



# Southern Housing - Stock Condition Surveys

## THE PROJECT

FFT were appointed by Southern Housing (formerly Optivo), to deliver a comprehensive programme of stock condition surveys following a thorough review of their existing asset data and survey configuration. Initially set over a three-year timeline, the project was designed to cover 35,000 homes and associated buildings. However, following Optivo's merger with Southern Housing Group (SHG) to form Southern Housing, the scope was expanded to include an additional 25,000 legacy SHG properties. The project now encompasses 60,000 assets and has been extended to a 6-year term, projected to conclude in 2026.

The surveys are capturing condition data, HHSRS information and energy performance data in RdSAP format. Due to the merger, two different software platforms are being used: Innovation Apex for legacy Optivo assets and Keystone Foundation for SHG. As the project has progressed, our role has expanded to assist with the client's transition to a single asset management database.

## OUR ROLE

FFT is responsible for providing high-quality stock condition, RdSAP and HHSRS data, and energy performance surveys across all 60,000 assets, utilising the distinct software systems of the merged organisations.

Beyond data collection, FFT project manages all aspects of resident access coordination, working closely with tenants to maximise successful survey completions. A key strength in our approach lies in our 19-person in-house team, which allows us to maintain clear communication, organisation and consistency. We coordinate all appointments internally, resulting in notably higher access rates. To date, we have completed over 42,000 dwelling surveys and have achieved an 87% access rate across the whole general rented stock.

### CLIENT

**Southern Housing**

### LOCATION

**London, South East, Isle of Wight and West Midlands**

### CONTRACT VALUE

**£2.6m**

### DATES

**July 2020 - Ongoing**

### SECTOR

**Housing**

### SERVICES PROVIDED

**Stock Condition Surveys**

## THE CLIENT

Southern Housing is one of the largest housing providers in the UK with around 80,000 homes across London, the South East, the Isle of Wight and the Midlands, giving over 167,000 people somewhere affordable to call their own.



## CHALLENGES

Appointed in early 2020, we faced immediate disruption due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns delayed access to residential properties, prompting us to shift our focus to communal block surveys while residential access was restricted. In order to recover lost time and mitigate programme slippage, we expanded both our field and back-office teams.

The portfolio spans an eclectic range of premises spread throughout Greater London, the South East, the Midlands and the Isle of Wight. COVID-related travel restrictions, such as the closure of overnight accommodations, forced us to redesign our scheduling model. We adopted a geography-based deployment strategy, prioritising surveyor assignments based on proximity to minimise travel and meet safety requirements.

Due to the merger of Southern Housing Group and Optivo, complexity arose from the use of two separate asset management systems. When software access was unavailable, but the client needed surveys to be undertaken, FFT implemented an in-house data collection software, with mapping into the client's Data Management System once restored.

## ADDED VALUE

Our expert Stock Condition Survey team brings over 80 combined years of experience at FFT, ensuring a high level of technical oversight and strategic guidance throughout the project. The team hold weekly internal project reviews and provide the client with detailed progress reports, maintaining transparency.

This project has positioned FFT as a trusted partner in Southern Housing's long-term improvements to their asset management software and risk area focussing for surveying priorities.

FFT have an agreement of specific social value commitments which will benefit residents, these include completing training courses for interview techniques, self-defence classes, providing washbags and college bags and sponsorship of charity projects and events.



## THE OUTCOME

The project has significantly increased Southern Housing's asset data quality, enabling more accurate long-term forecasting and efficient short-term works programming.

Recognising the project's success and FFT's added value, Southern Housing extended the programme by an additional year to support their transition to a single asset management database solution and re-procurement of stock condition surveys.



*"Throughout the five-year programme, FFT have shown great flexibility and focus on evolving client requirements, overcoming significant challenges first from COVID restrictions then subsequently re-design of service and programme following our merger and systems integration. The quality control framework provides us assurance that our data is robust and enables us to prioritise investment to ensure our homes meet the standards and are safe for our residents to live in."*

**Dritan Uka - Director of Strategic Asset Management at Southern Housing**

