

Digital transformation for housing

Small digital steps, big human impact



TL;DR

With over 1.2 million UK households on social housing waiting lists and **mounting pressures on housing associations to deliver services efficiently**, the case for digital transformation has never been clearer.

In 2025, housing associations delivered 49,000 new homes, but operational efficiency, tenant satisfaction and long-term resilience hinge on more than bricks and mortar. **This white paper redefines digital transformation for housing**: it is not about implementing new tools in isolation.

It's about rethinking culture, empowering employees, **placing tenants at the centre of services** and delivering measurable value through innovation.

In this paper, we'll focus on the practical. We'll explore the barriers housing associations face, share real examples of what works and provide a roadmap that starts where you are; without the hype.

From digital noise to strategic clarity

Digital transformation can sound like a buzzword. For housing associations juggling strained budgets, rising tenant expectations, ageing stock and an evolving regulatory environment, the term often sparks more anxiety than excitement.

The problem isn't a lack of intent – housing leaders want to modernise. The problem is the “digital noise”: the overwhelming choices in platforms, systems and jargon-heavy solutions that don't always reflect the day-to-day realities of housing providers. The real opportunity lies in stripping it all back and asking: what do our tenants need? What do our staff need? And how can digital tools be used, bit by bit, to meet those needs more effectively?

Digital transformation done well is not about massive upheaval. It's about small, smart steps. It's about freeing up housing officers' time by automating repetitive admin. It's about enabling a tenant to book a repair without waiting on hold. It's about giving staff visibility into repairs or arrears without switching between six different systems. And most of all, it's about ensuring technology serves people, not the other way around.

Why it matters...



81%

of leaders say digital transformation is vital to their success

Source: [Backlinko](#)



63%

of execs saw 2-year gains, often exceeding ROI expectations

Source: [KPMG](#)



26%

reported profit boost and 55% more product from adopting digital tech

Source: [RCADENY](#)

What's really holding us back?

Every housing association is on its own journey. Some are trialling AI tools to streamline maintenance calls. Others are just trying to get their data in order. Wherever you are, there's no shame in recognising the barriers first. That's not a sign of failure, it's the first step to genuine, sustainable progress.

Culture before code

Let's start with what's often the hardest to talk about: culture. You can buy the most advanced software in the world, but if your staff aren't brought along for the ride, or if they're overwhelmed, undertrained or unconvinced, then progress will stall.

Cultural resistance shows up in subtle ways: "We've always done it this way." "It's not my job." "This won't work for our tenants." And we get it. Housing is personal. Teams are close-knit. Change can feel like disruption. But change doesn't have to come all at once. In fact, it shouldn't. Real transformation happens when staff feel heard, involved and supported. When the conversation is less about systems and more about how we improve services together.



-65%

reduction in absenteeism seen by North Star Housing by reshaping leadership and boosting wellbeing

Source: People Management

Legacy thinking: safe, but stifling

It's completely understandable that housing associations, many with public-sector roots, prioritise risk management. But sometimes the systems and workflows we cling to are doing more harm than good.

Legacy systems and mindsets create repeated tenant requests, outdated repair schedules, and siloed, unusable data.

We need to make space for new thinking. That doesn't mean ditching everything familiar – but it does mean recognising that doing nothing is, in itself, a risk.

Skills and confidence gaps

Many teams lack the confidence to explore digital tools beyond the basics. It's not a question of intelligence; it's about time, training and trust. Staff need to know they'll be supported, not replaced. They need to feel part of the solution.

That's where partnerships and peer learning come in. We've seen excellent results from collaborative regional models, like Greater Manchester's Digital Blueprint, that bring housing providers together to share what works and pool resources.

3 hrs

a day are wasted by
48% of businesses due
to inefficient systems,
costing £28k annually

Source: Recordpoint

54%

of the UK workforce

lack proficiency in essential
digital tasks needed at work

Source: Cosmic

Data and security are important foundations

Roughly half of housing associations report low confidence in their data quality. Yet good data underpins everything. From identifying vulnerable tenants, to making the case for funding, to ensuring safety and compliance.

Add to that the growing threat of cyberattacks, and it's clear we need to treat digital infrastructure with the same seriousness as physical infrastructure.

Good transformation isn't flashy. It's often slow, methodical, and behind the scenes. But that's where the foundations get laid and where real resilience begins.

Real solutions, real benefits

When housing associations look to [digital solutions](#), they're not doing it to keep up with trends. They're doing it because tenant expectations are changing, teams are stretched and resources are tight. The good news? There are practical, proven technologies making a real difference on the ground.

Freeing up time where it matters most

Conversational AI, like [chatbots](#) and voice assistants, is transforming how housing associations manage incoming queries. These tools provide tenants with immediate access to information or services without needing to speak to a person. When paired with Robotic Process Automation, routine tasks like updating records, logging repair requests or checking account balances are carried out seamlessly. This frees up frontline teams to focus on complex issues, improving both tenant experience and staff efficiency.

Simpler smart forms and inboxes for staff

Smart forms help tenants submit accurate information quickly, while behind the scenes, data flows directly into housing systems. Staff avoid duplicating tasks and errors are reduced. [Smart inboxes](#) enhance this by automatically sorting and routing incoming communications to the correct team or workflow. The outcome is shorter resolution times, reduced manual handling and better service continuity, this is particularly valuable for overstretched customer service teams.

Modern contact centres are at the heart of tenant experience

[Contact centres](#) are evolving into unified service hubs where staff can interact with tenants across phone, email, chat, and social media; all from one screen. This integration means fewer handoffs, better context, and faster resolution. For tenants, it feels personal and responsive. For staff, it's more manageable and less frustrating. A modern contact centre brings cohesion to service delivery and strengthens the tenant relationship.

Stop chasing repairs, predict maintenance

By installing IoT sensors in properties, housing providers can monitor conditions like temperature, humidity, and boiler activity. These sensors flag issues before they become emergencies, allowing for scheduled maintenance rather than costly, last-minute repairs. This proactive approach extends asset life, reduces tenant disruption, and ensures homes remain safe and energy efficient.

Breaking down language barriers

Housing associations serve increasingly diverse communities. [AI-powered language translation](#) tools support tenants in their preferred language across chat, voice and email; instantly and accurately. This removes a major barrier to accessing services and ensures vital information isn't lost in translation. Multilingual digital engagement improves satisfaction and helps housing teams deliver more equitable service.

Build trust with branded calls and messages

Branded communication, tools that allow housing providers to display their organisation's name and logo when contacting tenants by call, text or messaging apps. This helps tenants quickly recognise who's trying to contact them, reducing the likelihood of ignored calls or mistaken identity. For providers, this means better response rates for appointments, rent reminders or urgent notices. These communications are not just more secure; they also reinforce tenant trust and create a more professional image. With integrated analytics, teams can track what gets seen and responded to, refining future outreach for better results.

A roadmap for housing leaders

Digital transformation isn't a side project. For housing associations, it's a strategic shift that demands leadership from the top and alignment across every department. It can't be left to IT teams alone, it won't succeed without clear vision, culture and commitment at board level. This section outlines a more robust roadmap to help leaders move from vision to action.

Step 1

Frame the imperative

Link digital change to your mission and highlight inefficiencies to build urgency

Step 2

Map maturity

Assess data, systems, capability, and tenant access to identify gaps and quick wins

Step 3

Set measurable outcomes

Define SMART goals tied to tenant impact, compliance, and efficiency

Step 4

Build leadership

Form a cross-functional team with clear accountability / authority to drive progress

Step 5

Focus on use cases

Prioritise service improvements first, then match technology to real needs

Step 6

Support people

Invest in communication, training, and champions to build confidence and buy-in

Step 7

Monitor and adapt

Track KPIs, gather feedback, refine continuously, and share lessons learned

How to sustain momentum and drive continuous improvement

Digital transformation is not a one-off project; it is an ongoing journey. Sustaining momentum requires housing associations to embed continuous improvement into the culture of the organisation. This means setting up structures that encourage feedback, learning and adaptation at every level.

Organisations should establish regular reviews of both technology performance and tenant satisfaction, using real data to inform iterative improvements. Dedicated digital champions or cross-functional working groups can help keep innovation alive beyond the initial implementation phase. Housing associations should also invest in keeping staff skills up to date, ensuring teams remain confident using digital tools as they evolve.

Finally, sustaining momentum means keeping tenants involved. Regularly consult with tenant panels or focus groups to ensure that new solutions continue to meet real-world needs and use these insights to shape future priorities. Transformation is not static, it's a continuous partnership between technology, staff and the communities you serve.

Plus Dane case study

Objective

For many housing associations, digital transformation isn't about shiny tech, **it's about fixing real problems**: tenants stuck in call queues, staff bogged down by admin and legacy systems slowing everything. Plus Dane Housing tackled these challenges head-on.

Problem

Owning 13,500 homes, Plus Dane needed a better way to connect with over 30,000 tenants. **Long wait times, poor visibility of demand and limited contact options** were creating frustration, as Ian Kelly, Director of Digital and Innovation says ...

*"Our telephony and contact centre platform was **inadequate for our needs**. We wanted a more reliable phone system and an omnichannel contact centre **so tenants could choose how they communicate with us**"*



Outdated phone systems



Poor visibility of contact demand



Tenants have long call wait times



Staff burdened by admin



Limited contact options



Inconsistent service capacity



Solution

Partnering with Britannic, Plus Dane implemented a cloud-based contact centre powered by 8x8. **Phone, email and WhatsApp were unified** so tenants could reach the team anytime, even when offices were closed. **Real-time queue management, automated email triage, and speech analytics** helped calls get answered faster and urgent cases prioritised.

Results

A pilot programme proved INBOX's ability to efficiently manage different types of resident queries—bins, council tax, benefits, and more—resulting in **fast, accurate routing and a noticeable improvement in response times**.

1 min

reduction in average call waiting times

10%

increase in answered calls without additional staff

About Britannic

We're an **award winning consultative technology solutions partner**, delivering successful outcomes to improve CX and operational efficiencies by using **data insights, expertise, strategic system design, and value driven managed services**.

Talk to the solutions people.

We know a thing or two about solving business problems. Since 1984, we've been matching business problems with the right technology solutions. Creating opportunities for growth, adding value and helping businesses disrupt their market. Digital transformation isn't for the faint hearted, but fortunately it's not a journey your business needs to do alone.

We work closely with businesses to understand their goals, processes and culture to develop personalised digital strategies. Building and supporting integrated solutions with network services, systems and applications that meet your end user needs and commercial objectives.

40 years in the business means we know a thing or two about delivering great customer service. Our team of engineers is world class. We're not just customer focused, we're customer centric.

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