

# Keyfax News

SPRING 2010

## What options do I have?

The demand for social housing is increasing, fuelled by the economic downturn, rising unemployment and financial constraints. But with a relatively static supply of accommodation, those looking for housing need even more help to understand the local housing situation and be realistic about the options available to them. Unfortunately it is often difficult for people to comprehend how social housing is allocated, to appreciate what is actually available and therefore what their chances are of being offered accommodation.

Keyfax Housing Options can provide a solution. Using Keyfax Inter•View scripting software, interactive guidance can be created for almost any topic and then be made accessible to people via the internet. Keyfax Housing Options is a model set of scripts specifically targeted at individuals looking for help with accommodation. The scripts can easily be refined and amended to reflect local circumstances, services, allocation policies and available housing.

The great advantage of Keyfax Inter•View lies in the ability to create scripts that respond intelligently to information provided by users and other available information. Therefore responses are customer focussed.

Our Housing Options can:

- establish the household composition and calculate the required number of bedrooms based on defined criteria
- identify Housing Need factors and assessment in accordance with the Allocations Policies
- provide up-to-date, realistic guidance on the likelihood of an offer of social housing based on the assessed housing need, the availability of relevant accommodation and the current state of the housing 'queue'.



It can also:

- obtain information on household income and assess the potential for obtaining different types of benefits
- provide guidance on private rented accommodation and rent guarantee schemes
- assess the opportunities for assistance with HomeBuy and other ownership schemes
- determine eligibility for assistance with mortgage payments
- identify where assistance may be required for debt counselling or provision of support services
- provide guidance on appropriate employment and training opportunities.

On completion, each user is provided with a personal Self Help Pack identifying the various options that are available and appropriate for them. They can save and print the Pack and return to it at a later date to update their records, explore other options and update their Pack.

Housing Options is just one example of the way Keyfax Inter•View is being used to provide tenants and customers with information and guidance relevant to their particular enquiry and appropriate to their personal circumstances.

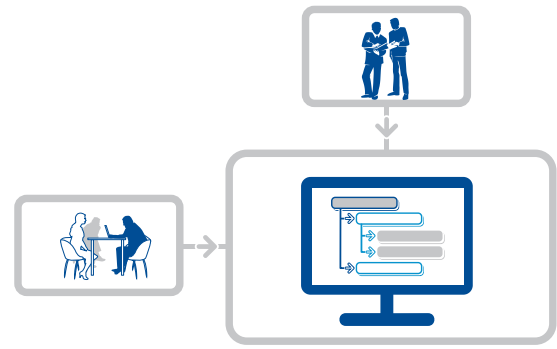


## A Housing Plus for Keyfax

The Housing Plus Group have recently adopted Keyfax as part of their strategy of improvement. Based in the West Midlands, the Housing Plus Group manages over 5000 homes across South Staffordshire, Cannock, Stafford and Shropshire. Group members include South Staffordshire Housing Association as well as Property Care, a specialist property repair and refurbishment business.

“We have a vision to become widely recognised as the most outstanding and inspiring housing group in the Midlands by delivering a consistently great customer experience. We intend to achieve this by pushing the boundaries, to develop the services and systems we need to achieve this goal - systems like Keyfax.” says Stath Kyranonitis, Business Improvement Manager.

“Feedback from our consultations with tenant representatives and board members showed that our tenants value certainty and clarity in their dealings with us - certainty that we will respond to their repair request ‘right first time’ and clarity on what will be happening. Operationally we also want the same thing: our operative planners need to know what the problem is before they allocate a job so they can ensure we send the right person, with the right materials and skills. We highlighted this as a gap that we needed to close as an enabler for wider changes and improvements.”

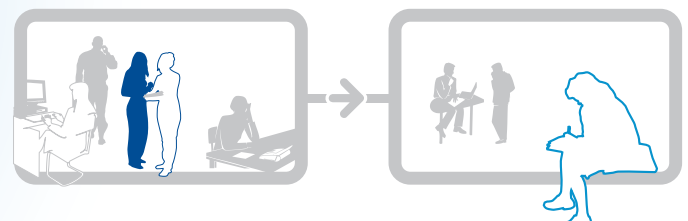


“To close this gap we chose Keyfax. It was so logical we could understand how to use it and how it could benefit us before the demonstration was halfway through. Its modular approach to scripting allowed us to allocate some of our administrators to create the scripts, rather than having to tie up valuable IT resources. It also means that the people who will be using the tools are actively involved in the creation of the operation process.”

“As this is an enabler for other improvement projects, we wanted to implement Keyfax Inter•View scripting as soon as possible. The core Inter•View flowcharts were reviewed and amended by a working group of the senior supervisors, inspectors and management team, within three weeks. A dedicated scripting team was then set up and, with the assistance of Robert Price, our Keyfax Account Manager, they got stuck in converting the Flowcharts into Scripts. Testing is currently underway with joint sessions between the Call Centre, who will be using Inter•View, the Property Care division and the scripters. This has been hugely successful and is still on target, even though we have widened the scope of the original roll out.”

“We intend to roll out Inter•View for handling repairs diagnosis as a first stage of a wider implementation, which will include the use of Inter•View scripts for dealing with the range of housing and tenancy enquiries we handle with our Call Centre’s operation.”

If you want to know how Keyfax Inter•View can benefit your organisation, contact us on 01869 242967 or email [sales@omfax.co.uk](mailto:sales@omfax.co.uk)



# Family's new partnership with Solihull

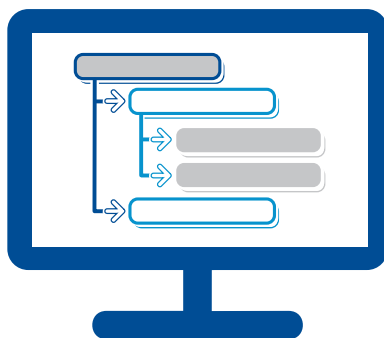
Family Housing Association (Birmingham) is a small association managing 2200 properties in Birmingham, the Black Country and North Warwickshire. They have recently taken the bold step of out-sourcing their customer contact service to Solihull Community Housing. As Family have had a long standing interest in Keyfax and were keen to make use of it as part of the out-sourcing, we were interested to hear more.

Family Housing started life in 1964 to help the young Irish community find accommodation but now have a very diverse client group. Most of their properties are in inner city areas and they work with local communities, not just by providing a place to live, but by working with residents to develop their skills, build their confidence and enable them to achieve their full potential. An important part of their work is supported housing, providing homes and caring support for young homeless people, older people and those with learning disabilities and mental health problems.

**So given this commitment to their residents, we spoke to Gail Newbold, Head of Neighbourhood Services at FHA.**

**Why out-source this important service?** "For some time, FHA has been looking at our arrangements for our residents to contact us" says Gail, "and like many, we concluded we needed a customer service centre. But to achieve the business efficiencies and consistency we were seeking, we decided to out-source. As a small Association, we believed we would get better value for money by partnering with another organisation who has already been there, done it, bought the t-shirt, and could demonstrate the efficiency gains and positive outcomes for customers we wanted to achieve. In addition, a partner could also offer extended access for our customers which would have been uneconomic for us to do ourselves."

"This is a pilot project for one year, during which time we will measure outputs and outcomes to determine whether customers have received the 'special' service they are seeking. As a small Association we want our service to be bespoke and to be able to use the customer profiling information we have to better manage and communicate with our diverse customer group. This partnership helps facilitate this.



**So why choose Solihull Community Housing?** "Residents and staff jointly selected SCH as our partner through a competitive tendering exercise. We were impressed with their operations and their commitment to customer service. They have also been using Keyfax for some time and bring an expertise in this field."

**How have things gone?** "We have been working on this project for around 12 months but the actual implementation time was just 6 months. We phased implementation but went fully live on 19th January this year. So far we have been able to add to our script sets, manage priorities for repairs consistently; achieve better diagnosis of repairs reported; add to our customer profiling information; record all telephone calls; improve our contact with customers through outgoing calls in the evenings, eg reminder calls regarding gas servicing; improve collection rates for customer feedback with telephone surveys. We have learned a lot! In addition to this, with the help of our out-of-hours partner, we have been able to offer a 24/7 service to customers every day of the year, so we are never closed in an emergency. Our customer satisfaction has improved significantly and we have submitted our application for the Customer Service Excellence Award."

**So you are pleased?** "We continue to measure the outputs and the outcomes from the partnership with SCH and so far we are all delighted with progress."



## SCH provides the expertise

So we then spoke to Lourdes Sharpe, Head of Customer Services at Solihull Community Housing.

**Why take on this additional service?** “We have been demonstrating and giving advice to a large number of organisations on how we do things at SCH and how we have gained our Three Star award.” says Lourdes. “We have the facilities and the capabilities, so being able to offer this quality of service to others was a logical extension of our business. Keyfax has been central to this. It enables us to give staff the level of guidance they need to handle calls from a variety of sources. And we have the expertise to offer the scripting service to others. Anyone who implements scripting across the whole business will know what a challenge getting it done in 6 months is!”

**How does the partnering arrangement work?** “SCH takes the calls for Family and logs them onto Family’s computer system - MIS. We have a remote link to it, so all data relating to Family customers is stored on Family systems.



As part of the agreement, SCH developed and implemented Keyfax scripts for the whole business and we continue to maintain these scripts.

During the 6 month period we built a set of scripts for day-to-day repairs service, a set for repairs out-of-hours and a set for housing and other enquiries - everything from a switchboard call to rent payments or taking a report of ASB.”

**As the service uses a link direct into Family’s system, what happens if the link goes down?** “As part of our business continuity planning we looked at how we would handle enquiries and process repairs in such an event and we have an emergency set of scripts to deal with emergency repairs on our own Keyfax contact centre system. These came in very useful in early January when we had to evacuate our contact centre for a week and we had some staff tele-working from home and other bases where they didn’t have MIS access. Throughout all this we managed to keep our services going and maintained performance. We went live with all calls the day after we moved back to the contact centre!”

**So Keyfax was an important part of the project?** “Advisors were used to using Keyfax scripts and quickly picked up MIS. Scripting means that any member of the team can handle a Family enquiry competently and confidently. Family have confidence that advice and actions taken by SCH are in line with their policies and procedures because the scripts are written to support them. We can now ensure that the customer is getting a consistent response to their enquiry regardless of whom they speak to.

A big change is that now every single enquiry handled by SCH is logged using a script. This has meant that we have been able to provide Family with detailed business intelligence information - we are able to drill down and report on who is contacting us and when, what the contacts are about, how many are avoidable or repeat contacts and we can report on enquiry trends. This valuable information is helping us to make service improvements and will be of equal benefit to Family. This is a real win-win partnership.”