

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2026

HOUSING

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

FULFILLING AFFORDABLE DEMAND IN FAREHAM

Residents are already moving in to VIVID and Hampshire Homes' 100% affordable scheme in Fareham, Hants, with the first units recently completed



UPDATE YOUR
REGISTRATION





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

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

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

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

LDS have an undefeated 14 years of industry expertise and prioritise efficiency and precision above all else, at every stage of the customer journey – from the first point of contact to the day of the survey, our customers know they are in safe hands with LDS.

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



Mains Leak



Heating Leaks



Damp Surveys



Water Ingress & Mould



Flat & Commercial Roof Leaks



CCTV & Drone Surveys

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



4.9 out of 5

Customer Reviews



**Book a Non Destructive
Leak Detection Survey today**

Tel: 0344 809 4968

www.ldsleakdetection.co.uk

info@ldsleakdetection.co.uk



SCAN ME

CONTENTS

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2026



News & Insights

Industry News.....	04
Round Table Review: Exploring Solutions for Decarbonising Social Housing.....	13
Futurebuild Show Preview	19



Features

21 Building Fabric: Cladding Remediation & Maintenance

COMPLIANCE IS ABOUT MORE THAN FIRE

Joe Ragdale of Wetherby Wall Systems explores how facade safety is evolving. As regulation and sustainability expectations rise, compliance must now extend beyond fire performance.

23 Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning: Affordable Warmth

RETROFIT QUALITY IS THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Rob Garner from Warma UK explains why the defining measure of success in the UK's retrofit journey is not funding or volume, but the quality and integrity of delivery.

29 Tackling Damp, Mould & Condensation

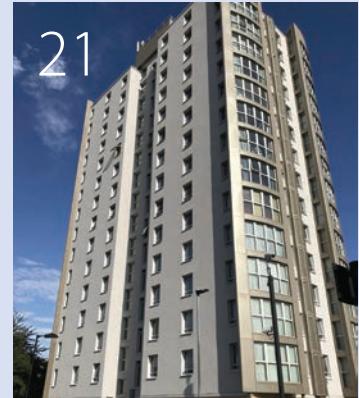
MAKE INDOOR AIR QUALITY A KEY PRIORITY

James Kane of EnviroVent discusses the latest updates to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and advises social landlords on how to remain compliant.

34 Road to Net Zero

THE POWER OF SUPPLIER COLLABORATION

Ashley Cooper from WMS Underfloor Heating discusses the importance of collaborating with suppliers committed to a low-carbon future.



Products

Building Fabric Cladding Remediation & Maintenance	20
--	----

Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Affordable Warmth	22
Radiators.....	22

Interiors Floors & Floor Coverings	22
---	----

Tackling Damp, Mould & Condensation	26
---	----

Road to Net Zero.....	34
-----------------------	----

Managing Editor
James Parker

Publisher
Anthony Parker

Account Director
Midge Myatt

Account Manager
Nathan Hunt

Digital Marketing & PR
Account Manager
Suzanne Easter

Operations Director
Shelley Collyer

Events Coordinator
Amy Madigan

Studio Manager
Mikey Pooley

Production Assistant
Georgia Musson

Digital Production
Coordinator
Kim Musson

Feature Coordinator &
Publisher's Assistant
Kim Neville

Finance Director
Simon Reed


An Employee Owned Company

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

Advertising &
Administration
01435 863500
info@netmagmedia.co.uk

Press Releases
editorial@netmagmedia.co.uk

Registration &
Circulation Enquiries
info@netmagmedia.co.uk

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

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

All rights reserved

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

Printed in England

 This magazine
may be
recycled

Editor's Comment

Hello and welcome to your winter edition of Housing Management and Maintenance, I hope this issue finds you well. However, no doubt the year ended with disappointment for you, like me, to discover that the long-awaited Warm Homes Plan would not, after all, be published in December as promised.



There were signs of hope from Rachel Reeves' Budget announcement that the funding for the Warm Homes Plan (the rebadged Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund), was being increased from £13.2bn to £15bn. But perhaps it was hoped this would be a handy screen for the quiet moving of the publication until an "expected" date in January.

What was also clear was that the beleaguered ECO scheme is to finish with its fourth wave concluding in April 2026. As yet, there is no replacement, in the absence of a comprehensive Warm Homes Plan detailing scope, funding allocation and approved upgrade measures. DESNZ has yet to show what the Plan will do to fill the gap left by ECO, which has upgraded hundreds of thousands of homes since 2013, and there is consternation across the sector on social media, as retrofitters hold their breath.

No doubt attempting to iron out many of the wrinkles and issues within the Plan, such as how to ensure verified, robust installations and avoid the horrors recently reported from some ECO projects, is the cause of delay, as funding seems to have been resolved. But, given that we are talking about bricks and mortar as well as the many complexities of disrupting residents, perhaps there is not enough joined up working between DESNZ and the Ministry of Housing?

Our recent sponsored round table looked at the various challenges for social housing teams from decarbonisation and Warm Homes, and the report on page 13 helps to explain why the experts believe that joined-up Government is crucial. It's a shame the centre doesn't pay more attention.

James Parker

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



Alternatively, please visit housingmmonline.co.uk/subscribe

On the cover...

The first homes at VIVID's Southampton Road development in Fareham are now complete.
Photo credit: VIVID

See page 06.



Award win for Dudley brownfield scheme recognises placemaking excellence in affordable housing

Platform Housing Group is celebrating after Cookley Works in the West Midlands was named Best Affordable Housing Development 2025 at the *Inside Housing* Development Awards.

Platform said the award recognises a “transformative” project that turned a derelict five-acre brownfield site in Brierley Hill, Dudley, into a thriving new community of 71 high quality, 100% affordable homes, built to meet local demand.

Delivered in partnership with Lovell Partnerships, West Midlands Combined Authority and Homes England, Cookley Works includes 37 homes for affordable rent and 34 for shared ownership, “giving families and individuals across the West Midlands a real opportunity to put down roots in a secure and aspirational home.”

The HA added: “From the outset, the vision for Cookley Works was clear: to prove that affordability and aspiration can coexist.” The development is tenure blind, with thoughtfully designed features including glass balconies, tree-lined streets and landscaped green spaces, creating a neighbourhood that residents are proud to call home.

Bringing the long vacant and contaminated industrial site back into use posed significant challenges, said Platform. “But through close collaboration and determination, the partners delivered a scheme that not only met urgent housing need, but did so with a focus on quality, sustainability and placemaking.”

Throughout construction, rigorous checks carried out by Platform’s in house Quality Team, resulted in a defect rate “far below the



“Cookley Works stands as a blueprint for brownfield regeneration and a proud example of Platform’s mission to create communities where people can thrive”

industry average,” underlining the commitment to excellence. The site’s heritage has also been honoured with a commemorative statue, connecting the new community to its steelworking past.

“Cookley Works stands as a blueprint for brownfield regeneration and a proud example of Platform’s mission to create communities where people can thrive.”

Orbit meets target to deliver £100m social value ahead of schedule

Orbit has successfully achieved its goal to deliver £100m in social value by the end of 2025/26 – ahead of its target date. The milestone was confirmed following an independent audit by HACT (the Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust), which reviewed Orbit’s approach to measuring and reporting the social impact of its activities.

Working in close partnership with HACT, Orbit invited an independent review to ensure its data collection methods and social value calculations meet best practice standards. Orbit said: “The audit confirmed that the data are of high quality

and that the organisation has accurately applied HACT’s Social Value Bank metrics in calculating the £100 million in social value generated through its services and community initiatives.”

Building on this achievement, Orbit is now collaborating with HACT to develop a “new, expanded framework that captures a broader range of social and economic impacts.” This includes the value created through the construction of new affordable homes, repairs, and other key services. The enhanced approach will underpin a new, more ambitious social value target, set to be announced in 2026.



Northampton scheme including affordable homes wins a dozen LABC Building Excellence Awards

A Northampton housing development has been awarded 12 industry accolades for its building excellence. Hunsbury Grange, a residential community with a proportion of affordable housing in West Northampton, picked up a dozen Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards.

Developer Shelbourne Estates, part of Wilmslow-based Morris Homes Group, has been praised for its “ambitious plans, commitment to sustainability, and talented site team.”

Hunsbury Grange’s site team has recently been awarded LABC’s monthly recognition for the 10th time since work began in 2023.

Shelbourne Estates also received the coveted ‘Development of the Year – over 100 units’ at LABC’s annual excellence celebrations in both 2023 and 2024. The awards recognise “the very best developments, construction practices and workmanship of developers, builders and



contractors,” said Shelbourne Estates.

Comprising two, three, four, and five-bedroom homes, the residential community is surrounded by

natural beauty, overlooking the picturesque Upton Country Park as well as being situated close to Sixfields Reservoir.

While “many of the properties have been sold, some homes are still available for purchase,” said Shelbourne. Northampton town centre is reachable by car in just 15 minutes, offering residents a host of amenities at their disposal including pubs, restaurants, and shops.

The development is located just two miles away from the M1 and a short distance from Northampton train station, from which London and Birmingham are an hour’s train ride away.

The LABC Awards celebrate the highest levels of achievement by companies operating in all sectors of the property and real estate industry.

For Shelbourne Estates, the recognition underlines its growing reputation for delivering developments that combine architectural integrity, luxury designs, and modern functionality.



First units of 100% affordable home scheme completed by VIVID at Fareham development in Hampshire

The first homes at VIVID’s Southampton Road development in Fareham are now complete, marking a milestone for the project and a significant step forward in delivering much needed affordable housing in Fareham.

The development, delivered in partnership with developer Hampshire Homes, will provide 95 new homes, all as affordable housing, following recent planning approval. Of these, 71 will be for social rent and 24 for shared ownership, helping to meet local housing needs and support families on Fareham Borough Council’s housing register.



Photo credit: VIVID

Customers have already started moving in, with full completion anticipated by early 2026. Infrastructure enhancements, including new pedestrian and cycle routes, as well as a toucan crossing on the A27, have been implemented to support safe and convenient access.

This marks the beginning of a new community in Fareham, where customers will move into high-quality, affordable homes. “It reflects the strong partnership between VIVID, the Borough Council, and Hampshire Homes in creating well designed places to live,” said the housing association.

Are we ready for Awaab's Law?

If we are still dealing with damp and mould in buildings, will a shorter timeline assist the desired outcomes?



Following previous winter periods dealing with constant reports of damp, condensation and mould, are we ready for this one? We should not be experiencing repeat issues year on year regarding internal structural conditions and, would Awaab's Law change our approach?

With a recognised number of complaints relating to untimely responses, actions and guidance, there is indeed an opportunity to get ahead of these issues with a proactive approach armed with smarter knowledge of damp, condensation, mould and of equal importance, ventilation adequacy.

With many years of expert, trusted, independent experience surveying properties following reports of these issues, we remain committed to sharing our diagnostic findings and consequently, the reasons behind such issues alongside credible and understandable recommendations for long-term cost-effective solutions.

To assist your journey we deliver a number of balanced CPD accredited Damp, Mould and Ventilation training courses for...

- **Administrative through to Technical Staff**
- **Delivering a unique understandable approach to the root causes of mould**
- **Alongside embedded yet simple and effective solutions**
- **For immediate guidance and improved resident interaction**

For example did you know...

- **Mould is only a 'symptom' of a problem**
- **Removing it alone will not resolve the issue and, it will likely return**
- **There are always more than 1 reason for its outbreak**
- **And, there are recognisable solutions for immediate improvements**

For more information, contact us now

info@cornerstone-ltd.co.uk 0344 846 0955
www.cornerstone-ltd.co.uk



A fairer, greener future for EV charging in communal living

British Gas and Zaptec have introduced the UK's first Communal EV charging tariff, giving residents in flats, tower blocks and shared developments access to lower, fairer charging costs while reducing infrastructure expenses for landlords, councils and housing associations. The tariff is available exclusively with Zaptec Pro and Zaptec Go 2 chargers

For many years, residents in flats and shared buildings have missed out on the benefits of affordable electric vehicle charging.

Homeowners with driveways have enjoyed low overnight tariffs and predictable costs, while those living in communal developments have faced higher commercial rates and limited charging access. This has slowed EV adoption and created a clear inequality between property types.

“Affordable EV charging is no longer reserved for people with driveways. It is now available to residents in flats and shared communities across the UK.”

A new national pilot from British Gas and Zaptec aims to close that gap. It introduces the UK's first Communal EV charging tariff tailored specifically for housing associations, councils and private landlords. The goal is simple: make EV charging greener, fairer and accessible to everyone, not just those with private parking.

Under the pilot, residents can expect charging rates of around 22p/kWh in the day and 15p/kWh overnight, compared with an average public charging cost of 71p/kWh according to Zapmap's national charging price index.* These savings of more than 50% give tenants a realistic and affordable alternative to public networks. Landlords and property owners also benefit with shared infrastructure costs falling sharply from around £400 per month to around £40 per month.* This removes one of the biggest financial barriers to installing communal charging.

The tariff is available exclusively with Zaptec Pro and Zaptec Go 2 chargers. Both are designed for multi-resident environments and single-cable installations, making them suitable for retrofits and new developments. They operate using a dedicated three-phase meter, creating a clean and manageable installation pathway for housing providers.

The tariff is available exclusively with Zaptec Pro and Zaptec Go 2 chargers

To maintain fairness, a 15% profit cap has been built into the model, and standing charges are expected to remain consistent with a site's existing tariff. For housing associations, councils and landlords, this creates a practical route to modernise stock and support tenant needs. Grants and funding remain available to help accelerate installation, and the pilot will gather insights that shape the final nationwide product.

Most importantly, this is a shift in accessibility. Affordable EV charging is no longer limited to people with driveways. It is now available to residents in flats and shared communities across the country, helping drive EV adoption where it has lagged most.

*Source: British Gas and Zaptec pilot release
*Zapmap index referenced within release and pilot materials.

Want to learn more about the new EV communal tariff or sign-up? →



Get in touch with Zaptec → sales@zaptec.com
0808 175 4780





A better deal for shared charging

→ **Fair, low-cost charging for flat residents** Tenants can now charge at around 22p/kWh in the day and 15p/kWh overnight instead of paying commercial rates or 71p/kWh on public networks.

→ **Exclusive to Zaptec Pro and Zaptec Go 2** The only chargers in the UK that unlock this tariff, giving housing providers a clear, future-proof standard for communal sites.

→ **Levels the playing field for shared buildings** Residents in flats finally gain access to the same type of affordable charging previously limited to those with private driveways.

→ **Infrastructure savings for landlords** Shared infrastructure costs fall from around £400 to around £40 per month, making on-site charging much more financially viable. This tariff and associated rates are the first of its kind.

→ **Designed for communal parking environments** Built specifically for apartment blocks, estates and shared bays, ensuring fair, consistent pricing across multi-resident properties.

Platform Housing Group wins gold at international Green Apple Awards for environmental best practice

Platform Housing Group has been recognised with a Gold Environment Award at the international Green Apple Awards for Environmental Best Practice, celebrating its commitment to improving the energy efficiency of their homes across the Midlands.

The award recognises Platform's successful retrofit programme, which has been delivering phased energy saving improvements since 2018. Measures such as upgraded insulation, modernised heating systems and the installation of solar panels have already helped thousands of customers reduce energy use, lower carbon emissions and save money on energy bills.

Competing against more than 1000 entries from around the world, Platform received its award at a ceremony at the House of Lords, where organisations were honoured for innovation and leadership in sustainability.

Platform's retrofit programme supports the organisation's commitment to achieving EPC Band C for all homes by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050. "The recognition also highlights the Group's data led approach to home energy improvements," commented Platform.

The Green Apple Awards, established in 1994, are regarded as one of the UK's leading honours for environmental excellence. Run by The Green Organisation, the awards promote best practice across industries worldwide and are supported by several independent environmental bodies.



(L-R): Daniel Morley, sustainability data analyst, Platform Housing Group, Elisha Muggerage, retrofit project coordinator and Richard Wilkins, general manager at Sony UK Technology Centre

Looking ahead, Platform will continue building on its success by improving internal processes, strengthening data accuracy and reporting,

enhancing customer communication and supporting colleagues through ongoing training and retrofit upskilling.

Emma Watkins is promoted to new assistant director role at Gloucestershire HA Two Rivers Housing

Two Rivers Housing has appointed Emma Watkins to the newly created role of assistant director of neighbourhoods.

Emma joined Two Rivers Housing in 2003 as an administrative assistant. Since then, she has worked her way up through the organisation and was appointed as income manager in 2019, before being made head of income in 2023. Over the last 12 months, she has been working as interim assistant director of housing, working with executive director of people and neighbourhoods Liz Evans to support the team through an internal restructure.

Two Rivers said: "The new assistant director role has been put in place in response to feedback from tenants and the housing team and follows a review



of the service area at the end of 2024. Tenants told the organisation that they wanted the team to be more visible in and around its neighbourhoods and improve the way it deals with issues such as anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood management and community support."

In response to this, Two Rivers Housing has invested in its frontline housing team to provide a more localised neighbourhood management service. This includes a new dedicated safer neighbourhoods team and increasing the size of its neighbourhood management team.

Emma will oversee the Two Rivers Housing community engagement, income collection and neighbourhood management teams.

Anchor secures planning for 100% affordable extra care scheme in the Newham, east London

Anchor, with the support of architect PRP, has secured planning permission for a major extension to Cardamom Court in the London Borough of Newham, delivering 37 much needed new affordable extra care apartments for older people.

The scheme will increase the existing 1990s development to 70 homes, all of which will be 100% affordable. Working together, Anchor, England's largest not-for-profit provider of housing and care for people in later life, and award winning architects PRP, have designed a four-storey extension to replace an existing day centre to provide 37 new extra care homes alongside improved communal facilities and outdoor spaces for all residents.

All the new apartments are 'dual aspect' with private balconies or terraces and meet London Plan space standards, with 10% designed as wheelchair accessible homes.

A primary concept for the extension was to engage with the existing community, to make new facilities that benefit everyone on the site. The



scheme includes a new entrance opening onto a landscaped courtyard garden, with communal spaces that encourage social interaction. All new apartments exceed current space standards and are designed to serve as long-term homes for residents, with accessible kitchens and level-access bathrooms.

New outdoor spaces will include a communal courtyard garden and roof terrace, as well as pathways around the site leading to a south facing garden. The scheme achieves biodiversity net gain through careful planting and includes a green roof integrated with photovoltaic panels.

KEEP YOUR PROPERTIES CLEAN, SAFE & COMPLIANT FOR LANDLORDS & BUILDING MANAGERS

CLEANING

Commercial/stock window cleaning, Pressure washing, Graffiti removal, DOFF steam cleaning (Grade 1 and 2 listed buildings)

MAINTENANCE

High Level repairs or painting, Roof Repair with 24/7 MEWP Access (no waiting for 3rd parties)

COMPLIANCE

Lightning Protection System Testing, Eyebolt & Man Safe Testing, Full Site Inspections & RAMS, Fully Trained & DBS-Checked Teams



Accountability - Integrity - Reliability

CONTACT US
JR Business Centre, Treforest Ind. Est. CF37 5UR.
01443 844679 | lee@ccwcservices.co.uk
www.ccwcservices.co.uk
#CCWCservices | Global Recognition Award Winner 2024





HOUSING

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

REGISTER ONLINE FOR:

IN-PRINT MAGAZINE
DIGITAL MAGAZINE
NEWSLETTERS
INDUSTRY VIEWFINDERS

WWW.HOUSINGMMONLINE.CO.UK

Exploring Solutions for Decarbonising Social Housing

The third Building Insights LIVE round table dedicated to tackling social housing management and maintenance issues was held in London in October, focused on sharing knowledge on how the sector is delivering the Warm Homes Plan. It featured a variety of expert voices from across the sector, plus the construction sector supply chain, sharing knowledge on decarbonising homes at scale, for the long-term benefit of tenants, including learnings from the ECO and HUG programmes.

The round table brought housing professionals together with the construction supply chain and expert consultants to collaborate and openly discuss this key issue. The £1.29bn Warm Homes Social Housing Fund, currently in its third wave of energy efficiency upgrade projects, gives the sector the chance to achieve low energy retrofits at a scale never seen before, including a variety of fabric improvements and heating measures.

The unique mix of professionals we assembled candidly explored realistic solutions for decarbonisation at scale, including hearing insights and questions from event sponsors WMS Underfloor Heating, LHC Procurement Group, Intergas Heating and Mira Showers.

Focusing on real-world challenges, the discussion didn't shy away from issues. Delegates agreed there was a multiplicity of motivations plus other challenges, such as confusion on who the decision maker is on decarbonisation projects, affordability of upgrades, and how to engage with residents. Useful examples of success were also shared however.



Recommendations were shared at the end of the session, ranging from harnessing AI to the need to bring the price of electricity closer to gas, to a better joining-up of Government policy. With EPC 'C' established as a minimum for social housing by 2030, the shift has moved to avoiding fuel poverty as the key objective, replacing others such as 'heat demand.' But managers have a raft of challenges, not least as the decarbonisation measures required means an entirely different heating approach.

The insights and learnings from experience are a must read for not only the sector, but Government. Only practical knowledge-sharing and collaboration of this sort will help see realistic solutions disseminated across the UK.

ROUND TABLE ATTENDEES

- **Matt Baird**, Co-Chair, Spring Housing Association & Director, Avalon Recruitment
- **Tania Jennings**, Net Zero Carbon Manager, Lewisham Council
- **Sue Riddlestone**, CEO Bioregional Development Group
- **Paul Norman**, Director of Asset Strategy, Clarion Housing Group
- **Alison Haigh**, Associate, Buttress Architects
- **Sarah Daly**, Head of Strategic Partnerships & Sustainable Communities, Agile Homes
- **Richard Ellis**, Director of Sustainability, Peabody
- **Stephen Tracey**, Construction Manager, Wates
- **Christian Dimbleby**, Head of Sustainability UK, White Arkitekter
- **Georgina Sommerville**, Managing Director, Green Rose Community Interest Company
- **Ruth Dent**, Director of Customer & Assets, Re:gen Group
- **Elaine Middleton**, Board Member, Livin Housing, and consultant, The Social Housing Round Table
- **Alison Skillen**, RISE Project Director, Turner & Townsend
- **Kyae Lee**, Senior Technical & Sustainability Manager, Legal & General Affordable Homes

SPONSOR ATTENDEES

- **Mark Owen**, Business Development Manager, WMS
- **Underfloor Heating**
- **Graham Collie**, Director of Product Innovation, LHC Procurement Group
- **Stewart Thompson**, National Specification Manager, Intergas Heating
- **Ben Smith**, Senior Channel Manager (Specification), Mira Showers





BUILDING KNOWLEDGE ON RETROFIT BEST PRACTICE

Sponsors Intergas Heating Solutions, LHC Procurement Group and Mira Showers and WMS Underfloor Heating tabled practical questions for at-scale retrofits

THE DEBATE: VIEWS ON 'EPC C'

The discussion began with a look at the decarbonisation challenge in some detail, but also at the opportunities which are being grasped by social housing providers, working with their supply chains to upgrade thousands of homes. Chair Matt Baird asked where the sector was on the road to EPC 'C' 2030, and the conversation quickly delved into the realities of stock condition surveys at scale.

Tania Jennings from Lewisham Council said a recent third party EPC survey of their 19,000 homes was done at pace, and "so many assumptions were made; they were possibly spending 30 minutes in each house." She said that 2600 properties had more than a 10 SAP point disparity between the survey findings and the data from their own retrofit assessors (the biggest outlier being a 48 point difference). This "really highlighted the challenge of basing grant funding on EPCs," she said, as inaccurate EPCs could see homes erroneously denied grant funding, adding: "EPC targets are only as good as the assessor doing them."

Delegates agreed that targeting EPC C was not in itself a strategy for decarbonising homes, or how to assess the quality of their fabric pre-upgrade. Sue Riddlestone of Bioregional questioned why the EPC platform was "doing so much heavy lifting, as it's not a great metric." Paul Norman from Clarion said it was "crude," as it doesn't account for different home types, and Matt Baird mentioned that Scotland had even dropped its mandatory EPC 'D' target, as it was causing "chaos."

Jennings said the "biggest challenge" from some asset team is that "a lot of times they would prefer not to know." She said Lewisham encouraged residents to comment in surveys, "because we cannot fix what we don't know."

Elaine Middleton of Livin Housing said that despite the range of challenges that are landing on social housing teams, the focus was currently "too linear" in terms of Warm Homes upgrades, when the causes of a property needing measures might be several, and overlapping. She understood the ethos: "If you can measure it, you can manage it," and said Government "is happy because

you can fill in the form and submit a return, but I think we need to take more control and decide our own strategies."

Middleton added: "The problem with a target is it is not necessarily the right thing to do," instead advocating "using real asset intelligence to make sensible decisions on properties" She agreed with Sarah Daly of Agile Homes, that "the goalposts keep moving."

ENGAGING WITH RESIDENTS & FUNDING

The core of successful refurbishments is resident engagement, with residents currently potentially ending up with damp and mould due to financial concerns, said Elaine Middleton. "Because a storage heater was too expensive to run," they may prioritise paying rent instead for fear of eviction," she said, however decarbonisation projects can be very disruptive, particularly internal wall insulation.

Tania Jennings said for good resident engagement in decarbonisation retrofits, but also to ensure that damp and mould issues are taken care of, and not made worse. As well as providing scope for residents to openly comment on their properties in condition surveys, she said Lewisham was "very clear" to residents in terms of the real implications of retrofit projects, alongside the benefits. She advocated, "don't sugarcoat things."

Architect Alison Haigh said that resident engagement was "so challenging in this sector." She gave the example of retrofitting underfloor heating, assuming that residents would need decanting, saying that "already made it so much more complicated." Kyae Lee of Legal & General said it was important to stress the improved comfort residents would accrue, as this can be a compelling benefit: "In Green Deal pilots we did, people didn't even know how much money they were saving, they just said 'my home is so much more lovely to live in.'"

Jennings said that educating tenants on the benefits of decarbonisation could prove very fruitful, and they can even educate their neighbours. She said that fully informing residents (both social and neighbouring freeholders) can bring the "level of trust that sometimes gets lost." She added, however, that the



industry needed the Department to appoint more Resident Liaison Officers (RLOs), as her team were currently relying on their contractors' RLOs. Stephen Tracey of Wates and Paul Norman said funding EPC C would not get anywhere near the net zero, although that was an increasingly politically sensitive target. Norman said that rather than the "£100m or £150m" for EPC C, "it's two or three billion to get to net zero." Georgina Sommerville said that PVs increasingly being seen as the "easiest way to get to EPC C," which was "potentially really useful, because it often provides different financial models."

Alison Skillen of Turner and Townsend cited examples of collaboration on funding, as "so much needs to happen across boroughs," due to the complex nature of projects. Paul Norman said DESNZ were now having conversations with providers about doing more without funding increases however, and supported the resulting likely increase in private finance. Ruth Dent concluded, on funding: "The housing sector has to get better at working together, because we're all fighting for the same resource, which is driving cost up."

SKILLS & UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The round table discussed the need for comprehensive deep retrofits to achieve the hoped for results, including exploring ground source heat pumps as well as air tightness measures. Tania Jennings highlighted the variability in housing conditions, and the difficulty in achieving identical retrofits results as a consequence.

The conversation moved onto the skills gap, with 4,600 contractors going out of business annually, and the need for better training and collaboration. Ruth Dent said Re:gen took a "creative and collaborative" approach with their supply chain to fill the gap between demand and required staff. "We went out to all our software companies and said, Are you using your apprenticeship Levy, if not can we have it?" She added that, with the supply chain struggling to keep up with demand, one problem was that the sector "isn't co-operating particularly well with colleges and universities."

As the conversation moved to solutions, Tania Jennings said that social housing providers need to "identify the pinch points" in projects in order to prioritise installations and ensure they are not counterproductive. She candidly admitted that internal wall insulation was a major obstacle in terms of job schedules: "Trying to get our kitchens and bathrooms team to understand that the only time you'll ever be able to insulate a kitchen is before you put the cabinets back up."

Delegates said that better fabric including air-tightness measures was causing overheating, particularly in new builds, and agreed that it must be a priority:

Jennings said "anything we can do to reduce pipe lengths, improve insulation around them, move towards smaller water heaters." There was also agreement however that the squeezed time windows inherent to the funding waves of the Warm Homes programme wasn't conducive to giving the time required to pursue holistic decarbonisation upgrades which brought all factors into consideration.

SESSION 2: SOLUTIONS

The second session of the debate saw delegates questioned by our sponsors on key practical issues, from growing uptake of more innovative heating solutions like underfloor heating, to improving holistic consideration of all energy and efficiency measures via collaboration across teams. There may not have been definitive answers to all the questions, but each was discussed in-depth, with some revealing insights emerging.

HEATING PRIORITIES

Stewart Thompson of Intergas Heating's question tapped into to the core issue of resident motivation for upgrades: "What is the priority for your residents, cheaper energy bills or saving carbon, and why?" Chair Matt Baird said candidly, as a board member for a housing association: "It's a difficult one; we want to be saving carbon, but how do I make sure my tenant is still paying their rent, and they keep their home and they keep it safe?"

Tania Jennings countered: "Why is it one or the other?" to which Baird responded: "Because it will cost money." Alison Skillen added further clarity from observing the current central drivers towards fuel poverty: "All of the policies, all of the criteria, all of the eligibility, are about cheaper bills. That is the only conversation that's happening at the moment." She said that even the Government's changing the programme's name from the SHDF to the Warm Homes Fund was a signal of this.

Skillen said that for providers, "the criteria has always been what you do to make sure that whatever you're doing doesn't disadvantage the residents." Paul Norman said he learned during the SHDF that "just saying I'm going to come and spend thousands in your home and it's going to be cheaper to run, doesn't get you in the door." Tania Jennings said: "We have genuinely had people turn down a 100K retrofit because they would have to clear their loft."

Skillen concluded: "There are a whole lot of competing priorities," and Matt Baird asserted: "This is why it makes it so hard to get things done." Stephen Tracy from Wates said it came down to allowing residents the choice between capital savings and lower bills: "if you take away that choice, it might give you an





COMMON GOALS

Delegates agreed that there should be more policy clarity across Government, electricity prices needed to come down, and stop-start wave funding was unhelpful

asset issue, with associated assets you need to manage differently.”

Thompson proposed the notion that lower carbon was seen by residents as “a nice to have, but not the core driver.” Kyae Lee of Legal & General said that the residents of a Passivhaus scheme reported in a Post Occupancy Evaluation “without fail” that their bills were “so much cheaper,” and this was “a concern particularly to the younger residents.”

THE UNDERFLOOR OPTION

Mark Owen of WMS Underfloor Heating explained why he believed underfloor heating has considerable potential for decarbonising social housing, such as paired with heat pumps for example, for “lower-cost and lower-maintenance heating.” However, with accessing housing associations being a challenge, he asked what would it take for the technology to become the ‘default option’ in new social homes (such as via policy-based incentives and supply-chain innovation).

Delegates offered some fairly stark learnings for UFH providers, that there was reticence in the social housing sector around maintenance in particular, that was preventing takeup. Ruth Dent said: “We don’t know how to maintain it, it comes back to skills.” She suggested that the approach to training in-house teams around heat pumps that emerged “around five years ago, working with suppliers to put them through courses” needed to happen with underfloor heating. Otherwise, said Dent, it’s a case of “not knowing what it means for the future in terms of our repairs and maintenance.”

Paul Norman said that trade offs on capex were driving decisions on new build, but also “whether it was cheaper to maintain over a 30 year period.” Owen assured the group that “the price had come down drastically over the past 10 years,” and there was “very little maintenance required for underfloor heating.” Alison Skillen said that manufacturers “needed to look at the cost caps set by Government” for retrofit, and “whether it fits inside those sensibly.” She warned that if this wasn’t done, people like Clarion and Peabody would have to increase their funding contribution: “Can they recover that cost?”

Richard Ellis from Peabody offered a view that in terms of overheating issues in new builds, the cooling potential of underfloor heating systems to run as “reverse chillers” to cool properties down needed exploring. “This was also a good selling point around heat pumps,” which have an underused cooling role too, he said.

MAKING A RECOVERY

Mira Showers recently acquired waste water heat recovery specialist Recoup, which gives the company a key weapon in the decarbonisation space. WWHR is a highly effective, straightforward means of recovering heat from showers to heat incoming cold water, saving carbon and relieving pressure on boilers and heat pumps. Ben Smith wanted to know if and how housing providers ensure that water and energy efficiency are considered together during retrofit projects, particularly as arguably introducing such measures on a retrofit basis requires more holistic thinking to get right.

He explained that with the water aspect and the energy recovery aspects of the company’s offer currently sitting in separate parts of the overall ecosystem, “they appear on frameworks at different points, and they’re purchased by different people within groups.” Smith wondered whether there were potential future solutions to bring them together, “so we can tell a complete story.”

Paul Norman offered the view that as a supplier they’d need to look at “in two parts – explain very simply how it will work in practice, how it will gain SAP points toward EPC C; how much does it cost and what the benefit is.” But the second part was the affordability for customers, but “it’s how you join those two bits together.”

Steven Tracy said that waste water heat recovery should be “baked into the Future Homes Standard, so it becomes business as usual.” Elaine Middleton said that social housing organisations have “multiple problem statements and pain points and regulatory requirements to hit,” so needed suppliers to show “how doing things together would solve those multiple problems. We’re really busy, so you really need to spell it out.”

Alison Skillen said that while hot water heating gets “massively underestimated in terms of its carbon,” there were obstacles to choosing non-standard solutions for retrofits. “We are in danger because we’re so reliant on those [frameworks] that we’ve ended up with cookie cutter solutions.” She added that she “would like to see some of the framework providers thinking a little bit more creatively around how they adapt their solutions,” but also cited a provider giving a one-line specification – ‘supplier to provide’ – “I remarked that was quite a high risk strategy!”

Before asking his own sponsor question, Graham Collie of LHC Procurement Group said regulations “needed to keep up” with innovative ideas. However, he said the Procurement Act coming into force this year has meant the



Government "has banned purchasing systems," under a certain threshold, replacing them with 'dynamic marketplaces,' but this "really stifles innovation."

JOINED-UP PROCUREMENT

Graham Collie asked the panel's views on collaborative procurement's role in decarbonisation projects. He explained: "Joined-up procurement, where clients pool resources and align specifications, can deliver far better outcomes, so what more can we do as framework providers to help with collaboration to unlock innovation and consistency?"

However other delegates said that integrating teams, despite the benefits of reducing duplication, also created problems, in a complex picture of service suppliers and frameworks. Alison Skillen from Turner and Townsend said the sector "keeps talking about this mythical thing called joint procurement; but you always seem to hit the barriers around who's taking the risk, and what you do when there's a quality problem; who owns that?" Ruth Dent said: "At some point someone has to crunch the numbers and do the business case."

Paul Norman advocated engaging with people such as main contractors: "They are probably your best friends; most of us rely on our contractors to bring innovation." Skillen said there were "huge numbers" of consortiums across the sector, because "it makes very little sense for [providers] to do procurement on their own...we can't afford for every organisation to lead on innovation." She admitted there were challenges around other bodies taking on upgrades however, and Matt Baird confessed that sometimes "it was hard to get past housing providers' egos."

Graham Collie gave an example of Scottish collaboration, where providers worked together across Dumfries and Galloway, but each one individually undertook the resulting contracts, setting up a hub and bringing in other teams as needed. Tania Jennings summed up her approach to avoiding reinventing the wheel across the sector: "I'm a big fan of draconian models, I'd love it if Government said, 'just hit this standard, no excuses, thank you.'

CONCLUSION

As the industry embarks on the fourth wave of Warm Homes Fund projects, with the PAS2035 standard for ensuring retrofit quality now in force, the £6bn Warm Homes fund barely scratches the surface of the net zero goal. But it is a major step in the right direction, helping elevate whole estates and securing residents against fuel poverty.

Delegates thought that to counter the concerns around disruption, promoting the lifestyle, comfort and cost benefits property upgrades to residents could



be fundamental. For providers, the focus may be a whole-area benefit, but for individual residents, it was about empowering them by "helping people understand what was available," in Jennings' words. But, as she stressed, building the essential trust was also about "being really transparent about what we can and can't do."

THE ROUND TABLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Elaine Middleton, Livin Housing:** Don't wait for Government to tell you to do it, use your asset intelligence and people and work out what you can do, how you can do it, and go from there.
- **Mark Owen, WMS Underfloor Heating:** I would like to see Government put what they're saying into action.
- **Christian Dimbleby, White Arkitekter:** Sort out electricity pricing. If they really want decarbonisation, we need to make it cost effective to use renewable sources of heating.
- **Alison Skillen, Turner & Townsend:** I would like to see continued support for the strategy between waves, we need to move away from the stop-start.
- **Sarah Daly, Agile Homes:** I'd like to see a regional approach, where every region knows exactly what it needs to do and how those skills and supply chains and everything else will feed into an overall delivery model.
- **Stephen Tracy, Wates:** Policy cohesion – all those areas such as education and housing where they're all crossing over, need to get their heads together and make it work.
- **Alison Haigh, Buttress Architects:** There's a continuous focus on capital costs rather than long term savings; if you could switch to that, there'd be a lot more improvement on carbon. Also, we need to make retrofit business as usual and not a specialist term.
- **Ben Smith, Mira Showers:** We need to link legislation across the industry.
- **Richard Ellis, Peabody:** We need to bring down the cost of electricity.
- **Graham Collie, LHC Procurement Group:** Work with the devolved nations; take the lessons learned and apply them everywhere else. And unlock the Procurement Act so we can sort of the innovation side of it.
- **Tania Jennings, Lewisham Council:** We need a firm and binding end date for gas, not just for new build, but for retrofit as well. When councils cannot put a new like for like boiler into because that is genuinely the biggest barrier to us innovating. And remove the cost caps on these grant funded programmes; we need deep retrofit funding so that we don't end up considering buildings to have an end of life.
- **Paul Norman, Clarion Housing Group:** Pick a policy line through to 2050; make it law, stick to it.
- **Ruth Dent, Re:gen Group:** We know what to do. There isn't a silver bullet for this, and I think we just need to keep pressing forward and heading in the right direction, rather than trying to tick boxes.
- **Stewart Thompson, Intergas Heating:** My message to Government is, stop being selfish. Look beyond your parliamentary term and do what's right for the country.
- **Georgina Sommerville, Green Rose CIC:** For the sector; use the resources you have, especially your community resources. And to manufacturers, go beyond 'we have this product, or we fit this product' pre-empt some of the answers to the questions you're going to be asked, and find out what HAs and tenants want.



XTEND

INTERGAS HYBRID HEAT PUMP

Innovation Meets Efficiency



Intergas Hybrid Heat Pump.
Ready for today.
Designed for tomorrow.

Save up to
82.5%
on your gas
consumption

At Intergas, we know the future of heating is low carbon – but we also know homeowners need reliable warmth, every day of the year. That's why we developed the Intergas Hybrid Heat Pump: the ideal bridge between today's comfort and tomorrow's sustainability.

This innovative system combines the efficiency of renewable heat pump technology with the proven reliability of any ErP compliant boiler. Working intelligently, the system automatically selects the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly energy source – heat pump when conditions are optimal, boiler back-up when needed.

The result?

- Reduced energy bills for your customers
- Lower CO₂ emissions
- A practical, future-ready solution that doesn't require a full heating system replacement

Scan the QR code for
more information



For more information on the Intergas Sustainable Housing Solutions Initiative (ISHS) call 01527 888000 or email marketing@intergas-heating.co.uk

INTERGASHEATING.CO.UK

INTERGAS®
HEATING SOLUTIONS

3-5 MARCH, EXCEL LONDON

futurebuild

The housing sector comes together at Futurebuild 2026

The pressure is on for private housebuilders to deliver on the Government's 1.5 million new homes target – in spite of rising costs and materials and the implications of tightening design and safety standards. Futurebuild 2026 will be a platform for developers, contractors, specifiers, local authorities and housing associations to tackle these challenges head-on, amplifying the innovation that's being spurred to support the sector in addressing affordability and sustainability ambitions.

Leading with the theme 'connect', a series of new show features at Futurebuild 2026 (3-5 March at Excel London) are being introduced to enhance purposeful collaboration – bringing together thousands of decision makers dedicated to finding viable solutions that can help surmount these ongoing issues.

CONNECTING DECISION MAKERS

In 2025, Futurebuild welcomed 9,179 unique specifier visitors, including over 600 VIPs and senior leaders. With 67% involved in purchasing decisions, exhibitors generated an average of 175 qualified leads.

As attendees navigate how to successfully deliver on initiatives including the London Plan, Awaab's Law, ever stringent safety regulations and the impending construction products reform, the calibre of 2026 exhibitors – combined with a reinvigorated and carefully curated conference and knowledge programme – is paving the way for the next instalment to be Futurebuild's most inspirational yet.

SUPPORTING CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION

The reimagined format and floorplan include a new Local Authority Collaboration hub alongside the National Retrofit Conference. This will be a dedicated area for representatives across the public and private sectors to connect and better understand how the built environment can enhance projects



for both people and place. The focus will be on advances being made in the delivery of healthier, more efficient homes – in tandem with the continuing commitment to decarbonisation.

Wider environmental and resource concerns will also be major talking points on Futurebuild's main conference arena and Buildings stage as industry representatives champion the sector's growing recycling and reuse momentum – exploring how circularity can be embedded and sharing pioneering examples in action.

REUSE RESILIENCE & REGENERATION

Futurebuild partners including The Circular Economy Task Force, ACAN!, The Circular Economy Institute and Architects Declare are involved in shaping these conversations. They will be alongside the architect, academic and authority on circular economy thinking, Duncan Baker-Brown, who will be a headline key speaker reinforcing that critical resilience will only come by taking a circular economy approach with reuse at its heart.

This theme will also be a major focus in Futurebuild's central conference arena as industry bodies, government figures and high profile change makers take to the stage to rally for the three fundamentals shaping the future of the built environment: reuse, resilience and regeneration.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Several leading trade bodies including The Sustainable Development Foundation, Association of Sustainable Building Products (ASBP) and The UK's District Energy Association (UKDEA) are also instrumental in pulling together a provocative and informative knowledge programme agenda.





Futurebuild has invited these well connected networks to execute a series of seminar 'stage takeovers'. By partnering to deliver content shaped by the industry, for the industry, the event organisers are bringing fresh thinking to the fore with a particular emphasis on dissecting the role of innovation.

INNOVATION AT THE HEART

Martin Hurn, Futurebuild event director, comments: "As ever, innovation will be central to the discussion but we'll be flipping the script to explore how we

By bringing together the entire supply chain, Futurebuild is uniquely placed to engage representatives from senior specifiers and architects through to major contractors and developers

can better use existing knowledge and the need for social transformation, rather than solely exploring novel technical solutions."

"Futurebuild is where mission meets market. We're not just a conference or a showcase. We're a platform for delivery. We connect people, ideas and solutions in ways that accelerate the shift to a net zero, resilient and regenerative future."

By bringing together the entire supply chain, Futurebuild is uniquely placed to engage representatives ranging from senior specifiers and architects through to major contractors and developers – all actively looking for innovative solutions and ideas to shape their projects.

CONNECTING IDEAS & IMPACT

To this end, the Innovation Trail, a curated path showcasing products and systems with measurable sustainability impact, will be spotlighting the biggest breakthroughs, featuring brands including Dimplex, Anzen Walls, The Concrete Centre, 7 Steel UK and ZapCarbon.

The FutureX stage – home of Futurebuild's innovation content – will also return for 2026 taking on a sharper, digital focus. Dedicated sessions will cover AI, circular tools and data-led design as digital solutions become increasingly essential for monitoring performance, reducing waste and improving project outcomes.

To register for your ticket, please scan the QR Code.



Article supplied by Futurebuild

Glidevale Protect supports fire safety at refurbishment of Manchester homes

FrameSafe FR, Glidevale Protect's Class A2, fire rated external wall breather membrane has been installed to help improve safety standards as part of the cladding remediation works being undertaken at a major medium rise residential development in Greater Manchester.

The Life Building in Hulme offers a wide range of living options that allow for flexible and urban living. Working on behalf of Homes England, principal contractor Cubic Facades was appointed to install full cladding remediation works to ensure full compliance with fire safety regulations in alignment with the Building Safety Regulator. Glidevale Protect was a key supply chain partner on the project, supplying fire rated membranes in collaboration with RGB Facades, a specialist within the rainscreen cladding sector.

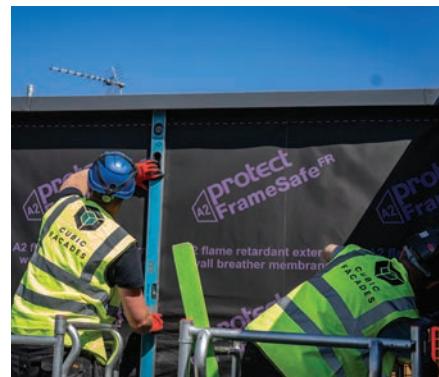
The mandatory remedial works involved three blocks of cladding being replaced with non-combustible materials on all external walls for the entire building envelope as well as internal courtyards, balconies and public walkways. As part of this, a fit for purpose, independently tested fire rated membrane was required to be used as part of the external wall build up. Glidevale Protect's FrameSafe FR external breather membrane, which exceeds the current requirements set down in Building Regulations Approved Document B in the UK,

was supplied by partner RGB Facades for use throughout the scheme.

The Protect FrameSafe FR breather membrane has been installed by Cubic Facades onto the external wall fire boards throughout the development to ensure integrity of fire performance and to reduce the risk of fire spread. Its Protect FR tape has also been used to seal membrane laps which creates a full wall membrane and tape system solution. Protect FrameSafe FR and Protect FR tape products have been independently fire tested both with the membrane free hanging and as a system application fixed over A1 and A2 substrates, achieving a Class A2-s1, d0 reaction to fire.

Mike Dickinson, commercial director of Cubic Facades commented: "We are pleased with the overall performance of the external wall membrane for this project. It was critical that the chosen product had independent fire test data as a membrane system with tape to back up its claims and give us the confidence to fit on site. The product is easy to install and my team commented that Protect FrameSafe FR was easier to handle than other fire rated membranes that had previously been used."

James Smith, head of technical for Glidevale Protect said: "Fire rated wall membranes like our own Protect FrameSafe FR product, can help play



a crucial role in reducing facade fire risk, as their performance can have a positive impact on the overall fire strategy of a residential development like the Life Building.

"Currently, UK Building Regulations generally class external wall membranes as exemptions to the minimum Class A2 requirements for wall structures in relevant buildings in UK Building Regulations, albeit with the exception of residential buildings above 11 metres in England, where external wall membranes must achieve a minimum of a Class B-s3, d0 rating. But there's a growing industry momentum towards specifying products that future proof against minimum standards, prompting the use of fire rated materials with a higher reaction to fire classification, like Protect FrameSafe FR."

0161 905 5700 www.glidevaleprotect.com

Compliance is about more than fire

Joe Ragdale of Wetherby Wall Systems explores how facade safety is evolving, and that as regulation and sustainability expectations rise, compliance must now extend beyond fire performance.

Facade specification has long centred on fire safety, and rightly so. But in today's regulatory environment, compliance is about far more than passing a single test. The Building Safety Act 2022 places accountability for safety across design, construction, and occupation, requiring that every element of the building envelope can be justified and evidenced.

While BS 476 tests remain recognised in some situations, the EN 13501-1 classification system has become the standard reference for reaction to fire performance across the UK and Europe. Its use ensures consistency, transparency, and traceability of performance ratings from A1 (non-combustibility) through to F.

Yet even when products achieve the highest individual ratings, compliance ultimately depends on how materials behave together as a system.

SYSTEM TESTING & INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE

Modern facades are multi-layered systems of insulation, subframes, membranes, and finishes, all exposed to structural and environmental stress. The way these components work together determines not only fire performance but also air and water tightness, acoustic insulation, and thermal stability.

Large scale testing standards such as BS 8414, assessed against BR 135 guidance, remain critical to verifying the fire behaviour of complete external wall systems under realistic conditions. In parallel, CWCT test sequences measure air permeability, watertightness, and resistance to wind loading, key indicators of durability and occupant protection.

By focusing on whole assemblies, rather than isolated materials, system testing offers a truer representation of how facades behave in use. It also provides a traceable record of performance that supports compliance during audits or future maintenance.

There's a growing recognition that facade performance isn't just about how one product behaves in a test. Real compliance comes from understanding how materials interact as a complete system, thermally, structurally, and over time. That's where long-term reliability is proven.

This system-based mindset underpins current industry best practice, helping specifiers ensure that what's tested, designed, and installed aligns consistently throughout the project lifecycle.

Real safety compliance comes from understanding how materials interact as a complete system

BEYOND FIRE: HOLISTIC COMPLIANCE

Fire resistance remains fundamental, but modern facade compliance now embraces a wider set of performance priorities, thermal efficiency, moisture control, structural stability, and long-term resilience among them.

Each factor impacts on the others. For instance, improved airtightness and reduced thermal bridging enhance both energy efficiency and fire safety by limiting concealed air pathways.

According to UK Government greenhouse gas statistics (2023), energy use in buildings accounts for roughly 20% of the UK's territorial emissions.



The UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) reports that embodied carbon in materials represents about 20% of emissions in the built environment, meaning operational energy, driven largely by heating and cooling, remains the dominant carbon source.

High-performance facades that maintain airtightness and thermal continuity therefore contribute directly to both regulatory compliance and the UK's broader net-zero ambitions.

DURABILITY, TRACEABILITY, & LIFESPAN

Most new UK buildings are designed for a service life of around 50-60 years, reflecting guidance in public sector and infrastructure design standards. Over that period, facades must resist wind, water ingress, UV exposure, and movement while retaining fire integrity and energy performance.

The Building Safety Act's principle of a 'Golden Thread' of information ensures that design decisions, product data, and maintenance records remain

The Building Safety Act's principle of a 'Golden Thread' of information ensures that design decisions, product data, and maintenance records remain traceable throughout a building's life

traceable throughout a building's life. For facade design, this means evidencing not only fire testing but also durability and maintenance planning.

A system that fails prematurely can undermine both safety and sustainability, leading to early replacement, higher embodied carbon, and greater cost. Durable, well tested assemblies help mitigate these risks by supporting consistent performance over decades.

BALANCING SAFETY, CARBON, & COST

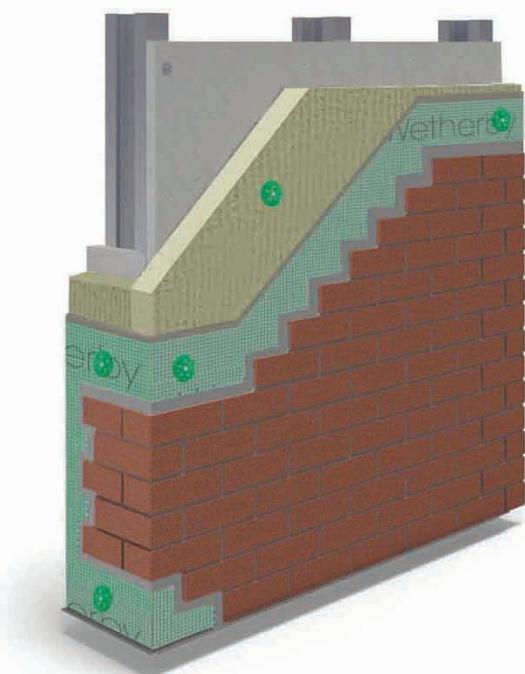
Specifiers face the challenge of meeting safety, environmental, and economic targets simultaneously. On higher risk buildings, non-combustible or limited-combustibility materials are now the default expectation, yet these choices must also align with thermal targets and design aesthetics.

Construction costs add further complexity. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) notes that UK material prices have risen significantly, by around 30-40 % since early 2020 across many key categories. Although well tested systems can require higher upfront investment, they often deliver long-term value through improved durability, reduced maintenance, and greater assurance of compliance.

THE PATH FORWARD

As the regulatory landscape continues to tighten, facade compliance is best achieved through system-based design that addresses fire, structural, thermal, and environmental performance in parallel.

Full system testing, clear documentation, and lifecycle thinking now form



the foundation of best practice. For landlords, this means evaluating facade performance not only in laboratory conditions but across the building's operational lifespan, linking design intent with practical verification.

By approaching facades as integrated systems rather than collections of individual products, the construction industry can deliver safer, more efficient, and lower carbon buildings that stand the test of time.

Joe Ragdale is technical director at Wetherby Wall Systems

Improving the standard of flooring in social homes

With Beauflor sheet vinyl, social housing providers can ensure their tenants benefit from a welcoming floor that gives a better standard of living. The positive impacts of providing social tenants with good quality flooring throughout their accommodation are well-documented. Flooring can help to create a 'sense of home', improving well-being, boosting integration and reducing loneliness, lessening financial strain and giving a sense of pride. Social housing providers also benefit, reductions in void rent loss, reduced void turnover and costs, reduced refusal rates and fewer complaints have all been cited as benefits of providing floor coverings. Beauflor's cushion vinyl flooring ranges provide landlords with an affordable and durable floor covering that's still quiet and comfortable underfoot. Often specified in bathrooms and kitchens, they are also suitable for use in all areas of the home. With this in mind, Beauflor offers a wide range of designs across its social housing floors, allowing providers to vary floor design between rooms, or offer tenants a choice of styles. Natural or grey wood planks, light stone or dark slate, concrete, terrazzo or ceramic tiles, the designs capture popular domestic styles and many feature a textured surface for a more authentic look. What's more, every design offers an excellent level of comfort due to backings that absorb footfall. The floors also have excellent thermal and acoustic properties too, for a surface that's warm and quiet in use.

info@beauflor.com www.beauflor.com



Nuaire switches to 100% recycled plastic

The Drimaster from Nuaire has evolved once more! The Drimaster-Eco has swapped its casing from a virgin ABS plastic to a recycled plastic. The switch will result in a reduction of 167 tons of equivalent embodied carbon over the period of a year. Tried and tested, Drimaster PIV units are installed in over a million homes in the UK, and are particularly popular with social housing providers due to their cost-effectiveness, speedy install (Drimaster-Eco can be installed in a loft in less than an hour), longevity (many Nuaire Drimaster PIVs have been in operation for over 20 years), and non-disruptive nature for residents.



info@nuairegroup.com nuaire.co.uk/residential/positive-input-ventilation

Additions to the Stelrad compact range

Stelrad has launched a range of 200 mm and 1,200 mm high radiators in a variety of sizes.

The new radiator sizes offer a helpful additional range to slot into specifications and installations up and down the country.



The new 200 mm sized radiators are available in K3 and K4 sizes while the 1,200 mm sized radiators come in K2 format. They come with a 10-year warranty. Head for the website for all the advice you need on the right radiators for your installations and heating system designs.

0800 876 6813 www.stelradprofessional.com



Retrofit quality is the measure of success

Rob Garner from Warma UK explains why the defining measure of success in the UK's retrofit journey is not funding or volume, but the quality and integrity of delivery.

The UK housing sector is entering one of the most important phases in its modern history. The transition to low carbon, energy-efficient housing is now a central pillar of national policy, with billions of pounds now being committed to retrofit schemes. Yet for housing associations, local authorities and private landlords, the challenge is not only to secure funding but to ensure that every project delivers safe, durable, and verifiable improvements for residents.

The Government's Warm Homes Plan outlines a £15bn investment between 2025 and 2030, supporting the retrofit of around five million homes. This includes a mix of measures such as insulation, low carbon heating, solar technologies and energy storage.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) were the primary delivery vehicles for this ambition, with the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility route, known as LA Flex, providing councils with the flexibility to target vulnerable households who might otherwise fall outside national criteria.

The direction of travel is encouraging, but the sector's progress will not be judged by how many properties receive grants, but by how many residents live in warmer, more efficient, and healthier homes because of it.

COST OF POOR QUALITY

In recent years, several large-scale retrofit audits have revealed widespread issues in workmanship, specification and post-installation oversight. Common failures,

particularly in external wall insulation, have led to damp and condensation problems that undo the very benefits retrofitting is meant to achieve.

For social landlords already managing complex building safety obligations, these findings are a stark reminder that quality assurance must be the foundation of every scheme.

Retrofit delivered without rigour can quickly become a liability. Poor quality installations create financial burdens for landlords, disrupt residents' lives, and undermine public trust in the very idea of energy efficiency and the grant schemes that deliver it.

By contrast, high performing retrofit projects share consistent traits: they are designed with care, properly ventilated, and verified to perform as intended. The results go beyond better energy ratings; they deliver lasting warmth, improved air quality and healthier, more resilient homes.

Quality, in this sense, is about more than compliance. It means selecting the right measure for each property, considering how residents live in their homes, and ensuring work is carried out by professionals who understand how every element of the building interacts.

POLICY MOMENTUM TOWARDS CONSISTENCY

Government policy is beginning to reflect this emphasis on quality. The Response to the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee's Retrofitting Homes for Net Zero report sets out a stronger framework for delivery.

Among its priorities are simplifying eligibility rules to make schemes more

For social landlords and local authorities, delivering retrofit well requires more than simply appointing accredited contractors

accessible, establishing a national advice service, reforming Energy Performance Certificates by 2026 to better reflect carbon and cost outcomes, and overhauling the retrofit accreditation process to ensure consistent competence across the supply chain.

The report also highlights the importance of workforce expansion, with the Warm Homes Skills Programme and Heat Training Grant expected to support the training of around 18,000 new retrofit professionals.

Combined with improved consumer advice and oversight systems, these initiatives signal a maturing policy landscape that recognises the need for competence and accountability at every stage.

However, policy frameworks alone cannot guarantee delivery standards. The real test lies in how they are interpreted on the ground, by installers, managing agents and landlords working together under shared expectations of quality and verification.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DELIVERY

For social landlords and local authorities, delivering retrofit well requires more than simply appointing accredited contractors. It demands a structured process that integrates assessment, design, installation, and verification under a consistent methodology. Standards such as PAS 2035 and PAS 2030 provide the technical backbone, but it is the discipline of implementation that determines success.

Under ECO4 and GBIS, this process began with proper scoping, understanding each property's condition, ventilation pathways, and resident needs. Coordination between managing agents, landlords and local authorities is essential to avoid duplication, gaps or unintended outcomes. The LA Flex route, in particular, has shown how data-led targeting can align retrofit with public health objectives, identifying households with respiratory or cardiovascular vulnerabilities where warmth and air quality improvements deliver measurable wellbeing gains.

Our experience across multiple local authority partnerships has demonstrated that early engagement and shared oversight make all the difference. Programmes that embed technical monitoring from the outset, use resident communication plans, and maintain transparent performance reporting tend to achieve higher completion rates and lower remedial costs. Quality is as much about governance as it is about engineering.

QUALITY AT SCALE

In Wales, the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) offers a strong example of how a quality driven model can be scaled effectively. Since 2020, ORP has funded more than £260m in social housing upgrades, combining fabric improvements with digital monitoring and skills development.

The Welsh approach is notable for its emphasis on 'whole house' design and data-led evaluation. Each participating landlord develops an evidence based retrofit pathway, measuring building performance over time rather than treating projects as one-off interventions. The programme also invests in workforce development and innovation funding, creating a cycle of learning that continually raises standards.

For landlords in England and Scotland, ORP illustrates that quality control and scale are not opposites; they are mutually reinforcing. By treating retrofit as an ongoing asset management process rather than a single funding round, the programme ensures that lessons learned are applied to future workstreams, improving outcomes year after year.

SKILLS, OVERSIGHT & ACCOUNTABILITY

As retrofit accelerates, capacity becomes as critical as capital. A well trained workforce is the foundation of quality. Government investment through the Warm Homes Skills Programme is a vital start, but the sector itself must go further. Housing providers can embed accredited competencies into their



procurement frameworks, sponsor apprenticeships tied to live projects, and capture lessons learned through performance monitoring.

Oversight, too, must be embedded rather than reactive. Independent audits, robust data capture, and resident feedback loops should be normal features of programme governance. When residents understand the process and see tangible improvements, confidence grows and that confidence reinforces the credibility of every partner involved, from the landlord to the local authority to the delivery agent.

CONVERTING FUNDING INTO OUTCOMES

The expansion of retrofit finance through the forthcoming Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund represents a major opportunity for the housing sector. Further allocations under the Warm Homes Local Grant underline the government's intent to scale up area based delivery and strengthen local partnerships. Together, these initiatives represent the next phase of retrofit funding, one focused on collaboration, consistency and measurable outcomes.

Yet the ultimate test of these schemes lies in the quality of what they deliver. Funding allocation should not be mistaken for delivery success.

Quality driven projects deliver multiple dividends: they reduce bills and carbon, extend the life of housing assets, and improve occupant wellbeing. They also reduce the likelihood of remedial costs, reputational risk, and resident complaints. Every pound spent on careful design and verification saves several pounds on rework and rectification later.

Landlords who view quality assurance as an investment rather than an overhead are already setting the benchmark for the sector. Their projects demonstrate that rigorous oversight can coexist with efficiency, and that resident centred delivery is the surest path to achieving both environmental and social goals.

QUALITY AS THE COMMON CURRENCY

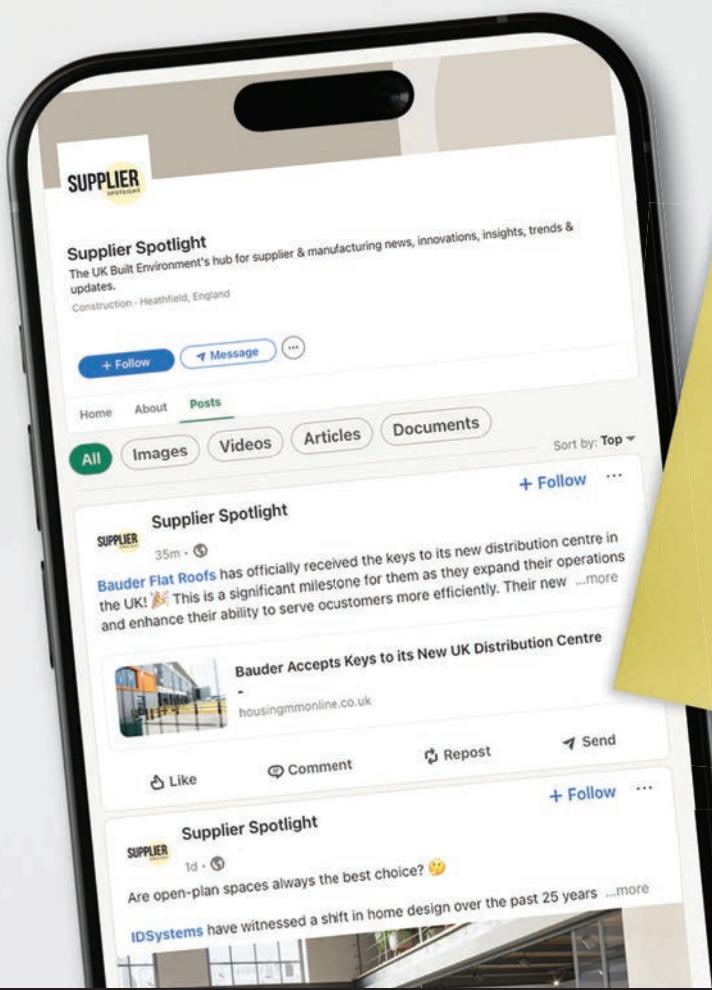
The retrofit transition will define the next decade of housing management. But it will only succeed if delivery is grounded in quality from the first assessment to the final verification.

For social landlords, local authorities and delivery partners alike, the task is not merely to retrofit homes, but to build trust in the systems that make those homes warm, safe and efficient.

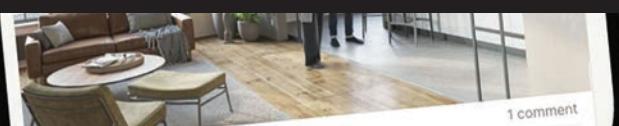
Quality of delivery is what ultimately determines whether the UK's retrofit ambition succeeds. By holding delivery to the highest standard, technically, socially and operationally, housing providers and their partners can turn today's funding into long-term progress for residents, communities and the environment.

Rob Garner is operations director at Warma UK

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT



[WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/SHOWCASE/SUPPLIER-SPOTLIGHT](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/supplier-spotlight)



Vortice launches the “Fan For Life” – A game-changing Awaab’s Law solution for social housing ventilation

Vortice is proud to announce the launch of the VORTICE F4L, also known as the “Fan For Life”, a revolutionary new ventilation system designed not only to improve long-term health but also to serve as a solution to Awaab’s Law complaints. The “Fan For Life” prioritises prevention over cure when tackling damp and mould issues in the social housing sector. Vortice firmly believes that it is more important than ever to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to persistent social housing issues. Awaab’s Law – a brand-new piece of social housing legislation – ensures that landlords must respond to health and safety hazards like damp and mould within 24 hours. The “Fan For Life” is designed to prevent those health and safety hazards at the root cause.

The VORTICE F4L boasts an industry-leading 10-year parts warranty, with unrivalled performance and a modular design that makes it flexible for a wide range of housing situations. The “Fan For Life” sets a new benchmark for improving indoor air quality, reducing maintenance costs, and delivering a state-of-the-art, robust ventilation strategy. The aim is not to merely keep damp and

mould at bay, it is to eliminate the issue for good, keeping residents healthy while also empowering housing associations and local authorities to futureproof their housing stock.

The modern retrofit market comes with a unique set of new challenges, and the “Fan For Life” has been specifically designed to tackle those problems head-on. Thanks to the VORTICE F4L, housing associations, local authorities, and contractors will no longer have to spend valuable time, money, and resources on full replacement fans. As the name suggests, once the “Fan For Life” is installed, you will never need to fit another fan ever again. All modular components can be swapped in a matter of seconds without the need for an electrician, allowing you to maintain a high level of performance without disrupting occupants or shelling out for repeat labour costs.

“FAN FOR LIFE” LEADS THE FIGHT AGAINST £8.8 BILLION PROBLEM

Social housing providers are facing unprecedented financial pressures, with a record £8.8 billion spent on repairs and maintenance in 2024. This represents

a 13% increase from the previous year and 55% higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2020.

At the same time, the UK is grappling with a skills shortage in the housing and construction sector, with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) forecasting a need for an additional 252,000 skilled workers by 2028, making it increasingly difficult for housing providers to find qualified professionals.

Recognising this challenge, Vortice has engineered the “Fan For Life” to negate the need for electricians when replacing the fan or its components. This innovative design not only reduces reliance on skilled trades but also ensures that maintenance can be carried out quickly and cost-effectively, easing the burden on housing providers.

KEY FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF THE VORTICE 4FL

Awaab Law Solution: Social housing landlords must respond to health and safety hazards like damp and mould within 24 hours under new laws. The “Fan For Life” is designed as a proactive,





preventative measure to stop damp and mould from ever appearing.

Modular Design: Simply replace the components instead of the entire fan, all without the need for an electrician. This saves on time, money, and pressure on maintenance departments.

10-Year Parts Warranty: The longest warranty on the market. The "Fan For Life" is specifically designed with reliability in mind. Once installed, you won't ever need a replacement.

Unrivalled Performance: The "Fan For Life" is the highest-performing fan in its category, exceeding Building Regulations Part F and Part L requirements for social housing stock.

Integrated Data Tracking: Built-in smart tracking system allows housing providers to easily retrieve up to 23 data parameters via USB, ensuring compliance and protecting against disrepair claims.

Energy Efficiency: Fully adjustable settings ensure precise airflow, reducing energy consumption and running costs for tenants.

Versatility: Suitable for wall, window, and ceiling applications, with both IPX4 and SELV options available.

Paul Harrington, social housing sales director at Vortice said: "The 'Fan For Life' is more than just a ventilation product; it's a long-term strategy for social housing providers. Awaab's Law is an important piece of new legislation, but we believe some social housing landlords are approaching the issue of damp and mould from the wrong angle. The 'Fan For Life' focuses on proactive prevention rather than reactive cures. Instead of aiming to get rid of damp and mould once it appears, the VORTICE F4L prevents it from appearing in the first place. This not only improves occupant health but also helps avoid costly and time-sensitive complaints for landlords under Awaab's Law."

"We have also designed the 'Fan For Life' to address one of the biggest challenges facing the

housing sector today: the skills shortage. There are fewer qualified tradespeople available than ever before, so we wanted to create a product that simplifies maintenance and reduces reliance on electricians. The modular design means components can be swapped in seconds, saving time, money, and resources.

"As someone who has spent over 25 years working in residential ventilation, I've seen first-hand the challenges housing providers face in balancing compliance, cost, and occupant satisfaction. The 'Fan For Life' is our answer to these challenges - a product that's innovative, reliable, and built to last. We back that up with the best warranty on the market."

AWAAB'S LAW: PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

The launch of the "Fan For Life" comes at a critical time for the social housing sector, as Awaab's Law introduces stricter timelines for addressing

disrepair cases. The "Fan For Life" supports housing providers and occupants alike in taking a proactive approach to ventilation, preventing damp and mould issues before they arise.

"Damp and mould complaints are not just a compliance issue, they're a health issue," Paul Harrington adds. "The 'Fan For Life' empowers housing providers to futureproof their stock, reduce maintenance costs, and deliver healthier, high-quality living environments for their residents."

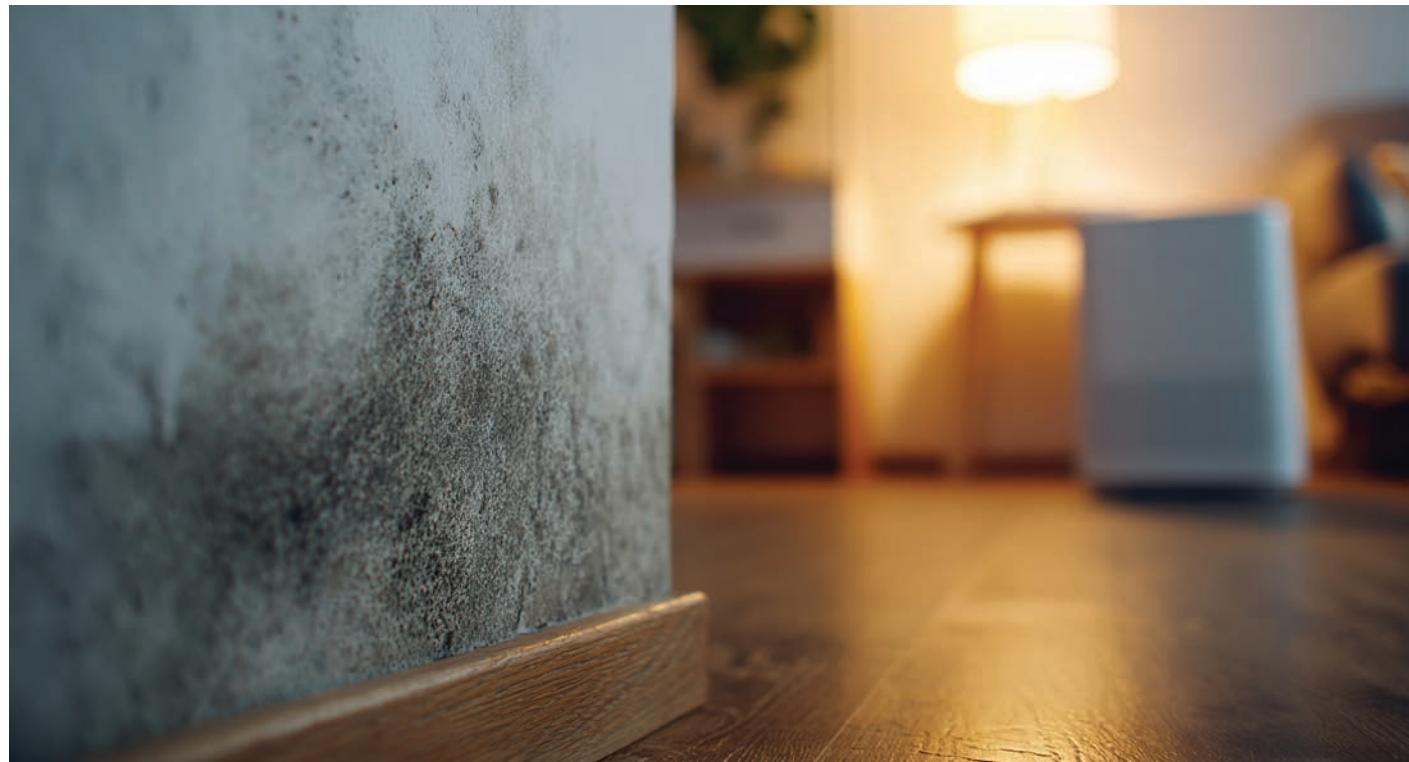
Vortice is a leading provider of ventilation solutions, specialising in innovative products that improve air quality, energy efficiency, and occupant wellbeing. With a strong focus on compliance and sustainability, Vortice supports housing providers, contractors, and developers in delivering effective and measurable ventilation strategies.

For more information about the "Fan For Life," visit vortice.ltd.uk/fan-for-life or contact Paul.

07801 661 464 paul.harrington@vortice.ltd.uk



Aico leads national action to tackle damp and mould in UK homes



From October 20-26, home life safety leaders Aico supported the return of Damp & Mould Action and Awareness Week, to unite the housing industry to tackle one of the UK's most pressing housing and health issues.

With the UK Government in 2024 reporting over seven million households affected by damp and mould across the UK, there is a clear need to act against the issue, which costs the NHS an estimated £1.4 billion annually and contributes to a wider £15.4 billion in societal costs.

To raise awareness and drive action, Aico has led the second Damp & Mould Action and Awareness Week, providing support with free resources

and guidance. Over 200 individuals signed up to the event, supported by organisations such as AllergyUK, Chartered Institute of Housing, and Trowers & Hamlin.

The first webinar, hosted by Professor John Edwards, director of Edwards Hart, offered a deep dive into the issues of damp, mould, and condensation in housing. Edwards shared practical insights from decades of experience in construction and building pathology, focussing on best practice for surveyors, contractors, and housing providers to reduce risks of these hazards and implement lasting solutions.

"We have got to understand the causes of problems and deal with the causes," said Edwards. "We need to be proactive and undertake preventative actions."

International legal experts from Ashfords provided an overview of the current legal framework, recent case law, and the implications for landlords and housing providers in the second webinar. The session equipped attendees with practical guidance to remain compliant, avoid claims, and safeguard tenant health and safety. With a focus on Awaab's Law, Ashfords shed light on the new statutory requirements and timelines for investigating and remedying health hazards.

In the third webinar, Dave Batsford, regional surveying manager at whg provided a first-

hand social landlord perspective. Covering the steps they have taken to improve housing conditions across their portfolio and discuss how they balance tenant wellbeing, legal responsibilities, and financial constraints when addressing damp and mould.

Tony Boyle, regional director at Aico, said: "The response to the first Damp & Mould Action and Awareness Week was fantastic, with huge engagement from housing associations, tenants and policymakers.

"But that was just the beginning. This year, we're aiming to reach even more people, spark more action, and continue making progress towards healthier homes for all."

"With the introduction of Awaab's Law, there will now be a legal mandate to tackle damp and mould with urgency. We want to ensure landlords, tenants and housing professionals have the resources they need to understand their responsibilities and take meaningful action."

Aico's Damp & Mould Action and Awareness Week underscores the company's commitment to improving home life safety and supporting the housing sector in creating healthier living environments. For more information, please visit aico.co.uk/damp-mould-action-and-awareness-week

01691664100 www.aico.co.uk

Make indoor air quality a key priority

James Kane of EnviroVent discusses the latest updates to the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and gives some crucial advice to social landlords on how to remain compliant and provide a healthy environment.

Awaab's Law, formally known as Section 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, was officially introduced in 2023. The secondary phase of legislation which mandates that landlords investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould in homes, within set time periods, as well as repairing all emergency hazards within 24 hours, became legislation on 27 October 2025.

As has been widely reported, this legislation came about following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in December 2020, which was attributed to prolonged exposure to mould in his family's rented home. His parents' pursuit of justice highlighted the need for legislative reform to protect vulnerable tenants from a similar fate. Awaab's Law, the first stage of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, came about as a direct response to this tragedy, which aims to enforce accountability among landlords and ensure that social housing occupants live in safe, habitable conditions.

MEETING AWAAB'S LAW

Under Awaab's Law, social landlords are required to investigate and remedy reported hazards within the following timeframes:

- Emergency hazards must be addressed within 24 hours
- Landlords are required to investigate complaints within two weeks and begin repairs within seven days if there is a significant risk to health or safety.

IMPORTANCE OF EFFICIENT VENTILATION SYSTEMS

Having an effective mechanical ventilation system in a home helps to prevent issues caused by condensation and mould, which can exacerbate respiratory conditions, such as asthma. It also leads to an improved level of indoor air quality, which is better for the health of occupants, particularly vulnerable people, such as children and the elderly.

By investing in efficient mechanical ventilation systems, social housing providers can significantly mitigate the risks associated with damp and mould, ensuring they remain compliant and protecting the health of occupants for the long term.

FUTURE UPDATES TO AWAAB'S LAW

While Awaab's Law is a significant step forward, it is not the end of the journey. Future updates to the legislation are anticipated, which will expand the scope of hazards that landlords must address.

In 2026, the law is expected to include timeframes for non-emergency repairs related to various hazards, including excess cold and heat, structural collapse, fire hazards and electrical faults.

By 2027, the law will extend to all remaining hazards, as defined by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005, excluding overcrowding. This progressive approach underscores the Government's commitment to improving housing standards across the board.

ENSURING COMPLIANCE

To comply with Awaab's Law and enhance tenant safety, there are a number of actions that social landlords are recommended to take. First of all, it is essential



While Awaab's Law is a significant step forward, it is not the end of the journey; future updates to the legislation are anticipated, which will expand the scope of hazards that landlords must address

to introduce a programme of regular home inspections – the aim of which is to help identify potential hazards before they escalate and to focus on areas prone to damp and mould.

Secondly, as many social landlords have done in recent months, it is advisable to invest in effective mechanical ventilation systems throughout the housing stock. Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) units and heat recovery ventilation (MVHR) systems help to regulate moisture levels and improve indoor air quality by extracting moisture laden air from the home and removing it to the outside. Many social landlords have recognised the need to collaborate with ventilation manufacturers who can provide the expertise on correct system specification, design, installation and maintenance.

Many are also addressing resident education when it comes to preventing damp and mould, by proactively providing ventilation advice and information. Essential guidance for residents includes the use of extractor fans while cooking and showering, avoiding drying clothes indoors, and keeping lids on pans when cooking.

Social landlords now need to demonstrate that they can comply with the law by investing in effective ventilation solutions

In addition, as regulatory and legal standards rise, so too does resident awareness. Residents are more informed and more likely to challenge poor living conditions – and social landlords must be prepared to respond.

These changes, combined with the critical Housing Ombudsman report released in 2021, have triggered a much more proactive approach from the sector and a realisation that prevention is not just preferable, but essential.

SUPPORTING COMPETENCY

Meeting these new standards means developing the skills needed to deliver high-quality installations, through accredited training programmes such as our NICEIC-approved Domestic Ventilation Training & Assessment Course.

Of course, training is just one part of the picture – the products themselves must be robust, effective and suitable for the realities of social housing.

PIV SOLUTIONS

For whole-house solutions, PIV is ideal – especially in properties where major renovation isn't viable. Typically installed in the loft, PIV systems introduce filtered air throughout the home, diluting pollutants and displacing moisture laden air. This reduces condensation and prevents mould from gaining a foothold, creating healthier, safer living environments.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

Advances in technology can assist social landlords in meeting the requirements of Awaab's Law. Smart monitoring systems can provide real-time data on indoor air quality, enabling landlords to be proactive should any issues arise.

Residential Ventilation



vectaire

MVHRs - upright and in-line

dMEVs - axial and centrifugal

R290 natural refrigerant

Cooling/Heating Units

CONTROL condensation - TACKLE mould

EXTRACT pollutants - REPLACE with FRESH air

Vectaire Ltd. 01494 522333. sales@vectaire.co.uk. www.vectaire.co.uk

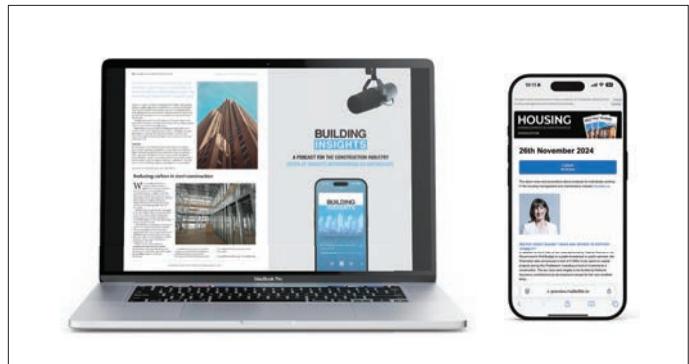


A COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT

The implementation of Awaab's Law represents a pivotal moment for social housing in the UK. The legislation aims to protect vulnerable tenants and improve living conditions, driving up standards in the ventilation of the UK housing stock.

Social landlords now need to demonstrate that they can comply with the law by investing in effective ventilation solutions, whilst monitoring and responding quickly to any issues within their housing stock. There will be mutual benefits to both residents and social landlords, as it helps to drive up standards in indoor air quality, protecting the health of tenants and the fabric of the properties.

James Kane is head of social housing at EnviroVent



HOUSING

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

REGISTER ONLINE FOR:

IN-PRINT MAGAZINE
DIGITAL MAGAZINE
NEWSLETTERS
INDUSTRY VIEWFINDERS

WWW.HOUSINGMMONLINE.CO.UK



**Heating only
the rooms
needed,
when
needed.**



ehc[®]
the electric heating company

**EHC products can be
individually controlled,
offering tenants total
control over heating
requirements per room.**



**electric-heatingcompany.co.uk
info@electric-heatingcompany.co.uk
01698 820 533**



Defying damp: Solving social housing's mould problem



Awaab's Law is now in force, placing legally binding requirements on social landlords to tackle damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk to tenants within strict timescales. Yet across social housing, the issue is still too often addressed with either low-cost but ineffective measures such as cleaning or redecorating, or disruptive and expensive solutions like solid wall insulation that can require households to be temporarily rehoused.

A practical, people-first response is essential. Luke Brooks, senior commercial manager, specialist packed products at Tarmac, explores the benefits of innovative plasters, including lime plaster systems, in supporting landlords' compliance efforts and improving living conditions.

Social landlords have long been aware of their responsibilities under Section 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 - known as Awaab's Law - introduced as part of the Government's mission to improve the safety and quality of social housing. With the legislation now active, landlords must investigate and fix dangerous damp and

mould within prescribed time periods, and repair emergency hazards within 24 hours. Additional measures for addressing other hazards are being implemented on a phased basis to strengthen protections for tenants further.

Failure to comply can lead to enforcement action, marking a significant turning point in the drive to improve housing quality across the UK.

HIGHLIGHTING THE PROBLEM

Landlords already had a duty to keep homes fit for habitation and to remedy disrepair - including meeting the Decent Homes Standard - but damp and mould remains a persistent challenge. Awaab's Law, introduced in memory of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who tragically died following prolonged exposure to damp and mould, sets clearer and stronger expectations to ensure tenants live in safe homes.

Government findings published in 2023 showed that around 3-4% of the four million social housing homes in England had notable damp or mould, 1-2% had serious (HHSRS category 2) issues, and

0.2% had the most severe (category 1) hazards. The latest English Housing Survey recorded damp problems in 7% of social homes in 2023-24, up three percentage points since 2019.

Although significant improvements have been delivered through various funding programmes, more solutions are needed to help reduce damp and mould risks across existing stock under the strengthened legal framework.

LIME PLASTER – TACKLING THE ISSUE

Social landlords can pursue a range of interventions to improve energy efficiency and reduce damp and mould, from fixing leaking roofs and improving insulation to upgrading ventilation and heating systems. Retrospective damp-proofing measures are another option, though often costly, disruptive, and not always guaranteed to resolve the issue.

Damp and mould occur when excess moisture remains on walls, creating ideal conditions for growth. Solid brick and stone walls are especially vulnerable because their colder surfaces cause airborne moisture from daily



activities to condense. A missing or ineffective damp-proof course makes the challenge worse. An increasingly popular whole-property solution is the use of modern, breathable lime plasters such as the Limelite Breathable Plaster System.

Lime plasters help regulate moisture by absorbing excess humidity and releasing it back into the air when conditions are dry. Their microporous structure allows controlled vapour movement while resisting liquid water penetration, supporting healthier internal environments and reducing mould risk.

By contrast, conventional gypsum plaster is hygroscopic – it absorbs and holds moisture from the substrate or atmosphere. Without suitable insulation and ventilation, this can contribute to damp and black mould. While widespread double glazing has improved heat retention, it can also reduce ventilation and increase humidity, highlighting the limitations of gypsum in older properties.

Lime plasters are specifically suited to older buildings – common across the social housing sector – and can even help make them warmer and easier to heat. Limelite renovating plasters, for example, use expanded perlite to achieve thermal conductivity values on average three times lower than gypsum plasters, improving overall wall insulation.

ADDED BENEFITS

There are practical benefits for contractors too. Lime plaster is sometimes perceived as challenging to apply, but modern systems such as Limelite have been designed for ease of use and suitability across

a range of skill levels. Limelite is less than half the weight of sand and cement plaster and can be applied to both modern and traditional substrates, including masonry, blockwork, stone and wooden lath. Crucially, lime plasters dry quickly – with products like Limelite drying in as little as 24 hours.

The key to success lies in choosing the right materials. With improved understanding of lime

plasters and access to high-quality systems, social landlords have another effective tool in their arsenal as they work to deliver healthier homes under the strengthened legal requirements. For tenants, that can only be a positive step towards safer, better-quality living conditions.

www.limeliteheritage.co.uk



The power of supplier collaboration

Ashley Cooper from WMS Underfloor Heating discusses the importance of collaborating with suppliers who are committed to a low-carbon future.

The UK's journey to net zero is reshaping every aspect of the housing sector. While the Future Homes Standard is set to formalise many of these expectations, the road ahead towards reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency and designing future proof homes that perform effectively in the real world is already clear.

As the transition gathers pace, low-carbon heating solutions have become a central part of the conversation. Change is no longer driven solely by legislation, but by a growing demand for homes that are comfortable, efficient and ready for a low-carbon future.

Those who act now will help shape a housing sector that's fit for tomorrow. For housing providers who want to stay ahead of the game, now is the time to prepare for a long-term shift that will define the next generation of homes. However, positive progress depends on more than relying on technology – it requires collaboration across the supply chain, with housing professionals choosing partners and products that share the same mission values.

PARTNERING FOR PERFORMANCE

With the targets and changes ahead, heat pumps have emerged as the primary low-carbon heating solution for new homes. However, they must be paired with compatible low-temperature systems to function optimally. Due to the large surface area and low flow temperature requirements, hydronic underfloor heating (UFH) is the most effective heat emitter. It enables heat pumps to operate at their optimal Coefficient of Performance (COP) level, at flow temperatures typically between 35°C and 45°C.

To provide the industry with the latest knowledge, Energy House 2.0, a research facility at the University of Salford, has tested various heating systems to assess their performance across an entire room. Alongside many other factors, the study measured spatial air temperature, providing an accurate picture of how heating systems perform throughout the whole space, eliminating hot spots close to the heat emitter or thermostat and colder temperatures further away.

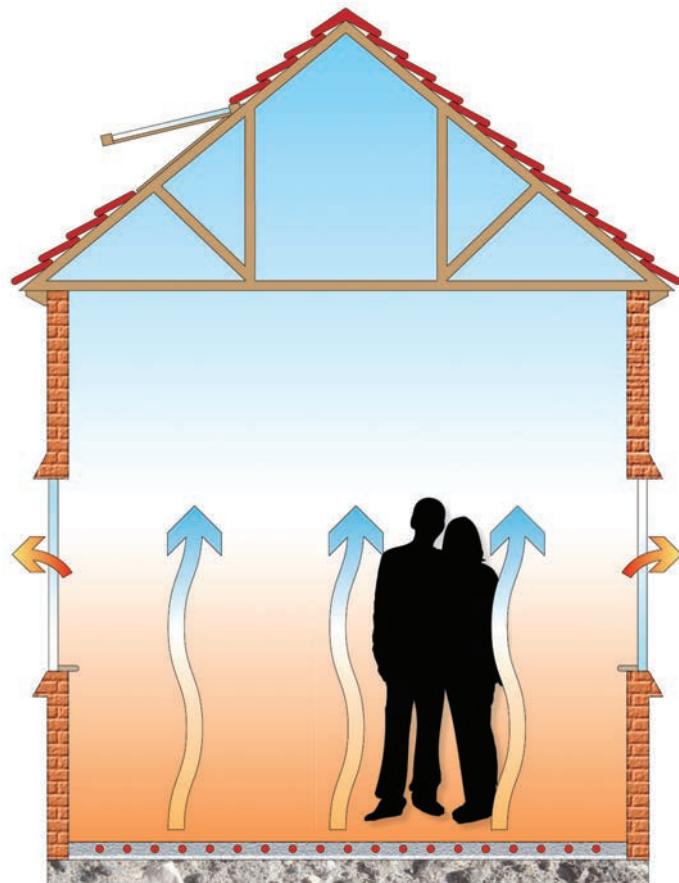
The results were clear. UFH delivered the lowest temperature variations, compared to as much as 4°C from other technologies, and 2.2°C from traditional radiators. The performance was even better when the system ran continuously, further highlighting its efficiency in real world conditions.

However, end user comfort is about more than just average air temperature. The time it takes a system to reach that temperature, heat loss during off periods, and overall running costs all impact the occupant experience. A system that costs less to run but is slow to warm up doesn't tick every box if comfort is only achieved late in the day.

A closer examination of the data reveals that UFH provides the most consistent comfort and efficient performance. The cost difference between UFH and other options is minimal when compared holistically, plus, as radiant heat is distributed evenly across the floor, it eliminates cold spots where mould might develop. This consistent warmth helps regulate humidity, reducing the risk of condensation and improving indoor air quality.

THREE PILLARS OF PERFORMANCE

As regulations evolve and the Future Homes Standard draws closer, proactive system design and innovative specification will be essential.



UNDERFLOOR HEATING

For housing providers who want to stay ahead of the game, now is the time to prepare for a long-term shift that will define the next generation of homes

UFH is already proving its value in low-carbon homes. Landlords are well-positioned to meet the challenge with expert guidance from specialist partners and the right technology. Now is the time to work with suppliers who can deliver fully compliant, low-carbon heating systems, offering regulatory peace of mind and the real world comfort and performance that tenants deserve.

Ashley Cooper is managing director at WMS Underfloor Heating



futurebuild

03-05 March 2026
Excel, London

futurebuild

CONNECTS

**Shaping the future of the
built environment**

The only UK event dedicated
to connecting innovation
with specification to drive
sustainable change.

Start connecting today



by EASYFAIRS

 @FuturebuildNow

 /FuturebuildNow

 /FuturebuildNow

 /FuturebuildNow

 FuturebuildNow



Scan to learn
more about
the **Ei3024**



Ei3024

MULTI-SENSOR FIRE ALARM

Mains powered with

**10-year rechargeable
lithium cell back-up**

Built-in **AudioLINK+**
data extraction
technology



Dust Compensation

with self monitoring
mechanism

Add an **Ei3000MRF**
module for wireless
interconnection

#AlarmsSaveLives

an Company