

ENFIELD COUNCIL

PROPERTIES



10,000

IMPROVEMENTS IN COLLECTIONS

£1M

(2019-2020)

COLLECTION RATES

100.18
to
101.86

(2019-2020)

Enfield Council is the capital's Northern most borough and owns around 10,000 properties. Prior to RentSense Enfield Council used their Housing Management System to trigger weekly arrears alerts for their officers to work through and contact tenants about rent.

"The system would create several thousand alerts a week, many of which did not need contact. For the staff it's demotivating spending time on alerts that require no action," explains Zhensheng Chen, Income Manager at Enfield Council.

Universal Credit has had a far-reaching impact on Enfield Council already, housing benefit payments have dropped by nearly £4m in just four years and arrears have increased year on year. To arrest the rising arrears and enable greater efficiency within rent collections Enfield looked at RentSense.

Mobysoft undertook a free consultancy, termed a discovery day, which examined how the council worked and what the impact of RentSense would be, which was presented back to the housing and senior management teams.

"We were impressed from the beginning. Mobysoft came back with a business case stating how arrears would fall, and by how much, and articulated what efficiencies RentSense would deliver. It's unusual that a company will give you hard figures and stand by it and back it up. It was clearly explained how the implementation manager would work with us on the deployment and how the account director would ensure that RentSense met the agreed business case," highlights Geoff Waterton, Head of Income and Debt at Enfield.



IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

Like most Local Authorities, Enfield had experienced IT service cuts and also some difficult implementation projects, but with RentSense the whole project was very easy, with the bulk of the work undertaken by Mobysoft. Moreover, once RentSense was deployed Enfield saw immediate benefits with RentSense presenting 60% fewer weekly alerts.

“**We worked with Mobysoft and we changed the way we work in readiness for RentSense, and straight away staff embraced the system. They could see the benefits and they were able to complete their arrears alerts every week, which before was just not possible. As a result, there has been more subtle benefits too, staff turnover has reduced as job satisfaction has increased,**” mentions Geoff.

ENABLES EARLY INTERVENTION

Not only are staff completing their workload but there is greater enthusiasm and as they know they are working on alerts that need action and can reach the right tenants in time. RentSense is also flagging cases at their earlier stages so officers are able to offer that intervention and support at the very first stages of debt.

“**Early intervention is that key bit of work that will reduce evictions and allow council officers to target intervention work as early as possible,**” comments Geoff.

“**If you don't make contact early on it becomes increasingly difficult to resolve the situation as tenants can become more difficult to engage with as debt problems increase. That intervention is fundamental to managing arrears as cases are and become incredibly complex. That is why RentSense is so effective. In 2019/20 so far, and we are ten months in, we have not evicted anyone for arrears.**”

STRATEGIC TOOL SUSTAINING TENANCIES

Whilst RentSense has helped reduce arrears Enfield also believe that that RentSense is helping the council support the bigger picture.

“**The council's three strategic aims are good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods, sustain strong and healthy communities and build our local economy to create a thriving place. RentSense feeds into all of these. It is helping sustain tenancies and support tenants in a way that was simply not possible before, and we have more funds to reinvest into the HRA to give people better homes.**” comments Geoff.

RentSense also enables Chen and Geoff to allocate work to different officers and also gives insight into officer and patch performance.

“**We can see how officers are progressing with their workload. It is an effective management system for us. From every aspect it has been incredibly well drilled. Income officers have embraced the new system and working method, as managers it gives us the information we need and it has helped improve performance, and from an IT perspective it has removed a lot of work. It is easy to use and implement. Often with IT systems you find staff asking IT for support or raising concerns the system is not working, we have none of that with RentSense,**” explains Geoff.

So how has RentSense impacted the bottom line for the council?

“**Since we deployed RentSense our collection figures have improved by over £1m year on year, going from 100.18 to 101.86%. Our arrears are falling for the first time in four years and evictions are down. I think that demonstrates the effectiveness of RentSense,**” concludes Geoff.