

Case study: Housing & Public Sector

Thrive Homes

Delivering award-winning customer services, with integrated IT support from Sovereign

Managed IT Services



Since 2010, Sovereign has provided Thrive Homes with a managed IT service.

Initially Sovereign provided an interim service to support Thrive Homes. In 2012, following a rigorous OJEU tender, Sovereign was chosen to act as Thrive Homes' in-house IT Team, and continues to support Thrive Homes today. The service Sovereign delivers is strategically aligned to support Thrive's award-winning customer service delivery.

From initial interim support during a period of major disruption, Sovereign has forged a strong relationship with Thrive Homes. Today, the two organisations have succeeded in 'blurring the lines' between customer and managed services provider.

Client: Thrive Homes

Thrive Homes is a housing association which owns and manages more than 4,000 rented and leasehold properties in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Their ongoing vision is to create a thriving community offering life choices and opportunities to those who live there. It is a vision that their endeavours help to make a reality by providing good quality homes and services.

In 2014, Thrive was 7th overall and also named best public sector organisation in 'The Top 50 Companies for Customer Service'.

Since then, it has won several other awards and has been recognised as a 'leading light for innovation' in the housing sector.

Issue: Maintaining High Standards Required Extra IT Support

In 2010, two years after Thrive Homes had become independent from Three Rivers District Council, they realised their IT department faced significant challenges.

The housing association had always provided their customers with very high standards of customer service. These standards were in danger of being compromised if their IT challenges were not overcome urgently.

The organisation leaders recognised that the best way to navigate this period of disruption as smoothly as possible for both customers and staff, was to seek extra IT support.

Why Sovereign?

Sovereign has supplied services and support to the social housing sector for over fifteen years. Over this time, the business has developed a division solely concerned with the specific requirements and challenges faced by public sector organisations.



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During the back office audit which occurred at Thrive as part of their service improvement project, a weakness within the delivery of IT services was identified. Sovereign was already known to the audit team and they recommended them to the stakeholders at Thrive.

In 2012, Sovereign won the managed services contract and has been providing IT services to Thrive ever since.

Jo Sedley-Burke, Sovereign's Managing Director:

“Sovereign is uniquely placed to tailor business solutions to suit the needs and budget constraints of public sector organisations. Our flexible approach led to the initial interim contract whereby Sovereign provided short-term IT support. The improved IT services delivery alleviated the pressure on Thrive, allowing them time to determine what they needed from a long-term IT supplier.”

The Sovereign Solution

Following the initial consultation, Sovereign identified the areas of Thrive's existing IT infrastructure and processes that required updating. Drawing on their extensive sector experience and knowledge, they devised a plan that met all of Thrive's needs whilst demonstrating excellent value.

The highest priority for Sovereign was making sure Thrive's IT was 'match fit' and ready to support its immediate customer delivery requirements. Once this initial stage was complete and Sovereign won the five-year tender, they began to research potential future solutions for the growing needs of the housing association.

Aligning cost-effective solutions to Thrive's values and goals, Sovereign was able to tailor and integrate its services accordingly. Sovereign has tested and applied systems and processes to each stage of the housing association's progression. This strategic approach continues to ensure that critical service standards remain high with minimal internal disruption.

Results and Benefits

Six years after the initial interim project, Sovereign staff now comprise 90% of Thrive Homes' IT team. Working in close integration, the lines between Thrive Homes and its IT Team are now blurred to the point of being invisible.

As a result of this successful integration, Thrive's IT department is highly effective, cost efficient and robust. It benefits too from using Sovereign's Tier III standard data centre facility, ensuring Thrive's infrastructure is also secure to ISO27001:2013.

Recently, Sovereign has worked with Thrive to implement its new housing management system. An important part of this project was the move to Windows 7 and the refresh of some of Thrive's servers to make sure the infrastructure continued performing to the high levels expected by Thrive's staff and its residents.

As part of the last strategic road mapping exercise, Sovereign and Thrive are planning a migration to Office 365 and are currently writing a paper to define everything Thrive needs from its IT team over the next 5 years.

Testimonial

Shaun McLean, Director of Resources at Thrive Homes:

“Sovereign intrinsically understands that customer service excellence lies at the heart of everything we strive to achieve. Because this is so important, it is the first and last consideration of everything Sovereign works on with us.

Sovereign has shown real commitment to our values. At times they have worked into the night, ensuring the right systems are in place to support some pioneering new software without having to cause daytime disruption to the networks.

As our IT team, Sovereign engage at all levels within Thrive. In particular, they work strategically with our Head of IT to make sure our infrastructure is always aligned with what we want to achieve as an organisation.

Sovereign's support is now so integral to what we do, that a member of the Sovereign team was recently nominated for one of Thrive's employee awards.”

If you would like to know more about our services and recent projects, or if you want to discuss a current plan or challenge, please contact us on our details below.

Sovereign is a business solutions provider which offers a fully integrated approach to transforming the way businesses operate, focusing upon making the people and the processes of a business more efficient and delivering technology to make them more effective.

Consultancy | IT Services | Managed IT Services | Data Centre | Recruitment

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