



Dear Members of City Council,

We are writing to provide an update on LMCH's pest control program and tenant support initiatives following the recent Community and Protective Services Committee meeting on October 21, 2024. LMCH is committed to clean, safe, and well-maintained homes for our tenants by collaborating with the City of London and other community stakeholders to achieve long-term solutions.

Response to Report Recommendations

We appreciate the recommendations outlined in the Property Standards and Tenant Support Report received at the October 21, 2024, Community and Protective Services Committee meeting and have reviewed them to assess alignment with LMCH's objectives and resources:

- **Tenant Support Fair:** LMCH supports the continuation of Tenant Support Fairs and values the opportunity for direct engagement with tenants. These fairs would benefit from being more collaborative with large landlords. Having a presence at the fair or the ability to engage directly with tenants would help lead to a timelier resolution of issues.
- **Extreme Clean Program:** While the Extreme Clean Program benefits certain complex tenancies, it has limited capacity to service broader tenant needs. The program deals only with the most extreme cases, and the support requires tenant consent to participate, which can be a challenge.

LMCH supports systemic conversations with income support programs (ODSP and OW), home care, health systems, and community organizations to identify sustainable funding to support successful tenancies. By advocating for our tenants, we can ensure that they can access community services like meal programs, shopping support, home health care, housekeeping, etc., all of which contribute to the challenges we and other landlords face.

- **Property Standards By-Law:** LMCH works closely with the City of London and would welcome an opportunity to collaborate with other stakeholders to continue supporting communication, compliance, and/or review of the Property Standards By-law. These discussions should also include improving collaboration to enforce by-laws when tenants create by-law infractions.
- **Public Extermination Program:** LMCH believes in the flexibility and responsiveness provided by partnering with established pest control providers. Given that pest control is highly regulated by the province of Ontario and significant public sector investment would be required in the program's planning, oversight, and administration, we recommend continuing to leverage external providers rather than pursuing a public extermination program, which may limit flexibility and increase costs.

LMCH is currently working toward moving cleaning services internally. Developing and implementing cleaning services will take 12-24 months. From a staffing and financial resource perspective, there is no capacity to investigate a public extermination program. We also advise Council that this would require a substantial budget amendment and increase.

- **Laundry Services:** Currently, our laundry program operates on a cost-recovery model, covering expenses for machine upkeep and utilities. For tenants with extreme infestations, LMCH provides laundry cards to support necessary cleaning.

Enhancements in Pest Control and Tenant Support

Over the past year, LMCH has undertaken significant improvements to address pest control challenges in our units. Key measures include:

- **Increased Management Capacity:** In 2023, we added management capacity within Property Services to oversee pest control efforts, ensuring a targeted and data-driven approach.
- **New Pest Control Provider:** In 2023, we completed an RFP process to select a new pest control provider, improving responsiveness and service quality.
- **Enhanced Workflow and Data Monitoring:** In 2024, we implemented an upgraded workflow that provides detailed insights into service requests, treatment completion rates, trends, and other key performance indicators. This data informs targeted interventions and allows us to track outcomes actively.
- **Active Management of Incomplete Service:** In 2024, we started tracking and managing issues related to not accessing units, no notice, lack of unit preparation, and tenant refusals, allowing us to enhance our internal processes and manage complex tenancies.

Our efforts are showing measurable results:

- **Treatment Coverage:** We increased the percentage of treated units from 72% in Q1 to 90% by the end of Q3 2024.
- **Tenant Refusals:** Refusals have declined from 8% to 3%, demonstrating our tenant engagement and compliance success.
- **Preparation Support:** Recognizing that some tenants, especially those with medical or physical barriers, face challenges in preparing their units for treatment, LMCH has increased its preparation assistance. In 2023, we supported over 200 unit preparations; in 2024, we have already assisted with 177. This includes providing mattress protectors, laundry cards, and on-site support for preparation and unpacking. Preparation costs per unit vary from \$500 to \$2,500, with expenses anticipated to exceed **\$250,000** in 2024 alone.
- **Increased capacity and use of Advanced Treatments:** We identified that long treatment cycles and low clearance rates caused frustration among tenants and subsequently resulted in capacity issues for the provider. We added a second pest control provider to service the LMCH portfolio in early October 2024 to combat this. This allowed us to increase capacity, treat units sooner, and provide more preventive treatments and inspections across the portfolio. We also transitioned to more frequent use of Apprehend, an advanced treatment that remains active for up to three months, reduces unit preparation requirements, and requires fewer follow-up treatments.
- **Increased Tenant Engagement:** The LMCH Property Services team is more active in tenant engagement activities. They attend community BBQs and Tenant Talks, where they can provide information and answer questions for tenants.
- **Units with Extreme Pest Control Challenges:** LMCH has a low number of units with extreme pest control challenges. The Tenant Services team supports these units, including assigning a Housing Stability Case Coordinator who will engage family and other community support to strengthen the tenant's support system. These extreme cases often require some debris removal or preparation to support the success of the treatment, which LMCH may cover.



When necessary, LMCH will serve notices or file an application to terminate the tenancy if progress is not made. We must balance supporting the tenant's success with the impact on the broader tenant community, our staff, and the building if pest control issues are not managed.

Despite these improvements, challenges remain. At the end of Q3 2024, our overall infestation rate was approximately 38%, with a target of 10%. Obstacles include tenant preparation, housekeeping challenges, and the complex needs of some tenants that require a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Looking ahead, we will continue to strengthen pest control service delivery.

Collaboration between landlords, tenants, and pest control companies is essential to effectively managing pest issues in multi-residential buildings. Landlords must clearly communicate the importance of tenant preparation and ensure that tenants understand the steps required for successful treatment. Tenants play a crucial role by preparing their units as instructed and promptly reporting pest sightings to prevent infestations from spreading. Pest control companies bring the expertise and resources necessary to manage infestations, but their efforts are only effective if they have access to adequately prepared spaces. When landlords, tenants, and pest control providers work in tandem, they create a unified approach that increases the likelihood of eliminating pests and maintaining a healthier, pest-free living environment for all residents.

Commitment to Collaboration and Community Advocacy

While the report received by the Community and Protective Services Committee highlighted pest control challenges that impact seniors, similar challenges for pest control also exist with non-senior tenants, and these challenges are the unfortunate reality of many low-income households in London and Middlesex County, including those residing in LMCH.

Pest challenges, however, are only one of many other challenges facing residents. LMCH is committed to fostering stronger partnerships with the City of London and other community organizations to address the socioeconomic challenges affecting our tenants. Expanded collaborations with income support programs, home care providers, health care, and community services will enable tenants to access more comprehensive support and improve their quality of life.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and your support for our shared goal of providing clean, safe, and well-maintained homes. LMCH looks forward to continued collaboration with City Council to address these challenges effectively.

Sincerely,

Paul Chisholm

Chief Executive Officer
London & Middlesex Community Housing

Mayor Colin Grantham

Vice-Chair, Board of Directors
London & Middlesex Community Housing