

Case
Study

Ensuring Excellence at “Johnnie” Johnson Housing Trust



Context

“Johnnie” Johnson Housing Trust (JJHT) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing homes and services that people value. JJHT has an asset base of over 4,600 homes, a wide range of type (e.g. general needs, retirement housing, rural, special needs, shared ownership). They are located in a large number of geographical areas across the country, for a wide range of tenants and residents. The property portfolio is worth over £120m and JJHT employs over 300 people.

The project

YC Change Consultants has played the role of inspector and critical friend to JJHT for a number of years. A mix of inspections and challenge workshops provides an external and objective view of where the Trust sits in relation to excellence against peers in the housing industry – checking out the reality of the quality of services provided to their tenants and residents.

The process

YC Change Consultants has worked with JJHT for a number of years providing services which always challenge the organisation against “excellence”, using the Audit Commission KLOE Framework. The relationship first started in September 2005 when JJHT commissioned their first Housing Inspection across all service areas and gave each service area an inspection score and also an overall ‘star’ rating and a Prospects for Improvement rating. In 2006 YC Change Consultants became a critical friend through running a series of workshops ensuring Improvement Plans were SMART and maintained a focus on excellence. The mechanism used at the time also provided a way of routinely capturing evidence.

In 2007 a couple of ‘challenge sessions’ reviewed progress on action plans, testing the reality of the evidence provided which showed outcomes of the improvements put in place. Also this gave an external view as to the progress made against “excellence” criteria.

In 2007 JJHT purchased Covalent to help deliver a number of objectives. These included:

- Better tracking, monitoring and analysis of performance indicators to enable more informed decisions being made.
- Managing coordination and alignment of key organisation strategies and plans to ensure consistency of purpose and execution of strategy.
- Enabling JJHT to track progress of KLOE objectives.



In 2008 a full service inspection was carried out – but in the style of a short notice, which really tested how the improvements were embedded and how performance had benefited as a result. This was a time of celebration as it showed the calibre of an organisation with “2 stars” and “promising” prospects. Covalent KLOE model was used by JJHT to enable the organisation to keep track of progress to-date against the KLOE standards. Covalent acted as a repository where evidence and supporting information could be stored to demonstrate improvement and progress. Action plans and progress reports were generated from Covalent for KLOE working groups.

Code & Title KLOE 03 Stock Investment & Asset Management									
Action Code & Title	Status Icon	Progress Bar	Milestone Description	Milestone Completed	Milestone Note	Start Date	Due Date	Progress to date notes	Documentary Evidence
KLOE 3.1 Access, customer care & user focus	▶	96%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.2 Diversity	✔	100%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.3 Capital improvement, planned and cyclical maintenance, major repair works	▶	75%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.4 Responsive repairs	✔	100%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.5 Void repairs	✔	100%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.6 Gas servicing	▶	83%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.7 Aids and adaptations	✔	100%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		
KLOE 3.8 Value for money	▶	86%				01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2011		

Code & Title KLOE 3.1 Access, customer care & user focus									
Action Code & Title	Status Icon	Progress Bar	Milestone Description	Milestone Completed	Milestone Note	Start Date	Due Date	Progress to date notes	Documentary Evidence
KLOE 3.1.1 How effectively does the organisation communicate and consult with its service users and stakeholders about stock investment and asset management?	✔	100%	1. Planned Programme project files and progress ticketsheets being set up by GH	Yes	In use	01 Apr 2007	31 Mar 2009	18 Jan 2008 1. Notification of Works to Tenants Strengths Asset Management provide information to tenants 2 weeks prior to planned works starting on site. Where it is PFA, writing to tenants is written in to the contract. The letters contain as much information about the nature of the works as possible. Contractor details are given at this stage so tenants are able to discuss this work, if needed. Where appropriate, consultation meetings/presentations are held to discuss how the works will affect tenants. On large scale works, the scheme notice boards are updated with current works information. Future Plans - Asset Management to set up own scheme notice boards to convey important Planned and Responsive repair information. Project files and ticketsheets to be improved by Geoff Hodge (com Evidence - example letters - Elmwood & New House - Digital TV aerial upgrade + JJH IRS info to tenants, "Asbestos Fact Sheet 2007", DVD presentation - Sovereign Windows (available on disk only), HT Forrest Open Day & Tenant Pack	GETTING TO WORK ON IMPROVING HOMES 1.doc
			10. Stock condition data is being	Yes	Completed and on-going project			07 Dec 2007 3. Tenant Engagement / Participation Strengths	Asbestos Fact Sheet 2007a.doc

KLOE action plan progress report

YC Change Consultants has remained a critical friend and 2009 saw further 'challenge workshops' looking at current improvements against a moving excellence target and yet again, JJHT stepped up to the challenge. Tier performance monitoring enables JJHT to distinguish between strategic and operational performance measures. JJHT's approach to monitoring performance measures has enabled it to better understand the capacity and capability of its processes and to distinguish between common and special causes variation. The use of process behaviour charts have been a major aid to forecasting future performance. Such in-depth information has enabled managers to intervene with confidence to design improvement. The use of process behaviour charts has helped managers assess the true improvement impact of their action plans (see chart on page 3).

Covalent has allowed the organisation to give an instant snapshot of current and trend performance. Again, this piece of work provided JJHT with KLOE judgements for each service area as well as overall scores for Judgement 1 (star rating) and Judgement 2 (prospects).



The benefits

A 'mock' inspection gives the organisation a benchmark – from qualified and experienced ex-Audit Commission inspectors – as to what “score” they would be given should an inspection take place – be this a full service inspection or a short notice inspection. By providing a “score” for each service area, as well as overall organisation scores, it helps JJHT prioritise improvements, which Board members are particularly keen on.

An ongoing 'critical friend challenge' ensures that JJHT keeps focused on improvements and is striving for excellence, especially as “excellence” improves year on year. By working with YC Change Consultants, JJHT is getting robust, up to date advice and top tips around improvements in the industry, as well as completed fair and objective challenges and recommendations.

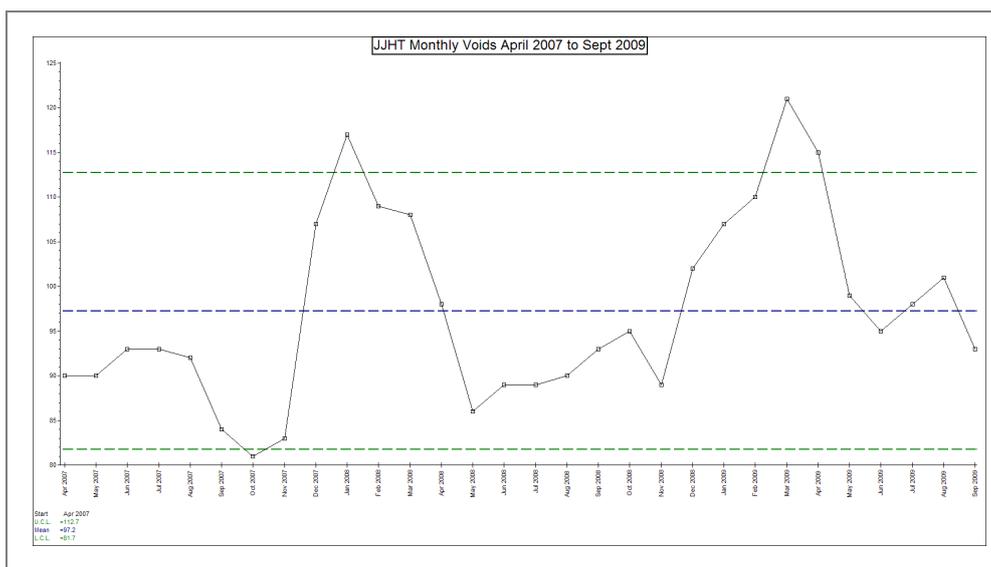
JJHT managers have found the process of being able to speak to a 'critical friend' to be both rewarding and a challenge. Being able to speak to (a range of) external 'specialists' has allowed sharing of best practice, 'new' ideas and an increase in achievements.

The senior management team and Board have found this approach beneficial providing a litmus test of its efforts to ensure continuous improvement throughout the organisation is met. JJHT has been able to divert resources to those areas of the organisation where the pace of service improvement is slow or challenges remain.

Covalent has enabled JJHT to maintain focus on those areas of the organisation where weaknesses remain and to celebrate success.

"YC Change Consultants has worked with "Johnnie" Johnson Housing for several years, specifically acting as a "critical friend" in our preparations for Audit Commission inspection. They are utterly professional, extremely knowledgeable, and never short-change on its promises, as such they are a rarity - a consultant who delivers value for money. They delighted us with the depth and breadth of their scrutiny in a very concentrated inspection. Their feedback was fair-minded and objective and the professional approach of the team earned the trust and respect of all."

Jim Lunney, Chief Executive



Taking a long term view of performance data – number of voids per month for the last two years