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National Housing
Maintenance Forum

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Welcome to the NHMF Bulletin 2019

 Ben Virgo, Secretary (NHMF)



Welcome to the NHMF Bulletin 2019. I would like to thank all the contributors to this edition for taking the time to share their knowledge across the key topics that were considered to be most relevant to Asset Managers who attended this year's NHMF Maintenance Conference in Birmingham.

These are: compliance, contract management and procurement, asset management, the skills shortage and worker health and new technology and innovation.

Following on from the introduction of this year's conference app, which was a big success with the delegates, I would like to encourage readers to share content digitally across their networks using the social media links provided at the top of each article.

This year, we were pleased to welcome over 500 delegates to the NHMF Conference in Birmingham. The conference is a valuable forum for debate and we were thrilled to host such a wide range of exhibitors, speakers and delegates from across the UK and beyond.

As clients and contractors continue to explore new ways to address the skills shortage, there is a clear need to focus on how we can all develop strategies to bring new talent into the industry. In addition to the articles relating to the key themes that ran through the conference, this bulletin also highlights the importance of training the next generation, collaboration and procurement. We also need to work in partnership to develop new technologies and innovative solutions to common challenges as well as ensuring we continue to monitor worker health and wellbeing.

Away from the Conference, the NHMF Committee is always keen to welcome new members, both to the NHMF and the Contractor Forum and continues to develop new initiatives to promote good practice in maintenance. This March saw the inaugural meeting of the Contractor Forum South West group in Bristol, hosted by Ross Green and Mike Turner. We very much hope to see more regional groups emerging throughout 2019.

Our popular NHMF training days cover a wide range of topics designed to support both clients and contractors. For members who are keen to explore key topics at a more granular level, the annual NHMF study tour is an excellent opportunity to get together with colleagues and share ideas. This year's study tour will visit Freiburg on 9-11 October.

Entry to the NHMF Awards gives a much deserved boost to hard-working teams, as well as providing a platform to share your success with peers who could benefit by adapting your project to suit their own organisations. See the website 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 21– 22 January 2020.

Summerland to Grenfell – 44 years of un-learning

The death toll of the Grenfell Tower fire makes it one of the worst peacetime building fires of the last hundred years, not only in the United Kingdom but in the whole of Western Europe. Of these, it is the only one that was in a residential building.

 Professor Christopher Hall



In a letter to the *Financial Times* the day after the fire, I made a connection between the Grenfell fire and another tragic fire, that at the Summerland Leisure Centre in Douglas in the Isle of Man in August 1973. Few people know of it. 51 people lost their lives. This was the greatest loss of life in a building fire in the United Kingdom for nearly half a century. The building was a holiday leisure centre, very different in structure and in purpose from Grenfell Tower. But the two fires have striking similarities.

Summerland was remarkable for the speed with which the fire spread. The fire started in a hut placed against a wall with a combustible cladding. The cladding formed the outer leaf of a cavity wall, the

inner leaf of which was made of combustible fibreboard. The cavity had no fire stopping.

The fire took hold on the inner face of the cladding, inside the cavity, and spread fast, both horizontally and vertically. Fire soon broke through the fibreboard into the interior of the building at several levels. Within a few minutes it took hold of the acrylic wall and roof panels. A large part of the building was on fire within 20 minutes.

At the time, the Summerland fire had an enormous effect in the building industry. The RIBA Journal published a special issue called *Anatomy of a Disaster*. The RIBA said in its plainest English that "It is the

responsibility of every RIBA member...to ensure that disasters like Summerland cannot recur." There was an editorial plea to the whole industry not to forget, "Read, learn, and do not forget: those Summerland victims need not have died."

In the Grenfell Tower fire, just as at Summerland, we had rapid fire spread vertically on the exterior of the building, caused by ignition of combustible cladding, with propagation inside an unstopped cavity. This allowed the fire to enter the building at many levels, compromising the compartmentation of the structure.

In both Summerland and Grenfell, we had combustible materials in cavities, where plastics acted as fuels. The cavities acted as chimneys to draw in the air. In both cases, there were very large quantities of these plastics. The Grenfell Tower was more or less entirely covered with combustible cladding and insulation, a total area of 6700 square metres.

In the seventies, as plastics came to be used more and more in buildings, the problems arising from their fire properties were a matter of great concern. Expanded polystyrene ceiling tiles and plastic foam upholstery caused deaths in house fires. These hazards were quickly blocked by legislation. There were serious fires involving plastics. Above all there was the Summerland fire to show us the peril.

Materials specialists and fire safety experts knew where the risks lay. But the period of great innovation in plastics manufacture was over. No major new commodity plastics came to market after that. So, by the eighties, specialists knew most of what there was to know about the fire properties of these materials.

Here is the question:

Given that the fire properties of plastics were known in the seventies, and given that we had understood the causes of the disaster at Summerland, how then could the Grenfell Tower fire happen?

We can recall what the RIBA said 43 years ago, "Read, learn, and do not forget ..." But we did forget. How was it that we collectively forgot what we knew then? First: I said in my letter to the *Financial Times* that the Grenfell fire was a failure of government. I meant that government carries ultimate responsibility for public safety, or often says that it does. This seems particularly clear-cut in the case of the Grenfell Tower fire, where the residents had little or no control over where they lived. But of course, responsibility for safety is shared somehow between public and private entities, including individuals. So, I also said that the

British construction industry must take full responsibility as well.

And second: the reason that it was unthinkable for Grenfell to have happened in London in 2017 is that the UK once led the world in fire safety engineering. This country created the first government building research facility in the world in 1921, and a government-funded Fire Research Station followed soon after. The idea of compartmentation in controlling the spread of fire in large buildings was developed in this country. The design principles were set in a National Building Study published in 1946 and many fire test methods used worldwide were invented here.

So, what happened?

Between 1973 and 2017, there were three major changes. First, over these years, the industry's regulatory framework was repeatedly changed, and probably weakened, partly in pursuit of a policy goal of deregulation.

Second, the public-service research base on which this framework depends has been removed. "Governments have sometimes neglected and sometimes fostered, but...until now, have never attempted to destroy their national organisation for building research." I quote George Atkinson writing in 1996. Soon after, the attempt was successful.

Third, the building control process has been radically changed. Dame Judith Hackitt's Grenfell review found that the building regulations were not fit for purpose. In my view, any further changes in the regulatory framework should start with a long hard look at the history of these 44 years.

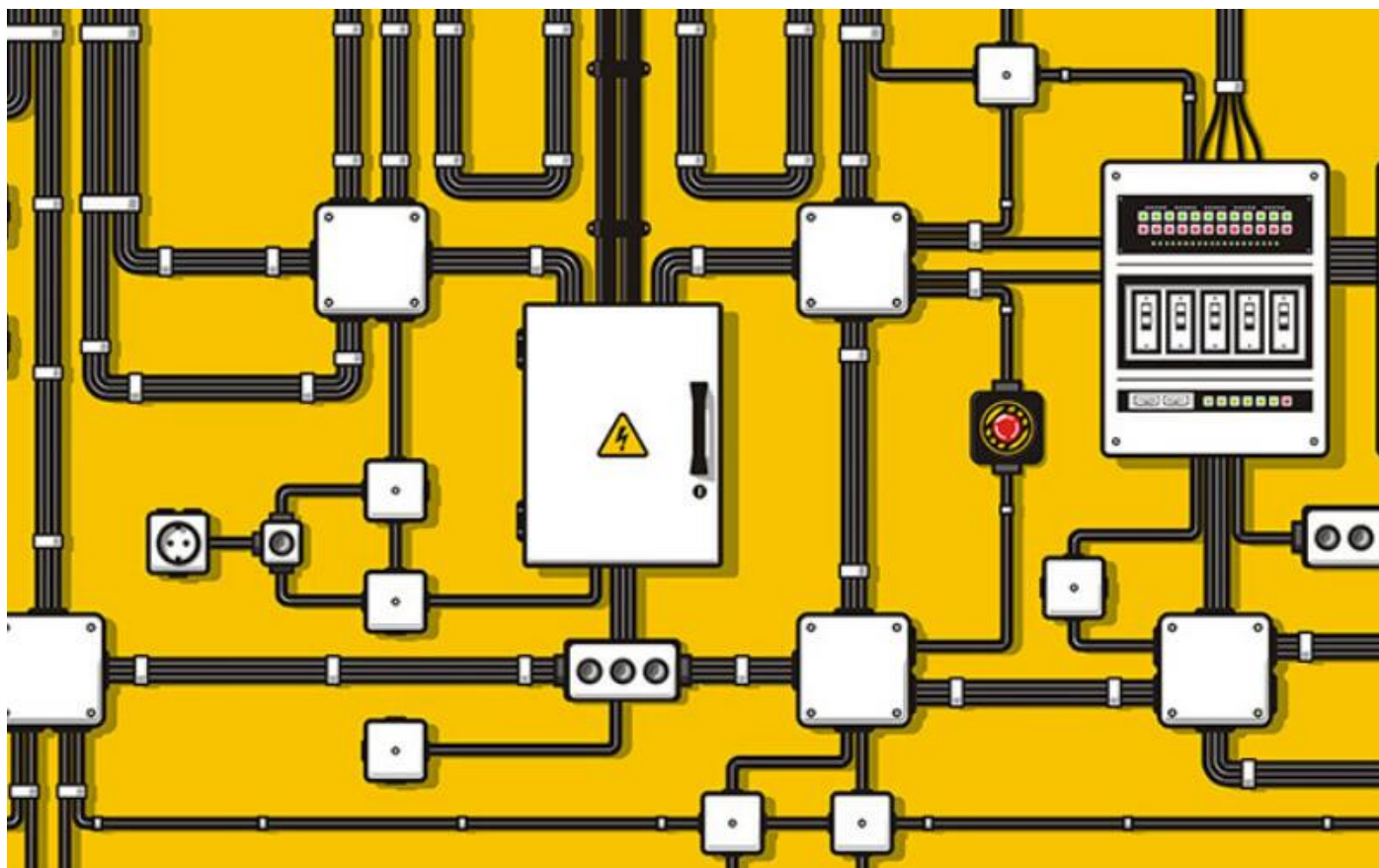
Those of us who work in science and engineering know that making things successfully depends not only on having the instructions, but also on having skill and experience and know-how and judgement.

A catastrophic major fire is low-probability, high-severity risk. It is a hazard outside the experience of almost all of us. The fire behaviour of different forms of construction, and the combustion properties of plastics are matters of first-hand experience for just a handful of specialists. Priceless knowledge. How do we capture and retain that sort of priceless knowledge for our collective benefit?

BS 7671: The 18th Edition is crucial for maintenance and asset managers

With our increasingly complex dependence on electronic devices, automation and IT, in both domestic and commercial environments, the possible consequences of overvoltage damage to vulnerable equipment and components – including the risk of electric shock or fire – can be significant, costly and hazardous.

 Steve Martin



Changes in the 18th Edition of the Wiring Regulations (BS 7671), which came into full effect on 1st January 2019, greatly impact how maintenance and asset managers manage repairs, maintenance and inspection.

The 18th Edition has updated standards in line with the latest advances in technology, including Arc Fault

Detection Devices (AFDDs), Residual Current Devices (RCDs) and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

To note, existing installations that have been installed in accordance with earlier editions of the Regulations may not comply with this edition in every respect, but this does not necessarily mean that they are unsafe for continued use or require upgrading.

How will asset managers be affected?

ECA would recommend that maintenance teams and HA asset managers continue to ensure their buildings are kept up to date by carrying out regular inspections of electrical systems by suitably skilled and competent contractors, to highlight any potential failings and areas of improvement.

Key changes to be aware of

- Protection against thermal effects

A new Regulation 421.1.7 has been introduced, on the installation of Arc Fault Detection Devices (AFDDs). This is a new Regulation that recommends that AFDDs are installed to help mitigate the risk of fire in AC circuits or final installations in the event of an arc fault - a high power discharge of electricity between two or more conductors that can cause fires.

The Regulation indicates that additional consideration should be given to premises with sleeping accommodation (as defined by the Health and Safety Executive), and locations with risk of fire due to the nature of processed or stored materials, such as barns, woodworking shops, or stores of combustible materials.

- Protection against transient overvoltage (voltage spikes)

This is an amended Regulation, which now stipulates that protection against voltage spikes by means of Surge Protection Devices (SPDs) has to be provided where the consequence of a voltage spike would result in serious injury or loss of life, serious disruption of public services, interruption of industrial activity, or if it would affect a large number of co-located individuals.

- Electric Vehicles

This section contains significant changes to Regulation 722.411.4.1 concerning the use of a PME supply. The exception concerning 'reasonably practicable' has been deleted plus changes have also been made to requirements for external influences, RCDs, socket outlets and connectors.

PME is the most common form of earthing provided in new electrical installations. There are ways that PME can be used, but these are often difficult to achieve. Therefore, most installations will rely on separation of the earthing system and making the EV a TT system (using an electrode in the ground).

While this is fine in some cases, it can present some issues in installations where the structure of a building is metallic. The building will likely be connected to PME, and the EV in question will likely be separated from it. This leads to a potential issue, where the EV can be at a different potential to the building, increasing the chance of electric shock.

- Residual Current Devices

When it comes to RCDs, BS 7671 now recognises different types, based on their ability to work with circuits that have DC, power electronics or specialist products on them.

These newly recognised types of RCDs are specifically picked up on in section 722 for EVs, but general awareness of these in the wider industry is very low. The new devices are electronic in nature and have a different reaction to circuits containing power electronics that can distort the waveform. The industry and its customers are only just becoming aware of these products, the costs are high in comparison to existing devices, and availability is limited.

While these are the updates which asset managers should be aware of, there are many other changes within the 18th Edition. More information on these changes, training and other industry updates can be found at www.eca.co.uk/Project18.

Lift modernisation or lift replacement?

The question many clients ask is what is more cost-effective, lift modernisation or replacement?

 Greg Harris



The answer is not straightforward as many factors need to be considered along with the expenditure. The main factors are life expectancy and whether the equipment is fit for purpose (duty). Once you have the answers to those two questions you can consider selecting the correct equipment to meet the life expectancy and duty.

Beware, the most cost-effective solution may not be the answer as it may not realise the life expectancy and further modernisation or replacement may need to be effected much earlier than envisaged.

Life Expectancy

The type and intensity of use will impact directly on life expectancy. The target for life expectancy should be twenty years without major investment other than

replacement of consumable parts. In this instance you must consider a well-engineered lift that is fit for purpose.

It should be noted that a low use lift may require robust finishes and doors, such as a lift in sheltered accommodation where wheelchairs and scooters are in frequent use. In this instance the standard model replacement lift may not be robust enough to provide a reliable service and modernisation may be the preferred solution.

The condition of the existing lift equipment and its age will be a useful indicator when considering the best solution to ensure longevity and reliability when modernisation or replacement is being proposed. Please be aware that lift use may have changed during the course of its life and this may distort the opinion.

You may then evaluate your future requirements based on the condition of the existing equipment, whether it is more economical to carry out a lift modernisation or lift replacement programme.

Please be aware that lift standards changed in August 2017 and an existing lift shaft may not be big enough to accommodate a lift designed in accordance with the new standards. The new design may require deeper pits and increased headroom which may be difficult or expensive to accommodate.

Fit for Purpose

In both instances described above it is essential that the lift has a robust specification based on expected use to ensure that life expectancy and reliability are achieved. It should also be pointed out that a maintenance regime carried out and enforced in accordance with the operation and maintenance manual is absolute to ensure that the lift performs as designed and provides mitigation in the event of any accident or incident.

Please be aware that some manufacturers offer a platform lift with a fully enclosed lift car and power operated car and landing doors that allow a new lift to be installed with a shallow pit and low headroom. The lifts do not comply with any recognised standards. The original design of these lifts is for very infrequent use by persons with a disability only. These are not for general use by passengers, buggies or movement of goods. The manufacturers' manuals quite clearly state 'for disabled persons only', but these products are being offered as a conventional lift alternative. This is definitely a case of 'not fit for purpose' and lift reliability will be a major issue as currently being experienced by a lot of unsuspecting lift owners and users. This type of lift will not provide the typical life expectancy of a suitably specified conventional lift. Lift replacement will be a lot sooner than envisaged and prove much more difficult to install as major civil works will be required to accommodate a conventional lift.

Another area to be considered is compliance with British Standards. Model lifts designed and manufactured in accordance with the Lift Regulations and EN Standards may not include some of the additional items detailed in BS 7255 (Code of Practice for Safe Working on Lifts). It is essential that any lift offered includes these as standard.

In conclusion, there is no simple methodology to determine whether lift modernisation or replacement

is the best solution when an existing lift is coming to the end of its life. The most cost-effective offer may not be the best solution and a higher, but not disproportionate cost may need to be considered.

If a modernisation is the preferred option, the relevant British Standards must be considered as the type of works to be carried out may invoke other works listed in other standards from the EN 81 suite.

You must ensure that all appropriate current legislation, codes of practice and standards are complied with, without reservation.

Getting the right fit

In March 2018 the Contractor Forum met for the first time since the new committee was established. With 36 members, many new, the room represented contractors from all walks of social housing maintenance life.

🏠 Sonya Russell | Caroline Lester | Melissa Woodall



As a group we discussed what our focus would be for the coming year and what topics we felt were most important to us as contractors to take to the wider sector to consult and collaborate with.

Several subjects were discussed and following a vote we decided on: Procurement and Compliance.

Members of the forum volunteered to form working parties for these topics. The Procurement working group consists of Sonya Russell, Head of New Business - AD Construction Group, Melissa Woodall, Head of New Business - PiLon and Caroline Lester, Relationship Manager - MCP Property Services. We represent medium sized organisations providing both responsive and planned maintenance. We feel it is important that we cover a range of service delivery streams, to ensure we view procurement from each

workstream's perspective, as we recognise the need for bespoke requirements.

Why Procurement?

From shared experiences of the multiple procurement processes undertaken by the contractors in the room, the most prevalent viewpoints were that we wanted to:

- Get the best fit – to ensure clients and contractors understand enough about each other so there are no surprises once contracts are underway.

- Be able to make more informed bid decisions, so as not to waste anyone's time.
- Strive for a more efficient procurement process. With deadlines often being challenging, what can we do to ensure the process is clear, concise and meaningful?
- Ensure smooth running of contract management and delivery post award, meeting promises proposed and ensuring cost certainty.

What we want to achieve through our working group?

We were all in agreement that whilst procurement is a subject that has been widely discussed in the sector, we believe there is an opportunity to further these discussions and deep dive into the complexities of the procurement process to establish some of the real issues and work in collaboration to develop tangible solutions. In order to better understand the wider sector opinion, we have started a conversation. Initially, we compiled a questionnaire based on the chronology of a procurement process to include:

- Market engagement
- Contract types
- Cost models / pricing
- Specification
- Information / data
- Evaluation models
- Procurement timetable
- Feedback

This was sent to a number of clients, contractors and consultants, and we received 50 responses with a fairly equal split. The feedback was very interesting, and it was clear there were some areas that opinions were strongest with viewpoints divided and based on this we decided on four we were going to take forward to continue the conversation.

Market Engagement

introduced by **PiLON**

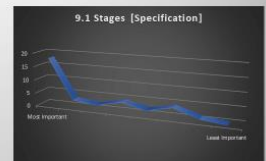
- Disparity between Client / Contractor opinion as to success of market engagement exercises
- Is market engagement used as a tick box?
- Is enough information provided for contractors to decide to bid?
- Client confidence on what engagement is acceptable under procurement law



Specification

introduced by **MCP**

- Generally good information provided
- Consider scope for contractor to influence specification – how?
- Having a prescriptive specification when a contract is tendered gives the client more certainty



Cost Models / Pricing

introduced by **MCP**

- Lack of accurate stock data affecting best value pricing and therefore cost certainty?
- Notional models can be risky and ultimately lead to contractual issues
- Gaming!
- Risk



Information / Data

introduced by **Construction Group**

- Historical data / Stock condition / components lifecycle information – was enough provided to inform bid?
- Divide between what client and contractor opinion – contractor has to price/absorb risk. Is client aware of the implications?
- Second guessing numbers, volumes, spend = inaccurate pricing



In January we hosted a workshop at the NHMF Conference 2019, where we presented the findings from the questionnaire. With over 80 delegates in attendance we asked for their opinions and this led to some very interesting discussions around good and bad practice. At the end of the session we asked those in attendance to vote on each of the above subject areas, and what they would like to see taken forward into further round table discussions.

The two topics that we will be taking forward are:

1. Information / Data
2. Cost Models / Pricing

We are looking to host our first roundtable event on Information / Data in June. We have received a lot of interest from across the sector and would like to encourage more people to get involved in developing a refined procurement process.

We will look to publish the outcomes of this session including our work to date in the summer.

Introduction to the NHMF Contractor Forum

The NHMF Contractor Forum was established in 2012 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.

Membership benefits

- Access to the standard version of the M3NHF Schedule of Rates.
- Two designated representatives to attend events throughout the year.
- Joining over 40 member organisations ranging from Kier Group and Wates through to specialist sub-contractors from across the UK.
- Regular opportunities to network with peers to discuss key issues facing the sector.
- Working with the NHMF to have your say in developing good practice.

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Contractor
Forum

TUPE issues in tendering

TUPE¹ crops up in different ways in procurement.

 Andrew Millross | Doug Mullen



It could be:

- on the transfer of a contract from one contractor to another (which is the usual scenario);
- on the outsourcing of a contract, where TUPE applies between the employer and the new contractor; or
- from the existing contractor to the employer on insourcing.

Where TUPE applies, the new contractor (or the employer, on an insourcing) will take over the employment contracts of the employees of the incumbent contractor who are “assigned” to the work at the time of transfer. Whether a particular employee is assigned to the work can be difficult to determine, particularly where they work on more than one contract or where, as occurs with planned

maintenance, there is sometimes a gap between the one contract ending and the next contract starting.

If TUPE applies, the “assigned” employees will transfer on the same terms and conditions. Only some pension terms transfer but contractors may be required to provide broadly comparable pension terms anyway.

In the “usual” scenario (contractor to contractor) the most significant implication of TUPE for an employer is that TUPE costs will be passed on to them through the tender price. Employers need to decide how to deal with this in the tender process. There are the following options:

1. **Provide the workforce information and pass the risk onto the contractor:** Where the employer can provide accurate workforce information to bidders, so they can take TUPE costs into account within their tender prices, this is usually the best option. However,

existing contracts do not always entitle the employer to workforce information and the outgoing employer can sometimes be reluctant to provide it. There are often concerns over the quality and accuracy of workforce information that is provided.

Ultimately the choice is going to be down to whether the employer can get TUPE information and the level of procurement risk that the employer is prepared to accept if they can't.

2. **Exclude TUPE costs:** Where there is no TUPE information, bidders will not be able to provide accurately for TUPE costs in their tender prices. This could lead to wide discrepancies between what different bidders have allowed. Here it is usually better to get bidders to tender on the basis that TUPE does not apply. TUPE costs will then be quantified and paid as a separate amount on top of the tendered prices. These costs will be payable only to the extent that the incoming contractor is able to establish that they are legitimate additional costs resulting from TUPE. The obvious downside of this approach is that the employer is not able to assess the overall cost of the contract until after the employees of the incumbent contractor have been transferred to the incoming contractor. There are also concerns over whether paying an additional amount for TUPE costs not included in tenders could be regarded as a substantial change to the contract. This approach also negates the incumbent contractor's inherent advantage from having no TUPE costs (which is why threatening to run the tender process on this basis can be a good way of persuading the incumbent to provide TUPE information even if there is no legal right for the employer to obtain this).
3. **Require bidders to make assumptions about the TUPE costs:** An employer that cannot obtain TUPE information can ask bidders to make certain assumptions about the workforce information such as the pay and number of employees likely to transfer. If these assumptions prove to be false, then there is at least a starting point for determining the additional TUPE costs due to the successful contractor. This is a variant on Option 2 above but carries less procurement risk.

[1] The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

There are theoretically other options, such as asking bidders to set out their assumptions in relation to TUPE costs, but the difficulty with these is ensuring that you are comparing like with like.

There may be trouble ahead!

How to manage legal challenges effectively

For many organisations, the last thing they want to consider when starting a procurement process or entering into a contract is how this can go wrong. However, as a specialist in contract and procurement disputes, I see how quickly disputes can escalate and how the early steps taken are fundamental to mitigating the time and cost expended in resolving the situation.

 Emma Riley



Procurement Disputes

Although potential for challenge is wide ranging, difficulties tend to arise over things such as a failure to follow the process in the tender documents, how responses are evaluated / scored and breach of the overarching treaty principles relating to transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

To reduce the risk of challenge it is important to plan your procurement and draft the documents carefully. In particular, ensure:

- you have the right to abandon or re-run the process at any stage for any reason without any right of the bidders to claim their costs;
- the team running the procurement is properly briefed; and

- those undertaking the evaluation are provided with the necessary information to evaluate in accordance with the issued documents.

During the process, keep contemporaneous records and refer back to the original documents. Where clarifications are raised, respond to these in accordance with the issued documents. If a clear breach can be established, don't be afraid to issue new documents or re-run parts of the process where this is necessary.

Taking early steps will minimise the potential for challenge and give the contracting authority better tools to address and defend any challenges that arise.

Where a challenge does arise, the time limits for bringing a claim are strict. A disappointed tenderer generally has thirty days from when they knew, or ought to have known that grounds had arisen to issue a claim at court. The strict time limits mean that challengers may already be out of time when a process is challenged. Where possible, a contracting authority should be careful not to issue further information which may restart the time for bringing the claim. Early advice should always be sought to ensure that the necessary steps can be taken.

There can be many signs that a dispute under a contract is arising, such as unfulfilled promises, complaints, delayed responses and so on. It seems simple to ignore these initial warning signs because of a desire to keep the works or services progressing and to avoid unnecessary disruption. However, ignoring the warning signs can mean that a dispute escalates and ultimately results in increased time and costs.

Problems are bound to crop up from time to time, but taking appropriate steps at an early stage will minimise the potential of a dispute growing. The good news is that even if a serious dispute does arise, with the right advice, it is possible to use tools such as mediation, to resolve these quickly and cost effectively.

Contract Disputes

Considerable skill is involved in effectively managing and avoiding disputes which inevitably arise from time to time. The causes of disputes arising are many and far reaching, although ultimately, they boil down to time and cost!

Once a contract has been entered, it's easy to set this document aside and only pick it up again once a dispute has arisen. One of the most fundamental steps to avoid and mitigate disputes under a contract is to know your contract and apply it. If there are changes to the contract that become necessary as a relationship progresses, properly record these in writing and get them signed by the parties. This will avoid arguments at a later stage about what terms apply.

Ensure that a professional relationship is maintained and that the team managing the contract is properly briefed and understands the contract procedures. If the team changes, consider additional training to ensure that the new team members are up to speed. It is also important to make sure that records are properly maintained and kept up to date.

Making the most of active asset management

The role of active asset management in a modern housing provider is well-established. Most landlords now have a good understanding of the performance of their homes and make informed property decisions accordingly.

 Nick Carlisle



Because of the success in recent years in asset managers running more efficient stock management operations, attention is rightly turning to what else is possible. What more can the robust collection and analysis of data tell people about potential business improvements?

Here are just some of the challenges facing housing providers at present where we have worked with clients to explore solutions.

1. **Resident trust:** Repairs and maintenance is the single most important factor influencing resident satisfaction, where accountability to residents is high on the agenda. Landlords

need to demonstrate safety, security and transparency in order to inspire trust and confidence. What does this mean for the focus of the asset management task?

2. **Physical standards:** There is a clear emphasis on physical standards – only strengthened by the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. The majority of organisations understand their stock through use of asset modelling or Net Present Value modelling, so how effectively is this information used to manage risk and take action?

3. **Housing growth:** Housing providers are responding to the huge public and political pressure to contribute substantial numbers of affordable homes to the government's overall annual housebuilding target of 300,000. They must do this while continuing to invest in their existing assets. How can asset managers balance value preservation with value creation?

Happily, most housing providers have the foundations in place to continue to evolve their active asset management approach to further support the business. The functionality and role of models is evolving and we continually invest in updating our SHAPE (Savills Housing Asset Performance Evaluation) model to keep in tune with client needs.

Registered providers have spent time getting the data right, so they understand their assets – without this nothing else is possible. They have demonstrated asset performance over the long term and informed actions in business plans accordingly (modelling scenarios on stock investment and disposals, etc). The next step is applying this analytical power to address wider business objectives and challenges.

One obvious area where robust active asset management is proving valuable is helping organisations to communicate with residents and other key external stakeholders (the regulator, local authorities, investors/lenders, politicians, etc.) in order to build trust.

For instance, the Regulator of Social Housing's Value for Money Standard requires housing providers to clearly articulate their strategic objectives as well as to publish evidence to enable stakeholders to understand performance.

The key metrics relevant to asset management in this standard are:

- Reinvestment percentage
- Social housing cost per unit
- Return on Capital Employed

Asset managers can play an important role in helping their organisation clearly articulate their performance in these areas and the rationale behind decisions taken.

On the issue of physical standards, several housing providers are exploring how their social objectives can be considered when making asset decisions. Homes in an area of low housing demand may have a low or

even negative NPV. However, this neighbourhood may be one in which the organisation is committed to invest in order to support its residents.

Similarly, when exploring how to increase house building, housing providers told the most recent Savills Housing Sector Survey in 2018 that a key constraint to their ambitions is the availability of suitable land. Asset managers are well-positioned to help. They can use Land Registry data to accurately plot the location of all their homes and the land they own that surrounds them. They can use this to calculate the housing density of their assets and understand where potential exists to build more homes in areas of low housing density.

These are just some examples of where organisations are using their asset knowledge to tackle wider business issues. There are many more applications and we look forward to supporting housing providers to explore them.

M3NHF Schedule of Rates: maximising the benefits and avoiding the pitfalls

The M3NHF Schedule of Rates is involved in a large part of the sector's finances, an estimated £1.3 billion a year is managed through the housing maintenance system incorporating the Schedule of Rates so naturally people are interested in any changes to the base rates from one version to another and the implications of the 'potential' percentage adjustments.

David Miller | Dominic Higgins



We can only really comment on the former, but we can offer information guidance on the latter from recent procurements.

During this year's workshop at the NHMF Maintenance Conference, we presented some recent tender adjustments from all corners, but we also asked for some ideas on factors that could financially influence a bid from a contractor – some are certainly beyond

control, like geographic spread, but there are other factors that can play a part and make a contract more attractive. For instance, a high minimum order threshold, self-authorisation limits, responsibility for taking calls and making appointments are all aspects that can promote contractor confidence and hence influence adjustments.

Version 7 is the latest release and 'What's the difference?' is a big question as an awful lot has changed since Version 6 in 2008.

Importantly the 'difference' is not uniform – it isn't as simple as a wholesale index related increase. The re-evaluated cost of each activity is affected differently by the changes to material costs and labour rates, innovation and methodology in undertaking the works.

Fluctuations in budget spend can also be a concern to both Client and Contractor, particularly if we can't understand why.

There are many potential reasons where the forecast doesn't quite match the reality. For instance, potentially due to resident expectations and specification, inaccurate budgeting base data and changes to regulations. Sometimes the reason is not immediately obvious, and an investigation can find overspend due to invalid claims for work which has been misunderstood and mistakenly included on invoices.

This then leads us on to talking about the evolution of the training we provide to non-technical staff and operatives. This was predominantly down to a request from a long-standing and very astute client of ours. On joining a new organisation, tasked with ensuring efficient spend on maintenance, our client spent the first few weeks soaking up the repair reporting and job raising atmosphere of the call centre. This confirmed his belief that some of the issues were self-inflicted through a lack of knowledge on SoR use. To counter this problem we were asked to develop a training package that could be delivered in an hour and twenty minute session to small groups of up to four at a time, to ensure the continual operation of the call centre. Quite a departure from our normal half or full day sessions.

What we developed was an explanation of the system which included many everyday examples of similar situations. For example, we incorporate composite codes and individual codes – renewing a bath includes for all the other individual activities/codes that you might expect (like silicone sealant), in the same way a full breakfast could be selected from a menu that includes the individual constituent parts. The point being that we only pay for the one item. "Okay, but why have a code for silicone sealant around a bath?" That could be the only job required – not hungry enough for the full breakfast?

We also make the distinction between a new job and a consequential job. In order to fit the bath, we might

have to remove the bathroom door. This is a direct consequence of the bath renewal activity so is not a new job and could not be claimed.

Is that fair? What if, on the way to deliver our package the courier had to re-route around a diversion? Might take a bit longer, bit of a pain, still the same job – you would not expect to pay any more.

These small increases in diagnostic awareness can add up to massive savings and we've certainly had reports that the benefits have far outweighed the downtime and costs associated with training.



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How do we keep residents safe?

The Hackitt review has illustrated a requirement for a more thorough and transparent approach to fire safety that fully involves the residents.

 Ross Green



In May 2018 the NHMF Contractor Forum developed a working group to investigate how to keep property assets compliant while addressing the safety of residents. The working group looked at this issue from their own perspectives with Hyde Housing's Brent O'Halloran and Tpas Chief Executive Jenny Osbourne MBE providing the landlord and resident perspectives alongside Simon Davies from Kier Services and Chris Graham from PML Group covering the issue from the contractor and cultural point of view.

Each had their own challenges to the safety of residents but what soon became clear was the common thread running throughout: culture!

Hyde Housing's approach was to set up a dedicated project team, Hyde's fire safety taskforce, with its own board and CEO as sponsor. The team has a methodical programme of inspection and remediation

for high rise schemes, which will be rolled out to all properties moving forward. Additionally, Hyde have set up a partnering supply chain network to deliver the inspection and remediation works following the outcomes of their in-house developed fire safety MOT (landlord's fire safety record). This provided openness in terms of building safety information but also paved the way for an organisation-wide approach to the safety of their residents and buildings.

Jenny Osbourne highlighted some of the key fire safety issues facing residents and underlined the fact that existing regulations and guidance are often complex and unclear with conflicting advice being given regarding evacuation and a lack of clarity surrounding roles and responsibilities. This diminishes an organisation's ability to assess staff competency and ensure the appropriate compliance measures and sanctions are in place. Jenny also identified issues

relating to unclear systems for product testing and the problem culture of an industry where the regulator is not always seen to be effective.

Jenny also emphasised the requirement for ongoing work with residents and their affiliate organisations to ensure there is real listening and access to clear information, as well as a need to encourage training and recognise that resident engagement cannot be done on the cheap, but it can save organisations money in the long term. The future of compliance needs resources, time and planning as well as an empowerment culture within the landlord organisation.

Simon Davies explored the contractor's viewpoint and looked at three fundamental aspects in fire safety works:

- Renewed emphasis on build and maintenance quality.
- Partnering: not just a buzzword.
- Peace of mind for residents and landlords alike.

Kier Services have developed their own Fire Safety Commitment to reassure clients that their projects will be carried out to the highest standards in a way that will keep residents informed and safe. This has been developed through training investment, a three-stage minimum work inspection regime that includes a third-party inspection, a competent supply chain, fully accredited and tested products, meaningful and accurate post maintenance data and a tailored communications and engagement plan on each project, ensuring early and continuous resident liaison.

Throughout the working group, one common thread became apparent, and that was the cultural perspective. With this in mind, Chris Graham has been working with both public and private sector clients on their approach to customer centricity and how this can only be adopted by fully engaging with customers. Historically the housing sector's focus on compliance has led to a 'box ticking culture' where no thinking or challenge has been applied to compliance inspections. This meant that compliance alone has been no guarantee of resident safety. His research has shown us that people don't behave collaboratively unless they have been taught to, and that without a clear understanding of objectives and expectations, the result will lead to a culture of poor behaviour.

The overarching output from the compliance working group and the individual perspectives was that without real and sustained culture change to fire safety, the sector will face another avoidable tragedy in the future.



The graphic is a vertical purple rectangle. At the top left is the NHMF logo, which consists of the letters 'nhmf' in a small blue box next to a white swoosh, with the text 'National Housing Maintenance Forum' below it. At the top right are the social media handles '@NHMFOfficial' and '#NHMFAwards' in white. In the center, the words 'NHMF' are in large white letters, and 'Awards' is in large yellow letters. Below this is a horizontal line of white dots. Under the dots, the text 'The NHMF awards recognise success and ingenuity within the housing sector.' is written in white. Below that, 'Applications for 2020 open in August.' is also in white. At the bottom right, the text 'Visit our website' is in white, followed by a large yellow arrow pointing to the right.

NHMF
Awards

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The NHMF awards recognise success and ingenuity within the housing sector.

Applications for 2020 open in August.

Visit our website 

The world of tomorrow...today - how emerging technology could revolutionise our sector

One of the key themes that was discussed at this year's annual conference was how new technology and innovation are driving service improvements

 Stewart Davison



It can be said that this isn't a new topic, the maintenance sector has always been looking at technology and the benefits they can bring. The key difference now is in the pace of technological advancement.

I led a workshop session at this year's NHMF Maintenance Conference entitled, 'Safety through Technology', where I initially took the audience through Gas Tag's solution for enhancing, improving and driving fundamental change in how gas safety and maintenance is managed.

The key message to delegates was that, simply put Gas Tag is about protection:

- Protection from the [1.1 million illegal gas jobs^{\[1\]}](#) carried out every year.
- Protection from [unqualified, rogue engineers^{\[2\]}](#), or just those lacking enough experience.
- Protection from [shortcuts and dishonesty^{\[3\]}](#).

The audience were taken through the Gas Tag solution and given a better understanding of how it

fits into existing technology infrastructures and how it delivers value to social landlords.

The audience saw how combinations of existing technologies can still drive transformational change. Some interesting questions were raised by audience members over how Gas Tag differs from existing mobile and cloud solutions; the answer being that whilst other systems have focused on the works management aspect of gas, and generally have been designed to work equally for a gas engineer as for a painter and decorator, Gas Tag was built from the ground up to provide full visibility and accountability on what the gas engineer 'actually does' whilst on site, whilst validating qualifications and competencies through its unique integration to the Gas Safe Register and providing a real time view of all gas activities and up to date compliance information to the organisation.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this part I was ably supported by Alan Core of Housing Plus Group and Malkit Sagoo of Platform Housing Group as a small panel of industry experts.

Initially the audience were taken through some examples of these technologies, initially IoT and how the addition of sensors into properties could potentially revolutionise the repairs sector. Both Alan and Malkit discussed their thoughts on IoT, with Alan most notably, talking about how the technology could drastically reduce the number of no access visits, which costs our sector approximately half a billion pounds, every ten years. He went on to put to the audience how the current models of reactive maintenance could move to a more proactive maintenance service.

HPG have already begun trialling this approach, with a 'hit squad' of operatives who are available to respond to tenants' repairs issues immediately. The addition of smart boilers and sensors in their properties could further enhance this service by giving the operatives real time information on repairs issues and if the tenant is in, before they arrive at the door.

The discussion moved on to ML and AI with Malkit talking about how Platform are exploring chat bots in customer services, where a bot, rather than a human, will interact, signpost and guide customers to the right services, freeing up the humans at Platform to focus on the more difficult contacts. He went on to describe how ML can greatly enhance the analysis of the wealth of data that we collect in the sector, and how ML can

begin to provide answers to those questions we didn't even know we needed to ask!

The interaction between the audience and the panel was great, with a number of insightful questions from delegates exploring some of the issues, such as privacy. All too soon time was up and the number of delegates that wished to engage further with myself and the panel was gratifying and showed what an engaged and active set of delegates we had at this year's conference.

[1] <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/news/news-2016/more-than-a-million-households-put-at-risk-by-illegal-gas-fitters/>

[2] <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2016/09/which-boiler-servicing-investigation-reveals-shocking-findings-452715/>

[3] <https://www.installeronline.co.uk/34817-2/>

An innovative joint venture approach to repairs and maintenance

An unrelenting focus on delivering excellent customer services runs through everything at Wheatley Group, Scotland's largest housing, property management and care organisation.

 Professor Paddy Gray | Stephen Devine



So when, in 2015, Wheatley laid down a clear pledge in its five-year strategy that it would improve the service that mattered most to its tenants - repairs - few doubted it heralded the start of a new and very different journey.

After a full options appraisal, that journey saw the Group form a joint venture in April 2017 with Glasgow City Council where Wheatley became an equal member in City Building (Glasgow) LLP (CBG).

City Building (Glasgow) was the council's long established and highly regarded, arms-length, repairs and maintenance organisation and had been the

contractor delivering repairs, maintenance and investment services for GHA, Wheatley's biggest social landlord, for more than ten years.

As part of entering the joint venture, Wheatley and the council agreed as part of the business plan for City Building (Glasgow) that both would commit their repairs and maintenance spend to the new venture, and that each would have equal representation on the Board.

Wheatley's most important requirements included:

- More control in development of its repairs and investment service for customers.
- The ability to develop the future strategic direction of the service.
- The ability to shape the culture of service delivery.
- Financial benefits and greater efficiency.
- A role in the governance of its repairs delivery.
- Minimum disruption to services to customers.

Other options for achieving these drivers were assessed. These included bringing the service in-house, but that was ruled out because of the risk of services being disrupted and the length of time it would take for the benefits of an in-house service to be realised.

Bringing in a third-party provider was also considered but that was seen as offering less control in developing services and fewer opportunities to shape the culture of service.

The joint venture came out on top on all these factors and it offered much more. This included retaining City Building's extensive expertise and experience in delivering repairs, maintenance and investment services to landlords in Wheatley Group for over a decade. In addition, it brought the added value of the largest apprentice employer in Scotland and security of employment for CBG staff and its supply chain. Wheatley and City Building (Glasgow) also had a strong relationship, albeit one of client/contractor, on which they could build.

The joint venture is now almost two years old and is firmly established as a partnership with a core focus on delivering excellent services for customers. That focus on excellence is reflected in rising tenant satisfaction with the service.

Wheatley recently commissioned an independent review of the joint venture which concluded that 'The joint venture has been a considerable success in its first year and its comparatively seamless introduction is a major achievement.' This review and operational experience have also highlighted that implementing a joint venture has:

- Improved collaboration leading to more customer-focused solutions.

- Led to greater focus on ensuring a smooth end-to-end customer journey, rather than hand-offs at organisational boundaries.
- Resulted in better investment planning through staff co-location and better mutual understanding of respective requirements.
- Accelerated a shift from a client-contractor relationship to one that is built on collaboration and co-creation to deliver outcomes for customers.

The Wheatley experience shows there are real benefits to tenants from a joint venture, where it is well executed by committed partners. It offers the potential to combine experience from operating in the wider market with the greater service flexibility that comes from in-house provision. As with any partnership, long-term success will ultimately depend on the ability of everyone involved to continue to share their priorities, listen to their customers and to respond. That, after all, is what drives Wheatley every day in its never-ending journey to customer service excellence.

Improving decisions on stock using new technology and data

Understanding the sustainability and longevity of an asset is a complex process. None more so than in the housing context when that asset is a customer's home.

 Russell Thompson | Mark Arnold

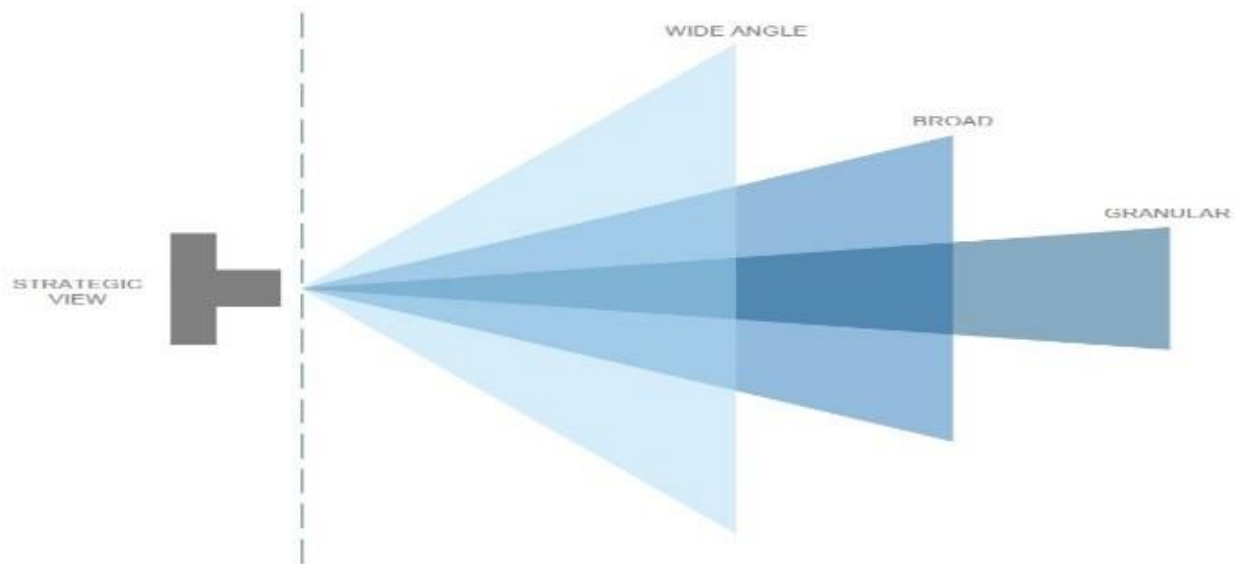


It is vital then that we have the ability to understand property and neighbourhood performance first and foremost at a granular level, (individual property), but also that we have the ability to see things in a wider context. At Thirteen we call this process looking through our 'sustainability lens':

1. a granular lens is used to assess an individual property's performance;
2. a broader lens is used to assess a street, block or patch of properties and
3. a wide-angle lens is used to assess a whole estate for example.

When assessing an asset, we consider it important to use a combination of all three lenses to fully understand how it is performing, how sustainable it is within our portfolio and the factors that may influence its categorisation.

Our portfolio is subdivided into five categories which are detailed in the following table:



Sustainable Category – Core and Non-core Stock	Description and Classification Reasoning
Category 1	30+ years sustainable life: Stock meets client / customer requirements, now and in the future.
Category 2	15-30 years sustainable life: Stock meets current client/customer requirements in the medium term.
Category 3	Applied where a property is performing below average or where concerns have been raised regarding its future. Sustainability evaluation outcomes used to inform potential interventions to improve performance.
Category 4	Applied where stock is deemed to have outlived customer need or where beyond economic recovery. Option appraisal may be carried out within 1 year to determine its future.
Category 5	Option appraisal is considered to be essential, to be completed within 6 months. Begin discussions and research around disposal options and regeneration opportunities.

Thirteen utilise an in-house developed database called SM@RT (Sustainability, Management and Risk Tool), which allows us to understand the performance of our properties and estates. The SM@RT database uses up to date business intelligence on property and tenancy performance from Orchard Housing reports to provide individual property, street and estate level net present value (NPV), internal rate of return (IRR),

sustainability scores and property sustainability categories, based on weightings derived from historic operational evidence and agreed by our cross-directorate property appraisal group. Using actual void loss, bad debt, housing management, cyclical maintenance and general maintenance data, SM@RT is able to calculate NPV outcomes using current rent levels.

SM@RT looks at two levels of data:

Level 1 Economic

- The hard facts, does this property make a profit?
- Calculates NPV and IRR using actual costs

Level 2 Social and environmental

- What do we know about our properties and neighbourhoods?
- What is the public perception?
- Calculates the socio – environmental scoring using 39 factors such as ASB, Turnover, terminations, crime rates and satisfaction.

SM@RT allows Thirteen to:

- Focus on neighbourhoods where investment works were planned and rearrange planned works cycles to ensure different works streams get done at the same time.
- Focus the right staffing resources in the right place at the right time.
- Analyse both asset data in conjunction with housing management to study housing estates and trends.
- Develop a neighbourhood performance league table where further research and decisions can be made on the poorer performing estates.
- Explore customer feedback on estates and learn from positive and negative comments.
- Consider external socio-economic influences on estates that can be the difference between an estate acquiring a stigma or conversely a desirable reputation for being a great place to live.
- Concentrate on providing value for money solutions for estates through performance measurement and benchmarking.
- React quickly to downward trends on estates e.g. estate minor works monies.
- Highlight issues with open land within neighbourhoods to consider future options.
- Align with local authority strategic priorities and engage with third party stakeholders with a vested interest in our communities to agree joint partnership projects.

SM@RT shines a light on the overall performance of our portfolio and why assets are underperforming or may be considered 'unsustainable' and, whilst it does not tell us what to do, it aides us in making informed business decisions around the asset agenda.

An integrated approach to IoT deployment

With a growing number of social landlords looking to Internet of Things (IoT) technologies to help solve their problems, there are new challenges emerging relating to scaled up deployment and benefits realisation.

 Chris Jones



Homelync and Stirling Council attempted to address this problem with an integrated IoT pilot and found that the benefits go far beyond operational savings.

Social housing providers are faced with many of society's most serious challenges. They often have a responsibility to monitor and tackle fuel poverty which causes tens of thousands of winter deaths throughout the UK every year. Further to this there are growing regulations and pressures to improve fire safety, there is a rapidly ageing tenant population requiring healthcare, and there are growing environmental pressures associated to CO₂ emissions and water scarcity. There are also requirements for improving air quality to help prevent mould due to its associated

maintenance costs and respiratory health conditions; one of the leading financial strains on the NHS. Social landlords often face these challenges whilst simultaneously tackling the fallout of budget cuts.

A growing number of larger and more technologically advanced landlords are turning to IoT solutions to solve some of these problems. Connected fire alarms, smart boilers, energy optimisers, air quality sensors, and water leak detectors are the most commonly deployed while some landlords are also trialling smart locks, advanced assisted living solutions, predictive heating controls and dozens of other technologies. The tipping point for IoT seems to have arrived particularly since leading established equipment

suppliers such as Aico, Vaillant, and Bosch are all rolling out their connected solutions which promise great business cases.

However, social landlords are already finding that multiple supplier IoT roll-outs come with a number of challenges. For example, technologies often require the use of the tenant's internet connection which is a failing point for several reasons. There is a requirement to monitor several additional dashboards which creates operational inertia, consumer devices are not geared up for multi-property enterprise deployments, and there is a loss of value in not having data in one place for cross-analytics and insight.

In Q2 2018 Homelync deployed an integrated IoT pilot of five properties with Stirling Council. This collaboration (BT, Vaillant, BlueGreen, Verv, Smart Compliance and Conservation Labs), enabled the integration of several advanced technologies including smart boilers, connected fire alarms, water leak detectors, air quality analysers, and energy optimisers. These devices were deployed alongside Homelync's IoT Gateway which provided the internet connection for data to be passed to the cloud-based analytics platform. Insight was then be presented in a unified 'process friendly' dashboard.

The initial results of the trial were very promising. Recorded data from the deployment was extrapolated to represent Stirling's total housing portfolio of approximately 5,500 properties. This analysis showed that there would be 'net' annual savings of £452k directly to the council through reducing the number of unnecessary visits, enabling preventative maintenance strategies, optimising investment, reducing voids and helping people to live in their properties longer. While also improving quality of life and reducing fuel poverty, the tenants would directly save £700k per year due to energy efficiency and damage prevention. The environment would benefit by a reduction of 1.3m kg CO₂ and a saving 15m litres of water. More impressively, through knock on societal benefits like savings to the NHS, wider society would benefit by a total of £5.4m per year once the system is fully scaled.

As impressive as the results were, there were several deployment challenges that had to be overcome. For example, some devices were difficult to install due to space limitations and several supplier technologies were therefore trialled to identify the most suitable for Stirling's assets. Secondly, some consumer devices required significant commercial and technical integration work before they could be deployed as 'enterprise' solutions. Development work should be completed as much as possible prior to deployment

in these cases. Thirdly, lessons were learned with regards to sensor placement, for example, air quality analysers must be strategically placed to give accurate readings.

Any social housing provider who has trialled several individual IoT technologies will attest to the need for an integrated approach for operationally scalable solutions. The benefits of IoT have been tantalisingly close to social landlords for a number of years. However, due to recent advancements in technology, key suppliers releasing new connected products, and integration platforms which allow scalable roll-outs, we may finally see IoT delivering the benefits it has promised for years.

The skills shortage – training the next generation

The NHMF's mission is to be the centre of excellence for improving property performance and its best practice website is a free resource to help social landlords be efficient, effective and economic in complying with their health and safety requirements.

 Andrew Burke



However, with the challenges landlords are experiencing in recruiting skilled staff, the best practice website also has the potential to be a free training tool for new staff and to help staff to keep up to date.

The best practice website could be used during staff induction and training. For example, new technical staff could be asked to research the website's compliance section. It is structured with a set of topical 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 and good practice examples so that

landlords can review their compliance regimes from first principles. New staff could be tasked with preparing papers on the legal requirements for selected topics, such as gas or fire or electrical safety. These papers could also be used for new staff to review a landlord's current practice against the legal requirements, approved guidance and good practice examples and to propose possible improvements. The website could also be used for annual CPD training to ensure staff keep up to date, and it could be used at each stage of career progression.

The website also provides criteria for commissioning and carrying out risk assessments and managing risks which is an essential requirement of all health and

safety practice. This would provide all new technical staff with the understanding they need for their work. Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower and the recommendations from the Hackitt Review, this aspect of asset management and maintenance has become increasingly important and is likely to remain so with increasing scrutiny by the Regulator of Social Housing. It will no longer be sufficient for social landlords to have 'ticked' all the boxes because they will need to demonstrate that they have assessed the risks for their residents and that they are actively managing and reducing those risks. Risk assessments are only the start because they identify what the risks are. An action plan then needs to be developed on how those risks will be managed and reduced and then implemented.

The best practice website has been kept up to date with Q&A briefings when regulations have changed, such as the ban on combustible materials following

the Grenfell fire. Best practice case studies are regularly published to help the sector learn from what works well and to avoid what does not work. For example, a fire safety case study explains how one social landlord improved fire safety for its vulnerable and older residents while reducing operating costs.

The website is designed to be a starting point for any landlord wanting to review its own compliance priorities and procedures. It enables landlords to set and agree compliance priorities with their boards and senior management. Something that is becoming increasingly important as government implements the recommendations from the Hackitt Review and the Regulator for Social Housing increases its scrutiny of tenant safety and the quality of their homes.

What our users think:

“ It has a good summary, easy to find tabs and goes into details on the subject of those tabs. I agree it would be a good tool for learning as it gives the information in a clear and easy manner which makes it easy to understand even if you are not 100% clued up on the subject. “

Adam Charnock, Asset Officer, Magna HA

“ This looks brilliant....what I have read is clear, informative, succinct with links to extended information, tailored to our needs. It is going to be a great help to me in understanding our priorities and motivations...”

Bob Roberts, Trainee Asset Surveyor

The National Housing Academy – a competency driven approach to technical skills

Today the housing sector faces many challenges, one of vital importance to the progression of the sector is that of skills.

 Stephen Makowski



Much has been said regarding skills shortages not least the impact of Brexit, the downgrading of technical skills and the lack of career movement for those entering the sector. However, there are challenges of equal importance that seem to be ignored. Very little is written about the extraordinary acceleration in technical products, the blurring of lines between traditional 'skilled' trades and the impact of modular and volumetric housing on sector technical skills.

Three years ago, quietly but diligently, a group of sector professionals set about taking on this monumental challenge and in so doing is gradually changing the landscape for technical housing skills forever. Their work has led to the formation of the first National Housing Academy (NHA) for the sector, a not-for-profit organisation with a remit to take on the growing decline in technical skills faced by the sector.

The NHA took the decision three years ago to carry out a thorough skills analysis to identify exactly where resources might best be concentrated to address these challenges. Furthermore, we decided to counsel the sector to see the extent to which current policy on technical training was compounding an already

The National Housing Academy's journey within this landscape

diminishing skills return and unwittingly contributing to this decline.

As a result of undertaking over 500 skills audits we now have an acute understanding of the current technical shortfalls facing the sector and therefore a better understanding of how to address these concerns at national level.

Our research and work on technical skills suggests that:

- Qualification achievement did not correlate with increased competency.
- The best skills largely reside within a narrow ageing group of retiring operatives.
- Those with the greatest practical skills often had the least well-developed digital skills.
- Recent apprenticeships to develop multi-skilled operatives were largely unsuccessful in delivering competent employees.
- Organisations do not have meaningful ways to measure competency against organisational performance.

How is the NHA addressing these challenges?

The NHA decided, given this research, that concentrating on delivering qualification-based outcomes would not of itself address the skills shortfalls in any meaningful way. A more reactive and fluid approach, with greater ownership by sector organisations was the way forward and from previous work carried out both in the UK and abroad, it was clear that a 'Competency Management' approach by organisations would provide a better and more reactive solution for the sector.

What has this fledgling organisation achieved in these early years?

A review of technical apprenticeships has been undertaken and the Level 2 Property Maintenance Operatives apprenticeship has been re-written, extending both its scope and skills.

A Level 3 Apprenticeship in Property Maintenance is in development.

Supervisory level courses and qualifications that are sector specific have been developed.

A national learning management network has been successfully implemented where organisations can have a low-cost LMS and competency management platform which can be customised to each organisation's own unique brand.

Competency management software toolkits have been put in place specifically for the housing sector to develop inroads into this skills agenda.

What can you do to take part in this movement?

Our landscape is changing and very quickly, the stakes are high and time is short!

Our ability as a sector to adjust to meet these challenges is woefully inadequate. If we do not take action, then we will not have the skills we require, nor will we be able to deliver safe and reliable services to our clients. We will be unable to preserve and protect our asset base and we will not be in a position to offer meaningful employment to our communities.

For the first time in the history and development of social housing policy, and as a result of individuals and organisations working together, the NHA can offer all housing associations, regardless of their size, equal access to the very best technical and skills training resources to support their development and management of a competent skilled workforce.

Become part of the solution by joining us at the NHA and begin your journey into competency and skills.

Common health issues in the workplace – a headache or an itch that needs to be scratched?

Work and health are inextricably linked, having the potential for both a positive and a negative impact on each other.

 Clare Forshaw



Waddell and Burton's influential review 'Is work good for your health and well-being?' (2006) concluded that work is generally good for physical and mental health and that for many health conditions, individuals fare better if they remain in, or return to work as soon as possible.

From the raft of health issues that can affect our workforce, employers usually like to be able to distinguish clearly between those which are caused by work and those which are not. However, with some workplace health conditions this is difficult, if not often impossible to do.

These can be termed '**common health problems**' and cover issues such as back pain, neck and upper limb problems (known as musculoskeletal disorders), mental health and stress.

Why is this a problem?

They can be particularly problematic because:

- They are often subjective and variable in terms of symptoms, making diagnosis and determining health outcomes difficult.

- They are multifactorial – many different issues combine to result in an unpredictable health outcome.
- They often coexist – people with muscular pain problems often suffer a mental health issue.
- They can be influenced by both work and non-work factors.

These issues combine to make any preventative actions difficult and treatment uncertain. However, considering the scale and impact these health issues have, the likelihood is that with an ageing workforce, skills shortages and retention issues, the problem is only likely to get bigger!

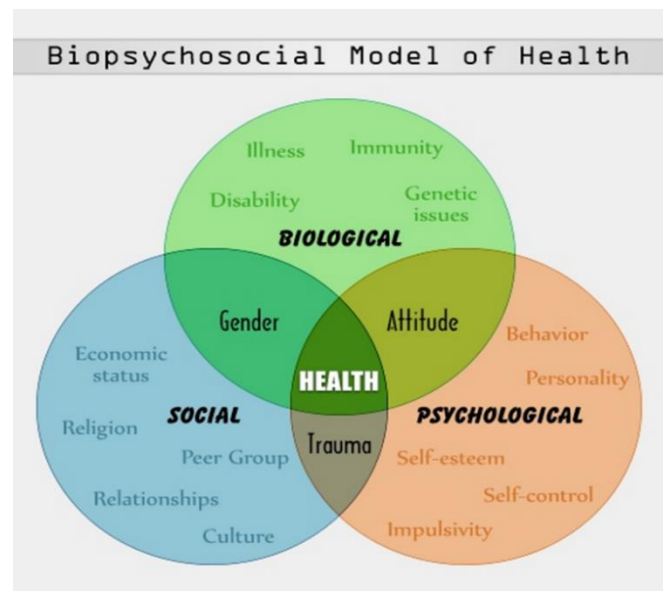
The fact is that we have over 75% of adults in Great Britain in employment (the highest proportion since records began), on average spending a third of their waking hours in the workplace. The annual economic costs of sickness absence and worklessness is estimated to be over £100 billion¹ and over 137 million days were lost to sickness absence in the UK in 2016². 22% of sickness absences are caused by musculoskeletal conditions and 11.5% as a result of mental health issues, including stress, depression and anxiety³.

According to the CIPD the average recruitment cost of filling a vacancy is £4,000, increasing to £6,125 when the associated labour turnover costs are included. Another quote puts the cost at over £30,000 taking into account the time needed to get up to speed with the job.

What can we do better?

So how can we better tackle these 'common health problems'? Firstly, we need to overcome the hang ups relating to whether these issues were caused by work or not. The term 'work relevant' sums up the imperative to address the problem at the workplace and do all we can to look at any work issues that help or hinder the health or symptom experience.

We also need to look more closely at our traditional model of providing a diagnose and cure response. A biopsychosocial model approach best suits these issues in that it takes account of the much broader intricate and variable interaction of biological (genetic, biochemical, etc.), psychological (mood, personality, behaviour, etc.), and social factors (cultural, familial, socioeconomic, medical, etc.).



We also need improved acknowledgment and ownership of common health problems in the workplace. We can apply better work organisation and improved quality of management principles. The two L's for me are key to making the difference: Leadership and Line Management.

A Healthier Future!

Having a healthy and productive workforce is more important today than ever. Employers need to provide good work, good jobs and supportive workplaces when people fall ill. A safe workplace is an essential element to this but we can all contribute to an improved perspective on these difficult and pervasive health problems for our workforce and society. Moving forward we need to engage better with our workforce on these matters and improve our systems and procedures to positively affect the occurrence and impact of common health issues and keep people healthy, happy and at work.

¹ Working for a healthier tomorrow: work and health in Britain Department of Work and Pensions report, March 2008.

² Health and Safety Executive.

³ The Office of National Statistics, 2016

For more details, please contact clare.forshaw@parkhs.co.uk

Skillexit – how employers can tackle the skills shortage challenge

A sustainable commitment to attracting, retaining, training and developing the best talent lies at the heart of every healthy business and economy.

 Mike Turner



Closer to home, we all know that the maintenance and repair of the UK's housing stock is completely dependent upon the employment of an efficient and sufficiently skilled workforce.

But the escalating skills shortage, driven by an ageing workforce, fewer apprenticeships and the impact of Brexit on our migrant workforce, is forcing employers to the edge of a precipice.

Without intervention, costs will rise and quality will decline to levels not experienced before, making 'Skillexit' a highly fitting term. Indeed, its impact may see organisations withdraw from the sector as they

are unable to fulfil the obligations placed upon them by their clients, something that we're seeing now.

Squeezing businesses

According to the latest research from the FMB, the UK construction worker shortage has hit its worst level on record. This severe skills gap is driving up wages and squeezing businesses already battling higher material costs. Looking ahead, the picture isn't any more positive: The Farmer Review¹ predicts that the construction labour force will decline by 20-25% in the

next decade, a culmination of a record low level of new entrants and the need to replace 700,000 retiring workers.

In terms of new people entering the sector, only 21,000 new apprentices entered roles in construction in 2017 which equates to less than 1% of the sector's workforce. A main contributor is low contractor margins, which directly result in a lack of available investment in training for new entrants looking for apprenticeships or 'on the job' school leaver training schemes. Value is being removed from the supply chain at all levels, with training often seen as a loss leader in terms of funding relative to costs. The practice of not having directly employed tradespeople on the payroll has led to a skills vacuum in organisations. Entire generations of in-house skills are being lost and the core outputs of their businesses: delivering plumbing, plastering, electrics, painting, bricklaying, carpentry, are no longer within their control.

Making a choice about culture

With a culture ingrained with a commitment to direct delivery, Ian Williams has always recognised that recruitment and development of talent is fundamental to our future success. That's why we've committed to apprentices making up 10% of our operational workforce at any time. We're currently consistently achieving 11% and have formalised the significant investment we commit to training and development with the creation of the Ian Williams Academy, whose main objective is to ensure that we have a strong talent pool, transfer the skills, expertise and company ethos through the workforce and ensure succession planning. The Academy scheme is considered by the CITB to be a best-in-class approach and won the National Housing Maintenance Forum's Best Apprentice Scheme 2018.

Nurturing in-house skills and keeping control in-house, is not a 'nice to have'. It's a commercial imperative that will lead us all in the direction of a healthier, vibrant and attractive industry to be part of, driven by experienced and empowered people who have the right skills for the job, both now and in the future.

Actions for employers to consider to attract, train and retain the best talent

- Implement an engaging recruitment strategy focused on candidates and hold their hands throughout the process.
- Offer training that benefits your company and is sustainable.
- Involve apprentices in other company training to provide a broad range of experience.
- Team up with trained mentors and have a dedicated team to look after any pastoral and qualification needs.
- Create a positive and enjoyable working environment with a vision for the future.
- Use your apprenticeship funds where there is resource to support them.
- Consider forming an Apprentice Task Force with representation from across the business.
- Celebrate their successes.

For more information:

www.ianwilliams.co.uk/ouracademy

1 The Farmer Review of the UK Construction Labour Model, Mark Farmer, October 2016

Promoting diversity - women in maintenance

At Guinness, promoting diversity across our business is a priority. This includes the role of women in maintenance (WiM) where on average tradeswomen represent 2% of the workforce. Given the challenges of customer service and trades skills shortages in housing, our sector provides a great opportunity to promote careers and broaden aspirations.

 Paul Roberts



Along with colleagues, I was delighted to present at January's NHMF conference to promote how Guinness and Sovereign are committed to developing a diverse workforce including more tradeswomen - not just in Guinness but across the sector.

At the forum, Helen Colwill, a Guinness electrician and Tradeswoman Ambassador, joined Liane Sheppard, Operations Director from Sovereign, and myself in leading a workshop on 'Women in Social Housing Maintenance'. We took the opportunity to share work that we have been undertaking with others as well as

on our own, to increase the number of tradeswomen. We don't have all the answers, but we wanted to share good practice and listen to new ideas.

So why still so few tradeswomen? At the workshop Helen explained the challenges from personal experience - career stereotypes, lack of female role models, limited recognition of trades as a career route, poor recruitment and basic failures to adapt the working environment. All play a part and we can respond to each.

Encouraging more women into apprenticeships or to return to trades roles

Whether in advocacy, recruitment, training, or the support network, we will be taking steps forward this year.

We will develop the overall apprenticeship experience at Guinness, improving pastoral support, upskilling managers to support their apprentices and developing a mentoring system between former and current apprentices.

We know that smarter recruitment is also key – overcoming the barriers that women face, positive marketing and joining up HR teams across the sector to boost recruitment.

We will also seek to broaden our routes into Guinness to make sure that we, and our contractors, can attract and retain tradeswomen. Working with partners, we will hold more 'Kickstart' free training programmes this year to help women kickstart a career in housebuilding or construction. We will offer more work experience for budding tradeswomen at college or, as we did to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week and International Women's Day, host free 'Try a Trade' sessions for female customers and colleagues who want to try their hand at joinery, plastering or tiling. Meanwhile, we will work with our tradeswomen and staff forum to implement their ideas to improve the working environment, helping Guinness to be a great place to work.

We will work with a range of partners (our contractors, communities, colleges and other housing associations) to promote WiM and encourage more young women at school, and women returning to work or changing careers, to consider a career in maintenance. We want to work with other advocates – we have signed up to '2019 Positive about Women in Construction' and we are actively seeking other advocates to help promote the initiative, for example those talking about diversity, apprenticeships, customer service or skills shortages.

Ambassador training

We have also announced that we are organising and hosting a free training workshop in the summer to support volunteers who are willing to be advocates and role models for diversity in the trades workforce across the sector.

This is just the start – we hope that our vision will inspire others to do the same so that we can raise the bar and move beyond 5% towards 10% of the workforce quickly, as a new decade approaches.

To find out more about joining The Guinness Partnership as an apprentice,

email apprentices@guinness.org.uk or visit the Guinness website: guinnesspartnership.com

What makes a great contractor/client relationship?

Contractor/client relationships are comparable to marriages. To avoid divorce, it is vital there is commitment, shared goals, good communication and trust.

🏠 Jenny Neville | Lee Woods



“ It takes two to make a marriage a success and only one to make it a failure. ”

-Herbert Louis Samuel 1870-1963

The following are eleven essential factors for establishing and maintaining a successful contractor/client relationship.

1. Contract documents

These should be simple and well-defined to prevent assumptions and interpretations of their application. Contract documents should be compared to check for conflicting information; we have seen examples of

contradictions between the term brief and pricing schedule which can cause disputes later into the contract term if not resolved.

2. The client brief

The contractor and client should hold a pre-mobilisation meeting to review the term brief/specification and pricing schedule. This meeting is an opportunity to identify any 'big ticket' items or

areas of uncertainty, prepare the mobilisation plan and clarify the scope and type of works.

3. Contract administration/management

The contract should be sufficiently resourced to deliver the client brief and a resource plan should be produced, ensuring that staff with the correct skills are in the team. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities should be clarified as part of mobilisation and the main point of contact for both parties should be a lead 'Contract Manager'. Both contractor and client should operate under a 'fully integrated' team model, where IT, data and operations are all working together as one team with common goals and objectives.

4. Mobilisation

Mobilisation is critical and all about planning and preparation. You might require several meetings, including a pre-mobilisation meeting, to agree the mobilisation plan which should include:

- Recruitment
- Branding
- Resourcing
- Communication
- Key Contacts
- Briefings
- IT and data exchange
- Training
- Agreeing end-to-end processes
- Pilots

5. Pilots

It's likely that teething issues will occur in the early weeks and months - pilot phases can help to resolve these promptly. By agreeing a small number of jobs to road test the end-to-end service delivery process, from issuing the order to paying the invoice, each party will gain an understanding of who is responsible for fixing what, as well as how the processes actually work.

6. IT, software and data transfer

Both parties should understand which systems/interfaces will be used and these should be

set up and tested during the pilot or earliest stages of the contract term to allow time for improvements. In addition, it should be clarified whether there are any proposed changes to technology during the life of the contract.

7. Communication

Good communication is critical to contract success. Be proactive, implement regular, client-led meetings to create an open platform for regular progress reporting and feedback. Use 'time speak' and stay ahead of issues to avoid complaints. Never leave problems unresolved and escalate where required.

8. Issuing works

Ensure there is a purchase order, works order or job number for all orders issued. Agree a template for data sharing that captures all the relevant information (UPRNs, address lists, order numbers etc.) ensuring compliance with GDPR. Contractors should not accept incomplete instructions or templates from the client.

9. Changes and variations

Inevitably changes and variations will be required, however, you should stop and check what the implications are before you agree; consider the impact on service delivery, cost and procedures etc. Contractors should be clear and explain extra incurred costs and negotiate delivery timelines. Follow a clear approvals process ensuring all agreed changes/variations are documented.

10. Invoicing and payments

The payments process should be agreed upfront and tested as part of the pilot. The contract should also be clear about the debtors' policy, remedies for overdue payments, suspension of services and payment deductions. Any disputes should be resolved early and variations to the contract should be agreed in advance.

11. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Keep them simple, link them to strategic objectives and ensure they are measurable.

Learning from the Glasgow experience

The annual NHMF Study Tour provides a valuable opportunity for members to share knowledge with colleagues from across the social housing sector and approach common challenges from a fresh perspective. In 2018 we visited Glasgow to look at the history of social housing in the city, and to explore some of the innovative solutions being adopted by local housing providers.

 Craig Oosthuizen



Our tour began at the Lighthouse, the first commission completed by renowned Scottish architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and a fitting location to officially welcome delegates.

Bill Byfield, Savills Public Sector Director, kicked off the tour by providing an introduction to the history of social housing in Glasgow. Between 1840 to 1930 sandstone tenements were built on a massive scale in Glasgow to house its rapidly expanding population. These tenements were usually overcrowded with inadequate access to sanitation and refuse removal.

Poor construction also meant that the state of these properties gradually declined over the years. From the 1950s onward, many of these tenements were demolished and replaced with new properties. Residents were initially impressed with the new properties, but over time issues related to the design of these homes meant they were no better than the tenements they were built to replace. The tenements that remain today are not necessarily the best quality, but they are now recognised for their historical significance for Glasgow and have been refurbished. This experience set the theme for the study tour and

demonstrates how important it is to think of the life cycle costs of homes when they are designed, as future generations are left with maintaining these buildings.

In the afternoon, the group headed to our first site visit via Glasgow's underground, known locally as the 'Clockwork Orange' to visit Wheatley Group's Ibroxholm Oval. Eric Conquer led us on an informative tour of one of their refurbished multi-storey buildings to demonstrate how the organisation has implemented fire safety measures in buildings ranging from 8 to 26 storeys high over a range of stock, including six RSLs, two care partners, a repair division and two commercial subsidiaries.

This was followed by a visit to Elderpark Housing Association led by Chief Executive, Gary Dalziel. Formed in 1975, Elderpark HA was one of the first community-based housing associations in Scotland and currently manages just under 1,300 homes. Gary explained that around 70% of their stock is tenement flats and roughly 4,000 repairs are carried out every year. The group were given a guided tour of one of their refurbished tenement buildings led by Gary and his team who talked us through the extensive improvement programme, including replacing all the kitchens and modernising communal areas including lobbies and stairwells to a high standard.

On day two, we returned to the Lighthouse for a joint NHMF committee and contractor forum meeting chaired by Karl Linder. This was a useful opportunity to review preparations for the annual NHMF Conference before joining Eric Conquer for our final stop at the City Building training academy. The group were keen to gain a first-hand look at this innovative construction craft apprenticeship programme which has taken a very inclusive approach to recruitment. No formal qualifications are required to be accepted, although prospective apprentices are tested for literacy, numeracy and practical skills, with a separate 'talent taster' scheme on offer for candidates who may not yet have achieved the necessary skill level.

Roughly 400 to 500 candidates apply every year and the programme is only open to Glasgow residents. City Building try to ensure there is an even spread of recruitment geographically and through all the trades and with approximately 90-95% of apprentices completing their training, the programme is clearly a positive step, from which many lessons can be learned.

In addition to the programme, City Building also assist with a wide range of local community projects and offer 250 work experience placements a year to

Glasgow schools, plus the opportunity for Wheatley Group tenants to gain experience in partnership with local charity, MCR Pathways.

The group were very inspired to see so many apprentices demonstrating their new-found skills in the workshop and felt the scheme was an encouraging example of how social housing providers have taken a proactive stance in supporting the wider community, as well as finding practical solutions to bring new recruits into the sector.

Our visit was a timely reminder of Bill Byfield's opening remarks to the study tour: "Building houses is easy, maintaining them is hard".

NHMF Study Tour 2019

Join us in Freiburg for the next NHMF Study Tour on 9-11 October. The tour will include two days of visits, experiences, fellowship and knowledge exchange to understand the participative processes that shaped the city and observe sustainable building practices in action.

The study tour is attended by members of the NHMF Committee, and the NHMF Contractor Forum and is open to Directors or Senior Managers working in the maintenance or asset management areas of the UK and Republic of Ireland Social Housing.

For information and details on how to book, please visit nhmf.co.uk/studytour

NHMF training days 2019

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

For information and bookings, please visit nhmf.co.uk/training

Brexit - what will it mean for me?

At this year's NHMF Conference, we debated the implications of Brexit through the perspectives of a housing association, a contractor and a European thinktank.

 Neil Watts | Paul Reader | Corné Koppelaar



Our panellists share their insights on the potential impact of Brexit on the social housing sector.

Neil Watts, Director of Service Delivery, Peabody Trust

Since discussing Brexit at the NHMF Conference, we are continuing to review our risk profile across key areas of the Group, in anticipation of a “hard” or “no deal Brexit”. We have a range of key mitigating actions in place as part of our robust approach to managing risk. These include financial stress testing to the highest level, risk assessment of suppliers for existing and future development schemes and ongoing work by the Group's Business Continuity function to identify the critical suppliers in each business area. We

continue to monitor and scrutinise these regularly at executive and board meetings to ensure that all risks and mitigating actions are tracked and managed at Group level.

Furthermore, our people are our most important asset. So, we are supporting our valued colleagues who are EU nationals, by providing them with the relevant information throughout the process. We will also continue to monitor the potential impact on our customers and identify any mitigations we may need to put in place to support them.

While we are managing our risks and stress-testing scenarios against the uncertainty that Brexit brings, our focus must and does remain on doing more to help people make the most of their lives.

Paul Reader, Partnership Director, Morgan Sindall

There have been many developments in the Brexit journey since my presentation on a 'Contractor's Perspective of Brexit' back in January. With even more Brexit scenarios than there were back then, what has seemed to have remained the same is the level of uncertainty it will bring.

Thankfully our position also remains very much the same, with a large proportion of our workforce directly employed UK citizens and a robust supply chain, we are confident we can continue to provide high quality services to our customers through these uncertain times.

Corné Koppelaar, Founder, Global Habitat

At the end of January 2019, we presented at the NHMF Conference the potential consequences of Brexit on housing and the way that Brexit is being perceived in mainland Europe. The main message for the audience was to be well prepared for any potential outcome. There are a number of threats that probably outweigh some opportunities that result from Brexit. What in January 2019 worried us most was the political instability. In housing where capital investments are big, investors tend to dislike a high degree of uncertainty.

Whilst the UK is unique in the sense of having made the decision to withdraw from the EU, it is not the only country where a growing level of scepticism towards the European project has developed. The underlying reasons for people feeling dissatisfied with both European and national politicians should be unravelled and addressed, this would open new avenues for improved political models within or outside of the EU.

The NHMF awards – benchmarking success

 Karl Linder



Anyone who has attended the NHMF Awards dinner will know it is the focal point of the annual NHMF Maintenance Conference in January. It provides an ideal forum for both social housing providers and contractors to come together and recognise the success and ingenuity of organisations that have demonstrated outstanding achievement within the housing sector. It is also a chance for applicants to showcase joint projects where they have excelled in improving the quality and efficiency of the services they provide.

The NHMF committee works hard to promote its mission to be the centre of excellence for improving property performance. For an organisation to win an award, it must demonstrate that it has provided first rate services to its customers and has a clear remit to deliver value for money initiatives at the core of its asset management strategy. This year, we received a wide range of entries across five categories which included 'best apprentice scheme' and 'best contract'. Details of all the winners can be found on the website.

Winning an NHMF award allows organisations to share their success across the group, as well as the industry as a whole. It supports the NHMF in promoting best practice and gives us all the opportunity to contribute

to the collective knowledge base. It is also an excellent way for organisations to reward team members for all their hard work and benchmark their success.

Entering a project for an award may seem like a lot of hard work with no guarantee of a return on your investment. However, if you view it as an exercise in its own right, it can deliver long-term tangible benefits. Many applicants have told us that the process of putting together their awards submission was an extremely useful exercise which pushed them to formulate a clear case as to why their project demonstrated genuine innovation. This is particularly useful if you need to secure buy-in from senior management or encourage your organisation to approach future projects from a different perspective. Finally, in a notoriously risk-averse sector where we need to account for every penny to our stakeholders, the ability to showcase a project that demonstrates tangible benefits is a useful tool when putting together a business case for future investment.



The NHMF awards are free to enter and applications open in August 2019. If your organisation is interested in finding out more, please visit the website for detail

Acronyms

We have tried, where possible, to ensure that acronyms are explained within articles. However...

 NHMF



Acronym	Explanation
AHBs	Approved Housing Bodies
ACOP	Approved Code of Practice
ALMO	Arm's-Length Management Organisation
BPE	Innovate UK Building Performance Programme
CDM	Construction (Design and Management) Regulations
CRM	Customer Relationship Manager
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Cost Sharing Vehicle

DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DLO	Direct Labour Organisation
ECA	Electrical Contractors' Association
ECO	Energy Company Obligation
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
ESDN	European Single Notification Documents
ESF	Electrical Safety First
EU	European Union

EWI	External wall insulation
Ffi	Fee for Intervention
GLAs	Greater London Authorities
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HHRNSH	High Heat Retention Night Storage Heaters
HHSRS	Housing Health and Safety Rating System
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
HSW	Health and Safety at Work
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
IAQ	Internal Air Quality
JCT	Joint Contracts Tribunal
JV	Joint Venture
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KTN	Knowledge Transfer Network
LED	Light Emitting Diode
LGSR	Landlords Gas Safety Record
LIHC	Low Income Housing Coalition
LLP	Limited Liability Partnership
MEV	Mechanical Extraction Ventilation system
MMC	Modern Methods of Construction
MVHR	Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery system
NEC	New Engineering Contract
NHF	National Housing Federation

NHMF	National Housing Maintenance Forum
NPV	Net Present Value
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OJEU	Official Journal of the European Union
PPP	Price per Property
PPR	Painting, Plastics and Repair
PQQ	Pre-qualification Questions
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PV	Photovoltaic
QLTA	Quality Long Term Agreement
rdSAP	Reduced Data Standard Assessment Procedure
RH	Relative Humidity
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentive
RTB	Rent to Buy
RP's	Registered Providers
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
SHIFT	Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow
SIS	Stock Information Survey
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMV	Standard Minute Values
SoR	Schedule of Rates
STPC	Specialist Term Partnering Contract
SWI	Solid Wall Insulation
TLO	Tenant Liaison Officer
TPC	TPC 2005 ACA Standard Form of Contract for Term Partnering - Amended 2008

TSC	Term Services Contract
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (in other words a Drone)

UPVC	Un-plasticised Poly Vinyl Chloride
WOS	Wholly Owned Subsidiary