

# Increased productivity at North Hertfordshire Homes

## Results & ROI

- Unnecessary furniture and equipment removed including; four book cases, three sets of drawers, enveloping machine and printer
- In one day two binloads of recycling, two confidential waster bags and 16 black sacks of rubbish were thrown away
- Corners and cupboards cleared making space for breakout areas and pleasant environment

## The client

North Hertfordshire Homes (NHH) began an organisation-wide Lean transformation programme in 2016. After delivering a successful roll out of Information Centres across the organisation the internal Lean Champions, known as Business Improvement Advisors (BIAs) required support to start implementing the roll out of physical 5S which are a key element of Lean foundation and visual management.

## The challenge

The roll out of physical 5S was particularly timely, as NHH have been consolidating a number of local offices into one and equipment and furniture has been 'lifted and shifted' from several old offices to the new location. The Housing Officers had moved to a new space, felt that their office was a dumping ground for other teams and were working in a room more densely populated with both people and furniture than they were used to.

## The approach

A one-day initial 5S workshop took place with the Housing Officers including an introduction to the principles of 5S before putting theory into practice and 'sorting' and 'setting' the office space. The team agreed the criteria for the sort phase and used this as a guide to remove broken or equipment, unnecessary stationery and out-dated paperwork. The team then applied the same criteria to bulky office furniture which, up until that point, had been vital storage.

Once everything had been quickly removed the team started to 'set' the office space by identifying and labelling the best places for the necessary items and putting mechanisms in place to help alert them if items went missing or were put back in the wrong place. Further work to ensure that the 'setting' of the office is continuously improving will be supported by the BIAs along with regular audits conducted by the Housing Officers themselves to 'sustain' the new working environment.

## The benefits

Valuable office space was reclaimed and put to better use. Just one example is the removal empty drawers being used solely to support a large, unused enveloping machine making space for a much needed breakout area or private area for the managers desk. The change was owned by the team and they now feel in control of their office space rather than letting it become a dumping ground for other teams and departments equipment.

Conducting 5S in more areas will free up further floor space, which is vital as NHH moves to one location. With 5S place office plans can be designed around teams needs, not what they have.

“

I can't believe how much rubbish we've been keeping hold of and moving around offices. I didn't think it could possibly take a whole day - I thought you'd be gone by lunchtime! ”

Jackie Harris,  
Housing Officers Team Leader