

Text Messaging Software Improves Council's Maintenance Efficiency

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Blackpool Council's Property and Maintenance Division have moved to increase efficiency, improve tenant satisfaction and to establish a new communication channel with its customers: by reminding tenants of imminent repair visits by text message. A number of repair visits made by contractors each year were not completed because the resident was unable to, or had simply forgotten to keep the appointment. The technology enables Blackpool Council to reduce the number of wasted visits made by contractors to residents' properties.

The Housing Corporation reports that, on average, around 6% of arranged repairs and maintenance appointments for local authority housing are not met. The costs incurred due to repair contractor's having no access to properties is estimated to run into the tens of millions across the UK.

Blackpool has moved to improved communication channels between themselves and the tenant by utilising text message technology. They maintain around 5,500 properties, and repairs are currently managed via a free phone hotline whereby the tenant is able to report faults and schedule an appointment for a repair visit. Starting this month, tenants with pre-arranged appointments will now have the option of receiving a text message from the council to remind them of the date and time of the scheduled visit.

The fully automated service reduces the workload for hotline staff and proves cost effective in terms of improved efficiency.

Cyril Holland, Property Maintenance Manager at Blackpool says, "We found numerous repair appointment visits per year were missed because the resident was unable to, or had simply forgot to keep the appointment. This resulted in a waste of resources and an unnecessary cost. The Mobyssoft text message reminder system integrates with our existing technology and will help us continually improve efficiency."

Blackpool have chosen Manchester based SMS software specialists Mobyssoft to implement the text messaging system for them. Mobyssoft have designed their SMS software to connect any existing system to the mobile networks.

Cyril Holland has also added "A key driver for us is efficiency, and as such we needed to implement a solution that was fully automatic, utilised our existing software and which did not require any additional staff training. We're confident that this software will continue to prove an investment in years to come, as this is just one application. There are many more ways it can be utilised by the council."

Mobyssoft's Managing Director Derek Steele comments "We are delighted to be working alongside Blackpool Council on this project. This is a great example of how businesses can use text messaging to improve customer care and increase efficiency."

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