



# CASE STUDY

## HOUSING & CARE 21



During the winter months, it can be particularly challenging to ensure that vulnerable groups remain safe. Any accident, where the organisation is at fault, is not only upsetting and can have a harmful effect on the involved person's wellbeing, it can also have a negative impact on the business through the threat of litigation claims, loss of reputation and increased insurance premiums

### OVERVIEW

SITES

64,360 m<sup>2</sup>

AREAS

Car parks

Pathways

Asphalt areas

RESOURCES

14 operators

SCOPE

Mechanical  
gritting

Manual gritting

Snow clearance

Housing & Care 21 is a leading national provider of retirement housing and care services for people aged 55 and over. It delivers affordable, contemporary, person-centered care and housing to meet individual needs, and to improve wellbeing and promote independent living. The not-for-profit organisation operates in over 150 local authority areas in England, managing around 19,000 retirement and extra care apartments for more than 22,000 residents.

Housing 21 aims to be the lead provider of housing and care services and strives for continuous improvement and innovation to offer its residents the best experience. It is committed to providing a forward thinking service by developing new and innovative future service models and by delivering tailored solutions that do not simply adopt and apply standard responses. Housing & Care 21 properties offer security and safety, peace of mind and independence.

### The Challenge

Most Housing & Care 21 sites are independently run by a Court Manager who has traditionally relied upon the local grounds maintenance team to provide winter maintenance, gritting and

pedestrian snow clearance. This has been carried out on a reactive basis, often at short notice because of sudden weather extremes.

The need for a more managed system has often led to communications issues with suppliers, including lack of proof of service and invoicing issues. A lack of specialist expertise has also led to salt damage of landscaped areas.

### The Solution

Echoing the organisation's ethos of supporting a quality experience through innovation, Mark Allum, contracts manager for Housing & Care 21, wanted to move away from an ad hoc service and to encourage a more proactive approach to winter risk prevention. In 2014, he teamed up with OUTCO to help mitigate the hazards posed by ice and snow and to create a clear process for service activation, service levels, evidence of attendance and escalation.

Over the first winter season, Housing & Care 21 piloted OUTCO's proactive service at 40 of its schemes in the North East and South West. **"Because our residents are very vulnerable to winter, we were on the hunt for a reliable national provider**



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**of winter services,”** commented Mark Allum. **“The goal was to ensure that, across the country, all our courts and schemes can receive the same consistency, quality, and reliability of service that OUTCO is known for.”**

### The Result

The success of the pilot scheme, coupled with OUTCO’s flexible business model, allowed Housing & Care 21 to offer and actively promote the OUTCO service across the UK.

This has been greatly welcomed by some 50 scheme managers, with a growing take-up. **“During the pilot, we put OUTCO under real pressure and they demonstrated great professionalism and delivered a first class service,”** explained Allum.

Local court managers can now rely on the experience and expertise of an established, national provider, with a bespoke site survey and risk assessment, and a quality service delivered by local teams.

OUTCO’s use of sophisticated weather data; a rigorous fully automated, yet flexible, management system that precisely meets the client’s gritting and snow clearance

requirements; and tracking technology for real-time alerts and proof of attendance, means that **“communication is now first class,”** according to Allum. **“OUTCO is contactable and responsive, and gives superb support from management right through to operator level. I wish all contractors were as responsive and flexible as they are. They are professional, prompt and deliver a job well-done.”**

As well as providing a service that supports the safety and wellbeing of Housing & Care 21, the winter maintenance service that OUTCO delivers provides added peace of mind in terms of risk management and sustainability. **“One of the many things we liked about OUTCO is their commitment to employing and training people from the communities they serve, which is very important to us,”** says Allum.

OUTCO uses marine salt which is a renewable resource and, when used correctly by trained professionals, restricts damage to landscaped areas and adds value to an organisation’s sustainability policy.