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for organisational improvement

Case Study:

## **Birmingham City Council Directorate of Adults & Communities – Elderly Persons Homes**



### **About the organisation**

- Name:** Birmingham City Council – Directorate of Adults & Communities – Elderly Persons Homes
- Size:** 1000 employees (within the Elderly Persons Homes)
- Industry Sector:** Provision of care to older adults

Elderly Persons Homes (EPHs) provide a residential care service in Birmingham. Plans are now underway to replace the 29 homes - built in the late 1960s and early 1980s - with purpose designed Care Centres providing high-quality facilities by 2012. Meantime, the Directorate is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of care in its existing homes.

In 2007 the Directorate set management and staff the challenge of developing and applying a quality management system that would place their service users at the heart of what they do. This included a commitment to the Seven Outcomes of the Government White Paper (Our Health, Our Care, Our Say) together with two additional outcomes involving leadership and effective use of resources.

### **Why choose the Customer Service Excellence Standard?**

Operations Manager Devinder Kalhan explained: "We chose to work towards the Customer Service Excellence Standard because its five criteria are totally in line with our quality management system objectives. We also sought the recognition and value of the Certification process - which is concise, focused and easy to follow."

He commented: "It's understandable to be hesitant in applying for CSE Certification on the basis that you are 'not quite ready yet,' but we would say 'go ahead and take the challenge now!'"

**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



The Government Standard

### **Implementation**

The Directorate has created an innovative customer journey mapping process involving the homes' residents in Life Story Books. Gathering information for the books helps meet the CSE requirement of focusing more on customer insight – and pinpoint particular needs.

EMQC assessor Mike Smith applauded the scheme, which is commended as a good example of customer journey mapping. "By involving service users and their relatives in telling stories about life events and cataloguing individual preferences and needs, Birmingham City Council has introduced valuable tools for providing continuing high standards of care at a time of significant changes to service delivery standards."

Working with the CSE Standard has also helped the Directorate to develop a more effective and dynamic process for measuring service excellence outcomes, leading to stronger partnerships within the service. The changes - made in consultation with team managers, staff and residents - include the development of local key performance indicators and customer and staff satisfaction surveys. Devinder explained: "We have moved away from target based objectives in favour of a more innovative outcome based measurement, linked to continual improvement."

### **What benefits have been gained?**

"Using the CSE Standard, which we achieved in May 2008, has enabled us to develop and refine our quality management system to a level that has raised standards of resident care," said Devinder.

The improved standards have been confirmed informally by favourable feedback and formally through the outcomes of service user satisfaction surveys. These indicate a distinct movement from 'satisfied' to 'happy with services' scores.

Devinder added: "Externally, we have received more favourable reports from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and also valuable feedback from the EMQC assessor during the assessment process. This is helping us to improve our levels of customer care even further."

He concluded: "Other measurable benefits are the improved levels of efficiency which have resulted from the 'teamwork spirit' generated by our journey to Certification."

