



# Railway Housing Association

MGI Case Study



## Proud past, exciting future

“MGI has provided us with a hard-wired culture with a step change in terms of excitement and engagement, enabling us to hit the ground running and deliver change quickly. It’s been phenomenal and invaluable.”

Matt Sugden, CEO, Railway Housing Association



### Background

The Railway Housing Association (Railway) Executive Team engaged MGI Learning to partner with them to deliver improved resident satisfaction, increase colleague engagement, improve communication and ensure that everyone in the team was equipped to manage a diverse range of resident needs. Together, we devised the ongoing ‘Building the Railway Team’ programme based on our unique Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit, implementing the methodology required to deliver strong foundations for cultural and organisational change.

Railway owns and manages over 1,600 rented, leased and shared ownership homes in 20 local authority areas, mainly concentrated in the areas of Darlington, Doncaster, Durham, East Riding, Hull, Leeds, Newcastle, York and Hereford. The organisation has a rich and proud history and was originally formed to provide homes for railway workers returning from the First World War and their families and celebrated its centenary in 2019. Its mission remains true to its legacy to provide good quality, desirable and affordable homes for residents in need of housing, these days from all walks of life.

Railway prides itself on its legacy of delivering high-quality services. The organisation faced increasing sector-wide challenges as well as its regrading in November 2023 by the Regulator of Social Housing from a G1 to a G2\* company in terms of governance. Incoming CEO, Matt Sugden joined the company in April 2023 and he and his team are committed to driving up customer metrics through increased colleague engagement and satisfaction.

As strong advocates for continued learning and development, the Railway Executive Team understood that the implementation of a robust customer service training programme would be the catalyst for a reinvigorated culture to support a refreshing reset of the company’s values and an exciting future.

Having been introduced to the benefits of MGI’s unique Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit and our extensive experience in the social housing sector in a previous role, Matt and his team partnered with us as customer excellence training provider. We collaborated with the Railway Executive Team to undertake a thorough discovery process to identify specific areas for improvement and set the foundations for building strong relationships, tailoring the programme accordingly.

## Implementation

In order to build a more customer centric culture across the entire organisation it was agreed that all Railway team members would undertake 1-Day face-to-face training called 'Building the Railway Team' delivered by an MGI consultant. This was followed by access to MGI's comprehensive, online Learning Journey which embeds the learning and equips everyone with the skills and resources to:

- Have a 'can do' approach to all interactions with customers, colleagues and partners through positive, empathetic and effective communication
- Significantly increase customer satisfaction
- Support an increased focus on delivering a resident experience culture across Railway

MGI also worked with members of the Board and a small cohort of residents representing the resident voice to further support the overarching strategy to strive for customer excellence.

In addition, managers and early adopter volunteers throughout the company attended further MGI training at a Champions Day to reinforce their skills and enable them to successfully support their colleagues in embedding the new skills into the everyday culture of the business. Champions are supported to create their own action plan and to excel in demonstrating the use of the Toolkit to their colleagues. They then provide support, guidance and coaching on the tools to help embed them into the team's everyday interactions with colleagues and customers.

Railway's whole leadership team is actively involved in the training process, endorsing and role-modelling the tools and ensuring that management are supported in leading the embedding across all of their teams. Regular huddle sessions led by managers and Champions give everyone opportunities to practise using the tools in real life situations. MGI huddle materials help to bring the learning to life and include interactive short sessions with video refreshers, discussion and activities with some intervening activities between sessions.

An MGI Complaints Masterclass followed to increase knowledge, consistency and confidence in the Railway team's ability to handle complaints effectively, using real life scenarios. Excelling at handling complaints is a vitally important focus to ensure Railway performs well against annual regulatory measures on resident satisfaction.

**"There has been a transformational shift in our response to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints over the last year. MGI has played a major part in that."**

Chris Marshall, COO, Railway Housing Association

To demonstrate Railway's commitment to their learning culture and to excelling in service, refresher training in MGI's Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit is planned and will include the induction of new key members of the Railway team into the Railway service ethos.





## Outcomes

Following the training, Railway saw significant improvement in both colleague engagement and resident satisfaction with complaints handling, together with their positive approach to feedback, being recognised by the Housing Ombudsman. The key results were as follows:

- Response within time frame to Stage 1 Complaints up from 68% in 23/24 to 100% so far in current year 24/25 (up 32%)
- Response within time frame to Stage 2 Complaints up from 16.7% in 23/24 to 100% so far in current year 24/25 (up 84%)
- Railway’s Annual Complaints Report highlighted positively in the best practice section of the Housing Ombudsman’s ‘Quarterly complaint handling report: Setting a positive complaints culture’, recognising a positive approach to feedback
- Most recent colleague survey shows Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) of +28 (‘very good’) indicating that ‘Railway is building a great foundation of maintaining a good employee experience... Colleagues are engaged and having a positive experience overall.’ This represents a significant uplift to the previous year’s internal colleague engagement survey

## Conclusion

The success of the ongoing ‘Building the Railway Team’ Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit training programme and partnership with MGI illustrates the importance of investing in a soundly based, proven training initiative where colleague learning and development is a key driver to customer excellence, with all the satisfaction that delivers to everyone involved. By addressing communication, empathy and how to manage anything that comes their way at work in a solution-focused way, the team at Railway is able to significantly improve resident satisfaction and colleague engagement underpinned by a strong foundation of cultural change.

As well as focusing on successful embedding to achieve consistent application of the tools right across the business, the next stage of the ongoing partnership between MGI and Railway will be a deeper focus on Complaint Handling and specifically resident satisfaction around complaints. Once the firm foundations for delivering the basics brilliantly are in place, the Railway Executive Team would like to engage contractor partners on the journey, with knowledge of the Toolkit and the MGI language and actions skills cascading out to cover those who have the most interaction within the actual homes of Railway’s resident base.

“We are on a journey and have a long way to go. What MGI has helped us to do in year one – and we see it as a long-term partnership – is to understand how important our people are and the part they can play in terms of transforming the organisation and enabling our vision to be the best small housing provider in the country.”

Matt Sugden, CEO, Railway Housing

\*The Regulator of Social Housing’s Governance Gradings: G1 – the provider meets our governance requirements as set out in our governance and financial viability standard, and G2 – the provider meets our governance requirements, but needs to improve some aspects of its governance arrangements to support continued compliance.

## MGI Learning 1-Day Training Programme (Achieved NPS score of 87.5 - Source: SmartSurvey Results)

### Comments on the MGI training from Railway participants:



“Excellent day, very enjoyable whilst learning a lot of brilliant information.”

“Amazing day, training, amazing, best training I have ever attended.”

“Really enjoyed the learning session. The facilitator (Julie) was so engaging, helpful and supportive. Looking forward to using the Toolkit. Would highly recommend!”

“It was great, fresh and engaging. Julie is a fantastic facilitator.”

“THE BEST course I’ve ever been on. So much to take away and apply. Literally game changing.”

“Great day with loads of different tools and techniques to take away. Fantastic delivery from Julie which was fun, engaging and packed with knowledge bombs. Thanks Julie.”



To find out more about how we can help you to achieve your goals for successful, long-lasting training through our Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit, or to book a chat with us, please contact us.

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