TORONTO

CITY CLERK

14

Quality Assurance Review of Shelters

City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, adopted this Clause without amendment.

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The Community Services Committee recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (June 15, 2005) from the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.

Purpose:

This report provides information on the three phases of Quality Assurance in the shelter system and reports on the results of the first phase of the Quality Assurance Review of shelters.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

(1)   the General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division report to Community Services Committee by October 2006 with an update on the findings from the second phase of the Quality Assurance Review of shelters; and

(2)   the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In November 2002, City Council approved new Shelter Standards after a comprehensive review to revise the guidelines. The review used a consultative process that included a review of access policies and practices; input from a Community Reference Group comprised of a broad range of stakeholders; input from an Inter-departmental City Staff Steering Committee with membership from a variety of divisions; a review of practices in other jurisdictions; and key informant interviews. The new standards outline the necessary elements and core functions of shelter service delivery, including board governance, organizational management and the services that

support homeless people to stabilize and move on to permanent housing. All shelters that receive funding from the City to operate and deliver shelter services in Toronto must adhere to the Shelter Standards.

City Council directed that all shelters implement the new standards and be in compliance by January 1, 2004. Hostel Services staff provided a range of supports to assist shelter operators with the implementation process including site visits, information sessions, correspondence, funding through Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives for training and various other preparatory tools.

In order to ensure that agencies are meeting the new standards, the Hostel Services Unit of the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division initiated a quality assurance review of all 70 shelter programs receiving funding from the City of Toronto. The reviews began in June 2004, and were completed by December 2004. This report provides an overview of the quality assurance review process and the key findings from those reviews.

At the City Council meeting of February 1, 2 and 3, 2005, Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration were also asked to describe in the Quality Assurance report the efforts being made to effectively manage bed bugs in shelters and to make every possible effort to ensure the health and personal safety of clients. This report also responds to that recommendation.

Comments:

Hostel Services of the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division is the consolidated service system manager responsible for shelter development, program delivery and system oversight. There are 70 distinct shelter programs in the City of Toronto located in 65 shelter facilities. The shelter system is a mixed services delivery model with the City directly operating 12 programs and 58 programs being operated by not-for-profit community agencies funded through purchase of service contracts. All programs must meet the operating requirements as set out in the Toronto Shelter Standards. On an average nightly basis there are over 4,200 beds available in the permanent shelter system for single adults, youth and families. In 2003 over 32,000 different people used the shelter system.

(1)   Purpose of a Quality Assurance Review:

The purpose of a quality assurance review is to determine compliance with a prescribed set of expectations or standards. In this context, there are two main purposes of the review. The first is to determine if shelters are fully meeting, partially meeting, or not meeting the standards as approved by City Council. The second purpose is to work with each agency that is not fully meeting the standards to ensure that they are able to do so in the future.

A quality assurance review process supports effective service system delivery. In a social service system that supports vulnerable homeless people, it is important to ensure that agencies in receipt of funding meet the service expectations of the City. In the spirit of continuous improvement this process also provides an opportunity to identify, evaluate and replicate excellent service practices in the system. This will ensure a continued and improved quality of service for homeless people using shelter services; while at the same time identifying agencies that need to address shortfalls in meeting the standards.

(2)   Development of the Quality Assurance Review Process:

The Quality Assurance Review process is rooted in the concepts of continuous improvement, capacity development, and service system excellence. The only way to build a system that most effectively meets the needs of homeless people is to ensure that the system is committed to the sharing and learning of the best or most promising practices; listens to the people who use the service and adjusts service accordingly; and is willing to remain open to opportunities for system improvement and excellence.

In the development of the Quality Assurance Review process Hostel Services staff utilized a coordinated project management approach to develop the measurement tool and design the review process. The project development team spent six months completing a review of various quality assurance systems both nationally and internationally and held various consultations with other relevant City departments, shelter operators and agency Boards of Directors in order to develop the most effective process.

(3)   Methodology:

Hostel Services staff identified a three-phase cycle of assessing and assuring quality as the best approach. The three-phase cycle became the foundation in constructing and organizing the components and activities of the quality review plan.

Phase One requires an in-depth on-site review of each shelter. This report focuses on the results of that review. Phase Two follows up on remedial activities identified in Phase One and goes into more in depth examination of key policies, practices and implementation of core business functions. This phase also includes shelter users in the evaluation process. Phase Three focuses on reviewing, refining and improving the standards as well as sharing examples of service excellence across the system. At the end of the third phase, the process repeats itself with shelters again being measured for compliance to the new standards. This three phased approach is grounded in a quality assurance review process from a human services perspective.

In the development of the review process and measurement tools, the project development team completed a line-by-line review of the shelter standards. There are 165 shelter standards organized in seven main areas: standards of organization, access to shelter, resident rights and responsibilities, program standards, food safety and nutrition standards, health and safety standards, and staff training. Not all standards are applicable to each shelter. For example, several standards relate to children's programming which are only applicable to family shelters not those that only serve adults. When looking at the standards in greater detail, there are 477 different indicators that can be examined to assess whether or not a shelter is fully meeting, partially meeting or not meeting a standard.

Appendix A provides a detailed description of the methodology and the development of the quality assurance framework and review tool. Appendix B outlines the three-phase cycle of the Quality Assurance Review process for shelters in more detail.

(4)   Overview of Performance Standards:

The project development team determined that it is important to set a high minimum performance bar to reinforce the significance of high service standards throughout the Toronto shelter system. Therefore, in order to pass the quality assurance review an agency is expected to reach a cumulative score of 70 percent. This overall percentage score includes marks for fully meeting and partially meeting a standard. Table 1 outlines the percentage levels and the indicators of performance for each level.

Table 1

Overall Cumulative Percentages	Indicators of Performance
90% – 100%	Shelter provider is meeting the majority of the standards which indicates excellence in organizational management, policy development, and service delivery for homeless people.
80% – 89%	Shelter provider has high quality administrative and operational policies and procedures, exhibits an acceptable level of compliance with the standards and demonstrates a strong commitment to quality and service delivery for homeless people. Action is required in some areas, generally minor in nature.
70% - 79%	Shelter provider has acceptable administrative and operational policies and procedures, exhibits general compliance with the shelter standards and demonstrates a suitable level of quality. Action is required in several areas, a few of which may be major in nature; these are correctable with sufficient oversight.
< 70%	Shelter provider has not met the minimum performance target. While some elements of shelter operation may be compliant with the standards, there are a number of elements that are either unacceptable and/or insufficient administrative and/or operational polices and procedures. There is a concern about the quality of service for homeless people. Agency is in operational difficulty and requires remediation with immediate corrective action of some major and minor issues. If addressed immediately satisfactory compliance can be achieved. In this situation Hostel Services may also chose to complete a separate operational review of the organization to assess its capacity to fully remediate and whether or not the agency should continue to receive funding to operate as a shelter. This is a separate process from the Quality Assurance Review process.

As this was the first time that Hostel Services undertook this process it was important to use this opportunity to get a baseline measurement and identify where each shelter was at in meeting the standards.

(5)   On the Day of the Review:

Each shelter review was conducted on-site at each shelter location by quality review team members that consisted of a minimum of three staff; including two Hostel Services Agency Review Officers and an Environmental Health Officer from Toronto Public Health. All review staff were trained on the review process and measurement tools in addition to using a scripted agenda and program for the day to ensure consistency in all 70 shelter site reviews. Shelters were provided a minimum of 30 days notice prior to the actual site review.

The majority of shelter reviews took one full business day, with larger sites requiring multiple days and larger review teams. The review teams were very well received in all the shelters. Executive Directors and other agency staff made themselves available to answer questions, provide information and escort the team on its review of the facilities.

The Quality Assurance Review project management team met weekly during the shelter system review process. Review team staff were required to bring any issues to the meeting for discussion and resolution to ensure a consistent approach in all site reviews across the system.

To ensure data reliability and a process that is fair and transparent the Quality Assurance review results only report the findings from the actual day of the review. This means that even though reviews began in June 2004 and a number of agencies will have taken additional steps to fully meet the standards, the Quality Assurance report only summarizes the findings on the actual day of the review. There would be no way to remark or change agency scores in a fair and transparent way without going back out to all the shelters and repeating the process. Later in this report there is an outline that explains what steps City staff are taking to follow-up on the results.

(6)   Key Findings:

It is important to provide some context to assist in understanding the findings from the Quality Assurance reviews. The following outlines some key considerations:

(i)   This is the first time that the City has undertaken a comprehensive review of shelters and it is the first time that shelter providers had to prepare for this kind of detailed review.

(ii)   The Standards document was not written in a manner that allowed for easily identifiable measurements. Identifying the most appropriate way to measure each standard was a complicated process and clearly demonstrated that some of the standards will need to be rewritten to clarify the City's expectations.

(iii)   Historically, some agencies have tended to focus their efforts and limited resources on service provision at the expense of writing policies that comply with the new requirements. While recognizing this issue, it is important to understand that sound policies that are clearly communicated to staff and residents and meet the standards are critical in ensuring good service provision.

(iv)   The shelter system is complex in its diversity of programs, shelter types, funding levels, and service mandates. This diversity helps to ensure that clients have different support options and at the same time presents challenges to a standardized approach to

measurement. In the development process Hostel Services tried to take into consideration this diversity, while at the same time recognizing that the standards are expectations that must be met by all to ensure consistent, equitable service.

(v)   Finally, this is a three phased process that acknowledges that some agencies will need to modify their programs and services in order to meet the standards.

The following highlights some of the key findings of the first phase of the Quality Assurance Review.

Overall Results:

Overall the shelter system performed well, with 93 percent of the shelters meeting the passing standard. The average score of all shelters was 81 percent. Forty-Five or 65 percent of the shelter programs scored above 80 percent in the review. Twenty or 28 percent of shelters scored between 70-79 percent and five or seven percent of the shelters performed below the 70 percent passing grade.

The average score demonstrates that overall the shelter system is performing well. There are opportunities for further review, improvement and refinement and the second phase will support agencies in their continuing efforts to meet the needs of homeless people seeking shelter. A list that reports the overall results for each shelter and the percentage of standards each agency fully met is attached in Appendix C. Appendix D provides a brief outline of the status of the five agencies that performed below the 70 percent passing grade.

The overall percentage of standards that were fully met on the day of the review was 72 percent. Seventy-three of the standards were fully met by over 90 percent of the shelters, an additional 22 were met by over 80 percent of the shelters, nine were met by at least 70 percent and another 6 were met by at least 60 percent of the shelters. The remaining 55 standards were met by less than 60 percent of the shelters. Some of these standards included Board of Director minutes unsigned, bed logs not on file in the shelters, insufficient policies regarding service appeals, complaints mechanisms not posted, limited formal mechanisms to give input on meals, and shelters with insufficient maintenance plans.

Results by Sector:

There is notable variation in the results across the different shelter sectors (men, women, youth, mixed adult and family). The women shelters faired best, with an average score of 85 percent, on average 76 percent of the standards were fully met in these shelters. The average score in the youth sector was 83 percent with 75 percent of the standards being fully met. The average score in the family sector was 80 percent with 71 percent of the standards being fully met. The average score in the men's sector was 79 percent with 69 percent of the standards being fully met and the mixed adult shelters on average scored 77 percent with 69 percent of standards fully met in each shelter. The chart in Appendix E shows the results of the Quality Assurance Review by sector. It is important to note that the mixed adult sector is the smallest sector with the least number of beds. Sector size was not factored in summarizing the data.

High Scoring Sections of the Standards:

The top three sections of the standards that were fully met by agencies the majority of the time were Food Safety and Nutrition Standards, Standards of Organization, and Health & Safety Standards. 82 percent of providers fully meet the Food Safety and Nutrition Standards which includes 21 different standards on food safety and nutrition such as the number of meals residents must receive a day, food must meet the Canada Food Guide, food supplements and vegetarian alternatives must be provided, etc. In the section that outlines the Standards of Organization 82 percent of shelters fully met these 20 standards which include board governance, financial accountability, reporting serious incidents to Hostel Services etc. In the section which outlines the Health & Safety standards 76 percent of shelters fully met these 33 requirements.

There were some interesting findings in these sections which highlight the opportunity to refine some agency practices such as signing Annual General Meetings minutes (only 38 percent fully met this standard), posting the Canada Food Guide in all dining rooms (only 52 percent fully met this standard). 77 percent partially met the standard to post evacuation signs on bedrooms doors (most had them posted in the hallways) and only 11 percent of shelters have preventative maintenance plans. Many of these standards are easily corrected in the second phase. For example the City can reissue copies of the Canada Food Guide with specific directions to post the guide in the dining room.

These top three scores indicate that agencies and boards are generally managing programs effectively and take seriously their obligations to ensure that the basic needs of residents are provided for. The results indicate that board of directors are providing effective board oversight in areas of governance, financial accountability, and staff supervision. The results also indicate that there are policies and systems in place to deal with health and safety issues.

Mid Scoring Sections of the Standards:

The next three sections of the standards in order of the highest to the lowest scoring were Access and Discharge, Program Standards, and Resident's Right's and Responsibilities.

Seventy percent of shelters fully met the 34 standards in the Access and Discharge section, 11 percent partially met the standards, and 19 percent did not meet the standards. In the Program Standards section 66 percent of shelters fully met the 39 standards, while 17 percent partially met the standards and 17 percent did not meet the standards. The Resident's Rights and Responsibilities showed that 62 percent fully met the nine 9 standards in this section, 27 percent partially met these standards and 11 percent did not meet the standards.

In these three sections there are varied results. Some of the positive results showed that 96 percent of shelters will admit new residents at all times during their hours of operation; 96 percent will explain the shelter rules and the resident's rights and responsibilities as soon as possible; 96 percent of resident's who wish to appeal service restrictions are given Hostel Services phone number; 93 percent of residents are provided appropriate bedding; 100 percent of shelters provide assistance to get identification; and 100 percent have age appropriate play experiences for children and youth.

While there were many positive results in these sections the results also showed that there are continued opportunities for service improvement related to admission and discharge practices, service restrictions, program standards, and complaints management. For example only 39 percent fully met the standard that shelters must be open with residents about their admission policies and cannot deny access based on substance use alone; only 34 percent fully met the standard that requires agencies to have their service restriction policy on file with Hostel Services; and while 94 percent of shelters are working towards being accessible for transsexual and transgendered clients, only 44 percent have developed a process that outlines how they are accessible.

Standards that relate to access will be an important focus in the second phase of the Quality Assurance review process. Policy and practice at each shelter must support this fundamental standard to ensure that the system is accessible for those seeking shelter.

In terms of other issues 47 percent of shelters were able to demonstrate on the day of the review how they assist residents to develop financial plans that will support residents to move out of the shelter while 53 percent were not able to do so and only 36 percent of shelters fully comply with the requirement to have a written policy on the collection, use and disclosure of resident information.

In the Resident's Rights and Responsibilities section again there were positive results but there continues to be opportunities to improve resident engagement in program decision making and in assisting them to know their rights and responsibilities as residents of the shelter system. For instance, half the shelters fully met the standards which outline resident's rights and responsibilities while the other half only partially met this standard. 20 percent of shelters were able to demonstrate on the day of the review how residents were included in program planning, development, and evaluation, 59 percent were able to show that residents were involved in some of these aspects and the remaining 21 percent of shelters did not have systems in place that supported resident engagement in program decision-making.

Lowest Scoring Section of the Standards:

The final section of the standards outlines the mandatory training for all staff of shelters. These standards were the most difficult to meet for the majority of the providers. Only 15 percent of the shelters fully met these standards. 67 percent partially met the standards and 18 percent did not meet the standards. It is important to note that the review team found that the majority of the agencies had made very real attempts to train their staff but agencies had not developed training tracking systems that could effectively demonstrate whether or not each staff person was trained in all the mandatory courses. The review teams found this the most difficult standard to measure. For example, even if an agency had trained 98 percent of their staff they were only awarded partial marks because they did not fully meet the standard which require all staff to be trained.

The other consideration related to this standard is the financial implications. Preliminary cost estimates suggest that it costs a minimum of $390.00 for each front-line staff (this does not include costs to backfill staff while they are at the training) to be trained in the mandatory requirements. Due to the nature of shelter services, staffing schedules and staff turnover, it is likely that the costs to complete mandatory training for all the front-line staff (approximately

4000 people) in the shelter system is in excess of $1.5 M and this does not include costs for year-over-year training, for food handlers certificates, children's services, supervisory training or other recommended training. Staff will be reviewing this issue.

Bed Bug Management:

Hostel Services conducted a recent follow-up survey with all the shelters to get a sense of the current rate of bed bug infestations in the shelter system. That survey showed that approximately 32 percent of the shelters had some level of bed bug infestation in their shelter (some beds out of service for cleaning, or majority of beds are affected by bed bugs). Interestingly, some of these shelters had never had bed bugs before, some were still treating for bed bugs infestations and some organizations had managed to control bed bugs and they no longer had them on site.

There are three standards in particular that assist in measuring how agencies may or may not be effectively controlling bed bugs in the shelter system. The findings from these standards help the City to evaluate how organizations are responding. These standards include the provision of clean bedding, laundry facilities and pest control contracts. The reviews showed that 90 percent of shelters provide clean bedding upon admission and the bedding is changed weekly, eight percent partially met this standard and two percent did not meet this standard. 95 percent of the shelters provide residents with laundry soap and instructions on how to do laundry if they have laundry facilities on site, 5 percent did not meet this standard. 55 percent had a contract in place with a licensed pest control operator, 29 percent partially met this standard and 16 percent did not meet this standard. It is important to note most of the agencies were able to show that they had regular treatments in place for pest control but they were not able to show the review team a copy of the contract.

In developing its response efforts to support agencies to manage bed bugs, Hostel Services completed research on bed bug management and developed a "bed bug primer" which detailed what are the best control methods. A copy of the bed bug primer is attached in Appendix F. Hostel Services distributed this primer to all shelters, drop-ins and social housing providers and hosted a number of information sessions for providers which included pest control experts and staff from the Toronto Public Health, Healthy Environments. In all the material and information sessions, what is key to effectively managing bed bugs is an Integrated Pest Management approach. Shelter providers must clearly outline what services they want pest control operators to provide and make sure that operators are using an Integrated Pest Management approach in their treatment of bed bugs. Hostel Services will use the findings from this review to support agencies to develop Integrated Pest Management specifications that will assist them in setting up the most effective pest control contracts.

Hostel Services takes the issue of resident personal safety and quality of life very seriously. It is critical that users of service are involved in the process of informing the City. The second phase of the Quality Assurance Review process includes a review of key standards that affect personal safety and quality of life issues as well as the completion of a resident survey. During the second phase of the Quality Assurance, Hostel Services will be gathering more information and provide a more detailed report of these issues in the October 2006 report.

Other Review Findings:

As part of the initial review process, Hostel Services also examined per diem funding and organizational financial position to see whether or not these directly influenced Quality Assurance Review results. The results of that review concluded that the level of per diem funding from the City is not necessarily a determinant in how an agency will score on the day of the review. The results showed that some agencies which received lower per diem amounts did very well and in some cases agencies that received higher funding performed lower. This review did not take into consideration additional revenue that agencies receive from donations or other third party revenue. Generally, agencies that performed very well had system average per diem funding.

The other interesting finding in relation to organizational size/capacity was that the agencies that consistently performed the best were mid-size multi-service agencies with overall operating budgets in the range of $4-10M. Smaller non-profits (under $4M) and very large organizations (over $10M) did not do as well. Staff consider that generally this may be because smaller non-profits have less resources and in-house expertise and shelter providers in large organizations have multiple mandates which affect the degree of attention that is paid to the shelter operations.

The reviews showed generally that there are two distinct opportunities to support agencies in the continued improvement process. These include assistance to develop policies as they relate to program delivery and service tools such as forms, that will ensure consistent and transparent service delivery.

The review did reaffirm that agencies can and are achieving the standards. 93 percent of shelters met the high performance standards. It is with these findings that the shelters and the City can move forward in the spirit of continuous improvement and share the best/most promising practices to ensure service system excellence. Hostel Services was generally pleased with the overall performance of the shelters and recognizes the cooperation and efforts all shelters took to prepare for the quality assurance review.

(7)   Remediation Action Plans and Site Review Follow-up:

Shelters began receiving their results in March 2005. The results included a complete copy of the scorecard that listed all of the applicable standards and how their organization performed on each standard. The report also provided sector information so organizations could see how they performed with others in their sector.

Agencies also received a follow-up work plan template. In many instances shelters have already reconciled deficiencies in their shelter since the time of initial review. It is expected that each agency will note this in their response work plan. For any other outstanding items, shelters have 90 days to develop and submit their plan to Hostel Services for final review and approval. This is an integral part of the first phase in the Quality Assurance Review process. These plans will begin to be submitted to Hostel Services at the end of June 2005. By September 1, 2005, all shelters will have submitted their remediation action plans for approval to Hostel Services.

Hostel Services Agency Review Officers will be following up on site with each shelter operator in the fall of 2005 to determine whether the agencies have made the necessary changes to meet the standards as outlined in their individual remediation action plans. In an effort to ensure the most appropriate use of resources and staff time (both the City's and the agencies) Hostel Services staff will focus their site visit on the standards that were partially met or not met on the day of the review and evaluate each agency's progress on meeting those standards only.

At this time agencies will also be required to provide a written management declaration that indicates whether or not the organization is still in compliance with the standards they met on the day of the actual review. If the organization has materially changed any activities or functions since their Phase One review that would affect their continued compliance with the standards then the shelter's Agency Review Officer will assess the nature and scale of the changes to decide whether or not a Phase One review needs to be conducted again.

(8)   Feedback and Debrief with Shelter Providers:

Shelter providers, upon receipt of their individual scorecards, have had the opportunity to schedule appointments with their Agency Review Officer in Hostel Services to get additional detailed feedback on the results of the review. These meetings are also an opportunity to get clarification on some of the decisions made in the evaluation process, as well as receive more information on approaches that can be used to go about fully meeting particular standards.

Hostel Services has received mixed reviews from providers during these meetings. Agencies have indicated that overall they are satisfied with the process and the scoring. However, they did raise some concerns about the process, scoring methods, data reliability, lack of administrative resources, and generally that some of the standards were unrealistic and unachievable as currently written. All this feedback will be reviewed and considered as the second and third phases are developed and implemented.

Opportunities for additional feedback on the first phase and input on the second occurred throughout the month of June including a formal debriefing session with all the providers. These meetings provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the successes and learnings from the first phase of Quality Assurance. There are opportunities for improvement and sharing of the most promising or "best practices" to effectively support capacity development and service system excellence.

(9)   Results Inform Phase Two:

It is important to note that the findings from the first review directly inform the second phase of Quality Assurance. There are three distinct initiatives in the second phase.

The first initiative focuses on a comprehensive examination of key policies that were consistently underscored in the reviews. This process will utilize research, consultation, and client interviews, to develop a consistent policy framework. This policy framework will measure the quality of service as it relates to the three specific policies that required the most improvement from the first round (admission and discharge, service restrictions and complaints management).

The second initiative is a very practical process that supports service system consistency and identifies the easy to fix issues that were found in the first round of the Quality Assurance reviews. An example of an "easy to fix" solution are the various forms agencies record information on. Historically agencies have developed their own forms. Some of these meet the standards and others did not. The most effective way to deal with these easily remedied examples is to develop a City approved form and distribute it to all providers for use. A good example would be a bed log. Only 13 percent of shelters had all the necessary information on their bed logs while 86 percent partially met this standard. Distributing a City approved bed log form and requiring agencies to use it will immediately bring all shelters into compliance with this standard.

The third is the identification of standards that need to be revised or amended to make them clearer and address any systemic issues with the way the standard was written. For instance, one standard requires that all garbage must be stored in an impervious container with a tight fitting lid (which conforms with public health requirements). Most agencies had tight fitting lids in their regular garbage storage areas however, 84 percent didn't have their kitchen garbage covered (they were being used to collect garbage while staff prepared the food) and therefore failed this standard. This standard will need to be clarified in the third phase of the Quality Assurance Review process to confirm if this is a realistic standard or needs to be amended.

Hostel Services staff are in the process of developing the second phase of the Quality Assurance review process. The second phase will focus more on policy and practice. Hostel Services will be conducting various consultations with key informants to identify the most effective way to measure policy and practice in the shelter system which will include input from shelter providers and users of service.

Conclusions:

On the whole, the shelter system is performing well above the pre-established performance benchmarks of 70 percent average score. The overall average score in the shelter system was 81 percent with 93 percent of shelters passing the high performance target. There are opportunities for continued improvement, and Hostel Services is working with shelter providers to improve compliance with the Standards.

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List of Attachments:

Appendix A: Summary of Methodology and Development of the 2004 Hostel Services Quality Assurance Review
Appendix B: Hostel Services Quality Assurance Plan

Appendix A

Summary of Methodology and Development of the 2004 Hostel Services Quality Assurance Review

Development:

In developing the Quality Assurance Review, the development focused on an approach that was flexible to capture the complexity of the shelter system, was responsive, provided timely results, enabled an analysis from a variety of frameworks, supported the continuous improvement of the Standards, and ultimately of the services delivered for homeless people using the shelter system.

To that end, the City identified a three-phase cycle of assessing and assuring quality as the best approach. The three-phase cycle became the foundation in constructing and organizing the components and activities of the quality assurance plan. Each phase of the cycle has a specific set of activities that are intended to ensure the quality of shelter services as well as work towards clarity in the understanding of the Standards thereby making future revisions to the Standards more effective.

Phase One requires an in-depth on-site environmental scan of each shelter, a detailed examination of records, and interviews with shelter management staff in order to determine compliance with the standards. Phase Two follows up on remedial activities identified in Phase One and goes into more in-depth examination of key policies, procedures and implementation of core business functions and also includes shelter users in the evaluation process. Phase Three focuses on reviewing, refining and improving the standards as well as sharing examples of service excellence across the system. At the end of the third phase, the process repeats itself with shelters again being measured for compliance to the new standards. This three phased approach is grounded in a quality assurance review process from a Human Services perspective.

Methodology:

There are 165 shelter standards organized in six main areas: standards of organization, access to shelter, resident rights and responsibilities, program standards, food safety and nutrition standards, health and safety standards, and, staff training. Not all standards are applicable to each shelter. When looking at the standards in greater detail, there are 477 different indicators that can be examined to assess whether or not a shelter is fully meeting, partially meeting or not meeting a standard. Given the volume of standards and measures, the nature of the service being delivered and the fact that this was the first quality assurance review of this nature, considerable research was conducted to develop the best possible model for effectively evaluating the adherence to the shelter standards. The process was consistent with practices of other jurisdictions and social service delivery systems.

Given that the shelter system provides human services for vulnerable people, a key distinction in preparing for the quality assurance review was prioritizing the importance of standard compliance. The project development team categorized each standard into three tiers with graduated scores assigned to each tier. Tier One standards were those standards considered critical to effective and safe shelter operations such as health and safety, and legal requirements. Tier Two standards were those standards important for effective shelter operations. Tier Three standards were those standards that are related to service enhancements but not related to the core requirements of providing effective shelter service and/or operations.

Score Card:

The measurement tool was designed as an electronic score card so that the review team could immediately enter information on the day of the review for most elements of the review process. Review team members used a laptop computer and entered data from the review directly into the electronic scorecard enhancing data integrity and evaluator accuracy. Any scores not entered on the day were documented onto a hard copy and transferred onto the electronic scorecard as soon as possible.

The electronic scorecard was programmed to automatically calculate various scores and percentages, required fields were set to reduce data omission errors and fields were locked to enhance data quality control. Further quality control procedures were employed in the data entry process including a data audit of each hand-written and electronic scorecard as well as a random numeric sampling of the electronic scorecard to confirm accuracy of all information.

Performance Standards:

There were two critical benchmarks for understanding quality in the review. The first was the percentage of standards that were fully met by each shelter. The second was the aggregate percentage score across all standards by each shelter (marks for standards fully met plus partial marks for standards that were partially met). In both cases, 70 percent was determined to be the appropriate benchmark. While the goal in any quality assurance review is 100 percent compliance all of the time, the aggregate benchmark of 70 percent for the first review was necessary in order to identify areas to concentrate limited staff resources in the remediation process.

Overall Cumulative Percentages	Indicators of Performance
90% – 100%	Shelter provider is meeting the majority of the standards which indicates excellence in organizational management, policy development, and service delivery for homeless people.
80% – 89%	Shelter provider has high quality administrative and operational policies and procedures, exhibits an acceptable level of compliance with the standards and demonstrates a strong commitment to quality and service delivery for homeless people. Action is required in some areas, generally minor in nature.

Overall Cumulative Percentages	Indicators of Performance
70% - 79%	Shelter provider has acceptable administrative and operational policies and procedures, exhibits general compliance with the shelter standards and demonstrates a suitable level of quality. Action is required in several areas, a few of which may be major in nature; these are correctable with sufficient oversight.
< 70%	Shelter provider has not met the minimum performance target. While some elements of shelter operation may be compliant with the standards, there are a number of elements that are either unacceptable and /or insufficient administrative and/or operational polices and procedures. There is a concern about the quality of service for homeless people. Agency is in operational difficulty and requires remediation with immediate corrective action of some major and minor issues. If addressed immediately satisfactory compliance can be achieved. In this situation Hostel Services may also chose to complete a separate operational review of the organization to assess its capacity to fully remediate and whether or not the agency should continue to receive funding to operate as a shelter. This is a separate process from the Quality Assurance Review process.

Quality Assurance Process:

The phase one review of the Quality Assurance Process uses five different assessment tools to measure compliance to the shelter standards. The five assessment tools include:

(i)   resolutions from shelter Boards of Directors;
(ii)   inquiry process;
(iii)   review of required materials on file with Hostel Services;
(iv)   shown on-site; and
(v)   measure and count.

The five different assessment tools were designed to ensure consistent measurement. The following provides a brief summary of the various components of the review process.

(i)   Board Resolutions:

The board resolution process requires governing Boards of Directors to make informed declarations that fairly and accurately represent the corporation's position on its compliance with various standards. Boards were asked to resolve 12 different board resolutions which summarized over 70 specific standards such as compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act, board oversight of financial records and shelter operations and existence of policies such as non discrimination etc. This component of the review process reinforced the role of the Boards of Directors in ensuring that agencies are in compliance with the standards, meeting their operating responsibilities and contractual obligations with the City.

(ii)   Inquiry:

The inquiry stage of the review included an extensive interview with senior staff including Executive Directors, and other management staff as required to review the shelters adherence to various policies and practices. During this stage the review team asked agency staff to respond to over 110 key questions related to the standards including questions regarding admission and discharge practices, complaints processes, food service provision, and how the shelter responds to health and safety issues and issues of communicable disease.

(iii)   Review of Materials on File with Hostel Services:

Some standards stipulate that specific documents are required to be on file with Hostel Services and specific forms need to be submitted at specific time intervals. Prior to conducting the file review related to these standards agencies were given an extended deadline of May 31, 2004, to make sure all the required materials were on file. Additionally, all shelters were sent two full detailed information charts reminding them of the list of materials that were required. Hostel Services staff checked all current files to determine whether or not all the documentation was submitted according to the standards. The results were then recorded accordingly. In order to be fair and consistent in the review process, documentation received after the May 31, 2004, deadline did not receive marks.

(iv)   Shown On-Site:

This method was used when visual verification was required to assess whether or not the shelter is adhering to a particular standard.   This includes viewing policies, procedures, materials/supplies, or other examples of how the shelter conducts a particular activity will provide additional evidence of whether or not they are adhering to a specific standard. The Shown On-Site included a review of over 170 individual measures from admission and discharge records, bed logs, emergency incident reports, evacuation plans, and first aid kits, to posted hand washing signs and storage of cleaning supplies.

(v)   Measurement and Count:

There are a small number of standards that require items to be precisely counted or measurements to be conducted to evaluate whether or not an agency is meeting the standard. These included a specific count of rooms, bed spacing, and the count of key infrastructure items such as toilets, sinks and showers. Space standards were measured but not marked in this case as Council has given shelters until January 1, 2006, to comply fully with the space standards. There are approximately 200 beds which will need to be phased out in order to meet the space standards.

Information, Support and Consultation:

Throughout the development and implementation process of the Quality Assurance Review, shelter providers received information and tools to assist them in their preparation. For example, in August 2003, Hostel Services developed and distributed a self-evaluation tool to each shelter. The self-assessment tool allowed agencies to complete their own review to determine whether or not they were meeting the standards and identify where the agency needed to focus their resources. The tool was an important aid to assist shelters in their agency's preparation for the day of the review.

Hostel Services also hosted a number of information sessions for shelter managers and Board members to outline the development and implementation plan for the Quality Assurance Review. Over 100 people attended these sessions. The purpose of the sessions was to garner agency input and feedback in the development of the process and identify what additional assistance agencies felt they needed in order to meet the standards and prepare for their reviews. An evaluation of the sessions indicated that 98 percent of the respondents found the sessions useful and informative. Agency Review Officers in Hostel Services were also available throughout the process if individual shelters required additional support in their preparation.

Hostel Services sent regular updates and reminders to all shelters about the process and what they should expect on the day of the review. In advance of the review each agency received a check-list which clearly outlined what each agency had to have on-file with Hostel Services, required policies that needed to be in place, and policies that need to be posted in the shelter. Shelters also received a detailed Board of Directors resolution framework that outlined the Quality Assurance review methods and detailed each applicable standard that related to the agency board resolution process. Lastly, agencies also received a complete package of each measurable standard and a detailed summary of how each standard would be measured on the day of the review.

The Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Association of Hostels was also briefed on the quality assurance framework, the tier designation, weighting of standards, the assessment tools and process and the 70 percent benchmark.

Appendix B

Hostel Services Quality Assurance Plan

The Quality Assurance plan is linked to a three-phase cycle. Each phase of the cycle has a specific set of activities that are intended to assure the quality of shelter services as well as work towards clarity in the understanding of the Standards thereby making future revisions to the Standards better. In summary, the three phase cycle is outlined below.

Phase One:

Review of All Shelters:

Review involves a visit to every shelter program to review the shelter's adherence to the Shelter Standards. Adherence in this review is at a high-level. For example, the purpose of the phase one review is to see if a policy for a particular shelter standard exists. The review does not evaluate the quality of the policy or whether it is "acceptable" or "good". This type of activity will occur in Phase Two.

Each Phase One review will be conducted by the shelter's Agency Review Officer, who will chair the review, an Agency Review Officer of another shelter, and a representative from Public Health. Representing the shelter during these reviews will be the Executive Director, senior staff, a member of the Board of Directors if appropriate, and other shelter staff as required.

The working document for the Phase One review is a scorecard, which contains each Standard. For each Standard, an assessment will be made by the review team as to whether or not the Shelter Standard is applicable or not applicable to the shelter. Assuming the Standard is applicable to the shelter, the review team will validate that each component of the Standard is met. For example, when reviewing Consent to Release Personal Information forms, the team will ensure that the form contains date of disclosure, resident name, name of the shelter and contact person that is disclosing the information, type of information to be disclosed and name of the shelter and contact person the information is being disclosed to. As a result of this level of analysis on each Standard, the Standard will be deemed to be fully met, partially met or not met. In the event that a Standard is partially met or not met, the review team will provide a detailed outline of what needs to be done to fully meet the Standard, and will propose a timeline for doing so.

The results of the Phase One review, including the scorecard and a template for a remediation plan, will be provided to each individual shelter after the Quality Assurance site visit. Once every shelter in a particular sector (e.g., men, youth) is completed, the shelter will receive an analysis of how their shelter compared to others. Once every shelter across the entire shelter system is completed, the shelter will receive an analysis of how their shelter compared to all other shelters.

Detailed notes on the review and subsequent follow-up will be on file in hard copy with Hostel Services. A shelter provider may request a copy of their Quality Assurance file at any time. Written Update to Clarify Standards:

At the conclusion of Phase One, after all shelters have been reviewed, Hostel Services will provide a written update, if required, to clarify any Standards. Clarity may be provided in language or interpretation of a Standard, and may include examples/case studies of proper and improper interpretation of the Standard uncovered during the course of the review. The purpose of providing the clarification is to increase the number of Standards met across all shelters.

Phase Two:

Follow-up on Remediation:

As noted previously, one of the items produced in the course of the Phase One review is a remediation strategy for each shelter. This strategy will be done in consultation with the Agency Review Officers and outlines what actions will be taken to fully meet the Standard and the timeframe for doing so.

In Phase Two, a more detailed process to achieve sign-off on the response to items identified for remediation will occur. The purpose of this exercise is to clearly document that areas that were deemed to not fully meet the Standard have been rectified.

Written Declaration of No Changes in Activities or Functions:

Changing activities within a shelter or the functions of shelter delivery can trigger the need for a Phase One review to occur again. In Phase Two, shelters will be asked to provide a written declaration that none of their activities or functions have changed since their last Phase One

review. If changes have occurred, the shelter's Agency Review Officer will assess the nature and scale of the changes and decide whether or not a Phase One review needs to be conducted again.

Phase Two Review:

The purpose of the Phase Two review is to dig deeper into policies and practices of a shelter, to move beyond "Does a policy exist?" to "Is the policy 'acceptable'?"

To move to this level of analysis and discourse requires communication with providers on their perceptions of what constitutes "good/acceptable" materials and practices. It also requires examples of those materials and practices that satisfy all of the City's interests.

The Phase Two review should be understood to be a learning opportunity, and the chance to receive constructive feedback. All shelters will receive feedback on the Phase Two review, though it will be more focused and shelter specific in nature.

Shelter Resident Survey:

One of the most important aspects of assessing quality is to receive feedback directly from end-users. In human services, the service is the product. As such, a process will be developed to gather feedback from shelter residents. This may include one-on-one interviews, focus groups and/or written surveys. The questions asked in the resident survey will be developed with input from shelter operators to ensure that the information gathered is mutually beneficial, as a shelter resident survey can provide constructive feedback on services in a systematic and valid format.

Investigate Best/Most Promising Practices:

The frame of reference for understanding best/most promising practices in service delivery is based upon the understanding that: there are innovative methods of undertaking shelter activities and functions which improve service to residents; there are innovative methods of undertaking shelter activities and functions which are very cost effective and do not have adverse impacts on service. Best/Most promising practices in relation to the Shelter Standards and quality assurance is focused on the best ways to meet a particular Standard, and is not concerned with any innovative and effective practices that are outside the scope of the Standards.

In Phase Two, an investigation will begin to examine those practices noted in the Phase One review as being possible best practices. The investigation into best practices will focus on the following questions: is this practice replicable? What resources are required to perform this practice? Has a reputable outside institution or body already recognized the work as a best practice, and if so, using what assessment criteria? In which ways are the innovations in shelter activities or functions improving service to residents, and what is the cost of achieving the innovation?

It is doubtful that every Standard will have an example of a best practice. In cases where it is possible that a Standard has a best practice, it will be noted for the assembly of best practice materials for the following phase.

Written Update to Clarify Standards:

Like Phase One, it is likely that some Standards will require written clarification. This may stem from the Phase Two review or the investigation of best practices. A written update, if required, will be provided to all shelter providers to clarify the Standards. In these cases staff will issue Hostel Services Guidelines to amend or clarify standards. This process is supported by the new operating agreements between the City and the agencies.

Phase Three:

Follow up on Remediation:

Similar to Phase Two, it is possible that remediation will be required from the Phase Two review. A formal sign-off on the completion of the remediation activities will be required and documented.
Written Declaration of No Changes in Activities or Functions:

Like Phase Two, a written declaration will be required to notify the City that there have been no changes in activities or functions which may have an impact on the results as noted by the City in those two reviews. If there have been changes, reviews may need to be conducted again depending on the nature and extent of the changes to activities or functions. This assessment will again be conducted by the shelter's Agency Review Officer.

Itemize Best/Most Promising Practices:

Following the conclusions of investigating best/most promising practices in Phase Two, it is necessary to itemize and collect supporting documentation of those activities or functions that are deemed to be best practices. These materials will help form the basis of a resource document that will be made available to all shelter providers, and may include everything from administrative practices to examples of forms and policies to an explanation of how a particular function or activity is undertaken at the shelter.

Resident Survey Report:

The results of the resident survey report conducted in Phase Two will be prepared. The report will provide an overview of the perceptions of shelter residents in the services they receive and suggest methods of overcoming any perceived shortcomings.

Update Standards:

Operationalizing and reviewing the Standards in Phases One and Two, as well as receiving resident feedback and investigating best practices will provide a wealth of information for amending and updating the next version of the Standards. As a result of this process it is quite possible that the next set of Standards will have some new standards added, some deleted, and the language altered for others. The purpose of the report is to get Council approval of the Standards and the timeline for implementation of the Stan

Appendix C

Summary of Hostel Services 2004 Quality Assurance Review Results
For All Shelters Grouped By Overall Percentages

90-100%	Sector	Number of Beds	Ward Location	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
Salvation Army – Evangeline	Women	77	14	95.1%	89.1%
Street Haven	Women	30	27	91.2%	82.7%
Subtotal	2	107		93.15%	85.9%

80-89%	Sector	Number of Beds	Ward Location	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
Toronto Community Hostel	Family	24	20	89.4%	82.4%
Eva's Initiatives – Place	Youth	32	34	89.1%	83.6%
Robertson House	Family	90	28	88.9%	83.3%
Native Men's Residence – Tumivut	Youth	52	21	88.4%	83.1%
Scott Mission	Men	45	20	88.4%	79.1%
Birkdale Residence	Family	160	37	88.2%	80.2%
Fred Victor Centre Women's Shelter	Women	40	28	88.2%	80.9%
Family Residence	Family	150 + motel program	43	88.2%	82.2%
Eva's Initiatives – Phoenix	Youth	50	19	88.2%	79.8%
Dixon Hall –Heyworth House	Co-ed Adult	70	31	87.9%	80%
Salvation Army – Hope	Men	108	20	87.8%	76.7%
Women's Residence	Women	118	19	87.6%	77.4%
YMCA House	Youth	50	20	87.3%	78.9%
Women's Residence Lounge Program	Women	15	19	87.1%	78.1%
Christie Ossington Men's Shelter	Men	45	18	86.7%	78.8%
Dixon Hall – 60 Richmond	Co-ed Adult	70	28	86.5%	76.2%
YWCA – First Stop Woodlawn	Youth/Women	55	22	86%	76.5%
Youth Without Shelter	Youth	30	1	86%	78.4%
Eva's Initiatives – Satellite	Youth	30	23	85.6%	78%
Christie Ossington Women's Shelter	Women	17	19	85.3%	73.6%
Salvation Army – Gateway	Men	108	28	85.3%	73.6%

80-89%	Sector	Number of Beds	Ward Location	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
Nellie's	Women	20	30*	85.2%	76.1%
Convenant House	Youth	94	27	84.8%	77.4%
Native Men's Residence	Men	63	21	84.5%	76.1%
Fife House – Denison	Co-ed Adult	5	27*	84.4%	70.2%
Scarborough Hope	Co-ed Adult	60	35	83.9%	74.1%
St. Simon's	Men	60	28	83.7%	75.6%
Covenant House – McGill	Youth	28	27	83.6%	76.2%
Homes First Society – Savards	Women	30	18	83%	71.5%
Woodgreen Reddoor – Pines	Family	50	31	82.6%	68.4%
Salvation Army – Maxwell Meighen	Men	260	28	82.1%	68%
COSTI – Immigrant Settlement Services	Co-ed Refugee	16	20	81.9%	73%
Good Shepherd – Main Program	Men	91	28	81.7%	69.7%
Turning Point	Youth	50	27	81.6%	71.2%
Woodgreen Reddoor – Lawrence	Family	75	37	81.3%	69.7%
Cornerstone	Men	50	21	81.2%	72.4%
St. Vincent DePaul – Mary's Home	Women	38	27	81.2%	76.5%
St. Vincent DePaul – St. Clare's	Women	28	24	80.8%	72.9%
St. Vincent DePaul – Amelie House	Women	20	30	80.8%	71.4%
St. Vincent DePaul –Elisa House	Women	40	6	80.8%	72%
Good Shepherd – Barret House	Men	5	28	80.6%	70.1%
Women's Residence Bellwoods	Women	11	19	80.2%	70.8%
Sojourn House	Family	50	27	80%	69%
Subtotal	43	2503		84.79%	75.65%

70-79%	Sector	Number of Beds	Ward Location	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
Fife House – Dennison	Mixed Adult	5	27*	79.6%	70.2%
Salvation Army - Florence Booth	Women	60	19	79.4%	70.5%

Fife House – Hastings	Mixed Adult	5	27*	79.2%	64.4%
Seaton House – Downsview Dells	Men's	28	9	78.9%	71.7%
Native Child & Family	Youth	12	19	78.4%	66.7%
Woodgreen Reddoor - Queen	Family	70	30	78.1%	64.1%
Horizon's for Youth	Youth	35	17	77.8%	67.9%
Homes First – Strachan	Women	76	19	77.7%	66.1%
Seaton House – Fort York	Men	74	19	77.6%	71.1%
Council Fire	Mixed Adult	61	28	77.3%	69.4%
Seaton House Annex & Infirmary	Men	140	27	77.3%	67.8%
Seaton House – Main program	Men	240	27	76.3%	67%
Second Base	Youth	56	35	76.3%	65.7%
Seaton House – O'Neill	Men	60	27	76.1%	66.1%
Treasure House	Men	48	20	76.1%	65.4%
Seaton House – Long-term	Men	140	27	75.7%	65.2%
Seaton House – Birchmount	Men	60	36	74.9%	67.3%
World Vision	Family	80	20	74.8%	67.5%
Touchstone Youth Centre	Youth	33	29	74%	65.7%
Salvation Army – Riverdale	Men	60	30	73.6%	60.8%
Subtotals	20	1343		76.96%	67.03%

< 70% **	Sector	Number of Beds	Ward Location	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
Dixon Hall – Schoolhouse	Men	55	27	69.6%	54.2%
University Settlement Recreation Centre	Mixed Adult	65	20	63.8%	55.3%
Central Neighbourhood House – Met Church	Mixed Adult	50	27	56.4%	53.4%
Beatrice House	Family	80	17	56%	51%
Toronto Recovery Homes	Men	24	20	48.3%	47.3%
Subtotals	5	274		58.82%	52.24%

Grand Totals	Number of Programs Reviewed	Number of Beds	Overall Score	% of Standards Fully Met
	70	4227	81%	72%

*   Shelter address is confidential, Ward location is the administrative offices
**   Please see Appendix D

Appendix D

Update on Agencies that Achieved < 70% in the Quality Assurance Review

< 70%	Number of Beds	Comments
Dixon Hall – Schoolhouse (Ward 27)	55	Many of the issues relate to the physical structure of the building (i.e. no cooking facilities) and the history of the program being operated as a long-term rooming house prior to becoming a shelter. Policies and procedures have not been updated to reflect its funding as a shelter. Agency has met with Agency Review Officer to discuss the findings of the review. The agency operates two other shelter programs. Average score in these programs is 87%, which demonstrates overall agency capacity. It is expected that with a review of the programs and services and appropriate capital investment this shelter will meet the standards.
University Settlement Recreation Centre (Ward 20)	65	This program only operates on the weekends. Many of the issues relate to the physical structure and the part-time nature of the program. The Agency Review Officer has begun discussions with the provider to identify the core issues and support them in the development of their remediation strategy.
Central Neighbourhood House – Met Church (Ward 27)	50	This program is currently closed and engaged in strategic planning. Many of the issues regarding this program relate to the lack of documented policies and procedures and the manner in which the agency chose to deal with the board resolutions.

< 70%	Number of Beds	Comments
Beatrice House (Ward 17)	80	Main issue with this program is that the Board of the agency did not provide the resolutions on the day of the review and there were a number of policies and operational policies that did not meet the standards. The Board has subsequently provided the resolutions. In late 2003 the Board of Beatrice House hired the YWCA as the new management company. The YWCA operates another shelter that received a score of 86%, which demonstrates overall agency capacity. Since the time of the review the agency has been in discussions with the Agency Review Officer and it is expected that the agency will meet the performance standards within the next 3 months.
Toronto Recovery Homes	24	This program had a number of issues related to Board resolutions, physical property standards and policies and procedures. Hostel Services has been in discussions with this organization since February 2004 regarding its operations. Shelter in cooperation with the City is ceasing operations effective July 15, 2005.

Appendix F

Bed Bugs:
A Primer with Practical Thoughts

Bed bugs are a pest (known as an ectoparasite – an on-skin insect pest). They are common in transient populations. Not limited to shelters, bed bugs can be found in hotels, motels, apartment buildings, rooming houses, dormitories and the like.

There is no pre-emptive chemically based pest control approach to dealing with bed bugs. While you can manage your facility in such a way so as to decrease the possibility that bed bugs will be present, there is no spray or chemical that can be used to prevent them from going there in the first place. Spending some time addressing areas bed bugs may live, however, can help prevent them from establishing a foothold should they arrive at your facility.

Preventing and managing bed bug problems necessitates an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. As a framework for looking at the issue, IPM's goals are to use pesticides only when absolutely necessary, undertake preventative measures, monitor and detect an insect problem early, educate people on how to deal with the issue, and maintain ongoing vigilance in addressing the issue. IPM is discussed in detail later in this document.

This communication is intended to share some practical thoughts on bed bugs and what to do.

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are a pest, about ¼ inch long (about the size of a pencil eraser) and rather flat before feeding (not much bigger than a piece of paper) and drop-shaped after feeding. They are tan in colour when they have not fed, reddish-brown when they have recently fed. They do not fly or jump. They travel from person to person by walking only (and rather quickly too, like the speed of an ant); and travel from place to place most often in clothing or luggage.

Bed bugs feed only in darkness, usually at night. They feed on humans, and will not stray far from a food source (usually only a few meters). In between feedings they go into hiding in dark places, usually between the folds of mattresses, in pillows, behind baseboards, in cracks in the floor, behind posters or wallpaper, in draperies, etc. They only need to feed once every few days, and the feeding lasts only 5 minutes. They do not stay on an individual in between feedings. (Unfortunately) Bed bugs can live about half a year without feeding if need be.

There are no reported cases of bed bugs transmitting disease to humans. Most health impacts associated with bed bugs are the scratching of the whitish bump that often appears after a bite. Scratching the skin surface can create an open sore and opportunity for infection. The bite itself of a bed bug is rarely felt at all and most often is painless. There are a small percentage of people, however, who are allergic to the saliva injected while the insect feeds which may result in painful swellings – but this is rare.

Bed Bugs and the Intake Process:

Given the presence of bed bugs that currently exist in the shelter system as well as other institutions, a provider may wish to consider several courses of action during the intake process.

(1)   Ask the individual if they have been staying somewhere that has bed bugs.

If they have, you may wish to consider suggesting that they wash and dry all of their clothing immediately to prevent transmission of bed bugs into your shelter. If they carry their clothes in a knapsack or similar bag you may encourage the washing and drying of the bag as well. Washing, and especially drying, kills bed bugs. If drying is your only option, tumbling the individual's clothing for 30 minutes in a dryer that is 97 degrees Fahrenheit (35 Celsius) or hotter will generally kill bed bugs – Hotter the Better.

(2)   Ask the individual if they themselves have bed bug bites.

If they do, laundering clothes becomes even more important not just because of killing the bed bugs, but also because clean clothes will reduce chances of infection in sores caused by scratching bed bug bites.

(3)   If laundry isn't an option, consider separation.

In the event that washing, and especially drying, the individual's clothes and bags are not an option on-site or at the time of intake, if at all possible separate the individual's sleeping area from the rest of your shelter population until the laundry issue can be dealt with. If you don't, the likelihood of bed bugs spreading and multiplying in your shelter increases a lot – which will

mean bed bugs will increase across the entire shelter system. If the person is in a separate sleeping area, check the bedding for bed bugs daily, ask the individual if they have any new bed bugs bites, and vacuum the sleeping area frequently making sure to use the hose attachment of the vacuum to get all the nooks and crannies. The separation area should be carefully sealed at any point where the insects could get behind baseboards or travel through wall separations into other areas.

(4)   If the individual refuses to have their clothes and bag laundered, separate and build it into the case plan.

If the reason why the belongings are not laundered is because the individual refuses rather than a lack of facilities, consider having the individual sleep in a separate area of the shelter (for reasons outlined in 3), and also consider building the laundering of belongings into the individual's case plan. Compliance on this matter may be a goal that will take a while to reach. In the meantime, achieving that compliance should not put others in the shelter in a position where they are likely to get bitten.

(5)   In extreme cases, consider a referral.

There may be extreme cases where an individual has many bed bug bites indicating they have come from an environment with many bed bugs, they refuse to have their belongings laundered, and you currently do not have any way of separating the individual from other shelter residents. In those extreme instances you may want to contact your colleagues in other shelters to see if they have any chance of providing a bed to the individual in a separate area.

There are Bed Bugs in your Shelter, Now What?

Here are some dos and don'ts for you to consider when your shelter has bed bugs:

Do	Don't
- Communicate the presence of the bed bugs to residents and staff in a reasonable, factual manner	- Panic – bed bugs are manageable
- Document the occurrence(s) including who, where, when, how much	- Shut down the shelter immediately
- Let your Agency Review Officer know if the problem persists	- Throw out all the bedding and belongings
- Encourage the person who was bitten to continue to stay at your shelter	- Think the problem will go away on its own
- Consider managing the storage of belongings differently and altering the intake process	- Delay in implementing procedures to minimize their presence
- Increase laundry access	- Move the bed to another area
- Contact your pest control operator to make sure you have an effective IPM strategy in place – NOW – even before it happens!	
- Remove clutter from sleeping areas	

A timely response is required once bed bugs are detected to avoid having bed bugs establish a foothold in your shelter. Detection can come from residents, staff or your pest control operator. The solutions to managing the issue also involve those same three groups of people.

When residents indicate that they have been bitten these instances should be documented and tracked. In particular, note the date of the incident and the number of people who claim to have been bitten. Also note in which sleeping area and/or part of a sleeping area they were staying. This will all be valuable information for your pest control operator and staff.

Staff are critical in looking for the presence of bed bugs in the sleeping area. Making checks for bed bugs (and other pests for that matter) can be an important component of having a safe, livable environment. Scheduled checks of beds and bedding will ensure vigilance in detection. Insect glue boards are invaluable in acting as early warning monitors. These can catch bed bugs when they are not easily found. Staff can also play a part in many of the minimizing strategies outlined in the next section.

Discussed in detail in the last part of this information package, your pest control operator can also play a big role in the detection and control of bed bugs in your facility.

Practical Actions to Minimize Bed Bugs:

There are a range of things that can be done to minimize bed bug activity in a shelter, though none of these things will prevent bed bugs in the first place. Some are cost effective solutions that have been gleaned from various sources, others may require a short term capital investment that can be a bit larger. Approaches that use pest control operators are discussed in a separate section following this one. Hostel Services does not recommend one method of minimizing bed bugs over another. It is likely a combination of these things given a particular circumstance that can have a true impact.

(1)   Laundry:

As was discussed at length earlier, washing and drying of clothes can reduce the number of bed bugs in a facility. The drying part is the really important aspect.

(2)   Storage of Belongings:

One aspect of storing belongings is to contain existing bed bugs that are in the belongings. This may be particularly relevant for those individuals who will not have their belongings laundered. Store belongings in a sealed plastic bag, such as a large sized garbage bag. It may not kill the bed bugs, but they aren't traveling about and laying claim to other areas of the shelter either.

A second step to storing belongings, that may be a relevant option to some, is where belongings are stored. If belongings are stored in an area not in the sleeping area chances are the bed bugs will be too far away from any food source to thrive. How these belongings are processed can also help. In addition to bed bugs not thriving in heat, they cannot survive the cold either. Bed bugs die when exposed to temperatures below 48 degrees Fahrenheit (9 degrees Celsius) for a prolonged period of time (about a day). It may be an option for the bag of a person's belongings to spend a day (sealed of course) in a freezer (with their permission of course).

To recap: seal the belongings in a bag; store the belongings away from the sleeping area; with the individual's permission, and where practical, have the belongings spend a day in the freezer (if the washing and drying was not an option in the first place).

(3)   Check the Bedding and Bed:

Early detection is the key for reducing the spread of bed bugs in your shelter. Each female bed bug can lay 6-10 eggs at a time (between 200 and 500 eggs in her lifetime) that hatch in about 10 days. Nobody wants bed bugs on that scale.

Early detection can occur in several ways, but the most important is to check a sample of bedding in the morning. There are several tell tale signs that bed bugs have been in a bed, the most detectable of which is small blood stains on the bedding. Other places to check for live bed bugs are inside pillow cases, around the elastic area of a fitted sheet, in the folds of the mattress and where the bed comes in contact with the bed frame.

Laundering bedding on a frequent basis – and more frequent when there are bed bugs present – is a good step to reducing their spread. Also, if the mattress is washable, washing it in its entirety – especially the folds and seam areas – can reduce bed bugs.

(4)   Alter the Bed Frame and Position of Bed:

Bed bugs cannot fly and find it very difficult - if not impossible - to walk on polished surfaces. It is for these reasons that the treatment of the bed frame and the position of the bed are important.

First, where the position of the bed is concerned, if you move the bed just an inch or two away from walls and other fixed furniture one of the transportation routes for the bed bugs into the bed have been eliminated. So long as the bed frame continues to touch a surface that bed bugs can walk up to get into the bed, they will. Also, make sure blankets and sheets are not touching the floor.

Altering the bed frame applies predominately to wood bed frames. The altering can occur in many different ways. Some of the common suggestions that have worked in different settings are:

(1)   seal the all wood with a glossy wood sealer;

(2)   apply a one-inch band of petroleum jelly (e.g., Vaseline) around each wood leg;

(3)   place each leg of the bed in a clean, polished metal can (e.g., old soup cans) or wrap each leg in metal tape;

(4)   wrap double-sided tape around the bed legs. Make sure the tape is tight or the bugs will just crawl below it; and

(5)   place an insect glue trap under each bed leg.

To recap: move the bed away from walls and furniture; treat the wood bed frame.

(5)   Change the Bed Frame:

Bed bugs have a really hard time climbing up metal bed frames. This is particularly true if the legs of the metal bed frame are wiped with a cloth every couple days to make them shiny. You may want to consider replacing all existing wood bed frames to metal bed frames. To help offset the capital cost of doing this, you may want to explore small capital funding opportunities like the one provided through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI).

(6)   Seal the Mattress:

Sealing the mattress (and box spring if applicable) in a fitted vinyl cover, or covering the mattress entirely in plastic can be effective for three reasons: one, it takes away crevices for bed bugs to hide; two, if fitted tightly can present another polished/slick surface that bed bugs have difficulty climbing; three, it can trap existing bed bugs that will be sealed away from their food source and die.

(7)   Steam:

Steam kills bed bugs. You may choose to rent or purchase a steamer and apply the steam to all of the mattresses, bed frames, carpets, rugs and draperies in your shelter. Generally steam is effective up to a one inch depth of the surface of the material that is being steamed. The steam, at the output source, must be 158 degrees Fahrenheit (70 Celsius) or hotter to be effective.

(8)   Vacuum Frequently:

Vacuuming can help perform two functions. In shelters where there are currently no other tell tale signs of bed bugs presence, a quick examination of vacuum collection will illustrate whether there are bed bugs (or other small insects) present. In shelters where there are bed bugs, vacuuming can be used to help minimize bed bugs by being able to remove them from spaces that are sometimes hidden from plain sight – especially those areas that are dark in the daytime. By using the wand attachments of a vacuum it is possible to vacuum the spaces where mattresses meet the bed frame, along baseboards, behind and in the folds of furniture, in cracks and crevices in the floor or wall, along the edges of windows, in the folds of draperies, and in carpets and rugs. Don't forget to empty your vacuum cleaner immediately afterward and seal the contents in a bag before disposing of it (and to this end, if it will be disposed of on your premises you may want to freeze it for a day first).

(9)   Small Mattress Tears:

Small mattress tears can present an opportunity for bed bugs to go deep inside the mattress during the day. If you cannot replace a mattress that has small tears immediately and you cannot completely cover the mattress as suggested in #6 above, stitch up just the area that has been torn or apply a heavy-duty tape such as duct tape to the area as an interim solution.

(10)   Eliminate Other Daytime Hiding Places:

If bed bugs are found in and along cracks and crevices in baseboards, walls and the floor it is important to caulk or otherwise fill potential daytime hiding places. If there is a bed bug presence you may also consider removing all posters, wall art, or other things on the wall that may present hiding areas. If wallpaper is present and bed bugs are behind it, it presents an opportunity to remove or repair the wallpaper to ensure that no other bed bugs hide there. If bed bugs are found in drapery, you may want to consider a different style of drapery that does not have as many folds or seams.

(11)   Inspect Donations of Furniture and Clothing:

Before accepting a donation of furniture or clothing into your shelter it is a good idea to take a flashlight and inspect the piece, paying particular attention to the cracks, crevices and seams. Put all donated clothing through the dryer treatment. Furniture requires very close visual inspection. Upholstered furniture and mattresses should be vacuumed and/or steamed before using.

(12)   Never Stop Monitoring, Cleaning and Treating the Problem:

This pest is resilient – never assume that the problem is gone. Monitor, Clean and Treat the problem – this must become part of the every-day standard operational practice at each and every facility.

The Role of Professional Pest Control:

The Shelter Standards specify that each shelter must have a contract with a licensed pest control operator, and have a scheduled inspection and treatment plan. Searching for bed bugs should be part of the scheduled inspection, and when bed bugs are detected a treatment plan should be developed. Chemical treatments are not always the answer. A pest control management strategy should also provide detailed advice to use as an operator of any steps you can take to control or reduce the presence of bed bugs. Also, the pest control operator may be expected to clean or indicate which areas require specific types of cleaning to reduce or eradicate pests such as bed bugs.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM):

Preventing and managing bedbug problems necessitates an IPM approach. Good IPM counts on ongoing evaluation and management of new information and the ability to make adjustments when things are not doing as well as desired. IPM is a way of thinking – it is a way of problem solving in the pest management area with the goals of:

(1)   using pesticides only when absolutely necessary and limiting their use whenever possible, to the minimum required amount to solve the problem;

(2)   looking at ways to limit the success of the insect pest through preventive measures – the saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is very applicable in this case;

(3)   monitoring to enable early detection is critical;

(4)   staff and client education is a necessity; and

(5)   ongoing vigilance is a necessity.

An IPM Approach to Bed Bug Control:

Following the outline of the five goals listed above, here is an outline of the IPM approach to bed bug control:

(1)   Use Pesticides Sparingly:

In the past, it was common to have preventive spraying for a variety of pests, but this is now viewed as an unnecessary use of pesticides. In the case of bed bugs, it will certainly not prevent the problem from being brought into a facility, and it is not a practical approach to treat beds in this manner pre-emptively.

There are only a few insecticides currently registered for use on bed bugs, but none of these have a very long residual action. In general, the insecticide must hit the bed bug directly or the bed bug must walk on it soon after treatment so they are contacted by it. Another added difficulty is that bed bugs have developed resistance to some of the common products so that effectiveness of killing the bed bugs may be gradually impaired.

Also, insecticides may not impact bed bug eggs, especially when applied by a spray. If the eggs hatch after the limited residual of the insecticide has subsided, then the bed bug will progress through its stages of development unimpeded by the insecticide. Fortunately, the steam treatment kills eggs easily if it is applied properly to hiding places.

If insecticides must be used, the manner in which they are applied can sometimes be problematic. Some pest management professionals have a tendency to use a "fogging" approach to dealing with these insects. Fogging is a practice of pest control where an ultra low volume application in the form of a mist is applied to a location. In this application a fine mist of insecticide settles on everything in the room. The use of fogging of an area as a strategy of control is questionable. This may in fact drive some of the insects into the walls, and into other areas.

Due to the biology of bed bugs, baits cannot be used, and as bed bugs feed through a piercing and sucking mouth-part, some of the ways that insecticides kill other insects do not work very well on bed bugs.

(2)   Preventative Measures:

Prevention covers several strategies and approaches. Some of the key areas and concepts where prevention are key include:

(i)   prevent bed bugs from spreading from one facility to another;
(ii)   prevent your facility from being conducive to bed bugs hiding;
(iii)   if your facility has bed bugs, prevent them from moving from one location to another within the facility; and
(iv)   prevent clients from easily bringing bed bugs into your shelter by making prevention part of the intake process.

An IPM approach seeks to thwart bed bugs from getting a foothold in the shelter, stop the spread of bed bugs when they exist, and avoid the reintroduction after they have been eradicated. Following the strategies outlined previously in this document can help in the prevention process. The better that prevention and control strategies are applied, the greater the likelihood that bed bugs will be reduced in all facilities.

(3)   Monitor for Early Detection:

Given that bed bugs can spread from one facility to another through people's clothing and belongings, the more vigilant people are on the lookout for bed bugs in your facility the greater the ability to contain the bugs not only within your facility but across all facilities. Following the common-sense approaches outlined previously in this document will ensure early detection.

(4)   Education and Training:

Monitoring for early detection, undertaking preventative measures and doing what is necessary if bed bugs are present requires an understanding of what bed bugs are and what to look for. Everyone in the facility should have some idea of what bed bugs look like and the tell tale signs that they are present. Having one person as the point person to disseminate information and manage a possible infestation is also a good plan. That person should also become aware of all pest management treatment options and be able to advise senior management on a preferred course of action given the facility and the level of infestation. This person can also be the point person in conversations with the pest control operator and share information back with other staff.

Client education is also important. Clients need to know how to report possible bites, and that such reporting should occur in a timely fashion to curtail the spread of bed bugs throughout the facility or to other facilities. This can start as early as the intake process and be positively reinforced through other interactions with staff, memos, posters, etc.

(5)   Ongoing Vigilance:

If you have worked hard and established processes and had some success or if you have worked hard and been frustrated, do not feel discouraged. Professionals in the field of pest management are struggling to control the resurgence of these insects. It is clear that unresolved infestations have the potential for extensive spread, not only within a structure, but also to other locations.

It only takes one surviving fertile female or a few eggs to start the cycle all over again, even after the best efforts of control. Looking at the size of a bed bug or an egg and imagining this in a room or an apartment, is on the scale of searching for a needle in a haystack, and in order to achieve control, that is what must be done.

And so, there must be ongoing vigilance within the facility and at an institutional level to remain committed to preventing bed bugs as much as possible, scanning for their presence, and taking corrective action as soon as they are noticed. Even if it has been months or years since bed bugs have been at the facility, staff still need to be on the lookout for a re-emergence.

Costs:

Managing the costs of bedbug control requires some rethinking of pest control program delivery in terms of processes and investment in good preventive measures. It is far better to use resources in a preventive approach and not have the infestation than to spend a lot of money trying to control an infestation. There is no common dollar figure for how much it will cost to control an infestation because of the multitude of variables involved, but suffice to say prevention is cheaper.

Conclusions:

Bed bugs are an issue beyond the walls of your facility. To decrease the possibility of transmission from one facility to another or within your facility requires dedication to the issue. There are several common sense, cost effective strategies that can be implemented to prevent and minimize bed bugs from taking a foothold in your facility that have been outlined in this primer. Adhering to some or all of these, in the context of an IPM strategy, will help address the issue.

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Keith Hambly, Fred Victor Centre, representing the Ontario Association of Hostels, Toronto Region, addressed the Community Services Committee.

(A copy of Appendix E, referred to in the foregoing report entitled "Quality Assurance Review Results by Sector" was forwarded to all Members of Council with the Community Services Committee agenda of June 29, 2005, and a copy is on file in the City Clerk's Office, City Hall.)