

**Customer
Voice**

Customer Scrutiny Review

Communal Cleaning Service

14 April 2025

Purpose of report

As a registered provider of social housing, One Vision Housing has an obligation to engage with its tenants and residents in line with the Regulator for Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

“Registered providers must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.”

- Consumer Standards 2024



Background

The Communal Cleaning service is a vital aspect of maintaining habitable and pleasant living conditions in shared residential properties. These services are crucial in OVH's high-rise and low-rise blocks of flats, independent living/retirement housing schemes and other multi-resident dwellings comprising common communal areas which are shared by residing residents.

Performance data reviewed at an OVH Customer Service Review Group meeting highlighted that customer satisfaction with Communal Cleaning was not meeting targets, leading to this Scrutiny Review to identify areas for improvement.



Who took part

Scrutiny Team members that took part in this review:

Pam Holliday – Chair

Ken Williams – Vice Chair

Anthony Bailey

Bernie Blackmore

Glenys Bowen

Joyce Johnston

Additional customer involvement:

One Vision Housing Tenant Inspectors



Scrutiny findings & recommendations

Area of Concern	Scrutiny Findings	Scrutiny Recommendation
Communication: Accessible Communication	During the review it was evident that OVH had recently undertaken steps to improve communication with residents with regards to the services they receive as part of the Communal Cleaning service. However, the Scrutiny Team discovered that the information was not accessible in other languages and formats.	To ensure equitable access, it is recommended that OVH should proactively offer service information in a range of formats and languages to meet the diverse needs of its customers. This includes, but is not limited to, large print, alternative languages, and braille. Frontline staff should also be made aware that the information is available in other formats and arrange for alternative formats to be provided to customers where appropriate.
Communication: Flytipping	The Scrutiny Team's review of communication materials highlighted a notable absence of information on tenancy enforcement actions for fly-tipping, potentially leaving customers unaware of the consequences that may result from such behaviour.	It is recommended that OVH should consider updating customer communications including leaflets and handbooks to include information around fly-tipping and the abandonment of domestic household goods (e.g. furniture, kitchen appliances, and other domestic goods) with respect to tenancy enforcement action to recover the costs incurred from removing such items from communal areas.
Communication: Signage	OVH Tenant Inspector reports highlighted an inconsistent approach to signage with regards to communal cleaning, which the Scrutiny Team determined could lead to customer confusion regarding the responsibilities of both the cleaning service, and residents using the communal areas.	To enhance the clarity and effectiveness of communication regarding tenant responsibilities, we recommend OVH review the current signage in communal spaces and make adjustments or improvements where needed to advise customers of their responsibilities.

Scrutiny findings & recommendations

Area of Concern	Scrutiny Findings	Scrutiny Recommendation
Surveys: Survey Reactivity	Survey Reactivity: After interviewing OVH's Customer Intelligence Assistant, the Scrutiny Team discovered there was a lack of reactivity in the way surveys are currently conducted; specifically, surveys were sent to all customers irrespective of recent service interactions, rather than being triggered by those interactions.	To ensure that timely and relevant feedback is considered, it is recommended that OVH adopt a more reactive survey system which captures resident feedback immediately, or shortly after they have received a service. By surveying customers directly after they have received a service, OVH will be able to gain immediate insights and address any issues promptly.
Lifecycle of Products	The Scrutiny Team established that communal area refurbishment currently follows a 20-year cyclical replacement programme. However, the Scrutiny Team was provided with instances where installed communal area flooring had failed to endure the full 20-year intended lifecycle and required renewal outside of the cyclical refurbishment period. This raises concerns regarding the potential suitability of some or all the flooring products currently being used for areas which may be subject to frequent use.	To ensure value for money and product longevity that meets customer needs, the Scrutiny Team recommends OVH undertake a review of flooring products and materials used in communal areas. This review should consider realistic lifecycles, standards of quality, and fair wear and tear usage of all products which may be used within communal areas. It should also include active participation from residents via a Customer Voice group (SRG or bespoke Procurement Group).
CCTV	During their review of fly-tipping removal costs, the Scrutiny Team found that requests for CCTV coverage for incidents of fly-tipping was infrequent to negligible, prompting concerns about the use of, and value for money of the CCTV service.	It is recommended that OVH should maximise resources, including CCTV (where available) to proactively combat fly-tipping and promote a culture of responsible waste management. In addition, to ensure value for money, OVH should consider conducting a cost-benefit analysis of its fly-tipping clearance process, specifically comparing the costs of clearance against those of implementing the use of CCTV retrieval (where available), and enhanced tenancy enforcement actions.

Scrutiny findings & recommendations

Area of Concern	Scrutiny Findings	Scrutiny Comments
Surveys: Working Groups	During the review, the Scrutiny Team discovered that, in response to survey data highlighting current levels of customer dissatisfaction with the cleaning service, OVH had initiated working groups comprised of management personnel to conduct investigations and formulate remedial strategies.	The Scrutiny Team commended OVH's proactive strategy for addressing current levels of dissatisfaction with the Communal Cleaning service and would like to propose a regular review of TSM data pertaining to Communal Cleaning satisfaction within the quarterly SRG. This review should serve to identify any continuing service issues/failures and assess if anticipated improvements are being reflected through improved levels of customer satisfaction with the service.
Service Charges	During the review, it was discovered that customers generally were uncertain what some service charge items pertained to. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and frustration for customers, as individuals may feel they are being charged for services they do not understand or perceive as necessary.	As part of their review of OVH's Independent Living Service, the Scrutiny Team put forward a recommendation to OVH's Executive Management Team (EMT) with regards to improving service charge communications. Therefore, the Scrutiny Team do not make any further recommendation to this as part of this current review; however, the team may consider communication of/around service charges as a potential area for resident scrutiny.

Management Response

Area of Concern	
Communication: Accessible Communication	Accessible information – Actioned • OVH offer service information in a range of formats and languages, a Recite me tool has been added to the website which also enables customers to access information in audio. Letters can now be sent via easy post our printing service, in large print, coloured paper and braille. • This offer is communicated to staff throughout the organisation. • Accessibility information is included on the back of customer letters. • Communications to customers are adapted in line with OVH’s Reasonable Adjustment Policy. • Customer EDI data is utilised to tailor communication to customers.
Communication: Fly tipping	Fly tipping - Actioned • The Communal Cleaning leaflet has a QR code which takes customers to the OVH website, where the Recite Me tool is available to aid accessibility e.g. large print. • A communications plan has been developed for further engagement with customers and there will be an article in the upcoming issue of ‘In Vision’ regarding fly tipping. • Days of Action are taking place in 2025/26 throughout our communities and neighbourhoods. This will include letters and face to face interaction, reinforcing the consequences of fly tipping. This work is being carried out in conjunction with Sefton MBC. • Surveys are completed during days of action, asking customers if they know how to dispose of items to educate customers and reduce fly tipping . • Information is contained within customers Tenancy Agreements. • OVH will review Tenancy sign up information, to strengthen the message at sign up regarding fly tipping. • An Anti Fly tipping campaign is currently underway in schools with children's winning posters displayed as a metal sign within our alleyways.

Management Response

Area of Concern	
Communication: Signage	Communal Areas - Actioned • Signage is used where required and appropriate to tackle specific issues considered on a case-by-case basis. • Adopting a blanket approach in all area's would incur additional costs and would be disproportionate. • There is an effective communications plan in-place regarding signage. • Weekly visits are carried out on blocks where dissatisfaction has been reported by customers, or by cleaners to the Neighbourhood Services team. • QR code stickers are used in communal areas as a permanent fixture. • The Customer Voice Newsletter is placed on notice boards in retirement homes, high rise blocks and local community centres to increase communication channels.
CCTV	CCTV -Actioned • The cost of fixed CCTV to High Rise blocks and seven Retirement Schemes is 200k a year and this cost is passed onto customers via service charges. There are affordability considerations for customers and the up-front capital cost for the Business is estimated at 800k per year. • Installation in all low-rise blocks is not an appropriate response. • There are legislative considerations to CCTV regarding installation and monitoring. • OVH currently use temporary cameras where appropriate and as part of Community Safety Team actions , dummy cameras are also utilised by the Community Safety Team. • OVH have recently procured a caged van and two operatives including tipping costs this is £140k per year and there is no service charge , making it cost effective and allowing OVH to use a targeted approach.
Surveys: Survey Reactivity	Survey Reactivity -Actioned • Implemented -Survey Agents receive a timelier refreshed Customer list. • OVH are currently exploring the use of SMS text to inform Customers that block when block has been cleaned.

Management Response

Area of Concern	
Lifecycle of Products	Lifecycle of Products – Actioned • Procurement of communal floor coverings doesn’t specify lifecycle in the specification. • Product has been reviewed by Procurement and Echelon as part of Value For Money report and has been deemed suitable for a 20-year lifecycle. • To be reviewed further by Procurement Team and finding presented to Scrutiny.

In summary

The Scrutiny Team appreciates the proactive and collaborative approach OVH has taken towards Communal Cleaning since this topic was prioritised for scrutiny review.

They would like to express their appreciation for OVH's implementation of action days, the establishment of working groups, and the enhancement of communication channels with customers.

The team would also like to encourage OVH to continue these efforts, with a focus on consistent monitoring and resident feedback, to ensure sustained improvements to the cleaning service, customer satisfaction, and resident engagement.



Acknowledgements

The Scrutiny Team would like to acknowledge the following OVH staff who took part in the Scrutiny Team interviews and questions for their openness and transparency:

Terry Keating (Maintenance Surveyor)
Anthony Payne (Estate Services Manager)
David Barton (Customer Intelligence Assistant)
Neil Kenwright (Head of Housing)

One Vision Housing would like to thank the dedicated Scrutiny Team for helping to complete this Scrutiny Review. We are confident that these recommendations will help us to improve customer relationships and strengthen our service offer.

