

Independent review findings and Housing Unit changes

Findings as at date of incident – 20 July 2013		Housing Unit changes implemented and underway as at February 2015
Policies and procedures (refer to page 5 of the report)		
1	<p>The City Housing Operational Portal provides Tenancy Advisors with a number of procedure documents to guide the Tenancy Advisors in the execution of their duties.</p>	<p>Following the incident, the Housing Unit introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures onto the operations portal. This included detailed procedures for staff to respond to complaints of anti-social behaviour, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How complaints are to be assessed and recorded ○ When and how interviews with the complainant and the subject of the complaint are to be conducted ○ Assessing the risk of the interview ○ Further courses of action <p>These procedures include a Risk Assessment Register for tenants and applicants. The Risk Register includes identifying potential risks to staff, tenants and/or others.</p> <p>The Housing Unit is continually updating Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and procedures. The updated policy and procedures will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standardise the approach to anti-social behaviour ○ Improve consistency across staff practice ○ Provide stricter guidelines on what steps must be taken ○ Improve capacity to supervise and manage risk <p>The updated policy and procedures are being based on Housing New Zealand Corporation's comprehensive approach.</p>

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		<p>Staff are being trained on the updated policy and procedures.</p> <p>A weekly report is provided to senior management on potential risks to tenants, staff and others.</p> <p>In addition, procedures providing more detail on how to respond to inter-tenancy disputes that do not involve allegations of anti-social behaviour have been introduced.</p>
2	The procedure for dealing with inter-tenant disputes (other than anti-social behaviours) lacked detail.	As per item 1 above.
3	There is no procedure to guide Tenancy Advisors on how they conduct informal resolution of tenancy disputes, and no guidance on when a matter is suitable for informal resolution or requires formal mediation. The decision to refer a matter to formal mediation rests with the Tenancy Advisor. We do note there is a link to mediation and Tenancy Tribunal details in the City Housing operations portal.	As per item 1 above.
4	Procedures for Tenancy Advisors responding specifically to complaints of anti-social behaviour were not in place leading up to or at the time of the incident. Section 56 notices were the key remedy used.	A full review of procedures has been implemented as per item 1 above. In addition, since the incident, an Anti-Social Behaviour Database has been created to record and manage incidents of anti-social behaviour within the Council's complexes. Greater supervision has also been exercised over staff management of anti-social behaviour. All information entered into the Anti-Social Behaviour Database is peer reviewed on a daily basis. There is now increased focus on anti-social behaviour training.

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Role and duties of a Tenancy Advisor (refer to pages 6–7 of the report)		
5	There are differing views within the management and staff at the City Housing team on the extent of the role of a Tenancy Advisor. Those spoken to in the course of this review agree the role includes the basic duties imposed by the Act. All agree that it includes some additional duties beyond those set out in the Act, but disagree on the extent of these additional duties.	<p>Since the incident, the Housing Unit has focussed on the competencies required to carry out the Tenancy Advisor role. This includes the ability to identify and work with appropriate support agencies for tenants. This focus has been reflected in the recruitment and training of Tenancy Advisors.</p> <p>The Tenancy Advisor position description has been reviewed. The new position description is clearer on the level of social assistance responsibilities of Tenancy Advisors, and on when responsibilities rest outside the Tenancy Advisor role with specialist support agencies. Training is provided to Tenancy Advisors on the competencies included in the reviewed position description.</p>
6	At its most basic, the role of Tenancy Advisor is to manage the tenants, rents and to deal with complaints.	Refer to item 5 above.
7	The role of Tenancy Advisor specifically includes an element of pastoral care in “facilitating the provision of tenant welfare services”. This element of the role requires a different skill set and capability, yet has not been supported through learning and development activities to ensure the Tenancy Advisors are equipped to perform this role.	Refer to item 5 above. In addition, the Housing Unit is liaising with a NZ training provider funded to develop social housing training modules. The unit is also reviewing social housing courses on offer in Australia that may be suitable for staff to undertake.

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Tenancy management systems (refer to page 8 of the report)		
8	There is no one central system for the management of tenancies or the recording of interactions with tenants. Instead, information is spread across a variety of databases and electronic storage systems.	<p>While the current computer system is cumbersome and requires ongoing 'work arounds' to record information, staff are required to record all information relating to tenancy management.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to create a central system to record tenancy interactions when tenancy management moves to a Community Housing Provider (CHP). It is proposed that a central system will be part of the business plan for the new CHP.</p> <p>The Housing Unit currently audits all records on an ongoing basis to ensure staff are keeping accurate business records.</p>
9	Such databases and systems do exist but are used inconsistently to record information about tenancies.	<p>The introduction of a new central system with associated training will assist in improving consistency.</p> <p>Staff are continually instructed to enter frequent, accurate and informative notes in SAP on their interactions with applicants and tenants. These notes are audited as part of ongoing business processes in the Housing Unit.</p>
10	Record keeping is largely manual, and dependent on the diligence of the Tenancy Advisor.	As per item 9 above.
11	City Housing Unit management and staff have developed their own systems to record tenancy information to compensate for the lack of a central system for the management of tenancies.	Subsequent to the incident, an Anti-Social Behaviour Database was established to record and manage incidents of anti-social behaviour within the Council's complexes. The database is updated and information pertaining to particular tenants shared with the relevant staff.

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12	The SAP environment currently used for the recording of notes regarding tenant interaction is not adequate and is open to unaudited addition, amendment or deletion of notes by any staff with access to the tenancy module	Since the incident, all staff are required to record the time and date they enter information and this is audited on an ongoing basis.
13	The lack of a central system for the management of tenancies (including the recording of notes) presents a risk that a Tenancy Advisor will not have all the necessary information they require, or that critical information will be missed.	As per 9 above. In addition, the creation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Database (refer to item 11) ensures all staff have the necessary information to manage risk and take appropriate action. This is linked to the Risk Assessment Register, as per item 1.
Training of Tenancy Advisors (refer to page 8 of the report)		
14	The Tenancy Advisors interviewed described sporadic and inadequate training in the areas of dispute resolution.	Refer to items 2, 5 and 7 above. In addition, since the incident, individual training courses have been offered to staff in association with the Australasian Housing Institute on such matters as de-escalation and dispute resolution.
15	Training for incoming Tenancy Advisors is largely on-the-job learning and augmented with sporadic training on specific aspects of their work, such as dispute resolution.	Refer to items 2, 5 and 7 above.
16	There is an over reliance on the (considerable) experience of Tenancy Advisors recruited into the team.	Refer to items 2, 5 and 7 above.

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17	Tenancy Advisors have not received the training required to deliver on all aspects of their role and, therefore, support the delivery of the CCC Social Housing Strategy.	Refer to items 2, 5 and 7 above. Training is offered on an ongoing basis. A comprehensive training plan has been developed. All staff receive training and updates regularly.
Management of the MacGibbon Place complex (refer to page 8 of the report)		
18	SAP contained no notes in respect of the victim or the offender prior to 1 July 2012.	The lack of any information pertaining to tenants has always been unacceptable and would be considered a performance issue. Staff, as per operating procedures, are continually instructed to enter frequent, accurate and informative notes in SAP on their interactions with applicants and tenants. These notes are audited on a regular basis to ensure detail and accuracy.
19	We have been unable to determine whether the absence of notes indicates that there were no complaints from these units, or whether complaints were received but not recorded. The Tenancy Advisor prior to the incident does not recall any issues that should have been noted.	As per item 18 above.
20	The earliest notes on other units within MacGibbon Place date from 2001.	As per item 18 above.
21	Complaints about tenant behaviour (other than the victim and offender) at MacGibbon Place include allegations of theft, use of an air rifle to kill a tenant's pet, threats of violence, burglary, sexual assaults	As per item 18 above.

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	and threats to kill.	
22	The number of complaints recorded in SAP relating to the victim and offender were not high compared to other units within the MacGibbon Place complex.	As per item 18 above.
23	The complaints recorded in SAP relating to the victim and offender did not disclose any threat of violence.	All staff are continually required to review tenant records and conduct risk assessments complete with notes. Failure to do so constitutes a performance issue and is addressed.
24	The offender did make a visit to the CCC offices on 10 June 2013. The note made by the Tenancy Advisor did refer to the fact she suggested “he go and see the police if he felt he would hurt her”. The Tenancy Advisor advised EY this was a standard response to tenants who appeared distressed or aggravated by tenant conflicts, and was not reflective of any threat by the offender to harm the victim.	<p>When staff become aware of incidents involving threats of violence or harm to others there are procedures which have to be followed. Actions would include contacting support agencies.</p> <p>Standard practice requires the formal reporting to management and police to ensure all practical steps are taken to mitigate any risk to any potential victims. All such incidents are recorded in Housing Unit systems and the Risk Assessment Register. All incidents are monitored closely and actions taken immediately to ensure safety to tenants and staff.</p>
Tenant complaints from MacGibbon Place (refer to page 10 of the report)		
25	Complaints about tenant behaviour (other than the victim and offender) at MacGibbon Place include allegations of theft, use of an air rifle to kill a tenant's	All complaints are taken seriously and treated formally and consideration is given to potential escalation and level of risk.

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	pet, threats of violence, burglary, sexual assaults and threats to kill. These are typical complaints that are dealt with on a daily basis across many of the housing complexes managed by CCC.	
26	The number of complaints recorded in SAP relating to the victim and offender were not high compared to other units within the MacGibbon Place complex. The nature of the complaint details recorded was not inconsistent with other complaints being dealt with leading up to, at the time and preceding the incident.	All information relating to threats of violence and/or harm to others are formally recorded and action taken to mitigate risk in consultation with other agencies.
27	The complaints recorded in SAP relating to the victim and offender did not disclose any threat of violence.	As per item 24 above
CCC Call Centre (refer to page 11 of the report)		
28	There is no dedicated call centre and/or Customer Services staff to deal with City Housing Unit tenant issues. This is the main channel for tenants to communicate issues to Tenancy Advisors.	The Council's Call Centre receives calls from tenants and applicants. Since the incident, steps have been taken to improve the Call Centre's understanding and knowledge of tenant and applicant issues. The Housing Unit alerts the Call Centre to specific issues and also provides regular briefings.
29	The call centre staff are not trained to triage or deal with issues that are presented over the phone.	In addition to item 28, the Housing Unit offers support to Call Centre staff following challenging phone calls. The Housing Unit also provides a contact for the Call Centre on a 24/7 basis.

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30	The call centre does not have access to SAP notes, so notes can not be recorded against a tenant/property.	The Housing Unit is reviewing the information it can share to improve the safety of tenants, staff and contractors without breaching tenant or applicant privacy.
Team culture and support (refer to page 11 of the report)		
31	The team culture at the time of the incident was poor and this contributed to the variations in adherence to policy and procedure within the unit.	All staff interviewed by EY stressed that there has been an improvement in the team culture and some noted a significant improvement throughout 2014. The team make-up has changed which has required a full review of procedures and implementation of training of new staff. The actions being taken under items 2, 5 and 7 assisting in the continuous improvement in team culture.
32	Resourcing of the team was not optimal and impacted on the individuals in these Tenancy Advisor roles and their ability to perform their role.	<p>A new service delivery model for staff has been implemented. This model identifies and manages staff workload. This model includes peer supervision of workloads including a six-weekly audit cycle of caseloads. The audit process includes ad-hoc reviews on a daily basis. This helps to ensure the workload of the Tenancy Advisors remains manageable.</p> <p>The team now also has an additional resource for community development. This helps promote better tenant relationships within social housing complexes by hosting events and activities. This role also extends to ensuring support services are connected across the housing portfolio.</p> <p>New risk assessment procedures have strengthened the focus of the team and underpins the performance improvement of staff.</p>

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Personal safety of Tenancy Advisors (refer to page 12 of the report)		
33	There is inadequate monitoring of the Tenancy Advisors. They are visiting sites and no one within the Housing Unit will know where they are at any given point in time.	<p>A Risk Assessment Register has been developed, under which risks to tenants, staff and others are assessed. This is used to manage risks and potential incidents across the portfolio.</p> <p>GPS locators (Bodyguard Alarm application) for staff have been introduced. Additionally, the Council is also looking at introducing GPS devices into fleet cars.</p> <p>Subsequent to a significant review, the Housing Unit's Health and Safety Plan is now in place. It includes a range of short- and long-term changes. This sits alongside a structured regime of staff training to imbed relevant changes.</p>
34	There is no formal risk assessment undertaken before Tenancy Advisors visit tenants' homes, and informal assessment of the potential risks is reliant on the Tenancy Advisor's experience, the Tenancy Advisor accessing the Anti-Social Behaviour database (and the integrity of that data), and the informal sharing of information about potential problems amongst the team.	<p>Subsequent to the incident, the Housing Unit introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Database to record and manage incidents of anti-social behaviour, including threats to staff. Staff access this database and discuss with management before visiting the property.</p> <p>A Risk Assessment Register has also been developed, under which risks to tenants, staff and others are identified. Senior management review the Risk Assessment Register weekly to understand the size and type of risks presented and to oversee implementation of risk mitigation.</p>