

## Improved resident satisfaction at Poplar HARCA

### The client

Poplar HARCA, a housing association in the East End of London, manages around 9,000 properties. Many of the older properties were built before modern construction, insulation and ventilation standards were introduced. Poplar HARCA's Property Services team had a number of longstanding process problems that they wanted to resolve. In a week, the team reviewed and improved three different processes: dealing with condensation and mould, repairs to properties following leaks, and repairs recharges. This case study just looks at what was achieved on the first process.

### The challenge

For a number of years, there had been an ongoing issue with condensation, damp and mould in some properties. Cases of condensation and mould would frequently reoccur with increasing frustration for residents and staff. Some of this was due to the age and construction-type of property, poor ventilation or other property issues, and some was due to overcrowding and tenant behaviour. Unfortunately, processes for dealing with condensation and mould were not optimised and there was a lot of failure activity for the Property Services team. Customer dissatisfaction created whilst dealing with the issues would sometimes lead to an escalation of problems and poor relations between customer groups and Poplar HARCA.

### The approach

It was agreed that Ad Esse would run a week-long Rapid Improvement Workshop (RIW) to create accelerated improvement, as opposed to a project spanning a number of months. Within the week, the process was mapped, issues were listed, root causes were identified, the process redesigned, new forms and checklists created and an action plan developed. The customer journey was mapped which led to a better appreciation of some of the customer problems with the current process.

New processes and procedures were developed and by the end of the week about 40% of the actions on the plan were already completed. The rest were picked up rapidly after the RIW.

### The benefits

A new approach for dealing with mould in properties was developed, which moved much more quickly to action for addressing root causes of damp, condensation and mould rather than just trying to treat the symptoms of condensation. Piecemeal actions were reduced, with the use of better equipment and data

logging for any properties likely to cause long term problems. Roles and responsibilities were clarified and the workshop resulted in much better communication and joint working between the Property, Housing and Complaints teams.

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Residents are much more satisfied because our service is more consistent and there are clear actions. The greatest impact has been on staff who - now that they have a clear process - are able to close cases, take greater ownership of issues and have more positive relationships with both residents and other teams. Time is now used much more effectively.

The Rapid Improvement Workshop was brilliant for bringing the team together to solve our problem logically. The process helped us to think in different ways and we had a lot of fun doing it. I would recommend it to anybody.”

Liz Williams, Assistant Director of Repairs and Property Services