pimss4communities

Case Study

Castle Rock Edinvar

Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord and part of Places for People group, **one of the largest property management and development companies in the UK.**

Castle Rock Edinvar manages some 6,000 homes over a widespread geographical area covering Edinburgh, West Lothian, East Lothian, Midlothian, Stirling, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire and Falkirk.

The stock in management is diverse, including houses, flats and tenement buildings, sheltered housing and some commercial premises. Castle Rock Edinvar's subsidiary company, Lothian Homes, offers a factoring service to new properties for ownership and private retirement developments as well as managing a range of mid and market rent properties.

Choosing pimss4communities

Places for People and Castle Rock Edinvar managed their assets using an early version of PIMSS. When **pimss4communities** was launched both organisations took the decision to upgrade to the new web based software. The benefits identified from upgrading are:

- increased control over assets
- improved store of information
- enhanced flexibility in analysis of data

For Castle Rock Edinvar, **pimss4communities** is vital in driving the asset management plan. The organisation has to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) by 2015 and **pimss4communities** is supporting the identification of the work and budget required to achieve this.

CASTLE ROCK EDINVAR
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

pimss4 communities

"It's a very effective system. It has allowed Castle Rock Edinvar to manage the delivery of SHQS and annual contracts more efficiently. It has definitely helped us understand the profile of our stock and to move forward with confidence"

Castle Rock Edinvar's benefits from installing pimss4communities:

- the system looks good and is user friendly. The dashboard allows us to set individual priorities. We can quickly see a snapshot of required investment, energy rating and SHQS works
- it's much quicker to prepare budgets and contracts and there are cost savings in staff time. The system saves time spent on producing reports and there are many more options available for analysis and reporting
- it's very useful to be able to download a top line report and produce the underlying property detail. The reports produced by the system are used by the team to produce the data required by the Board and by management
- all the basic information needed for going to tender can be obtained by interrogating the system to identify specific works (for example, kitchens due for renewal) that are then used to form the basis of a programme of work. This used to be a long manual process relying on an individual inspector's knowledge of an area
- we can easily change surveys and reports – the system is very responsive and flexible
- it is easy to train people; being web based, features like drop down menus make it easy to navigate. Training someone to interrogate the system and use the main features need only take an hour. This makes it easy to deploy to front line staff
- administration of contracts and the automatic updating of information when work is complete will save a lot of time and reduce the chance of mistakes
- the validation exercise that is normally undertaken at the year-end will be automatic in future, saving staff time
- having asbestos and energy on the system means that there is one source of information; the property address

Managing Castle Rock Edinvar's investment programme

Liz Peacock, Planned Works Co-Ordinator, is responsible for analysing and cleansing the data to establish the improvement and SHQS programme. In order to develop the condition of the housing stock, Castle Rock Edinvar has surveyed 85% of the property portfolio and has a programme to undertake a 10% validation survey exercise each year. The survey results have been loaded into **pimss4communities** and used to develop the planned maintenance and SHQS delivery programme.

The Association has an annual investment programme of £3m over the next 2 years; £700,000 of this is to meet the SHQS target. The works covered by the investment programme includes major works such as kitchen and bathroom replacements as well as window and door replacements and electrical upgrades. Sustainability and affordable warmth measures are one of the main investment drivers for Castle Rock Edinvar which continually seeks new energy initiatives to reduce fuel poverty. Works to help reduce fuel poverty include windows; central heating upgrades and loft and cavity wall insulation.

Although the deadline for achieving SHQS is 2015, Castle Rock Edinvar plans to ensure its stock meets the standard by 2013. **pimss4communities** has helped to identify exactly which properties fail the standard, what needs doing to bring them up to the standard and to prioritise the programmes of work. It also provides the reports for annual returns to the Scottish Government.

Liz Peacock says **"having pimss4communities enables us to focus and guide our activities more effectively.** All the information we need to access is on the system and we can see at a glance where and when we need to invest to bring our stock up to both SHQS and business standards. Because we can readily see where investment is required we have grouped works into work packages. This has helped us achieve value for money as well as higher levels of customer satisfaction."

Meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards

Many of PIMSS Data Systems' customers are in England and have to comply with Decent Homes legislation. However, PIMSS Data Systems has an excellent track record in supporting Welsh and Scottish Housing Quality Standards and Liz Peacock says that ensuring **pimss4communities** supplied all the right information was very easy. "We supplied the survey and it was a seamless transition to provide all the data in the format we need. It's never a problem tweaking the system to meet our needs."

Integrating data across the business

Castle Rock Edinvar is using **pimss4communities** as the central repository of asset data and is integrating other data into the system, for example asbestos and EPCs. It is easy to upload spreadsheets and work from other systems. This removes islands of data and improves efficiency. Integration with the Northgate housing management system is also on the horizon. Other plans include rolling out access to the system across the organisation so that anyone can see the current status of specific properties and, for example, answer tenants' queries without the need to refer to the asset management team. Also on the implementation agenda is the contracts module, which will help manage contracts for work once they are let.

"The Help Desk does what it says on the tin. It's always there to help, never says 'no'"

"the Help Desk is really good – if there is an error on the system it is logged, picked up and corrected. That works very well, we don't have to follow up. The team is very helpful – we only have to email them and any problem is dealt with very quickly. We have never had any major problems, a quick email or phone call resolves everything. Because the system is web based, there is no need for technical site visits; any change or updates can be handled remotely and we have never had any problems that have involved our own IT Support."

"Training is excellent. Neil showed us how each module works. The system is so user-friendly that with the high quality training we were able to get going straight away. It's so intuitive, there's very little need for user manuals."

pimss4communities – everything you need to manage your housing assets

Proven web based asset management system

Easy to implement, train and upgrade
Deploy across multiple sites

Manages Decent Homes SHQS/WHQS

Links with other systems for accurate data sharing
Dashboard view, quick access to most used information

Optional modules

Energy – with in-built energy calculator
Asbestos – comprehensive reporting and management
Planning – scenario planning to manage forecasts and budgets
Contracts – track progress and spend
Servicing – managing servicing schedules
Handhelds – rapid transfer of data gathered on site

To find out how **pimss4communities** can help your business call 0800 121 8767 **www.pimss.com**

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