

## Report HDR-SS-05-14

**To:** Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee  
**From:** Rick Moore, Housing Manager  
**Meeting Date:** February 12, 2014  
**Subject:** **Smoke Free Buildings - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Program**  
**Status:** Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution SSC20-14 February 12, 2014; Endorsed by County Council March 4, 2014 per Resolution CC38-14;

### Recommendation(s)

**THAT Report HDR-SS-05-14 regarding the Housing Manager's Report be received for information.**

### Background

#### Smoke Free Buildings

Effective January 1, 2014 all residential buildings managed by Grey County Housing (GCH) have been designated smoke free buildings. This means that smoking will be prohibited in designated areas of the building(s) including apartments/units identified as smoke free. This policy has been created to address health and safety concerns as recent fires in our units have been attributed to careless smoking.

Although the buildings are being designated as smoke free, the transition will take time. Tenants who smoke in their units prior to the January 1, 2014 will be allowed to continue smoking in their units until they move out. The next tenant to take up that unit will have to follow the new policy and they will not be permitted to smoke in the unit. There have been a few new tenants who have complained to GCH that there is smoke in the building. Although the buildings have been designated as smoke free, smoke could move from an apartment/unit where the lease allows smoking, to a designated smoke free area. The buildings are not totally air tight. Some tenants have misinterpreted the new policy and one tenant has complained that second hand smoke is making the tenant ill. The tenant has lodged complaints with other authorities. GCH has taken the complaints very seriously and various tests/repairs have been completed

to try to identify and ameliorate the potential of any smoke that may be entering into the unit. An Air Quality Assessment has been conducted by a qualified Safety Professional. Another test called, Blower Door Test will be conducted by a contractor to see if there is any movement of smoke between units. This will help us determine protocols for future such complaints.

CGH will assess the results and hold a tenant meeting to discuss with tenants. As a result of these concerns GCH has provided more detailed written information (attached) to Housing applicants and Property Supervisors are having new tenants initial the clause in the lease that discusses the non-smoking policy.

#### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Grey County Housing is in the early stages of a very exciting partnership with other community agencies aimed at reducing crime and making the neighbourhood in the Alpha Street area more secure to the residents. Owen Sound Police Services have been talking with tenants who take part in programming at the Alpha Street Family Resource Centre and have approached other agencies to discuss a multi agency approach to some of the issues the families experience within the neighbourhood. Police calls for service within the past year reflect that a more concentrated effort by associated agencies could help reduce the number of police calls and help make the community a better place to live and raise children. The Alpha Street neighbourhood has 201 residents residing in 68 units. Approximately one half (96) of that population are children under the age of 16. Tenants have expressed an interest in continuing on with any program that would promote the right to a safe community approach through increased communications and improved relations with the police.

As a result a committee has been struck consisting of Owen Sound Police Services (OSPS), Grey Bruce Health Unit, Georgian Collage Police Foundations Program and Grey County Housing to carry out the Crime Prevention Model, CPTED concepts. Students enrolled in the Police Foundations Program will be assisting OSPS officers with the program and this project is part of their course curriculum. The process will involve residents all the way through. Residents will help identify common problems and prioritize on how to resolve them through one on one and group sessions. Residents will interact with Community agencies to identify areas of risk or perceived risk within the complex. This will involve assessments of the following areas: Parking lots, formal play areas, paths and walkways and specific units within the complex with undesirable activities to name a few. Education and communication will be an encouraged and promoted throughout the program. GCH Property Supervisors and Community Relation Workers will be fully involved with the program.

Grey County Housing senior managers will be attending the OSPS Supervisors Retreat to provide an overall picture of the social housing portfolio and to discuss the challenges

GCH and tenants work with every day. The CPTED program is slated to start in February and end in early May of 2014. A final report will be provided.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

### Considerations

Grey County Housing staff will participate fully with partnering agencies throughout the program. GCH will offer the Alpha Street Family Resource Center as a hub and meeting center throughout the project. Any food and required project resources will be paid for out of the existing Tenant Relations/Recreation account.

### Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Enabling healthy and resilient communities by working cooperatively with community partners to improve quality of life opportunities.

### Attachments

Smoking Notice Revised

Respectfully submitted by,

Rick Moore  
Housing Manager

Director Sign Off: *Rod Wyatt*

## Notice to Grey County Housing Applicants

You are being sent this notice, as you are currently on the waiting list for subsidized housing in Grey County.

**Effective January 1, 2014**, all residential buildings managed by Grey County Housing will be designated as **smoke free buildings**. This means smoking will be prohibited in designated areas of the building(s) including apartments/units identified as smoke free.

Smoking will **not** be allowed in hallways, public areas, common rooms, laundry rooms, garbage rooms, vestibules/entrances or within five meters from entrances, exits, doors and windows, **or in designated apartments/units and their attached patio/balcony areas**. All new leases for tenants moving into apartments/units or transferring from one apartment/unit to another with Grey County Housing will include a no smoking clause. If you are offered housing, with a move in date on or after January 1, 2014, this will apply to you.

This new policy has been created to address health and safety concerns. Recent fires in our units have been attributed to careless smoking. The number of complaints from our current tenants, regarding second hand smoke, has increased. Further, refurbishing and preparing a unit for a new tenant when the previous tenant was a smoker is increasingly costly.

Our buildings are in transition. Tenants who smoke, with leases prior to January 1, 2014, will be *“grand-fathered”*. This means these existing tenants will continue to have the right to smoke in their apartments/units, including their balcony/patio areas, as permitted in their lease. Those with leases starting January 1, 2014 and after will be in designated smoke free apartments. Smoking is not permitted in designated smoke free apartment/unit or balcony/patio areas. Although the building(s) will be designated as smoke free, smoke could move from an apartment/unit where the lease allows smoking, to a designated Smoke Free area. We assume no responsibility should this happen. There are no guarantees that passive smoke will not travel from a smoking allowed area to a smoke free area.

Some of our non-profit providers may not adopt the smoke free designation.

If you have any questions, require any additional information, or if you wish to be removed from any of our waiting lists, please contact our office.

Rod Wyatt  
Director of Housing