

Policy

Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences

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1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Seniors are a fast-growing age demographic in Vancouver, with more older persons in the city than ever before. Many older adults live on fixed incomes and will need to consider changing health, accessibility and housing needs as they age. Some older adults will choose to stay in their existing home or community as long as they can, while others may seek out or require seniors' housing with supports or will downsize to a more manageable or accessible home. The City of Vancouver's Seniors Housing Strategy (2024) aims to ensure older adults have the housing and supports needed to allow for aging in appropriate and affordable housing in their community.

The City of Vancouver's Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences (Resident Relocation Policy) supports the needed redevelopment of private and public long-term care and assisted living residences while ensuring existing residents are protected. New long-term care and assisted living buildings are important as existing buildings continue to age and require updates for health and safety. New buildings allow for better care and support residents to live with freedom, choice and dignity. This Resident Relocation Policy builds on provincial regulations for community care (i.e., long-term care) and assisted living through the Community Care and Assisted Living Act.

Community care facilities are regulated by the Province of British Columbia's Residential Care Regulation. In Vancouver, this regulation is overseen by a licensing group at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). It includes requirements for written notice of closure at least one year prior to the date of closure and the development of a plan for the relocation of residents, to be approved by the Medical Health Officer, if a building is closing.

Assisted living residences are regulated by the Province's Assisted Living Regulation. This regulation is overseen by the Assisted Living Registrar and includes requirements for written notice of closure at least one year prior to the date of closure, and a health and safety plan on how the resident's needs will be met during the redevelopment.

This Resident Relocation Policy applies to private, public and non-profit owned community care and assisted living residences and is intended to ensure all residences are held to a high standard when it comes to resident moves. In addition to the Provincial regulatory requirements, Vancouver Coastal Health funded long-term care facilities follow VCH's Principles Guiding Resident Moves Related to Home Renovations or Closures. These principles outline VCH's responsibility for planning and managing the renewal of care homes receiving funding from VCH, where residents are affected by upgrades, conversions and closures (see the appendix for more details).

2 INTENT

The City's Resident Relocation Policy seeks to ensure proactive communication and provide resident protections during the redevelopment of an existing community care or assisted living residence, in addition to the Provincial regulations in place through the Community Care and Assisted Living Act. For VCH-funded care homes, additional requirements are found through their Principles Guiding Resident Moves Related to Home Renovations or Closures. The Residential Tenancy Act and the City of Vancouver's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy does not apply to these uses.

This Resident Relocation Policy aligns with both Vancouver Coastal Health principles for moving residents and aligns or exceeds the Province's Residential Care Regulation. This policy is intended to ensure that both VCH-funded and private care homes and assisted living residences are held to a high standard with regards to resident moves.

This Policy is required:

- as a condition of rezoning for an existing community care or assisted living facility; or
- for conditional approval of development applications, where a rezoning is not required, for existing community care facilities and assisted living residences.

This policy applies to all applications received on or after July 23rd, 2024.

Community Care (i.e., long-term care) and Assisted Living are regulated by the Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure resident moves meet applicable requirements including the British Columbia Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Residential Care Regulation, Assisted Living Regulation and Residents' Bill of Rights. Where conflicts exist between the requirements of these guidelines and legislations enacted by the federal or provincial government, the highest level of requirements will apply.

3 POLICIES

3.1 Policy Coverage

This Policy applies to existing community care and assisted living residences, as defined under the Zoning and Development By-law under Community Care Facility.

3.1.1 Eligible households

3.1.1.1 All residents residing in an applicable building type at the time the rezoning or development permit application is opened are eligible for this policy.

3.1.1.2 Residents who move-in after the application but during the redevelopment process will also be covered by this policy. Prior to move-in, these residents and their representatives, family members and contact persons should be informed of the development process through a meeting and letter.

3.1.2 Exclusions

3.1.2.1 Residents living in buildings that fall under the City's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy are not eligible for the Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences (e.g., primary rental, secondary rental, independent living that is rental in tenure, non-profit social and co-op housing, and supportive housing).

3.1.2.2 Residents who are temporarily staying in the building for a short-stay service, including respite care or convalescent care, are not eligible for the Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences.

3.2 Relocation Policies

3.2.1 Communication and engagement with residents

All residents will be provided with advance notice and ongoing communication of the relocation process, including through:

- (a) A letter to residents and their representatives, family members and contact persons prior to public notification of the application.
- (b) A meeting with residents and their representatives, family members and contact persons to describe the process and hear any specific concerns. This can be done individually or as a small group, as appropriate.

In addition to the above requirements, applicants must follow notification requirements under the Residential Care Regulation and Assisted Living Regulation.

3.2.2 Support with relocation

Residents will be provided with assistance moving, with all associated expenses to be paid directly by the applicant. In addition, the applicant will ensure new accommodation that meets the needs of the residents is secured. This includes:

- (a) Arranging for any assistance needed to move, including packing personal belongings and arranging transportation and movement of furniture and other belongings, which may include equipment. The applicant will assume all appropriate one-time costs associated with the move e.g., transportation, cable and telephone installation, unless the move is requested to be outside of the Vancouver Coastal Health boundaries.
- (b) Ensuring the new accommodation is secured at a community care or assisted living residence that is capable of meeting the resident's care needs, and in a subsidy type (i.e., private pay non-subsidized unit or subsidized unit) that matches the existing type, unless otherwise agreed to by the resident and their representatives, family members and contact persons (e.g. a subsidized registered assisted living unit must be secured for the resident if they are currently in one).
 - (i) If, due to health changes, another level of support is required (e.g., move to long-term care from assisted living), the appropriate residence must be secured.
- (c) The resident and their representatives, family members and contact persons should be asked for their preferences of a new long-term care or assisted living residence, with preferences honoured wherever possible. New accommodation should be secured within the City of Vancouver, unless the needs of the resident makes this impossible or unless otherwise requested by the resident and their representatives, family members and contact persons.

3.2.3 Right of first refusal

Residents should be offered the right to return to the new building upon completion. This should be offered unless it is not possible due to a change in service levels of units, unit types, or other factors demonstrated. The Right of First Refusal includes:

- (a) An offer to return to the new building to a unit that is of the same type (e.g., studio, one-bedroom, private room) and at the associated subsidy rate that the resident currently receives (i.e., private pay non-subsidized unit or subsidized unit).
- (b) Provision of moving assistance and expenses for both moves, should a resident take-up the right of first refusal. See 3.2.2 (a) for more information on required moving assistance.

3.3 Implementation

3.3.1 Submission requirements

The applicant must submit a Resident Relocation Application Form as part of the rezoning and/or development permit application process. Staff will evaluate each Resident Relocation Plan based on the policies set out in this document.

APPENDIX: VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH'S PRINCIPLES GUIDING RESIDENT MOVES RELATED TO HOME RENOVATIONS OR CLOSURES

In summary, the VCH Principles Guiding Resident Moves Related to Home Renovations or Closures (2020) includes:

- Planning is proactive in order to minimize potential for resident or family stress.
- The care home closure process is effectively coordinated so disruption to resident and family is minimized. This includes a Closure Team that is responsible for co-ordination of the resident moves and identification of system issues and conflicts and referral for resolution.
- Residents, family members and staff are provided with personalized communication and open and frequent communication and consultation is encouraged and maintained. This includes a joint letter, mutually approved by VCH and the care home, of the planned closure and with an invitation to a small group meeting where individual and personal concerns can be addressed. Existing groups such as Resident and Family Councils are also utilized, as agreed upon by the Chairs of these Councils.
- Open and planned communication with the public and media is maintained. Communication should be planned prior to a public announcement of the closure.
- Residents and families are supported to identify and access one of two preferred care homes, which are capable of meeting resident care needs. The resident's preference will be honoured unless the care homes are not capable of meeting the resident's safety needs.
- Individual resident quality of care is maintained through the planning and implementation of the moves. This includes resident reassessments so individualized care plans are current, supporting documentation, and a jointly facilitated move to ensure special needs are addressed.
- VCH assumes responsibility to move the resident, and their personal belongings, which may include furniture and equipment for VCH owned and operated sites. The closing care home arranges transportation and movement of furniture, equipment and resident belongings. VCH assumes all appropriate one-time costs associated with the move e.g., transportation, cable and telephone installation. Residents who move outside of the VCH boundaries assume costs of relocation.

All care home closures are subject to review, in order to guide and improve processes for future closures. This includes a family satisfaction survey to identify issues and follow-up as necessary to guide future practice.