



# SUCCESS STORY NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR

## WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT HOUSING (WDH)



**EFQM**<sup>®</sup>  
Leading Excellence



# THE JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE...

“ ...there is a continual improvement loop, feeding back the learning from the results achieved and using creativity and innovation to drive increased value for all the stakeholders. ”

# IGNITING THE PASSION FOR SUCCESS

EFQM is a network of remarkable and like-minded organisations who share a common vision of Excellence, as a continuous Journey together.

Through each Success Booklet, EFQM brings to you inspiring stories of people and companies who have successfully deployed the Model and experienced its many benefits. Here we take a closer look at how they did it...

## **EFQM ENABLES YOU TO CONNECT, LEARN, ACT, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED**

The EFQM Excellence Model provides organisations with a platform and common language to share their experiences and learn from others. The desire to share, learn and innovate is what drives our economies forward. A derived observation is the fact that what was considered "best practice" yesterday rapidly enters the mainstream and becomes common practice today. To stay ahead, organisations need to adapt faster than ever.

Introducing a proven practice from one sector to another is one way to achieve this...

# NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR

## THE STORY OF WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT HOUSING (WDH)



### PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF YOUR BUSINESS

WDH (Wakefield and District Housing) is a non-profit charitable independent housing association. We provide a range of affordable housing as well as services that improve social value for people. WDH manages and repairs 45,000 properties in the north of England, including 31,600 owned properties in the Wakefield district.

WDH primarily manages, builds and acquires a range of accommodation types wherever it's in our business interest to do so. In addition, we provide a range of value added products for older people, people with health challenges as well as getting people back into employment. We have a genuine desire and passion to care for our customers and to do our best to give them the choices and opportunities.

We employ over 1,400 people, including a multi-skilled workforce of 575 specialists who maintain and build properties. We have a range of specialist skills in WDH ranging from lawyers through to mental health workers. Employee satisfaction has risen from 67% in 2010 to 85% in 2016. We encourage an atmosphere of innovation and ideas through WDH's DNA: determination, nous and attitude.

### WHEN DID YOU START USING THE MODEL?

We have used the EFQM Excellence Model since WDH was created in 2005, as our corporate improvement tool and have embedded it in our planning and performance processes. It helps us ensure that our resources are planned and

deployed to maximise the impact on the results.

In 2008, we achieved "Regional Business of the Year" in the North of England Business Excellence Awards and were the UK Excellence Award winner in 2010. In 2012, we became European Finalists (the only UK entrant nominated and the first housing association to reach this level) and European Finalists again in 2013, securing the top accolade for "Adding Value for Customers". In 2015, we were then awarded "European Business of the Year" and more recently, we have continued to build on this success and have worked hard to act on suggestions for improvement from previous assessments.

### HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?

Our initial involvement was with North of England Excellence who provided support and training. Key people were assigned champion roles in the process and had specific training in the assessment process. It made perfect sense to adopt the model within the organisation as the benefits of that way of working could be seen immediately.





### HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY CONTINUE?

EFQM has played an important role in helping us to become the successful business we now are, and we are proud to have become regional and national winners in the UK and a European finalist twice, becoming a prize winner in 2013 for “adding value for customers” and then “European Business of the Year” in 2015. More importantly, the feedback we have had throughout each stage of the assessment process has been invaluable, and we have used it to build on any highlighted good practice and to make key improvements on how we operate. It has really helped us understand how far we have travelled on our journey to excellence, and how we can continue to improve in the years ahead.

### WHAT VALUE DID IMPLEMENTING THE MODEL BRING TO YOUR COMPANY?

There are several particular role model practices that we have implemented since the introduction of the model:

#### Creating a sustainable future

WDH has a 2020 Business Strategy that sets out a Business Model based on maximising our social dividend to deliver bold ambitions for transforming the Wakefield district.

Underpinning our Vision, our Business Model supports the delivery of growth, productivity and Value for Money (VFM) through increasing opportunities to expand our core businesses

and invest in new developments in a broader geographical area where there is a clear strategic advantage, increases our social dividend and demonstrates added value. Trading activities and investment wherever commercially viable will increase the social dividend, enabling us to maximise investment in new building development and regeneration, and improve tenant and property sustainability to create confident communities. We already own over 90% of the social housing stock within the Wakefield district, creating a solid core business that offers unparalleled economies of scale. Through partnerships, joint ventures and shared services, we will seek to build on this strength to develop our strategic advantage over a wider geographical area, without putting at risk our core business.

WDH provides a wide range of services that impact significantly on the communities that we serve. This approach not only strengthens communities, but also supports improved quality of life and delivers value for money through more sustainable tenancies.

The additional value created is measured using the “Social Return on Investment” (SROI), based on proven methodologies, to estimate the social added value from our housing, operational and support activities. Each of these social value adding services generate a differing level of social return on investment, but the overall average is SROI £9.51 for every £1 invested.

This approach helps to build a positive attitude

## Leading with Vision, inspiration and integrity

Central to our leadership approach is our Excellence Framework Model that focuses on ways of working and expectations, qualities and behaviours of our people. This is explained in our DNA – Determination, Nous and Attitude – that are underpinned by clear behavioural expectations:

- Determination: get the job done; deliver high standards; and take ownership.
- Nous: act with common sense; actively improve and learn; and know your stuff.
- Attitude: be helpful and friendly; treat people fairly; and keep promises and commitments.

These are used as part of the appointment process before an employee even joins WDH and then are integral to our appraisal process. We are committed to supporting people who want to develop a career with us and encourage training and development to ensure our employees have the right skills to progress.

At the same time, like our customer insight, we revised our approach to our Employee Survey using an independent external organisation, to help us measure ourselves against other UK leading organisations. Employee satisfaction has risen from 61% in 2006 to 83% in 2016.

Innovation is at the heart of our approach to continuous improvement. Employees at all levels are encouraged to constantly seek out ways to deliver our services more efficiently and to improve the customer service we provide. While policies and procedures are in place to ensure regulatory compliance and to maintain standards, teams are given a degree of autonomy on their approach to delivering outcomes. This is reinforced by our approach to performance management, which focuses wherever possible on outputs and outcomes rather than specific process measures. As a result, WDH has delivered year on year financial efficiency targets while also raising customer satisfaction levels.

### WHICH ASPECTS OF THE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION ARE YOU PARTICULARLY PROUD OF? WHAT ASPECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION WERE CHALLENGING?

Our approach to customer service is one whereby we put them at the heart of everything we do. We have always engaged with our customers to establish what their priorities are and this included an annual satisfaction survey. Since using the EFQM model and learning from the feedback, we introduced the UK Satisfaction Index Methodology in 2014 as a more advanced

approach to enable us to find out what are really the most important things to our customers, adding more value to them.

This is undertaken through an independent external organisation and enables us to compare ourselves with other leading organisations throughout the UK. As a result, we are able to concentrate our resources and services on what we need to prioritise to drive satisfaction forward and how we can maintain satisfaction already achieved. This is to develop our customer service from "good to great". Most importantly, what sets us apart from others, is that once we have measured satisfaction, we ensure that we communicate and feedback to them and our employees what action we will deploy to make improvements; this is in a "you said, we've done" format, which in turn improves customer loyalty and advocacy and contributes to an increase in the bottom line.

Alongside this, we ensure that we learn from all customer complaints, compliments and comments and share this across the organisation. It has been proven that a 2% increase in employee satisfaction, increases customer loyalty by 1% and improves the bottom line by 0.3%, so clearly it makes good business sense. Our own figures bear this out as employee satisfaction has risen from 61% to 83%, customer loyalty has risen from 54 to 93% resulting in an increase in the bottom line from £90m to £153m.

More recently, we introduced a further enhancement to customer insight, gaining a real time understanding, by undertaking feedback immediately on completion of a customer transaction. This means that we can measure the whole of the customer journey from the end to end of each process. The results are already very encouraging with overall satisfaction against all factors being well above 90%. It does, however, enable us to highlight and fix any processes or parts of processes that may have broken down. This in turn drives down costs and helps decision making.





## Can you provide some results or tangible evidences of this value/change after a few years?

Our results show that, since deploying the revised approach, employee satisfaction has risen from 61% to 83%, customer loyalty has risen from 54 to 93% resulting in an increase in the bottom line from £90m to £153m.

Our complaints processes were reviewed following implementation of the model and as a result customer complaints have fallen year on year, reducing from 149 in 2010 to just 27 across the whole business in 2016.

We also invested in our repairs service, introducing multi skilling across our trades workforce and this has seen repairs completed at first visit increase from 82% in 2010 to 91% in 2016.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE EFQM PHILOSOPHY?

EFQM has played an important role in helping us to become the successful business we are now. Although we are very proud of the awards we have achieved, the most important aspect to us is the feedback we have had throughout every stage of the assessment process. This has been invaluable, and we have used it to build on any highlighted good practice and to make key improvements to how we operate. It has really helped us understand how far we have travelled on our journey to excellence, and how we can continue to improve in the years ahead.



**Juliet Craven,**  
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(WDH)

### WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WDH?

Send your questions and enquiries to EFQM and we will make sure to get an answer for you. You can contact us at:

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