

Case Study

Consolidating four FM Helpdesks into one, centralised desk

IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Challenge

After consolidating 161 different helpdesks into four after NHS Property Services was formed in 2013, last year we looked to improve our facilities management services further. Indeed, we had four regional facilities management helpdesks - in London, Manchester, Wolverhampton, and Tyne & Wear - which was the root cause of significant inconsistencies in management and operational processes and consequently a poor customer experience.

Problems included varying standards of service across the helpdesks, no business continuity plan, no centralised control for operations resulting in numerous undocumented processes, inconsistencies in data capturing meaning there was no single source of truth and SLAs were not possible, high reliance on manual work and varied management styles.

The Solution

As well as considering the problems that existed in having regional helpdesks, we reviewed industry best practice to develop our strategy. It was clear to us that a single, centrally-managed helpdesk was the obvious solution to get complete oversight in order to fix the numerous control issues and ultimately, improve customer experience.

Existing office space was identified in Stockport and with excellent support from our Property and Construction workstream leads who, although working to a tight timescale, we refurbished it into a modern helpdesk environment on time and to an excellent standard for our new team of helpdesk colleagues.

In preparation for launch, we held 17 process workshops with colleagues from across the business to journey map and devise unified processes for all tasks carried out by the helpdesk. We also conducted 10 days of induction and training with our new helpdesk advisors which were recruited from a high-calibre, experienced pool of candidates.

In order to ensure a smooth transition and give the customers the best initial experience possible, we took a phased approach to transferring each of the regional helpdesks to the new central helpdesk location.

The Result

The overall aim of the new FM Helpdesk was to make our customers' lives easier, especially as they are very busy people with great demands on their time, and a need to be able to care for patients in fit-for-purpose environments. In having one central FM Helpdesk, our customers are receiving a high standard of customer service that is now monitored for quality and consistency, and are all following one central set of consistent processes to ensure jobs are logged and executed swiftly.

We now know our daily call volumes for the central helpdesk which allows us to resource plan and schedule correctly when looking at staff levels, resulting in both a measure and an improvement of call answering times for customers who have patients as their priority.

A central location has enabled improved handover between out of hours and in hours helpdesk shifts which in turn has meant priority issues have been well managed on behalf of the customer. We have had great feedback from customers about both our helpdesk staff and the impact the new processes have had on getting FM issues sorted faster. Over 600 customers surveyed gave us a CSAT score of 8.19/10, which is the second highest score of any of our NHS Property Services customer surveys, only after our award-winning new customer services centre.