

Responsive Repairs

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THE COMMUNITY HOUSING GROUP

THE CUSTOMER:

The Community Housing Group

THE CHALLENGE:

Responsive Repairs

THE SOLUTION:

Lean Intervention

THE RESULTS:

Increased Customer Satisfaction and Productivity



When The Community Housing Group was in the process of reviewing the Property Services Division it was recognised that lean thinking was the way forward to streamline processes, feed the surplus back into the organisation and create capacity to carry out more external contracts.

Lean Partnership was recommended to offer the support and skills the business needed to put lean thinking into action. The Community Housing Group chose initially to look at the Responsive Repairs service. Although this area already has high levels of customer satisfaction and has received the highest award by the regulator, the company is still keen to continually improve this area as it is the most important service to tenants and the largest service delivered by the Property Services Division.

The first aim of the lean thinking project was to deliver a next day response to all repair requests, so needed a focus on the fastest and most efficient and effective way of delivering the service to the customer.

Other goals involved creating capacity to do more work with existing resources, including encouraging staff teams to see their services as mini business units and manage them in real time, whilst increasing ownership/accountability at all staff levels in the process. As part of this, the company wanted to provide greater opportunities for front line staff to bring forward new ideas to improve their services and continue to maintain and improve on the existing high levels of customer satisfaction.

Lean Partnership helped The Community Housing Group set up a project team comprising all key stakeholders, including residents, scheme managers, property services team members and tradesmen. They delivered awareness training, taking the team through the application of lean principles, and ideas were generated that were then presented to the senior management, who approved their implementation.

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“Working with Lean Partnership has resulted in transformational change in our business. It has enabled us to exceed the expectations of our customers, increase the motivation and satisfaction of our staff, deliver real efficiencies and has given us the capacity to expand our business. We are still experiencing benefits, as staff are continually building and refining what is currently in place and focussing on resolving issues rather than managing a massive, cumbersome process.”

*Marina Banner, Group Director
(Strategy and Business Development),
The Community Housing Group.*

Whilst staff were excited and eager to be involved, they initially found it hard to think in a lean way, for example, it was difficult for them to look beyond the capabilities of computer systems,

audit and regulatory requirements and focus purely on delivering what the customer values i.e. the repair being completed.

Results Achieved:

- Next day response to repair requests
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased productivity
- Increased employee motivation and satisfaction
- Ability to take on additional work
- Identification of staff with skills that can be used elsewhere in the business
- Reduction in the number of cases where no access could be gained to properties to carry out a repair

Lean Partnership helped create the shift in thinking by designing a map of the process, to allow people to really understand why particular pieces of information were important. Everyone involved was amazed at the amount of duplication, checking and bureaucracy in the process, and residents were able to provide their input regarding their needs and how they would like the system to work.

Redesigning the process was fairly straightforward once everyone learnt to stop thinking about how the new process would fit with the computer system, and start to look at the ideal process then think about how IT could make the systems work in that way.

The new process was trialled in Plumbing before being rolled out to other trades in Response Repairs, allowing The Community Housing Group to tweak the process where necessary, and demonstrate benefits to other tradesmen and the unions.

Lean Partnership worked alongside the project team through implementation and helped develop a team of internal lean champions to deploy lean thinking across the organisation.

The Community Housing Group intend to roll lean thinking out across the business via the lean champions, and realise similar benefits to front line and support services across the group including voids, disabled facility grants, performance management and appraisals to improve efficiency, extend services to customers and remain a competitive and sustainable business.



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