

Scrutiny Review of The Chief Executive Letters (CEL'S) Report

Date Submitted: 18th January 2021

Scrutiny Report 2021

Report to:	One Vision Housing – Managing Director – Ian Mitchell
Date:	18 th January 2021
Title:	Scrutiny Review of Chief Executive Letters
Purpose of the report:	As a registered providers OVH have an obligation to engage with their tenant under the Consumer Regulation. ‘Delivering compliance within the consumer standard depends on good governance and on a organisations culture’ [Consumer Regulation Review 2019]
Prepared by:	Ken Williams – Vice Chair of Scrutiny

Background

Improving the quality of our communities and neighbourhoods and the lives of the residents requires strong partnership and collaboration between us as customers and One Vision Housing (OVH).

OVH do this by engaging with their customers to monitor and scrutinise the performance of services that they are in receipt of. We the Scrutiny Team do this by scrutinising a service area that is underperforming and sharing our findings with OVH on how we as tenants think OVH can improve. With this in mind we are delighted to share with you are recent findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of the Chief Executive Letters (CEL’S).

Definition of Chief Executive Letters CEL’S:

Chief Executive Letters or CEL’S as they are referred to, was a service set up at the request of Roy Williams CEO Sovini Group – to ensure all Councillor and MP enquires were recorded, monitored and responded to.

Topic Selection:

At the request of One Vision Housing we the Scrutiny Team were asked to review the Chief Executive Letters process and provide OVH with a response to how we felt the service could be improved, we carried out an in-depth review which involved interviewing staff members a Councillor and a Case Worker working for a Member of Parliament (please see acknowledgments in Appendix A).

Scrutiny Team members that took part in this review are listed below:

- Pam Holliday – Chair
- Ken Williams – Vice Chair
- Anthony Bailey
- Bernie Blackmore
- Richard Goldston
- Glenys Bowen

What we established during our investigations.

2.0 Our Findings:

2.1	<p>There were 197 CEL enquires received in a 12 month period from 02/08/19 to 31/07/20 – an average of 4 per week.</p> <p>24 of these (12%) had their target date extended. 13 of these (6%) did not meet the target date</p> <p>Average time to complete a CELs is 8.5 working days.</p>
2.2	<p>However during our investigation we realised that not all enquires can be dealt with straight away, for example it could be a request for more car parking spaces or it could be a longstanding repairs like damp that requires investigation. Therefore we recognise that enquires like this can't be dealt with straight away.</p>
2.3	<p>The majority of the CEL's relate to Property Pool Plus, the sample we looked at for the period May to August, - 13 related to Property Pool Plus, 4 – ABS, 1 – Repairs, 1 - Tenancy Management Issues, 1 - Leaseholder Service Charge , 2- Poor work.</p>
2.4	<p>We enquired with Christina Mooney - Customer Access Manager who is responsible for managing the Property Pool Plus service for OVH who informed us that the majority of tenants often contact their Cllr in the hope that they can help with increasing their banding.</p>

Observation that the Scrutiny Team want to acknowledge and validate as good practice

3.0 Validation:

3.1	<p>Ann Owens is the Head of Councillor Liaison, this position was created as it recognised the need to improve the relationship between OVH and Councillors within Sefton.</p>
3.2	<p>The feedback from staff, Cllrs and MP's is that the CEL function is a really useful system, it simplifies the process by having a one point of contact. For staff the information received is used as valuable customer intelligence and helps to drive up standards for OVH customers.</p>

3.3	All the information relating to the CEL enquiries is logged by Ann Owens in Pentana (our internal project management system). Ann Owens then appoints the action(s) to the relevant person(s). We believe the role of Head of CEL is a unique position and no other housing association in the region have this function.
3.4	Lately there has been an increase in the number of CEL's about over grown trees. OVH recognised that this was starting to be an issue – and as a result of the customer intelligence obtained from the CEL's OVH have recruited a specialist tree cutting team to help pre-empt this becoming an issues for the customers.

Action Required

4.0 Scrutiny Teams Recommendations

4.1	We believe the CEL information should be recorded as part of wider customer intelligence and reported and presented to the Service Review Group for monitoring.
4.2	CEL's to have a set of Service Standards with targets for acknowledgments, and response times.
4.3	Include a checking process to ensure that all CEL's are not closed before the enquiry/complaint is dealt with.
4.4	During our review we were not provided with any indication of trends as they are not classified by type. We recommend at the point of logging the CEL in Pentana that the enquiry is classified, so that a trend analysis can be identified.
4.5	Sometimes the information received from Cllrs / MP's is limited, therefore we recommend supplying a template to the Cllr and MP to complete in order to obtain as much information as possible.
4.6	CEL's are sometimes allocated incorrectly, therefore causing a delay in completing the enquiry, we recommend that time is taken to ensure that the CEL is assigned to the correct person.
4.7	There is a comments box in Pentana titled lessons learnt, this is rarely completed, we recommend that this is completed for each CEL, on completion of the enquiry/complaint.
4.8	Ensure that the complaints that come via a CEL are reported to the complaints officer so that they are recorded for monitoring purpose's and are in line with the new Ombudsman Complaints Code.

How we got there

5.0	Appendix A. Topic Selection
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5.1	<p>We would like to acknowledge the following OVH staff and Cllrs and Support staff who took part in the Scrutiny Team interviews for their openness and transparency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Anthony Lavell –Case worker for Peter Dowd MP• Cllr Denise Dutton – Deputy Leader Conservative Party – Sefton• Ann Owens (Head of Cllr Liaison – One Vision Housing)• Geoff McKeating (Maintenance Manager – One Vision Housing)• Christina Mooney (Customer Access Team Manager – One Vision Housing)