

Orbit expects 30% savings with Amnis



Orbit Heart of England, part of the Orbit Group, has completely overhauled its gas servicing operations with the help of Amnis and is on track to cut its annual gas servicing costs by 30 per cent. A pilot project was run at the end of 2009 with the full implementation across Orbit Heart of England's 14,000 properties completed in April 2010.

Historically, four groups of people were involved in Orbit's gas servicing programme: tenants; the gas servicing team who look after the day-to-day processes; the housing team who manage 'problem' property entry



issues; and external contractors who provide the servicing. In order to gain

access, up to eight visits were being made to some properties as well as different teams duplicating activities already done by other teams elsewhere in the process.

Furthermore, to overcome the delays associated with gaining access to certain properties, the team had started to operate a 10-month servicing cycle. While this ensured the maximum number of visits was completed within the 12-month legal timeframe, it also increased costs.

Amnis first highlighted the duplication of effort involved in the process and suggested that the aim of the project should be to reduce the number of properties that required multiple visits. An early realisation was that not all property access problems were due to tenants.

The answer was to categorise tenancies by the probability of problems arising. Where gaining access was not expected to be

problematic, tenants were switched to an 11-month service cycle and a telephone contact process implemented when access was not possible first time. At the other extreme, where access was very likely to be difficult, tenants were moved to a nine-month cycle.

This categorisation has enabled a change of control for the different groups involved in the process, resulting in less duplication, more efficiency and lower costs. The gas servicing team had previously wasted significant time dealing with the most difficult tenants; they are now handled from start to finish by the housing team which is trained and empowered to do so efficiently. Also changes to how injunctions are issued, eliminating some inappropriate steps and empowering the contract team to contact customers by phone to book and confirm appointments are all contributing to cost reductions.

Roger Piepenstock from Amnis explained, "The application of lean principles by Orbit Heart of England demonstrates how complex pathways can be redesigned to make significant improvements for housing providers, their contractors and tenants."