

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES DELIVERS LIFE-SAVING SAFETY INITIATIVE POWERED BY THE MICROSOFT CLOUD



Nottingham City Homes needed an efficient and secure way to implement new fire safety measures in its high-rise tower blocks. Partnering with AspiraCloud, it has implemented a Microsoft Cloud solution to increase team collaboration and productivity. Nottingham City Homes can now ensure faster outcomes for residents as well as continuous improvement across its services.

Nottingham City Homes manages 29,000 properties, including flats, houses and tower blocks, on behalf of Nottingham City Council. Its vision is to create homes and places where people want to live, and the Asset Management team leads the way in ensuring residents enjoy the highest possible standards of accommodation, from managing planned maintenance programmes to making sure sprinklers and fire alarms are in place.

TAKING PROCESSES FROM PAPER TO PEOPLE

As part of its passion for delivering outstanding services, Nottingham City Homes (NCH) wanted to eliminate manual, paper-based processes and replace them with smarter, digital ways of working.

When Nottingham City Council granted £8m to install new sprinklers across its high-rise tower blocks, NCH seized the opportunity to improve its installation services and provide the Council and residents with greater value for money. Working in partnership

with fire safety contractor 'Marlow Fire & Security' NCH wanted to reduce the volume of documents, number of site visits, and the total time involved in the installation process. After an initial consultation, Microsoft recommended AspiraCloud.

CLOUD INNOVATION

AspiraCloud took the time to fully understand the installation process and the challenges involved. By doing this, they were able to identify the critical factors to ensure success, such as securing employee buy-in and adoption and creating a secure cloud platform that was flexible enough to support the organisation as and when new requirements emerged. Above all, NCH needed the ability to unite teams within a common collaborative platform that would empower them to capture data quickly and access documents securely from any location.

AspiraCloud designed, developed and implemented a modern, progressive cloud platform that blended Office 365, Teams and SharePoint. With this in place,

every engineer and inspector can now work from mobile devices to capture and access information in seconds. Microsoft Teams sites have been created for every building managed by NCH, so anyone assigned to that building can access documents, photos and notes relating to the property. Teams can also collaborate and share information using instant messaging and shared calendars.

Using unique development methods, AspiraCloud worked with NCH to create Adobe forms which link with SharePoint. Critical site documentation is captured in a PDF document that automatically extracts individual data fields and saves them to SharePoint in real-time. Calendar requests, including pertinent access information, are automatically generated for the team members responsible for the next step. OneNote was also integrated with SharePoint to allow people to capture notes, take images of completed work and record customer signatures at the point of inspection sign-off. These user-focused tools have helped NCH transform its employees' average working day, and greatly improve customer experience.

TRANSFORMING PROCESSES FOR EFFICIENCY

Thanks to the new platform, teams at NCH now have the tools they need to deliver the best possible outcomes as rapidly as possible. Each stage of the process is fully automated, ensuring people can access and share relevant information in seconds, reducing the time taken to perform routine tasks by half. Unnecessary travel and administration time have been dramatically reduced and teams can now make the most of their time by working remotely.

ENCOURAGING MULTI-GENERATIONAL COLLABORATION

With a multi-generational and multi-disciplinary team, NCH needed a solution that could be readily adopted by everyone and which encouraged people to collaborate regardless of their working style.

Retaining the form-capture process – but evolving it to become more digital – played a central role in helping people embrace the new way of working. To help people feel a part of the process, user feedback was encouraged from the start and used to fuel ongoing technology development by AspiraCloud. The enhancements put in place include video conferencing and instant messaging to help teams to connect quickly from offices, tower block sites or while on the road, and speed up decision making. Always-on access to Teams sites also gives office-based management greater visibility.

PUTTING RESIDENTS AT THE HEART OF THINGS

Residents now have peace of mind that critical fire safety equipment will be installed quickly and with minimal disruption. Tasks which previously took a day are now completed in under 10 minutes, and fewer site visits are required, accelerating the entire process and reducing the impact on residents.

“WE HAVE A TRUE PARTNERSHIP WITH ASPIRACLOUD. THEY GAVE US A SOLUTION WHICH BREAKS TECHNOLOGY BOUNDARIES. THEY BROUGHT KNOWLEDGE, PASSION AND A DRIVE FOR RESULTS. I CAN'T SPEAK HIGHLY ENOUGH OF THEM.”

John Carr
Senior Technical Officer, Nottingham Homes

KEEPING DATA SECURE AT ALL TIMES

The original paper-based project delivery process meant that large volumes of documents were being generated and stored in archive boxes. This slowed the process down and over time created a mounting data security threat. Data is now securely stored and backed-up in the Cloud, ensuring that NCH has the assurance of industry-leading data protection and business continuity.

BRIGHT HORIZONS

With its new digital processes in place, NCH is looking forward to a bright future. New platform enhancements are continuously added to the development cycle, including additional capabilities to optimise the process. These include sending automated text messages to remind residents the night before each appointment.

Based on the success of this project, Nottingham City Council has accelerated its own plans to move onto Office 365 and will be adopting the same technology platform and processes across the organisation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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