

HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

APR/MAY 2020



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for housing

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standards
extended

£1 billion extra for
cladding removal

New satisfaction
survey
introduced

Big drop in
rough sleeping





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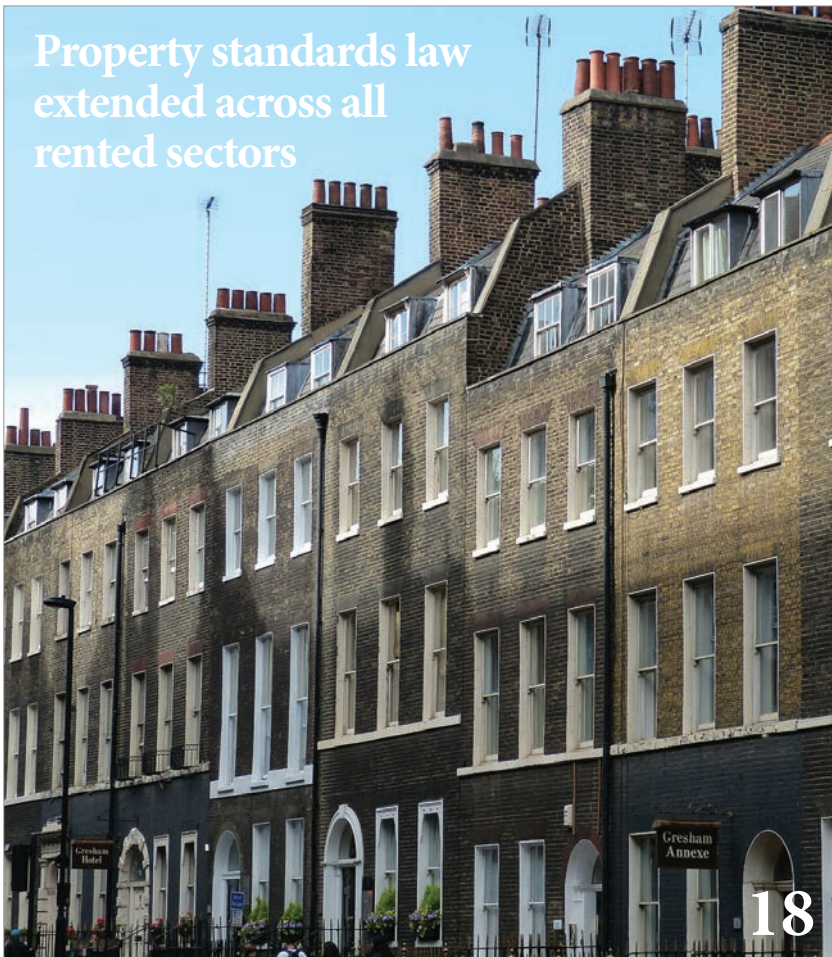
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Editor's comment

Huge housing agenda to deliver, once the pandemic is over



Patrick Mooney,
News Editor

It's very difficult right now to think of anything other than the Coronavirus crisis which has been sweeping the world in recent months and shutting down whole countries, economies and communities. At the time of writing we cannot be sure what sort of world and society will emerge from the current crisis. However, we can be sure that thousands, if not millions of people, will still be living in unsuitable homes; that thousands of others will be without a home and that countless others will have an issue with their tenancy – whether it is a rent query, a complaint about an unsatisfactory service, or a repair to a boiler or a kitchen cupboard that needs sorting. Life goes on and as far as we can, we need to get back in the saddle as quickly as we can once it's safe to do so while recognising that for many, this will be impossible for various reasons. The fact that housing officers at social and private landlords were not automatically included in the list of key workers at the outset of the virus in Britain, was a huge surprise to myself and to many, many others. Housing staff provide vital services to millions of tenants every day and every week of the year. For many tenants they are often the only human contact they receive on some days.

HOUSING ISSUES BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN

Before the virus crisis broke in mid March, the Grenfell Tower inquiry had just resumed. After several weeks of hearing evidence it seemed we were no further forward in learning the truth about how and why the tragedy unfolded in the way it did. Everyone was blaming everyone else for the tragedy. No one was willing to take responsibility for their part in the fire. But it's clear a lot of bad decisions were made and cutting costs keeps rearing its ugly head. It seems incredible that the inquiry could run for another two or three years (after the lockdown is lifted) and only conclude when we have witnessed the fifth anniversary of the fire. Hopefully by the time that inquiry chairman Sir Martin Moore-Bick has presented his findings and made his recommendations, the construction sector will look, act and behave in a very different manner to how it did pre-Grenfell. Over a billion pounds has been committed to making thousands of tall buildings safe to live in. But surely we should never have got into this situation if tenants were treated like true customers and listened to when they pointed out problems in the refurbishment project. Going forward much is riding on the implementation of the Hackitt Review. But we also need to ensure that residents who have valid complaints are listened to and where appropriate, their concerns are acted upon and problems are resolved. We also need to encourage and listen to whistleblowers from within companies and landlord organisations. Until we have an environment in which legitimate anxieties can be raised without the fear of reprisals, then we do not stand a chance of righting the many wrongs that exist.

A NEW FORM OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The new Housing Ombudsman has set out his stall to deliver an improved and more responsive service, aimed at quicker investigation and resolution. He also wants to identify learning points and trends, so that lessons can be learned. Let's wish him the best of luck and every success in delivering the planned changes. The regulator is also raising its fees in order to provide a stronger, more proactive service. In many respects it could do worse than to re-introduce housing inspections to champion the cause of tenants and to keep landlords on their toes. Times have changed but the co-regulatory model has possibly had its day and does not appear to have delivered the promised benefits, in terms of better outcomes at a lower cost. The most important thing is to ensure a cultural change takes place. Service excellence and correcting mistakes needs to take priority over lowering costs, cutting corners and increasing profits. The service quality aspect of value for money needs to be brought back and put centre stage. Councils across the country are trying to re-enter the housebuilding industry, to ensure that sufficient low rent homes are developed for families on low incomes. Too much taxpayer money and Whitehall effort is still being focussed on house ownership initiatives, ignoring the fact that 40 per cent of the population either cannot afford or do not want to commit themselves to home ownership. Rough sleeping remains a massive problem but it is to the Government's credit that it has committed a rising budget of over £300 million to resolving this problem, while also setting its sights on eliminating rough sleeping altogether. For the moment much of our normal daily lives are on hold, until the pandemic is over. But when it's over, we have a very full housing agenda to work on and deliver. Let's ensure we get it right this time.

Patrick Mooney



On the cover...

Martin McCrimmon of CMS Window Systems explains why window and door specifications need to take a holistic view on sustainability for wider social and environmental benefits.

See page 31.

Grenfell inquiry suspended indefinitely due to virus

The Grenfell Inquiry has been suspended for the 'foreseeable future' in response to the Coronavirus health crisis and associated work restrictions, as the country struggles to cope with a widespread lockdown.

Inquiry chairman Sir Martin Moore-Bick announced: "We very much regret that it has been necessary to take this step and we shall be giving careful consideration to whether it is possible to resume hearings using electronic means, but even if that is not possible the work of the Inquiry will continue."

This latest delay follows the break in evidence while immunity from prosecution for the witnesses was dealt with. It almost certainly pushes back the completion date for the phase two of the inquiry into 2022, or even later. The fire happened almost three years ago in June 2017 and justice appears to be on hold for the victims and their survivors.

Prior to its suspension, the inquiry had been hearing from the fire engineer who wrote the fire safety strategy for the Grenfell Tower prior to its refurbishment.

Ms Cate Cooney's evidence revealed that she had spent just 15 hours on the project and she never visited the site in person, when working for the fire consultancy Exova. She had relied on information given to her by a colleague and the strategy report was only a first draft, which included a lot of "unknown" information.

Exova went on to produce draft fire safety strategies for the refurbishment of the building in October 2012 and 2013. These strategies said the plans would have "no adverse effect" on the building in relation to external fire spread, but cautioned that this conclusion would need to be confirmed in a future issue of the report. No such future issue was ever written.

Exova reached their conclusion despite being aware that a rainscreen cladding system was proposed for the tower featuring combustible insulation, although they did believe that less combustible zinc cladding panels would be used.

Previously we heard that the main architects for Grenfell's refurbishment were given the work because they were working on a school project next door. The firm and its staff lacked relevant

This latest delay follows the break in evidence while immunity from prosecution for the witnesses was dealt with. It almost certainly pushes back the completion date for the phase two of the inquiry into 2022, or even later. The fire happened almost three years ago in June 2017 and justice appears to be on hold for the victims and their survivors

experience and they admitted they would not have won the job, if there had been open tendering. Ways were found to keep their fee below the level that would have triggered an open competition.

The selection of the insulation and cladding panels appears to have been similarly afflicted with poor decision-making, with various participants in the project being aware of the flammability of both, but cost saving considerations had led to their selection and use.

Spring Budget 2020 – a big boost for housing

This year's budget contained a package of measures to provide a boost to a housing sector struggling to deliver safer accommodation after Grenfell, while at the same time facing growing demands for good quality rental properties that people can afford. The main spending commitments reflect some of the housing sector's calls for funding certainty, for support to remediate unsafe buildings and action on rough sleeping. The headlines included, the following:

- An expanded Affordable Homes Programme committing £12bn over five years;
- A £1bn building safety fund for removing unsafe cladding; and
- New funding to address rough sleeping.

Many of the details are still to be confirmed by the Treasury and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, but this represents a good start. Clarity is needed on the types of tenure that the Affordable Homes Programme will fund, how building safety funding will be allocated, and the Government's plans for First Homes and the Right to Shared Ownership.

The Affordable Homes Programme is to receive an extra £9.5bn, creating a new £12.2bn five-year programme from 2021/22. This should give housing associations additional certainty over future investment.

A new £1bn Building Safety Fund is being made available to remove all types of combustible cladding from social and private high-rise buildings of 18 metres and above. The funding is additional to the £600m ACM Cladding Remediation Fund. The new money will be targeted particularly towards leaseholders and landlords who cannot afford to remediate buildings.

Extra funding for rough sleeping has been announced on top of the recent £236m committed for accommodation for up to 6,000 rough sleepers. The new funding consists of £144m for support services and £262m for substance abuse services.

Other announcements covered:

- New exemptions from the Shared Accommodation Rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants to protect those at risk

of homelessness. This will allow rough sleepers aged 16-24, care leavers up to the age of 25, and victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking to get the one-bedroom rate of LHA. It will support people's recovery from homelessness through improving access to the private rented sector.

- To help people receiving Universal Credit, from October 2021 deductions (including for rent arrears) will be reduced from a maximum of 30 per cent to 25 per cent and the repayment period for loans will be extended to 24 months.
- In response to the coronavirus outbreak, the Government is temporarily removing the Universal Credit minimum income floor for self-employed people directly affected. They have also relaxed rules on job centre attendance so that anyone infected with Covid-19 or required to self-isolate will not need to undergo a Work Capability Assessment or provide a fit note to claim Employment Support Allowance, or the equivalent under Universal Credit. A £500m Hardship Fund was also announced for local authorities.

Key regulatory tool put on hold due to coronavirus

England's regulator of social housing has decided to pause its programme of in-depth assessments during the current coronavirus crisis.

The regulator said that any IDAs already under way in mid March would either be completed online or deferred, while it would not start any new assessments. It said the situation would be kept under review.

IDAs - where the regulator's staff review information on providers, request a variety of documents and carry out on-site interviews as well as observing Board meetings - are one of the main regulatory tools currently in use.

However, they are also labour intensive and use up a lot of resources at both the regulator and at the housing associations being assessed. They require a lot of planning and generally have a long lead-in period, with HAs normally given several months notice of the time they can expect an IDA.

The regulator said it still expects social housing landlords to inform it of anything that may relate to non-compliance with its standards. This could range from a failure to complete safety works in a timely manner, or breaking a financial covenant.

"As ever, our regulatory approach remains proportionate and we will take account of the circumstances, including those arising from the impact of coronavirus," it added.



Local authorities award new multi-year contracts for repair and improvement of council houses

A leading social housing maintenance company has landed two multi-million pound contracts to deliver a range of repair and maintenance works to local authority clients.

Wates Living Space has been appointed by Crawley Borough Council to deliver a ten-year programme of responsive repairs, planned maintenance and work to refurbish void properties across the West Sussex borough from April.

Wates is one of two contractors employed to carry out responsive repairs to Crawley's stock of 9,400 residential properties and 5,000 garages over a ten-year period.

Crawley's cabinet member for Housing, Councillor Ian Irvine, said: "This is great news for our council tenants, who will continue to receive top quality service. Here at the council we have a thought process to ensure we get the best possible deal for both the organisation and our residents."

Meanwhile in the Midlands, Wates Living Space has been reappointed by Tamworth Borough Council to deliver a ten-year programme of housing repairs across the borough.

The council's recent three-year contract with Wates ended on 31 March. The new 10-year agreement is valued in the region of £50 million and will see Wates undertake planned works to the council's 4,200 houses, including new kitchens, new bathrooms, external work and any other planned improvement projects.

Cllr Michelle Cook, Tamworth Borough Council's cabinet member for Housing Services and Communities, said: "Providing decent affordable homes is one of our main priorities and represents a significant proportion of council spending. This means we have to achieve the best value for money possible, while ensuring our housing is of a high standard and that the service we provide to tenants is a good one."

Day-to-day and out of hours emergency repairs, as well as repairs to void properties, aids and adaptations, planned maintenance, annual gas servicing and repairs to other council property, will be undertaken by ENGIE, in a 10-year contract worth around £67million.

Both of the Tamworth contracts also have a strong focus on delivering a range of benefits to the wider community to ensure the ongoing work of both ENGIE and Wates has a positive impact on the lives of residents in the area.

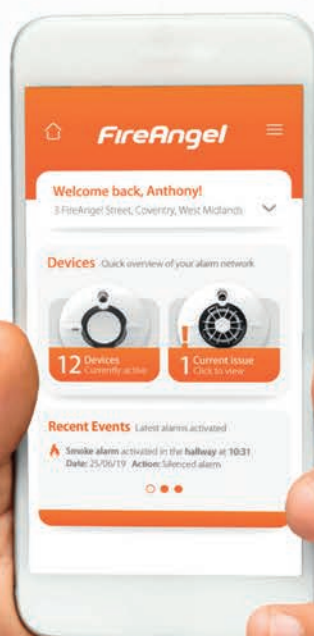
These include vocational qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities for local people, the provision of digital training courses in construction, and improvements to a council-owned facility such as a play area or community building. Other activities to be delivered as part of the contract include community DIY workshops, projects to provide enhanced and improved security for vulnerable residents and helping to tackle fuel poverty and causes of damp/condensation.

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Government relaxes certain housing welfare austerity cuts

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced a reversal of the Local Housing Allowance freeze and an increase in Universal Credit by £1,000 a year, as part of a series of measures to protect low-income tenants.

Although they welcomed the support for vulnerable tenants, homelessness charity Shelter said the Government would need to go further on its housing benefit offer. Among a wide package of measures, Mr Rishi Sunak pledged:

- Local Housing Allowance (including for Universal Credit claimants) to be boosted to cover the lowest 30th percentile of market rents – reversing the effect of George Osborne's freeze on the benefit introduced in 2016; and
- The Universal Credit Standard Allowance was boosted by £1,000 for the next 12 months with Working Tax Credits increased by the same amount. The minimum income floor for Universal Credit was suspended for anyone impacted by coronavirus, meaning it can be claimed by any self-employed people out of work at a rate equivalent to statutory sick pay.

The Government banned evictions from social and private housing, but also faced calls to protect people's income to ensure they did not simply build up huge rent arrears.

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter said: "These are vital measures to strengthen the safety net and to keep people in work and they will



significantly reduce the numbers of people at risk of losing their home.

"We are already hearing from people who are rapidly losing work and we think the Government

may need to further increase housing benefit to cover average rents as well as introduce other measures to provide crucial security to these workers during this crisis."

Government bans all evictions for social and private renters

The Government has implemented a package of measures to protect renters and landlords affected by coronavirus. As a result, no tenant in social or privately rented accommodation should be evicted from their home during the crisis.

Emergency legislation will prevent landlords from starting proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period.

But Labour's John Healey has criticised the move as not going far enough and says the measure is merely adding a three-month interval into the eviction process. He has called for the ban to mirror the mortgage protection scheme given to homeowners.

Recognising the additional pressures the virus may put on landlords, Ministers had previously confirmed that the three-month mortgage payment holiday would be extended to landlords whose tenants are experiencing

financial difficulties due to coronavirus.

This alleviates the pressure on buy-to-let landlords, who were concerned about meeting mortgage payments themselves, and will mean no unnecessary pressure is put on their tenants as a result.

At the end of the period, landlords and tenants will be expected to work together to establish an affordable repayment plan, taking into account tenants' individual circumstances.

The Government worked with the Master of the Rolls to widen the 'pre-action protocol' on possession proceedings, to include private renters and to strengthen its remit. This supports the necessary engagement between landlords and tenants to resolve disputes and landlords will have to reach out to tenants to understand the financial position they are in.

The Government is asking landlords to show

compassion and to allow tenants who are affected by this to remain in their homes wherever possible. The National Housing Federation and Local Government Association welcomed the new support for social renters and made clear that no one should be evicted because of coronavirus.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said: "The Government is clear – no renter who has lost income due to coronavirus will be forced out of their home, nor will any landlord face unmanageable debts. These changes will protect all renters and private landlords ensuring everyone gets the support they need at this very difficult time.

Ben Beadle, Chief Executive of the National Residential Landlords association said: "Landlord groups welcome the Government support. We recognise the exceptional circumstances and we will work collaboratively with government to ensure these measures protect both landlords and tenants."

Solicitor loses case as rogue landlord

A long running case against an East London solicitor was finally closed when she was convicted of failing to license two privately rented properties in Dagenham.

Ms Kate Okoli, who worked at a solicitors firm in Barking, was fined £10,000 following a three-year battle after she was initially investigated in 2017, in relation to several properties. She has since been prosecuted for failing to license both premises on Hewett Road and Neville Road.

Following the investigation, Ms Okoli was invited by Barking and Dagenham Council to license the properties but tried to convince council officers that she lived in them. However, after further investigation, the council obtained evidence of unlawful letting without a license.

After receiving a summons in June 2017, Ms. Okoli then applied for licenses for both properties and claimed she had previously made them. In July 2018 she was found guilty at Barkingside Magistrates Court of illegally letting properties without the correct license, but she appealed the decision.

During her appeal, Ms Okoli tried to deceive the court by providing evidence that she had applied and paid for licenses for Hewett Road and Neville Road, but the court rejected her evidence as it referred to completely different properties.



Eventually Snaresbrook Crown Court dismissed her appeal. Ms Okoli must now pay £1,000 per offence and £8,000 in costs to Barking and Dagenham Council.

Councillor Margaret Mullane, Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety said:

“This is a great result and shows that lying doesn’t get you anywhere. Private landlords play a hugely important role, but they have to play by the rules. We can make sure everyone living in the borough has a safe place to call home.”

Plymouth landlord receives suspended prison sentence after gas safety failings

A private landlord from Plymouth has been sentenced after failing to maintain gas appliances and failing to have landlord’s gas safety checks undertaken at his rental property in Canterbury Drive, Plymouth.

Plymouth Crown Court heard that in August 2018, a concern was raised with the Health and Safety Executive by a previous tenant that no landlord’s gas safety checks had been carried out for three years. HSE made

numerous attempts to contact the landlord, Mr Thomas Brumby, but received no replies or representations.

Having failed to provide HSE with a copy of any landlord’s gas safety records for his tenanted property, a formal Improvement Notice was served on Brumby requiring him to arrange for the gas appliances at his tenanted property to be checked and maintained. Brumby ignored the Improvement Notice.

Thomas Brumby of Canterbury Drive, Plymouth, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 36(3)(a) and 36(2)(a) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 15 weeks in prison for each offence, both suspended for 18 months, and ordered to pay costs of £1,500.

After the hearing HSE inspector Simon Jones said: “Thomas Brumby put the residents and other members of the public at risk of harm by failing to properly maintain gas appliances in a domestic property. He showed contempt of the law surrounding gas safety at a tenanted property.

“Landlords must ensure they obtain a landlord’s gas safety record and they maintain all gas appliances in accordance with the law.”

Social housing regulator’s fees rise by 15 per cent

The Regulator of Social Housing has confirmed that its fees levied on housing associations will rise by 15 per cent from April.

Fees for HAs owning 1,000 or more homes will increase to £5.42 per social housing unit in 2020/21, up from £4.72 in 2019/20. Fees for small providers

with less than 1,000 homes will stay at £300 a year and the initial registration fee will remain unchanged at £2,500.

Guidance published by the regulator shows that it expects to make £14.74m from the higher fees, compared with £12.75m in 2019/20. Fiona MacGregor, chief executive of the RSH, said the increased income would allow it to keep pace with the sector’s greater market focus and the emergence of for-profit providers.

It estimates that it needs another 30 staff across several teams, plus £700,000 for non-staff costs such as IT and external legal advice. Fees were originally

introduced by the regulator in October 2017.

Invoices were due to be issued in March, with fees due as a single payment within 30 days. Smaller housing associations “with cash flow considerations” could request to pay their fees in quarterly instalments.

According to the regulator’s updated guidance, registered providers that are part of a group structure in which the parent entity is registered with the RSH will be charged a single fee to the parent. Where the parent is unregistered, the fee is collected from each individual provider in the group.

Huge growth in short term lettings is cutting thousands of private rentals

Nearly half a million properties could be removed from the rental market, creating huge demand pressures and forcing up rents as more landlords exit the sector and move into short-term lets.

Regulatory and taxation changes, as well as a growing market for holiday flats and city breaks (through Airbnb and similar sites) is persuading hundreds of landlords to quit the private rental sector.

Ministers are being urged to change regulations so there is an even playing field in terms of tax and tenancy protection, as well as introducing more stringent limits on the length of short-term lets in order to protect local renting markets.

Homeowners in London are allowed to rent out their properties for short-term lets without planning permission for up to 90 nights a year, but the Greater London Authority has said that 23 per cent of those offering short-term lets ignored the cap.

Data from Camden council in north London suggested that 48 per cent of landlords are illegally letting their properties out as holiday homes. Councillors said the problem was so pronounced that some local schools cannot fill their classrooms and families are moving away from the area because of a lack of housing.

ARLA Propertymark has recently analysed the scale of Britain's short-term lets sector and the wider implications for the private rented sector in their report 'Impact of short term lets'.

David Cox, ARLA Propertymark Chief Executive said: "The growth in short-term lets is particularly concerning for the traditional private rented sector. As landlords are continuously faced with increased levels of legislation, it's no surprise they are

considering short-term lets as a chance to escape this. Unless the sector is made more attractive, landlords will continue to exit the market resulting in less available properties and increased rent costs." Among their key findings, are the following:

- Short-term lettings via online platforms has grown quickly over the past decade, with around 225,000 active listings on one site alone in 2017/18;
- 16 per cent of adults in have let out all or part of their property on a short-term basis over the past two years; most commonly they have let out their main residence but over three per cent of people have let out a property they own but do not usually live in;
- The scale of short-term letting activity varies widely between locations; the number of listings in the London Borough of Westminster was equivalent to 6.7 per cent of its total dwelling stock compared to 0.2 per cent in the London Borough of Havering;
- Almost one-quarter of landlords surveyed currently let out properties on short-term lets, while 12 per cent of these have done this by changing the use of a property that was previously used for long-term lets;
- Almost 50,000 properties have already been made unavailable to long-term tenants in order for landlords to pursue short-term lets;
- Increased flexibility and burdensome regulations in the long-term let sector were the main reasons for landlords to switch to short-term lets;
- Ten per cent of landlords surveyed said they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to offer short-term lets in the future in properties that are currently used for long-term tenancies.



If only the landlords that said they were 'very likely' to move to offering short-term lets were to do so, between 80 and 230 thousand properties could be unavailable for residents looking to rent, which is equivalent to between 1.5 and 4.3 per cent of the privately rented stock in Great Britain.

However, if the landlords that said they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to move to offering short-term lets were to do so, between 200 and 470 thousand properties could be unavailable for residents looking to rent, which is equivalent to between 4 and 9 per cent of the privately rented stock in Great Britain.

Commons committee launches survey on dangerous cladding

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee has launched a survey to understand the extent of dangerous cladding and other fire safety defects on residential buildings, and the impact this is having on residents' lives.

The quick to complete survey invites residents to tell MPs what the fire safety issues on their buildings have been, detail the impact this has had on them, whether it be financial or emotional, and

give their views on the Government's response.

The survey will inform the Committee's recently launched inquiry - Cladding: progress on remediation. The inquiry will examine the scale of issues facing residents in buildings due to combustible cladding.

It will also look at the effectiveness of Government support for the removal of all form of dangerous cladding from existing buildings, in particular the pace of remediation.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, it was found that the use of a number of forms of dangerous cladding on residential buildings was widespread. The impact on residents is not limited to the elevated fire risk due to the installation of combustible cladding on their properties.

There have been additional consequences that have caused significant financial and emotional strain. Residents have found themselves footing the bill for round-the-clock fire patrols, increased

insurance premiums and difficulties in accessing mortgage finance.

Committee Chair Clive Betts MP said: "We have launched this survey to get a real understanding of the impact that the on-going failure to resolve the cladding crisis has had on people's lives. Our aim is to find out what more needs to be done to end the financial and mental stress that thousands of residents are still going through.

"In the budget, the Government announced further funding for the removal of all types of cladding from existing buildings. We cannot be complacent however. If thousands of residents remain in limbo, facing huge costs for fire patrols or unable to mortgage their home, it will simply not be good enough."

We hope that this will be the most comprehensive survey of residents' real life experiences of dealing with fire safety concerns in their buildings."



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Gas fitter jailed over unsafe and illegal gas work

A self-employed gas fitter has been jailed for 16 months after working on gas appliances in domestic properties and leaving them in a dangerous condition, while he was unregistered.

Manchester Crown Court heard that in November 2014, Richard Goldthorpe was served a Prohibition Notice by the Health & Safety Executive banning him from carrying out gas work unless he gained the necessary competence and registered with the Gas Safe Register.

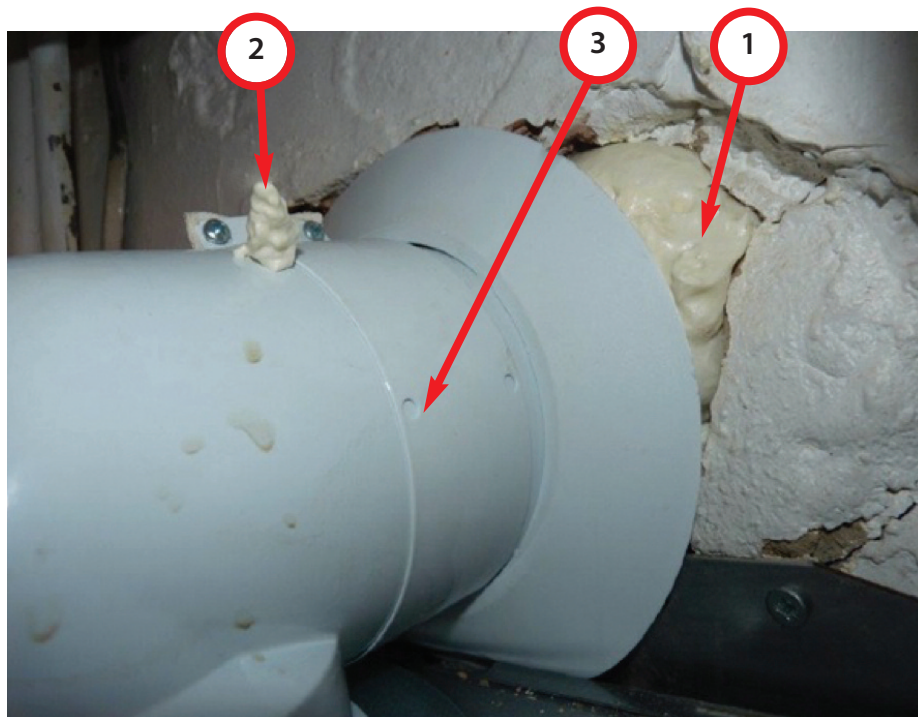
An investigation by the HSE subsequently found that between 3 March 2018 and 22 March 2019, Goldthorpe undertook work on gas appliances at seven addresses across England. On one occasion, he used a false name. His unsafe work was even featured on the BBC's Watchdog TV programme.

Several defects were found on each gas appliance worked on by Goldthorpe, including incomplete and defective flue joints, flues not sealed to building structures, and the dangerous decommissioning of a back boiler. All of the defects identified posed safety risks for the properties' occupants.

Richard Goldthorpe, of Irwin Road, St Helens pleaded guilty to:

- Seven separate offences under Section 3 (2) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
- One offence under Regulation 3 (3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998;
- One offence under Regulation 3 (7) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998; and
- One offence under Section 33(1) (g) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

While on bail awaiting sentence, Goldthorpe undertook further gas work while he was unregistered and subsequently pleaded guilty to two additional offences; one under Regulation 3 (3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations



PICTURED WITH NOTES FROM GAS SAFE REGISTER:

- (1) Incorrect expanding foam seal around chimney/flue outlet. Potential to crush chimney/flue pipe.
(2) Expanding foam seal observed at flue inlet joint. (3) No securing screws in chimney/flue joining coupling.

and one under Section 33(1) (g) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Anthony Banks commented: "Richard Goldthorpe knowingly defrauded homeowners and purposely misled them into thinking he was registered with Gas Safe Register.

"Mr Goldthorpe had even been warned on national television that he was breaking the law. The work he did was unsafe and he put several families

at risk. It is only a matter of chance that no one was seriously harmed.

"All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life. The public should always ask to see the gas engineer's identification and check the registration number online (www.gassaferegister.co.uk) or ring the Gas Safe Register customer helpline 0800 408 5500."

Double trouble for rogue landlord

A rogue landlord who was originally jailed in February last year, has now been convicted under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Siddarth Mahajan, of Milton Crescent, Ilford, was last year sentenced to 12 weeks in jail for falsifying documents in an attempt to prevent enforcement action relating to houses in multiple occupation.

He stood trial again at Snaresbrook Crown Court in late February for a confiscation hearing where Barking and Dagenham Council recovered £30,000 from criminal conduct.

Mr Mahajan will receive a 12-month prison sentence if there is a default on payment and he was given three months to pay. The judge also ordered Mahajan to pay a contribution towards the prosecution costs of £25,000 to be paid within nine months.

Mr Mahajan falsely claimed that the property had been in use as a HMO for more than 10 years and was therefore immune from enforcement action. He produced a number of documents to support this claim including several tenancy agreements, a letter from an estate agent and a

sworn affidavit which appeared to show that the property had been a HMO as far back as 2008.

Councillor Margaret Mullane, Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety said: "I hope this serves as a stark warning to disreputable landlords that we will continue to come after them for their money even if they have been previously prosecuted.

"The council will not stand by and let our residents live in cramped properties that are harmful to their wellbeing. We will use every legal measure at our disposal to ensure homes are of a decent standard, the integrity of the planning regime is maintained and dishonest landlords do not profit from the misery of their tenants."



New tenant satisfaction survey focuses on safety and access

The most widely used tenant satisfaction survey in the social housing sector has been overhauled and relaunched with a stronger focus on how safe people feel in their homes.

HouseMark's STAR survey is used by councils and housing associations, who between them manage the vast majority of social housing in the country. In recent years the reported very high levels of satisfaction (above 85 per cent) have been challenged by tenants groups as not being reflective of concerns about service levels and their landlords' performance.

Changes to the questions being asked were expected after the Grenfell Tower tragedy and were the subject of a major consultation exercise last year. Views were sought from 13,000 tenants and leaseholders, and more than 300 social landlords, with tenants now able to complete the new survey online or by text.

The new survey consists of three types of questions: core (which have to be included), recommended and optional. The latter two categories allow landlords to shape the surveys used to the services provided by them.

Core questions ask about how happy tenants are that their landlord keeps their home safe and secure and whether their landlord is easy to deal with. A question asking how satisfied residents are with their neighbourhood as a place to live has been demoted to a recommended question following concerns from landlords that this is not always within their control.

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS

From June the surveys will include a five-star rating system, which is designed to give a clearer

indication of landlords' performance overall and across key areas. To enable comparisons between landlords, ratings will be weighted based on variables that can affect satisfaction, such as geography, tenants' age profile and survey methodology.

Jenny Osbourne, chief executive of tenant engagement service TPAS, who assisted HouseMark with consultation events, said: "We know that in the past residents have often been cynical of satisfaction performance reported by landlords.

"The new STAR framework offers a valuable opportunity for landlords to reset their relationships, focus on what matters to tenants, and access meaningful insight to help drive service improvement."

During the consultation exercise, residents listed the quality of their home as the most important factor in being satisfied with their landlord, with ease of dealing with the organisation also rated as highly important.

HouseMark said the data showed that landlords making interactions with tenants simple and straightforward was likely to have a big impact on satisfaction levels in the future.

Jonathan Cox, deputy director at HouseMark, said: "The Social Housing Green Paper was a catalyst for undertaking the review, and clearly in the wake of Grenfell health and safety is a big concern.

"The review also highlighted the importance of softer measures like the ease of doing business with the landlord. This is a big driver of overall satisfaction and has been added into the new framework as well."

Huge cost of fire safety work for HAs revealed

The cost of completing fire safety work to England's entire housing association stock will far exceed £10 billion according to the National Housing Federation, who also warn this could severely reduce the amount of new social housing to be built.

The estimated cost includes removing and replacing all types of dangerous cladding from residential buildings of all heights, as well as implementing the recommendations from the Hackitt Review and the first phase of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Work on producing a more detailed cost calculation of the remediation work and its impact on HA balance sheets is currently underway. The G15 group of large HAs operating in the capital has already estimated it will cost them £6.9 billion to make their tower blocks in London safe for tenants and leaseholders to remain in.

Kate Henderson, chief executive of the NHF, said: "Housing associations are doing everything they can to make their buildings safe as quickly as possible and the sector has led the way in its quick response and co-ordination on fire safety.

"However, following the latest advice from government the potential costs of this huge programme of work are spiralling. The total cost of the building safety work required will easily exceed £10bn."

The NHF has been calling for a central government 'building safety fund' to help cover the cost of the remediation work. Ms Henderson said: "Without this funding there is likely to be detrimental impact on associations' ability to build much-needed new affordable homes and provide services to their residents and their local community."

The current estimates of safety costs only relates to buildings over 18 metres in height.

Adding to this the cost of removing dangerous materials from the many thousands of low and medium rise blocks below 18m high, will greatly add to the total.

The Hackitt Review has placed a series of requirements on the owners of tall buildings to ensure the ongoing safety of their tower blocks, while introducing three-monthly checks on fire doors, installing new alarm systems and water sprinkler systems will further add to costs.

Ombudsman sets out a tougher set of powers

A tougher set of powers to take action against failing social landlords have been outlined by the Housing Ombudsman, ahead of their introduction in July this year.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "Our goal is to deliver a step-change in providing timely, effective and high-quality redress. Equally, we are dedicated to promoting positive change by sharing the insights into our casework, creating more tools for landlords to improve their complaint handling and sharing our data publicly."

The service has published its business plan for 2020/21 as well as a revised scheme, which gives the Ombudsman stronger powers and more resources to deliver significant improvements in housing redress. Both are available on the Ombudsman's website. Other guidance will be published later in the year. New provisions under the revised scheme will take effect from 1 July, they include:

- A new power that allows the Ombudsman to issue complaint handling failure orders when a complaint gets stuck in the landlord's process or where landlords do not provide evidence requested by the Ombudsman in a timely manner;

- A 'severe maladministration' finding to clarify the range of determinations from service failure to maladministration to severe maladministration, together with a requirement for the landlord to demonstrate learning after the Ombudsman's decision;
- A more proactive approach in identifying possible systemic failure and to undertake further investigation either into an individual landlord or sector-wide issues. Any systemic failing found would be referred to the Regulator of Social Housing, as part of a broadening range of closer working processes between the two organisations; and
- Developing a new complaint handling code to achieve greater consistency across landlords' complaint procedures.

The Business Plan 2020/21 introduces a new, more efficient dispute resolution service as well as improved accessibility and greater transparency. It aims to reduce the average determination time on cases by half over the next two years – to 4-5 months in 2020-21, then to 3-4 months by 2021-22.

The subscription fee for landlords will increase for the first time in three years to £2.16 per home. This will pay for extra staff and other resources needed to deliver the service improvements and to meet continuing high demand for the service from tenants.

The plan also outlines new initiatives to share learning. A new dedicated team will be created to undertake further investigations into potential systemic issues, provide greater analysis and insight on complaints to promote positive change in the sector.

Mr Blakeway added: "We are committed to openness and transparency and will publish individual landlord complaint handling performance data as well as all determinations by the end of the financial year."

Both of the publications were approved by Robert Jenrick, Housing Secretary, following a consultation with landlords, residents and other stakeholders which showed strong support for the Ombudsman's plans.

Guidance on how complaint handling will work, the framework for systemic investigations and the complaint handling code will all be published during the year.

Over 80 per cent of adults at risk of missing 'hangover like' carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms

The gas industry's safety watchdog has warned the public to be more aware of the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning after research showed most people would miss the symptoms.

The Gas Safe Register has launched a Better Gas Safe Than Sorry campaign, urging the public to get clued up. Research has shown that only 18 per cent of people are likely to consider carbon monoxide poisoning as a possible cause of headaches and nausea.

The gas is colourless, tasteless and odourless meaning that it is difficult to spot without a properly functioning detector. It can build up in our bloodstream over time making it the silent killer. On average there are over 100 reported incidents a year of carbon monoxide poisoning in our homes, with 16 deaths in the last five years.

Many people mistake carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms for a different illness such as a cold, flu or hangover, according to the research. The data reveals that more than three quarters (82 per cent) of people

are unlikely to consider CO poisoning as the possible cause of a headache and nausea. This is despite these symptoms being two of the most common signs of exposure to the poisonous gas.

The research, which involved 3,000 UK adults, suggests that most people do not realise that the effects of CO exposure may not be severe. Only one in five (20 per cent) respondents said they would be aware of a carbon monoxide leak in their home if they felt unwell, as opposed to seriously unwell. The six main symptoms to look out for are:

1. Headaches
2. Dizziness
3. Nausea
4. Breathlessness
5. Collapse
6. Loss of consciousness

The findings are particularly concerning as latest figures show that 5.5 million homes in the UK are known to have unsafe gas appliances, such as gas

boilers, cookers or gas fires which can lead to carbon monoxide leaking.

Even more worryingly, only 20 per cent of those surveyed said they always stop using a faulty gas appliance until it is fixed and just 42 per cent get their gas appliances serviced every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Jonathan Samuel, Chief Executive, Gas Safe Register said: "It is really important to be better gas safe than sorry. Staying safe includes being aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If people are suffering from 'hangover-like' symptoms, such as headaches or nausea but haven't been drinking - it is important to consider carbon monoxide poisoning alongside other possible causes. We would urge everyone to help protect themselves and their loved ones by getting their gas appliances safety checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer".

Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas businesses who are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires and all other gas appliances. By law all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register.

Rough sleeping drops by almost 10 per cent

Official figures for the number of rough sleepers on England's streets has fallen for the second year in a row and they now stand at ten per cent below their recent peak.

The single-night snapshot figures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government estimated that 4,266 people had slept rough on a single night in the autumn of 2019, down by nine per cent on the 4,677 counted over same period in 2018 and down 10 per cent from the peak of 4,751 in 2017.

However, the figures are a staggering 141 per cent higher than ten years ago when at the start of 2010, it was estimated that 1,768 people were sleeping rough.

In response the Government announced £236 million in extra funding to tackle rough sleeping and appointed Dame Louise Casey as an independent advisor to lead an urgent review into the causes of rough sleeping.

The new money will go towards offering Housing First-style 'move on' accommodation for up to 6,000 rough sleepers and those most at risk of rough sleeping.

Chartered Institute of Housing director of policy James Prestwich said: "While it's welcome news that the Government has announced extra funding to help people who are sleeping rough in England, it remains completely unacceptable that in one of the wealthiest countries in the world more than 4,000 people are forced into sleeping on our streets."

"And these figures only represent a single-night snapshot and are therefore unlikely to represent the full extent of the problem, while many more people are forced to 'sofa surf' or live in unsuitable accommodation.

A WIDER PROBLEM

"Rough sleeping is a symptom of wider problems, including a shortage of genuinely affordable housing and a welfare system that no longer supports people on low incomes to meet their housing costs.

"We need to see a cross-governmental approach to end the scourge of rough sleeping,



including financial support for homes at social rents, good quality supported housing and a review of the impact of welfare policies on meeting the government's stated objective of ending the national shame of rough sleeping."

The number of people sleeping rough in London also fell for the first time in six years, according to the single night count figures, with 1,136 people estimated to be sleeping rough, down by 147 (11 per cent) since the previous year.

The South West of England was the only region where there was notable increase in the number of people sleeping rough, all other regions were broadly similar or decreased, with the number

decreasing the most in London and the West Midlands.

Catherine Ryder, Director of Policy and Research at the National Housing Federation said: "Rough sleeping is the sharp and visible edge of the housing crisis, but we have a huge hidden homeless problem in England too, with thousands of families living in temporary accommodation.

"While getting people off the streets into accommodation is an urgent priority, we also need to see long-term, ring-fenced support funding to prevent homelessness beyond the end of the parliamentary term. We also need to see an ambitious commitment from the Government to build affordable homes for social rent".

Rogue landlord database update

The limitations of the rogue landlords' database have been revealed in an exchange of communications with the Ministry of Housing.

Luke Pollard MP (Labour, Plymouth Sutton and Devonport) submitted a written question asking how many names were on the Rogue Landlords

Database as of 1 March 2020.

The Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher MP, responded: "There were 25 entries and 24 names on the database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents as of 1 March 2020."

The database was hailed at the time of its introduction as a vital tool in combatting poor property standards and bad behaviour by private landlords, however, it has been beset with problems over difficulties in accessing it and lack of transparency.

Brighton is named as most profitable city for private landlords

A study undertaken by an insurance company specialising in the rentals market has found the coastal city of Brighton is the most profitable area for private landlords to invest in property.

Brighton ranked as most profitable city for landlords making an average monthly profit of £668.95, beating London (£570.22) to top place. The study by CIA Landlord reveals UK landlords need to spend a whopping £925.40 per month on average in costs. Solihull in the West Midlands was revealed as the worst city to become a landlord making a loss of £207.41 a month.

CIA Landlord put together a study looking at every cost associated with being a landlord. From licence fees to maintenance costs, the research gives an overview of the best and worst places to become a landlord in the UK.

The 10 best cities to become a landlord based on the average property price, mortgage cost, average rent, and the monthly costs of being a landlord to calculate monthly profit, were Brighton, followed by London, Leeds, Bristol, Manchester, Nottingham, Belfast, Newcastle, Glasgow and Coventry. Meanwhile the worst cities to become a landlord, where it is predicted a loss would be made are Solihull, followed by Sheffield, Bradford and Wakefield.

Annual fees for expenses like landlord insurance, obtaining an Energy Performance Certificate and paying licence fees are estimated at £609.95. On top of this landlords need to factor in the cost of maintenance repairs and replacements.

Whether it is supplying a toaster for a new tenant or replacing an entire dishwasher, these costs soon add up. The study revealed that the average cost of buying all household appliances (dishwasher, fan oven, tumble dryer, fridge, washing machine and boiler) comes to a hefty £3,652.88, with an average annual replacement cost of £50.38.



Brighton ranked as most profitable city for landlords making an average monthly profit of £668.95, beating London (£570.22) to top place.

When it comes to furnishing a buy-to-let house, it is important to take into account these costs as well. For example, the total cost of purchasing furniture, (bed frame, mattresses, sofa, wardrobe, drawers) comes to an average cost of £1,314.65 in a 1 bed house, with an average annual replacement cost of £115.32.

Richard Wayman, Finance Director at CIA

Landlord said, “When looking into the true costs of being a landlord, it can certainly come as a surprise to some at just how expensive certain requirements are. Before taking your first step into the property ladder, we recommend you consider all the required costs involved and ensure you invest in an area that will be profitable for you in the long-term future.”

Union demands extra protections for student renters

The National Union of Students is demanding that the Government acts to reassure students and remove housing anxieties caused by the Coronavirus crisis and responses to it.

The union claims that students are particularly vulnerable to losing their tenancies in a period of uncertainty.

Eva Crossan Jory, NUS Vice President (Welfare) said: “NUS is working hard to ensure there are

protections for all student tenants in place during this crisis. The current crisis demands that students have a safe, affordable and secure roof over their head – this is a matter of social justice and public health!

“We are calling for student landlords to offer a no-penalty release from tenancy contracts to their tenants, an end to evictions and the subsidy, and the reduction or waiving of rent payments for students impacted financially by coronavirus.”

The union’s five key demands for Government, regarding student renters are:

1. Ensure all tenants and landlords have access to clear and holistic public health advice.
2. Every student landlord must offer a no-penalty release from tenancy contracts for the current

and next academic year.

3. Government must ban all evictions, for all renters, for the duration of the crisis.
4. Government must ensure that renters who are financially impacted by the coronavirus have their forthcoming rents subsidised, significantly reduced or waived entirely for 3 months – with the option to renew if needed.
5. Government must enact a universal freeze on all rent increases for the next 12 months.

The NUS are looking to universities and the private sector Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) providers and landlords to implement all of these demands voluntarily with immediate effect and implement the current Government advice on the coronavirus pandemic.

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Property standards law extended across all rented sectors

A key piece of legislation designed to ensure all rented properties are let in a safe and habitable condition was rolled out to millions of existing private and social housing tenancies last month.

When the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 was first passed 16 months ago, it was hailed as a significant piece of legislation that would lead to a 'step change' in housing standards, guaranteeing better homes for millions of renters. From 20 March it has applied to the vast majority of tenancies throughout England.

The Act was specifically designed to counter dangerous or unhealthy conditions in rented properties, such as damp and mould, broken boilers, poor ventilation, faulty electrics or missing floorboards. The law should help tenants by making sure irresponsible landlords improve their properties or leave the business.

The Homes Act (as it is known) allows tenants to bypass council enforcement teams, some of which have poor records of taking action against rogue landlords. It also gives council tenants an avenue for redress, as local authorities cannot bring cases against themselves.

In short, if rented houses and flats are not 'fit for human habitation', the affected tenants can take their landlords to court. The courts can make landlords carry out repairs or put right health and safety problems. They can also force landlords to pay compensation to their tenants.

It is not known exactly how many properties currently fall within the 'unfit for habitation' definition, but it could easily run into the hundreds of thousands of homes.

The best guide to 'unfitness' we have is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (known as HHSRS). This is a risk-based assessment that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors, particularly vulnerable people.

The most serious hazards are called Category 1 hazards and where these exist in a home, it fails to meet the statutory minimum standard for housing in England. The Homes Act specifies 29 HHSRS hazards where action needs to be taken by landlords.

MILLIONS OF HAZARDS

In 2018, there were 24.2 million homes in England and 11 per cent of them (equivalent to 2.6 million residential properties) had a HHSRS Category 1 hazard. This figure includes owner-occupied properties. It is actually a vast improvement on ten years earlier when 23 per cent of houses and flats had a Category 1 hazard.

Fourteen per cent of privately rented homes are estimated to have a Category 1 hazard and five per



cent of social rentals. According to the latest English Housing Survey, the most common causes of Category 1 hazards are to do with damp, followed by condensation and mould, penetrating damp and then rising damp.

Some seven per cent of private rented dwellings had some type of damp problem, compared with five per cent of social rented dwellings and just two per cent of owner occupied dwellings. As privately rented dwellings are, on average older, they are more likely to have defects to the damp proof course, roof covering, gutters, or down pipes, leading to problems with rising or penetrating damp affecting at least one room in the property.

The HHSRS is different to the Decent Homes Standard, which is more about comfort levels and the age or existence of certain amenities or property facilities, such as double-glazing, insulation levels and central heating, as well as the age of kitchen and bathroom fittings.

Initially the Homes Act only applied to new tenants from 20 March 2019. But since 20 March this year, everyone who has a secure or assured tenancy, or a statutory tenancy, or a private periodic tenancy, can use the Homes Act regardless of when their tenancy began. This is the case irrespective of whether they rent from a council, housing association or a private landlord.

Anyone who is still in the fixed term part of a private tenancy that began before 20 March 2019 cannot use the Act until the end of that fixed term.

STANDARDS TO BE TESTED

In the past 12 months there have been very few prosecutions brought under the Act. There could be a number of factors at work here – new tenants are less likely to complain, there are a lot more newer properties in the private rented sector and landlords have been working to improve their rentals. But generally speaking it is too early to make any large claims about its impact due to a lack of case law.

That could and probably will change over the next year or two, so landlords would be wrong to let their guard down and think the Homes Act will not have any impact on them. This will only be true if they keep their properties in good order and respond reasonably quickly to reports of disrepair or poor conditions.

However, reports of noise nuisance from neighbours or concerns about fire safety will have to be taken more seriously and acted upon than they possibly have in the past, if landlords are truly to rest comfortably.

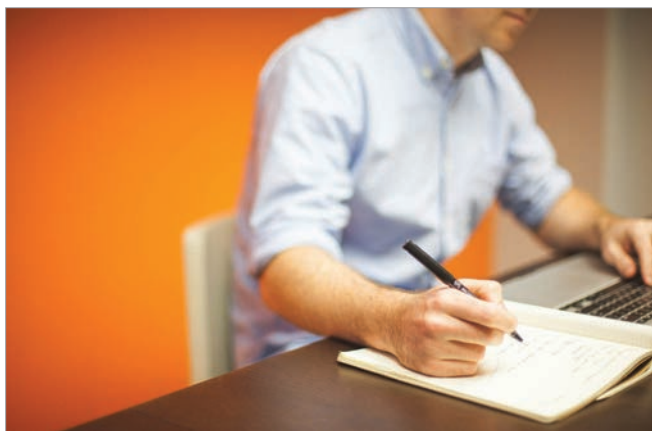
But it is not all one-sided. Even if a tenant's complaint about a specific problem is proven, the tenant will still need to satisfy the court that this makes the property unfit for human habitation. Due to the lack of cases to date, we do not know how high a bar will be set by the courts.

In addition there is no expectation on landlords to correct a problem that was caused by the tenant's own actions or behaviour. Landlords can also claim that repair works are not possible because they need the consent of a third party, such as getting permission from the freeholder or obtaining planning permission.

At the time of its passage in late 2018 Brexit was dominating most news headlines, so the Act cleared its final stages almost un-noticed in the media. Karen Buck the MP for Westminster North had pushed her Private Member's Bill through after several unsuccessful efforts, eventually winning cross party and Government support.

During the Commons debate, Ms Buck said: "Living in a cold, damp or unsafe home is hell. It damages people's physical and mental wellbeing. It erodes the income of the poorest households. It impacts on children's education. The most vulnerable tenants are most at risk of being trapped in substandard accommodation."

Initially private landlords were not supportive, but eventually groups like the Residential Landlords Association were won over. The RLA said it particularly welcomed the fact it places all tenants on an equal footing, while at the same time giving tenants greater opportunities to tackle rogue landlords.



The impact of Covid-19 on asset managers: adjusting to the new normal

"Asset management teams across the social housing sector are facing unprecedented pressure due to staff shortages and the impact of new safeguarding measures designed to protect vulnerable tenants. Like many organisations, we have been evaluating what practical measures we take to support teams working on the frontline. Undoubtedly, flexibility will be key, with a focus on using smart software for reporting and diagnostics in order to free up time for overstretched call centre staff and keep things moving. With online product demos already well underway, we've also redesigned our training programmes to work remotely so we can support existing staff who have had to step into new roles and ensure they hit the ground running. This is certainly a challenging time, but like many SMEs, we're nimble when it comes to decision making, and that will be a crucial factor at a time when we all need to adapt." – Paul Flowers Managing Director, M3.

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Building safety fund reaches £1.6 billion

The Government backed fund to pay for the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding systems on residential blocks of flats has been boosted by £1 billion, but doubts persist over whether this will be sufficient.

The extra money was included in the Budget and is available to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems. These systems, such as high-pressure laminate, wood and other Euroclass C/D cladding have been installed on high-rise residential buildings across both the private and social housing sectors.

This funding is in addition to the £600 million which the Government made available to ensure the removal of the highest risk Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding of the type that was in place on Grenfell Tower.

So far, no extra funding has been made available for other safety related work, which many experts also see as essential. The list includes installing water sprinklers, improving air ventilation systems, ensuring tower blocks have more than a single means of escape, upgrading the quality of fire doors and so on. The range of works and the price list is growing with the fires at Grenfell and other blocks, showing the vast extent of safety work required.

Residents of high-rise blocks across the country have been campaigning for months to get financial support – initially for cladding removal and replacement. Mental health problems, stress related illnesses and relationship breakdowns are being widely reported, as tenants and leaseholders complain of their plight being neglected.

In June it will be three years since the Grenfell Tower fire. Cladding removal works have progressed slowly, with the private sector particularly badly affected over issues of legal responsibility for the work, its planning and cost. Owners have been particularly badly hit as they have been unable to sell their flats due to mortgages not being available for purchasers. This has resulted in properties being given a zero valuation, with all parties stuck in limbo.

RESOURCE SHORTAGES

The new grant funding will be available to remediate buildings in both the social and private residential sectors of 18 metres in height and over, that have the Euroclass C/D cladding systems. It is this combination of risks that experts, including Dame Judith Hackitt, have advised pose the greatest threat to public safety and should be remediated as a priority.

But doubts exist as to whether the new money is anywhere near enough to pay for all of the skilled



labour needed to remove and replace the unsafe cladding panels within a reasonably short timescale, of maybe two to three years. On top of this there are concerns over other factors such as the supply of scaffolding, design and inspection resources and testing facilities for new cladding panels. There are also calls for funding to help pay for the remediation of all residential blocks of flats, including those below 18 metres in height, of which there are thousands.

The Coronavirus crisis and its impact on the construction sector is also an unknown factor, with many sites closed down and work at a standstill. It is not known when normal building work will resume, but because of difficulties in physically resourcing projects the Government should be flexible and sensitive in its approach to setting targets for cladding removal to be completed by.

In addition many thousands of residents have expressed their lack of confidence in high-rise living and are determined to move to houses or low-rise blocks of flats as soon as they can. Either way this will not be an easy problem to solve.

If the Government had acted more quickly after it received the coroner's report following the inquest into the deaths at Lakanal House in south-east London, then much of this pain, death and expense could have been avoided. It will be interesting to see if the Grenfell inquiry investigates the lack of Ministerial action, after it was told to revise building regulations and specifically upgrade fire safety rules.

An industry expert has highlighted that the prioritisation of works needs to also take into account an assessment of the insulation materials in use and how they react with different cladding materials, as well as the quality of cavity fire barriers. These may also need remediating as a matter of urgency.

Ministers have made it clear that building owners of tower blocks and other high-rise buildings remain legally responsible for ensuring the safety of their buildings and residents. In blocks of flats this will generally be the freeholder or their managing agent.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has named and shamed several freehold owners of ACM clad buildings in the private sector, where MHCLG officials consider they have been too slow to deliver remediation schemes. It would be ironic if this prompted Sir Martin Moore-Bick to name Government Ministers and officials who had

opportunities to act after the Lakanal House inquest, but failed to take them.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the private sector, grants will be for the benefit of the leaseholder owners of flats. The Government also expects building owners who have already committed to pay for the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems on buildings above 18 metres to honour these commitments.

Mr Jenrick said: "We know many building owners in the social sector are already rightly prioritising and taking forward this remediation work. We expect them to continue with this action so we can prioritise this funding on those who cannot afford the cost, creating a barrier to remediation and safety."

In providing financial support the Government is making clear that building owners have no excuse for not ensuring their residents are safe in their homes. It will also help in the transition to the new regulatory arrangements, delivering positive change in advance of the Building Safety Bill and the new regime of 'safety case reviews', recommended in Dame Judith Hackitt's review.

This total investment of £1.6 billion to support the remediation of ACM and non-ACM cladding systems on private and social residential buildings above 18 metres is meant to be the limit to the Government's funding for remediation.

A MHCLG spokesman added: "The fund does not absolve industry from taking responsibility for any failures that led to unsafe cladding materials being put on these buildings. As a condition of funding, building owners must pursue warranty claims and appropriate action against those responsible for putting unsafe cladding on these buildings, which will be repaid to government once recouped.

"If building owners continue to fail in their responsibility to remediate unsafe cladding systems, despite this additional funding, the Government will not hesitate to encourage and support enforcement action through local authorities and fire and rescue services using their powers under the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

"These enforcement powers, including the changes we are making through the Fire Safety Bill, and additional funding announced for the fire and rescue services in the Budget, will help ensure owners remediate their buildings at pace."

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When you need help understanding and managing your façade combustibility risk, defects and remedial issues, you'll gain total peace of mind with our unique comprehensive solution. We offer fully insured cladding reports along with an EWS1 form if required, assistance for interim measures whilst preparing a full design specification and scope of works for any remedial requirements. We also offer a CPD training session keeping you up to date with current Government Advice and Building Regulations.

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Each report is customised to your building covering combustibility, sub-structure, fire barriers, insulation and waterproofing, in addition to identification of any workmanship defects which may cause structural or ingress issues over time. We will attend site often along with complicated supplied access equipment where required, to carry out a full representative report relating to the combustibility of your façade. We will identify products used in the façade along with technical data and can organise sampling for testing with the BRE if required. Our **Next Steps to Compliance** will see us produce a full specification and scope of works clearly identifying works required, analyse returned tenders and placing fully compliant contracts. We can even assist with all aspects of a Warranty and Government Funding claim.

Fire Engineering Report

We can undertake a full Fire Engineers Report prepared by a Member of the Institute of Fire Engineers. The scope of the report will cover, but not limited to, the following:

- Review of the existing Fire Risk Assessment
 - Consideration of resident profiles; general needs, housing, sheltered, supported living etc
 - Review the findings of our initial report and investigations to confirm extent and locations of unsuitable façade materials
 - Consideration of site issues
 - Review means of escape
 - Review of flat entrance doors
 - Review of smoke control systems
 - Confirmation of fire fighting facilities provided
- Latest Government Advice is also considered.



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Interactive timber learning platform to help deliver a more sustainable built environment

The Wood Window Alliance (WWA), an organisation under the British Woodworking Federation, has invested heavily in the development of a Wood Window and Doors CPDi. This online resource has been designed to cater for the needs of architects, contractors and housing professionals to help in the planning and delivery of a more sustainable built environment.

By giving users the luxury of online bite-sized learning, the Wood Windows & Doors CPDi will help them stay relevant with fast and effective knowledge regarding the performance, maintenance, and sustainability of timber, as well as the proven wellbeing effects associated with such a material.

SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

The Wood Windows and Doors CPDi has been designed in response to the high volume of queries the WWA was receiving from professionals who wanted advice on the incorporation of timber into their projects. The modules explore how the reduction of carbon emissions whilst still creating a high performance, quality building can be achieved through the use of timber. Currently the following modules are available to access free of charge:



The Circular Economy – This module explores how a circular economy approach is achieved through a combination of designing for the long-term, using sustainable materials, engaging in eco-friendly sourcing and manufacturing methods and repairing, recycling and reusing.

Building Nature into Architecture – This module is an exploration of how low carbon spaces can be achieved by substituting high carbon building materials for timber. Practical guidance is given on timber species selection and relevant coatings and applications.

A Natural Evolution: The Wooden Window – This CPDi module identifies the key factors to

take into consideration when specifying timber as a construction material, especially in the specification of windows and doors. British Standards are explored to help professionals with future specification.

A Focus on the Benefits of Timber School Buildings – This module considers the research available on the positive impact that timber can have on students in a learning environment.



HOW TO START YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY

To begin your learning journey, please visit the WWA Wood Window and Doors CPDi at: cpdi.bwf.org.uk

woodwindowalliance@bwf.org.uk

windows.bwf.org.uk

Twitter: @woodwindowall

Shelforce shortlisted twice at Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce awards

Shelforce has been shortlisted for two awards at the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce Annual Dinner and Awards 2020. The window and door manufacturer is up for Excellence in Contribution to the Community AND Excellence in People Development. Shelforce specialises in providing high-quality PVCu and aluminium products to local authority building projects, working closely with Birmingham City Council, and 75 per cent of its workforce has a disability. Howard Trotter, Shelforce's Business Manager, said: "We are absolutely delighted to receive two nominations at what is one of the most prestigious events in the region's business calendar. "Shelforce has always been synonymous with contributing to the community and delivering social and commercial outcomes for the citizens of Birmingham. "We also help some of the city's most vulnerable people develop their life skills and the skills they need to work as a team and deliver high quality products in a competitive market." In the last year Shelforce has provided windows and doors for the revamp of the 20-storey Barry Jackson Tower to help homeless families and manufactured the aluminium windows for the city's first ever modular home. And Shelforce is set to open a training facility to equip young people with disabilities with the skills and confidence for employment. The annual dinner and awards takes place at the ICC Birmingham and is set to attract over 1,300 guests from businesses across Greater Birmingham.

0121 603 5262 www.shelforce.com



Longfloor have launched game-changer

Longfloor has launched a game-changing development for the construction industry, a revolutionary approach in the way liquid cement screeds are applied, a global first which will fundamentally enhance the way liquid cement screeds are used.



Darren Williams, Longfloor General Manager said: "The screed industry has witnessed a sea change in favour of cement-based liquid screeds but for many years has attempted to develop one which flows well, dries quickly and is as easy to install as possible. We are very excited to announce an industry first. The future is grey!"

01629 540 284 www.longfloor.co.uk

Eliminate the risk of contamination

Protecting and maintaining good hygiene, particularly in student accommodation, housing association properties, care homes and other buildings where large numbers of people come together, can be a major challenge. Through careful planning and implementation, steps can be taken to ensure contamination is prevented, permanently. CONTI+ take a holistic view to hygiene, starting with the ultimate hygiene of touch-free taps, showers and urinal controls through to disinfection solutions for drinking water hygiene and complete room decontamination. Discover the reliability and innovation of CONTI+, contact Paul Musgrove, UK Development Manager.



paul.musgrove@conti.plus conti.plus

Reversing the steady decline in the private rental market

Patrick Mooney looks at warning signs coming from the private rented sector:

Of course this could just be a piece of pre-Budget hyperbole, but leading representatives of private landlords are warning the Chancellor that Government policies are driving their members out of the market – potentially leading to a shortfall of half a million rental properties. Since the days of George Osborne as Chancellor, landlords have been complaining that his actions to tackle the huge growth in buy-to-lets would lead to a massive drop in the availability of rentals. Now it is possible those warnings could be about to turn into reality. One of Osborne's main taxation changes (limiting mortgage interest relief to the basic rate) is due to take effect from this coming April. Two organisations are warning this will make many landlords significantly worse off or even unable to make a profit on any of their lettings.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS

They say because the forthcoming change does not apply to landlords with short-term lets (such as those advertised on Airbnb and similar sites) it will encourage a lot of long-term landlords to move into that market. To counter this they want to see such tax advantages removed. Allied to this, they also want to see a level regulatory playing field between short-term and long-term lets specifically over protections for tenants and health and safety requirements. The Residential Landlords Association and the National Landlords Association have now combined forces to present a joint submission ahead of this month's Budget. In it they alert the Government to some worrying signs about their members' intentions to reduce their stock. They are also proposing some practical changes that could improve the living conditions for their tenants and which I will return to a little later!

GROWING NUMBERS VOTING WITH THEIR FEET

The RLA report that 34 per cent of landlords are planning to sell property over the next year while the NLA suggest that 24 per cent of landlords are looking to reduce the number of properties they let in the next year. These are both very sizeable increases on three years ago. In addition the proportion of landlords who are looking to reduce the number of properties in their portfolio increases substantially with the number of properties they own. Almost four in ten landlords with more than ten properties are looking to sell some of their stock. This suggests the Government's interventions are discouraging portfolio landlords (those running larger, full-time lettings businesses) rather than 'accidental' landlords who continue to remain in the market. Recently published research showed that

almost 50,000 properties have already been made unavailable to long-term tenants in order for landlords to pursue short-term lets, principally in tourism hotspots as citybreaks grow in popularity. The RLA and NLA are warning this figure could rise by up to another 470,000 properties (almost 10 per cent of the country's private rental stock) if landlords deliver on their 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' intentions to join them in the short-term letting business.

BIG RENT INCREASES ON THE CARDS

With landlords selling more properties than they are buying and others switching to short-term holiday lets for tax reasons, unless effective action is taken quickly, then tenants are going to find it increasingly difficult to find the housing they want, and rents will inevitably rise. The only question being, by how much will rents rise? Most estimates start at about 10 per cent, but there are many that forecast at least double that rate. To combat this Ministers are being urged to consider introducing limits on short term letting activities in areas where is a demonstrable impact on the supply of private rented housing.

COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE

They also want the Government to identify ways to improve enforcement action where commercial landlords are not complying with local planning laws or the 90 day limit for short-term lets in London. David Smith, Policy Director for the Residential Landlords Association, said: "Government policy is actively encouraging the growth of holiday homes at the expense of long-term homes to rent which many families need. This is completely counterproductive, making renting more expensive and undermining efforts to help tenants save for a house of their own. The Chancellor must use his Budget to give tenants a better deal by supporting good landlords to provide the homes to rent that they want to live in."

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Articles previously written by me for this website have often cited the older average age of private rental properties in this country, along with them being less energy efficient, but also the prevalence of damp and draughty conditions. The Government has been taking action to encourage landlords to improve the insulation and weather tightness of their properties. The rate of improvement in property conditions has recently slowed and we are at risk of hitting a plateau. So it is particularly welcome to see the RLA and NLA proposing actions in their pre-Budget submission that could make a real difference and kickstart a round of positive change in property conditions.

TAX BREAKS

They are suggesting that any work a landlord carries out to a rental property that is recommended on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) should be tax deductible, with landlords able to choose whether to deduct against income tax or capital gains tax. This would have the benefit of producing a series of win wins – for tenants, for landlords, for contractors and for Government policies in moving us towards a net zero carbon emissions economy. It will encourage landlords to behave in a way that many would otherwise not have done. Research by the RLA has found that 42 per cent of landlords are not planning to make any investment in energy efficiency measures over the next 12-24 months. But most of them (72 per cent) said that a tax scheme to support such work would make a difference to their decision.

POSITIVE BENEFITS

Implementing change in this way would make it self-policing as the recommendations are legally required to be listed on the EPC and are made by a qualified energy performance assessor. They also have a directly measurable cost-benefit as each recommendation must come with an estimate of its cost and the expected annual monetary saving it will create. This will incentivise improvements over the long term rather than being a 'one-off' as a landlord can get a new EPC having improved the property and carry out a further set of improvements to increase efficiency, thus permitting a further tax deduction. It's very much a virtuous circle, facilitated by taxation. It also encourages improvement beyond landlords simply reaching the minimum E standard and then stopping. This could have a dramatic impact on the comfort of current and future residents living in the properties.

INCENTIVES THAT WORK

Encouraging landlords to undertake continual improvements to a property should provide more new work for local tradespeople that landlords most often use. Research by Aldermore Bank suggests that private landlords currently contribute £3.61bn into local businesses across the UK every year. Another helpful suggestion could benefit the growing number of private sector tenants with a physical disability. In order to facilitate more use of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in the sector, the Government should loosen the requirement that DFGs can only be awarded if there is proof that there is an intention to live in the house for five years. The Government could also intervene to incentivise landlords to adapt properties and to continue to offer these to the market over the long term. Using capital gains tax relief for landlords who let properties to tenants in need of adaptations or accessible homes for a period of at least five consecutive years would support landlords to let to disabled and older tenants, promoting both longer tenancies and the retention of adaptations once installed.

Produced in Conjunction with Mitsubishi
les.mitsubishielectric.co.uk
les.mitsubishielectric.co.uk/the-hub

Minibems fits the bill

With over 300,000 existing heat network connections in the UK that still require a fit-for-purpose metering and billing system, and regulations due to be updated soon, now's the time for building owners to assess their housing stock and source the best service provider to meet their needs.

That's where Minibems fits the bill, with metering and billing solutions that are designed for easy integration in existing or new build developments that also provide synergy with their heat network performance system.

Providing the ultimate in flexibility, Minibems credit and pre-payment billing options can be switched remotely depending on building requirements and residents' circumstances. The system can also be set so that vulnerable residents are never left without heating or hot water.

REAL-TIME PAYMENTS

Operating a real-time payment system, credits made are applied to the Minibems controller instantly and these can be made via the Pingit App, EPay cash or card, Direct debit or Standing order, meaning customer satisfaction is high and ongoing management is hassle-free for building operators.

HEAT NETWORK (METERING & BILLING) REGULATIONS 2014

The requirements of the current Heat Network

(Metering & Billing) Regulations 2014 stipulate that for new build heat network developments and most major refurbishment projects final customer meters must be fitted, along with point of entry meters. In addition, customers must be billed using actual meter readings, rather than estimates, and billing information must be clear and informative.

These regulations are due to be tightened further and are currently under public consultation for the revised methodology for assessing the cost effectiveness of metering for existing district and communal heat networks. Following this consultation, BEIS intends to amend the Regulations and launch the associated revised cost effectiveness tool. Once the Regulations have been amended and the revised tool published, heat suppliers will be obligated to carry out the cost-effectiveness assessment on existing developments and install meters where required within a specified compliance period. Minibems offer advice and guidance to building owner/operators to ensure they meet with these regulations and can supply heat meters, bulk meters and prepay / billing services to suit.

For more information, please visit the Minibems website.

020 3411 4170
www.minibems.com



Minibems in home touch screen display

Johnstone's Trade launches 'ultimate defence' against wear and tear on interior trim

Johnstone's Trade today launches Aqua Guard, their most durable water based satin paint to date. This new, durable water based paint has been specifically designed to defend interior wood and metal surfaces against scratches, wear and tear and greasy finger marks in high traffic areas.

Interior wood and metal surfaces are often vulnerable to stains, scratches and grease in areas where the paint surface has softened, leaving surfaces open to regular redecorating and

maintenance. However, with innovative Surface Protection technology, Johnstone's Trade Aqua Guard creates a defensive barrier to ensure a long-lasting and premium finish. This unique technology helps extend the maintenance cycle of a building, providing a high-quality finish for longer and prolonging the time between redecoration.

David Baines, technical specification manager at PPG, explained: "We know that good design is about how the building makes occupants feel on a day to day basis, and this is becoming a bigger consideration for clients awarding tenders for projects."

"Specifying coatings such as Johnstone's Trade Aqua Guard, which will look clean and fresh for longer, will contribute to the overall long-term aesthetic of a building as well as reduce the lifetime cost of maintenance."

Not only is Johnstone's Trade Aqua Guard durable, it also has advanced application properties with excellent covering power and long-lasting whiteness. The water based technology, with quick drying and low odour qualities, also means that end clients don't have to worry about lingering paint smells.

The new product sits within the already well-established Aqua Water Based Collection from Johnstone's Trade, which offers high-quality



water based alternatives to traditional solvent based paints. Each product provides the application and feel of a solvent based product, while delivering the benefits of a water based coating.

Johnstone's Trade Aqua Guard is now available on NBS Plus as well as the National BIM Library.

www.johnstonestrade.com
www.ppg.com



EnviroVent welcomes research

EnviroVent has welcomed the recent report by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Physicians which demonstrates that respiratory problems among children may be exacerbated by indoor air pollution in homes, schools and nurseries. The authors warn that indoor air quality tends to be poorer in low quality housing where ventilation may be inadequate or insufficient. EnviroVent offers a range of Positive Input Ventilation, Mechanical Extract Ventilation and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery solutions to the new build and refurbishment sectors. Its award-winning products can be installed by its own dedicated team of nationwide installation engineers.



enquiries@envirovent.com

Airtech helps landlords meet guidance

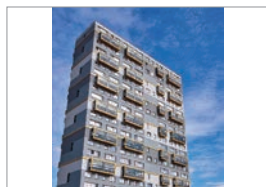
Following the recent launch of 'Indoor Air Quality at Home' from the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, landlords can be assured that Airtech can provide the ventilation solutions and expertise to help them meet the new guidance. The new NICE document gives detailed information and advice on ways to reduce exposure to indoor pollutants and so help protect health. Airtech is the only company in the social housing market that provides such a depth of detail when it comes to ventilation data through its sophisticated datalogging. This data is highly valuable to social housing landlords since it helps them in disrepair cases to prove sufficient ventilation in line with the Homes Act.



01823 690 292 www.airtechsolutions.co.uk/services/data-downloads

Development benefits from Sto insulation

A major residential refurbishment project in Glasgow has highlighted Sto's ability to provide a fully integrated insulation and render solution for major projects. StoTherm Mineral external wall insulation and StoLotusan render have been used on three large apartment blocks which are located on the Cedars development. The StoTherm Mineral system features mineral fibre boards which provide highly durable external wall insulation and unrivalled fire protection. The efficient single-leaf construction of the StoTherm Mineral system allows a building's thermal performance to be significantly improved without reducing the interior spaces, whilst minimising disruption to occupants.



0141 892 8000 www.sto.co.uk

Crown Paints supports launch of Hubb

Crown Paints has donated paint as well as sundries to the first Bell Decorating Hubb. The aim of the Hubb is to provide a space for learners at the school to feel inspired to develop new skills, as well as giving them an insight into the decorating industry – to encourage learners to consider a future career as a painter and decorator. Bell Decorating Hubb workshops are designed to be interactive through the use of practical, engaging tasks in partnership with various members of Bell's supply chain, including Crown Paints. As well as providing materials for the transformation, Crown Paints will be providing regular workshops to the school's learners every year.



info@crowntrade.co.uk

The role of assistive technology

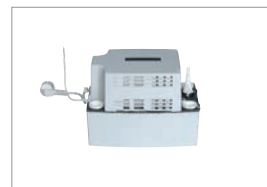
Latest figures allege that 1.5 million people are not receiving the care they need with day-to-day life. An adjustment to traditional thinking, of how money is spent, could alleviate the situation, by using- where appropriate- equipment in place of people. Installation of Closomat assistive technology, be it a toilet lifter and/or wash & dry WC, is proven to reduce or even eliminate the need for care visits(+). "Providing a suitable WC adaptation empowers the person to retain their independence, and releases the care workers for other duties, where assistive technology is not appropriate," asserts Robin Tuffley, Closomat marketing manager.



0161 969 1199 www.closomat.co.uk

Grundfos CONLIFT gives a helping hand

Condensate can be a real problem when it cannot be removed by a natural gravity fall. For example, due to the location, kitchen cupboard layout or doorway preventing straightforward access to a drain; a condensate pump, such as the Grundfos CONLIFT, provides an easy and convenient solution. The Grundfos CONLIFT family comprises of just two models; the CONLIFT1 and the CONLIFT1 LS. Their advanced design means they will operate automatically when condensate enters the collection tank from an appliance. The units then lift the condensate up to 5m in height and across a distance of several metres to the required drainage point.



01525 850000 www.grundfos.co.uk

Stylish new carpet launch

Designer Contracts has introduced a stylish, neutral carpet collection into its wide-ranging portfolio of floorcoverings. Primo Naturals is an easy-clean, twist-pile carpet, made with 100 per cent Excellon polypropylene – a fibre recognised for its stain resistance and hardwearing properties. Said Designer Contracts md, Peter Kelsey: "Carpet remains a core choice for many – particularly in the new-build sector. We work hard to identify key trends, along with core staples to ensure every interior preference and budget is catered for." Available in nine heather shades, Primo Naturals is bleach cleanable, naturally stain resistant and easy-to-care-for, making it an ideal choice for families and homes with pets.



01246 854577 www.DesignerContracts.com

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ESI Controls is taking a lead in offering the latest, quality heating controls. It now offers its best-selling RTP4RF (Programmable RF Room Stat) with OpenTherm technology, ensuring greater energy efficiency and cheaper energy bills whilst offering protection to your boiler. With OpenTherm, energy efficiency can be improved by as much as 14 per cent. The RTP4RF+ offers an easy choice solution for all housing associations and social housing providers and replacement heating contractors. In addition, these exceptional heating controls come with a 3-year warranty. Please contact ESI Controls for information.



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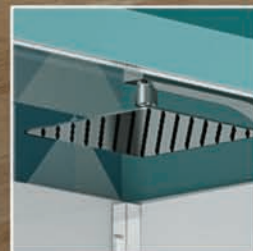




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If we can help you in anyway, please visit our website mirashowers.co.uk.

Showering solutions

Providing the best showering solutions for refurbishments is arguably more complex than ever before, given the range of choice today. Ann Boardman of Saniflo UK explains how shower cubicles can help.

Remember the days when being a student generally meant getting by with sub-standard accommodation? For today's students, it's a different story.

Just one search on Rightmove.co.uk for student accommodation reveals a very high standard of new and existing options. Estate agents go to lengths to promote a great bathroom, and so student accommodation providers need to deliver.

With the growth of newly built student accommodation across the UK, there's never been more competition. Independent landlords with properties on the outskirts of a city must provide an exceptional user experience in order to compete with new build, city centre developments. New build, city centre developments are in a race to get to market in the shortest timeframe possible, and they must provide top notch interiors.

For social housing refurbishments and new builds, there's still a need to deliver quality. The main considerations are cost, disruption to residents, the longevity of the new solution, and its suitability for all ages and physical abilities.

It is important to carefully consider the choice of product – whether the showers are for student accommodation or social housing, and regardless of whether it's a refurbishment or new build, it is worth considering integrated shower cubicle packages over separate showering products.

SHOWER CUBICLES

Some shower cubicle models can be up and running in less than a day with minimum disruption to the bathroom and residents, as there's no need for tiling, grout or silicone, and for refurbishment projects there are models that simply slot into the place where the old bath was. And, a real plus is that many shower cubicles are inclusively designed, which means they are safe and easy for everyone to use with certain models featuring grab rails, seats and thermostatic showers catering for less mobile individuals.

With the installer workforce ageing alongside residents, shower cubicles offers a solution here too. Installers of shower cubicles report that they are quick and easy to install, especially after receiving an on-site training session. Choose units that are watertight without the need for any silicone and can be operational on the same day, which is a real help for everyone.

As well as being easy to install and attractive, they are highly durable and need minimal maintenance. With no grout to discolour or unsightly silicone to maintain, the cubicles remain pristine looking for years.

Shower cubicles also tick the box for being compatible with timber frame buildings. Timber changes naturally over time and can shift and warp, causing movement to the building –including the bathrooms.

Traditional shower enclosures with tiles, grout and silicone gel are more prone to cracking when wood warps, which can result in the shower losing its water tightness, and leaks occurring. When water finds its way into a timber frame it can rot; jeopardising the structural integrity of the joists used for the bathroom walls. Rectification can be a costly issue in these cases.

Shower cubicles feature internal panels that can't crack, and therefore won't allow water to pass into the sub-structure. The panels are slotted over the upstand of the shower tray – supplied in the package – which ensures water falls inside the shower area and out through the plug hole. For ease of specification, some models are supplied complete with shower and valve, while other models can be selected without so that the customer can use a product of their own choice.



CONSIDERATIONS

For the best type of product, look for manufacturers who design, manufacture and test in Europe, as this means they have complete control over the process and they can maintain the highest standards of quality and service.

Also, ensure that all glass panels and doors meet the European standard EN12150 for toughened safety glass, and choose manufacturers who supply flat-packed products for ease of manoeuvrability.

Look for cubicles that don't require silicone. In the humid environment of the bathroom, silicone will deteriorate and discolour without constant maintenance.

And, opt for the models that have a permanent, anti-limescale coating to minimise the build-up of calcium deposits and dirt on glass, reducing the need to clean. This transparent chemical treatment is resistant to hot water and UV rays, encouraging water to run off the glass without leaving streaks or water marks.

A,B,C

Installing a shower cubicle really is as easy as A, B, C: assemble, bolt together, and connect to waste and water and add the doors.

As with fitting any shower there are just three main considerations: floor construction; waterproofing, and drainage. The quality and reliability of the products used are essential. The rest is down to choosing a quality manufacturer.

Ann Boardman is head of marketing and product management at Saniflo UK.

Arden

Arden Windows are a Manufacturer and Installer of High Quality External Timber Windows and Doors. We offer a fully bespoke solution supplying a wide range of Traditional and Contemporary window solutions. All products are manufactured within an ISO9001 Quality Management System, and are designed, painted and manufactured in our factory in Coventry. We offer a full sub-contract installation service. Projects include major New Build developments, Local Authority Replacement Schemes, Schools, Listed Buildings and Heritage Projects.

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Holistic sustainability for windows or doors

Martin McCrimmon of CMS Window Systems explains why window and door specifications need to take a holistic view on sustainability for wider social and environmental benefits.

The performance capabilities of today's advanced window and door systems – when designed, manufactured and installed correctly – offer housing specifiers the potential to transform the energy efficiency and comfort of existing homes, as well as ensuring new properties can be built to a standard.

Given the urgent need to reduce domestic energy consumption and carbon emissions associated with our buildings, which account for 40 per cent of the UK's total carbon emissions, understandably the focus is often on the thermal performance of windows and doors.

Great strides have been made in this respect over the past two decades in particular, with whole window U-values as low as 0.8 W/m²K available today without having to specify costly or bespoke systems or glass.

The adoption of life cycle thinking, however, in terms of a product's design, manufacture, service life and post-use fate, enables specifiers to consider and compare the holistic sustainability of one window and door over another. Continuous innovation by companies right along the supply chain means there is always scope to improve on the sustainability credentials of a specification whenever a new project is planned, providing that it can be based on reliable information, of course.

WASTE REDUCTION AND LANDFILL

A significant amount of waste is generated when post-consumer windows and doors are removed during refurbishment projects. The carbon impact of this can significantly undermine any 'performance in-use' benefits of the newly installed windows and doors, which is why it is essential to manage this waste correctly.

With the right systems in place, window and door manufacturers and installers should be able to ensure no post-consumer waste goes to landfill given the high recyclability of timber, PVCu, metals, glass and other elements of windows and doors. For example, in 2018-19 CMS Window Systems diverted 100 per cent of its 2,806 tonnes of waste, including all post-use windows and doors, away from landfill – 97 per cent was recycled and 3 per cent converted from waste to energy.

INCREASING RECYCLED CONTENT

Many products used to create new windows and doors are now manufactured using recycled content.

As processes evolve, the proportion of previously used materials in PVCu profiles, glazing and metal hardware is gradually increasing in line with 'closed loop' thinking. For example, new double glazed units are now available containing nearly 40 per cent post-consumer glass, which eases demand for virgin raw materials.

MANUFACTURING AND INSTALLATION

How sustainable are the factories producing your new windows and doors? Standards such as ISO 14001 are a credible indicator that the right environmental practices are being adopted, but how can window and door manufacturers go the extra mile?

Fossil fuel consumption is one area. One example is heating offices and factories with biomass boilers, achieving a carbon saving of around 95 per cent versus oil. But, there is so much more that can be done to reduce the impact that



a manufacturing business has on its local environment.

With the right strategy, a factory's physical environment can actually be enhanced, rather than simply looking at how to minimise the impact of its operations. A biodiversity programme can make a big difference, with active management of local wildlife habitats on the factory site to manage flora and fauna. Even the smallest steps, such as installing bird/bee/bug boxes or regular litter clearances, are capable of making a difference, which if adopted by all manufacturers would be a powerful force for environmental improvement UK-wide.

Alongside this, with consumers shifting from diesel and petrol vehicles to electric, so too can businesses, who increasingly being able to utilise the technology as it matures and becomes more commercially viable. Ask if your suppliers are utilising electrically-powered vans to cut CO2 emissions as part of their contracts.

SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The importance of social sustainability and how businesses in the supply chain are making a positive difference to people must not be overlooked.

Strategies to ensure young people have credible career options are extremely valuable, such as apprenticeship programmes, and so is paying the Living Wage regardless of age, as well as investing in employee wellbeing. The training of mental health first aiders, for example, is one of the ways that the workplace is improving in this respect.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

None of the environmental or social benefits outlined here can be delivered by a supply chain partner if they are not commercially sound, which is why the financial integrity of a supplier is crucial.

Well-managed businesses provide stable employment and re-invest profits back into the business to create more jobs and support the local economy, extending the benefits into the whole community.

Martin McCrimmon is director at CMS Window Systems.

Ecodek unveils new non-combustible decking – Adek – at Futurebuild 2020

Ecodek has unveiled its new non-combustible aluminium decking system, Adek, at this year's Futurebuild, which was held at ExCel London at the beginning of March.

This engineered lightweight decking has been specifically designed in response to changing building standards to be Class A2FL-s1 rated, which is now a legal requirement for any material used in the construction or refurbishment of high-rise buildings of 18m or above. This A2 certification means Adek lends itself to several applications, from balconies and terraces to walkways, in both commercial and domestic developments.

Made from 100 per cent recycled aluminium, Adek is available in two profiles, 20mm and 30mm – which can span 600mm and 1.2m respectively – and with a point load of 4kN, both options are strong, durable and long lasting. The system is also extremely easy to install, with concealed face fixings and no need for clips, making it an ideal solution for both refurbishment projects with specific completion dates, and new builds.

Its innovative design has resulted in a smooth surface which, together with an anti-slip coating, makes Adek safe and comfortable underfoot, even for bare feet, and the perfect choice for residential structures of any height.

Further information about Adek can be found on the Ecodek website.

01978 667 840 ecodek.co.uk/adek-non-combustible-aluminium-decking-system



Flamco launches XStream

Flamco has introduced XStream – a new approach to air and dirt separation. The removal of air and dirt is essential for a good and efficient heating system. This exciting new air and dirt separation system comes with a whopping 15 year warranty.



It comes with a unique ECO/MAX mode setting, it's easy to install, it prolongs the life of a heating system by reducing wear and tear, it has minimal heat loss due to its integrated insulation and it reduces energy consumption by 15 per cent through improved system performance. You can see more about the new XStream on the Flamco website.

01744 744 744 www.flamco.co.uk

Vent-Axia launches Lo-Carbon Response 7

The intelligent Lo-Carbon Response 7 from Vent-Axia is a new filterless unitary fan designed to meet the specific needs of social housing. Replacing Vent-Axia's original Lo-Carbon Response, the new Lo-Carbon Response 7 fan features a series of new and improved features to meet the changing needs of the sector including: an ultra-low profile for discreet installation; increased airflow performance; a new digital control menu; as well as a 7-year guarantee. Ticking all the right boxes for social housing the Response 7 range boasts powerful, quiet, efficient ventilation, helping provide good indoor air quality (IAQ) and comfort for residents, while being quick and easy to install, low maintenance and reliable.




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Concealment enhances tenant safety

British designed and manufactured, Powermatic controlled, concealed door closers from **Samuel Heath** are gaining increasing popularity for use on fire doors in high-rise flats, apartments and HMOs.

The door closers carry the CE mark and have been independently tested and proved to meet the requirements for FD60 and FD30 fire doors under BS EN 1634-1.

Totally concealed when the door is closed, Powermatic door closers are less susceptible to damage from vandalism or tampering. This gives them a significant advantage over surface mounted door closers when it comes to reliability of the fire door and maintenance costs, making them the right choice for both tenants and social landlords.

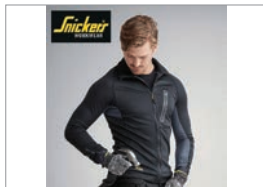
Unlike other jamb-mounted devices, Powermatic door closers facilitate a door's compliance with the accessibility requirements of Approved Document M, are the only Certifire jamb-mounted door closer and do not have to be removed from the door to be adjusted.

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A change of season means a change of focus on what you wear on site. That's why Snickers NEW LITEWork clothing can help you keep your cool when you're working in sunny, warm and humid environments. The ergonomic, body-mapping Trousers, Shirts, Shorts, mid-layer Jackets and Windproofers have all the comfort and functionality of other Snickers Workwear stretch garments but give extra freedom of movement on site. Just like high performance sportswear, they are super-light, quick-drying garments – with ventilation and moisture transport features – that keep you looking smart and feeling cool wherever you are on site in warm weather.



www.snickersworkwear.co.uk

Welcome pop ups

A new 'phone popping' solution, similar to the type used by doctors, schools and top restaurants to enable them to accurately identify patients, parents and even diners when they call, is enabling **The Window Company (Contracts)** to deliver an even better service to clients in the social housing sector. When a resident contacts the company at its HQ in Chelmsford, Essex, the person answering the phone can not only greet them by name, but also instantly see their address and exactly what work is required at their property. This gives the resident a new level of reassurance and makes the process of booking in appointments and surveys quicker and more efficient.



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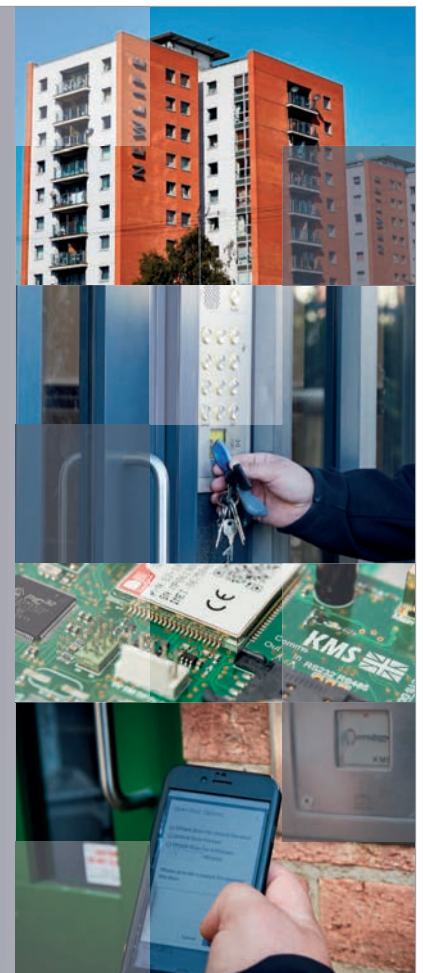
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The big cover up: Casings for social housing

The ongoing process of routine maintenance, heating system upgrades and new boiler installations, together with the retro-fitting of fire sprinkler systems in high-rise social housing, all demand that the pipework is covered to give a decorative and consistent finish.

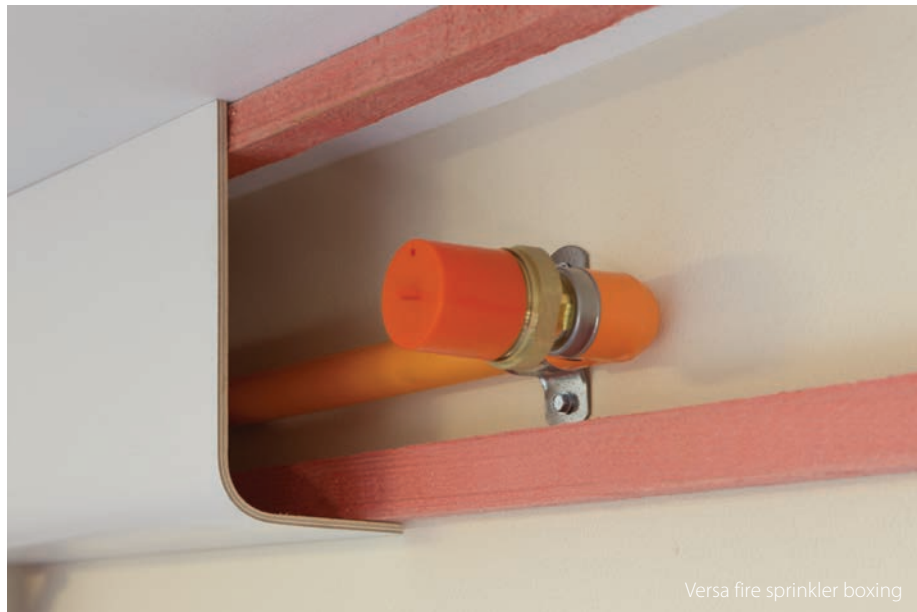
Pre-formed plywood casings are acknowledged as the preferred solution for social housing RMI and with more than 30 years manufacturing experience in the sector, Encasement Ltd estimates that more than 100,000 kilometres of its pipe-boxing have already been installed in social housing sites throughout the UK.

In any property, whether it's a new build or a refurbishment project, there will inevitably be exposed pipework that will need covering for reasons of safety, aesthetics or as a deterrent from tampering, accidental damage or potential vandalism in the case of exterior pipework.

However, for housing associations and local authorities that often deal with older housing stock requiring heating system upgrades, retro-fitted fire sprinkler systems and annual maintenance, the large amounts of exposed pipework can present a number of challenges.

Due to the age of the properties and the nature of their construction, which predominantly uses concrete and brickwork, mechanical and electrical services, as well as pipework need to be surface mounted, as they can't realistically be concealed during installation. This is particularly relevant for fire sprinkler systems.

As sprinklers need to be located within individual flats and communal areas to suppress fires and aid escape, incorporating them in new builds is comparatively simple, as they can be integrated at the building design stage and pipework can be hidden within risers and ceiling



Versa fire sprinkler boxing

voids. However, for retro-fitted solutions, this is not an option and in most cases surface mounting is the only practical option.

One of the main advantages of surface mounted interior pipework, whether its for sprinklers, heating systems or boiler pipework, for example, is the simplicity and comparative speed with which it can be installed by skilled contractors, helping to keep costs under control.

As a result, it makes sense that the pipe boxing method chosen to conceal pipework is also quick and easy to install, as the time taken on site and the associated costs are essential considerations on any project of this type.

Consequently, these are key reasons why pre-formed and pre-finished casings, such as Encasement's pipe and fire sprinkler boxing, have



Riva pipe boxing

become the preferred solution for many social housing landlords.

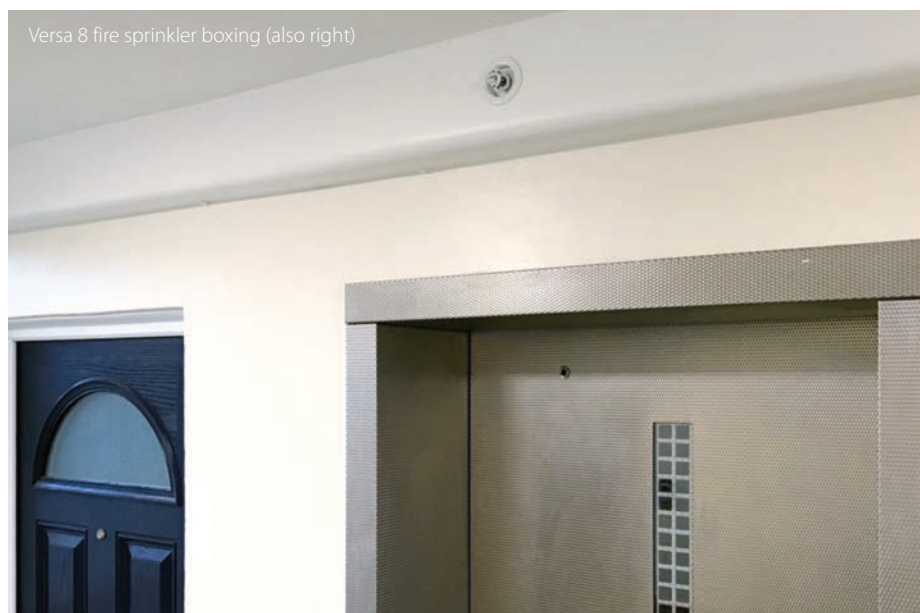
Encasement's range of pipe boxing and casing solutions continues to be in high demand with fire sprinkler installation, central heating upgrades and



Pre-formed and pre-finished boiler pipework casing



Arma – aluminium pipe protection



distributed heating system refurbishment projects all using its specialised products.

The company's products are continually specified by HAs, LAs and their contractors to conceal interior pipework, while its 'Arma' range of tough, lightweight aluminium casings are used to cover and protect exterior services, such as gas supply pipes, electrical cabling and distributed heating pipework.

The plywood casings range, which includes Riva; Versa 5 and Versa 8 pipe and fire sprinkler boxing products, alongside its boiler pipe work casings, are all pre-finished in white melamine, which removes the need for on-site painting and helps save time and money on site.

Encasement was one of the first manufacturers and suppliers of decorative casings to achieve the

FSC® Chain of Custody Certification from the Forestry Stewardship Council in 2010 and since then, the company has offered an FSC® certified option on its full range of pre-formed plywood casings to comply with customers' sustainable procurement policies.

Martin Taylor, Encasement's Managing Director, explained: "From our experience of working with contractors on countless social housing projects where pipework needs to be concealed, we know that pipe and fire sprinkler boxing can be fitted in less than half the time of site made alternatives."

For housing associations, local authorities and their contractors, this time saving provides a number of benefits. It helps ensure that heating systems, boilers and fire safety upgrades can be completed within shorter timescales. This minimises disruption for tenants and can also have a positive impact on improving maintenance and tenant satisfaction KPI's.

Potentially the most important advantage is that the time taken to complete the projects can be reduced without compromising the quality or integrity of the installation, which can also help reduce costs.

While the ability to save money on-site by using pipe boxing and casing solutions that are quicker to

install than site made alternatives is already attractive, pre-formed casings also enable further savings to be made. The 'whole life' costs for site made casings escalate significantly, when routine maintenance visits are factored in to the equation.

In the majority of cases, site made casings are damaged or destroyed during their removal, as the screw heads are filled and painted over, making them impossible or extremely time consuming to dismantle. Also, if mastic sealant has been used around the edges, it will also need to be removed.

Often, the complexities of managing routine maintenance and inspection increases when site made casings are used. In some cases a joiner is required to remove site made boxing in advance of the maintenance work being carried out by a service engineer. The joiner then has to revisit the property after the maintenance is complete to refit the casing or construct a new one.

With preformed pipe boxing solutions, it is usually a simple process of removing the securing screws and then the individual lengths of boxing can be removed and replaced quickly and easily.

For boiler pipe casings, this process is even simpler. As pre-formed casings are self-supporting and have no screws to hold them together, they can be easily removed and replaced in just a matter of seconds, dramatically decreasing the time that maintenance engineers need to be on site, with a corresponding reduction in associated cost.

"From day one, we set out to manufacture and supply the most comprehensive range of pipe boxing and casing products for the social housing sector and we now offer more than 200 different products, profiles and sizes within our standard range," continued Martin Taylor.

He added: "Our Versa range of pre-formed pipe boxing has rapidly become a key solution for concealing retro-fitted fire sprinkler pipework in flats and communal areas, whilst the launch of our flame retardant Versa 'FR' boxing was a first for the market. Versa FR is also pre-finished in white, while our Arma aluminium casings can be specified and manufactured in any RAL colour."

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Exercising fire safety with due diligence

BAFE Fire Safety Register discusses the importance of quality fire safety in housing management

As we approach the third anniversary of the tragic Grenfell Tower Fire, premises management teams need to fully understand their legal (and ethical) obligations in keeping their residents as safe as possible.

Using England and Wales as the example, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) outlines the core measures that should be undertaken to reduce fire risk and to manage this as best as possible. This includes completing a fire risk assessment, provision of fire safety equipment/systems (such as fire extinguishers and fire detection and alarm/emergency lighting systems) and ensuring these are maintained on a regular basis. These requirements are similarly detailed in the Scottish and Northern Ireland equivalents of fire safety legislation.

What is also noted in the Fire Safety Order is the use of competent persons. Part 2, Article 18 discusses safety assistance: “The responsible person must, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), appoint one or more competent persons to assist him [her/them] in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.”

This competency is noted as someone who “has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable him [her/them] properly to assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.” However, how exactly can you confidently confirm a fire safety service provider’s competency?

THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION

The fire safety industry has established multiple Third Party Certification schemes that independently confirm a provider’s competency. This allows premises management (Responsible People/Duty Holder) to suitably source help to fulfil their obligations with due diligence.

Third Party Certification is always for a specific service, which will never cover all services a provider may offer. Providers may have Third Party Certification for a number of services, but each service offered will have required independent assessment to provide evidence of their competency for that specific area. Therefore, it is extremely important to check your chosen providers are appropriately Third Party Certificated for the specific services for which you have contracted them.

WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

As many readers of Housing Management and Maintenance will know, Third Party Certification is when a company is independently and routinely assessed by a Certification Body.

These Certification Bodies are UKAS Accredited, which means their assessors have been appropriately checked by the Government’s sole approved body, confirming they are skilled to fulfil these assessments and determine competency.

A lot of work is performed ‘behind the scenes’ in the fire safety industry to ensure these schemes remain relevant and demonstrate the best levels of quality a company can adhere to. This offers a far higher level of reassurance that you are using competent providers when awarding contracts for your building.

CURRENT SAFETY CLIMATE

The Grenfell Tower Fire and other recent major fires have highlighted substantial failures in the elimination or reduction and ongoing management of fire risk through fire safety legislation responsibilities.

In the subsequent report, Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, Dame Judith Hackitt discussed “reducing building risk so far as is reasonably practicable.” Following this, premises management should also “ensure that there is a resident engagement strategy and that residents receive



information on fire safety in an accessible manner.” This will reassure residents they remain safe in their homes.

BAFE and the extended competency industry believe that specifying appropriate Third Party Certification for your fire safety requirements is a reasonable and practicable action to fulfil your obligations. This action, if specified (and checked that the certification is suitable and valid), will act as quality evidence that the premises management acted with due diligence.

Recording these actions will also be important moving forward. This has been expressed as the “golden thread” of information that would be compulsory to handover to any new premises manager when a building changes hands. It will also be an important reference required in any event of fire to check all measures were taken to mitigate this risk as best as possible.

Competency, and defining that competency, has been the ongoing topic of discussion for some time now – with recent fires only raising its relevance. BAFE believe in UKAS Accredited Third Party Certification as a quality measure of competence. It is argued you wouldn’t use an unregistered gas engineer, so why would you take the risk with your fire safety requirements?

CORONAVIRUS

These are trying times, and financial/staff resources will be difficult over the next few months. However, it is strongly recommended you do not take risks with your fire safety in the exercise of making savings.

Do the right thing and specify the right provider for the tasks required, and be content with your responsible decisions.

DON’T JUST SPECIFY, VERIFY

When sourcing help for your fire safety requirements, make sure you specify competent fire safety providers and verify their Third Party Certification is appropriate and valid for the work required. Visit www.bafe.org.uk for more information.

BAFE is the independent registration body for third party certified fire protection companies across the UK.



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Discovering property software

Jodie Deakin of Decorus for Sage explains the uses and benefits of property management software for landlords, letting agents and property managers.

Property management software can be intimidating to real estate professionals if you're unfamiliar with it. Thankfully, most solutions are designed with ease in mind. You don't have to be IT literate to use the software, and it can support your everyday work processes.

WHAT IS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE?

Property management software is a program made to help acquire and maintain property portfolios. This can be incredibly useful for landlords, letting agents and property managers.

You may see property management software abbreviated to 'PMS' online. Some property management systems may also sync up with accountancy software packages such as Sage and other software packages such as Microsoft Office.

WHICH SECTORS?

Depending on the property management system that you choose it can support the following markets:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Student Housing
- Social Housing
- Storage Sector

Software development teams will usually ask for a little bit of information about you as property management software is tailored to the user.

ACCURATELY TRACK TENANTS

This type of software can often act as a customer relationship management (CRM) tool, allowing users to keep a log of all individual conversations and updates. The benefit of this is that teams and clients can collaborate more effectively when it comes to prospective and existing tenants. If the property management software also offers real-time updates, it means that users will receive the most up to date information as soon as they log on.

A clever feature of property management software is its ability to automate common processes. If you mention recovering arrears to someone in the property sector, you're likely to get a large groan as a response. A great example of how digital automation can help people is that the software can automatically send out chase letters after set periods. Not only does this help save time but there is no need to set multiple reminders to make sure rent arrives on time.

Tasks which typically take up most of the day to complete, such as creating and sending out invoices, can be reduced to a single button click. Professionals who are used to traditional paper methods can often be shocked by how much time it saves and rarely look back after crossing over to digital.

MAKING ACCOUNTING EASIER

Most real estate professionals hate diving into a screen full of numbers, with



some struggling to tie figures together. As such, bookkeeping is often the bane of property managers.

Property management software gives you a clear breakdown of funds in your client account, showing transactions immediately. All the information you need is stored within the system, making it easy to find if you ever need to cross-reference costs.

If you use an external accountant, using property management software can help reduce the amount of work your accountant has to do. Some companies may also choose to bring bookkeeping in-house to save even more money.

TRACK PROGRESS EFFECTIVELY

Being continually occupied with maintaining your properties, it's all too easy to lose track of how well your portfolio is performing. With property management software that offers an accounting function, you can conveniently view your company's profit and loss to see your success.

Many property management systems will also let you drill down to account level so you can see the performance of each of your properties. This information can be accessed at any time and be turned into financial reports that can be easily shared with colleagues.

The same can be said of your property advertisement figures. Many property management systems come with built-in analytical tools to measure your online promotions.

ATTRACT TENANTS WITH GREAT MARKETING

You don't have to be a marketing professional to gain a competitive edge over the market. Property software can sometimes come with marketing suite features that help you advertise properties promptly.

Speed is the key when you're trying to fill vacancies, so uploading property profiles quickly can make all the difference.

ACCESS INFORMATION ANYWHERE

Ambitious property managers will want to keep a close eye on developments even when they're out of the office. This is a huge advantage of property management software over traditional methods.

Cloud-based technology opens the door to accessibility like never before. By storing all your data online, you can get a hold of the information and files you need from anywhere on the planet. You can also login to the software using any kind of laptop, PC or mobile (if the software also comes in app form).

GET EXTRA SECURITY

With more old-fashioned methods of storing files, there is a much higher chance of security breaches. Paper documents can easily be damaged or lost, which can then be tricky to recover.

The complete opposite can be said about property management software. Sophisticatedly built with additional security protocols already present, this kind of software can offer you peace of mind.

On top of this, if you do happen to delete an important file it can be easily retrieved. Going digital allows you to have an extra safety net in the case of human error, which can always be handy.

Jodie Deakin is marketing executive at Decorus for Sage

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www.saniflo.co.uk

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Encasement
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www.wilko.com

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www.1stfoldingslidingdoors.co.uk

Canopies UK
01254 777002
www.canopiesuk.co.uk

Cooke Brothers
01922 740011
www.cookebrothers.co.uk

Intratone
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www.intratone.com/gb

Nationwide Windows & Doors
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www.gerflor.co.uk

Mapei UK Ltd
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www.evinox.co.uk

Johnson & Starley Ltd
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Kingspan Environmental Ltd
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www.kingspanenv.com

Mitsubishi Electric Europe BV
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www.mitsubishielectric.co.uk

Roofing

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Hambleside Danelaw Building Products
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BAFE
0844 335 0897
www.bafe.org.uk

Fire Protection Association (FPA)
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www.thefpa.co.uk

Kidde Fyrnetics
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www.kiddefyrnetics.co.uk

SE Controls
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Yeoman Shield
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www.vexoint.com

HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

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Moisture MOT®

A unique and proactive damp, condensation and mould causation surveying process

The Moisture MOT® solution embraces proven knowledge and surveying services of Cornerstone Professional Services (UK) Limited bringing credible fact-based information pertaining to the health of a structure and ultimately, its occupants.

Similar to a Health or Vehicle MOT, it is a recognised planned or periodic assessment of a property both exterior and interior with any advisories noted for focussed attention whereby a 'Certificate of Condition' can be issued.

Property Analysis Model

The process embraces industry recognised data and parameters including Geographical location and UK Mean Temperature data from the Met Office in order to align its UK site to the expected construction behaviour. The pre-set defined surveying process acquires credible fact based data through all areas and an acknowledgment of existing and potential conditions.

Who can undertake Moisture MOT®s?

A unique component is the ability to acquire accredited training with the D.A.M.P Association, enabling interested surveyors to conduct Moisture MOT® surveys under a CMOTS accreditation.

The Moisture MOT® is a fundamental baseline entity for the Tempus Intelligent Property Management Solution

Reporting outcomes

All Moisture MOT®s are analysed within the Cornerstone SMART Portal and onboard Knowledge Base whereby data is assessed alongside predefined industry recognised parameters for a Certificate of Condition to be issued.

To learn more of this unique, flexible process, how it can be aligned to better decision making for reported damp, condensation and mould issues plus, how interested parties can seek certification to conduct their desired frequency of MOT's visit...

www.propertymot.uk or call us on 023 9200 1374