

Void time savings at Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

Results & ROI

- Within four months void turnaround dropped from 31 at redesign stage to 15.5 when implemented
- Cost per void at lowest level for 5 years
- More than £80k rental income increase pa

The client

Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT) is a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord formed in 2006, with a portfolio of 7,400 tenanted properties and 600 leaseholder properties as well as commercial properties for let. We were approached to run a proof of concept end-to-end review of the voids and lettings process.

The challenge

Many improvements had already been made to the process but VAHT felt that what was lacking was a complete end-to-end, co-ordinated approach. Everyone was working hard to improve but in a fragmented way. A team was established from Voids, Lettings, Supported Housing, Major Works, Rents, Investment, ICT and Business Improvement. The objectives of the review were to:

- Reduce the overall re-let time and therefore reduce rent loss
- Improve the customer experience
- Provide a proof of concept to demonstrate that Lean principles would fit with the culture and vision of VAHT

The approach

The end-to-end process was value stream mapped and data collected using a variety of tools. This revealed

that the process was basically sound, but showed an mean average turnaround time of 37 days for minor voids, and a median of 21 days. Data analysis showed that figures were affected by a handful of very long turnarounds in properties where death or eviction had occurred. It was agreed that the main process did not need any real redesign, but a special process was required for death or eviction. One of the few changes identified for the core process was a change to the order in which works took place. The process moved to a demand-led approach, where properties were worked on if a potential tenant had been identified.

The benefits

Despite not being a classic review, numerous benefits were realised:

- A standardised process for deaths and evictions
- Paperwork reconciliation across teams, removing duplication and creating standard templates
- Completing work with the tenant in situ, giving them more choice
- Streamlined management of property amendments
- An Information Centre and Voids Tracking board to focus on performance improvement and problem solving
- A new set of KPIs to encourage end-to-end working
- Reliability of move-in date for tenants