

Yorkshire Housing save over £68K annually

Results & ROI

- Annual reduction in void rent loss totalling £68,600, a recurring saving that equates to a 343% return on consultancy within the first year
- Total property void period reduced by 52% to an average of 24.5 days

The client

Yorkshire Housing is a housing association managing more than 16,500 homes across the county. The organisation formed in 1999 when Ryedale Housing Association and Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Association merged. They now employ over 750 people covering 7 office locations across Yorkshire.

The challenge

As an organisation dedicated to continuous improvement, Yorkshire Housing identified the need to approach change in a way that engages and enthuses their front line staff. This led them to Lean Thinking and they engaged us to run a Lean review of their voids service. All social housing providers rely on rental income to deliver services and to build new homes. Not being able to charge rent whilst a property is unoccupied is a key area through which social housing providers lose income. The pressure to reduce void times, therefore, always exists. Agreed objectives focused on reducing void rental loss, improving the customer's experience of the voids process and to prove that Lean can achieve tangible benefits and engage staff in improvement.

The approach

The project was split into three key stages:

Diagnostic

The current state across all seven offices, where voids were managed, was analysed in detail. Key findings included performance targets driving work rather than customer demand, different teams working to conflicting targets and demands, work being pushed through the process irrespective of existing work and backlogs, lots of hand-offs causing delays and time spent on unnecessary checks and excess paperwork.

Redesign

The project team attended a two-day redesign workshop to review the current state and develop improved ways of working. This included removal of hand-offs and unnecessary authorisations and checks,

moving to a process pulled by customer demand and removal of other waste activity.

Implementation

The new process was implemented and supported through the introduction of Lean Foundation tools, including 5S and a team Information Centre.

The benefits

As well as the financial benefits, the Lean review has resulted in a significant change in culture. Removal of disjointed targets and the introduction of Information Centres has improved communication and the relationship between teams. The staff are also better skilled and more empowered to deliver continuous improvement – during the project, the team implemented a further 20 improvement ideas. A revised focus has also led to the complete elimination of recall repairs within a month of the void being filled.

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Because staff were frustrated with the current process, it didn't take a lot of persuading for them to be 100% behind the project. The results however have been way beyond our expectations. One of the best ideas that has come out of the project has been daily briefings around the Information Centre and, because we are very strict on the timing for this (10 minutes max), it's not been too onerous on workload. ”

Helen, Neighbourhood Manager