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23 September 2020

Mr Peter Dixon
Chair of the Board
Optivo
By email

Dear Mr Dixon

Re: The End of the Evictions Moratorium

Please share this letter with the full membership of the Board and all shareholders.

We write to ask that Optivo agrees to take action to avoid adding to the homelessness crisis.

The government's moratorium on evictions has ended and a wave of evictions are set to follow, with a significant deepening of the housing crisis as a consequence. We have reviewed the policies of the housing association sector and accept that some landlords have tolerated greater rent and service charge debt levels. There are also services to help tenants and residents to maintain tenancies. However, none of the G15 associations have yet waived rents and service charges, writing off debt accrued as a direct result of Covid-19.

As far as we are aware, only Clwyd Alyn in Wales, considerably smaller and less wealthy than the G15, has taken this step.

The Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC), like many other organisations, is concerned that housing associations have not yet done enough to support tenants during the pandemic. Optivo has operating margins of approximately 23% according to your latest accounts, and operating surpluses of over £90 million. We therefore believe that you can afford to show leadership on this issue.

SHAC is now asking Optivo to waive rents and service charges for those suffering economic hardship due to the pandemic. We previously wrote to Paul Hackett with our request but he has declined to reply.

We hope that the Board will give this request serious consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne

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Social Housing Action Campaign

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