

# Housing – Managing through change – Time management

A short guide by Virtual College

# How can housing professionals boost their productivity by improving their time management?

The housing industry can be an extremely busy and fast-paced sector to work in, with any changes that come in often making working life even more hectic for housing professionals.

In recent months, the announcement that Britain is to leave the European Union (EU) in the near future has caused ripples of concern throughout various sectors, with housing no exception. The aftermath of June's Brexit referendum led to the appointment of a new prime minister, Theresa May, who swiftly appointed a largely new cabinet.

With new ministers looking after the UK's communities and housing briefs, different policies are likely to be introduced over the next few years, meaning professionals working in this industry will have to get their heads around any such changes, alongside managing their already busy day-to-day schedules.

So, with this in mind, how can housing professionals manage their time better in order to be more productive, but without increasing their stress levels?





## Keep calm and carry on

When a new policy affecting your work is introduced by the government or your local authority, it's likely that you might feel a sense of apprehension about getting to grips with a new way of doing things on top of your daily tasks, such as making property visits and tackling paperwork.

But it's important not to panic, as this will only lead to important time being lost. Instead, take some time to make sure you're fully up to date with the latest housing sector changes and to ask for any clarification that you might need and then begin applying the new processes to your work straight away.

If you delay implementing a change, you may need to spend extra time in the future going back and making changes to any work you did during this period, so optimise your time and don't waste any by getting on with the job as soon as possible.



## Take advantage of organisational apps

If you're the type of person who struggles with day-to-day time management, then it's advisable to take advantage of the myriad of organisational apps that are now available.

For example, apps including Trello, Evernote and Momentum all have functions that allow you to write down your to-do list and easily move items around, whether you're on a desktop PC in the office or out and about using your smartphone while meeting tenants.

Momentum automatically opens each time you open a new tab, greeting you with a motivational message and a list of the items you have left to tick off, alongside showing you a beautiful picture from a variety of locations around the world to keep you feeling inspired when you're distracted or busy.

Apps can help you to improve your time management skills by keeping you on track and reminding you of what needs doing on those days when you're feeling overwhelmed.



## Spend time working out your priorities

Before writing a to-do list, it's important to work out your priorities, as this will also help you to better optimise your time.

Looking after residents and protecting their wellbeing and safety are key priorities for all housing professionals, alongside ensuring compliance with the latest regulations.

With this in mind, any tasks that centre around these should always be at the top of your to-do list, and you should never be afraid to delegate duties to colleagues to ease your load and allow you to better manage your time.



## Don't neglect your well-being

Effective time management can play a huge role in making sure your mental health and wellbeing remain in a good condition too.

Disorganisation can lead to stress, panic and anxiety, in turn putting you at risk of depression and potentially physical illnesses as well.

In an interview on the NHS website, Emma Donaldson-Feilder, a chartered occupational psychologist, explained: "Spending more time on something doesn't necessarily achieve more. Staying an extra hour at work at the end of the day may not be the most effective way to manage your time."

She added that breaks are important for improving time management too, as time away from the office is not necessarily wasted time, but time for you to refresh your motivation.

"As a general rule, taking at least 30 minutes away from your desk will help you to be more effective in the afternoon. Go for a walk outdoors or, better still, do some exercise. You'll come back to your desk re-energised, with a new set of eyes and renewed focus," Ms Donaldson-Feilder recommended.

## Sources

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<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/top-15-time-management-apps-and-tools.html>

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