

## MIS Active Housing Management Systems

Case Study: **Accord Housing Association**  
(6,500+ units migrated from Simdell)

Rev 02

active  
management systems

### The Objective

Accord Housing Association, a diverse and multi-faceted independent RSL, was looking for a flexible, scalable housing solution to support ambitious expansion plans and extensive community initiatives. A move from a dated, and somewhat limited, character based system to a modern cutting edge Windows product was essential to realise gains in productivity and provide the means to adapt to the future.

### The Solution

Several housing systems were extensively evaluated. The old Simdell system had a number of fundamental problems and limitations, particularly with multiple debit frequencies, which a new product needed to provide as a bare minimum, and after investigating a range of supplier's solutions, the ActiveH system was selected.

ActiveH met all current requirements for Accord in addition to many of the wish list items anticipated to be required for the future.

Accord were impressed with the contrast in the rich functionality of the MIS AMS solution, the low pressure sales techniques and the help and support offered both through the implementation and on an on-going basis.



### Customer Comments: Coleen Whitehead, IT department

*"There was tremendous effort in configuring the system and validating the processes that we were taking forward. It was important that we questioned why we did certain processes and that others deemed essential were available from go live. We couldn't fault our implementer, who was with us every step of the way, however late we worked or how difficult the problem that needed to be solved."*

*"MIS communicate well at differing levels and always try to accommodate for the level of knowledge, expertise and experience of the person they are speaking to and when the fault lies with MIS they openly admit it."*

*"Once the system was in, the attention to detail from MIS didn't change. When I contact the helpdesk, we are aware that we are not their largest customer, but generally we feel we are their only customer in terms of the attention and care that they give us".*

**Big enough to deliver, but small enough to care**

### **History**

The Accord Group is based in north west Birmingham on the edge of the Black Country. Their main activity is to provide general family rented and low cost housing for sale to meet the needs of local communities. This RSL is also at the forefront of a number of groundbreaking initiatives in the following areas:-

- Social and economic regeneration
- Self build housing
- Care and support services
- Housing and services for the elderly
- Housing co-operatives
- Resident involvement services
- Development lead in the Matrix Partnership

Accord has its head office in West Bromwich and a satellite office in Darlestone which serves its northern property stock. Under Accord umbrella are a number of subsidiaries:-

Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services Limited (BCHS) provides management and development services to a number of primary co-operatives. BCHS is also involved in the provision of resident participation advice to Local Authorities, resident management organisations, other housing associations and their residents. BCHS has over 20 years of experience in promoting, developing and supporting resident led and controlled housing and regeneration initiatives.

Redditch Co-operative Homes (RCH) was launched in April 1998 as a joint venture partnership between Accord, Redditch Borough Council, BCHS and the Co-operators (tenants) in a bid to address the local housing needs in Redditch by providing high quality, low maintenance and affordable housing that is developed and managed by its residents. The project is the largest of its kind in the UK, with 6 neighbourhood co-operatives, over 100 homes completed and with plans to develop another 500 rented homes over the next few years.

Ashram Housing Association was formed in 1993 and is now the largest BME housing association in the West Midlands. It employs 80 staff and has approaching 800 homes in management located across the area, with 74% of its stock in Birmingham (70% of which is found in the East Birmingham Housing market area).

### **Implementation**

To steer the implementation, a team of six people were assembled from all areas of the organisation. This included senior housing management, IT, repairs, lettings and representatives from subsidiaries. This team were responsible for liaising with staff and MIS AMS to configure and implement the system to fully meet the organisation's needs.

In January 2003, the implementation was successfully carried out and four separate Simdell databases were migrated into a single ActiveH Housing Management system. All historic rent, repairs and letting information was converted together with full transaction and arrears history.

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