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TESTIMONIALS

Shian Housing Association



Shian Housing Association Ltd

Following the implementation of Pyramid Messenger powered by Deeplake's Communication Manager, Shian Housing Association have been able to dramatically increase the response to arrears management communications which as a direct result has led to a reduction in overall rental arrears. Phone calls into the association have also reduced, enabling staff to focus their attention on other areas of their work.

INTRODUCTION

Shian is a community based housing association, established in 1989 to cater for the general housing needs of ethnic minority people in Hackney and neighbouring areas. Shian H.A. originated from a voluntary organisation called Harambee II which provided short term housing, youth training, a community drop-in centre and welfare services for the local community, as well as support for ex-offenders.

Owning and managing over 450 homes, Shian H.A. have founding principles of tenant satisfaction, growth and happiness, all of which were important considerations when selecting and purchasing an integrated SMS solution.

IMPROVED RENT ARREARS

Successfully managing rent arrears has always been a high priority for Shian and the association has always taken a pro-active approach in using the latest technology to aid with this task.

"We found that the majority of our tenants used a mobile phone daily" said Office Manager Karen Lindsay, "therefore, we wanted a solution that would enable us to communicate with them in their preferred communication format".

"Since utilising Pyramid Messenger, we have noticed a significant reduction in the associations outstanding rent arrears, coupled with a large increase in positive responses to arrears management communication" she says. "Tenants are responding better to SMS messages with regards to their arrears and this has allowed our Housing Officers to put plans in place to tackle these arrears, whereas previously we may not have had any response to a letter until a much later stage in our arrears policy".

Karen pointed out "another recent addition to the system which is proving to be a benefit to both tenants and staff is that Pyramid Messenger automatically sends an SMS message to tenants who have failed to make a payment during the month." She continued "a few of our tenants have thanked us for this service, as it has highlighted problems that may have been caused by their bank or benefit payments. This is also giving us tighter control of rent arrears and lets the tenant know that we are monitoring their accounts more closely".

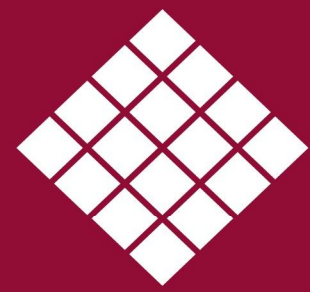
"Tenants have also benefitted from the ability to get an up to date balance of account, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without having to call the office during opening times". Karen says "tenants simply text in to the system with the word 'BAL'. Their mobile phone number is then seamlessly validated and depending on whether the account is pre-paid or in arrears will depend on the



OmniLedger Limited
1 Alders Court
Watchmead
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1LT
Tel: 01707 324201
Fax: 01707 375572
sales@omniledger.co.uk

www.omniledger.co.uk





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message returned. If the account is in arrears, tenants are given the options to either make a payment or discuss their account with their Housing Officer.”

Karen continued “not only has this dramatically reduced the number of calls into the association, but it’s also opened up new channels of communication with tenants that we have been unable to successfully contact in the past.”

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

“‘Shian’ means ‘home’ in the Ghanaian language Ga” says Karen “and it is this we have strived to provide. To us a home is not just bricks and mortar, but somewhere our tenants can identify with, somewhere they can be part of a community. The association often hosts or runs events, whether it’s a youth training session or a children’s Christmas party and tenant engagement is always key to the success of these events. We have found the use of Pyramid Messenger to inform our residents of times and dates to be very quick, efficient and easy, but most importantly it is not expensive.”



REPAIRS SERVICES

Shian H.A. raise approximately 1000 repairs per annum and wanted a fully automated solution to confirm repair appointments with tenants.

Karen explains “When a tenant reports a repair, it’s immediately entered into Pyramid, our Housing Management system. Pyramid will then seamlessly initiate a text through Deeplake’s Communication Manager that confirms the appointment details, time and date.”

Furthermore “Pyramid automatically initiates another text message the day before the appointment is due, to remind the tenant of the appointment. It also gives the tenant the option to reschedule the appointment by simply replying to the text. If a tenant chooses to reschedule, a member of staff will contact the resident to rebook the appointment at another convenient time”

“Using this new system has allowed us to significantly reduce the number of appointments that are not fulfilled by our contractors. It’s also improved our overall repairs service to tenants and helped us to become more efficient whilst reducing call out fees”

SUMMARY

“We were looking for a solution that would directly integrate with our existing IT infrastructure, specifically Pyramid, our Housing Management system, that was also easy to use and was cost effective” says Karen. “What we have got is all of this, plus a system that has increased our communication with tenants, helped us to improve our rent arrears and directly aided our repairs service. Also we have the added bonus of reducing phone calls into the organisation and freeing up staff time to deal with other matters”

“We are constantly looking for other areas where we can use SMS as a mode of communication as it has been so effective for us so far. OmniLedger have been fantastic and have taken many of our ideas and turned them into a reality with Pyramid Messenger.”

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