Vale of Aylesbury Housing

Efficient services at Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

Results & ROI
- Going paperless for the occupancy checks and the new tenant visits has saved the team circa £2419.14 a year in stationery costs
- The % of visits attended by a Neighbourhood Manager where the tenant is not at home has reduced from 50% down to 30%
- The number of calls relating to permission resolved at first point of contact have increased by 24%

The client
Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT) is a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord (RSL) that provides affordable housing for over 17,000 people living in Aylesbury and its surrounding villages. They have significant experience of continuous improvement. Following the success of past projects, a Lean Review for the Neighbourhood Service was initiated in February 2016.

The challenge
The Neighbourhood Service deals with a wide range of housing related issues including tenancy sustainment, tenant welfare and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Although Neighbourhoods covered an extensive area of work, data collection was proving difficult. Very little data was being collated regarding the team's activity, making it difficult to see current levels of performance and where data was produced, it was very labour-intensive.

The overall purpose of the review was:

- To define the purpose, processes, roles and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Service
- To increase Neighbourhood Manager (NM) efficiency and to embed continuous improvement further across the service
- Create a manageable approach to data collection and reporting

The approach
After establishing the scope with the project sponsor and key stakeholders, the project was broken down into three distinct phases:

Diagnostic
Paperwork, travel time, over-processing were amongst the problems that were found. 21 processes were found, and the top 3 identified and prioritised.

Re-design
An aspirational 'ideal' process was identified but dependant on an IT system upgrade. This was a more long-term solution. Despite this, the team made key improvements to the 3 priority processes.

Implementation
Two of the most substantial changes were regarding permissions – the removal of standard pet requests and major structural change requests. Both changes will require effective communication with residents.
An Information Centre was set up, where the Neighbourhood team meet for 10 minutes every week to review the progress of implementation.

The benefits
The project team identified an initial set of 11 success measures for this review. Given that recording of the NM's activity was virtually non-existent, these measures not only act as indicators of improvement but will provide the Neighbourhood team with genuine management information for the first time.
In addition to the headline project ROI, the project team also produced a 47-item implementation plan with timescales for action completion ranging from a week for simpler actions to several months for the more complicated changes.

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