

Responding efficiently to reported tree incidents

Flagship Group

The Challenge

- Improve the efficiency of tree works management

The Benefits

- Improved efficiency in the office and the field
- Rapid responses to urgent tree issues
- Better understanding and management of costs
- Improved customer service from high quality data



Flagship Group owns and manages thousands of trees and can receive up to eighty requests for tree work every single month, in addition to scheduled tree maintenance. It can now plan these tasks more efficiently using Esri's Workforce for ArcGIS and respond faster to any issues that might pose a risk to the public.

The Challenge

In a typical month, Flagship Group receives between fifty and eighty reports of issues relating to trees on its land – and this number can increase significantly following large storms. The housing association provides 28,000 homes for affordable and market rent and is responsible for thousands of individual and groups of trees, covering an area from North Essex to North Norfolk.

Previously, when tenants reported damaged trees in their gardens or employees noticed tree issues on land owned by Flagship Group, information was simply emailed to the organisation's in-house arborists. The team manager then had to rely on his local knowledge to plan work schedules for the arborists, and he allocated tasks by email. In the field, the arborists used pen and paper to gather data about trees and typed up information into spreadsheets when they got back into the office. Consequently, three arborists typically spent a whole week doing administration in the course of every month, which limited their ability to manage trees efficiently and effectively.

The Solution

Flagship Group had previously used Esri's ArcGIS platform to successfully improve the efficiency of its grounds maintenance workforce. The organisation therefore decided to adopt a similar approach and developed an integrated solution for tree works using Esri's Workforce for ArcGIS and Collector for ArcGIS, integrated with Microsoft PowerApps (part of Office 365).

Once responsibility for the tree is established using ArcGIS Enterprise mapping, information from an employee, tenant or member of the public is recorded via a PowerApp form. The relevant details are exported using Microsoft Flow and programmatically uploaded to Esri's Workforce for ArcGIS solution, where an assignment is automatically generated. The lead of the tree works team then uses Workforce for ArcGIS to view the locations of jobs and operatives on an interactive map, allocate the task to an arborist and schedule tasks according to priority. Workforce for ArcGIS includes real-time functionality, allowing the arborists to receive notification of urgent jobs near their current location, as they are assigned.

In the field, arborists use Workforce for ArcGIS on iPads to see their job list. When undertaking tree work, they can capture before and after pictures using Workforce for ArcGIS, and the solution automatically records useful data, such as the start time, pause time and completion time of each job. The arborists also use Collector for ArcGIS on their iPads to view tree data, confirm trees are the organisation's responsibility, amend asset information and collect new data to update Flagship Group's central database.

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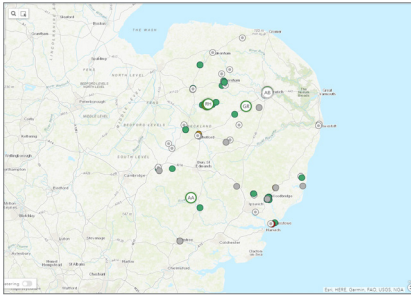
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“Esri’s Workforce gives us really valuable information, so we can continually improve the efficiency of our tree works and deliver better services for our customers.”

Victoria Green, Business Intelligence Developer, Flagship Group



Location of outstanding and completed works and operatives

The Benefits

An efficient tree works management process

The ArcGIS-based solution has freed up weeks of employee time per year, improving the efficiency of the entire end-to-end tree works process. In the office, the lead arborist no longer has to log individual requests for services and manually plan work schedules. Equally, arborists have access to better information in the field and no longer have to type up notes back in the office. “One team member commented that it took him just two hours to complete a task that previously would have taken a day,” says Andy Blackman, GIS Developer at Flagship Group.

Rapid response to public safety issues

Using Workforce for ArcGIS, Flagship Group can respond far more quickly to any public safety issues that might arise from damaged trees. Blackman explains: “When a request is logged, it becomes visible to the team manager on Workforce for ArcGIS almost immediately, and he can dynamically assign the job to the arborist who is nearest to that location. Within ten minutes of an urgent tree incident being reported, all the relevant information can be in the hands of the right person, in the best location, and the potential hazard can be dealt with quickly.”

Effective management of costs

The data collected by Workforce for ArcGIS helps Flagship Group to make better-informed decisions leading to cost efficiencies. For instance, the organisation can ensure tree jobs are priced correctly, based on actual time taken, and billed to the relevant internal departments or the customer. The organisation can also analyse historic data on tree falls and undertake pre-emptive pruning to reduce costly emergency jobs. “Esri’s Workforce gives us really valuable information, so we can continually improve the efficiency of our tree works and deliver better services for our customers,” says Victoria Green, Business Intelligence Developer at Flagship Group.

Improved customer service

Flagship Group can now deliver an improved service for its customers, because its central geospatial database of trees is improving in quality all the time. “When customers call the contact centre to discuss a particular tree, our staff can be confident that the data they are viewing shows accurate information,” says Blackman. “Because Collector for ArcGIS is so simple to use, it just takes a couple of minutes for field workers to amend our tree records and keep our asset data up-to-date.”

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