



DLO Review

Working with residents to provide quality housing services and decent homes

Our commission

During the past five years echelon has been commissioned by Homes for Haringey to undertake two reviews of its direct labour organisation, Haringey Repair Services (HRS), which comprises a responsive repairs team (including the repairs control centre); a planned works team (which includes void works) and a finance services team.

The first in 2012 involved undertaking a health check of HRS.

Client: Homes for Haringey

HfH is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) which was established in April 2006 to manage 20,985 properties on behalf of The London Borough of Haringey (LBH).

Its portfolio comprises 15,700 tenanted properties, 4,890 leasehold properties and 3,200 households in temporary accommodation.

In May 2011 the Property Services directorate, including HRS, was restructured to bring together voids and repair operatives, with the introduction of mobile working for a significant number of repair operatives.

HRS carries out approximately 60,000 repairs per year to just over 21,500 homes managed by HfH and employs 130 operatives, including five apprentices and 42 support staff.



"It is not about management and consultants implementing change, which is what had happened in the past when reviews had been carried out, with echelon it is about engaging with all of our staff and getting them on board to change the culture for the future."

Chris Liffen Executive Director
of Property Services,
Homes for Haringey



2012 Review

echelon undertook a rigorous stakeholder engagement programme and provided a detailed report highlighting areas for improvement and making recommendations for developing HRS. These included:

- Appoint a commercial manager/director.
- Review the role, capability and number of supervisors.
- Introduce and manage an effective change management programme.
- Move away from the schedule of rates and introduce a Price Per Property (PPP) model or average job cost.
- Have a more clearly defined relationship between client/contractor.
- Develop a detailed five-year business plan.
- Evolve the way financial management data is captured and used to drive a more commercial approach.
- Consider alternative delivery models for the service.
- No consideration of actively seeking external contracts until recommendations are put in place.
- Review of relationship with suppliers and subcontractors.
- Immediate instigation of new processes to manage current use of SOR.
- Review the KPIs being used and introduce a new suite of KPIs.
- Strengthen Quality Assurance Systems focusing on post-inspection process.
- More defined split between responsive, voids and planned works.
- Review KPI data collection and reporting.

HRS achieved cashable savings in the region of £2.9 million following the review and its operating costs fell from £19.4 million to £16.5 million.

2016 Review

Four years later a second two-stage review was carried out to:

- Ascertain how the recommendations from the 2012 review had been implemented.
- Focus on the future delivery of the repairs service.

Once again echelon undertook a rigorous stakeholder engagement programme including interviews with key stakeholders and service review workshops, as well as conducting a review of the ICT systems that were in place and the new system that was being mobilised.

Recommendations

echelon discovered that while the performance had greatly improved and the recommended policies and procedures from the 2012 review were all in place they weren't always followed. For example, while the tenant handbook clearly stated what type of repairs were the responsibility of tenants the contact centre didn't have a copy of the handbook and were booking in repairs which did not fall under the responsibility of HRS.

echelon provided a detailed report and made recommendations to ensure that the procedures were implemented properly.

There were 17 recommendations for stage 1 including:

- Review of a number of KPIs.
- Review risks raised and add to risk register.
- Review/refresh void process.
- Review Bonus Scheme.
- Pilot HRS delivering planned works and engage with Asset Management Team.
- Review process maps on a regular basis.
- Engage with Contact Centre.

A service improvement plan (SIP) was developed, based on echelon's report, and feedback from briefings with operatives and staff and meetings with leaseholders.

It identified 16 key areas with target dates set against priority covering work in progress, voids, responsive repairs, planned works, cost control, customer satisfaction, finance, contact centre, structure, DLO, out-of-hours service, health and safety, succession planning and the Service Connects IT system.

Outcomes

There is a greater focus on communication with contractors and the contact centre and the new ICT system is allowing HRS to make great strides in terms of mobile working and more effective use of materials.

Stage two of the review focused on future service delivery and covered capital works delivery options, gas contract delivery options, the voids process and material supply and is a work in progress.

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“Our performance improved considerably following the first review with echelon, but we didn't want to rest on our laurels and were keen to continue to improve.”

“The second review allowed us to assess how well the recommendations from 2012 had been implemented and to highlight areas where further improvements could be made, so that we can continue to build on the service that we offer to our tenants.”

Chris Liffen Executive Director
of Property Services,
Homes for Haringey

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