civica

Efficient housing asset management
at Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL
GWYNEDD

Civica Keystone helps North Wales's largest housing association manage its property assets, maintenance schedules and compliance requirements.

Finding the right asset management solution.

When housing association and registered social landlord Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG) was set up in 2010, around 6,300 council homes in towns and villages throughout Gwynedd came under its management. To get a clear picture of the condition of its housing stock, CCG engaged a specialist firm to carry out a comprehensive survey.

"We knew that our housing management system wasn't suitable for storing and managing all the data from the survey," explains Geraint Jones, Head of ICT at CCG. **"So, one of the first things we did as a new organisation was implement the Keystone Asset Management solution from Civica."**

With the help of Keystone, CCG went on to plan a five-year improvement and refurbishment programme of its housing stock. With a budget of £136m, CCG brought homes up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), by 2015. Details of all the improvements — from roofing and insulation to kitchens and bathrooms — were recorded in Keystone.

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Geraint Jones, Head of ICT, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

Outcomes

▶ **A single source of accurate, up-to-date information for all users about CCG's 6,300+ homes**

▶ **Streamlined working practices for field-based staff, saving time and raising productivity**

▶ **Simplified report generation and compliance processes**

▶ **Improved control and transparency in critical areas such as fire risk management, gas and boiler servicing, and scheduled maintenance**

▶ **Increased rental income and lower fuel bills for tenants through improved energy performance ratings.**

6,300+
property asset records

£136m
5-year improvement programme

250+
CCG staff have access to live data within Keystone

With all of CCG's property asset data held in Keystone, everyone in the organisation has comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information at their fingertips.

Getting more done with mobile and offline working

The initial five-year improvement programme concluded successfully, with 93% of tenants describing the quality of their home as excellent, good or fair. Of course, there's always more to do: CCG continues to spend £8m a year on maintenance and upgrades.

CCG now employs its own surveyors to inspect properties and assess requirements on a five-year cycle. They use the mobile Keystone solution, Keystone Foundation, on their mobile devices to record information and upload photos while they're on site, instead of making regular visits to the office to update the system.

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And in a rural area like Gwynedd, which has lots of coverage blackspots, Keystone Foundation's offline working capability comes into its own. It enables surveyors and other field-based staff to work even when they don't have network coverage, and synchronises the data once they're back in range.

> "When other housing associations ask us about Civica Keystone, we tell them it delivers everything a social landlord needs from a property asset management system."
>
> **Geraint Jones**, Head of ICT, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

A single, integrated source of truth

Regular Keystone users include the finance team, for reporting on planned maintenance; and CCG's call centre staff. The stock condition and planned maintenance data held in Keystone is always up to date, so agents can respond quickly and accurately to tenants' enquiries.

Before CCG added the planned maintenance module to Keystone, it managed the schedules in a separate system. **"There was always a time lag, so we didn't all have access to the same information at the same time,"** says Jones.

Mismatches in information sometimes led to unnecessary expenditure, such as paying for a repair on a boiler that was still under warranty. **"Now that all our data is consolidated in Keystone, issues like that are a thing of the past,"** says Jones. Even when CCG outsources a task like fire risk management, the contractors update Keystone directly from their mobile devices.

Streamlined reporting and compliance

CCG must report its WHQS compliance rating (currently 97%) to the Welsh government each year. With all the information held in Keystone, CCG can run the report at the touch of a button. **"Without Keystone, WHQS compliance reporting would be a mammoth task,"** says Jones.

For any housing association, boiler and gas servicing are major compliance challenges. Keystone's servicing and inspections module gives CCG full control over all the installations, and peace of mind that every one of them is serviced on time.

Additionally, CCG has implemented Keystone's energy module to help keep the energy efficiency ratings of its homes updated. It now has the information it needs to target properties with low energy performance ratings, to improve conditions for tenants and help lower their fuel bills. With higher average ratings across the board, CCG is entitled to raise rents and so increase its income.

Over time, CCG has implemented most of the Keystone modules, and has recently started using performance modelling to assess the viability of future stock. **"When other housing associations ask us about Civica Keystone, we tell them it delivers everything a social landlord needs from a property asset management system."** says Jones.