



Listening to the Community

**National Housing Maintenance Forum
Awards for Best Practice in Maintenance 2010**

Most Innovative Direct Labour Organisation

Bournville Village Trust has been a proud believer in the concept of a Direct Labour Organisation since our inception in 1900.

BPS circa 1920's building Hay Green Lane.



BPS circa 1930, starting on site building the Shenley part of the Estate.



As the vogue in our industry has come full circle several times between carrying out works in-house or contracting out, BVT has never lost sight of the unique benefits housing providers & its customers can benefit from, by having its own DLO.

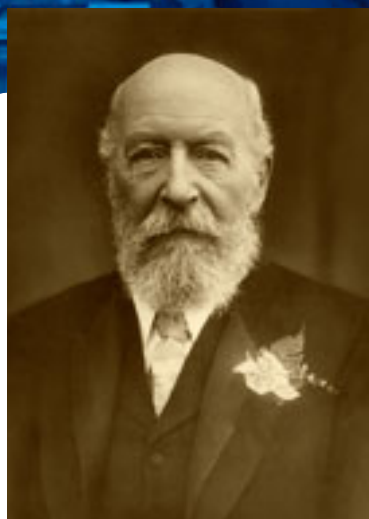
For BVT, our DLO, known as Bournville Property care Services, (BPS) has become an integral & irreplaceable part of our organisation through continual review of what we do and subsequent improvement. What is truly innovative about BPS is how we continually ask, listen and learn about who our community are and tailor our services accordingly.

As the nature of our communities has diversified over time and the expectations on housing providers to improve the domestic standard of living has increased, having a DLO has given BVT the ability to adapt and respond to these challenges quickly and comprehensively. Moreover, all improvements to the service we have provided have been designed not just to suit the needs of the groups that make up our community, but on an individual level.

Examples of Bournville's unique architecture.



What is innovative about the service provided?



George Cadbury, founder of Bournville Village Trust.

We're working on recognising skills

Is there a tradesperson who has saved your home and displayed great customer-service skills, given you advice, or simply done an exceptional job? If so, please let us know. We would like to recognise the people who do for all our tenants in Bournemouth. Therefore, we are pleased to announce the Bournemouth Tradesperson of the Year Award 2008. Tradespeople must be nominated by tenants and all nominees will be judged by Bournemouth Properties.

tenants organisation, BVT's Resident Involvement Officer will donate a prize for the winner. The closing date for nomination is September 30 2008. Nomination forms will be sent out, but they will also be found in the reception of Courtyard House, Telford. Alternatively, you can download a nomination form from the BVT website. For further information, telephone 01952 293777 or 01952 564199, or email kathleen.fughes@bvt.org.uk

Wayne reigns!

In the last edition of Outlook, we mentioned 14-year-old Wayne Jenkins, a teenager who after given a work placement at BVT, accepted a prestigious award. In fact, he went on to win a Shaw Trust national award - but didn't attend the ceremony because he didn't want to take time off from his BVT apprenticeship! With the help of local employers, the BVT Shaw Trust Young People's Services (YPS) can help young people whose futures may look bleak, discover and support them on the path to success. Wayne said 'I'm determined to do well for my dad, for Shaw Trust, who have done so much for me, and Bournemouth Village Trust, who have given me such a big chance to prove myself'.



Wayne's world gets better as he scoops top award

A youngster given a work placement at BVT has scooped an award from a national charity for the hard work and success of his achievement. Wayne Jenkins, aged 14, from Kings Norton was excluded from school several times, following some difficult times at home. The Shaw Trust charity helps young people aged between 14 and 16 get back into education or work, if they have had a tough time at school. Bournemouth Village Trust supported Wayne with a work placement in property maintenance, which he did thoroughly well. The transfer in to the 'working world' from school even inspired the youngster to set up his own DJ business in his spare time. Wayne was presented with a Star Award at the charity's annual award ceremony by Karen Richardson, star of TV's Hollyoaks. The Shaw Trust is a national charity which provides training and work opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the workplace because of disability, ill health or other social circumstances. The Trust aims to ensure that, of the one million disabled people and disadvantaged young people in the UK, who want to work, as many as possible receive the support they need.

Troubled teen is now a star



Recognition of our star apprentices in the media!

What are the benefits to the client, contractor, residents and the neighbourhood?



All operatives and supervisors wear branded clothing and carry ID at all times.

Having such a well established DLO has only been possible by retaining and developing the operatives who deliver the front line services every day. This process begins with BPS supporting significant commitment to a range of work experience placements for local schools (the uptake of which is in high demand!). BPS historically also seeks new young blood by annually appointing two apprentices for each major trade, and embarking them on an intensive programme imparting the skills and mindset they will need to become a master trades person, as well as how to adapt their approach to most benefit the customer in question. On mutual agreement, apprentices are offered permanent placements once their programme is complete.

With a significant proportion of our housing stock being in the region of 100 years old and the estate forming part of a historic conservation area, having a DLO with an appreciation of the importance of our heritage is crucial to meet the challenges of sympathetically conserving what is special about Bournemouth. Even more important than the understanding of our estate that our DLO has acquired, is the longstanding trust based relationship with households that our operatives develop and nurture over time. As most of our tenants tend not to move from BVT once established, many of our operatives get to know of our customers individual requirements and preferences, enabling maintenance works to be carried out with significantly less stress.

In recent years, BPS has embraced the movement toward direct resident involvement. With a strong tradition of involving residents in the decisions that affect the services provided by BVT, BPS has been instrumental in empowering residents to make decisions in the area of maintenance. With attendance at every maintenance tenant panel meeting, BPS is fully accountable to our customers and ensures that no changes are made to the service without consultation and approval from our tenant reps.

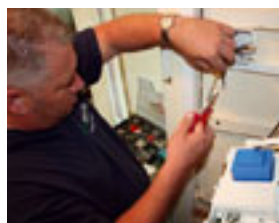


Consulting with our tenant reps.

“BPS is fully accountable to our customers”



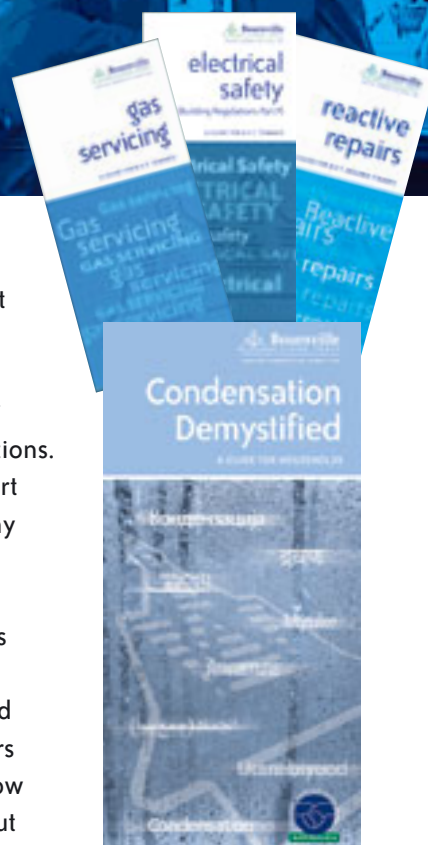
Testing taps with flow restricted to 6 litres per minute.



Installation of low energy fittings during rewiring.

The depth of this involvement began with the tenant maintenance panel ensuring that all communication from BPS was fit for purpose, and quickly moved on to areas of specification and sub contractor selection. BPS have now achieved such a level of resident involvement that it is now routine that our tenants choose all major suppliers of components, have 50% of the say when assessing which external contractors to appoint, ensure that there is ample choice for customers wherever possible, and even take an active role in assessing the relative performance of our DLO.

Part of the remit of the resident involvement strategy in the area of maintenance, is to source, trial and recommend technological advancements, with a view to incorporating successful products into standard specifications. Staff within BPS go to great lengths to support our tenant reps in assessing the merits of any potential improvements to our standards, including providing technical & regulatory input where required. Most recent examples of this can be seen in the “green” makeover of our modernisations programmes. It would be at odds with our philosophy for managers in *ivory towers* to dictate to our residents how they are to reduce their carbon foot print, but instead allow the community to tell us how they wish to address these issues. From the review of our electrical specifications intended to maximise energy conservation opportunities, to the overhaul of our plumbing specifications to dramatically reduce fresh water usage, BPS create the circumstances for our residents to tell us what works for them.



Clear advice and information for tenants can help with preventative maintenance.



BPS respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Christopher Taylor Court sheltered accommodation.

Having a DLO that is underpinned by a philanthropic philosophy bestowed by our founder George Cadbury, has ensured an entrenched approach toward ensuring that vulnerable members of our community are given a personalised service which ensures equality of opportunities and access to services. BVT is heavily invested in the concept of “supporting people” and has numerous diverse housing projects intended to assist those that may otherwise struggle to access services and take advantage of opportunities through no fault of their own. Such projects include vibrant sheltered accommodation, nursing homes, supported accommodation for young people leaving care, purpose built & converted fully adapted properties for people with mobility impairments and several mental health care homes with 24 hour care provided.

For the people who live in any of these homes, excellent service due to the BPS approach can quite simply significantly improve quality of life; when urgent repairs are quickly remedied, or when planned improvements delight the end user, the BPS approach is always listening, understanding, and accommodating. Our DLO carry out many different kinds of adaptation work for our Supported Housing Section at extremely competitive rates, enabling stretched budgets go much further in helping those who most need it. BVT Care Managers can always trust our operatives to have an understanding of the importance of dignity.

BPS is at the forefront of BVT 24 hours a day. With our own operatives providing out of hours on call cover 365 days a year, the personalised service doesn't stop at 5.00pm. Whether it is an urgent repair late at night, or a faulty emergency care alarm, our DLO gives BVT the ability to provide the benefits that come with knowing and understanding our residents, when they need it the very most.

What were the financial costs and cashable benefits?

The Bournville locality is largely devolved from the local authority with regard to housing, and although BVT is the largest social landlord in the area, it is not the only. There are a number of other local, unique housing associations run by resident committees that look to BVT to provide contracted services in some areas, repairs and maintenance being the biggest. BPS has adapted to be able to provide a comprehensive repair service for our managed societies, further sharing the benefits of a strong community based approach whilst at the same time generating significant income. Local owner occupiers are also welcome to call upon the expertise of BPS, and are invited to attend home maintenance advisory sessions, delivered by BPS staff. Known locally as “THOMAS”, the Telford Home Owner Maintenance Advisory Service, run in partnership with the local authority, has already assisted hundreds of local owner occupiers in maintaining their homes more effectively. Providing services that cross cut tenure, benefit the community as a whole thus improving the look of the estate overall, plus is an excellent opportunity to sell maintenance services to owner occupiers.

Growth into actively selling services to private cliental beyond our own housing stock has grown significantly in recent years and has ensured BPS continuing economic viability. Local clients have included the police force, probation services, several local churches, shops, farms, museums, and listed buildings. BPS has since established a strong local reputation for workmanship and private work alone last year brought an income to BVT of £180,000, which is pure surplus as there are no additional overheads required. All surplus generated by BPS is directly re-invested in BVT’s housing stock, allowing for additional improvements over and above the trust’s annual planned maintenance programme.

Our gas fitters can earn healthy surpluses for BPS installing heating systems for private clients.



BPS give Owner Occupiers the opportunity to benefit from generations of experience.





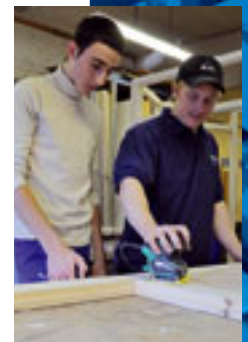
BPS keeps our tenants safe by personally ensuring gas safety checks and servicing are carried out.



Having the responsive repairs service managed by the DLO, maximises financial efficiency and minimises customer waiting time.

“BPS has proven that with the right approach you can ensure a flourishing DLO will more than pay for itself.”

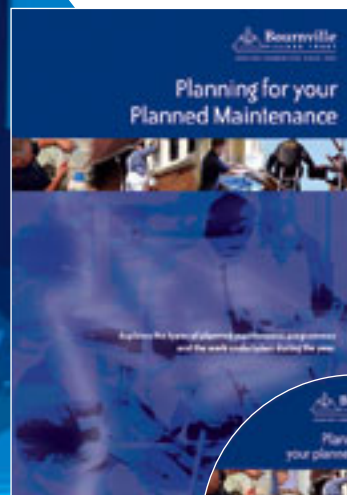
Based in the maintenance yard in the heart of the Bournville conservation area, BPS maintains commitment to innovation in its approach to equipping its operatives for the job in hand. BVT has always invested significantly in its DLO, even when other associations were winding theirs down. With excellent quality equipment & tools, BPS's depot has been established and refined over generations, now incorporating machine shop, plumber's workshop, multiple recycling compounds, electrical storage facility and well stocked stores. BPS benefits from many years of working closely with client side surveyors in effective streamlining of specification components, simplifying impress stock holding requirements. BPS is currently undertaking a feasibility study (in conjunction with a working party of tenants) to assess whether electronic mobile working devices which monitor stock levels and include an appointments system, will be a cost beneficial innovation. BPS has proven that with the right approach relatively high levels of investment can ensure a financially flourishing DLO that will more than pay for itself. In the last financial year BPS out turned an outstanding 26% surplus.



BPS fitted 'trial' kitchens to allow tenant reps to decide which kitchen supplier to choose for BVT.



BPS allowed their approach to work to be captured on film, for the benefit of our customers.



How relevant is this as an example that might be followed by other organisations?

BPS ensures the strongest possible links of communication between client and contractor by sharing its offices with the landscapes division as well as the client maintenance function of BVT (asset management). Working so closely with the BVT client function has empowered each side of the business to begin offering truly ground breaking and innovative services in recent years. For example, since 2007, at the beginning of each planned maintenance programme year, tenants are offered the opportunity to attend a local exhibition where BPS have installed full sized exhibits of every component type used to modernise our homes. From entire working kitchens fitted, full sized central heating system mock ups, entire bathroom suite displays and much more, our tenants get to see every possible available option in full size before making their final choices. They also have the opportunity to meet the operatives who will be working in their home, sometimes for up to 4 weeks at a time, and begin to build some rapport.



BPS provide all of the technical support to ensure our popular Maintenance Exhibition goes off without a hitch!

This opportunity provides residents with the reassurance they need to minimise stress of invasive improvement works.

Another big step forward in providing comprehensive information for our tenants experiencing major works, was the introduction of an interactive DVD. Filmed in BVT homes of the modernisations actually being carried out, BPS personally demonstrated to their audience that they were in good hands and most importantly, exactly how to get the very most benefit out of these upgrade works.

Satisfaction surveys are carried out on 100% of works completed.

Of course, BPS is consistently required to demonstrate its overall effectiveness in delivering its objectives. Carried out independently by our “Business Improvement Unit”, BPS is measured against a number of key performance indicators in different ways. From official scrutiny by resident committees, to regular and diverse “mystery shopping” campaigns, overall customer satisfaction with the service provided by BPS remains in the upper quartile of the Housemark Benchmarking measure. In 2009 this even peaked at 100% satisfaction! Over the last five years the average score has been 99%. Our job completion times are consistently placed in the top 10% of the top quartile. Emergency responses in the last quarter were also recorded at 100%, urgent 99.4% and routine responses also at 99.2%.



Emergency

We will respond and make the situation safe within 24 hours.

Urgent

We will complete the repair within 3 days (not including weekends and bank holidays).

Routine

We will complete the repair within either 14 or 28 days, or it will be put into a program of work.

“99% of our customers rate our conduct and standard of workmanship as excellent.”



BPS' performance has been outstanding in each category:

Emergency	100%
Urgent	99.4%
Routine	99.2%

BPS cannot claim to champion one flagship innovation that is the secret of its success. Instead, it is the sum of all of the “little innovations” done constantly, just by listening to our residents and acting on it.