

HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

APR/MAY 2022



Ombudsman
warns landlords
about complaints

Evictions on
the increase

Council missed
thousands of
safety checks

Shortage of
private rentals

Signs of a
rising tide of
homelessness





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The Resident App

With the HomeLINK Resident App, residents are provided with a healthy home rating, handy advice on how to improve the quality of their home, and Fire and CO alarm testing reminders.

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Editor's comment

Government intentions will be seriously tested in the weeks and months ahead



Patrick Mooney,
News Editor

Since being appointed as the Secretary of State for Levelling Up and Housing, Michael Gove has attempted to breathe fresh life into a number of policy areas where progress had stalled. These included improving residential building safety, completing regulatory changes in both social and private rented housing, getting tenants' voices properly heard and sorting out the mess which planning reforms had been left in.

Progress of a sort is being made in most if not all of the above, but the post-pandemic cost of living crisis (exacerbated by energy price rises and Russia's invasion of the Ukraine) has the potential for overshadowing all of this and introducing further problems in the shape of runaway inflation (already at a 30 year high), as well as a growing poverty and homelessness crisis. Even before the war in Ukraine sparked economic upheaval, we were being warned about a tidal wave of cost pressures, housing need and an upsurge in the number of people becoming homeless this year and next.

The housing charity Crisis has forecast that another 66,000 people will become homeless by 2024, with 8,000 more people rough sleeping and 9,000 people forced into unsuitable temporary accommodation. These are scary predictions and the figures alone do not do justice to the terrible impact such events and circumstances will have on every one of the individuals affected. We now need to add a looming refugee crisis to this list of problems.

During the Covid lockdowns, the Government along with many statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and charities, did a tremendous job with the 'Everyone In' initiative, which saw many thousands of vulnerable people assisted. A huge upsurge in homelessness and rough sleeping was avoided. In addition evictions largely dried up, but this was down to the Government's actions rather than an outbreak of landlord benevolence during the lockdowns. Late in 2021 and early this year there have been worrying signs that evictions are beginning to rise again.

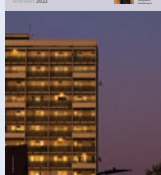
"It doesn't have to be like this," said Matt Downie, the chief executive of Crisis, when commenting on the growth in homelessness and evictions. "The protections put in place during the pandemic helped thousands of people off the streets and prevented many more from facing homelessness. It would be shameful for this progress to unravel before us, at a huge human cost and a financial one for the local councils left to foot the bill." In December last year, the Government announced a £316m homelessness prevention fund for councils for the current financial year that it said would protect tens of thousands of people from homelessness. It was welcomed by Crisis but in the intervening months, seismic shifts in the economy and the energy market have made this support package look woefully inadequate. Crisis is also calling on the Government to further increase the Local Housing Allowance – the amount the state will pay to cover rent for people on benefits – so it truly covers the cost of rent across the country. This is badly needed if we are to avoid the frightening increases in homelessness now being predicted.

Meanwhile the performance of social landlords is coming increasingly under the spotlight with more revelations from the Ombudsman and the regulator that some services at housing associations and councils are falling well below acceptable standards. It is shocking to think that as we approach the fifth anniversary of the Grenfell Tower disaster later in the year, that basic responsibilities in terms of health & safety within tenants' homes are still not being fulfilled and that when tenants complain about such matters, their concerns are not properly dealt with. To be honest this is a scandal and if the sector cannot sort this problem itself, then it is crying out for more regulatory action, including a more prescriptive framework, with tougher penalties. Fines and/or removing people from their well-paid jobs should be used in order to get senior executives to take this matter seriously.

The private rented sector will also be facing a new regulatory regime later this year, aimed at improving the quality of housing on offer to tenants and to tackle the twin problems of 'retaliatory evictions' and rogue landlords. The private rented sector is the second biggest part of the housing market and it probably contains some of the widest differences in living conditions. It will be in everyone's interest if the proposed changes produce a fairer and more sustainable lettings sector. As a society we are in need of a decent supply of homes in a good condition and at fair prices, to rid us of the twin scourges of homelessness and poverty.

Patrick Mooney

HOUSING
MANAGEMENT
& MAINTENANCE
October 2022



On the cover...

Demand for private rented housing remained strong at the end of 2021, according to data released by the National Residential Landlords Association.

Photo by Ben Allan on unsplash.com/@ballonandon
See page 22

Thousands of renters face eviction as living costs soar, adding to a predicted growth in homelessness

Growing numbers of tenants are facing eviction in the coming months as private and social landlords are returning to the courts, amid a cost of living crisis in England.

At the end of 2021, some 14,123 landlords in England started court proceedings to evict tenants from their properties between October and December, up by 43 per cent on the previous quarter.

Private landlords are now starting as many court proceedings to evict tenants as they did before the pandemic. A total of 9,410 claims were made to court against private tenants in the final quarter of 2021, compared to 9,676 in the same period in 2019. 4,807 claims were made by social landlords – compared with 15,369 in the final quarter of 2019.

The evictions are putting extra pressure on rehousing services at councils across the country and the number of people homeless in England is predicted to jump by a third by 2024 as councils warn of a “tidal wave” of need caused by benefits freezes, soaring food and energy bills.

More than 66,000 more people will be homeless by 2024, with the bulk of the increase being among people forced to “sofa surf”, according to annual forecasts by the housing charity Crisis and Heriot-Watt University. There will be 8,000 more people rough sleeping and 9,000 people forced into unsuitable temporary accommodation.

The chief executive of Crisis, Matt Downie, described the findings as “a huge cause for concern”,

as a survey of 155 English councils also found that nine out of 10 town halls expect to see an increase in evictions from private rented homes over the next year. Eight out of 10 fear increases in homeless children.

The eviction ban helped keep many renters safe in their homes during the pandemic. Now this protection has gone, evictions are picking up and renters are struggling even more. With its emergency helpline already under pressure, Shelter is warning that there will be a further wave of evictions to come as the living cost crisis bites.

INCREASING TOLL OF HOMELESSNESS

Extensive polling carried out for Shelter found 275,000 private renting households had received an eviction notice in the previous month or were behind on their rent. This is equivalent to one in 17 private renting households being in real danger of losing their home this winter.

The living cost crisis is taking an increasing toll on households. 45 per cent of private renters are more worried about becoming homeless because of the current economic situation and living costs.

Many renters are being forced to choose between putting food on the table, heating their homes or paying their rent. The charity’s poll of private renters found that:

- Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) were behind on their rent or constantly struggling to pay it;

- Nearly a third (32 per cent) had to cut back on food for them or their partner in the previous month; and
- One in six (17 per cent) had fallen behind on paying their energy bills in the previous month.

Osama Bhutta, Director of Campaigns at Shelter, said: “Huge numbers of eviction notices are dropping on doormats across the country, and our services are working round the clock to help as many people as possible keep the bailiffs at bay.

“The reality is though that thousands more people are at risk of eviction. Soaring inflation and rocketing energy bills may be the final straw for many renters struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Many have no savings at all, and increasingly some are being forced to choose between feeding their families, heating their homes, or paying their rent.

“While Government measures, like the £65 million rent arrears fund, will help some, it won’t be enough to protect every family who is barely hanging onto their home. It’s time the Government gave renters the financial lifeline they need by boosting support and reversing the damaging welfare cuts that have left people on the brink of destitution. In the meantime, we’ll continue to do everything we can at Shelter to support as many people as possible during these tough times.”

Private landlords offered incentives to house vulnerable tenants

The National Residential Landlords Association is backing a new local authority scheme to help house vulnerable people or those with additional needs within the private rented sector.

The project will help young people, young parents, the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, as well as vulnerable adults and those with mental health problems move from Supported Accommodation into a rented home of their own.

Local authorities in East Sussex are working with Supported Accommodation providers to offer Tenancy Sustainment courses to help these tenants learn the skills needed to live an independent life. Moving forward they will be offering landlords incentives to get on board.

The scheme is already supporting 236 individuals by providing comprehensive tenancy skills training, as approved by the NRLA support package.

This training ensures all residents fully understand tenants’ responsibilities, money management, different types of tenancies, managing a tenancy and budgeting for a planned move. During this time they are also helped to access training, education and employment opportunities.

Once they have completed their training they can access homes in both the social and private rented sector and will be given six months of resettlement support by their existing keyworker.

Cid Singh, move-on coordinator from the Supported Accommodation & Refuges Virtual Team at Hastings Borough Councils said: “Within

East Sussex, 65 per cent of the rental market, is supplied by private landlords and therefore it is essential for pathways from statutory provision, into PRS are initiated and working partnerships formed.

“This will enable those that are in need support accommodation being able to access it quicker and receive the wrap around support they need. We are looking to initiate, establish and maintain good working partnerships with landlords across the region to create a pathway for residents from supported accommodation directly into tenancies in the private rented sector.”

The council is finalising the details of the financial incentives it will be offering and is working with stakeholders from the DWP, council tax office and other support agencies to help ensure tenants are given the ongoing support they need.

East Sussex County Council has also produced a Tenancy Sustainment Guide for tenants, evidencing best practice from all the scheme providers, approved by the NRLA.

Think tank warns Government that 400,000 people could be pulled into poverty by planned benefit changes

The independent Joseph Rowntree Foundation is warning that a planned real-terms cut to benefits in April could pull 400,000 people on low-incomes into poverty.

It also warned that nine million families who receive benefits will be £500 worse off on average due to inflation from April. The majority of these are tenants in both the social and private sectors. Failure to act would make the Government responsible for a second cut to benefits in less than six months.

Ensuring benefits keep pace with inflation would help fill the gap left by inadequate energy price mitigation measures and prevent widespread hardship according to the JRF.

New analysis reveals the stark consequences of the Government's decision to uprate benefits by just 3.1 per cent in April, when inflation is forecast to hit levels of between two and three times that level.

This represents a real-terms cut to the incomes of some of the poorest families in the country at a time when the UK's main out-of-work support is already at a 30-year low following a decade of cuts and less than six months on from the £20 per week cut to Universal Credit.

This is likely to push thousands more tenants into serious rent arrears and at risk of eviction from their home by landlords.

Around nine million households on means-tested benefits due to low incomes, both in and out of work, will experience an average real-terms cut

of £500 per year. Couple families with children in receipt of benefits due to low income will experience a real-terms cut of £720 per year, while the figure across all pensioner couples is £540 per year.

For families on low incomes, a reduction in the value of benefit levels that are already inadequate could not come at a worse time. Already, many families are going without the essentials. The price of food and other basic items is rising, and the energy price cap could push the average bill towards around £2,000 from April, leaving many families deeply concerned about how they will manage to stay afloat.

The Government's temporary support package in response to rising energy bills has been criticised for failing to target sufficient levels of support to those most in need, and for its use of a loan scheme which risks delaying rather than alleviating the pressure on household budgets.

Following the energy price cap rise, families on low incomes face an average energy bill increase of £566 a year, meaning they will spend on average 16 per cent of their incomes after housing costs on energy bills.

The mitigations consisting of the council tax rebate and rebate loan then claw-back will cover only 60 per cent of the increase for the average low-income family, highlighting the risk of widespread hardship if further action is not taken.

The planned real-terms cut follows a £1,000-a-year cut to the incomes of households on

For families on low incomes, a reduction in the value of benefit levels that are already inadequate could not come at a worse time. Already, many families are going without the essentials

Universal Credit last October, in the face of widespread opposition including by many Conservative MPs. While working families saw some extra support through changes to the UC taper rate and work allowance, this did not fully mitigate the impact of the cut for all working families.

Those out of work, including people who have lost their job, those seeking work and those who are unable to work due to sickness, disability or caring responsibilities, saw no mitigation and are £20 per week worse off following the cut.

JRF is calling on the Government to uprate benefits in line with the Bank of England's forecast of 7% inflation by April as an immediate first step to help keep up with the rising cost of living.

Rental stock availability drops to below pre-pandemic levels

Research by a specialist property lending company has revealed that rental market stock levels have plummeted across the UK's major cities, as a return in tenant demand has driven a rental market revival.

Octane Capital analysed the level of rental stock across 21 major UK cities and how this availability of rental homes has changed during the pandemic.

The research shows that during the final stages of 2019 and prior to the pandemic, there were a total of 82,726 rental homes available to tenants across these 21 cities.

By the start of the pandemic in January 2020, this had climbed to a total of 96,735 and this surplus continued to increase throughout the pandemic, hitting a high of 171,080 at the end of 2020.

However, as restrictions eased, trickles of tenant demand started to return until now with all

restrictions now lifted, the rental market seems to be making a full return to health. The latest figures from Octane Capital showed that just 64,839 rental properties were listed across the 21 major UK cities in March.

London has seen the largest return to form of all cities when compared to the pandemic peak in available rental properties at the end of 2020. The level of currently available rental homes has fallen by -74% across the capital, while Edinburgh (-69%), Aberdeen (-64%), Newcastle (-62%) and Cardiff (-59%) have also seen some of the largest reductions when comparing current levels to the highs seen in December 2020.

CEO of Octane Capital, Jonathan Samuels, commented: "The rental market revival is in full swing and the decision to lift all remaining Covid

protocols bolstered confidence, as tenants return to our major cities in their droves to both live and work.

"This is extremely welcome reading for the nation's landlords who suffered greatly due to dwindling demand during the pandemic, forcing them to massively reduce their rental income expectations while also suffering from lengthy void periods.

"It's fair to say that we couldn't find ourselves in a more different place at present and if anything, there is now a shortage of suitable rental stock to meet this returning demand. As a result, we're seeing sharp growth in rental incomes and while this won't negate the impact of the last two years, it will certainly help steady the ship moving forward."

Earlier in the year the consultancy Capital Economics predicted the UK will need nearly 230,000 new rental homes to avoid a shortfall if the current growth in demand continues, with subsequent increases of 227,000 homes a year to meet the demand for 1.8 million new households over the next decade.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST A COMPLIMENTARY MOT ASSESSMENT

The certified assessment of tenanted properties is gathering pace with a number of housing clients seeing a clear difference with an MOT certifying the health of their properties. This new framework aids determining current and future stock conditions whilst upholding better decision making with noted issues resulting in a reduced 're-spend' by landlords.

David Bly, Director of Cornerstone Professional Services (UK) Ltd, the organization behind the Property MOT®, explains why Social Housing providers are requesting further details and sample MOT surveys aligned to this unique framework:



"The MOT survey demonstrates a user-friendly yet detailed algorithmic assessment of a structure alongside elements controlling the internal atmosphere with each assessment aligned to a property and its residents upholding bespoke outcomes. This approach aligns to the housing stock within the UK as a whole whereby a myriad of stock types, ages and periods plus geographical location and orientation can and do, affect the structural behaviour alongside the internal atmospheric management".

"In addition, recognizing the net zero journey is upon us, the assessment of each property includes its air permeability and appropriate measures to retain heat etc. That said, the current drive to 'Insulate Britain' cannot be a broad-brush affair rather an individual assessment to determine efficacy and anticipated outcomes such that, with a vastly differing structural type and age perspective across the UK, in the absence of specific assessment criteria, we will have to consider 'Ventilating Britain'."



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Tenants complaints to Ombudsman continue to rise

Complaints from social housing tenants to the Ombudsman are continuing to increase at a fast rate with poor communications, excessive delays in responding and poor record keeping all being highlighted as problem areas.

The Ombudsman's Insight report covering the period October to December 2021 showed it received 6,313 enquiries and complaints, a 53 per cent increase compared to the same quarter in 2020.

Learning points for landlords, highlighted by the Ombudsman, included the importance of effective communication, attempting mediation to achieve earlier resolution and continuing to monitor ASB complaints.

Maladministration by social landlords was found in 47 per cent of the cases during the period, an increase on the previous quarter. The number of orders and recommendations issued to landlords also increased by 33 per cent, with the Ombudsman making improvements for residents on 1,300 occasions.

The report also provided data for the North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humber regions, together with six case studies involving landlords in those areas. The case studies featured reflect the most frequent complaint categories – property condition, complaint handling and anti-social behaviour.

The report found some regional variation in outcomes with 47 per cent of cases involving property condition from the Yorkshire and Humber being upheld compared to 34 per cent from the North West, whereas 20 and 34 per cent of cases involving complaint handling were upheld in those regions respectively. Anti-social behaviour complaints were twice as likely to be upheld in the North East compared to the other two areas.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "While we continue to handle more casework, this period also shows a slight increase in maladministration compared to the previous quarter. There are several factors driving dissatisfaction, however we continue to see key themes including poor communication, excessive delays and poor record keeping.

"This reinforces the need for landlords to use the good practice set out in our Complaint Handling Code, so they can respond to complaints fairly and effectively".

"One case includes reports of building defects from a shared owner shows how the resident was impacted by long delay. Although it was a developer who was responsible for causing and remedying a building defect the landlord should have been proactive in chasing the developer and keeping the resident updated."

Right to Buy is a strategic failure and will deepen inequalities



The continuing sale of council homes in England through the Right to Buy scheme is having a damaging and negative impact on many communities and making it far more difficult for progressive policies to work.

In a damning assessment the 2022 UK Housing Review concludes that the Right to Buy has become a strategic failure and unless it is reformed, it will continue to contribute to social disadvantage and exacerbate inequalities. Since it was introduced in 1980 approximately 2 million council homes have been sold to tenants.

The Review's analysis, by Alan Murie of Birmingham University for the Chartered Institute of Housing's annual report, says that the RTB policy has led to an erosion of the stock of social rented homes, many of which have then found their way into the unregulated and more costly private rented sector. In many areas as much as 40 per cent of ex-council homes are now private lets.

This movement of stock to the private market is putting at risk Government ambitions for estate regeneration and the achievement of net zero carbon targets, as the unsold social rented homes benefit from investment in carbon reduction and Decent Homes initiatives while private homes on the same estates fall further behind.

The Right to Buy has already ended in Scotland and Wales and campaigners want to see this extended to England. Such a move could also benefit the taxpayer.

Many former council homes have been converted into privately rented properties with significantly higher rents, pushing up the taxpayer-covered benefit bill, while adding pressure on local authority waiting lists and raised temporary accommodation costs.

CREATING PROBLEMS

The value for money argument for Right to Buy is further undermined by the revelation that the cash value of the average discount in 2019/20 exceeded the aggregate average rent paid over the previous 15 years; and the average discount of 43 per cent (13 years tenancy for a house or seven years for a flat, assuming maximum discounts had not applied) indicates that discounts received by some Right to Buy purchasers in England far exceed their cumulative rent payments.

The Review also found that the RTB policy has had a 'levelling down' impact in smaller settlements and rural areas where council housing was critical in providing good quality, low-rent housing for lower-paid households with local work and family connections.

Without a supply of council lettings many newly forming households, who cannot afford to buy, are unable to access housing locally or are limited to accommodation that fails to meet their needs.

Alan Murie, Emeritus Professor of urban and regional studies at the University of Birmingham said: "If there had been a sufficient attempt to sustain investment in social housing and to reinvest capital receipts in social rented homes, the impacts of right to buy could have been offset. The problem has not been right to buy as such, but because right to buy has continued alongside other policy failures."

James Prestwich, director of policy and external affairs at the Chartered Institute of Housing said: "This analysis shows that the Right to Buy is an ill-designed policy which undermines the availability of social housing stock for those who need it most and adds to pressure on the public purse. An urgent re-think is needed on its future."



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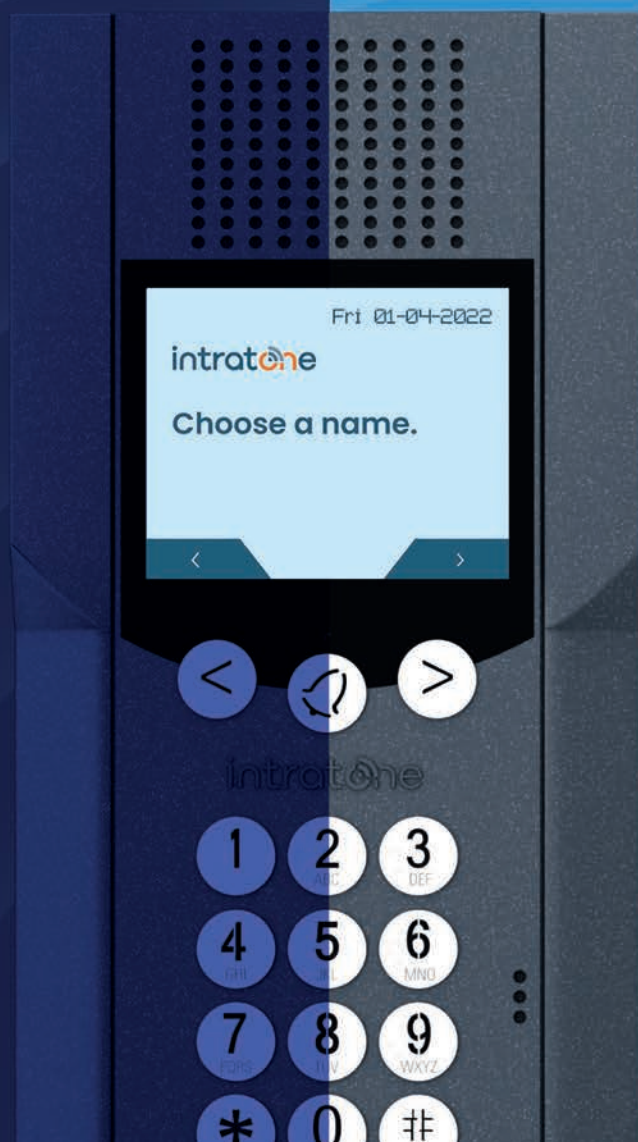
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Ombudsman blasts London council for failings on damp and mould

The Housing Ombudsman has strongly criticised the London Borough of Lambeth for significant failings in dealing with a long-standing complaint about damp and mould caused by leaks.

In an unusual ruling, the Ombudsman has made two severe maladministration findings against the council. Their resident had suffered extreme stress over several years that impacted on the family's wellbeing.

The council was ordered to pay £2,150 in compensation to the resident as well as providing confirmation of all the works completed, that it had implemented a series of service improvements and was using the learning from outcomes to avoid the failings happening again.

The resident had been dealing with water coming into her property and causing damp and mould since 2015. The Ombudsman had previously investigated a complaint from the resident about repairing leaks at the property and ordered the landlord to carry out a range of works to resolve the issue. The landlord confirmed that works had either been completed or were planned.

In 2020 the resident again complained to the landlord and asked for proof of the works ordered having been completed. She also contacted the Ombudsman, complaining that the problem had been extremely stressful and had a huge negative impact on her and her family's wellbeing, as well as their use and enjoyment of their home.

In its response the council submitted a large number of emails, many of them duplicated many times, in a file containing hundreds of pages. In relation to the ongoing reports of leaks, it meant the cause was unclear, as well as who was responsible for remedying the issue and what action had been taken to try and resolve it. There was also no indication of the landlord's final position on the matter.

The Ombudsman found severe maladministration for the landlord's failings in

dealing with the leaks and associated damp and mould at the property. It failed to demonstrate that it had taken reasonable and appropriate steps to investigate and resolve the issues. It had caused ongoing detriment to the resident for several years.

There were also a severe maladministration finding for the landlord's handling of the complaint with long delays and failure to address the complaint in any meaningful way. These failings further compounded the detriment caused to the resident by the way the landlord dealt with the works needed. A further finding of maladministration for the landlord's poor record keeping was made.

The investigation formed part of nine individual complaints the Ombudsman considered as part of a special report concerning Lambeth, using its new investigative powers under paragraph 50 of the Scheme where systemic issues may be presenting.

SERVICE FAILURES

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said:

"This case was highlighted in our special report about the landlord following the volume and frequency of complaint handling failure orders issued and a series of formal investigations. It provided a collective view of the landlord's service provision and identified dealing with repairs, complaint handling and record keeping as key themes. All of those issues feature in this case.

"The landlord's ongoing service improvements may mitigate some of the failings identified in this individual case. We need reassurance that they will not happen again."

A Lambeth Council spokesman said: "Lambeth has more than 33,000 council homes and our priority is ensuring all of these are safe and well-maintained for our tenants. We have invested hundreds of millions of pounds in improving our council homes and estates in recent years, in line with the Lambeth Housing Standard.

The Ombudsman found severe maladministration for the landlord's failings in dealing with the leaks and associated damp and mould at the property

"We have also concentrated on making improvements to the day-to-day delivery of repairs and maintenance work. Repairs are now being carried out promptly in the vast majority of cases. There are however some instances where we do not provide the standard of service that our tenants expect, and we apologise for these and are working hard to ensure that any issues are tackled quickly.

"It is clear that the service we provided on aspects of this case fell below our usual standards and we're sorry for any distress caused to the residents as a result. We will apologise to this resident and will of course fully comply with the Ombudsman's recommendations. We will pay compensation and are actively resolving the problems reported at the property.

"All of the new contracts, new in-house team, new appointment system, housing database update, resident portal and training have all happened in the last nine months. The in-house team and most of the contracts have settled in well, the improved ICT systems are working as planned and the council now has real-time visibility of the process.

"While we saw improvements in 2021, the real improvement will be seen this year when the new delivery arrangements have fully embedded. Adding the effect of a detailed stock condition survey and informed long term investment, the council is confident residents are going to experience a much better repairs and maintenance service going forward."

Social landlords cut their spending on repairs last year

Housing associations spent three per cent less per home last year, largely due to cuts in their repairs and maintenance spending during the pandemic, according to the regulator.

In its annual Value for Money report, the Regulator of Social Housing reported the median 'headline social housing cost' for landlords in 2020/21 was £3,730 per home, which is 2.7 per cent less than the figure for the previous year.

The mean headline social housing cost per home fell by 2.3 per cent to £4,150

The headline social housing cost figure is calculated by dividing landlords' spending

on activities like maintenance, repairs and neighbourhood services by the total number of social homes they own.

It is a key metric used by the regulator when analysing value for money. In its latest annual value for money report, the regulator said the drop in the headline social housing cost figure was largely due to a fall in repairs and maintenance spend during the pandemic.

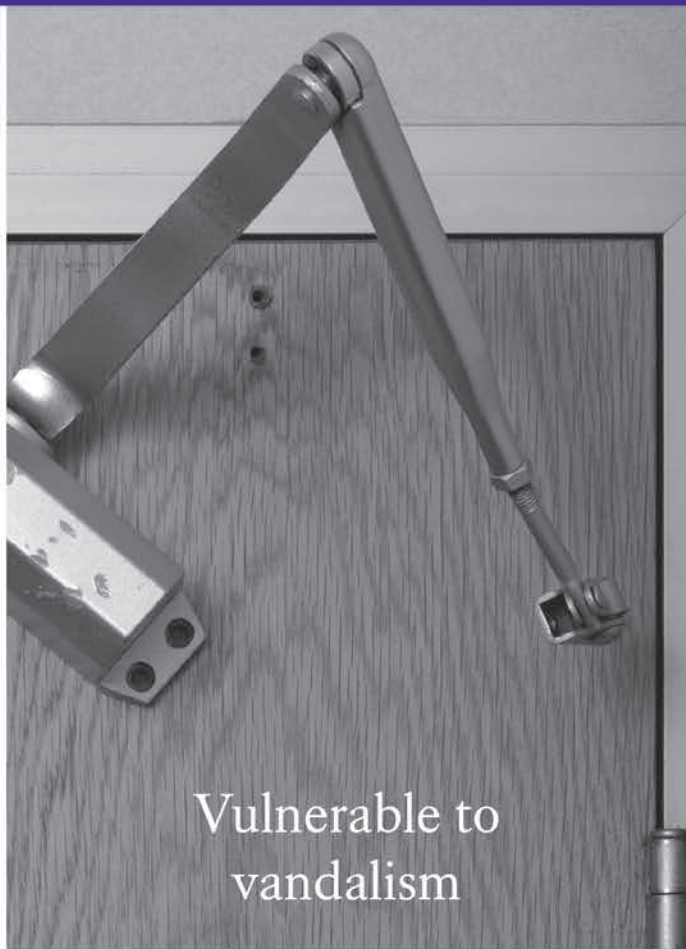
The report said works to existing social properties in nominal terms fell from £1.9bn in 2020 to £1.6bn in 2021. But the regulator added that by the third quarter of the financial year, capitalised

major repairs and maintenance had exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

Other data in the report revealed that reinvestment in new and existing social housing stock was 5.8 per cent of the total value of existing stock in 2020/21, compared with 7.2 per cent in 2019/20. The sector invested £9.5bn in new supply and existing stock in 2021, compared to £12.2bn in 2020.

However, the regulator pointed out that the survey showed that providers are already delivering capital investment programmes to catch up works that were delayed by the pandemic.

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London needs almost 85,000 new private rented homes a year

The capital needs almost 85,000 new private rented homes a year to meet its housing needs, a new report has found.

The report, authored by economics consultancy Capital Economics and commissioned by the National Residential Landlords Association, reveals the stark shortage in the supply of rented homes across London.

The conclusions are based on the Government's long-standing target that 340,000 homes a year must be built across the UK by the middle of this decade to meet future demand.

Capital Economics reports that, if owner occupied and social rented homes in the UK continue at their ten-year average rate of growth, private rented sector supply would have to increase by 227,000 properties per year to meet the government targets.

Growth on this level is also needed if supply is to meet the needs of an anticipated 1.8 million new households over the next ten years. In the case of London, the capital would require approximately 83,000 new rental properties a year over the next decade.

The projections come as official figures show that the supply of private rented housing in London has fallen by 85,000 over the past five years.

Given that renting privately is often the first step young people take when they leave home or university, demand will only increase. The 15-24 age group in London is forecast to grow by over 120,000 (almost 12 per cent) between now and 2030.

Additional survey data by the research consultancy BVA-BDRC suggests that in Central London, 74 per cent of private landlords saw an increase in the demand for homes to rent in Q4 2021. This was up from the 54 per cent figure



In the case of London, the capital would require approximately 83,000 new rental properties a year over the next decade

revealed by BVA/BDRC's Q3 2021 research.

Capital Economics sets out how, in order to meet targets for housing supply, the Treasury needs to encourage investment in the sector. Greater investment would, it argues, support the provision of new housing in a number of ways.

This includes, increasing the rate of new builds and switching commercial property to residential use. The report also points to the contribution the sector can make in moving stock from short term to long term lets and bringing empty homes back into use.

Ben Beadle, Chief Executive of the National Residential Landlords Association said: "As the demand for private rental properties picks up following the pandemic, renters across the capital will struggle to find the homes they need and want. For all the efforts to support homeownership, the private rented sector has a vital role to play in housing so many Londoners.

"The analysis demonstrates the folly of the mayor's calls for rent controls in the capital, a policy which would serve only to freeze investment in the very homes renters need."

UK is home to world's fourth largest private rental market

Research by a specialist property lending company shown has shown the UK ranks fourth in the global rankings of domestic private rental markets, with only the United States, Germany and Japan home to more rental homes.

Octane Capital analysed the size of the private rental market across OECD nations based on the total number of dwellings, the proportion of these attributed to private rentals and what this equates to in terms of the total number of rental homes in each market.

Across the UK there are estimated to be over 29.5m homes within the current property market, with approximately 30 per cent of these are thought to be privately rented, meaning the UK's buy-to-let stock totals over 8.7m homes.

This places the UK within the top four OECD

nations based on the total number of rental properties within the private rental sector. Top of the table is the United States, where an estimated 34 per cent of the nation's 139.7m homes are privately rented - a total of 47.7m rental homes.

With just shy of 20m privately rented homes, Germany ranks second but some way behind the United States, with Japan also home to more rental homes than the UK at 8.7m in total. France completes the top five and trails the UK with some 8.3m rental properties within the private rental sector.

CEO of Octane Capital, Jonathan Samuels, commented: "The buy-to-let sector is a serious business and privately rented properties not only account for a third of all homes across the nation, but they also provide a home for many,

many more tenants, who have been priced out of homeownership due to high house prices.

"The sheer scale of our private rental market is clear when viewed in contrast to other nations around the world, with the UK sitting comfortably within the top five. While we will never rival the might of the United States due to the mismatch in geographical size, population and property market size, we could see the UK start to catch the other frontrunners as long term renting becomes more prevalent as a lifestyle choice.

"This is already a commonplace occurrence in nations such as Germany where nearly half of all homes are privately rented in order to satisfy this demand. Should we see a similar trend emerge in the UK, there's no doubt that the buy-to-let sector will continue to swell in size."

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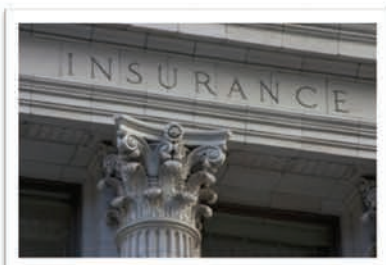
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Ombudsman produces three-year plan to deal with huge demand for its complaints service

The social housing sector's Ombudsman has published a three-year corporate plan setting out how it is going to respond to an enormous increase in its workload as growing numbers of tenants complain about their landlords.

The Ombudsman says it intends to work with landlords across the sector to promote fairness through its investigations, strengthen local complaint handling and encourage learning to improve services.

The plan reinforces the changing role and importance of complaint handling and comes at a period of significant change for the social housing sector and the service. It has seen casework volumes more than doubling compared to the same period in 2020/21.

The past year has seen an increased profile for the Ombudsman service with ITV news giving greater exposure to tenants complaining

about long-standing grievances, mainly to do with terrible living conditions and unresponsive repairs services.

To pay for its work, the Ombudsman has increased its membership fee to £4.60 per unit in 2022/23 and subsequent rises will be consulted on as part of the process to agree annual business plans. The fee will be capped at £5.30 over the duration of the plan.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "We are experiencing a demand for our service that is unprecedented in our 25-year history. In addition, future policy changes to improve access to complaints and the impact of building safety are likely to sustain higher volumes of casework.

"We have set out an ambitious plan to grow and improve our service. At its heart is our casework and investigations. An Ombudsman's investigation can have profound impact, both putting something

right for the resident if it has gone wrong and encouraging organisational learning by the landlord to improve services and prevent future failure."

"We will also build on the positive impact of our Complaint Handling Code to create a centre that champions learning among social landlords to improve services and potentially prevent complaints.

"Social housing is a unique sector deserving an independent, proactive and visible Ombudsman to support it. We believe our values-driven plan delivers that."

The Social Housing White Paper has seen increased resident awareness of their right to complain, and since our Complaint Handling Code was implemented, complaints have been coming through landlords' complaints processes more quickly in line with the timescales set out in the Code.

Ombudsman tells landlords to improve their culture and performance after upholding two thirds of cases about complaint handling

The Housing Ombudsman is urging social landlords to 'up their game' and improve their internal culture and performance in dealing with tenants' complaints, after completing its first annual review of complaints.

The review found that two thirds of its investigations into complaint handling were upheld and prompted the ombudsman to warn its members that poor complaint handling can considerably affect the trust residents have in their landlords to put things right.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "Creating and embedding a culture that values complaints and gives them the appropriate level of priority requires strong leadership and management.

"Our analysis strongly suggests both complaint handling and service delivery need to be improved across our membership. The uphold rate of 66 per cent on complaint handling sends a stark message that this is inadequate across our membership.

"I hope complaint handlers will find our analysis and the accompanying landlord reports of interest, but I strongly encourage senior leaders and governing bodies to use it to facilitate a wider discussion about their organisation's success in handling complaints and how it can develop its approach."

Based on the analysis, the annual review identifies the strategic and operational challenges for the social housing sector to overcome including:

- Not all landlords have adopted a positive complaint handling culture;
- The need to increase trust among residents that complaining will make a difference;
- Procedural failings with high uphold rates in complaint handling;
- Inadequate records with poor record keeping being a common finding;
- Missed or unproductive appointments; and
- Poor communication and lack of follow up.

Our review also looked at the most common areas for complaint – repairs, anti-social behaviour and complaint handling – and provides the first analysis of the sector's performance by type and size of landlord.

The review covers April 2020 to March 2021 and draws insight from:

- The annual landlord performance reports, published for the second time
- New annual surveys of the Ombudsman's 600-member strong Resident Panel and landlords
- Complaint Handling Failure Orders issued in the final quarter of the year.

The individual landlord reports show a correlation between the number of complaints and a landlord's size. For complaints about property condition (the highest category of complaint) medium sized landlords have the largest rate at 34 per cent compared to 32 for large landlords and 24 for small landlords. However, their upheld rate is the lowest at 39 per cent.

On complaints about complaint handling that account for 19 per cent of all complaints determined and have a high overall uphold rate of 66, the rate for medium sized landlords is noticeably lower at 39 per cent compared to 73 for small landlords and 67 for large landlords.

In the first survey of the ombudsman's Resident Panel, members scored access to the complaints process well with 68 per cent rating it as acceptable or above. However, 70 per cent felt more could be done by landlords to improve their complaint handling and the same proportion felt landlords could do more to raise awareness.

More than 77 per cent of residents felt landlords could do more to learn from the complaints they receive. Landlords were surveyed about the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which sets out good practice on effective complaint handling, with 94 per cent saying it was easy to understand and 88 that it was easy to apply.



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MPs demand that leaseholders and social housing tenants do not have to foot the bill for building safety works

Too many leaseholders will fall through the cracks of the Government's "piecemeal measures" to protect leaseholders from the costs of building safety remediation, says the cross-party Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee.

The Committee's Building Safety: Remediation and Funding report responds to the plans outlined by Secretary of State Michael Gove to the House of Commons earlier this year.

The committee's report makes a series of recommendations for Government, including calls to:

- Scrap the proposed cap on non-cladding costs for leaseholders;
- Implement a Comprehensive Building Safety Fund to cover the costs of remediating all building safety defects on any buildings of any height where the original "polluter" cannot be traced;
- Compensate leaseholders for costs already paid out, including for interim measures and for rises in insurance premiums;
- Require all relevant parties who played a role in the building safety crisis to contribute to funds for remediation; and
- Ensure the Affordable Homes Programme is protected at its current level and that social housing tenants do not pay the price through costs or diversion of funds away from maintaining their homes or other vital services.

Clive Betts, Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, said: "Leaseholders should not be paying a penny to rectify faults not of their doing in order to make their homes safe. Nearly five years after the tragic Grenfell fire, it is shameful this situation is yet to be properly resolved.

"While we welcome Michael Gove's commitment to fixing these issues, we are concerned there are



"Leaseholders should not be paying a penny to rectify faults not of their doing in order to make their homes safe."

Clive Betts, Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

gaps in the Secretary of State's proposals which risk leaving leaseholders to pick up the bill.

"Leaseholders are no more to blame for non-cladding defects than they are for faulty cladding on homes they bought in good faith. The Government should bring forward a Comprehensive Building Safety Fund, or upgrade their existing funding plans, to ensure that the costs of remediating all building safety defects on buildings where the original 'polluter' cannot be traced are covered and that leaseholders are also compensated for costs they have already paid out.

"The Government should be looking beyond developers and manufacturers to contribute to the costs of fixing the building safety crisis. We recommend the Government identify all relevant parties who played a role in this crisis, such as product suppliers, installers, contractors and sub-contractors, and legally require them to pay towards fixing individual faults and ensure that they also contribute to collective funding for building safety remediation. Insurers should also be required to contribute to funds for remediation.

"The Government needs to stop pitting the building safety crisis against the housing crisis. Social renters shouldn't be bearing the impact of putting building safety right – the Government needs to act to ensure the tenants of social housing are protected from the costs of remediation.

"Residents of social housing are currently paying the price through the diversion of funds from maintaining their homes and other vital services provided by housing associations and councils.

"The Government should also come forward with a cast-iron guarantee that the Affordable Homes Programme is protected at its current level in the event that the Government fails in its bid to secure sufficient funds from industry."

The report disagrees with the Government that only buy-to-let landlords with one other property should be included in the statutory protections for leaseholders, arguing there are other options to exclude wealthy property tycoons without making landlords of more modest means liable, and calls on the Government to publish an impact assessment before undertaking action.

The LUHC Committee's report highlights the ongoing uncertainty around building safety and its significant impact on the housing market

The report also recommends that it should be the Building Safety Regulator, and not building owners, that decides whether a building needs a fire risk assessment and that the regulator should also set the standard that a building needs to meet.

Rents frozen for thousands of tenants in Northern Ireland

Rents for tenants of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are to be frozen for the year 2022/23 because of the rising cost of living, the Stormont government has decided.

Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey announced that there will be no increase in rents for all social housing tenants living in the circa 85,000

homes managed by the NIHE and she urged housing associations in the province to follow suit.

"As communities minister my priority is to support people, particularly the most vulnerable, who are facing soaring fuel and household bills. I am announcing that I will freeze Housing Executive

rent levels for 2022/23 so as to not place any further financial burden on individuals and families trying hard each day to make ends meet," she said.

The minister added that tenants "need security" and that a freeze in their rents will provide a "bit of stability on an important housing cost in an uncertain climate."

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Private rented white paper to be published in the Spring

The Government's long-awaited proposals for making changes to regulations in the private rented sector are expected to be published within the next few weeks.

It is expected to launch a consultation on the introduction of a legally binding Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector for the first time ever. It will also set out how the Government intends to end Section 21 'no-fault' evictions - a pledge first made by former Prime Minister Theresa May back in 2019.

Ministers have said they will also explore the idea of a national landlord register and set out plans for a fresh crackdown on rogue landlords.

The White Paper was originally due to be published last year, but has been delayed by Ministerial changes, refreshing the Government's approach to building safety and cladding, as well as work on developing the Levelling Up strategies.

Ben Beadle, Chief Executive of the National Residential Landlords Association said: "Every



tenant should have the right to expect properties to be safe and secure. The existing Decent Homes Standard however is not the right vehicle with which to achieve this important goal.

"At present, this standard, designed for the social rented sector, does not reflect many of the differences between it and the private rented sector. This includes the types and age of

properties in each.

"We will work with the Government to ensure whatever standards expected of the sector are proportionate, fit for purpose and can be properly enforced. Without this, criminal landlords will continue to undermine the reputation of the vast majority of responsible landlords doing the right thing."

London mayor renews call for private rent controls in the capital

An east London council referred itself to the regulator after discovering that thousands of essential health and safety records for tenants' homes were either missing or unreliable.

The missing safety records at Barking and Dagenham Council related to fire risk assessments, gas servicing, electrical installations, asbestos and water safety.

The problems came to light during an internal audit, which found that while most of the required safety checks were being completed, the council lacked the paperwork to verify this.

The Regulator of Social Housing was called in

and concluded that the council had breached the Home Standard and there was the potential for serious detriment to tenants. Work to correct all of the gaps is expected to have been completed by the Summer.

The biggest gap in the council's safety records related to electrical installation condition reports where the council found it either did not have a clear record of whether a report was required or could not evidence that such a check had previously been completed for more than 16,000 of its domestic properties and more than 2,000 communal areas.

It was also found that the council did not have fire risk assessments in place for more than 100 properties, and did not have a clear record of whether an FRA was required for more than 1,000.

Almost 3,000 properties and 2,000 communal areas also required data validation to establish whether they should be included on the gas safety programme.

Dominic Twomey, deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, performance and core services at Barking and Dagenham Council, said the council required frequent checks on the health and safety of its homes and it voluntarily referred itself to the regulator after discovering the data gaps.

He reiterated that the council was committed to providing the safest council-owned properties in the capital.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm requirements updated

Social landlords have been warned that tougher rules over providing smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their rented properties will be in place by the Autumn.

Following a consultation exercise last year on changes to the requirements, junior housing minister Eddie Hughes has written to landlord representatives advising them they should be installing alarms in tenants homes 'without delay' and any landlord found in breach could be fined up to £5,000. In his letter, Mr Hughes writes: "This

is a crucial measure for residents' safety, and the timeframe has been informed by the responses to our consultation: a clear majority of respondents were in favour of regulating without delay.

"We are working at pace to bring these changes in, which could be as soon as Autumn 2022." The changes will mean that all social landlords must:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every storey of their homes; and
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in every room

which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers)

Mr Hughes said alarms have been shown to save lives and it is vital that residents are protected by them. He welcomed the positive action of those landlords who have already installed alarms, and he encouraged others to 'act early too'.

"I am sure you will agree that installing these alarms now is the right thing to do to make sure residents are protected as soon as possible."

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Rough sleeping falls again to an eight year low

The latest set of rough sleeping statistics shows that rates have fallen for a fourth year in a row with a nine per cent reduction in rough sleeping compared to last year.

Numbers have fallen in every region of England, taking levels to an 8-year low overall. The number of people in emergency accommodation has also nearly halved (down 49 per cent), with more people securing long-term homes.

Researchers at housing charity Shelter pointed out that the number of people sleeping rough is still 38 per cent higher than in 2010 when the data started being collected. The local council areas in England with the highest numbers of people

sleeping rough were Westminster (187), Camden (97), and Bristol (68).

Rough Sleeping and Housing Minister Eddie Hughes MP said: "The Government remains focused on ending rough sleeping by the end of this parliament (in 2024) and we're making excellent progress towards this.

"The latest figures are testament to that, showing our investment is helping more people have a roof over their heads and the best possible chance of turning their lives around."

£800 million has been invested in the past year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, with £2 billion committed over the next three years. This

includes providing 6,000 long-term homes through the £433 million Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and up to £52 million for rehab and detox services for people with drug or alcohol issues.

The Government has committed to publishing its Rough Sleeping strategy, to set out a plan for how it will continue its work to end rough sleeping by ensuring rough sleeping is prevented in the first instance, and responded to effectively in the rare cases where it occurs.

The actions include a promise to replace the Vagrancy Act, which Ministers admit is antiquated and no longer fit for purpose.

Another council refers itself to regulator over missing safety data

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The missing safety records at Barking and Dagenham Council related to fire risk assessments,

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He reiterated that the council was committed to providing the safest council-owned properties in the capital.

Lettings company and its director fined for gas safety failings

A private lettings agency and its director have been fined thousands of pounds for failing to carry out essential safety checks on gas appliances in a rental property.

Chelmsford Magistrates' Court heard how the landlord, Belleview Property Limited (Belleview), failed to carry out the annual gas safety check at their rental property in Colchester, Essex. Belleview

was served with an Improvement Notice requiring the checks to be carried out, but failed to do so within the specified timeframe.

They also failed to provide details of the tenancy agreement when requested to do so by a Health and Safety (HSE) inspector using her powers under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The investigation found that Belleview's failures were committed with the consent of, or were attributable to neglect on the part of, Adrian Ellis, as the sole director of Belleview.

The Court heard that Ellis had previously been prosecuted by the HSE for failing to undertake gas safety checks at properties owned and rented out by him as an individual. Belleview had also been subject to HSE enforcement twice in the last five years relating to its failure to arrange gas safety checks at properties rented out by it, including the property subject to the current case.

Belleview Property Limited of St Ives,

Cambridgeshire pleaded guilty to breaching the Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations 1998, Regulation 36(3) and failing to comply with the requirement to provide information under Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined £12,000 with £2,245.28 costs.

Director Adrian Ellis of Leech's Lane, Colchester, Essex CO4 5EP pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £3,000 with £2,245.28 costs. Each defendant was ordered to pay a further £170 as a government surcharge.

After the hearing HSE inspector Jessica Churchyard said: "Landlords must ensure gas appliances at their tenanted properties are maintained in a safe condition and are checked by a Gas Safe Register engineer at least every 12 months. HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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Demand for rental homes remains very strong

Demand for private rented housing remained strong at the end of 2021, according to data released by the National Residential Landlords Association.

A survey of private landlords across England and Wales, conducted in partnership with the research consultancy BVA/BDRC, found that 56 per cent reported a rise in demand for privately rented homes in Q4 2021. This was almost identical to the 57 per cent who saw the same trend in the third quarter of 2021.

Regionally demand was highest in the South West, with 77 per cent of landlords confirming that demand increased in the final quarter of 2021. Meanwhile, in a sign of post-COVID recovery in the London market, 74 per cent of Central London landlords saw increased demand. 54 per cent of landlords in this region witnessed a similar trend in Q3 2021.

Despite strong demand, across the country the proportion of landlords planning to reduce the number of properties they let (24 per cent) outstrips the proportion planning to purchase homes to let (14 per cent). This research comes after the economic consultancy Capital Economics warned

that, without urgent action, the supply of homes for private rent could fall by over half a million over the next ten years.

Capital Economics found that if owner occupation and social housing continue at their ten-year average rate of growth, private rented sector supply would have to increase by 227,000 per year to hit Government targets. It also noted that “even if the other [housing] tenures doubled their rate of growth, 105,000 homes for private rental would be needed each year, which is well above current rates of growth.”

Ben Beadle, Chief Executive of the National Residential Landlords Association said: “The rental housing supply crisis is only set to worsen, as renters continue to feel the effects of a market starved of a healthy supply of homes for private rent.

“The Government needs to accept that for all the rhetoric about homeownership, many people need to rent beforehand. Policies that dampen investment in the private rented sector serve only to reduce choice, drive up rents and, as a result, make homeownership more difficult to achieve.”

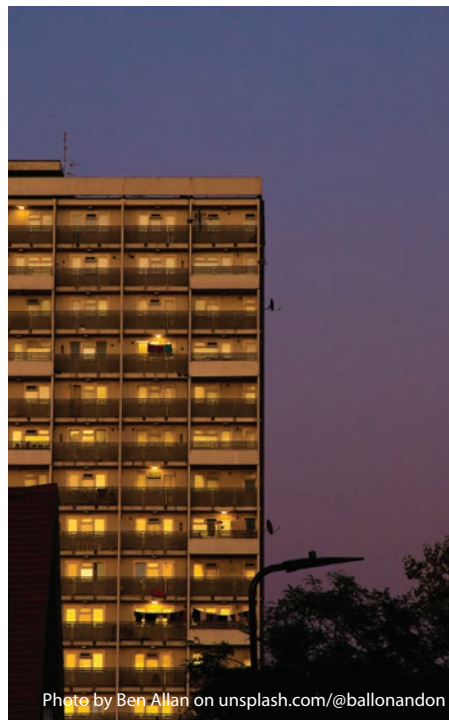


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And it's not just familiar faces who will be showcasing the best products around – there will be lots of new brands on display. You will be able to see composite decking supplier Ronjack, metal door manufacturer Strongdor and modular steel outbuildings manufacturer Telluria. They'll be joined by FIT Show first-timers ICB Fabrications, sustainable merchandise supplier Media HUT, Checktrade and Solar Calibre Doors.

SAVE MONEY & MILEAGE

As well as saving time hunting out the best products by being able to see them all under one roof, you'll be able to access exclusive offers and discounts. Exhibitors will be pulling out all the stops to bring you the best deals and discounts which you will only be able to benefit from if you attend the show.



Looking for a new piece of machinery? Perhaps you want to expand your portfolio to include outdoor living products. You'll be able to do all of this, as well as receiving offers directly from industry leading brands.

FANCY A LATE NIGHT LOCK IN?

We understand that time means money and you might not want to take time off the tools or away from jobs during the day. That's why we're opening for our 'Late Night' event on Wednesday 11th May until 8pm, which means you've got plenty of time to finish up in the office and head over to the NEC for some after hours shopping and networking.

PIG's will also be hosting its infamous PIGs Bar on the Certass stand so the beer will be flowing and there will be plenty of opportunities to network and celebrate with the whole industry.

TRY, TEST & DEMO

Not only will you be able to see the latest products up close, but you'll also be the very first to see them. Our exhibitors are planning more new product launches than any previous year. You'll be able to test out the latest products and smart home technology, as well as watch live demos with the people behind these amazing innovations. Whether it's the latest bi-folds you're after, lantern roofs or flat roof alternatives, you'll be able to test and try them out for yourself.

And it's not just about the latest windows, doors, glass and hardware, we'll also be bringing you the best tools and equipment to help install them.

And if you're feeling confident in your own abilities, there will be opportunities for you to roll up your sleeves and take on the experts with live time challenges. You might even win some prizes!



Register for the event here: fitshow-2022.reg.buzz/websitebutton

Quick and easy pipe boxing from Pendock



MXF fire sprinkler boxing



CHM/MXM external metal boxing



BC boiler pipe casings

Each product in the Pendock Profiles family of pipe boxing and casings is designed to conceal unsightly exposed pipe work quickly and effectively in a range of social housing projects and applications.

From the MXF, MX and TK pipe boxing ranges, dedicated to concealing interior pipework, to the specialised BC boiler casings, CH channel pipe boxing and the strong CHM and MXM metal boxing for external applications, the Pendock range is one of the most comprehensive available.

Except for the metal boxing range, all products are manufactured from pre-formed plywood and are supplied pre-finished in durable melamine. This removes the need for time consuming on-site

fabrication or painting, which saves time and money as Pendock boxing can be fitted in less than half the time of site-made alternatives.

The widespread use of Pendock MXF fire sprinkler boxing has helped speed sprinkler system installations on high-rise and low-rise residential fire safety improvement projects, as they're quick and easy to fit, using screws, battens and dedicated accessories to cover surface mounted pipework.

Concealing boiler pipework, valves, regulators and filters is equally simple with the BC range of boiler pipe casings, which are designed to be free standing. Four casing options are available, including jointed designs that can be supplied

either factory assembled, or as components for on-site assembly.

A joint-less one-piece casing and bespoke options are also included in the range, which are manufactured by Pendock to the exact boiler and project specifications supplied by the contractor.

Where exterior pipework needs concealing or protecting from possible damage theft or vandalism, CHM and MXM metal pipe boxing is engineered to enclose pipework, building services and utilities associated with the installation of low carbon district heating schemes and air source or ground source heat pump installations.

01952 580 590 www.pendock.co.uk

AKW Holdings Group acquires Elfreed Limited including Contour Showers Limited and H2O Pumps Limited

AKW Holdings Limited Group, provider of accessible showering, general bathrooms, daily living and kitchen solutions, announces that it has acquired Elfreed Limited including Contour Showers Limited and H2O Pumps Limited.

Serving a broad range of customers throughout the UK, Cheshire-based Contour Showers was established in 1959 and employs approximately 60 staff across two sites in Winsford, Cheshire and Longton, Stoke-on-Trent.

The acquisition is complementary to AKW Holding's current operations and aligns to its existing UK operations via AKW Medi-Care Limited, based in Droitwich, Worcestershire. From being founded in 1982, AKW Medi-Care delivers wide ranges of shower room, bathroom and kitchen products to its customers.

Commenting on the acquisition, Nick Parsons, Chief Executive Officer of AKW Holdings Group said: "The acquisition of Contour Showers adds yet more expertise to the group and expands the reach and diversity of our products, offering greater choice, availability and an increasing number of product solutions into our markets".

AKW Holdings Limited were advised on the deal by Seneca Corporate Finance (corporate



finance), Squire Patton Boggs (legal) and KPMG (financial and tax diligence). Contour were advised by AXM Venture Capital Limited and BBS Law (legal).

AKW is a supplier of showering, daily living and kitchen solutions for people with mobility

needs. Choice, competitive pricing, and first-class customer service makes AKW the first choice for clients across the UK and abroad.

For more information, please contact AKW.

01905 823298 www.akw-ltd.co.uk

16 JUNE, SIXWAYS STADIUM WORCESTER



Why we are planning ahead for housing

Community Housing & Investment Consortium (CHIC) will be hosting its 11th annual conference and exhibition on June 16, 2022, returning to the Sixways Stadium in Worcester.

As a procurement consortium with over 200 members, mainly from the housing sector, the members service delivery team has insight into the behaviours of the housing and construction sectors.

Registered providers face some big challenges, including cost inflation, material and labour shortages, the need to reduce carbon emissions and a housing shortage. We need to invest in our current homes and build many new ones. Efficient responses to all these challenges are imperative.

Common practice is to take a reactive approach to asset management and development programmes. What this leads to is a tunnel vision, putting aside the strategy required for longevity.

At the 2022 CHIC Conference, CHIC wants to look ahead. What should the plan be for housing and construction investment to ensure what we do now is really going to be fit for the future?



WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO ATTEND?

The conference is designed to promote the sharing of ideas and collaboration to achieve great outputs. Previous events have seen upward of 500 delegates from the housing and construction sectors.

The Government mandate for a 30% cut in carbon for all new buildings – as set out in the Levelling Up paper – is due to come into force in June, great timing to discuss the immediate implications on planned programmes with sector colleagues at this event.

By gathering like minded individuals who are heading in the same direction, it encourages greater thought and business development opportunities. Whether this is hearing from experts and sector leaders at a workshop or speaking to the 40+ exhibitors throughout the day, those attending will be provided with information on how they can implement change within their organisation.

BBC home editor Mark Easton is returning to chair the conference for the fifth year running. A hit with delegates, Mark has an exceptional track record in sparking great debate and challenging the speakers. The extended Q&A sessions at the end of each workshop will provide delegates with an opportunity to ask questions.



WHAT'S ON

CHIC has over 20 speakers lined up throughout the day, including Will Perry from the regulator of social housing and chief economist Trevor Williams.

Each speaker has been invited because of their expertise and knowledge, helping delegates better understand what they want to know, and more importantly what they need to know, to steer the sector in the right direction.

Informative presentations spread across eight different sessions. These are all available to delegates following the event so you can share with your colleagues and begin using what you learnt. Delegates can also meet with the supply chain face to face.

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

The agenda has been shaped around upcoming challenges, both in the immediate future but also looking up to 30 years ahead. It is important to take a

proactive approach to understand what is coming, implementing the necessary changes now to save time, cost and effort later down the line.

The keynote session is based on the overarching theme “Planning ahead for housing.” With energy efficiency and sustainability standards coming into play over the next 30 years, CHIC has invited three leading sector figures to discuss their unique perspectives on what registered providers need to be doing right now to help shape the future of housing.

Returning topics of discussion this year include whether today's building safety standards are going to be fit for the future, including fire precautions and sustainability, and how changes such as developing more offsite manufactured homes are going to warp procurement compliance.

Another theme carried over from previous years is how housing associations can work collaboratively with their supply chain to tackle the pressures such as stock shortages and lead times, to create efficiencies and continuity of supply.

Utilising data effectively to make informed decisions and in turn being intelligent when it comes to asset management is an emerging topic. This follows CHIC's new framework for Digital Asset Delivery a few months prior, supporting the ‘golden thread’ of information.

Attendance is free and those wishing to attend can register for a place at:
www.chicltd.co.uk

3-5 MAY, EXCEL CENTRE

Building cultural change in 2022



More than 25,000 people are expected to come together at UK Construction Week (UKCW) London on 3-5 May, at the ExCeL centre – the country's largest live show for the construction industry

UKCW London will explore how the industry implements new behaviours, best practice, and a true cultural shift in how it builds for the future.

The event is likely to be the biggest construction event the capital has seen in many years, with over 40,000 m² of exhibition space, more than 300 exhibitors, 10,000 products on show, 300 expert speakers, seven theatre stages, multiple specialist hubs, and 150 hours of CPD content.

The event will provide insights into the issues affecting the way in which buildings are designed and the emerging markets, technology innovations and global design trends to watch. Some of the major companies taking part include HS2, ABC+ Warranty, Bosch, Hanson Plywood, Xero, Entserv UK and Construction Industry Solutions Ltd.

Nathan Garnett, UKCW event director is excited to bring UK Construction Week to London. "2022 is the year to focus on how we achieve the systemic changes we've been discussing for some time and to share the learning from the organisations who have already made a strong start."

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME EXPLORED

Day one will include updates on the new rules around public procurement, the new regulatory regime on building safety, the forthcoming Building Safety Act, and the new ways in which the industry works on projects as wide ranging as prisons, hospitals, road and rail infrastructure, education buildings and housing. Day two will be a deep dive into digitalisation, Net Zero and energy futures, and day three will focus on people, including diversity, health and wellbeing, recruitment and retention issues.

The main stage will be sponsored by COINS, while CEMEX will be sponsoring the Infrastructure Hub. Expert speakers from the Infrastructure Projects Authority and Barbour ABI will showcase learning from major projects like HS2, Thames Tideway, Royal Docks London and the West Midlands Growth Engine as well as analysing government policies that will affect infrastructure over the next 10-15 years.

The Sustainability Hub includes sessions on best practice in low carbon building and retrofit from Europe, regenerative design and biomimicry, hydrogen innovation, 3D printing, waste issues and building for disassembly.

The Digital Construction Hub in partnership with Build in Digital will deliver practical workshops on digital strategy, BIM, cloud computing, cybersecurity, use of Big Data and how technology can improve efficiency, productivity and profitability.

The Offsite Alliance Hub will share learning from Alliance members who work alongside leading organisations, government, local authorities and housing associations to increase the uptake and delivery of offsite technologies across the residential sector.



UKCW AWARDS CAMPAIGN

UKCW's Role Models awards campaign – an opportunity to recognise talented professionals – also returns for its fourth year after receiving a record number of nominees last year from all areas of construction, including a large number of architects.

Entries for the 2022 Role Models awards are now open and will be closing on 25 February. This year's shortlist will be announced at UKCW London, with the winner crowned at UKCW Birmingham, 4-6 October at the NEC.

UKCW is a chance to "celebrate the sector's achievements and some of the best thought leaders and innovators construction has to offer," say the organisers.

UKCW, supported by other sponsors including Aico, Northgate Vehicle Hire and Bosch, will run alongside co-located events Concrete Expo (3-4 May), the Offsite Show with Buildoffsite, (3-5 May), and Grand Designs Live (30 April - 8 May), and industry conferences including the Timber Trade Federation conference on 3 May and the Future of Work in Construction conference on 4 May.

Free registration to UK Construction Week London is now open with one entry badge also providing access to the Offsite Show, Concrete Expo and Grand Designs Live.

Download the free UKCW app and book one-to-one appointments with delegates and exhibitors. It is available from both iOS and Android app stores.

To get regular updates on the event, follow UKCW on social media using the hashtags #UKCW2022 #UKCWLDN

If you're interested in visiting UKCW London 2022, register for your place at:
www.ukconstructionweek.com/make-an-enquiry

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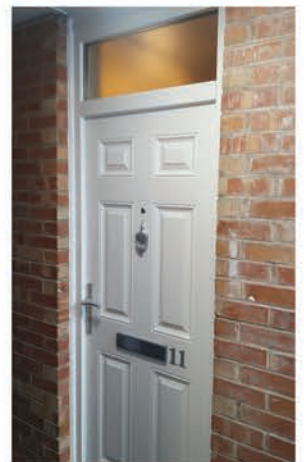
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SUSTAINED FLAMES
FOR 60 MINUTES
IN TEST

Smoke, mirrored testing and 3rd party auditing

Winkhaus UK explains the importance of smoke control testing in fire doorsets, and the incorporation of smoke control into 3rd party audit/certification schemes for flat and apartment entrance doorsets.



Fire regulations are often driven by disaster, with changes in recent years highlighting the requirements for compliance, and how this should be delivered and maintained through the lifecycle of a fire doorset.

The 2019 MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) guideline identified the 3 critical performances for a fire doorset as Fire, Smoke and Security. The MHCLG guideline, along with the independent review of building regulations and fire safety, also clearly states that these critical performances should be 3rd party audited and certified.

Traditional test evidence most often includes smoke resistance, but the smoke evidence has not been controlled by the 3rd Party independent audit / Certification scheme as recommended by the MHCLG.

Secured by Design (SBD) – the official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings – says that to precisely follow this guidance,

the independent audits must relate to fire, smoke and security. This change ensures that all three performances are tested and regularly independently audited to prove all production this week, next month, and next year continue to provide the safest door set solution, for the lifecycle of the door.

As a business we have always tested our fire doorset solutions against all three critical performances, with both fire and smoke now having their own mirrored FoAp (Field of Application) that identifies the design and range of products that are covered. The Q Mark certification system brings together the information from these FoAp's and consolidates the approved design range within the door manufacturers "Scope of Certification".

UKAS accredited 3rd Party auditing is not just required to verify test data for fire doors, it is a critical requirement throughout the "Golden Thread" or lifecycle of a fire doorset. Every stage from manufacture, through survey and



UKAS accredited 3rd Party auditing is not just required to verify test data for fire doors, it is a critical requirement throughout the “Golden Thread” or lifecycle of a fire doorset.

installation, annual inspection and any remedial maintenance required may be 3rd party audited. All of these stages within the Golden Thread refer back to the original design testing ensuring the correct components are being used to make or maintain a door.

Monitoring this compliance can be supported through the use of new data storage technology, allowing each door to be individually recognised and the information from across the lifecycle digitally stored and accessed when required. For the landlord or responsible person, this means simplification of the maintenance program for doors.

As an example, software can record when a door’s annual inspection is due and can create a schedule for inspection, or when remedial maintenance work is required for say a damaged letterbox, the information stored for the doorset can record the correct replacement component is competently fitted to ensure continued compliance and warranties are maintained.

To aid the understanding of the new requirements for a compliant fire doorset specification, we have recently expanded our free training. The training can be tailored depending on the audience, to cover a general overview of the golden thread and importance of 3rd party testing, or greater detail on the latest testing standards and legislation or Q&A sessions if greater depth is requested.

Winkhaus UK are manufacturers of security locking systems for doors and windows

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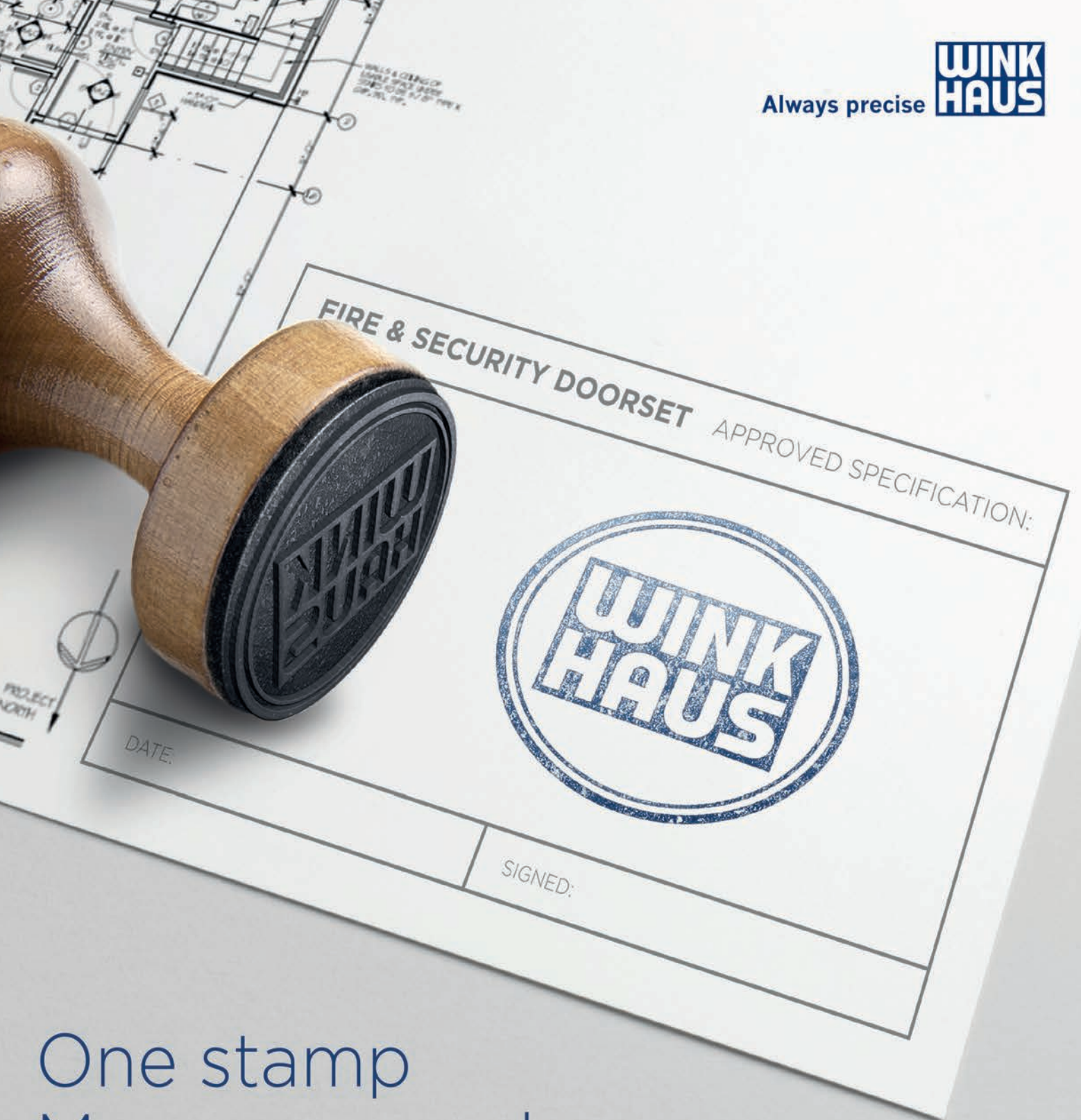
ZERO plus



Marley's future-proofed roof system scoops prestigious product award

Marley's full roof system has won the Best External Product award in the highly competitive 2022 Housebuilder Product Awards. The expert panel of industry judges recognised how Marley's complete roof system including integrated solar PV and an innovative fire safety solution – Roof Defence, could help housebuilders tackle prominent issues round future sustainability and end user safety, and ultimately, provide future-proofed roofs. Marley SolarTile®, together with the new and innovative Roof Defence product, can both be specified as component solutions within a fully integrated roof system and help play a significant role in enabling housebuilders to satisfy new carbon reduction responsibilities under Part L of the Building Regulations, as well as enhance protection against the risk of fire spread between roof spaces. Stuart Nicholson, roof systems director at Marley, said: “We are committed to working with housebuilders so they can specify roofing solutions that meet the needs of their customers and the regulatory landscape they’re operating in. That’s why we’re delighted that the value of future-proofed roofs provided by the Marley full roof system have been recognised in this way.

01283 722588 www.marley.co.uk/roofsystem



One stamp Many approvals

For further information about Winkhaus Fire, Smoke & Security Doorset Solutions, support creating your specifications or to register for our free training, please visit: firetraining.winkhaus.com



MHCLG COMPLIANT:
Fire, Smoke & Security



WEB:
Winkhaus Evidence Bank



BS EN 1634:
Fire Resistance & Smoke Control



PAS 24:
Enhanced Security



Q-MARK CERTIFICATION:
Fire, Smoke & Security

Shelforce partnership 'top notch' for housing association installer

A West Midlands double glazing and installation company that specialises in housing association projects has said it 'couldn't ask for more' from its partnership with Shelforce.

Lutley Windows has been working with Shelforce since last year and have described the Birmingham window and door manufacturer as 'top notch.'

Shelforce specialises in providing high-quality PVCu and aluminium products to local authority building projects and employs some of the city's most vulnerable people with 75% of its workforce disabled, and for Lutley Windows MD Mark Taylor the company was well known to him.

Mark started Lutley Windows nine years ago working mainly maintenance for one housing association with a bit of response fitting. By the

time the company was asked to do planned works as well as maintenance, it was working with two housing associations.

Now Lutley Windows works with Midland Heart, Black Country Housing Group and Birmingham Civic Housing Association and, while the company also takes on domestic work, housing association work has tripled – meaning the partnership with Shelforce will be crucial moving forward.

"I've been in the business for over 30 years and knew all about Shelforce," said Mark. "When Stuart Stimpson from Winkhaus suggested trying them I jumped at the chance; it was a great idea, and we are absolutely over the moon with them and haven't looked back since."

"Anything we do we go to Shelforce first, whether that's windows, doors, fire doors and we only use another company if they can't do it but most things they can do."

"They really are top notch, and we feel comfortable with them; pretty much everything they do is to the highest spec and when they say they are going to do something they do it. That's rare and while it's a difficult time for everybody currently, Shelforce still deliver."

"They are always on the phone and if there are any issues they get them sorted straight away and you can't ask for more than that. And, of course,



with their experience in social housing and local authority projects they really know their stuff."

With around 20 people working at Lutley Windows, the company is looking to continue expanding next year, and Mark sees the partnership with Shelforce as important in that too.

Mark added: "We are currently trying to get registered for our PAS 2030 Certification and we're hoping towards the end of this year that we'll be working in partnership with Shelforce's Business manager Howard Trotter so Shelforce will be supplying the frames for Birmingham City Council and we're hoping to supply the labour."

Howard commented: "We have developed a hugely valued partnership with Lutley Windows in a short space of time which I feel is testament to both companies. It's been a pleasure to work closely with them and we're looking forward to a lasting relationship with Mark and the team."

From high rises and new builds to schools and colleges, Shelforce has experience with all types of social housing refurbishment and maintenance.

0121 603 5262 www.shelforce.com



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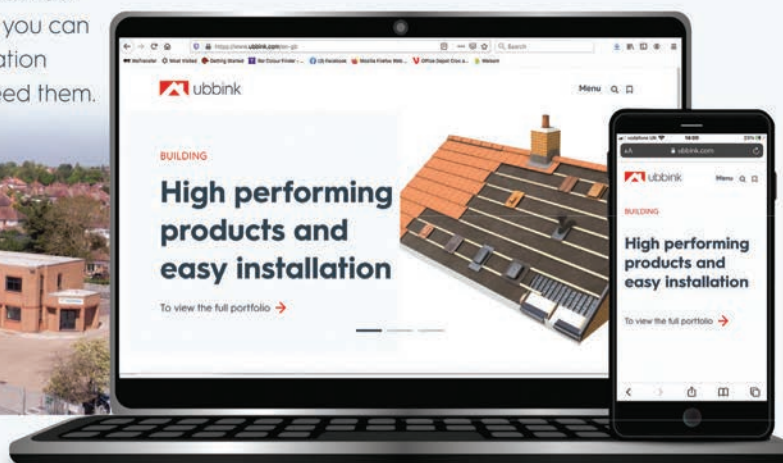
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Vent-Axia supports new White Paper

Vent-Axia, a leader in low-carbon ventilation, is delighted to support BEAMA's updated Ventilation White Paper. Launched on 16 February 2022, BEAMA's 'Better Ventilation, Better Homes, Better Health' White Paper sets out a 4-step policy pathway for the future to deliver effective ventilation and improved indoor air quality (IAQ) inside UK homes in order to help protect health and wellbeing. Vent-Axia fully supports this White Paper as it aligns with the company's commitment to improving IAQ through ventilation to protect public health. Vent-Axia is committed to improving IAQ and energy efficiency.

0844 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com



ESi provides controls for tallest city centre

ESi has seen its controls specified for a landmark development in the centre of Birmingham. 481 of ESi's ESRT4 wired programmable room thermostats adorn the walls of exciting new apartments at the 42-storey Zone2 Broad Street. The ESRT4 is an easy to install-and-use 7 day, 5/2 or 24hr programmable room thermostat which offers up to six time and temperature changes each day with different programmes for weekdays and weekends. The ESRT4 has all the energy savings features such as TPI, Delayed Start and Optimum Stop and the all-important Landlord Service Interval.

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Budget conscious? Try this new low surface temperature radiator

Midlands-based safe heating product provider, Contour Heating, has launched a brand-new low surface temperature radiator that is set to provide the housing and wider construction sector with a cost-effective alternative to their current heating products.

Covora Lite launches alongside a range of other safe heating products as part of the all-new brochure made available earlier this year.

Aimed at projects working to tight budgets and timelines, its launch is also aimed at helping school and nursery fit outs scheduled over the summer.

Providing contractors with a cost-effective low surface temperature radiator, Covora Lite

also boasts the quickest lead time of any Contour Heating product, while also providing contractors and installation teams with split delivery.

"Covora Lite is our most affordable low surface temperature radiator to date" said Commercial Director Robin Mansell.

"With all the features expected from Contour's extensive range, Covora Lite is still a premium product, but one that makes safe heating much more affordable.

"Delivered in days, Covora Lite is helping all projects push back against inflation, material cost rises and labour shortages."

Including bullnose corners for added safety precautions, pencil proof grilles to prevent foreign objects from entering and with BioCote, helping protect against 99.9% of bacteria, Covora Lite low surface temperature radiators are kept 'on the shelf'.

This approach means they can be turned around much quicker than other heating products on the market, and at lower cost providing you with an unrivalled cost and time saving.

On top of this, spilt delivery is also available, helping you optimise your projects and work more streamlined with other trades.

Contour Heating's complete product range also includes other low surface temperature radiators



as well as a variety of anti-ligature solutions, helping provide safer heating to a wider range of industries.

If you're interested in learning more, you can visit Contour Heating's website or speak to the team directly.

01952 290 498
sales@contourheating.co.uk
www.contourheating.co.uk



F. Ball supports centre renovation

Products donated by F. Ball and Co. Ltd., including the company's Stopgap 1200 Pro levelling compound, have been used to prepare subfloors as part of the renovation of the Coventry Caribbean Community Centre prior to its reopening to coincide with Coventry's UK City of Culture status last year. Installers opted to use F. Ball's

Stopgap 1200 Pro to smooth subfloors. The levelling compound can be applied directly over minimal, well-bonded old adhesive residues. F. Ball's Stopgap F77 one-part waterproof surface membrane was then applied to prevent excess subfloor moisture attacking floorcoverings and adhesives.



01583 361 633 www.f-ball.co.uk

Fibo expands collection with new designs

Leading waterproof wall panel manufacturer, Fibo, has added a selection of new, market-leading designs to its Urban, Signature and Scandinavian collections, providing its customers with even more contemporary choices. Launching at kbb Birmingham in March, a new Straight Herringbone design is joining the popular Urban Collection; a Vertical Plank design has been added to Fibo's Scandinavian Collection, and a new high gloss décor has been introduced to the Scandinavian and Signature ranges. All of the designs come complete with a market-leading warranty of 25 years.



01494 771242 fibo.co.uk/collection

David Phillips reappointed

David Phillips is delighted to announce its reappointment for the Procurement for Housing (PfH) furniture and flooring framework for the next four years. Following a meticulous tendering process, David Phillips is pleased to be one of 5 suppliers listed on the framework for residential furniture. Connecting housing providers with market leading furniture and flooring experts, the PfH framework seeks to offer solutions for all requirements. Saving valuable time and money, the framework allows clients to avoid the open market and issues direct awards to recommended suppliers.



020 3872 2295 davidphillips.com

Weekly bathroom installations on the up

The switch from traditional tiling to installing Fibo waterproof wall panels in their bathrooms has allowed Places for People, one of the UK's largest property management companies, to improve its installation rate by up to 133%. Providing tenants with a hygienic and maintenance-free finish. Manufactured in an ISO 14001 quality assured environment, Fibo wall panels have a decorative, high pressure laminate surface, bonded to a specially developed high quality 9 mm seven-layer WBP Plywood core with a balancer laminate on the reverse. They come with a manufacturer's 25 year product warranty and are certified antibacterial.



01494 771242 www.fibo.co.uk

Multi-generational bathrooms

Yiota Toumba at Ideal Standard shares her thoughts on how to create residential bathrooms that cater to everyone, regardless of age or mobility



The UK's population is ageing, and around one in five people are now 65 or over. With that number expected to grow significantly over the next decade, it's vital that the homes we're developing today will provide adequate support for people tomorrow.

Building or upgrading bathrooms to be more accessible and comfortable for less mobile residents is one of the most impactful steps developers and housing managers can take. This will both greatly improve the quality of life for residents and increase a property's value.

When it comes to adapting bathrooms for the infirm or those residents with reduced mobility, there's a lot to consider – from temperature to extra support, to anti-slip measures. Safety needs to be the ultimate priority, but you still need to create a space that is attractive and supports people in maintaining their independence.

There is a range of specialised bathroom products available on the market created for those with less mobility in mind, which can offer a sleek look and feel as well as an additional level of support.

BATHS

Standing in the shower can be a difficult experience for many with less mobility, which is why baths are more likely to be an important feature in their homes.

Baths that are made with lower edges than standard and come with reinforced ledges provide an additional level of support.

These will allow users to comfortably sit down when they need to and make it much easier for them to get in and out of the bath as they can sit on the side and manoeuvre at their own speed.

SHOWERS

At the same time, there are many who also find lying down in a bath difficult, in which case a tailored showering set-up is required. When looking for an accessible showering range, it's important to consider the entire system to create a comfortable experience for the end-users. This may include systems that come with supportive rails and shower chairs built-in, allowing users to sit down and rest while they shower.

Wet rooms are another option, providing easy access and usability, with users able to get in and out without needing to overcome any height difference between the floor and a shower tray.

PREVENTING SCALDING

One of the most notable and preventable dangers in bathrooms is scalding, which should always be considered when choosing fittings for homes where children, elderly or less mobile people live.

One of the best ways to eliminate scalding is to make use of taps and showers fitted with thermostats. Thermostats ensure that the water exiting the fitting will not exceed a pre-set temperature. They work by sensing any changes



in temperature and moving an internal piston accordingly which alters the proportion of hot and cold water being mixed in the valve.

It's not just the water exiting exposed fittings that can result in scalding for end-users. Brassware itself will heat up very quickly if designed poorly. When you choose exposed fittings for housing catering to elderly people, you should make sure they have some form of insulative properties designed into them.

REDUCING SLIPPING

Another important factor to consider is how to minimise the risk of slipping. You can never eliminate the danger completely, but you can help to reduce the chance of slipping by making better choices when it comes to the products you put into these environments. Installing grab rails in shower cubicles and baths and around basins can significantly help reduce the risks, providing further support and confidence to users.

Today, there are also effective surfaces and finishes that manufacturers apply to baths and shower trays that cut down on slipping. These products should be approved and certified in accordance with the TUV tests. These are the best-known slip resistant standards, conducted in Germany against DIN 51097.

If you're unsure of the slip resistance capabilities of the products you're putting in your bathrooms, get in touch with the manufacturer to enquire directly. They should be able to provide quick and reliable guidance.

Higher WCs are also much easier to use for those with mobility issues and reduce the pressure on people's knees, helping people maintain their independence. Brightly coloured toilet seats may also be a good idea for those who suffer from visual impairments, helping WCs stand out more.

With an ageing population to cater for, it's vital for everyone involved in the development of future and existing housing stock to consider the needs of tomorrow when creating or renovating bathrooms. By doing so, they can play a big role in giving people their day-to-day independence and improving their quality of life.

Yiota Tumba is senior designer at Ideal Standard

AKW's new futureproof sanitaryware range – compliant with revised UK water regulations

AKW, one of the UK's leading providers of accessibility solutions, is pleased to announce the launch of its stylish new Livenza Plus sanitaryware. This high-quality range has classic, clean lines and is fully compliant with the latest, revised UK Water Regulations. With the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) reviewing its approval of water fittings across the industry, the Livenza Plus range delivers peace of mind to installers and end users alike, as it is fully compliant with all revised requirements. In addition, Livenza Plus features a rimless toilet pan, flush options and stylish aesthetics to suit any home. The latest UK water regulations require a 300 mm cistern overflow pipe and a visible top-fill water inlet valve, with an all-round air gap. This is to eliminate backflow and potential contamination risk of the water supply. To accommodate the revised internal design requirements, the Livenza Plus raised push button and lever flush cisterns are tall and slim, delivering both functionality and enhanced aesthetics. Alongside this sophisticated design upgrade to the original Livenza range, the AKW Livenza Plus range has rounded edges and corners to minimise potential fall injuries and features a rimless pan, which is easier to clean and helps prevent the build-up of bacteria. To improve functionality still further, the cistern comes with either a standard push button flush, a raised version or lever handle option for those with dexterity issues.

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Anchor your fastenings with Sika Everbuild

Sika Everbuild is shining a spotlight on its styrene-free chemical anchor adhesives – Everbuild Anchorset Green and Sika AnchorFix-1. The styrene-free, low odour formulation of both adhesives makes them more pleasant to work with than other similar products on the market. There's no compromise on the quality in terms of application or durability, with both providing the robust performance that the chemical anchoring process demands. Specialist adhesives offer a strong two-part process which is a reliable way to anchor metal fixings to a concrete substrate securely without risk of the concrete cracking under the strain.



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Housing Management & Maintenance

The Housing Management & Maintenance (HMM) website is an online provider of past and present news items dedicated to keep professionals within this sector updated with a wide range of topics including legislation, projects, products and more. housingmmonline.co.uk is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live links to advertisers' sites, as well as email alerts to keep you as informed as possible.



www.housingmmonline.co.uk

Doors open for Office to home Conversion in Woking

Vicaima doors have been selected by a Surrey based contractor for new apartments in central Woking town location, converting former office space into smart contemporary living.

The trend for re-imagining unwanted commercial and workspaces into modern homes offering flexible rental opportunities, has seen

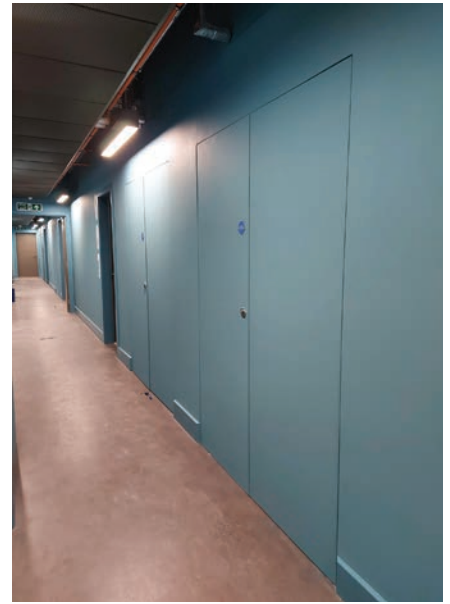


substantial growth over the past few years. One such example is the newly refurbished Conerstone development in the heart of Woking town centre, where 94 new apartments from compact studio design to 3 bed living have been created.

The adaptive reuse in such developments often present both functionality and safety considerations which must be addressed. This is one of the reasons why the extended scope and certification compliance offered by the Vicaima range, provides so much appeal to contractors and developers looking to address design and technical challenges.

Surrey based specialist contractors Buxton, chose Vicaima Easi-Fit interior doorkits for apartment entrances, internal room division and corridor areas, offering as it does a rapid installation with easily assembled door and frame. In compliance with leading regulatory standards, apartment entrance doors supplied by Vicaima, not only provided third party fire certificated assurance, but were approved to Secured by Design, for added peace of mind. To enable a flexible colour scheme to be accommodated throughout the project, all doors were supplied in Vicaima's revolutionary Primed 2 Go finish. With their ultra-smooth polymer faces that don't require either face sanding or priming, excellent surface decoration can be consistently achieved.

Easi-Fit door kits and Primed 2 Go finish are




just two examples from an extensive selection of imaginative ideas from the Vicaima Collections, with performance and decorative solutions for a multitude of project types.

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How to have confidence in your fire safety door supplier

Ty Aziz, Managing Director of Sentry Doors, shows why choosing a reliable partner has never been more important.

There is no one working in housing management today who does not recognise the crucial importance of choosing and working with the right fire safety door supplier. This magazine's recent survey revealed that 95% of participants believed fire doors to be the single most important product in the fight to prevent fires. So how do you ensure that you can have the confidence in your supplier to create the foundation of a trusted, ongoing partnership that protects tenants into the long term?

At Sentry Doors – manufacturers of timber fire doorsets – we believe that it is of course, about choosing the right, great door at the highest standards of safety, but it is also about knowing that this doorset will be manufactured to your exacting requirements and delivered when you need it. With Housing Management and Maintenance's survey revealing the horrifying figure that 54% of doors were classified as 'broken' when inspections were carried out, timely delivery has never been more important. While we operate at the highest standards of safety, we also ensure the most exacting lead times in the business at six to eight weeks, with constant contact to make sure you always have confidence.

SAFETY FIRST

Most importantly, it is all about knowing that the doorsets you choose have been tested to the extreme and that a UKAS accredited third party certification body such as BM Trada has certified them as working as intended to withstand fire in the chosen environment. Our doorsets also undergo primary testing to ensure they can withstand real world environments. To provide the highest standards of safety and security, all our doorsets are tested and approved in accordance with PAS 24:2016 and



Secured by Design (SBD). In addition, this means that ongoing maintenance is carried out against the fire door's original specification.

Fire doors also need to be dual certified: they meet exacting requirements for fire door manufacture and for enhanced security and that this is incorporated at the design stage.

Confidence also comes from factory precision — doorsets that are manufactured to fit a bespoke aperture and provided as complete sets rather than kits do not offer the same room for human error when nothing can be left to chance.

A CONSISTENT, CERTIFIED PROCESS

But alongside this, confidence in your supplier comes from knowing that they are an established manufacturer with a consistent quality standard: such as compliance to ISO9001. Do they continually invest in the manufacturing process and plant for example? At Sentry Doors we are very proud of our ongoing investment program in areas such as new CNC machines and paint lines; we encourage our

customers to visit our factory and see our operation. For those that can't make it to Doncaster we offer virtual factory tours so that our customers can see us in action.

THE RIGHT DOOR AT THE RIGHT TIME

Then, to meet your work schedules and protect your customers, timely delivery is essential. At Sentry we have more than thirty years' experience working with contractors, and we make sure we understand project schedules almost as well as you do. Our customers deal with the same account managers who are always available to provide assurance at every stage of the door making process. Our ongoing commitment to a six-to-eight-week lead time means we will communicate the planned delivery date at least five weeks' ahead. We reinforce that at two weeks to ensure all components are in place for an easy and reliable delivery process. A week ahead our transport team will be in contact to make sure you know everything is on track—confirming it all again the day before planned delivery.

TRUST IN THE ENTIRE SENTRY DOORS PROCESS

Trust is more important than ever, and we are proud of the people, the planning and the processes that ensure that. When something goes wrong, we fix it immediately. We commit to our lead times and have achieved them consistently.

This means our customers — working on some of the most important replacement projects in social housing — trust in every aspect of Sentry's operation. We know this because they return for their next project knowing that Sentry provides the confidence they require.

Why not pay us a visit or give us a call to talk to the great people behind that promise?

01302 337473 www.sentrydoors.co.uk



A best practice approach to fire safety

Simon Jones from life safety manufacturer Kidde Safety Europe looks at upcoming changes to Scottish fire safety regulations, and how these will impact the requirements for domestic dwellings across the UK



According to recent research, 27% of UK renters revealed that they do not have a smoke alarm on each storey of their home – and private renters (32%) are less likely to have an alarm than social renters (20%). In addition, the research showed that 51% of tenants surveyed did not have a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm fitted in their property.

To ensure occupant safety, it is paramount that landlords and property owners have an in-depth understanding of the safety alarm requirements for their dwelling(s) and that the correct models are installed in the appropriate locations. To improve safety in domestic dwellings, Scotland is leading the way in fire safety in the UK by updating its fire safety legislation. Although only applicable in Scotland, we see this as a best practice approach to occupant safety and recommend that landlords and property owners UK-wide adopt these changes.

WHAT DOES THE NEW LEGISLATION IN SCOTLAND COVER?

The updates to the Scottish legislation were introduced in response to the Grenfell fire tragedy in London in 2017 and look to ensure that building occupants are as safe as possible. Following the fire, an interim report reviewed the Building Regulations and Fire Safety in the UK which identified the failings

and flaws in current fire safety legislation.

As such, and leading by example, Scotland is changing its fire and smoke alarm legislation under the Housing (Scotland) Act so that by February 2022, all homes in Scotland must have interlinked alarms installed. This aims to provide protection for privately owned and rented homes as well as social housing premises. The responsibility for ensuring this lies with the property owner, which is why it is so important for landlords, local authorities and housing associations to familiarise themselves with the requirements.

The updates to the Scottish legislation, which landlords must comply with by February 2022, stipulate that alarms should be installed as follows:

- One smoke alarm in the living room (or the room that is used most regularly by the occupant)
- One smoke alarm in every hallway or landing
- One heat alarm in the kitchen
- Each smoke and heat alarm should be ceiling mounted and interlinked
- Carbon monoxide alarms with sealed-in batteries that last the full product lifetime must also be installed in rooms where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance or flue.



All the above contribute to the minimum requirements under the new Scottish regulations and are the equivalent to LD2 under BS 5839 Part 6. However, additional alarms may be required following individual risk assessment.

Under the new Housing (Scotland) Act, it is also vital that smoke and heat alarms be interlinked. This means that when one alarm sounds, it will trigger all other alarms. This ensures that occupants will hear the alarm wherever they are in the building – even if they are far from the source of the heat, smoke or fire, they will be alerted quickly and have time to safely evacuate. Interlinking can be achieved either by mains power connection or by radio frequency enabled alarm units.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When selecting which alarms to install, we always suggest looking at reputable manufacturers and trusted brands – and, if there is any doubt, taking the time to

New regulations call for smoke alarms to be installed in all social housing premises

look at online reviews of the company. This will help to ensure that the models chosen are manufactured in line with relevant standards and will perform as intended in an emergency. It is also vital to check that mains powered smoke alarms are compliant with EN 14604 and mains powered heat alarms with BS 5446-2.

In addition, for warning occupants of the presence of carbon monoxide, a CO alarm should be installed in any room with a new or replacement solid-fuel or combustion appliance such as a wood or gas burner or open fire. CO alarms should also comply with EN 50291 Part 1 for domestic premises and be tested and approved by an accredited third-party agency. Furthermore, with the proposed updates to the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015 in England now approved by Parliament, landlords in the social and private rented sectors are required to fit CO alarms in any room that has a fixed combustion appliance, such as gas boilers, water heaters or fires. The new regulations also call for smoke alarms to be installed in all social housing premises.

To enhance occupant safety, Kidde recommends that property owners UK-wide implement BS 5839 Part 6, LD2 as best practice (as has been initiated by Scotland). This includes making sure that heat and smoke alarms are installed in the correct locations in line with LD2 standards and interlinking each unit. In addition, building owners should ensure that CO alarms are correctly fitted in line with the latest guidance.

With over 100 years of experience in the field of fire safety, Kidde offers a range of high-quality, reliable and compliant products. For additional information, Kidde's technical specialists are on hand to assist with any question.

Simon Jones is marketing manager at Kidde Safety Europe

When is a fire door not a fire door?

Well, the simple answer is 'when the door closer isn't working'. If a door closer has been damaged by vandalism or tampering, the fire door will not perform the function for which it is designed and specified, namely keeping the door closed.

Unlike surface-mounted door closers, Powermatic is completely concealed when the door is closed. Not only does this enable the specifier to retain the aesthetics of a door and interior, but it also reduces the opportunity for the door closer to be vandalised, tampered with or removed, ensuring that the fire door continues to perform reliably.

Together with maintenance-free service and closing speed and latching action which can be adjusted without removal from the door, this can result in a reduced maintenance burden for building owners and managers.

Powermatic also boasts a plethora of performance accreditations, including UKCA marking, fire testing on half- and one-hour fire doors, opening forces that comply with BS8300 and the ability to enable doors to meet the requirements of Approved Document M. It is also the only Certifire jamb-mounted door closer.

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Controlling Legionella

The Legionella Control Association (LCA) discusses the control of the disease in housing, as well as its risks, and emerging trends.

Legionnaires' disease (LD) is a potentially fatal type of pneumonia, a bacterial lung infection. LD is contracted from bacteria of the genus *Legionella*, within a water-based aerosol, entering the lungs. Exposure is generally preventable if water systems are properly maintained and there are legal implications where there are failures to control this risk.

Legionella is naturally occurring and a potentially fatal pathogen with over sixty species. Guidance from the HSE does not make any distinction based on species and any *Legionella* species is considered a risk.

The risk associated with *Legionella* and human infection was first established in 1976, following an outbreak of disease at an American Legion convention. This led to over 150 cases of which over 15% were fatal.

Data suggests there are over 250 confirmed cases of LD in the UK annually.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT REDUCE THE RISK OF LEGIONELLA GROWTH

- Avoid growth temperatures (20-45°C)
- Avoid stagnation so there is no time to grow
- Avoid materials that support growth
- Control spray to minimise transmission risk
- Keep the system and the water clean, to minimise nutrients
- Use water treatment techniques, particularly where the above cannot be controlled
- Maintain the system properly

These principles form the basis of the requirements of the HSEs Approved Code of Practice for the control of *Legionella* in water systems and underpin all the UK guidance for controlling *Legionella*.

In practice, some of these can be a challenge. When the conditions for growth are right, then *Legionella* can grow within pipework. Once present, *legionella* can be a challenge to remove from a system.

LEGIONELLA & THE LAW

The Law applicable to *Legionella* is the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

Legionella bacteria is a hazardous substance under COSHH Regulations. Risks must be assessed, identified risks must be eliminated, substituted for lower risks or where this is not possible control measures must be used.

There is an Approved Code of Practice for *Legionella* (ACoP L8) and technical guidance in HSG274 published by HSE

ACoP L8 and the HSE guidance outline how to comply with the law and keep your activities safe. They highlight the legal requirement for risk assessment; to assess the risk posed by your undertaking that may allow *Legionella* to proliferate. Where risks are identified, you are also required to have a written scheme of control to manage the identified risk. This is commonly achieved through maintaining control of water temperature, use of water treatment, regular cleaning of commonly fouled components, etc. together with regular monitoring and inspection to ensure the regime is effective.

In Healthcare settings, such as hospitals, doctors' surgeries, dentists' premises and nursing homes, the Health and Social Care Act and associated regulations will apply. There is also specific guidance from the Department of Health.

LEGIONELLA CONTROL ASSOCIATION (LCA)

The LCA Code of Conduct is highlighted in L8 as guidance to work standards an end user should expect. A voluntary membership organisation with c.400 *Legionella* specialist Member companies.



The LCA Code has 27 requirements with Service Delivery Standards for *Legionella* control services. LCA Members must have procedures in place to deliver a consistent and compliant service; these, and evidence, are audited by the LCA. Where a member's performance falls short, we will suspend and eventually terminate the member.

LEGIONELLA TRANSMISSION PATHWAY

Legionella can be present at low level in mains water. You cannot contract LD from direct contact with the water or by drinking water containing *Legionella*. LD is not transmissible from person to person – the route of infection is through inhalation of an aerosol containing sufficient *Legionella* bacteria to cause disease.

The risk of acquiring LD arises when contaminated water droplets become aerosolised. This could be from showers, aerosol created as flow from taps hits the sink, garden sprinklers, kitchen sprays, etc.

While Legionella can infect anyone, some are more susceptible than others. Anyone who has existing lung disease is especially vulnerable and high-risk individuals following COVID-19 with c. 20% of secondary infections are identified as LD in one study.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The law is quite clear here. Where the Health and Safety at Work Act applies there must be a Legionella Risk Assessment.

CONTROL MEASURES

Any risk needs to be controlled to an acceptable level. The HSE uses the term as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP), and this is the target level of risk for any system. Legionella control measures usually include maintaining temperature, use of water treatment, flushing and physical control.

SAMPLING & ANALYSIS

Sampling should be driven by risk assessment; where high-risk areas are identified sampling might be recommended. Where control measures are lost, reactive sampling for legionella weekly should be carried out until control is re-established.

POSITIVE LEGIONELLA RESULTS

Around 13% of all samples in the UK return a positive so it's not uncommon to have positive Legionella results.

Act on a result to address the immediate risk (the symptom) and the underlying issues (the cause). Cleaning & disinfection is commonly used as an immediate risk reduction measure, but a review of the risk assessment and identification root cause analysis is critical.

SUMMARY

LD is potentially fatal but preventable. Employers and those in control of premises have a legal duty to ensure risks are identified and controlled. Legionella prosecutions result in large fines and custodial sentences, and it is not



necessary for there to be a death or case of disease for a successful prosecution. If your water system exposes stakeholders to risk of harm, you are committing an offence.

The LCA is a voluntary organisation whose membership comprises providers of services and products concerned with the control of legionella bacteria in water systems

Gilberts helps protect twin towers

An "iconic" site that has been transformed into high rise, high specification living for young professionals is a showcase for the latest in modern methods of construction- including its fire protection. The Coventry development – named Elliotts Yard after the automotive business that occupied the city centre site since the 1920s- comprises two separate buildings including a 17-storey tower containing a total 200 apartments. Modular construction techniques were chosen as far as possible to deliver a sustainable solution that simultaneously provided robust acoustic and fire safety performance, including precast concrete sandwich panels and the latest in smoke evacuation – Gilberts Blackpool's Series 60 dampers. M & E contractor on the project Excelsior Services (Residential) commissioned smoke control specialist Baiceir to design the most efficient means of protecting the towers. Baiceir recommended installation of a Gilberts Series 60 smoke damper into the fire shafts on each floor (30no in total), with fan skids on the roof of each building to accelerate smoke evacuation. Baiceir Director Andy Baker said, "It is vital that tall, residential buildings are safe. We hope our clients never need to use our systems, but clients need the peace of mind that if the smoke/fire evacuation systems ARE needed, they will perform. The great design and quality of manufacture in Gilberts' Series 60m smoke dampers makes fitting them a breeze".

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