

Essentials for Housing Back Office

Hitachi Solutions worked with one of the UK's largest Housing Associations to create Essentials for Housing - Back Office.

Never before has this complexity of functionality been available for Housing Associations. Residing principally on the Microsoft platform, it effectively removes the need for multiple systems, processes and user interfaces.

What is Essentials for Housing?

Essentials for Housing is a comprehensive housing management solution designed specifically for the needs of Housing Associations. No other software on the market today can provide asset management, rent and service charge setting alongside component accounting capabilities on the Microsoft platform.

Essentials for Housing holds all the complex data generated by Housing Associations and feeds it into the user interface (we recommend Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Sales and Marketing) to give a completely reliable user experience for both staff and customers.

It is now a genuine option for Housing Associations to decommission their disparate legacy housing management systems and replace them with a one solution. Our solution is tested and proven; it provides a coherent single version of the truth, which has been so lacking in the past, and takes Housing Associations into the future with confidence.

What can Essentials for Housing do for you?

In order to run efficiently and effectively, Housing Associations need to trust their data. Essentials for Housing gives one asset database, one view, and integrates perfectly with Microsoft Dynamics 365 for Sales and Marketing for more proficient processes.

Key Features

Key features of Essentials for Housing fully support the way Housing Associations do business.

These are:

- Rent Setting
- Service Charges
- Asset Creation
- Asset Management
- Repairs Management
- Planned Programme
- Financial Operations
- Securitisation
- Warranty Management
- Back and Front Office Integration

Rent Setting and Service Charges

Fundamental areas which have proven problematic in the past, are now much more easily managed. Essentials for Housing covers rent setting, billing, rent collection, leaseholds, freeholds and the needs of non-social tenants with simplicity.

Rent account details are held within Essentials for Housing, showing the transactional history and are fully integrated with the chosen finance platform. For example, annual rent statements are created within the solution and issued to tenants by post or email.

Another advantage is the facility to track actual unit costs versus estimates and actual costs versus what has been billed and collected. Our software enables charging across multiple properties and across mixed tenures.

Essentials for Housing provides a complete view of tenant debt — both managed and unmanaged — including a link to Housing Benefit, tenure type and Universal Credit. This is all interconnected to the arrears management process in Essentials for Housing - Front Office.

Our solution also provides an error free Service Charge Management capacity, from the most basic to the most complex. It has the capacity to define both fixed and variable service charges for different charge types, e.g. window cleaning or ground maintenance. It can also manage service agreement charges by allocating them across your assets and apportioning them appropriately over your tenancy agreements.

Asset Management

From an entire estate to a single flat — Housing Associations need total confidence in the information they hold. Essentials for Housing makes this possible.

It can capture a property's full history and work with other software from us for a complete end to end solution. Using the IoT and the Predictive Service Hub allows Housing Associations to move away from expensive reactive maintenance processes and towards a more managed and controlled predictive maintenance model. Not only that, but all surveys and inspections relating to the property will also be held in the same place.

This means that all associated costs of an asset are unitedly held, making it simple to determine actual costs against revenue received, resulting in a clear picture of commercial viability. The ability to predict future associated costs of the property means this data is also crucial for assessing the financial impact of forward planning maintenance scheduling.

Repair Management

Essentials for Housing hierarchy supports:



Major Works



Responsive Repairs



Surveys and Inspections

The hierarchy identifies and records service objects versus fixed assets, to allow more proactive and accurate management of stock. All data and history of the asset is held within Essentials for Housing and can be accessed through mobile applications. Proactive management of repairs is driven from Essentials for Housing - Front Office.

Component Accounting

Essentials for Housing has a compelling financial element.

Financial operations includes repairs, regulatory reporting and comparative revenue for a property with different operational and financial life cycles and enables depreciation to be properly managed. It tracks any individual component — for example, land, roof, kitchen, boiler etc. — it also includes the ability to identify warranty periods and their financial implications.

Our solution links hierarchy assets to fixed assets giving an accurate financial position of the stock. In line with regulatory requirements, our property hierarchy and fixed assets are held in one location, eliminating the need for a monthly reconciliation between old and disparate systems.

Warranties

In the past, identifying warranty periods has been difficult. This has resulted in Housing Associations being unable to clearly identify what is still under warranty and unwittingly paying for repairs or components that are already covered.

Essentials for Housing makes sure this never happens by effectively identifying warranty periods. Our solution flags up if any requested repair is still under warranty ensuring all payments are correctly allocated.

Planned Programming

A key feature of Essentials for Housing is the ability to plan programmes of works. This has never been achieved with legacy systems. Essentials for Housing ensures a clear overview; a complete picture of the past and a comprehensive plan for the future.

This enables informed decision making and the ability to manage budgets effectively and efficiently.

Compliance

At Hitachi Solutions, we support our clients to become fully legislatively and regulatory compliant. We regularly review software and provide a contractual commitment to ensure our product remains in line with legal requirements.

Our solution has an inbuilt asset register which meets with Homes England regulations and holds all the securitisation data for the corporate liabilities register. By keeping all relevant data together, managing complex tasks with multifaceted legal requirements becomes much more straightforward.

Essentials for Housing is able to hold information against an asset, for example, the percentage of the property owned.

This includes:

- ✓ Shared ownership
- ✓ Right to buy
- ✓ Right to acquire
- ✓ Tenancy history e.g. mutual exchange and assignments

Additionally, all relevant certificates — for example gas, asbestos etc. — are held within it. Risk and responsibility are managed in the same place for any function requiring a servicing regime. The cycle will be triggered, and any follow-on works will be easily managed, as there is no break between the servicing regime and responsive repairs.

Back and Front Office Integration

Our solution means a genuine ability to share all your data to deliver a single, reliable source of truth.

The complex and robust nature of the data held by Essentials for Housing, is fed into Essentials for Housing - Front Office, to give your customers a reliable, trusted and largely automated user experience.

So, information is enhanced at every level — from the single customer right the way through to the board, giving greater clarity, dependable data and better communication for all.

Interested?

At Hitachi Solutions, we work with Housing Association professionals who know exactly what you need from your technology. Our partnership with Microsoft means using solutions that are familiar both to your staff and your customers, making any changes easy to assimilate.

Why Hitachi Solutions?

We offer **deep industry expertise** combined with **decades of experience** providing high-value solutions that deliver **rapid return on investment**. Our approach is designed to give you a faster, lower-risk implementation and rapid adoption of Hitachi Solutions proven best practices, processes and configuration.

It starts with core technologies built on the Microsoft Dynamics 365 cloud platform.

We extend that with our own best practice pre-configuration and sector-specific functionality so you can get up and running quickly. New features are introduced every three months to ensure you benefit from enhanced functionality which helps you keep pace with the demands of your industry.

Finally, we deliver a tailored solution with inbuilt best practice processes and configuration templates to provide the best fit for your business, so you can focus on your unique strengths, not on basic technology.