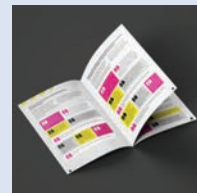
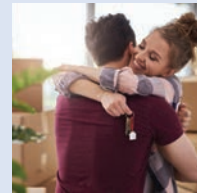


HOUSING MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

OCT/NOV 2024



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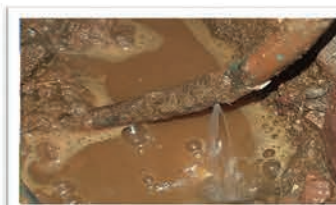
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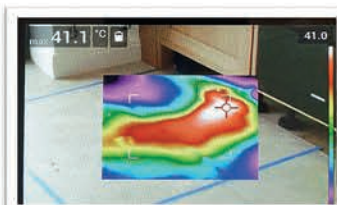
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News Editor
Patrick Mooney
patricknetmag@gmail.com

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



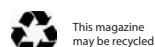
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Editor's comment

The Times They Are a-Changin'



Patrick Mooney,
News Editor

With humble apologies to the great Bob Dylan for my clumsy use of his folk anthem's title, but it perfectly sums up my thoughts on where we currently find ourselves in the housing sector, as we move from one Government's approach to solving the country's housing problems to another's. Labour took power in Westminster for the first time in 14 years with a stonking great majority, setting the stage for a big housing shake-up, but how much change are we actually looking at? To my eyes and ears what we are experiencing is actually a massive change in emphasis and intent. The new administration is focusing on many of the same things that occupied their predecessors, but they appear to be applying themselves with far more vigor and enthusiasm.

Within days of coming into office Labour did a hatchet job on the National Planning Policy Framework. They announced their intention to build a very similar number of new homes as the Conservatives' target under Michael Gove had, but they supplemented this with a raft of planning changes which were prepared and designed during their lengthy time in opposition. The really big change was the re-introduction of imposed targets on local authorities.

With the introduction of its Renters' Rights Bill, the new Westminster government has laid out plans to reduce the pressures facing private renters and those who simply cannot afford the rents, including limiting how often landlords can hike rents and by how much. But I would guess that over 90% of the new Bill is exactly the same as the Renters (Reform) Bill, which fell at the final hurdle when an early general election was called by Rishi Sunak. Both featured the abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions, but Labour are going further and with greater speed. What we don't yet know is whether Labour will be introducing rent caps to the private rented sector. And then there are other areas where Labour are simply saying that work has to be speeded up, such as the removal of dangerous cladding from high-rise residential tower blocks.

One big area of change is in respect of climate change and delivering on net zero carbon emissions. Under Rishi Sunak there was a wholesale rollback from many Green commitments, but the new administration has quickly made moves to deliver far more investment in renewable energy and in delivering energy saving schemes to our housing, with an expectation that new housing standards will demand far higher standards of insulation, as well as tackling long standing problems like damp and mould. Interestingly there were schemes which the Conservatives were developing separately for the private and social sectors which Labour has said will apply across all tenures.

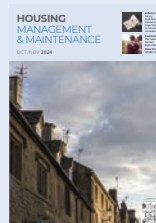
So far, the new Labour government has been somewhat reticent about homeownership, and although it has presented some ambitious plans and policies, we are yet to see how the balance by tenure will play out. However, the new Government has committed itself to publishing a long-term housing strategy, and although we haven't seen any substantive detail on this, many in the sector welcome the commitment. It is encouraging that, with Matthew Pennycook and Angela Rayner heading up the housing brief, we are likely to see more stable political leadership on housing policy. The annual rollover of Housing Ministers under the Conservatives had become something of a joke and prevented any long-term focus. What we do not want to see are more short-term gimmicks. Hopefully the new administration has learned the lessons from previous Governments, and we will actually see a fit for purpose long-term housing plan that is in tune with the current and future needs of the whole country.

The make-up of housing in Britain has changed hugely in recent times. We have gone from seeing nearly a third of the population living in council housing, down to the present where it is less than half that figure. The private-rented sector fell to as low as 11%, but then tripled in size. Home-ownership remains the aspiration of as many as 80% but has fallen from 72%, down to below 60%. In response to these changes John Perry, the CIH's policy adviser, said: "The new Government faces a dilemma: it wants to promote homeownership but also build more homes for social rent. This is bound to involve choices about resources. The CIH supports both objectives, but its priority for resources would be for more social rented homes." The problem with delivering that will be in finding the financial resources to bring it about. And that brings us back to Bob Dylan and his protest song - "Come MPs and Ministers, please heed the call; Don't stand in the doorway, don't block up the hall; For s/he that needs decent housing won't wait forever; They will soon shake your windows and rattle your walls, For the times, they are a-changin'."

Patrick Mooney

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On the cover...

Nicola Kennedy of Heero Technologies debunks prevailing myths around retrofitting and explores how technology can help local authorities drive sustainable change at scale.

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What an excellent repairs and maintenance service looks like

With so much focus on how we deliver more new homes, it is worth reminding ourselves that only a tiny percentage of the population gets to move into a new home. Improving the quality of our existing housing stock has a far bigger impact on the quality of life for the vast majority of us.

It is partly for this reason that so much attention is being paid by the Housing Ombudsman on complaints and the lessons to be drawn from them, and why the sector is preparing itself for an updated Decent Homes Standard to be implemented within the next year. The new Government has said this will apply to both the social and private rented sectors.

Over the past year a joint initiative of the CIH and NHF, 'The Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance project' (RERAM) has been beavering away to agree a set of standards and recommendations. One of their aims is to support the social housing sector to improve the standard of repairs and maintenance services delivered to social housing residents.

Based on its research with residents, social landlords and wider stakeholders, the project developed good practice guidance, case studies and a set of principles for how social landlords should work with their residents and colleagues to improve their repairs and maintenance services. In the course of their work it was identified that the minimum standards that residents expect from their landlords are:

- Being treated with respect, and being believed, by housing providers and their contractors.
- Making repairs easy to report through multiple means (e.g. by phone, website, and apps).
- Receiving clear, timely communication at every stage of the repairs process, especially when appointments are made or changed, and from operatives.
- Having clear and realistic timescales and expectations, as well as appointments that are kept to.
- Being honest about delays and problems, and working with residents to fix them as quickly as possible.
- Knowing and adapting to the variegated and often complex needs of different residents.
- Enabling operatives to complete their work well, by giving them clear instructions for each job and ensuring they are properly qualified for the work they are undertaking.
- A good quality of work, with homes left clean and tidy when it is completed.
- Monitoring and oversight by the landlord, especially checking the condition and quality of work done to homes.



The project developed good practice guidance, case studies and a set of principles for how social landlords should work with their residents and colleagues to improve their repairs and maintenance services

- Publishing data on outcomes and performance, and doing so in a way that residents can understand and use to scrutinise performance.
- Clear, simple complaints procedures, for when things go wrong.

But we also know that excellence might mean different things for different landlords. Residents may attach different levels of importance to the above standards, or have additional standards that matter more to them and their communities. This is why the definition of 'excellence' is not the same everywhere and for all time.

Committing to delivering an excellent repairs and maintenance is both a promise to do the basics well, but also to work with residents on an ongoing basis to understand their priorities and where they want to see improvements made.

The meaning of excellence is neither imposed from the top-down nor built entirely anew from the bottom-up, but an ongoing process that is defined and redefined in partnership with residents, staff, and contractors. In the months ahead, service providers would be well advised to keep these issues in the forefront of their minds and to use them when drawing up plans and work programmes.

HAs need £54bn to deliver social housing targets in London Plan

The G15 group of large housing associations operating in the capital has urged the Government to help it leverage more private finance through a 10-year rent settlement and access to the Building Safety Fund.

The G15 has said HAs need £54bn to build the number of social homes outlined in the London Plan over the next five years. At the same time Fiona Fletcher-Smith, chair of the G15 and chief executive of L&Q has warned the Government not to lose sight of affordable and social housing in its housebuilding plans.

The lobbying group has drawn on figures from the Greater London Authority and Savills to calculate that an affordable home in London costs £450,000 to build. Therefore, HAs will need to raise £54bn to deliver 120,000 social homes by 2027/28.

The G15 has also published a report titled, 'Increasing London's Affordable Homes,' in which they urge the Government to provide financial certainty for HAs through a 10-year index-linked rent settlement, allowing them to raise the loans necessary to deliver the affordable homes by 2029.

It has also called on the Government to address "the unfair disparities" in rent levels between new and existing tenants through rent convergence policies and to give HAs access to the underused Building Safety Fund.

The research highlighted that due to financial challenges in the social housing sector, G15 members saw a 78% decrease in housing starts in London, dropping from 10,255 in 2022/23 to just 2,222 last year. Including all tenures and areas outside of London, G15 landlords have cut their development pipelines from 14,658 house starts in 2022/23 to 6,387 last year, which marks a 56% decrease. Grant rates contribute just 12% to scheme costs today, compared to about 75% in the 1990s.

The G15 has also called on the Government to work with the London mayor and set up development corporations to build on strategically defined areas of green or grey belt land, compensating for any loss of nature. In addition, the G15 has said that the Government should create an Affordable Housing Commission, to scrutinise housebuilding targets and hold the Government accountable for delivering them.

New standardised stock condition surveys to be developed for the social housing sector

The National Housing Federation and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors are to develop a new standardised stock condition survey specifically designed for the social housing sector.

The new standard will be developed in partnership with housing associations and other stakeholders including the National Federation of ALMOs and the Association of Retained Council Housing. It is expected to be launched in 2025 and although it will not be mandatory, there are hopes that most social landlords will adopt it and use it as a tool to improve the quality of existing homes.

Most social housing landlords already conduct regular stock condition surveys, but their content and use varies. The NHF believes a standardised approach would offer greater assurance to both residents and landlords.

According to the Good Home Inquiry, there are 10 million people living in homes (of all tenures) that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. While the proportion of these homes in the social housing sector is smaller than those in the owner-occupied sector, in 2022 there were still 10% of the social rented sector's homes that did not meet the standard.

The Better Social Housing Review recommended that social landlords improve how they collect and use data – both about the condition of the homes they manage and about who lives in them. With a growing number of HAs aiming to conduct 100% rolling stock condition surveys every five years, it became clear there is room for improving consistency in assessing the quality of homes to ensure they are as good as they can be for residents.



Most social housing landlords already conduct regular stock condition surveys, but their content and use varies

A CONFIDENCE BOOST

Kate Henderson, chief executive of the NHF, said the standardised survey will be an “invaluable resource” that will help the sector to assess the quality of their homes in a consistent way, and give both landlords and residents greater confidence.

It is hoped the new standard will help HAs and councils to easily identify quality issues that need addressing within their properties, by creating a standardised and consistent approach to understanding the condition of tenants’ homes.

The standard will incorporate all current regulatory requirements and be adapted as needed to align with future changes, such as the new Decent Homes Standard when it is finalised. The NHF and RICS said the standard “will help landlords provide a consistent and accurate barometer of the

condition of the UK’s social housing sector” and ensure that all social housing residents are living in good quality homes.

Justin Young, chief executive of RICS said: “The UK needs a data-driven, fact-focused social housing sector and a comprehensive stock condition survey, designed with RICS members’ expertise, will clear up uncertainty about the quality of the UK’s social housing stock”.

Young described the new partnership between RICS and the NHF as “timely”, due to the Government’s plans to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years. He added: “Ending the housing crisis not only begins with building new homes; it must also include the renovation and retrofit of existing homes, improving the quality, quantity, and sustainability of social housing.”

CIH welcomes minimum energy efficiency standards

The Government has announced that Wave 3 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and a new local authority retrofit scheme will be opening for applications.

Both schemes, which have respectively been renamed the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund and the Warm Homes: Local Grant, will provide funding to registered providers of social housing and local authorities to tackle fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

The Social Housing Fund opened on 30 September 2024 and will close at midday on 25 November 2024. Delivery of the fund runs until 2028. An expression of interest window is expected

to open in October 2024 for the Local Grant. The total funding available will be confirmed at the April 2025 Spending Review, together with more details of the Government’s Warm Homes Plan.

The Government has also announced that it will consult on a new minimum energy efficiency standard for the private and social rented sectors (targeting EPC C by 2030) and on EPC reform before the end of year.

Responding to the news, Rachael Williamson, head of policy and external affairs at CIH, commented: “Warm, safe homes are one of the building blocks of health and wellbeing, but some homes are still too difficult to keep warm in the

winter. It is hugely welcome that government have confirmed the continuation of these retrofit schemes, something that CIH had called for in our submission to the autumn budget.

“The funding will enable social housing providers to continue their work tackling fuel poverty, and some small tweaks made to the schemes, especially to the grant funding profile in the Social Housing Fund, will help to accelerate delivery in the coming years.

“CIH has long called for the introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards in the rented sectors, especially in the private rented sector, where residents are too often exposed to unaffordable energy bills. We look forward to responding to the consultation, and working with our members to ensure the proposals provide a strong regulatory framework for eliminating fuel poverty.”

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Mayor lobbies for return of councillors on local HA boards

Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham is lobbying the Government to give local councillors greater control over the social housing in their area.

In the past councillors were often entitled to seats on the boards of housing associations operating in their council's area. This became formalised during the era of stock transfers from the late 1980s onwards, but it was scrapped by the Conservative Government in 2017.

Speaking at an event organised by the housing charity Shelter on the fringe of the Labour conference, the Greater Manchester mayor said he wanted to see a return of the "golden share" concept.

Andy Burnham told attendees: "One of the things I will be asking the Government to do is to restore that golden share concept where there has to be councillor representation on local housing associations".

"If you don't have that accountability you have got a problem," he added, referring to the disaster at Rochdale Boroughwide Council, which led to the death of toddler Awaab Ishak.

Burnham said he would "go even further" and push "to get housing stock back under significant local control, if not fully run by councils".

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter, set out some key asks of the Government, which included having a target for social housing building, "so that we know what we are expecting and we are measuring whether we are getting it or not".

She also urged a change in the design of the Affordable Homes Programme. "It needs to prioritise social rent. Affordable is an Orwellian term - we need to prioritise social rent housing and we need secure funding for 10 years," she said.

She also said the Government needed to encourage local authorities to test out new compulsory purchase rules and replace the right to buy with a mortgage deposit scheme.

Housing Ombudsman sets key tests for improving fairness

The Housing Ombudsman has released its latest Insight report focusing on shared ownership, setting out nine tests for how the Ombudsman may assess shared ownership complaints in future as it develops its approach.

It also highlights what the Ombudsman can and cannot do for shared owners, including on issues such as defects and the sales process. The Ombudsman has also updated its website to provide key information for both shared owners and landlords.

Investigations included in the report involve errors in the sales process leading to residents being unable to afford to purchase or incorrect charges that then come as a surprise on moving in. There are also cases where poor understanding of a lease agreement led to residents with months of delays to vital repairs.

The Ombudsman has spoken to landlords and shared owners throughout this report and the changes made to the publication and website reflect that engagement.

While the proportion of complaints the Ombudsman receives each year from shared owners is proportionate to the size of the tenure, the high level of dissatisfaction amongst shared owners suggests more complaints should be escalated to it.

Therefore, the Ombudsman will undertake targeted awareness raising as well as making sure complaints procedures are accessible. Miscommunication, confusion over maintenance responsibilities and the complexity of shared ownership have impaired landlords' response to complaints, compounded by poor knowledge and information management.

The Ombudsman highlights key aspects relating to shared ownership cases:

- **Sales process:** The Ombudsman found there were delays in instructing solicitors, the incorrect levels of charges or rents in the lead up to the sales process being incorrect so the resident did not know what they were supposed to pay, and residents not being told the correct levels of staircasing.
- **Defects:** The Ombudsman found cases of landlords not chasing developers or following up with the residents following defects being raised, and how landlords should deal with defects after the liability period if the developers had not resolved them.
- **Cladding:** Cases included findings that related to the Ombudsman's Cladding

guidance, including unreasonable delays in communication about documents residents may have needed or about the safety of the actual building itself.

- **Repairs:** The Ombudsman examined the importance of landlords understanding their obligations in regards to repairs and how landlords can communicate effectively with residents during complex works that need to take place.
- **Charges:** Following on from its Insight report on charges, the Ombudsman found instances where landlords acted reasonably around charges and information surrounding them, as well as instances where this did not happen.
- **Managing agents & freeholders:** The Ombudsman found that landlords did not often effectively manage their relationships with the freeholder or managing agent of the building, leading to difficulties in communicating effectively with residents.

These issues have informed the nine key tests the Ombudsman may consider during an investigation, alongside the prospect of using Paragraph 48 of its Scheme, which allows the Ombudsman to treat an individual case as a 'test case' where others could have been affected.

Richard Blakeway, housing ombudsman, said: "Criticisms of shared ownership stem from its inherent complexity, fundamental inequities in its design, and responsibility for residents without the same level of control.

"While this report cannot fix these problems, it gives residents the opportunity to learn about complaints they can bring to us to make their housing situation better, whilst also giving landlords the opportunity to learn from the complaints we have had to provide a better service to shared owners.

"A simple concept has led to a complicated product and miscommunication has too often undermined the relationship between landlord and shared owner from outset. One of the most striking lessons from our review is the ability of landlords to successfully recover service failures in their complaints process for shared owners compared to other tenures. This must provide lessons for overall handling.

"We may be at an inflection point for shared ownership. Any future reform of shared ownership must address the recurring reasons for dissatisfaction and service failure that is so evident in our casework."

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Housing professionals want more social rent homes

The Chartered Institute of Housing has a full policy and training agenda with the new Government setting out its programme in a slew of announcements, consultations and legislation. Reflecting on the various initiatives, the CIH has issued a members' briefing, which is broadly supportive.

There are around 5.5 million people living in social homes across the UK, just over four million of these in England. Just below 20% of households currently live in social housing provided mainly by housing associations and councils.

There continues to be a need for lots more social homes, as a report published by the NHF and Shelter earlier this year reaffirmed, putting the number of homes needed at 90,000 per year.

Speaking at the Labour conference in the Autumn, Labour MP Dan Tomlinson urged the sector to "keep pushing" for the Government to deliver 90,000 new social homes each year.

It is welcome, then, that the new Government has committed to a new era of social housebuilding with ambitious housing targets: that's 1.5 million new homes by the end of this Parliament, with a commitment to delivering more social homes.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves reiterated her party's commitment to increasing the number of new homes built each year. Speaking in Liverpool, she said: "What you will see in your town, your city, is a sight that we have not seen often enough in our country: shovels in the ground, cranes in the sky, the sounds and the sights of the future arriving."

PRIVATE RENTING

However, as things stand, there are approximately 1.3 million people on England's social housing waiting list alone. This means many are forced – 20% of UK households in fact – to look to the increasingly expensive private rented sector.

A privately renting household in England typically pays £1,300 a month on rent. In London, that figure shoots up to more than £2,100. In Scotland, where a temporary rent cap was lifted



earlier this year, the average monthly rent comes in at £1,018.

Indeed, the unaffordability of renting privately continues to push up rates of homelessness and temporary accommodation use. In August, it was reported that more than 150,000 children in England are currently living in temporary accommodation, marking a 14.7% rise in the number of households with children in temporary accommodation on the previous year.

Living in temporary accommodation has become a reality for around 75,000 households in England, despite legislation demanding that such placements should be restricted to periods of no more than six weeks.

With the introduction of its Renters' Rights Bill, the new Westminster Government has laid out plans to ameliorate the pressures facing private renters and those who simply cannot afford the rents, including limiting how often landlords can hike rents and by how much.

While such measures are welcome, it's the view of many – including CIH – that to truly ease the difficulty of private renting, more homes need to be built, including many social and affordable homes.

John Perry, CIH's policy adviser, says: "The new Government faces a dilemma: it wants to promote homeownership but also build more homes for social rent. This is bound to involve choices about resources. CIH supports both objectives, but our priority for resources would be for more social rented homes."

A NOTE ON SHARED OWNERSHIP

Shared ownership was first introduced through the 1980 Housing Act to help people who wanted to be homeowners but couldn't afford to buy a home with a conventional mortgage. Since its inception, some 400,000 shared ownership homes have been built, half of which have been bought out to full ownership.

So far, the new Government has said little about shared ownership, with the tenure absent in all notable announcements and policy developments. This is despite a select committee report earlier this year finding the tenure is "failing to deliver" an affordable route to homeownership.

The report made a series of recommendations for the then Conservative government, including to examine how it can ensure shared owners are only ever liable for repairs and maintenance costs proportionate to the size of share they own. These recommendations still stand under the new Labour government.

Speaking at the Labour conference, former chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee Clive Betts said he was sceptical about the future of shared ownership, adding that funding for the tenure could be redirected to support the Government's social housing ambitions.

The new Government has committed to publishing a long-term housing strategy, and although we have yet to see any substantive detail on this, many in the sector, including CIH, welcome the commitment.

It is also encouraging that, with Matthew Pennycook and Angela Rayner heading the housing brief, we are likely to see more stable political leadership on housing policy. So far, this has proven to be the case.

"What we don't want" says Peter Williams, "is another short-term gimmick. Hopefully the new administration will have learned the lessons from previous governments, and we'll see a fit for purpose long-term housing plan that is in tune with the current and future needs of the whole country."

Twenty-one people chasing every rental property, says Zoopla

A staggering average of 21 people are competing for every private rental property advertised, according to new figures from property portal Zoopla. The figure is more than twice the pre-pandemic average and up from an average of 15 recorded in the last Zoopla report in June.

While there are now 18% more rental homes available than this time last year –

something Zoopla attributes to lower mortgage rates allowing some renters to buy their first property – there are still 24% fewer homes available than before the pandemic. The NRLA fear this situation could be exacerbated by the recent announcement of the Renters' Rights Bill which will see the abolition of section 21 and the fixed term, as well as potential tax changes in the Autumn

Statement. The landlords group is continuing to lobby for adjustments to the Bill and any timetable for implementation, to ensure the sector has time to prepare and so that landlords have the confidence to remain in the sector and continue to invest.

According to the report the average rent for new lets in the UK is £1,245 as of July 2024, with rents rising 5.4% in the last year. While this is the slowest rate of growth in three years, a combination of high demand and a low supply of properties means rents remain high.

Zoopla predicts rents will rise 3-4% over 2024, with the supply/demand imbalance set to remain into 2025.



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Funding package vital to PRS energy efficiency plans

Plans to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector must be backed up by a comprehensive financial package says the NRLA.

The call came after Ed Miliband, energy security & Net Zero secretary confirmed a consultation will be launched on plans to increase the minimum energy efficiency standard for rental properties to a C rating by 2030. Those landlords whose homes do not meet the new standard will be unable to rent them out.

The C target mirrors 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.

According to official data, in 2022, almost 45 per cent of private rented properties in England had an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least a C, more than double the rate compared to 2012.

However, a third of private rented sector homes were built before 1919, a higher proportion than any other tenure. These are among some of the hardest to improve properties of the entire housing stock.

Chris Norris, policy director for the NRLA said: “The NRLA wants to see all rented properties become as energy efficient as possible. However, the Government’s approach must involve a clear and comprehensive plan which recognises that the sector has some of the oldest, and hardest to improve, properties in the UK’s housing stock.

“The sector needs a clear trajectory setting out what will be expected of it and by when. This plan must also ensure sufficient numbers of tradespeople are in place to undertake the work that will be required.

“Alongside this, as the Committee on Fuel Poverty has warned, is the need for a financial package to support investment in energy efficiency measures. At present, the private rented sector is the only housing tenure without a bespoke package to support work to upgrade homes.”

Ombudsman challenges ‘stigmatising’ temporary accommodation processes



The Housing Ombudsman has challenged the social housing sector over temporary accommodation processes that

stigmatise tenants, after he found a resident was unable to live in their home for three years.

This case features in the latest learning from severe maladministration report.

The Housing Ombudsman has released its latest severe maladministration report, sharing learning from cases involving temporary moves, known as ‘decants’ by the social housing sector. With the important role that social housing has to play in giving safe and secure housing to millions, the learning in these reports will help landlords provide effective services that protect this aspiration.

This report comes ahead of the introduction of Awaab’s Law, which has specific requirements for landlords on temporary moves where there are risks to the health and safety of residents.

There are important learning points throughout the report to help landlords prepare for the new legislation, including how process improvements could reduce stress and anxiety for residents, treatment of subsistence costs such as food and travel, assessing the suitability of alternative accommodation and empathetic communication.

Included in the report are cases involving a pregnant resident moved several times before not being able to return home due to the birth of her baby. The Ombudsman has also highlighted a case where a resident ended up in temporary accommodation for three years – despite originally being given very little information about the initial move itself.

Other cases include a resident requesting to be moved because of poor living conditions not being actioned until a ceiling collapsed and other residents being locked out of hotel rooms because the landlord did not pay the invoices.

The Ombudsman will continue to share insight

about this, and other topics, through its Centre for Learning. Landlords highlighted in this report include:

- Kensington and Chelsea Council
- Lambeth Council
- Moat Homes
- Notting Hill Genesis
- Orbit Group
- Peabody
- Southwark Council
- Wandle

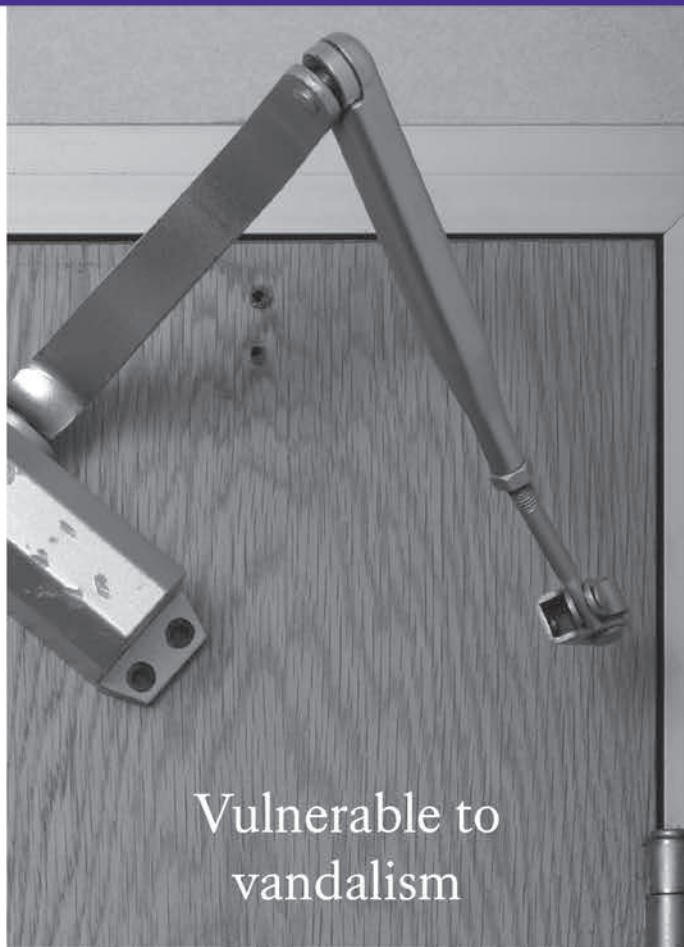
Richard Blakeway, housing ombudsman, said: “This report focuses on landlord’s handling of temporary accommodation during works on a resident’s property. In the sector, this is termed ‘decants’ – which in itself is crude, dehumanising and stigmatising language for what can be a difficult and emotional process for any person.

“Throughout this report, the human cost of temporary moves is laid bare. There are cases where residents have spent months or years in temporary accommodation, sometimes bumped between different hotels, with experiences of financial hardship and difficulties coping with medical conditions. In some instances, children are not appropriately safeguarded.

“You can see every case the different ways the resident was simply not heard. It is a sombre read. Providing temporary housing is something almost every landlord will need to do at some stage. Every week there will be successful temporary moves. Given the costs that can be involved in this process, it is important to get it right.

“Landlords should use this report to improve services for residents who may be required to move due to works or other circumstance. With the incoming legislation from Awaab’s Law, this learning is even more strategically important for senior leaders to grasp.”

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Councils call for more time for people moving on from asylum accommodation

A 'snapshot' survey by the Local Government Association has revealed that councils are calling for the extension of the 'move-on' period, the time between an asylum seeker receiving a decision on their application and having to leave Home Office funded accommodation, to ease the financial impact on Local Authorities.

The ending of accommodation and support from central government when an asylum seeker receives a decision on their application has impacted nine in 10 councils financially and added to staff pressures in England, Wales and Scotland, according to a snap-shot survey by the LGA.

Nearly 90% of council respondents to the LGA survey also said that the ending of central government support following 'move-on' periods had contributed to a rise in homelessness presentations to their local authority, and around three-fifths of councils said it led to increased street homelessness.

The survey looked at the period between August 2023 and March 2024 when, as the Home Office has sought to expedite applications from certain countries and clear the backlog of people claiming asylum, councils faced added pressure as more people entered the 'move-on' period.

The time between an asylum applicant receiving a decision and having to leave the Home Office accommodation they were staying in while awaiting their outcome is called the 'move-on' period.

Central government's support and accommodation ceases at the end of this, and councils have to step in to fulfil their statutory

"We need greater recognition from central government of the crucial role councils play in supporting effective move on processes."

Cllr Louise Gittins, Chair of the LGA

duties by supporting adults and families to find or by directly provide accommodation and working with other local partners to help them access benefits or find employment.

When asked about the most effective way to reduce costs and impacts of the Home Office backlog clearance programme, an "extension to the 28-day move-on timeframe to 56 days in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act" was the answer most given, with 84 % of responding councils highlighting this step.

Funding to provide immediate move-on support once people have received a decision, funding for move-on accommodation – such as the first month's rent for people finding their own place to live, and funding for early intervention while people await a decision, were identified as the second, third, and fourth most effective options respectively to mitigate the situation.

Of the councils who responded* about costs which are directly attributable to asylum accommodation, nearly three quarters of councils (72%) said that the current asylum dispersal grant only covers their asylum costs to a small extent or does not cover it at all.

The LGA, which represents councils across

England, is calling on the Government to use the survey findings to inform the next asylum backlog clearance programme as announced by the Home Secretary in July.

Councils also want to work with government to develop a more place-based asylum system that supports newly recognised refugees to move on from asylum accommodation in a way that unlocks their potential to contribute to the local economy and their new communities, and minimises homelessness and destitution.

Cllr Louise Gittins, chair of the LGA, said: "The approach of withdrawing support so abruptly as part of the current move-on period adds pressure onto already stretched council budgets and services. We need greater recognition from central government of the crucial role councils play in supporting effective move on processes.

"Councils are the experts in their communities and know what steps can be taken to minimise the impact on asylum seekers, local people, and council resources. Increasing the move-on time to 56 days would bring this into line with best practice around supporting other vulnerable people find homes and reduce, risks of homelessness and destitution locally."

Miliband pledges to end scourge of cold and draughty rentals

Labour is to bring in new regulations to improve the standard of all rented housing, the energy secretary announced at the party's conference in Liverpool. As a result landlords who rent out sub-standard draughty homes will face a crackdown.

Miliband said the measures would lift a million renters out of fuel poverty. Previously announced plans only applied to private landlords, but the new requirements will also cover tenants in social rent homes.

Miliband told the conference: "We all know that the poorest people in our country often live

in cold, draughty homes. It is a Tory legacy... this Government will not tolerate this injustice and we will end it." He added: "We will go further and faster than promised in our manifesto: ensuring every rented home reaches decent standards of energy efficiency."

Under current regulations, private landlords are free to rent out homes even if they only meet the lowest minimum standard of efficiency, an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of E.

Social rented homes are subject to no minimum energy efficiency standards at present and concerns have been raised by campaigners that social landlords, including housing associations and councils, have been allowing their stock to deteriorate, harming some of the most vulnerable in society.

Labour will consult by the end of this year on revised proposals that would require all rented homes to meet an EPC rating of C or its equivalent by 2030.

Analysis by Friends of the Earth has found that at current rates of progress it would take 90 years to ensure that the 55% of homes in England and Wales that do not meet EPC C are brought up to that standard.

Health authorities are concerned about the poor state of the UK's homes, after cases of damp and mould that have caused illness and even death in children. Homes are also responsible for about a fifth of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, and cost households hundreds of pounds a year in higher energy bills, so are an urgent priority for reaching Net Zero.

Simon Francis, the coordinator of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, said: "People in rented accommodation are almost twice as likely to live in cold, damp homes compared with people who own their own properties... but the Government shouldn't drag their heels with more consultations. This issue has been consulted on widely in the past and ministers must move to take action."

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Rental reform needs to work for tenants and landlords

Responding to publication of the Renters' Rights Bill, one of the largest representative organisations for private landlords has called for the reforms to be as balanced as possible to ensure that the needs of both landlords and tenants are addressed appropriately.

Ben Beadle, the chief executive of the National Residential Landlords Association, has emphasised the importance of transparency and fairness in the upcoming changes to the private rented sector. He also notes how it is crucial that steps be taken to deal with wait times which prevent the courts from ruling on cases in a timely manner.

Beadle said: "Plans to reform the private rented sector have been on the table for over five years now. Above all, renters and landlords need certainty about what the future looks like. It is vital that the Bill works and is fair, to both tenants and landlords.

"The end of Section 21, 'no explanation' repossessions represents the biggest change to the sector for over 30 years.

Once the Bill is passed, it is vital that sufficient time is provided to enable the sector to properly prepare.

"Over 4.5 million households will need tenancy agreements updating, letting agent staff and landlords will need to undertake training and insurance and mortgage providers will need to adjust policies and rates. None of this will happen overnight and the Government needs to publish guidance.

"In addition, ending Section 21 will leave the courts needing to hear possession claims where landlords have a legitimate reason. The cross-party Housing Select Committee has warned that without reforms to ensure the courts process cases much more swiftly, they risk becoming overwhelmed. This will not serve the interests of tenants or landlords seeking justice."

In respect of plans to improve the quality of rental housing, Ben Beadle said: "Too often the actions of a minority of rogue and criminal landlords have brought the sector into disrepute. We therefore support measures to ensure every rental home is of a decent quality, and swift action is taken where standards threaten the health of tenants. However, this all needs to be backed up with robust enforcement by councils."

According to the English Housing Survey, there are 4.6 million households in the private rented sector in England and 82% of private renters are satisfied with their accommodation compared to 74% of social renters.

Council spending £15m on tackling social housing failings



More than £15m is being spent by a south coast unitary authority to tackle serious failings in hundreds of its council homes, after the social housing regulator said 30% of the council's homes did not have an electrical condition report.

It follows a report from the regulator which said "significant improvement" was needed in Brighton & Hove City Council's provision. The regulator also said the council could not provide evidence it met smoke alarm requirements and it also failed to ensure some properties met electrical safety rules.

It found that there were 1,700 fire risk jobs to be carried out, with a majority overdue by at least two years. There was also a backlog of around 8,000 low priority repairs - with some that dated back to 2021.

There were also 3,600 homes without a current electrical condition report, and 500 water safety "remedial actions" that were overdue by at least three months.

An internal report to the authority's cabinet said the council had set up a Corporate Housing Building Safety Programme and was tracking all "compliance actions" to manage risks effectively.

The council's report in response to the regulator's findings said: "We have adopted a risk-based approach to inspections. This strategy ensures that high-risk issues are addressed first while also providing a clear timeline for completing lower-risk actions."

It added that the approach was "designed to give confidence" that it was managing compliance obligations in a "structured and effective manner".

The council said it was also engaging with East Sussex Fire and Rescue, the Health and Safety

Executive and the Building Safety Regulator.

A detailed action plan has been drawn up for each of the council's 46 high-rise blocks of flats while more work was needed on fire risk assessments for lower-risk buildings.

At the same time the council is dealing with concerns over the safety of eight large panel system high rise blocks across the city. These have all been surveyed by specialist consultants and a variety of precautionary steps are being taken including banning e-bikes and e-scooters, as well as gas cannisters, moving bin stores and undertaking visits to individual flats to check on risks.

Councillor Gill Williams, Cabinet member for Housing and New Homes, said: "We have been working closely with the Regulator of Social Housing over the past year and we fully accept the extremely serious findings of the review. We are very sorry for not meeting the standards both we and our residents expect.

"Like many councils with a largely ageing housing stock, we do face challenges in modernising our homes. We have introduced a raft of urgent measures to build on the positive work carried out on building, fire and other health and safety measures in council homes over the last 12 months.

"We're doing this to ensure we are fully compliant with building safety and quality standards under the Building Safety Act and Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 as soon as possible. Our key priority is the safety of our residents and we are fully committed to meeting these regulatory requirements. We are working very hard to get to a better place as soon as we possibly can."

Funding confirmed for EPC improvements to private rentals



A new funding pot has been announced to support energy efficiency improvements to privately rented homes in England, with grants to be focused on low-income households.

The money will be distributed through the 'Warm Homes: Local Grant' scheme, with landlords eligible to receive up to £30,000 towards improvements to their first rental property, and £15,000 for work on additional homes to let. Properties must have an EPC rating of D to G to qualify.

The funding will be capped at a maximum of £15,000 per home for energy performance upgrades, and £15,000 for low carbon heating. Private landlords will be eligible for full funding for the first property, and will need to contribute 50% of funding for any additional homes.

It will be distributed by eligible local authorities, with the Government stressing the money will be focussed on improving the 'energy performance and heating systems of low-income homes' in England – across privately-owned properties.

The call comes after Energy Security Ed Miliband confirmed a consultation will be launched on plans to increase the minimum energy efficiency standard for rental properties to a C rating by 2030.

There are currently three different eligibility criteria:

- Eligible postcodes: These are based on deprivation factors.
- Benefit claimants: Tenants who are in receipt of certain benefits, including Universal Credit and housing benefit or who meet the existing ECO4 Flex Criteria.
- Low-income households: Households whose gross income is below £36,000 a year.

The onus will be on councils to check that those claiming grants fall into one of these brackets.

While the cash is not yet available, private landlords are being encouraged to check

whether funding will be available in their area, as outlined above.

For landlords to benefit from the Warm Homes: Local Grant they must:

- Express permission for their details to be shared and stored on a central database of landlords participating in the Warm Homes: Local Grant;
- Agree to support DESNZ-led surveys or evaluations regarding PRS uptake in the Warm Homes: Local Grant; and
- Confirm that the Minimum Financial Assistance threshold of £315,000 will not be exceeded by the landlord receiving the proposed assistance.

Eligible local authorities were able to express an interest in accepting funding in October. There will not be a limit on how many properties a landlord can claim for, however there is a maximum amount that can be paid out. This upper limit is £315,000 and includes any previous grant funding claimed for improvements.

The NRLA has welcomed the move, but would like to see support available for those landlords who do not fall within the remit of the scheme.

NRLA Deputy Director for Campaigns Meera Chindooroy said: "Any grant funding to pay for energy improvements is to be welcomed and we are pleased to see the investment is not limited to a single tenure.

"However, the nature of the scheme means that huge swathes of landlords across the country will be, quite literally, left out in the cold. It's also unclear if there will be enough to pay for improvements across the areas already selected to benefit.

"The PRS has some of the oldest, and hardest to improve, properties within the UK housing stock and what we would like to see is a comprehensive package of financial support available to landlords across the board."

New Homes Ombudsman service appoints new chief ombudsman

Nigel Cates has been hired as the new chief ombudsman for the New Homes Ombudsman Service targeted with resolving disputes between new home buyers and housebuilders.

Launched in 2022, the service deals with complaints in the first two years from reservation or practical completion, whichever is later. NHOS forms part of The Dispute Service Group, the country's leading tenancy deposit and dispute resolution service provider.

Cates took over leadership of the independent body from the end of September, replacing Alison MacDougall who retired in August. He joins with experience as head of financial support and controls and head of complaints/service recovery at HSBC UK after a nine-year stint at the bank.

Before that, he served as senior ombudsman at the Financial Ombudsman Service and as competition and consumer director at the Office of Fair Trading. Cates said: "I am delighted to be joining NHOS at this critical stage in its development. With the Government committed to an ambitious programme of new house building, there is a growing recognition that the service should be moved onto a statutory footing to ensure that all new homeowners have access if needed to a first-rate ombudsman service.

"I look forward to building on the success to date of NHOS and to working with the New Homes Quality Board and developers to further improve the standard of new housing across the UK"

Jodi Berg OBE, chair of the NHOS Board, said: "We are excited to have Nigel lead this increasingly important service. Not only does he bring significant and relevant experience to the table, but his career has involved substantial senior level representation across the public, private and not for profit sectors. We look forward to welcoming him to our team at NHOS and to the TDS Group at large."

In late 2022, NHQB launched the New Homes Quality Code in England, Scotland and Wales, and in Northern Ireland in 2023. The new code is an attempt to get a robust voluntary system of consumer regulation in place for the housebuilding sector after facing serious criticisms in recent years.

Regulator publishes fire safety remediation report for English social housing

The Regulator of Social Housing has published the findings from its latest quarterly survey on the fire safety of 11 metre plus buildings in the social housing sector.

All social landlords are required to submit quarterly data to RSH and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the fire safety remediation of relevant buildings for which they are responsible.

Of the 17,457 relevant buildings reported, 99% had had fire risk assessments undertaken and 11% were found to have a life critical fire safety (LCFS) defect relating to the external wall system (EWS). The vast majority of relevant buildings (88%) had no LCFS defects.

11% of the 1,932 affected buildings are due to have remedial work completed within the next six months, and 84% are expected to complete in the next five years.

Some landlords with multiple affected buildings have indicated they are prioritising works on higher risk buildings, which can be more complex and take longer to remediate. These landlords have a duty to put interim measures in place to ensure the safety of tenants until works are fully completed.

The regulator will continue to monitor the performance of landlords in remediating 11 metre plus buildings and the progress they are making against their plans.

Social landlords must have robust systems and processes in place on fire safety and its management, underpinned by accurate and up to date data. This is a key aspect of landlords ensuring that tenants are safe in their homes.

Will Perry, director of strategy at RSH, said: "This quarterly survey is an important tool in helping us monitor the progress being made by the sector on remediating fire safety defects. Fire safety is

a fundamental responsibility and we expect all landlords to take prompt and effective action so that tenants can feel safe in their homes.

"This includes putting mitigating measures in place to protect tenants from any risks in the interim period before works are complete. Boards and councillors have a duty to ensure these plans are delivered.

"Meanwhile our ongoing regulation, including our programme of inspections and responsive engagement, helps us check that landlords are meeting the outcomes of our standards – including those relating to fire safety."

Landlords have previously claimed that delays in progressing schemes is due to a range of factors including navigating complex legal arrangements with freeholders and leaseholders, difficulties sourcing contractors and supply chain delays.

Essex council's housing stock found to have serious safety failings

The Regulator of Social Housing has found that Harlow District Council failed to meet the new consumer standards over a series of safety shortcomings.

As a result, the regulator gave the Essex council a C3 grade for its housing service, which means there are serious failings and it needs to make significant improvements.

RSH investigated Harlow Council after reviewing its Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results. RSH concluded that the council had:

- Carried out fire risk assessments for only 20% of buildings that it should have done, out of its 9,100 social housing homes.
- Over 500 high risk fire safety remedial actions overdue, and a further 1,500 medium risk actions overdue (the majority of which are more than 12 months overdue).

Harlow Council has employed an external consultant to help it to develop a detailed improvement plan as a priority and the RSH will be engaging with the landlord as it addresses these failings.

The Council is working to complete the outstanding fire risk assessments and resulting actions, starting with the highest risk

blocks. RSH continues to scrutinise the Council closely and it must demonstrate that it is reducing risks to tenants as it puts these issues right.

Kate Dodsworth, chief of regulatory engagement at RSH, said: "It is unacceptable that Harlow Council has failed to meet fire safety requirements. Providing safe, decent homes for tenants begins with robust data, and this must include fire risk assessments for every home that needs one.

"We identified these failings by scrutinising the council's TSM results. It is the landlord's responsibility to notify us themselves of material issues. Our new proactive approach and expanded consumer remit is helping to bring issues to the surface earlier. We expect all providers to regularly review and evaluate their services to improve outcomes for tenants."

The investigation was carried out as part of RSH's responsive engagement work.

Councils are committed to improving housing standards

Councils are committed to addressing the challenges of unfit housing and want their residents to have the security of a safe and well-maintained home with any issues quickly and satisfactorily addressed.

Responding to the Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner's announcement of measures to

protect renters and drive up housing standards, Councillor Adam Hug, Local Government Association housing spokesperson, said: "It is good the Government is setting out measures to protect renters and improve housing standards.

"Councils are committed to addressing the challenges of unfit housing and want their

residents to have the security of a safe and well-maintained home with any issues quickly and satisfactorily addressed.

"While we look forward to seeing the detail behind this announcement, councils need further funding and support to raise standards in the private rented sector.

"Councils could also do much more if they were given the right tools, such as removing the requirement for Secretary of State approval for larger selective licensing schemes."

Deputy PM demands faster remediation of residential buildings

The Housing Secretary has committed the Government to agreeing a remediation acceleration plan with the housing and construction sectors this Autumn, in a determined effort to speed up the removal of dangerous cladding from buildings.

The commitment to a speeded up remediation plan came weeks after the damning findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report were published and a series of fires broke out in blocks of flats where remediation work was still in progress.

Angela Rayner said that working with the Prime Minister on the inquiry was “the most sobering moment of my career”, describing it as “a fatal failure of market and state”.

“It is completely unacceptable that we have

thousands of buildings still wrapped in unsafe cladding seven years after Grenfell,” she continued.

“That’s why we will bring forward a new remediation action plan this Autumn to speed up the process and we’ll pursue those responsible – without fear or favour.”

The Housing Secretary has also set out other measures to address the housing crisis, including the Renter’s Rights Bill, which received its first reading on 11 September, consulting on a new Decent Homes Standard for the social rented and private rented sectors and bringing forward legislation on Awaab’s Law.

The latter will allow tenants to request action on mould and leaks within a specified timeframe. Under previous Tory plans it would have applied

only to the social rented sector, but Labour intends to extend its application to the private rented sector.

She also set out plans to apply new access to information requirements to social housing landlords, which are intended to help tenants get improvements for their homes, and promised to introduce a competence and conduct standard for the sector to ensure staff have the right skills and experience. As well as promising improvements to the quality of existing homes, Rayner has committed the Government to a “council housing revolution”. She said that, while new social housing “plummeted” under the Tories, Labour would “reverse that tide”, setting out an ambition to build more social homes than are lost within the first financial year of the government.

Orbit increases spending on existing homes

One of the country’s biggest social landlords has seen its surplus fall by 39% as it focuses more of its activity on improvement works to its existing housing stock.

Orbit owns and manages 47,000 homes across the Midlands, East and the South-east of England. In the past year it has put additional investment into its repairs and maintenance service, particularly in tackling damp, mould and condensation related issues, as well as progressing with net zero carbon works. At the same time Orbit’s development work has fallen 31% year-on-year with 870 homes built in the year, compared to 1,257 the previous year.

This marks the second-lowest number of homes delivered by the association in the past five years, with the lowest being 848 new homes during the pandemic in 2020/21. In 2021/22, Orbit delivered 1,013 homes.

The group invested £119.4m in existing homes, including capitalised spend, up from £88.8m the previous year. The association said it has delivered major works and improved energy efficiency of its stock. A spokesperson for Orbit said: “We have introduced a five-year planned investment programme which enables us to plan and deliver capital investment works in collaboration with our supply chain in a more efficient and effective manner.”

The association’s turnover decreased by £27m year-on-year to £391m, down from £418m in 2022/23, driven by a decrease in market and shared ownership sales, though partially offset by increased income from social housing rent. Its overall surplus

fell 39% from £89.6m to £54.9m. Its surplus from social lettings decreased from £90m to £83m while its surplus on the sale of properties fell from £30m to £21m. Income from market sales fell from £85m to £61m, while shared ownership sales turnover decreased from £63m to £41m.

Earlier this year, the Housing Ombudsman reviewed seven cases of damp and mould at Orbit and issued 15 recommendations ordering the association to address these issues.

A spokesperson for Orbit said they fully accepted the findings of the Housing Ombudsman and have striven to put things right and learn from them. This has included undertaking an independent review of its damp, mould and condensation approach, implementing organisational-wide training to increase understanding of customer vulnerability, launching a You and Your Home customer check-in pilot and revising its complaint handling programme.

Former tenant ordered to pay back £260,000 in RtB fraud case

A former tenant of Islington Council in North London has been ordered to repay £260,000 after fraudulently trying to buy the council home through the Right to Buy scheme.

Gouranga Deb took on a council tenancy in 2011 without telling the council he had bought a home in nearby Haringey in the time between applying for council housing and being offered a home.

Throughout his time as a tenant, Mr Deb failed

to tell the council he owned the three-bedroom Haringey property, which was big enough for his family’s needs. Instead, he let it for up to £2,000 a month while claiming full housing benefit for the council tenancy.

Islington Council discovered the fraud when Mr Deb applied to buy the council home, through the RtB scheme. The council said as demand for council homes vastly outstrips the number of properties available, Mr Deb’s actions deprived others of a home.

Mr Deb has previously been given a suspended sentence of two years, plus 30 rehabilitative activity days and 250 hours of unpaid work after pleading guilty to four counts of fraud at Snaresbrook Crown Court in December 2022.

Islington Council was then able to recover the money by pursuing financial recompense under the

Proceeds of Crime Act. Mr Deb was ordered to pay back £242,705 plus £18,000 in costs at Snaresbrook Crown Court.

Una O’Halloran, executive member for homes and neighbourhoods at Islington Council, said: “Council homes change lives, and we will not tolerate any activity that deprives people in genuine need of a safe, decent and affordable place to call home.

“Our housing investigations team work tirelessly to deliver results like this and will always take action against the small minority of people who try to cheat the system, to make sure council homes are going to people who really need them.”

In the past six months, the council’s housing investigation team has recovered 36 properties that were being fraudulently let. They will now be offered to people in genuine need.

Specifiers' survey finds lack of awareness a major barrier to net zero innovations



“At Futurebuild, we are dedicated to driving sustainable change by equipping the supply chain with the insights and tools to innovate.”

Resistance to change and the absence of third-party verification also emerged as key issues.

Another prominent takeaway from the report was the need for closer collaboration between the industry and Government. More than 30% of respondents believed that policy reforms were essential for overcoming current industry challenges. The transition to a circular economy was deemed essential by respondents, who called for national take-back programs and circular hubs to enhance material reuse and recyclability.

Martin Hurn, event director at Futurebuild, emphasised the importance of collaboration and innovation in addressing these challenges: “At Futurebuild, we are dedicated to driving sustainable change by equipping the supply chain with the insights and tools to innovate.”

The report produced by Futurebuild aligns with the event’s aims, he said, by delivering “actionable data to help manufacturers position their solutions and sustainability credentials to decision-makers.”

A recent industry survey on construction specification has discovered that lack of awareness of “innovative products” was the second biggest barrier to the UK implementing the changes needed to reach zero, behind cost at number one.

Futurebuild, which positions itself as the leading platform for innovation in the built environment, has invested in industry-wide research to discover the key challenges and issues in the specification process in the context of net zero aims. Entitled ‘Impacting the Specification Process,’ the report “examines the factors shaping the UK’s path to carbon neutrality, highlights opportunities that will influence the industry’s future, and provides an analysis of the critical trends driving the shift towards sustainable and net zero construction,” commented Futurebuild.

The wide-ranging list of 448 survey respondents ranged from multidisciplinary consultants to housebuilders, developers and contractors, to government, trade associations, project managers, manufacturers, and engineering firms. The findings “highlight a strong demand for innovative, low-carbon solutions,” said Futurebuild, but “also underscore significant barriers, particularly related to cost.”

The majority of respondents agreed on the importance of decarbonisation, and 19% expressed enthusiasm for products which “directly contributed to decarbonisation.” However, cost was cited as the number one barrier for specifying innovative lower carbon products (by 54% of respondents) followed

by ‘lack of awareness’ at number two (52%).

The report delved into specific challenges around sustainability for specifiers, including the need for improved training, education, and access to relevant information around Biodiversity Net Gain. Respondents also identified the opportunities and challenges in incorporating ‘biomaterials’ in projects, with the primary barrier again being a lack of knowledge and understanding on applications.



Pendock pipe boxing – keeping a low profile

The use of pre-formed boxings and casing for concealing pipework on social housing refurbishment projects has largely overtaken the time intensive procedure of fabricating individual boxing on site, to become the preferred solution for most social landlords and contractors.

Traditional methods of concealing surface mounted heating system and boiler pipework typically involved the fabrication of boxing from wood or MDF. The need to cut the pieces to length then fix them to the wall, followed by sanding, priming, painting and sealing is extremely time consuming and costly, especially in terms of labour.



MXF sprinkler boxing

While the most obvious advantage of using ready-made plywood boxing are the significant reductions in time and costs that can be achieved, project aesthetics have also played an increasingly large role in decisions to replace 'site-made' with 'pre-made'.

SMOOTH PROFILES

Pre-formed boxing is curved to form smooth 'L' shaped or 'U' shaped profiles, so there are no sharp corners or joints along the edges of the profiles, as is usually the case with site fabricated alternatives.

Also, due to the wide ranges of sizes available, the correct profiles can be selected to meet the

dimensions needed for the project, so they can fit more closely over the pipework. This helps minimise the intrusion and visual impact in flats, where skirting level heating pipework or high level fire sprinkler systems are being concealed.

To add even greater versatility, the range includes a wide choice of sizes, enabling a consistent finish to be achieved in individual flats, even where different profile styles or sizes are installed. This becomes more important where complete residential blocks are being refurbished, as each one will have the same continuity of finish, which is much more difficult to accomplish with site made boxing.

In addition, all plywood profiles are pre-finished with a white resin impregnated décor paper, as standard, which removes the need for painting on site, saving even more time and further improving finish consistency.

PRODUCT RANGE

MXF fire sprinkler boxing, TK pipe boxing and BC boiler casings are all manufactured from UKTR compliant pre-formed plywood, enabling Pendock boxing to be fitted in around half the time of site made alternatives and allowing them to be easily removed and re-fitted to aid routine inspection and maintenance.

The TK pipe boxing range is designed primarily for use at skirting level and incorporates a 115° angle to the top of the profile, enabling it to 'blend-in' to the skirting and help it avoid being used as a step.

Pendock boiler pipe casings are designed specifically to conceal unsightly boiler pipework, valves, filters and flues, they also allow easy access for gas safety checks, routine inspection or boiler maintenance.

Where exterior pipework needs protecting and concealing, the CHM and MXM metal pipe boxing range has been engineered to enclose building services and other utilities. Bespoke manufactured to individual project specifications from 2 mm aluminium, as standard, metal boxing is used



MX pipe boxing

widely for concealing external pipework used in low carbon district heating schemes, as well as air-source and ground-source heat pumps.



MXM metal boxing

Metal boxing is also regularly specified for covering fire sprinkler supply pipework mounted in open balconies or externally to flats, to provide added security and weather resistance. Also, as it is non-combustible, it is used in high rise residential blocks to conceal interior runs of pipework where no sprinkler heads are present, such as communal areas.

Details on the full Pendock Profiles family can be found on the company's website along with downloadable drawings in PDF and DWG format, plus NBS specification clauses.

01952 580 590
www.pendock.co.uk



CHM metal boxing



BC boiler casing

Join Winkhaus at London Build 2024

Winkhaus UK is exhibiting at London Build 2024 on 20-21 November, where we will be showing a range of future proof fire and security solutions, in addition to hosting a seminar titled "How the Golden Thread is Improving Fire Safety".

One of the UK's largest construction shows, London Build 2024 is the biggest to date, taking over both Grand and National Halls at Olympia London. Winkhaus UK will be located on stand 070 next to the Fire Safety Stage, and we will be showcasing our internal and external Composite and Timber fire doorset solutions, our innovative aluPilot window system, the intuitive Family of Locks and the innovative autoLock AV4.

FIRE SECURITY – STANDARDS ARE CHANGING

With fire safety and fire door legislation changing significantly in recent years, it's critical for specifiers and responsible persons to remain up to date with changes that impact every stage and aspect of a fire doorset's lifecycle, from design and testing to ongoing inspection and maintenance.

If you're unsure if your specification is compliant, need help navigating the requirements of the new legislation, the fire safety order or social housing act, please come and visit our team of experts, or join our seminar "How the Golden Thread is improving building fire safety" on the Fire Safety Stage at 11am Wednesday 20 November, where a panel of experts will share their knowledge and the requirements for compliant fire doorset specifications in residential new build and social housing.

WINKHAUS FIRE DOORSET SOLUTIONS

For over a decade the Winkhaus UK Technical Team has been involved in the creation and implementation of the latest standards and guidance for fire doorsets. With our partner network of over 60 Third Party certified fabricators, we have built 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.



Internal and external fire door solutions for residential newbuild and social housing

For further information on how we can help with your specifications, to request copies of our checklists, for information on the new ranges of external Timber and Composite fire doorset solutions or our expanded ranges of internal Timber and Composite fire doorset solutions, for advice or to request training, please join us at London Build 2024 on stand O70.

FUTURE PROOF ALUMINIUM SOLUTIONS

Balancing the equation of future design is a challenge for architects and specifiers, who often find that gaining performance in one area is delivered as a trade off from another. To meet future thermal performance requirements, how can we manage the additional weight required without compromising design and layout, provide ease of use for all future tenants without compromising safety, manage ventilation and maintain security?



Winkhaus is an expert in window fitting solutions, working in partnership with system houses and fabricators in the development and delivery of innovative solutions that meet the current and future design challenges facing architects and specifiers.

We have developed a flexible range of window fitting solutions that can manage sashes weighing up to 300 kg, are designed to meet the requirements of PAS24 and up to RC3, have a range of accessories that provide safety restriction for younger family members, include various ventilation options, ergonomic operation even with high sash weights and low handle position, and can be configured in multiple configurations.

To learn how our systems can aid in balancing your future design challenges for windows, sliding or folding doors and windows, come and join us at London Build 2024 on stand O70.

AV4 MULTI-POINT AUTOLOCKING SOLUTION

Winkhaus' new multi-point autoLock AV4, is an automatic multi-point locking system which locks automatically when you pull the door closed, without the need to lift a handle or use a key.



Already the locking solution of choice for many leading door manufacturers, the AV4 range has been designed to not just surpass security standards but also requires the lowest force to operate of any autoLock. The force required to operate becomes important through the life of a doorset, as materials naturally expand and contract (thermal expansion), affecting the alignment of the door and frame, and increasing the required force to operate the locking system.

In independent testing with a wide range of homeowners who have all struggled with thermal expansion and ability to open doors previously, AV4 was chosen as their locking solution of choice. This means that the AV4 range is not just secure but will continue to function through the life of the doorset, providing continued peace of mind for homeowners.

FAMILY OF LOCKS

Designing solutions that meet current and future operational needs, abilities and access requirements of tenants, whilst complying with the latest requirements of PAS24, Approved Document Q and Police Secured by Design (SBD) can be a significant design challenge.

We have developed a range of locking solutions that fit the same initial routing, that are suitable for all door materials, and can be interchanged on site without the need to replace the doorset, thereby reducing the time spent by, and cost of, property services and maintenance contractors.

Winkhaus' Family of Locks has been highly specified in the residential new build and social housing sectors for over 30 years. Designed and manufactured in Germany, tested to simulate over two decades of use and already compliant with future security requirements of ADQ.

WHY WINKHAUS?

Winkhaus UK is part of Winkhaus Group, a leading manufacturer of door locking solutions, window fitting systems and access control solutions. For over 170 years we have been designing innovative security solutions for residential and commercial applications. All our products are designed and engineered in our state-of-the-art production facilities in Germany.

Register and join us at London Build 2024: london-build-expo-2024.reg.buzz/

enquiries@winkhaus.co.uk
www.winkhaus.co.uk/en

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 3rd Party accredited external fire doorsets.

The introduction of the external range of fire doorsets is in addition to the existing range of 3rd 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



Scan here for more information



DLUHC COMPLIANT:
Fire, Smoke & Security



UKCA:
UK Conformity Assessed



EN 1634:
Fire Resistance & Smoke Control



PAS 24:
Enhanced Security



3RD PARTY CERTIFIED:
Fire, Smoke & Security

COMMENT

The Labour Renters' Rights Bill

Allison Thompson of Leaders Romans Group (LRG) discusses the key changes & impact on the Labour government recently introduced Renters' Rights Bill.



The Renters' Rights Bill, introduced by the Labour government, brings substantial changes to the private rental sector. It builds on, but also diverges from, the previous Conservative-led Renters' (Reform) Bill, which saw its progress through Parliament stalled by the general election, while focusing on bolstering tenant rights and adding more stringent landlord obligations.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVE & LABOUR BILLS

PERIODIC TENANCIES & ABOLITION OF ASSURED SHORTHOLD TENANCIES

The Labour Renters' Rights Bill intends to mandate that all assured tenancies become periodic. This means there would no longer be fixed-term assured tenancies; instead, tenancies would continue indefinitely until either party serves notice. This approach enhances tenant security, as they are no longer bound by time limits or face sudden eviction at the end of a fixed term. In addition, assured shorthold tenancies would be abolished, moving all agreements to a periodic assured tenancy model.

ABOLITION OF SECTION 21 "NO-FAULT" EVICTIONS

The abolition of Section 21, often referred to as "no-fault" evictions, is a shared element between the Conservative and Labour proposals. However, Labour's proposed Renters' Rights Bill takes a more immediate approach. In contrast, the

Conservative Renters (Reform) Bill aimed for a phased removal of Section 21, contingent upon court reforms.

RENT CONTROLS & ANTI-BIDDING MEASURES

Labour's version includes provisions that limit in-tenancy rent increases to just once per year, and these increases must align with market rates. Additionally, Labour would introduce a ban on rental bidding wars, preventing landlords from accepting offers above the advertised rent. This adds more robust protection compared to the Conservative version, which permitted annual increases but lacked specific limitations against sharp hikes designed to push out tenants.

DECENT HOMES STANDARD & AWAAB'S LAW

Both the Conservative and Labour bills introduced the Decent Homes Standard for the private rental sector. However, Labour's proposal incorporates "Awaab's Law," which mandates stricter timelines for addressing health hazards, such as damp and mould. Landlords would now be required to inspect reported issues within 14 days, notify tenants of planned actions within a week, and carry out repairs within 28 days unless more time is needed. The Conservative version did not include these specific timelines, making Labour's approach more tenant-focused in ensuring timely property maintenance.



LANDLORD DATABASE & OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

Labour’s Renters’ Rights Bill would also introduce a mandatory private landlord database and the requirement for landlords to join an ombudsman scheme. The database aims to enhance transparency by tracking landlord compliance and penalties, while the ombudsman would provide an accessible way for tenants to resolve disputes. This aligns the private rented sector more closely with the social housing model’s regulatory standards.

IMPACT ON THE RENTAL MARKET

These reforms would offer a significant boost to tenant security and affordability. The abolition of Section 21 means tenants no longer need to fear sudden evictions without a valid reason, and limits on rent increases would provide greater financial predictability. The introduction of Awaab’s Law would ensure that landlords must address unsafe living conditions quickly, greatly improving the quality of rental housing. However, there are potential downsides, as the increased regulatory burden on landlords could reduce the supply of rental properties, making it harder for tenants to find homes and potentially increasing rents for new tenancies.

While the bill introduces more stringent regulations, there are still clear eviction grounds, such as rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, providing landlords with predictable avenues to regain possession. Though rent increases are restricted, landlords can still adjust rents annually in line with market conditions. Meeting the Decent Homes Standard may also improve property desirability, potentially reducing vacancy periods and attracting quality tenants. However, the need to comply with these new regulations, such as joining a landlord database and adhering to strict maintenance timelines, may increase administrative burdens and financial pressure, leading some landlords to leave the market.



“These changes bring challenges but also opportunities for landlords to elevate their service standards”

Allison Thompson, Leaders Romans Group (LRG)

These changes bring challenges but also opportunities for landlords to elevate their service standards, align more closely with tenant needs, and contribute to a more transparent rental market.

While these reforms are intended to stabilise the rental sector, this might impact supply and could lead to higher rents for new tenancies in the medium to long term if rental stock decreases significantly.

In summary, the Labour Renters’ Rights Bill represents a significant shift towards stronger tenant protections and stricter regulatory requirements for landlords. While these changes could enhance living conditions for tenants and build a fairer rental system, they also place additional responsibilities on landlords, who would need to adapt to this new landscape. As always, staying informed and proactive in addressing compliance requirements will be key for landlords navigating these changes.

Allison Thompson is national lettings managing director at Leaders Romans Group (LRG)

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27-28 November, ExCeL London

HOMES UK

HOMES UK and Unlock Net Zero Live, happening on 27-28 November at London's ExCeL, is set to be a pivotal event for professionals in housing, asset management, development, and sustainability.

At the Labour Party conference in September, the government's renewed commitment to increasing affordable housing and enhancing the quality and sustainability of existing homes was made clear. With this heightened focus on social housing, HOMES UK and Unlock Net Zero Live is the ideal opportunity to connect with industry leaders and discover the solutions needed to meet these challenges.

KEY TOPICS FROM THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

Attendees can explore a range of sessions addressing critical issues in housing and sustainability, including:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Changes:** Explore the proposed reforms to unlock the growth needed to build 1.5 million new homes.
- **Building New Towns:** Delve into the challenges and opportunities of developing the next generation of New Towns.
- **Funding Amid Economic Pressures:** Discover innovative approaches to fund housing delivery in today's economic climate.
- **Safer, Healthier Homes:** Learn about strategies for delivering safer, healthier new-build homes.

BUILDING SAFETY & WORKFORCE COMPETENCE

- **New Remediation Action Plan:** Unveiling this autumn, the plan aims for faster repairs and greater accountability in building safety.
- **Next Steps in Building Safety:** Review progress in the new building safety regime and how to ensure the right skills and workforce to manage complex projects at scale.
- **Excellence in Repairs:** Discover what repairs excellence looks like as resident expectations rise, and explore how to build national workforce capabilities to meet this demand.



SCALING UP RETROFIT & DECARBONISATION

- **Council Retrofit Scheme and Warm Homes Fund Wave 3:** Learn about DESNZ's newly announced schemes for making homes warmer and reducing bills by scaling up home decarbonisation.
- **Making Retrofit Aspirational:** Explore successful resident engagement programs and how to create a "gold standard" for retrofit compliance and quality assurance.
- **Data and Decarbonisation:** Ensure your data strategy aligns with decarbonisation goals by leveraging robust data and actionable insights.

AWAAB'S LAW & THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

- **Awaab's Law and Decent Homes Consultation:** Understand the implications of Awaab's Law, which will be introduced this autumn, and how to meet the new Decent Homes Standard.
- **Funding Decent Homes:** Learn strategies for affordably funding and delivering Decent Homes requirements at scale, including rent settlement and management approaches.
- **Building Safety and Resident Trust:** Explore how to engage residents on building safety and rebuild trust in the sector.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

To view the full programme, including these sessions and many more, visit the HOMES UK website. Don't miss this opportunity to gain insights and solutions for the UK housing and living sector at the largest housing event in the South. Register now by scanning the QR code to secure your free ticket.



Article supplied by HOMES UK

Panasonic's efficient heating solutions

In a bid to decarbonise Together Housing's social housing stock, Concept Heating turned to **Panasonic Heating & Cooling Solutions** to provide high-quality heat pumps for tenants. Panasonic's Aquarea J Series air-to-water heat pumps were specified to meet the request, along with its Aquarea Service Cloud software to help monitor energy efficiency. Panasonic and Graham Plumbing, have already provided sustainable heat pumps to over 700 of Together Housing's properties. This year, an additional 600 properties are expected to transition to air-to-water heat pumps.



www.conceptheating.com www.aircon.panasonic.eu/GB_en

LAs and housing officers need advice

The challenges facing local authorities and housing officers have never been more real as they seek to tackle societal, fuel poverty and climate-related issues. An ageing housing stock and a growing population that must be provided with affordable housing are key concerns. Frequently, it is architects who can provide the solutions needed.



Architects bring the breadth of experience and knowledge necessary to create homes that are fit for the future. Local authorities can maximise their assets and achieve cost effective solutions through coherent and effective development strategies. Visit **West Fraser's** website for more information.

uk.westfraser.com

Choosing a flooring contractor

Choosing the right flooring contractor is a critical decision. From the quality and range of products to buying power, stock levels, compliance, environmental impact, expertise and service levels, the right flooring solutions go deeper than price alone. In short, while cost is always a consideration, it should not be the sole determining factor. The goal should be to find a supplier who offers the right balance of quality, service, and value, ensuring that the flooring solution meets both current needs and future expectations. As well as flooring, **Designer Contracts** provides blinds and curtains, furniture and lighting.



01246 854577 www.designercontracts.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 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

EnviroVent introduces innovations to Infinity filterless extractor fan

EnviroVent has upgraded its renowned Filterless Infinity Extractor fan with an exciting new Datalogger function, plus variable speed control and a market-leading eight year warranty, as standard. The new Datalogger innovation will help social landlords to be able to better monitor fans in residents' homes, their running conditions, energy usage and operational life, as well as allowing them to identify any potential issues. It also allows social landlords to view the time the unit has spent in trickle, boost and increased humidity modes, as well as monitor the amount of energy used. Data can be viewed from the past 30 days or 12 months, to enable social housing providers to make short or long-term comparisons. The Datalogger is now standard within EnviroVent's Filterless Infinity fan and will be covered under its eight-year extended warranty. This means the fan is covered for any disrepair or product failure issues within that period. It also provides clarity on the running costs and energy usage associated with the fan. The ventilation fan, which is part of EnviroVent's filterless range, now also offers installers the ability to vary the speed of the fan to allow greater control and to reach increased airflows. The Filterless Infinity Extractor Fan was designed and built specifically for the social housing market. It is suitable for use in any domestic bathroom, kitchen or utility room and can be wall, ceiling, window or duct mounted to meet Part F of Building Regulations. The fan has low energy consumption and is powered by an Ultra Low Watt DC motor, offering low maintenance and whisper quiet running.



01423 810 810 www.envirovent.com

Stomix external wall insulation system improves energy efficiency for Rugby residents

Residents in 68 homes in Rugby will benefit from more energy efficiency thanks to the installation of the **Stomix** external wall insulation system. To enhance energy efficiency and make the homes cheaper to heat, the **StxTherm Robust** system was specified. Part of the **Stomix** range, **StxTherm Robust** is an EPS-based external wall insulation system designed for social housing refurbishment. Ideal for low to medium rise housing, it prevents heat loss and eliminates thermal bridges. By insulating the outer leaf of each property, the entire structure becomes warm and dry, reducing the risk of condensation and associated mould growth. Installed by **Green Homes Solutions**, the system was finished with a through-coloured **Stomix** silicone render in cream. Replacing the existing pebbledash, the new render has enhanced the exterior of each home, and is designed to be weatherproof and vapour permeable, allowing the walls to breathe and so overcoming the problems associated with conventional renders such as interstitial condensation which can lead to mould growth and freeze thaw cracking. Unlike traditional sand/cement renders which require frequent over painting to maintain their appearance, a through-coloured **Stomix** render does not require over painting to maintain its weatherproof or aesthetic qualities. Please visit the **Sto** website for more information.



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Heating up refurbishments

Chris McQuade of F. Ball advises on retrofitting underfloor heating, focusing on the unique considerations for choosing and installing floorcoverings to boost comfort, energy efficiency, and property value.

The application of a floor smoothing compound is a recommended step as part of any flooring installation to create a perfectly smooth base for floorcoverings and ensure a flawless finish. Floorcovering and adhesives manufacturers also advise basing adhesive selection on the specifics of a particular project, including features required for ease of installation, as well as checking the compatibility of chosen floorcoverings and adhesives to prevent floor failure.

This invites questions such as: “What smoothing compound should I apply?” and “What adhesives can I use?”

There is sometimes uncertainty about the need for a specialist smoothing compound when working over underfloor heating. There are similar concerns around why a temperature tolerant adhesive is required to install LVTs in conservatories, for example, but they are not necessary over underfloor heating.

MYTH VERSUS REALITY

In fact, when working over underfloor heating systems that are contained within the subfloor, no specialist provisions are required. It is just recommended that systems are turned off 48 hours before the installation of floorcoverings, during and 48 hours after.

The issue comes when working over retrofit electrical wired or water-fed underfloor heating systems that are increasingly installed over subfloors as part of new build or refurbishment projects. In these situations, it is advisable to use a purpose-designed smoothing compound to encapsulate the pipework and electrical wires, allowing between 5 mm and 35 mm of a smoothing compound above the pipes (less for electrical wired systems), depending on the type of system being installed and the manufacturer’s instructions.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The rise in popularity of underfloor heating, especially retrofitted installations, has led manufacturers of subfloor preparation products to launch specialist smoothing compounds that are formulated to encapsulate underfloor heating systems.

These products can also be suitable for use over a wide range of absorbent and non-absorbent subfloors, including sand/cement screed, tile backer boards, concrete, plywood, granolithic, terrazzo, epoxy and polyurethane resins, ceramic and quarry tiles, as well as waterproof surface membranes.

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

Once the smoothing compound has been installed and the subfloor is ready to receive a floorcovering, it’s not necessary to use a temperature tolerant adhesive unless the room is subject to extreme temperatures caused by solar gain.

This is frequently the case in heavily glazed areas, such as conservatories or kitchens with bifold doors, which then rapidly cool at night. Extreme temperatures or temperature fluctuations can cause vinyl floorcoverings to expand and contract significantly, potentially leading to unsightly tenting and gapping at the edges of floorcoverings, particularly between adjacent vinyl tiles or planks, over time. When the bond has fully matured, temperature tolerant adhesives hold floorcoverings firmly in place in these environments, restricting these movements and ensuring the long-lasting performance of installations.

Temperature fluctuations as a result of underfloor heating systems are much more gradual and less extreme than changes in temperature resulting from solar gain, which can be much more sudden and range up to +60°C. To meet British Standard guidelines of resilient and textile floorcoverings, underfloor heating systems should not exceed 27°C at the bond line.



It is advisable to allow between 5 mm and 35mm of a smoothing compound above retrofit electrical wired or water-fed underfloor heating systems, depending on the type of system being installed and the manufacturer’s instructions

Where a temperature tolerant adhesive is required, there are a number to choose from, including ones with extra features, such as pressure sensitive characteristics.

FURTHER ADVICE

For checking the compatibility of chosen floorcoverings, as well as suitability for use in high-temperature environments, F. Ball produces its industry-leading Recommended Adhesives Guide. The 2024 edition of the guide lists adhesives recommended for use with over 6,000 floorcoverings, produced by over 200 manufacturers.

Chris McQuade is technical service officer at F. Ball



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Ventilation solutions for landlords

Vent-Axia's new Lo-Carbon Revive 7 fan has raised the bar on energy efficiency for social housing providers, with an estimated running cost of just £3 per year. Designed to meet the specific needs of the social housing sector this next generation of the popular Revive 7 filter-less unitary fan offers greater efficiency, near silent operation, a slimmer profile, all with the same great performance and in line with the updated Part F of the Building Regulations. This gives social housing landlords confidence that the new Lo-Carbon Revive 7 can tackle the issues of condensation and mould, while improving the efficiency of housing stock and comfort for residents.



0344 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

ADEY launch the MagnaClean AtomSC™

ADEY® have launched their latest super compact filter; the MagnaClean AtomSC™. This latest addition to the MagnaClean filter range is their smallest filter yet. Providing a super compact filter solution as part of an all-in-one compliance package. This latest filter offering from ADEY has been developed with the needs of the specification boiler sector in mind, providing a solution which meets the needs of both the specifier and the contractor. Super compact, the AtomSC™ has a pipe cut-out of only 60mm. Designed for installation in the tightest of spaces; either under, or around the boiler.



01242 546 700 www.adey.com/magnaclean-atomsc

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Fabric first still makes sense

Stewart Clements of HHIC highlights that while “Fabric First” is key in decarbonisation strategies, it needs further explanation. This approach is crucial for improving sustainable housing and tackling fuel poverty in the UK.

It's important that those responsible for building new homes and for upgrading existing homes – including both social and private housing providers and landlords – recognise the different factors involved in minimising energy consumption and in making tomorrow's homes the efficient properties needed to achieve decarbonisation and reach the net zero target for 2050.

Although broadly similar, it is essential to acknowledge that the way fuel poverty is measured differs between different countries in the UK. In England, fuel poverty strategy is focused specifically on prioritising low-income households for energy efficiency support. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the fuel poverty strategies do not make this specific distinction.

Other main differences in the metrics include whether housing costs are accounted for and the heating standards used for vulnerable households.

The latest English Housing Survey Report (2022-2023) demonstrates quite clearly that existing homes still have a long way to go to improve insulation measures to reduce heat loss in domestic homes. This has a major influence on energy usage no matter what heating technology is used. It reports that 88% of homes in England are fitted with full double glazing compared to 79% in 2012, along with 52% of homes having cavity wall insulation which is an increase of 45% from the report produced in 2012. Perhaps surprisingly, only 38% of homes have 200 mm or more of loft insulation which the report advises is an increase of 34% compared to 2012.

If we conclude that double glazing has increased significantly in this time period, it leaves the two key measures that will be vital when planning for any

The latest English Housing Survey Report (2022-2023) demonstrates quite clearly that existing homes still have a long way to go to improve insulation measures to reduce heat loss in domestic homes

heating and hot water system upgrade. The Energy Saving Trust advises that 25% of heat is lost through the roof of an uninsulated loft space. Reducing heat loss in homes lowers carbon emissions, so it makes sense to make low-carbon retrofitting easier which saves on household running costs. Older properties upgraded with double glazing, loft and wall insulation have significantly lower heat demand. This makes them better suited to low temperature heating systems such as heat pumps, with potentially fewer heating system components changes required.

Although the Government has relaxed the requirement for insulation when installing a heat pump, we believe this is a false economy and consumers will be better advised to save money in the long term by insulating their home with at least 200 mm of loft insulation and have cavity wall insulation installed if double glazing is already installed. Those older homes built with solid walls could require financial support for measures such as external or internal wall insulation to help reduce heat loss – and the Government needs to have a plan



on how to finance and encourage the consumer or their landlords to insulate houses built without a cavity.

There are five key factors that will minimise energy consumption by a heating system in your average home and directly influence the levels of fuel poverty that still exist in the UK. These include high quality insulation, increased air tightness, the avoidance of thermal bridging, maximising solar gain and the use of adequate ventilation. Insulation promotes heat retention and reduces heat loss. Air leakage through gaps in the building envelope should also be considered. Thermal bridging allows an easier path for heat loss. Address these five key factors and you are addressing fuel poverty levels.

The future homes standard consultation considers two options for new

Reducing Fuel Poverty in the UK must be a priority for the new Government as it moves forward in its attempts to hit Net Zero by 2050

build properties, one with increased insulation compared to the current Part L regulation. The alternative has higher levels of insulation and the use of a mechanical ventilation system. We await the conclusion of which option will be chosen – likely to be later this year for introduction in 2025.

Another benefit towards energy saving that has been recognised by the Government in the recent Boiler Efficiency Consultation is that energy saving can be achieved by regular servicing of heating systems. The first step is likely to be a new requirement for servicing of heating systems in the 2025 Building Regulations. While not a new topic, there is an asymmetry in that tenants in social housing have to have their boilers and heating systems serviced once every twelve months by law, but private homeowners do not. If purely from a safety point of view it seems illogical that there is not a blanket requirement for heating systems to be serviced every year.

This coupled with the new Benchmark Online Platform that provides a tool for recording the details of any heating appliance when it is installed has the added benefit of providing a service record for a home heating and hot water system – an effective ‘MOT’ equivalent for home heating and hot water when you buy and sell a home.

The Fabric First approach on the road to decarbonisation is critical, as is the requirement to maintain efficiency through an annual heating and hot water system service, required by law in every home. Reducing Fuel Poverty in the UK must be a priority for the new Government as it moves forward in its attempts to hit Net Zero by 2050 and to make significant inroads into that target in the next ten years.

Stewart Clements is director at HHIC

Panasonic partners with tado°

Panasonic Heating & Cooling Solutions is delighted to announce today its first integrated offering with partner tado°, a leading provider of home energy management solutions. Panasonic’s innovative Aquarea air-to-water heat pump technology has been combined with tado° smart heating products for room control and energy management services, to create one fully integrated solution, available this Autumn. This builds on their partnership, revealed earlier this year, and underscores their shared dedication to delivering sustainable energy solutions whilst lowering energy costs for customers.



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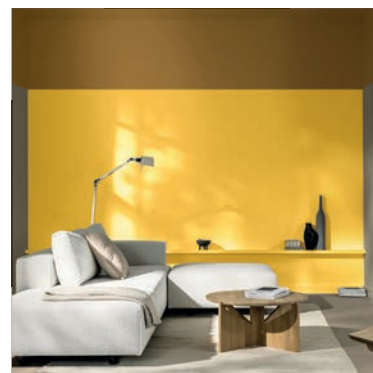
Introducing Consort Claudgen’s CFH3 Commercial Fan Heater, designed for efficient heating in workshops, garages, and commercial spaces. Rated at 3 kW, it offers three fan speeds, three heat settings, and a fan-only mode. With the HRXSL controller, users can set up to six daily programs and 7-day scheduling for energy efficiency. Multiple heaters can be controlled together for larger spaces. The heater features multi-directional brackets, allowing 180° horizontal and 45° vertical adjustment for targeted heating. Finished in sleek matt black, the CFH3 combines functionality with style.



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Dulux unveils True Joy™ as its Colour Of The Year 2025

For 2025, Dulux is asking architects, specifiers and designers to embrace yellow and infuse a sense of optimism, pride and imagination into their projects. As a guiding light to introduce these bold, positive shades to clients, the paint manufacturer has announced True Joy™ as its Colour of the Year for 2025, which is complemented by three versatile ColourFutures™ palettes. Over that last two decades, the Dulux Colour of the Year has been chosen through extensive trend research by Dulux colour experts and international design professionals. The 2025 selection, True Joy™, is a bright and positive yellow that reflects people’s desire to break free, reset, and create something new and exciting. As well as embracing True Joy™, Dulux is also encouraging designers to share the joy of yellow and help clients to leap out of their comfort zone – and feel confident in doing so. Yellow shades like True Joy™ can be used as a bold statement colour or an accent hue. However, to help designers advise their clients on the best colour pairings, Dulux has created three supporting ColourFutures™ palettes. To support specifiers and provide additional guidance on the use of True Joy™, Dulux has created the Dulux Trade Colour of the Year 2025 Specifier Guide which includes mood boards that can be used to help create the perfect space across any sector. Designers can also use the Dulux Trade Colour Schemer for colour inspiration.



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Building a brighter future with Vicaima

As we stand on the brink of potentially a major re-focus for the construction sector and a new emphasis upon delivering living, learning, leisure and workspace fit for future generations, incorporating designs to meet ever-changing aspirations, we must not lose sight of the need for maintaining quality, regulatory and environmental standards.

In the realm of fire safety, Vicaima has established itself as a leading manufacturer of timber doors and door kits, setting a benchmark in the industry with comprehensive certification and third party accreditation. With a commitment to design quality and performance, Vicaima has consistently demonstrated its ability to produce doors that not only meet the needs of current living, but forever look to the future. With an unwavering attention to sustainability goals, Vicaima products integrate seamlessly with the needs of the built environment.

LASTING GOOD LOOKS

A perfect example of how Vicaima combine tough products with real room appeal is in the use of the recently expanded Dekordor HD Colours range. In a world where skills and labour shortages on site are a constant concern, the argument for using factory assembled door kits and pre-finished products is self-evident. HD Colours presents a high resistance, durable continuous pressure laminate that affords long lasting good looks, with a choice of 14 on-trend colour options. Already extensively used for student accommodation, education and commercial environments, HD Colours has a proven track record, making it a worthy alternative to the ever-present and widely used white door and frame. Fresh for Summer 2024 has been the introduction of four new finishes, including Twilight Blue, Granite Grey, Green Mist and Light Grey. These neutral colours add an ideal subtle touch for rooms. Designed for a brighter future in living and workspaces.



Bishop Fitzgerald Upper Primary School

SUSTAINABILITY / ESG

The Vicaima Group is committed, within the framework of the ESG (Environment, Social and Corporate Governance) criteria, to making its contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations.

Vicaima acts with the responsibility of providing the market with solutions that have a reduced impact on the environment, are accessible to all and ensure people's safety and well-being and contributing to a more inclusive way of living.

Being sustainable in today's timber doors market, is not just about having all your products covered under FSC certification. While that is the case with Vicaima, their aims and aspirations go well beyond ticking obligatory boxes. As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words and so it is a measure of the importance Vicaima sets in its ESG obligations that it has laid out the Facts and Figures of its path through sustainable.

Most recently, Vicaima announced that Sustainable Production and Consumption was one of its major areas of action, working actively to extend the life cycle of its solutions, by optimising the entire value chain and minimising waste.

The Vicaima Group's approach to this issue has produced concrete and measurable results. In 2023, a total of 4,139 tonnes of waste was generated, representing a 15% decrease compared to the previous year. From this volume, of which wood waste represents a significant part, 96% was valorised through reuse in new products, recycling or the production of thermal energy.

During all operations, the different waste circuits are continuously monitored and categorised, making it possible to optimise the separation and forwarding of waste for recovery via the various duly accredited waste partners or operators, with the aim of being reused and reintroduced into the value chain, thereby avoiding the final destination to be landfill.

In this context, priority is given to progressively include in Vicaima's manufactured products or those that it integrates throughout the supply chain, renewable materials, high percentage recycled materials or wood-based products made from fast-growing natural fibres, rather than virgin raw materials.

As we look to the future, Vicaima continues not only to lead the way in product performance, but also to ensure this goes hand in hand with design and innovation, for a safe and sustainable environment.



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Mastering maintenance

For social landlords, implementing an effective and well-planned regime of maintenance is critical to ensuring their residents' homes are safe and fit for purpose – particularly when it comes to waterproofing, Roland Jackson of SOPREMA explains more.

Like every other variety of residential accommodation, social housing developments require a programme of ongoing diligence and maintenance. If the programme is planned and executed effectively, assets will remain in a good state of repair for longer, thus providing a secure and safe home for residents while minimising long-term building costs for authorities.

Various refurbishments of walkways, roofs, stairwells and balconies will be central to such programmes. To ensure such projects are successful and deliver on performance and value, several considerations need to be made.

Firstly, social housing refurbishment works often need to accommodate high levels of residents in situ during implementation, making it extremely important to plan carefully.

Minimising disruption and inconvenience, without sacrificing on the quality of delivery, is therefore critical. To this end, selecting products that are simple and quick to install, have non-slip properties, and are hard-wearing can have a tremendous impact.

Often the areas that are most commonly refurbished are those with the highest footfall, including walkways, entrances and stairs – to minimise disruption in the future, it is crucial that robust, long-lasting products and solutions are adopted.

It's important to also consider that social housing refurbishments involve people's homes. All residents should expect improvement works to result in an aesthetically pleasing finish, while individual preferences may need to be taken

into account. For example, some residents may not be comfortable with torch-on waterproofing solutions being used in their homes, from both a fire risk and a noise perspective.

Choosing the right waterproofing products is therefore essential and opting for a PMMA-based liquid waterproofing membrane and PU system aligns with many of the aforementioned considerations and requirements. Firstly, this sort of product is quick to install and cure, with much of the work being possible to complete within a day (moving from primer to finish takes only a few hours). This helps to minimise disruption for in-situ residents during the refurbishment work.

PMMA-based solutions are also robust, durable, and easy for maintenance teams and residents to clean and manage. This makes them ideal waterproofing choices for areas such as balconies, capable of withstanding the additional weight of home furniture such as tables, chairs and plant pots.

In regard to providing an aesthetic finish, PMMA-based waterproofing products are also typically available in a range of finishes that can be customised to suit a customer or resident's preferences. Tiled finishes offer a solution that is pleasing on the eye, and many products offer a variety of colours that can be utilised to create numerous decorative effects on balconies and terraces.

The choice of finish will depend on the application in question. Flat roofs, parking areas and some terraces may benefit from a Deco structure finish made up of acrylate-based chips, or a Deco mix finish based on acrylate flakes and coloured, kiln-dried quartz sand.





Selecting products that are simple and quick to install, have non-slip properties, and are hard-wearing can have a tremendous impact

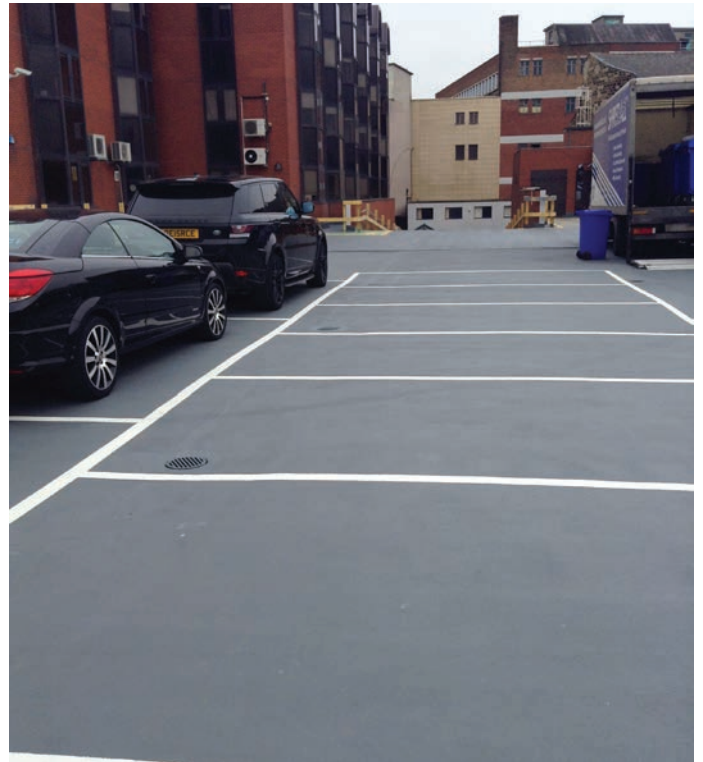
In terms of safety, an important feature of PMMA is that it does not need to be a torch-on solution. This makes it perfect for environments where torch-on techniques cannot be used due to fire safety requirements.


As an alternative to PMMA-based waterproofing products, bitumen membranes can also offer a solution that provides quality, durability and a strong service life, especially for flat roofs.

For environments such as balconies, additional work will be required, in the form of either adding a walkway or placing balcony tiles on top of waterproofing systems. Furthermore, in high-traffic areas, bituminous waterproofing may be more prone to damage, which is another important consideration.

Ultimately, local authorities and social landlords need to have confidence that the chosen solution is fit-for-purpose and can deliver the required upgrade efficiently and to a high-standard. The best way to select the most appropriate solution is by partnering with an expert supplier who can provide the necessary guidance and product specifications.

Roland Jackson is commercial director at SOPREMA







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Missing Closers... Whoa, Heavy!

Fire doors are crucial for safety, yet their weight often causes residents to remove door closers, compromising fire protection. Pete Davies of Fireco highlights how free-swing devices can address this by ensuring doors close properly during emergencies.

For those of us who know our RRFSo's from our BS7273-4s, there's no question that fire doors save lives; that the weight associated with operating a fire door is a necessary evil, a symptom of those innocuous-looking closers that ensure doors can shut safely. But when we think about who uses those doors on a daily basis, are we expecting too much from residents?

We know that effort is made to educate 'non-fire safety' people on the importance of fire doors, but I believe that for most, this doesn't stick. Don't get me wrong, I don't think for a moment this is a deliberate and malicious attempt to ignore sound, tried and tested guidance. I just think that for most people who use fire doors daily, fire protection is something that the fire and rescue services do, rather than something they should be mindful of when, say, opening the door to their flat.

Ah, the humble flat entry door. Give a thought to this oft-overlooked bit of kit. A lot of science goes into the design of these doors to ensure maximum fire protection and that each installation is instructed by years of experience and best practice guidance. The importance of doors being able to close safely with integrity uncompromised cannot be overstated. But does the resident know this? More importantly, do they really care?

Disengaged door closers are becoming a massive problem within social housing and general-purpose flats. For most residents, flat entry doors are nothing more than a barrier to their home, a hurdle to overcome. And what happens? Out comes the screwdriver, off comes the closer and hey-presto! Suddenly that barrier is beaten, the hurdle hurdled. Magically, the door to their home is suddenly lighter and easier to use!

It would be easy to assume that the only residents likely to struggle getting past the door to their flat would either be elderly or disabled, but this isn't so. Everyone is inconvenienced by heavy fire doors. Struggling to get into one's apartment is not exclusive to the elderly or those who rely on mobility aids. They irritate people of all abilities and age ranges. Fire doors do not discriminate.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

A conversation with a customer at a local authority in Southern England highlighted this. A survey of 6,000 flat entry doors in general-purpose flats identified 1,700 doors with disengaged or removed closers. That's over 28% of their doors. Another, Housing Association, told us recently that



Disengaged door closers are becoming a massive problem within social housing and general-purpose flats

In most general needs blocks, each flat is designed to be a 60-minute fire-resisting compartment, commonly, using a stay-put policy, with BS5839-6 detectors in the flats themselves, where, crucially, the highest risk of fire comes from.

In the UK, BS 7273-4 requires flat entrance doors to be part of a critical system. This means that any free-swing devices fitted to these doors need to be able to fail-safe on a fault signal from the fire alarm panel. In a majority of social housing premises, especially high-rise blocks of flats, there is no alarm and detection, other than the individual smoke detectors in the flats themselves.

Maybe, if the 'Responsible Person' has had one installed, other detection equipment such as sprinkler or AOV systems could be used to actuate the devices. This means that, assuming that relevant detectors are in the individual accommodations themselves, you could use these systems to actuate free swing devices on flat entrance doors.

Perhaps a variation would be more 'reasonably practicable'? After all, Clause 6 of BS 7273-4 allows for variations to the recommendations of the standard, subject to a suitable risk assessment, and approval from all interested parties (the Responsible Person, the resident, the Premises Manager, the Installer, the local fire authority etc), and requires the variation to be noted on the commissioning certificate. Simple enough, right? The problem is, even though many more people are embracing variations where they offer a viable solution, some remain scared of thinking that far outside of the box.

In reality, finding a compliant solution for this problem can be tricky, with BS 7273-4 already known for being an awkward standard to comply with. The issue of how to effectively deal with the problem of disengaged and tampered closers is a head-scratcher, for sure.

Pete Davies is business development manager at Fireco

a staggering 40% of closers were missing from flat entry doors in general needs accommodation. In an analysis of Grenfell survivors' statements to the inquiry, it's suggested that 56% of doors had missing self-closing devices. More recently, the devastating fire at Twin Parks, NYC, was allowed to quickly spread throughout the building, largely because the door to the flat where the fire originated did not close behind the residents as they evacuated.

Isn't it time, then, to start using free-swing devices (which bypass the resistance/closing mechanism until they receive a suitable signal from a fire alarm) on flat entry doors as standard? There's a massive risk of doors being made non-compliant purely because of how heavy they are. But to use these types of products, we need a way to actuate the device so that it can close the door in an emergency. How do we do that when there is no fire alarm?



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Innovative app assists local authorities

Nicola Kennedy of Heero Technologies debunks prevailing myths around retrofitting and explores how technology can help local authorities drive sustainable change at scale, creating a future where every home is energy efficient.



Local authorities have a central role to play in ensuring the UK is on track to meet its net zero ambition of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. However, they face a dual challenge – significantly reducing their carbon footprints while enhancing the living standards of their residents.

Approximately 27 million homes must be decarbonised by 2030, a significant number of which are owned by local authorities, to reduce the UK's reliance on fossil fuels and to help it meet its objectives. One way to achieve this is through retrofitting; implementing a range of measures to upgrade the country's existing housing stock to reduce energy consumption and make homes fit for the future.

There are various factors that may complicate decarbonisation – local authorities are generally tight on resources and may see retrofitting measures as being uneconomic, logistically or technically demanding, or as having a negative impact on residents. Additionally, it can be challenging for local authority officers to navigate the complex and ever-changing landscape of energy, climate, and housing, as well as the funding, finance and grants available to help with the retrofitting process.

While these are legitimate concerns, they are generally driven by misconceptions. Luckily, there are several innovative and cost-efficient cleantech tools available to not only debunk these, but to successfully aid local authorities in overcoming the barriers to retrofit, enabling more energy efficient home upgrades at pace and scale.

One of these – a software application developed by Heero Technologies – can streamline the often complex and seemingly disjointed retrofit experience, guiding local authorities through the entire energy retrofit journey and equipping them with the knowledge and tools to make decisions that will make net zero homes a reality.

BROAD BENEFITS

The benefit of using an independent energy platform is that it delivers agnostic, bespoke property information that is both personalised and specifically targeted at home energy improvements. For example, it not only highlights specific measures based on their ability to improve the thermal efficiency of a property and to generate energy from renewable sources, but also shows the cost of installation and energy bills savings associated with each suggested measure.



Additionally, the technology offers advice on financing and can ensure that any grant funding local authorities are entitled to is highlighted – a lack of funding remains a key obstacle to retrofit execution – and it recommends vetted and reliable installers.

What's more, it offers a powerful solution to promote sustainability and engage with local communities as it can be seamlessly integrated into any existing outreach strategies, fostering stronger connections with residents and encouraging active participation in energy-saving initiatives.

COMBATTING THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

By using cleantech to drive retrofitting, local authorities can make meaningful progress in the battle against climate change. However, aside from helping them meet regulatory expectations, retrofits are an excellent way to support tenants amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis – as well as softening the impact of ever-rising utility bills, improving the energy efficiency of homes will improve residents' standard of living.

Implementing home energy-efficient measures is critical and the impact far-reaching, making the effort and investment well worth it

In fact, according to Citizens Advice, a large-scale drive to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of 31 million people to a C rating by 2030 will not only cut consumers' bills by £24bn, but will also save the NHS £2bn, reduce new cases of childhood asthma by 650,000, and prevent 570,000 children and adults developing mental health conditions associated with cold homes.

Considering this, implementing home energy-efficient measures is critical and the impact far-reaching, making the effort and investment well worth it.

EFFECTING TANGIBLE CHANGE

Improving domestic energy efficiency and decarbonisation is mission-critical to delivering on the UK's net zero commitments, making the retrofitting challenge considerable. Overcoming it will depend on ensuring that the right improvements take place in the right properties.

Realistically, considering that the UK has the most inefficient, energy-hungry, and wasteful properties in Europe, there are very few houses in the UK that wouldn't benefit from some form of retrofit and, while some measures may be more costly than others, there are a host of cost-effective and minimally disruptive options available today.

Cleantech can help streamline the entire process by accurately showing which property-specific energy efficiency measures can produce the biggest gains, what the cost of installation is, as well as what savings can be realised if the suggested improvements are implemented, offering local authorities the opportunity to effect tangible change and progress by drastically improving energy efficiency and making a real difference to their communities and the environment.

Nicola Kennedy is the CEO of Heero Technologies.

Green Innovations

Bond It is using its expertise to meet the need for greater sustainability. "In line with our focus on increased sustainability, our product range also continues to evolve" comments Kirstie Cooper, marketing manager at Bond It. Their approach has led to the introduction of Bond It Breeze Block Foam – a multi-purpose polyurethane foam which is ideally suited for use as a gap-filler on joints where movement is likely. It can accommodate this movement whilst maintaining an airtight seal around the components, reducing heat loss and subsequently heating and energy requirements.



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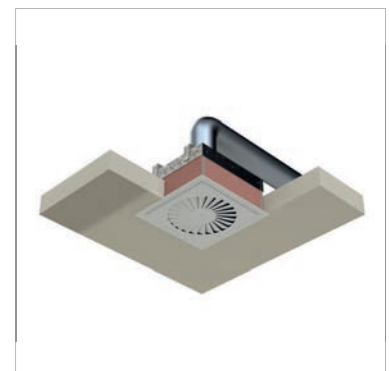
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www.housingmmonline.co.uk

Gilberts raises the bar with fire rated ventilation solutions

Gilberts has risen to the challenge of ensuring the balance of ventilation and safety with the development of its fire rated connection box (plenum). The Fire Rated Connection Box (available in both top and side entry versions) achieves 60 minutes' fire and thermal rating to EN1366-3-2021. It means that fire integrity of ventilation between internal compartments has never been easier to achieve. The new plenum maintains performance integrity when tested at temperatures up to 1,000°C. It ensures that the fire barrier through a masonry or plasterboard wall or ceiling or concrete floor will be retained, maintaining compartmentation. Gilberts believes it is the only plenum of its kind in the UK tested to deliver such high performance. It gives assurance that the two relevant layers of fire safety – compartmentation and structural safety – are addressed. "There is no harmonised European standard for fire testing of plenum boxes. However, it is the crucial element in retaining the fire compartment. The lack of a definitive Standard makes it difficult for fire officers to sign off a detail. By providing them with a tested one-hour fire and thermal rated plenum box they have the peace of mind that they have a sensible choice," explains Gilberts' technical director Roy Jones. "We believe it will be the 'go to' solution for consultants and contractors to achieve building compliance in non-domestic or multi-occupancy settings."



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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.

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www.geobear.co.uk

