housing buildings to facilitate the transparent management of common spaces. This mirrors the tenant input reflected in Idea 2a above.

World Health Organization Toolkit – Global Campaign to Combat Ageism¹³ outlines necessary resources to learn about ageism, initiate conversations about this important topic and organize events to raise awareness. This Toolkit can be used by the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to facilitate training of ISM staff on the prevention of ageism reflected in Idea 2d above.

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario – Training Tools¹⁴ are available to support the training of service providers and partners in care. These free training resources support the delivery of staff training on a variety of topics, including: ageism and discrimination training, and intervention guidance to support service providers and partners in care. The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation can use these free guidelines to train their staff on ageism and discrimination, which reflect priority areas identified by tenants for staff education in Idea 2d above.

¹² Health Commons Solutions Lab, Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life, 2022 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62ff6f02b371544df8193c2d/t/63322e7ffe673663990d9ba3/1664233409931/Seniors-Health-and-Wellness-Initiative-Full-Report-%28August-2022%29.pdf>

¹³ World Health Organization, Toolkit: Global Campaign to Combat Ageism, <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-campaign-to-combat-ageism-toolkit>

¹⁴ Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, Training Tools <https://eapon.ca/training-tools/>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Service Coordinators in Multifamily Housing Program Resource Guide¹⁵ is best practice literature that can be used to support Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation in their implementation of Idea 2e above. This document outlines guidance and thresholds for optimal staff-to-tenant ratios in service coordinator programs (i.e., 1:50 to 1:100 ratios of staff-to-tenants). The ‘Service Coordinators’ described in the report have a similar scope of practice to Senior Services Coordinators.

Designing and Implementing a New Seniors Service Coordinator Role for Low-Income Housing: A Qualitative Study¹⁶ aimed to understand the new Senior Services Coordinator position as part of the ISM. The study found that high workloads and expectations of tenant-facing social staff (i.e., Senior Services Coordinator position) impacted their ability to develop trusting relationships with tenants, which echoes Ideas 2c and 2e in the list above. The study states that while the staff-to-tenant ratios improved under the ISM, they are higher than what is recommended in other service coordinator models, which reinforces Idea 2e above.



Highlights – Staffing and Training

- New staff roles were hired in the first year of implementation, which improved staff-to-tenant ratios for Senior Services Coordinators (tenant-facing staff), however, the ratios for Tenant Services Administrators worsened. Two training modules were delivered to staff.
- Key performance indicators demonstrated that the dollar value of arrears increased and the unit vacancy rate increased, remaining above the target of 2.3%, during the first year of ISM implementation.
- Direct engagements revealed the following priority issues were impacting the development of trusting tenant-staff relationships: high staff caseloads, misalignment of staff to buildings, barriers to communication between tenants and staff, and inconsistent or inadequate seniors-specific staff training.
- Recommendations for this innovation are focused on improving communication between tenants and staff, and enhancing the training, recruitment and retention of staff as part of the new model.

¹⁵ Housing and Urban Development. (2018). Service coordinators in multifamily housing program resource guide. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Multifamily Housing. <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Service-Coordinators-in-Multifamily-Housing-Program-Resource-Guide.pdf>

¹⁶ Sheppard CL, Hemphill J, Austen A, Hitzig SL. Designing and Implementing a New Seniors Services Coordinator Role for Low-Income Housing: A Qualitative Study, Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 2022; DOI: 10.1080/01634372.2022.2118920



Innovation 2: Seniors-Specific Policies and Procedures

Targeted Outcomes of ISM Innovation 2: Tenant engagement in operations and policies, tenant and staff awareness of policy changes, higher staff compliance with policy changes, creation of “seniors-specific” policies and procedures in buildings, and increased tenant satisfaction with building operations.



What was implemented – ISM Outputs

After one year of implementation, nine procedures were tested and implemented and an additional four procedures were under development.

The procedures tested and implemented as of December 2021 were: Tenants Needs Assessment; Referring Tenants to Health and Social Supports; Tenant Referral to Specialized Program (i.e., Specialized Program for Inter-Divisional Enhanced Responsiveness to Vulnerability [SPIDER], and Furthering Our Community by Uniting Services [FOCUS]); Referral File Management System; Internal Integrated Team Meeting; Primary and Community Care Response Team and other regional integrated care teams; Tenant On-boarding; Arrears Collection and Evictions Prevention for Seniors and Vulnerable Tenants; and Soft Landing for Evictions.



The procedures being updated or drafted as of December 2021 were: Complex Tenancy Management; Rent Review and Notice of Decision; Turning 65; and Annual Unit Inspections.



What we learned from the data — Key Performance Indicators

One of the three objectives of the ISM is to improve the delivery of housing services, with an increased focus on issues that impact seniors housing stability. Together with the other innovations, the policies and procedures listed above were designed to produce the following trends.

Expected Trends – Property Management

The number of maintenance requests was expected to increase, then decrease, as tenants became more familiar with request procedures and the quality of their units gradually improved. The number of pest control work orders were expected to decrease as a result of staffing supports leading to early identification of pest-related issues. Service levels were expected to increase as policies and procedures (e.g., Annual Unit Inspection) were implemented to improve early identification of unit-level issues.

Expected Trends – Community Safety

The number of community safety unit[†] events and calls responded to by police, fire, and paramedic services were expected to decline, in part due to the risk-driven approach and enhanced attention to safety and security in Annual Unit Inspections and the Furthering Our Community by Uniting Services (FOCUS) procedures.

Key Performance Indicators – Property Management

Over the first year of the ISM there was an increase in maintenance requests and pest control work orders (**Figure 3 and Figure 4, Appendix 3**) and a decrease in service levels, defined as the number of requests completed within five business days (**Figure 5, Appendix 3**). The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report suggests that these trends may be due to the pandemic-related streamlining of Annual Unit Inspections in 2020 and 2021, resulting in less time spent in units to identify issues related to maintenance and pest management.

[†] **Community Safety Unit:** A unit within Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The unit works directly in the community to conduct patrols and site visits, respond to calls, help resolve complaints and disputes, assist victims and apprehend offenders, build relationships within the communities, and partner with other law enforcement, fire, and social service agencies.

Key Performance Indicators – Community Safety

The number of events responded to by the community safety unit decreased over the first year of the ISM (**Figure 6, Appendix 3**). The types of events the community safety unit responded to include: anti-social behavior, arson, warrants, disputes and serious violent incidents. The 2021 ISM Annual Program Report suggests this may be attributed to the pandemic, as more tenants stayed in their units and had limited contact with others.

The number of calls attended by Toronto Police increased sharply from April to June 2021, followed by a steady decrease (**Figure 7, Appendix 3**). The highest proportion of calls belonged to the “other” category (i.e., anything other than a person in crisis, wellness check, or violence call) followed by “Wellness Checks”. This increase in calls to police may reflect dissatisfaction with the community safety unit, which should be able to address tenant safety and security concerns without police aid. The spikes in police calls may also point to pandemic-related impacts, as community-based supports for tenants would have been less available amidst increased isolation and mental health vulnerability.



The calls attended to by Toronto Paramedic and Fire Services were stable during the first year of ISM implementation (**Figure 8 and 9, Appendix 3**). Monthly total of calls attended to by Toronto Paramedics were the most frequent among all first responders (range: 125 to 175), with May 2021 reporting the highest total. The calls attended to by Toronto Fire were comparatively much lower, ranging from zero to seven per month.



What we learned from tenants and staff

While a variety of new policies and procedures were introduced, tenants spoke to a lack of clarity on whether or how these were seniors-specific, or what, if any, ‘seniors-lens’ was applied. Some tenants communicated a sense that nothing had changed with respect to policies or procedures. Tenants also provided specific feedback for improving seven key procedures, including use of space, forms and processes related to turning 65, rent reviews, arrears, unit inspection, evictions, providing a soft landing after eviction, and tenant needs assessments. For example, tenants voiced a desire for staff to better communicate and support them through the transition to new income support programs associated with turning 65.

Some tenants felt that the new or revised policies and procedures were not clearly defined and overlooked tenant priorities. For example, many tenants reported that use of space was a top priority in their buildings, but felt they had not been adequately consulted before this policy was revised and implemented.

Conversely, staff spoke about feeling inundated with new policies and procedures and having trouble staying up to date or getting on the same page about expectations:

“I know that policies and procedures have been updated, but I have not been able to keep pace. There’s so much all the time, we’re being torn in all different directions.”
– Staff, Focus Group

For some tenants, particularly those for whom English is not a primary language, many of the standardized forms and tenant procedures feel complicated, inaccessible, and in some cases repetitive. Some tenants criticized the language used by staff as confusing and harsh, especially in standard communications and notices (e.g., annual rent reviews).

Despite positive changes in some policy areas, tenants and staff criticized the lack of focus on operational and safety issues, including security concerns, challenges with temperature control (e.g., heat challenges, need for improved air conditioning), cleanliness, pests, maintenance, and unit modification.

For instance, one staff member shared the following:

“Tenants are saying ‘if this is seniors housing, for us to age in place, we need our units modified.’” – Staff, Focus Group

Many tenants also identified pest management as a top priority in their building:

“Pest management and clean buildings affect the lives of tenants, all day every day.” – Tenant, Focus Group

These operational and policy concerns from tenants and staff reinforce trends observed in the key performance indicators. For instance, the observed increase in maintenance requests and pest control work orders alongside a decrease in the number of requests completed within five days may indicate that the demand for maintenance and pest control outpaced supply during the first year of ISM implementation. The increase in pest control requests corroborates concerns tenants shared about the approach pest management in their buildings. This underscores the need for more accessible, streamlined approaches to requests and follow-up procedures related to pest management and maintenance requests.

Tenants also highlighted security issues and some spoke to feeling unsafe in their buildings. These concerns mirror trends observed in the key performance indicators. For example, overlapping surges in calls to the community safety unit and police may suggest that tenants did not feel entirely comfortable seeking support from the community safety unit alone, and had to rely on additional response from the police.

Tenants also proposed building-specific solutions to address community safety issues:

“Each building has to be assessed if they need 24 hour security or not.” – Tenant, Focus Group

Recommendations for Change – Seniors-Specific Policies and Procedures



RECOMMENDATION 3

Facilitate communication and engagement with tenants and staff on the development and dissemination of policy changes



Ideas from tenants and staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 3a. Develop and integrate a tenant consultation process into residential and non-residential use of space agreements, policies and procedures
- 3b. Coordinate quarterly training, engagement, and information sessions with ISM staff on procedural and policy changes and best practices (e.g., workshops, quizzes, ‘lunch and learn’)
- 3c. Use standards of respectful language in all written and verbal communications regarding rent and arrears

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 3d. Integrate a tenant consultation component into the development and dissemination of tenant-identified priority policies and procedures
- 3e. Translate all forms and standard letters into the top 10 languages spoken by tenants



Ideas from City partners

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 3f. Engage with the City and tenants to adapt the City’s “Equity Lens Tool” to define and pilot a “Seniors lens” that can be consistently applied to policies and procedures to ensure seniors’ needs are adequately and equitably met



Resources

‘Can you send someone who speaks my language?’ Language barriers among older adults living in Toronto’s social housing:¹⁷ A recent report from the Wellesley Institute that includes five groups of actions recommended to enhance housing supports for senior tenants with limited English proficiency. The recommendations in this report can be used by the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to inform steps taken to increase access to resources and care in senior tenants’ preferred language, as proposed in Idea 3e above.



RECOMMENDATION 4

Focus proactive policy and procedure revisions on priority areas identified by tenants and staff



Ideas from tenants and staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 4a. Use of Space: Implement recommendations on use of space in the Health Commons Solutions Lab Report and remove barriers to tenant use of common rooms and spaces
- 4b. Support on documentation related to turning 65: Provide early support and education to tenants who are turning 65 to successfully transition to income supports for seniors including education and support for tenants on key documentation

¹⁷ Wellesley Institute, ‘Can you send someone who speaks my language?’ Language barriers among older adults living in Toronto’s social housing, 2022 <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Language-Barriers.pdf>



Ideas from City partners

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 4c. Connect with housing help centres and the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity to ensure their supports are described in tenant resources and welcome binders
- 4d. Collaborate with City of Toronto Employment and Social Services and/or community organizations to host information sessions on benefit transitions (e.g., income tax filing programs, transition from Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program to the Guaranteed Income Supplement)



Resources

Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: tenant voices improving quality of life¹⁸ contains recommendations (16 through 22) on use of space in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation Buildings. For example, Recommendation 18 in the Health Commons Report echos Idea 4a above from tenants and staff regarding barriers to tenant use of space: *Clearly communicate when the common areas (particularly if there are doors or controlled entry) are open or closed in accordance with tenants right to doors or controlled entry) are open or closed in accordance with tenants right to access common space and to reduce the likelihood that tenants believe they cannot access a space when they can.* This highlights that barriers to tenant use of space was a priority identified in both the Health Commons and City's ISM evaluations. This and other use of space recommendations in the Health Commons report should be leveraged to support the use of space recommendations in the City's Evaluation Report.



Spotlight

The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation has identified priority policies for review, including the Use of Space Policy. Policy review will proceed through close consultation with tenants and in partnership with Health Commons Solutions Lab and an external facilitator. Reviewing this policy provides an opportunity to integrate the solutions tenants have identified for use of space issues in this and other reports.

¹⁸ Health Commons Solutions Lab, Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life, 2022 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62ff6f02b371544df8193c2d/t/63322e7ffe673663990d9ba3/1664233409931/Seniors-Health-and-Wellness-Initiative-Full-Report-%28August-2022%29.pdf>



RECOMMENDATION 5

Co-develop proactive interventions to address urgent issues identified by tenants, including: building security, pest management, maintenance requests, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC)



Ideas from tenants and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 5a. **Security:** Identify building-level need for the installation of security cameras in common areas
- 5b. **Pest management:** Undertake coordinated entire-building bed-bug treatment when bedbugs are identified
- 5c. **Maintenance:** Ensure common washrooms are always open and well-maintained
- 5d. **Maintenance:** Work with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to establish a follow-up protocol with tenants for maintenance and unit modification requests, including formal acknowledgment, standardized response times, and collection of tenant satisfaction with vendor
- 5e. **Maintenance:** Ensure maintenance requests submitted offline through paper are equally prioritized

Long-term (12+ months)

- 5f. **Security:** Identify building-level need for an overnight security guard or other staff person where safety is a pressing concern
- 5g. **Pest management:** Establish a team internally with necessary equipment to treat outbreaks rapidly and keep them under constant control
- 5h. **Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC):** Work with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to establish methods for improved temperature control and ventilation at the building-level



Resources

Perceptions of Risk: Perspectives on Crime and Safety in Public Housing for Older Adults¹⁹ is a study conducted with senior tenants and staff in social housing buildings to understand tenant perceptions of safety. Findings from this study reinforce Idea 5a, pointing to the need for enhanced physical and environmental safety infrastructure, improved building management, increased on-site security, and other proactive measures to reduce risk by creating a greater sense of connection and community within the buildings.

“When the bedbugs come, that’s another problem’: Exploring the lived experiences of bedbug infestations among low-income older adults and service providers who support them”²⁰ is a study highlighting the widespread issue of bedbugs for senior tenants in Toronto social housing as well as the physical, mental, social and financial impacts of pest issues. The study includes practical recommendations that Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation can leverage to support their staff using the Idea 5b above, including: wearing personal protective equipment, bringing a change of clothing, and implementing education and training for staff.

Using research and education to implement practical bed bug control programs in multifamily housing²¹ is a peer-reviewed article that reviews scientific literature on integrated pest management in multi-family housing. Research conducted over the past 8 years has consistently proven that integrated pest management is the best approach for successful suppression of bedbugs. This research supports the solution suggested by tenants and staff in Ideas 5b and 5g above for an integrated team dedicated to pest management. The study also outlines the responsibilities of the housing provider and tenants in an integrated pest management approach, the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation may use these definitions to guide their development of a similar approach across their buildings.

19 Sheppard CL, Gould S, Austen A, Hitzig SL. Perceptions of Risk: Perspectives on Crime and Safety in Public Housing for Older Adults. *Gerontologist*. 2022 Jul 15;62(6):900-910. doi: 10.1093/geront/gnab155. PMID: 34698842; PMCID: PMC9290885.

20 Sheppard CL, Roche B, Austen A, Hitzig SL. ‘When the bedbugs come, that’s another problem’: exploring the lived experiences of bedbug infestations among low-income older adults and service providers who support them. *Perspect Public Health*. 2022 Sep 20; doi: 10.1177/17579139221118777. Epub ahead of print.

21 Bennett GW, Gondhalekar AD, Wang C et al. Using research and education to implement practical bed bug control programs in multifamily housing. *Pest Manag Sci*. 2016; 72: 8-14 https://www.extension.entm.purdue.edu/bedbugs/pdf/Bennett_et_al-2016-Pest_Management_Science.pdf

Effectiveness of building-wide integrated pest management programs for German cockroach and bed bug in a high-rise apartment building²² is a peer-reviewed study describing the effectiveness of contractor-led and researcher-led integrated pest management programs in low-income apartment buildings. The study's key finding is that integrated pest management is a much more effective approach for building-wide control of cockroaches and bed bugs than a conventional pest control service. The study confirms the benefit of building-wide integrated pest management on pest reduction, which was a solution shared by tenants and staff in Idea 5b above.



Spotlight

The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is launching three Quality Improvement Projects in November and December 2022, and January 2023. One project is focused specifically on pest management, and another on safety and security. These priorities were identified through consultation and engagement activities with tenants. The projects focused on pest management and safety and security will continue into 2023 with leadership from a joint team of tenants and staff, and should be informed by the ideas presented above.



Highlights – Seniors-Specific Policies and Procedures

- By the end of 2021, nine seniors-specific policies and procedures were implemented and four were in the process of being drafted and reviewed.
- Key performance indicators demonstrated that incidents responded to by the community safety unit decreased while calls attended by Toronto Police increased, suggesting gaps in the safety and security supports provided by the community safety unit.
- Direct engagements revealed the following policy and procedure priorities among tenant and staff: improved communication about processes around policy revisions and implementation, a need to support tenant access to and use of common spaces, pest management, tenant safety and building security.
- Recommendations for this innovation are focused on enhancing communication and engagement around policy change, integrating tenant and staff priorities into policies and procedures, and co-developing solutions to urgent building operations issues (e.g., security and safety, pest management, maintenance).

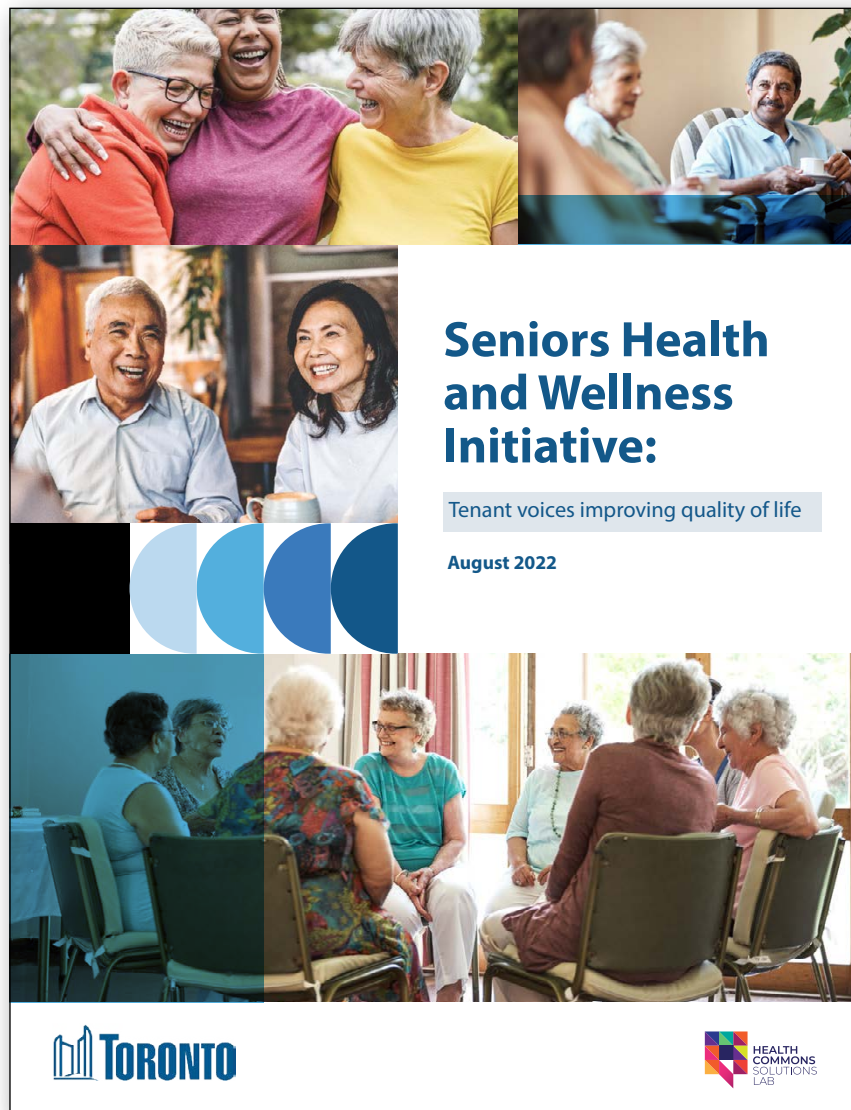
²² Wang C, Eiden A, Cooper R, et al. Effectiveness of Building-Wide Integrated Pest Management Programs for German Cockroach and Bed Bug in a High-Rise Apartment Building, *Journal of Integrated Pest Management*, Volume 10, Issue 1, 2019, 33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jipm/pmz031>



Innovation 3: Seniors Health and Wellness Initiatives

The City engaged Health Commons Solutions Lab to conduct a separate review of the Seniors Health and Wellness innovation of the ISM. The review was conducted in close collaboration with tenants and members of the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee, and was directly shared with Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation. The recommendations on this innovation reflect the necessary next steps to implement the tenant-driven input in the Health Commons report.

Targeted Outcomes of ISM Innovation 3: Improved delivery of housing services, and improved access to health and community support services.



Recommendations for Change – Seniors Health and Wellness Initiatives



RECOMMENDATION 6

Engage tenants to translate the Seniors Health and Wellness Report from Health Commons into practice



Ideas from tenants and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 6a. Draw heavily on the Health Commons Solutions Lab report to redefine health and wellness according to tenants and initiate service planning and coordination that better addresses tenant health and wellness

Long-term (12+ months)

- 6b. Undertake a tenant engagement process to translate the findings and recommendations in the Health Commons Report into a revised health and wellness component of the ISM



Idea from City partners

Long-term (12+ months)

- 6c. Collaborate with tenants to coordinate and deliver more unit-level supports as part of the revised ISM health and wellness initiative; unit-level supports should be provided to address tenant-identified needs, which may include personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, and other services provided by Seniors Services and Long-Term Care's Community Programs or additional organizations identified by tenants in the 2021 Annual ISM Report, and the Health Commons Report



Resource

Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life:²³ The tenant-driven findings and recommendations in this report are foundational to revising the seniors health and wellness component of the ISM. This report provides guides all recommendations and ideas listed above and should be implemented in full by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to improve the health and wellness component of the ISM.



Spotlight

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation plans to develop an Action Plan to implement the recommendations in the Health Commons Solutions Lab Report, in consultation with the City and the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee, with opportunities for shorter and longer term actions. The action plan will be incorporated into Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's upcoming Interim Strategic Directions.



Highlights – Seniors Health and Wellness

- This innovation was paused during the first year of implementation pending comprehensive review by the Health Commons Solutions Lab.
- The Health Commons report comprehensively outlines tenant priorities related to health and wellness, and makes recommendations for action to address these.
- In this report, recommendations for this innovation outline next steps for the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation in engaging tenants to redevelop the seniors health and wellness component of the ISM.

²³ Health Commons Solutions Lab, Seniors Health and Wellness Initiative: Tenant voices improving quality of life, 2022 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62ff6f02b371544df8193c2d/t/63322e7ffe673663990d9ba3/1664233409931/Seniors-Health-and-Wellness-Initiative-Full-Report-%28August-2022%29.pdf>



Innovation 4: Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships

Targeted Outcomes of ISM Innovation 4: Improved Care Coordinator alignment in buildings, increased awareness of and connections to Care Coordinators and community support services, higher degree of coordination between housing and health, and higher tenant satisfaction with services in or near the buildings.



What was implemented – ISM Outputs

In the first year of ISM implementation, 62 Care Coordinators were assigned to the Phase 1 and 2 Buildings. Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation also established an array partnerships across all buildings to support a robust COVID-19 response. Partnerships were forged with Ontario Health Teams, Toronto Public Health, hospitals, community health centres, community service agencies and volunteers to provide, among other supports, outbreak testing, mask distribution, food distribution, and door-to-door and onsite vaccine clinics.

Other partnership agreements related to access to common spaces were suspended during the pandemic, except for access required by essential services (e.g., vaccine clinics described above).





What we learned from the data — Key Performance Indicators

One of the three ISM objectives is to increase access to health and community support services. There were specific trends expected among key performance indicators to measure whether tenants were being connected to home and community care services, and how they were interacting with the health system.

Expected Trends – Tenant and Community Service Requests

Expected an initial increase as Senior Services Coordinators proactively worked with tenants to connect them with supports. As these supports were established, tenants would have fewer unmet needs and therefore make fewer requests.

Expected Trends – Tenant Access to Home and Community Care Support Services

Expected an increase in tenant access to home and community care support services through enhanced referrals and connections to Care Coordinators.

Expected Trends – Emergency Department Visits

Expected a decrease in emergency department visits, due to improved access and utilization of health services and programs.

Key Performance Indicators – Tenant and Community Service Requests

The number of requests for tenant and community services sharply increased in January and February 2021, then decreased and remained relatively stable until December 2021 (**Figure 10, Appendix 3**). Common request types included COVID-19 support, residents requesting support, and “other” (i.e., critical incident follow-ups, requests for external service providers, soft landing support, and vulnerable person door knocks). The increase in total requests was likely due to the former Seniors Housing Unit conducting COVID-19 wellness checks across the buildings, leading to an increase in referrals to services. COVID-19 supports increased as a result of these checks, as did resident requests for other supports.

Key Performance Indicators – Tenant Access to Home and Community Care Services

The number of tenants enrolled in and accessing services offered by services funded by Ontario Health (formerly Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network) remained relatively stable over the first year of ISM implementation (**Figure 11, Appendix 3**). These services include mental healthcare, meals on wheels, homemaking services, vision services, withdrawal management, assisted living, supportive housing, social visits, and transportation services.

Similarly, the number of senior tenants both referred to and accessing home care services did not increase after the ISM was implemented (**Figure 12, Appendix 3**). Home care services are those funded by Ontario Health (formerly Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network) and include nursing, personal support worker services, physiotherapy, social work, and occupational therapy.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted tenant access to home and community care services through closures, lockdowns, and other public health measures. Barriers to staff-to-tenant communications – as discussed in the staffing and training section – may also help to explain these trends, as frontline housing staff play a key role in connecting tenants to Care Coordinators and health and social services.

Key Performance Indicators – Emergency Department Visits

There was a slight increase in emergency department visits among senior tenants in Toronto Seniors Housing buildings in spring 2021 (**Figure 13, Appendix 3**). This aligns with a spike in COVID-19 cases across the province in spring 2021,²⁴ suggesting that tenants may have experienced an increased need to access care as a result of actual or suspected COVID-19 infection.

The number of low urgency emergency department visits represents a relatively small proportion of visits among tenants. This suggests that tenants were primarily accessing the emergency department for urgent, pressing health issues.

24 Public Health Ontario, COVID-19 Data Tool, 2022 <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Infectious-Disease/COVID-19-Data-Surveillance/COVID-19-Data-Tool?tab=trends>



What we learned from tenants and staff

Despite the number of Care Coordinators assigned to Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings, tenants and staff reported inconsistent awareness of who their Care Coordinator was, their role, and how they could be connected to the supports offered by these staff:

“For tenants; especially when their lives are complex; all of us blend into this whole mash of people, and they don’t know who any of us are; it’s just about ‘who was the person I could trust?’ Who was the person who was nicest to me?”
– Staff, Focus Group

Some tenants also expressed frustration and confusion around the repetitive language of “coordinator” among ISM staff:

“Why would you name the new role “Senior Services Coordinator” if there is already a provincial “Care Coordinator” role? Two Coordinators, too many.”
– Tenant, Focus Group

Staff reported difficulty communicating with and reaching Care Coordinators, with some meeting only once with their designated Care Coordinator over the first year of implementation. Care Coordinators’ work hours differ from Senior Services Coordinators’, and turnover among staff and administrators across partners made it difficult to build relationships.

In addition, tenants and staff expressed irritation with a convoluted referral process for Care Coordinators. Some Senior Services Coordinators found it more efficient and effective to work with local supportive housing services and community organizations than connecting with the centralized Care Coordinators:

“I just feel like [the Care Coordinators] are a barrier in themselves. I have to call the intake line, then I talk to the assessment person, then I talk to a Care Coordinator, then the Care Coordinator comes out. I feel like if we’re partnering it’s supposed to be seamless referrals, it’s not.”
– Staff, Focus Group

The reported barriers to communication and complex referral processes among staff, tenants and Care Coordinators may explain why the number of tenants accessing both home and community care services did not increase over the first year of ISM implementation, but instead remained stable.

These insights also underscore the need for enhanced health partnerships to support service delivery at the unit-, building-, and community-level. Stronger partnerships with the provincial system and community-based supportive housing providers may help address this gap. However, staff discussed barriers to forming health partnerships, including program waitlists, complicated referral processes, and unclear eligibility criteria. These challenges make it difficult for staff and health partners to collaboratively engage tenants and identify needs at the building or community level.

Tenants also shared ideas and recommendations for programs and services they would like to see in their building. These included: registered nurses to run health check clinics, education programs on health conditions, mental health support groups, and housekeeping supports. In some cases, tenants singled out community organizations they have had positive experiences with:

“Personal Support Workers from SPRINT are fabulous...everyone appreciates the care they give.”
– Tenant, Focus Group

Coordinated delivery of these health and social supports may reduce both urgent and non-urgent emergency department visits for tenants, which should have decreased over the first year of ISM implementation, but remained relatively stable.

Finally, tenants noted that health partnerships should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach, and instead respond and cater to the unique needs in each building:

“One size does not fit all...Staff have to focus on what that building is comfortable with...some buildings need extra support, some need minimal and others need a mixture.”

– Tenant, Focus Group



Recommendations for Change – Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships



RECOMMENDATION 7

Enhance tenant access, awareness, and utilization of Care Coordinators



Ideas from tenants and staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 7a. Hold annual building-level information sessions with the Senior Service Coordinators and Care Coordinators where both introduce themselves to tenants, describe the supports they provide, discuss referral pathways and how tenants can best reach them
- 7b. Hold quarterly building-level check-ins between ISM Staff and Care Coordinators to discuss how these staff can better collaborate to address tenant issues and service gaps
- 7c. Hold annual regional information sessions between ISM Staff and Care Coordinators, where Care Coordinators or other Home and Community Care Support Services staff provide an overview of provincial services, referral pathways, and how Care Coordinators can help connect tenants

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 7d. Design and display large posters in each building to explain the role of Care Coordinators, how tenants can get connected to them, and types of services available; where needed, posters should be placed in locked, secure bulletin boards maintained by staff

“There needs to be some visibility of provincial staff since they are part of the ISM... introducing themselves and what they do, what agencies work within those regional boundaries, what agencies they have access to.”

– Tenant, focus group



RECOMMENDATION 8

Improve tenant awareness of and access to supports provided by health partners



Ideas from tenants and staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 8a. Resume programming in all buildings in full compliance with public health guidance to ensure programs are active, accessible, safe, and appropriate for tenants

Long-term (12+ months)

- 8b. Conduct a feasibility assessment – including a tenant engagement process, current state analysis, and business case – for the potential expansion of community partners into buildings where services are most required (e.g., LOFT Community Services, WoodGreen, City's Homemakers and Nursing Services, City's Seniors Supportive Housing Program)



Ideas from City partners

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 8c. Promote and deliver ward-level seniors services information sessions for tenants in collaboration with community partners, building staff, and local Councillors, alongside distribution of one printed copy of the Directory of Services for Seniors and Caregivers to each building and Seniors Service Coordinator
- 8d. Connect and collaborate with health partners (e.g., Ontario Health Teams, Home and Community Care and Support Services, community agencies) to establish regional service models that meet tenant health and social service needs, as identified through building-level engagement with tenants

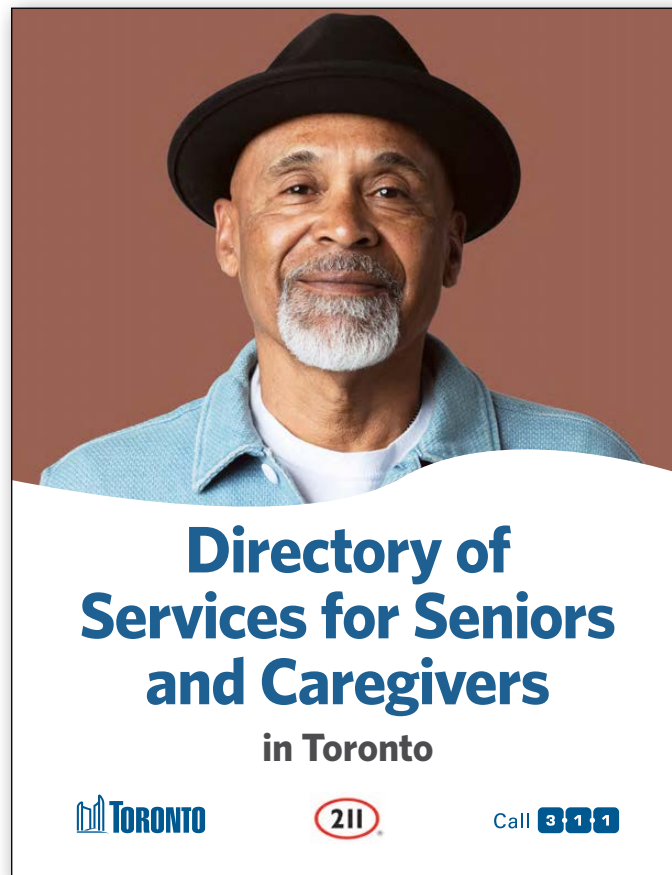
Long-term (12+ months)

- 8e. With input from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee, draft a formal agreement between community health partners and Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to clearly outline roles, referral pathways, accountability, and improved consent and confidentiality processes



Resources

Directory of Services for Seniors and Caregivers²⁵ is a free, publicly available City of Toronto resource to help seniors and caregivers find the services they need in Health, Housing, Food, Pets, Recreation, Caregivers, Legal and many more areas. As per Idea 8c above, the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation may partner with the City to distribute the Directory and deliver information sessions on the Directory in buildings across City wards.



Seniors Services Information Sessions: As part of the Seniors Strategy 2.0, the City delivered sessions across wards to inform seniors about the services available in their community. The City can adapt existing materials to create tailored sessions for tenants and staff in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings, to be delivered in partnership with City Councillors, service providers, and ISM staff.

²⁵ City of Toronto, Directory of Services for Seniors and Caregivers in Toronto, 2021 https://211central.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Directory-of-Services-for-Seniors-and-Caregivers_WEB-Oct-2021-1.pdf

Environmental Scan of Seniors Social Housing Models - In support of an An-inclusive Approach to Housing for Vulnerable Older Adults:²⁶ This report describes 34 service delivery models connecting low- and moderate-income seniors living in social housing to health and social services. A key findings of the report is that promoting access to primary care and health services is central to integrate services in seniors social housing. These findings reinforce the importance Recommendation 8, regarding enhanced tenant connections to health and social support services in their community.



Spotlight

North Toronto Ontario Health Team – Neighbourhood Care Team: An integrated model of care pilot in one Toronto Seniors Housing building. This model aims to increase tenant connections to primary care, mental health and addiction supports, and digital health and literacy. The model is delivered in partnership with the North Toronto Ontario Health Team, Baycrest, Sunnybrook Health Sciences, Sprint Senior Care, VHA Home HealthCare, Loft Community Services, Vibrant Healthcare Alliance, family and tenant representatives, Home and Community Care Support Services, and the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation.

The North Toronto Ontario Health Team conducted extensive tenant engagement at the pilot site through focus groups, door-to-door surveys, and tenant town halls to identify needs and build trust. As a result, the Neighbourhood Care Team worked with partners to implement services including mobile vaccine clinics, registered nurse clinics, and a health education series. This model demonstrates promising future directions for Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's health partnerships to support tenants' health and social service needs and could be scaled to inform partnerships across the North East, South West, and South East regions, as suggested in idea 8d above.

²⁶ City of Toronto, Directory of Services for Seniors and Caregivers in Toronto, 2021 https://211central.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Directory-of-Services-for-Seniors-and-Caregivers_WEB-Oct-2021-1.pdf



Highlights – Designated Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships

- 62 Care Coordinators were aligned to buildings and Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation formed health and social service partnerships to deliver COVID-19 supports to tenants.
- Key performance indicators demonstrated that the number of tenants referred to or accessing home and community care support services did not increase during the first year of ISM implementation. The number of tenants who visited an emergency department was stable with a sharp increase in spring 2021. As expected, tenant and community service requests increased then stabilized.
- Direct engagements revealed the following priority issues for tenants and staff: difficulty accessing Care Coordinators and the services they offer, adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to health partnerships, and challenges to forming health partnerships (e.g., waitlists, complicated referral processes, and unclear eligibility criteria).
- Recommendations for this innovation are focused on improving tenant access to and awareness of Care Coordinators, and engaging tenants to enhance their access to health and social services.





Tenant Engagement and Communication

Targeted Outcomes of Tenant Engagement in the ISM: Increased tenant engagement, tenants feel that management/staff are actively listening to and taking action on their input, and engagement and communication efforts adopt an equity lens to involve diverse voices.



What was implemented – ISM Outputs

Senior Tenant Advisory Committee

Members of the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee bring their lived experience, knowledge, and skills to assist in the development of age-equitable best practices and approaches for senior tenant engagement, and to prioritize the health and well-being of all Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation tenants across the 83 buildings.

Between December 2020 and December 2021, the Committee held 10 official meetings and three optional meetings on other topics of interest to members. Members were also invited to participate in focus groups to provide input on the transition to the new Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation. More information on the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee can be found in the 2021 ISM Annual Program Report.

Communication with Tenants – Newsletters and Information Sessions

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation circulated a quarterly newsletter for tenants, called “Seniors Speak,” with eight issues published between the summer 2019 and winter 2021. The number of newsletters produced and shared with tenants did not increase as a result of the ISM.

There were two information sessions held for tenants on the ISM, delivered by the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation. On September 14, 2021, a session was held for buildings that began implementing the ISM during Phase 2 of implementation. On November 16, 2021, an information session was held in the South East region to provide an update on Phase 1 implementation of the ISM.



What we learned from the data – Key Performance Indicators

One of the ISM's three objectives is to build relationships of trust between senior tenants and housing staff. The only existing tool to systematically measure tenant satisfaction is the Annual Tenant Experience survey, implemented once prior to the implementation of the ISM in November 2020.²⁷ Tenants reported overall satisfaction with the services they received, while also indicating that staff availability and understanding of seniors-specific needs require improvement. This survey should be repeated annually within the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings, to hone understanding of tenant experiences and identify areas for improvement in relationships with staff.



What we learned from tenants and staff

While tenants appreciated the circulation of newsletters, many also shared a desire to receive clearer and more accessible information about the ISM that outlines the model and the staff involved. In addition, tenants noted that the terminology and definitions used by staff to describe the model can be inconsistent, and expressed a need for consensus definitions co-developed with tenants.

Language and communication represent a major difficulty for tenants whose primary language is not English. These tenants experience barriers to engagement and challenges to understanding information shared about the ISM, their tenancy (e.g., lease, notices), or available support and services.

“Because [the lease] is in English, but we speak Mandarin. First, we can't read it. Second, we don't understand what people are saying. We need someone to help [...] they should consider using various languages.”

– Toronto Seniors Housing Tenant, Wellesley Institute Report on Language

27 Toronto Seniors Housing Unit. Tenant Experience Survey: Results from Integrated Service Model Phase 1 Buildings. 2021. <https://www.torontohousing.ca/residents/Tenants-First/PublishingImages/ism/ISM%20Phase%201%20Tenant%20Experience%20Survey%20results.pdf>

Communication and engagement with staff should be respectful and responsive. Some tenants perceived staff to be unapproachable and dismissive, or that their engagement style with tenants was too corporate and formal. Tenants expressed a preference for face-to-face communication and identified a need for social events like barbeques or celebrations to build rapport among staff and tenants.

Senior tenants identified an urgent need to better leverage their expertise as an asset to community planning. Despite engagement structures like the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee, meaningful engagement and leadership opportunities are lacking across the Corporation, and existing tenant leaders feel underutilized in decision-making. Tenants suggested that the tenant engagement model be redeveloped to more effectively gather and integrate the perspectives of senior tenants into the design and delivery of services. Critical to this process will be ensuring that all tenants, regardless of their languages spoken, have opportunities to shape their community.

The selection of candidates for various committees involved in the design and delivery of the ISM should also focus on recruiting diverse seniors and balancing representation across the four regions. Tenants and staff reported that diversity and equity within the ISM needs more attention and effort.



Recommendations for Change – Tenant Engagement and Communication



RECOMMENDATION 9

Enhance accessibility of information on the ISM for tenants



Ideas from tenants and staff

Short-term (3-6 months)

- 9a. Enhance tenant access to the annual ISM program report (e.g., printed copy in building common rooms)
- 9b. Identify tenant leaders who speak multiple languages and would be willing to support interpretation for live events or written communications
- 9c. Co-create a glossary of frequently used terms to build consensus between tenant and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 9d. Establish a building-level database available to all staff on prominent languages spoken by tenants, as well as guidance for the use and maintenance of the database



Resource

‘Can you send someone who speaks my language?’ Language barriers among older adults living in Toronto’s social housing:²⁸ This recent report from the Wellesley Institute describes language barriers experienced by seniors living in social housing in Toronto. It provides guidance for social housing providers to share information with tenants who have limited English proficiency in accessible and inclusive ways. The recommendations and action areas in this report can support advancement of Recommendation 9.

²⁸ Wellesley Institute, ‘Can you send someone who speaks my language?’ Language barriers among older adults living in Toronto’s social housing, 2022 <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Language-Barriers.pdf>



RECOMMENDATION 10

Enhance opportunities for tenant engagement and leadership



Ideas from tenants and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 10a. Provide building-level orientation for new and existing tenants to learn about leadership opportunities and events
- 10b. Enable each building to identify, train, and define tenant representatives in a way that is equitable and suits building-level needs
- 10c. Provide each building with a predictable, easy-to-access fund to support tenant-led activities
- 10d. Hold regular face-to-face social and recreational events at the building level (e.g., BBQs, holiday meals, social events) and establish a secure, tenant-only bulletin board to promote the events





Resources

Principles and Methods for a Tenant Engagement System - Recommendations from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee:²⁹ A comprehensive, Council-directed report compiled by Joy Connelly through engagement with the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee to improve tenant engagement in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation. The principles and methods described in the report informed recommendations and ideas presented here should serve as a foundation for the redevelopment of Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's tenant engagement model.

The missing link: creating opportunities for older people to participate in academic conferences:³⁰ This study was co-written by tenants living in social housing in Toronto and exemplifies meaningful engagement. The authors make recommendations for promoting the engagement of seniors, including assigning meaningful roles, providing mentorship and support, access to literature and resources, recognition, and promoting opportunities for involvement. Recommendations in this study may be applicable to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation's broader efforts to engage tenants.



Spotlight

Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is in the process of procuring an external facilitator to support the co-design of the new tenant engagement model with senior tenants. The *Principles and Methods for a Tenant Engagement System* report will inform this process.³¹ Tenant leaders will also be engaged in design of consultations, and a working group comprised of staff and tenants will be formed to finalize the re-designed model. The target is to approve the model at the executive level in the spring of 2023.

The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation also intends to review the Tenant Action Funds and Tenant Funds Distribution Policy. This aligns with the tenant-identified opportunity to establish a predictable, easy-to-access fund to support tenant-led activities.

29 Principles And Methods for a Tenant Engagement System: Recommendations from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee (Compiled by Joy Connelly), 2022 <https://www.torontoseniorshousing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/QTEC-June-13-2022-Public-Agenda-package.pdf>

30 Sheppard CL, Clohessy M, MacNeil C, Butler R. The missing link: creating opportunities for older people to participate in academic conferences. *J Gerontol Soc Work*. 2022 Sep 22:1-9. doi: 10.1080/01634372.2022.2124573. Epub ahead of print.

31 Principles And Methods for a Tenant Engagement System: Recommendations from the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee (Compiled by Joy Connelly), 2022 <https://www.torontoseniorshousing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/QTEC-June-13-2022-Public-Agenda-package.pdf>



Highlights – Tenant Engagement and Communication

- By the end of 2021, the Senior Tenants Advisory Committee held 13 meetings, “Seniors Speak” newsletters were delivered to tenants quarterly, and two information sessions were delivered in buildings that rolled out the ISM.
- The Annual Tenant Experience survey is the only existing tool to systematically measure the tenant perspectives and has only been implemented once, prior to the ISM. Quantitative data is not available on tenant satisfaction and the overall tenant experience during ISM implementation.
- Direct engagements revealed the following priority issues: an urgent need to leverage tenant leaders in community planning, a desire to receive more accessible information about the ISM, ongoing language barriers for tenants whose primary language is not English, and a need for responsive and respectful tenant engagement and communication.
- Recommendations for this innovation are focused on enhancing accessibility of information about the ISM and enhancing opportunities for tenant engagement and leadership.





Key Performance Indicators

Over the first year of implementation of the ISM, the City collected data from Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation and health partners (e.g., Home and Community Care Services and Supports, Toronto Police, Toronto Paramedics, Toronto Fire) to establish a baseline understanding of the model's early impact.

While gathering input on these indicators was not the initial focus of this evaluation, feedback was shared by tenants and staff across direct engagements on various challenges and areas for improvement.



What we learned from tenants and staff

Tenants and staff reported some dissatisfaction with the key performance indicators and shared potential solutions for strengthening and streamlining the indicators collected.

"[We] need to find the best way to move forward with these KPIs [and] identify what needs to be modified."
– Staff

"KPIs are just one way to evaluate these innovations."
– Staff

Some tenants identified a pressing absence of indicators to assess tenant satisfaction and the quality of staff-to-tenant relationships. Tenants highlighted that the number of newsletters circulated or information sessions held does not effectively capture or reflect improvements in engagement and trust. Additionally, the Tenant Experience Survey, which does include items on tenant satisfaction with staff, has not been administered since 2020.

Tenants also shared that sociodemographic characteristics of tenants as well as measures of tenant engagement and satisfaction need to be captured better on a routine basis, such as through the Tenants Needs Assessment or Tenant Experience Survey.

Recommendations for Change – Key Performance Indicators



RECOMMENDATION 11

Work with tenants and staff to develop additional key performance indicators and related data collection tools that measure tenant-staff relationships



Ideas from tenants and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 11a. Co-develop, circulate, and analyze an annual tenant experience survey, including items on tenant satisfaction, wellbeing, quality of relationships with staff, and other indicators as determined in collaboration with tenants
- 11b. Develop data collection tools that assess tenant awareness of staff (scope, role, how to contact)
- 11c. Develop indicators to assess staff competency and awareness of tenant issues and priorities, and guidance on how this data should be used and managed



RECOMMENDATION 12

Establish data collection guidance for key performance indicators to promote quality and consistency



Ideas from tenants and staff

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- 12a. Expand collection and analysis of tenant needs assessment data, including improved collection of socio-demographic characteristics, at the building and regional level to identify strategic areas for service provision and opportunities to address barriers for equity-deserving groups
- 12b. Leverage service use data collected from partner organizations to identify service gaps and areas for intervention



Highlights – Key Performance Indicators

- Data is collected by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, Toronto Police, Toronto Paramedics, Toronto Fire and Ontario Health to measure the outcomes and impact of the ISM.
- Tenants and staff shared concerns with the current set of key performance indicators collected to measure the impact of the ISM. These include gaps in monitoring tenant satisfaction, assessing the impact of staff-to-tenant relationships, and concerns with the quality and utility of the current indicators.
- Recommendations for this innovation are focused on addressing gaps in the data, specifically around the tenant experience and staff-to-tenant relationships, and enhancing the quality and consistency of the full scope of data collected.





What's Next? Advancing the Recommendations

This report evaluates the first year of ISM implementation, including concrete recommendations and ideas directly from those living and working in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings to improve the model in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

The City and senior tenants share a vested interest in supporting the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to be a success in leading, implementing, and advancing the ISM to better support tenants health and housing needs. The transition to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation should not just reflect a change in the management of the 83 seniors buildings and proceeding with business as usual. Instead, this transition should signal a departure from the legacy of Toronto Community Housing Corporation and a moment of transformation in social housing for seniors.

Much has been achieved in the first year of ISM implementation, and the tenants and staff engaged in this evaluation expressed appreciation for the significant progress and potential of this new service model. Tenants and staff also pointed to emerging and longstanding gaps and issues at the unit, building, regional, and corporate level, offering actionable and innovative recommendations in response. The ongoing and meaningful engagement of senior tenants will be critical in realizing these recommendations and improving the ISM.

The Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation is currently co-developing a new engagement model with tenants. The successful redevelopment of the engagement model provides an opportunity to tailor the ISM to the unique needs of each building in collaboration with senior tenants, as suggested throughout this report. Systems must be in place to engage tenants, ensure each building has sufficient tenant representation, and foster trusting relationships among tenants and staff.

Now is the time to listen and act, to draw on the content of this and other key reports, and work with tenants to translate their priorities into tangible changes in policy, programming, and practice.

The City will continue to provide strategic support to the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation to advance these recommendations and foster vibrant, active, and inclusive tenant communities. In particular, the ‘ideas from the City’ woven throughout this report provide promising avenues for collaboration to improve ISM implementation and better address tenant needs.

We look forward to walking this path together.

Table 5. Logic Model for the ISM

Issue	Seniors living in social housing are disproportionately affected by poverty, social isolation, mobility issues, and cognitive and health challenges that negatively impact their wellbeing. Staff in the seniors-designated buildings are assigned to support a high number of units and are required to travel between buildings, negatively impacting their ability to build relationships with and support tenants. Furthermore, services in these buildings are often inconsistent and inadequate, and there is a lack of integration between housing and health services for senior tenants.
Tenant Priorities	Senior tenants living in Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings have identified the following four priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To live in buildings and units that are clean and well-maintained; 2. To feel safe in their homes and communities; 3. To have increased access to programs, services and supports that meet their needs; 4. To receive more frequent and proactive communication that is timely and respectful.
Objectives	The objectives of the Integrated Service Model are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foster relationships of trust between housing staff and senior tenants; 2. Improve the delivery of housing services, with an increased focus on issues that impact housing stability for senior tenants; 3. Increase access to health and community support services through enhanced partnerships with community agencies and integration of services directly in TCHC buildings
Target Group	Seniors living in the 83 seniors-designated buildings operated by the Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation (formerly Seniors Housing Unit at Toronto Community Housing)
Inputs	City of Toronto partnership, Home and Community Care Services (formerly Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network) partnership, community agencies, research partnerships

Strategies (Innovations)	Staffing Model	Housing Operations & Policies	Seniors Health & Wellness	Designated Care Coordinators
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete Tenant Services Coordinator and Tenant Services Coordinator roles Create Seniors Services Coordinator, Tenant Services Administrator, and Support and Engagement Supervisor roles Increase staffing levels Identify partners for training Train staff on seniors issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and implement seniors-specific housing policies in priority areas Create the Senior Tenant Advisory Committee Host quarterly tenant town halls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify agencies to act as partners Locate/create space Engage with tenants and partners to identify service offerings and programs for initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign designated Care Coordinators to each building Develop tenant referral processes Host integrated team meetings with health and housing staff
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # staff hired # and type of training curriculums developed and offered # staff trained # of team meetings Feedback from housing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of policies revised/created # of policies implemented # of Senior Tenant Advisory Committee meetings # of tenants at town halls Feedback from tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of partner agencies identified # of tenants engaged Menu of programs and services available # created Feedback from tenants & partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of Care Coordinators assigned to buildings # of tenants referred to Care Coordinators # of integrated team meetings Feedback from health partners
Short-Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ staff to tenant ratio ↑ tenant awareness of housing staff ↑ staff knowledge of seniors' issues and support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ awareness of policy changes among tenants and staff ↑ compliance with policies ↑ tenant engagement in building operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ awareness of programs and services among tenants and housing staff ↑ access to programs and services among tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ communication between housing and health staff ↑ number of tenants connected to community support services
Intermediate Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved relationship between tenants and housing staff (↑ tenant satisfaction, ↑ communication) Improved delivery of housing services, including condition of units and buildings (↓ pests, ↓ moderate or excessive hoarding) and ability to manage tenancy (↓ total arrears, ↓ retroactive arrears, ↓ active legal files, ↓ tenant evictions) Improved access to health and community support services (↑ access to TC LHIN funded services, ↓ crisis long-term care placements) 			
Long-Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior tenants have an increased ability to age in place with dignity and in comfort. 			

Questions for Direct Engagements with Tenants and Staff

Questions that guided focus groups and interviews with tenants

Staffing and Training Questions

1. Do you know and trust the staff in your building and find them helpful? Do staff help you meet your needs?
2. Do you know the Senior Services Coordinator working in your building? Did you know that part of their role is to help tenants to access services they may need?
3. Is staffs' communication with tenants appropriate, good, timely, respectful, and considerate of language preferences?
4. What types of staff are needed in the building to better support you?
5. What are your top recommendations for improvement in this area?

Policies and Procedures Questions

6. Do you feel more satisfied with the operations and services in your building since the ISM began to roll out in 2021?
7. Do you feel safe in your building? Are you happy with maintenance and cleanliness?
8. What policies continue to be challenging for you, or do you feel need changing? (For example: annual rent review, eviction, arrears)
9. What are your top recommendations for improvement in this area?

Seniors Health and Wellness

- The Seniors Services and Long-Term Care Division engaged the Health Commons Solutions Lab to conduct a separate evaluation of the Seniors Health and Wellness innovation of the ISM. The process led by Health Commons took place during the summer of 2022, and focused on gathering tenant input on the seniors health and wellness component of the ISM.
- The City brings the input and recommendations outlined in the Health Commons report forward, rather than duplicating efforts to gather input on this innovation.

Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships Questions

10. Do you feel like you and other tenants can access the services you need to be able to continue living independently?
11. Do you think the services offered in your building fit tenants' needs and are helpful to tenants?
12. What services would help senior tenants to continue living independently (e.g. health supports in the building, food, homemaking, laundry, or other ideas)?
13. Are you aware that each building has or will have a designated Care Coordinator from the Province to help tenants to access government-funded health and community support services?
14. What are your top recommendations for improvement in this area?

Tenant Information, Engagement and Consultation Questions

15. Which information and engagement channels do you find most helpful for learning about, and giving feedback on, the changes being made in the building (e.g., Formal tenant engagement system, Quarterly Seniors Speak newsletters, Regional town halls, Tenant social events, Other)?
16. What are your top recommendations for improvement in this area, specifically regarding engagement with tenants around staffing, building policies/procedures, and health and community services?

General/Overall Question

17. Overall, what suggestions do you have to make the buildings better for senior tenants?

Questions that guided focus groups and interviews with staff

Staffing and Training Questions

1. Do you think the new staffing model works well? Can you share some advantages or challenges of the new model that you see in your role as the building Super?
2. Do you feel tenants know and understand the role of the SSC, and how could this be improved or supported?
3. Are there any coordination/collaboration gaps/needs among SSCs, TSAs and you in a building?
4. What supports/resources would help you better perform your roles and responsibilities in the buildings?
5. Do you feel that after attending the different training sessions that are being held, you gain good knowledge, resources and tools to support senior tenants in your building/s?
6. What would help you feel better equipped to support senior tenants specifically, and meet their unique needs?
7. What are some of the challenges you face in terms of connecting to tenants, fostering strong relationships of trust and addressing their concerns?

Policies and Procedures Questions

8. Do you think the new or updated procedures and policies that have been updated, drafted and/or tested under ISM better meet the needs of senior tenants?
9. Which policies and procedures continue to be most challenging for senior tenants, in your view?

10. Have you and the tenants been able to keep pace with the changing procedures/policies?
11. Have these been helpful to you and the new ISM staff in terms of improved communications and better relationships with the tenants?

Care Coordinators and Health Partnerships Questions

12. How do you find the partnership with provincial Care Coordinators (CCs)? Are you aware about the role of CCs and that the SSCs can help refer tenants to the CCs? Do you see any challenges in this pathway?
13. Do you think this innovation and joint training of CCs and
14. Do you think the joint training between SSCs and the provincial Care Coordinators (CCs) has been helpful in strengthening the relationship between the two roles and organizations (TCHC and HCCSS)?
15. Do this innovation and joint training have been able to build a smooth referral process for tenants? Do you face any challenges in this regard?
16. Is the building Super aware of the role of CCs and that the SSCs can help refer tenants to the CCs. Do you see any challenge in this pathway?

General/Overall Question

17. What are your top recommendations for improving the delivery of the ISM in the buildings going forward?

Key Performance Indicator Figures

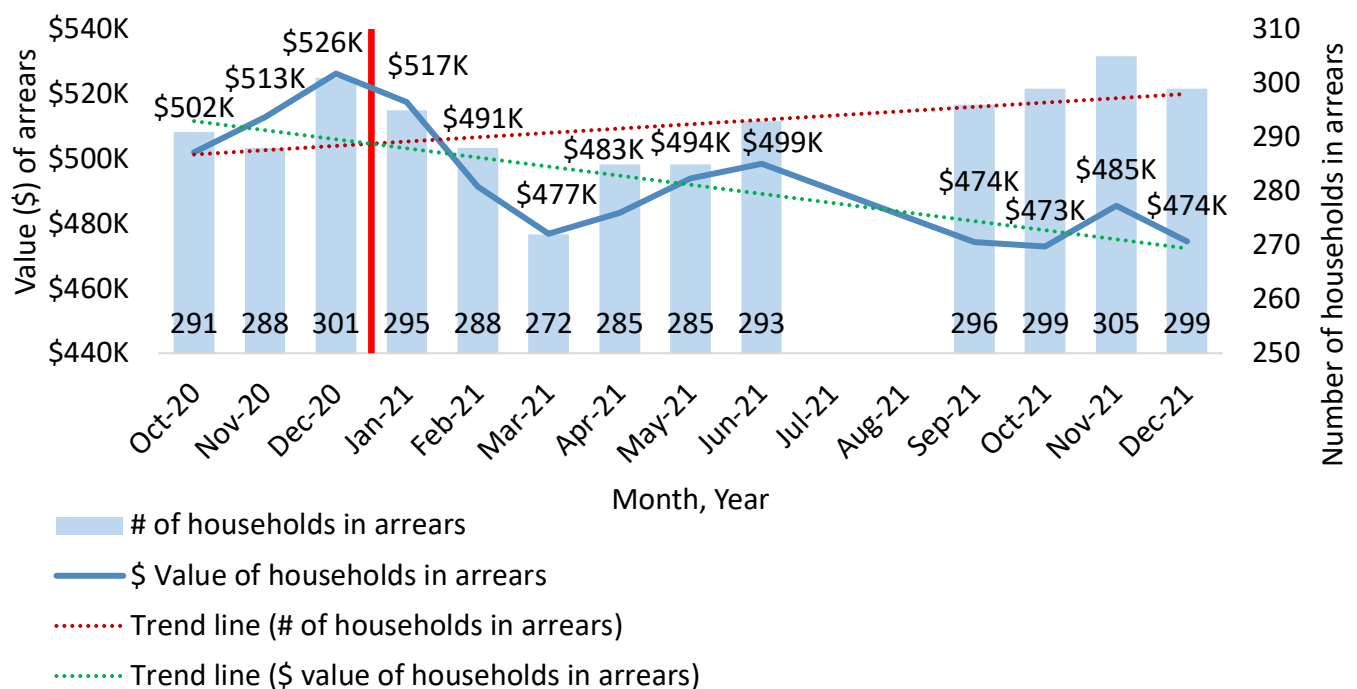
Below are the figures depicting key performance indicators referred to throughout the report. All data in the figures represent the experiences of the 18 Phase 1 buildings.

Tenancy Management – Key Performance Indicators

(see page 29)

Figure 1. Number and Value (\$) of Arrears

Expected trend: decrease for both value and number of households

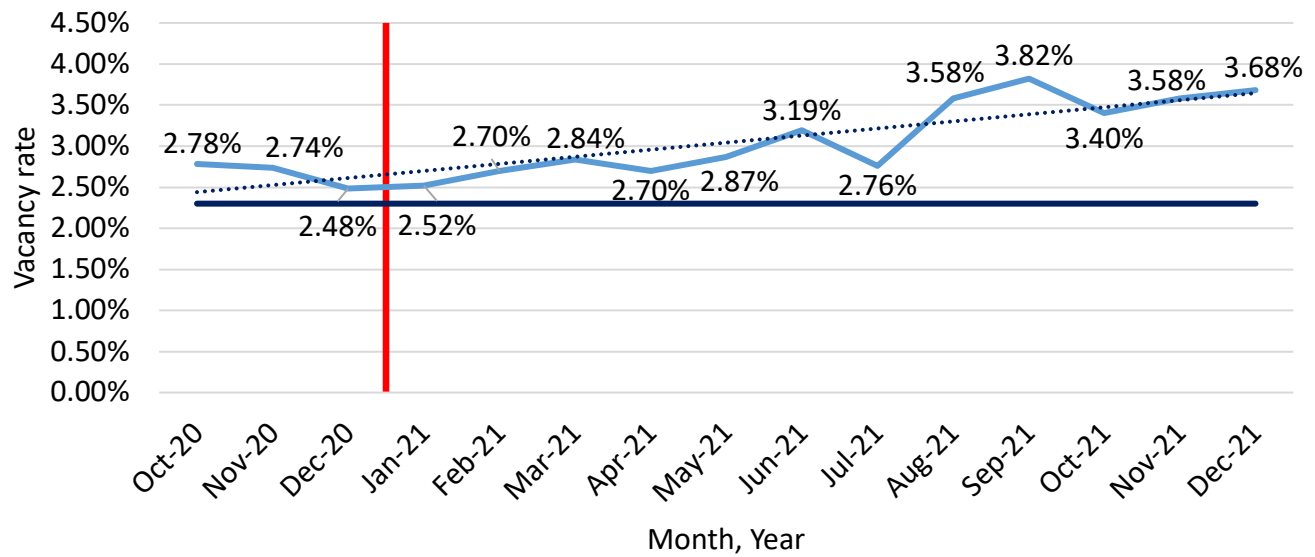


Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

Note: Business reporting issues due to the transition to new technology resulted in data for indicator being unavailable for July and August 2021. Note that these arrears include households with retroactive arrears which are often temporary while waiting for tenants to provide documents or other requirements and are often diminished or reversed once these requirements are met. Over the period of this data there were an average of 100 households with retroactive arrears with an average total arrears for all retroactive households of \$140,773.

Figure 2. Vacancy Rate (target 2.3%)

Expected trend: decrease



- The total number of rentable vacant units divided by the total number of rentable units, calculated on the last day of the month
- Average of Vacancy Rate Target
- Linear (The total number of rentable vacant units divided by the total number of rentable units, calculated on the last day of the month)

Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

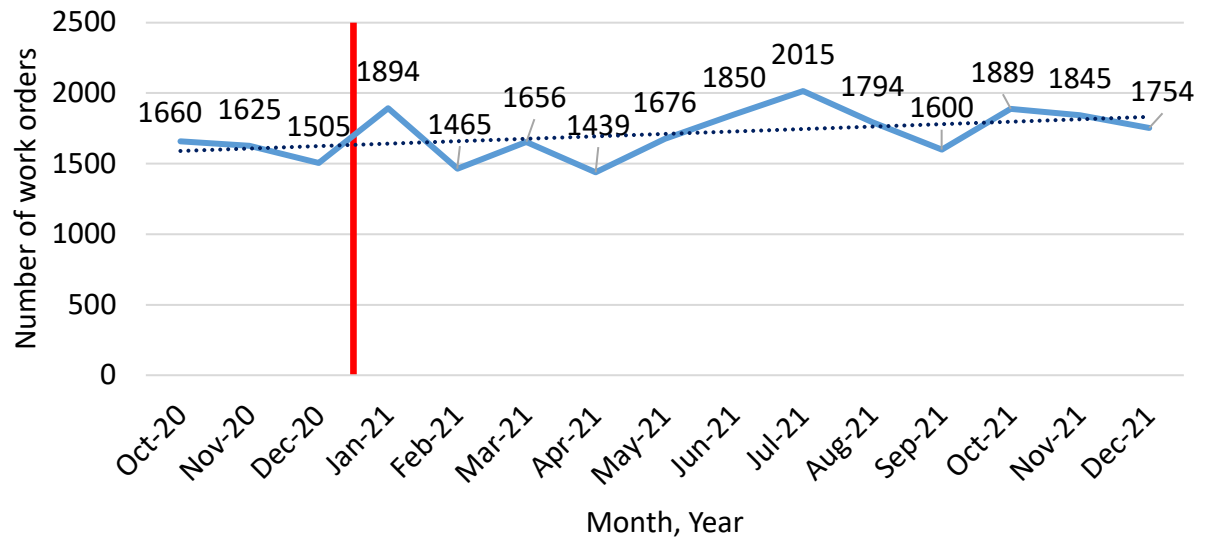
Note: Vacancy rate is the total number of rentable vacant units divided by the total number of rentable units, calculated on the last day of the month.

Property Management – Key Performance Indicators

(see page 36)

Figure 3. Number of Maintenance Requests (Work Orders) Created

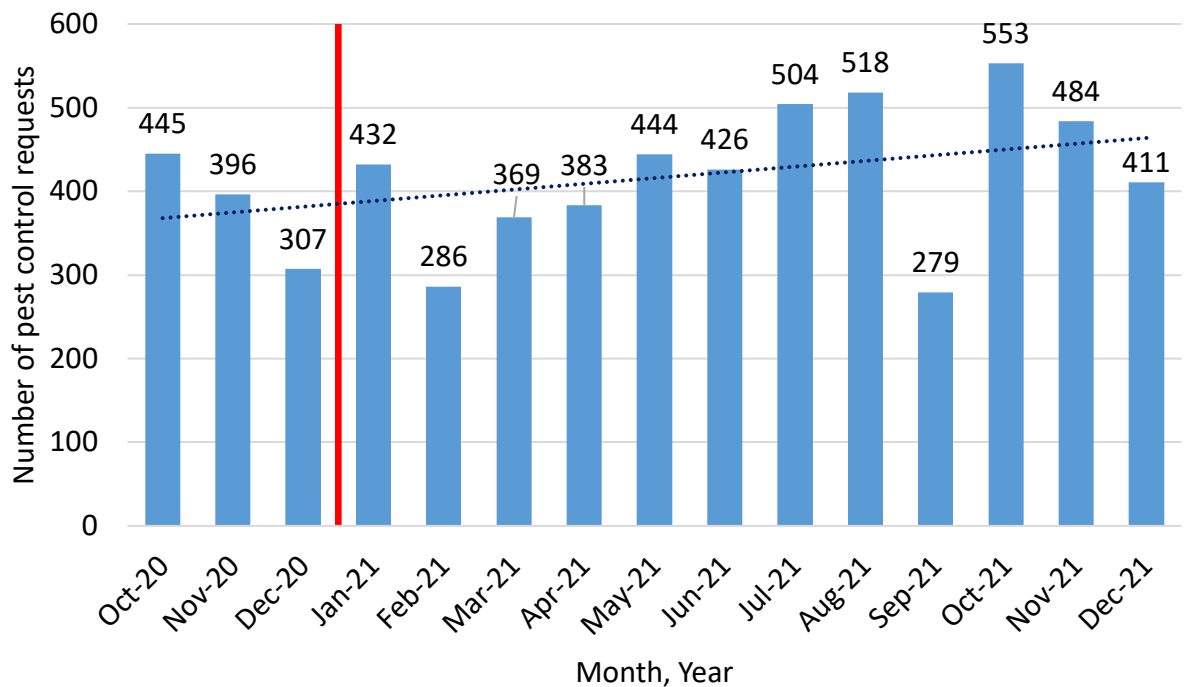
Expected trend: increase then decrease



Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

Figure 4. Number of Pest Control Requests (Work Orders) Created

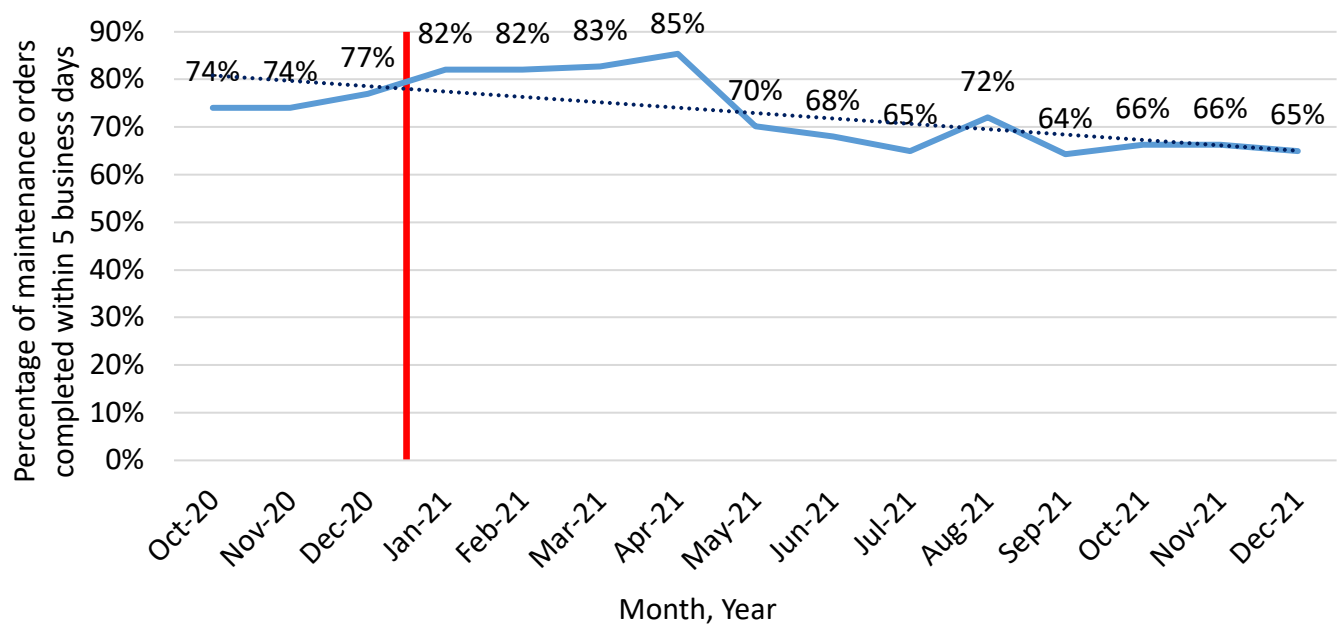
Expected trend: decrease



Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

Figure 5. Proportion of Maintenance Request Work Orders Closed in Five Business Days (Service Level)

Expected trend: increase



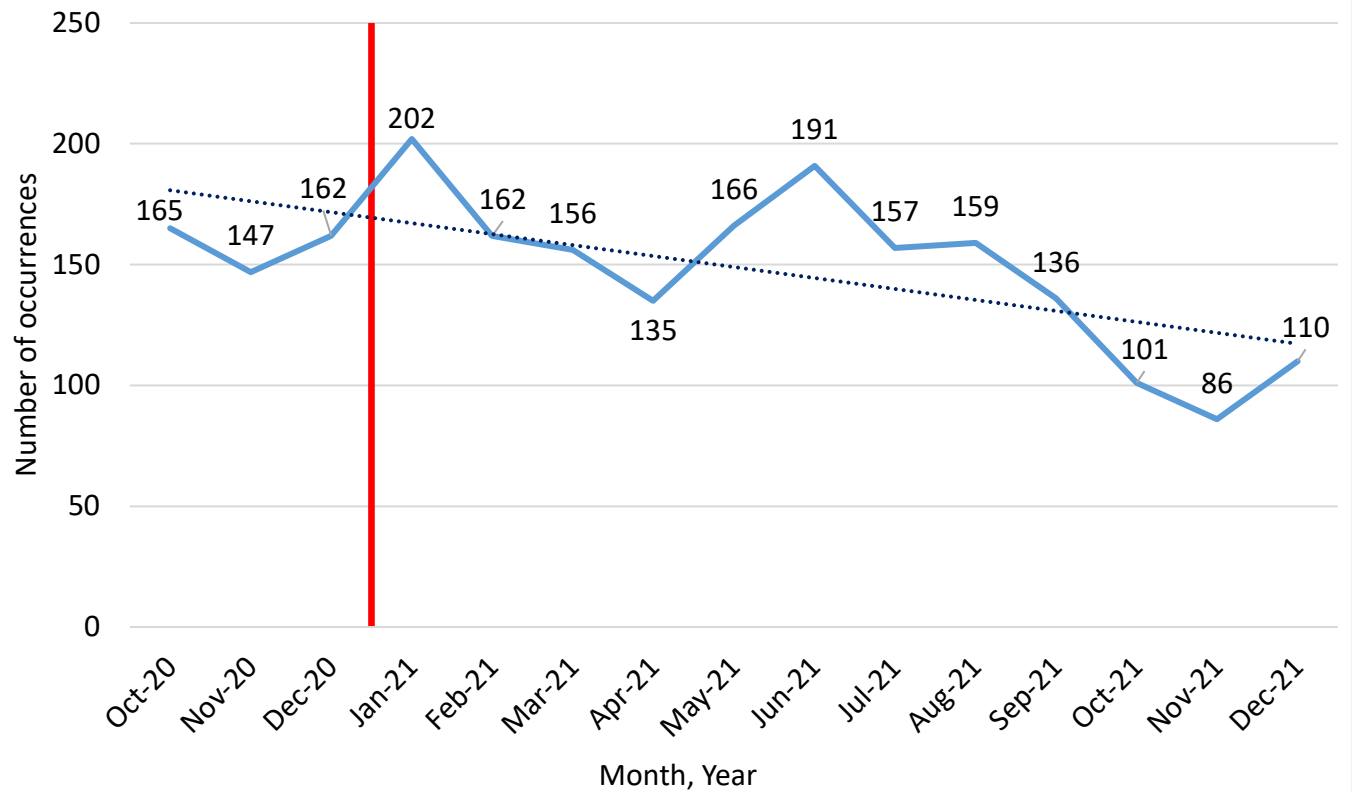
Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

Community Safety – Key Performance Indicators

(see page 37)

Figure 6. Community Safety Unit Events

Expected trend: decrease

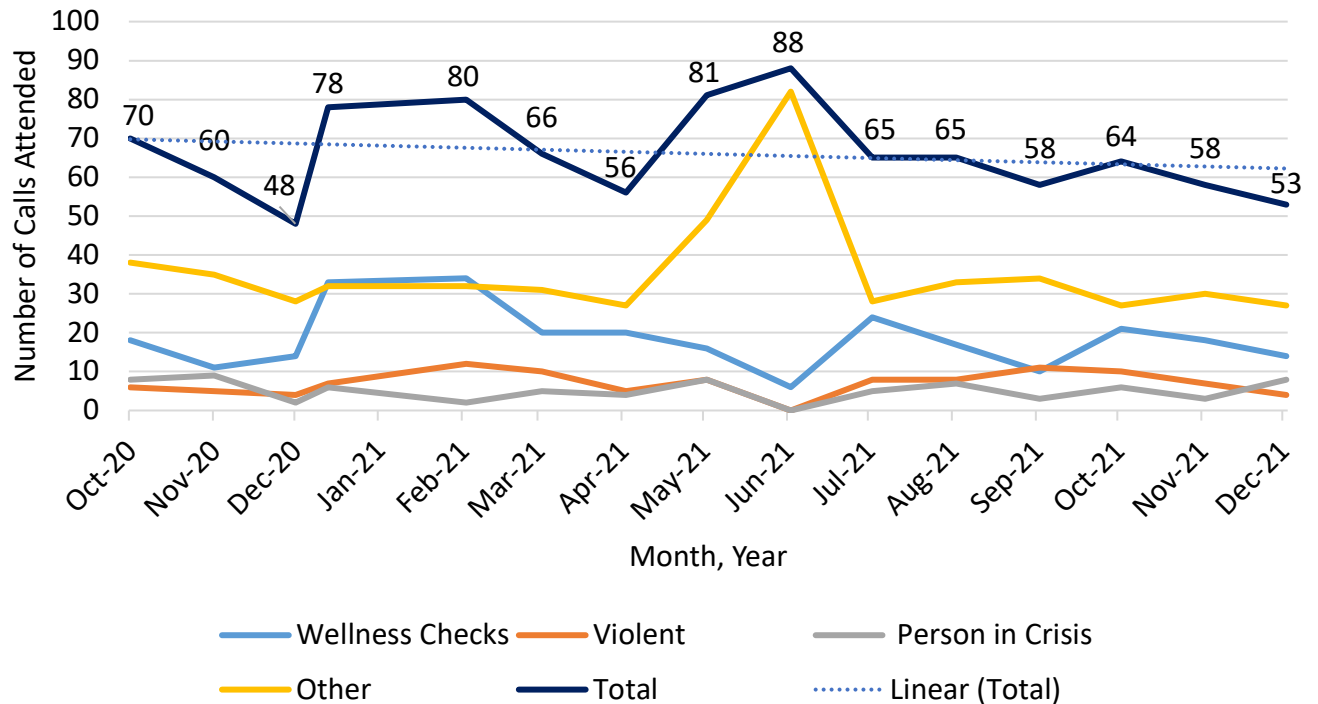


Source: Toronto Community Housing Corporation – Community Safety Unit

Note: Types of community safety occurrences the unit responds to include: anti-social behavior, arson, warrants, disputes and serious violent incidents.

Figure 7. Number and Type of Calls attended to by Toronto Police

Expected trend: decrease

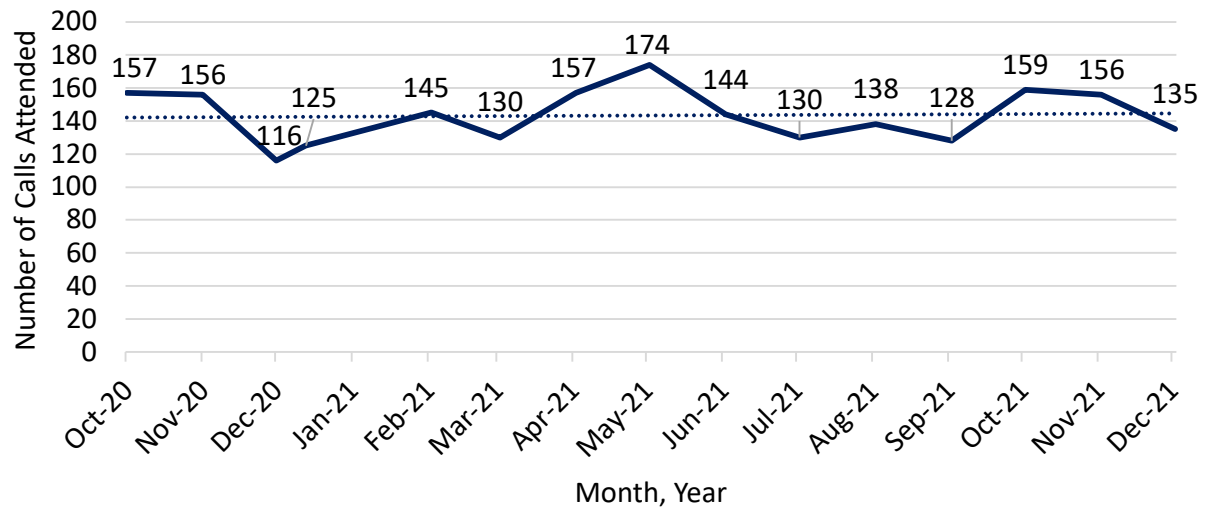


Source: Toronto Police Services

Note: “Wellness checks” refers to address and wellness checks. “Violence” refers to assault and weapons related calls. “Person in crisis” refers to attempt or threatened suicide, person in crisis, or overdose. “Other” refers to calls that did not fall into these categories. Figure represents calls attended to a building address and within 50 metres of the address.

Figure 8. Number of Calls attended to by Toronto Paramedics

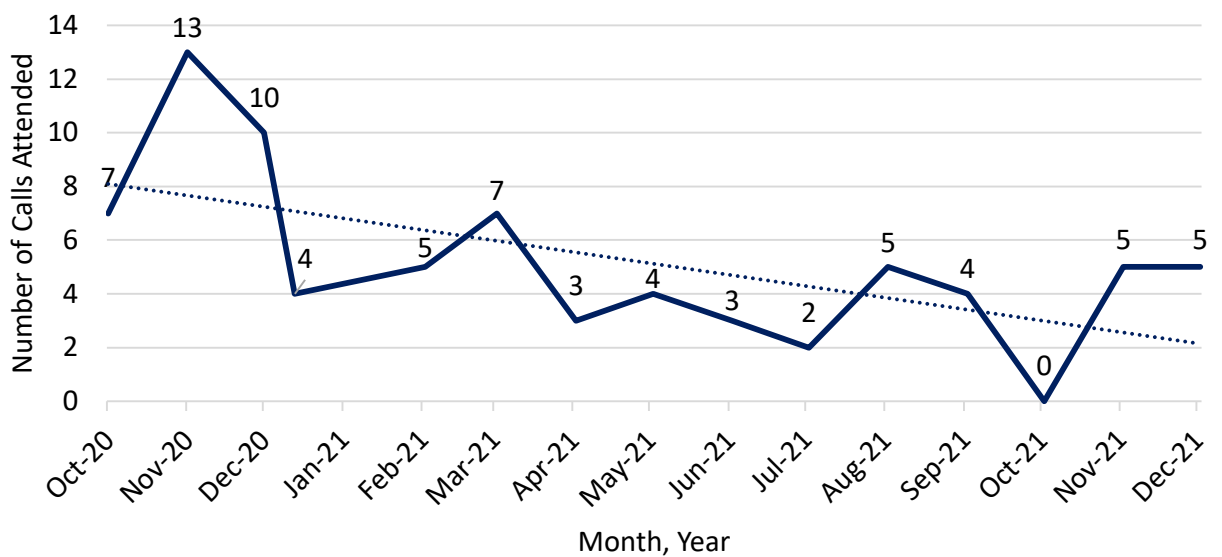
Expected trend: decrease



Source: Toronto Paramedic Services

Figure 9. Number of Calls attended to by Toronto Fire

Expected trend: decrease



Source: Toronto Fire Service

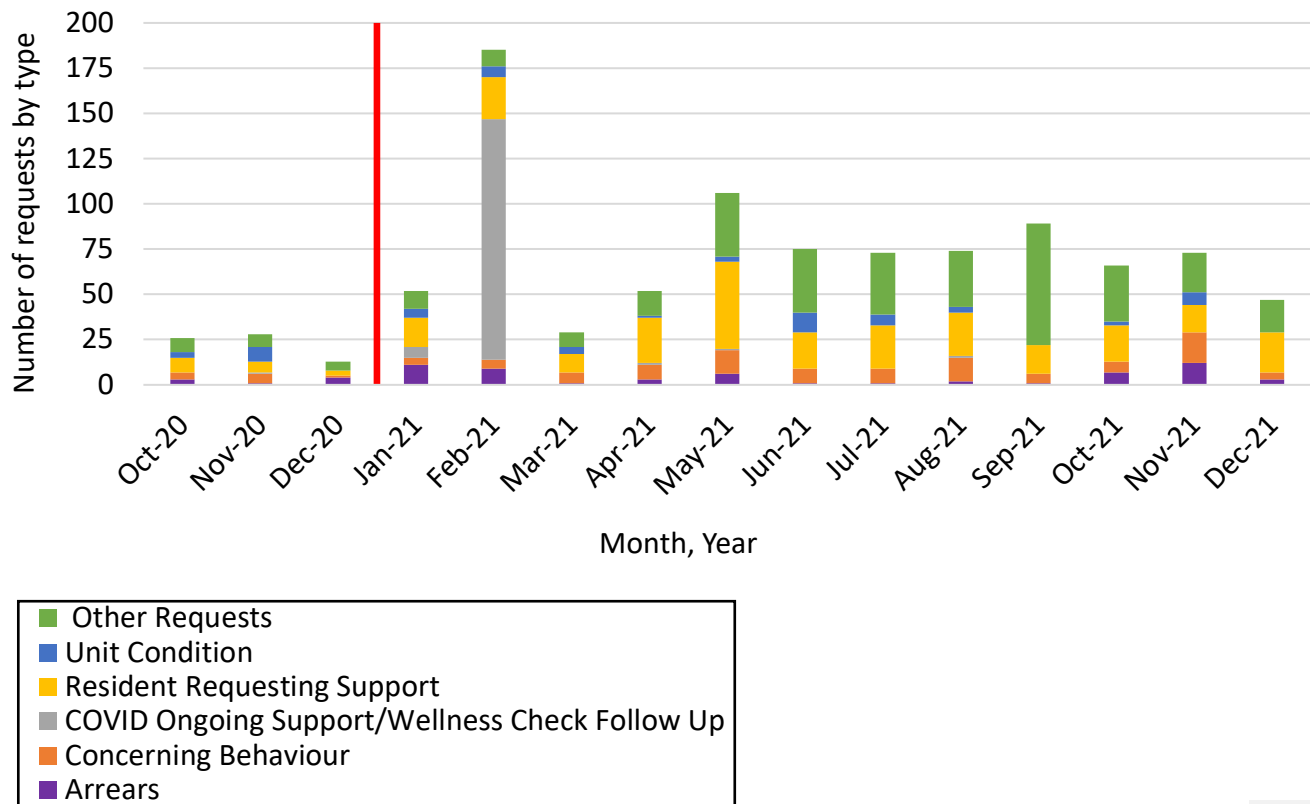
Note: Fire calls includes calls attended for real fire events, and pre-fire conditions (e.g., a pot on a stove causes a smoke alarm to go off, but a fire is not caused).

Tenant Access to Community Support Services and Home Care – Key Performance Indicators

(see page 50 and 51)

Figure 10. Number and Type of Tenant and Community Service Support Requests Created

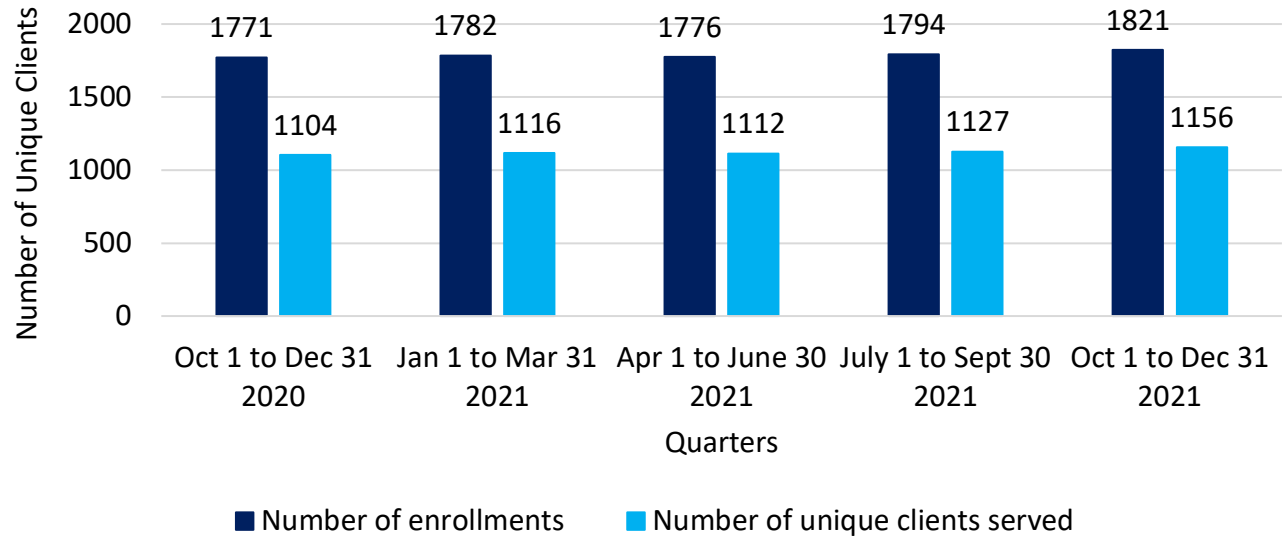
Expected trend: increase then decrease (in the number of requests created)



Source: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation

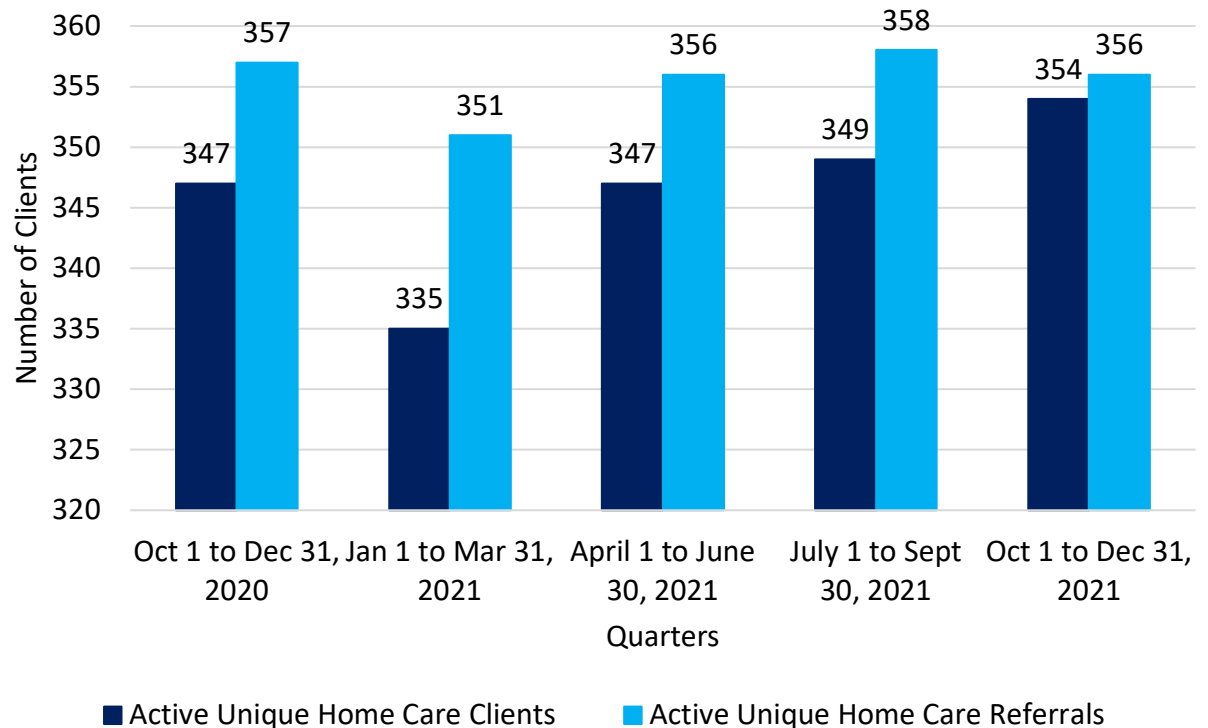
Note: Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation combined the number of service request types with low numbers into the 'Other Requests' category, including: critical incident follow up, external service provider requests, internal unit transfer, loss of subsidy, support relocation of tenant, soft landing support, vulnerable person door knock, and vulnerable person telephone. Toronto Seniors Housing also merged two COVID-related categories: ongoing support and wellness check follow-up.

Figure 11. Tenant Access to Services funded by Ontario Health (formerly Toronto-Central Local Health Integration Network)



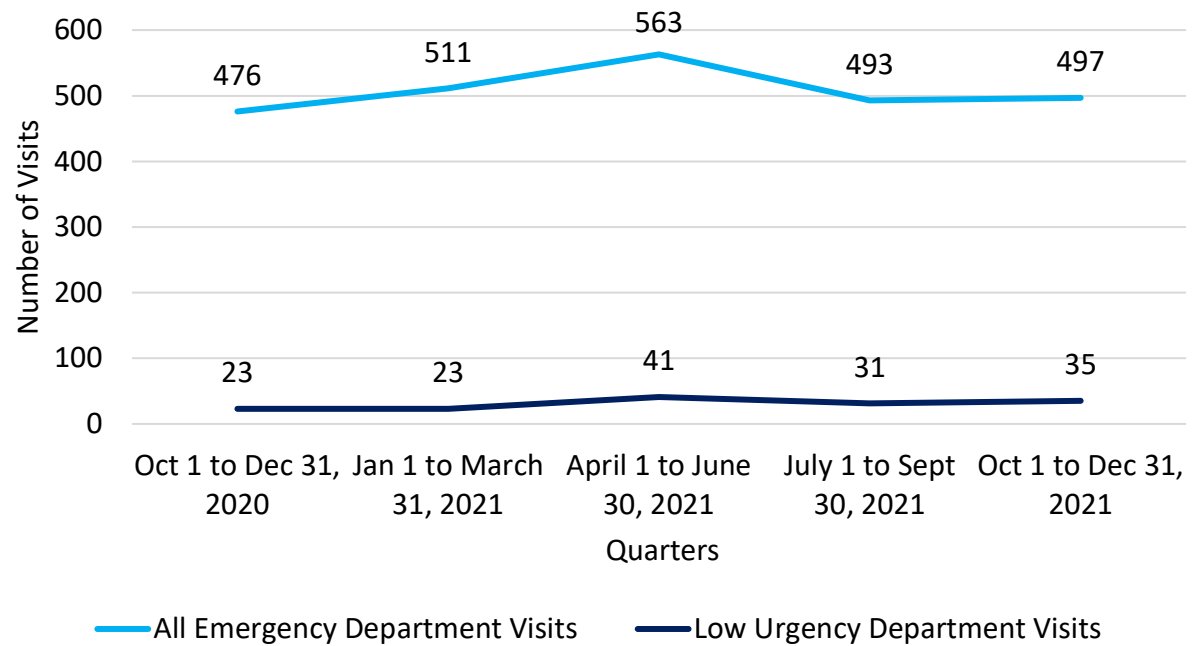
Source: Ontario Health

Figure 12. Active Clients and Referrals to Home Care Services funded by Ontario Health (formerly Toronto-Central Local Health Integration Network)



Source: Ontario Health

Figure 13. Emergency Department Visits among Tenants



Source: Ontario Health

Note: Urgency of emergency department visits is based on the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale score of 4 or 5. Level 4 refers to less urgent visits, where conditions that relate to patient distress or potential complications would benefit from intervention. Level 5 refers to non-urgent visits or conditions that are non-urgent, or may be part of a chronic problem.

