



HOME TAKEOVER COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY – JUNE 2023

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BACKGROUND

The issue of home takeovers was identified by Grey County Housing staff during a local community engagement meeting 2021. Staff continue to observe and address the issue of home takeovers in rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) neighbourhoods and are seeing the significant impacts it is having for tenants, families, individuals taking over the unit(s) and the neighbourhood.

Home Takeovers is defined as, *“Situations in which vulnerable tenants are forced to accommodate unwanted guests in their homes. During home takeovers, vulnerable tenants [may initially] allow people into their homes to fulfill unmet social, economic, and personal needs. In the process, the tenant is threatened physically, financially, and/or psychologically.” (The Dream Team, Safe at Home Research Project)*

This issue is complex with many intersecting factors, and intervention requires time, referrals, and response from a number of organizations. Through consultation with Public Health, the issue was identified as an opportunity to engage with community stakeholders and have a conversation about how to address the issue collaboratively.

PURPOSE

Home takeovers have not been studied or quantified at the local level in Owen Sound, Ontario. In the absence of formalized local knowledge about home takeovers, a survey was developed for distribution to community partners in November 2021 to better understand awareness of the issue, and existing response strategies.

The results helped to inform the development of a multi-stakeholder Home Takeover Response Framework which was rolled out to community partners in November 2022 as part of the pilot project. Strategies such as media and other communications, resource distribution, lunch and learns, and organizational training were implemented to help raise awareness of the issue among community partners and the general public. The project aimed to build community partner capacity to prevent, identify, respond to, and support recovery from home takeovers through enhanced intersectoral collaboration. In June 2023, a survey was conducted to understand the impact of the pilot project on community partners working in organizations which may encounter clients dealing with Home Takeover.

METHOD & RESPONSE

The survey was distributed by email to Home Takeover Committee Advisory Committee on May 31, 2023 and to two members of the Supportive Outreach Services (SOS) on June 14, 2023. Recipients were asked to forward the survey invitation to all staff in their organization who may encounter clients dealing with a home takeover, and those who oversee staff who encounter these clients. The survey remained open until June 19, 2023. One reminder was sent to each Advisory Committee Member midway through the survey period.

Advisory Committee members were asked to reply to the initial email invitation and note the total number of staff to whom they forwarded the survey. The total number of invitations reported was 233, and 69 (30%) responded. A breakdown of respondents by sector can be found in (Table 1).

Table 1: In which sector are you employed?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
Public Safety (Law enforcement, By-Law, Fire)	17%	12
Healthcare (Primary Care, Hospital, Public Health)	45%	31
Human Services (Housing, Social Services)	26%	18
Community-based or non-profit organization	9%	6
Other (please specify)*	3%	2
	Answered	69

*Other, please specify: *community law; SOS paramedic services.*

Of respondents, 77% work directly with the clients served by their organization, 12% work directly with clients and oversee other staff who do, and 12% do not work directly with clients but oversee staff who do.

RESULTS

FAMILIARITY WITH TERM “HOME TAKEOVER”

87% (n=60) of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the term Home Takeover. Only 13% (n=9) had not heard of the term prior to reading the survey.

INCREASED AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF HOME TAKEOVER

82% (n=49) of respondents agreed that in the last 12 months, their awareness and understanding of the issue of home takeover has increased. Only 8% (n=5) disagreed and 10% (n=6) were unsure (Table 2).

Table 2: In the last 12 months, do you feel you have an increased awareness and understanding of the issue of home takeover?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	82%	49
No	8%	5
Not sure	10%	6
	Answered	60

ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Respondents were asked to select the activities that have contributed to their awareness and understanding of home takeover (Table 3). The most common response was that they received information and/or updates from their organization (71%), followed by reviewing the Home Takeover Guidebook (49%) and reviewing the Home Takeover webpage and/or other resources (43%). 24% of respondents indicated that their participation on the Advisory Committee contributed; 22% participated in a training session at their organization, and 20% attended the HT Lunch and Learn. Only 10% completed the Ottawa Crime Prevention online training. Other activities described by respondents as contributing included: personal experience dealing with HT situations (n=3); working with partner agencies (n=1) and hearing about the topic from others (n=1).

Table 3: What activities have contributed to your awareness and understanding of home takeover? (Select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
I received information and/or updates from my organization	71%	35
I reviewed the Home Takeover Guidebook	49%	24
I reviewed the Home Takeover webpage and/or other resources	43%	21
I participate(d) on the Home Takeover Advisory Committee	24%	12
I participated in a training session at my organization	22%	11
I attended the Home Takeover Lunch n’ Learn (hosted by Grey Bruce Public Health and Grey County Housing)	20%	10
I completed the Ottawa Crime Prevention online training	10%	5
Other (please specify)	10%	5
	Answered	49

FAMILIARITY WITH RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Respondents who indicated that they were familiar with the term Home Takeover, were shown an image of, and asked whether they were familiar with, the *Grey Bruce Home Takeover Response Framework and Pathway*. 63% (n=38) of respondents said they were familiar with it, and 37% (n=22) said they were not.

All five respondents from the community based or non-profit sector were familiar with the response framework; about two-thirds of from the healthcare sector were familiar (Table 4). Only about half of public safety sector and human service sector respondents were familiar, and none of the “other” sector respondents were familiar. These results should be interpreted with caution given the variation in the number of respondents per sector.

Table 4: Count of Respondents’ Familiarity with HT Response Framework by Sector

Are you familiar with the Grey Bruce Home Takeover Response Framework?	Public Safety	Healthcare	Human Services	Community-based or non-profit organization	Other	Total
Yes	5	20	8	5	0	38
No	5	7	7	0	3	22
Total	10	27	15	5	3	60

Interestingly, most respondents who are not familiar with the response framework and pathway are frontline staff working directly with the clients served by their organization. In contrast, nearly all respondents who are in a supervisory or management type role (overseeing staff who work directly with clients) were familiar with the framework (Table 5). This suggests that additional work is needed to ensure that the pathway and framework are disseminated to frontline staff.

Table 5: Count of Respondents' Familiarity with HT Response Framework by Role in Organization

Are you familiar with the Grey Bruce Home Takeover Response Framework?	I work directly with the clients we serve	I work directly with the clients we serve, and oversee other staff who do	I do not work directly with the clients we serve but I oversee staff who do	Total
Yes	24	7	7	38
No	20	1	1	22
Total	44	8	8	60

ORGANIZATIONAL ADOPTION OF RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Respondents were asked whether their organization has adopted the Home Takeover Response Framework. In other words, has their organization reviewed and approved the Response Framework, and have an expectation that the Response Pathway be used. 42% (n=24) of respondents said 'yes'; 12% (n=7) said 'no'; and 46% (n=26) were 'not sure' (Table 6).

Table 6: Has your organization adopted the Home Takeover Response Framework and Pathway?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	42%	24
No	12%	7
Not sure	46%	26
	Answered	57

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES REGARDING APPROACH TO HOME TAKEOVER

Respondents were asked to indicate whether there had been any changes within their organization regarding how home takeovers are approached in terms of prevention, identification, response or recover. 37% (n=21) said that there had been changes in their organization, 28% (n=16) said there had not been changes, and 35% (n=20) were unsure (Table 7).

Table 7: Have there been any changes within your organization regarding how you approach home takeover prevention, identification, response or recovery?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
Yes	37%	21
No	28%	16
Not sure	35%	20
	Answered	57

Those who indicated that they had been changes were asked to briefly describe what they were. Twelve respondents provided comments. Some respondents described multiple changes.

Educating Clients

- *Educating tenants and staff on what to look for.*
- *Awareness and education when working with clients.*
- *I have had discussions with families that I support who have had family or friends staying at their home.*
- *Educating clients.*
- *Increased discussion about home takeover situations with clients and how to help manage situations.*
- *Educating service users about home take over, their rights and options.*

Staff Training

- *Increased staff awareness of the issue and resources available to assist community members who identify this as an issue.*
- *Staff all participated in the development of this project so have an understanding of the pathway and how to utilize resources.*
- *Awareness has been the main change. We've shared resources with staff on signs of HT with guidelines on how to deal with the matter. We still haven't found a client who seems like they're dealing with HT yet though.*
- *I am now aware of what home takeover is & how to ensure our vulnerable populations are protected and not exposed to this. When talking to the community about housing, I am now aware of what signs to look for and how to intervene if home takeover is a possibility.*
- *Increased information from clinicians who are part of advisory committee.*

Collaboration/Communication with Partners

- *On going communication between housing and agencies.*
- *Involving partner agencies including 211 early and often.*
- *Clinician involvement in advisory committee.*

Data Collection

- *We will be working with Grey County on tracking number of encounters.*

FACTORS HINDERING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Respondents who indicated that there had not been any changes to their organizational approach to home takeover prevention, identification, response, or recovery were asked to describe the factors that were hindering change. Barriers described by two people each included: lack of staff time and complex factors related to housing (e.g., housing scarcity; landlord-tenant issues).

[It's] so challenging when housing is so scarce. You want to help to get people housed and might actually be causing this rather than preventing.

Another noted that they were unfamiliar with the task force and its work until the survey; and another said they were generally unsure of how to help people in home takeover situations.

USE OF HOME TAKEOVER RESOURCES TO INCREASE AWARENESS WITH CLIENTS

23% (n=13) of respondents have used the Home Takeover project resources to increase awareness about home takeover with tenants, homeowners, and/or clients. Eight respondents provided comments describing how they have used the resources:

- *Information provided at move in, in newsletters and in tenant meetings. Used the pathway to see what other organizations can bring to the table.*
- *We have educated tenants throughout tenant meetings and have handed out information.*
- *Used the brochure to outline what a home takeover is and the 10 Question checklist to discuss whether or not the client might be experiencing a home takeover.*
- *I have used the questionnaire.*
- *Have distributed cards and discussed materials with residents.*
- *Tenants/homeowners/clients have been provided resources such as agencies to contact and direction to the landlord tenant board.*
- *Staff use them to educate clients on what a home takeover is and if they are at risk/ a possible victim.*
- *Making clients aware of the term and its signs.*

77% (n=44) of respondents have not yet used the resources but of those respondents, nearly 80% plan to use them with clients within the next 6 months. Those who indicated they do not plan to use the resources with clients were asked to describe why not. Six respondents left comments. Four of them indicated that they are not currently dealing with clients who the resources would apply to. Two were unaware of the project resources and/or their organization's policy for using them.

HOME TAKEOVER ENCOUNTERS IN PAST 6 MONTHS

50% (n=33) of respondents indicated that they have encountered at least one home takeover in their work within the past six months. 14% (n=9) have experienced one; 33% (n=22) have experienced 2-5 and 3% (n=2) have experienced more than 5. The remaining 50% of respondents have not encountered a home takeover in their work within the past 6 months.

Table 8: In the last 6 months, have you encountered a home takeover in your work?

Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes, one	14%	9
Yes, between two and five	33%	22
Yes, more than five	3%	2
No	50%	33
	Answered	66

Table 9 presents respondents by sector who have encountered between 2-5, or more than 5, home takeovers in the last 6 months. Respondents in every sector have experienced between 2-5 home takeovers suggesting that every sector is encountering the issue and able to identify it as a home takeover. This may also be an indication of multiple sectors collaborating to address a home takeover when it arises.

Table 9: Count of respondents who have encountered 2-5+ home takeovers in the last 6 months by sector

In the last 6 months, have you encountered a home takeover in your work?	Public Safety	Healthcare	Human Services	Community-based or non-profit	Other	Total
Yes, between 2-5	4	6	7	3	2	22
Yes, more than 5	1	1	0	0	0	2

USE OF RESPONSE PATHWAY BY THOSE WHO HAVE ENCOUNTERED HOME TAKEOVER IN PAST 6 MONTHS

Respondents who have used Response Pathway

31% (n=9) of respondents who have encountered at least one home takeover within the past 6 months indicated that they used the Response Pathway. Of these respondents, 66% agreed that the Response Pathway helped them to respond to the home takeover in coordination with other community partners; 33% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Respondents who have not used Response Pathway

69% (n=20) of respondents who have encountered at least one home takeover within the past 6 months indicated that they did not use the Response Pathway. Those respondents indicated their reason(s) to be: *they were not familiar with the pathway (53%); they didn't have the pathway available at the time (32%); and they didn't feel they needed it or already knew how to respond (21%)*. Other reasons provided included: *the client had a plan in place and did not feel they needed the supports listed in the pathway; client was not their primary client; provider asked for support from advisory committee members, and none knew what to do*.

Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I am not familiar with Response Pathway	53%	10
I didn't have the Response Pathway available at the time	32%	6
I didn't feel I needed it/I already knew how to respond to the situation	21%	4
Other (please specify)	16%	3
	Answered	19

OTHER COMMENTS

Respondents were provided with an opportunity to provide any other comments or suggestions regarding the Home Takeover Pilot Project. There were 16 comments. Nearly half were positive affirmations and expressions of thanks for the work that has been done on this project including the training and resources that have been developed.

Useful information; awesome resource available.

It is good to have that questionnaire. The clients are then aware if the family or friend are taking advantage of them they can discuss with the family and put limits on what the family or friend can do in their home.

Very important project. Glad to see it happening.

Some described opportunities for building on the work that has been done through data collection to contribute to understanding the magnitude of the issue locally; additional home takeover education for frontline workers; continued promotion of the resources; and low-literacy tools for service users.

NEXT STEPS

The results of this survey will be shared with the Home Takeover Advisory Committee and used to understand the current impact of the Home Takeover Pilot Project and to inform next steps. The survey results will also help to determine the extent to which evaluation outcomes and intended actions by the committee have been achieved.