



## Case Study:

### Guinness Northern Counties



## Background

Guinness Northern Counties provides a wide range of services including care and support, neighbourhood investment, housing management and rental or ownership opportunities to residents in over 26,000 homes located in the North of England.

It is part of The Guinness Partnership, one of the largest affordable housing and care providers in the country, which owns and manages over 60,000 properties and continually works to build neighbourhoods where people want to live.

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### Situation

Guinness Northern Counties aims to deliver high quality services that are good value for money, but most of all it wants its customers and residents to be satisfied. So when a resident moves out, Guinness Northern Counties sets to work to make sure that properties are turned around and made ready for the next resident as quickly as possible. Not only does this ensure that waiting lists for housing are kept to a minimum, but that void properties are brought back into use to generate rental income that can be reinvested into improving neighbourhoods and the property estate.

### Solution

Guinness Northern Counties appointed VPS in January 2010 to undertake a £100,000 (per annum) contract providing clearing and security services on an ongoing basis. The VPS team maintains strong communication links, liaising with the client daily to allow Guinness Northern Counties to allocate work on a flexible basis, in case properties aren't accessible to be cleared and secured.

Review meetings are held at least quarterly and address any issues so that the VPS Account Manager and Service Centre Manager can take immediate action.

Appointing a company that specialises in void property solutions means that the properties can be efficiently cleared within specified deadlines, often with as little as 24 hours notice required. VPS clears the property of general rubbish and undertakes garden clearance. Additional services such as fumigations, needle sweeps and graffiti removal are also supplied, when required. Turnaround times for completing these jobs can vary from 24-48 hours.

If a property needs securing to protect it from the threat of vandals, squatters or arson attacks before a new resident takes occupancy, Guinness Northern Counties can call on VPS to rapidly deploy steel security on windows and doors to stop intruders gaining access while the property is vacant. VPS can also install discreet electronic security such as the VPS SmartAlarm, in a matter of hours. Sensors provide immediate detection and report on a range of incidents including intruders, flooding and fire. Entirely free-standing they use wireless GSM mobile phone technology and a long life battery so neither mains power or a phone line are required.

### The Outcome

VPS clears on average around 8 properties per week for Guinness Northern Counties and completes approximately 20 security related jobs, with over 99% completed on time.

Nigel Bennett, Buyer at Guinness Northern Counties, said: "We want to deliver high quality services which are good value for money. Working in partnership with VPS we're able to continually look at ways to improve our services for customers. The quality of work VPS undertakes meets our high standards and Key Performances Indicators. By employing a specialist company, we can concentrate our resources on helping our tenants and customers, knowing that VPS will take care of providing vacant property services to meet our customers' expectations."

For a vacant property solution call us on **08706 087062** or visit us at [www.vpspecialists.co.uk](http://www.vpspecialists.co.uk)