

Bulletin 20

Issue 20 : 2018



National Housing
Maintenance Forum



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Welcome to the NHMF Bulletin 2018

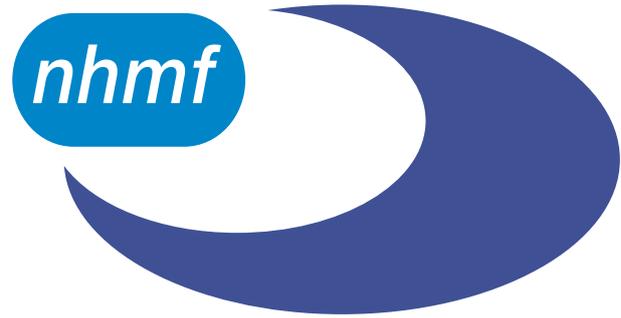
Ben Virgo, Secretary (NHMF)

Welcome to the NHMF Bulletin 2018. After overwhelmingly positive feedback, and in our continued drive to embrace the many advantages of online media and to be the centre of excellence for improving property performance, the Bulletin will only be available digitally again this year.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this edition for their time and willingness to share their views and best practice. The articles are grouped into the key topics that were discussed at the NHMF Conference in January 2018, which the NHMF Committee considers to be the most important areas for Asset Managers. These are: contract management, compliance, responsive maintenance, managing stock and investment, technology and data and people

The NHMF Maintenance Conference in January returned to the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham, where we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the conference in style. We took the opportunity to thank those stepping down, particularly Liz Circuit, Shaun Aldis and Paul Reader, who have made the NHMF and Contractor Forum a huge success. We welcomed a new Chair, Contractor Forum Chair and Secretary with ambitions to find new creative and strategic ways to make positive transformational changes, whilst building on the foundations already in place. We also acknowledged the success of our members moving up within their own organisations to leadership roles. This continues to raise the importance of asset management within organisations. Thanks to all the participants at the conference; it was deemed to be a great success with a record number of delegates, and extremely high-quality content for all the sessions.

Over and above the official themes topics running through the conference and bulletin are advancing technology (Florian Moldoveanu & Neal Ackcral page 36), collaboration and leadership (Liam O'Connell page 15). The need for both continuity and leadership are coming to a



head with a skills shortage and leaders reaching the natural completion of their careers. It is now time for new leaders to take the initiative, step up to the challenge and for the industry as a whole to nurture new talent and skills. Apprenticeships and mentoring are examples of ways we can achieve this (Paul Isherwood & David Truesdale page 16). We need to continue to work together as an industry, particularly in finding ways to deal with tragedies such as the Grenfell Tower fire (Jan Taranczuk page 4). These topics are reflected in these articles, which our speakers have kindly produced to reflect the conversations at the conference.

In other areas of NHMF activity, Contractor Forum membership is open to contractors of all sizes. NHMF training days and the annual NHMF study tour, which will be in Glasgow in November 2018, welcome clients, contractors and consultants to a neutral forum. Entry to the NHMF Awards gives a massive boost to hard-working teams and shares their good results with peers who could benefit by adapting the project to suit their own organisations. See the website at nhmf.co.uk for additional events and activities taking place during the year.

We look forward to seeing you at the next NHMF Maintenance Conference which will return to Birmingham on Tuesday 22 & Wednesday 23 January 2019.

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Reflections from Shaun Aldis NHMF Chair 2015-2017

Shaun Aldis, Chief Executive (Wolverhampton Homes)

The past three years as Chair of the NHMF have gone so quickly. The conference has gone from strength to strength and is bigger and better than ever before, which is why, at the AGM in advance of the conference, I spoke about the future, looking forward to the year 2118.

Buildings are at the heart of our everyday wellbeing, they help us to function and allow work to be undertaken in an agile way; they provide us with a purpose and inspire us, they are our future.

Moving forward, we all leave a legacy, good or bad. So try to imagine 2118, what will people think of the way we built our homes and where we used to work?

Will they see us as having been innovative and progressive, or as people who settled for good buildings that served a purpose in 2018 but offered no longevity beyond a serviceable lifecycle. Will they remember the digital era and other transformation advances that were made, or just some shoddy designers, constructors and maintenance staff who left behind sub-standard buildings? Will they remember Ronan Point or the more recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower as a subsequent maintenance failure? These are difficult questions to answer and history will be the judge. One thing, which is certain, is that we are placed in jobs to ensure that we take responsibility

for our actions. We all have a duty of care, we cannot abdicate our responsibility. Businesses that are well monitored are usually well managed.

For me it's about making a difference. I have just completed my first 100 days as CEO of Wolverhampton Homes. We have some incredible staff who have made me feel very proud. So much has happened. My day one was my day 30 as I started planning before I sat in the seat; something all new recruits should do. The role is very different to that of an operations director. Nose in hands out! It's one of listening and influencing, and asking lots of questions. Being visible is equally important. We have just completed our business plan which sets out our proposals for developing a tenant and leaseholder deal, along with a new people deal to support our move to a new building (not an office) which I want to be future proofed. We have introduced 'Stepping Stones', a course set up to help staff move on to new careers or to re-engage with the company, which is backed up by a review of our '121' and appraisal system, which in turn is over arched by a refreshed performance management framework. In this way, each senior leadership team member and rotated staff members will present their performance to our senior management team. These are exciting times at Wolverhampton Homes!

“ Our role is to maintain the homes which are essential building blocks to improving the quality of life ”

Before moving forward, I wanted to glance back and focus on what we have achieved during my tenure. My first priority was compliance, as was my second and third. I am pleased with the progress we have made, so much so that the NHMF website now takes the biggest hit for enquiries in this area. It been a credit to the team. We are a diverse group of people, who are relied upon to make maintenance a reality; in truth, we are not as collaborative as we think we are. The pace of change is moving more quickly than we can grasp it; the world is changing, and we are now challenging how we deliver projects using either generic or specialist teams. Contractual barriers are starting to re-emerge, separating clients from the supply chain. What happened to 'Rethinking Construction' and Egan? Some clients gave, even abdicated, responsibility to their constructors. We need to rethink how contracts are managed and work in a more open and collaborative way in order to remove those barriers.

Our role is to maintain the homes which are essential building blocks to improving the quality of life. Of course we deliver much more than this, and the NHMF networks support this through our best practice seminars and the conference.



Nine building blocks to effective statutory property compliance

Lee Woods, Operations Director (Pennington Choices)

The regulator's focus on governance shows no signs of relenting, and it is therefore essential that statutory property compliance is a top priority for all registered providers.

Boards must be able to say with confidence that they are fully compliant with their statutory obligations and provide evidence to support this statement.

The following nine building blocks provide a guide for organisations who want assurance that their approach to compliance is robust.



1. Board and management - reporting and challenge

To attain and retain assurance Boards must take an active and sustained involvement in compliance. They must fulfil their role by understanding and agreeing their policy principles to be applied, by challenging performance against these principles, and ensuring there is robust reporting in place to evidence outcomes. They need an understanding of what to look for and what questions to ask.

2. Policies, procedures, process maps

Policies, procedures, and process maps, usually exist, but it is the way in which they have been created and maintained which gives rise to shortfalls. We would recommend that the "big five" compliance policies are approved by the Board and reviewed every two years, or immediately prior to the publication of new legislation.

3. Data validation - "clean checks", security protocols

Assurance can only be given if there is the data to support it. Data held in the central system must match that of the original records including: visit dates, re-inspection dates, property or asset specific information, access documentation, and any other supporting evidence. Additionally, there must be sufficient security protocols in place which ensure the number of people with the authority to amend/add/delete information on the central system is limited.

4. Central control of key data to evidence assurance

We always advise our clients to maintain data on a central system. In instances where data is not held on a central system, we strongly recommend installing a single custodian who will take ultimate responsibility for the data and will audit its robustness.

5. Inspection programmes that comply

It is essential to understand your obligations in terms of the type and frequency of inspections required. All inspection programmes, including any "catch up" works, should be clearly outlined within your organisation policies.

6. Clear approach to delivery/close out of follow up works

There should always be an audit trail of any remedial works raised as part of a cyclical inspection programme. This should include records of when the work was raised and by whom, when the remedial works were carried out and by whom, and finally evidence that all work has been completed.

7. Procurement, qualified contractors, and competent persons

We advise all our clients that it is best practice to define what constitutes competent persons in their policy documents. For example, we would recommend that asbestos contractors are UKAS accredited and that fire risk assessors are BAFE accredited. This provides clarity when procuring compliance contractors and instils the requirement to systematically check competence.

8. External assurance checks

External assurance checks are a powerful tool for identifying strengths and weaknesses in compliance delivery. This should include checks of staff carrying out the works and the processes and procedures which support them. Catching problems "early" in this sense allows them to be resolved before the stakes are raised and the consequences of not addressing them become higher.

9. Clear escalation protocol in case of non-compliance

The approach to an event of non-compliance should be clearly reflected in the organisation's policies. There should be clarity around how it is reported, who it is reported to, what action that person should then take, and under what timescales. Ultimately, all events of non-compliance should be reported to the Board.



Compliance priorities

Andrew Burke, Adviser (NHMF)

The NHMF Best Practice website was developed as a free resource to help social landlords be efficient, effective and economic in complying with their health and safety requirements. It is designed to be a starting point for any landlord wanting to review its own compliance priorities and procedures, and it enables landlords to set and agree compliance priorities with their boards and senior management.

“ The NHMF website is a free resource to help social landlords be efficient, effective and comply with their health and safety requirements ”

The resource is structured with a set of guides summarising landlords’ legal responsibilities for meeting statutory health and safety requirements. Each guide explains what is legally required and provides links to approved guidance so that landlords can review their compliance regimes from first principles. It also provides criteria for commissioning and carrying out risk assessments and managing risks. It has been kept up to date with Q&A briefings on changing regulations and best practice case studies are being published to help the sector learn from what works well and avoid what does not work. The fire safety case study explains how one social landlord improved fire safety for its vulnerable and older residents while reducing operating costs.

Gas safety – new regulations

While the current focus for compliance is on fire safety following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, social landlords have a duty to keep their residents safe, warm and healthy. Before Grenfell, gas safety was one of the top compliance challenges for the sector, housing associations are scrutinised by the Regulator. Maintaining 100% compliance with gas safety checks is still required but the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 are designed to help

landlords. These regulations came into force on 6 April 2018. Landlords need to understand what changes have been introduced and which requirements have not changed.

What has changed?

Regulations 2(4) (g), 26(9) (c) and 36(3) have been amended. Regulation 36A, amending Regulation 36(3), is most relevant to social landlords.

36A introduces flexibility as to when landlords’ annual gas safety checks can be carried out and determines when the next safety check is due under Regulation 36(3). It allows the annual gas safety check to be carried out in the two-month period before the ‘deadline date’ (defined in the regulations as ‘the last day of the 12-month period within which the check is or was required to be made under regulation 36(3)(a) or (b)’), while still being able to retain that date. This adopts the same principles as have been operating for a MOT certificate.

What has not changed?

Landlords still have to comply fully with their duties as set out in **Regulation 36(3)** of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) i.e. each rental property has to have an up to date gas safety check.

What do these amendments mean in practice?

They allow landlords more time to deal with problems of gaining access, including legal processes, for the annual safety check without shortening the 12-month period. Under the previous regulations, the renewal date was when the safety check was carried out. In many cases, this meant safety checks (and annual servicing) were being carried on a 9-monthly basis rather than a 12-monthly one. This should save the sector millions of pounds annually.

While this flexibility should reduce costs for gas safety, landlords will still incur legal costs to gain entry when tenants refuse to allow access. Landlords are not required to use the new flexibility but most social landlords will use it to reduce annual gas servicing costs.

Landlords adopting this flexibility need to ensure their record-keeping systems can record the ‘deadline date’ as well as the date when the annual safety check was carried out. They will need to review existing and future contracts for gas servicing and safety checks to ensure their contractors can operate the new system and record the relevant dates and information. HSE has also updated its GSIUR **Approved Code of Practice**.



Fire safety: we learn by asking questions



“ If we ask the right questions we should be able to prevent further tragedies ”

Jan Taranczuk, CIHCM (CIH London Board)

The coroners investigating the fires at Lakanal House, Shirley Towers and in Derby found out what had happened by asking questions. The Grenfell enquiry is going to ask plenty of questions which will include: Were the Lakanal recommendations implemented in Kensington & Chelsea? The Dame Judith Hackitt review of Building Regulations has been asking questions every day.

So what issues should we be tackling?

Your organisation should have a management plan that takes account of the recommendations from the three coroners' recommendations, which cover a range of issues affecting management and maintenance. For example: one of the Lakanal recommendations was that new tenants should be given information about fire safety when they move into their home, and what action to take in the event of a fire. Advice on the precautions to be taken to reduce the likelihood of a fire should also be provided.

It also makes sense to warn our residents that faulty white goods continue to cause fires. According to a recent Which? investigation; faulty appliances are causing more than 60 domestic fires a week in the UK. Faulty washing machines and dryers were the most high-risk appliances, causing 35% of fires between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2016. Over the same period, cookers and ovens caused 11% of fires, dishwashers 10% and fridges, freezers and fridge freezers 8%.

Residents can be reminded that they can check if their unit is subject to a safety recall here:

electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls

What type of fire risk assessments should we be conducting?

There has been much publicity about fire risk assessments. By now, there is no excuse for not having a comprehensive programme to review fire risk assessments within specific timescales. Your programme of overall improvements should be based on the significant findings in the assessment. A typical (Type 1) fire risk assessment will find a mix of tenancy issues and physical matters that require physical improvement or maintenance.

It would also be sensible to consider whether you need to undertake more extensive/intrusive fire risk assessments before you commission

any improvement work. When specifying the improvement work, remember to include an effective method of quality assurance that includes third party accreditation,

Details of the four types of fire risk assessments can be found in the Local Government Association Guidance:

local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/fire-safety-purpose-built-04b.pdf

Some organisations have begun to programme one of their regular block inspections to happen shortly before the fire risk assessments. This enables the tenancy team to deal with identified issues before the assessor visits.

Deciding whether to publish the assessments is difficult. At the time of writing, the Dame Judith Hackitt review is considering how the records for a building should be stored and accessed by both a regulator and the residents. Whatever is finally decided, landlords will have to ensure the information that is collected does not adversely identify a particular property or resident.

“ We need to ask questions and learn the lessons from the answers ”

Do we need to take any special action for our elderly or vulnerable residents?

Older people are more likely to die in a fire. The National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance for Specialised Housing (May 2017) comprehensively identifies the contributing factors and provides guidance to landlords as to how to reduce those risks.

nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/News/nfcc-launches-specialised-housing-guidance



Raising awareness of the challenges of maintaining smoke control systems in tall buildings



Conor Logan, Colt International Technical Director & **Tom Archer**, Colt International - Service, Sales Manager

While in general there is quite good understanding of the cause and spread of fire in buildings amongst asset managers, there seems to be less confidence regarding the importance of smoke ventilation and the maintenance of smoke control equipment.

Priority is often given to the fire alarm panel, which will generally not be used to initiate evacuation in a residential building but will serve to activate other fire safety components, such as the smoke control systems, which should be designed to protect the building occupants in an emergency.

“ The need for smoke ventilation is twofold, to give a clear means of escape for the occupants and for the fire brigade to gain safe and fast access ”

The need for smoke ventilation is twofold, to give a clear means of escape for the occupants and for the fire brigade to gain safe and fast access close to the affected fire floor to tackle the fire as soon as possible to protect the occupants and the building.

It is common for a building operator's emphasis to be on fire alarm panels and sprinkler systems, rather than the use of the smoke control systems installed in buildings. These are often overlooked or potentially ignored, sometimes due to the perceived complexity of the systems, when in fact they are very straightforward in design.

One of the common issues is that buildings can be handed over and occupied, where a smoke control system has been installed with no basic information passed on to the building owner / operator with regards to the cause-and-effect, maintenance requirements and general operation of the systems.

Three of the main concerns that the delegates at the NHMF Conference 2018 expressed were how the actual design, cause-and-effect and operation of the smoke ventilation system in a fire was supposed to work, and what regular maintenance was required and under legislation.

Regular servicing to the full cause-and-effect is not the same as functionality testing which is sometimes carried out by fire alarm companies and is not the same as the maintenance required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO). Under the RRO and following the recommendations of BS 7346-8, BS 9991, and BS 9999, maintenance of life safety equipment by a competent person is a legal requirement.

Potential problems can stem from systems which have not been designed or installed correctly and could cause smoke shaft systems to open on non-fire floors. The issue is, that the floors unaffected by the initial fire should never open. A door opening on a floor above the fire, through faulty installation or poor design or incorrect controls could cause even more damage to the lobby floors above, and potentially even loss of life.

During the six months following the tragic event in June 2017, there were 17 major fires in London. Six in residential blocks and in two of these instances ventilators on floors above the fire floor had opened due to poor design or installation. The consequence of this was considerable smoke spread to areas which should not have been affected.

A service to a smoke ventilation system should confirm the correct operation and check for any design flaws that there may be in the original installation in order to issue an annual safety certificate. Examples of non-compliances might include non-interlocking dampers, inappropriate use of doors controlled by magnets and installations with non-fire rated cable.



Final push needed for safer rented homes to become reality

Steve Martin, Director of Technical (ECA)

At present there remains a significant electrical safety loophole in the housing sector. While those living in social housing are protected by legislation which ensures regular checks take place, there is no such requirement within the private rental sector (PRS).

This is significant because recent data from the English Housing Survey (2015/16) indicates that tenants in the private rented sector face a higher risk of electrical shock and fires caused by electrical faults in their homes compared to social housing tenants.

Bearing in mind that there are 4.4 million homes in the PRS in England alone, this makes up a significant proportion of households. Invariably this means that there are tens of thousands of people, including the very young and the elderly, who are possibly at risk at any given moment.

Electrical Safety First estimates that around 350,000 people are injured by contact with mains electricity every year, and roughly 20,000 fires are caused by electricity annually.

So what can be done to protect tenants?

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 allows the Housing Secretary to impose electrical safety standards on homes within the PRS, without the need for new legislation. This was a significant development which came about due to efforts from ECA, ESF and other partner organisations.

The Government has been consulting on introducing mandatory electrical safety checks every five years – exactly what we had been pressing for in recent years. Doing so would give tenants peace of mind that a suitably qualified and certified electrician has recently checked their property for safety compliance.

Introducing mandatory inspection does not even cost a large amount of money. We anticipate that it would cost £2.50 per month to bring this in, which is a relatively small sum when you consider the damage faulty electrics can wreak on properties - and the devastating impact they can cause to the people involved.

As well as making homes safer for tenants, electrical installation improvements also benefit landlords as they lead to a material improvement to their properties, helping prevent fires which could cause costly and significant damage.

As a result, it's vital that the entire sector now continues to keep the pressure up on the Housing Ministry, to ensure that this vital opportunity to protect consumers does not pass us by.

We just need a workable system to be introduced which does not create additional business burdens, and which ensures those who do the electrical checks are suitably qualified. Creating such a system is more than possible, and we will continue to work constructively with partners to achieve this.

The prize on offer - securing the safety of more families, children and elderly people - is a vital one, and something that the entire industry needs to embrace.

“ Electrical Safety First estimates that around 350,000 people are injured by contact with mains electricity every year, and roughly 20,000 fires are caused by electricity annually ”



Asbestos in social housing - your chance to influence change



John Richards, Managing Director (Thames Laboratories)

I entered the asbestos industry fresh out of university in 1984. Early in my career I met with the then Chairman of the Asbestos Removal Contractors who advised me that the asbestos industry had no future and I should find an alternative career. Almost 35 years later a lot has changed but the fundamental reason for the start of the asbestos removal industry is still present but has our understanding of the risk improved over time?

Accurate figures are difficult to identify but in 1984 the UK recorded around 500 deaths from asbestos related exposure. This compares with 5,000 deaths that have been identified each year for the last few years. This despite the ban on the use of asbestos and the ever changing requirements for the management and removal of asbestos materials.

In recent years the Government has conceded that the younger someone is exposed to asbestos the greater the chances that they will develop an asbestos related disease, so the hope would be that we would be seeing the wholesale removal of asbestos from schools. Some of the highest asbestos containing school builds are known as CLASP or SCOLA buildings but recent evidence published by school union groups has indicated that at the current rate, it will take 50 years to deal with the issues these schools present.

What we do know is that the UK has the highest levels of asbestos related deaths per head of population and the World Health Organisation estimates that the costs of treating asbestos victims in the UK is in excess of £500,000,000.

How does this all affect the housing sector?

The current focus on asbestos awareness is to target those at greatest risk and this is typically tradesmen. Yet what is not as well reported is that females account for around 20% of mesothelioma deaths at around 500 per annum. Research by HSE has suggested that around 80 - 400 of these deaths may occur as a result of domestic exposure to asbestos. The risks of prolonged exposure to low levels of asbestos are not understood and decisions made today will impact on asbestos deaths in the future.

Asbestos regulations in the UK are set by the Health & Safety Executive, the remit of the HSE is to deal with workplace related risks. A home isn't a workplace until a contractor is employed to undertake work in the property. As a result, the regulations and guidance on residential properties are confused. Much of the current guidance on the management of asbestos was written to deal with what HSE term 'non-domestic premises'. In the housing sector this guidance creates issues in defining what does non-domestic mean?

“ According to HSE research, up to 400 of the 500 mesothelioma deaths per annum may occur as a result of domestic exposure to asbestos ”

Common areas are regarded as non-domestic but what defines a common area? Does an area or lobby where residents have fitted their own locks qualify as a common area, are blocks of garages common areas, are terraced loft spaces common areas, and does this change if they are only accessed through the dwelling?

These are questions that we regularly see Housing Associations and Local Authorities struggling to answer.

In 2017, I was asked by HSE to pull together a small group of those in the housing sector to help establish what issues the sector was facing in an effort to provide some clarity and to establish clear guidance for the social housing sector.

In late 2017 we had our first meeting and have formulated a questionnaire. We would ask that anyone with an interest in property management in the sector answer this questionnaire so we can then work with HSE and others such as Homes & Communities Agency to develop and signpost clear guidance for the sector.

The questionnaire has been designed to help the group assess the sectors priorities and issues to allow for the phased release of information to assist all of those charged with the management of asbestos.

You can find the questionnaire at <https://s.surveyplanet.com/ryrqZZ0Vf>



Contractor Forum

Introduction to the NHMF Contractor Forum

The National Housing Maintenance Forum's (NHMF) Contractor Forum was established as the trade affiliation for contractors working in the field of social housing, with the aim of creating closer working relationships between contractors, clients and sub-contractors. The forum works closely with the NHMF in promoting good practice in the procurement and management of repairs.

For many years the NHMF has had at least one contractor represented on its committee to ensure that it understands fully the contractor's perspective when developing the M3NHF Schedule of Rates and related products. Contractors have also been involved in various training sessions and conferences in order to promote good practice. The NHMF is keen to involve contractors at an earlier stage in the consultation process

when developing the schedules and diagnostic systems that are now used by nearly all social housing providers; it feels that it would benefit from their wide practical experience. Members also support and contribute to sessions at the annual NHMF Maintenance Conference.

The Contractor Forum has been meeting since January 2012 and most recently in May 2018. The NHMF has agreed its aims and objectives, its membership, the fees needed to fund it and its terms of reference

For current membership and to join, visit nhmf.co.uk



NHMF Committee

The NHMF is managed by a committee representing each region of the UK and different types of users. It is elected at an annual general meeting held at the NHMF Maintenance Conference.

The committee controls funds raised from the annual licence fees on the M3NHF Schedule and related products. Any funds not required to keep the products up to date with changing demands are used to promote best practice in maintenance.



Chair: Karl Linder (Hanover HG)



Deputy Chair: Paul Wenham (Southern HG)



Treasurer: Jon Cross (Essenjay Associates)



Secretary: Ben Virgo (M3)

Member 2018

- Shaun Aldis
- Andrew Burke
- Karen Cannon
- Stephen Chalmers
- Jon Cross (Treasurer)
- Steve Downing
- Graham Gowland
- Ross Green
- Paul Isherwood
- David Jervis
- Karl Linder (Chair)
- Stephanie Lloyd-Foxe
- Peter Long
- Simon Lowe
- David Miller
- Shaun Mulloy
- Phil Pemberton
- Julian Ransom
- Ben Virgo (Secretary)
- Neil Watts
- Paul Wenham (Deputy Chair)
- Nick Yandle

Job title

- Chief Executive
- Adviser
- Senior Asset Manager
- Technical Director
- Managing Director
- Director
- Executive Director of Property
- Head of Business Development
- Director of Asset Management
- Housing Consultant
- Head of Asset Management and Compliance
- Project Manager
- Housing Repairs Service Manager
- Head of Property Investment
- Director
- Maintenance Manager
- Director of Asset Strategy and Delivery
- Director
- Sales and Marketing Manager
- Director of Service Delivery
- Group Property Services Director
- Policy Lead

Organisation

- Wolverhampton Homes
- NHMF
- NW Leicester DC
- Kingsdale Group
- Essenjay Associates
- Rand Associates
- Gentoo Group
- Kier Group
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Suffolk Housing
- Hanover HA
- Magna HA
- Basildon CC
- Methodist Homes
- Rand Associates
- Wolverhampton Homes
- The Riverside Group
- Savills (UK)
- M3
- Peabody
- Southern HG
- National Housing Federation



Benefits of entering the NHMF awards

Chloe McLaren Webb, Asset Policy & Standards Manager (Hanover Housing Association)

Hanover was really pleased to win at the recent NHMF awards for the innovative hot water system retrofitted into one of our extra care estates – designed to reduce residents’ hot water bills while delivering higher quantities of hot water and helping to reduce legionella risk.

As well as the warm feeling that comes with being announced a winner we also saw a number of benefits as an organisation through the process of entering the awards and documenting this innovative project.

“ As well as the warm feeling that comes with being announced a winner we also saw a number of benefits as an organisation through the process of entering the awards and documenting this innovative project. ”

Clear messaging

Pulling together the submission helped us to summarise the project and the associated benefits in a clear and concise way that was accessible to a wide audience. This is particularly useful when you are talking about a complex and quite technical system such as a high-efficiency condensing boiler with a passive flue gas heat recovery unit and a hot water cylinder (quite the mouthful!). This was a helpful and timely exercise for Hanover as we are doing a lot of work around how we engage and communicate with colleagues and residents in the delivery of our asset management strategy.

We all know that asset management has gained a greater prominence within most social housing businesses and the sector as a whole in

recent years, alongside this there has been a need to improve the way we communicate what asset management is all about – how it contributes to the vision and strategic aims of the organisation, the difficult decisions that are often necessary, and how we celebrate our successes and share innovation and good practice with others.

Opportunities for improvement

For many of us, submitting an award entry probably highlights areas where we should have done things a bit differently, as information about savings and feedback from colleagues and residents isn’t always readily available and up to date. Greater monitoring, analysis and reporting is vital if we are to understand and quantify the benefits of our investment and plan more strategically, however it can often be one of the first things that we cut from the budget when we need to reduce costs. At Hanover we’re working hard to put a consistent and long-term structure in place to better understand and learn from what we have done in the past.

Gaining buy-in

Lastly, being shortlisted for an award really helps to increase the visibility of innovative projects across the organisation. This can be really useful when trying to secure buy-in from leadership and help to open up opportunities to think a bit differently in the future. As a sector we don’t like to take risks. We are custodians of public money and our residents quite rightly demand value for money from their landlord. This means that we often require a lot of evidence and examples before we try something new. In articulating the benefits of a project, communicating this to the rest of the business, and possibly winning a shiny award, we can add to the business case for future investment in innovative technologies or new approaches.

For Hanover all of this feeds into our work in the asset management team to increase the visibility of what we do and ensure we are part of the bigger picture – contributing to the positive development both of the organisation and the social housing sector more widely. In the past, asset management has been viewed as inward facing and disconnected from the wider business, with a singular objective to maintain decent homes standard, and that’s something we want to change.

The NHMF Best practice award winners 2018

2018 AWARDS

Best Client - Peabody

Peabody has devised and implemented a condensation, damp and mould (CD&M) strategy for 4,500 homes in the Thamesmead estate in south-east London. The evidence-based strategy is designed to manage CD&M systematically and proactively across the housing stock. CD&M risk assessments and surveys are used to identify homes for a range of interventions, including energy advice, smart heating controllers and demand controlled mechanical extract ventilation, in various combinations. Evaluation of the first phase of the programme indicates that it is effective in reducing CD&M repairs, increasing the affordability of heating and improving the indoor air quality for households.



Best Contract – Innovation and stability – balancing risk and reward

Leeds Federated & Keepmoat Regeneration's responsive repairs & voids contract is driving excellent performance through a joint fund for risk and reward. This contract strikes a balance between innovation and stability. Innovation is being delivered through increased parts specification, improved KPI requirements and most importantly through the addition of the risk/reward mechanism which continues to drive successful performance. Stability is maintained as the contract is underpinned by a traditional schedule of rates based approach.



Most improved asset management service – Basildon Borough Council & Morgan Sindall Property Services

In 2016 Basildon Borough Council selected Morgan Sindall as its preferred partner to deliver a flagship integrated asset management service. The fifteen-year, £330 million contract incorporates responsive repairs, planned maintenance and cyclical compliancy services across a stock portfolio of 13,000 domestic dwellings, 5,450 garages, and a significant portfolio of commercial premises. In its first year, the partnership has reinvested over £1 million of savings into the service and the local community. They have also reduced complaints by 15% and set up the multi-award winning BasWorx social enterprise to deliver over 1,800 training and employment opportunities to local people.





Best Customer Impact (joint) – Curo

Curo's community enhancement project is one of the golden threads that runs through all its five strategic priorities aimed at creating great properties and places. All Curo's homes meet "Decent Homes" standard, and it has ambitious plans to achieve Curo's SHAW standard (Safe, Healthy, Affordable & Warm). Curo is therefore redirecting its resources to improve the communal spaces, both internally and externally around its blocks of flats and sheltered schemes. Curo has a 5-year plan to complete these works, and has already seen quantifiable and measurable improvements to the communal spaces and the service to customers and leaseholders on completed projects.

Best Customer Impact (joint) - Hanover Housing Association

Fred Tibble Court is an Extra Care Retirement Housing Scheme consisting of 31 flats which are occupied by some of Hanover's most vulnerable residents. Hanover installed the first UK retrofit of the Aqua Quinta system which is a new state of the art technology. It combines the Quinta Pro high efficiency condensing boiler with the Eco Plus passive flue gas heat recovery unit and a hot water cylinder to create a super condensing solution providing high volume delivery of hot water. The project has reduced residents heating and hot water bills while delivering higher quantities of hot water.



Best apprentice scheme – Ian Williams

The Ian Williams Academy was created to formalise the significant investment Ian Williams commits to training and development. The Academy apprenticeship programme is an industry leading scheme to attract, train and develop apprentices in all trades, providing a long term sustainable future with Ian Williams. The CITB acknowledges this scheme as best in class in leading the response to the severe skills shortage faced by the construction industry.



We can, and must, take greater responsibility for our future

David Orr, Chief Executive (National Housing Federation)

When I spoke at the National Housing Maintenance Forum conference earlier this year, I asked the delegates in the room to raise their hands if they would be comfortable being the named person responsible for the safety of residents in a high rise block of flats. Perhaps unsurprisingly following the horrific tragedy that took place at Grenfell Tower last summer, not a single hand went up.

This is a situation that cannot continue and, very soon, won't be able to. Dame Judith Hackitt's Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety is clear that those who commission and own buildings must take responsibility, as duty-holders, for the safety of those buildings.

I believe that this is the right thing to do to make sure that such an appalling event like the Grenfell fire never happens again and we must do everything possible to ensure that. While this change will require a considerable cultural shift in the way that we work and the skills that we need to employ, I firmly believe that housing association leadership teams and their asset managers working on the ground, will meet this responsibility. I believe that precisely because there is a precedent,

“ Those who commission and own buildings must take responsibility, as duty-holders, for the safety of those buildings ”

so we already know we can rise to a challenge for the sake of our social mission.

The sector's approach to asset management has changed over the years, allowing us to understand our assets more comprehensively. This hasn't happened by accident – the sector knew that its social mission was at its core and we adapted so we could keep delivering it. We're better now at utilising those assets to release equity so we can build affordable homes both because our independence allowed us, but also because our responsibilities as community landlords compelled us. We're a sector that wants to

build good quality homes for even more people.

We're also a sector that collaborates and it's one of our unique strengths. We learn from one another and we learn from our 80-year history. We've been committed to long-term community management for quite some time, so there's plenty out there to teach us. And we'll be committed to our communities for as long as we exist, so working together is the best way to get it right. We can talk to our development colleagues to make sure our buildings work for the residents who will live there and we can continue to collaborate with our construction sector colleagues.

I know that the sector will make the best use of these important qualities it holds, with no more important reason than to ensure our customers' safety. As the Federation, we'll be supporting our members throughout this shift – there's never been a more important task. We invest in our places, we support our people – and we will continue to take seriously the responsibility we have to our residents and our homes. We are the guardians of that destiny and achieving it means that we have to do things differently now. But we have before, so we can again and we will.



Some thoughts for 2018

Alison Inman, President (Chartered Institute of Housing)

Last year was my first time at the NHMF Conference. I chaired a session with Jane Nelson, Chris Irons and Lucy Pedrick on Skills in a post-Brexit world and was really pleased to be invited back this year.

“ Repairs are the number one concern for tenants and the procurement and provision of the repairs service should be of equal concern to Boards ”

Speaking on the same platform as David Orr is a little bit daunting, and his musings on the role of Asset Management professionals after Grenfell was as thought-provoking and stimulating as we have come to expect. It was David's first public address since he announced his imminent retirement, and a reminder of the size of the shoes his successor will have to fill.

I had a couple of things I wanted to talk about, neither of which might routinely be top of the agenda at a building maintenance conference.

The first of these was the role of non-Executive Directors. The previous day I had chaired a meeting of the Audit Committee at Colne Housing Society. Perhaps because I was coming straight up to Birmingham after the meeting, I was struck by how much of it was spent talking about our physical assets. We had several internal audit reports to consider, on gas safety, data integrity, voids and fire safety. These were followed by an item on health and safety assurance, a look at our risk universe and a broader discussion on data.

There is a real need for all board members to have a very good understanding of asset management and maintenance. Repairs are the number one concern for tenants and the procurement and provision of the repairs service should be of equal concern to Boards. It's not just about development.

So, my challenge to us all is to ensure that Board induction and ongoing training helps us to up our game and to play our part in making sure we have the right strategies, that we understand the performance of our organisations, and are asking the

questions we need to get the assurance our organisations and communities have a right to expect.

One of the privileges of being CIH President is being able to choose a theme for your Presidential Year. For me that has been domestic abuse and I wanted to highlight the role that our trades staff play in keeping communities safe.

We build, manage and maintain properties to the highest standard we can, but we need to ensure that they are places where our residents can live safe lives. For the one in four women who experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, home is a far from safe place. So, I asked people at the conference to have a think about bathroom doors. The bathroom is the only room in most homes with a lock on the door. It is the room that a woman may run to when she feels at risk. If you are repairing bathroom doors that have been kicked in, or have broken locks, or holes punched in them then this is not just a repairs issue. This needs to be a red flag. Your staff need to know that your organisation has a domestic abuse policy, that their concerns will be recorded and referred to an appropriate member of staff who is trained to respond appropriately.

The great women at the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance can help you meet this challenge and have the resources you need to respond in a safe and appropriate way. Look them up. You might just save a life.



No place like home

Peter Hall Jones, Leadership, Behaviour and Culture Change Consultant & Trainer (The Spiral Partnership)

No matter where you have been its always nice to come home, put the kettle on, and just relax in the comfort of your own home. The sometimes derided, but oft quoted, and overwhelmingly accepted, Maslow's hierarchy of need has extolled the importance of home and security as a prerequisite for human well-being, worth, and development since 1943.

For those of us looking to move property – our choice often comes down to which property ‘feels like home’. Travellers for time immemorial have found a place like home in foreign lands. That is why we have New South Wales and New England and why other communities make their new environment look and feel like home – the Costa del Sol in the late 70's early 80's with burgers chips and pubs; the new desk or office looking like the old one in the previous business.

We have ‘forever homes’, ‘doer-uppers, investments, ‘step-ups’, ‘family homes’ and ‘downsizers’. We open our homes, share our homes, air-bnb our homes, we swap them, we decorate them, we extend them and we maintain them.

We celebrate making the rent or the mortgage payment on them each month. We queue and demand them, we squat and we bunk down in them, sofa surf and ‘go in to accommodation’ to have one. We count ourselves lucky to have a roof over our heads.

The Guardian (April 2017) reported that the UK's biggest home builders had 600,000 plots of land with planning permission. In 2016 DCLG reported 200,000 empty properties.

In November 2017 Shelter reported 281,000 people were living in temporary accommodation and a further 21,300 were in single homeless hostels or social services housing and 4,500 were rough sleeping.

Now, I am only a consultant who asks questions, helps individuals and organisations remove barriers, shares great ideas that I've picked up elsewhere. I find these statistics bewildering, embarrassing and plain ludicrous. The numbers just do not stack up, the morality does not stack up, the economics do not stack up – its mad and bad!

Some will say this is naïve, nothing can be done because the problem is too complicated but we could have a war on homelessness. Some prefer ‘talk, talk to war, war’ but we could have a good old ‘war spirit’, one flag, united, glorious sacrifice (of egos), community, pulling together – united against a common enemy. Governments of all persuasions that like a war on ... ‘a war on drugs’, ‘a war on terror’, ‘drone wars’, ‘a new cold war’, ‘a war on plastic’, ‘a war of words’, ‘culture wars’, ‘at war with litter louts’, why not a ‘war on homelessness’? We could do what we do in real wars: we could requisition, call up, mobilise, unite, create a state of emergency and use emergency powers.

What would cause us to come together on this common cause against a common evil foe?

Who would be our leaders and generals, marshal us into formation, dig in, take land, street by street, house by house, hand to hand. A call to service the nation's needs.

We may not personally live in the world of the homeless - but they live in ours. Wouldn't it be awesome to get home, put the key in the door, smell tea, feel the warmth knowing that collectively went to war and banished homelessness from the land.

Pete Hall Jones is a motivational teller of stories, and a mind-set change consultant who works around the world and across all sectors in the UK helping organisations and individuals change the way they think, act and deliver.



“ Wouldn't it be awesome if we collectively went to war and banished homelessness from the land ”





What makes a great leader?

Liam O'Connell, Consultant, Professional Speaker, Author (Liam O'Connell)
John Giesen, Director (Giesen Consultancy)

Creating a vibrant business culture - it's all about the people.

Leadership

Many people think that great leaders only come in one shape or size but we believe they come in all shapes and sizes. In our presentation to the 2018 NHMF Conference we showcased a number of leaders; both good and bad; ranging from Steve Jobs to Donald Trump. We leave you to choose who exemplifies which.

We looked at the 5 key attributes we believe make the difference:

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Leadership
- 3 Opportunity
- 4 Action
- 5 Focus

We believe that great leaders:

- understand the power of connecting positively with their people
- cope positively with change by focusing on what is important
- lead with passion and energy

Great leaders create a great place to work where people are proud of what they do and deliver fantastic customer service every day. They do this in many different ways and as we have said they do not come in a standard shape or size.

What is a common theme however, is that the best are true to themselves and actually share that with colleagues and teams. They may be someone who is very loud and will be a showstopper in front of an audience. They may be someone who is quiet and reserved but who connects with people on a personal level. They may lead from the front

“ Great leaders are not afraid to surround themselves with people who are different to them and people who are better than them in many ways ”

or they may be someone who will coach from the sidelines. Whatever they are they will be seen as honest in their relationships and their team will trust them and their judgment.

A lot of people think they must surround themselves with people like them and some say these people shouldn't be as good as they themselves are. Donald Trump famously said he wanted to surround himself with people who were failures. We believe that great leaders are not afraid to surround themselves with people who are different to them and people who are better than them in many ways.

Our Approach

We believe that most people will take more from a training session if they're having fun and between us we aim to ensure that they do just that as we aim to have fun too. But along the way we cover some practical and real-life examples of what works and importantly what doesn't.

We have worked with some very diverse organisations ranging from local authorities to educational establishments to private sector and commercial companies. The bottom line is always the same; it is about people.

And remember the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do!

“EVERYONE THINKS IT'S ALL ABOUT HOUSES but...”



“WE'RE ABOUT MUCH MORE THAN THAT”

WHO ARE WE

The Housing Executive is the largest social housing landlord in the UK maintaining almost 90,000 homes and has been named as one of the top 30 landlords in the UK.

WHAT IS ASSET MANAGEMENT

The management and maintenance of Housing Executive property assets, through strategies, plans, procurements and schemes, delivered on a value for money basis. It is the systematic process of deploying, operating, maintaining, upgrading, and disposing of assets cost-effectively.

GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Opportunities available in

- Regional Programme Delivery • Contract Claims
- Compliance • Health and Safety • Procurement



Developing skills in house...Our award winning succession planning model

Paul Isherwood, Director of Asset Management (Northern Ireland Housing Executive)

David Truesdale, Asset Management Training & Development Manager (Northern Ireland Housing Executive)

Our award winning graduate trainee programme is the division's mechanism to ensure we have the right talent in the organisation in the years ahead.

When our new asset management division, led by a newly appointed director, was set up in 2015, one of the key tasks was to build up a team of experience and expertise.

The need to get the right team in place was necessary given the scale of the newly formed division. Responsible for the maintenance of 90,000 properties, the division was procuring three major new contracts; a £1bn maintenance and improvement service, a £240m heating contract and a £750m planned maintenance contract. In addition, the division was also transforming the way it did business by reducing the number of contracts, implementing new business approaches and creating more streamlined processes for customers, contractors and tenants.

In 2014, almost 40% of asset management staff in management positions were aged 55 years plus. The last technical graduate intake was in 1991. As a consequence, we faced an accelerated turnover in this age bracket and staff level, leading to the inevitable loss of expertise. We discovered, like many other similar organisations, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit experienced qualified technical staff.

Our graduate trainee programme has helped us address all these issues. As soon as the division was set up we began the recruitment of two tranches of 12 trainees. Due to its success, further approval was granted in 2016/17 to recruit two further tranches of nine graduate trainees and six school leavers. To date we have successfully recruited 29 of 42 trainees with the remaining 13 to be recruited in 2018.

“ Our succession planning ensures adequate resources to continue delivering a high quality customer focused and cost effective maintenance service to our tenants ”

Our programme ensures adequate succession planning to provide appropriately experienced and qualified staff and management resources to continue to deliver a high quality customer focused and cost effective maintenance service to our tenants.

It develops and stretches the skills and abilities of each trainee, driving continuous service improvement through on-the-job learning with mentoring and coaching. A structured manual and log-book supports this development, indicating competencies to be met, facilitated through placement, with review meetings.

Monthly group training sessions are key to the programme, with particular emphasis on contract management best practice providing the skills and tools trainees will require.

Importantly, the programme is underpinned by a Project Management PG Diploma through Ulster University.

This approach ensures structured staff development from grassroots resulting in enhanced service delivery. Personal development of future asset management housing professionals is achieved through placements and opportunities for special project work including the successful delivery of;

- £1bn maintenance and improvement services contract, where trainees are a key part of the team delivering this project to provide first class customer focused service, with trainees producing procurement documents and delivering training to 500 staff.
- Tower block economic appraisals, where trainees are assisting in informing the prioritisation of work and level of investment required for our 33 high rise buildings.
- Compliance unit, with trainees reviewing existing policies and developing new procedures to ensure a consistent approach to meeting health and safety obligations.

We have found that trainees have developed multi-purpose skillsets which can be utilised on projects across the division, resulting in a well-informed, flexible and motivated staff who understand the business.

The programme has morphed from tranche one to tranche three from rotational placement across divisional departments including work on special projects, to more job specific roles particularly as trainee project managers. The outstanding 13 trainees will be recruited in 2018 as project managers across the division.

Moving forward, we are recruiting six school leavers and supporting them through on-the-job learning and completion of a BTEC construction qualification.

“ We need the right people with the right skills in the right job

The graduate trainee programme allows us to grow our own talent in-house from grassroots ”

We are proposing quantity surveying student sponsorship to university students and pursuing delivery of work placements.

A key focus in 2018 will be the establishment of a Housing Executive Construction Academy for Northern Ireland, where we will work in partnership with the six regional colleges across the province to facilitate practical training of trade apprentices through our DLO and contractors.

The Graduate trainee programme has proved extremely successful and was recognised at the CIH 2017 Awards at Titanic Belfast where it won the category of ‘Excellence in developing skills and capacity’.



CIH Housing Awards 2017 - WINNER
Excellence in developing skills & capacity



Plan for customer safety

Neil Yeomans, Head of Property Compliance (Orbit HG)

Compliance is pretty easy, right? We have x number of properties that need x number of certificates, so it's hard to understand how such a simple equation can go wrong.

This is something that has challenged housing providers since the compliance industry was born, even more so post Grenfell. The fact is, compliance is complex and multi-faceted and so there is always a risk that something could go awry. This article describes one of the key lessons Orbit has learnt over the last 18 months.

My background is in regulation within an environmental health department and when I moved into housing I was surprised how underused HSG65 is. HSG65, an HSE document, is in my view, the most important document in all of health and safety as it provides a model that can be applied to all customer safety functions from gas through to playground safety. This model is based upon the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle (PDCA).

PDCA will be familiar to many of us, especially those trained in health and safety and potentially to those who have been on a leadership course focussing on continuous improvement. The principles are to:

1. Work out what you want to do (Plan)
2. Do it (Do)
3. Look at what worked and what didn't (Check)
4. Take the learnings and incorporate into your future plans (Act)

One of the things we identified at Orbit was that the "doing" part of PDCA receives a disproportionate amount of focus. This is because it's easy to apply a KPI to how many certificates are required to achieve the magical "100% compliance".

It was only when we tried to apply KPIs to the other steps of PDCA that we realised how difficult it is to communicate things like:

1. The quality of the policy and management plans
2. The quality of an incident investigation, and demonstrating how well you've embedded the lessons learnt from that investigation back into your plans

This is one of the fundamental reasons that compliance is sometimes reduced to a simple numbers game, i.e. almost all focus goes on "doing", as it's highly visible to senior leadership and therefore attracts their attention and zeal.

That's why we restructured our Property Compliance team to allow one third of the team to concentrate solely on the other aspects of PDCA. The results are something we are incredibly proud of. For example, over the last 18 months we have:

“ Compliance is complex and multi-faceted and there is always a risk that something could go awry ”

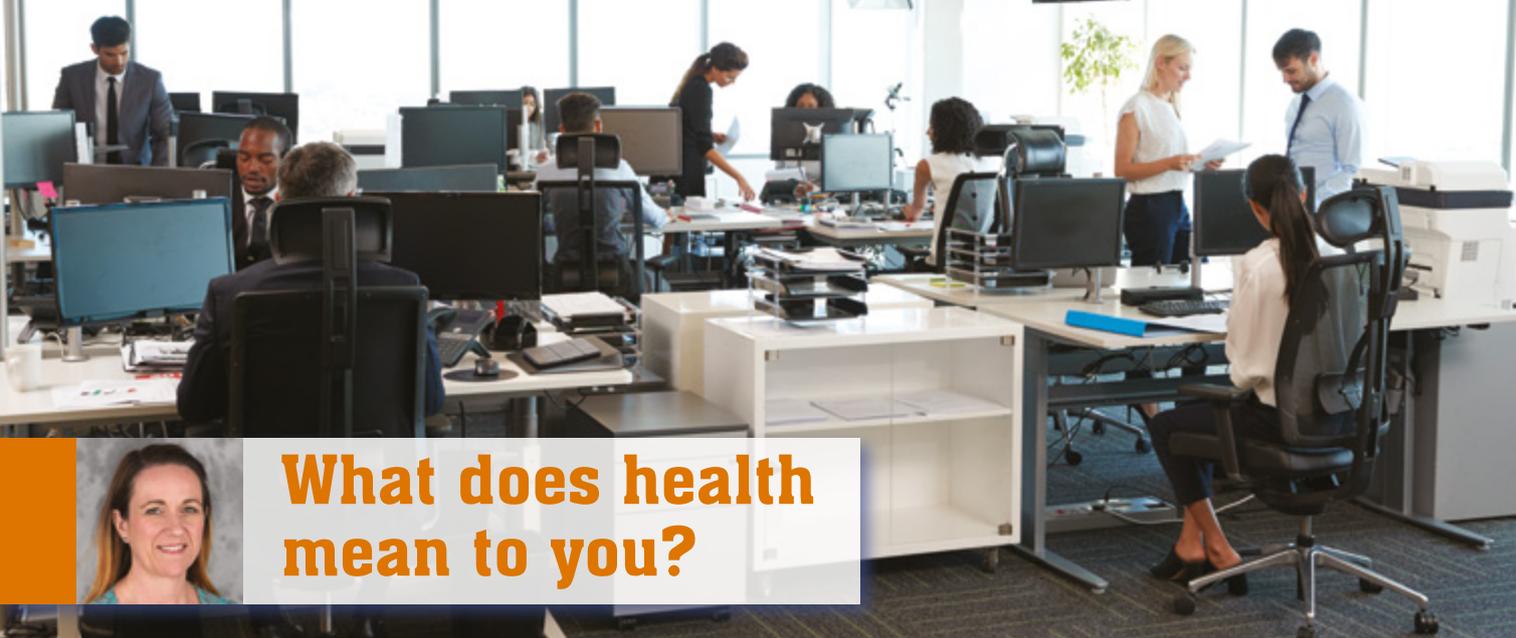
- Designed bespoke IT systems for all compliance areas, from gas through to fall arrest safety
- Completed 161 performance improvement projects
- Achieved Primary Authority status with the West Midlands Fire Service
- Reviewed and confirmed the status of all 160,000 lines of asbestos data in our register

Furthermore the continuous improvement that is inherent to PDCA means that our "doing" across the whole of Orbit has continued to deliver as we have:

- Completed 10,894 FRA actions resulting in us having **zero** overdue high, medium or low FRA actions
- Completed 3,430 legionella risk assessment actions resulting in us having **zero** overdue high, medium or low actions
- Maintained 100% compliance on gas
- Maintained 100% on fire and legionella risk assessments,
- Maintained 100% on lifting equipment thorough examinations

Even better is that PDCA, by its very nature, is a continuous improvement model, so now that it is inbuilt into our very team structure, the benefits will only increase as time goes by.

I'll leave you with a question, just to see if this article has connected with you. Of the figures presented above is it the first set of planning, checking and acting work that draws your eye or the second showing the "doing" activities? It is our hope that more people will view the first set of figures as being just as important as the second; that's when we'll know that PDCA is driving improvement across our industry.



What does health mean to you?

Clare Forshaw, Head of Centre for Health (Health & Safety Executive)

In the context of work – what does health mean to you – in your sector, your organisation and your role within it?.....

Occupational health has a very broad scope – covering both the health people bring into the workplace and the health outcomes affected by the work activities and environment. It covers the range of chemical, physical, biological and psychological risks arising from work and also the variety of fitness, wellness and wellbeing activities that workplaces often provide.

it is too late, for example, lung diseases and cancers, noise induced hearing loss and muscle and tendon damage.

There is, however, a plethora of information which can predict the potential for harm related to particular work activities and even proven, improved ways of working to prevent or reduce the potential for health effects to a minimum. It is all too often about having the knowledge, understanding and being proactive which can make the real difference.



And what about mental health at work? All over the media, from government, charities and from trade associations and trade unions we are being told about the negative impact not addressing mental health issues is having on us as individuals, as workers and on the economy. Employers are facing more and more pressure to take on responsibilities to provide a positive influence to improve the mental health of workers through the workplace. It has been often quoted that good work is good for you – but how do you know what good is and conversely when things are bad. And how far can employers go in influencing people's

state of mind – making the balance between preventing negative impact from work issues but not interfering or meddling with personal or home life....

A 'Complete Worker Health' approach helps organisations to take a measured, stepwise approach towards a sustainable, evidence based strategy on health. It sets out to firstly identify what your business health priorities are based on a task based inventory. It then looks to identify the most appropriate protective measures and procedures to eliminate or minimise the risk of harm. From this, some relevant key performance indicators can be derived that track progress through leading measures to provide feedback on progress in a more timely way. The approach can work for the range of potential health effects such as physical, chemical and psychological as well as wellbeing needs.

Work can provide a positive influence on people's health and wellbeing, but it can also be the cause of misery, poor health and even early death due to work related factors. We all need to do more to address properly workplace health issues that we know can cause harm in the future and this can set the tone to drive improvements for both physical and mental health and a more open and engaged culture.



Evidence suggests that workers are 100 times more likely to die from an illness caused by workplace exposures than from an accident at work. However, most of our health and safety approaches focus on the immediate risks to life and limb from accidents and incidents.

Many organisations have little understanding of what the actual health risks are arising from work activities under their direction. Workers are often left to get on with the job, exposing themselves to potential life limiting or life changing irreversible harm which most often only manifests years in the future when



NHMF Study Tour 2017, London

Liz Circuit, Director (M3)

On the first day, we started in Portcullis House to hear about the ambitious project to refurbish the Palace of Westminster and the significant M&E challenges they face in such a prestigious listed building. We then visited the iconic 1960's Millbank Tower to hear from CityWest Homes about their work as a Central London provider of social housing brings. Delegates were able to look out across the city and see a number of the estates owned by CityWest Homes, the Peabody Trust and Southern Housing, and the variety of buildings constructed over the city's history.

The day ended at Camden Council's award-winning Somers Town decentralised energy network scheme. The project which delivers heat and hot water to the residents of Camden and has been designed with expansion in mind, allowing it to grow into one of London's major heat networks. The location of the installation made the project extremely challenging. Close to St Pancras International station, the area required the removal and reinstatement of cobbles, working on busy highways and walkways and dealing with the congested existing utilities in central London.

Delegates enjoyed hearing at first hand from an engineer on site about the day to day running of the scheme and they had the opportunity to see some of the technology used to monitor its daily performance of the scheme.

The second day provided a masterclass on Fire risk management. The NHMF Committee and Study tour delegates were joined by NHMF Contractor Forum members to spend the day considering what action should be taken to ensure resident safety while we await the outcome of the Grenfell enquiry.

Led by Andrew Lancaster of Anthony Collins Solicitors, delegates discussed the legal obligations for landlords in respect of fire safety.

NHMF training days 2018

The NHMF offers a series of one-day training courses to support both clients and contractors. The sessions are applicable to property services directors, asset management directors and members of their teams who are directly involved in or may be considering procuring or managing contracts under the M3NHF Schedule of Rates documentation and associated modules. They are particularly valuable if clients and their contractors attend together.

For dates and details,
visit nhmf.co.uk/training



Jan Taranczuk, Peter Gray and Paul Coffey presented a case study of their review of fire risk at LB Ealing. Gerry O'Connor and Keith Hooker of Swindon BC, together with Craig Scriven and Chloe Bruin of Kier Services described the actions they had taken to communicate with residents in the months following the Grenfell Tower disaster in June. One of the largest tower blocks owned by Swindon BC is sited in the centre of the town and was built in the same year as Grenfell. As a listed building, it has not had any retrofit works to the exterior, but it has still caused concern among local residents.

The event was hosted in St Paul's Cathedral which has been rebuilt four times following destruction by fire. Delegates enjoyed an informative tour of the building at the end of the day.

The next NHMF Study Tour 8-9 November 2018 will be visiting Glasgow. The study tour is attended by members of the NHMF committee, the NHMF Contractor Forum and is open to Directors or Senior Managers working in the maintenance or asset management areas of UK and the Republic of Ireland Social Housing. For more information and to book visit nhmf.co.uk



Varying contracts – the main traps to avoid

“ There are various traps into which it is easy to fall when varying contracts ”

Alistair Smith, Solicitor and **Andrew Millross**, Partner (Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP)

Maintenance contracts often need to be varied to take account of changes in law and instances where the parties wish to change contract terms. However, there are various traps into which it is easy to fall when varying contracts, some of which are considered here.

What is a variation?

There is an important distinction between instructions given under the terms of the contract and variations. Typically, maintenance contracts allow for the client representative/contract administrator to give instructions eg to authorise additional works or change how works are carried out. A variation is not needed where instructions are given under the terms of the contract.

A variation involves changes to the contract terms beyond what is permitted by the contract, for example where the model for payment changes from a schedule of rates model to a price per property/price per void model.

“Informal” variations

From a legal stand point it can be quite easy to make verbal variations “by accident”. The risks here are highlighted by the 2015 case of *Mears v Shoreline*. Shoreline entered into a maintenance contract with Mears. During mobilisation it was noticed that there were some items missing from the bespoke schedule of rates. The Core Group agreed some composite rates in order to “fill the gaps”, which led to Mears being paid more than the original contract envisaged. Shoreline then tried to recover these costs by making deductions from later payments on the basis that the additional composite rates were not included in the contract. The court said that the contract had been validly varied by the Core Group, even though the contract required all variations to be in writing. Shoreline had to repay the deduction.

“Formal” variations

If you are intending to vary a maintenance contract, the variation document should be drafted carefully, using the definitions, terminology and clause numbering of the contract that is being varied.

If the original contract was executed as a deed it is usual to have a deed of variation. This ensures that the period of 12 years to bring breach of contract claims still applies. If a letter or variation agreement is used, there is a risk this period will be reduced to 6 years.

Variations and procurement law

Where the original contract required an OJEU tender process, then any variation will need to be within the scope of what is permitted under EU procurement law. If you do not comply with European law and the variation is challenged, this could lead to the variation being set aside, a fine being issued by the Treasury, or damages becoming payable.

In terms of practical steps to minimise these risks, it is worth signing the deed of variation/variation agreement as soon as possible. The six-month window within which a challenge can be brought to set aside a variation starts to run from when it is signed. Provisions can also be inserted into the variation agreement itself which encourage the court to preserve the original contract in force if there is a successful challenge to the variation.

Variations to consider now

Long term maintenance contracts, sometimes need to be updated to accommodate changes in the law. Over the last couple of years you should have made variations to accommodate the CDM Regulations 2015, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Public Contract Regulations 2015 and if you are a local authority or ALMO the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Additionally, there is a need to make variations now to accommodate the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). These changes, set out in the Data Protection Bill, are set to make sweeping changes to data protection law. On 25 May 2018 the new provisions come into force with the risk of hefty fines for non-compliance.

We are often asked what changes should be made to maintenance contracts in preparation for Brexit. Other than checking that any definition of “law” works both pre and post Brexit, there are not really any major changes that are needed. It seems likely, for a period at least, that the status quo will continue. However, it is worth considering carefully what inflation price index to use for new contracts in order to pick up the anticipated increases in materials and labour costs. It may be worth considering the PPI or one of the BCIS indexes, as there is a risk that contracts using CPI or even RPI could become commercially unsustainable.



Together we thrive – collaboration without merger

John Fisher, Managing Director (CHIC)

With a continuing focus on value for money, the pressure to deliver efficiencies and savings continues to grow for housing providers. Many are now turning their attention to alternatives to mergers.

By embracing collaboration through initiatives such as cost sharing vehicles and purchasing consortia, organisations can achieve not just financial savings, but also wider social and economic benefits.

Good housing assets are core to customer satisfaction and business success. Approximately 40% of rental income is spent on maintaining and investing in housing stock which equates approximately to £2000 per home, per annum.

Of this 40%, a quarter is spent on building materials, and much of this is traditionally left to contractors to source and provide. Those landlords with in-house contractors buy their own materials but they are small buyers in a huge market.

The market is highly complex, with all sorts of discounts, rebates, special offers and mark ups. In simple terms, the clients specify a performance standard, the contractor then has to spot buy that product for each scheme or programme – a micro-purchase in market terms – and the client gets whatever is provided by the contractor.

Is it therefore time the sector focused on whole life costs, separating materials purchasing from the labour and delivering better value and certainty of product quality? Efficiencies create more funds to build the new homes we need to address the housing shortage.

Central Housing Investment Consortium (CHIC) is a consortium of over 50 housing associations in the Midlands, South East England and Wales managing over 500,000 homes. By consolidating spend at a regional level we can:

- Share the cost of shopping (procurement)
- Separate materials from labour – and reduce risk and cost
- Increase social value outcomes through supporting employment and training
- Get members to work together to share best practice

Since its inception in 2010 CHIC has delivered over £50m savings to our members and 1,200 social value outcomes.

“ Savings can be delivered through collaboration but so can innovation ”

But can we deliver even more through a truly national approach? Yes, in 2015 CHIC joined the Re:allies partnership now comprising three consortia of housing landlords whose membership together manage in excess of 1.2m homes. That's 30% of social housing nationally.

Together we procure and manage materials and merchant services, supplying both internal and external contractors. This means that together housing landlords are now a significant market player for their building materials. This collaboration is rewarded by competitive pricing and a strategic relationship with the supply chain; typically members save up to 20% on materials cost.

So savings can be delivered through collaboration but so can innovation. More than ever the sector needs strong leadership to change the way we have always done 'it', and for all to recycle savings to create new affordable homes.

Our innovative BuildSmart model puts our members at the forefront in tackling the housing shortage with an all-in one, collaborative approach to off-site manufacture and development of new homes. It enables the delivery of new homes through factory built standard house types with a co-ordinated approach to materials supply and efficiencies during the build period.

The Re:allies consortium is delivering measurable savings and additional benefits for its members nationally, whilst delivering social value for local people.

So why don't all housing providers adopt this approach? Fear of change and concern about letting our competitors know too much about us are principle reasons. Collaboration and partnerships provide a simple, effective and valuable option for all providers, whatever their size. The first consortia have now been around for a decade and 30% of the national market has adopted them. Only 70% to go!



Potential benefits of combined working in asset management

Simon Davis, Director (Rand Associates)

In times where the pressure is on Registered Providers (RPs) to provide more for less, one of the answers might be just around the corner.

We have helped to facilitate several RPs who have worked in partnership with other similar organisations. When two or more RPs with similar objectives work together, there are multiple potential benefits to be gained, including:

1. Driving efficiencies through achieving economies of scale
2. Better informed policies and practices
3. Greater levels of quality control and validation
4. Greater ability to benchmark

out surveys can be more cost effective if it is spread over a greater number of properties, regardless of them being undertaken externally or in-house. The key here is geographical planning. It may be possible to share staff working on the surveys or administration, which would result in savings and a more consistent approach.

We then reach the second stage; we know what our liabilities are, but what do we do about them? In very simplistic terms, someone needs to consider what sort of investment plan this looks like, so that a true understanding of a works programme is developed. Again, it may be possible to share expertise at this level, which would present a further saving. Probably the most obvious saving comes next though, when we start to think about procurement. The increased economies offered by conducting larger volumes of work in a standardised way will present an attractive proposition for many contractors and in-house maintenance departments. There are also less obvious benefits, such as reductions in tendering costs for contractors.

Finally, once the contracts are up and running, someone has to manage them. We have already cited the potential to invest in more advanced software, which could also be applied to this purpose. Sharing of staff to manage a project is potentially a key benefit. Again, not only are there savings to be made, but contracts can be approached in a more informed and consistent manner. Take for example, the need to validate completed works. This can be addressed by a smaller group of surveyors which will mean more consistent communication with the contractor. In theory this could lead on to validating a lower percentage of works.

Over the last few years, we have seen various organisations adopt the above approach. In pursuing this, there are some challenges to be overcome, perhaps the most significant of which is finding appropriate partners in the first place. Consideration will also need to be given to a other factors such as the type of works that need to be done, the stage of existing contracts, and budgets. It is crucial that all the organisations are working to the same agenda from the start. However, it is clear that under the right circumstances, the benefits are there to be realised.

“ When two or more RPs with similar objectives work together, there are multiple potential benefits to be gained ”

Taking a project from start to finish, an initial task might be to gather data on what works need to be carried out. Typically, this might take the form of a stock condition survey, and the benefits of combined working here are exhibited in a variety of ways. To start with, the database itself may prove to be more affordable if the costs are spread over more than one organisation. This also has the potential to allow access to databases that would otherwise be beyond the financial grasp of an individual RP. When setting up a database, input on survey design etc from more than one organisation can help ensure a more complete end product. Once you have your database set up, the process of carrying



Achieving social value through procurement and contracts

Gayle Monk, Associate and **Andrew Millross**, Partner (Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP)

There are clear tensions concerning social value in procurement. These range from the inherent conflict between a desire to achieve a local social impact and legal obligations that protect freedom of movement across a European marketplace, to the difficult question of how far it is right to spend rent receipts on things that may not directly benefit tenants.

Securing social value

For those looking to secure social value there is now a genuine opportunity to incorporate social, economic or environmental elements into a wider contract scope.

Procurement is just one part of a wider picture, though. The delivery phase is equally (if not more) important – there is no point in taking care to incorporate social value requirements properly into your procurement process if you don't manage the contract effectively to ensure that the specified or promised social value is actually delivered. It takes a holistic view of the entire commissioning cycle to achieve social value:

- **Pre-procurement:** At this stage you should identify the social value aspects of what you are looking to purchase, making sure that they are both what is needed, and aspirational but commercially achievable. This will mean that social value is truly integrated into a contract (not just an “add-on”) and, when it comes to the procurement process, that tenderers know what are your priorities and social value objectives. This could range from identifying the key social value outcomes you want to achieve from a contract to a wholesale redesign of what you purchase.
- **Contract drafting:** We are getting used to having to prepare our contract and procurement documents before the procurement process starts. This is when you should be designing sensible contract management processes and writing them into the contract. These processes should measure and manage the delivery of social value objectives alongside other contract deliverables; treating social value as part of the contract, not as an add-on with its own bureaucracy.
- **Procurement stage:** The key to a successful procurement is ensuring that you get the best tenderers bidding for the contract and keen to win it. When designing the procurement, you need to consider how the process might attract – or deter – the best contractors for what you are looking to procure. If a small business could successfully deliver the contract, for example, then setting the right turnover thresholds and insurance requirements is vital. Equally, for complex contracts, it is worth considering the degree of dialogue or negotiation needed – both the competitive procedure with negotiation and competitive dialogue give more scope to engage with tenderers around areas that benefit from discussion during the tender process.
- **Proactive contract management:** When social value is truly at the core of the contract, it isn't an “add-on”, but instead is part and parcel of what the contract is seeking to deliver. Effective contract management involves:
 - understanding the resources you will have available to monitor and administer the contract (and this may mean setting clear priorities);

- gathering sufficient reliable data to demonstrate the success or otherwise of the contract, but without unnecessary bureaucracy;
- ensuring presentation of this data against clear KPIs in a suitable format – and over appropriate timescales;
- using the contractual mechanisms for contract monitoring and management twinned with a relational approach which gives early warning of concerns or risks and a shared approach to “problem solving”; and
- developing a clear and shared understanding of the impact of success or failure to deliver – including in terms of payments and deductions, rectification plans, and termination.

“ Proactive contract management: When social value is truly at the core of the contract, it isn't an “add-on”, but instead is part and parcel of what the contract is seeking to deliver

”

Tradeswomen into maintenance project

All of the above factors are reflected in the free Legal Guide we developed for the “Tradeswomen into Maintenance” Project.

Whilst women make up 13% of the construction workforce, only 1% of manual trade workers are women. In the context of a skills shortage in construction, which will only get worse following Brexit, this is a serious loss of potential talent to the construction and maintenance industry. We wrote the Legal Guide for social landlords, ALMOs and local authorities that want to take steps to address this imbalance as part of their “social value” objectives.

The Legal Guide explains relevant equality and procurement legislation (including the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012) and sets out the steps that can be taken to promote the creation of opportunities for women to take up and thrive in maintenance careers. It includes template clauses for each stage of the procurement and contracting process. These are “open access” for copyright purposes, meaning that they can be freely copied and used. A copy of the legal guide can be found [here](#).

This Legal Guide is one of a number of good practice guides which aim to support landlords and other businesses working in the social housing and public sector to increase the number of women working in construction trades.



All change: updates to suites of standard building contracts

Beulah Allaway, Solicitor & Ross Hayes, Consultant & Project Manager (Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP)

Last year saw an influx of new forms for the most commonly used suites of standard building contracts.

NHF Schedule of rates

Updated more regularly than the other forms of contracts, the NHF Form of Contract 2011 (REV4:2016) has changed less over the last year than the others, with changes made to add clauses proactively supporting tradeswomen into maintenance and a client option to audit valuations and recover costs on evidence of overcharging. More substantial change is on the horizon with new data protection clauses coming that will reflect the General Data Protection Regulations in force from 25 May 2018.

JCT contracts

From JCT, 2017 saw the roll-out of the last contracts in its 2016 suite, rendering the 2011 suite unsupported by JCT and thus requiring users to switch to the new 2016 forms. Changes are consistent across the suite and include:

- updates to reflect new law, including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015; Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and the Freedom of Information Act 2010 (the latter not being new law, but of particular relevance to ALMOs subject to it);
- consolidated interim and final payment provisions across most of the suite, except for the Measured Term Contract where, appropriately, final account is still a standalone process;
- changes to how collateral warranties and third-party rights are granted, requiring users to familiarise themselves with new Rights Particulars when granting third party rights; and
- changes to insurance provisions, including flexibility on insuring existing buildings.

NEC contracts

June 2017 saw the 4th edition of the NEC published. All in the existing suite were updated at the same time to enhance consistency, and three new contracts added including a Design, Build and Operate contract. A consultative version of a new Alliance Contract was also issued. Unlike the JCT suite, the earlier NEC3 editions are still supported so users do not have to change. However, for repairs and maintenance contracts some of the new features of NEC4 will be very useful, including a new final assessment (an “NEC final account”) procedure shortly after the end of the contract and an option to allow for annual “final accounts”.

In addition, the new contracts now include anti-bribery, corruption and confidentiality clauses.

The NEC maintains its emphasis on management with a new “deemed to accept” clause for programmes and plans. Failure by the client’s contract administrator to respond to either submitted for acceptance is treated as acceptance. Beware!

ACA contracts

ACA’s Term Partnering Contract 2005 (TPC 2005) is also sometimes used for long-term maintenance contracts. Neither TPC2005 nor its project equivalent, PPC2000, have recently been updated, but ACA has produced two new forms – TAC-1 and FAC-1. TAC-1 is the successor to TPC2005, so feels much the same but with terminology reflecting “alliancing” rather than “partnering”. FAC-1 is a new framework alliancing contract, fusing a traditional framework agreement with an alliancing contract and is designed to be a multi-party contract under which the alliancing partners work collaboratively to deliver “framework objectives”.

“ Last year saw an influx of new forms for the most commonly used suites of standard building contracts ”

The end of amendments?

With all of these updates and new forms, can you do away with your schedules of amendments to JCT, NEC and ACA forms of contract? Almost certainly not. Unlike the NHF Schedule of Rates, the other forms discussed in this article are not drafted to reflect the specific regulatory and practical considerations of providers of social housing. So, when using any of the new JCT, NEC and ACA forms of contracts, amendments will still be needed to reflect regulatory requirements not covered; to be mindful of obligations to residents particularly with regard to data protection and DBS checks; and if necessary to adjust the risk under the contract.



Legal compliance for asset management professionals



Katie Saunders, Partner & Mark Robinson, Partner (Trowers & Hamblins)

In an ever increasingly regulated environment, housing providers need to ensure that they are compliant with all legislation when it comes to managing their housing stock.

Here are some key compliance issues to consider:

Procurement

In September 2016, the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) published a Standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ) which amalgamates the CCS's standard Pre- Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) and the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD). Procurement and Asset Management Directors must use this document for all works, services and supplies procurements and must inform the CCS if they wish to deviate from the wording. In February 2017, the CCS issued a revised version of the SQ, provided further guidance on standard questions that may be asked and when deviations from the standard drafting need to be reported. Procurement and Asset Management Directors are advised to incorporate these questions into sub-threshold procurement exercises, to ensure 360 degree adoption of the social objectives underlying the SQ's questions.

Payment of contractors and supply chain

One of the less well-known changes made by Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015 was a requirement for contracting authorities to include terms in all their contracts ensuring that all valid and undisputed invoices were paid within 30 days. Most contracts based on standard forms of contract (JCT, PPC, etc.) will comply, but employers must take care with bespoke payment terms. PCR 2015 also requires contracting authorities to ensure that their contractors impose equivalent 30-day payment terms in any sub-contracts, and that those sub-contractors must also have equivalent terms in their sub-contracts.

Modern Slavery Act

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA) came into force on 29 October 2015 and requires any business operating in the UK with a total annual turnover in excess of £36m to publish a slavery and human trafficking statement each financial year within six months of meeting this qualification. The MSA statement needs to outline the relevant steps a business has taken to ensure slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in the supply chain. Registered Providers failing to comply with the requirements of the MSA could face an injunction which if defied would place them in contempt of court and subject to

“ Social landlords must publish an annual Value for Money report and must make annual declarations that they comply with all current law ”

an unlimited fine. Potential reputational damage and the achievement of social value aims make this important legislation to comply with.

Regulatory and compliance obligations

The HCA through its governance and liability standards requires all Registered Providers to produce an Asset and Liability Register. Failure to do so may lead to a potential regulatory downgrade so it is of paramount importance for Registered Providers to put one in place. However, keeping the list up to date does present an opportunity to Asset Management Directors to survey the contracts they have in place. The Asset and Liability Register is therefore not just a box to tick for compliance with the HCA but also a valueadding exercise for Asset Management Directors which may allow them to reduce risk, costs and delays across a broad spectrum of projects.

Contracting authorities must publish data annually on their websites setting out the percentage of contracts where suppliers were paid within 30 days of an undisputed invoice, as required by PCR 2015.

Social landlords must publish an annual Value for Money report and must make annual declarations that they comply with all current law, including their procurement obligations under PCR 2015, the health and safety regulations and environmental legislation.

These are just some of the areas of concern for Asset Management Directors. Steps need to be taken to ensure asset management programmes are procured and administered in compliance with all statutory obligations.



How it all began

Stephen Chalmers, Technical Director (Kingsdale Group)

When six members of the South West HAMMAR Group and I agreed to produce a new SoR, we thought it was going to meet the needs of our associations and possibly a few additional interested parties. 25 years on from that original meeting, over 500 organisations have adopted what is now called the M3NHF Schedule of Rates. Over these 25 years I recall many times core members of the seven saying "I didn't expect it would be so popular".

Some of the mile stones achieved along the way include:

- The launch at the NHF Maintenance conference in July 1994, Manchester, when there was phenomenal interest from other housing associations
- Agreeing the adoption of the SoR with Dave Treanor of the organisation now known as M3
- Setting up the steering group which has evolved over the years to the present NHMF executive and main committees; and the subsequent formation of the NHMF Contractor Forum
- The additional SoR modules covering specialist works and services.
- The handbook which developed into Locator, now M3Central Repairs & Diagnostics, and several specialist publications
- Training events which led to a one- day conference, which in turn has developed into the hugely popular three-day NHMF Maintenance Conference & Exhibition
- The rollout of a training calendar with numerous topical events held in various locations
- The annual study tour
- The annual NHMF Bulletin and NHMF website, continually updated with best practice

Countless people from social housing providers and various other organisations have freely given their time to develop and promote the SoR and associated products, publications, software and events. This all started from a user driven need; and the development of the NHMF and the M3NHF Schedule of Rates suite of products and initiatives is still driven by users which makes it unique.



“About ten maintenance managers from varying sized associations thrashed out the issues of how they felt a schedule of rates should be constructed”

“none of us could have imagined the Schedule would grow to where it is today. It is still moving forward, which is what gives it its strength, as it was produced by users and is being guided by its users”

We need not have worried. Apart from running workshops, we spent the whole time on our stand in the exhibition area. The response was overwhelming. Everybody who looked at it liked it. Some orders were placed; others said they would be back to us. We were elated. At last we could relax. So if you remember a group of very drunk people in the late bar at Manchester, it was us!

We asked the NFHA if they were interested in adopting it, and if they could promote it. Initially we spoke to the publications section. They suggested we talk to Dave Treanor at NFHA Software.

By the time Nick, myself and David Miller of Rand met Dave Treanor he was fully aware of what we had produced and also knew of the interest from associations throughout the country. On the 15th November 1994 we had agreed a deal with Dave and the NFHA. There would be a Steering Committee to ensure the Schedule remained user based, initially with four members from the West Region and five representing other parts of the country. These were Mike Snowdon of Touchstone, John Taphouse of Community HA, Mark Richards of Wales and West, Mike Cleavelly of Orwell HA. As we expanded into new regions we invited more representatives, with the aim of including people from every HAMMAR group. We were joined by Tony Hodge of Northern Counties HA and Ray Moberley of Beth Johnson HA.



Richard Holiday

Over the four years since the initial launch the Committee has grown to represent each area. I have chaired the Committee

throughout this period, and seen the number of users grow to 130, including a number of councils and the MoD married quarters. The Committee has been active in initiating more modules to complement the schedule. These include Gas Servicing, Pre-Painting Repairs, Hard Landscaping Maintenance, and a new



Mike Cleavelly

Communal Area module which covers such things as lifts, emergency lighting, and fire alarms. More modules are in the pipeline. We have also produced Repairs Manuals for association staff, and a Repairs Handbook for tenants which mirrors the staff copy. Florin Associates converted this to a Windows help file so it could be used on a computer to work with any repairs and maintenance software. All of this was achieved by Dave Treanor and Rand Associates working closely with the users on the Steering Committee. We have also involved companies dealing in hand-held computers:



Nick Wood

Power Survey were the first to put the Schedule into this format. From that initial meeting four and a half years ago none of us could have imagined the Schedule would grow to where it is today. It is still moving forward, which is what gives it its strength, as it was produced by users and is being guided by its users.





National Housing
Maintenance Forum

NHMF Maintenance Conference

What is it?

An annual conference devoted to housing maintenance and run by maintenance professionals. It covers strategic issues and provides a focus for networking and promoting best practice.

When is it?

The next conference will be held on Tuesday 22 & Wednesday 23 January 2019.

Where is it?

Hilton Birmingham Metropole (NEC)

Who will be speaking?

Speakers will include experts from a wide range of relevant specialist fields. We will hear from those in Government departments, National Housing Federation, Chartered Institute of Housing, resident providers, contractors, experienced consultants and professionals. Our speakers share a passion for playing their part in delivering good quality, affordable housing in the UK.

Why should I be there?

This is the one chance in the year to attend an event devoted to topics that are of concern to Asset managers and Directors of property services. We look at what is new, what works well and follow innovations proposed in earlier years to see what happened. It is an opportunity to share ideas and test your own views on colleagues facing the same set of challenges.

nhmf.co.uk/conference
@NHMFOfficial
#NHMFConference





When do CDM Regulations apply?



Mike Forsyth, Managing Director and Safety Practitioner (Safer Sphere)

The Construction Design and Management Regulation or CDM has been around for over 22 years in some shape or form, and during that time has been subject to changes. The most recent revision of the Regulations came into force in April 2015 (CDM15).

“ Complying with CDM 2015 does not have to cause you concern, instead, it will help ensure that no-one is harmed during construction and that the structure is safe to use and easy to maintain ”

The removal of the role of the CDM Co-ordinator to make way for that of the Principal Designer was one of the biggest changes to this latest revision. CDM15 is the legislation that applies to all construction projects, from feasibility study to final handover and beyond. The CDM Regulations are in place to reduce the risk of harm not only to those who build and maintain structures, but also to those who use them up to the point of demolition.

CDM15 applies to both domestic and commercial building sites, large and small. Put simply, unless it is a DIY job, then this law will probably apply as a result. The health and safety responsibilities should be treated as normal a part of the construction process as mixing cement. No matter what the size of your project, consideration for health and safety should be part of the planning process, not something that is reluctantly added before the building starts.

It doesn't have to be about creating mountains of paperwork and unnecessary processes; Safer Sphere can assist with ensuring CDM compliance. We will work together with clients and designers

to promote health and safety throughout the project, manage your compliance efficiently, and ensure adequately trained individuals are appointed to propel the project forward. Complying with CDM 2015 does not have to cause you concern, instead, it will help ensure that

no-one is harmed during construction and that the structure is safe to use and easy to maintain. Effective planning will also help ensure that your work is well managed with fewer unexpected costs and problems.

Companies that have kept abreast of the changes to the regulations are improving standards within the construction industry all the time. Nearly three years have passed since the requirements of CDM were revised in 2015, and there are companies who have not had the resources available within their own organisation to enjoy the benefits of having competent, professional and holistic construction health and safety solutions available to them. In addition, many homeowners will still be unaware of the regulations at all, never mind how it affects their own responsibilities.

Domestic clients were omitted from the Regulations before the 2015 revisions; since then if a domestic project has more than one contractor working simultaneously, a “Principal Contractor” and “Principal Designer” must be appointed just like on a commercial site. Size is not important before any project starts, the Principal Designer will be responsible for ensuring the client understands their responsibilities under CDM15 and for preparing and sharing the pre-construction information with the appointed designers and contractors.

The Principal Contractor must prepare a construction phase plan before any physical work begins. The Principal Contractor is also responsible for undertaking worker site inductions, ensuring that adequate welfare and sanitation facilities are provided and securing the site against the public. Whether you are having building work carried out on your behalf (client), as a domestic client, Principal Contractor, designer, sub-contractor, appointed as another duty holder, or a site worker, then you will have to consider your health and safety responsibilities under CDM15 before a spade is put in the ground.

In order to comply with this law, projects should be carried out with health and safety in mind.



Achieving significant savings in repairs service



Richard Woolfall, Director of Repairs (Your Housing Group)

It is a scenario too familiar to many social landlords: increasing maintenance costs, a declining rental stream, an ageing population placing increased strain on ever-limited resources, and greater pressure on repairs managers to deliver more with less. How do you save money while keeping tenants happy and homes well maintained?

Your Housing Group (YHG) asked itself this question and in response introduced the Repairs Play Book for tenants living in its 29,000 homes in the North of England. The Repairs Play Book is just one of a range of measures recently introduced by YHG to improve its operational efficiency to deliver more new homes and do its part in answering the housing question.

The YHG operating model

The YHG Repairs Play Book was designed to reflect the needs and diversity of its customers. It delivers a market-reflective repairs service that has centralised service standards and delivery controls, but utilises a localised delivery model via a ‘thin client’ structure.

The YHG repairs model has led to the cost of unplanned maintenance being reduced by over £2.6m in the previous 12 months since its introduction in late 2016. Repairs completed has fallen below 1.7 repairs per property per annum, and the average time taken to complete a repair has improved to just over seven calendar days.

YHG’s repairs service is primarily managed via its ‘Your Response’ call centre and the maintenance hub, with a team of in-house surveyors called upon to deal with more complex maintenance matters. All repairs and call centre staff are trained to ensure that the repairs service is delivered in a consistent and equitable manner in accordance with a centralised repairs service standard. The Repairs Play Book also offers customers access to a range of enhanced repairs completed by YHG’s in-house contractor at a market-competitive fee.

Intelligent investment

Your Housing Group introduced the Play Book as part of a wider investment strategy. The repairs service standard is carefully balanced in conjunction with the voids and programmed investment standard. A critical factor in the success of the repairs service has been its approach to the collection of intelligent data used to

inform and shape the wider asset service. YHG’s repairs service is not focused on delivering affordable repairs, it is about delivering a market-reflective maintenance function as part of a wider intelligent asset investment function.

The Repairs Play Book has helped YHG cut the number of repairs requiring a pre-inspection by 90% and reduced the average waiting time for property inspections from over two weeks to less than three days.

YHG’s budget for planned maintenance and void repairs has remained constant since the repairs model was introduced.

“ How do you save money while keeping tenants happy and homes well maintained? ”

Commerciality versus social purpose

The new model has been well received by tenants. Customers now receive a consistent and transparent repairs service with the option of the delivery of an enhanced standard of repairs. In developing the Play Book, YHG listened to feedback from tenants and proactively included customers in the ‘repairs conversation’. The primary area of feedback from tenants was the need to tailor the service to reflect the diverse needs of YHG’s more vulnerable customers. In response, YHG enhanced the Play Book, empowering its trained customer service staff to amend the nature of the repair issued to reflect the needs of individual customers, while remaining within the parameters of centralised process.

The Repairs Play Book has exceeded initial expectations, it has enabled YHG to create financial capacity to deliver more new homes for current and future customers.



How soon before Internal Air Quality (IAQ) joins the ‘big five’?



Jenny Brierley, Researcher (University of Sheffield)

“ Critical factors in effective performance of ventilation systems are day to day actions by the resident to ventilate their home and maintenance in practice by the landlord ”

Without doubt, the number one priority in building maintenance must be keeping people safe. This theme was strongly in evidence throughout this year’s National Housing Maintenance Forum (NHMF) Conference, with a plenary session directly addressing best practice in relation to the ‘big five’ health and safety (H&S) issues – fire, gas, electrics, water, and asbestos. Another issue on the H&S agenda, occupying increasing political debate and media space, is air quality, with the current public focus particularly on external air quality. The impact of the housing sector on outdoor air quality, through energy choices for home heating and transport fleets for instance, is well recognised and significant, but fast rising up the agenda is the often overlooked, but linked, issue of indoor air quality (IAQ).

The evidence linking indoor air pollution to impacts on health is extensively researched and stark. The ‘pollution poverty penalty’ identified in relation to outdoor air quality

raises similar concerns for indoor air quality, making this an issue of even greater concern to social landlords.

Controlling the sources of indoor air pollution (volatile chemical products in cleaning materials and building finishes, external air pollutants, mould, smoke, etc) should be the primary strategy for good IAQ (BS ISO 17772-1:2017), with appropriate ventilation and filtration essential to eliminate or decrease remaining pollutants.

While older housing stock is frequently over-ventilated, new low-zero energy homes require effective planned ventilation to maintain healthy IAQ. Social housing has been in the vanguard in creating highly energy efficient homes, aiming to tackle fuel poverty as well as reduce carbon emissions, with homes becoming increasingly airtight in order to reduce heat loss. As an expert in the field has commented, ‘a building cannot be too airtight, but it can be under ventilated’.

So how can social landlords ensure effective ventilation in low energy, rented homes? An appropriate ventilation strategy and good design, accurate build and expert services installation are clearly all necessary, but not sufficient. As numerous post-occupancy evaluations demonstrate, critical factors in effective performance of ventilation systems are day to day actions by the resident to ventilate their home and maintenance in practice by the landlord.

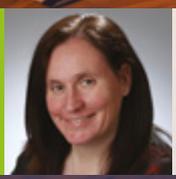
Current research at the University of Sheffield, supported by the NHMF, is exploring this issue in depth, with the aim of understanding how the practices of landlords and residents are helping or hindering good ventilation in low energy homes. An online survey of NHMF members gathered valuable insights on this



issue, supplemented by a lively workshop at the conference in January. There was no shortage of thoughtful, candid, solution-focused contributions to the discussion, but it is clear that achieving effective ventilation is no easy task for social landlords. The research continues with five in-depth case studies at housing association schemes across England, planned for summer 2018, with a report due next year.

Although current legal or regulatory requirements in respect of domestic ventilation are sparse, tighter regulation is a future possibility. Acting now to establish best practice, based on well researched understanding of the issue from the perspective of both landlords and residents, will put the sector on the front foot, demonstrating a proactive commitment to healthy homes. How soon before indoor air quality is added to health and safety priorities for social landlords, with the ‘big six’ on the agenda at future NHMF conferences?

For more information, please email jimbrierley1@sheffield.ac.uk



Managing the risk of off-site build

Samantha Ferneley, Business Development Executive (BLP Insurance)

The UK is facing a severe housing shortage; the average age of our construction workforce is increasing, creating a potential time bomb that will play out over the next 10 years as the workforce shrinks by 25% as detailed by Mark Farmer in his 'Modernise or Die' report.

The construction industry is also struggling to attract new talent which is resulting in a critical skills shortage across the sector. Building firms in the UK are being forced to double the wages for tradespeople from abroad, increasing the cost of traditionally built homes.

Quality is suffering, with an increase in construction defects and buildings not performing according to their design, highlighted in the findings of the APPG for Excellence in the Built Environment report, 'More Homes, Fewer Complaints'.

A solution exists if the industry embraces off-site or non-traditional methods of construction. We will call it Smart Construction. This has the capacity to modernise the industry in a way which will both increase attraction to new entrants and offset attrition and shrinkage. It will improve productivity so we can increase output with constrained labour.

As always, cost needs to be considered in times where budgets are very limited. Up-front costs of the system need to be weighed up against faster build times (often 50% quicker than traditional), whole life costs, energy use, defect and repair rate.

For an industry as cautious as ours there are challenges. How do we ensure off-site systems are durable, will not require excessive maintenance, will perform as designed and can be adapted for future use and family growth?

“ This has the capacity to modernise the industry in a way which will both increase attraction to new entrants and offset attrition and shrinkage. It will improve productivity so we can increase output with constrained labour ”

A solution that already exists is the Buildoffsite Property Assurance Scheme (BOPAS) launched in March 2013. bopas.org. BOPAS was developed to address the perceived risks associated with innovative construction and is recognised by the principal mortgage lenders as providing the necessary assurance underpinned by a warranty provision.

The scheme was jointly developed by Buildoffsite, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Lloyd's Register and BLP Insurance, in consultation with the Council of Mortgage Lenders and The Building Societies Association to provide assurance to the lending community, investors, developers and owners that innovatively constructed properties will be sufficiently durable for a minimum of 60 years...(cont)

The assurance scheme comprises:

A durability and maintenance assessment:

- Minimum 60-year durability
- No disproportionate maintenance
- Lifecycle assessment
- Site specific workmanship checks

A process accreditation:

- Competency management
- Procurement management
- Configuration management
- Process control

An online database comprising details of assessed building methodologies, registered sites and registered warranted properties.

One of the main advantages of Smart Construction is in terms of quality. An article in the January 2016 issue of 'Planning and Building Control Today' confirms that buildings in the UK currently fall short by up to 30% in terms of how they were originally designed to perform. Properties built in a factory will have a higher level of quality control compared with a construction site, improving the performance of the building over time. This improved performance from off-site techniques should translate into reduced energy and maintenance costs.

There are other benefits too in terms of safety and working conditions as it is much safer to produce something in a controlled factory environment rather than building outside, at height, while exposed to changeable weather. Off-site construction is ahead in terms of sustainability with less waste, noise and vehicle movements on site.

Many Housing Associations are looking at off-site solutions and framework agreements as developments coming to market can be replicated at scale, as in the case of Swan Housing who are building their own factory to produce hundreds of homes.

There have been many advances in the quality and performance of Smart Constructed Methods in the last 50 years and today's homes are unrecognisable from the post war 'prefabs' in the memories of many. Recent developments suggest that industry confidence is growing and major investment decisions are being made but there is much work to do to ensure we are building the number of homes we need.

“ Properties built in a factory will have a higher level of quality control compared with a construction site, improving the performance of the building over time ”





Take the guesswork out of management by mapping your data

Rick Thompson, GIS Consultant (Oxford Data Consultancy)

Geographic Information System (GIS) is now being taken up by many innovative social housing providers to create efficiencies, transform the business and provide strategic insight across their organisations.

My presentation at the 2018 NHMF conference in Birmingham focused on asset management and maintenance teams, although during the three years I was GIS Officer at Trafford Housing Trust I saw GIS in use across all departments. Visualising data can present more information and insights than spreadsheets or databases can reveal.

99% of housing data has some form of spatial element, for example, property locations, street furniture, communal grounds, estates, commercial buildings and development sites. Visualising your housing data and analysing it with a GIS gives you a strategic insight into your organisation. This provides you with accurate information to assist you with improving processes, and has the potential to save money with additional benefits such as enabling mobile working.

We all want to save money when we can, and having your grounds maintenance information in a GIS offers the most tangible saving opportunity. Housing associations which have gone down this route have reported savings of between 10%-15% on their grounds maintenance contracts.

Asset management can benefit in a range of ways. For example, in a programme of works does the rest of the organisation know where and when you are working on improvement works? Sharing this information through web mapping can help housing officers deal with queries on the ground from tenants rather than wasting staff and customer time in finding the information or the right person who has the information. Also by having this information in a GIS allows for more efficient and effective planning of the works.

Net present value (NPV) thematic maps make best use of your NPV data for more informed decision making. If you have an NPV for your stock then you are in a strong position to start thinking strategically about your future stock and whether to invest, maintain or release properties.

Repairs analysis - where are the true hotspots? Producing reports on the number or type of repairs for a particular estate or patch is achievable, but will only show you themes or issues at these pre-designed geographical areas. Visualising this data and analysis within a GIS allows you to look past these boundaries from your housing management system and allows you to see the data on groups of properties. GIS also allows for simple data filtering without the need to request a new report or build one from your housing system.

“ Housing associations which have gone down this route have reported savings of between 10%-15% on their grounds maintenance contracts ”

These are just a small selection of tasks that can be done utilising GIS. As a tool to capture information, GIS allows you to compare your property list with land ownership and property boundaries and find out exactly what you do own.

Nowadays, GIS is very flexible and can run on desktop, tablet or your mobile phone. Costs are much more realistic and can be adapted to suit most budgets. With the amount of data now available, not just your own, but open source data, making the most of it requires an innovative approach, and GIS, although having been around for a long time, is now proving to be the ideal vehicle for housing associations to develop for the future.

A free paper on the benefits of GIS can be downloaded at: odc.co.uk




Workshop 2e
Using mobile technology to enhance the customer experience
 Florian Moldoveanu, PiLON & Neal Ackcral, Optivo
Dorset Room



Enhancing the customer experience with ground-breaking technology

Neal Ackcral, Executive Director Property & Asset Management (Optivo)
Florian Moldoveanu, CEO (PiLON)

Optivo and PiLON are working in partnership with Optivo's residents to design and develop innovative solutions to enhance customer experience through an interactive web portal.

Optivo is one of the largest housing providers in the UK, providing affordable housing to over 90,000 residents in London, Sussex, Kent and the Midlands. PiLON is a main contractor specialising in refurbishment and regeneration of social housing work in partnership with Optivo to deliver the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms within London.

We also ran customer surveys and focus groups to find out what residents wanted to do online, armed with this customer insight we used nudge theory to target customers.

The solution (The PiLON customer portal)

The solution involved the delivery of an online portal that could be easily accessed and managed via mobile devices. The portal allowed residents to engage in the co-creation, development and delivery of their new kitchen or bathroom, while at the same time giving them 24/7 access to other property related services.

How it was rolled out and implemented

PiLON rolled out the app to all residents scheduled for a major works programme in 2016/17, with PiLON and Optivo staff providing training to residents in using the portal. Many of whom would have previously been counted as difficult to reach owing to language barriers. With the app's pictorial interface, that issue was overcome.

Take up in the use of the application was increased by the provision of free tablets to residents who didn't own devices funded within the contract price for either a new kitchen or bathroom.

What was the impact?

The advantages of using this innovative technology to enhance customer experience, by engaging residents through technology, provided additional benefits for all the project stakeholders. The innovation has also led to the companies being named as finalists for the 'Outstanding approach to tenant involvement' category in the 2018 UK Housing Awards.

Optivo's target for digital engagement was to get 40% of clients using the digital solution by 1 January 2018, this is already at 44%. Many residents now regularly access Optivo's services online to raise day to day repairs and to pay their rent. This has not only reduced Optivo's call centre costs but has provided our residents with 24/7 access to our services.

“ The advantages of using this innovative technology to enhance customer experience, by engaging residents through technology, provided additional benefits for all the project stakeholders ”

At the start of their partnership, two objectives were identified - firstly to try and engage residents digitally and secondly to make residents feel part of the decision process when kitchens and bathrooms were being replaced to maximize customer experience and satisfaction.

The challenges faced to encourage residents to buy into our collaborative vision

Research highlighted that many customers were struggling to transact online. For some, cost was prohibitive due to the expense of tablets and broadband contracts. Others lacked the necessary digital skills and confidence.

Acronyms

We have tried, where possible, to ensure that acronyms are explained within articles. For those instances where this was not possible, however, here we have listed some commonly used acronyms.



Acronym	Explanation	Acronym	Explanation
ACA	Association of Consultant Architects (ACA)	LLP	Limited Liability Partnership
ACOP	Approved Code of Practice	MMC	Modern Methods of Construction
AHBs	Approved Housing Bodies	MVHR	Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery system
ALMO	Arm's-Length Management Organisation	NEC	New Engineering Contract
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group	NHF	National Housing Federation
BAFE	British Approvals for Fire Equipment	NHMF	National Housing Maintenance Forum
BCIS	Building Cost Information Service	NPV	Net Present Value
BPE	Innovate UK Building Performance Programme	NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
CCS	Crown Commercial Service	OJEU	Official Journal of the European Union
CDM	Construction (Design and Management) Regulations	PCR	Public Contracts Regulations 2015
CD&M	Condensation, Damp & Mould	PPI	Payment Protection Insurance
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board	PPP	Price per Property
CLASP	Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme	PPR	Painting, Plastics and Repair
CPI	Consumer Price Index	PQQ	Pre-qualification Questions
CRM	Customer Relationship Manager	PRS	Private Rented Sector
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	RH	Relative Humidity
CSV	Cost Sharing Vehicle	RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change	RTB	Rent to Buy
DLO	Direct Labour Organisation	RPs	Registered Providers
ECA	Electrical Contractors' Association	RPI	Retail Price Index
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange	RRO	Regulatory Reform (Fire) Order 2005
ESF	Electrical Safety First	SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
EU	European Union	SCOLA	Second Consortium of Local Authorities
GLAs	Greater London Authorities	SHIFT	Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow
GSiUR	Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations	SIS	Stock Information Survey
HAMMAR	Housing Asset Management, Maintenance and Regeneration	SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency	SMV	Standard Minute Values
HSE	Health & Safety Executive	SoR	Schedule of Rates
HSENI	Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland	STPC	Specialist Term Partnering Contract
HSW	Health and Safety at Work	TLO	Tenant Liaison Officer
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	TPC	TPC 2005 ACA Standard Form of Contract for Term Partnering - Amended 2008
IAQ	Indoor Air Quality	TSC	Term Services Contract
JCT	Joint Contracts Tribunal	TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
JV	Joint Venture	UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	UPVC	Un-plasticised Poly Vinyl Chloride
LED	Light Emitting Diode	WOS	Wholly Owned Subsidiary
LGSR	Landlords Gas Safety Record		
LIHC	Low Income Housing Coalition		

The National Housing Maintenance Forum (NHMF) sets the standards for maintaining assets and manages the development of the M3NHMF Schedule of Rates. For more information visit nhmf.co.uk



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