

The Objective

Rapidly expanding, South of England based Housing Association WCHA needed a flexible scalable enterprise-wide business solution whose system functionality, could cope with diverse business divisions and provide the ability to handle sophisticated reporting requirements.

The Solution

After an evaluation of several possible options by various specialist Housing Consultants, the MIS Active Management Systems ActiveH range of Housing products utilising the world leading Microsoft SQL Server database was selected and implemented throughout the organisation.

The ActiveH solution included integral workflow designed into every module of the product from day one in addition to innovative features such as desktop tasking and task escalation, which provided a powerful core system with the ability to be easily expanded (by either MIS or WCHA staff) to meet future requirements.



Customer Comments

Tony Blows, Group IT Manager commented:-

"We have identified so many benefits since summer 2006. Within just a few weeks, the dust had settled and we were already making enhancements to further standardise reporting and business processes using workflow."

"Administration resource has been freed up to concentrate on value tasks, to the benefit of our customers, rather than low level routine letter generation, which has been generally automated with workflow. Now management and users have seen the advantages of workflow, they cannot get enough of it. The fact that our own staff can create these and further enhance the flexible standard package by adding new screens and processes provides some independence from MIS, but we know they are there to offer genuine, willing help and assistance whenever we call upon it".

"The enhanced reporting facilities have enabled us to present a single view of our business which can be measured and is consistent across each business area".

"IT administration of the database and servers (which was all sourced through MIS as a one stop shop) has been painless"

"The relationship we have with MIS is a strategic partnership and from our experience goes way beyond the nine 'til five culture so often experienced from other suppliers. This has made the difference in enabling us to expand the ActiveH solution to exceed expectations of staff and customers".

Big enough to deliver, but small enough to care

MIS Active Housing Management Systems

Case Study: **Western Challenge Housing Association**

Rev 02

History

Western Challenge Housing Association (WCHA) is an independent landlord which exists to provide affordable good quality homes for rent and sale. Originally created in 1977, it is now part of the wider Spinnaker Housing Group which manages some 10,000 properties across the south of England and in the Midlands.

The Association's services are provided via its head office in Christchurch, Dorset and regional offices in Bristol, Exeter, Reading, Leicester, Cheltenham, Poole and Newport IoW.

WCHA operate a diverse range of housing stock including:

- General Rented Homes (for single people and families)
- Supported Homes (for people with a variety of support needs including learning disabilities)
- Sheltered Homes (for older people)
- Shared Ownership Homes
- Leasehold Schemes for the Elderly
- Key-worker Accommodation (specifically for doctors, nurses, police, teachers and other workers in important service areas)

Western Challenge have worked in partnership with MIS AMS since 1996 when the association first installed the original HAMIS housing management and MISAC financial systems (predominantly across thin clients), and in 2002 they implemented MIS's first generation Call Centre solution. As the association grew it became apparent that they needed to invest in more advanced technology.

Product Evaluation

Utilising several specialist Housing Consultants, a number of potential systems were evaluated, before ActiveH was selected as meeting their "must have" requirements". ie a solution that :-

- clearly enhances service to customers
- drives efficiencies within the organisation
- has all modules sharing a common database
- is on a database platform that is open, modern and mainstream
- is flexible and quick to adapt to their dynamic current and future needs
- has full module integration to prevent any re-entry of data
- has a true normalised database design to facilitate flexible reporting
- integrates directly with Microsoft Office and Business Objects for reporting

Implementation

As part of the implementation process, key product champions were identified. Each was closely involved with the ActiveH implementation team members during every aspect of configuring and testing the system. Processes were carefully re-evaluated before being taken forward into the new system and a 'train the trainer' approach was used in some areas of the project to optimise resources.

In July 2006 confidence in the implementation team meant that a "big bang" approach was feasible to successfully migrate all applications (CRM, Rents, Repairs, Assets and lettings) on a single weekend. Downtime was minimal and users were successfully using the new system by the Sunday afternoon.

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