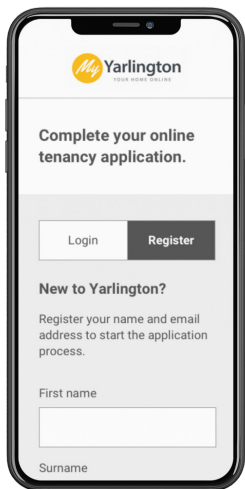


Yarlington works with Active Housing to develop online tenant onboarding



WHO ARE YARLINGTON?

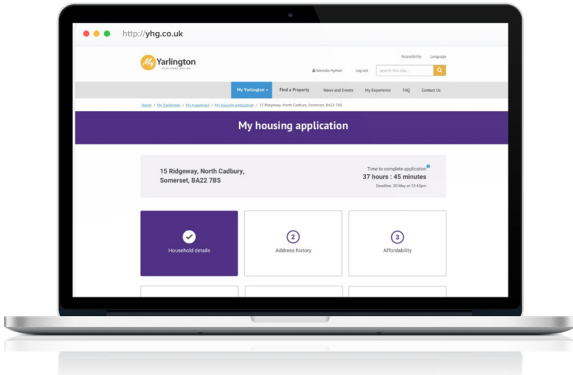
Yarlington Housing Group is a large housing association in the South West of England, with over 79,000 customers. Yarlington is a strong leader in the housing sector, particularly around digital, and in 2019 won 'Digital Landlord of the Year' at the UK Housing Awards.

As digital partners with Active Housing, Yarlington approached Hallnet looking for a digital solution to their paper, choice based lettings application form.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Yarlington are always looking for new ways to improve their services for staff and customers alike. This is why they decided to go paperless with their tenant onboarding process, which was long and dated. Completing an application form required a lettings advisor to call up the pre-tenant and go through a paper form with them over the phone. This was often very time consuming for both parties, and because the application was on paper, it was difficult to amend.

If a customer wanted to make a change to their application form, they had to show up in person to one of the Yarlington offices. This is why the organisation wanted their process to change. Switching to a digital self-service solution would increase ease and efficiency. Having a more streamlined process would reduce the amount of void properties, and they would be able to move people into their new homes quicker, whilst reducing the amount of time a home is empty for.



THE FUNCTIONALITY

The software lets pre-tenants register for a property using a unique pin which has been given to them by the housing group. After registering, they can view the details of the property they have been matched with and begin their application process.

Tenants are also given a time frame of 48 hours to complete forms to speed up the process of getting a tenant into an empty house. If they do not respond within that time frame they will lose the property and have to start the process again. However, admins will have special permissions to extend the time frame if needed.

Once the pre-tenant has applied for the property, they can also log in at any time to check the status of their application, as well as viewing details about the property they have been matched with.

THE APPROACH

An agile style of project management was used, and due to the size of the project it was launched in phases. In the phase 1 launch, pre-tenants were able to register and then accept or decline a property. In phase 2, they were allowed to add their household details and address history, and fill out the affordability and expenditure forms. In phase 3 of the launch, they were able to manage their ASB / crime, health, proofs and declaration.

The benefits of using a phased approach meant that Yarlinton could receive feedback on the online forms from their customers as it was being launched. This meant that they could continually go back and improve things where necessary. It also allowed them to see how their customers were using the forms so that they could make improvements on the next sections in the following phases of the launch.

THE CHALLENGE

It became apparent to the team early on in the process that they had underestimated the size of the forms that they were digitally creating. They overcame this by launching the project in phases. This meant that phase 1 could still be delivered in the time frame expected, with the later phases to follow.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this project was a success for all stakeholders involved. It meant that Yarlington were able to increase the efficiency of one of their key customer processes, as well as save time and effort for their staff and customers. Although there were issues on the project, these were resolved and still allowed for a great product to be launched - as well as one of the first of its kind in the sector. As digital partners, Yarlington and Active Housing will be continuing to work together, including working on a new customer portal for the Yarlington / Radian partnership.

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