

EVH Annual Conference

From AI integration to Westy

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Association

Introductions

- Jennifer Cairns, Director of Corporate Services
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Content of Presentation

Overview: to share how we are using Artificial Intelligence in a practical housing association environment.

- What is AI?
- Why and how did we start?
- New Policy, Governance Framework & Risks
- Examples of successful projects
- Lessons Learned & Future AI Projects
- AI Tool Demo
- Questions?

What is Artificial Intelligence?

AI can be defined as the use of digital technology to create systems capable of performing tasks commonly thought to require human intelligence.

AI is constantly evolving, but generally it:

- involves machines using statistics to find patterns in large amounts of data, or
- the ability to perform repetitive tasks with data without the need for constant human guidance
- generative AI (gen AI), a technology that can create original text, images, video and other content.



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What is Artificial Intelligence? - Benefits

Based on our experience, machine learning AI can benefit WSHA Group in a number of ways:

- provide more accurate information, forecasts and predictions leading to better outcomes (e.g. analysing large amount of data)
- improve our customer services (quicker, more responsive)
- automate repetitive and time-consuming tasks (which frees up valuable time of frontline staff and offers greater job satisfaction).

BUT.....We are very much at the start of our AI journey!



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Why and how did WSHA start using AI?

Why?

- Individual Staff Interest
- Feedback from wider staff group re workload and time-consuming tasks
- Leadership Discussions around Failure Demand

How?

- Establishment of AI Working Group - Not IT Led
- AI Checklist
- New Project Sign Off - IT Project Board



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Risks, Policy and Governance Framework

- Risk Overview
- AI Policy
- Governance Framework
- Regular Review and Board Monitoring



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EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS



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What AI Tools do we use?

- Chatbase (Custom ChatGPT) – Not for personal data
- Microsoft Power Automate
- Microsoft Power Apps
- Microsoft Co-Pilot
- Google API



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Examples of successful AI projects

Housing Options:

Issue

Delay in processing housing applications – staff frustration and demotivation

AI Solution

- Responsive email system with no staff input
- What size of property do they need, what area are they looking for etc

Outcome

- Fully automated with 8778 responses to requests from applicants since launch in December 23
- No backlog of housing applications, applications processed in a few days at most rather than months.
- Freed up staff time to work on other tasks e.g. customer satisfaction surveys, improved response times for customer calls etc



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Examples of successful AI projects

Policy & Procedure query.

Issue

We have so many Policies and Procedures that it can be difficult to quickly find the correct approach to take to a situation.

AI Solution

- Centralise all company policies and guidance into one accessible platform
- Instant answer to policy or procedure query
- User-friendly interface
- Planned Maintenance Programme
- HR Chatbot



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Examples of successful AI projects

SOR Seeker

Issue

Repairs staff being unable to quickly identify the correct SOR code to use from thousands of SOR codes containing extensive information.

AI Solution

- With a quick query to our "SOR Seeker," you'll receive the relevant code within seconds.
- Submit a list of required repair works, and it will generate the corresponding SOR codes

Outcome

- Improved repairs processing
- Reduce staff workload



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Examples of successful AI projects

- **Westy our customer Chat Bot.**
- Westy combines reliability and efficiency to provide you with precise, dependable answers—always "fetching" the best information to make life easier. It can also share links to forms, PDF documents, and informative videos on topics such as damp and mould.



- Since Launch on the 29/11/24
- Successfully supported 696 users.
- Responded to a total of 3,416 questions and queries.
- It automatically engages with users who mention mould, prompting them for further details. This is the only trigger that requests contact information, allowing us to receive a notification and follow up directly.

LESSONS LEARNED & FUTURE AI PROJECTS



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Lessons Learned from AI Projects

- **Main lesson – Valuable resource that can free up staff time and improve customer service**
- Pace of Change
- Not always the solution, existing systems and software may have the answers
- Wrong answer – highlights a data issue that needs fixed
- Good Learner
- Test, Test, Test
- Always need to have an option of speaking to a real person
- Recognise that customers and applicants are also using AI.



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Future plans for AI projects

List of possible future projects:

- Incorporating AI into mailbox to prioritise emails
- Analyses of patterns in asset management data to improve investment decisions
- Tenants asking “Westy” when their kitchen etc is due for replacement!

WSHA Key Business Objective for 2025/26:

- ***Develop a plan to identify and review inefficient working practices to benefit our customers and improve job satisfaction.***

Westy Demo



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Questions?



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