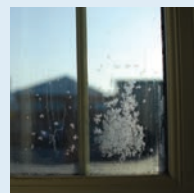


# HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

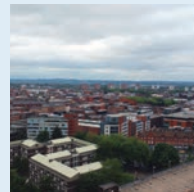
FEB/MAR 2023



Return of  
inspections

Huge fine for  
sub-letting

Mould guidance  
to be reviewed

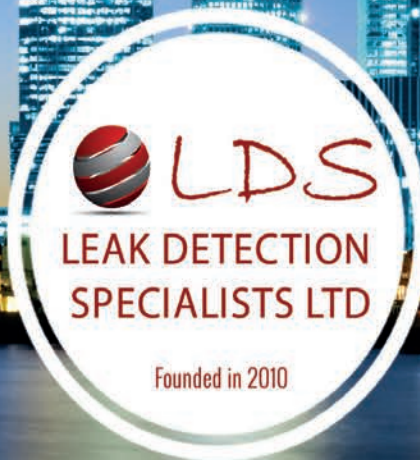


Shocking child  
homelessness  
stats

Ombudsman  
critical of service  
failures







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# Feb/ Mar 23

## CONTENTS



### Features

**27** Industry Viewfinder

#### The decarbonisation of social housing

In recent research discovered how much of a challenge our readers expect the decarbonisation of social housing to be, the barriers and benefits they expect, and their awareness of their own stock and its performance

**39** Groundworks: Drainage & Water Management

#### Fit and forget

As heating water accounts for nearly 1/5th of energy use in UK homes, water conservation is the key to reducing energy bills, Groundbreaker explains more

**42** Heating, Ventilation & Services

#### Good ventilation practice in social housing

Poor indoor air quality and ventilation in general current housing stock has always been a huge challenge for social housing bodies. Roy Byom from Titon explains

**45** Landscaping & External Works: Landscaping & Outside Communal Areas

#### Outside spaces that work

Jack Potter from Ground Control explores how the housing sector can unlock the value of green space, and help the next generation to reap the benefits of their natural world

**49** Utilities & Services: EV Charging

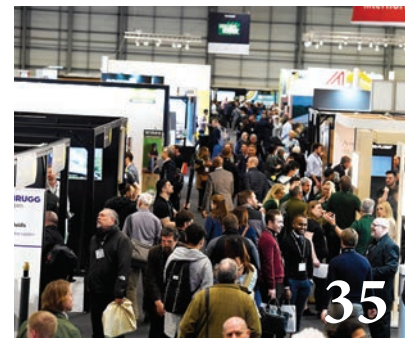
#### Are you recharged and ready this year?

David Abernethie from Sevadis discusses how social housing providers can benefit from the implementation of an EV charging infrastructure plan

In this issue of

### HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

Industry News..... 04  
Futurebuild Show Preview ..... 35



### Products

Groundworks  
Drainage & Water Management ..... 38

Building Fabric..... 41

Heating, Ventilation  
& Services..... 41

Interiors  
Bathrooms..... 44  
Floors & Floor Coverings..... 44

Landscaping & External Works  
Landscaping & Outside  
Communal Areas ..... 45

Safety & Security  
Access Control ..... 47  
Smoke & Fire Safety ..... 47

Structural Elements..... 48

Utilities & Services  
EV Charging..... 48

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## Editor's comment

# The pressures on social landlords are not going away anytime soon



Patrick Mooney,  
News Editor

People working in the social housing sector must be really feeling the heat at the moment and wondering when some respite might arrive. The demand for their product – relatively low rent properties of a good quality – shows no sign of abating with well over 1 million households on council-run waiting lists and more than 250,000 people living in temporary accommodation. But at the same time the sector is facing a growing list of problems, threats and risks; with no easy answers in sight.

Over the past year or two the Housing Ombudsman has been getting ever more vocal in its criticism of landlords who fail to respond to tenants' concerns about anything and everything; from long term water leaks to pest infestations, and from ingrained mould and damp to missing fire doors, or simple repairs which never get attended to despite the repeated promises to send a contractor. With so many repairs getting ordered each year, some errors and mistakes are inevitable but the unbelievable (and unacceptable) tales of service failure are becoming more commonplace.

Indeed the Ombudsman has been finding that even the relatively simple task of monitoring the progress in responding to tenants' complaints is beyond the grasp of some very well resourced landlords. Obtaining compensation for service failures is also proving problematic. So perhaps it was inevitable that the Housing Secretary would start to name and shame those landlords who regularly feature in the Ombudsman's list of repeat offenders.

But Michael Gove hasn't stopped there – he is also overseeing the introduction of a raft of changes to the regulation of social landlords, some of which could have serious consequences for senior executives and board members if the regulator really does take it's new powers seriously. Last year a new set of performance measures were launched and from April this year, all social landlords with at least 1,000 homes in management will have to monitor and report on how they are doing against these 22 indicators.

An early assessment of current performance against the new satisfaction measures by Housemark, the sector's expert in data analysis, has revealed some worrying messages. Overall satisfaction is down by a significant 5%, with many tenants critical of their landlords' ability or willingness to listen to them, act on what they say and respond to any complaints they raise. If this continues then it's possible we could be seeing lots of fines levied, careers ended, services being moved to other providers and a growth in 'forced' mergers or transfers of housing stock.

This is coming at a time when social landlords are being told they have to retrofit energy efficiency improvements to millions of properties, to comply with tougher, new safety requirements, and modernise their housing stock. All of this at the same time as rent rises are capped at levels below the current rate of inflation. To add to their problems, cost of living pressures are making it more difficult for tenants to keep up with their household expenditure and as a result rent arrears are rising. It's a bit of a cliché but the sector is facing a perfect storm. I wish I had a magical superpower or even a crystal ball and could see a way out of this, but I'm struggling to do so.

However, I'm prepared to make a start by identifying some of the obvious things which landlords could do to make a start. A meaningful change in the working culture and ways in which services are provided and tenants are treated is needed as a minimum. This might even require board members, councillors and executives getting personally involved in checking on how services are being delivered. What services are actually being given to tenants on a day-to-day basis and whether they would be happy to receive them. Properly reviewing how complaints are dealt with and responded to would be an interesting exercise for many decision makers! Are they repeating mistakes or learning from them and making changes for the better? Next up, are landlords making intelligent use of new technology to free up staff members time, so they can properly engage with tenants, treating them like they are valued customers rather than an annoying nuisance.

The availability of resources to ensure flats and houses are let at a decent standard and are properly repaired and maintained seems too obvious to mention. Except of course in way too many instances this isn't the case. Reading case studies published by the Ombudsman is quite an experience and an eye-opener on what is actually happening on a daily basis across the sector right now. When things go badly wrong – such as a damp and mouldy home is allocated and let to a new tenant, fleeing terrible conditions and uncertainty in their temporary accommodation; then why is no-one at that organisation empowered to put a stop to the situation and ensure that proper and effective treatment takes place, before the property is re-let? The very real prospect of a heavy fine and being named and shamed for such failures should be at the forefront of everyone's mind and ensure such experiences become a thing of the past.

Patrick Mooney

HOUSING  
MANAGEMENT  
& MAINTENANCE



## On the cover...

*All social landlords with at least 1,000 homes can expect to be inspected against the new consumer standards at least once every four years. Photo by Samuel Regan-Asante on unsplash.com/@fkaregan*

See page 14



# Guidance on mould to be reviewed after toddler's death

**G**overnment guidance to landlords in England about the health risks posed by mould and damp in residential properties will be reviewed, following the death of a toddler and similar high profile cases.

Awaab Ishak was just two years old when he died from a respiratory condition caused by exposure to mould at the family's housing association home in Rochdale. The inquest into his death concluded late last year and prompted an outpouring of grief, anger and demands for action across the housing sector.

The housing and health secretaries of state have committed to publishing new guidance in the Summer following a review by various bodies, including the UK Health Security Agency.

This could have major repercussions for all parts of the rental sector, with hundreds of thousands of homes known to be affected by damp. According to the English Housing Survey damp affects about one in ten of the country's five million private rental properties.

The Housing Ombudsman is taking a tougher line with social landlords where he finds they are not taking appropriate action to tackle mould and damp and are instead blaming tenants' lifestyle for causing problems.

Michael Gove and Steve Barclay said: "Awaab Ishak's death was a tragedy that should never have occurred. People across the country were horrified to hear about the terrible circumstances that led to it."

The new Social Housing Bill is giving more powers to the regulator to ensure tenants are listened to and their concerns dealt with quickly and fairly, with unlimited fines for failing landlords

"Awaab's case has thrown into sharp relief the need for renewed action to ensure that every landlord in the country makes certain that their tenants are housed in decent homes, and they are treated with dignity and fairness." He promised to work closely with Awaab's family to deliver tougher laws on damp and mould.

## KNOWN RISKS

Senior coroner Joanne Kearsley said Rochdale Boroughwide Homes were not "proactive" in responding to complaints from Awaab's parents and asked: "How in the UK in 2020 does a two-year-old child die as a result of exposure to mould?"

She asked the Government to address the fact its housing health and safety rating system does not reflect the known risks of damp and mould to health. She also questioned why private sector tenants do not have access to the Housing Ombudsman for their complaints to be investigated independently.

In response, Michael Gove said his department was working on a new policy that would specify time limits landlords must meet when investigating

hazards and acting on them where health concerns were identified. He also said there were plans to introduce a new private rented sector landlord ombudsman.

Gove had previously announced that Rochdale Boroughwide Housing would be blocked from receiving taxpayers' money to build new homes until it could prove it is a responsible landlord. This immediately led to the landlord losing a £1million grant and he warned other landlords that they faced similar action unless they raised standards.

Neighbours of Awaab's parents have reported similar problems in their homes within the same block of flats.

The new Social Housing Bill is giving more powers to the regulator to ensure tenants are listened to and their concerns dealt with quickly and fairly, with unlimited fines for failing landlords.

More than 170,000 people have signed a petition calling for Awaab's law to ensure no other child dies due to mould in their home. The new law would give landlords 14 days to carry out inspections on damp and mould and seven days to start repairs if a medical professional deems there is a health risk.

## 34 children died unexpectedly in temporary housing since 2019

Homelessness may have been a contributing factor in at least 34 children's deaths in England between April 2019 and March 2022, according to a damning report prepared for Parliament.

The report reveals the public health crisis of homeless children who have been forced into temporary accommodation. It was compiled by an NHS funded body, the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD), for the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Temporary Accommodation.

The NCMD report analysed data from 6,970 children's deaths. It states: "Homelessness and temporary accommodation were recorded by the independent child death overview panels in 34 cases as factors that may have contributed to the child's vulnerability, ill health or death.

"Of child deaths reported between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022 there were at least

200 individual records where homelessness or living in temporary accommodation (bed and breakfast, hostel, shelter, and in extended family accommodation) were recorded as present in the child's mother, child, or child's family life at some stage. There were a further 114 cases in which overcrowding within the property was recorded."

The APPG say that the real number of children who died while experiencing homelessness is likely to be higher than this new data shows because, as things stand, there is no requirement for the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) – an organisation which reviews all child deaths nationally – to ask whether the child who has died had experienced homelessness.

This is the first time this research has been done. Moving forward, the APPG is working with the NCMD to have a question on homelessness included in all child death reviews.

This is the first time this research has been done. Moving forward, the APPG is working with the NCMD to have a question on homelessness included in all child death reviews

The number of homeless families with children being put at risk by homelessness is growing. At the end of 2022, when the APPG's report was written, there were 95,060 households living in temporary accommodation in England, including 119,840 children.

Back in 2010 there were just 37,940 households living in TA. As a result, the length of stays in temporary accommodation is getting longer, with some mothers and their children being placed for years at a time, as councils struggle to find them more appropriate long-term homes.





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## Over 50,000 households threatened with no-fault evictions since ban on them was promised nearly four years ago

According to Government statistics, some 52,800 households were threatened with homelessness due to Section 21 eviction notices being served on them between April 2019 and June 2022.

Meanwhile one in 12 private renters in England – equivalent to 941,000 people – are currently under threat of eviction, according to research from the housing charity Shelter.

The charity's polling, conducted by YouGov and funded by Nationwide Building Society, found that of those at risk of eviction, 504,000 private renters had received or been threatened with an eviction notice in the last month, up 80% on the same period last year, and 482,000 are behind on their rent, putting their home in danger.

Back in April 2019 the Government said it would ban Section 21 evictions, as part of its planned reforms to the rules governing private rentals. These currently allow landlords give tenants just eight weeks' notice to leave a property at the end of a fixed-term contract.

Under the new proposals, landlords will only be able to evict a tenant in "reasonable circumstances", which will be set out in the new law on rental reform expected to receive Royal Assent this year.

Late last year it was revealed the number of tenants facing homelessness had risen by 76% in a year. Government figures showed that 5,940 households in England were issued with a Section 21 eviction notice between April and June 2022 compared with 3,380 notices in the same period in 2021.

Darren Rodwell, housing spokesman for the Local Government Association said: "With the number of Section 21 evictions increasing, as well as the cost of living continuing to rise and more Ukrainian arrivals presenting as homeless, councils are increasingly concerned of a national homelessness crisis."

"These pressures, combined with depleting social housing stock and an unaffordable private rented sector, feels like a perfect storm for services trying to prevent homelessness."

He urged the Government to bring forward the ban on Section 21 evictions and to look at developing a cross-departmental homelessness prevention strategy.

## More than 120,000 children spent Christmas in temporary accommodation

Latest figures for England show there were a total of 120,710 dependent homeless children living in temporary accommodation, with 2,320 of these in bed and breakfast hotels.

The Local Government Association equated the number to over 4,500 primary school classes worth of homeless children living in temporary accommodation amid concerns of a national homelessness crisis. The housing charity Shelter estimated the figure was equivalent to one in every 100 children across the country.

The LGA said the number of children who woke up on Christmas morning in temporary accommodation highlights the urgent need to ensure the building of more affordable homes for rent and ensuring the private rented sector is affordable for people claiming housing related benefits.

Councils ambitions to get on with building homes, with land for more than 2.6 million homes allocated in Local Plans and nine in 10 planning applications being approved. But the LGA says the right powers must be provided to incentivise developers to get building, including being able to charge full council tax for every unbuilt development from the point the original planning permission expires.

Meanwhile, Local Housing Allowance rates have been frozen since March 2020 meaning the private sector is becoming less and less feasible for households dependent on housing support, as their limited income cannot stretch to paying the rent on most properties.

With the number of Section 21 'no fault' evictions increasing, the cost of living continuing to rise and more Ukrainian arrivals presenting as homeless, councils are increasingly concerned of a national homelessness crisis. These pressures, combined with depleting social housing stock and an unaffordable and overly competitive private rented market, feels like a perfect storm for services trying to prevent homelessness.

The LGA says urgent work is needed to prevent further disruption to children's schooling, home lives and social lives, which have already been significantly impacted as a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

It says the Government must look at developing a cross-departmental homelessness prevention strategy which addresses the drivers and levers of homelessness within policy which reviews Local Housing Allowance rates,

The LGA said the number of children who woke up on Christmas morning in temporary accommodation highlights the urgent need to ensure the building of more affordable homes for rent and ensuring the private rented sector is affordable for people claiming housing related benefits.

prioritises a significant increase in social housing and uses the upcoming renter's reform to create a private rented sector that is safe, stable, and affordable.

Councillor David Renard, LGA housing spokesperson, said: "Living in temporary accommodation can cause great disruption for children and families. As we face the reality of a national homelessness crisis, it is crucial we make addressing the chronic housing shortage a priority."

"Suitable housing must be found for those already homeless, but we must also ensure everything possible is being done to combat the rising cost of living and prevent further people from becoming homeless."

"The best way to improve housing security is to address the unaffordability of housing by giving councils the right powers and investment to build 100,000 new social rent homes a year, and to reform the Right to Buy scheme so that it is more sustainable."

"Government should also use the upcoming finance settlement to urgently review Local Housing Allowance rates to ensure that at least a third of the market is affordable for people claiming housing related benefits."

# Ombudsman issues special report on Birmingham City Council after wider investigation finds fundamental failures

The Housing Ombudsman has issued a special report on Birmingham City Council after concerns about the landlord's complaint handling and compensation, which have led to a breakdown in trust among tenants.

England's biggest council landlord with over 60,000 properties is being urged to make robust changes to its "fundamentally flawed" complaints handling in a special report that was issued following concerns about its complaint handling and compensation.

The Ombudsman used its systemic powers to conduct an investigation that was initiated by a case where it found severe maladministration for delays in repairing an extensive water leak that caused damage to a resident's property.

The landlord failed to offer any compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused to the resident, in contravention of the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Other investigated cases had lasted for up to 10 years and involved multiple disrepair claims. The Ombudsman ordered the council to pay £7,500 compensation in 14 cases.

The special report is based on complaints made to Birmingham City Council that were brought to the Ombudsman for investigation over a six-month period from March 2022. In all it made 25 findings across these cases and found maladministration in 24 of them, including five findings of severe maladministration – representing a maladministration rate of 96%.

The Ombudsman identified four key themes and set out a series of recommendations, as follows:

- **Repairs:** The aims of the landlord's repairs policy were not met in practice, and residents had to make multiple attempts to get repairs resolved, often over a prolonged period. The report's recommendations focus on how the landlord can improve triaging repairs requests, reviewing repairs progress with contractors, and taking a proactive approach to repairs;
- **Record keeping:** The landlord's response to repair requests and complaints showed the impact of poor record keeping. The landlord had no framework in place for the record keeping and the expectations on its staff and contractors. This is a significant weakness in the landlord's approach and the cause of repeated service failure. Recommendations included developing a framework and an action plan to ensure better external and cross-departmental communications;
- **Complaint handling:** The landlord's complaints policy failed to comply with many of the



Birmingham City Council is the largest local authority social housing landlord in England with over 60,000 homes and carries out over 250,000 repairs per year

requirements of the Complaint Handling Code, meaning there was little chance of individual complaints being handled appropriately. The report recommended the landlord update its complaint process to comply with the Code and then self-assess against it to detail how it will tackle cases of non-compliance; and

- **Compensation:** The landlord's complaints policy did not allow for compensation to be paid for distress, inconvenience, time and trouble. It also said it could not make payments where the landlord decided there was no liability, which is entirely false. In one case the landlord initially refused to pay a financial remedy direct to the resident, instead wishing to offset it against rent arrears. The Ombudsman's guidance on remedies is clear that compensation awarded by this Service should not be offset against arrears. The report recommends a new policy should be created so that a resident does not have to pursue a separate compensation claim.

The council engaged with the investigation, accepted it got things wrong and needed to improve. It has started acting on orders from the Ombudsman, has a detailed action and there will be regular meetings to ensure compliance with the recommendations.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "Our wider investigation revealed the landlord's current approach to handling complaints is

fundamentally flawed. At every point residents are met with increasing challenge to get the landlord to put things right, while the lack of adequate policies, procedures and governance combined with limited learning from these issues meant the landlord repeats the same mistakes."

"This has often led to a collapse in trust between residents and the landlord. Some residents faced living for years in homes that required repair, making repeated attempts to get the landlord and its contractors to act decisively. In one case the resident made repeated disrepair claims for over 10 years."

He added that the investigation found residents were often refused a rightful remedy and there was limited evidence of learning from complaints, with procedures remaining unchanged until the Ombudsman became involved.

The Ombudsman said Birmingham is not alone in facing these challenges, and there are lessons for the wider sector from his report. He continues to see cases that involve these fundamental issues which cut across every aspect of a resident's interaction with a landlord.

Birmingham City Council is the largest local authority social housing landlord in England with over 60,000 homes and carries out over 250,000 repairs per year. As a result of performance issues, it terminated a failing repairs contract in March 2022 and is working with its repairs contractors to develop process improvements to avoid future service failures.



## Tenants offered training on how to challenge landlords over poor housing conditions

A new training scheme is being launched this Spring, to help social housing tenants hold their landlords to account and ensure their voices are heard.

Residents will learn how to take an “active role” in how their homes are managed through workshops, forums and online resources to run over the next two-and-a-half years, according to DLUHC.

They will also receive advice on how to set up a residents’ panel or challenge a landlord if it fails to meet required service standards.

Training will be provided by the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH) and Public Participation, Consultation and Research who have jointly been awarded a £500,000 grant. Details of how tenants can take part in the training will be provided by CCH before the scheme launches.

Previously a new 250-strong social housing residents’ panel was launched in November, with a remit to advise the Government on improving standards in the sector.

Baroness Scott, minister for social housing, said: “We want to make sure every resident is heard and has the opportunity to be actively involved in how their home is managed.”

“This Government-backed (training) scheme will help to do just that; empowering residents to challenge their landlord where needed and contribute to positive change in their homes and communities.”

## Ministers told to end the uncertainty on private rentals energy efficiency policy



The Government is being urged to clarify its plans for improving the energy efficiency of privately rented accommodation, more than two years after it consulted the sector on a set of proposals.

Back in 2020 the Government proposed changing the law forcing private landlords to bring their properties up to the EPC C standard from 2025 for new lettings and from 2028 for existing tenancies. It also proposed landlords should be responsible for paying up to £10,000 for the work on each rental.

But since the consultation exercise ended, Ministers have failed to announce whether they intend to proceed or not and have been accused of dragging their feet on the issue, even though roughly one in four private tenants are living in fuel poverty.

Approximately two-thirds of private rentals are below the proposed minimum C rating, from the current minimum standard of F. It is estimated that the tenants of these properties would save around £570 a year in heating bills, if their homes met the standard.

Typically many lettings need improvements in their insulation, draught-proofing, double glazing and more efficient heating systems.

The National Residential Landlords Association says that even if the Government took action now, it will be too late to introduce the new requirements from 2025. The NRLA claimed the proposals were now in effect “dead in the water”.

Instead the NRLA are suggesting the new standard should apply to all lettings with effect

from 2028. They also want a more sophisticated system for determining the landlord’s responsibility for improvement payments, linked to the average market rents in any given area, with a taper applying between £5,000 and £10,000.

The NRLA is calling on Ministers to support landlord investment with a new tax allowance for those landlords who are undertaking works towards reaching Net Zero.

Ben Beadle, chief executive of the NRLA, said: “We all want to see properties as energy efficient as possible. However, the Government’s delay in responding to its own consultation on energy standards in the private rented sector means its plans are dead in the water. The lack of clarity is playing a major part in holding back investment in the homes to rent tenants desperately need.”

He added that the plans relied on a misguided assumption that landlords have unlimited sums of money and the sector actually contains some of the most difficult to retrofit properties. “Ministers need a smarter approach with a proper financial package if we want to ensure improvements to the rental housing stock.”

In his recent review of the Government’s progress towards the UK meeting its legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050, the former Energy Minister Chris Skidmore warned about a failure to improve the energy efficiency of the UK’s housing stock. About 14% of the UK’s carbon emissions are associated with heating residential homes.

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# Shocking reality of homelessness exposed

To expose the devastating impact of homelessness on children's health, education and wellbeing, the charity Shelter recorded the experiences of more than 800 families with 1,600 children living in temporary accommodation throughout England.

The ground-breaking survey of homeless families, which is the largest ever conducted and funded by Trust for London and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, reveals the terrible toll of life without a home:

- Sharing beds: More than a third (35%) of homeless parents say their child(ren) do not have a bed of their own and are forced to share a bed with another family member.
- Education: Almost half (45%) of school age children have arrived at school tired, late or hungry as a result of living in temporary accommodation. B&Bs and hostels are often not equipped with suitable or any facilities for parents to cook meals for their children, and noise from other residents and bed-sharing means children often struggle to sleep.
- Play: Six in 10 (61%) children lack space to play in their temporary accommodation.
- Mental health: One in four parents (26%) report their child or children being often

Thousands of homeless children are turning up to school too tired to learn – hardly surprising when one in three have to share a bed

unhappy or depressed as a result of living in temporary accommodation.

- Social isolation: More than one in four parents (28%) say their children are finding it hard to make or keep friends as a result of living in temporary accommodation. This can be the result of feeling embarrassed or ashamed of where they live, or because they are unable to have friends to play due to a lack of space or rules that forbid visitors.

Temporary accommodation is provided by councils to eligible families who become homeless. It is supposed to be a temporary measure until the council can find a settled home. It can take the form of emergency hostels, B&Bs, one room bedsits and cramped flats. It is not designed for permanent living and families can be asked to move numerous times with short notice.

Unless the government reverses the freeze on housing benefit, Shelter expects thousands more families will become homeless this

winter as the cost of living crisis worsens and rents rocket.

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter said: "A grotty hostel or B&B is not a home, but this is where thousands of homeless children are forced to live. And many more children will be thrown into homelessness as their parents can no longer afford to keep a roof over their head."

"The housing emergency is robbing children of a secure childhood. Thousands of homeless children are turning up to school too tired to learn – hardly surprising when one in three have to share a bed. Something has gone very wrong when children cannot play because their temporary accommodation is too cramped even for toys, and no friends are allowed to visit."

Shelter's analysis of the latest government data shows 5,030 families are living in emergency B&Bs and hostels – widely considered the worst type of temporary accommodation. Families are often crammed into one room and forced to share bathroom facilities with strangers.

## Severe maladministration finding over lengthy delays on fire doors

South London based Wandle has been ordered to pay a tenant £700 compensation after taking more than 18 months to deal with a safety query over a flat's fire doors.

The Ombudsman also made a severe maladministration finding against Wandle, a social landlord with more than 7,000 homes, after it failed to confirm whether the doors in the tenant's flat were fire-rated or needed replacing, despite staff making numerous visits to the property.

The tenant first requested confirmation that all the doors were fire doors after moving in following a mutual exchange. However, four visits later over a period of nine months and the landlord still had not

clarified, prompting the resident to send another letter seeking confirmation. The tenant also voiced concerns about the front door missing a fire strip and not fitting the frame.

The tenant, who has vulnerabilities including Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, raised a stage one complaint, in response to which the landlord said it would assess the doors in the property. Subsequent visits still did not establish whether or not the doors in the property were fire doors and the resident asked if the landlord had responsibility for fixing the faulty doors she had previously raised concerns about.

The landlord escalated the complaint to stage two and arranged for a window and door survey to be carried out and to finish works which were incomplete. The survey found that the front door needed a new fire door, that a new fire door was needed for the lounge and that other door defects needed repairing.

But 18 months after the resident had first moved in, the landlord had still not replaced the front door.

The inspection at mutual exchange was found to be unsatisfactory as the missing kitchen door should have been identified. Cumulative failures meant the fire safety issues in the property went unaddressed for a significant period and caused the tenant worry and frustration.

Following the Ombudsman's investigation, the landlord reviewed both its mutual exchange policy and complaint handling process, as well as making it easier for staff to identify when a resident has a vulnerability.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "Given the intense focus on building safety following the tragic events at Grenfell, it is deeply concerning and unacceptable that the resident had to go to extraordinary lengths to resolve the issues with the fire doors."

"The landlord should have been aware that the kitchen door, which was supposed to be a fire door, was missing. It would be expected that the landlord would have undertaken an inspection of the property at the time of the mutual exchange applications, as standard good practice, if not part of its mutual exchange procedures."

"Not only was the landlord potentially remiss in relation to its duties in relation to fire safety but the resident was put to the trouble, inconvenience, and stress of pursuing the issue."

Wandle released a statement saying it had apologised unreservedly to the tenant affected, has fully complied with the orders and reviewed its policies and procedures to prevent anything like this from happening again. It has also improved its training in complaint handling.



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# The return of landlord inspections forms centrepiece of new consumer regulation for social housing

All social landlords with at least 1,000 homes – housing associations and councils – can expect to be inspected against the new consumer standards at least once every four years, starting in Spring 2024.

The inspections programme forms the centrepiece of a new and wider system of consumer regulation, designed to give greater protection to tenants and raise the standard of homes and services across the social housing sector.

The biggest changes in the oversight of social housing in almost two decades were initially prompted by the Grenfell Tower fire, but have been given added impetus by a series of more recent high profile service failures, including the death of two year old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale.

A pilot inspections programme early this year will test out much of the draft methodology, but it is clear the initial focus will mainly be on the condition and safety of tenants' homes (compliance with the decent homes standard will be key), the energy efficiency of homes and how much influence tenants have on service delivery.

The seven landlords included in the pilot programme are Bernicia Homes, Brunelcare, Cheshire Peaks and Plains, Eastbourne Borough Council, Folkestone and Hythe Borough Council, Guinness Housing Association and Torus.

The regulator of social housing has set out its next steps for overhauling the regulation of landlords in an implementation plan, with its legal basis due to be confirmed when the Social Housing Regulation Bill completes its passage through Parliament during 2023.

The new framework represents a significant challenge to social landlords, but also to the regulator as an enhanced set of powers will make additional demands on its skills and resources. Although the system is still being described as co-regulation, it is clear the regulator will be moving from a reactive to a more pro-active body.

## GET READY MESSAGE FOR LANDLORDS

All social landlords have already been urged to start collecting the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (mandatory from April) and it is possible the results of these, along with feedback from the Housing Ombudsman, will play a critical part in determining the priority of who gets inspected and when.

Recruitment of new regulatory staff is already underway and among the next steps to be carried out over the coming year, are:

- Consulting with tenants, landlords and



other stakeholders on the consumer standards. RSH plans to launch the consultation by Summer 2023.

- Developing the new approach for landlord inspections, including carrying out further engagement with tenants, landlords and other stakeholders.

Fiona MacGregor, chief executive of RSH, said: "We are making significant progress in gearing up for new consumer regulation, which will empower tenants and give us stronger powers to hold landlords to account."

"It is vital that landlords get ready now. Tenants deserve quality services from their landlords, and homes that are safe and of a decent standard. Where there are issues, landlords should act to put things right – before we start carrying out our consumer inspections".

The inspections will build on the regulator's experience in carrying out in-depth assessments for the economic regulation of HAs. However, there are quite a few details still to be ironed out and agreed, including:

- How the outcomes of inspections will be reported – such as will there be a scoring or star rating system, of the type previously used by the Audit Commission;

- How much of an impact the new regulatory system will have on the fees which landlords are charged;
- How influential will tenants be in triggering an inspection;
- How the scope of inspections will be determined – will they look at the whole of a landlord service, or just elements of it;
- How much notice landlords and their tenants will receive of an inspection taking place; and
- What the rewards or penalties will be for a good, or poor outcome from an inspection.

Legislation is giving the regulator new powers requiring performance improvement plans, backed up by enforcement notices and penalties for landlords that do not deliver changes to sub-standard services.

Social landlords with fewer than 1,000 homes will not be subject to inspection and while councils will be covered by the new system of consumer regulation, they will not be subject to the existing economic regulation. A series of consultation events and exercises will be undertaken over the next 12 months and these are likely to shape some of the detail, but not the overall direction of the regulatory regime.

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# Landlord ordered to pay £750 compensation after resident left without heating and hot water

The Ombudsman found severe maladministration for A2Dominion's failure to fix various problems with a resident's heating and hot water supply over a number of years and ordered the landlord to pay the resident a total of £750 in compensation.

Issues around responsibility for the heating between the landlord, freeholder and managing agent led to further delays in rectifying the problem. This left the resident without heating or hot water on several occasions as well as brown water coming out of the taps.

The South London resident complained that her flat, served by a district heating system, had insufficient heating and hot water for her needs and she did not have adequate hot water and heating at the same time. When she raised a repair, the managing agent referred her back to the landlord.

After a delay, the landlord's contractor was able to carry out a repair without collaboration with the freeholder. However, the issue was not fully fixed and another complaint was made about the heating, this time being an urgent repair. The landlord did not respond within the 24 hour window it set out in its policy and required several visits before it was finally rectified months later.

Following this, no further survey was made on the building as promised by the landlord and the evidence available showed a lack of communication with the resident.

The Ombudsman found there was no clear arrangement for resolution of heating and hot water issues at the resident's block between the landlord and the managing agent and freeholder, with clarity lacking around roles and responsibilities.

The landlord failed to take the action outlined in its response to resolve the resident's complaint, its contractor did not carry out a survey, and its named points of contacts failed to liaise with the resident until resolution.

## COMPENSATION LEVEL INCREASED

The landlord had offered compensation of £250 for the lengthy delays in resolving the problems, but the award was not deemed sufficient.

They were ordered to apologise, pay a higher compensation sum and to carry out an inspection of the resident's heating and hot water system, identifying any parts of the system that need repair, servicing or replacement. The landlord was also ordered to provide the resident with information on the responsibilities of all relevant parties on heating and hot water issues.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "Inadequate heating and hot water can lead to significant detriment and at one stage the resident reported being without heating for two days. There were significant failings in the overall management of the scheme as it is vital for landlords to have proper agreements in place

with the managing agent or freeholder, with clarity around roles and responsibilities."

"This is an issue which I see too often in our casework and our concerns have been set out in two Spotlight reports over the last two years. Both the landlord and wider sector should revisit these reports, particularly our focus on managing agents which set out our serious concerns that landlords may not always have clear and effective liaison in place with managing agents or freeholders."

"Ultimately the landlord is accountable for the tenant-landlord relationship and landlords should consider our practical recommendations to help improve the experience for residents"

A spokesman for A2Dominon said there were failings in terms of the delays to maintenance work being carried out and the amount of compensation offered to our resident. Sincere apologies had been offered to the resident for the problems they experienced with heating and hot water at their property and acknowledge any distress this may have caused.

As a result, the HA has overhauled the way it manages contractor partnerships and clarified the responsibilities and service level agreements for all involved in any future repairs on this scheme. A strategic improvement plan has been put in place to review this across other schemes with more complex lease arrangements.

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## Multiple complaints drives Ombudsman to launch wider investigations into two large landlords

The Housing Ombudsman has launched investigations into L&Q and Haringey Council after persistent poor performance over damp and mould complaints.

The watchdog said it had launched an investigation into both landlords to see if damp and mould issues are indicative of wider failings at the organisations. It will produce a learning report for the landlords and make recommendations for service improvement.

L&Q featured in the Ombudsman's 2021 damp and mould Spotlight report, with maladministration findings in 50% of its damp and mould cases.

The housing association also has 32 open cases with the Ombudsman that have been identified as high risk and involve complaints handling, the handling of damp, mould and leaks

reports, or both issues.

The Ombudsman has upheld nearly half of L&Q's cases determined since 1 April 2021 where complaints handling or leaks, damp and mould formed part of the investigation and over a third of the remaining cases were acknowledged during the landlord's complaint process to having been poorly handled by the landlord.

For Haringey Council, the Ombudsman has 13 open cases identified as high risk and involving leaks, damp and mould. It has upheld more than three-quarters of cases determined since 1 April 2021 where leaks, damp and mould formed part of the investigation.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "After repeated failures in the past year by both of these landlords, we've seen a high number of cases

concerning the landlords identified as high risk. Under the circumstances, I've asked my team to expedite these investigations."

"Other cases with us concern similar issues and may indicate a repeated failing. Conducting a further investigation, using our systemic powers under Paragraph 49 of the Scheme to identify areas for both landlords to learn and improve, is therefore required."

"At the end of the monitoring period, we will publish a learning report highlighting any issues we have identified in the cases investigated and make recommendations to the landlords where appropriate."

A similar investigation has been carried out at Birmingham City Council, with another one already underway at Islington Council.

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# Private sector rents are rising at fastest rate for seven years

Tenants in properties owned by private landlords have faced the highest annual rise in their rent since comparable records began seven years ago, official data shows.

Rents rose by 4% last year as landlords, who face their own squeeze from higher mortgage rates and increases in council tax, repair bills and utilities, passed on these costs.

A quarter of private tenants surveyed in December said their rent had risen in the previous six months, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said: "Renters proportionally spend more on housing costs than owners do. On average, they pay 24% of their weekly expenditure on housing compared with 16% by those with a mortgage (based on the latest figures from 2021)".

An even more dramatic picture was revealed in an insight into the rental market from private landlord Ocase, which revealed that across the UK, the average rent has increased by 10.8% over the past year, rising from £1,060 per month at the end of 2021 to £1,175.

Tenants are being hit hardest in London where the average rent has increased by 14.8%, from £1,752 per month to £2,011. Scotland has also experienced higher than average price growth at 14%, rising from £738 to £841 per month. The smallest rent increases were reported in Yorkshire and Humberside where prices grew by 7.2% from £737 per month to £790.

Sales and marketing director at Ocase, Jack Godby, commented: "Rents are increasing because landlords are passing on the additional costs they're dealing with due to the cost of living crisis, not least



the soaring price of energy. On top of that, rising mortgage rates means many landlords are being forced to up their prices to avoid making a loss on their investments."

"And as if that wasn't enough, many high street lenders have removed their buy-to-let mortgage products from the shelves which means landlords

can't get finance for new investments which, in turn, means rental stock is dwindling while tenant demand remains strong."

A growing proportion of people told the ONS they were finding it difficult to afford their rent or mortgage payments, rising from 27% in late September to 31% in mid-December.

## Rental reform plans risk causing chaos in student housing market

Students face chaos as Government plans to reform the rental market threaten to cause widespread uncertainty as to whether housing will be available at the start of each academic year.

Under the plans, included in the Government's Rental Reform White Paper, all student housing, with the exception of purpose-built blocks, will be subject to open-ended tenancies.

This move means landlords are unable to guarantee that accommodation will be available for the start of each academic year, unless sitting tenants have handed in their notice to leave. Students looking for housing will be unable to plan in advance where and with whom they want to live.

New data from the National Residential

Landlords Association reveals that 84% of landlords renting to students are concerned about the Government's plans.

One landlord told the NRLA: "I let solely to students. The end of fixed term Assured Shorthold Tenancies will bring chaos. We will have no guarantee that existing tenants will leave and therefore won't be able to let properties in advance."

According to official data, over a half (53%) of students in the UK in rental properties do not live in halls of residence or other university provided accommodation

With the Government having made clear that private purpose-built student accommodation will be exempt from plans to make every tenancy open

ended, the NRLA has called for the same to be applied to all types of student housing.

Under the NRLA's proposals, student landlords would be able to repossess a property with two months' notice where it is required for new students each year. To provide protections, the earliest such notice could be served to sitting tenants would be in the last two months of a tenancy agreement, or at the 10th month of a 12-month fixed term.

Ben Beadle, chief executive of the NRLA, said: "The student housing market works unlike any other, operating from one academic year to the next. It is common sense that landlords should have certainty that accommodation can be made available for new students each year, as has already been reflected for the Purpose-Built Student Accommodation sector"

"Without changes the Government risk causing chaos, confusion and anxiety for students unable to plan where they live for the start of each academic year."

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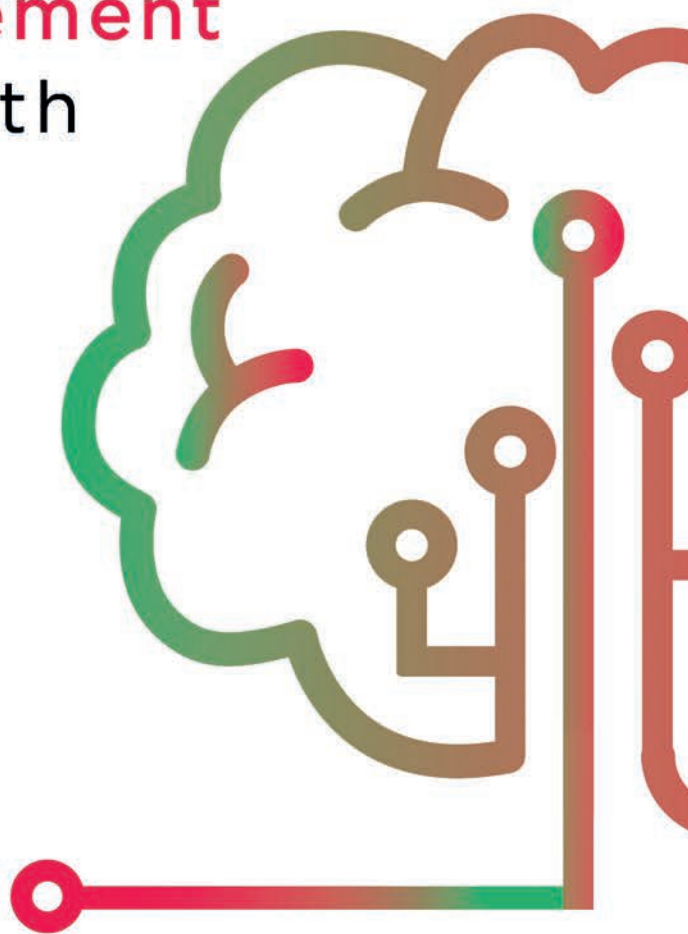
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# Housing associations spent a 'record' £6.5bn on repairs and maintenance of existing homes

The largest 204 housing associations in England spent a record sum of £6.5 billion on the upkeep of their homes last year, according to figures released by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Between them these HAs each own at least 1,000 homes and collectively they own 2.8 million housing association properties across the country, about 95% of the total.

The spending figure represents a 20% increase on the previous year's spend of £5.4bn and includes £3.7bn spent on maintenance, £0.6bn on major works and £2.2bn on capitalised major repairs. The previous record spend on R&M was the £5.7bn invested in 2019/20.

The accounts also show that more than 80% of landlords reported a 5% or more increase in their repairs and maintenance spend on a per property basis.

While the increased spending includes some element of catch-up work from the pandemic (when lots of repair work was paused) and increased spending on safety works; the figures do not include the cost of retrofitting energy efficiency improvements, such as improved insulation.

Given the ongoing reported problems with

disrepair and the need to tackle damp and mould in tenants' homes, it is clear that spending by HAs will have to increase significantly in coming years.

The figures also show that the HA sector remains reliant on its core business of letting social housing properties, which accounted for £16.5bn, or 70% of total income. Sales of shared ownership homes (at £2bn) and open market homes (£1.7bn) accounted for just over 16% of income.

Meanwhile rent arrears have increased over the past four years and now stand at 5.2% of gross rental income compared with 5.0% in 2021.

The accounts show HAs spent £12.3bn on newly built houses and acquisitions in the year, up 12% from £10.9bn in 2020/21. This figure comprised £9.2bn on new social and affordable rental properties and £3.1bn on properties for outright sale. Overall 49,000 properties for affordable housing tenures, including shared ownership, were built.

The additional spending on investment in existing stock reduced overall surpluses from £2.6bn to £2.4bn, while the accounts also showed that the overall operating margin had fallen to 19%, its lowest level since 2011.

Forward projections show that HAs are

More than 80% of landlords reported a 5% or more increase in their repairs and maintenance spend on a per property basis

planning higher levels of investment in their existing stock, driven by a variety of priorities, including energy efficiency factors, stock quality improvements, building and fire safety works and decarbonisation work.

Jonathan Walters, deputy chief executive of the regulator, said: "Social housing providers maintained their strong liquidity in 2021/22, attracted new finance, and continued to invest in the homes they provide. However, wider economic pressures that were starting to impact their finances have now become serious challenges."

"Providers need to continue taking a strategic approach to managing economic risks and focus on their fundamental objectives of investing in new social homes, and providing safe, well-maintained homes for their tenants."

## Social housing tenant satisfaction with their landlord falls by 5%

A decline in overall tenant satisfaction is being driven by social housing landlords failing to listen to and act on tenant feedback, as well as poor handling of complaints according to analysis of the new performance measures.

The data analysis and consultancy firm Housemark has worked with over 100 organisations to measure their performance against the 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which all social landlords will have to measure themselves against and report on from April.

The results of their analysis show there is a lot of room for improvement, particularly in how landlords communicate and interact with their tenants, as well as how complaints are dealt with. The main headline findings include:

- Overall tenant satisfaction has decreased by around five percentage points since 2020 to 79% today. The picture for shared owners is even more stark with only 56% satisfied;
- Fewer than two-thirds of residents (64%) feel that their landlord listens to their views and is

minded to act on them;

- Yet, 83% of tenants say their landlord treats them fairly and with respect; 75% say they are kept informed about the things that matter to them;
- Landlords are performing well on all safety measures, with a median score of 100% on all five areas;
- By contrast, only 83% of tenants say they are satisfied their home is safe;
- 85% of non-emergency repairs are completed on time against landlord targets, but the average days to complete repairs has increased by 40% to around 14 days since 2020;
- Eight in every 10 tenants say they are satisfied with repairs; 76% are satisfied with the time taken to complete the most recent repair; and
- Only 68% of tenants say their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained.

In addition, eight in 10 tenants receive a response to a complaint within the 10 days required. Just over half of tenants (56%) say they are satisfied with

their landlord's approach to handling complaints. Satisfaction with how their landlord handles anti-social behaviour is also low with a median score of just 60%.

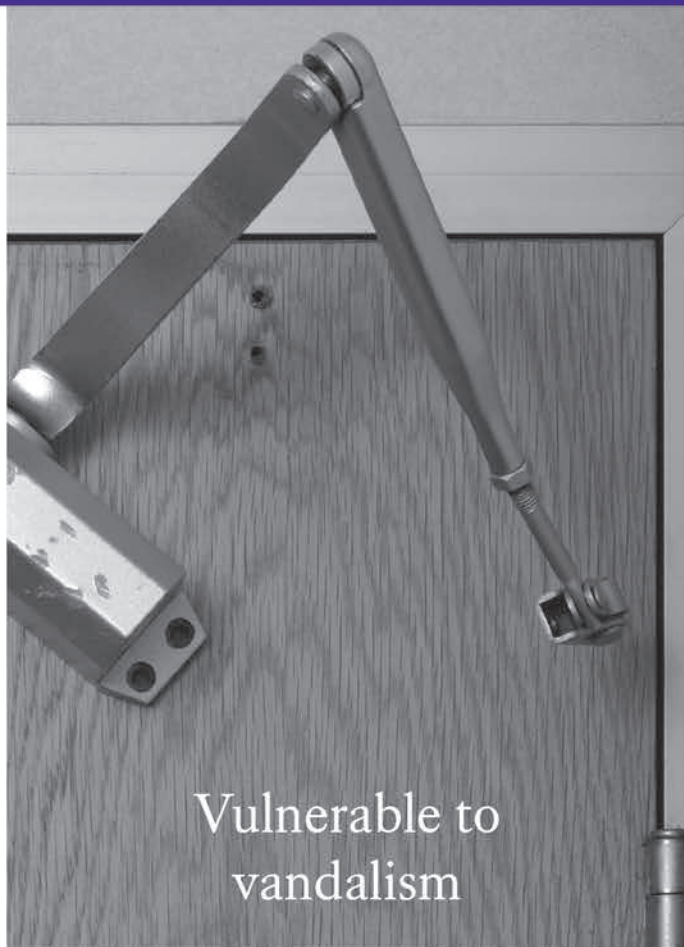
Housing providers are required by the regulator to measure and report their performance against the 22 TSMs from 1 April. Registered Providers owning more than 1,000 shared ownership properties (around 50 landlords) must publish separate survey results for this group.

Jonathan Cox, director of Data and Business Intelligence at Housemark, said: "Although our data only gives an early indication of performance based on limited sample sizes, some striking trends are emerging that can inform landlord decision-making."

"There is clear potential for landlords to improve listening to and acting on tenant feedback, as well as how they engage with tenants. Changes here could help to address the decline in overall tenant satisfaction that our analysis highlights."



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## Council tenant prosecuted for illegally subletting her home

A three year investigation by Haringey Council in North London has resulted in a woman being prosecuted for tenancy fraud and ordered to repay £33,894.58.

Miriam Bailor became a tenant at a council owned property in Northumberland Park, Tottenham, London, in October 1998 and lived at the address for 19 years until she vacated it in December 2017. She then sub-let the property to an unsuspecting family for a rent of £900 per month.

Bailor pleaded not guilty at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court, but an extensive investigation by the council's Audit and Anti-Fraud team showed that Bailor was not occupying her tenancy address and that other persons were living there in her absence. During the trial she repeatedly lied about where she was living. The two day trial found Bailor guilty of unlawfully subletting her property, contrary to Section 1 (1) Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 and sanctioned recovery of any profit made by illegally subletting the property.

Concerns were initially raised with the Audit and Anti-Fraud team when a contractor suspected that Bailor was not living at the Northumberland Park address and another family was living at the property in her absence.

### CHILDCARE PAYMENTS CLAIM

Bailor was interviewed under caution by officers from Haringey Council Investigations team where all available evidence was presented to her. Throughout the interview she maintained that she was living at the tenancy address and claimed that any money she received from the sub-tenants was in respect of childcare that she was providing for them. The district judge said: "What you did was clearly intentional and done for profit. As for harm, behaviour such as yours undermines the system used by local authorities to grant secure tenancies, and I full well understand why parliament introduced an Act such as this because it's there to deter people from misusing housing when they have been lucky enough to receive a council tenancy."

Councillor Sarah Williams, cabinet member for finance and local investment said: "I hope this case serves as a reminder to those who are thinking they are above the law. We will not hesitate to act against anyone caught making fraudulent claims. Haringey Council has a zero tolerance to fraud and corruption."

"For years, Miriam Bailor cheated the housing system and thought she would get away with it. Haringey, like a lot of local authorities has a huge demand for social housing and people like Miriam Bailor deny families a decent home. I am delighted we have recovered this property and will now let it to a family in genuine need."

# Gove continues to name and shame social landlords who fall foul of the Housing Ombudsman

Three more social housing landlords have been named and shamed by the Housing Secretary Michael Gove for failing their residents, as he urged lawyers to direct tenants to the Housing Ombudsman to save them time and money.

Michael Gove has demanded answers and action from Orbit Housing, Lambeth Council and Birmingham City Council after the Ombudsman found severe maladministration in their handling of complaints.

It brings the total number of landlords that have been publicly criticised by the Housing Secretary during 2022 for poor performance to 14. The total amount of compensation these sub-standard landlords have been ordered to pay to social housing tenants by the Ombudsman in 2022 to over £574,000.

In a letter to the Law Society, Citizens Advice, and Housing Law Practitioners Association, Gove urged solicitors to tell social housing tenants that the Ombudsman should be the first route for reporting complaints with their landlord and that it is unacceptable for landlords to let legal proceedings get in the way of them undertaking repairs.

A departmental press release said while lawyers will always have a crucial role representing tenants in legal proceedings, the Ombudsman services are free to use and residents are now able to bring complaints directly themselves, potentially avoiding lengthy and costly legal proceedings.

The Housing Secretary said: "Each of these landlords have failed their tenants, letting people suffer in disgraceful conditions while refusing to listen to complaints or treat them with respect."

"Housing providers will have nowhere to hide once our Social Housing Bill becomes law. A beefed-up Regulator will have the power to enter properties with only 48 hours' notice and make emergency repairs with landlords footing the bill."

"I'm urging everyone offering advice, from solicitors to voluntary organisations, to always direct social housing tenants with complaints to the Housing Ombudsman. Every tenant deserves a decent home, and landlords must not use legal cases as an excuse to delay making repairs or act on complaints."

### STRONG ACTION TAKEN

Orbit Housing was ordered to pay a resident £5,000 after damp and mould issues went untreated, while Birmingham City Council (second letter this year) failed to respond to resident's complaints of boiler faults and rotten floorboards in the living room.

In Lambeth, the Council did not repair damaged windows in a fifth-floor flat that fell out of their frames onto the ground below, leaving a resident with boarded up windows during winter, causing mould which damaged their possessions.

They follow 11 other providers to have faced severe maladministration findings from the Ombudsman. These included Clarion (four this year) who did not repair a tenant's leaking room with rainwater leaking down walls and cracks in every room, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing who failed to resolve an infestation of silverfish and Johnnie Johnson Housing who had to pay £1,800 compensation after a resident suffered verbal abuse, threats and intimidation at the hands of his neighbours.

London Borough of Hackney, Housing Plus Group (was Stafford Rural homes), Habinteg Housing, Shepherd's Bush Housing, Southern Housing, Onward Homes, Catalyst and PA Housing, were the others to have been criticised.

10% of homes in the social rented sector failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2021/22, with 177,000 social homes affected by damp, according to statistics from the English Housing Survey published earlier this month.

Late last year the Housing Secretary announced he will block government funding to any housing provider that breaches the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards until they can prove they are a responsible landlord, with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing the first provider to be sanctioned.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill is expected to drive up standards in social housing; by tackling damp, cold, unsafe homes, making sure landlords do not ignore tenants and bolstering the Regulator's power to act.

The Government is also launching a £1 million public information campaign early next year to make sure tenants know their rights, including about the work of the Ombudsman, and how they can hold housing providers to account.



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# Ombudsman launches investigation into London council over repeated damp and mould failures

The Housing Ombudsman has begun a wider investigation into the London Borough of Islington, citing its poor handling of damp and mould reports and resulting complaints by tenants.

The wider investigation was initiated following a review of the landlord's complaints casework, while the Ombudsman wants to know if they are indicative of wider failures within the landlord.

Of the cases determined between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the Ombudsman made four maladministration findings in the five damp, mould and leaks complaints the service investigated.

During 2022 it found further cases of maladministration or reasonable redress, which is where the landlord identifies its own service failure, in all the damp, mould and leaks complaints determined.

The council previously featured in the Spotlight damp and mould report, issued by the Ombudsman in October 2021. A tougher line is now being taken

against 'repeat offenders', with the Ombudsman having published a highly critical report on failures at Birmingham City Council following an investigation.

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, said: "After repeated failures in this area over the past year, I have been alerted to two new damp and mould complaints concerning the landlord that have been assessed as high risk. Under the circumstances, I have instructed my team to expedite these investigations."

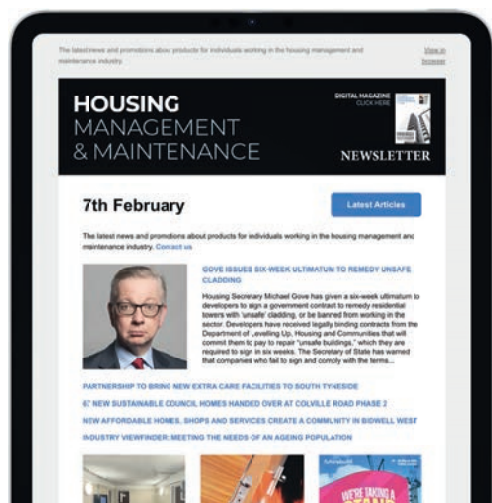
"Other cases with us concern similar issues and may indicate a repeated failing. That is why we will be conducting a further investigation using our systemic powers under Paragraph 49 of the Scheme to identify areas for the landlord to learn and improve."

"At the end of the monitoring period, we will publish a learning report highlighting any issues we have identified in the cases investigated and make recommendations to the landlord where appropriate."

The council is investing an extra £1m to recruit specialist surveyors and to pay for more insulation and ventilation to tackle damp and mould

A spokesperson for Islington said the council is now actively reviewing all damp and mould cases from the past three years and contacting residents to make sure the issue was resolved.

The council is investing an extra £1m to recruit specialist surveyors and to pay for more insulation and ventilation to tackle damp and mould. It is also developing training for non-specialist housing staff to identify damp and mould concerns when visiting homes on other issues, such as carrying out gas compliance checks.



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# Pipe boxing, maintenance and tenant satisfaction.

The importance of maintaining quality standards and completing work within acceptable time frames have long been key considerations when planning social housing maintenance, heating efficiency improvements and safety upgrades, such as fire sprinkler systems. With the new tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) due to come into force in April this year, these criteria are likely to become even more important.

Although concealing pipework for sprinklers, heating systems and utilities will form only part of the full scope of RMI activities provided by HA and LAs, the potential for minimising the impact on tenants, while maintaining satisfaction levels, can be aided using Encasement pre-formed pipe boxing and casings.

For social housing providers, large quantities of exposed pipework can present several challenges as part of the property management process, especially when dealing with older housing stock requiring upgrades such as retrofit fire sprinklers or fuel efficient low-carbon, heating system improvements.

There are often exposed interior pipes that need concealing to improve safety or aesthetics, while covering exterior pipework is also common practice, as it provides protection from accidental damage, as well as acting as a weather barrier and a deterrent to potential tampering or vandalism.

For fire sprinkler systems in new build properties, the pipework can readily be incorporated, as they can be hidden within risers and ceiling voids, but for retrofitted installations, this is rarely an option. In most cases, surface mounting of sprinkler pipework is the only practical cost-effective solution. A similar situation exists for heating system refurbishment programmes.

The upgrading boilers to more fuel-efficient models, with their associated new radiator pipework, or the installation of low-carbon heating solutions, such as ground source heat pump and shared loop arrays, all involve the surface mounting of pipes. In many cases, other utilities, such as electrical cabling, will also need to be concealed.

A key advantage of surface mounted pipework is the simplicity and comparative speed with which it can be installed by skilled contractors, which helps



Versa fire sprinkler boxing

keep costs under control. Clearly, choosing a method of concealment that is also quick and easy to install, makes sound economic and practical sense.

From direct experience of working with contractors on countless UK social housing projects, information acquired by Encasement has shown that its pre-formed pipe and fire sprinkler boxing can be fitted in less than half the time of traditional site made boxing methods.

A further advantage of pre-formed casings becomes apparent when assessing 'whole life' costs, which can escalate significantly when routine maintenance visits are considered. In most situations, site made casings are damaged or destroyed during their removal, as screw heads are usually filled and painted over, making them impossible or extremely time consuming to dismantle, re-assemble or re-construct.

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

For interior use, Encasement's Riva; Versa 5 and Versa 8 pre-formed plywood pipe & fire sprinkler boxing, alongside its boiler pipe casings, have become the preferred solution for many HAs and LAs and are in widespread use in social housing projects across the UK.

Where exterior services, need to be concealed, such as distributed heating and ground source loop array pipework, or electrical cabling and air source heat pump installations, Arma metal casings provide a highly effective solution. Bespoke manufactured to individual project specifications from 2mm thick aluminium, as standard, they provide tough and durable protection.

All Encasement plywood boxing is manufactured from UKTR compliant, sustainably sourced timber and is pre-finished with a white decorative resin impregnated paper, as standard, which removes the need for painting, further helping save time and money on site.

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INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

# The decarbonisation of social housing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The decarbonisation of the UK is slowly picking up pace, and there are few sectors with more to scale than housing.

With over one in five homes in the country being first constructed over 100 years ago, and over one in three built before WWII, the UK has the oldest – and arguably most inefficient – housing stock in Europe.

80% of the housing this country needs by 2050 already exists. This means that a concerted retrofit revival must be seen if we are to reach the 2050 Government’s net zero targets by that date, and many housing professionals have been left wondering how they are going to achieve this.

In the social and private rent sector, margins are almost always squeezed tight already, and many housing professionals are not certain if they can reap the benefits of upgrading their stock here.

In recent research carried out by Housing Management & Maintenance, we looked to find out exactly how much of a challenge our readers expect this process to be, the barriers and benefits they expect, and their awareness of both their own stock and its performance, and the funds available to them.

Our survey of 82 housing professionals – with an average of 1410 units managed, 72% of whom are at manager level or above – indicates that the sector is doing reasonably well considering the high average age of its stock, but that residents are suffering with antiquated efficiency measures at present, with an average of 41% of our respondent’s tenants estimated to be fuel poor.

“Today, the UK housing industry is more aware than ever of its impact on the environment, with associations and landlords alike beginning to understand how crucial a step towards reducing the carbon footprint of the built environment the decarbonisation of its stock will prove.”

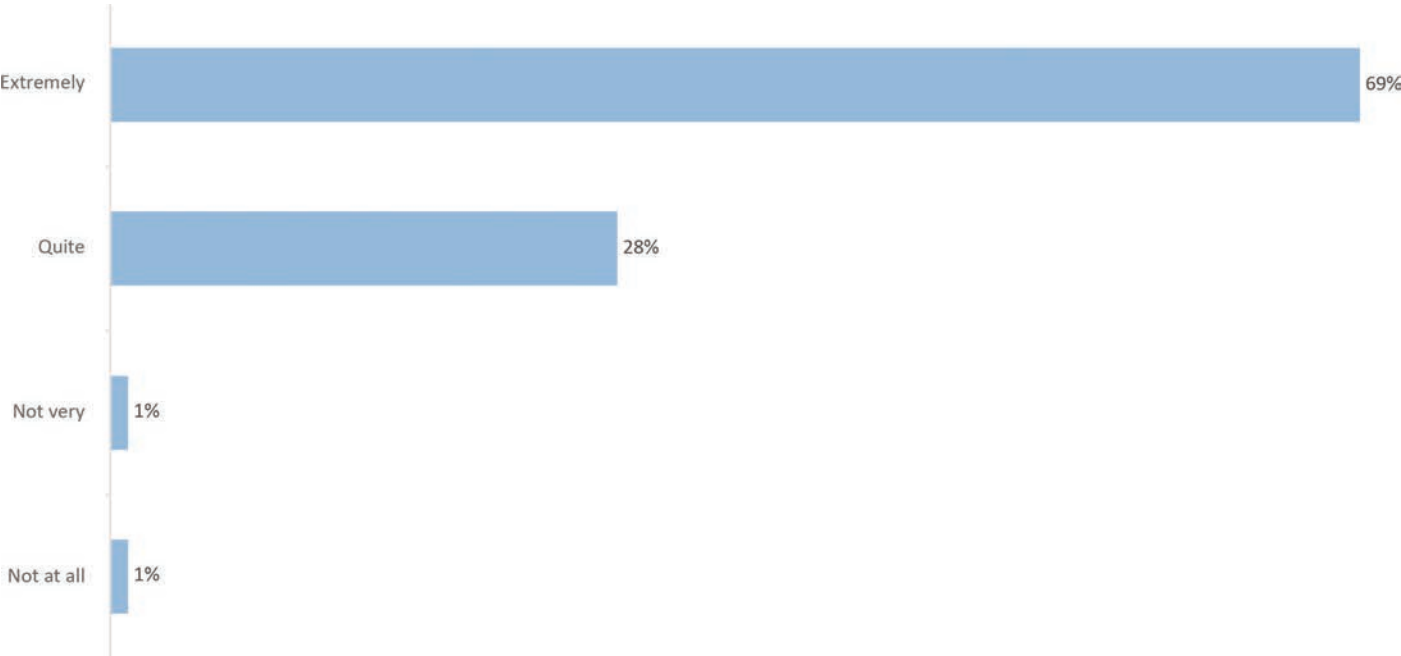
INTRODUCTION

STATE OF THINGS TODAY

According to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), 40% of UK emissions come from households, with around a third of this being produced as a byproduct of heating.

Today, the UK housing industry is more aware than ever of this, with associations and landlords alike beginning to understand how crucial a step towards reducing the carbon footprint of the built environment the decarbonisation of its stock will prove.

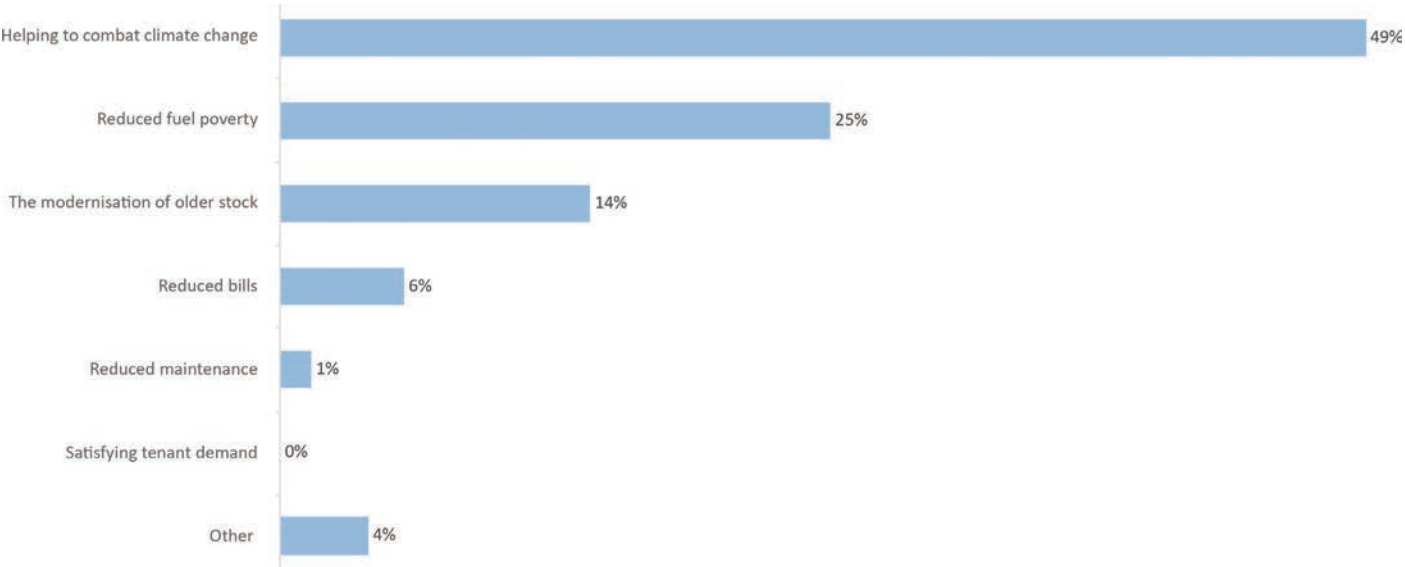
This awareness does not inherently lead to action, however. There are many barriers present in tackling this, from costs, to supply, to access, and the task



“How important do you believe the decarbonisation of social housing is?”







“What do you believe will be the main benefit of the decarbonisation of social housing?”

itself is only becoming more complex with inaction as the country’s housing stock continues to age.

When asked, on average, how our respondents would describe the state of the UK’s average social housing stock in terms of energy performance, 80% believe it to be inadequate at present, with 30% saying it is in “dire need of improvement,” 50% it “requires improvement,” 18% believing it is performing “adequately,” and just 2% saying it is performing “exceptionally well.”

In terms of their own housing, the median age of our respondent’s housing stock was around 62 years old. Just 5% of our respondents said the average age of their stock was 20 years old or less, followed by 32% 20-40 years, 24% 40 to 60 years, 14% 60 to 80 years, 5% 80 to 90 years, 10% 100 to 120 years, 4% 120 to 150 years, and 5% above this.

In spite of this, our respondents stock is arguably performing quite well considering its average age, with the vast majority (88%) stating that their stock’s EPC bands have improved or vastly improved over the last decade. With an

upcoming bill only expected to bring in minimum EPC ratings of C for buy-to-lets by 2025, it is a welcome surprise that the majority of our respondents stock would meet this today, with 50% citing an average of a C rating, followed by 9% at B and 4% at A. Unfortunately, there is still much to work on, with over a quarter (26%) citing an average rating of D, 7% E, 2% F, and 2% G.

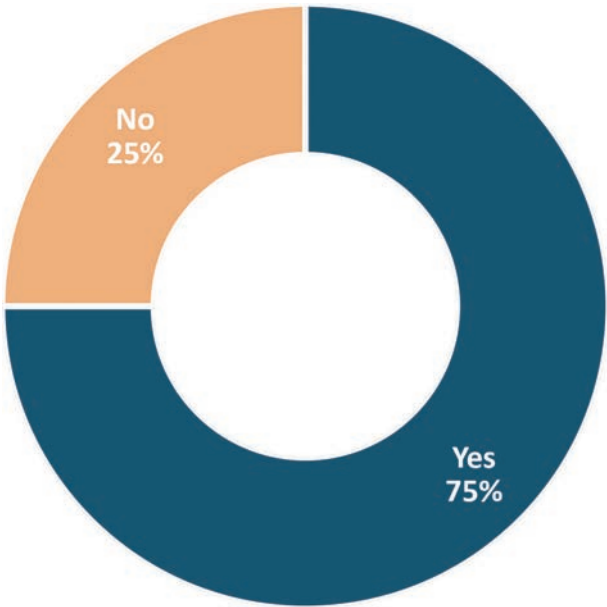
Better than expected or not, however, any poor performance can have stark implications on the affordability of living in such accommodations, especially in times of an energy crisis. Sadly, when asked what percentage of their tenants they would estimate as being fuel poor – essentially meaning that after spending the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line – the average was 41%.

BENEFITS OF DECARBONISATION

The impacts of such failings in terms of the impacts of performance on the affordability of a home – of which, by and large, the sector appears to be aware of even among housing professionals’ own stock – lead directly to the benefits that addressing such issues can have.

Thankfully, it seems that the significance of these benefits were well appreciated by our readers. When asked how important they believed the decarbonisation of social housing as a whole is, 69% said ‘extremely important,’ followed by 28% ‘quite,’ with just 1% ‘not very’ and another 1% ‘not at all.’

As above, they are also actioning this to some extent, with three-quarters (75%) currently looking to improve the energy performance of their housing



“Is your company currently looking to improve the energy performance of your housing stock?”

When asked, on average, how our respondents would describe the state of the UK’s average social housing stock in terms of energy performance, 80% believe it to be inadequate at present, with 30% saying it is in “dire need of improvement,” 50% it “requires improvement,” 18% believing it is performing “adequately,” and just 2% saying it is performing “exceptionally well.”





An aerial view of a city, likely Tokyo, with a dense grid of buildings. Overlaid on the image are several glowing blue lines that form a network, connecting various points across the city. The lines are thicker and more prominent in some areas, creating a sense of connectivity and data flow.

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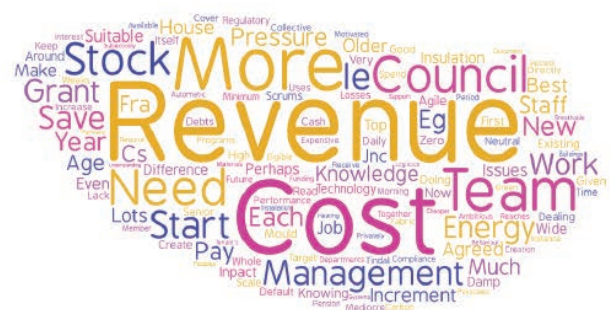
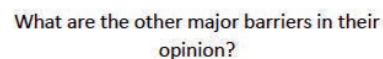


stock, with 76% of respondent's average EPC bands having improved over the last decade and 12% vastly improved.

These benefits were also well understood by our respondent's tenants. When asked how important the following benefits were among their residents, 62% said reduced bills were 'very' important, 29% 'fairly', and just 5% 'not greatly' important and 3% 'unimportant.' Next, energy efficiency was seen as 'very' important by 50%, 38% 'fairly', 9% 'not greatly' and 3% 'unimportant.' Of slightly less concern was the environmental impact of the home itself, at 32% 'very', 46% 'fairly', 15% 'not greatly' and 6% 'unimportant.'

Considering this understanding from housing professionals of the benefits of doing so – both to tenants and to the environment – and a majority of whom are already undertaking ecological works, the question remains, why is there still a clear need for improvement in the UK's stock?

As expected, there were a number of the usual suspects listed among our respondent's main barriers when it came to the decarbonisation of social housing. In this survey, we asked respondents to rate their 'top 5' barriers, with the 1st being scored five points and the 5th being scored one point.



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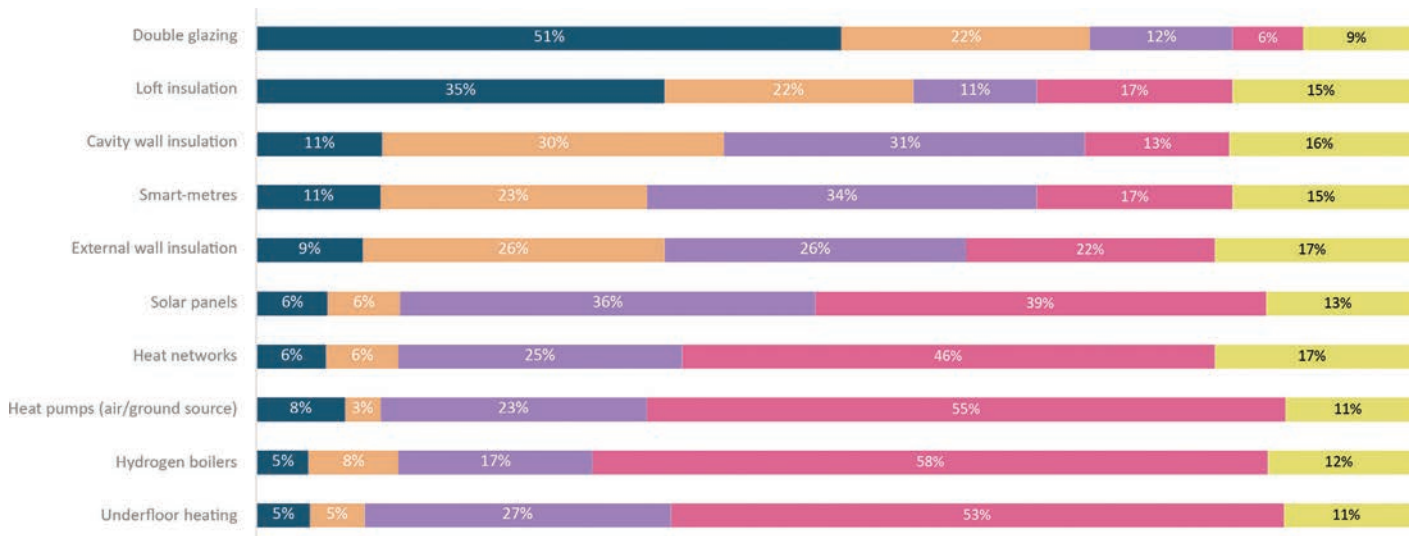


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SCAN  
ME







"In your current stock, what portion do you believe has the following installed?"

■ All ■ More Than Half ■ Less Than Half ■ None ■ Unsure

Verbatim comment: "I don't think the climate change crisis is genuinely understood by most people including the Councillors and Cabinet at my Council. The urgency for properties to effectively go off grid with all power generation is immense."

As always, cost was the highest rated barrier, at 262 points. This was followed by a lack of Government support at 162 points, a lack of external skills (81 points), age of stock (59 points), supply chain issues (49 points), tenants refusing improvements (46 points) and lack of internal skills (45 points). Lastly, those barriers that scored less than 40 points were increased maintenance (35 points), access to homes (29 points), lack of stock knowledge (29 points) and lack of residential education (28 points).

Other barriers cited as verbatim comments continued this trend, including that much of the insulation available is "not suitable for older buildings which require a breathable fabric," that "older stock uses too much energy," and "tenant's behaviour, knowledge of new technology and energy."

One commenter believed there was a significant lack of understanding among housing professionals, writing: "I don't think the climate change crisis is genuinely understood by most people including the Councillors and Cabinet at my Council. The urgency for properties to effectively go off grid with all power generation is immense."

As to the highly rated lack of government support in particular, when asked to rate how well the government has performed in various areas, our readers were fairly scathing, with over half indicating failings on each measure rated. Just 3% for instance, said the Government has performed 'very well' in informing the social housing sector on upcoming efficiency changes, followed by 26% 'well', 56% 'not well' and 15% 'very badly'. Again, just 3% said the government has performed 'very well' in legislating on energy efficiency measures, followed by 22% 'well', 63% 'not very well' and 13% 'very badly'. Lastly, a negligible 1% said the Government had performed 'very well' in funding green social housing, with 'well' at 22%, not very well at 57% and 'very badly' at 19%.

Considering the impact of Government support that is already available, focusing in particular on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, our survey highlighted a reasonable awareness of the help available, though it appeared it

was not relevant to, or utilised by, the majority of our audience. 63% had heard of the Fund, for instance, but of those that had, just 9% had applied and been accepted, 5% applied and rejected, with 42% not having applied but planning to in the future, and 44% not having applied with no plans to. In contrast to this, the majority 61% of those who had heard of the fund believed the application process to be clear.

Another of our respondent's verbatim comments as to the main barriers touched on this point too, believing that the most significant troubles they see are "cost and T&Cs around grant programs, which more often than not are more expensive even with the grant than doing it directly."

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that a large portion of the county's housing is fairly old, with our research showing that 63% of our respondents estimating the average age of their stock is over 40 years old, with an average age of 62 years across all our respondents.

Unfortunately, older homes are often far less efficient than their modern counterparts, lacking in sufficient insulation and worsened by disrepair creating gaps in their fabric. It can also be more complex to retrofit a home with such insulation as opposed to installing it into a new build, and many new low-carbon technologies are reliant on high levels of insulation.

The issue will have to be overcome somehow though, with multiple Government targets being introduced to decarbonise housing across the country. Heating is at the heart of this for most homes, with heating having historically been inefficient, producing much of a home's carbon output and costing tenants in the process.

Our research has indicated that housing professionals are well aware of this challenge, and that the majority have already begun work to decarbonise their stock – though there is still some way to go. Almost half of their tenants were estimated to be fuel poor, and the majority of our respondents believed the Government to be performing poorly in all aspects asked of them in funding help for the issue and educating the sector on the need for action.

According to our respondents, the biggest barriers to the decarbonisation of social housing are costs, and a lack of Government support. Therefore, if the Government is to meet its targets, and the climate challenge is to be addressed outside of new builds, then it must work to enable the retrofit revival that is so clearly needed in this country.

The full white paper can be downloaded free of charge at [housingmmonline.co.uk](https://housingmmonline.co.uk)



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## Net zero retrofit solution for social housing

Vent-Axia, the leader in low carbon ventilation, has launched its Net Zero Retrofit Solution to help social housing providers meet carbon targets. The range has been specifically developed to provide increased ventilation while minimising unnecessary heat loss through heat recovery technology. The UK is committed to meet Net Zero targets by 2050. This sets a tough challenge for social housing providers to improve their energy efficiency and so lower the carbon emissions in their properties, without detrimentally affecting the indoor air quality (IAQ) in their homes.



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## JACKON by BEWI showcases the future of building at stand F08

JACKON by BEWI will be at Futurebuild this year and will be promoting its ICF building systems. These are ready for the rigorous new u-value targets for new-builds, when these come into effect in 2025 as part of the Future Homes Standard. JACKON's THERMOMUR® ICF and JACKODUR® ATLAS ranges already meet or exceed the new targets for thermal insulation. The THERMOMUR® 350 Super range – currently the company's best-selling range in the UK – already achieves 0.15 for walls with no added materials, and the JACKODUR® ATLAS insulated raft system can be designed to achieve 0.11. Visitors to the company's stand at the Show will be able to find out more about the benefits that JACKON by BEWI's 60 years' expertise in XPS and EPS manufacturing can bring to construction projects. JACKON by BEWI building systems make a positive contribution to the construction of highly energy-efficient buildings due to very low energy inputs required for heating or cooling. JACKON by BEWI's ICF system, THERMOMUR® and the insulated concrete raft system JACKODUR® ATLAS allow for fast construction with premium air tightness and acoustic insulation, as well as making the building exceptionally thermally efficient. By planning for energy-efficient homes of the future now, we can help the environment for years to come.

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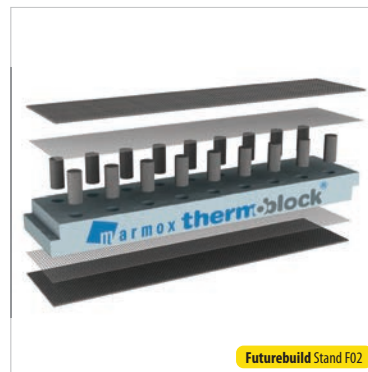


Futurebuild Stand F08

## Marmox Thermoblocks offer warm support at Futurebuild

With both an energy and a housing crisis looming large across the UK, it is appropriate that Marmox has opted to dedicate its stand F02 at this year's Futurebuild to showcasing a product offering a ready solution for the issue of thermal bridging. Well proven in practice, Marmox Thermoblocks are widely recognised by specifiers as providing a means of achieving compliance with Part L, by addressing the challenges of cold-bridging at the floor/wall junction or beneath parapet walls. In fact the growing emphasis on improving energy efficiency as well as the speed and quality of construction is making Thermoblock mainstream for both traditional and modern methods of building. Grant Terry, the Marketing Manager for Marmox, commented: "Thermoblock is unique to the industry in terms of its insulation performance coupled with high load carrying capability and practicality in use. Increasing in popularity over the past decade, it has proved itself in a range of applications and is now widely used in commercial contracts as well as by housebuilders." Thermoblocks are available in widths of 100, 140 or 215 mm and are formed from sections of XPS (extruded polystyrene) encapsulating two rows of high strength, epoxy concrete mini-columns. These are attached at either end to the top and bottom layers of glass-fibre reinforced polymer concrete, to ensure a good bond with the rest of the structure.

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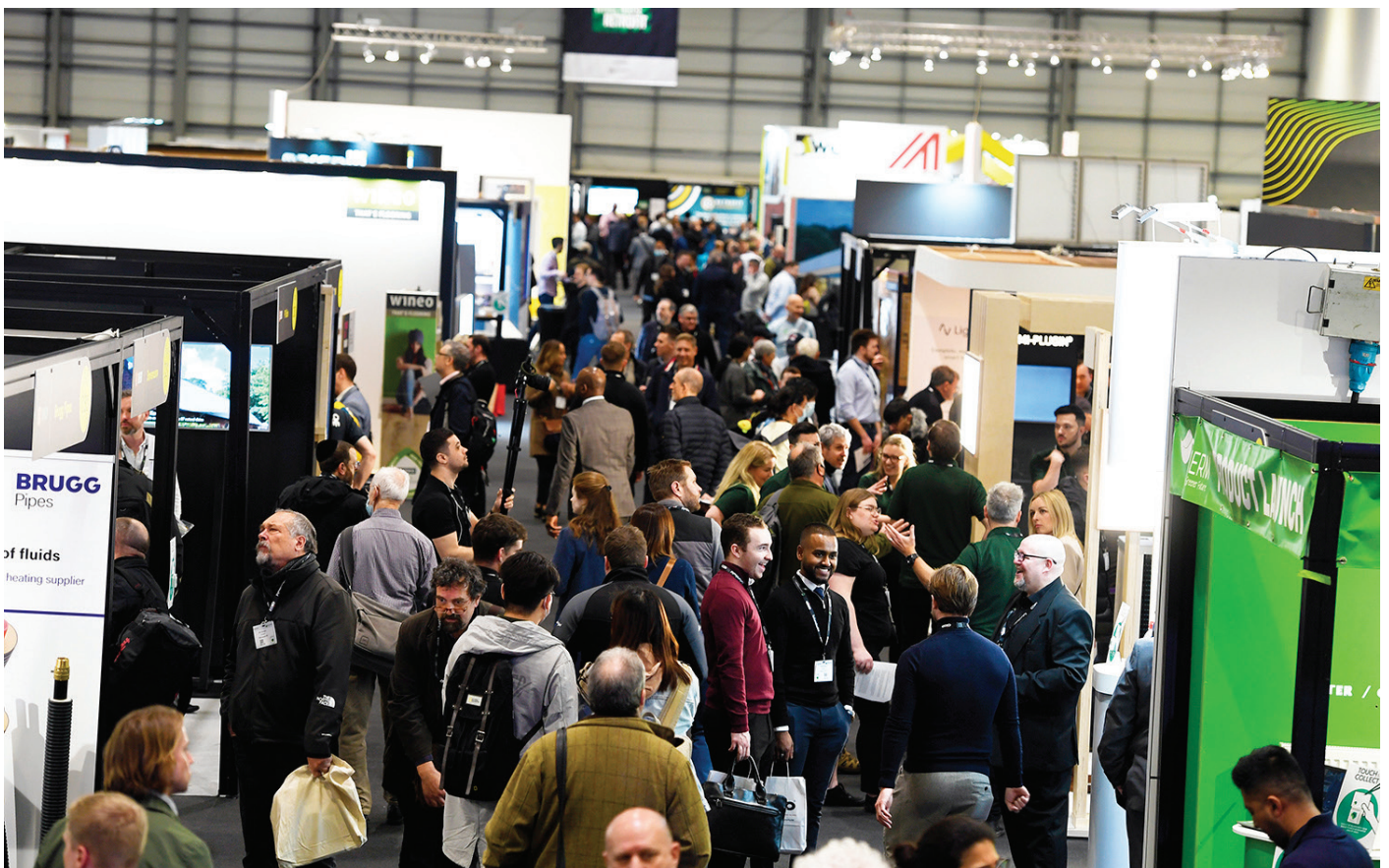
Futurebuild Stand F02

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7 - 9 March 2023, ExCeL London

# Futurebuild targets retrofit at scale



With 27 million domestic buildings in the UK, the majority of which require significant energy efficiency improvements, it has been calculated by the UK Green Building Council that 1.8 homes per minute will need to be retrofitted to deliver the UK government's commitment to net zero by 2050. It's why Futurebuild 2023 is urging companies and professionals to 'take a stand' for retrofit in order to create a better built environment and deliver on our net zero ambitions.

Futurebuild's expanded Retrofit section, sponsored by Elmhurst Energy and in partnership with The Retrofit Academy CIC and Osmosis, is set to be bigger and better in 2023 and will be showcasing the best solutions, technologies and services, that together, can unite and strengthen the delivery of whole house retrofit at scale. The Retrofit Zone will focus on retrofit in practice, innovation that is scalable, and cement a standard of safe, high-quality retrofit.

Social landlords and local authorities throughout the country are among those in the supply chain who are keen to identify organisations, products,

Futurebuild 2023 is urging companies and professionals to 'take a stand' for retrofit

technologies and systems that can help them to scale up and decarbonise their housing stock, without compromise on quality or service.

From the manufacturer to the installer, the supply chain is gearing up to meet retrofit demand, with climate conscious clients renovating their homes and waves of funding from the UK government needing to be fulfilled for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Local Authority Delivery programmes.

David Pierpoint, founder and CEO at the Retrofit Academy will be curating the section's exhibitors, seminars and training taster-sessions. He said: "The current energy crisis has the energy efficiency of our homes under the spotlight. With residential fuel bills soaring, fuel poverty is once again on the rise and felt





widely across our communities. Retrofitting is part of the solution to energy efficient, sustainable, healthier homes and improves both our carbon footprint and the quality of people's lives. If we are to meet our net zero targets, we must share knowledge, collaborate and innovate, and by doing this we will go some way to creating a world where every home is warm, healthy and low carbon."

#### TALKING RETROFIT

At the heart of the Retrofit Zone will be the CPD-accredited Seminar programme, which has been designed to offer valuable insights at all levels from assessment, coordination, deployment, and evaluation. The line-up will feature industry leaders, pioneers and innovators who are driving forward with retrofit. Speakers include Jarrod Green, retrofit technical solutions manager – EQUANS; Edith Colomba, senior sustainability consultant – Useful Simple Trust; Antonia Craze, senior energy officer – Portsmouth City Council, and many more.

As part of this and on Day Three of Futurebuild (March 9th), David Pierpoint will be chairing a wrap up seminar entitled, 'Are we ready to deliver retrofit at scale?'. It will explore insights from the first three days of the event and what has occurred in the past 12 months in the world of retrofit.

#### A SKILLED-UP RETROFIT WORKFORCE

To meet this enormous retrofit challenge, the Retrofit Academy has secured funding from the government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver over 1200 retrofit courses in England to help the UK achieve its net zero goals by building a highly skilled retrofit workforce. Recent studies have estimated that up to 400,000 new recruits will be needed to form a retrofit army so that they can deliver retrofit projects at scale.

The courses are ideal for experienced built environment professionals such as architects, surveyors and construction site managers, social housing providers, those working in the energy efficiency sector (such as Domestic Energy Assessors), and SMEs (e.g. contractors installing insulation, glazing, doors and heating systems) looking to deliver high quality and sustainable retrofit projects.

"If we are to meet our net zero targets, we must share knowledge, collaborate and innovate, and by doing this we will go some way to creating a world where every home is warm, healthy and low carbon."

David Pierpoint, founder and CEO at the Retrofit Academy

#### THE RETROFIT ACADEMY AWARDS

The winners of the Retrofit Academy Awards will be announced at Futurebuild on Tuesday 7th March. As well as increasing credibility, the awards set out to recognise the rising stars in the industry and showcase the hard work and dedication going into outstanding retrofitting projects across the UK being made across all levels, including retrofit coordinators, installers, social housing, local authority delivery programmes, and individual projects.

Martin Hurn, Futurebuild's event director said: "The solutions exist within the supply chain that can underpin whole house retrofit at scale and create a better built environment. It's now about giving those innovative brands the platform to really showcase their products, solutions and innovations. Futurebuild 2023 will be that platform."

Futurebuild 2023 will take place from March 7th to March 9th London's ExCeL. For more details, visit [www.futurebuild.co.uk](http://www.futurebuild.co.uk)

Don't miss out on this year's event. Visitor registration is now open – scan the QR code now...

Article supplied by Futurebuild





# The future of home heating



With the 2025 Future Homes Standard requiring new build homes to produce 75-80% less carbon emissions and likely to prohibit the installation of gas boilers, it is evident we will have to change how we heat our homes. However, with 83% of homes currently relying on mains gas for heating this change will not be easy.

Electric heat pumps are currently the Government's preferred green heating technology, thanks to their impressive efficiency of some 200-400%. This is two to four times that of electric storage heaters and even the most efficient gas boilers.

The Government have recognised the ability of heat pumps to reduce space heating emissions, setting a target to deploy 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028. Progress towards this target is being made, with heat pump installation rates increasing by 28% in 2021. Industry player, Redrow have announced that soon they will be fitting heat pumps as standard in all their new homes.

But despite this progress there is more to be done, with it being estimated that only 60,000 heat pumps were installed in 2021, and the UK having the lowest adoption rates in Europe.

Due to their large housing stocks, social housing landlords and housing associations are in a unique position to help increase the rate of uptake. Widespread support by these stakeholders could significantly increase installation rates and open the

market to smaller private landlords and individual homeowners who would benefit from the ensuing economies of scale.

With social housing standards being updated to require lower carbon emissions, heat pumps offer a key route for housing providers to meet targets. Increasing amounts of renewable generation - for most of January 2023 wind accounted for between 40-60% of grid generation - means that emissions from heat pumps will only drop.

Heat pumps not only offer environmental benefits but potentially economic ones too. With the ongoing volatility of the gas market increasing boiler running costs, heat pumps are nearing and sometimes surpassing running price parity with boilers, depending on operational efficiency levels.

When considering the suitability of a heat pump for a home, it is important to consider the energy performance of the building first. For the best results the energy efficiency of a property should be maximised before a heat pump is installed, following a 'fabric first' approach. This is because the cheapest and greenest energy is that which is not used at all, and moreover if insulation improvements are made after a heat pump is fitted the heat pump's efficiency can be compromised due to the system being oversized.

The cost of heat pumps can sometimes be reduced when being supplied to multiple neighbouring properties by sharing ground loop systems. This is a service offered by multiple

companies, who between them have transitioned many social homes from gas boilers to ground source heat pumps.

Another potential green heating solution is to convert the gas main from methane to hydrogen, or at least to blend the two gases. Ideally this would be possible without the need to replace existing gas boiler systems. However, emerging studies are suggesting that this is unlikely to be possible for home heating.

Unsurprisingly, giants in the gas industry like Shell and BP are lobbying hard for the use of hydrogen in homes. However, in the shorter term it does seem that electric heat pumps will be the preferred way for the housing industry to decarbonise its stock.

Sava run free weekly technical webinars covering subject such as The Future of Home Heating. You can see upcoming webinars and book your free place by visiting the website below.

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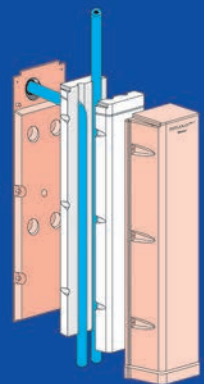


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# Fit and forget

As heating water accounts for nearly 1/5th of energy use in UK homes, water conservation is the key to reducing energy bills, Groundbreaker explains more

Reducing hot water demand is an effective way to help occupants conserve energy and reduce bills. Some uses are fixed, e.g. the washing machine or dishwasher, here education about full loads and eco settings can have an impact. However, many are not.

Showers account for a quarter of UK domestic water usage. To reduce this hot water usage there are three options: take cold showers, not ideal on a cold winter morning; shorter showers, using egg timers or a 'favourite song' to cut shower time; and flow reduction, less water is used while the shower is running.

The first two options require active engagement by all members of the household. The last is a fit and forget method of permanently reducing water use.

'Eco' or water saving shower heads are designed to restrict the water flow to a single outlet. They are highly effective but retrofits like these come at a price, especially larger properties with multiple bathrooms. They also do nothing for running taps, whether they're in the bathroom or kitchen.

A further 1/5th of water usage is the taps in the house, e.g. rinsing the coffee cup, or washing hands. Again, flow restrictors can be fitted to each of these outlets.

For households on an increasingly tight budget, or landlords trying to minimise costs, multiple fittings for each tap or shower might not be an investment they are able to make.

Showers account for a quarter of UK domestic water usage. To reduce this hot water usage there are three options: take cold showers, not ideal on a cold winter morning; shorter showers, using egg timers or a 'favourite song' to cut shower time; and flow reduction, less water is used while the shower is running

## HOUSEHOLD FLOW RESTRICTION FOR JUST £20 PER PROPERTY

The alternative is whole site flow reduction. Fitting a device at the metre – such as Groundbreaker's NRv2 LoFlo – regulates the level of flow entering customer premises, regardless of network pressure. As the flow of water into the premises





## Whole site flow reduction devices can be easily and simply retrofitted to any metre installation, or metre exchange when upgrading or remediating underground metre chambers

is limited, then the amount used in 'time controlled' activities is also limited – but without providing a degradation of service. More importantly, by not requiring any intervention or behavioural change on the part of the customer, will lead to a 'natural' reduction in consumption.

Our water companies are regulated to provide a minimum level of water supply, but in many areas, due to network structure and gravity fed systems, supply is much greater. Households in high pressure areas could be receiving up to three times the required minimum levels. So, run a hose for five minutes at the bottom of the hill, and your lawn will be greener than the gardener that does the same at the top. 'Time controlled' uses could be reduced if all households received the same acceptable 'standardised' supply.

Independent research carried out by WRc, showed a theoretical reduction of 2-4% of typical water usage when such devices are installed. However, recent field trials by a major UK water company have shown savings of 5%.

As part of UK Net Zero Carbon targets, water companies have been targeted to reduce the water householders are using, Per Capita Consumption (PCC). PCC reduction targets average just under 6% in the UK, so utilising property flow restriction could achieve just 1% off the average PPC reduction targets! However, water companies are also tied to customer performance commitment levels (C-Mex), and some seem to be concerned that a reduction in the supply

levels to properties will prompt customer complaints, offsetting the financial rewards of achieving PCC targets.

Field trials of devices such as LoFlo, have shown that most customers are not aware of supply levels in their property, within certain limits. Especially when moving into a new property, customers accept the levels as 'being what it is' and fears of an increase in customer complaints impacting C-Mex values are overrated. In recent trials in England, where occupants did notice the change in supply, it was the positive impact of reduced flow that was cited, e.g. reduced splashing at the kitchen sink.

Whole site flow reduction devices can be easily and simply retrofitted to any metre installation, or metre exchange when upgrading or remediating underground metre chambers. Thus, allowing water demand management, with little or no impact on consumers, at the minimal cost of approximately £20 per household.

As the device is fitted at the water metre, it is the water company's fitting. Therefore, landlords must be proactive in challenging water companies to provide a standardised supply to help UK housing stock to achieve water consumption targets.

*Article supplied by Groundbreaker*

## Sto system specified for Kent apartment

Two new apartment buildings in Kent have been given a thermally-efficient and visually-striking facade thanks to the use of an external wall insulation system from Sto. The two new blocks in Ashford – Stour Heights and Somerset Heights – have a single-skin construction, comprising a reinforced concrete frame with concrete block infill, and they benefit from the installation of StoTherm Mineral external wall insulation, with a StoCleyer B mineral brick slip and StoSilco render facade finish. A StoSilco stippled render finish was also used on specific areas of the new buildings.



0330 024 2666 [www.sto.co.uk](http://www.sto.co.uk)

## Heating costs controlled with ElectricalDirect

ElectricalDirect has added the innovative Radbot 1 Intelligent Thermostatic Radiator Valve from Secure to its expanding range of heating solutions. This new type of heating control has been designed to optimise energy usage which is an ideal solution for those looking to reduce their energy bills. The device can be installed on any radiator that has an existing thermostatic radiator valve. By using an innovative, self-learning algorithm, the Radbot 1 continually monitors the home environment to detect and predict occupancy patterns with no need for apps, smart thermostats, or setting complex schedules.



03003 038 826 [www.electricaldirect.co.uk](http://www.electricaldirect.co.uk)

## Calido combats mould and recovers heat

Vent-Axia has launched the Lo-Carbon Calido, decentralised mechanical ventilation with heat recovery unit, to help social housing landlords tackle condensation and mould while reducing energy bills. Offering up to 80% heat recovery the Calido is designed for retrofit properties, allowing landlords to easily install discrete decentralised mechanical ventilation with heat recovery in existing homes, improving indoor air quality and energy efficiency. With pressure on to tackle condensation and mould in housing stock, while reducing carbon emissions, the Lo-Carbon Calido's dmVHR is the ideal solution.



0344 856 0590 [www.vent-axia.com/calido](http://www.vent-axia.com/calido)

## 'Quiet Mark' for Therma V Monobloc 'S'

LG Electronics has achieved the Quiet Mark accreditation for its leading air to water heat pump – the Therma V Monobloc "S". Quiet Mark is the international award for high-performance technologies and solutions battling everyday unwanted noise. It confirms that the R32 Monobloc S is one of the quietest, and most technically effective products in noise reduction or acoustic properties available on the market in its category. As with the original Monobloc, this latest model combines the indoor and outdoor features in one module. It is connected by only water piping, eliminating the need for refrigerant piping.



[uk.aircon@lge.com](mailto:uk.aircon@lge.com) [partner.lge.com/uk](http://partner.lge.com/uk)

## Gilberts helps protect twin towers

A 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 (30 in total), with fan skids on the roof of each building to accelerate smoke evacuation. Gilberts' Series 60 is believed to be the only vent of its kind designed and manufactured in the UK. It has been tested to- and passed- all relevant tests (EN 12101-8 and EN 1366-10 and classified to EN 13501-4). Delivering up to two hours' fire integrity, the damper combines a low leakage rate and high free area through parallel linked blades when open to deliver high smoke evacuation rates.

01253 766911 [info@gilbertsblackpool.com](mailto:info@gilbertsblackpool.com)



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# Good ventilation practice in social housing

Poor indoor air quality and ventilation in general current housing stock has always been a huge challenge for social housing bodies. Roy Byom from Titon explains



Houses, flats and apartments built over several decades have had differing ideas and applications from all manner of materials and products. Although Building Regulations have altered to try and regulate aspects of homes' future and present, much of what has been proposed or recommended has allowed for basic performance of product and materials with little policing to maintain higher standards.

The Decent Homes Standard was meant to improve living standards for social housing stock and breathe new life into conditions, not just for now but with an element of future proofing living conditions. To a degree this has happened,

however, as we stand and reflect on what has been delivered, we have to be honest and say things are slipping back to pre-Decent Homes standards due to poor levels of maintenance and the lack of continual investment.

Among recommended changes to differing social housing issues, the one constant is the need for better indoor air quality and ventilation practices. Our industry has seen that good ventilation has been way down the list of priorities when applying changes – the lack of good ventilation practice in social housing has been and still is being played out in different forms across the housing sector.



## Everybody has a part to play in making the right application to drive down the issue of poor ventilation in social housing

During the last couple of years, Covid and the lockdown situation have exacerbated an already fragile situation in social housing, with a massive rise in disrepair cases which have overwhelmed the already stretched resources of many maintenance and repair departments. The advice from the Government has been to ventilate to help stop the spread of Covid in homes.

During the colder months of the year, most people will look to heat their property over anything else. It is also natural to keep the windows closed for longer to retain heat; however, with poor or inadequate ventilation this invariably means keeping moisture laden air in – which will almost certainly lead to major condensation and mould issues in the most vulnerable properties.

In recent times there have been several high profile cases highlighting the tragic effect of what happens when poor indoor air quality is left to fester without good advice, and application. These have been well documented over the years by the media, and blame is often focused on the landlord.

There is no one panacea that will conquer all the ills of poor ventilation in social housing, however, everybody has a part to play in making the right application to drive this issue down. Everybody being surveyors, asset managers, product specifiers, maintenance managers, product installers, maintenance contractors, and even the tenants themselves can all contribute to help with good practice for ventilation in social housing stock. All parties involved with ventilation products should have an understanding of why this occurs through education and advice. Products that have been specified should not perform at the basic level to tick a box, and not be the

cheapest product. Ventilation products should be able to cope with reasonable moisture levels found in most homes when cooking, bathing, washing and drying clothes, especially during the cooler months in the year. There are very good products out there on the market, recent changes in the Building Regulations give enough guidance for higher performance levels. New reporting technologies are also playing a part to help monitor IAQ situations in homes, however the homes require high level ventilation equipment to aid situations in properties with overcrowding.

Good ventilation education and advice for all parties involved needs to be part of any changes if we stand a chance of reversing the current upward trend for disrepair cases. It would be nice to think that the vast majority of landlords in various guises are keen to get the usual properties off the reoccurring list on a permanent basis. The major challenge of today comes with other factors not seen on such a level as cost of living increases, this played a part of the equation in the past and is now more widespread.

So in essence the likelihood is that good ventilation can be achieved, there just needs to be the desire and responsibility of all involved to make sure that better and higher levels of performance from products and applications are being used. Titon has the knowledge, experience and products to help any situation especially for Social Housing. Ventilation is key and an important part to any dwelling where people's health can potentially be compromised.

*Roy Byom is sales manager for social housing at Titon*





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## Consort Connect app launched

Consort Claudgen have launched Consort Connect app which allows users to have complete control over their heating remotely via their smartphone or tablet. The app is free and downloadable from Google Play or Apple Store. It can control Consort's Wi-Fi enabled heaters and SL heaters connected to an SLPBWIFI wireless controller. Features a 7-day timer with 24 heating periods per day, lock function, open window tracking and response capability, and custom automations. Also, the SLPBWIFI and Consort 'MWIFI' heater models have a self-learning control ability utilising occupancy and temperature sensors.



01646 692172 www.consorttepl.com

## Designer Contracts takes the floor

Designer Contracts, one of the UK's largest flooring contractors, has swept the floor with a raft of new and refreshed carpet, vinyl and LVT collections. The company has introduced a contemporary new sustainable cushioned sheet vinyl offer (Styletex Deluxe) and launched an additional contract carpet range (Designer Tweed). It has also added an 80/20 wool twist to its portfolio (Franklin Twist) and refreshed its ever-popular Designer Knight Tile offer. As well as flooring, the company provides blinds and curtains, furniture and lighting, and operates a show home interior design service division.



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# Outside spaces that work

Jack Potter from Ground Control explores how the housing sector can unlock the value of green space, and help the next generation to reap the benefits of their natural world

**W**hile biodiversity recovery is often seen as second in priority to solving climate change, in reality, they are intrinsically linked. As the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said at COP27 in Egypt “there is no solution to climate change without protecting and restoring nature.”

With just 53% of our natural wildlife and fauna left from before the industrial revolution, familiar sights like the hedgehog, dormouse or red squirrel are now rare. The turtle dove, once a commonly found bird in England, is the fastest declining bird species in the UK and on the brink of extinction following a 98% reduction in the last 40 years.

The good news is the housing sector is in a unique position to accelerate action. Across social, local authority, supported living, care, retirement and new build residential development, we can maximise the value of outside spaces for people and nature.

## BIODIVERSITY AS AN ENABLER

Until now, nature and biodiversity has been a fringe issue for housing associations and so understandably its impact has been limited.

However, at a time when difficult decisions are being made, nature positive green asset management is proving an effective enabler – providing greater social value, revenue generation and cost reduction.

## SOCIAL VALUE

The Green Spaces Advisory Board (GSAB) – a cross-industry collaboration of ground control and seven leading housing associations – reports that residents are increasingly mindful of the environmental impact of their homes and communities, and are often keen to explore more sustainable ways of maintaining them.





## Across social, local authority, supported living, care, retirement and new build residential development, we can maximise the value of outside spaces for people and nature

GSAB's recent consultation programme found that, with early engagement, community groups who access outside space are effectively encouraged to reconnect with nature.

However, traditionally neat borders are what people like to see. So, it's important to carry out consultation with residents when implementing biodiversity enhancement at scale.

Our advice is to make the biodiversity, wellness, and tree planting gains you are hoping to achieve part of a neighbourhood management standard that all stakeholders have bought into. You will avoid time on heavy red tape later in the process.

We should not underestimate the importance of engaging and co-producing with a diverse range of stakeholders, defining how holistic 'value' will be judged. Nor should we miss the opportunity to 'piggyback' outside space as a conversation starter for broader conversations about sustainability.

### REVENUE GENERATION

From November 2023, developers will have a legal requirement to leave nature in a better state than when they found it and deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain over a 30-year period (measured in biodiversity units) – although many planning authorities are aspiring towards a 20% requirement.

Those who are not able to achieve a positive impact towards nature can purchase offsite biodiversity credits to make up the difference. While offsets are the bottom of the mitigation hierarchy and should be seen as the last resort, it is anticipated that the creation of offsite high value wildlife sites

will be required for many developers to achieve 10% BNG.

This presents housing association landlords with the opportunity to make areas of habitat available as an offset site and to monetise available land as BNG credits (currently £25k per unit).

We're working with many housing association clients to help unlock the value in their estate, undertaking preliminary biodiversity value assessments on sites across the UK.

### ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT REGIMES

In ground maintenance, the emphasis is on a less intensive mowing and hedgerow cutting regime. This provides double gains for housing sector clients because it's good for biodiversity, and when managed smartly, can deliver positive results for nature that are self-funded through a reduction in maintenance visits.

The nature-positive transition is something that is actively encouraged to champion sustainability and deliver better environments.

Even if you have an urban site – by introducing wildflower borders, community gardens, and edible herb borders – while at the same time considering how to dial down intensive mowing and cutting – you'll be maximising the opportunity to boost biodiversity, wildlife, health, wellbeing and so much more.

### THE FUTURE OF OUTSIDE SPACE

As a housing sector, we must prove ourselves equal to the nature challenge by ensuring that both existing communal green spaces and new build communities maximise the benefits of parkland, woodland, verges, scrubland, gardens, lakes and canals – moving the sustainability agenda beyond housing stock to the vast areas of open space we can bring to bear for carbon capture, nature's recovery and resident wellbeing.

Our future is about embracing new styles of active stewardship: woodland creation, biodiversity enhancement, wildlife habitat improvements, and empowering resident engagement events all have a role to play in making outside spaces that work for people and nature for generations to come.

*Jack Potter is biodiversity manager at Ground Control*



## Glasgow housing association upgrades door entry and access management system for residents

A leading Scottish social housing provider has teamed up with access control and door entry manufacturer Videx, to equip 60 supported living flats with a customised solution, across six apartment blocks.

Residents of St Peter's housing development, managed by Glasgow-based Partick Housing Association, required an easy to use but secure entry system to enable access for residents and visitors. Working with installer RenRoC, Videx supplied its popular IPURE system, an IP video door entry system, which provides many features for convenient but highly secure access for any size of building or complex. The IPURE IP door entry system was also paired with Videx's offline proximity access control system, MiAccess.

With the addition of MiAccess, the system provides highly convenient proximity fob access for not only residents but also housing wardens and maintenance engineers. Using MiAccess, entry fobs can easily be added offline from a remote location via a PC or laptop, meaning programming can be fully managed offsite if required. Entry fobs can simply be replaced by programming a new fob offsite and then swiping at a reader on site, once the new fob is swiped, the old fob is automatically replaced with the new, resulting in less call outs and reducing the overall carbon footprint for local authorities or housing



associations. Installer Derek Corner, director at RenRoc said: "The Videx IPURE IP system with integrated MiAccess proximity offers a complete door entry solution for residents and wardens at the housing development. Residents have peace of mind with ease of access, convenience and security, and wardens can now manage and administer entry tokens with ease, and remotely. What's more, the system enables device to device communication allowing vulnerable residents

to contact the onsite support team without additional hardware being installed. From my perspective, the Videx system with integrated proximity access ticks all the boxes that were required to provide a comprehensive, secure and easy to use system to meet the needs of the client."

The video IP door entry panels at each of the accommodation blocks are also engraved with the appropriate address and button numbers, many housing associations find this useful as it enables call buttons to be specifically named or labelled, helping any visitors to find which button they need easily and quickly, or help to identify any onsite services such as a warden or concierge. Button engraving is just part of the bespoke services offered by Videx, including custom sized metal work and colour engraved logos.

Billy Paton, Scotland and Ireland sales manager at Videx, added: "Partick Housing Association needed a solution that offered convenience, security and something that was adaptable and easily modified if required and this is exactly what the IPURE IP system with integrated MiAccess offers. From a management perspective, the ability to programme the MiAccess system on or offsite (via the offline software) reduces time, money and helps to reduce the association's carbon footprint."

0370 300 1240 [www.videxuk.com](http://www.videxuk.com)

## Evacuation alert system from Advanced helps protect residents in Merseyside social housing

Fire protection solutions manufacturer, Advanced, has supplied its EvacGo evacuation alert system to two high-rise residential tower blocks in Huyton, Merseyside following a series of fire safety improvements to the buildings.

Following a significant programme of compartmentation works undertaken in 2018, the 11-storey Knowsley Heights buildings have benefitted from a refit that includes installation of Advanced's EvacGo system, which is compliant with the BS 8629 Code of Practice, for the design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance of evacuation alert systems for use by fire and rescue services in England and Wales.

Knowsley Heights is owned by Livv Housing Group, an independent housing association, with the two buildings partially managed by an onsite manager. ABM Fire and Security Ltd undertook the complete, supply, installation and commissioning of the EvacGo systems. A 4-loop, 16-zone evacuation alert panel was installed in each building.

Each EvacGo panel is housed inside a STS 205 security-rated enclosure with patented BS EN 1303-compliant lock and key mechanism for exclusive access by the fire and rescue service – ensuring minimal risk of unauthorised use and full compliance with BS 8629. Argus Vega

Sounder VADS audible and visual devices and interfaces were installed in the hallways of each of the 128 flats to ensure all residents, including people who are deaf or have hearing loss are kept safe and informed.

Tony Cahill, executive director – property from Livv Housing Group said: "EvacGo from Advanced was selected for the Knowsley Heights refit as it was essential that the evacuation alert system met the criteria for BS 8629. While it may not be mandatory for an 11-storey existing building, meeting with best practice is essential for us as a housing association to protect our customers in the event of a fire."

All Advanced evacuation alert systems are custom-manufactured to reflect each individual building's evacuation zones and have been developed to provide a bespoke solution that allows the fire services to control evacuation floor by floor according to the severity and location of the fire. BS 8629 guidance states that the evacuation alert control system should be installed where a 'stay put' policy is in force, such as with Knowsley Heights, so that it can be used to facilitate a timely and ordered evacuation for all residents. An evacuation alert system is vital to help fire and rescue services inform residents of a change in evacuation strategy during an incident. This gives fire and rescue services an additional



tool to use on the ground, alongside existing methods of evacuation. It must be standalone, with its only function being to assist fire and rescue services in the evacuation of the building.

As a world leader in the development and manufacture of intelligent fire systems, Advanced is committed to creating a safer future. A reputation for performance, quality and ease of use see Advanced products specified in locations around the world, from single-panel installations to large, multi-site networks.

0345 894 7000 [uk.advancedco.com](http://uk.advancedco.com)



## Subsidence – no longer a problem for houses or flats with Geobear solutions



**G**eobear provides a modern subsidence solution that can be delivered in one day and tenants do not need to vacate their properties. This has transformed maintenance of properties and kept housing stock online.

Over the past five years there has been a significant increase in the number of subsidence cases impacting houses. The causes for this are both the change in climate and problems with aged drainage on older buildings.

Dry summers mean tree roots migrate deeper into the soils, and where the soil type is clay, the moisture extraction by the trees will cause it to shrink. This leads to the house sinking slightly causing cracks in internal walls and brickwork. Where drains are implicated there will usually be a joint failure along a drainage run and over time liquid seeps into the soils below which saturates the area this causes wash out of soils and a building will subside.



Historically subsidence repair would take months and tenants would need to be re-housed – this is no longer required. Geobear uses a non-invasive method which means tenants can remain in their home whilst subsidence repairs take place.

Geobear drill holes through the foundations of the properties, into the underlying strata. An expanding geopolymer resin is injected into designated locations which fills and compacts voids in the soils. This essentially reinforces the existing soils and protects against any further building movement.

Geobear has been established for 40 years and was the original inventor and pioneer of this process. Their solutions are accredited by the BBA.

Contact Geobear for a fast solution to your housing stock affected by structural movement.

0800 084 3503 [www.geobear.co.uk](http://www.geobear.co.uk)

## BG's SyncEV Chargers at Lace Fields



**B**G's SyncEV Chargers have been installed at Lace Fields, one of the latest housing developments by William Davis Homes. Lace Fields when completed, will enjoy around 800-character homes nestled in the historic village of Ruddington, offering the best of both town and country living.

BG SyncEV (part of the Luceco PLC Group) offers a range of EV charging products for the home or the workplace that are smart, powerful, and packed with technology and a 3 year warranty for complete peace of mind.

The EVS7G charger was selected for Lace Fields, a type 2 socketed dynamic 7.4 kW wall



charger with WiFi and Smart! Functionality – OCPP 1.6J connectivity. The charger has integrated earth fault protection (RCD) + PEN protection system so an earth rod is not required. As part of the WiFi connectivity, free lifetime software updates over-the-air are available and the SyncEV easy to use app shows usage and cost, the Smart technology optimising home EV charging selecting the cheapest, greenest energy possible. After installation and commissioning, homeowners are given supporting literature as part of their welcome pack, BG SyncEV chargers are fully compliant with current standards and 3rd party approved by DEKRA.

William Davis Homes have been building houses for more than 85 years, their ethos underpinned by strong family values and understanding what makes each house a home. As well as craftsmanship, comfort and security, William Davis Homes look to futureproof their homes with technology, meeting the expectations of prospective homeowners, electric vehicle charging facilities from BG's SyncEV being an element of their continued success.

01952 238 100  
[www.luceco.com](http://www.luceco.com)





# Are you recharged and ready this year?

David Abernethie from Seবাদis discusses how social housing providers can benefit from the implementation of an EV charging infrastructure plan

Last year was a significant period for the UK with the electrification agenda; new regulations, legislation, technology, and investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure proved that the nation is steering towards the right direction for a carbon-free future. While the EV industry has been working on supporting the sustainability of transport for what seems like years, the reality is the concept of electrification and deploying EV charging infrastructure remains in its infancy for many organisations. What we can take from 2022 is although electrification is still new for many, figures from SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders) suggest that we have shifted from an electric revolution to an electric evolution, with now over half a million electric vehicles on the UK roads. This figure will increase this year and for years to come, for multiple reasons, one being that the accessibility of EV charging facilities is improving, thus generating confidence among the public.

## OUTLOOK FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS

Like most organisations, social housing providers are beginning – or have already begun – to contemplate the future of their properties, and how they can offer sustainable homes to their tenants. Under legislation implemented

last year, all new buildings and developments must be equipped with EV charging points to support the future of electrification. While the legislation is not applicable to existing buildings (unless a building is undergoing major refurbishment and has ten or more parking spaces), social housing providers are ensuring that the deployment of EV charging points is a key part of their environmental responsibility plans. Installing EV charging points at existing buildings is essentially a ‘no brainer’ when factoring in the benefits, such as increased customer satisfaction; fiscal benefits; greater green credentials and more.

## THE LOW-DOWN ON INCENTIVES

Nobody said that the deployment of EV charging infrastructure was going to be ‘cheap,’ in fact, some projects can be costly due to the infrastructure works required to install the EV charging point itself. However, last year, the UK government introduced an array of EV charging point grants, enabling landlords to benefit from cost savings towards the purchase and installation of their chosen EV charging equipment. Social housing providers are eligible for £350 grant funding per charging socket; although there is no limit to





the number of charging sockets per property, applicants can only submit a maximum of 200 grant funding applications per year. This specific grant funding model is applicable for single-unit and multiunit properties, meaning that both houses and apartments are covered. One element to factor in with this grant is that the property must have dedicated parking spaces for tenants, whether that be a drive/garage, or a communal parking facility.

#### REVENUE GENERATION

The support of grant funding proposes financial savings for social housing providers, but there are still costs associated with the deployment of EV charging infrastructure, including installation, additional materials, labour costs, maintenance costs and management fees. While this may sound like an extensive cost outlay, the proliferation of EV adoption presents great potential and opportunities for social housing providers to recoup their EV charging point investment, as well as generate additional revenue in the future. One of the key elements to consider when devising an EV charging point strategy is the integration of a smart back-office management system that enables the charging point operator (CPO – the social housing provider) to manage and monitor their network of EV charging points. This also includes billing features, allowing the CPO to implement tariff-based charging to their tenants, whether that be a per-usage, monthly, quarterly or annual fee. The integration of a smart back-office management system is a crucial part of the EV charging point journey for most, if not all social housing providers, especially now as energy costs are high.

#### CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

Whether the location of parking is directly outside the property in the form of a driveway or garage, or the location of parking is in a communal environment, there are several factors to take into account when choosing the right solution. For driveways or garages, the common option is a wall-mounted EV charging point – this is a space-saving solution which offers a discreet way of positioning the EV charging point either on the house, or on the walls of a garage. For communal car parks, the requirements may vary depending on the nature of the car park. For example, an overground car park that is exposed to the public

Most social housing providers already have access to their own electrical contractors, some of which may have EV charging point installation training

would benefit from a hard-wearing pedestal/pillar EV charging solution. For an underground car park – to save space – a wall-mounted solution would be recommended. In terms of charging speed outputs, the most common option for EV charging points installed on a house is a 7.4 kW charger, for communal car parks, the same can apply, however, locations with three-phase electrical supply can opt for faster charging outputs such as 11 kW or 22 kW.

In order to choose the right solution for a social housing provider's EV charging requirements, we believe that working with experienced and expert EV charging point installers is essential for a seamless and straightforward surveying, installation and commissioning process. Most social housing providers already have access to their own electrical contractors, some of which may have EV charging point installation training, however, we understand that for some, this may not be the case. For this reason, we run a series of CPD sessions for electrical contractors requiring training and support towards the installation of EV charging points, whether that be for a basic or complex installation.

#### THE FUTURE IS ELECTRIC

Electrification will continue to be a hot topic of discussion in 2023 as more and more drivers and businesses make the switch, while housing providers, public destinations, and workplaces work to provide accessible EV charging facilities at their locations. For social housing providers, 2023 will provide scope for opportunities and future growth when implementing an EV charging strategy for their buildings.

*David Abernethie is senior project manager at Sevadis*



# **BUILDING INSIGHTS**

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