



## Committed to excellence

Lifeways helps people to lead more fulfilling, independent lives by providing extraordinary support for adults with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, acquired brain injuries or mental health needs.

The organisation was established in 1995, with the aim of providing support to help one person live more independently, and their first location for people with complex needs was opened the same year. Twenty five years later and Lifeways has grown to become the UK's largest supported living specialist, providing support to almost 5,000 people in more than 1,000 locations. And they still refuse to settle for anything less than extraordinary as they help people to have fulfilling, independent lives in their local community.

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### Goals

- Regain visibility and control of property management across the estate
- Reduce property maintenance costs
- Improve time to fix and service quality

### Results

- Avg. call-out costs dropped by 1/3
- Expected to reduce annual reactive property maintenance budget by 30%-50%
- Property team now have greater ownership and autonomy

## Business values that count

With a focus on quality and reassurance in everything they do, there is no room for compromise in any aspect of the Lifeways business. Every member of the team shares the same commitment to quality in their own role and seeks the most appropriate tools to enable them to achieve distinction in their own field. The size of the business brings reassurance and allows Lifeways to invest in their people and services to make sure they get the results they want.

## Growing estate called for property maintenance review

With one or two properties, it is relatively easy to monitor facilities management and maintenance, but with rapid expansion, including 900 new apartments in 65 communities from 2015 to 2020, Lifeways had outsourced day-to-day responsibility for projects to keep its properties safe, secure and fully compliant. Their quest for continuous improvement and outstanding service led to a review of existing processes and the formation of a dedicated property team.

Greg Robinson, incoming Head of Property explains "Using an outsourced call centre had provided the organisation with a functional option during a period of rapid expansion, but as we reviewed our operations, it became obvious that it didn't help us meet the standards of excellence we strive for. We had outgrown a service that had originally been put in place for convenience during a phase of expansion and no longer had visibility or control over the property management of the estate and knew that costs, time to fix and quality could all be improved."



*Access Maintain is simple, quick and accurate to use.*



## Choosing the right solution

Lifeways has a complex estate comprising many, and different, properties so it was essential to find a flexible and intuitive technology solution to help the team deliver an improved service. After scouring the market for options, Access Maintain shone through as the most appropriate choice.

“Some of the options we looked at required a licence for us to use them, were awkward to use and needed multiple clicks to get a job raised” continued Greg, “Access Maintain is simple, quick and accurate to use and can be open to multiple users. By registering our entire supply chain on Access Maintain, costs are locked in and we have the control to know which jobs are open, which contractor is attending – and when – giving full visibility of how much the work is going to cost in advance, rather than getting some nasty surprises afterwards.”

## Expectations

Moving from a temporary system without proper procedures, reviews of quotes or contractor performance, across to implementation of Access Maintain, delivered instant results. The average call-out cost dropped by a third in the first two weeks of use and introducing an audit trail gave immediate accountability. Ultimately, Greg and Lifeways expects that Access Maintain will reduce their annual reactive property maintenance budget by between 30% and 50%.

“The reporting structure delivered greater reassurance to the Lifeways Board” added Greg “as we were able to demonstrate that we had full control over what was being spent and that the value and effectiveness was being measured. This gave them the confidence to increase authorisation levels so that the property team have greater ownership and autonomy, making the property maintenance process even more efficient.”

“Our contractors also love us using Access Maintain as the automatic generation of PO Numbers gives them reassurance that the payment system is streamlined and that they can commence works as soon as authorisation is received. With checks and queries completed at the outset, they know they will be paid on time as there are no lengthy queries when the invoice is raised. They can also check that they have the right Health & Safety procedures in place and we can send out updates and special instructions to everyone quickly and easily, which was particularly helpful during the changing pandemic regulations.”



## Future ambitions

The Lifeways property team has found Access Maintain easy and intuitive to use and even the least experienced had soon mastered it. "The benefits of the technology were immediately obvious" said Greg "and we'll continue to refine how we use it to maximum effect. Where procurement and compliance can be integrated to have one sign on and need as few clicks as possible to navigate through open jobs, cost, authorisation, compliance, processing invoices and reporting, it makes a significant impact on a multi-site business such as Lifeways."

Access Maintain will provide a smooth process for statutory compliance and streamline getting the right contractor for the right job, at the right place and time and at the right price. It is contributing to greater accountability at quarterly contractor review meetings and delivers an overview of assets, flagging up potential problems before they happen. Instead of blindly repairing a boiler on a regular basis, for example, Access Maintain will highlight the recurring issue and we can decide whether it would be more cost effective to replace it. With the majority of the estate being leasehold, we need to ensure that we are complying with statutory requirements and providing a safe environment for our residents whilst being mindful of a landlord's property. The upcoming Estates Manager Module, enabling custom map builds and giving a map of areas that contractors can and can't work in will further enhance the systems functionality and operability when it is released.



**Get effective oversight and control across all your sites with Access Maintain.**

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### About The Access Group:

The Access Group is a leading provider of business management software to mid-sized UK organisations. It helps more than 35,000 customers across commercial and not-for-profit sectors become more productive and efficient. Its innovative Access Workspace cloud platform transforms the way business software is used, giving every employee the freedom to do more. Founded in 1991, The Access Group employs more than 2,900 staff.



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