



## How Severnside Housing Created A 'One-Stop-Shop' for Customer Service

Severnside Housing is one of Shropshire's largest social landlords, currently owning and maintaining more than 5,300 homes in Shrewsbury and the surrounding areas.

Severnside Housing was established in October 2001, following the transfer of housing stock from the former Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council. At the time of transfer, Severnside made a commitment to improve homes and services and guaranteed the protection of residents' rights and rent levels.

### Creating A Centralised Service

Six years ago Severnside had no central team to deal with resident enquiries. They simply published their main switchboard number and residents were put through to the relevant department to deal with their enquiries.

This approach proved inefficient, for both Severnside and their residents, for a number of reasons:

- Often there were no departmental resources available, resulting in a call back being required.
- If the resident had multiple enquiries, they had to be transferred from one department to another or had to call back.
- At peak times, it was highly likely that the switchboard would be busy and residents would be kept on hold for long periods of times.

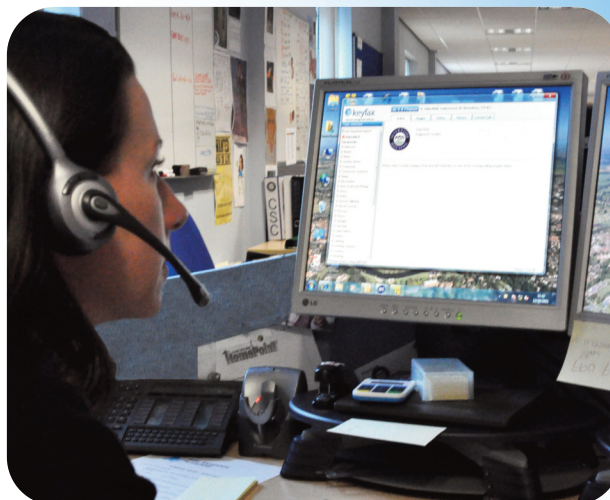
Severnside knew that a far more efficient way to serve their residents would be to create a centralised, single point of contact – a contact centre that could deal with all customer enquiries.

### Creating The Multi-Skilled Advisor

If they were to adopt the contact centre approach, Severnside recognised that they had to do something different. No longer could they rely on the expertise of the departmental staff member; they were creating a function where any advisor would deal with any enquiry but where it would not be possible for a single individual to achieve that level of expertise across every discipline.

The conclusion was that far greater intelligence and support had to be provided by the systems used by the advisors. In essence, the systems need to guide the advisor through each and every process, rather than the other way around.

Severnside turned for guidance to the repairs user group of their Housing Management Systems, IBS, who recommended using Intelligent Scripting. After a visit to Solihull Community Housing, a user of **Keyfax Response Management**, and seeing what could be achieved, Severnside embarked on a Keyfax implementation.



### Creating Intelligent Scripts

Severnside did not want to phase in the transition to a contact centre model, and therefore they wanted to have all of the scripts in place to deal with the different types of enquiries from their residents from day one.

“We sat down with each team specialist and fully defined the process flow of each type of enquiry” commented David Hanley, Business Improvement Officer at Severnside Housing, “the flexibility of Keyfax enabled us to then build the intelligent scripts ourselves.”

Severnside also utilised **Keyfax Contact Manager** to record and manage interactions with their residents, ensuring that key information is kept up to date and a full contact history maintained.

### Integration With Other Systems

Core to the Keyfax deployment is its integration into existing systems, including the IBS Housing Management System. This has helped to reduce duplication of information being entered and held on different systems, and on-going this is an area that Severnside Housing is looking to reduce even further through tighter integration, wherever this is possible, with its main housing system.



Another example where integration is key is in terms of the Customer Service Centre handling calls related to potential employment. These can now be handled and job applications automatically dispatched.

“A key part of the solution is the ability to collect information within **Keyfax Inter-View** and for this to be automatically posted and updated within our Housing Management System”, said David Platt, Customer Service Centre Supervisor “also, we utilise the intelligent scripts to guide advisors to the relevant systems and information that they need to access in order to service the customer.”

#### The Delivered Benefits

“We strongly believe that **Keyfax Response Management** has delivered significant benefits to all parties, including our residents, our advisors and Severnside Housing in general.” stated David Hanley, Business Improvement Officer.

**Residents** – now have a far more responsive service. They have two numbers to dial, one specifically for Gas Service which goes directly to the contractor who use their own system, and the main number, utilising Keyfax, for any other enquiry going to the customer service centre. Residents know that they are going to get a prompt, high quality, consistent service from Severnside Housing and their gas contractor.

**Advisors** – feel more confident in dealing with any enquiry. The system intuitively guides them through the information they need to gather, the advice they should provide to the resident and through any processes that need to be followed. With the level of support provided by **Keyfax Response Management**, advisors spend less

time focusing and navigating across multiple systems, and are able to give their full attention and the desired level of service to residents.

**Severnside Housing** – have achieved their goal of delivering a far more efficient and effective service to their residents. **Keyfax Response Management** has enabled them to put a contact centre model in place that is capable of responding to any resident enquiry. By utilising intelligent scripts, the training time for new advisors has been dramatically reduced and it is quick and easy to introduce new services to the contact centre. Severnside are also utilising **Keyfax** to fully understand the types of calls they are receiving from residents and using this valuable insight to streamline processes, improve services and address avoidable calls.

The ability to refine and adapt the Intelligent Scripts of **Keyfax** is extremely beneficial to Severnside Housing as they look to continually improve both the quality of service they deliver to their residents and also the productivity of their contact centre advisors.

“Integration is key for us.” said David Platt, “By utilising Keyfax as our front-end, we can continually look for ways to tighten the integration, reducing the number of screens that our advisors have to access and ensuring that data is only collected and entered once.”

Severnside Housing are also offering a multi-channel capability for their residents where they can log needed housing repairs online.

#### Summary

Since the decision was made to migrate to a contact centre model, Severnside Housing has achieved a great deal. They recognised immediately that in order to deliver efficient and effective service to their residents, they needed to equip their customer service advisors with the right tools to be able to deal with any enquiry from any resident.

“Our decision to implement **Keyfax Response Management** was definitely the right one.” said David Hanley, “Our goal was to deliver intelligence in the systems that our advisors use, and, wherever possible, this goal has most certainly been achieved.”

“Omfax has been a valued partner.” continued David Hanley, “They continue to help us to make the best use of the solution and to do things we never thought possible.”