Welcome to the Global Village

Sharon Steele – Head of Communication & Intelligence, First Ark Group
About the session

- Who we are
- Why did we create an app?
- How did we go about it?
- What the benefits are
- What pitfalls we experienced
- Our next steps
- Your views and ideas
Who we are

• Group structure - First Ark – formed October 2010
• 480 staff
• Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT) is the landlord in the Group
• Around 14,000 homes - Knowsley, Merseyside
• Vivark – our repairs and maintenance social enterprise

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTNqng7T8oI
Why did we create an app?

- Welfare Reform and its impact on income
- Mosaic Profiling and customer feedback
- Increased choices for customers
- Equality & diversity
- Value for money
- Opportunity – new website and customer portal

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yqHj1WXIHk
How did we go about it?

• Consultation with customers late 2011
• Engaged with teams about key services to offer – repairs; ASB, rent payments; feedback
• Project linked with new website, customer portal and allpay launch
• Reviewed app products already on offer but had to create something new to meet needs
• Worked with developer – Litmus Systems
How did we go about it?

- Driven by communications team
- Operational teams specified their needs e.g. ASB reporting; appointment slots; repairs
- IT team co-ordinated the interface with Orchard for rent balances and servers
- Security built in for rent balance – customers must register on the self service portal
- Testing and training
How did we go about it?

- iPhone version launched May 2012
- Android version Sept 2012
- Communications plan for the launch
  - Gathering email addresses and mobile numbers
  - Social media
  - Website
  - Community Day
Repair Selections for Plumbing

- Water
- Tank leaking

Additional details/comments:

Water leaking slowly from bottom of tank

Add up to three photos of the fault (optional):

- Photo 1
- Photo 2
- Photo 3

What would be the best days for your appointment?

- MON AM
- TUE AM
- WED AM
- THU AM
- FRI AM
- SAT AM
- MON PM
- TUE PM
- WED PM
- THU PM
- FRI PM

- Avoid school run

Submit
Guess the photo....!
Report comes through by email

• Fault Details:
  • Area Selected: Plumbing
  • Sub area Selected: Basins
  • Fault Selected: Taps - leaking

• Comments:
  • The tap on the kitchen sink constantly drips and also leaks from around the seal when turned on.

• Indicated Availability:
  • Tuesday AM: Avoid School Run

• Pulls through all the details as entered in registration screen
What the benefits are

- Over 400 downloads of the app to date
- Around five reports per week, mainly repairs
- Increased choice for customers – positive feedback in post-launch consultation
- Better visibility of rent balances for customers
- Internet / telephone card payments have increased by around 17%
What pitfalls we experienced

- Integration of rent section – time and IT team, not able to integrate repairs at present
- Some technical hitches – server; portal log in
- Android version more complex to design
- Reassurance for contact centre team
- Monitoring usage
- Getting statistics on payments
Next stages

• Next step of app communications plan
• Add other elements to the app - customer profiling and Property Pool Plus
• Wider use of apps and use for Vivark

• Your ideas and suggestions – over to you!
Keep in touch

• Download the app for free – search for Homefirst or KHT on iTunes
• Check out our websites www.k-h-t-org or www.firstark.com
• Talk to us through Facebook or Twitter