

SHARE FORUM 2

14th July 2006, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Chosen View Road, Cheltenham.

Attendance

John Mann (Chair), Director of Asset Management, Gloucester City Homes,
John Archer, Mechanical surveyor, Fosseyway HA
Tony Hayes, Property Services Manager, Wyedean HA
Jane Byett, Housing Officer, Oxboode HA
Mark Sutton, Contract Officer, Stroud DC
Sandra Hickman, Tenant Representative, Stroud DC
Paul Simpson, Sales Development Manager, Domestic and General Insulation
Rachael Capener, Tenant Involvement Officer, Cheltenham Borough Homes
Tracy Palmer, Cheltenham Borough Homes
Roger Sparks, Housing Enabling Officer, Cheltenham Borough Council
Eric Wilson, Stock Information Officer, Cheltenham Borough Homes
Bill Johnson, Regional manager, Earth Energy
Duncan Dawes, Regional Sales manager, Horstmann
Paul Lovegrove, National Sales manager, Horstmann
Heather Watts, Energy Efficiency Development Manager, Scottish Power
Kaye Welfare – Energy Advice Manager, Severn Wye Energy Agency (kaye@swea.co.uk)
Dinyar Baria – Project Manager, Severn Wye Energy Agency (dinyar@swea.co.uk)

Apologies – Ruth Kirkup – Stroud DC, Chris Winter - Oxboode HA.

Action Points

- 1) ***Prior to the next forum, Dinyar will request the housing providers to explain how they manage with one off insulation requests.***
- 2) ***Dinyar to make available factsheets on funding, regulations etc.***
- 3) ***Dinyar to investigate other 'gas servicing' programmers available and their use in other housing associations and their legal implications.***
- 4) ***Dinyar to distribute contact details of forum members to all.***

Forum Notes

Dinyar opened the meeting and thanked the participants for attending and a good turn out. After a brief introduction of participants around the table, Dinyar gave a very brief re-cap and description of the project, its aim and its activities.

John Mann, acting as Chair went through the main action points from the previous meeting.

Action points from previous meeting (SHARE forum 1)

- 1) 'Easy to Use' heating controls to be investigated and reported back to forum.
As a result of this Horstmann were invited to this forum. Dinyar also contacted Danfoss but they didn't have any suitable products.
- 2) The issue of tenants reporting deficiencies in insulation themselves. How is this managed by RSLs – Procedures for mopping up outstanding insulation jobs etc. This could be a future forum discussion point.
*This is to make sure that all housing providers make sure that their properties are well insulated and that they are getting the most from the EEC funding. The issue is how to deal with small numbers of insulation jobs. **Prior to the next forum, Dinyar will***

request the housing providers to explain how they manage with one off insulation requests. The information will be compiled and then used as a discussion point to see how we can progress this important issue.

- 3) Ground Source Heat Pumps – work with Stroud DC to investigate feasibility and costs with installers/energy suppliers – Report back results to forum.

The systems generally cost about £5,000 plus the cost of the heat delivery system. However, the ongoing cost to both the tenants and the housing provider is less than other forms of heating.

For more information about ground source heat pumps or if you think that it may suit a particular property or situation, please contact Dinyar.

- 4) Dinyar to update forum on changes to funding (including low carbon buildings programme)

Dinyar is currently updating a factsheets on this and other related issues and will make them available before the next forum.

- 5) Lifetime cost analysis of technologies to landlord & tenants– Dinyar to investigate different software currently available and to report to the next forum.

There is a package called fuel prophet that can calculate savings, but it is very technical. Trying to find a simpler package.

- 6) Dinyar to co-ordinate training requirements and sessions for staff and tenants.

Training schedules, dates and locations have all been agreed.

- 7) Dinyar to investigate humidity meters and their practical use in advice giving.

Roger Sparks kindly found some humidity meters that were on sale at a reasonable price. These are available at www.brannan.co.uk. The cheapest humidity meters were £3.57 +vat. One with a thermometer costs £6.45 +vat.

Presentation from Horstmann

Horstmann presented two of their gas central heating programmers – The Thermoplus and The Serviceplus.

The first, Thermoplus, was designed with NEA to be used with the elderly and vulnerable. The product is used with Warm Front installations and has received good feedback so far. They are compulsory for all installations in properties with residents over 60.

Fosseway HA reported that they used these controllers on some installations for people with disabilities, but not as a matter of course.

Sandra Hickman asked about whether they were appropriate for the colour blind. The answer was yes they were tested for this.

The price of these heating controls is roughly about £30 which is comparable to a normal programmer and thermostat.

It was also mentioned that as the thermostat is electronic they are more technically accurate at measuring changes in temperature than dial based thermostats.

The second programmer type they presented on was the Serviceplus programmer which has a timer built into it that can be used to give warning messages and eventually stop working when gas servicing was required.

General Discussion (chaired John Mann)

Gas Safety check programmers

After lunch, (after Horstmann had left the forum), the appropriateness of Serviceplus was bought up as the first discussion point in the general discussion

It was commented that Drayton manufacture a similar product that instead of completely cutting off when a service is due, it would instead lower the comfort levels. Apparently, Honeywell produce one that frequently resets the units once a service is due.

X of Fosseyway said that they faced legal issues regarding the use of this type of programmer and suggested that there might be a human rights issue. It was mentioned by who? that it may just be down to the wordings in the tenancy agreements. There have been a few other RSLs who have installed these programmers and they must have faced similar issues.

Dinyar will investigate this for the next forum.

It was also pointed out how important gas safety and maintenance checks were to the RSLs. Gloucester City Homes mentioned that as an ALMO, not having 100% checks completed could affect their "star" assessments. The whole area of gas safety checks was called 'a massive area of work' and could be very expensive.

The lack of an audible warning could also be an issue for the visually impaired or in instances where the programmers are badly located. It was mentioned that the system didn't have a back light so the warning messages are hard to see in badly lit rooms or if it is located in a cupboard.

Affordable Warmth

Kaye Welfare, the Gloucestershire energy efficiency advice centre manager, is also the chair of the affordable warmth partnership in Gloucestershire. She would like to present at the next forum and have a discussion about fuel poverty and other issues. Dinyar to put this as an agenda item for the next forum.

Distribution list

John Mann suggested that list of attendees and their contact details be made available to everyone. **This will be done and made available to everyone.**

Location

Dinyar thanked Rachael and Cheltenham Borough Homes for the kind use of their room. However, it was noted that the disability access and the parking may be an issue. John Mann generously offered the use of the board room at Gloucester City Home's office, Southgate House on Southgate Street in Gloucester. The next forum will be there and maps provided.

Earth Energy Presentation

Finally, Bill Johnson from Earth Energy did a presentation on Ground Source heat pumps that explained the technology and the relationship they have with Calorex, the manufacturer and Powergen, who market and subsidise the scheme. Slides are available on request.

End of Forum

Date of Next Forum - 6th October 2006 at Gloucester City Homes, Southgate House, Southgate Street.