



# Case Study



*"We wanted to help staff and our external partners make their jobs easier while improving our level of customer service. Using PDAs for employees to key in data while on the ground has provided this, as well as increasing our business process efficiencies dramatically."*

Mark Pearson, IT Support Officer, Community Gateway Association

## Mobile working solution offers next generation housing management

Recently awarded two star status by the Audit Commission, Community Gateway Association (CGA) turned to Civica when it wanted to enhance the level of service it offered its tenants of 6000 homes in and around Preston through mobile working for its staff on the ground.

Civica provided a mobile working solution for CGA linking its Civica Housing Management System and 50 Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), offering employees the ability to feed back information from the field to one, central system in real-time. Normal implementation of a mobile working solution this size takes up to three months but Civica delivered a seamless system in a record time of 14 days, helping CGA meet its audit requirements.

As a Gateway Association, CGA is a not-for-profit community business, set up to meet the housing needs of people in Preston and the surrounding areas. The association embraces a new style of management involving tenants in decision making about their homes and neighbourhoods. In common with all social housing providers, CGA remains under constant pressure from regulators and customers to raise the quality of the service it offers. To gain maximum efficiency from staff providing its Housing Management services, the organisation needs flexible systems able to adapt to change and new

ways of working. Expectations of customers are high as a result of natural comparisons drawn by the customer with other service providers, and due to the commitments made to customers through the Gateway approach, enabling tenants to take greater control over their communities.

### Changing tenant needs

Civica has worked with CGA since May 2000, providing it with Housing Management technology. As CGA's tenants' requirements have changed, Civica has helped the Gateway Association stay one step ahead with new technology that ensures a consistent, high level of customer service. In June 2000, Civica set up its Housing Management System adding the



**Community Gateway currently benefits from using the following Civica solutions**



Workflow & Doc. Management



Contact Management



Revenues & Benefits



Housing



Environment



Traffic & Streets



Planning



Finance



Legal



Pensions



Health & Social Care



Education & Skills



Managed Services



Consulting



Software Licensing



Voice Solutions



Internet Solutions



Fleet Management



Service Management

Mobile Solution in June 2008, providing PDAs for staff working across five departments, from those managing income through to maintenance staff.

Mark Pearson, IT Support Officer, CGA, explained: *"In the past we had a central Housing Management System but the information from the field was being fed in at the end of the day or when staff came back to the office, using hand written notes.*

*"We wanted to help staff and our external partners make their jobs easier while improving our level of customer service. Using PDAs for employees to key in data while on the ground has provided this, as well as increasing our business process efficiencies dramatically."*

CGA understood that carrying a laptop around housing estates was cumbersome when trying to carry out maintenance or clean up graffiti, for example. But all teams on the ground needed to access their own applications from the Housing Management System as well as having a digital camera, phone and email access. Civica advised CGA, enabling them to select PDA's that were fully compatible with the Civica Mobile software linked easily with Civica's Housing Management System.

Pearson continued: *"As part of their job the Neighbourhood Services team might have to photograph graffiti before cleaning it up, and provide progress reports on the job that has been selected for them by the system, according to their roles.*

*"As well as standard systems on the PDAs including, for example, a lone worker alarm for the security and safety of our employees, each department has had their own needs addressed with some able to access customised interfaces on the handhelds where they wanted particular specifications.*

*"The Rents team are very heavy users of the PDAs and they wanted to ensure that a customer's balance was easily visible at the bottom of the screen but they also wanted to see the customer's benefit details at the top. Civica ensured the Civica Mobile software was customised to deliver this on the Rents team view of their PDA screen."*

## Mobile working benefits

The Housing Management system ensures employees across the five departments at CGA can see the progress of jobs. The Community Assistants team act as "flexible workers" who can have jobs re-assigned to them by team leaders so that vans from different teams can pick up jobs if they can help. The increased amount of easily accessible information on the PDAs means that CGA can allocate the best team able to attend a job in the knowledge that relevant data can be quickly sent and accessed, increasing process efficiencies and customer service levels.

Pearson said: *"One of the main benefits of the new mobile working system is the speed of interaction. The PDAs and the Civica Housing System synchronise every 15 minutes; we have the control to alter this to under five seconds if we choose to. Everybody is therefore able to see the latest details on the system. Similarly people can check other teams' data, so the Community Safety team can check a customer's rent account, for example.*

*In addition to increased information for staff and partners, Civica's Housing Management System offers improved management information through remote access and improved reporting capabilities. CGA has a 100% customer profile target to gain and in the future the organisation's Business Improvement team will be able to quickly and easily implement questionnaires, that can be used to gather profiling information using the mobile technology, at the same time as dealing with a customer enquiry."*

Robin Ridgley, who sits on the CGA, Business Improvement team, said: *"At present we have 89% of our customer profiles so are not far off our target, but Civica's Housing Management System with the PDAs are key to us reaching our target and continuing to achieve our business improvement objectives through closer reporting of our customer needs.*

*"In the future we will also look to fully integrate the reporting and survey findings directly into our CRM system to ensure seamless customer service based on the feedback available from the ground. In this way we will continue to offer an exceptional level of customer service while improving our employee processes and efficiencies end-to-end across the organisation."*

### Civica UK Limited

Bromwich Court, Gorse Lane, Coleshill, Birmingham B46 1JU

Tel: 01675 433600 Fax: 01675 433699

Email: [enquiries@civica.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@civica.co.uk) Web: [www.civica.co.uk](http://www.civica.co.uk)