

Deputation - Jacqueline Yu

Item 6A - Tenant Service Offices: Service Model Realignment TSC Public Meeting - July 17, 2027

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Tenant Services Committee – July 17, 2026
Written Deputation by Jacqueline Yu

Good Morning

Good morning, Chair and Members of the Tenant Services Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my comments regarding Item 6A – Tenant Service Offices: Service Model Realignment.

I am a 74-year-old senior tenant of Toronto Community Housing and a person with disabilities living with multiple chronic health conditions. I have lived in my ground-floor unit for many years because of my mobility limitations and medical needs.

I experienced a loss of privacy and peaceful enjoyment when the area directly outside my unit was treated as a common gathering space. I also experienced concerns regarding safety, accessibility, and the use of the fenced area adjacent to my home.

I have raised these matters through the appropriate legal channels, including the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. Therefore, **I am not asking the Committee to determine my individual case today.**

Instead, I respectfully ask the Committee to consider how the proposed Tenant Service Office Service Model can better protect

vulnerable tenants, particularly seniors and persons with disabilities.

My experience demonstrates why stronger governance, greater accountability, meaningful accommodation, and more responsive tenant services are essential throughout TCHC.

Why Item 6A Matters

Item 6A presents an important opportunity for TCHC to strengthen the way tenant services are delivered.

An effective Tenant Service Office should do more than provide administrative services. It should ensure that tenants receive fair, respectful, transparent, timely, and accountable service regardless of where they live.

A modern public housing provider should demonstrate:

- transparency;
- accountability;
- procedural fairness;
- independent oversight;
- respect for human rights;
- accessibility;
- meaningful tenant engagement;
- consistent decision-making;
- evidence-based management; and
- continuous organizational improvement.

These principles are particularly important for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable tenants who depend upon TCHC for safe and secure housing.

Governance and Accountability

Since 2019, TCHC's decentralized operating model has, in my view, contributed to inconsistent decision-making and reduced organizational accountability.

When responsibility is divided among multiple regional structures, tenants may find it difficult to determine who is ultimately accountable for important decisions affecting their housing, accommodation requests, safety, or complaint resolution.

A public service organization functions most effectively when:

- responsibilities are clearly defined;
- decisions are transparent;
- oversight is independent;
- accountability is measurable; and
- tenants understand where decisions are made and how they may be reviewed.

These principles are fundamental to public confidence.

Reducing Bureaucratic Buck-Passing

Bureaucratic buck-passing occurs when responsibility for resolving an issue moves from one office or department to another without clear ownership.

When accountability is unclear,

- decisions may be delayed;
- tenant concerns may remain unresolved;
- communication becomes inconsistent; and
- confidence in the complaint process may decline.

The proposed Tenant Service Office Service Model should establish:

- clearly defined responsibilities;
- structured escalation procedures;
- transparent decision-making;
- timely responses; and
- accountability at every level of the organization.

Independent Oversight

Many tenants have expressed concern that complaints involving regional management may continue to be reviewed within the same regional management structure.

Whether or not every complaint is handled this way, this structure may create a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Public confidence is strengthened when complaint investigations are independent, impartial, transparent, and evidence-based.

For this reason, I respectfully encourage TCHC to strengthen independent oversight for complaints involving regional management, human rights matters, disability accommodation, safety concerns, and other significant tenant issues.

Human Rights

The Toronto Ombudsman's investigation identified significant concerns regarding TCHC's historical handling of complex human rights matters.

The investigation found that human rights concerns were often addressed through operational management rather than specialized or independent processes.

The Ombudsman recommended improvements designed to strengthen:

- governance;
- accountability;
- specialized expertise;
- transparency; and
- independent oversight.

These recommendations remain highly relevant to Item 6A.

The new Tenant Service Office Service

Model provides an opportunity to ensure that tenants who raise disability accommodation, accessibility, safety, security, or human rights concerns receive fair, impartial, and professionally managed services.

Organizational Structure and Service Delivery

The effectiveness of any Tenant Service Office depends not only on the dedication of frontline staff but also on the organizational structure that supports them.

Regional General Managers have significant responsibilities for overseeing operations, tenant services, building maintenance, financial management, community engagement, and regional administration. These are important responsibilities that require clear governance, transparency, and accountability.

As responsibilities have expanded within the regional operating model, some tenants have expressed concerns that decision-making has become increasingly decentralized, making it more difficult to achieve consistency across the organization.

When authority is broadly delegated, it is especially important that strong systems of independent oversight, quality assurance, and organizational accountability are in place to ensure decisions are fair, consistent, and aligned with TCHC's policies and obligations.

Internal Complaint Resolution

An effective complaint process should give tenants confidence that concerns will be reviewed fairly, objectively, and without bias.

Some tenants have expressed concern that complaints involving regional management may be reviewed within the same management structure responsible for the original decisions. This can create a real or perceived conflict of interest and may reduce confidence in the complaint resolution process.

Public housing providers should ensure that complaint investigations are transparent, impartial, evidence-based, and subject to appropriate independent oversight.

Strengthening these safeguards would help improve public confidence while supporting both tenants and staff through a fair and accountable process.

Meaningful Tenant Engagement

Meaningful tenant engagement is one of the foundations of good public housing governance.

Tenant engagement should provide opportunities for diverse voices to be heard and should reflect the experiences of tenants from different communities, cultures, ages, and abilities.

Many tenants have expressed the importance of ensuring that consultation processes are transparent, inclusive, and representative of the broader tenant community.

Tenant representatives should be selected through fair and open processes, and engagement activities should encourage constructive dialogue rather than division within communities.

A strong Tenant Service Office should support meaningful tenant participation while ensuring that engagement processes remain transparent, accountable, and focused on improving services for all tenants.

Human Rights, Accessibility, and Accommodation

For seniors and persons with disabilities, tenant services are not simply administrative matters.

They directly affect health, independence, dignity, safety, and quality of life.

Accommodation requests involving disability, accessibility, privacy, safety, and security require specialized knowledge and careful consideration.

These matters should be handled consistently, respectfully, and in accordance with human rights principles.

The Tenant Service Office Service Model presents an opportunity to strengthen organizational capacity by ensuring that staff have appropriate training, access to specialized expertise, and clear procedures for responding to complex accommodation and human rights concerns.

Building Public Trust

Transparency and accountability are essential for maintaining public confidence in a public housing provider.

When tenants understand how decisions are made, who is responsible for those decisions, and how concerns may be reviewed independently, confidence in the organization is strengthened.

Conversely, where organizational responsibilities are unclear or complaint processes appear difficult to navigate, tenants may lose confidence in the fairness of the system.

The proposed Service Model Realignment provides an opportunity to strengthen governance through:

- clearer organizational responsibilities;
- improved communication;
- transparent decision-making;

- independent oversight where appropriate;
- consistent service standards; and
- ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.

Recommendation for Governance Review

Based on my personal experience, together with concerns raised through public deputations and independent oversight reports, I respectfully request that the Board undertake a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of TCHC's decentralized regional operating model introduced in 2019.

The purpose of such a review should be to evaluate whether the current structure is achieving its intended objectives of improving tenant services, operational consistency, accountability, transparency, and equitable service delivery across the organization.

If opportunities for improvement are identified, I respectfully encourage the Board to consider strengthening centralized oversight for functions involving complaint resolution, human rights matters, disability accommodation, governance, and tenant engagement.

The goal should not simply be organizational change, but ensuring that every tenant receives consistent, fair, respectful, and accountable service regardless of where they live.

Conclusion

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments on Item 6A.

As a senior tenant living with disabilities and chronic health conditions, I understand how important responsive and accountable tenant services are to everyday life.

My purpose today is not to ask the Committee to decide my individual case. Rather, I respectfully ask the Committee to use this Service Model Realignment as an opportunity to strengthen governance, transparency, accountability, independent oversight, accessibility, and meaningful tenant engagement throughout Toronto Community Housing.

By building a service model founded on fairness, respect, consistency, and continuous improvement, TCHC can strengthen public confidence while providing better support to all tenants, especially seniors, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time and for considering my recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

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