



**The Gateshead Housing Company** creates one-stop repairs & maintenance function with Kirona

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# The Gateshead Housing Company is a non-profit organisation responsible for the day-to-day management of nearly 20,000 homes in Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. It was founded in 2004 as an arms-length management organisation for Gateshead Council to manage housing stock in the borough.

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## The Challenge

From 2008 onwards, The Gateshead Housing Company's repairs and maintenance service was contracted out to external commercial providers, most recently Mears. However, in 2017, the housing provider went through a review exercise, concluding that it would be in the organisation's best interests to bring these operations and their management back in-house. By doing so, it was expected that The Gateshead Housing Company would be able to harness economies of scale to run its repairs and maintenance operation more efficiently. In turn, it would be able to put more resource into customer services.

This was a major change, which would involve hundreds of existing Mears staff, as well as employees from Gateshead Council's Construction Services Direct Service Organisation (DLO), transferring to an all-new Home Repairs brand within The Gateshead Housing Company. Home Repairs would handle property services including repairs and maintenance, voids, gas service and capital investment, and it would report into a newly created Director of Property and Assets.

A new business plan for the organisation was also created. This aimed to maximise growth via jobs, investments and income generation, to make more efficient use of resources and reduce costs to achieve best practice, and to address and ensure integration of services and sustainable working practices.

The range and volume of work to be carried out by this new in-house function needed careful and comprehensive management. The Gateshead Housing Company chose to work with Kirona to deploy an integrated software solution to achieve this.

## The Solution

In April 2017, the formal contract between Mears and The Gateshead Housing Company ended, and around 450 employees from both Mears and Gateshead Council's construction services DLO joined the organisation, forming Home Repairs. The new brand immediately went live with Kirona's Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) and Job Manager software.

With the exception of window replacements and some other commercial work, all of the organisation's repair and maintenance appointments are now automatically allocated and managed by Kirona's DRS. This allocates field operatives according to their locations their own individual, real-time task lists, ensuring the most efficient distribution of staff. Meanwhile, Job Manager ensures seamless information flows between the central office and each field-based worker.

Since three different organisations merged to form Home Repairs, three different working practices, cultures and methodologies also needed to be consolidated. Changes and adaptations had to be made on all sides to integrate Home Repairs successfully.

**"Kirona has helped us to create a highly efficient and integrated property services brand, with a focus on excellent customer service and strong positioning for the future".**

Andrew Curtis, ICT Development Manager  
The Gateshead Housing Company

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# In 1 month....

# 9.3%

increase in  
completed  
repairs

# 7,202

responsive repairs & gas  
repairs carried out

# 3,600

customer orders completed

# 99%

customer satisfaction maintained

## The Outcome

Home Repairs took a measured approach to integrating its three constituent organisations, spending a year gradually implementing Kirona's software and carrying out regular process reviews to determine enhancements and improvements.

Nevertheless, by the end of its first month deploying DRS and Job Manager, the organisation had carried out 7,202 responsive repairs and gas repairs, completed 3,600 orders with customers and had a further 3,100 booked for the coming weeks.

There were 52,315 completed repairs (including planned jobs) by the end of the second quarter, an increase of 4,884 compared to the same period in the previous year, and customer satisfaction has been maintained at its 99% target. Kirona's technology has been embraced by employees on the frontline, and the organisation is also working on deploying Kirona's Project Planner software to optimise the planning and scheduling of voids.

The Gateshead Housing Company is now delivering more and achieving better outcomes for customers within its existing budget, and utilising Kirona's experience to advise and support the delivery of a new repairs and maintenance model. It is developing the right people, skills and behaviour for the future via greater workforce capacity, a highly-skilled direct labour workforce and appropriate communication channels, prioritising its workload towards a demand-driven service.

Andrew Curtis, ICT Development Manager at The Gateshead Housing Company said:

**"Kirona has been at the centre of the development of our Home Repairs brand. We've successfully united staff and functions from across three organisations, and have created a true one-stop, integrating the company's housing repairs and maintenance service, thanks in part to the software that enables us to see across the whole workforce and allocate staff accordingly. Kirona has helped us to create a highly efficient and integrated property services brand, with a focus on excellent customer service and strong positioning for the future."**



## Speak to us

For more information about The Gateshead Housing Company project or to discuss any of Kirona's products and services contact us at [info@kirona.com](mailto:info@kirona.com) or **01625 585511**.



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