



HARRY CUMMINGS AND ASSOCIATES INC

PENTICTON SUPPORTIVE HOUSING REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

Completed on behalf of BC Housing
by Harry Cummings & Associates Inc.

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We would also like to thank all of the representatives from the various community service providers and other community stakeholders that participated in interviews and discussions as part of the review. A summary list of stakeholders that participated in the review is presented in Appendix A.



Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Penticton Supportive Housing review, commissioned by BC Housing and prepared by Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. The purpose of this review is to determine the extent to which the three supportive housing sites in Penticton (Burdock House, Compass Court, and Fairhaven) are meeting their mandates to residents, the need for supportive housing in Penticton, and the impact that supportive housing has had on residents and the surrounding community. Specifically, the review examines the impacts of supportive housing on:

- Homelessness
- Housing Stability
- Quality of Life
- Health of Residents
- Use of emergency health care services
- Crime and safety
- Community outreach and acceptance

This report provides a brief overview of the three supportive housing sites in Penticton, the research methods used, and the findings of the review.

Supportive Housing Sites

This review covers three supportive housing sites in Penticton: Burdock House, Compass Court, and Fairhaven. All sites have 24/7 staffing, on-site security cameras, and secure fob-access entryways for resident safety.

Supportive housing sites provide residents with single occupancy studio apartments that are approximately 320 square feet in size and include a 3-piece bathroom, a small kitchenette (with burner stovetop or microwave), and an apartment sized fridge. Residents are provided with daily meal options¹ and supportive housing staff are available to help residents:

- Maintain their homes
- Enhance their life skills, including learning to cook
- Connect with education, employment, health, and independent housing
- Access community information, social and recreational programs
- Participate in case planning and needs assessments
- Access income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits
- Apply for BC Identification Card
- Open a bank account
- Access food

Staff also perform wellness checks on residents.

¹ Daily dinner meals are provided at Burdock House and Compass Court. Fairhaven provides residents with a daily continental breakfast and three dinner meals per week.

[Burdock House \(594 Winnipeg Street, Penticton, BC\)](#)

Burdock House is a new-build, four-story building with 62 resident units. Opened in October 2019 and operated by Ask Wellness Society, Burdock House is a mixed-resident site that includes one female only floor for vulnerable female residents.² Residents have fob access to their floor and may visit other residents on site (with the exception of no unescorted male residents on the female only floor) and are allowed one adult visitor at a time during daytime hours (outside of provincially mandated COVID-19 social distancing restrictions). The Burdock staff offices are located on the ground floor at the entry point to the building and residents can access a member of staff at all hours of the day or night. Each floor also has one telephone in the hallway that connects to the main desk so that residents can alert staff in case of an emergency. Burdock House also provides residents with harm reduction / overdose prevention initiatives and features an on-site Licenced Practical Nurse.

[Compass Court \(1706 Main St, Penticton, BC\)](#)

Compass Court is a two-story refurbished hotel with 20 resident units (single occupancy). Opened in May 2019 and operated by Penticton and District Society for Community Living (PDSCL), Compass Court is a mixed-resident site with secure (fob) floor access. The main office is located in the middle of the two hallway wings where residents can engage with staff at all hours of the day or night. Residents may come and go as they please, visit other residents, and are allowed one adult visitor at a time during daytime hours (outside of provincially mandated COVID-19 restrictions). Compass Court also provides residents with harm reduction / overdose prevention initiatives and staff conduct daily wellness checks on residents in their unit. Nurses from Interior Health trained in harm reduction and substance use make bi-weekly visits to Compass Court to provide healthcare support to residents.

Compass Court is located at the same address and in the same building as Compass House, an emergency shelter for unhoused residents of Penticton. Compass Court has four resident units on the main floor (the same floor as the shelter residents) and 16 units on the second floor.

[Fairhaven \(2670 Skaha Lake Road, Penticton, BC\)](#)

Fairhaven is a two-story refurbished motel with 41 resident units (single occupancy). Opened in 2016 and operated by Ask Wellness Society, Fairhaven is a mixed-resident site with outdoor unit access within a gated common area. Resident units all have outdoor space facing a common courtyard and community garden, with fob access to the main gate at the front of the property. Residents may come and go as they please, visit other residents, and are allowed one adult visitor at a time during daytime hours (outside of provincially mandated COVID-19 restrictions). The Fairhaven staff offices are located at the front of the property by the main gate where residents can access a member of staff at all hours of the day or night. Fairhaven also provides residents with harm reduction / overdose prevention initiatives and staff conduct daily wellness checks on residents in their units. Although Fairhaven does not have an on-site nurse, they have access to the Licenced Practical Nurse at Burdock to provide occasional assistance and support to residents.

² The mixed community of residents at all three supportive housing sites in Penticton includes residents with different genders, ethnicities, and ages. Residents also have a mix of vulnerabilities and support needs.

Research Methods

For this review, HCA analyzed relevant supportive housing documents and conducted phone and video interviews with supportive housing staff / operators, community service providers, RCMP officials, Penticton city staff, and local business representatives and community stakeholders. A total 47 individuals were interviewed, including 34 individuals who are not affiliated with the three supportive housing sites in Penticton. Additional details on the number of interviews completed and the stakeholder groups that participated in the review are provided in Appendix A.

In November of 2021, HCA conducted a site visit to all three supportive housing sites in Penticton where we toured each of the facilities, conducted additional discussions with supportive housing staff / operators, and spoke with supportive housing residents. A total of ten residents across the three supportive housing sites participated in interviews or discussion groups as part of the site visit.

A resident survey was also conducted in each of the three sites with the assistance of supportive housing staff. HCA utilized an existing resident survey template that BC Housing developed and uses for assessing resident outcomes. The survey measures the change in well-being and quality of life that residents have experienced. The resident survey results are self-reported by residents and participation is voluntary. A total of 56 residents across the three sites completed the survey which represents a combined participation rate of 46.7%. All surveys were completed anonymously and the results were aggregated for the three sites. Additional details on the distribution of survey participants by supportive housing site are provided in Appendix A.

Findings

Homelessness in Penticton

KEY FINDINGS

Supportive housing is currently providing stable and secure housing for 117 residents in the City of Penticton. Many supportive housing residents have strong ties to the community. They have lived in Penticton in the past, have family members in the city, and access service and supports in Penticton.

Local stakeholders confirmed that limited affordable housing is contributing towards increasing numbers of unhoused individuals in Penticton and stressed the need for more supportive and affordable housing.

The three supportive housing sites have improved the housing status of numerous individuals in the city of Penticton. Currently, 117 individuals are housed across Burdock House, Compass Court, and Fairhaven.^{3,4} These sites provide safe and secure housing for individuals who were previously experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the city of Penticton. Supportive housing staff and local service providers discussed how these sites are fulfilling an important need within the community and confirmed that supportive housing residents have strong connections to the community (e.g., residents have been living in the city for at least a year prior to moving into their supportive housing unit; and many of the residents have been living in Penticton for more than five years).

These observations are consistent with the results of the resident survey which found that nearly all of the surveyed residents (92.9%) had one or more prior connections to the community before moving into their supportive housing unit. A substantial proportion of the residents reported that they have lived in Penticton in the past (50.0%) and they have family or friends living in the city (44.6%).⁵ Furthermore, over a third of the residents reported that the services they use are located in Penticton (35.7%). A small number of residents reported that they were living in one of the neighbouring communities prior to moving into supportive housing (<10 individuals).⁶

“There’s nothing affordable in this city, it doesn’t exist. If you look online a one-bedroom is \$1,600 a month, which isn’t affordable even if you’re working full-time.”

~ Fairhaven Resident, 2021

³ Based on the demographic profiles of Burdock House, Fairhaven, and Compass Court, completed by BC Housing in December 2021.

⁴ There are 60 residents at Burdock House, 17 residents at Compass Court, and 40 residents at Fairhaven.

⁵ These findings closely mirror the results of the 2021 Point in Time homeless count that was conducted in Penticton on April 19 and 20, 2021. A total of 114 people were identified as experiencing homelessness and at least 73% of these individuals have lived in the community for at least one year while 46% have lived in the community for 10 years or more. Furthermore, at least 56% of these individuals have been homeless for more than one year (Source: Homelessness Services Association of BC. Penticton - 2021 Homeless Count).

⁶ To protect the privacy and confidentiality of supportive housing residents, values of less than 10 are reported on in general terms (i.e., a few, a small number, or several) and identified in tables / graphs as “<10.”

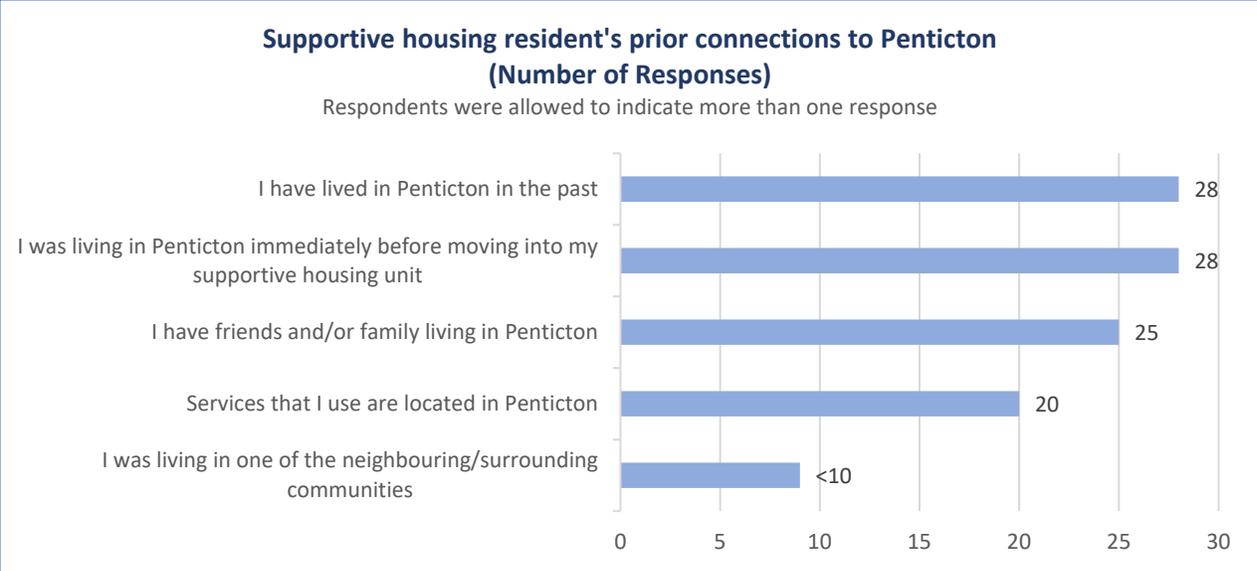


Figure 1: Supportive housing resident’s prior connections to Penticton

Supportive housing candidates are selected based on a number of factors including housing need, length of time living unhoused in Penticton, and their level of support need compared against the current makeup of residents with high-, medium-, and low-service needs in the housing sites. Supportive housing staff confirmed that all of the residents have been unhoused or residing in emergency shelters prior to moving into their supportive housing unit. Surveyed residents reported that they were living unsheltered (20 respondents, 35.7%), in temporary shelters (19 respondents, 33.9%), with friends or family (<10 respondents), or an ‘other’ housing situation (including motor homes, second stage housing, and market housing) (12 respondents, 21.4%) prior to moving into their supportive housing unit.

Housing affordability was identified as a primary contributor to the homelessness crisis in the community by supportive housing staff, local service providers, and community representatives. Service providers talked about their challenges in finding safe housing options for their clients, and how they are seeing more young and elderly people on the streets than they have in the past.⁷ Many felt that without more housing options available in Penticton, the city will only continue to see an increase in homeless individuals in the community.

⁷ The Penticton 2021 Point in Time homeless count determined that at least 24% of the 114 people identified as experiencing homelessness are 55 years of age or older.

Housing Stability

KEY FINDINGS

In addition to providing stable housing for the existing 117 residents, a further 149 individuals have lived at the three supportive housing sites for a period of time before they moved out for various reasons. Almost two-thirds of the former residents lived in supportive housing for more than six months and over a third of the former residents lived in supportive housing for more than 12 months.

Service providers emphasized that they are better able to provide services to individuals once they are housed (i.e., have a fixed address). Staff emphasized the need for more mental health and addiction services in the community which would further strengthen the capacity of individuals to maintain their residency in supportive housing.

Beyond the 117 individuals who currently reside at Burdock House, Compass Court, and Fairhaven, another 149 individuals have lived in supportive housing for a period of time before moving out for various reasons. Of these 149 individuals, 96 (64.4%) remained housed for more than six months and 54 (36.2%) remained housed for more than 12 months.

Of the 95 individuals who stayed in one of the supportive housing sites for less than 12 months, 35 (36.8%) were exited (i.e. expelled), 23 (24.2%) gave notice they were leaving, a small number of individuals have passed away (deceased) (<10), abandoned their unit (<10), or transferred to another supportive housing unit (<10), and 26 (27.4%), moved out for other reasons (includes health issues, unit no longer appropriate, individual no longer eligible for the program, etc.).

“Burdock House is our home and we’ve made friends with other residents. We’ve become a caring community of residents.”

~ Burdock House Resident, 2021

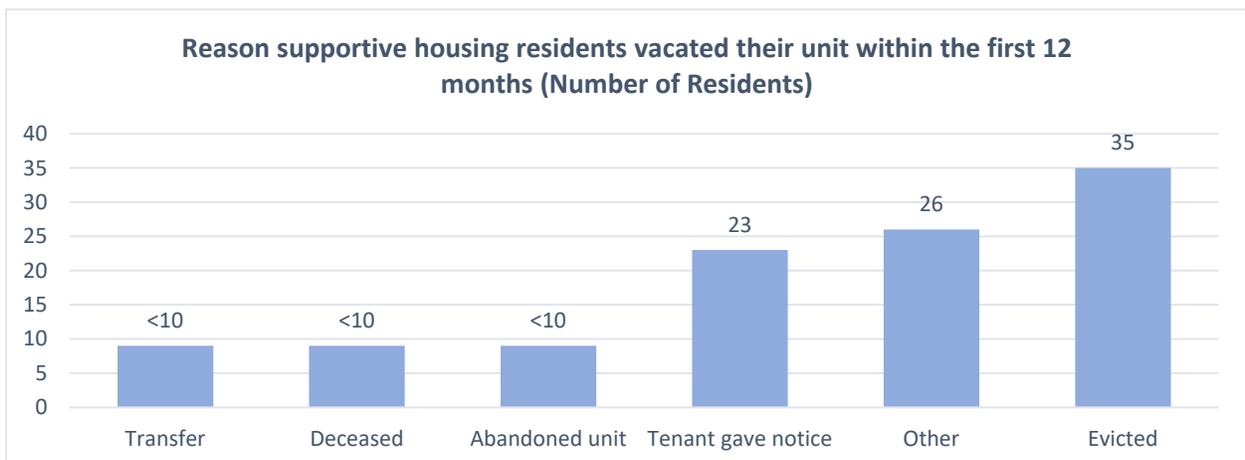


Figure 2: Reason supportive housing residents vacated their unit

The status of where these 95 individuals moved to when they left supportive housing is unknown for the majority of people (58, 61.1%). However, it is known that a small number of individuals were admitted to the hospital or went for treatment (<10), passed away (<10), moved on to other forms of housing, (e.g., subsidised housing, other supportive housing, private market housing, etc.) (<10), or are now homeless or staying in a shelter (<10). Another 21 (22.1%) residents went somewhere unspecified (other) (includes assisted living, correctional facility, long-term care, moved in with friends or family, left the community).

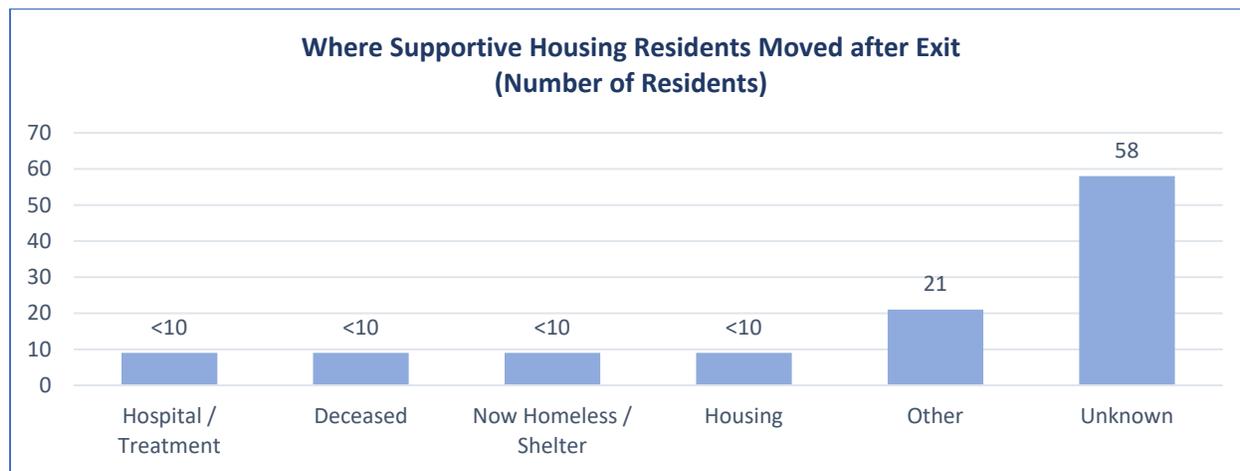


Figure 3: Where supportive housing residents moved after exit

Supportive housing staff and service providers confirmed that safe, secure, permanent housing greatly improves the stability that residents experience. Housing staff said that they notice a difference in residents once they have been in housing for a few weeks. Residents gain a sense of personal security and progressively become less agitated and generally more comfortable engaging with staff once they have been housed.

Service providers discussed the varying level of supports that this population needs within the community, and the role that supportive housing plays in helping them provide services to this population. Currently the three supportive housing sites work to accommodate individuals with a range of high-, medium-, and low service needs, and local service providers confirmed that supportive housing greatly enhances their ability to provide support to at risk populations within the community. However, some individuals would benefit from round the clock health care supports while others are in active recovery and would benefit from a recovery-based housing model. There are also some individuals who require very little support from staff and would benefit from an independent or subsidized housing option. Taking into consideration the varying needs of this population, service providers stressed the importance of a tiered approach to supportive housing with differing levels of supports offered to suit the needs of the residents.

“I’ve had people do really well in supportive housing. One fellow was homeless and had no income, but since getting housed he got income assistance, got his ID, and got a job... this is someone who (previously) couldn’t get access to support.”

~ Service Provider, 2021

Furthermore, service providers specified that there is a need for more addictions support services, specifically a local treatment/recovery and detox center in Penticton. Respondents observed that Interior Health has been doing a good job since taking on some of the services that were formerly provided by another service provider but emphasized that it takes time for the community to adjust to a new care provider.

Service providers talked about how everyone is at capacity in Penticton, and the need for more local support services for the homeless and at-risk population in the in the community. One service provider discussed the need for an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)⁸ team in Penticton – indicating that they have been advocating for an ACT team for Penticton for several years – as this would help to alleviate much of their caseload and better support their high needs clients in the community.

Quality of Life

KEY FINDINGS

Stable housing and living conditions enable residents to work on and realize personal goals with the assistance of supportive housing staff. Although slightly fewer than half of the total current residents responded to the supportive housing survey, the majority of respondents have experienced notable improvements in their quality of life including their overall well-being, access to supports, and positive interactions and relations with other residents in the building and neighbours in the community. Between a third and half of the respondents also experienced improvements in their finances as well as access to education and/or employment opportunities.

At least a third of the survey respondents experienced an improvement in their social connections with family and/or friends but this figure may have been depressed somewhat by the visitor restrictions that have been in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supportive housing has had a major impact on the quality of life for their residents. Over half of surveyed residents confirmed that their overall wellbeing had improved since moving into their supportive housing unit (35 respondents, 66.0%). Surveyed residents reported improved access to supports (32 respondents, 59.3%) and social connections (18 respondents, 34.0%), with many also reporting that their access to supports and social connections have stabilized (i.e., remained the same) since moving into supportive housing. Service providers confirmed that it is easier to provide services to their clients once they are housed and that housing provides the stability that individuals need to be able to work on personalized goals.

⁸ ACT is a mental-health service delivery model that provides a holistic, team-based approach, to recover for clients with complex mental illness. The ACT model promotes community living, psychosocial rehabilitation, and recovery, with clients receiving individual care plans from a multi-disciplinary group of mental health care professionals (ACT team) to provide a holistic approach to recovery. More information about Interior Health's ACT services can be found at: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/services/assertive-community-treatment>

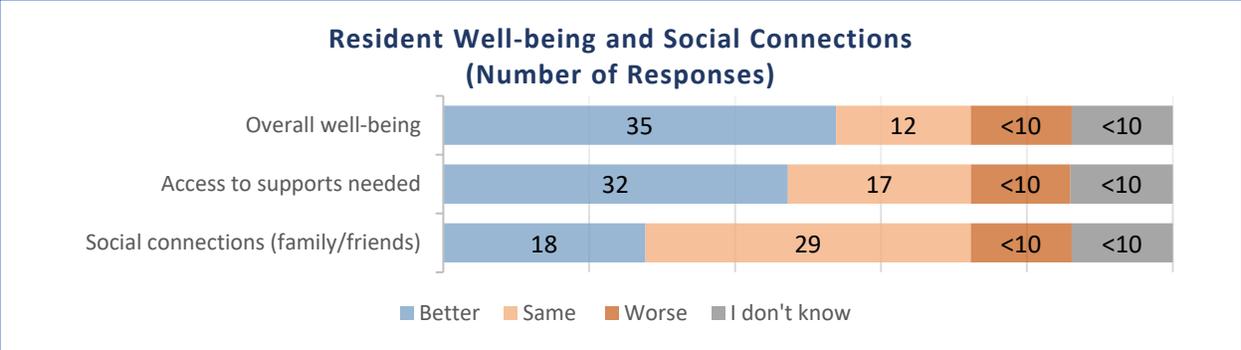


Figure 4: Resident well-being and social connections

Most of the surveyed residents reported having good relationships with other residents in the building (54 respondents, 93.1%) and the majority of residents have a local support network of friends or family who they can talk to (44 respondents, 88.0%). Furthermore, a large majority of respondents said that they have experienced positive interactions with the neighbours in the surrounding community (47 respondents, 92.2%).

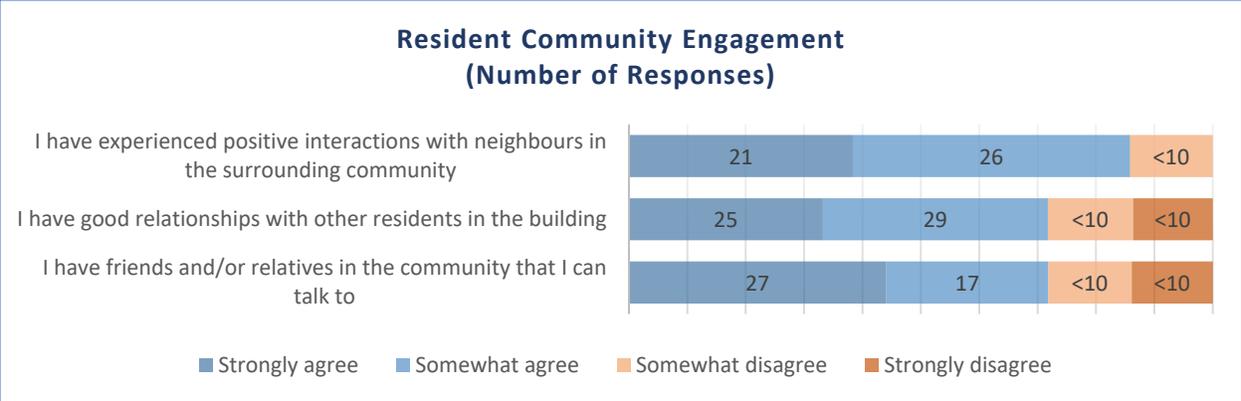


Figure 5: Resident community engagement

Residents confirmed that they have made good relationships while living in supportive housing, however both residents and staff reported that social connections have been difficult to maintain during COVID-19, particularly as guests are not allowed on site. Still, staff at all three sites feel that they have a good community of residents and noted that residents generally get along well with one another and look out for each other. This sentiment was echoed in several of the resident interviews with some respondents saying that they will drive their neighbour to appointments or make extra food to share with their neighbours when preparing a meal.

Although residents are unable to have guests on site due to COVID-19 restrictions, several residents have reconnected with loved ones since moving into their housing unit. Staff and residents confirmed that family members are happy to see that they are in a safe and supportive environment and expressed appreciation for this housing opportunity. For some residents, the limitation of not being able to have their children visit on site was a huge motivator to move on to independent housing and were using the supports offered to explore opportunities for detox / treatment programs and / or applying for subsidised housing. At the time of this review, a small number of individuals (<10) had moved on from supportive housing to other housing opportunities.

“I’d like it if my daughter could come and see where I live, but I get that they can’t have kids here... she knows that I’m in a good place here.

~ Compass Court Resident, 2021

Surveyed residents also reported improvements in their access to education, employment opportunities, and finances. Half of all surveyed residents reported that their financial situation has improved since moving into supportive housing (28 respondents, 50.9%), with another 35.4% (19 respondents) saying that their financial situation has stabilized (i.e., remained the same) while housed. Approximately 40.9% (18 respondents) of surveyed residents indicated that they had improved access to education and 35.4% (17 respondents) said that they had improved access to employment opportunities. Supportive housing administrative records indicate that at least nine residents obtained employment in 2021.

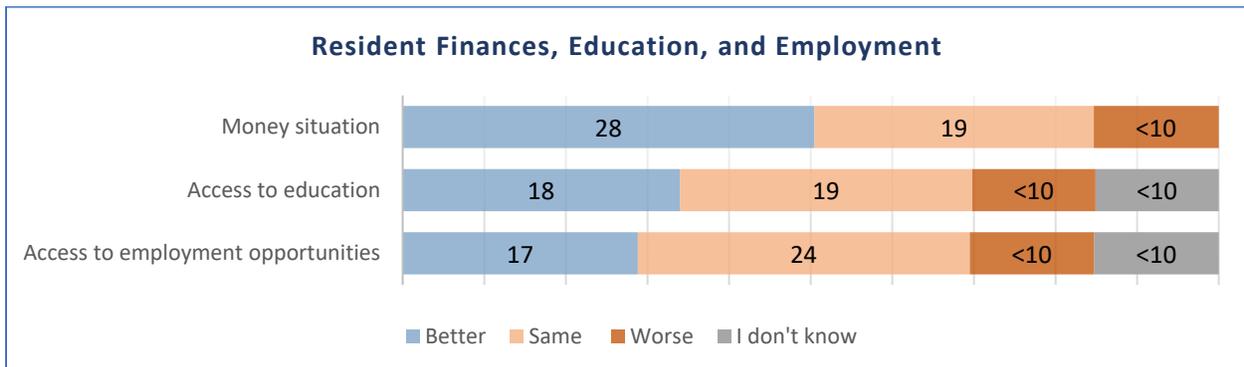


Figure 6: Resident finances, education, and employment

It is important to note that supportive housing is meant to provide housing first, with supports provided to help residents obtain personal goals if and when they are ready to work on them. Supportive housing staff at all three sites discussed the importance of celebrating “little wins” with residents, such as eating two to three healthy meals per day, maintaining a standard of personal cleanliness (i.e., room standards and personal hygiene), or remembering to take medication as prescribed. Residents work with supportive housing staff on developing a personal care plan which is self directed. Many of the residents in supportive housing have significant physical, social, or psychological impairments that limit their ability to gain employment or transition to independent housing; and so staff work with residents on an individual basis to work on personal goals and define / re-define what success means for them in their lives.

Health of Residents

KEY FINDINGS

Although slightly fewer than half of the total current residents responded to the supportive housing survey, the majority of respondents have experienced one or more health benefits since moving into supportive housing (e.g., improved physical and/or mental health, improved capacity to manage and address addiction issues, improved access to healthy food).

Some residents are actively prepared to enter into substance use recovery programs. However, without sufficient recovery-focused housing in the community, there is concern that the individuals returning from these programs will struggle to maintain their rehabilitation process.

All three supportive housing sites offer residents some form of in-house medical care and support. Burdock House has an on-site Licenced Practical Nurse who also provides nursing support to Fairhaven. Compass Court has two Interior Health nurses who come on site twice a week to provide health supports to residents.

Supportive housing was found to have an important impact on the overall health of residents, with most of the surveyed residents reporting improvements in one or more health measures since moving into their unit (78.6%, n=56). Improvements in health included, increased access to healthy food (32 respondents, 60.4%), improved physical (24 respondents, 43.6%) and mental (20 respondents, 37.7%) health, and improvements in their issues with addiction (18 respondents, 37.5%). Furthermore, a significant proportion of residents reported that their health had stabilized (i.e., not deteriorated) since moving into supportive housing (30%+ across all health survey questions).

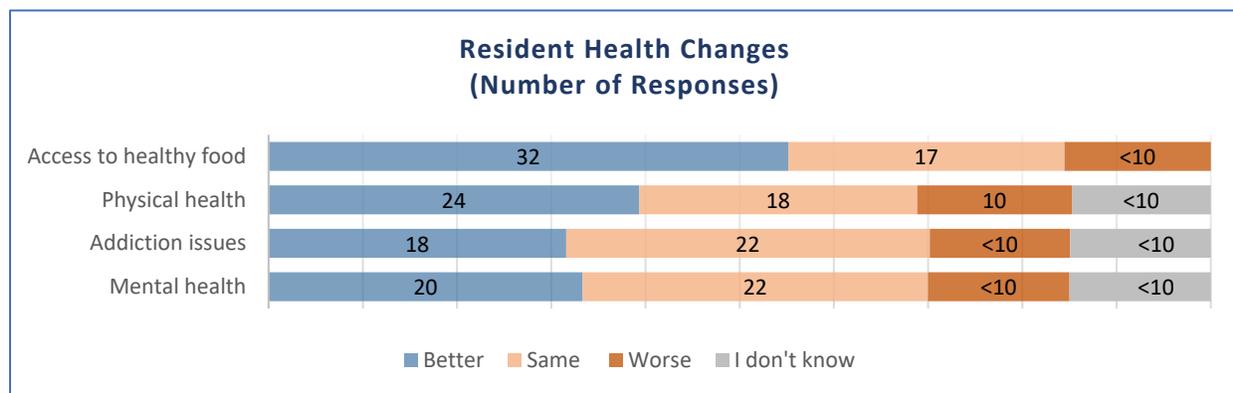


Figure 7: Resident health changes

A small number of residents interviewed (<10) were preparing to go into a substance use recovery program at the time of this review. These residents discussed challenges around maintaining sobriety in supportive housings while other residents are engaging in substance use and indicated that there is a need for recovery-focused housing in Penticton. This sentiment was echoed by supportive housing staff and local service providers who said that although the current supportive housing sites are meeting a real need in the community, there is a need for recovery-focused housing once residents come back from treatment.

Use of Emergency Health Care Services

KEY FINDINGS

All three supportive housing sites make available some degree of nursing support, either through an on site Licenced Practical Nurse or weekly visits by nurses from Interior Health. These resources have enabled many health care related issues to be managed on-site and have reduced the frequency of hospitalizations and emergency room visits that residents might otherwise require.

Having a stable and fixed address has also strengthened the capacity of residents to access other health care and wellness services they're in need of (e.g., dentists, optometrists, counseling or therapy).

Improvements in resident health corresponded with a reduction in hospital and emergency room visits. Nearly half of surveyed residents reported that they had fewer visits to either the hospital or emergency room since moving into supportive housing (44.6%, n=56) (46.2% went to the ER less often and 40.7% were in the hospital less often).

Additionally, 48.2% of all surveyed residents (n=56) indicated that they have increased access to one or more health service since moving into supportive housing. Of these, 18 (33.3%) reported increased access to local drop-in clinics or a family doctor, 14 (30.4%) said that they have increased access other wellness services such as counselling or therapy, and 10 (20.8%) said that they have increased accessed to other health services such as dentists or optometrists.

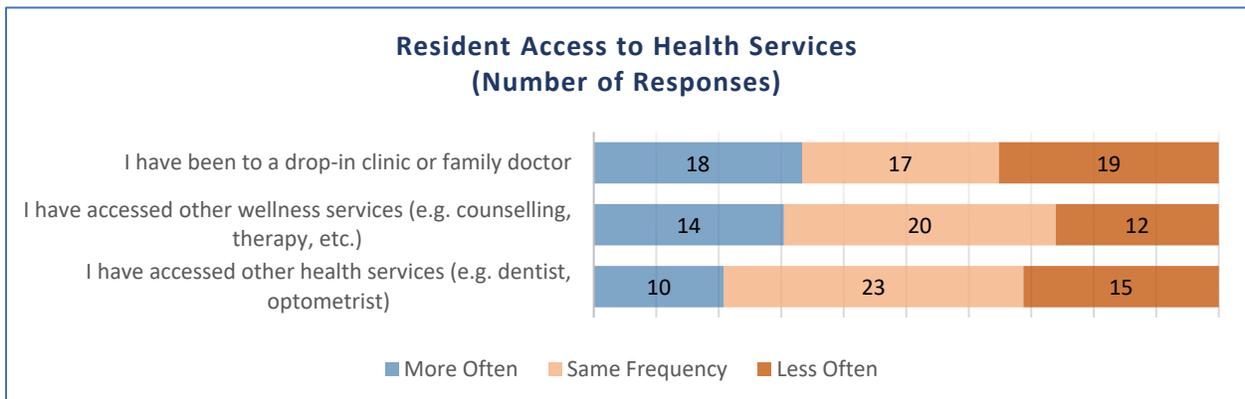


Figure 8: Resident access to health services

Supportive housing staff confirmed that their ability to provide some nursing supports on-site has helped to reduce the frequency of visits and / or length of stay in hospital for their residents. On-site nurses help residents with wound care and other minor medical issues to help them stay healthy, and the Nurse at Burdock noted that the local hospital has been able to discharge patients early on occasion because of the supports that they are able to provide on site.

However, housing staff also noted that some of their residents have high health needs that are beyond their current health care capacity on site. Staff emphasized the need for more long-term health care solutions for those with high health and mental health needs to provide the specialized care they require.

Crime and Safety

KEY FINDINGS

Community stakeholders are concerned about ongoing incidences of petty theft, property damage, drug use, and disturbance of the peace that are occurring around the supportive housing sites. However, it is difficult to establish the exact extent to which supportive housing residents are responsible for these incidents. While it may be the case that a select number of supportive housing residents are responsible for some of the incidents, it is also the case that there are residents who care about the community and act responsibly.

The volume of emergency service calls to the supportive housing locations has to be viewed through the context of this being a population that has a high rate of chronic illness and mental health conditions. Furthermore, there are some residents that are dealing with addictions issues within the context of an ongoing opioid crisis.

One of the key benefits of supportive housing is that it provides residents with a safe and secure home and although some residents confirmed that they've had positive interactions with neighbours in the surrounding community, residents are also experiencing stigma and discrimination in the community.

Although the large majority of stakeholders interviewed indicated that they are generally in favour of supportive housing, ongoing incidences of petty theft, property damage, drug use, and disturbance of the peace that are occurring around the supportive housing sites are a key source of concern in the community. Property theft, property damage and public nuisance issues are particularly concerning to the business community.

Administrative data was examined from several sources including the three supportive housing sites, RCMP, Fire Department, and Bylaw Enforcement to try and gain a better understanding of the usage of emergency and bylaw services at these locations and the surrounding area.

It's important to understand that the service call data compiled by each of three supportive housing sites reflects calls for service that originated from the supportive housing complex itself while the data provided by the RCMP and Fire Department reflects service calls to the street address that corresponds with the location of each supportive housing complex. Not every service call that the RCMP and Fire Department responds to is necessarily related to or involves a resident at the supportive housing

“...we hear it from the adjacent properties about their quality of life, perceptions of safety, etc.... we've heard it all and we're trying to manage all of the perceptions of safety while trying to get the vulnerable access to services and supports.”

~ Penticton city staff member, 2021

complex. Indeed, as revealed by supportive housing staff, requests are occasionally made for emergency services to assist / intervene with non-residents who are at their location or happen to be in close proximity to their address.

With respect to the data provided by the City of Penticton Bylaw Services, the figures reflect the number of service calls that bylaw enforcement responded to within a 250-metre buffer zone centred around each supportive housing complex. It's important to emphasize that there is no definitive way of knowing the degree to which residents from the supportive housing complexes were involved in these incidents and so questions related to attribution have to be treated with extreme caution when interpreting the data.

Supportive Housing Data

Burdock House

Since the facility opened in October 2019, a total of 391 emergency service calls originated from Burdock House – 211 for ambulance (54.0%), 33 for fire department (8.4%) and 147 for RCMP (37.6%). As of November 22, 2021, the number of calls the RCMP responded to are on track to be lower than the previous year, dropping from approximately 7.5 per month in 2020 to 3.8 per month in 2021.

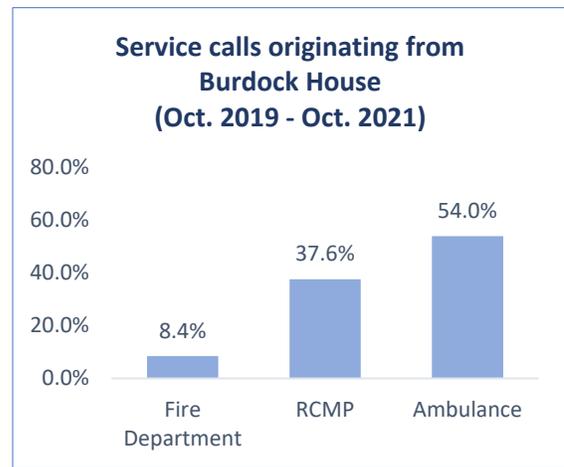


Figure 9: Service calls originating from Burdock House

The number of calls that ambulance and fire department services responded to in 2021 are on track to be somewhat higher than the previous year. The average number of calls for ambulance service originating from Burdock House was 7.6 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 9.5 per month in 2021 (as of Nov. 22).

The average number of calls for the fire department originating from Burdock House was 0.7 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 2 per month in 2021 (as of Nov. 22).

Fairhaven

Between January 2020 and October 2021, a total of 129 emergency service calls originated from Fairhaven – 74 for ambulance (57.4%), two for fire department (1.6%) and 53 for RCMP (41.1%). As of October 23, 2021, the number of calls the RCMP and the fire department responded to are on track to be lower than the previous year. The average number of emergency service calls for the RCMP originating from Fairhaven was 3.4 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 1.2 per month in 2021 (as of Oct. 23). Only two emergency service calls for the fire department originated from Fairhaven in 2020 and no emergency service calls have been made in 2021 (as of Oct. 23).

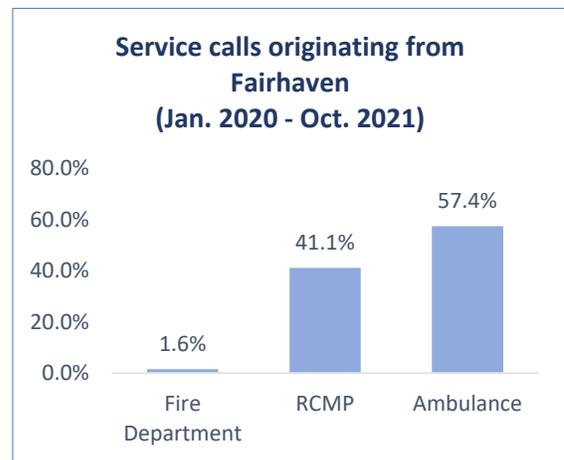


Figure 10: Service calls originating from Fairhaven

The number of calls that ambulance services responded to in 2021 are on track to be somewhat higher than the previous year. The average number of emergency service calls for the ambulance service originating from Fairhaven was 3.1 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 3.7 per month in 2021 (as of Oct. 23).

Compass Court

Between May 2019 and October 2021, a total of 121 emergency service calls originated from Compass Court – 82 for ambulance (67.8%), two for fire department (1.7%) and 37 for RCMP (30.6%). As of Oct. 22, 2021, the number of emergency service calls for ambulance service that originated from Compass Court are on track to be somewhat lower than the two previous years. The average number of emergency service calls for the ambulance service originating from Compass Court was 3.1 per month in 2019 and 3.7 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 1.3 per month in 2021 (as of Oct. 22).

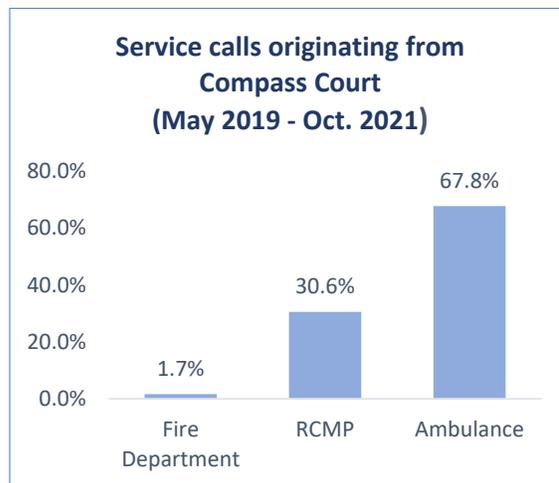


Figure 11: Service calls originating from Compass Court

The number of emergency service calls for the RCMP are on track to be lower than 2019 but slightly higher than 2020. The average number of emergency service calls for the RCMP originating from Compass Court was 2.5 per month in 2019 and 0.6 per month in 2020 compared to approximately 1.0 per month in 2021 (as of Oct. 22). Only one emergency service call for the fire department originated from Compass Court in both 2019 and 2021.

It's worth noting that the total number and frequency of emergency service calls originating from Compass House is much higher compared to Compass Court. In 2021, approximately 85% of the total RCMP service calls originating from the Compass Court/Compass House address were for Compass House (55 of 65 service calls) while 90% of the total ambulance service calls were for Compass House (115 of 128).

A more detailed analysis of the emergency calls originating from the supportive housing sites reveals the effects of the growing opioid crisis which is national in scope and has grown substantially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ The City of Penticton has been especially hard hit experiencing a fatal overdose rate of 59.3 deaths for every 100,000 people compared to 41.9 deaths for every 100,000 people for the entire Interior Health region over the same period (BC Coroner's Service, January-August 2021).¹⁰

The growth in overdose service calls at Burdock House illustrates this development. In 2020, the majority of ambulance calls were linked to medical health emergencies and/or mental health distress (73%) while 22% were linked to overdose related incidents and 5% were linked to other care / assistance matters. In 2021, overdose related incidents accounted for just over half (52%) of the ambulance calls while 45% were linked to medical health emergencies and/or mental health distress and 3% were linked to other care /

⁹ Government of Canada. Modelling opioid-related deaths during the COVID-19 outbreak. Updated Dec. 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/opioids/data-surveillance-research/modelling-opioid-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html>

¹⁰ Interior Health. One city's steps to battle the poisoned drug crisis. November 9, 2021. <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/stories/pentictons-steps-to-battle-the-poisoned-drug-crisis>

assistance matters. It's also worth noting that the large jump in service calls in 2021 involving the fire department were related to assisting the ambulance service with overdose incidents (64% of the service calls to Burdock House that the fire department responded to were linked to providing assistance to the ambulance).

The following three tables provide a breakdown of the emergency service calls that originated from Burdock House, Fairhaven and Compass Court and that the RCMP, ambulance and fire department services responded to.

Table 1: Emergency Service Calls Originating from Burdock House, 2019 to 2021

Service Responder	Year			Total Number
	2019 Oct. 15 to Dec.*	2020	2021 Jan. to Nov. 22	
RCMP	15	90	42	147
Fire Dept.	3	8	22	33
Ambulance	18	91	102	211
Total Number	36	189	166	391

Source: ASK Wellness Society - Burdock House. * Burdock House opened in Oct. 2019.

Table 2: Emergency Service Calls Originating from Fairhaven, 2020 to 2021

Service Responder	Year		Total Number
	2020	2021 Jan. to Oct. 23	
RCMP	41	12	53
Fire Dept.	2	0	2
Ambulance	37	37	74
Total Number	80	49	129

Source: ASK Wellness Society - Fairhaven

Table 3: Emergency Service Calls Originating from Compass Court, 2019 to 2021

Service Responder	Year			Total Number
	2019 May to Dec.*	2020	2021 Jan. to Oct. 22	
RCMP	20	7	10	37
Fire Dept.	1	0	1	2
Ambulance	25	44	13	82
Total	46	51	24	121

Source: PDSCL – Compass Court/Compass House. * Compass Court opened in May 2019.

RCMP and Fire Department Data

Data provided by Penticton South Okanagan Similkameen Regional RCMP reveals that there was an increase in the number of General Occurrences¹¹ reported at the physical address for Burdock House (594 Winnipeg St.), Fairhaven (2670 Skaha Lake Rd.), and Compass Court (1706 Main St.) between 2019 and

¹¹ An occurrence can be any type of police-related event or activity that is entered into police records management systems (e.g. crimes against a person or property, drug offences, nuisance). It could be generated from a call for service or something that is self-generated by a police officer, such as a traffic stop. All files from the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME), regardless of Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics status (CCJS) or offence type, are included in the data.

Source: RCMP Occurrence Report

<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/transparenc/police-info-policiers/calls-appels/occurrence-incident-eng.htm>

2021. The increase was especially notable for 594 Winnipeg St. and 1706 Main St., but it appears that the 2021 figures are on track to be lower than the 2020 figures at all three sites and in the case of 2670 Skaha Lake Rd., the 2021 figure is on track to be lower than 2019. This drop-off is consistent with the pattern of emergency service calls originating from Burdock House and Fairhaven.

Table 4: RCMP Record of General Occurrences, 2019 to 2021

Location of General Occurrence		Year		
		2019	2020	2021 Jan. to Sept. 30
594 Winnipeg St. (Burdock House)	Total number per year	52	205	97
	Average per month	4.3	17.1	10.8
2670 Skaha Lake Rd. (Fairhaven)	Total number per year	63	86	46
	Average per month	5.3	7.2	5.1
1706 Main St. (Compass Court / Compass House)	Total number per year	120	232	145
	Average per month	10.0	19.3	16.1

Source: Penticton-South Okanagan Similkameen RCMP

Data provided by the City of Penticton / Penticton Fire Department also reveals that there was an increase in the number of calls for service reported at the physical address for Burdock House (594 Winnipeg St.), Fairhaven (2670 Skaha Lake Rd.), and Compass Court (1706 Main St.) between 2019 and 2021. In the case of 1706 Main St. (Compass Court/Compass House) the 2021 figure actually declined from 2020 but is still higher than the 2019 figure. It appears that the increase in overdose related incidents is a contributing factor in this pattern.

Table 5: Penticton Fire Department Service Calls, 2019 to 2021

Location of Service Call		Year		
		2019	2020	2021
594 Winnipeg St. (Burdock House)	Total number per year	14	32	65
	Average per month	1.2	2.7	5.4
2670 Skaha Lake Rd. (Fairhaven)	Total number per year	11	7	26
	Average per month	0.9	0.6	2.2
1706 Main St. (Compass Court / Compass House)	Total number per year	35	114	94
	Average per month	2.9	9.5	7.8

Source: Penticton Fire Department / City of Penticton

Bylaw Enforcement Data

There has been a substantial increase in the bylaw enforcement service calls responded to within a 250 metre radius of each of the three supportive housing complexes. The large majority of the service calls related to safety / security / livability were related to social nuisance in public places (72%). Between 2020 and 2021, the number of social nuisance service calls responded to in the 250 metre zone surrounding Compass Court / Compass House increased from 92 to 138 while the number of social nuisance service calls responded to for the area surrounding Burdock House and Fairhaven increased by 31 to 66 and 14 to 24 respectively. In both 2020 and 2021, the majority of the social nuisance calls for the three sites combined were located in the area surrounding Compass Court / Compass House (60%+).

As emphasized earlier in this report, questions related to attribution have to be treated with extreme caution when interpreting the bylaw data as there is no definitive way of knowing the degree to which supportive housing residents were involved in these incidents.

The following three tables provide a breakdown of the calls that the bylaw department responded to within a 250 metre buffer zone centred around each of the three supportive housing sites.

Table 6: Bylaw Dept. Record of Calls Responded to within a 250 Metre Buffer Zone around 594 Winnipeg St. (Burdock House), 2020 and 2021

Type of Community Safety/Security/Livability service call responded to by the Bylaw office	Year		Total Number
	2020	2021 Jan. to Sept. 27	
Social nuisance in public places	31	66	97
Security functions	12	9	21
Check on welfare (personal wellness check on person)	7	20	27
Assist police services	3	1	4
Assist fire department	1	0	1
Assist ambulance service	0	0	0
Total Number	54	96	150

Source: City of Penticton

Table 7: Bylaw Dept. Record of Calls Responded to within a 250 Metre Buffer Zone around 2670 Skaha Lake Road (Fairhaven), 2020 and 2021

Type of Community Safety/Security/Livability service call responded to by the Bylaw office	Year		Total Number
	2020	2021 Jan. to Sept. 27	
Social nuisance in public places	14	24	38
Security functions	5	7	12
Check on welfare (personal wellness check on person)	6	9	15
Assist police services	0	1	1
Assist fire department	0	0	0
Assist ambulance service	0	1	1
Total Number	25	42	67

Source: City of Penticton

Table 8: Bylaw Dept. Record of Calls Responded to within a 250 Metre Buffer Zone around 1706 Main St. (Compass Court / Compass House), 2020 and 2021

Type of Community Safety/Security/Livability service call responded to by the Bylaw office	Year		Total
	2020	2021 Jan. to Sept. 27	
Social nuisance in public places	92	138	230
Security functions	17	18	35
Check on welfare (personal wellness check on person)	3	18	21
Assist police services	1	3	3
Assist fire department	1	0	1
Assist ambulance service	0	0	0
Total	114	177	291

Source: City of Penticton

While community stakeholders provided a fairly consistent narrative on the type of impacts being felt in the neighbourhoods surrounding supportive housing units, the interviews also revealed that there is often little distinction made in relation to who is actually contributing to these impacts (i.e., supportive housing residents vs. shelter residents vs. unhoused individuals vs. others).

From the viewpoint of supporting housing staff, ‘generalizing’ the behaviour and activities of the homeless and housing insecure population is not helpful and it’s frustrating for staff and residents who feel that their buildings are unfairly associated with every negative incident that occurs in the neighbourhood.

Furthermore, it’s important to emphasize that those who are experiencing homelessness also have concerns about their safety in the community and supportive housing residents broadly confirmed that they feel safe and secure while living at Burdock House, Fairhaven, and Compass Court. Most surveyed residents strongly (37 respondents, 68.5%) or somewhat (10 respondents, 18.5%) agree that they feel safe in their unit and the majority also strongly (30 respondents, 54.5%) or somewhat (15 respondents, 27.3%) agree that they feel safe at the supportive housing building/complex. Moreover, 56.6% of surveyed residents reported that their sense of safety has improved since moving into supportive housing while an additional 35.8% confirmed that it has not worsened.

“Having a gated access makes me feel more safe. It limits who can come on site and if you’re not a resident you have to sign in to visit and visiting hours are limited.”

~ Burdock House Resident, 2021

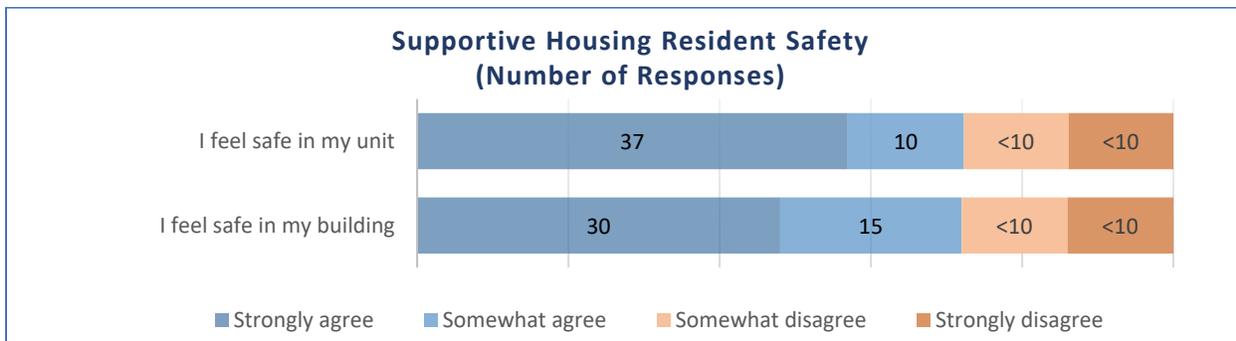


Figure 12: Supportive housing resident safety

Community Outreach and Acceptance

KEY FINDINGS

The three supportive housing sites have undertaken several initiatives to engage with neighbours and other community stakeholders and respond to various concerns (e.g., litter, discarded sharps, disruptive behaviour). A highly visible initiative is the creation of clean-up teams where groups of supportive housing residents dedicate time each week to collect garbage and sharps to keep the surrounding neighbourhoods clean and safe. Supportive housing staff confirmed that these efforts have been well received by many community members and both staff and residents are proud of their ongoing efforts to support their community.

Supportive housing staff and local service providers discussed the important role that supportive housing plays in the community. Respondents confirmed that supportive housing helps to facilitate more efficient

and effective service access and provision as it enables service providers to gain a fuller understanding of the needs of the client while in a stable setting. However, nearly all of the supportive housing staff and local service providers interviewed commented on the negative perceptions of supportive housing that persist in the community. One service provider discussed the frustration felt by neighbouring businesses and community members, saying that people are fed up with cleaning up needles and garbage and dealing with criminal behaviour. However, the extent to which supportive housing residents or shelter users or other individuals in the community are the source of this activity is not clear and most respondents feel strongly that supportive housing residents in Penticton are being unfairly associated with every activity.

Supportive housing staff have made concerted efforts to positively engage with the community through the development of local advisory committees, clean-up programs, and safety initiatives to ensure that the supportive housing sites are contributing towards positive change in their neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Advisory Committee (implemented through Ask Wellness) and the Compass Community Advisory Committee (implemented by PDSCL) were established to provide opportunities for interested and concerned partners and neighbours to meet on a semi-regular basis to discuss concerns and issues in the community and identify solutions.

In addition to these committees, the supportive housing sites have all implemented community clean-up programs (the Ambassador Program at Burdock House and Fairhaven and community clean-up program at Compass Court) where residents and staff pick up garbage, sharps, and abandoned shopping carts several times per week to keep the community clean and safe. Compass Court also recently implemented their Neighbourhood Watch program, where they trained staff with a security background and license with experience working with marginalized persons, on trauma informed practice, naloxone and first aid, and non-violent crisis intervention training to dissuade individuals from loitering in the area.

Supportive housing staff are proud of recent and ongoing efforts to positively engage with the community and commented on the positive feedback that they've received from neighbours on their efforts to keep the neighbourhood clean and safe. Furthermore, staff noted positive feedback that they have received from local service providers who acknowledge the important role that supportive housing plays in their community. Overall, supportive housing staff feel strongly that they are providing an essential service in the community and stressed that there needs to be greater awareness and clarity about the role and benefit of supportive housing in Penticton.

“I’m so supportive [of supportive housing]. I think that mental health is a major issue in communities. Personally, I think that Penticton needs to step it up and be more supportive.”

~ Community member, 2021

“Our neighbourhood watch team maintains a positive rapport with many known unhoused individuals in the community and so they can effectively encourage them to move along from loitering around neighbouring businesses”

~ Compass Court Staff, 2021

Conclusions

The three supportive housing sites in Penticton – Burdock House, Compass Court, and Fairhaven – provide an essential service in the City of Penticton. These sites provide stable and secure housing for a total of 117 citizens of Penticton and many of the residents have benefitted from the opportunity and supports that supportive housing offers to improve their lives.

Supportive housing has had a major impact on the quality of life with the majority of residents surveyed confirming that their overall well-being has improved since moving into their supportive housing unit. Residents experienced an improvement in their housing stability and access to services and supports, allowing them to work on personalized care plans with supportive housing staff and service providers to realize their goals.

Supportive housing also has a substantial impact on the health status of residents. Most of the surveyed residents confirmed that they have seen improvements in one or more health measure including access to healthy food, improved mental and physical health, and improvements in their issues with addictions. At the time of this review a small number of residents (<10) were making steps towards treatment and / or recovery by taking advantage of available programs in Kelowna or Kamloops; however, residents, staff, and service providers all agreed that there is a need for these services and supports in the City of Penticton.

Improvements in resident health have also had a ripple effect on changes in hospital and emergency room visits, with surveyed residents reporting fewer visits to the hospital or emergency room since moving into supportive housing. For some residents, supportive housing has also provided improved access to drop-in clinics or family doctor, access to wellness services such as counselling or therapy, and access to other health services such as dentists or optometrists.

Other positive outcomes experienced by residents include improved finances and better access to education and employment services. A small number of supportive housing residents (<10) have gained employment in 2021.

With respect to community connections, the large majority of the surveyed residents confirmed that they have a local support network of friends and/or family that they can talk with, and a large majority also confirmed that they have good relations with other residents in their supportive housing site.

Supportive housing staff have made concerted efforts to positively engage with their community through the development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Advisory and Community Advisory Committees, resident clean-up programs, and the Neighbourhood Watch program. The large majority of surveyed residents confirmed that they have at times experienced positive interactions with neighbours in the community.

Despite the achievements noted above, supportive housing staff and residents, along with other community stakeholders, confirmed that there continues to be negative attitudes and reactions toward the homeless and housing insecure population in Penticton. Ongoing incidents of petty theft, property damage, drug use, and disturbance of the peace that are occurring around the shelters and supportive housing sites are a key source of concern within the broader community and have likely contributed to some of the backlash directed at these facilities and the population they serve.

While it may be fair to assign responsibility for some of these incidents to a select number of supportive housing residents, it has to be recognized that many supportive housing residents are responsible for their behaviour and are deserving of respect. Furthermore, many of the supporting housing residents have substantial ties to the community (e.g., family, work history, long-term resident, etc.) and care about the community.

Effective supportive housing service delivery is associated with ensuring a manageable balance of residents with low, moderate, and high needs and the three supportive housing sites in Penticton have been progressively working in conjunction to improve this balance across their sites. With the addition of the on-site Licenced Practical Nurse at Burdock and Fairhaven, and the Interior Health nurses at Compass Court, these sites have gained valuable capacity to deliver overdose prevention initiatives and provide more direct support in helping residents with some of their health-related issues.

However, housing staff, community service providers, and community representatives all confirmed the need for strong local services and supports for supportive housing to be successful in the community. Improved access to mental health and treatment/recovery programs were identified as a key need in the community (e.g., either through direct transportation to treatment/recovery programs in Kelowna or Kamloops or through a treatment/recovery facility in Penticton). Several service providers also indicated a need for a local ACT team to better support high needs residents in Penticton.

Although supportive housing may represent a long-term housing plan for many of its residents, the lack of affordable housing options in the community presents a barrier for some residents who have the desire to move on from low barrier housing to recovery-based or independent housing environments when they are ready. The majority of community stakeholders agree that a tiered approach to supportive housing is needed for supportive housing to be successful in Penticton.

Appendix A: Interviews and Surveys Completed

The following table provides a breakdown of the stakeholder groups that participated in interviews and discussions as part of the review.

Stakeholder group	# of interviews
Supportive housing management and staff	13
Penticton health service providers and other local service providers	17
Penticton city staff, RCMP, Penticton business community representatives, and other community stakeholders	17
Total	47

The following table provides a breakdown of the resident surveys that were completed at each supportive housing site.

Resident Surveys	# of surveys completed	Housing population	% of population
Burdock House ^a	22	60	36.7%
Compass Court	<10	19	NA
Fairhaven	25	41	61.0%

^a HCA utilized data from a recent resident survey that Burdock House completed in February 2021 and supplemented this with a follow-up survey to address a select number of questions related to resident engagement with other residents at Burdock and resident engagement with the neighbouring community. A total of 22 residents (36.6% of 60 residents) responded to the survey in February 2021 and 24 residents (40.0%) responded to the survey in October 2021.

A total of ten residents from the supportive housing sites participated in interviews or discussion groups as part of a site visits in November 2021.