

How Lewisham Homes ensured a successful roll-out of their new Compliance System (and saved over 200 staff hours a month)

When Lewisham Homes wanted to implement a system to drive greater transparency and efficiencies in their Property Compliance processes, they knew that they would need to review and improve their processes first.

Note for non-housing professionals:

Property Compliance is a set of rules and statutory requirements that must be met by landlords in relation to Gas, Asbestos, Electrical, Fire Risk, Lifts and Water within a property and in communal areas. These processes often involve scheduled testing/checking, and completion of any required remedial actions.

“You have to invest your time and resources in the short term to ensure that time and resources are utilised wisely in the future.”

Rachel Bancroft, Head of Compliance and project sponsor at Lewisham Homes

Lewisham’s challenge

Lewisham Homes’ mission is “to provide safe, quality homes, deliver efficient services and enhance life chances.”. Recent structural changes in the organisation highlighted opportunities for improvement and efficiencies in property compliance. The current issues centred around the frustrating and time-consuming nature of managing and reporting the performance of property compliance, and the difficulty of accessing good quality real-time data and information.

Why work with Ad Esse?

Lewisham Homes identified an IT system that would help them overcome these challenges and automate parts of the existing process. However, knowing that systems are rarely wholesale solutions in themselves, Lewisham Homes invited Ad Esse to complete a process review of their key compliance areas in preparation for the system roll out. The objectives of this project were to drive waste and

inefficiencies out of the existing property compliance processes, deliver an improved customer service, and design the optimum processes to work in harmony with the new property compliance system.

Rachel Bancroft, Head of Compliance and project sponsor said:

“We wanted to do the Lean review to ensure that when bringing in a new system to utilise for compliance, we would be getting the most out of the system and using it efficiently - in effect not taking ‘bad habits’ with us.”

The Project

We completed the project by working with a team made up of the Compliance Contract Managers, front-line operational staff, contractors (who completed the testing/surveys and works), and the IT systems supplier. The project began by creating a shared understanding of the current ways of working, the root causes of any problems, and the scale of the improvement that could be achieved. The overall findings of this initial investigation revealed three key priorities that were taken forward and addressed in the solutions design stage of the project. These were:

- Alignment of power with accountability for outcomes throughout the processes. In order to be labelled accountable for a process, you must have control over how it is delivered.
- Streamlining processes. This was possible not only through the new IT system functionality but through additional process redesign too. In fact,

the process design identified system functionality that ideally would not be turned on, because the workarounds required to make the system work would increase process waste, not reduce it.

- Changing the performance management culture.

Whilst this project touched just one part of the organisation, performance management culture will be relevant across the organisation as they continue their transformation journey. This shift involves moving away from time-consuming snapshot reporting and lengthy narratives to live performance dashboards and stand-up meetings where concerns, progress and developments are discussed.

We identified a collection of quick-win solutions alongside these big-ticket areas for improvement; this helped to ensure that errors and problems could be removed in the short term whilst waiting for longer-term solutions to be put in place.

>200 working hours a month saved, empowered staff & more!

The output of this review was a set of process quick wins for immediate implementation, and a revised suite of future state processes that are practically aligned with the new system capability, and ready to be implemented alongside the system roll out. By creating a schematic for performance dashboards and introducing weekly stand-up meetings with the Executive Team to discuss compliance, Lewisham Homes saved many hours of management, staff and administration time creating monthly exception reports. The time saving from process efficiencies add up to more than 200 staff hours every month, in addition to reducing process error rates, and introducing real-time data to aid decision making and property management.

“ Ad Esse enabled the team to strip back processes and gave reassurance and support for where we were doing things right. This is a great approach for showing your Executive Teams that there are some processes that need to be more time consuming than others for very good reasons, but critically that harnessing the power of your own staff expertise is the best way to enable successful change. ”

Rachel Bancroft, Head of Compliance and project sponsor