



WANSBECK HOMES

Our Vision:

Making the Difference

Our Mission:

To deliver outstanding customer service and create a brilliant place to work.

Our Values:

- Customer Services
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Quality
- Leadership

Most Innovative DLO

Wansbeck Homes began operations on 25 February 2008 following the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the housing stock formerly owned by Wansbeck District Council. Together with Cheviot Homes, Wansbeck Homes became part of the Bernicia Group.

Wansbeck Homes is constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable rules. The governing body is the Board of Management, which is made up entirely of volunteer members and comprises of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and professions including tenants of Wansbeck Homes. The Board is made up of 15 Members, 5 representatives are nominated by the Council, 5 are independent members and 5 are tenant representatives.

Our Board and staff are committed to making a difference to the housing conditions for individuals, neighbourhoods and the communities we serve.

Background

Handyperson/QRV Service

There is increasing reference in a spectrum of government strategy documents to the importance of preventative services and enabling older, disabled & vulnerable people to maintain independence – particularly the Department of Health White Paper on the future of adult health and social care (2006). There is also a strong policy drive to encourage greater partnership working across sectors to deliver the services that are the priorities of older, disabled & vulnerable people themselves.

As this report highlights, older disabled & vulnerable people, identify Handyperson services as an important resource to enable independent living. Their impact straddles housing, health and social care targets and directives, ranging from prevention of falls, reduced admission to care homes to maintenance of a decent housing stock. Even though many people from these groups have a reluctance to ask for help, many will access practical services which enable them to remain in their own homes thus maintaining their independence.

What is innovative about the service provided?

Wansbeck Homes decided that this new service was necessary, from the results of a range of customer consultations undertaken. The outcome identified the need to set up a team to carry out small tasks in the Customers new home, for which they may not have the tools, equipment or skills required to carryout such tasks.

Also the consultations identified some of our elderly customers do not have access to friends and family who would normally undertake such tasks.

Additionally the scheme helps reduce disruption to the customer through arranging a dedicated slot on the first day of the Customers tenancy.

This new service was introduced early 2009 as we found that additional to the items above this type of service was necessary for a number of reasons;

- To engage the customer in our repair system by helping identifying work
- To gain the confidence of the customer
- To address the visual look of the estate
- Assists new Customers during the stressful experience of moving into a new property.
- Tenants failure to report repairs
- Growing costs in return visits by ad-hoc reporting

What are the benefits to the client, the contractor and the residents?

The Handyperson/QRV service has helped reduce current appointments and the completion of repairs that would normally fall within a priority timescale for completion of 20 days down to between 10 and 14 days.

Additional benefits.

To the Customer:

- Reflects tenants' wishes, the aim is to increase the speed at which the most common and relatively small repair jobs are completed, whilst giving tenants some certainty about when work will be done.
- Faster response times to individual jobs.
- Less disruption to customer as all work done at once.
- First time first fix.

To the Company:

- Shorter journey times 'reducing downtime'.
- Maximising productive time available i.e. more jobs completed through reduced need to travel.
- Number of emergency repairs has reduced in the pilot areas as quick response teams have been able to absorb more than initially thought. The average SOR cost of an emergency job is approximately 22% higher if completed by the emergency team.
- Small jobs removed from the day-to-day appointment diary resulting in the maximising of general resources within the overall repairs system creating greater customer service.
- Efficiency savings across the repair budget.
- Enhancement of neighbourhood.
- Increased inquiries from potential tenants

Planned Improvements

Additionally, as Wansbeck Homes is currently carrying out works to bring its own housing stock up to the Decent Home Standard, the team decided that in order to minimise the inconvenience to the customer, this would be the ideal time to carry out any small repairs by the Handyperson/QRV service.

The process involves the technical inspector calling at all properties on this estate assisting the tenants to complete the repair request form highlighting any work normally undertaken by the responsive repair team.

The technical inspector explains how the work is to be carried out and gives realistic time scales and ensures no false promises are made, which would disappoint the tenant and raise unrealistic expectations.

Once the work has been identified the Handyperson works alongside the site supervisor to ensure that the customer is only inconvenienced once throughout the ongoing modernisation work.

As the service expands we intend to develop a more extensive range of small works, therefore meeting the requirement of our tenants.

The scheme initially started out with small demand, but as the service was rolled out over the forthcoming months, more & more tenants recognised the value to them of our new service.

What were the financial costs and cashable benefits?

The Handyperson/QRV bears no increased cost to the service as it is purely a redirection of resources to create greater efficiencies and adds value to the service delivered to the customer.

To assess this we conducted a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the repair to ascertain service delivery and value to the customer.

This scheme has been very successful with tenant's satisfaction high (95%)

How relevant is this as an example that might be followed by other organisations?

Other RSL's and organisations would greatly benefit from this service as it is good practice and improves our service at no additional costs. We are also engaging with our customer on a regular basis through site surveys, working groups and tenants panels etc.

It gives our tenants an opportunity to bring forward requests & ideas which we can take on board. This means we are able to maintain the housing stock more efficiently by addressing a problem before it has escalated into a larger more expensive work, this in turn leads to high customer satisfaction, and subsequently confidence in our service which results in increased income from rents.

As a result of our service Wansbeck Homes have happy tenants less willing to move to another landlord.