

## Greater rents team capacity at Tower Hamlet Homes

### Results & ROI

- Arrears critical path reduced by 56% (from 64 weeks to 36 weeks)
- 30% increase in the number of residents signed up to the tenants portal 'See My Data'
- Significant reduction in the number of preventable calls received by the Rents Team

### The client

Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) is an ALMO (Arm's Length Management Organisation) delivering high-quality housing services for residents living in 22,000 homes. THH has a history of implementing change but now wanted to develop their in-house change capability using a Lean Thinking methodology and selected the rents team as a priority area to start the roll out.

### The challenge

The rents team had a successful history of applying change and were performing well. However, the rents collection service itself is complex and is customer facing, with many internal and external stakeholders. The purpose of the review was agreed as 'improving efficiency across the rents process and increasing rent collection'. Clear drivers for the review included the anticipated workload increase as a result of the universal credit roll out, perceived inefficiencies within the process, staff dissatisfaction highlighted on a recent staff survey and a high volume of phone calls.

### The approach

Data analysis and diagnostic mapping with key stakeholders showed:

- Cycle-time for rent management was 64 weeks
- Delays of 24 weeks outside of the control of the rents team
- Inbound calls were 80% failure demand
- Varying success levels of letters sent during income management (some more than 80% effective, others less than 40%)
- Disproportionate amount time spent chasing facilities debt, whilst 20% of facilities accounts were in arrears, the total arrears figure was only £13k
- Attendance at tenant 'surgeries' was circa 50% attendance rate

Priorities for improvement were identified by the team and presented to the senior management team for sign off, including:

1. Streamlining process of managing facilities arrears
2. Removing ineffective process stages in arrears management
3. Reduce Failure Demand calls
4. Quantifying the impact of the current 'See My data' process
5. Review effectiveness of rent surgeries (close less popular ones, reduce time spent in surgeries)
6. Set up an Information Centre with short weekly briefings to replace monthly 2-hour meetings

### The benefits

- Increased capacity of Arrears Officers to deal with those struggling to make rent payments whilst ensuring that persistent non-payers were dealt with quickly
- Improved customer experience where those interested in the online service were enabled
- Information Centre set up provided a real-time overview of performance, problem solving and activity, updated and accessed at any time
- Simplification and automation of the existing debt management process meant rent officers only needed to be involved in rare occurrences



Staff engagement with Information Centre briefings is a real success. It has been great to see every member of the team take a turn in speaking so knowledgeably about the service and taking joint responsibility for successes as well as areas identified for improvement. ”

Beverley Greenidge, Head of Neighbourhoods