

£114K reduction in rent loss at Saffron Housing Trust

Results & ROI

- Reduced key-to-key time from 58 days to 19 days (median)
- Void rent loss down 50% on average, per month
- £114K reduction in rent loss when comparing April – Aug 2018 to 2019
- 75% of residents are now making payment at sign up. Up from 0% before the review.
- 90% reduction in the use of paper throughout the end-to-end process

The client

Saffron Housing Trust provides affordable homes and services to people in need. They provide specialist homes for older and vulnerable people and build properties. Formed in 2004 from a South Norfolk Council stock transfer, they now own and manage over 6,000 properties across Norfolk and Suffolk.

The challenge

The Trust wanted to undertake a proof of concept review to demonstrate the benefits Lean Thinking can deliver. They selected the end-to-end voids and lettings process as the ideal candidate for this pilot review for a number of reasons:

- High potential for direct cashable savings through reduced void rent loss and a reduction to the cost of void works
- Weak existing performance data with few of the typical measures such as accurate key-to-key time or cost of void works
- A number of hard-to-let properties that sit-in the 'too hard to do' pile with little movement
- The lettable standard is not clear creating an inconsistent customer experience.

The approach

Working with the internal transformation team and new business analyst we were able to complete a thorough diagnostic. Value Stream Mapping was used to identify the causes of unevenness, overburden, and waste in the current process and the value-adding elements. Identifying the causes of the delays and errors during diagnostic allowed the group to identify possible solutions and test how effective they were at resolving the issue. The process redesign enabled the lettings and voids teams to communicate and work in parallel. Eliminating the waste created by waiting for one part of the process to stop before another would start. The new process was implemented rapidly using the skills the group had acquired throughout the review with the

majority of actions completed within four weeks of the process redesign.

The benefits

The introduction of the team Information Centres and void tracker has given the teams visibility of performance. The lettings team now 'pull' the property they and their customers want ensuring the voids team are working on the 'best' property. There are fewer voids being worked on and fewer visits for voids operatives reducing the waste and increasing the value-add activity for the voids team. Moving to any-day tenancies has reduced the overburden on all and given the customers greater choice and flexibility. A clear, concise property standard understood by all and continuously improved.

“The Voids review was our very first Lean review and WOW what an impact it has made! This review really showcased the power of collaborative working to the organisation. Those involved have felt engaged and empowered by the approach taken and continue to use the tools and techniques they have learned to drive continuous improvement.”

Jodie Sherwood,
Assistant Director (Business Transformation)