

Increased productivity at Southern Housing Group

Results & ROI

- 17% reduction in low-risk ASB cases handled by the trial regions (allowing Anti-Social Behaviour Case Workers to focus on high risk cases)
- 150 targets have been scrapped in favour of measuring performance
- Arbitrary performance measures within the Customer Service Centre (CSC) have been replaced with a scorecard designed around Overall Effectiveness (OE) - integrated with monthly business performance reporting and root-cause problem solving

The client

Southern Housing Group are a large housing association, managing 25,000 properties and employing over 900 staff. Southern's five regions stretch from the Isle of Wight to London. Having previously used applied Systems Thinking, Southern wanted to improve its traditional approach to manage larger, more complex improvement projects. Southern thus partnered with Ad Esse to develop their internal Continuous Systems Improvement (CSI) team and facilitate major Lean projects.

The challenge

The first project was a review of Resident Services, which had the objectives of improving the customer experience, achieving more efficient processes and enabling staff within regional teams to focus on what matters to the customer. The major problems across regions and processes within the service included:

- Lack of sufficient demand level and process performance data
- Focus on intermediate and inappropriate targets rather than end-to-end measures
- Regional inconsistency in processes and roles
- Organisational structure and roles leading to hand-offs and duplication (i.e. frequent referrals between different departments and suppliers)
- Lack of a shared knowledge about schemes and services

The approach

Diagnostic work was carried out to ensure a clear and shared view of the current position. The planned diagnostic approach was designed by Ad Esse, but sensitively coordinated within Southern by the CSI team. This enabled the most efficient and effective use of resources, whilst allowing for a skills and knowledge transfer to the CSI team to build their in-house

capability. The diagnostic work prioritised the following areas for improvement activity:

- Reporting and handling of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Estate Services and the inspection process
- Consistent implementation of the new Lettings process across the regions
- Development of arrangements for the collection and use of demand data in the CSC

The ASB, Estate Services inspections and CSC data collection processes were re-designed during a week of 3 concurrent Rapid Improvement Workshops.

The benefits

In addition to results above, the OE scorecard allows Southern to identify and quantify the sources of Failure Demand for improvement activity. Information Centres have also been introduced across the Group to measure improvement. Lean Thinking knowledge/skills have been transferred to the CSI team, with training for Directors and managers in the practical implementation of strategic improvement projects. Following the success of this activity, further reviews have taken place.

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Visiting the Information Centre this morning gave me an insight into how work will be managed in the future for the Group... looking forward to seeing Information Centres right across the Group... ”

Tom Dacey, Chief Executive