

# CAPITA

## Capita OPENHousing homes in on increased tenant satisfaction for Wakefield District Housing

*Satisfaction levels at all time high as Capita OPENHousing helps drive the Wakefield Standard for 2012*

Since using Capita OPENHousing's suite of systems, Wakefield and District Housing (WDH), which owns 31,000 homes, has seen tenant satisfaction increase to 85%. The introduction of OPENHousing, OPENContractor, OPENMobile and OPENAccess forms a significant part in the housing group's intention to create confident communities and deliver high quality, value for money services.

### The background

WDH became the largest single housing stock transfer organisation in 2005, taking responsibility for over 31,000 homes in the Wakefield District.

WDH has a clear vision - to create confident communities. As part of this, it's helping to build a more competitive knowledge-based economy through local innovation and by having a skilled and flexible workforce. This is designed to create socially inclusive communities, reduce deprivation levels and inequality, and improve the quality of Wakefield's environment through the injection of a capital modernisation programme of over £700 million to deliver decent homes and the "Wakefield Standard".

### The challenge

As part of the transition of housing stock from Wakefield Council in 2005, WDH outlined the steps it would take to improve the lives of their newly expanded group of tenants.

Paul Wood, service director, ICT, for WDH, comments: "We were passionate about meeting the promises voted for by tenants on transfer. We were clear that the implementation of Decent Homes and the Wakefield Standard (an improved offer higher than Decent Homes) was a clear deliverable. In addition, we also wanted to improve other areas such as allocations and our repairs service".

Paul continues: "When we took on the Council's housing stock in 2005, we inherited its existing IT systems, which had served their purpose well. However, it was clear that for WDH to maximise its resources and offer tenants the best possible service, a new comprehensive IT system would be required".

"In terms of improving allocations, we wanted to re-engineer a predominantly manual housing allocations process - transforming this into an IT focussed solution in an area where there was low IT connectivity. We also wanted a range of automated solutions to meet the diverse requirements of our customers since we saw the introduction of Choice-based Lettings as a major contribution to developing confident communities".

"We also have a very large Responsive Repairs Section and our aim was to mobilise them through the use of remote devices which would increase efficiency - but above all would provide high value services to tenants. Getting the green light from tenants was vital so we made it a priority to meet as many as possible to explain our proposals."



## The solution

The search for a suitable IT system was a robust process and involved a full review of what was available in the market place. "We left no stone unturned in our pursuit of the right software package," says Paul. "For us to be able to realise our ambitions, it was essential that we chose wisely."

After careful consideration, WDH decided to adopt Capita OPENHousing's OPENAccess, and OPENContractor packages. The choice was due to the software's rich functionality, and the Capita team's deep domain expertise in the sector.

**Paul Wood, service director, ICT, WDH**

"We were impressed with Capita OPENHousing's consultancy team, who clearly understood our roadmap for the future. They outlined exactly what steps were required to offer the smoothest possible transition of data from the Council's existing IT system, and outlined how the migration process would take place."

The migration of existing council data required the transfer of millions of data files, and complete independence from the existing infrastructure took 18 months.

Paul continues: "We were impressed with how quickly the transition took. It was an intricate project, which required a professional approach, and that is exactly what we received. It's never an easy process when you change IT systems and we had to make sure that all 800 plus users at WDH would be happy with the changes, after all we would be changing the way they worked."

The change in IT systems at WDH has been successful with users enjoying the benefits that OPENHousing, OPENContractor, and OPENAccess has to offer.

Paul continues: "Colleagues enjoy the efficiency of the new systems. For example, using OPENHousing, it is possible to have a single view of tenants' information, which makes the processing straight forward. OPENHousing is also 100% compatible with OPENContractor and OPENAccess."

As a result of these implementations, significant improvements have taken place. In particular, Homesearch, the Choice-based Lettings system, was launched 1 February 2007. It immediately proved popular with customers and in the first 12 months, 7,970 new members joined the scheme.

Customer satisfaction showed that 97% of customers who use Homesearch find it easy to use and understand, and 93% are satisfied with the scheme. In addition, the first 12 months showed that automated methods of expressing interest in properties through the scheme proved to be very popular, with 66% of all expressions made electronically.

In terms of the repairs service, WDH's mobile operatives are now better placed to offer customers the best possible service through the support of personal digital assistants (PDAs). The use of handheld devices lets over 100 workers in the field receive jobs electronically, order parts and complete jobs without the need to return to their office.

Recent surveys of the repairs service have reported satisfaction at 92% - an increase of 6% in the last year alone.

"Since using Capita OPENHousing's software, our satisfaction ratings have generally increased across all service areas. Our overall service satisfaction rating has increased by 7% and now stands at 85% overall. There is still room for improvement as ever, and we continue to use Capita OPENHousing's software to drive tenant satisfaction further."

**Paul Wood, service director, ICT, WDH**



To find out more about how software solutions from Capita OPENHousing can transform your organisation, please contact:

Manvers House  
Manvers Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8YX

t: 08701 631800  
f: 08701 631869

cssenquiries@capita.co.uk  
www.capita-software.co.uk

# CAPITA