The Property Operations and Supply Chain SaaS Buyer's Guide 2025.

for housing associations

Plentific

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Software: The overlooked mechanism for widening operating margins under mounting pressure.

Mounting Challenges for Social Housing Providers

The RSH's recent Sector Risk Profile report (Oct24) highlighted that over the last year, the financial stability of local authorities and private registered providers has faced mounting challenges. The report acknowledged that these difficulties stem from both internal and external factors, such as persistently high interest rates driving up borrowing costs and unprecedented spending on maintaining existing properties. In our State of Social Housing 2024 report we unpicked the reasons for the increased spending, from builder shortages and material price hikes to significant regulatory requirements coming into effect and putting extra pressure on margins.

Dwindling Surpluses, Less Room for Error

Landlords' ability to deliver more high-quality social housing depends on adequate resources, which are, worryingly, beginning to lag. A *Social Housing* analysis published in November 2024 found that the combined pre-tax surplus of the largest housing providers across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales fell by 39% over the past year. With financial flexibility shrinking, the regulator has warned that effective management is now critical, as there is little room for error in decision-making.

Nothing ever changes if nothing changes

The right software is arguably one of the most effective ways to reduce the margin of error. While many providers are aggressively cutting costs – turning to traditional measures like staff redundancies to boost margins – others are taking a bolder, more sustainable approach to future-proof their operations. They are investing in purpose-built social housing software to enhance decision-making with data-driven insights and lower costs through more effective operations.

Regardless of their stance on software procurement, most would agree that property operations and supply chain software will be crucial in withstanding the pressures of 2025.

How to choose Property Operations (PO) software for the long haul

However, with so many providers out there, and recognising that it's a long-term, high value investment, what should housing providers look out for in a modern PO solution to ensure they get it right? What are the key benefits it should deliver on and the valued innovation it should bring to the table? And perhaps just as important, what are the hallmarks of a reliable provider of such a software?

This guide aims to provide guidelines on the biggest questions that housing providers should be asking when considering the procurement of property operations software-as-a-service.

Key Benefits.

It's clear that the nature and speed of change in the UK's social housing sector will demand smarter, more efficient solutions to meet increasing pressures. With a renewed focus on repairs and maintenance, sustainability, the recent deployment of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the upcoming implementation of the revised Decent Homes Standard, housing providers face mounting challenges.

A modern property operations (PO) software should therefore offer housing providers a robust tenant communication module to enhance engagement, and a comprehensive maintenance module to streamline repairs and upkeep. By incorporating AI with predictive capabilities, PO software can automate recurring tasks, easing the workload on already stretched teams at a time when budgets leave little room for expansion.

Below follows an overview of the most valuable benefits that the right PO software will deliver.

Key Benefits.

1 Enhanced Tenant Satisfaction.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has released its analysis of the 2023-24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) results for registered landlords managing 1,000 or more homes, with input from nearly 500,000 tenants. The findings revealed that 70% of tenants in social housing expressed satisfaction with the overall service provided by their landlord, while 19% reported dissatisfaction. Only 35% of tenants who had made a complaint in the past 12 months were satisfied with how their landlord handled it.

Crucially, the report highlighted that a tenant's perception of repairs and property maintenance is the single biggest driver of overall satisfaction. A modern Property Operations solution can directly address this perception by empowering residents to report repairs at their convenience, enabling housing providers to make better-informed decisions about service delivery. With an intuitive, device-agnostic repairs interface, both residents and call centre teams benefit from seamless reporting, while system administrators gain access to a powerful editor to streamline processes and improve response times.

Key Benefits.

② Compliance Transparency.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) now demands regular reporting on tenant satisfaction, complaint handling, and property conditions through measures like the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and its Economic Standards. A good PO software will continuously collect and consolidate all compliance-related data – ranging from maintenance records to tenant communications – into a single system, making audits faster and more accurate. other regulations, while reducing the administrative burden.

③ Better Control of Supplier Costs.

Property Operations software allows housing providers to manage supplier relationships and costs with greater transparency and control. Through built-in procurement tools, providers can track supplier performance, monitor costs, and identify inefficiencies. For example, the software can often automate comparisons of contractor quotes or trends in supplier overcharging. All of which help housing providers to avoid unnecessary expenditure, improve budget forecasting, and secure the best value for repairs, maintenance, or outsourced services.

Key Benefits.

4 Faster Resolution of Repair Requests.

Property operations software can significantly improve the reporting, tracking, and resolution of repair requests to reduce the time it takes to deliver a service. With integrated tenant portals, residents can report issues instantly, attach photos, and monitor progress via automated notifications. Simultaneously, providers can assign repairs to the most suitable contractor based on availability, location, and cost. All of which delivers a higher level of tenant satisfaction.

5 Reduced Void Periods.

Shorter void periods mean families in need can access homes faster, aligning with social housing providers' core mission. In addition, and in a time when providers' margins are under pressure, maintaining rental income and minimising housing stock underutilisation via property operations software, is proving to be a game-changing strategy for some of the UK's largest housing providers. By automating processes like end-of-tenancy inspections, repair scheduling, and tenant onboarding, downtime between occupancies is significantly reduced. In addition, predictive insights can help identify homes at risk of vacancy and pre-plan necessary maintenance or re-letting procedures.
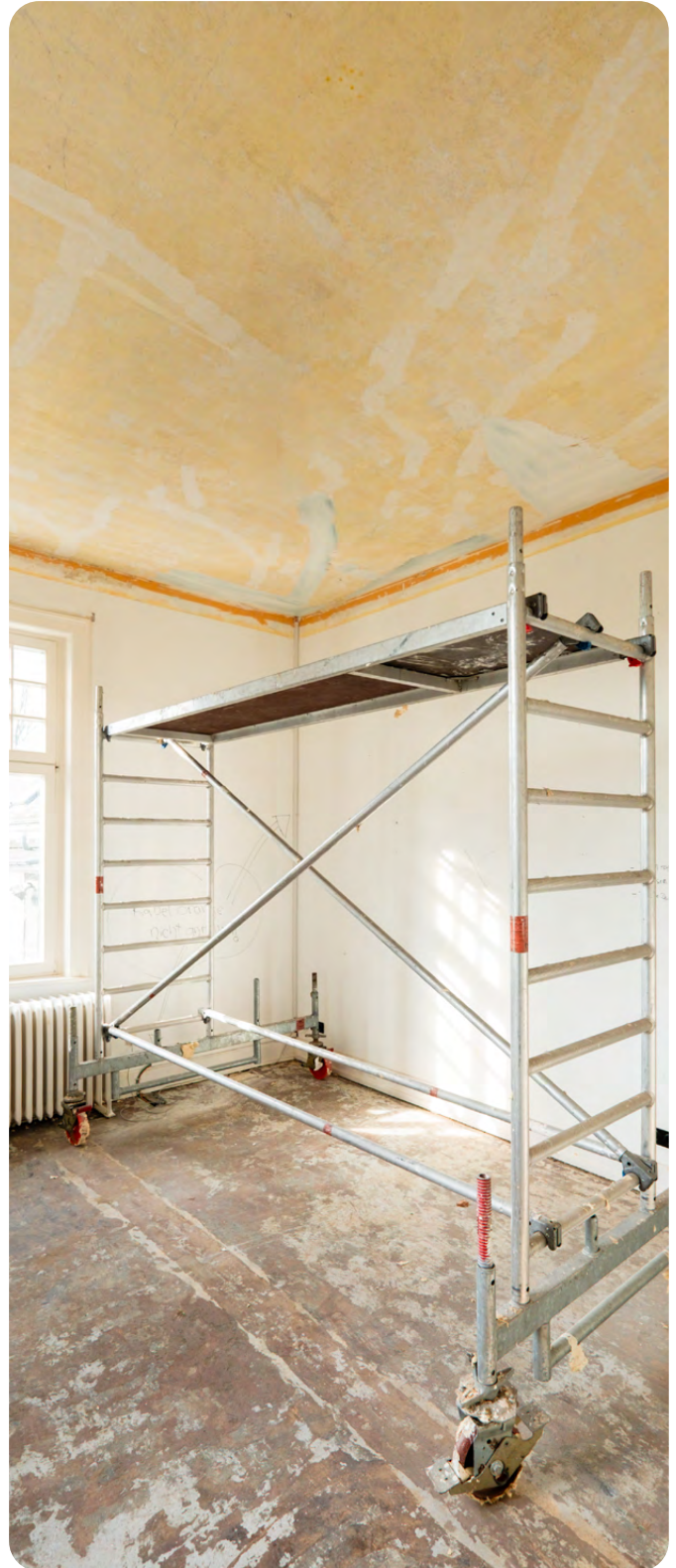
Key Benefits.

⑥ Damage and Disrepairs Prevention.

A robust, predictive maintenance module, powered by AI and data analytics, enables housing providers to identify and address issues before they escalate into costly disrepairs. By analysing maintenance history, sensor data (such as smart meters), and tenant reports, property operations software can predict common failures like leaks, damp, or boiler breakdowns.

The right software will help providers to proactively tackle mould and damp, thereby reducing repair costs, extending the lifespan of assets and most importantly, improving tenant living conditions. This shift from reactive to proactive repairs is critical when viewed from the perspective of escalation to disrepair status.
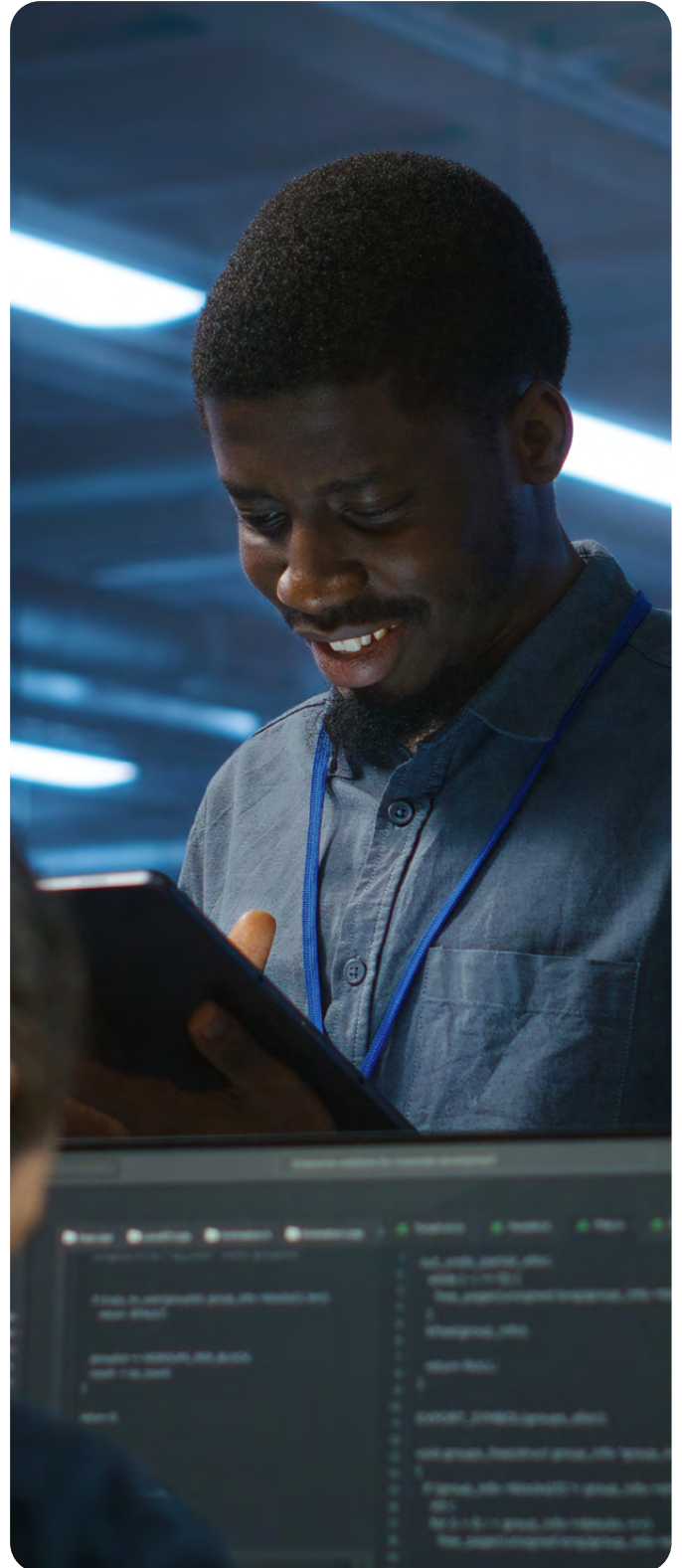
The Housing Ombudsman has recently reported an "unprecedented rise" in disrepair complaints. The sharp increase not only raises serious safety concerns, but also places additional financial strain on providers through fines, compensation payouts, and escalating repair costs. The issue is further compounded by a shortage of skilled labour and mounting pressure from claims management companies that are actively pursuing disrepair cases for financial gain. By adopting the right technology, providers can mitigate these risks, minimise penalties, and safeguard their reputation in a sector facing heightened scrutiny.

Key Benefits.

7 Optimisation of Existing Resources.

With constrained budgets and limited staff capacity, operations management software enables providers to optimise their resources effectively. Automation of routine tasks – like rent collection, appointment scheduling, and tenant communication – frees up staff time for higher-value activities, such as strategic planning and tenant engagement. AI-powered tools also ensure optimal scheduling of repairs, assigning the nearest available contractor to reduce travel time and costs. Given that housing providers face a plethora of additional operational pressures, maximising the impact of existing resources via PO software, is essential for maintaining service levels without increasing overheads.

8 Enhanced Decision Making.

Data-driven decision-making is vital for improving operational performance and reducing costs. Property operations software offers advanced analytics tools that generate insights into asset performance, repair trends, tenant satisfaction, and financial health. For example, providers can identify underperforming properties, analyse recurring complaints, or forecast maintenance budgets with far greater accuracy if they have the right software available. These insights enable leaders to make informed, proactive decisions to improve service delivery and cost efficiency. Analytics also help providers demonstrate accountability to stakeholders and regulators by showcasing measurable outcomes and areas of improvement.

Core Capabilities.

When evaluating property operations software, prioritise a platform that orchestrates and centralises the following key capabilities and features into a unified solution, enabling better coordination and control of operations.

Data Access Control.

Key features to look out for

1. Role-Based Permissions

Modern property management software ensures that sensitive tenant data remains protected by enabling role-based access control. This allows administrators to assign permissions to staff based on their role, ensuring only authorised individuals can access specific information.

2. Enhanced Data Security

By limiting access to confidential data, the software helps organisations comply with data privacy regulations while maintaining tenant trust and operational security.

Core Capabilities.

Compliance Transparency.

Key features to look out for

1. Centralised Compliance Tracking

The software acts as a central hub for managing building safety and statutory compliance across your property portfolio. Customisable trackers and standard templates streamline reporting, ensuring consistency and accuracy.

2. Visual Documentation

Inspection photos and videos can be securely stored and shared, providing transparency for stakeholders and reducing ambiguity in compliance reporting.

3. Bespoke Compliance Tools

Users can build and tailor compliance trackers to suit specific business needs, ensuring housing providers meet evolving regulatory requirements efficiently.

Inspection Management.

Key features to look out for

1. Automated Scheduling

Simplify inspection routines with automated scheduling tools, calendar integration, and reminder notifications. This reduces manual effort and ensures inspections occur consistently and on time.

2. Real-Time Progress Visibility

Gain a clear overview of inspection progress with tools that provide bespoke templates, photo and note attachments, and instant sharing capabilities. These features enable real-time reporting and in-depth insights while reducing operational overheads by up to 50%.

3. Improved Documentation

A digitised inspection process enhances accuracy and transparency by allowing teams to attach detailed notes, images, and reports directly to inspection records.

Resident Communication and Engagement.

Key features to look out for

1. Multi-Channel Communication Tools

The software should support various communication channels, including email, SMS, in-app messaging, and push notifications. These channels should work together in real-time to ensure transparent communication across residents, operators, and service providers, all within a single, cohesive platform.

2. Feedback Mechanisms

Tools for collecting resident feedback on repairs, services, and overall satisfaction are essential for continuous improvement.

3. Community Building Features

The RSH's Neighbourhood and Community standard requires providers to go beyond merely providing a place to live, but to also help nurture a positive wider environment for residents. The right PO software will include features to foster a sense of community among residents, such as online forums or notice boards to help support community projects.

Repairs and Maintenance Management.

Key features to look out for

1. Centralised Platform

A modern PO software should be able to connect residents, operators, and service providers via a single platform – enabling real-time communication and orchestration throughout the repair process, thereby reducing time to resolution.

2. Resident Self-Service Portal

A dedicated portal for residents that allows 24/7 reporting of issues, tracking of repair progress, and provision of feedback on contractor performance.

3. Automated Work Order Management

A system that will automate the creation, assignment, and tracking of work orders, based on criteria like the type of repair, location, and contractor availability. This automation minimises manual effort and ensures timely responses to resident requests.

4. Real-Time Cost Tracking and Control

With the pressure on margins being what they are, the ideal PO software should enable providers to track repair costs in real-time, establish cost frameworks for contractors, and monitor pricing practices to ensure budget certainty and prevent overruns.

5. Contractor Management

The software should include a series of easy-to-use features for service provider management, including performance tracking, rating systems, and communication tools – all of which are essential for ensuring quality service and accountability.

6. Access to Vetted Talent

A modern solution should provide access to pre-vetted contractors and skilled professionals to tackle workforce shortages – such as the limited availability of roofers in the UK – ensuring quick mobilisation and competitive cost visibility. This guarantees a reliable and high-quality talent pool that housing providers can access as and when they need it.

7. Dynamic Supply Chain Management

The software should ensure a seamless, end-to-end repair process with features like dynamic scheduling that considers service providers availability, travel distance, and service level agreements to allocate jobs efficiently. For maximum benefit, the system will allow for two-way uploads and updates, which means residents should be able to upload fault photos, track job progress, receive updates, and even rate completed repairs through the platform.

Integrated AI capabilities should instantly automate job categorisation, match tasks with appropriately skilled professionals, and optimise workflows to deliver a higher rate of first-time fixes. Crucially, the right system will allow providers to shift workloads across the supply chain to manage peaks and troughs, ensuring SLA adherence and operational resilience during high-demand periods.

Core Capabilities.

Voids Property Management.

Key features to look out for

1. Automated Workflow Management

Minimise vacancy periods by automating key tasks such as scheduling inspections, tracking repairs, and communicating with stakeholders.

2. Centralised Data Management

Manage all void property projects across your portfolio from a single, unified platform to eliminate data silos and improve coordination across teams.

3. Real-Time Property Status Tracking

Monitor void property projects in real time, whether small or large scale. The ideal PO software should provide live updates on property status, helping teams meet SLAs, optimise workflows, and reduce key-to-key turnaround time.

4. Standardised and Customisable Processes

Users should have access to pre-built or customisable void management templates to standardise workflows. This consistency helps to reduce errors, and ensure that every void property follows a clear, repeatable process.

5. Team Coordination and Accountability

Look out for tools that provide greater visibility, accountability, and task delegation amongst your teams. It should also help you to track progress and assign responsibilities to ensure everyone stays aligned on the delivery requirements and timelines.

Planned and Predictive Maintenance Capabilities.

Key features to look out for

1. Data Analysis and Insights

Look for a system with robust analytics that can process repair histories, sensor data, and property condition assessments. This helps identify trends and predict future maintenance needs, allowing you to address issues before they escalate.

2. Automated Alerts and Recommendations

A good solution should automatically flag potential maintenance risks based on data insights and recommend preventative actions. This reduces the chance of costly failures and helps prioritise tasks effectively.

3. Planned Maintenance Management

Ensure the software supports cyclical work orders for routine scheduled tasks, such as boiler servicing or safety inspections. This guarantees essential maintenance is never missed, reducing unexpected breakdowns and extending asset lifespans.

Project Management for Complex Projects.

Key features to look out for

1. Streamlined Project Workflows

Look for modules that simplify the delivery of critical business priorities, such as disrepair cases, damp and mould management, and capital investment programmes. The software should ensure tasks are organised and executed efficiently, particularly when adhering to regulatory SLAs.

2. Centralised Monitoring

A centralised platform is essential for planning, tracking, and managing complex projects. It should offer real-time visibility into timelines, progress, and resource allocation, enabling better control and faster decision-making.

3. SLA Compliance

The system should include tools to track milestones and measure performance against strict regulatory timelines. This ensures projects stay on schedule and aligned with compliance requirements, helping to avoid delays and penalties.

Data Management and Reporting.

Key features to look out for

1. Centralised Data Repository

A single source of truth is vital for effective decision-making. The software should consolidate all property-related data, including inspection records, repair histories, tenant information, and financial details, into one accessible location.

2. Real-Time Data Accessibility

Modern property management requires access to live, up-to-date information. The software should ensure teams, whether in-office or remote, are always working with the latest data to avoid delays and errors.

3. Automated Data Capture

Minimise manual data entry with automated tools that collect and update information from multiple sources. This not only saves time, but reduces errors and ensures the accuracy of critical data.

4. Customisable Reporting and Analytics

Each organisation has unique needs. The software should provide customisable reporting and analytics tools to track KPIs, monitor trends, and generate actionable insights for decision-making.

5. Compliance with Regulatory Requirements

Built-in features that align with regulatory reporting standards, are essential. This ensures housing providers remain compliant, avoid potentially hefty fines, while at the same time reducing administrative effort.

Hallmarks of a modern Property Operations software supplier.

Choosing your next (or first) Property Operations solution is not just about choosing the right set of features to get the job done. It's also about choosing a reliable, stable partner who can deliver and support the software for its full lifespan in your organisation.

The right supplier will not only deliver the features you need today but also continuously develop their solution in lockstep with the demands of the industry, its regulations and best practices to help your organisation stay ahead of the curve.

Integration and Scalability.

A modern property management software supplier should be able to offer a smooth integration with other tech solutions in the industry, and scale as your organisation grows.

Integration with Existing Systems

Your PO software should be able to integrate with mission critical systems in your tech stack, such as finance platforms, accounting tools, procurement systems, and CRMs for operational efficiency.

Open API and Marketplace

An open, REST-based API allows providers to integrate third-party tools and tailor the software to their specific needs. A marketplace for pre-built integrations extends functionality, offering flexibility and agility to adapt to changing business requirements.

Scalability

The ideal provider will be able to demonstrate how their solution will scale alongside your organisation, whether managing small portfolios or expanding to thousands of units. It should maintain performance and stability as demands increase, accommodating growing complexities without disruption.

Cloud-based Solutions.

Cloud-based property management software offers substantial benefits over on-premises systems:

Accessibility

Your teams can securely access the software from any location, enabling remote work, real-time collaboration, and improved service delivery for residents.

Cost Efficiency

With cloud solutions, there's no need for expensive hardware investments or costly maintenance – updates, security patches, and performance upgrades are handled automatically.

Scalability

Cloud platforms allow organisations to scale operations up or down quickly, accommodating portfolio growth or changes without disruption.

Enhanced Security

Leading cloud providers implement robust security protocols, including data encryption and regular backups, to mitigate risks and protect tenant information.

Resilience and Reliability

Cloud solutions offer greater uptime and disaster recovery capabilities, ensuring continuous operations even in unexpected circumstances.

Onboarding.

The onboarding process sets the tone for a successful software adoption journey. A good provider will:

Provide a Structured Implementation Process

Experienced providers will deliver a clear, step-by-step onboarding process tailored to your organisation's needs, ensuring minimal disruption to ongoing operations.

Offer Training and Resources

Comprehensive training for staff – including interactive sessions, webinars, and a knowledge base – is critical to help teams use the software from day one, and as time goes on, to its full extent to ensure your organisation gets the most value from the features. Make sure it's available.

Assign Dedicated Onboarding Specialists

Ask about the experience of the onboarding team that will guide your team through the configuration, data migration, and testing phases to ensure a smooth transition.

Customise for Your Organisation

The larger your organisation, the more you will need tailored workflows and system configurations that align with your existing processes and business objectives – check that the provider has a track record of delivering projects like these for organisations similar to yours.

Hallmarks of a modern Property Operations software supplier.

Support.

A trusted software partner offers ongoing, proactive support to ensure optimal system performance.

24/7 Availability

Access to dedicated support channels, including phone, email, live chat – and an out of hours emergency line – are critical to resolve issues quickly and with minimum impact on your teams.

Proactive Monitoring

High-performing suppliers monitor system health to identify and resolve issues before they impact operations.

Escalation Pathways

A clear process for handling complex support queries ensures timely solutions without compromising productivity.

Knowledge Base and Documentation

A well-maintained repository of resources, including FAQs, how-to guides, and troubleshooting manuals, empowers teams to resolve minor issues independently.

Customer Success.

Customer Success ensures housing providers achieve long-term value from their software investment. Look for the following customer success markers when evaluating your technology partner:

Strategic Support

Will your account have a dedicated customer success manager (CSM) who will work with your organisation to optimise software usage, monitor KPIs, and identify growth opportunities.

Regular Check-Ins

Do they offer periodic reviews to help assess progress, gather feedback, and ensure the software aligns with your company's growth goals.

Supply Chain/Vendor Management.

A modern PO software supplier should empower you to build a resilient and scalable supply chain to meet resident demands effectively.

Dynamic Contractor Management

The platform should help housing providers better manage contractors, ensuring workflows scale up or down as demands fluctuate.

Vetted and Pre-Approved Marketplace

The right software partner can actively source, vet, and pre-approve new contractors in your chosen regions, which is of particular help when expanding into a new region. Depending on the sophistication of their Marketplace, a supplier like Plentific is also able to recruit suppliers on your behalf.

Preventing Disrepairs

By giving providers access to a flexible pool of trusted suppliers, the software helps resolve repairs quickly, preventing them from escalating into costly disrepair cases.

Data Security.

A modern property management software supplier must have a robust security posture to protect sensitive tenant and organisational data. When selecting your software partner, the following should be key considerations:

GDPR Compliance

Ensuring data is handled in line with GDPR and other global privacy regulations, with clear processes for data retention, access requests, and deletion.

Enterprise-Grade Security

Encryption, multi-factor authentication, and secure hosting infrastructure safeguard residents information against breaches.

Regular Audits and Monitoring

Proactive monitoring and regular security audits ensure vulnerabilities are identified and addressed promptly.

Data Backup and Recovery

Automated backups and disaster recovery capabilities protect against data loss, ensuring operational resilience.

An AI-Minded Development Culture.

A software supplier with an AI-driven development culture will enable housing providers to access cutting-edge functionality within the software, delivering operational efficiencies and financial legroom.

Predictive Analytics

AI-powered modules are increasingly able to accurately forecast maintenance issues, disrepair risks, or tenant needs based on historical data – allowing housing providers to take proactive action.

Process Automation

Routine tasks such as scheduling inspections, generating reports, or managing work orders can be automated, reducing manual workloads.

Data-Driven Insights

Advanced analytics and AI algorithms uncover trends and actionable insights, empowering housing providers to make smarter decisions.

Continuous Innovation

A supplier committed to AI innovation will ensure the software evolves with new features that improve efficiency, reduce costs, and optimise operations.

By choosing a supplier with a strong AI focus, organisations position themselves for long-term operational success, innovation, and sustainability.

Want to know more about Plentific's property management software?

At Plentific, we have extensive industry experience in transforming housing organisations towards operational excellence with property operations software. Take the first steps towards improving your operational efficiency and resident experience and talk to our specialists.

Talk to us

About Plentific.

Plentific is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform and tech-enabled Marketplace developed to connect owners, operators, service providers, and residents in a single place, facilitating real-time property operations. Recognised for its award-winning solutions, Plentific helps streamline operations, unlock resources, enhance resident satisfaction, and ensure asset safety. Users benefit from data-driven insights that prompt action, resulting in tangible impact.

Plentific's solutions include Work Order Management, Resident Selfservice, a Tech-enabled Contractor Marketplace, Contractor and Internal Workforce Management, Inspections and Compliance Management.

Committed to building stronger communities where people can thrive, Plentific leverages technology to enhance the lives of 3M+ residents and businesses of 5,000+ service providers worldwide.

Plentific