

Eviction Prevention Kitchener-Waterloo & Cambridge October 2021 -March 2022

Report (3rd and 4th quarter)

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General Work Plan

Strategies and Activities in Eviction Prevention

1. Ongoing: Empowering tenants to document and mediate their conflict experience with landlords and/or neighbors.

- (a) Provide community members with accurate information on landlord and tenant rights, responsibilities, Ontario Landlord Tenant Board required forms, procedures, and hearings.
- (b) Professional discretion to identify where a relevant legal, social, economic or health related problem is present and what, in consultation with the community member, action needs to occur to remedy the presenting problem.
- (c) Make 'warm referrals' to community partner agencies to support tenants whose needs are outside of our purview.
- (d) Create an online following of community members through social media for the sharing and gathering of information (Eviction Prevention KW and Cambridge Facebook pages)
- (e) Ensuring access to accurate information and referrals to holistic community supports to better manage wellness.

2. Ongoing: Assist tenants as they navigate their Landlord Tenant conflict

- (a) Provide safe, private access to space and technology for tenants to attend their scheduled Landlord Tenant Board hearing in all three cities.
- (b) Refer tenants for summary legal advice where required. Eviction Prevention Workers are information and referral specialists and not permitted to provide legal advice in any way.

- (c) Eviction Prevention Workers will be a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual support person to tenants who are navigating a Landlord Tenant Board Hearing or other Landlord conflict.

3. Initiated activities

- (a) The intersections and impacts of the various justice systems are complex and much more visible. The impacts of evictions on community members who are criminal or family court involved is significant. In response, we have strengthened our relationship with The Waterloo Regional Police Service and Family and Children's Services Waterloo Region.
- (b) A joint intake process with the assistance of the placement student was undertaken until April 2022. Though the in-house intake system was temporary and designed to provide exposure and expanded knowledge and skill set to the placement student, the intake system was helpful to slowing and processing requests for service because of the backlog but also so that more time could be dedicated to matters that come within the mandate of eviction prevention.
- (c) Increasing the voice and visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ tenants and their challenges and barriers to safe, affordable and accessible housing in the community. Eviction Prevention KW is seeing an influx of queer community members at risk of eviction, being evicted, hidden homeless, unsheltered and without access to a queer safe and/or substance free emergency shelter system or queer safe, affordable and accessible housing options in the region. The queer community is largely overlooked in the region.
- (d) Tenant support to mitigate impact on whole neighbourhoods is now requested in each of the three cities. The complexity of the situation requires ongoing support to collaboration of different social and enforcement agencies, and at the same time, support to individual households in many instances. This type of work is not resourced enough but would present initial phases of tenant organizing that is missing in other interventions, especially in the enforcement work that individualizes the challenges and problems that tenants are exposed to.

Protocol/service agreements currently being developed with community partners:

1. **City of Waterloo - Property Standards** - Ongoing with the ByLaw Enforcement Staff, Regional Council Member Angela Vieth, Family and Children's Services Waterloo Region, House of Friendship, Reception House, The Coalition of Muslim Women and Community Legal Services of Waterloo Region.
2. **City of Kitchener - Property Standards** - To be determined
3. **Waterloo Regional Police Service - Community Engagement Unit** - Ongoing with Family and Children's Services Waterloo Region, Community Legal Services of Waterloo Region, The Coalition of Muslim Women, House of Friendship and Reception House
4. **Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region** - Ongoing with the Two Row Wampum Team and the Black and Racialized Peoples Team.

5. **Sex Workers Action Network Waterloo Region** - SWAN has been on hiatus due to the pandemic but is now in a position to partner with Eviction Prevention. The goal in this partnership is to empower sex workers as tenants and to ensure that they are given voice, visibility and support without fear of judgement. At this time, there is an agreement in principle that SWAN will refer to SDC Eviction Prevention where required.

EVICTON PREVENTION KITCHENER WATERLOO

Major presenting issues in Eviction Prevention Kitchener-Waterloo

1. Increasing numbers of 2SLGBTQ+ community members looking for housing/rooming together. Safe, affordable, accessible and queer friendly shelter and housing options are unavailable in the region. Eviction prevention is coming into contact with more queer community members who are unsheltered, hidden homeless or precariously housed.
2. Landlord harassment and abuse, especially for single women and 2SLGBTQ+ community members.
3. Bad faith evictions or renovictions.
4. Ineffective Property Standards investigation and enforcement.
5. The general lack of safe, affordable and/or accessible housing and supports in the region.
6. Income instability – COVID, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, CPPD, Student, precariously employed.
7. Landlord Tenant Board backlog and online video hearing inefficiency.
8. Limited capacity for access to legal counsel for summary legal advice or Landlord Tenant Board hearing representation.

Challenges

1. Increasing numbers of 2SLGBTQ+ community members without access to queer safe, affordable and accessible housing options in the region. **Queer specific housing or shelter options, supports and resources are substantially lacking in the region.** The queer community is largely overlooked and neglected by the region.
2. During the reporting period, eviction prevention has seen an influx of young people who have been discharged from the care of Family and Children's Services Waterloo Region. As former wards, they are often in housing arrangements that do not provide protection under the Residential Tenancies Act. With this, eviction prevention has strengthened its relationship with Community Justice Initiatives Housing Mediation to help remedy landlord, tenant, roommate and neighbor conflict; however, the service is voluntary in nature. Though housing mediation is an excellent alternative to the Landlord Tenant Board because it is transformative justice and not backlogged at this time, the voluntariness of the service is a barrier. In the case of a corporate property owner and a now independent ward, it has been proven in our work that corporations are unlikely to mediate outside of the Landlord Tenant Board though they are required to first mediate

while at the tribunal. **There needs to be mandated housing mediation outside of the Landlord Tenant Board.**

3. The Landlord Tenant Board Tribunal is backlogged. It takes approximately 1-2 years for a tenant to see remedy in their conflict. In the meantime, mental health and relationships deteriorate. **There need to be mandated mediation processes outside of the Landlord Tenant Board in the region.**
4. There are not enough available funds for rental arrears and emergency utilities support. **Enhanced or community based rent banks are needed.** (Canadian Legion rent support is an example)
5. Gangs, drug trafficking and violent crime. With respect to the reasonable enjoyment of property, Landlords and tenants who have experienced violent crime and/or have gangs and drug trafficking in their neighborhoods are less likely to engage in support for fear of repercussions. Fear has made it difficult for eviction prevention to assist these community members, and so we have strengthened our relationship with the Waterloo Regional Police Community Engagement Unit and Community Justice Initiatives due to **the need for crime prevention and mitigation.**

Successes

1. A **joint case management and intake protocol** was developed between the Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge Eviction Prevention Programs which later shifted to include the hidden homeless population and their peer support volunteers. Where calls for assistance were outside of the eviction prevention mandate, hidden homeless volunteers were able to support callers with advocacy and system navigation. With this relationship between eviction prevention and the hidden homeless peer supports, community members were not falling through systemic gaps. Unfortunately, this valuable relationship dissolved due to lack of funding. As an alternative, though not as effective as having hidden homeless peer support readily available, Eviction Prevention has been a standing member to the Unsheltered Campaign network of community groups and individuals. This connection has helped to mitigate the loss of peer support but also to ensure our most vulnerable community members are not entirely without support.
2. On April 13, 2022, Eviction Prevention received a written decision from the Landlord Tenant Board regarding a harassment and tenants rights violation case. In brief, the **adjudicator found in favor of the tenant because there was significant documented evidence of the landlord violating the tenant's rights and pursuing a bad faith eviction of a long term tenant.** The tenant had been in their unit for more than 5 years and they were paying significantly lower monthly rent than the current market prices. This particular tenant was an excellent self advocate but also engaged the support of other community organizations and local politicians. Our most notable service to this tenant was taking in all the documented evidence and organizing it in a timeline that set out the

facts and circumstances of the tenant landlord relationship particular to the incidents of harassment and violation of rights. The tenant is an Ontario Disability Support Program benefits recipient who could not have afforded current market rental rates and lives with mental health challenges related to sexual violence. Their mental health deteriorated over the time it took to bring the landlord to the Tribunal but they were well supported by many in the community. This matter had been long standing prior to the tenant reaching out to eviction prevention and there was little to no meaningful systemic response when they arrived at intake. In an attempt to promote peace between the parties, Eviction Prevention prepared the timeline of events for submission to a Justice of the Peace for the purposes of obtaining a peace bond; however, justices were not sitting to hear peace bonds in landlord tenant matters, and so the timeline was instead, with advocacy, entered in as a police witness statement and evidence at the LTB. With the help of eviction prevention and The Waterloo Regional Police Community Engagement Unit more specifically, this tenant found justice and was financially compensated for their pain and suffering caused by the landlord in the amount of \$3000.00.

3. Since the inception of the eviction prevention program in May 2021, community **organizations and community members continue to regard the program as highly valuable** and much needed given the climate of housing in the region.

Outputs Tracking

Cumulative Numbers OCTOBER 2021 – MARCH 2022

Of households supported during the reporting period: (24)

Of households being supported at the time of reporting: (15)

Total # of individuals supported (94)

Pending Intakes: 0

Intakes in Progress: 2

It should be noted that 2 households have remained on the active tenant list since near the inception of the program due to the Landlord Tenant Board backlog. These two eviction prevention cases are complex. 1 household had been waiting for a hearing date for approximately 9 months and then the matter was adjourned. Another date has not yet been scheduled.

The other household is within a Region of Waterloo Supportive Housing complex wherein substantial staff and neighbor conflict has been occurring. The matter has recently been referred to Community Justice Initiatives for housing mediation in the absence of an appropriate response by the region and Waterloo Regional Police Service, and due to the LTB backlog.

Eviction Prevention Outcomes

In some cases, the outcome of the eviction prevention matter may not be known to the worker. The two most common reasons for an outcome not being known are when a tenant is referred to legal services or the household stops communicating.

During the reporting period, eviction prevention had the following outcomes:

Evictions Prevented (4)

Evictions Completed (1)

Household relocated (2)

Household stopped communicating (4)

Referrals to Community Legal Services WR during the reporting period (14)

Hidden Homeless (4)

Impact on whole neighbourhoods

Neighborhoods being supported during the reporting period:

(a) Waterloo Neighbourhood Case Study

Collaboration with the City of Waterloo Property Standards inspector is providing ongoing oversight; the Ward councilor is asking for more robust support for the residents. A local community organization, Adventure for Change, has secured funding for community navigators who are representative of the residents most impacted and who speak the required languages. Also, they provide a venue and environment for collaboration and meetings of enforcement agencies, legal supports and mediators to ensure that issues can be addressed and landlord negligence mitigated. Conflict and racism in the neighbourhood also have to be addressed. The first in a series of partner and community meetings has been held, and a number of agencies are seeking ways to be more present and improve collaboration.

All of these issues were present in one area of Waterloo:

- tenants living with cockroaches infestation in the whole unit
- tenants living with bedbugs, so bad the older male teenager was sleeping outside on the back deck because of the bug bites he was getting
- family had to get rid of all beds and furnishings due to bed bugs, this family is on a fixed income
- family of 8 cooking with one burner and had to buy a toaster oven to cook with because stove was not being replaced
- family had no water heater for over a month and were bathing the children in cold water
- mould in the bedrooms, and basement
- leaks from upstairs leaking through ceiling into living room, dining room and into the basement
- a tenant slipped on wet surface, fell down stairs and broke her leg up to her hip

- family living with a hole in the wall under the bedroom window from water leakage from window
- families living with leaking into the basement
- family using space heaters because Hydro is too expensive
- families have been taken to the LTB by former landlord of sold property for rent arrears from previous year
- multiple families having their repair requests for holes in ceiling and damaged flooring to be fixed ignored
- Property Standards not enforcing the repairs requests
- Electrical Safety Authority not enforcing orders
- families are part of the BIPOC and Newcomer communities, where English is not the fluent language spoken by the adults in the households, and children are interpreting for the adults
- children being kept home from school to assist adults in communicating and paying bills
- school support worker contacted Eviction Prevention because children had shared the stress their housing situation was causing them
- pipes in the basement sweating so much there are puddles on the floor
- sinks leaking continuously in basement laundry area
- electrical light fixtures open with exposed wiring. When ESA came they turned off the power in order to do a temporary fix for safety reasons before leaving and issuing an order.
- part of the wall (interior side of an exterior wall) is cracked and missing caused by leak damage from an outside window into the children's bedroom
- tenants living in conditions where the back steps are not intact but makeshift with bricks and wood
- fence structures have been torn down only for the 'one family' in their area and not replaced, leaving them without a yard, but the neighbours have one
- back deck has rotten wood that has created a hole in the deck, making it a hazard
- fencing in one yard is leaning, exposing pointed part of nails
- racial harassment and bullying among children
- families being involved in racially-based threats and attacks

(b) Kitchener Neighbourhood Case Study

This particular underserved neighborhood came to Eviction Prevention primarily for assistance with rental arrears, advocacy for the stoppage of landlord harassment, neglect of property standards and the inability to reasonably enjoy the property.

Supporting this neighborhood is an anomaly of sorts. In November 2021, there was a shooting incident in the neighborhood. Not only are tenants struggling to make ends meet in a pandemic, tenants are isolated by fear of gangs, drug trafficking and violent crime as is the property owner/manager. There is a serious concern for the safety of the neighborhood which has been brought to the attention of the Waterloo Regional Police Service Community Engagement Unit who answered by meeting with tenants in an area away from the neighborhood. The attending member of the Community Engagement

Unit reiterated that they continue to be a presence in the area and that tenants can contact the Unit with any further concerns. The unit also offered access to victims services. Neighbors have opted not to engage victim services due to trust issues and fear of repercussion but remain open to having discussion with the police about criminal activity in the area. Thus far, tenants do not feel as though the police are taking their concerns seriously.

At the time of reporting, tenants who were in arrears have satisfied their obligations through the Landlord Tenant Board and preserved their tenancy but the outstanding issues of property maintenance and crime persist.

The neighborhood has agreed to organize for potentially better outcomes with the property owner and police but have been referred to Waterloo Regional Community Legal Services for the filing of necessary forms to the Landlord Tenant Board. The challenge with this is that there are 8 households identified and each will have to file separately with the Board. There is however an opportunity at the Board for tenants to address the issues collectively in that they can be heard together by an adjudicator.

Learning & Trends

Tenants in Kitchener and Waterloo are experiencing substantially long waits to access the Landlord Tenant Board. At this time, tenants are waiting at least 18 months for legal remedy. In the near future, Eviction Prevention would like to see the Region of Waterloo work toward mandating housing mediation, beginning with cooperative and supportive living complexes. It would be ideal to have Community Justice Initiatives provide a mandated mediation service to the community because they are already involved in housing mediation. Given the backlog of the Landlord Tenant Board, it would be wise to begin discussions with the Region about mandatory mediation because the relationships and mental health of community members is deteriorating while waiting for access to justice.

Eviction Prevention is coming into contact with more adults who do not have their names on tenancy agreements or leases. With regard to cis gender heterosexual couples, the man is often the only signatory to the lease. This is problematic for many reasons. Men who have come in contact with the criminal justice system and have been forcibly removed from the property leave women without a tenancy agreement that provides the necessary protections for themselves in current or future landlord tenant conflicts.

Such circumstances also leave the woman and children more vulnerable to illegal eviction given the climate of evictions in the region. In response, and although more often than not there are social assistance benefits considerations, Eviction Prevention has highly recommended that all adults in the home be signatories to a lease agreement.

In addition, in cases of domestic violence, and where a male has been arrested and removed from the home, income loss due to incarceration has had a significant impact on women and children such that the rent is no longer sustainable. We have also come across situations where domestic violence calls to the police were malicious in nature and have caused the men, who are the legal tenants or the signatories to the agreement, to be evicted by police and required not to further attend the residence. This is problematic in that it is often the woman who is not the lease signatory and so, while the man of the household is now homeless, she is illegally occupying a dwelling and has no rights to the property. This leaves the unit generally vulnerable to the landlord putting it back on the market at a higher rate. Eviction Prevention has made it known to The Waterloo Regional Police Service that while they are required to investigate domestic violence accusations, that they cannot lose sight of potential for malicious reports and should, during the course of their investigation, consider who is the legal tenant. In considering who the legal tenant is, they may be able to craft more reasonable alternatives to eviction and homelessness. Indeed this puts a woman at risk of being homeless too; however, there are very many more supports for women and children in the Region than men and, it is more likely that women have family support. All of these dynamics intersect also with child welfare and has an impact upon any family who may be involved with Family and Children's Services Waterloo Region.

EVICTION PREVENTION CAMBRIDGE

Major issues in Eviction Prevention Cambridge

Eviction Prevention Cambridge has noticed an increase of evictions by landlords for personal use and for sale of units. In some instances, tenants are being evicted without actual knowledge of the purchaser, new landlord or whether the new landlord's family is actually moving in. By the time the tenant becomes aware that the unit is sitting vacant or being re-rented, they have already been forced to move or faced harassment by the landlord or purchaser until the proper eviction process is complete. The landlord gives notice, files with the LTB, waiting months for a hearing date in some cases a year or two with multiple adjournments. During this time the tenant is being harassed and will move out rather than face the stress of the situation, which may still lead to an eviction, raising the costs of moving and increasing rents even higher.

Current Issues Facing Tenants Being Supported:

- Tenants have reported facing repeated repair requests being ignored for months and years at a time
- Non-compliant landlords who are unresponsive to tenant concerns/complaints
- Eviction Notices for multiple different reasons at different times
- Eviction Notices for rent arrears that tenants claim they have paid and are from the years before with and without receipts from the tenant
- LTB hearings for multiple issues and repeat hearings for the same issues
- Harassment by the landlord in order to have the tenants move out
- Tenants being offered money to move as incentive after receiving N12 notice
- Multiple tenants in row houses facing N12 evictions (served Dec. 2021/Jan. 2022). The properties were purchased in Fall of 2021 and resold from a corporation to individual buyers and investors in January February 2022.
- Tenants not being able to pay the high costs of rent for new housing, having been evicted from long term rentals
- Tenants facing illegal rent increases by landlords, but unaware of their legal rights, they pay the increase under duress
- Tenants not wanting to advocate for themselves for fear of repercussion by landlord; two landlords told them that if they had fix the issues they would just sell the property and have the tenants evicted
- Tenants not financially qualifying for Community Legal Services help in order to fight bad faith evictions, yet not making enough money to pay for a paralegal, so they just move
- Families with children with exceptionalities evicted from home and now forced to move away from the child's school and medical services
- Tenants afraid to reach out to organizations for help if they have to give to much personal information because of trauma caused from previous help or homelessness
- Tenants not feeling comfortable, confident or having the knowledge to speak with or write to landlords about fighting evictions, to file with the LTB against their own landlord, and to stop illegal/harassing practices by the landlord
- Landlords not listening or respecting tenants' verbal or written communication until they show they are being supported by an outside agency like Eviction Prevention
- Tenants having to choose what bills to pay, what medication to buy, how much food to buy or whether to pay rent because income is so low, debt has piled up and they are facing eviction from rent arrears
- Tenants not being able to afford rent due to low income, being on Ontario Works, ODSP, WSIB, Pensions; the income they receive is not enough
- Families having to use the Child Tax Benefit to pay part, if not all of their rent, which causes more scarcity and stress for families and often leaves children with less than children whose families that are not forced to use CTB for their rent.
- Families being separated because one parent is not housed or is being evicted and without housing can not retain full/part time custody of their children

List specific issues facing tenants during your reporting period:

23 -facing rent arrears;

5 -have landlords not giving receipts,

6 - dealing with maintenance issues

0 - dealing with pests i.e. cockroaches and/or bed bugs

6 - health and safety of units

1 -where property has been sold to bigger corporations,

5 - households served with -Eviction Notices (N-Notices)

9 - having hearings with LTB

1 - with Sheriff orders of eviction

21 - households having difficulty securing alternate housing due to having fixed low-income source; ODSP, Ontario Works

Challenges

- Connecting in person with tenants is still a challenge as many organizations were still not open to the general public and Covid protocols made it difficult for some people to be in indoor spaces with a mask for extended periods of time.
- During the early opening stages, it was still a challenge introducing Eviction Prevention (who we are and what we do) to the community and we relied more heavily on spreading the information through our initial building of new community partnerships and the ones we had already connected with.
- Connecting with some community organizations around use of 'in person' space for tenants to access LTB hearings virtually or use computers for accessing resources was difficult as many were still not open for in person use, some have differing Covid Protocols which interfere with accessibility for those who do not wish to disclose their vaccination status.
- Many tenants needing support require more in-depth time spent on listening to and understanding their unique situation, gathering supportive documentation/materials, researching and pulling together resources in ways that best support the tenant, ie. print/digital, facilitating 'warm connections' to partnering organizations and preparing for LTB hearings.
- Many Tenants needing extended time and support in order to help participate in their own eviction prevention plans, LTB hearings and maintaining connections with community partners due to medical, mental, language barriers
- Many tenants have been facing multiple issues intertwined with evictions i.e. repairs, harassment, mental health issues, low income
- Tenants not being able to assist in their own housing issues and LTB hearings due to language barriers
- Language barriers also make it difficult for tenants to fully understand their rights, to communicate their rights and to stand up for their rights with landlords
- Mental, physical and spiritual health is playing a big part in tenants' lack of ability to manage their housing and to participate in the eviction process and in appointments

with other community supports in regard to their housing, as well as advocate for themselves, so they end up getting evicted

- Eviction Prevention has had to develop Protocols for Home Visits to meet with tenants, attend partnership support meetings, access paper documents, take pictures for documentation
- Community financial supports have a conflict of interest when it comes to financial help for rent arrears within Regional Housing
- Regional Housing tenants have many issues with the Landlord, which is the the Region of Waterloo, many complaints of repairs not being done, property management harassment
- Rental opportunities in the city are limited based on tenants' ability to pay higher rents, lack of good credit, tenants facing mental health and needing supportive housing
- Tenants trying to live on fixed income (ODSP, OW, Pension), having to decide between food, shelter, medications and rent

Successes

Eviction Prevention Cambridge has succeeded in helping tenants prevent their evictions in different ways as evictions can happen for many reasons. Tenants are being evicted through legal channels by the LTB. Tenants also can be evicted by force, coercion, harassment and unsafe living conditions, all of which can cause a tenant to leave their unit and find other housing. Many tenants flee because they do not know their rights as tenants nor their responsibilities. They do not understand the eviction process, Residential Tenancies Act, who in the community they can get help from or how to fight back for their rights and hold the landlords accountable. Even if tenants did have all this information, barriers still exist to navigating the processes, services and systems. Many tenants we have supported are living in poverty, while being financially assisted by government programs or working. Many families struggle to fully understand or comprehend the English language both written or verbal. Many are dealing with medical and /or mental health challenges and are living with trauma and existing in a state of stress. These are not just barriers, they act as roadblocks for tenants in securing and maintaining safe and affordable housing. Every barrier we help tenants overcome is a success.

Some of our successes have been building and developing stronger relationships with organizations that support tenants and helping them understand what we have been seeing and how community involvement in targeted areas can help support tenants. We have spent months supporting many tenants with Eviction Prevention for different reasons. We were able to build relationships with tenants, hear their stories, their struggles and their frustrations. We learned and witnessed the barriers these families were facing as we navigated the eviction process together – language barriers including English and technological, lack of understanding the eviction process, not knowing who to call to get help. These families have fought for safe, healthy living conditions by the only means they knew and have watched as they were let down time and time again.

We facilitated a roundtable type meeting of the community supporters in a particular neighbourhood area. Working as a team we formed a platform so each organization could share their role, see where they could be doing more and add any missing information or perspectives to the talks. As a result of this meeting the community organizations have agreed to a community event where tenants can come out, see who they are, learn what they do and how to get hold of them, and become a part of the community presence.

The stakeholders involved:

Eviction Prevention Cambridge/KW, Community Legal Services, Community Justice Initiative, Property Standards, WRPS Community Engagement, Adventure for Change, Angela Veith, Ward Councillor.

Outputs Tracking

Cumulative Numbers OCTOBER 2021 – MARCH 2022

Total Households supported: 31

Total Individuals supported: 60

Total Families supported: 14

Eviction Prevention Outcomes

Cumulative Numbers OCTOBER 2021 – MARCH 2022

In some cases, the outcome of the eviction prevention matter may not be known to the worker. The two most common reasons for an outcome not being known is when a tenant is referred to legal services or the household stops communicating.

During the reporting period, eviction prevention had the following outcomes:

Evictions Prevented 2

Evictions Completed 0

Evictions Pending 4

Household relocated 4

Household stopped communicating 3

Referrals to Community Legal Services WR during the reporting period 7

Impact on Whole Neighbourhoods

c) Cambridge Neighbourhood Case Study

The townhomes/condo complex was bought in the fall of 2021 by Muse Properties and then sold off individually to other buyers within a few months. Tenants have been served with N12 notices and left not knowing who actually owns their rental unit, who to pay rent to and if the

new purchaser is a company or an individual. Some of these tenants have been living there for many years.

Tenants in one neighbourhood of townhomes/condos had the property bought by a corporation in the Fall of 2021 and were assured their homes were going to be fine, only to have received N12 notices 'eviction for personal use' in December 2021 and January 2022. The tenants were misled on many occasions of prospective buyers coming into their unit as contractors and/or investors, not potential buyers of their unit. Some of these tenants were not given any notice of the sale of their rental unit or to whom, but had a stranger show up at their door saying they are the new owner and demanding rent be paid to them. These tenants were scrambling to find a new home which is now so much more expensive. Rent is higher and the space is smaller. These tenants are reaching out to find out their rights, but many have had no time to formulate a plan without being under distress. These evictions have affected seniors and families the most and still some of the evicted rentals sit empty.

As we work to help support whole neighbourhoods facing landlord tenant issues it has become very important to include the community organizations that will be called on by tenants to help hold landlords accountable. The united team working together builds community responsibility and strengthens tenant advocacy. We are also exploring the space and place to help bring in mediation services to communities in hopes that some issues can be addressed between tenants and with building management.

Learning/TRENDS

- Tenants need to understand their rights and responsibilities in their own language and cognitive level.
- Materials need to be easily accessible for tenants, with hard paper copies offered when needed.
- Landlords and building management need to know their rights and responsibilities in a no-threatening way to bring about understanding before enforcing.
- Communities need to be aware of which organization to contact when issues arise, but also who the people actually are. This became very important to tenants who are already dealing with past and present traumas, are racialized, newcomers to Canada, and are dealing with poverty and landlord harassment. Figures of authority can add stress and present a barrier to seeking help.
- There are gaps in services being offered to support tenants financially and informationally. Tenants who need more support are not being accommodated because they need usually weeks or even months of support. Support may mean helping fill out forms, speaking to other organizations, helping tenants compile papers, writing letters, looking for apartments, connecting with other organizations in a safe way, and facilitating transfer of care which does not do more harm to people already facing harm.
- Each tenant's situation is unique and can not be handled in the same way in order to practice holistic care and not re-traumatize

- Tenants also need to feel empowered and learn how to build and organize tenant associations to build trust in community, share rental stories, learn from each other, teach each other and advocate not only for themselves and each other, but also with community organizations that are there to support and work together to fill the gaps experienced by tenants, especially marginalized, traumatized, disenfranchised groups within the community .

Eviction Prevention Hidden Homeless Jan – March 2022

An additional part-time worker was in place from January to March 2022, but due to a cut in funding their contract ended and they were no longer available as of April 2022. The two remaining Eviction Prevention part-time workers remain at capacity and can only serve tenants with information and accompaniment in preparation for a formal eviction process, when they have to be referred to the Community Legal Services Waterloo Region.

The workers encounter residents who do not have leases in their name; are living with friends, family, partner or acquaintances; or are displaced due to harassment and negligence without due process (illegal or forced evictions).

Some were displaced as a consequence of a court or incarceration process, due to household/relationship breakdown, etc. Most live with complex family issues, household dissolution, involvement with the law, domestic violence, disability, mental health, low literacy and income insecurity were combining factors to be addressed.

There are few if any avenues for most of the residents precariously housed in these respects, and preventing their (unsheltered) homelessness is a challenge that requires significant resources and collaboration among housing providers in the Region. However, this work is not recognized as a gap in services currently. This work is badly needed, and is also time consuming and psycho-emotionally demanding, since it goes beyond housing and income support. Social Development Centre Waterloo Region is currently exploring other options to continue this work that would be robust and embedded in the broader community.

OCTOBER 2021 -MARCH 2022 CUMULATIVE NUMBERS

Of households being supported at the time of reporting: 65

Total # of individuals supported: 185

BIPOC: 45 (24%)

2SLGBTQ+ : 7 (4%)

Self identified Indigenous: 15 (8%)

Woman: 43 (23%)

Children 0 - 6 : 25 (13%)

Children 7 - 12 : 27 (14.5%)

Youth 13 - 17: 28 (15%)

Persons over the age of 65 : 7 (4%)

People living with Disabilities : 18 (9,5%)

Referrals to other agencies or enforcement: 33

Referrals from other agencies to Eviction Prevention: 29