

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

AUG/SEP 2024



**Industry News**  
New energy  
efficiency targets  
announced

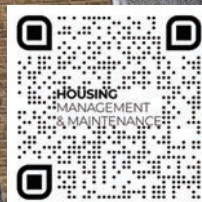
**Comment**  
Remediation success

**Landlord Latest**  
Rykneld Homes

**Industry Viewfinder**  
Enhancing Fire  
Safety in Social  
Housing



Update your  
registration here:







**Do you want a reliable leak detection company that will save you time, money and stress? At LDS, our engineers pinpoint leaks within 1 metre without causing any damage to the property.**

From damp, flat to flat leakages, shower leaks, domestic central heating, and big commercial sites, there is no leak that goes undefeated. With a 1-2 day turnaround, we take matters into our own hands from the first point of contact and the issue is resolved within a matter of days, followed up by a comprehensive report with our findings and photographs.

A 99% success rate and engineers who are specialists in their field makes us the leading leak detection company in the UK. Whether you're in England, Scotland or Wales, LDS will be there to exceed your expectations and locate your leak efficiently, with no fuss.

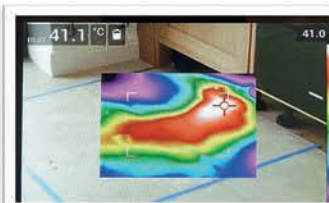
We are always looking for ways to think outside of the box, that's why we have a 99% success rate and have received countless 5\* reviews from our customers over the last year alone.

**LDS have an undefeated 13 years of industry expertise and prioritise efficiency and precision above all else, at every stage of the customer journey – from the first point of contact to the day of the survey, our customers know they are in safe hands with LDS.**

**LDS Leak Detection Specialists Ltd continues to invest in excellence at every step of the customer journey. A personable bespoke service tailored to each client.**



**Mains Leak**



**Heating Leaks**



**Damp Surveys**



**Water Ingress & Mould**



**Flat & Commercial Roof Leaks**



**CCTV & Drone Surveys**

**Acoustics  
Correlation  
Tracer Gas  
Thermal Imaging  
Inspection Cameras  
Dye and Salt Testing  
Moisture Mapping  
National UK Coverage**



**Book a Non Destructive  
Leak Detection Survey today**  
**Tel: 0344 809 4968**  
**[www.ldsleakdetection.co.uk](http://www.ldsleakdetection.co.uk)**  
**[info@ldsleakdetection.co.uk](mailto:info@ldsleakdetection.co.uk)**







# Aug / Sep 24

## CONTENTS

### Features

**25** Industry Viewfinder

#### Enhancing Fire Safety in Social Housing

Despite improved fire safety regulations, significant gaps persist. A minority of housing professionals still report failings, with some uncomfortable reporting fire safety issues, highlighting ongoing risks in the sector

**34** Addressing the Ageing Population Crisis

#### Stepping up to support older residents

Peter Wingrave of AAT GB Ltd asks, is it time for a step change in the way we approach dealing with the crisis in our housing market?

**39** Fire Door Safety Week

#### Fire Door Safety Week

Helen Hewitt of the British Woodworking Federation (BWF) explores how legislation is driving forward fire safety standards and how Fire Door Safety Week remains crucial for raising awareness of fire doors and their life saving role

**42** Heating, Ventilation & Services: Affordable Warmth

#### Affordable warmth

Ashley Cooper of WMS, explains how heating homes from the ground up delivers affordable warmth for today, tomorrow and the future

**45** Interiors: Flooring

#### Why floor coverings matter

Agustina Memoli of Uplyfted discusses the importance of floor coverings in Social Housing and asks can a home be a decent one without floor coverings?

**49** Tenant & Resident Engagement

#### No access? Give tenants a stronger voice

In an increasingly complex landscape, where consumer and compliance standards have been thrust into the spotlight, Gary Haynes of Voicescape discusses the issue of no-access and why reducing no-access rates and increasing tenant engagement through innovation are more important than ever

In this issue of

### HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

Industry News.....	04
Landlord Latest: Rykneld Homes.....	19
Comment: Remediation success.....	22
Appointments & News .....	35



### Products

Addressing the Ageing Population Crisis .....	34
Fire Door Safety Week.....	36
Heating, Ventilation & Services	
Heat Pumps .....	40
Radiators.....	40
Affordable Warmth .....	42
Interiors	
Bathrooms.....	43
Coating, Sealants & Paints.....	44
Flooring.....	44
Safety & Security	
Smoke & Fire Protection.....	46
Tenant & Resident Engagement .....	49
Structural Elements.....	50

**News Editor**  
Patrick Mooney  
patricknetmag@gmail.com

**Publisher**  
Anthony Parker

**Account Director**  
Midge Myatt

**Content & Research  
Coordinator**  
Shelley Collyer

**Events Coordinator**  
Amy Madigan

**Studio Manager**  
Mikey Pooley

**Production Assistants**  
Georgia Musson  
Kim Musson

**Account Manager**  
Nathan Hunt

**PR Executive**  
Suzanne Easter

**Publishing Assistant**  
Kim Neville

**Managing Director**  
Simon Reed



Cointronic House,  
Station Road,  
Heathfield,  
East Sussex TN21 8DF

**Advertising &  
administration**  
Tel: 01435 863500  
info@netmagmedia.co.uk  
www.housingmmonline.co.uk

**Editorial features**  
Tel: 01435 863500  
kneville@netmagmedia.co.uk

**Press releases**  
editorial@netmagmedia.co.uk



The manufacturer of the paper used within our publication is a Chain-of-Custody certified supplier operating within environmental systems certified to both ISO 14001 and EMAS in order to ensure sustainable production.

Subscription costs just £24 for 6 issues, including post and packing. Phone 01435 863500 for details. Individual copies of the publication are available at £3.25 each including p&g.

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopying, recording or stored in any information retrieval system without the express prior written consent of the publisher. Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of material published in Housing Management & Maintenance, the publisher can accept no responsibility for the claims or opinions made by contributors, manufacturers or advertisers. Editorial contributors to this journal may have made a payment towards the reproduction costs of material used to illustrate their products.

Printed in England



This magazine may be recycled

## Editor's comment

# Hitting the ground running is a welcome sign of intent



Patrick Mooney,  
News Editor

Well the new Government didn't waste any time in setting out its intentions to revitalise the housebuilding sector with an array of announcements on planning reforms, building a series of new towns and making use of the 'grey belt'. The re-introduction of nationally imposed targets for housebuilding will no doubt upset a lot of people, but history has shown that this sort of focus is necessary if we are to fix the housing supply crisis. Promises that new infrastructure, such as new schools and GP surgeries will be built to support the new houses may quell some of the opposition.

The Deputy Prime Minister has stated that the building of new social and affordable homes is her number one priority, which many of us working in the sector will applaud, but the task will require an awful lot of resources – new planning officers, new construction workers, a new set of local plans and above all lots and lots of money. It will take a monumental effort if local councils, housing associations and private builders are to achieve an average new build rate of 370,000 homes a year, but this is the sort of target that is needed if we are to eliminate the national waiting list of approximately 1.3 million households and the record numbers of homeless, with around 145,000 children living in temporary accommodation. The right to buy is to be re-examined with strong hints given that qualifying periods of residence will be lengthened, discounts may be reduced and local authorities given more flexibility to use the receipts to build replacement homes.

There are of course many other housing issues for the Government to tackle – including the ending of Section 21 'no fault' evictions, the appalling rates of rough sleeping, private rents that are rising at their fastest rate in over a decade and years of underinvestment in our current housing which is seeing thousands of families living in unfit homes. Ministers have committed to introducing a new Decent Homes Standard and extending its application to the private rented sector, but we need to see how this will be delivered and funded. They have also committed to delivering Awaab's Law to both the private and social sectors, ensuring damp and mouldy homes are fixed within short timescales.

The solution to some of these problems will be seen in the introduction of the Renters' Rights Bill, similar to the Bill introduced by the previous Government before being dropped prior to the election. The new Bill seeks to level the playing field between landlord and tenant and gives renters more security over their living conditions. The Bill also introduces further provisions to strengthen the rights of tenants, such as - clarifying the grounds on when landlords may retake possession of their property; making it easier for tenants to challenge rent increases; creating a new ombudsman service in the private rented sector to encourage the use of alternative dispute resolution; creating a database of landlords, so that tenants will have more information when deciding whether to rent a particular property; and making it illegal for landlords to discriminate against tenants with children or who are in receipt of benefits.

The recently published English Housing Survey has highlighted that there is much more required to modernise our housing conditions, while reports from the Housing Ombudsman show that many landlords' ability to deal with fairly basic issues such as completing window repairs is compromised and complaints from tenants are often disregarded for long periods of time. It shouldn't really need new legislation to sort out problems like these. Collectively the housing sector needs to match the Government's ambition and intent. Staff at all levels in all housing organisations need to up their game and ensure that new and existing homes are fit for purpose, and that services to tenants are delivered to a high standard. If we do not, then the Government may take decisive steps to improve service quality – the approach being taken to planning reforms should be seen as an example of their fresh approach.

Patrick Mooney

Looking to update or cancel your HMM registration? Scan the QR code to visit our registration page. From here you can also register for our Digital Issues and Newsletters.

Alternatively, please visit  
[housingmmonline.co.uk/subscribe](http://housingmmonline.co.uk/subscribe)



## On the cover...

**Luke Driscoll of Hyde Group explains how engaging residents from the outset of building safety remediation projects is the key success**  
See page 22





# New energy efficiency targets announced by Labour

Private landlords have until 2030 to get their rented properties to an EPC 'C' rating – or they face being barred from letting them out.

Ed Miliband, Energy Security and Net Zero Secretary, confirmed the plans shortly after taking office. He told the Commons: "One thing that this Government will do that the last Government did not, is demand that landlords raise the standard of their accommodation to a proper energy performance certificate standard C by 2030."

He said the move will help support more than three million people in the country facing fuel poverty.

The C target mirrors the original Conservative proposals, first mooted in 2021, which would have required all landlords in England and Wales to have a C rated home by 2028 – plans which were axed by former PM Rishi Sunak last year.

The National Residential Landlords Association supports the principle of energy efficient homes, but it also knows that many landlords face significant challenges when it comes to making upgrades, particularly when it comes to insulating older solid brick homes.

It is asking the Government for more information as to how properties will be assessed and details of any exemptions and spending caps, as well as whether funding or other support will be available to landlords when it comes to making improvements.

New regulations will be needed – and the NRLA will be pushing for details to be set out swiftly to allow landlords time to plan for any upgrades required. The last Government was consulting on plans to change the way EPC inspections are carried out just prior to the election.

## LONG TERM PLANS NEEDED

Now that a firm target is in place, the NRLA will be continuing its campaign on the issue and

engaging with the new government to stress the need for a credible and long-term plan that supports the rental market to improve energy efficiency, including targeting funding for improvements and tax incentives to reduce the overall cost of making changes.

NRLA deputy director of campaigns, policy and public affairs Meera Chindooroy said: "In the midst of a housing and cost of living crisis it is vital that we ensure there is a healthy supply of quality homes to let in the places where people want to live.

"Creating energy efficient homes is a win/win – tenants have cheaper bills, and the property is more marketable as a result. However, the costs to get some homes, typically older properties, to a C grade is, quite simply prohibitive for smaller landlords.

"Our research shows that, contrary to popular opinion most landlords are not property tycoons with money to spare, and with improvements potentially costing tens of thousands of pounds it is essential that the government comes up with a plan that will work across the country."

Under the previous government's 'C' rating proposals spend on energy efficiency improvements was to be capped at £10,000.

However, as the NRLA pointed out at the time, the impact this would have on landlords would differ depending on which part of the country they lived in – £10,000 being much more feasible for a landlord to finance if they are renting out homes in London, for example, compared to someone whose properties are located in the north east.

While 2030 may sound like some time off, landlords need time to budget for and plan improvement works – and find traders to carry them out – meaning landlords need answers sooner rather than later.

## Social housing plan agreed for athletes' village

More than 200 homes in a complex built in Birmingham for the Commonwealth Games of 2022 will in future be used for social housing.

The flats were originally started as part of the plans for an Athletes' Village in Birmingham for the 2022 games. The development's construction was delayed due to coronavirus with athletes instead being housed in student accommodation. The flats have been sitting empty since they were completed in April 2023.

The 213 homes in Perry Barr are set to become available for council housing use, which Birmingham City Council said would provide a "welcome boost to the supply of high-quality council homes".

A report said 23,000 people were waiting for social housing in the city and a portion of the 213 people who would be given the new homes will currently be in council funded temporary accommodation.

Council leader John Cotton was optimistic about Perry Barr's future despite recent uncertainty over the residential scheme. He said: "It's been utterly transformed as a result of the legacy from the Games, whether we're looking at the railway station, Alexander Stadium, the new secondary school and sixth form. So I think there's a bright future for Perry Barr as a result of that Games legacy."

Councillor Jayne Francis, cabinet member for housing and homelessness, added: "The decision to keep one of these plots to be used as council homes has been made after a detailed analysis of all possible options.

"It will boost the supply of homes for people in the city who are most in need, at a time when the number of people on the housing register has never been higher."



# Satisfaction with housing remains high but outcomes vary across tenure types

The latest results from the English Housing Survey have revealed that the majority of households are satisfied with their current accommodation. The majority are satisfied with their accommodation (88%) with over half feeling 'very satisfied' (56%).

Fewer than one in 10 households felt dissatisfied with their accommodation (7%) and only 3% felt 'very dissatisfied'. But the proportion of households satisfied with their accommodation has fallen slightly over the last 10 years. Back in 2012/13, 91% reported being satisfied and 60% very satisfied.

Overall, owner occupiers were more likely to be satisfied (94%) than all other tenures (82% for private renters and 74% for social renters). Compared to 10 years ago, owner occupiers and social renters are less satisfied (95% and 80% respectively) and private renters were unchanged.

Within the social rented sector, housing association renters (76%) were more likely to be satisfied than local authority renters (71%). Local authority (20%) and housing association (17%) renters were also more likely to be dissatisfied with their accommodation than private renters (10%) and owner occupiers (3%).

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Households living in London were most likely to report feeling dissatisfied with their accommodation (10%) and there were no significant differences between the other regions (5% to 7%). This is most prominent in the local authority sector, where over a quarter of local authority renters in London were dissatisfied (26%) compared with local authority renters outside of London (18%).

Households who did not receive any housing support (82%) were more likely to be satisfied with their accommodation than households who did receive support.

By tenure, housing association and private renters who did not receive any housing support (80% and 85%, respectively) were more likely to be satisfied than those who received housing support (both 73%). There was no significant difference among local authority renters.

Overall, households with a white household reference person (HRP) were more likely to report being satisfied with their current accommodation (90%) compared to households with an ethnic minority HRP (79%).

This trend was also observed among owner occupiers, social renters and private renters. Similarly, there was a higher proportion of ethnic minority households who reported feeling dissatisfied (12%) compared with white households (6%). This relationship is seen in all tenures.



Households living in London were most likely to report feeling dissatisfied with their accommodation (10%) and there were no significant differences between the other regions (5% to 7%)

## ISSUES CAUSING DIS-SATISFACTION

Renters and owner occupier leaseholders were asked how satisfied they were with the repairs and/or maintenance provided by their landlord or freeholder. Just under two-thirds of households said they were satisfied (63%), 10% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and over a quarter were dissatisfied (28%).

Satisfaction was then assessed against the Decent Homes Standard. Generally, households in non-decent homes were more likely to be dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance (31%) than households in decent homes (27%).

When asked why they were dissatisfied, one in three (29%) households said the 'landlord is slow to get things done', over a quarter mentioned that the 'landlord does not bother' (26%), 20% mentioned 'other' reasons, 13% said the 'landlord does the bare minimum' and 12% said the 'work done is of poor quality'.

Over two-thirds of households were satisfied with the housing services provided by their landlord or freeholder (68%), 12% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 19% were dissatisfied.

Private renters were more likely to report being satisfied with the housing services provided (76%) than all other tenures (51% to 65%). Social renters were also more likely to report being feeling satisfied with the housing services (64%) than owner occupier leaseholders (51%).

## COMPLAINTS MADE

Of those who considered making a complaint, 79% of private and social renters did. They were then asked whether they made the complaint to either their landlord or agent.

Over half of social renters who considered a complaint mentioned they had complained to their landlord (58%), under a quarter had complained to the tenant management organisation (23%) and 21% had not made a complaint. For private renters, less than half (44%) reported making a complaint to their landlords, around 40% complained to their agent and 21% did not make a complaint.

Social renters who made a complaint were most likely to report they were unhappy with the response. Nearly half (47%) of private renters and 66% of social renters said they were not happy with the response to their complaint. Private renters tended to say they were more satisfied with the response to their complaints than social renters.

About 17% of social renters said they were happy with 'some' of the response, and a further 17% said they were happy with 'all' of the responses from their landlord or agent. A quarter of private renters said they were happy about 'some' of the response and a further 28% with 'all' of the response.

Social renters mainly reported complaining about repairs (89%) followed by: the quality of their home (26%), anti-social behaviour in the area (11%), neighbours (9%), behaviour of the landlord (4%) and behaviour of tenancy management organisation (3%). Private renters complained mostly about repairs (79%), the quality of their home (32%) and the behaviour of the landlord (8%).

Social renters were more likely to complain about anti-social behaviour (11%) than private renters (5%), while private renters were more likely to complain about the quality of their homes (32%) than social renters (26%).



# It's **more** than a roof



LEARN MORE

It's a Marley Solar Roof System.



 **Marley**

You may just see a roof. But by specifying a complete Marley Solar Roof System, you can be sure of a secure and robust solution, that also delivers more desirable, energy efficient homes.

It's more than a roof, it's building to make a difference.

[marley.co.uk](http://marley.co.uk)

**15  
YEAR**

MARLEY ROOF  
SYSTEM WARRANTY



## RSH publishes key findings from its 2023/24 consumer regulation work

The Regulator of Social Housing has published the annual review of its consumer regulation work for the past year highlighting important messages for landlords to follow in future.

The report provides important learnings for all social landlords – including councils and housing associations – which they can use to strengthen their approach to delivering the outcomes in RSH's consumer standards.

The report reinforces several important points for landlords. They must:

- Meet all health and safety requirements to keep tenants safe;
- Know the condition of tenants' homes and have accurate, up-to-date data on them;
- Have an effective complaints handling process in place;
- Engage effectively with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect; and
- Refer themselves to RSH when they find a material issue, or a potential material issue, so it can be resolved promptly if required.

The report covers the year before the regulator began its new regulatory approach and relates to its previous consumer standards. However the findings and learnings are still highly relevant in the context of the new standards.

Fiona MacGregor, chief executive at RSH, said: "Landlords must take their responsibilities seriously and provide safe and decent homes for their tenants, and treat them with fairness and respect. As the cases in this review show, some landlords have failed to do this.

"We have now started our proactive regulation of the consumer standards, including our programme of inspections, which will help to drive landlords to deliver long-term improvements. All landlords should consider the important lessons in this report as part of their ongoing work to improve tenants' homes and services.

On 1 April 2024, RSH introduced new consumer standards and started a proactive inspection programme for landlords with over 1,000 homes. It also continues to review landlords' information regularly and investigate cases that are referred by tenants and other stakeholders.

## Private rents hit new record high, as average property receives 17 enquiries



The average advertised rent of new properties coming onto the market has hit a new quarterly record, with the average price outside of London now £1,314 per calendar month.

The property firm Rightmove says the average rental prices are 7% higher than a year ago, slowing from a peak of +12% in 2022. Average advertised rents in London have also risen to a new record of £2,661, now 4% higher than last year, compared with the peak of 16% in 2022.

The overall balance between supply and demand has continued to improve during the second quarter of this year. However, the latest snapshot of the rental market highlights how busy it remains compared to more normal levels seen pre-pandemic – meaning both letting agents and tenants are unlikely to feel any improvements yet.

The number of enquiries each rental property is receiving from would-be tenants is now 17 which, while it is down from 26 this time last year, it is more than double the eight at this time in 2019.

The slowing in the number of enquiries per property is driven by more rental properties becoming available, and fewer tenants looking to move. The number of available properties is currently 14% higher than this time last year, while tenant demand is down 16% compared to last year.

However, despite these improvements, there is still a way to go to reach pre-pandemic supply and demand levels. The number of available homes to rent is still 20% below 2019, while 22% more tenants are looking to move than in 2019.

A recent Rightmove study showed that around 120,000 more rental properties are needed to bring rental price growth back towards more

normal pre-pandemic levels of around 2-3%, based on current demand.

There have been some early positive signs from the new government regarding improvements in the rental market for tenants.

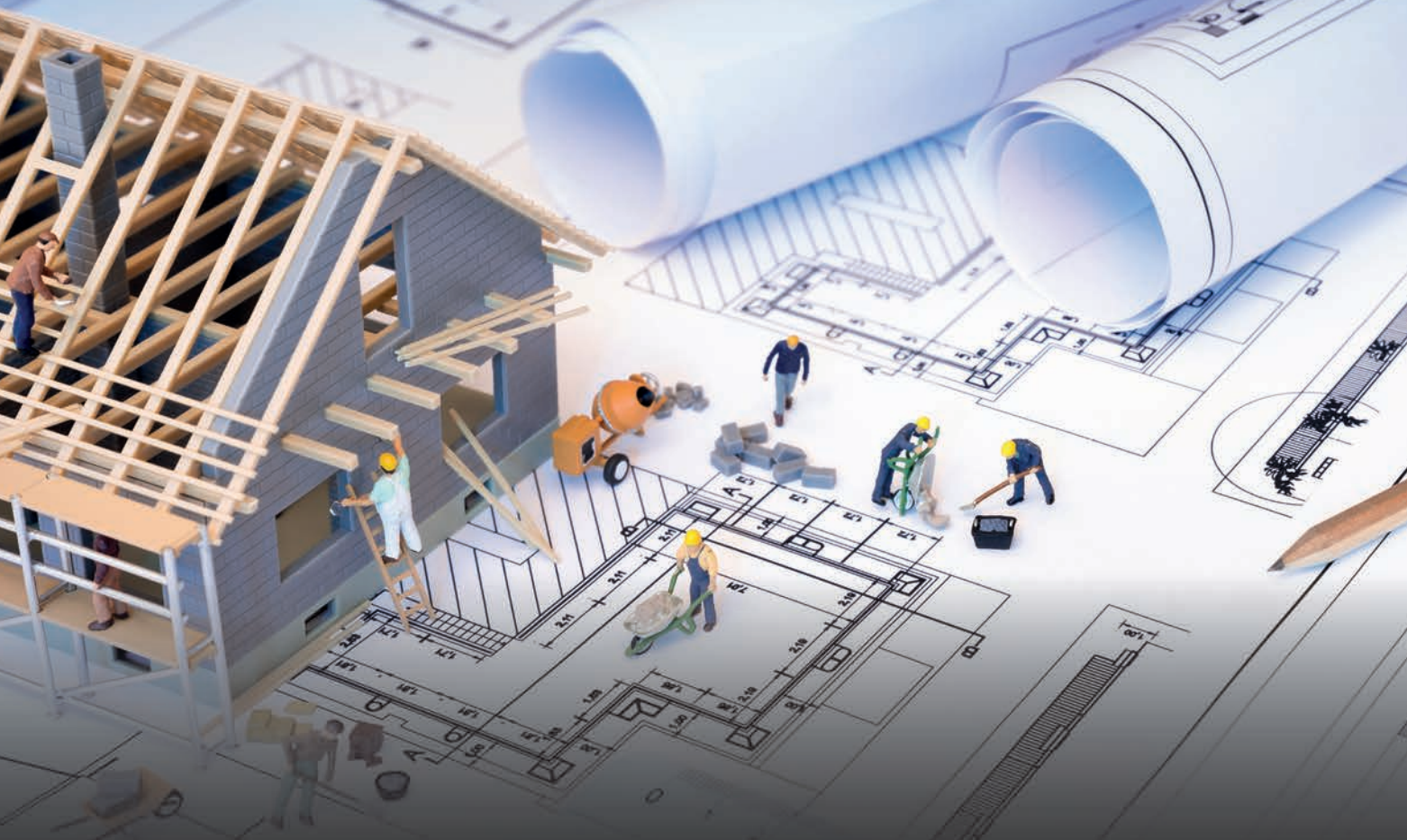
Labour has pledged to get 1.5 million more homes built, which could improve the availability of rental properties for tenants if some go to the private rented sector, or more tenants can become first-time buyers.

Rightmove is also calling for further support from the government for landlords to encourage investment in the private rented sector, particularly any help with making properties more energy efficient. A balanced approach to the rental market that acknowledges the importance of landlord investment will ultimately benefit tenants, providing them with a broader choice of higher-quality homes.

Rightmove's Director of Property Science Tim Bannister said: "With 17 enquiries for every available rental property, the market remains out of balance and difficult for tenants. We need landlord investment to increase stock and help achieve a healthier supply and demand balance in the market.

"There is an opportunity to encourage landlords to continue to invest in good quality homes, for example through tax changes, incentives to help with energy-efficient upgrades or a general sentiment change in government towards working alongside and with landlords. Landlords have previously told us that the government's perception of landlords is one of their main concerns about the sector. Support for both tenants and landlords will be key to achieving long-term stability in the rental market."





# MEETING VENTILATION REQUIREMENTS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

A PARTNER YOU CAN TRUST FOR YOUR SOCIAL HOUSING NEW BUILD PROJECT

## TURNKEY SOLUTIONS FROM DESIGN TO INSTALLATION & SERVICING

EnviroVent has a 30-year proven track record in solving condensation and mould issues for existing properties of housing associations and local authorities. We are also uniquely qualified to meet the ever-changing ventilation challenges and environmental standards for all your social housing new build developments. Partner with EnviroVent for effective, compliant and future-proofed ventilation solutions.

- › Ventilation design service
- › Compliance with Future Homes and Building Standards including Passivhaus
- › Capital Investment Projects or New Build Developments
- › Market leading products

**envirovent**®



Scan for more information  
about how we can help  
with your social housing  
new build project or visit:  
[www.envirovent.com/  
ventilation-design-service](http://www.envirovent.com/ventilation-design-service)



## Government urged to regenerate the UK's sheltered housing stock

A cross-party Parliamentary inquiry has called on the Government to help regenerate a "significant proportion" of the UK's sheltered housing stock.

A new report from the All-Party Parliament Group (APPG) on Housing and Care for Older People, co-chaired by Lord Best, calls for urgent upgrades to the estimated 527,000 sheltered housing properties in the UK.

Researched and written by the Housing LIN, and funded by Abbeyfield, the report highlights the need for modern, accessible homes for older residents.

It showcases successful regeneration projects and urges investment in refurbishments, emphasising the health benefits.

Lord Best said: "Sadly a lot of the sheltered housing of the 1960s and 70s is now past its sell-by date and ready for a serious upgrade. Bedsits, let alone shared bathrooms, are no longer acceptable. If this accommodation becomes hard to let or is sold off, the nation will lose a precious asset that will be hugely expensive to replace.

"So now is the time for a significant programme of imaginative regeneration of outdated sheltered housing that can provide much-needed affordable, accessible, sociable homes fit for our ageing population for decades to come."

Jeremy Porteous, chief executive of the Housing LIN, said: "Sheltered housing is the single largest designated accommodation type available for older people. However, we have discovered that the sector is encountering significant operational challenges in maintaining this valuable asset. Much of the housing stock is in need of improvement and there are increasing cost pressures on services.

"With technology advances, modern construction materials and methods, as well as older people's housing preferences changing too, we believe the timing is right to generate a contemporary sheltered housing offer that takes the 'sheltered' out of 'sheltered housing' and provides an attractive housing choice in later life for future generations instead."



## Record number of empty homes brought back into use across Scotland

A report published by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) shows that almost 11,000 long term empty homes have been brought back into use in Scotland since the partnership was established in 2010.

In its latest impact report, the SEHP reported that Empty Homes Officers helped owners to bring 1,875 long-term empty homes back into use in 2023/24. This is the highest annual total recorded and takes the total number of homes returned to use to 10,889 since the partnership commenced.

The SEHP is funded by the Scottish Government and hosted by Shelter Scotland. Its work supports the Scottish Government's commitment to bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing where possible.

At a time when the Scottish Government, and ten local authorities in Scotland, have declared housing emergencies, the contribution empty homes can make to provide the housing Scotland needs cannot be underestimated.

Tahmina Nizam, national manager for the SEHP said: "The impact of the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership and empty homes officers across the country was recognised in the independent audit of empty homes work published by the Scottish Government last year. It is demonstrated again by the figures in the report we have published today.

"With more local authorities declaring housing emergencies over the past few months and the Scottish Government itself declaring a housing emergency in May, we know that bringing empty homes back into use will play a crucial part in meeting housing demand locally and nationally. The best way for local authorities to ensure we make full use of empty homes would be to expand their empty homes services and increase the resources they allocate to empty homes work as a whole."

The Impact Report highlights how a number of the local authorities who have declared a housing

emergency – including Edinburgh, Fife and West Lothian – are increasing their commitment to empty homes work by appointing additional empty homes officers. However, it also notes that Moray Council are planning to discontinue their dedicated empty homes service this month, which will mean that homes that could be brought back to use as much needed social or affordable housing will remain empty. A vital resource for neighbours faced with stress from living next door to an empty home will cease to exist.

Scotland's Housing Minister Paul McLennan said: "This report demonstrates the benefit that returning long-term empty homes back into use can have on communities in Scotland. The Scottish Government has invested over £3.7m in the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, including funding to embed dedicated empty homes officers within councils. Since 2010, this has helped to return almost 11,000 properties to active use, providing much needed homes for families.

"Bringing empty homes back into use is one of the most cost-effective ways of increasing housing stock and I want to see every local authority working with the Partnership. I want to make clear that councils can also utilise the ring-fenced revenue they derive from council tax on second and empty homes to fund these essential empty homes services."

The report also includes updates on five kickstarter projects, part-funded by the SEHP, that were established to encourage more organisations to get involved in empty homes work. The most recent of these, is with the Community Impact Initiative (Cii). The project, launched earlier this year, is the forerunner to a multi-year program that will regenerate empty homes in Dundee. The renovation work itself will be used to support over 180 local people to gain the skills and qualifications needed to move towards employment.

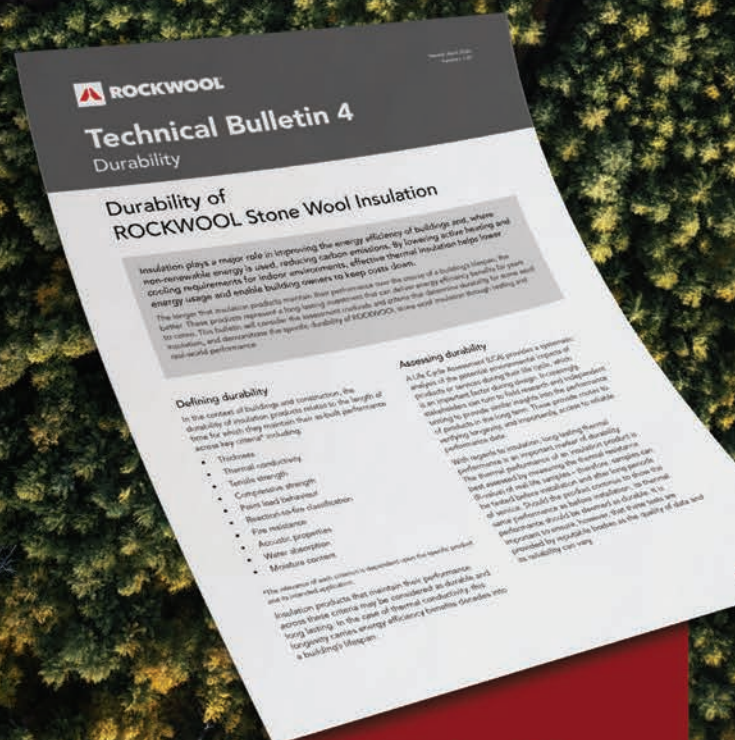


# How durable is ROCKWOOL stone wool?

ROCKWOOL stone wool has been rigorously tested in real world applications to demonstrate its longevity, with the results proving consistent performance for decades.

Available for free download, the latest ROCKWOOL Durability Bulletin discusses:

- How product durability is measured and why it's important
- How ROCKWOOL insulation will benefit your construction projects
- Results of durability testing and how it affects real world design



Download the  
Technical Bulletin:



[rockwool.com/uk/  
technical-bulletin](https://rockwool.com/uk/technical-bulletin)



[rockwool.com/uk](https://rockwool.com/uk)



# NHF asks the Government to bring forward the revised Decent Homes Standard as soon as possible

The representative body for housing associations across the country has written to the Government urging it to urgently update and extend the remit of the Decent Homes Standard to all rented homes.

Sir Keir Starmer committed to reviewing the Decent Homes Standard in his first Prime Minister's Questions. The government has also committed to extending the DHS to the private rented sector, but it has yet to give any details about the timings and breadth of these reforms for social landlords.

A spokesperson for the National Housing Federation (NHF) said: "For a true renewal of social housing, a new standard for the decency of homes must be front and centre of a Government-led long-term plan for housing. This new standard must ensure homes are truly fit for modern standards of living.

"This is vitally important for housing associations. Without clarity on forthcoming requirements, housing associations cannot confidently make decisions about how they need to adapt their approach to repairs, maintenance and planned improvement works."

Currently, 90% of housing association homes meet the DHS (compared to 79% of private rented homes). Furthermore, housing associations spent £7.7 billion on repairs and maintenance in 2022/23, a record level and 20% higher than the previous year.

But the lack of clarity seriously limits the extent to which landlords can invest, given the significant financial pressures on the sector and the broad range of other new requirements placed on social landlords.

The NHF is keen for the Government to bring forward the review of the DHS as quickly as possible. The previous Government committed to review the DHS in the Social Housing White

Paper, published in November 2020.

There have been several stages of the review since then, but no details have yet been confirmed. The NHF is calling on the new Government to commit to progress the review at pace and then share a public consultation as soon as possible.

The revised DHS must set higher minimum decency standards that help improve the condition of homes for all residents, and focus on making homes safer, warmer, and better suited for modern ways of living.

## DHS – KEY PRINCIPLES

The NHF and its members are keen to support this however possible. To this end, it has developed a series of key principles to help the Government ensure the revised DHS is developed in a way that is practical and financially viable for social landlords:

- Build on existing requirements: the new DHS should build on current standards to make the transition easier for social landlords.
- Confirm new requirements for the social rented sector as soon as possible, including confirming Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards with a target of reaching EPC C across all social homes by 2030. This must align with forthcoming EPC reforms.
- Provide a reasonable lead in time for landlords to meet the revised standard.
- Fully evidence and carefully consider the true costs of new requirements.
- Provide adequate funding to support the sector to meet new burdens, through a commitment to a 10-year rent settlement with annual rent increases of up to CPI+1% and grant funding for new requirements.
- Allow new components to be installed as part of planned replacement works, to reduce costs and limit the environmental impact.

Reasonable set deadlines for installing certain components could be considered where there are significant safety concerns for residents.

- Provide clear exemptions for properties where needed, particularly for Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. This is not to help landlords avoid making improvements – social landlords are committed to providing safe, warm and affordable homes for residents. It is important the revised DHS does not excessively increase the rate at which homes are lost from the sector because they are no longer financially viable (which could be an unintended consequence if strict new requirements are introduced without clear exemptions where needed and without sufficient funding).

The NHF is calling for clarity and certainty over the new requirements for social landlords as soon as possible, with the true cost of new requirements assessed in the round and covered through new funding arrangements.

"We developed these principles in collaboration with representatives of local authorities, ALMOs, social tenants and the sector's professional body," said the spokesperson.

"We have already shared these asks with the Government and will continue to emphasise the importance of progressing the review of the DHS at pace in future conversations with ministers and advisers. Given the crucial importance and wide-ranging benefits of improving the quality of homes for social residents, it is vital that the government supports social landlords to continue to invest in the condition of existing homes.

"Committing to the review in PMQs is a good first step, now we need the detail that must sit beneath this commitment."

## Landlords need to professionalise to prepare for the future

Landlords need to professionalise if they are to flourish, says Paul Shamplina, TV star and founder of Landlord Action, who will be addressing the NRLA Landlord Conference this autumn.

Shamplina, who has decades of experience in the industry, says landlords need to view their rentals as a business, and has called for greater clarity on what changes we're set to see in the coming years.

He said landlords need stability and direction if the Government wants to avoid an exodus from

the sector when the Renters's Rights Bill is brought forward and section 21 is abolished. Shamplina has concerns about how the courts will be able to cope in the future and the impact of landlords leaving the sector on supply and affordability.

He said: "I believe the PRS is going to be a more professional environment going forward and landlords will need to strategise; to see their lettings as a business, with themselves as providers and their tenants as customers.

"As well as announcing the new Renter's Rights Bill, the King's Speech also confirmed plans to devolve powers and continue to strengthen the powers of Metro Mayors, which could mean more challenges for landlords.

"The biggest fear I am seeing can be summed up in two words... rent caps. Personally I don't think it these are likely to be introduced, but we can't be certain and it's something we will undoubtedly be talking about on the day"

**David Bly – Managing Director of Cornerstone Management Services Ltd, a company providing independent expert property health Surveys, is of the opinion more can be done.**

With constant year-on-year damp, condensation and mould in many homes it could be argued there needs to be 'reset' with regard to how structures are assessed prior to and post any improvements plus, the 'adequacy' of internal atmospheric management protocols aligned to upholding a healthy dwelling.

'Blame' is not an option and, can be replaced with 'did you know' since many residents may not be aware of the impact of some everyday activities on the internal conditions as a whole.

Whether landlords are doing enough is noted but, they may well be doing all they can within their infrastructure plus existing knowledge base resulting in more needing to be done.



It is Cornerstone's opinion, any improvements must embrace the structural type, period, age and orientation plus existing permeance as they can all play an active role in maintaining desired structural health. And, with a drive for Net Zero and many Retrofits underway, a greater understanding of these ongoing issues and root causes will aid the journeys.

New legislation calling for timely responses to reported issues alongside defined 'better decision making' will not only reduce annual spend but will uphold the strong desire for cost effective remediations for the long term.

This can be achieved by re-thinking how complaints are recorded, how responses are managed and how credible knowledge in a recognised format can be utilised and delivered to residents with a greater understanding for improved conformity.

An innovative approach will instil landlords with confidence their improvements concluded in a defined approach whilst providing bespoke guidance for residents for an improved healthier internal living condition, will deliver a transformed stock management protocol for maintaining a host of structure types and their geographical locations.

To learn more or discuss how we can help, contact us now:

[www.cornerstone-ltd.co.uk](http://www.cornerstone-ltd.co.uk) and 'enquire today'.

[info@cornerstone-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@cornerstone-ltd.co.uk)

0345 846 0955

**Cornerstone are with you to assist your journey  
for improving Structural Health**



## Consultation on new draft shared ownership code launched

The Shared Ownership Council has launched a consultation on a new shared ownership code of good practice, hoping that providers of shared ownership homes will adopt it.

The council acknowledges that while shared ownership plays a “major role” in addressing housing supply and affordability, it “isn’t working well for everyone”.

Earlier the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) committee conducted an inquiry into shared ownership, which concluded that the tenure does not provide an affordable route onto the housing ladder for “too many people”. The council said it is building on the recommendations outlined in the LUHC report.

The council describes the code as “a step on the reform journey” for shared ownership, emphasising that “consumers considering shared ownership and those already involved deserve consistency, high standards of information, transparency, and support”. The consultation will be open until September.

A recent report by Savills revealed that the number of shared ownership homes in England has passed the 250,000 mark for the first time (252,220). The report also found that shared ownership sales have added a total of £6.5bn to housing associations’ turnover in the last decade.

**Savills say that shared ownership has the potential to deliver an additional 100,000 homes in the next five years, generating £2.2bn each year.**

Ann Santry, chair of the SOC Board said: “Shared ownership has an important part to play in helping people achieve a stake in home ownership. The new code aims to drive best practice across all of the providers and others who are part of the journey shared owners are making.

“However, while we recognise the achievements to date we must undertake further reform to this tenure. The Shared Ownership Council seeks to play a leading role in aligning stakeholders to support reforms that improve shared ownership for consumers and allows the tenure to fulfil its potential.”

# Homelessness in England at highest level on record

Homelessness is at its highest level in England since records began and is expected to worsen, according to an investigation by the public spending watchdog into the last Government’s attempts to tackle the problem.

The National Audit Office (NAO) said that despite a range of measures introduced under Theresa May’s Conservative administration in 2018, homelessness had soared, with record numbers of families now trapped in unsuitable accommodation.

A combination of sky-high rents, insecure tenancies, housing benefit cuts and severe shortages of social housing were fuelling the problem, which was costing the taxpayer £2.4bn a year and threatening to bankrupt district councils, it said.

The NAO report was published in July. Its findings included:

- The number of households accepted as homeless by their local council has risen by more than one-fifth over the past five years, from 64,080 in the third quarter of 2018/19 to 78,980 in the same period last year, an increase of 23%;
- Just under 113,000 households, including almost 146,000 children, were living in temporary accommodation in the third quarter of last year, at a cost of £1.6bn, up from 83,540 in 2018, a rise of 35%; and
- More than 33,000 households were living in temporary accommodation outside their local area last year, a 42% increase in five years as councils, particularly in London and the south-east, struggled to find affordable properties to place families.

The NAO said the Government had failed to get a grip on the poor quality of temporary housing endured by many homeless families, with local authorities increasingly forced to book households into B&Bs and hotels to meet overwhelming demand.

Although councils are only supposed to use B&Bs for households with children as a last resort, the figures showed that 4,560 households with children were put up in B&Bs, of which 2,960 had been living in them for longer than six weeks.

The NAO report said: “The situation has worsened since we last examined the issue in 2017. Despite the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017, homelessness numbers are at a record level and expected to increase.”

A separate Conservative initiative to eradicate rough sleeping in England by the end of 2024 also failed, after figures published earlier this year showed the numbers of people spending the night



on the streets or in tents or cars had risen for the second year running.

Theresa May introduced the Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into force in 2018, giving councils new duties in an attempt to get a grip on the problem and rectify the Tories’ dismal record on homelessness over the previous eight years.

However, the NAO concluded that despite some small improvements, the position had since worsened.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government welcomed the NAO report: “Homelessness levels have skyrocketed and too many families are living in temporary accommodation. We will take the action needed to tackle this issue and develop a long-term, cross-government strategy working with mayors and councils to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness.”

Claire Holland, the Local Government Association’s housing spokesperson, said: “We need the new Government to take urgent action to implement the recommendations highlighted in this report, by adopting a genuinely cross-departmental approach to tackling homelessness, and producing a long-term strategy.”

A separate NAO press release showed the last Government spent £9.2bn trying to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children in England, only to leave office with the gap at GCSE level wider than a decade ago.

Closing the attainment gap has been a priority for the Department for Education (DfE), particularly after the disruption caused by Covid. In 2023/24, it devoted about 15% of its annual budget to a range of interventions aimed at achieving that.

# Half of all complaints to Ombudsman are from tenants living in London



The Housing Ombudsman has released its latest Insight report, looking into complaints within Greater London. The report comes it was revealed that 47% of the cases determined by the Ombudsman in 2023/24 were from tenants living in a London postcode.

This rate is disproportionately high, given just under one in six homes in the Ombudsman's membership is located within Greater London. No other region of England has such a wide gap between the proportion of social housing and complaints.

In line with the acute housing crisis in the capital, most indicators reveal poorer outcomes in London for residents with the Ombudsman's severe maladministration rate at 9.3% compared with 7.4% for the rest of the country and an overall maladministration rate of 77% compared to 68.5% for England.

The uphold rate on property condition, including repairs and health and safety, is also the highest in the country. This is despite more homes reportedly meeting the Decent Homes Standard in the capital.

The report sets out the challenging operating environment for social landlords, including working with third parties like managing agents and historic under-investment in homes, alongside the need for improvements by landlords in communication, record management and oversight of repair services.

Included in the case studies is one on building safety, in which the landlord failed to provide timely information on fire safety measures and cladding on the building. In another case on decants, the Ombudsman did not uphold the complaint because the landlord went beyond its obligations to address concerns about parking.

In this report, the Ombudsman has provided learning and case studies on a range of topics under two main banners of quality of homes and quality of customer service. Among the learning themes are:

- A positive complaints culture starts from the top – it is crucial that leadership and governance are seen to support the complaints function;
- It is important a landlord does not lose sight of the person at the centre of a protracted issue, does not blame them for the situation, and there is a continuous assessment of whether the remedial actions taken remain appropriate or whether a decant is now necessary;
- Landlords need to be clear on their role and responsibilities and proactive working with third parties, with robust service agreements in place;
- Complaint handling is a landlord's opportunity to regain a resident's trust after they have had a bad experience. It is far more than just ascertaining what the service failure is and rectifying that situation; and
- Insight and intelligence from complaints should be used strategically. This ranges from effective root cause analysis of casework through to identifying risks and horizon scanning.

The Ombudsman is urging other landlords (outside of London) to take note of the recommendations and learning points, especially in other urban areas, as they provide vital indicators of where things go wrong and how to stop that from happening.

## Report highlights £14.6 billion economic contribution of the London private rented sector

A report by professional services firm PwC, commissioned by the NRLA and Paragon Bank, indicates that London's private rented sector (PRS) makes a gross value added contribution of £14.6bn to the UK economy.

Entitled "The Economic Contribution of the Private Rented Sector," the report delves into the economic value generated and supported by small and medium-sized landlords (those with 15 or fewer properties) in England and Wales. The report states that the £14.6bn economic contribution made by London's PRS accounts for 2.6% regional GVA.

The report also highlights that London's private rental market supports, directly and indirectly, 128,000 jobs in a number of areas. The figure underlines the important role that the UK's PRS plays in encouraging investment and employment across a range of regions.

Further findings from the report reveal that the private rented sector in England and Wales contributes, in total, £45bn of GVA to the UK economy, and supports approximately 390,000 jobs. Key industries which benefit from the PRS's economic activity include construction, building maintenance, and public administration.

Ben Beadle, chief executive of the National Residential Landlords Association, responded to the report: "These findings underline the extent to which the PRS plays a pivotal role in the delivery of much-needed investment and jobs.

"Although the national contribution that the PRS makes is significant, the positive impact the PRS makes can be seen most clearly in the regional data featured in this report.

"It's an important reminder of how a thriving private rented sector is in the interests of not only landlords and tenants, but also to the market's wider supply chain which depends on high levels of investment."

Richard Rowntree, managing director of Mortgages at Paragon Bank, added: "London is a transient city and, as such, requires a thriving private rental sector to serve the capital's tenants. Not only does the London rental sector make a direct economic contribution, it also supports the city's wider economy by providing housing for hundreds of thousands of tenants who work in the city across a broad range of sectors."



# Main findings of the English Housing Survey released

The results of the annual survey of housing conditions and occupants in England has been released and they provide a wealth of fascinating information for anyone with an interest in the nation's housing and who lives in it.

This article focuses on the rented sectors which together make up 35% of all households in England, with 4.6 million households in the private rented sector (19% of all households) and 4 million households in the social rented sector (16%).

Households in the rented sectors tended to be younger, more ethnically and nationally diverse, and contained a higher proportion of households with dependent children than owner occupation.

In 2022/23, HRP's in the private rented sector were the youngest, with a mean age of 41. Social renters followed with a mean of 53 (53 years old for housing association tenants and 54 years old for local authority tenants). This compares to a mean age of 57 among owner occupiers.

The private rented sector had a lower proportion of HRP's from the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland (70%) than the social rented sector (90%), both of which were lower than owner occupied (96%).

Households with dependent children were more common within the rented sectors (private renters: 30%; social renters: 31%) than among owner occupiers (23%). The rented sectors presented similar proportions of households with dependent children.

## PAYING RENT

The majority of renters say they find it easy to pay their rent and are not in rental arrears. However, households in the social rented sector are more likely to be in arrears than households in the private rented sector.

Social renters were more likely to have been in arrears either currently or over the past year, than private renters. Approximately 593,000 (15%) social rented households were either currently or previously in arrears when interviewed, compared to 229,000 (5%) private rented households.

The majority of private (71%) and social (73%) renters reported it was easy to pay rent. Approximately 1.2 million (29%) private rented households reported finding it difficult to pay their rent. A further 852,000 (27%) social rented households reported finding it difficult to pay their rent.

While households with dependent children in both rented sectors were more likely to be in arrears in the past year than households without, households in the social rented sector with dependent children (22%) were more likely to have currently or previously been in arrears than private rented households with dependent children (8%).

Social renters are less likely to have savings than private renters, and both groups are less likely to



have savings than owner occupiers. More owner occupiers (79%) had savings than either private renters (54%) or social renters (27%).

Just under a quarter (24%) of private renters who were lone parents with dependent children had savings. This was a lower proportion than any other private renting household type, which ranged from 45% to 66%.

Social renters who were lone parents with dependent children (14%) were less likely to have savings than private renters who were lone parents with dependent children.

## REASONS FOR MOVING

While most renters ended their last tenancy because they wanted to move, a minority were evicted or asked to leave by their landlord.

In 2022/23, most private renters (63%, 424,000 households) who had moved in the last 12 months cited they had decided to end their tenancy because they wanted to move. Much like the private rented sector, the most common reason for social renters ending their last tenancy was because they wanted to move (63%, 38,000 households).

Other reasons given by private renters included that the tenancy was for a fixed period (19%, 130,000 households), the tenancy ended by mutual agreement (10%, 69,000 households), or were asked to leave by their landlord or agent (9%, 61,000 households).

A minority chose to end their last tenancy due to rent increases (2%, 11,000 households), accommodation that was linked to a job that ended (2%) or had a poor relationship with the landlord (1%, 7,000 households).

Over one quarter of social renters (27%, 17,000 households) reported their last tenancy ended because they were asked to leave by the landlord/agent, which was higher than the proportion of private renters asked to leave by the landlord/agent (9%, 61,000 households).

Social renters are more likely to have experienced homelessness than private renters and are more likely to have a member of the household on the waiting list for social housing.

Within the social rented sector, 8% of renters (around 319,000 households) had experienced homelessness in the past few years. This was higher than the proportion of private renters (4%, around 193,000 households) and owner occupiers (<1%, around 41,000 households).

Overall, 9% of social renters (373,000 households) reported someone in their household was on the council housing and/or housing association waiting list, which was higher than the proportion of private renters (6%, 280,000 households).

Nearly one in 10 privately renting households were refused a tenancy in the past twelve months because they were in receipt of benefits.

# Ombudsman takes social landlords to task over windows

The Housing Ombudsman has taken the unusual step of issuing an open letter to Chief Executives of social housing providers, expressing deep concerns regarding the handling of some window-related complaints.

The Ombudsman's letter highlights a troubling pattern identified from recent casework, where residents' complaints about window disrepair or health and safety issues have not always been adequately addressed by landlords.

The letter acknowledges that window-related complaints often involve complex issues ranging from design concerns and prolonged disrepair, exacerbated by a lack of funding and historic underinvestment in social housing infrastructure. The Ombudsman also knows this is an area where many landlords are focused and proactive. However, its investigations also show that landlords have not always responded in a timely way, and sometimes important repairs have been deferred.

Richard Blakeway, housing ombudsman, commented: "We have serious concerns about the handling of window-related complaints.....we are seeing unsafe living conditions where windows are falling onto the ground or are boarded up for prolonged periods. It is becoming routine for me to see cases where repairs to windows are delayed, sometimes for years, because of resources. Safe, secure and well-maintained windows are fundamental to a decent home."

"These issues also underscore the chronic underinvestment in social housing and need for a national conversation leading to a new, revised Decent Homes Standard alongside building the next generation of social homes."

The Ombudsman's casework has revealed three main issues:

- Landlords failing to consider individual household circumstances during risk assessments, leading to overlooked health and safety concerns;
- Delays in conducting repairs, often postponed due to cost considerations and planned cyclical works; and
- Inadequate communication with residents regarding the operation and safety of newly installed windows.

To address these issues, the Ombudsman will publish decisions on window-related complaints, which will support landlord learning and improve future responses. Engagement with regulatory bodies is also underway to share more information on these matters.



The letter acknowledges that window-related complaints often involve complex issues ranging from design concerns and prolonged disrepair, exacerbated by a lack of funding and historic underinvestment in social housing infrastructure

The Ombudsman encourages all social housing providers to review their own window-related complaints proactively and to implement the following core lessons:

- Conduct thorough risk assessments based on individual household circumstances, ensuring appropriate actions are recognised, responded to, and documented
- Engage independent surveyors and ensure that responses to their recommendations are reasonable, clear, and consistent
- Justify decisions to defer repairs or opt for limited repairs not primarily on cost but in line with legal obligations
- Provide clear, comprehensive, and accessible information to residents regarding the operation of new windows

Throughout these core themes strong knowledge and information management is essential.

## Council converting student apartment block to house the homeless

Plymouth City Council has purchased a large city centre building to use as temporary accommodation for homeless families.

The building has been used to provide a number of self-contained student apartments, each with common living areas. The council plans to convert it into 30 one, two and three bedrooms flats suitable for families who are homeless. In addition, an office space for the council's housing team will be created.

Councillor Chris Penberthy, Cabinet member for Housing, Communities and Cooperative Development, said: "This really is amazing news. Buying this building is going to make such an incredible difference to so many families when they need support the most.

"We are in the midst of a national housing crisis and we have to make big, bold decisions like this if we are able to help the increasing number of people coming to us for help.

"Once up and running, these apartments will greatly reduce our reliance on bed and breakfasts, allowing us to give homeless families, already placed under an inordinate amount of stress, at least some stability."

The funding for the purchase and refurbishment of the building is coming from a £15m budget for buying properties to reduce financial pressures on providing temporary accommodation.

Councillor Mark Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, added: "The financial challenges facing local government have been well documented and quite simply, it was never going to be sustainable to continue the spend on hotel and bed & breakfast accommodation in the long term.

"The purchase of this building is win-win. Not only will it give families experiencing homelessness some semblance of normality, it will also, over time free up budgets to help tackle issues around homelessness in the round."

Like other cities, Plymouth is facing a homelessness crisis brought about by a combination of factors such as the cost of living and other economic issues. These have significantly affected local housing markets and people's ability to meet day to day bills like rent, mortgage payments, utilities, food and travel.

There has been a massive increase (158%) in demand for temporary and short-term accommodation, with families staying longer in temporary accommodation as there are fewer permanent homes to move into. The completion of the purchase is expected to take place in September, with a planning application for a change of use submitted shortly afterward.



# Housing regulator publishes first set of planned inspection results

The Regulator of Social Housing has published the first set of regulatory judgements arising from its new programme of planned inspections. It expects to publish more judgements from its first wave of inspections later in the summer.

After inspecting Watford Community Housing Trust and Nottingham Community Housing Association Limited, the regulator confirmed that each landlord meets its governance and viability requirements, and has the financial capacity to deal with a wide range of adverse scenarios.

The RSH also confirmed that, overall, each landlord is delivering the outcomes of the new consumer standards. They have demonstrated that they identify issues affecting tenants and put plans in place to solve them and minimise recurrence.

The regulatory gradings for each landlord are G1 for governance, V1 for viability and C1 for the consumer standards. The regulator expects that, even when a landlord is assessed as C1, they will continue to review, evaluate and improve their service to tenants.

Landlords should also continue to monitor and mitigate their financial risks carefully and test the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, including through independent reviews.

RSH started the first phase of its inspection programme for all large social landlords (those with



over 1,000 homes) on 1 April 2024. The inspections will take place over a four-year cycle and are one of the key changes to the regulator's approach arising from the Social Housing Regulation Act.

Kate Dodsworth, chief of regulatory engagement at the RSH, said: "Our inspection programme is a really important part of our new regulatory approach. Now we can go out and proactively seek evidence that a landlord is delivering the outcomes in our consumer standards, which will help to drive long-term improvements in landlords for the benefit of tenants."

"Critically we're also continuing to scrutinise the finances and governance of housing associations

and other private registered providers, at a time when they are facing many competing demands on their finances. Through our integrated regulation, we're helping to promote a sector that is viable, well governed and able to deliver more and better social homes for people who need them."

The regulator is continuing to carry out its work on responsive engagement – where it considers information that is referred by tenants, landlords and other stakeholders. Since April, the RSH has published four regulatory judgements, based on responsive engagement, for landlords who have failed to deliver the outcomes in the new consumer standards.

## Ombudsman launches Call for Evidence

The Housing Ombudsman has launched its latest 'Call for Evidence' Survey to inform its next Spotlight Report, entitled 'Repairing Trust', which will explore common issues in housing maintenance.

This follows an unprecedented rise in complaints relating to disrepair, combined with increasing costs and skills shortages. In many cases, this is significantly impacting upon residents' safety in their homes.

The report will highlight some of the positive changes landlords have made to rise to the maintenance challenge and support landlords prepare for the introduction of Awaab's Law, which will for the first time set statutory repair timescales and record-keeping requirements.

The investigation report will also examine the complex relationships between landlords, contractors, and residents, with a particular focus on accountability, roles, and responsibilities. It will examine the experiences of operatives on the ground as well as residents and the breakdown in relationships that can happen between the landlord and residents.

The Ombudsman is targeting residents and repair operatives, alongside landlords and contractors employed by them. For the first time, the Ombudsman is also seeking views from MPs and councillors, with both reporting housing repair issues as being a common issue for their constituents.

The Housing Ombudsman encourages all stakeholders to participate to contribute their insights and experiences. Submissions can be made using the QR Code until Friday 25 October 2024. The questions will cover four themes:

- What are the main issues landlords face when contracting services, what causes these issues, and what impact do they have?
- What problems do residents encounter with these services, the underlying reasons, and their effects?
- What barriers do operatives experience in delivering services, the root causes, and the repercussions?
- What are the lessons learned from cases with no maladministration and successful initiatives within the sector?

Richard Blakeway said: "Social housing is vital to this country but maintaining existing homes is becoming more complex and costly. There are strong indications in our casework that trust between some residents and landlords is deeply fractured. The situation is becoming extremely challenging, with residents frustrated and landlord staff fatigued. I am especially concerned to hear more reports by residents of poor staff conduct while landlords are also telling us of operatives reporting challenging behaviour by residents."

"This Call for Evidence is a crucial step in understanding the challenges and opportunities in housing maintenance. By involving a wide range of voices, perspectives and experiences. We aim to identify common issues, understand root causes, and highlight best practices to ensure the maintenance of decent home standards. Our report will aim to provide practical recommendations and foster a deeper trust between residents and landlords to ensure that maintenance services are both effective and reliable."



# Rykneld Homes

Rykneld Homes is responsible for the management, maintenance and improvement of properties and neighbourhoods in North East Derbyshire



**R** ykneld Homes Ltd manages around 7,600 social properties across North East Derbyshire. Our footprint contains four towns, with surrounding rural areas, with housing stock dispersed between the towns and villages.

Rykneld Homes is based near Chesterfield and is wholly owned by North East Derbyshire District Council. We are one of the largest employers in the district. We have a board of directors, including independent appointed individuals, council-appointed directors, and an independent chair.

Rykneld Homes was established in 2007, registering with the Regulator of Social Housing in 2013 in order to start developing, acquiring, and building our own housing. We now own 140 properties (including shared ownership) as a Registered Provider of Social Housing.

## AIMS & GOALS

Our fundamental objective over coming years is to provide more affordable housing: we have set ourselves a target of delivering 400 homes by 2027. It's ambitious, but we believe it's achievable.

We'll build, buy back, and acquire homes – ensuring they meet the safe and high standards required for social housing. To date, 276 approved homes have been gained through new build projects, buybacks and S106 acquisitions.

We have recently become a Homes England (HE) developer partner. Securing this status will enable future developments and acquisitions, which meet the capital funding guide, to be supported by grant funding.

We've pledged to provide sustainable and environmentally friendly developments, using new technologies wherever possible to continue driving down our carbon footprint.

We're seeing an increase in the number of people applying for housing and we want to support them to have a safe and decent home. But it's equally important to look after and improve the homes we already have, as well as supporting the people who live in them.

Collaboration is key to achieving our goals and we'll continue to work closely with our parent Council and all our community partners.

Our performance across all service areas is strong, particularly in relation to customer health and safety. For example, in response to the Housing Regulator



and Ombudsman, we have established a specialist team to quickly respond to any reports of damp and mould in properties.

We have a sound knowledge of our housing stock, with a rolling programme of stock condition surveys. This enables us to make informed investment decisions while keeping our homes safe and decent.

Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff are committed to providing excellent services, listening to our customers' needs, and offering support and advice where needed.

### TENANT WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT?

Enhancing residents' quality of life is fundamental to Rykneld Homes. Our vision is 'To be the best housing provider for our communities', while our mission is 'Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do'.

It's why Building Sustainable Communities is one of our four strategic objectives. We view Sustainable Communities as being about strengthening community engagement. In doing that, we are building communities that are engaged, valued, and places where our customers enjoy spending time.

Communities in North East Derbyshire experience higher-than-average levels of deprivation and poverty. For example, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows there are six areas in our district that fall within the most 10% deprived areas across England.

Rykneld Homes uses data and statistics from deprivation, crime, health, education, skills, employment, and housing to formulate plans to tackle those inequalities.

As such, our Sustainable Communities strategy means actively going into our communities to either support existing community projects and groups, or where there is a need, to establish new ones.

Projects are varied, but key themes supported under the Sustainable Communities strategy include:

- Improving people's health (both physical and mental)
- Bringing the community together and reducing social isolation
- Improving opportunities for children and young people
- Enhancing the environment
- Tackling unemployment
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Encouraging volunteering.



We provided approximately 270 hours of community engagement in 2023/24, reaching 3,692 people. In March, our Community Involvement Team won the prize for Best Use of an EEM Charitable Donation at the Building Communities Awards 2024. The award recognised the variety of activities on offer in our communities and the reach of our programme.

Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey shapes our strategy and thinking at all levels of the organisation. The response rate is good and we are in the process of verifying the data of the 2023/24 survey.

### MAJOR PROJECTS

We are consistently improving our existing homes. It's a huge part of what we do. Since 2010, we have undertaken structural repairs and installed External Wall Insulation (EWI) to more than 2,100 non-traditional construction homes with a further 345 planned.

In April 2023 we started work on a two-year programme to deliver EWI and other works to 640 council homes, with the support of £8.2m from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

Further investment from the Council, together with further external funding opportunities, will allow this type of work to continue through to 2027 for other homes in the district.

This award-winning work has delivered significant carbon reductions, improved the EPC ratings and thermal comfort of homes and reduced the risk of fuel poverty in the district.

This supports the ongoing long-term programme to regenerate the Council's non-traditional housing which forms approximately 40% of the stock.

There is a combined total of £21m being invested in the Council's hardest to treat homes. The Council has committed £13m through the HRA to the project. This is a two-year programme with the external funding to be spent by March 2025, with works to be fully completed by September 2025.

Our work in collaboration with Sustainable Building Services UK (SBS) is one of the largest, most successful solid-wall SHDF Wave 2-funded schemes in the country – already seeing 250 solid-wall properties complete.

We are also working on whole house retrofits and the installation of solar panels to a selected number of homes within the district.

The homes are off the gas network with a range of existing heating systems including solid fuel and electrical storage heaters. Works include, cavity wall insulation, air source heat pumps (Low Carbon Heating, installations, upgraded ventilation and solar PV systems to the roofs.

A further scheme will see 34 homes have external wall insulation installed through the (SHDF) programme as well as the addition of solar panels through devolution funding.

We are also increasing the number of low carbon heating systems being installed in the housing stock and will be seeking further funding through the next wave of SHDF funding.





Through our excellent delivery performance on the SHDF project we were asked to participate in a national learning and feedback event for other recipients of SHDF funding.

We were one of only two providers asked to speak from a total of 107 project delivery teams across the country.

Kitchen and bathroom update and roof replacement schemes are also ongoing across our portfolio.

#### THE SOCIAL HOUSING ACT

We welcome the focus of the Social Housing Act – it aligns with our organisational culture and how we operate. We knew change was coming and were pleased to see tenant involvement, improved standards and a focus on taking action form the basis of the new framework.

Making sure our residents have a safe, affordable and decent place to call home is the foundation of our work. So while we, like others, will need to make some adaptations to the way we do things, we are well placed to do so thanks to our existing processes.

- It is our job to:
- Ensure tenants are safe in their homes
- Listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly to put things right
- Be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect
- Know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them
- Collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs.

We are already doing these things, our next steps are to develop and improve our processes. We need to ensure we are accurately capturing what we do and the impact it is having.

Communicating with our tenants and using their voice to shape our policy is something we prioritise. We know how important cultivating purposeful relationships with tenants is. As such, one of our values is transparency – we recognise how important it is to keep our tenants and teams informed.

For example, we recently hosted an Involved Tenants conference with neighbouring housing providers. This was a valuable and insightful event and one of many opportunities for tenants to share their thoughts with us and influence and shape policy.

In anticipation of the changes, we have also been working with the sector leader, Savills, to review and update our stock condition systems, and surveying process.



#### feedback event"

Niall Clark of Rykneld Homes

We've recruited and trained a team of new stock condition surveyors, who will also be providing EPCs. This will enable us to develop an EPC rating for our stock – data which will be key to informing future spending decisions.

Completing the full stock condition survey of our housing stock by summer 2027 will also enable us to annually update our 30-year investment and major works programmes.

#### DATA MANAGEMENT & AI SOFTWARE

Every year we carry out more than 30,000 repairs, making sure our customers' homes are safe and decent.

Our specialist property services teams are high performing and efficient. The use of the latest mobile technology and our supply chain management means customers receive an excellent repairs service that continues to meet performance targets. This is all software-led.

Our contact centre is key to the way we provide repairs as they not only answer calls and log repairs, but they deliver a diagnostic and advisory service. This ensures the right repair is logged and appointed with the customer as efficiently as possible.

We are in the process of reviewing our Repairs Policy. Tenant voices will again help shape the service. We are currently testing new repairs targets for emergency, urgent, and routine repairs with the aim to reduce overall response times.

A key part of the Policy Review includes improved financial and performance monitoring to ensure our trade operatives are productive and services can demonstrate value for money.

*Article supplied by Niall Clark, deputy managing director and director of customer & strategic partnerships at Rykneld Homes*





Gary Court, Croydon

## COMMENT

# Remediation success

Luke Driscoll of Hyde Group explains how engaging residents from the outset of building safety remediation projects is the key success

The landmark Building a Safer Future publication and subsequent legislation reinforced the importance of building owners' obligations to provide safe homes. At Hyde, we're committed to becoming a truly customer-driven organisation, providing great services to customers and ensuring our homes are safe, decent and energy-efficient.

Large scale building safety projects that involve removing cladding and combustible materials from buildings, is one of the ways we're ensuring our buildings and the people who live in them are safe. The advantages, from increased safety for our residents to potential financial benefits, emphasise their importance.

However, the challenges, particularly regarding the impact on those still living in the buildings, logistical complexities, resource shortage and cost, require detailed solutions and collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

Building safety remediation projects can cause significant disruption to residents, with noise, dust and restricted access to parts of their building and surroundings. Managing this intense disruption over a significant time frame requires careful planning and communication.

That's the approach we took when remediating Gary Court, one of our high-rise residential towers in Croydon. Gary Court is a nine-storey block of 150

homes and several commercial units. It was built with what was later confirmed to be non-compliant and combustible elements within the external wall system.

We set out to replace the building's external walls, lowering the risk of fire spreading. This involved removing more than 250,000 bricks, along with terracotta tiles, which were cleaned and stored, before being re-used on the building, to maintain its original appearance.

Gary Court was wrapped in scaffolding for two summers, across 2022 and 2023, blocking natural light and residents' views. Our contractor, Equans' site compound completely took over the car park and internal courtyard. We also carried out the remediation work while people stayed in their homes. The impact on our residents was considerable.

Proactively engaging and communicating with residents, and building trusting relationships with the local community, was therefore key.

Monthly project meetings kept tenants informed as we brought them along the journey with us. During these meetings, residents had the opportunity to raise concerns and have questions answered. We factored their feedback into our programme, putting them at the heart of everything we did. Information such as key milestones and guidance were shared regularly through email and a dedicated webpage on our website.





Another example of focused resident engagement is Propeller Crescent and Purely Way in Waddon, where we carried out similar work. As a way of thanking our tenants for their resilience and support, our contracting partner, Wates, organised a playground clean up day, with ice cream, as well as a drawing competition for local school children. Wates also managed regular waste removal and decluttering, which in turn, encouraged residents to do the same.

Factoring initiatives like these into building safety projects is vital as it not only contributes to building positive relationships with our residents, but it also fosters a sense of community among themselves.

Collaboration among all involved parties, being clear with expectations and resolving issues to deliver the best outcome for those living in the building, is the best way to yield successful results.

One of the biggest worries for residents, and one of the most significant challenges of building safety remediation, is who pays for the work, which can be extremely costly.

Determining who bears the financial responsibility for remediation can be contentious. While the Government may provide some funding, building owners, developers, and residents often face disputes over cost-sharing, leading to delays and legal challenges.

At Hyde, we do all we can to ensure that costs of remediation projects are not passed onto our residents. This involves applying to the Government's Building Safety Fund to recover the cost of work carried out.

For example, the Gary Court remediation cost £10m. We were awarded £6.4m through the Building Safety Fund; the remainder we covered. This meant no charges were passed on.

Additionally, the technical aspects of removing old cladding and installing new systems are complex. Ensuring that the new cladding integrates seamlessly with existing structures, without compromising their integrity, demands high levels of expertise and precision. Unfortunately, there's a limited pool of qualified contractors and materials available for such specialised work, which can cause delays.

And navigating the complex regulatory environment can be laborious with varying standards and approval processes, requiring meticulous attention to ensure compliance at every stage of the project.

The Building Safety Act has led to increased scrutiny and stricter safety regulations, requiring building owners to create a record of all the components that make up the external wall of buildings.



Luke Driscoll of Hyde Group

*"We have a responsibility to use our knowledge and expertise to create homes that residents feel safe in and can be proud of."*

As well as giving confidence to residents that their building is safe, it also means owners are in a better position to make informed decisions about how to manage and repair buildings.

That's because addressing these issues can also reduce the future repairs and maintenance burden – savings which we can reinvest in building and maintaining homes – and also improve the sustainability of our buildings. High-quality, sustainable cladding materials often offer better insulation and energy efficiency, cutting bills and making homes more affordable to live in.

Our priority, like all social landlords, has always been to provide our residents with safe homes.

By carrying out remediation work on our buildings, we're demonstrating to our tenants and stakeholders – our commitment to building safety, fostering trust and confidence within our communities.

And of course, completed remediation projects, backed by relevant certification, give residents reassurance that their building is safe. And homeowners can sell and remortgage their homes.

Gary Court has now secured an A1 EWS1 – the highest fire safety rating for remediation work. This means the building is safe and doesn't contain any combustible materials – so no further external wall work will be needed.

We have a responsibility to use our knowledge and expertise to create homes that residents feel safe in and can be proud of. We're working with our local authorities, and like-minded contracting partners, to efficiently remediate buildings, making them safe, because we can't stand by and wait for others to fix the problems.

*Luke Driscoll is asset management & sustainability director at Hyde Group*



# Avoid Risk. Choose **Sentry**.

The UK Leader in timber fire safety and security doorsets



## Compliance Assured

Bespoke doorsets for all applications, with industry-leading certification so you can be **assured of compliance without having to compromise on style.**



## Trusted Service

Over 100 years of expertise, combining the **Best of British manufacturing** with **world-leading testing.**

Dedicated account managers and responsive estimating team for a **friendly service** and **expert technical support.**



## Delivery You Can Count On

Capacity to meet **strict project deadlines** and tailored to suit your budget, with **flexible credit options.**

**Quite simply, we are the secure choice for fire safety.**



**SENTRY  
DOORS**

The secure choice for fire safety

If you want a fire door supplier that delivers bespoke solutions on time and on budget, with compliance always assured, **get in touch today!**

**01302 337473**

**[enquiries@sentrydoors.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sentrydoors.co.uk)**

**[sentrydoors.co.uk](http://sentrydoors.co.uk)**

## INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

# Enhancing Fire Safety in Social Housing

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fire safety saves lives. Lakanal House, Grenfell; every death demonstrates the severe potential of failure.

Still, as late as 2022, the Home Office recorded 321 fire-related deaths in Great Britain. While an improvement across decades – falling below 400 for the very first time in 2011/12 – lives remain at stake from largely preventable risk.

Whitehall has not ignored the problem entirely, and the majority of the housing professionals responding to a recent research project undertaken by *Housing Management & Maintenance* are experiencing its changes to the regulatory framework day to day. Despite an increased uptake in these changes, however, a minority continue to report failings in their own stock, as they have done year on year.

Of those that believed the relevant change applied to their stock, in 2024 20% were yet to check fire doors to communal areas every three months, 30% were not carrying out monthly checks on fire equipment and lifts, and 27% were recently working on buildings they believed to be unsafe because of the cladding installed on them.

Helping to form a picture of why these issues persist are the responses from 400 housing professionals across four years, an average of 80% at manager level or above, representing stock from a few houses to thousands (two thirds with over 50).

Revealing a broad mood in the UK housing sector since 2021, at least one in five across all years said they partially understand fire regulations at best, and an average of one in ten had been put in a position where it would be uncomfortable for them to report issues of fire safety to a superior or relevant authority.

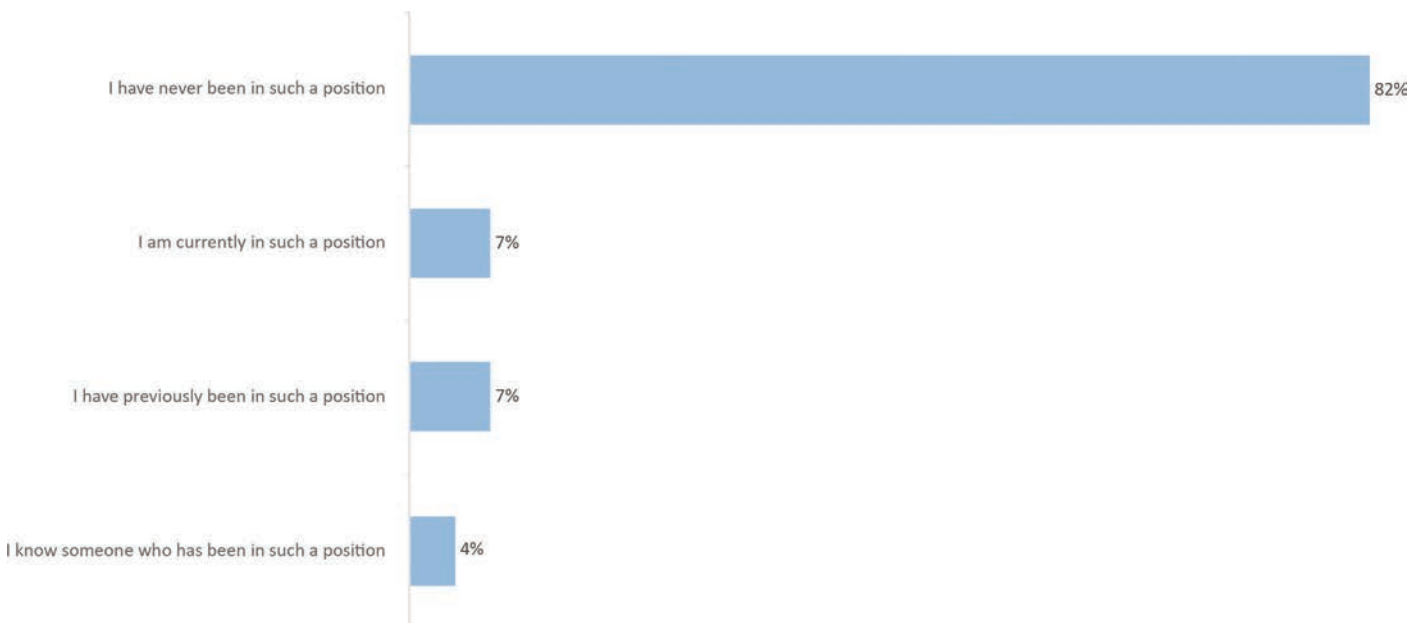
## A VARIED FRAMEWORK

Fire safety in the UK is governed by a varied and evolving framework, with rules differing pre, during and post construction, between different heights and occupancy rates, and, as a devolved matter, between administrations.

Though requirements during construction are similar across the UK, there is no equivalent of a 'responsible person' in Scotland and Northern Ireland, for example, and certain laws apply only to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) with at least three tenants who share facilities.

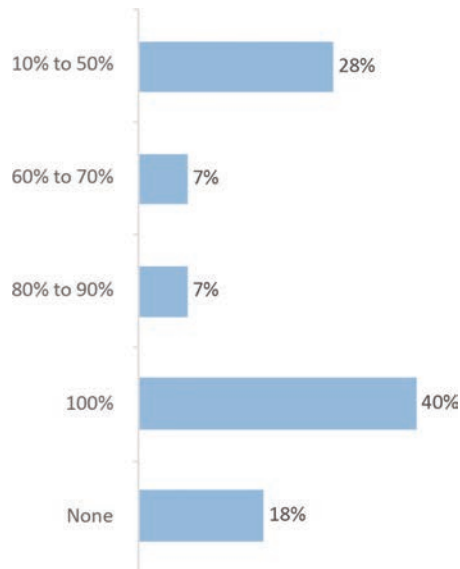
This study focuses largely on the rules in England, during the design and construction of a home, requirements for the fire safety of buildings are set by the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2010. These laws are intended to ensure that all new buildings are designed and constructed to limit the spread of fire and to help occupants escape in the event of a fire.

Once the property is occupied, the building's owner or manager becomes this 'responsible person' under the Fire Safety Order 2005 – applying only



It has been reported that many housing professionals at some point in their career have been put in a position where it would be uncomfortable to report fire safety issues or malpractice to a superior or relevant authority, or that their voices would not be heard in the matter. Which of the following options best suits your experience of this?





What percentage of your properties have a Category LD2 fire detection system installed?

to communal areas of blocks of flats and HMOs, not to the individual flats or houses.

#### LEGISLATION POST-GRENFELL

In 2017, the Grenfell Tower fire in London took the lives of 72 people, including 17 children and 15 of the 37 disabled residents, and injured more than 70.

In response to the fire, guided by the Hackitt review of building regulations and fire safety and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Government made several changes to fire safety legislation.

The 2021 Fire Safety Act clarified and furthered the duties of the responsible person, required to share fire safety information with residents, as well as keep documentation of the building's structure, external walls and flat entrance doors, and ensure regular checks of equipment and fire doors.

In 2022, The Building Safety Act established the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), giving the body and local authorities further powers to take action against violations of building regulations.

Further changes were introduced to protect 'higher-risk' buildings, defined as those over 18 metres tall, or with seven or more storeys. Under the changes, developers need to obtain approval from the newly established BSR to build 'higher-risk' buildings, also to make changes to existing ones.

Responsible persons of buildings of this height have to prepare floors and building plans as well and share this information with their local fire and rescue service.

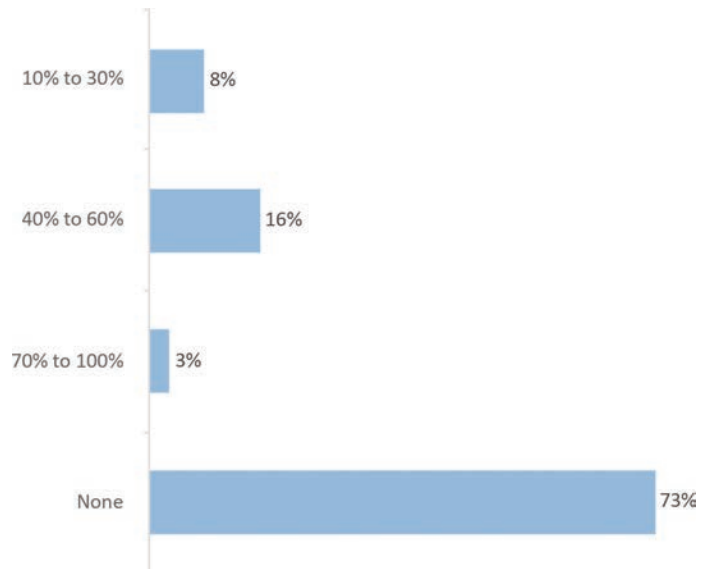
The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 introduced further requirements for an 'accountable person', to be held accountable by the BSR for ensuring fire risk assessments are conducted regularly, and if any faults are found, safety measures are put in place.

#### TWO YEARS OF CHANGE

While promising, questions remain over how well this change has been adopted.

Looking back on our previous study in 2023, more respondents are now working on housing that requires further requirements for responsible persons, up this year to 74% from 56% last year, with no significant change in the location of each study's respondents.

In the same years, the vast majority of those that managed housing applicable to the various updates are meeting the new requirements, although a minority remain yet to action them – almost up to a third in buildings over 18 metres.



What percentage of the housing you've worked on in the last 6 months would you estimate has unsafe cladding?

#### BUILDINGS OF ALL HEIGHTS

For the rules that apply to buildings of all heights, there was a rise in respondents who believed the rules to be applicable to their stock, a corresponding rise in those who had taken action to meet these rules, as well as a small rise in those who were yet to take action.

The number of respondents who had actioned the measures prior to the legislation changed little.

#### DISPLAYING FIRE SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

When asked if they display fire safety instructions in their stock following fire safety regulation updates, this year 52% had done so prior to the updates (56% in 2023), 33% did so because of the updates (12%, 2023), 8% believed the rules to be inapplicable to their stock (28%, 2023), and 8% believed the rules applied to their stock, but were yet to install them (4%, 2023).

#### PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT FIRE DOORS

This year, 47% said they had provided information about fire doors to their tenants before the updates (53%, 2023), 33% had actioned this because of the changes (17%, 2023), 8% did not believe the changes were applicable to them (26%, 2023), and another 8% believed the rules said they should inform tenants about fire doors, but were yet to do so (4%, 2023).

#### OVER 11 METRES

More consistently, there was less change year on year in those who believed the rules for buildings of 11 metres or higher were not applicable to their stock.

Though still a small minority, the number who believed the rules were applicable to them, and were yet to take action, were more stark here.

#### CHECKING FIRE DOORS TO RESIDENCES

Asked if they check fire doors at the entrances of individual flats every 12 months following the updates, 19% were doing so prior to this (17%, 2023), 20% have done so because of them (13%, 2023), 4% were yet to action this (2%, 2023), and 57% said the rules didn't apply to their stock (68%, 2023).

#### CHECKING FIRE DOORS TO COMMUNAL AREAS

The new requirements for buildings over 11 metres also include checking fire doors in communal areas every three months.

**JELD WEN**



# A WORLD OF PRODUCT INNOVATION AWAITS

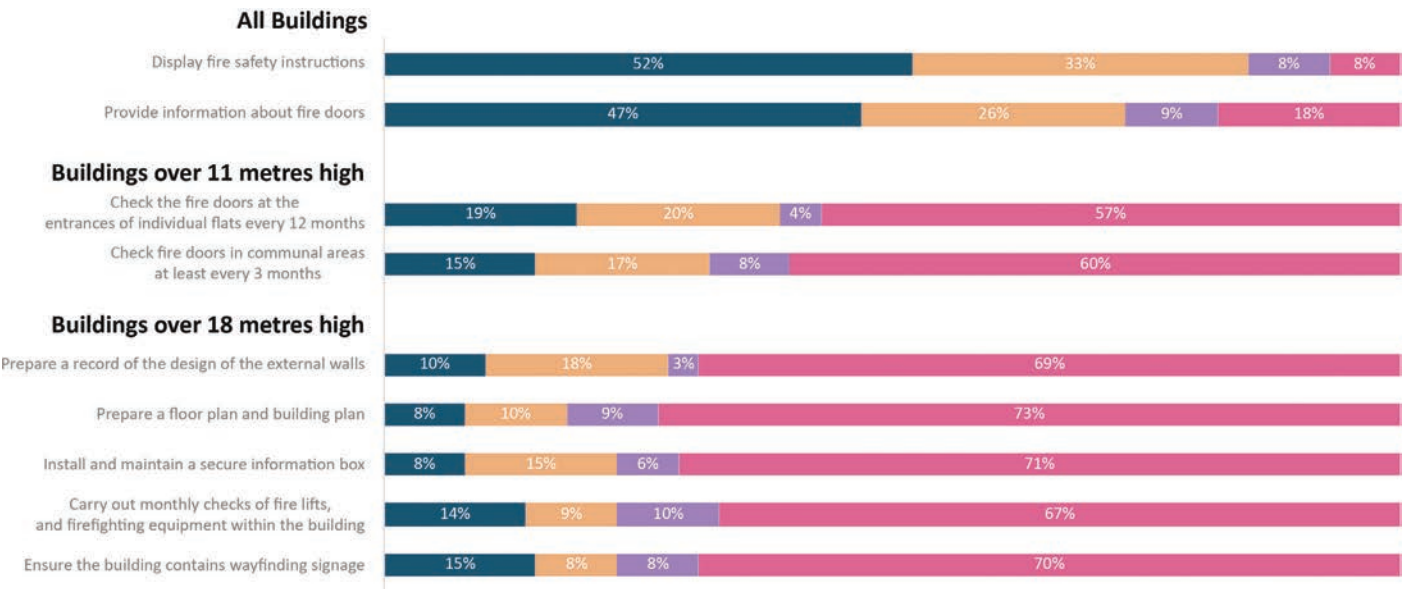
BEHIND EVERY DOORSET

**From public sector housing to high rise residential developments, student accommodation and retirement complexes, we offer a wide range of interior doorset products and straight-talking support to give your project the complete solution.**

- A UK, volume interior doorset manufacturer with dedicated nationwide team support
- Fire, smoke and security rated interior doorsets in a wide range of designs, colours and finishes
- Choose from a wide range of hardware including handles, hinges, access controls and more
- Third party certified interior doorsets for added compliance and peace of mind
- Digital data pins added to all Certifire doorsets for golden thread compliance

Contact the experts today: [www.jeld-wen.co.uk](http://www.jeld-wen.co.uk)





Following these updates at the start of this year, what options best suit your actions on the following updates?

■ Actioned prior to updated legislation ■ Actioned because of legislation ■ Yet to action ■ Not applicable to my properties

15% of our respondents had actioned this prior to the changes (21%, 2023), 17% have done so because of the regulations (11%, 2023), 8% were yet to do so (2%, 2023), and 60% said the rules didn't apply to their stock (65%, 2023).

This means that this year, 20% of those who manage stock with requirements to check their fire doors to communal areas every three months, are yet to meet this requirement, up notably from 6% last year.

OVER 18 METRES

Given the particular importance of the recent changes, there are several new requirements for buildings over 18 metres.

Despite this, nearly a third of those who believed the rules applied to their stock were yet to see the standards met.

FIRE EQUIPMENT AND LIFTS

When asked if they carry out monthly checks on fire equipment and lifts in the buildings they manage, of those who said the rules applied to their stock, 42% were completing the checks that frequently before the changes (50%, 2023) and 28% were doing so because of the them (33%, 2023).

This leaves 30% who believed the rules applied to their stock but were not carrying out monthly checks on fire equipment or lifts.

EXTERNAL WALL RECORD

We asked if they have prepared a record of the design of the external walls since the regulation changes, 10% had already done so (7%, 2023), 18% actioned this following the changes (6%, 2023), 69% said the rules didn't apply to their stock (83%, 2023) and 3% believed the rules applied to them, but were yet to take action on this (5%, 2023).

PREPARE A FLOOR AND BUILDING PLAN

8% of respondents had prepared a floor and building plan before the latest changes (11%, 2023), 10% had done so following the changes (8%, 2023), 73% said the rules didn't apply to their stock (79%, 2023), leaving 9% that were yet to take action (2%, 2023).

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

When asked if they had ensured their buildings contained wayfinding signage following the updates, 15% were already doing so (13%, 2023), 8% had done so

because of the changes (4%, 2023), 70% said the rules didn't apply to their stock (78%, 2023), and 8% said the rules applied to their stock, but they were yet to do this (4%, 2023).

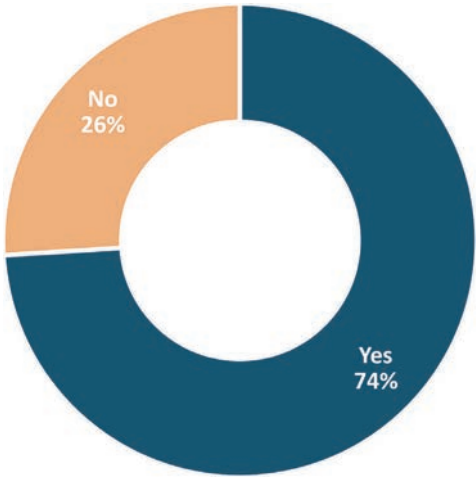
PERCEPTIONS OF IMPROVEMENT

Over the same two years, *Housing Management & Maintenance* also asked respondents how they would rate the improvement of fire safety in various areas, such as their own stock, or the country's social housing stock as a whole.

Overall, the large majority of respondents believed each area was making some degree of improvement over the last five years, though this year saw a notable rise in respondents believing the private rented and social housing sectors were in decline.

THEIR STOCK

When asked how the fire safety of the housing they manage has improved in the last five years, 18% said it had vastly improved (15%, 2023), 58% said it has improved (39%, 2023), and 20% said it had slightly improved (40%, 2023).



Do you work on any housing that falls under the Fire Safety Regulations 2022 updates this year that require a Responsible Person?



# Fire Doorset Solutions

## One Stamp, Many Approvals

Following an 18 month development, test and accreditation program, Winkhaus UK are launching a range of timber and composite UKCA 3<sup>rd</sup> Party accredited external fire doorsets.

The introduction of the external range of fire doorsets is in addition to the existing range of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party accredited timber and composite internal fire doorsets, which we recently expanded to provide the most comprehensive range of options for all your project requirements.

For further information on the new ranges of external timber and composite fire doorsets or our expanded ranges of internal fire doorsets, or for advice and support with your specifications, please scan the QR code or email [marketing@winkhaus.co.uk](mailto:marketing@winkhaus.co.uk)



Scan here for more information



**DLUHC COMPLIANT:**  
Fire, Smoke & Security



**UKCA:**  
UK Conformity Assessed



**EN 1634:**  
Fire Resistance & Smoke Control



**PAS 24:**  
Enhanced Security



**3<sup>rd</sup> PARTY CERTIFIED:**  
Fire, Smoke & Security



This year, just 4% said fire safety in their stock had slightly worsened over this period (4%, 2023), and no respondents said it had worsened or vastly worsened, both at 1% in 2023.

#### LEGISLATION

Considering progress in fire safety legislation over the same period, 10% believed it had vastly improved (14%, 2023), 51% said it had improved (37%, 2023), and 23% said slightly improved (43%, 2023).

A notable 10% believed legislation had slightly worsened over this period (5%, 2023), 4% worsened (1%, 2023), and 1% vastly worsened (0%, 2023) – though an 85% approval rating for legislative changes is arguably quite successful.

#### PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

This year saw a fall in the perception of fire safety in the private rental sector. 2% said it had vastly improved over the last five years (15%, 2023), 33% said it had improved (32%, 2023), and 33% said it had slightly improved (47%, 2023).

This leaves 23% who believed it had slightly worsened over this period (4%, 2023), 8% worsened (3%, 2023), and none vastly worsened, as in 2023.

#### SOCIAL HOUSING

8% believed fire safety in social housing had vastly improved over the last five years (15%, 2023), 52% improved (32%, 2023), and 21% slightly improved (47%, 2023).

Another negative trend, left 14% that believed it had slightly worsened (5%, 2023), 6% worsened (1%, 2023) and again none vastly worsened for both years.

#### SPECIFICATION

Respondents were also asked about two areas of their stock's specification in particular, category LD2 fire detection systems – required in circulation areas that form part of the escape routes – and unsafe cladding – with the potential to increase the spread of a fire.

#### LD2 DETECTION SYSTEMS

When asked what percentage of their properties have a Category LD2 fire detection system installed, 28% said 10 to 50% (14% 2023), 7% said 60 to 70% (9%, 2023), 7% said 80 to 90% (11%, 2023), 40% said all of their properties (33%, 2023), and 18% said none (18%, 2023).

#### UNSAFE CLADDING

While 73% this year said they have not worked on any housing in the last six months that had unsafe cladding installed (81%, 2023), this leaves the 27% (19%, 2023) who were still working on buildings they believed to be unsafe because of the cladding on them.

### FOUR YEARS OF BARRIERS

While the majority of respondents have adapted well to fire safety changes in the last two years, there are still those who continue to report failings.

Our research data since 2021 goes some way to form a picture of why this is – highlighting where companies are failing, and the barriers to their success.

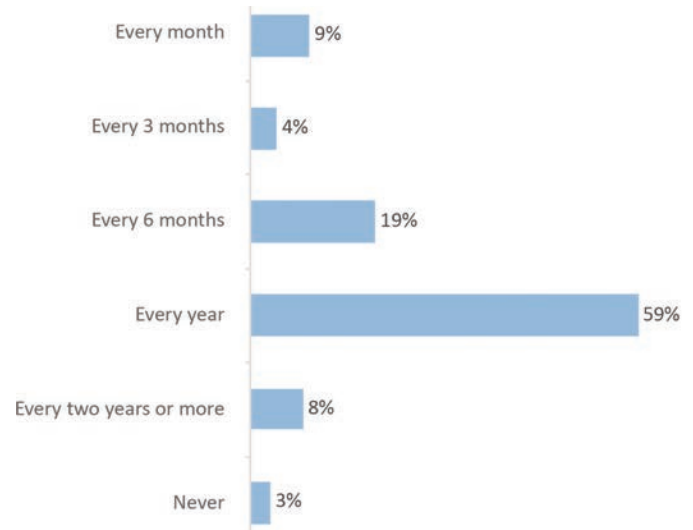
#### FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Fire risk assessments are a vital component in ensuring the risk of fires starting are low, as well as of it spreading, and that people are alerted when it does occur and able to escape.

Since 2021, housing professionals were asked how often they completed assessments, how often they passed, what their main causes of failure were, and how long it took them to address the issues.

#### FREQUENCY

When asked how often respondents conducted fire risk assessments, the average time has slowly fallen, though negligibly from 2023.



How often do you or your association/organisation conduct fire risk assessments on each property under your company's remit

In 2021, the average was 336 days between assessments, 319 in 2022, 305 in 2023, and 304 in 2024.

Further, across all years, there is always a very small – but still disturbing – minority who continue to report that no fire risk assessments are conducted across their stock, at 4% in 2021, 2% in 2022, 4% last year, and 3% this year.

#### PASS OR FAIL

Looking at the rate of passing these assessments, respondents across all years reported a relatively strong performance.

In 2021, the average was 78%, in 2022 it was 90%, in 2023 it was 81%, and 82% in 2024. Though fairly high, it does mean that in most years, around 1 in 5 assessments taken are failed.

#### CAUSES OF FAILURE

Looking at their most common reasons for failing fire risk assessments, the top three of each year highlighted consistent pressure points.

Across all years, issues around fire doors were the most commonly cited cause of failure, with recurring themes in the second and third places.

In 2021, fire doors were followed by ageing properties, then ageing products. 2022 was the same but in reverse. In 2023 it was holes in walls, then ageing properties. And in 2024, again fire doors were followed by ageing products, then ageing properties.

#### REMEDIATION

Considering how long it takes to address these issues on average, the results were also fairly consistent – despite a dip in 2022-23.

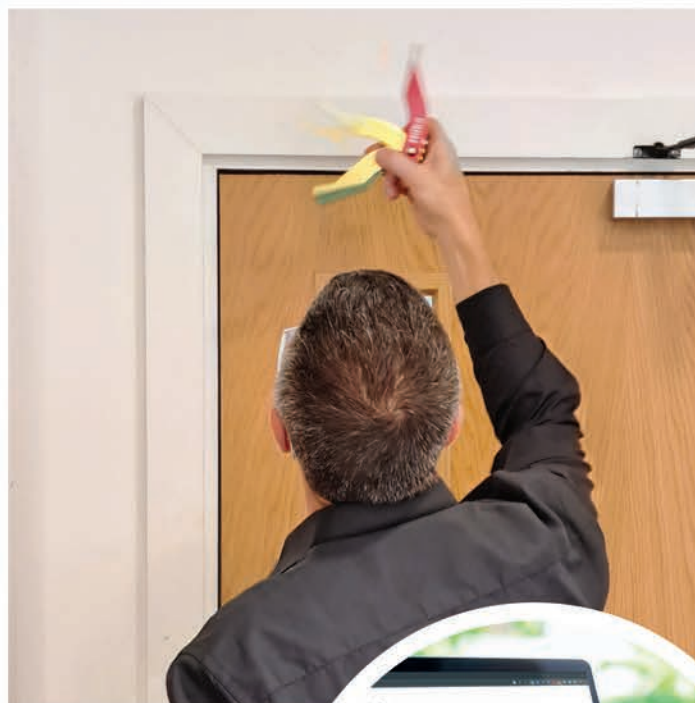
In 2021, respondents reported it took them around 42 days to address assessment failures, 33 days in 2022, 27 days in 2023, and 43 days in 2024.

#### SOURCES OF RISK

From 2022, respondents were also asked what they believed to be the largest cause of risk to fire safety in housing, and the main reasons they believe this risk remains.

#### BIGGEST CAUSES OF RISK

As to the causes of risk, there was fairly little consensus among respondents. The top three cited as the greatest fire risk in housing in 2022 were flammable products, followed by smoking and broken fire doors. In 2023, candles were the most common, followed by electrical faults, and then faulty appliances.



**Fire doors save lives and property, but only if they're compliant.**

Inspections  
complete  
with digital  
reporting



## Have you had yours checked recently?

There are many factors to consider when checking the compliance of a fire door. Under the Fire Safety Order 2005, the Responsible Person for fire safety must carry out any necessary assessments and actions to ensure that all equipment in their building is safe and compliant. This includes organising inspections and maintenance for fire doors.

**We can help make compliance easy with our range of fire door services!**



Inspections



Measure-up



Supply & install



Installations

**Talk to us about our  
fire door services**



Call 01273 320650



Visit [www.fireco.uk](http://www.fireco.uk)

Scan to request  
a free quote



fireco.online/HMM-Aug2024



This year, the results were much closer, but there was still little consensus. 64% believed flammable products, cooking and electrical faults to be a large cause of fire risk, 62% believed broken fire doors and faulty appliances were a large risk, and 61% said tenant failures.

THE REASONS THEY REMAIN

Respondents were also asked what they believed to be the main factors that this risk continues, with only uninformed tenants making the top three each year.

Cheap products led the way in 2022 as the major reason these risks remain present, followed by untrustworthy manufacturers, and uninformed tenants. Costs were first in 2023, followed by uninformed tenants and a lack of Government support. This year, malicious tenants were the most commonly cited reason the risks remain present, followed by landlord malpractice and costs.

RESPONSIBILITY

Looking at who housing professionals believed to be the most responsible for reducing fire risk in housing, there were varying trends across the four years in some areas, but a small majority have consistently put the onus on landlords.

This year, 56% said the main onus should be on landlords, leading the way every year with a maximum of 6% difference across the four years (51%, 2021; 50%, 2022; 57%, 2023).

13% said the onus should be on building owners this year, falling year on year from 40% in 2021 to 32% in 2022 and 27% in 2023. This year, 9% said tenants, rising from 2% in 2021 to 10% in 2022, back to 9% in 2023.

Of the remaining share, 7% said local council (5%, 2021; 2% 2022; 3% 2023), 3% said builders, never rising higher over the four years (2%, 2021; 0%, 2022; 1%, 2023), and 12% chose ‘other’, including “the housing committee” and “everybody” (0%, 2021; 6%, 2022; 10%, 2023).

UNDERSTANDING

While the majority of respondents consistently report they at least mainly understand fire regulations, each year over one in five – to almost a third (32%) this year – said they partially understood them or less.

18% said completely this year, followed by 24% in 2023, 16% in 2022 and 17% in 2021. 50% said mainly this year, 54% in 2023, 63% in 2022, and 54% in 2021.

This left 20% that said partially (16%, 2023; 20%, 2022; 24%, 2021), 12% that said slightly (5%, 2023; 0%, 2022; 5%, 2021), and nobody that said they did not understand the regulations at all (2%, 2023; 1%, 2022; 0%, 2021).

A clear and consistent regulatory framework, increased investment in housing safety, enhanced education and awareness, and effective collaboration among key stakeholders are essential to achieve meaningful progress.

REPORTING RISK

While always a minority, an average of one in ten respondents over the four years report they have been put in a position where it would be uncomfortable to report fire safety issues or malpractice to a superior or relevant authority, or that their voices would not be heard in the matter.

7% said they had been put in such a position before in the last two years, falling from 11% in 2022 and 16% in 2021. In the last two years, 7% were currently in that position, falling from 33% in 2022 and 25% in 2021.

4% this year said they had never been in such a position, but that they knew someone who has, falling a little from a high of 11% in 2021 to 10% in 2022, and 5% in 2023.

CONCLUSION

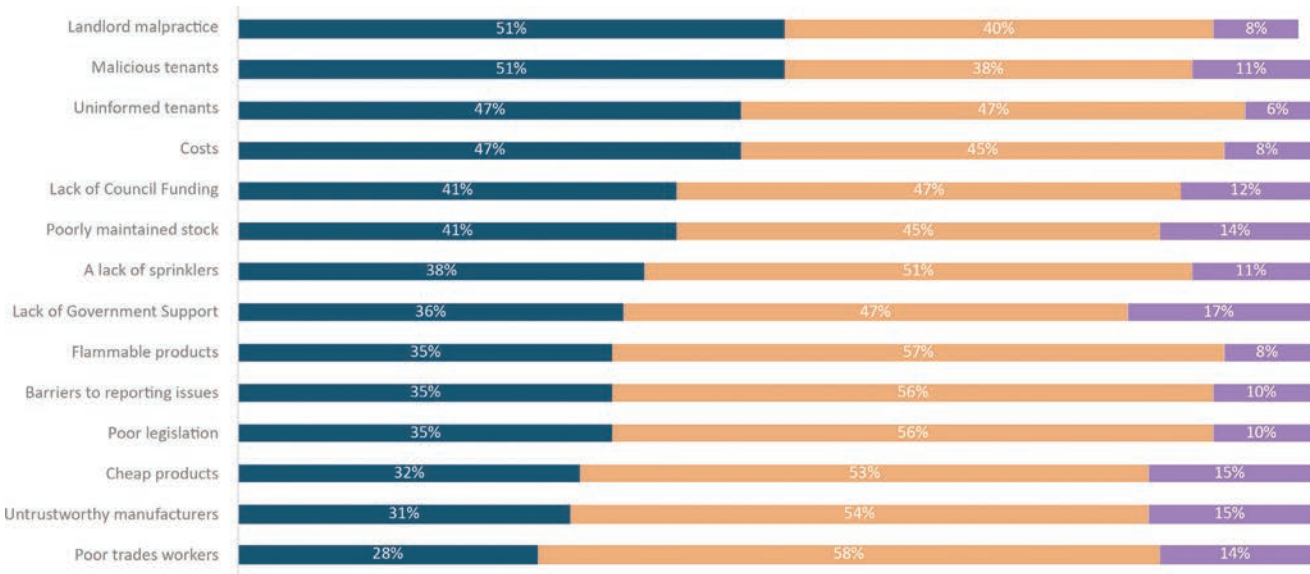
Fire safety remains a critical concern within the UK housing sector.

Despite the numerous legislative changes in the last few years, while many housing professionals are meeting the standards, a significant number continue to see failure.

Our research over the last four years has revealed multiple reasons for this, from a lack of understanding, to costs, poor products, and the culture of reporting risk.

A clear and consistent regulatory framework, increased investment in housing safety, enhanced education and awareness, and effective collaboration among key stakeholders are essential to achieve meaningful progress.

Most fires are preventable, and the consequences of failure can be severe.

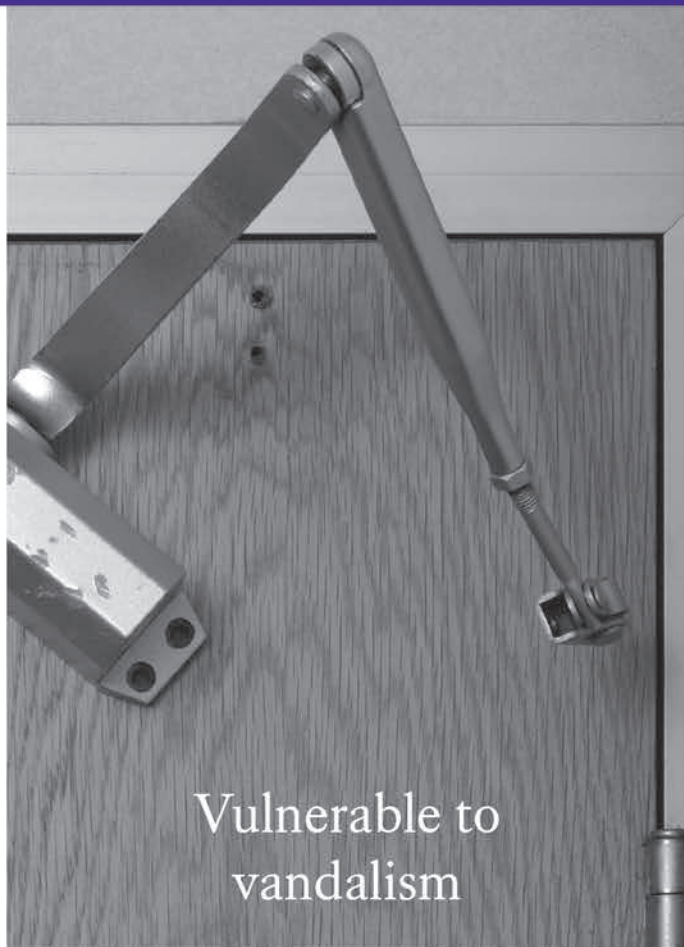


What do you think are the main reasons these risks remain present?

Major Reason Minor Reason Unsure/Don't know



# YOUR FIRE DOORS MAY COME WITH MORE THAN ONE OVERHEAD



Vulnerable to  
vandalism



Concealed from  
vandalism

Suitable for use on one-hour and half-hour fire doors.

Completely concealed when the door is closed.

May be used on social housing entrance doors.



## **POWERMATIC<sup>®</sup>**

The concealed door closer  
[concealeddoorclosers.com](http://concealeddoorclosers.com)

Tel 0121 766 4200 [info@samuel-heath.com](mailto:info@samuel-heath.com)



# Stepping up to support older residents

Peter Wingrave of AAT GB Ltd asks, is it time for a step change in the way we approach dealing with the crisis in our housing market?



The National Housing Federation claims that since 2010/11 the number of over 55 households in the private rented sector has grown by 70%

The biggest sector of growth is that of elderly tenants. Indeed, according to the Centre for Ageing Better, over 10m people are now aged over 65. 45% of older households have a member living with a long-term illness or disability. The National Housing Federation claims that since 2010/11 the number of over 55 households in the private rented sector has grown by 70% but is still (according to the English Housing Survey) less than half the number of those in social housing.

But it is widely acknowledged that the majority of housing stock is not suitable. The usual call is to build more homes, but we all know that takes time and money, and even then will not meet the demand: with only 427 wheelchair-accessible homes being built each year.

We need to think 'outside the box' and adopt strategies that can go some way to make our existing properties more age-appropriate.

The Government's paper 'Future of an Ageing Population' states "there is consensus that the home should enable people to maintain a good quality of life and be adaptable to suit their health and care needs. Over half of the non-specialised housing stock is estimated to require structural alterations to provide suitable access for older people, and over a quarter of inaccessible homes are not adaptable at all... The adaptability of existing stock is therefore crucial."

If a tenant is going to be a property for five years, they can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt the property to their needs; but when the tenant moves, how suitable will that property be for a new incumbent?

Under the Equality Act, a landlord has to make "reasonable" adjustments to accommodate a disabled person's needs, but there is no definition of "reasonable".

In an ideal world, should we be utilising alternative tools that optimise flexibility of the accommodation, making it potentially suitable for the widest possible number of tenants?

## ADAPTING THE BARRIER OF STAIRS

One of the biggest issues facing older renters is reduced mobility. The Centre for Ageing Better cites unsafe stairs as one of the five biggest issues impacting tenants' health & wellbeing: the stairs may not be themselves physically unsafe, it may be the mindset of the tenant that they are struggling to manage them safely with the associated fear of falling.

The English Housing Survey says that older social (41%) and private renters (23%) were more likely to live in low rise (three storeys or less) purpose built flats; for them, there is a real problem – there is no requirement to provide a lift in such low rise buildings, yet if the tenant cannot safely use the stairs, they become a prisoner in their home. Under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System, the landlord has to take necessary steps to make stairway access safe, inside and outside of the property and in common areas.

So how do landlords make those stairs accessible and safe without impinging access for the other tenants?

The answer is a stairclimber or stairclimbing wheelchair. It's a solution already utilised by almost every local authority in the country via the social care teams.

A stairclimber is a portable unit, not fixed to the staircase in any way. It can accommodate most common staircase designs. Battery powered, it can climb and descend 300 steps from one charge so more than enough to safely function up and down several flights. It just requires another person to be to hand to operate it.

## Under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System, the landlord has to take necessary steps to make stairway access safe, inside and outside of the property and in common areas

Because it is not fixed, it can be quickly re-allocated to another tenant or property when the original recipient no longer needs it, thus extending the scope of the whole property portfolio without any building works, making good etc.

It is worth noting that a stairclimber can also accommodate external steps, be it to the front, back door, into a garden area, or the wider environment. Accessibility and social cohesion are two of the most significant factors that affect how older people experience their neighbourhood.

Such equipment also enables a comfortable, safe means of evacuation, facilitating compliance with the Building Safety Act.

Further, reputable suppliers will support landlords with assessments of the tenant and care team to verify the suitability of the equipment, set it to the tenant's requirements, train any operatives, manage the equipment, undertaking annual service & maintenance, and acting as an extension to your maintenance team in managing the removal and re-allocation. Thus, the landlord's obligations to undertake "reasonable" adjustments for disabled tenants are met, and the doors of a property opened for an older tenant who may otherwise struggle because of steps into/out of the property, or the stairs within...

It's a different approach, but in these current times where we have a growing older tenancy, if nothing else it answers an immediate need to reduce – or eliminate – the impact of reduced mobility on a tenant's ability to occupy or continue to rent a particular property.

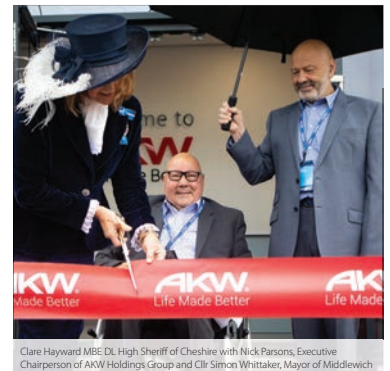
*Peter Wingrave is director at AAT GB Ltd*



## AKW opens manufacturing facility and showroom in heart of the North West

AKW, one of the UK's leading providers of accessibility solutions, is pleased to announce the opening of its sizeable new showroom and manufacturing facility in Middlewich, Cheshire. AKW is proud to continue investing in British manufacturing and the 26,000 sq ft facility will produce accessible bathroom and kitchen products from across the company's portfolio. In addition, the site includes offices and a large bathroom and kitchen showroom and client assessment centre, to enable Occupational Therapists, contractors, and other specifiers in the North West to experience AKW's product range in situ and receive product training as needed. Following the acquisition of Contour Showers Limited in 2022, it quickly became clear that the existing Contour facility in Winsford would not be able to meet AKW's manufacturing requirements. A new production site in Total Park, Middlewich, was subsequently taken on under a long-term lease and the layout amended during construction to suit AKW's needs. Located three miles from junction 18 of the M6, AKW's new facility is EPC A-rated and features roof mounted solar panels which will generate an estimated 15,000 kWh electricity per year for the site. Alongside AKW staff, all of the Winsford site's employees have made the move to the facility and a fuel allowance, free transport service and hybrid working have been set up to make the transition easier.

01905 823298 [www.akw-ltd.co.uk/akw-opens-parsons-house](http://www.akw-ltd.co.uk/akw-opens-parsons-house)



Clare Hayward MBE DL High Sheriff of Cheshire with Nick Parsons, Executive Chairperson of AKW Holdings Group and Cllr Simon Whittaker, Mayor of Middlewich

## A revolution for the construction industry

SFS Group Fastening Technology have launched an innovative solution for the construction market, which will save time onsite. The new TDBL- nonut® – which carries ETA-11/0191 approval – has exceptional performance thanks to its patented thread shape, under-head locking detail and trilobular geometry. Together ensuring that the fastener remains firmly in place and cannot be loosened. Thus, ensuring cost-effective time savings when compared to the traditional nut and bolt. The TDBL- nonut® enables fast and easy installation from one side meaning it can be used in previously inaccessible or hard-to-reach places.



[uk.sfs.com](http://uk.sfs.com)

## Housing Management & Maintenance

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



[www.housingmmonline.co.uk](http://www.housingmmonline.co.uk)



# Closing the compliance gap

The findings from the latest HMM white paper provides insight into the changing landscape for fire safety in social housing, and although compliance levels are increasing, there are still significant failings that need to be addressed to ensure compliant fire and life safety solutions are in place and maintained across the sector. In this article Mark Alton, Fire Product Manager at Winkhaus UK, looks at the gaps the research has highlighted for fire doorsets, advising the corrective actions required for social housing providers to create and implement a compliant fire strategy

### WHAT DEFINES A “BETTER” FIRE SAFETY PRODUCT TO YOU?

The research responses suggest that “better fire safety products” are chosen based on their longevity and that they should come from trusted brands, with no mention of their performance or evidence of their compliance.

The changes in legislation have been created to help us define what a better fire product is, it's a compliant product and don't just take the manufactures word for it, ensure it is verified by an independent body. The introduction of 3rd party certification across the lifecycle of fire doorset was one of the best ways of demonstrating due diligence has been fulfilled. For responsible persons and tenants, this provides confidence in the information provided and peace of mind that a compliant solution is being specified, manufactured, installed and maintained.

UKAS accredited 3rd Party auditing is not just required to verify test data for fire doors, but best practice to demonstrate compliance. All these stages within the Golden Thread refer to the original Design and Test evidence, ensuring the correct components are being used to make and maintain a door.

### MAINTAINING EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

To ensure continued performance and compliance post installation and handover, fire doorsets require regular fire assessment or inspection. The research shows an average of one annual fire assessment being completed, however in our specific question on maintenance and inspection, we see only 51% of respondents scheduling annual inspection for flat entrance doors and the required quarterly inspections for communal/external fire doorsets, meaning this

schedule is not in place for almost half the fire doorsets captured in this survey. The original design and test evidence for a fire doorset becomes the golden thread of evidence that must be maintained throughout the lifecycle of a fire doorset. Scheduled inspection is there to ensure the golden thread is maintained and if remedial maintenance is required, it is completed in accordance with the original design and test evidence for the fire doorset. This reduces ongoing replacement costs for providers, as if the thread is broken by not inspecting and maintaining, the fire doorset will need to be replaced.

### HOW DO WE CLOSE THE GAP IN COMPLIANCE?

Understanding and challenging the barriers for compliance requires a wider debate within our sector in order to increase the importance of fire safety in the long list of other priorities social housing providers must juggle within their budgets and available funding.

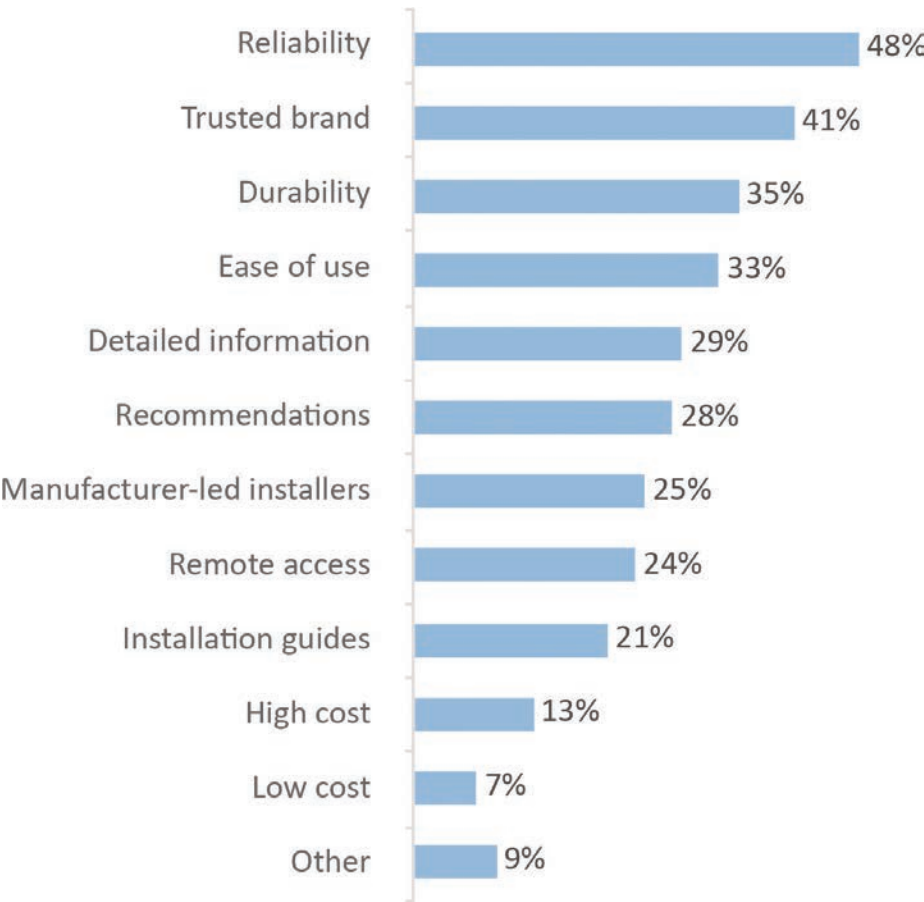
What can be controlled is the internal processes that need to be created and implemented to ensure compliance with legislation and that they then become common practice. From the survey findings these are three take aways we advise those who are not currently compliant implement:

- Ensure your fire doorset specifications cover the whole lifecycle of a fire doorset and that they ensure the original design and test evidence is maintained.
- Seek 3rd Party verification from providers that they have ongoing capability to manufacture, install and maintain the solutions they propose, in line with the original design and test evidence.
- Risk assess and maintain your fire doorsets to reduce replacement costs, maintaining your evidence of compliance and performance.

### WINKHAUS SUPPORT

Creating compliant fire doorset specifications can be challenging for specifiers especially with the number and significance of changes in recent years. To support specifiers, we have created a series of checklists to simplify these changes, we offer support for specifiers in creation of their specifications and training to support their fire compliance journey.

For further information on how we can help with your specifications, to request copies of our checklists, for information on the new ranges



What defines a “better” fire safety product to you?

## The Golden Thread

Fire Doorset legislation has changed significantly in recent years, with the Golden Thread one of the most important changes.

**The Golden Thread of information** is for **all higher risk residential buildings (HRRBs)**, so that their **original design intent is preserved** and **changes can be managed through a formal review process**. There are five steps in the life cycle of compliance for a Fire Doorset, with the first (Design & Test) also the reference point for all others to ensure the **original design intent is preserved**.



### 1 DESIGN & TEST

The 3 critical performances of a Fire Doorset – **Fire, Smoke & Security**

Tested to **EN 1634-1** (Fire)

Doorsets Tested from both sides

Tested to **EN 1634-3** (Smoke)

Enhanced Security – **PAS24**

Full range of products under a Field of Application

The Field of Application is **3<sup>rd</sup> Party** Certified

### 2 SPECIFY

Site surveyors are **3<sup>rd</sup> Party** Accredited

Surveyors receive specific product training

Surveyors have the skills and knowledge to ensure the Fire Doorset is suitable for the installation

### 3 MANUFACTURING

Operators trained in Fire door specific characteristics

Factory specific Fire Door procedures

**3<sup>rd</sup> Party** certification as part of a **Factory Process Audit**

Factory Process Control establishes constancy and traceability through manufacturing

### 4 INSTALLATION

Site installation team are **3<sup>rd</sup> Party** Certified

Installation team receive specific product training

The installation is fully documented, detailing products used

Homeowner/Tenant sign over on completion

Full audit trail for Responsible Person

### 5 MAINTENANCE POST INSPECTION

Maintenance is covered by a **3<sup>rd</sup> Party** Certification Scheme

Maintenance team receive specific product training

Maintenance team replace defective/damaged items

Warranties are not effected by approved work

Ensure that door components are Current & Correct

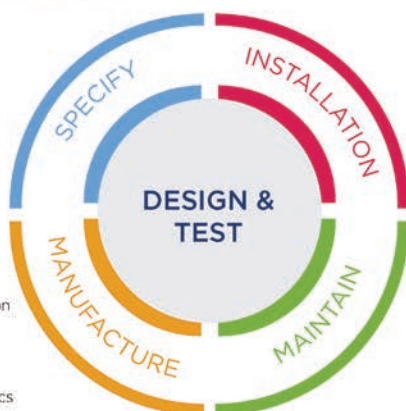
Provides full traceability for the **Life Cycle** of the Fire Doorset

### PLANNED ANNUAL INSPECTION

Inspector **3<sup>rd</sup> Party** Certified

Inspector has received specific product training

Inspections carried out against the Field of Application



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

of external timber and composite fire doorset solutions or our expanded ranges of internal timber and composite fire doorset solutions, please visit [www.winkhaus.co.uk/en/firedoorsets](https://www.winkhaus.co.uk/en/firedoorsets) or email [marketing@winkhaus.co.uk](mailto:marketing@winkhaus.co.uk)

### WHY WINKHAUS?

Over the past decade the Winkhaus UK Technical Team have been involved in the creation and implementation of the latest standards and guidance for fire doorsets. Winkhaus fire doorset solutions are manufactured through our partner network of over sixty 3rd Party certified companies. With

our partner fabricators, we have one of the largest evidence banks of compliant solutions for both timber and composite internal and external fire doorsets, all independently audited by BM Trada as part of their Q Mark and UKCA Mark schemes. This not only ensures our test evidence is always compliant, but always expanding to provide the most comprehensive range of options for all your project requirements.

Our range of solutions includes both 30 minute and 60 minute fire doorset solutions, with our internal 30 minute solutions averaging 47 minutes performance, an average over 50% higher than the

minimum allowed results and with several tests achieving over an hour's performance.

[marketing@winkhaus.co.uk](mailto:marketing@winkhaus.co.uk)  
[www.winkhaus.co.uk/en/firedoorsets](https://www.winkhaus.co.uk/en/firedoorsets)



Winkhaus Evidence Bank	Composite Fire Doorsets		Timber Fire Doorsets	
	Internal 30	External 30	Internal 30/60	External 30
Q Mark Fire	✓	n/a	✓	n/a
Q Mark Smoke	✓	n/a	✓	n/a
Q Mark Security	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party UKCA Fire & Smoke	n/a	✓	n/a	✓
Mirrored Test Evidence	✓	✓	✓	✓

Winkhaus scope of accreditation for internal and external fire doorsets



# Fire door compliance: Beyond stock condition surveys – what Facility Managers need to know



## The National Fire Door Register



Jim Kerr, Managing Director of Door Data Systems

### MANAGING EXISTING FIRE DOORS

When it comes to fire door management, starting with stock condition surveys might seem like the obvious choice. However, as a Facility Manager or Responsible Person, it's crucial to ensure that the advice you're receiving is accurate. But is a stock condition survey really the best starting point? I suggest that understanding fire safety requirements and engaging with a reputable Fire Risk Assessor should be your first step.

Legislation doesn't require every fire door to meet the latest codes, but it does mandate that systems of maintenance are in place and that work is carried out by a Competent Person. In fact, as a Responsible Person, you're strongly encouraged to work with competent professionals. Therefore, assembling a skilled team and clearly defining roles and responsibilities should be your first priority.

### WHAT DOES COMPETENCY REALLY MEAN?

Competency isn't as complicated as it might seem. Consider the following when assessing potential team members:

- Skills: What specific skills does the individual possess?
- Knowledge: Where did they acquire their knowledge, and how extensive is it?
- Experience: How much experience do they have, and in what contexts? You might even present them with sample scenarios to gauge their problem-solving abilities.

### UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A FIRE DOOR INSPECTOR

A Fire Door Inspector's job is to evaluate the condition of a door and assign it a risk level based on its current state. It's important to note that this risk level applies to the door itself and should not be

confused with the building's overall risk assessment, though their findings will certainly influence it. Keep in mind that a Fire Door Inspector is not a designer. Unless qualified, they shouldn't specify which doors to use. Instead, it's up to the Responsible Person(s) to review the inspection report and obtain quotes for repairs, maintenance, or replacements. This decision should be made in conjunction with the Risk Assessor's findings.

### ENGAGING CONTRACTORS: AVOIDING COMMON PITFALLS

When hiring contractors, a common mistake is to engage only those with third-party certification. However, it's essential to understand the limitations of these schemes. For example, some schemes may not recognise repairs that others do. Ask yourself:

- Can the door be repaired to its original state and function as intended?
- Is the repair practical, or should new doors be considered?

Remember: Installing a new door constitutes a design change, which must be documented and is often notifiable.

### NEW DOORS: INSTALLATION AND CERTIFICATION

For new doors, third-party certification schemes require that installation guides are provided with each door. Without these guides, the margin for error increases significantly. To manage a building's fire doors throughout its lifecycle, Fire Certification is essential. The Field of Application or Global Assessment will give critical information for building owners and managers, making it imperative that this documentation is easily traceable to each door.

Beware of the misconception that a fire door inspector will sign off on installation work. The responsibility for installation lies with the company and individuals who perform the job. While a door may be inspected as a final check during handover, the inspector cannot be held accountable for the installation.

### COMPLIANCE, EVIDENCE, AND TRACKING

Managing fire doors effectively involves maintaining comprehensive records from manufacturing through installation to ongoing inspections and maintenance. Door Data Systems offers leading software that allows each trade to contribute to a door's history, ensuring detailed records are kept. The system simplifies reporting, speeds up maintenance, and reduces the need for multiple site visits by engineers.

With a centralised dashboard, Facility Managers can access key data, schedule work, appoint contractors, monitor door status, export reports, and integrate with existing asset management systems. Designed to deliver ongoing benefits, Door Data Systems helps reduce costs, improve standards, and support continued education and improvement in fire safety.

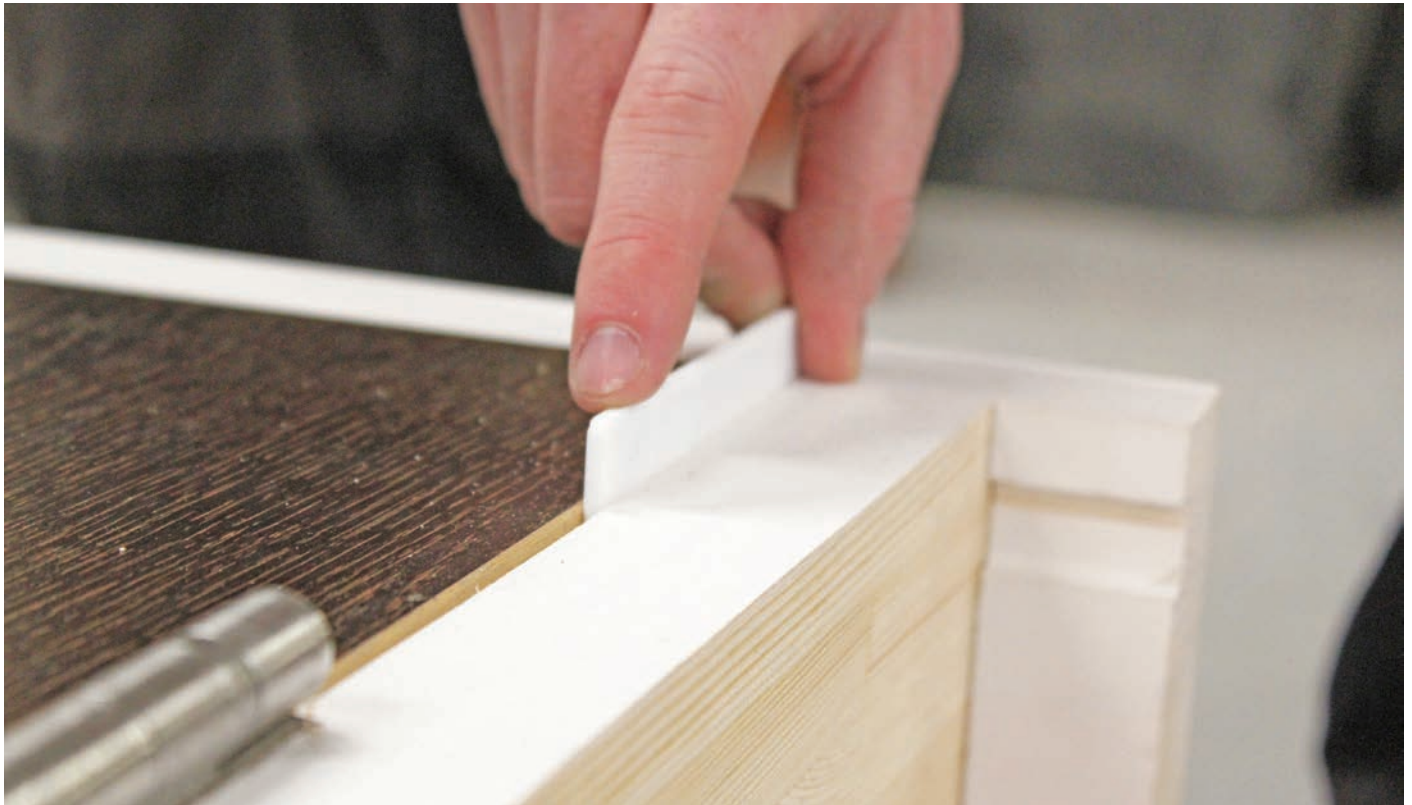
Standard features incorporating voice recognition for onsite reporting, adding parts and door details ensures comprehensive regulatory reports. Offline working and API integration provides ease of use for field operatives and facility management.

*For further support and guidance on fire door management, contact Jim Kerr, Managing Director of Door Data Systems.*

**Jim.kerr@doordatasystems.co.uk**  
**03301 330679 www.doordatasystems.co.uk**

# Fire Door Safety Week

Helen Hewitt of the British Woodworking Federation (BWF) explores how legislation is driving forward fire safety standards and how Fire Door Safety Week remains crucial for raising awareness of fire doors and their life saving role



**T**his September Fire Door Safety Week marks its 11th year of raising awareness about the vital role that fire doors play in protecting building occupants across the UK.

The campaign has played a crucial role in driving greater awareness over the last decade, but the latest fire data shows the importance of continuing to champion fire door safety best practice and awareness.

In the residential sector, the Fire and Rescue Services in England attended 702 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10 or more storeys) flats or maisonettes in the year ending December 2023. This is a slight decrease on the previous year (733 fires), but it clearly demonstrates how vital fire safety awareness is, particularly for residents in high-rise properties.

While appearing as a standard door a majority of the time, fire doors play a fundamental life-saving role during a fire. Preventing the spread of fire and/or smoke, fire doors help enable a safe means of escape for building occupants and a route for the emergency services to enter the building. However, improper maintenance, being propped open, or damage to fire doors often goes unreported and unresolved.

## EVOLUTION OF FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, fire safety has rightly been in the spotlight with a focus on driving forward legislation and industry best practice. For housing associations and council-owned residential properties, regulation sets the benchmark for fire safety standards.

To drive forward fire safety across the construction industry, the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 placed greater accountability on the 'responsible person(s)' for fire safety and traceability throughout the supply chain – with evidence required to demonstrate building regulations compliance and proof of product performance.

In addition, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 implemented many recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report and applied it to multi-occupancy residential buildings in England over 11 metres in height.

These regulations primarily focus on the role of the 'responsible person' and multi-occupancy buildings, with two key areas regarding fire doors: keeping residents informed and fire door inspection.

To encourage the correct use of fire doors and reporting of maintenance issues, the responsible person needs to ensure that all residents are aware of crucial information about fire doors: that fire doors should remain closed when not being used to enter or exit an area and should not be tampered with in any way.

The legislation also sets out the minimum for fire door inspection, with the responsible person required to carry out annual inspections of all flat entrance doors that lead onto the building's common areas. This involves inspecting the self-closing devices and ensuring that they are functioning properly. The regulations highlight that these checks are visual and simple to carry out without the need for a specialist or tools.

At the BWF we believe that everyone can play a role in keeping buildings across the UK fire safe. From ensuring that fire doors remain closed to reporting damage, all building users can take a proactive approach to maintaining fire safety.

## RAISING AWARENESS

Since the campaign's launch in 2013, Fire Door Safety Week has been integral in raising awareness of the role fire doors play in keeping building occupants safe. The annual campaign, which will take place this year from 23 – 27 September, is funded and managed by the BWF and is supported by a wide range of industry partners, including the National Fire Chiefs Council.





As part of the BWF's ongoing activity to raise awareness of fire safety, this year's Fire Door Safety Week will highlight the vital role of fire doors and share important information to encourage confidence in reporting maintenance issues.

The campaign will also launch new research that will explore which building's people feel are the most fire safe and the role that fire doors play in helping people feel safe. The campaign will highlight that in all environments it's important to remain alert to fire safety risks and aware of the fire safety measures in your surroundings.

Fire Door Safety Week will empower building users to spot common fire safety issues, such as blocked escape routes or propped open fire doors, and provide them with the confidence and information needed to report issues.

Fire doors perform a life-saving role in the event of a fire, yet they can only perform effectively if they are well maintained and fit for purpose. Through Fire Door Safety Week, we continue to raise awareness and highlight the role that everyone can play in being able to recognise and report fire doors issues to help keep all building users safe.

*Helen Hewitt is CEO of the British Woodworking Federation*

#### THE FIVE STEP FIRE DOOR CHECK

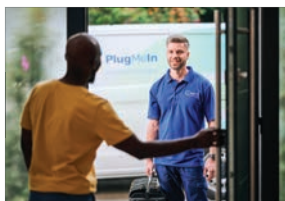
Identify fire door maintenance issues in five simple steps:

1. **Certification:** Look for a label or plug on the top or side of the door. Without a certification mark you cannot be sure it's a fire door – if you're unsure, report it.
2. **Gaps:** Check the gaps around the top and side of the fire door, they should be less than 4mm when the door is closed. The gap under the door can be up to 8 mm. If the gaps are larger, report it as this could allow smoke and fire to travel through.
3. **Seals:** Look for the intumescent seals around the door and frame for signs of damage. The seals expand in contact with heat to stop smoke and fire moving through the cracks, so if there's signs of damage, report it.
4. **Hinges:** Check all three hinges are firmly fixed with no broken or missing screws. If there are issues, report it.
5. **Closing:** Check the door closes firmly without any sticking. The fire door can only perform its role if it closes properly. If it doesn't report it.

For more information visit: [firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk](http://firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk)

## Panasonic partners with Plug Me In

Panasonic is excited to announce its collaboration with heat pump installers, Plug Me In, to provide Panasonic Aquarea heat pumps as part of ScottishPower's clean heating customer offering. Engineers from ScottishPower's installer company, Plug Me In, will install Panasonic Aquarea L or J Series air-to-water heat pumps with Panasonic Smart Cloud controls for customers on behalf of the ScottishPower Customer Business in the UK. Panasonic will make available their wide range of Aquarea units to Plug Me In to ensure the correct size of heat pump is installed in each home.



[www.aircon.panasonic.eu](http://www.aircon.panasonic.eu) [www.plugmein.com/heat-pumps](http://www.plugmein.com/heat-pumps)

## K3 rads from Stelrad

K3 radiators have come into their own in recent years as the number of low temperature, renewable heating systems has grown – in particular in replacement heating system installations. In these situations, K3 radiators from Stelrad, with three panels and three sets of fins, providing 50% more metal heating surface than a standard K2 for example, but from the same size radiator footprint – offer a solution. For more information on the choice of radiators available and for selection and fitting tips head for [www.stelrad.com/trade](http://www.stelrad.com/trade) or go to the Stelrad videos on You Tube.



[sales@stelrad.com](mailto:sales@stelrad.com) [www.stelrad.com/trade](http://www.stelrad.com/trade)

**HMM IS ON LINKEDIN**

[WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/SHOWCASE/HOUSING-MANAGEMENT-MAINTENANCE](http://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/SHOWCASE/HOUSING-MANAGEMENT-MAINTENANCE)

**Housing Management & Maintenance**  
Book and Periodical Publishing  
HousingMag, Great Britain - 271 followers  
Providing a comprehensive insight into current affairs in the social and private rented sectors.

**About us**  
Since its inception in 2016, Housing Management & Maintenance has garnered attention from a diverse readership comprising over 8,000 housing and facilities management professionals, including local authority and housing association representatives, buy-to-let investors and student accommodation providers.

An ABC-awarded magazine produced by established business publisher netMAGmedia, Housing Management & Maintenance provides a comprehensive insight into current affairs in the affordable housing and lettings sector in its Industry News section, which is overseen by highly experienced News Editor Patrick Mouney.

Patrick has spent over 30 years in the housing sector working for various local authorities, housing associations and regulatory bodies, and is currently a consultant, helping landlords to improve their services, performance, value for money and governance.

Website <http://www.housingmagonline.co.uk/>

# Why it's time to digitalise your fire door inspections

Fire doors are an integral part of your building's fire safety. They can stop the spread of smoke and fire, but they can only do this if they are compliant and inspected regularly. Now that the new fire safety regulations have come into effect, it's more important than ever to keep up to date with fire door inspections, with quarterly and yearly checks.

Fire door inspections involve checking every element of the doorset, from the door itself to the hardware. Every part of your fire door could have an impact on effectiveness and compliance, meaning inspection reports need to be thorough and comprehensive.

However, most reports are usually presented in lengthy Excel sheets or PDFs that can be difficult to understand, too time-consuming to read and leave you unable to quickly assess what doors need replacing.

With the amount of information and recommendations that a detailed inspection report generates, going digital with your fire door inspections will help you stay compliant and in control of all fire doors within your premises.

## CLOUD-BASED DOCUMENTATION

After the Grenfell tragedy, it is now the duty of the responsible person to put in place and maintain the golden thread of information, which was introduced to focus 'on the need to implement a more collaborative process of sharing information about high-rise residential buildings'. Having a golden thread means keeping easily accessible, reliable, accurate and up-to-date information.

Essentially, this golden thread of building information must be stored digitally and securely. It should serve as the definitive source of information for a building, accessible to those who require it for their tasks, exactly when needed, and presented in a usable format.


**Fireco**

Compliance Made Easy

By using a digital portal to record all your door inspections, you can store information for every aspect of the report and keep clear records of when the door was last inspected.

You can access all of the reports and inspection notes via Fireco's online DorTrak portal.

## SAVE TIME AND HAVE PEACE OF MIND

In light of the new legal requirements, the responsible person could find it challenging to maintain fire doors across multiple sites.

Many report formats don't include key information such as door certification, ratings and detailed reviews of door gaps. Reports that are overly complicated can make understanding and processing the data quite difficult. Ideally, you want this information to be passed on to an accredited company so that they can help provide options to improve compliance.

By having a digital solution, all the information from your reports is stored in one place, with a clear record of when you need to carry out your next inspection.

If you are struggling with lengthy reports, digitalising your fire door inspections can save you time and give you peace of mind. Fireco offers a fully certified inspection service complete with digital reporting using our tailor-made software, DorTrak.

## DESIGNED AFTER CONSULTING WITH INSPECTORS AND CLIENTS

Fireco developed DorTrak software after consulting with customers and inspectors. The goal was to enhance door inspections and provide clear, comprehensive data for third-party quotes. Previously, reports were impractical, using basic photos and lacking essential data. DorTrak transformed this by enabling users to access and

enlarge detailed images and floorplans in one place. DorTrak drills down to the details of the door. It meticulously examines all door components, from seals to hardware, ensuring no detail is overlooked during inspections.



The software allows every inspection stage to be exported and printed as concise summary reports, making it the perfect way to digitalise your door inspections. DorTrak helps users understand reports and receive guidance on necessary door replacements while ensuring building compliance and occupant safety all the way.

## DIGITALISE YOUR FIRE DOOR INSPECTIONS WITH DORTRAK

Fireco can cover every aspect of your fire door management, from inspection, measuring up, supply and installation, as well as handling all your regular inspections.

To find out how we can help you with your fire door inspections, please visit the website for a quote or call today.

01273 320650

[www.fireco.uk/fire-doors/inspections](http://www.fireco.uk/fire-doors/inspections)



# Affordable warmth

Ashley Cooper of WMS, explains how heating homes from the ground up delivers affordable warmth for today, tomorrow and the future



**I**ncorporating underfloor heating into a home's fabric offers many benefits, from ease of installation to thermal comfort and low maintenance for residents.

## THE FUTURE OF HOME HEATING

The industry is navigating the most significant legislative adjustments the UK housing market has ever seen, and it's never been more critical for heating systems to work in harmony and maximise efficiency to minimise residents' energy bills. This is especially important as, despite the energy price cap being lower during the summer period this year (July to September 2024), National Energy Action predicts that 5.6 million UK households will still be in fuel poverty from July 2024. Guaranteeing system efficiency and affordable warmth has never been more important.

The Government expects heat pumps to become the primary heating technology for new homes; however, for these renewable heat sources to work at their most efficient (COP) level, they must run between 35-45°C. Hydronic (water-based) underfloor heating can easily achieve this by design. All relevant suppliers must view the entire new-build heating system design holistically to ensure it delivers its promised efficiency levels.

## THE UNDERFLOOR SOLUTION

By design, hydronic (water-based) underfloor heating pairs seamlessly into a low-temperature system. It covers a much greater surface area than radiators and is designed to run at 35°C rather than the 70°C required by a standard radiator system.

It's simple to sequence underfloor heating into the build or remediation process. Depending on preferences, there are options at oversite or weathertight stages, making it the ideal choice for managing programme timings and site logistics. Key factors to consider at the specification stage include the installation sequence, floor build-up, property size, zoning requirements, and the chosen heat source.

Including pipework within the floor screed is the most common method of incorporating hydronic underfloor heating into a new build. Most solid floor builds require an insulated screed to meet building regulations, so this system can easily be accommodated into most floor applications without affecting the overall build-up. The pipework is clipped to the top of the sub-floor insulation layer before the screeding process, and the finished system offers a quick, cost-effective, and flexible form of heating while providing maximum output.

Good quality underfloor heating pipe, made from superior quality, five-layer, sustainable PERT (polyethylene of raised temperature resistance), can be melted down safely and reused, further enhancing the dwelling's longer-term sustainability credentials.

## BUILDING ON THE BENEFITS

When it comes to affordable warmth, we naturally think of energy savings, but maintaining a heating system is part and parcel of the running costs. Hence, keeping maintenance costs to a minimum is also key. Underfloor heating requires very little maintenance, and some PE-RT pipes can come with a 50 year product warranty, offering landlords and residents peace of mind and affordable

## Guaranteeing system efficiency and affordable warmth has never been more important

warmth long into the future. In fact, if the pipe is not disturbed during its use, it can be expected to outlive the life of the building itself!

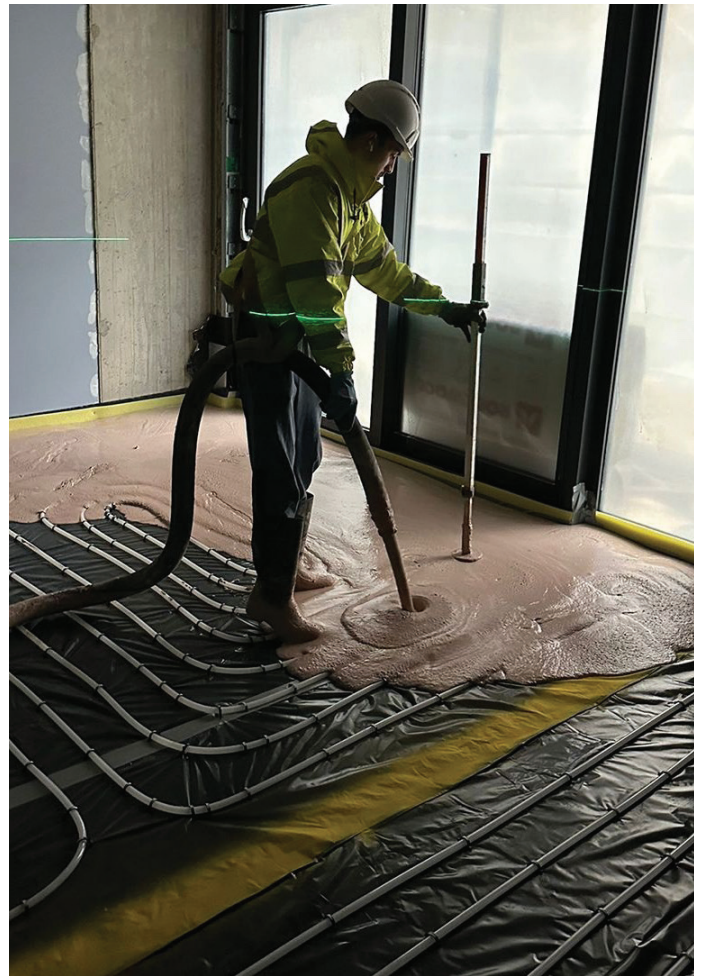
When it comes to broader property maintenance, underfloor heating, specifically hydronic (water-based) underfloor heating, is the only solution that can heat all surfaces in the room evenly. This radiant form of heat creates evenly warm spaces, and because warm air holds more moisture than cool air, that room can hold more moisture rather than depositing it as condensation and, subsequently, mould growth.

Safety will be a top priority with any specification choice, especially when young children, elderly or vulnerable occupants need to be considered. Safety comes as standard with underfloor heating as the system offers all the warmth tenants desire without the danger of any hot surfaces. Plus, given that underfloor heating is completely concealed within the floor, the technology is also out of sight and thus eliminates the potential for radiator vandalism. Radiant technology eliminates air movement from the heating system as it heats the fabric of a room and doesn't use air as a medium to transport heat, further improving indoor air quality.

The 'hidden' nature of underfloor heating also benefits all parties from a space-saving and interior layout perspective. As the heat emitters become part of the floor construction, every inch of floor and wall space can be maximised. As such, both landlords and residents alike will benefit from the total floorplan freedom, allowing space for everything from kitchen floor plans and furniture layouts to increasing accessibility within the property.

Now is the time to heat homes from the ground up and specify a solution suitable for almost every type of site and subfloor. This will help households keep their energy bills under control and guarantee affordable warmth.

*Ashley Cooper is managing director at WMS*



**AKW**  
Life Made Better

THE NEW GENERATION

## Electric Showers



Our refreshed range of electric showers features further advances in design and ease of use, as well as an improved look and feel. From contrasting colours and soft-touch controls, to LED display and remote operation, every element has been considered.



Scan to watch  
our video

[www.akw-ltd.co.uk](http://www.akw-ltd.co.uk) | Telephone: 01905 823 298 | Email: [sales@akw-ltd.co.uk](mailto:sales@akw-ltd.co.uk)



## Bradite One Can aids street transformation

A quiet residential street in Portsmouth has received a makeover thanks to local volunteers supported by, amongst others, Bradite paints. Members of the local Goodgym – an organisation that combines keeping fit with practical help for the community – descended on Percy Street, Southsea, with plants, pots, recycled timber and bags of enthusiasm. The timber was used to build six large wooden planters for window sills and they were painted – green, of course – using One Can supplied by Bradite. The company supplied eight 2.5 litre tins of One Can Eggshell in a range of RAL greens.

Organiser Julie Blake explains: “So far, we have painted the window boxes and one large door which is primed for the creation of a mural (using the remaining paint) in the Spring by a member of local street art gallery, The Corner Collective,” explains Julie. More residents have asked for planters and other streets have expressed their interest in the greening initiative. “We were so grateful for the support of Bradite and especially glad that the One Can paint performed so well and dried quickly with no need to prime!” adds Julie, “We had over 20 volunteers painting to complete the project in less than three hours.” Other organisations that supported the Percy Street project include Natural England and Portsmouth City Council.

01248 600 315 [www.bradite.com](http://www.bradite.com)



## Beauflor builds relationships at Housing 2024

Beauflor® showed how its sheet vinyl flooring solutions can meet the needs of the housing sector at Housing 2024, the UK's leading event for the industry. With collections that provide a cost-effective floor in housing of all types, Beauflor® used Housing 2024 to show the industry how its floors can improve the long-term value of the project and support the well-being of tenants. Durable and easy to maintain, Beauflor sheet vinyl improves the value of private and social homes. In private homes, it provides a cost-effective option for purchasers that's attractive and comfortable. However, in social and affordable housing its effect is more profound, giving providers a floor that can be used across tenancies, providing a good standard of accommodation for tenants while avoiding the cost of replacement. Chris Roberts, national sales manager, says: “We were delighted to show how our sheet vinyl floors can help to deliver a good standard of homes while meeting value objectives. Specifiers in attendance at Housing 2024 were certainly keen to hear how affordability can combine with their durability and maintenance requirements without compromising the important aspects of occupier need such as comfort, hygiene and safety, all in a range of popular home-like designs. We look forward to building new relationships with the providers that discovered Beauflor at this year's show.”

[info@beauflor.com](mailto:info@beauflor.com) [www.bauflor.com](http://www.bauflor.com)



## A whole new look with V33

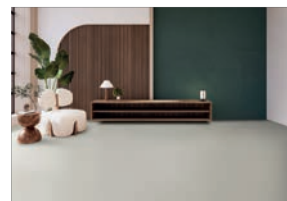
If you feel that the appearance of your fridge, freezer, dishwasher, kettle or other household appliance is letting down the look of your kitchen, have you ever considered painting it? Available in satin, matt, gloss and metallic finishes, V33 Radiator & Household Appliance Paint can be applied directly to metal or PVC, providing a perfect long-lasting finish that is highly resistant to all the bumps and scratches your radiators and household appliances can take. The paint requires no undercoat and is heat resistant up to 100°C with no flaking. With high adhesion when applied directly to metals and PVC, it is ultra-washable.



[info.uk@v33.com](mailto:info.uk@v33.com) [www.v33.co.uk](http://www.v33.co.uk)

## Flooring for social housing

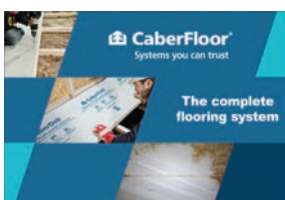
As one of the UK's largest flooring contractors Designer Contracts can help you save money on floorcoverings whilst ensuring you receive the outstanding service you need. They have many years' experience supplying and installing floorcoverings in the social housing sector, consistently meeting and exceeding the exacting demands of their customers. They provide a genuine value for money service. Designer Contracts actively work with Housing Associations and other public sector organisations, together with being a nominated supplier on a number of EU compliant frameworks.



01246 854577 [www.designercontracts.com](http://www.designercontracts.com)

## Fantastic flawless flooring with CaberFloor

Floors can pose challenges for people at times! One of a building's critical components, flooring, can be tricky. West Fraser's CaberFloor range is designed to tackle all challenges effectively. Trusted by leading housebuilders and specifiers nationwide, CaberFloor products deliver high-quality flooring finishes, preventing issues and saving costs down the line. For assistance in selecting the right flooring system for your project, West Fraser offers a helpful flowchart, along with detailed installation guides and videos for each CaberFloor product: [uk.westfraser.com/resources/help-advice/installation-instructions](http://uk.westfraser.com/resources/help-advice/installation-instructions)



[uk.westfraser.com](http://uk.westfraser.com)

## Housing Management & Maintenance

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



[www.housingmmonline.co.uk](http://www.housingmmonline.co.uk)

# Why floor coverings matter

Agustina Memoli of Uplyfted discusses the importance of floor coverings in Social Housing and asks can a home be a decent one without floor coverings?



Day in and day out we observe how floor coverings play a pivotal role in defining the comfort and aesthetic appeal of a home. This is particularly true in social housing, where families may not be able to afford floor coverings significantly impacting residents' daily lives. We understand the effects that flooring choices have on housing, and advocate for the use of modular carpet as a suitable solution for both residents and housing providers.

## ECONOMIC VALUE

Investing in floor coverings can yield significant returns for housing providers. Satisfied residents are more likely to stay longer, reducing turnover rates and the associated void and re-letting costs. The Thirteen Group, identified that improving home standards, particularly through flooring and wall painting, made the most significant difference in resident satisfaction. This led to higher retention rates and lower maintenance costs over time:

- A reduction in void turnover from 11% to 7% (representing over £1 million saving).
- Increased resident satisfaction.
- Reduced arrears (though some of this may be related to other factors).

The investment in flooring can thus pay off through both direct financial returns and enhanced community stability.

## EMOTIONAL VALUE

The importance of flooring in social housing extends beyond mere functionality; it is about enabling dignity and house-pride for residents. Various reports, including those by Altair, have underscored the challenges faced by social housing residents when moving into homes without adequate floor coverings. These reports highlight the need for housing providers to consider flooring as a fundamental component of housing quality.

Improving home standards, particularly through flooring and wall painting, made the most significant difference in resident satisfaction

A Bromford's resident commented: "It helps make the flat look more like a home, it has created less stress on my life as I feel that I can now have visitors over and it has taken a financial burden away from me"

## ENHANCING COMFORT AND REDUCING NOISE

One of the primary benefits of floor coverings is its ability to enhance comfort and reduce noise. Unlike hard flooring options, soft flooring provides a soft, cushioned surface that is pleasant to walk on. Moreover, they absorb sound, which can be crucial in multi-unit housing where noise complaints are common. Installing flooring can reduce noise transmission between units, creating a quieter and more peaceful living environment for all residents.

Another Bromford's resident commented: "Our shell of a house has become a home. After suffering with bare, cold and ugly floors we now can walk around barefoot without the fear of frostbite! It brings warmth to each room. Aesthetically the modular carpet looks great and really lightens the rooms. Having the whole house carpeted even the stairs has made a huge difference to the noise levels reducing them dramatically."

## ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE

Another significant advantage of flooring is its insulation properties. Soft flooring can retain heat helping in maintaining a warmer indoor environment during the colder months. This not only contributes to the comfort of the residents but also results in energy savings which can lower utility bills.





After flooring installation

A Raven Housing Trust resident commented: "I love it, it looks really good. It's made a big difference, it was colder in here before, now it's much warmer, and it's helped reduce echoing."

Carbon footprint must be an important consideration when procuring materials for housing. Procuring ultra-low carbon products is a crucial step for housing providers to significantly reduce the overall carbon emissions associated with construction and maintenance. Adopting low carbon solutions is not just an environmental imperative but also a strategic move to meet regulatory requirements and societal expectations for sustainable development.

#### CONCLUSION

Flooring is a critical aspect of housing that influences economic, environmental and emotional value. For social housing, where residents often face financial, physical and mental hardships, choosing suitable flooring can make a significant difference. Floor coverings can enhance the living conditions in social housing, ensuring dignity for all residents.

*Agustina Memoli, Co-founder & Commercial Director at Uplyfted*

## HydroPro Floor Paint – fast and versatile

HMG Paints Ltd has announced the launch of its HydroPro Floor Paint, an easy to apply, single pack, water-based product that provides an excellent result in the shortest possible time. The latest addition to the Manchester-based firm's growing Hydro-Pro range of products, the Floor Paint is formulated for either interior or exterior use and can be applied over new, aged or previously painted floor areas in either domestic, workshop or factory situations. It dries in 30 to 45 minutes and can be overcoated after 1 hour. Offering excellent coverage and obliteration, this high-performance, cross-linked coating is hard wearing and designed to withstand light industrial traffic so it will cope with occasional forklift use. Ideal for shop fitting and refit, two coats can be applied in a short space of time so the client can get back to full business use with minimal delay. Also, the lack of odour means the floor can be painted while people are still working in the vicinity. HydroPro Floor Paint is formulated for use on bare or previously coated concrete, tarmac and wooden floors, but not decking. Superior adhesion and durability are the hallmarks of the HydroPro range with resistance to oils and grease. The product can be applied by brush or roller. It is available off the shelf in light, medium or dark grey, yellow, tile red or mid blue while other colours can be provided in batch size quantities.

0161 205 7631 [shop.hmgpaint.com/products/hydropro-floor-paint-5-litres](https://shop.hmgpaint.com/products/hydropro-floor-paint-5-litres)



## Gilberts ups the standard in smoke and fire protection

With growing emphasis on managing the risk of smoke and fire within building safety, Britain's leading air movement engineer Gilberts is leading the way to optimise control. To address increasing demand and to exceed criteria laid down in the latest Building Regulations, Gilberts is launching a new, fully tested range of insulated smoke and fire dampers. The insulated dampers complements Gilberts' established Ductgard units for HVAC ductwork. The insulation element of the new dampers helps minimise the risk of heat transfer and thus the risk of fire spreading beyond the compartment. Its performance exceeds the two relevant layers of fire safety in buildings: integrity of compartmentation and structural safety. Spring and thermal fuse activated, the insulated dampers offer fire resistance of EI30, EI60, EI90 and EI120 for general ventilation systems with walls and partitions of various ratings. Thus, they deliver effective cut-off partitioning between the fire-engulfed zone and the remaining part of the building, helping maintain the building integrity. The range is fully tested and certified to EN15650, EN13501-3 and EN1366-2. The introduction of the insulated dampers builds on Gilberts' 60+ years' heritage of bringing to market advanced technology that enhances the design, safety, energy efficiency and occupier comfort of non-domestic buildings.

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





**We're the UK's largest flooring contractor and more**

**Carpet - Vinyl - Laminate - LVT - Safety Floor - Blinds & Curtains - Furniture & Lighting**

**Specification, supply & installation nationally**



# *Designer Contracts*

Email: [Enquiries@DesignerContracts.com](mailto:Enquiries@DesignerContracts.com)

Phone: 01246 854577

[www.DesignerContracts.com](http://www.DesignerContracts.com)





# **marmox** **fireboard**

Fire Protection • Sound Absorption • Thermal Insulation

**A1 Certified**  
*Render/Plaster Board*

- **A1 Fire Protection**
- **Sound & Thermal Insulation**
- **Thin & Lightweight**
- **Easy to Cut & Install**

## **NEW PRODUCT**

Available in 20, 50 & 100mm.  
Use on masonry, wooden  
or metal structures!

 **marmox**  
Waterproofing & Insulation Solutions

W: [www.marmox.co.uk](http://www.marmox.co.uk)

T: 01634 835290

T: [sales@marmox.co.uk](mailto:sales@marmox.co.uk)



# No access? Give tenants a stronger voice

In an increasingly complex landscape, where consumer and compliance standards have been thrust into the spotlight, Gary Haynes of Voicescape discusses the issue of no-access and why reducing no-access rates and increasing tenant engagement through innovation are more important than ever

**T**he driver for tenant safety, welfare and wellbeing is a shared responsibility – a responsibility that sits across three parties.

On the one hand, you have the Government. It has a vital role to play as the guardian of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 – legislation which has armed the Regulator of Social Housing with stronger powers and the ability to issue unlimited fines for non-compliance by social landlords.

On the other you have social housing providers. Arguably, their responsibility is greater. They have a duty to develop innovative methods of compliance that flex with the ever-evolving landscape and failure to do so carries significant fines.

Between the two sits the tenant. Engaging with them throughout the entire process is absolutely crucial – not only to ensure that providers remain faithful to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, but to ensure that the welfare and wellbeing of tenants remains front and centre.

## THE ISSUE OF NO-ACCESS

Creating an effective relationship between the three stakeholders is essential when it comes to the issue of no-access – an increasingly difficult challenge and one that if left unresolved carries unquantifiable risks. Why? Because failure to gain access to tenant properties at the time of gas and electrical safety check

## The sector needs to look at how to reduce no-access rates in an innovative way

appointments has the potential to create significant knock-on effects.

Whether it's inefficient use of time and resources spent on wasted visits and rescheduling, or increased vehicle fleet costs – the numbers are significant. Not to mention the problem of missing deeper tenant issues. Accessing properties enables providers to identify and flag more vulnerable customers, as well as other property-related issues that go beyond the 'big six' of asbestos, fire doors, gas, electricity, stair lifts and lifts.

The exact cost of no-access varies from organisation to organisation. But what is clear is that it can trigger an unwanted domino effect – from money spent and time wasted to an inability to go above and beyond for tenants.

Simply accepting no-access is not sustainable. Instead, the sector needs to look at how to reduce no-access rates in an innovative way. Working smarter is key, harnessing new systems, data, and automation is vital. Stronger engagement with residents is also crucial, in order to prioritise gaining the first-time access providers need to maintain compliance, ensure safe homes, and drive down costs. But how can that be achieved?



## FINDING A MIDDLE GROUND

If the end goal is to ensure tenants are safe and satisfied, there is a strong argument for engaging with them before access – not just after.

While better communication with residents may increase the chances of gaining access to their property, it's not always possible when the volume of appointments outweighs the resources available to different housing associations.

As such, many social landlords adopt a more prescriptive approach to housing maintenance, informing tenants of a specified date and time for appointments, usually communicated through letters or text messages. The onus is then placed on the resident to make themselves available accordingly. This carries with it both pros and cons, but what is the alternative?

The consultative approach – a collaborative one, where housing associations 'consult' with tenants to find a date and time that is convenient for them. This is a two-way interaction rather than the one-way communication associated with the prescriptive approach, but it too has pluses and negatives – the latter being that it requires more staff and can be more cost intensive.

Finding the middle ground between the two approaches is the ideal. By combining the approaches through the implementation of automation technology, data analytics, and behavioural science principles, it simplifies a previously manual, complex, and laborious process of engaging at scale. Not only does it support a more efficient, resident-focused appointment-booking approach, but it can also help to align with new consumer standards, which call for the use of data to design services around customer needs.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TENANT SATISFACTION

Central to any approach is tenant engagement. Providing individuals with a choice is a more effective method of engagement than offering no choice, especially in situations where it could lead to inconvenience. Offering tenants a choice around maintenance visits demonstrates that they are valued and have a voice. Resolving appointment conflicts becomes easier, leading to increased efficiency for both providers and customers.

By consulting with tenants through the use of technology, maintenance visits

By giving customers a voice and allowing automation to drive process efficiencies, social housing providers will be better positioned to meet compliance obligations and focus on more meaningful interactions with customers

become a negotiation should the tenant need them to be. Instead of taking 'shots in the dark', social landlords can send engineers to properties with a greater likelihood of access. In turn, this reduces excessive cost (an average of £75 per missed visit as well as the added postage and other ancillary costs), together with the waste of resources that is associated with booking, confirming, and rescheduling missed appointments.

By giving tenants a choice and putting more power in their hands when it comes to appointment booking, it provides tenants with newfound flexibility and control. It also empowers providers with increased first time access rates, better tenant engagement, and greater cost-efficiency.

What's more, the quality of the landlord-tenant relationship has a potential knock-on effect when it comes to tenant behaviours and service demand – not just for compliance, but for rent payment, ASB, and overall engagement too.

As regulatory pressures and penalties heighten around non-compliance, it's clear that improving tenant safety through engagement has become ever-more critical for the social housing sector. By giving customers a voice and allowing automation to drive process efficiencies, social housing providers will be better positioned to meet compliance obligations and focus on more meaningful interactions with customers – all the while providing sustainable, safe, and well-maintained living environments for communities.

*Gary Haynes is Managing Director at Voicescape – the UK's leading software provider of engagement solutions to the social housing and local authority sectors*

## Metsec underlines commitment to accurate product information

**V**oestalpine Metsec has become one of the earliest adopters of the Code for Construction Products Information (CCPI), introduced by the Construction Products Association in response to Dame Judith Hackitt's review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, set up following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

CCPI assessments are undertaken by Assessors from Construction Products Information Ltd. and are carried out on a manufacturer's specific products and systems, not the company as a whole. As such, an organisation or brand cannot, in itself, gain assessment or make any claims of conformance beyond a specific product set.

To date, voestalpine Metsec has successfully achieved assessment for four of its key construction systems; SFS light gauge galvanized steel structural framing systems and Metframe pre-panelised framing system from its Framing Division, dry lining metal framed components for gypsum plasterboard systems from its Dry Lining Division and roof, side rail and mezzanine floor systems from its Purlins Division.

Alan Harris, Quality and BIM Compliance Director at voestalpine Metsec, states, "Continuous investment in independent performance testing and quality assurance is

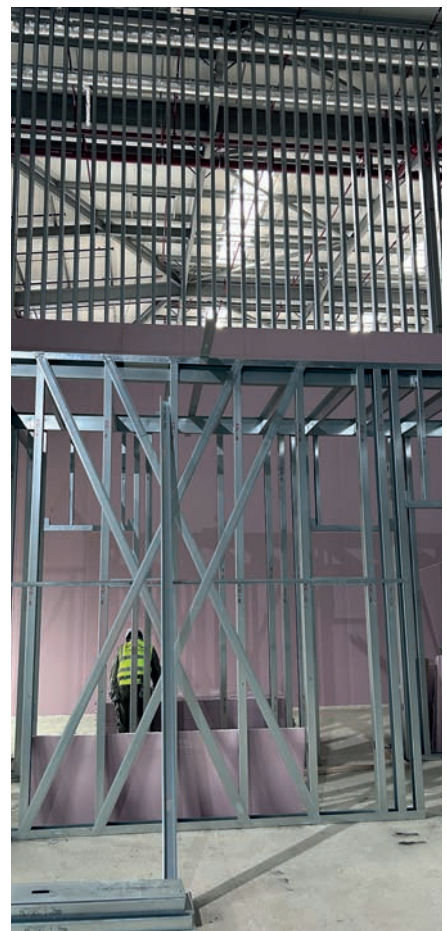
what keeps our construction solutions at the forefront of the industry.

"Ensuring that the data and information derived from these tests is conveyed in a clear, unambiguous fashion is key to providing specifiers, installers and users with more confidence in the systems' capabilities and suitability for their projects. Successful assessment to the CCPI confirms we are doing things right and underlines our commitment to the industry's needs."

CCPI aims to address the stipulation from Dame Hackitt's review that construction product information needs to be communicated in a clear and accurate way. Its aim is to help organisations drive for higher standards in the presentation of construction product information, with a priority on building safety.

voestalpine Metsec has set up a rigorous information review process to ensure that messaging from all divisions is based on accurate, verifiable data and that this information is presented in a clear and accessible manner, which can be easily found and assimilated by its intended target audience.

metsec.plc@voestalpine.com  
www.metsec.com





# **BUILDING INSIGHTS**

**A PODCAST FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**  
**LISTEN AT [HOUSINGMMONLINE.CO.UK](https://www.housingmmonline.co.uk)**





# Ei3030

## MULTI-SENSOR FIRE & CO ALARM



The latest addition to the technologically advanced **3000** Series, the Ei3030 combines individual **Optical**, **Heat** and **CO** sensors for the ultimate fire and CO response, while maintaining the simplicity that Installers love.

**Smart, connected and future-proof.**



Add the Ei3000MRF for wireless interconnection and data extraction via the Ei1000G Gateway



Scan here to  
learn more  
about the  
Ei3030

