TENANT REGIONAL NETWORK 4 (CENTRAL REGION)

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Observations to the ICI Committee on responses and progress of the SHR

1. Whilst the SHR is becoming more responsive to communication with tenants and tenant organisations it needs to inter-react more with them. The Board needs to be more visual as there is feelings amongst tenants that the SHR is becoming more landlord orientated.

2. For example, Regional Networks of RTO’s are looking for ways to improve relations with the SHR and there needs to be a requirement to “get out there”

3. There is evidence to suggest that Landlords are reneging on their legal requirement to consult with tenants, so therefore there ought to be a Thematic study into Tenant Participation as landlords are concentrating at the exclusion of existing structures on tenant scrutiny

4. The SHR needs to stop changing the information they ask Landlords to submit for their Annual Return on the Charter so that a consistent set of performance information over a period of time can be provided that allows for meaningful comparison of performance. We are pleased with the information available from the online landlord comparison tool and look forward to being able to look at year on year trends when the next set of landlord reports are published in August 2015.

5. Many tenants not sure what the role of the SHR is with regards to investigating the concerns of tenants. Linked to this there needs to be more clarity on what constitutes a significant performance failure and timescales for responding.

6. SHR has instigated a number of Thematic Enquiries covering a number of relevant service areas that tenants see as in need of improvement. These are really the first national enquiries looking at service delivery since the introduction of the new independent regulator. The outcomes from the Thematics should lead to better outcomes for tenants. However, there remains a problem re deployment and resources available to SHR.

7. There is a failure of the Regulator to respond withing appropriate timescales regarding Significant Performance Failures. If a landlord were to find itself in financial trouble then there would be extensive probing and actions applied by the Regulator. Tenants are correct to expect a landlord failure reported to the Regulator in good faith should receive appropriate attention and feedback.

8. The ARC on the Charter is a useful example where the SHR is picking up on landlords that are not acting in tenants best interests. It is early days, but performance failure will be best shown when this years returns are published and tenants can begin to make a year on year assessment.
Outlook

9. It is early days, as we have pointed out to the Committee, but we need to be more vigorous in the SHR’s attempts at communication. Since our last meeting on 7th January, the SHR has been making strong attempts at improving communication using some hard copy and information technology. As highlighted above, we are sure that this will improve, but it is too slow in maturing. We look forward to continued dialogue with the SHR, through our sub-group that we as Networks have set up to continue this dialogue, but as you will have read more requires to be done.

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