



Best practices for battling the backlog.

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Addressing key backlog challenges.

Landlords require a viable solution to tackle their existing backlogs and reduce the strain on operational teams on the approach to winter. It's time to address, adapt and advance.

Even the most progressive of housing providers face issues when battling a backlog. From the point of organising and coordinating the work, many struggle with obstacles such as lack of access, resource constraints and even insufficient reporting trails to track progress.

Adding to these pressures is the rapidly evolving relationship that residents have with the speed and efficiency of service delivery. Expectations are high, but engagement is low.

From conversations with leaders within the industry and through our PropertyLab research, we have uncovered several challenges that have historically caused repair backlogs to emerge, as well as the factors that will continue to impact backlogs to this day.

Covid-19

The national lockdown restrictions brought many routine and emergency repairs to a halt. Even now, some Covid-19 backlogs are unresolved; and high-risk or self-isolating residents continue to cause access issues.

Poor resident engagement

Residents are our greatest asset when it comes to understanding the quality of homes. With poor resident engagement, backlogs can worsen due to hidden repairs from deteriorating issues and lack of contractor access.

Insufficient audit trails

Systems to record, reconcile and report data are key for dealing with the backlog of jobs. Without this, it can be an impossible task for property managers to keep track of contractor visits, completions and communications.

Resource shortage

The cost and accessibility of building materials remains a problem due to a lack of HGV drivers being able to transport the goods*. Research suggests that this has caused delays for 9/10 tradespeople conducting works.



*<https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/news/construction-materials-shortage>

Adapting operations & service delivery.

To overcome these challenges, housing providers must develop pragmatic approaches to overcome their works-in-progress (WIP).

Our research suggests that current strategies and solutions used within the housing sector may lack the resilience and adaptability to manage repair backlogs efficiently and cater to changing resident expectations.

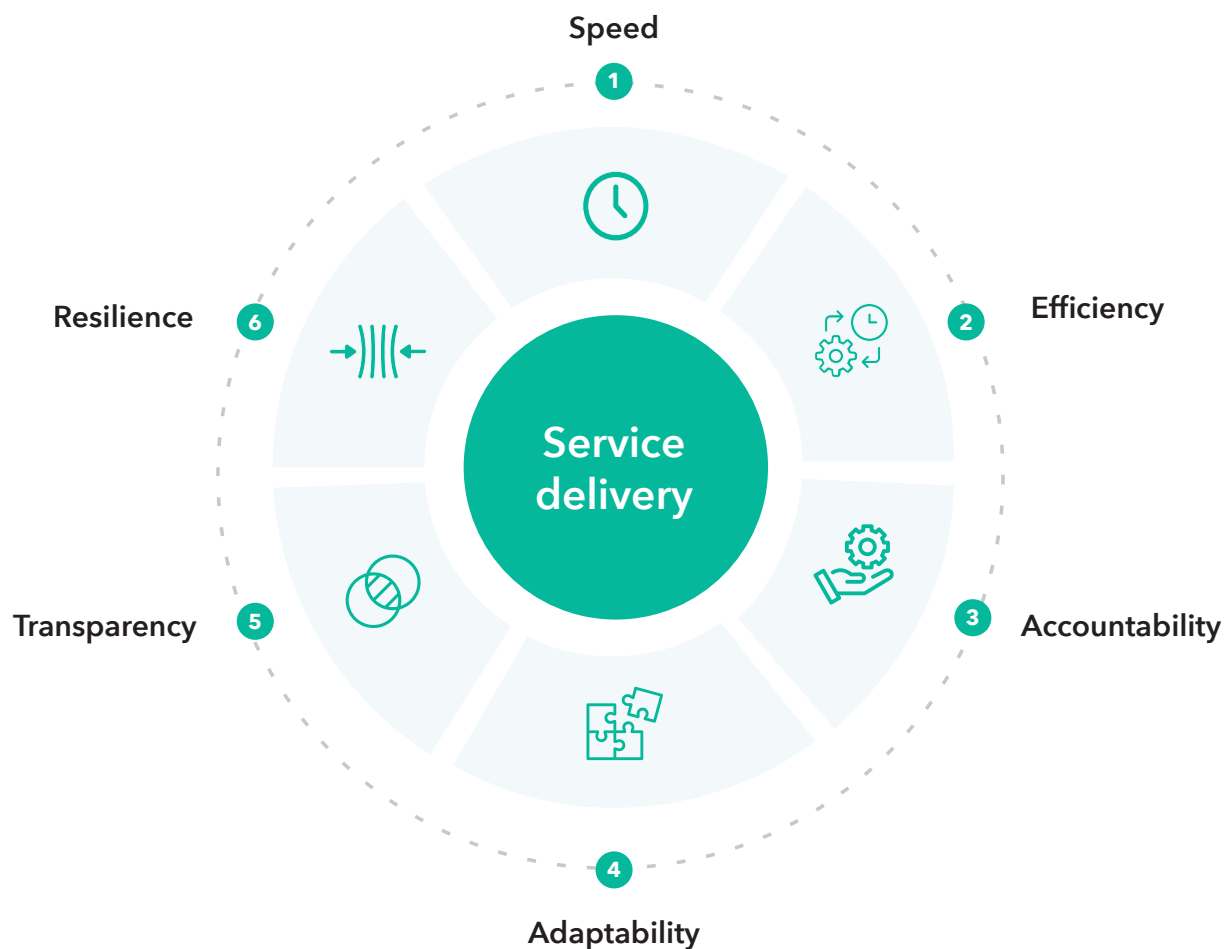
These challenges provide both the inspiration and necessity to explore more dynamic, flexible models of service delivery. With this comes

greater control, flexibility and efficiency in the delivery of overdue remedial works.

We believe that the key to successful remobilisation, tackling a building backlog and re-working service provision is through exerting more control of supply chain, harnessing portfolio data and introducing agility into procurement frameworks.

In the following pages, we will outline six key opportunities that can help your operational teams overcome the pressures contributing to a repair backlog in time for the winter months.

How service delivery must adapt to meet backlog challenges.



1 Introduce flexible, agile workforces.

From our PropertyLab programme and the discussions it has fueled on flexible service, we've learnt the importance landlords place on designing an inherently flexible approach to service delivery.

Implementing agile approaches to procurement and introducing visibility into every stage of service delivery can help reduce organisational risk in the long run - whilst also providing a framework on which service delivery can be streamlined.

"So things like vehicle tracking that we're seeing commonplace across any delivery company, seeing that integrated in repairs is quite important. The ability to change appointments over a text or logging into like a little portal is quite important."

2 Boost resident engagement.

There is a new kind of customer that housing must cater to. One who is accustomed to service being built around their lives, rather than current approaches to activity like compliance, which do not adapt to new behaviour as easily.

Introducing omni-channel approaches (letters, texts, emails) to help gain access, in addition to providing self-serve capabilities for residents, can help design a digital service around their lives and unlock opportunities for successful, more compliant operations.

"People will ignore letters, leave them until the last minute and not really take notice. We started introducing a text service as well so now they're texting the resident. That has triggered phone calls to book appointments and that has worked better than the lettering process alone."

3 Enhance digitalisation.

Introducing digitalisation into daily operations is an effective step to combating backlog pressures. Companies which are 'bionic' - those with a good balance of human and technological abilities - have shown greater resilience overall.

Digitalisation has allowed housing providers to seamlessly transition to home working, or deal with the sudden peaks and troughs in demand caused by market fluctuations. These organisations are able to mobilise their maintenance teams fast enough and maintain service continuity even when their existing contractors call in sick.

"We had a recent case where 90% of our in-house contractors had to self-isolate. We were able to leverage the digitalisation in our procurement model and divert jobs to a local, vetted supply chain to manage repairs during a critical period."

4 Establishing real-time audit trails.

Some housing providers are often over-reliant on a few tried and tested tradespeople. They are never sure if they are being overcharged for repairs as their internal systems are not set up to track variations in quotes, photo evidence of any issues and job completion reports.

By using the right software, operations managers can accurately track and follow the entire journey of a customer repair request from start to finish. Some of these software systems are plug-and-play and can integrate alongside existing digital solutions, making for an effective reduction in the number of outstanding routine repairs. Audit trails are also essential for maintaining the safety of homes.

"Our procurement outperforms similar sized housing providers now that we are 95% more likely to have greater visibility into our Tier 1 suppliers. A simple system to track all repairs opens up the possibility of deploying further analytics into each repair and more insight into each contractor's performance for better results."

5 Localise service delivery.

Sourcing local trade talent for maintenance works can help housing providers offer residents more choice, a better safety net and better support for emergencies.

Tapping into vetted, local supply chains brings additional advantages. Shorter commute times help local contractors provide a more sustainable, reliable service. This also supports smaller businesses and creates further economic opportunities within the communities they serve. Lower lead times are key in reducing a backlog and a diversified supply chain provides flexibility and resilience when dealing with a high volume of works-in-progress.

“There’s more flexibility with smaller, local businesses that can turn up on short notice. The communal aspect of the service can make it better but also cheaper - not as many overheads - and this supports local businesses that absolutely need the work.”

6 Improve accessibility of compliance data.

Prevention is often the best cure for a backlog, especially in the winter months. The challenge of having compliance data spread across multiple systems, with manual entry and record management, can increase the number of works and contractor visits in the winter months.

Stronger regulation and improved technology are helping housing providers do more with their compliance data - use it to track access rates, standardise data from site visits and intelligently collate it to be more proactive, and hence less reactive, when a boiler needs replacement, for example.

“I want to be able to see all of my compliance data in one place, to give me a solid understanding of what’s going on each day. At the moment I have to hop across multiple systems and spreadsheets and chase team members for data, which often takes days for them to reconcile.”

Advance with a resilient solution.

Our award-winning Repairs Manager solution is designed to battle backlogs in record speed. Upload work orders in bulk directly onto the platform and track the entire repair journey from, raised to resolved, all from one screen.

Don't let demand fluctuations and capacity constraints stand in the way of offering residents a speedy, reliable and cost-effective service. Enable your operational teams to effortlessly manage backlogs and day-to-day work orders across their entire portfolio.

Issue works to your existing contracts through the Plentific platform or outsource to our unique marketplace of over 18,000 vetted and verified contractors.

"Traditional repairs delivery models led primarily by either simple tenant demand for reactive repairs or by the predicted lifecycle of components in the case of planned maintenance will no longer match the value and economy thresholds now expected."



Launch your digital transformation today.

Visit our website to kickstart the battle against your backlog with Plentific. Learn more and book a callback to integrate our technology into your operations.

Plentific integrates repairs, maintenance, compliance and voids management to streamline property maintenance and provide instant insight into the health of a property portfolio.

Visit our website

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BOOKING 1 - SCHEDULED

Export

Wed 30 Sep 2020, 11:30 - 13:30


ITEM DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	AMOUNT	
Site visit and analysis of the problem	1	180.00	£180.00	>
New plumbing, adapters and fittings	2	50.00	£100.00	>

Total (incl.

FINAL INVOICE (total incl. VAT)

Details

£75.00

 Paid on 14 Aug 2020, 13:12