

Getting it right first time

A midland based housing association, improved from 1 star with uncertain prospects to 3 stars with excellent prospects. Following this 3 star status national awards were used to seek accreditation and support the associations ambition to be “excellent”. Being awarded Social Landlord of The Year and Best Social Housing Provider, Richard Elwell was a key partner behind the association’s improvement due to his active involvement in the training and development of employees and the Executive Team.

Richard provided support to, both individually and collectively, the Executive Management Team. Listening to their ambitions and concerns and then pin-pointing the key strategic issues and also identifying the risks and likely issues that would arise. An excellent example of this is despite the excellent record, there were rare but recurring occasions where the customer was not getting the best service. Richard worked with the association and together they developed a right first time, every time programme. Within the Executive Team there was concern about the ‘every time’ because this was perfection. However, working with Richard they decided that this was a risk worth taking because the message was that failing the customer was unacceptable. It was this message that changed the culture because employees and contractors were held to account and it was easy to monitor. If the Company had a complaint it was asked ‘did we get it right first time?’ and if not they apologised and learned from the experience. Some past practices which were considered ‘acceptable’ were changed in the light of this experience and over nine months complaints reduced by 50% and compliments increased by a third, with compliments exceeding complaints for the first time.

As well as working with the executive Richard helped individuals and teams within the Company that were going through major change. Richard used the values of social housing and what the association was trying to achieve, to explain why change was important and get the employees/teams engaged in the change process. Richard supported managers and employees involved in a number of service reviews within the Company including the implementation of mobile working which significantly reduced the number of employees and the way that they worked.

“These are a few examples that show the calibre of Richard. Richard is loyal, supportive, determined, enthusiastic and keen to improve the lives of the people in society that have the most need.”

Paul Field – CEO Housing Association