

# PA Housing: transforming learning in the housing sector

## INDUSTRY

Housing

## KEY CHALLENGES

PA Housing needed to update its learning and development processes, which were outdated, inefficient and in need of transformation.

## SOLUTION

An implementation of Totara Learn and Perform, and acquisition of digital courses.

## The company

PA Housing is a registered provider of social housing offering more than 23,000 homes across the Midlands, London, and the Southeast, with a range of housing solutions from affordable rent to independent living and shared ownership for those in need. Their mission is not only to provide accommodation to their users, but to offer social value too.

This is especially important today, because the housing sector is facing many challenges, including those around the state of accommodation, and serving vulnerable residents.

In turn, this makes it imperative that employees have a strong digital learning solution where staff can be trained to the highest standard.

23,000

Homes

600+

Employees

5

Digital Solutions

## The challenge

PA Housing's learning and development processes were outdated, inefficient and in need of transformation. Some of their main challenges included:

- L&D requests were being processed via three different internal systems, resulting in a triplication of workflows, which could lead to errors.
- Digital learning was hosted on an external supplier's LMS, and a license cost had to be paid each time a module was completed. This was expensive and meant that only a small selection of digital learning could be offered to employees.
- There was no facility for managers to self-serve, to find information on the learning objectives of their staff, or the status of courses.
- There was a reliance on Microsoft Excel to deliver reporting, which was a time-consuming process open to human error.
- These barriers were holding PA Housing back in delivering learning efficiently, and weren't supporting accessible, blended learning that fitted different learning styles.

## A 360 solution

PA Housing were seeking a cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that would deliver a blended learning approach that could be accessed on different devices.

They also wanted a Performance Management System that would allow for an efficient, streamlined method of appraising staff, over a web-based solution.

With this in mind, Learning Nexus delivered a tailored digital learning package consisting of:

- Totara Learn (a learning management system designed to create an empowered learning culture)
- Totara Perform (a performance management system designed to drive productivity and innovation)
- Digital training courses for 500 users
- The Adapt authoring tool (a flexible tool to build and edit digital courses)
- Membership of our unique Housing Course Share (a community-based resource providing digital learning specific to the housing sector)

While the brand new LMS would allow staff members to access role-specific training and generate efficiencies in the management of content and reporting for managers, the PMS would mean probation periods could be managed along with monthly and annual appraisals and include the setting up of Personal Development Plans (PDP).

The new system would also integrate with iTrent, PA Housing's HR Management System. This would allow specific curriculums and development pathways to be introduced for different teams and functions, resulting in more focused learning based on organisational and individual learning requirements.

## The results: Broadening learning opportunities

The implementation project has brought a host of benefits to PA Housing, giving the organisation back precious time for other tasks, and skyrocketing the development of its people. Learning and Development Manager at PA Housing, Richard Reid, says:

"In terms of Totara Learn, it's moved us on leaps and bounds. Because of the way that we engage with our learners, it's really important to have a user-friendly system. It also gives back a lot of time compared to the ways that we were having to work before. That time can now be used more productively."

"Before, we were using an external supplier's LMS to host learning, but the functionality didn't meet our requirements. It was taking around 3 days a month to produce a report on compliance digital learning. Now, our managers have a live dashboard where they can see whose compliant or not at any given time."

"In terms of Totara Perform, we hosted our appraisal on it for the first time last year. Previously we used to have to input handwritten forms and put them onto an Excel spreadsheet, which was time-consuming and at risk of error. Now we've got a better system and can easily generate the reporting we need."

"It's broadening the opportunities for the development of individuals and the feedback on the use of the system is excellent."

## A defined learning portfolio

PA Housing's new learning and development platform has enabled the organisation to offer a much wider suite of learning to its people, supporting them in their job roles, personal development, and career development needs.

Meanwhile, blended learning within its Management and Career Development programmes has driven benefits within the organisation too.

## Looking ahead

It's clear that the new learning management system and accompanying training content has broadened opportunities for people development across the organisation.

As for the future, PA Housing's new features are set to play a key role in the transformation of learning and development. Richard concludes by explaining the organisation's goals for the coming year:

"Internally, the next steps are to set up development pathways for all job roles – identifying a curriculum of learning that will

provide the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will support employees to excel in their roles. The system is key to us being able to launch this because it's a way that we can assign that learning, and report on progress."

"We're also preparing for the introduction of the Social Housing Bill that's focussed on the competence and capability of staff in the housing sector. The LMS is going to be key to this because it's the conduit through which we can deploy and report on training."

Are you seeking a 360 learning solution? Contact us at [hello@learningnexus.co.uk](mailto:hello@learningnexus.co.uk) or on 01453 756000 to find out about how we can help you.

Contact us



Above: PA Housing's learning and development space, with their own branding 'iGrow'