

case study



Change for the better at Edinburgh

Edinburgh Building Services (EBS), the department responsible for Housing Repairs, maintains around 24,000 individual properties including blocks, garages and lock-ups across the city.



Key Points

- Number of properties maintained - 24,000
- Responsive repairs spend - £12m
- Number of responsive orders a year - 100,000
- % appointed / kept - 96%
- APSE and COSLA award winners
- Charter Mark & IIP accredited

EBS carries out in the region of 100,000 repairs annually. There are a total of 250 operatives, of which 100 carry out Responsive Repairs and the remaining 150 carry out planned works.

Over the past three years, EBS has undergone an extensive service improvement programme. As part of this process, it was recognised that a new and better way of scheduling appointments than the traditional, time-intensive



paper-based system was needed in order to meet their ambitious key performance indicators, support the delivery of service objectives and improve customer satisfaction.

Before the introduction of OPTI-TIME, the allocation of work to operatives was exclusively paper-based, which meant operational managers spent a significant part of their working day on an administrative process rather than managing operatives and ensuring quality and customer requirements were met.

Edel McManus, Service Improvement Manager for Admin and IT, explains "After investigating the market, EBS selected OPTI-TIME as it met all

our requirements and would deliver real operational benefits to EBS and ultimately to the service we provided to customers."

In April 2006, a dedicated Project Team comprising a cross section of EBS staff, individuals from the Council's corporate call centre and BT (the Council's IT provider) was formed and using a Prince2 approach they began the development and roll-out of OPTI-TIME. By October 2007, a successful pilot with plumbers was carried out and other trades were phased in over the following two months.

Central to the project was the engagement of our entire workforce and interested stakeholders. Throughout the process we maintained a communications campaign including presentations, demos, workshops, email updates, posters and articles in Building Futures (Edinburgh Council publication).

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What difference has the introduction of OPTI-TIME made to EBS?

Said Edel: "OPTI-TIME eliminated inefficient manual processes and introduced automated, dynamic scheduling which is reflective of our resources and volumes of work. Although we do not have mobile yet we have already begun to see results: increased productivity and performance and a reduction in operative down time and subcontractor costs. Most importantly, it provides our customers with a flexible, managed and monitored appointment system which helps us keep our promises, meet customer needs and ultimately improves customer satisfaction."

Deputy Contracts Manager with EBS, William Gillhooly agrees: "With OPTI-TIME, we can now be proactive, looking ahead to identify where best to use our resources and moving operatives between teams when and where required. It allows us to focus on managing resources, quality and performance rather than administration."

Repairs Direct (Corporate Call Centre) has also reaped benefits from the introduction of OPTI-

TIME: "One of the main benefits to us and the tenant is the ability to offer appointments and information confidently to the tenant. Repairs Direct staff are also reassured that jobs they book are being completed as promised by the use of text back and viewing the progress of jobs which they were not able to do before."

Despite the short-term lack of a mobile data solution, EBS has fully implemented the culture of mobile working. Operatives text to indicate each job starting and finishing, the planners ensure the core systems are updated and the schedule is flexible and reactive to the unfolding day. The results that have been achieved bear testament to the quality of the project management and the change management processes that were put in place. The technology was a catalyst and an enabler but Edinburgh has shown that it is the culture that ensures success.

Table of improvements

- **Typical appointment wait reduced from 8 weeks to 5 days**
- **Appointments kept improved from 78% to 96%**
- **Complaints reduced by 90%**
- **Tenant satisfaction increased from 75% to 95%**
- **Average working days to repair and empty home reduced from 20 to 10 days**
- **Employees satisfied with their job (on-going MORI SURVEY) increased from 25% to 80%**

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