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Clare Miller
Chief Executive
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Dear Clare

Re: Changes Needed at Clarion

We are sorry not to have received a response to our request for a meeting dated 24th May 2023.

We had hoped to discuss a set of strategic changes that our members overwhelmingly agree are needed within Clarion to address the issues they are most concerned about.

As we are not able to meet, we have set these out below instead:

1. Service Issues and Charges

- a. Include within rent basic services such as tree pruning, fire tests, and pest control, rather than extracting them as separate service chargeable items.
- b. An external audit of the service charge system using an accredited organisation.
- c. An increase in the number of permanent staff working in the service charge team.
- d. Provide a number for tenants and residents to speak directly to the team if they have a problem.

2. Complaints Handling

- a. For Clarion's complaints policy and procedure to be implemented and followed promptly and fairly
- b. For complaints to be dealt with in accordance with Clarion's Complaint's Policy, the new charter for SH residents and tenants and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- c. For swift and effective resolution of complaints to take place - not to drag on for months - or even years
- d. For Clarion to learn from their complaints and to implement their learnings for the continuous improvement of services and complaints handling
- e. Clarion to ensure that all agreed outcomes / learning points from a complaint are implemented
- f. All staff to adhere to a code of conduct for dealing respectfully with tenants and residents, and managers need to intervene and contact the tenant or resident when a complaint has been raised about a member of staff's unacceptable behaviour
- g. Clarion staff are often inexperienced and lack training. Clarion needs to inform us of how they intend to address this to improve overall services to residents.

3. Disrepairs, Routine and Cyclical Maintenance, and Refurbishment

- a. Invest in green solutions, especially those which help tenants and residents reduce costs such as energy supply through solar panels.
- b. Maintain one job number from the start to the final completion of any repair or maintenance works, instead of generating multiple numbers for the same job, and include this in any related correspondence with tenants and residents, alongside a brief description of the works being carried out.
- c. Ensure staff are able to raise orders for individual / communal repairs and book appointments directly (or take action under ASB protocols)
- d. Ensure that there is capacity amongst Clarion staff / trades staff / contractors to rapidly carry out all immediate urgent and medium repairs.
- e. Clarion to follow up /post inspect a job or process once it's completed to ensure quality control. If not, they must act on the feedback.

- f. Neighbourhood Officers (NOs) and Housing Officers (HOs) need to be restored and have the power to raise jobs and assess the quality of work provided contractors. Alternatively, these powers should be given to Property Managers.
- g. The NMs and HOs need to visit each neighbourhood or estate at least every two months, must alert tenants and residents in advance, and be available at a specific meeting point for those who need to talk to them. Tenants and residents need to have a number to contact their NM/HO/PM directly, not via the call centre.
- h. All Contractors must adhere to a code of conduct for dealing respectfully with tenants and residents, and managers need to intervene and contact the tenant or resident when a complaint has been raised about a contractor's unacceptable behaviour.
- i. On receiving a call requesting a repair, staff need to check whether anyone in the household is disabled, and if so, what special consideration needs to be taken when carrying out the repair.
- j. Cyclical repairs must be carried out every five years.

4. Organisational Culture including Disability Discrimination

- a. Through tenant and resident consultation, undertake a major review of communication systems within Clarion, and invest in improvement.
- b. As advised by the Housing Ombudsman, through tenant and resident consultation, undertake a major review of knowledge and information management (KIM) within Clarion, and invest in improvement.
- c. All Clarion staff interacting with tenants and residents need to be properly trained on both 'customer service' and disability.
- d. Return to direct contact, team level, email addresses, for example enabling contact with the local Neighbourhood Officer team, Housing Management Team, and Service Charge Team without going through the generic call handling system.
- e. Calls should be quality controlled.
- f. Clarion should adopt the [SHAC Charter on disability](#).

5. Tenant & Resident Democracy (Engagement), and ‘Customer’ Service

- a. Board papers need to be accessible online.
- b. Information should be disseminated to tenants and residents through a wide range of media, not just the website.
- c. Estate or neighbourhood notice boards need to be kept up to date with Clarion information.
- d. Tenants and residents must have access to the notice board to share their own information (ie. the notice boards should be unlocked).
- e. There must be genuine consultation with tenants and residents ahead of any major works and feedback must be acted on. This must include consultation prior to major works to communal areas.
- f. Clarion should introduce support for resident groups at a local level, for example providing a meeting place with a small budget for refreshments, and notifying tenants and residents with contact details for the TRA chair where a TRA is operating.

We remain interested in a meeting between a delegation from SHAC and the executive and senior managers at Clarion. Please feel to contact me with dates if you would like to discuss these points.

Regards

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