Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Information, advice & guidance
for RMCs and Property Managers

FlatLiving Magazine

February 2023

BREAKING NEWS P.5-7

01
Welcome

02
News

03
Training

Welcome

Welcome to our February issue of Flat Living Magazine!

To help you prepare for a new season, our contributors have focused their features on everything to do with lifts, gates, lighting, and communal areas in readiness for Spring!

On page 5-7 you can find updates from ARMA and the Property Institute, ALEP, and FPRA following the recent announcement from Michael Gove.

As always, we have included training opportunities from ARMA and job vacancies from Block Recruit to help you upskill or move on to new pastures.

If you have any questions you would like us to organise an article on, or if you have any interesting articles to add – please send them directly to the team via info@flat-living.co.uk.

Happy reading!

Belinda Bagnall and The Flat Living Team

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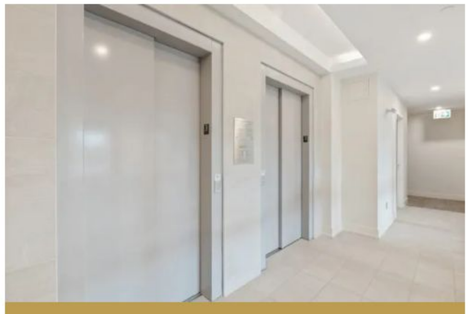

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Breaking News:

How Will Leasehold Changes Affect You?

Update from the Property Institute on recent Secretary of State & DLUCH announcements on developer contract, insurance commissions & leasehold reform

Readers may have seen yesterday's Sunday Times the interview feature, Sky News' Sophy Ridge on Sunday and today's Times article with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Michael Gove, and the resulting media coverage that has followed some of his key statements and announcements on building safety and leasehold reform, including an acknowledgement that the government system of building safety regulation and enforcement was wrong and inadequate – a first from any minister.

Below, we have summarised the announcements, many of which The Property Institute (TPI) has been forward-signalling and keeping its members updated on in recent months, which include:

- The publication of the long-awaited developer remediation contract to pay for and complete life-critical fire safety repairs on 11m+ buildings;
- The announcement of a new Responsible Actors Scheme under the Building Safety Act which places restrictions on those who don't sign the contract to operate in the housing market, including, ultimately, being prevented from developing land in England until they comply;
- Planned action on insurance commissions and making service charges more transparent for leaseholders;
- A pledge by Michael Gove to reform the leasehold system at the end of the year

DEVELOPER REMEDIATION CONTRACT & RESPONSIBLE ACTORS SCHEME

Today (Monday 30th January), Richard Goodman, Director General at DLUHC, wrote to developers with a copy of the legally binding remediation contract that will commit them to pay for life-critical fire-safety repairs on their buildings over 11m, and reimburse taxpayers where public money has been used to fix unsafe buildings, requesting that developers respond with their intentions and timeline for signing the contract by 10th February, and a six-week deadline (by Monday 13th March) to sign the contract.

This follows Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, demanding developers are held to account, which led to public pledges from 49 of the country's leading developers that they would take responsibility to fix their own buildings, which will now be turned into legally binding commitments.

The government is warning that companies who fail to sign and comply with the terms of the contract will face significant consequences. A Responsible Actors Scheme (RAS) in England, pursuant to Sections 126-129 of the Building Safety Act 2022, is to be brought forward in the Spring, to give the Secretary of State powers to prevent developers from operating freely in the housing market by blocking building control approval if they fail to sign and comply with the remediation contract. The operational details of the scheme will be set out in regulations, which may also include requirements in relation to fit and proper persons.

TPI is pleased to see Government now applying pressure to get buildings fixed and safe, but it will be interesting to see how the developers respond to the contract terms and the deadline, given that other stakeholders, including construction material manufacturers are not coming under the same pressure or scrutiny, and the fact that Gove has himself admitted that Government failed to regulate the system effectively.
Upon reviewing the new contract, TPI remains concerned about the gap between 'life-critical' work and the Building Safety Act requirements for holistic 'structural and fire safety', which will be certified by the Building Safety Regulator.

Under the contract, developers will commit an estimated £2 billion or more for repairs to buildings they developed or refurbished over the past 30 years. This means that together with the Building Safety Levy, the industry is directly paying an estimated £5 billion to make their buildings safe. The contract also requires developers to reimburse taxpayers where public funds have been used to fix unsafe buildings.

This follows confirmation from six major lenders earlier this month that they are now able to consider mortgage applications on properties that are covered by the leaseholder protections in the Building Safety Act, or where the building is eligible for a government or developer remediation scheme.

Once the remediation contract is signed by developers, leaseholders will benefit from a common framework of rights and responsibilities that will get their buildings fixed, without them having to pay and will require developers to inform residents in affected buildings how they will be meeting these commitments.

Read the full DLUHC press announcement here and access Richard Goodman's letter to developers and the full developer remediation contract here

INSURANCE COMMISSIONS

As part of the publication of the developers remediation contract and the announcements of the new Responsible Actors Scheme, **DLUHC has also announced action on buildings insurance commissions**, in response to the Financial Conduct Authority's review into the market last year, which suggested commissions make up almost a third of premiums. This is a concern which ARMA, IRPM and TPI has been signalling clearly to the industry for some time, encouraging members to ensure transparency and proportionate charges.

Michael Gove has today responded to the FCA and its report, confirming that he shares the concerns highlighted by the investigation, particularly in regards to the evidence of weak competition in the market and unacceptable issues faced by leaseholders around the transparency of their insurance costs. Gove also states that he is concerned about the lack of regulatory protections for leaseholders under FCA rules and confirmed that **ensuring that buildings insurance is widely available, is affordable and offers fair value to leaseholders is one of his top priorities**.

Within his letter, Gove has asked to be updated on progress on these key issues, including the launch of an industry-led scheme for buildings with significant fire safety issues, by summer 2023, and has set a deadline of the end of February 2023 for a new code for fire safety risk data collection from ABI and BIBA.

The letter, alongside today's press notice, confirmed that the Secretary of State **intends to legislate to ban managing agents, landlords and freeholders from receiving commissions and other payments from insurers and insurance brokers, replacing these with more transparent fees**. Gove will also **arm leaseholders with more information to enable them to better scrutinise their insurance costs** and rebalance the legal costs regime to give leaseholders greater confidence to challenge their insurance costs.

TPI has clearly indicated that measures to ban commissions were likely coming, so this announcement should be no surprise to industry. To be clear, TPI will be seeking assurance that reasonable fees for the work done must be due to managing agents and support the principle of transparency generally and around building insurance specifically.

LEASHOLD REFORM

In his interview on sky News' Sophy Ridge on Sunday and in The Times article today, Michael Gove announced his intentions to reform the leasehold system, with planned new legislation to be introduced in the final Parliamentary session, at the end of this year.

Whilst there is little detail at this stage, we know that following the announcement of the developer contract and clamping down on insurance commissions in relation to building safety, DLUHC intend to bring in **further measures to make service charges more transparent and empower leaseholders who want to challenge their bills**.

It has also been reported that **ministers are preparing to ditch rules that bar flat owners from buying the freehold to their property if a small part of their building is given over to commercial use,** such as shops.

The government also intends to **make it much easier for leaseholders in flats to take over their buildings and bring them into common ownership**.

When asked if he wants to abolish the leasehold system – which he described as "an outdated feudal system" – he unambiguously declared: "Yes".

Talking about the timescales of reform, Gove made his position on leasehold clear:

"It's not easy in legal terms. When you've got a tangle of property laws going back hundreds of years, unstitching all of that is difficult. But the fundamental thing is that leasehold is just an unfair form of property ownership. In crude terms if you buy a flat, that should be yours. You shouldn't be on the hook for charges which managing agents and other people can land you with."

Breaking News: Leasehold Reform Back in the Spotlight

Leasehold Reform Back in the Spotlight

The Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners (ALEP) has responded to comments made by Michael Gove at the weekend which suggest the Government may introduce further reforms to the leasehold system before the end of the current Parliament.

In an interview with Sophy Ridge on Sunday on Sky, he was asked a follow up question on his interview with The Times newspaper on 29 January 2023. Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, said that he wanted to introduce legislation before the next election and in the final parliamentary session, (i.e. before the end of this calendar year), 'in order to change the leasehold system.'

ALEP Director, Mark Chick, said: 'This is clearly a statement of political intent and also reveals the intended timescale from the Government. Following the introduction of the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 last summer, there has been much speculation about when further reforms to the leasehold system may be forthcoming. It is encouraging to hear from the Secretary of State with some further certainty on this, as leaseholders and those advising would like to know the likely timing and detail as to what may be planned."

"However, Mr Gove's interviews shed little light on which specific elements of the leasehold system the Government will turn its attention to next and, despite the promise, the practicalities of introducing new legislation before the next election (in terms of timing etc.) will also need to be addressed. This also says nothing as to what will happen to the leasehold reform agenda should the Conservatives lose."

On 9 November 2022, Lucy Frazer, the Minister for Housing and Planning, responded to a Parliamentary Question on progress in introducing leasehold reform, stating that "The Government has committed to making enfranchisement cheaper for leaseholders by reforming the process of valuation leaseholders must follow to calculate the cost of extending their lease or buying their freehold."

Chick continued: "Based on recent statements from Government, it seems likely that changes to the valuation system will form at least one component of the next round of reform. We look forward to receiving clarity on the Government's agenda for leasehold reform, and consulting with them in relation to the areas where it is considering change, as well as the likely timing and detail of any new legislation."

ALEP ASSOCIATION OF LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT PRACTITIONERS

For more information about ALEP please visit https://www.alep.org.uk/

Breaking News: Six Weeks for Developers to Sign Contact Requiring Them to Pay to Fix Unsafe Buildings

Six weeks for developers to sign contact requiring them to pay to fix unsafe buildings

- Contract requires developers to fix buildings and reimburse taxpayers
- Developers have six weeks to sign
- Estimated £2bn expected to be committed by developers to fund repairs
- Responsible Actors Scheme to be committed to law in spring 2023

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities made an announcement earlier today on the progress of the negotiations with industry regarding the funding of building safety repairs, and on actions being taken to provide relief from high building insurance premiums.

Today, developers received legally binding contracts that will commit them to pay for life-critical fire-safety repairs and to reimburse the taxpayer for money already spent making their buildings safe. Under the agreement, which will be legally enforceable, homebuilders must fix all buildings over 11 metres that they have played a role in developing or refurbishing in the last 30 years in England.

The government has set a six-week deadline for all developers who were invited to discussions to sign the contract. Further developers will be invited to sign the contract in the near future.

Regulations will be laid in the Spring to create a Responsible Actors Scheme in England, which we intend to establish under powers in the Building Safety Act. All those who fail to sign or comply with the terms of the contract will be ineligible to join the scheme. Being outside the scheme means that those companies may face new restrictions to their ability to operate in the housing market, including, ultimately, being prevented from developing land in England until they comply.

What's new?

The FCA have confirmed a number of changes to the obligations and expectation of Principals and ARs in the final rules.

Additional Information and Notification Requirements for Principals

- Principals will be required to notify the FCA of new AR appointments at least 30 calendar days before the appointment is due to take effect. Alongside this notification, Principals will need to provide information about the rationale behind the appointment, the financial and non-financial arrangements entered into with the AR, and details of the AR's business.
- Principals with existing ARs will need to provide additional information about their AR's as now required with new appointments above.
- Principals will need to notify the FCA of any changes to their ARs details or the regulated activities that the AR engages in.
- Principals will need to verify the details of their AR on an annual basis.
- Principals will have 60 business days from their accounting reference date to annually report AR complaints and revenue data. A Principal will be required to provide data on all of their ARs revenue from regulated and non-regulated financial service activities, as well as from non-financial, non-regulated activities.

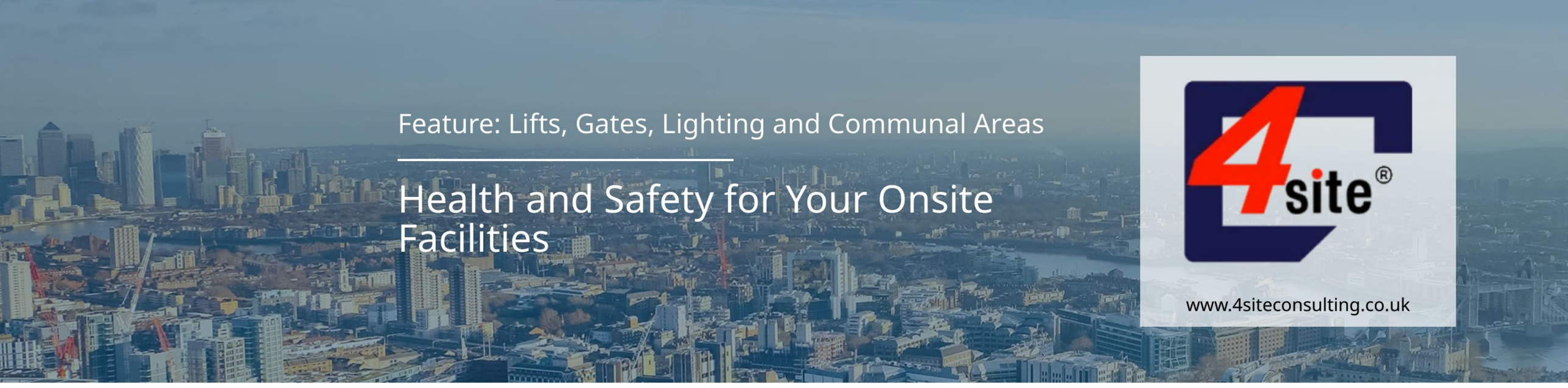
ARs should

- Provide their Principals with the information that they will require to comply with the s165 data request.
- Establish systems and processes to enable them to provide their Principal with all the information that it requires to fulfil its reporting notification obligations, including in relation to the AR's non-regulated business e.g. changes in business model or senior management.
- Permit increased oversight from their Principal e.g. permit their Principal to scrutinise management information, analyse data, review call scripts and other materials, understand issue escalation and engage regularly (via calls, meetings, email).

Be aware that if their Principal is unable to adequately oversee them in accordance with its regulatory obligations, the Principal will be able to terminate its AR contract. In practice this could mean that the AR must cease transacting insurance business. The AR should therefore consider (i) how it can best help the Principal oversee activities, and (ii) the precise language of the termination clause that is now required by the FCA.

What will the Principal be responsible for?

- Overseeing their ARs effectively. Principals should enhance oversight of their ARs by ensuring the adequacy of their systems and controls, and the proficiency of their resources to continually and accurately monitor their ARs.
- Take more responsibility for their AR. In effect, this would entail enhanced assessment and monitoring of ARs to ensure that their activities do not, or would not, result in undue harm to consumers or market integrity. The FCA have stated that a Principal's oversight of ARs activities should be "of a comparable standard as if they were an individual directly employed by the Principal."
- Annually review their ARs. Any significant issues identified in the review in relation to specific ARs must be escalated to the Principal's governing body.
- Review their ARs on an ad hoc basis.
- Annually assess the information held on their ARs.
- Have clarity on the circumstances in which they should terminate an AR relationship and ensure that its written contract enables it to terminate if it is no longer able to adequately oversee the activities of its AR.



Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Health and Safety for Your Onsite Facilities

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If you're responsible for managing a block of flats, one of the key aspects of your role is to manage and maintain the facilities within the block, for example: lifts, emergency lighting, and automated gates.

As such, you are responsible for ensuring that these facilities are compliant and safe for residents, employees and any visitors. In this article we will look a bit closer at some of these areas and discuss your responsibilities when it comes to safety, as well as discussing the requirements for risk assessments and surveys.

Risk Assessments and Asbestos Management

It goes without saying, that you will need to ensure the communal areas of the block have sufficient and up-to-date risk assessments; including health & safety and fire. However, it is important to note that this also includes external communal areas (such as gardens), lift motor rooms & plant rooms. If the block has a communal water system, you will also need to manage the risk of Legionella with a Water Hygiene Risk Assessment and provision of a log book and schematic drawings.

Furthermore, if you manage a block that was built prior to the year 2000 then you will need to manage any potential Asbestos Containing Materials. The building should be presumed to contain asbestos unless otherwise confirmed by way of an Asbestos Management Survey which will identify any potential ACMs and provide a management plan to manage the possible risks. Most of the time, it is not necessary to remove the Asbestos Containing Materials, and instead a management plan should be put in place; which will usually include yearly re-inspections. Managing Asbestos is particularly important when you have contractors working on the block, to protect both the contractors and the public. Contractors should be asking to see the building's asbestos register before commencing any works.

Lift Safety

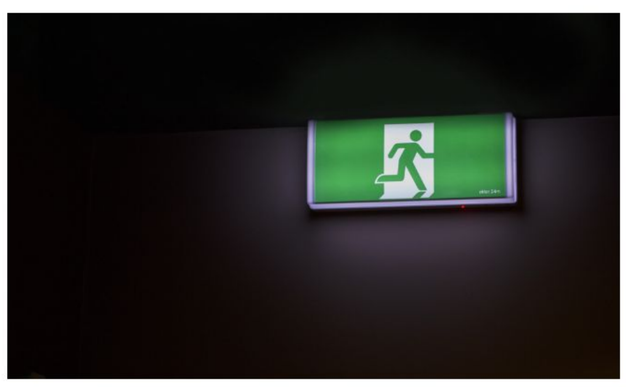
In addition to all of this, you will also need to ensure that the facilities within the building are safe and maintained. As previously mentioned, this will include lifts if present. As you can imagine, lifts can be extremely dangerous if they're not maintained. In fact, there are many horror stories on just this!

This is why they require regular servicing, with lifts carrying people needing to be serviced every 6 months. The dutyholder for the block will need to instruct a competent person to service the lifts. The competent person here may be from an external organisation as companies may not have the competency in-house. Relevant documentation and records for servicing these lifts should be kept up to date and be readily available, preferably on site.

In many cases, if you are having an Asbestos Survey carried out in a block that has a lift, the Surveyor will need to assess the lift shaft for potential Asbestos Containing Materials. Access to the lift shaft should be provided by a competent person, without this it will often be marked as 'presumed' on the report due to having no access to these areas, which is something to be avoided where possible.

Emergency Lighting

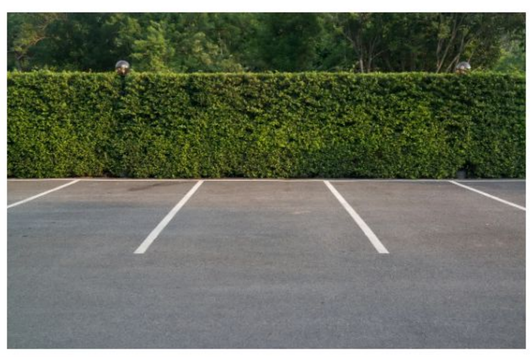
When it comes to evacuating a building, such as in the case of a fire, lighting is extremely important for ensuring that people can make a safe exit. Natural or 'borrowed' lighting is not always sufficient, this is where Emergency Lighting comes in. For those who are unaware, Emergency Lighting is a battery-backed lighting system that automatically switches on in the event of a power outage that leaves the usual mains lighting compromised.



If Emergency Lighting is not present in your communal area, then your Risk Assessment will review this to see if the lack of Emergency Lighting creates a significant risk. If there is a need for it to be installed, then that same Risk Assessment should then make a recommendation accordingly.

You should note that it is not always required, and occasionally 'borrowed lighting' from outside street lamps may be deemed sufficient for consistently illuminating the areas, especially in city centre locations.

Of course, if your building does have emergency lighting it will need to be maintained. Those responsible should ensure that the activation test is completed monthly, visual tests are completed regularly, and that it is serviced annually by a competent contractor.



External Communal Areas

We have established that Health and Safety Risk Assessments are required within the communal areas of your block and that this also extends to any external communal areas that you are responsible for.

Some of these areas may include: communal gardens, car parks, and bin stores.

In some cases, an Asbestos Survey may be required externally, for instance within a communal carpark or garages built pre-2000, where Asbestos Containing Materials may be present.

It is important that you do not overlook these areas as they can pose risks just as your internal communal areas can and if a health and safety incident were to occur, you may be held just as responsible.

If you would like any further advice or guidance on anything discussed here, please don't hesitate to contact the team.

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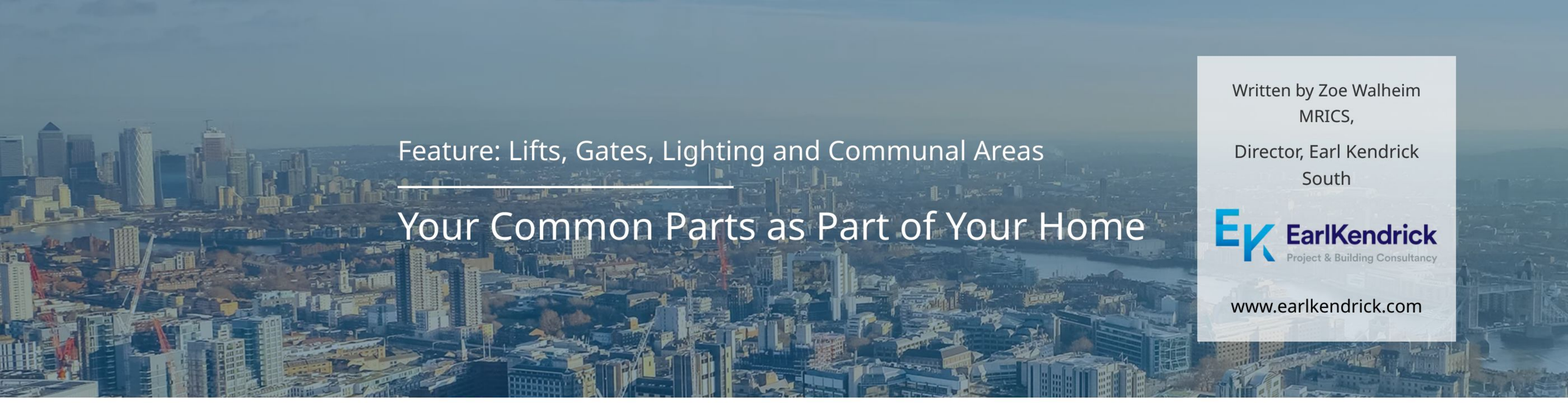

Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Your Common Parts as Part of Your Home

Written by Zoe Walheim MRICS,

Director, Earl Kendrick South

EarlKendrick Project & Building Consultancy

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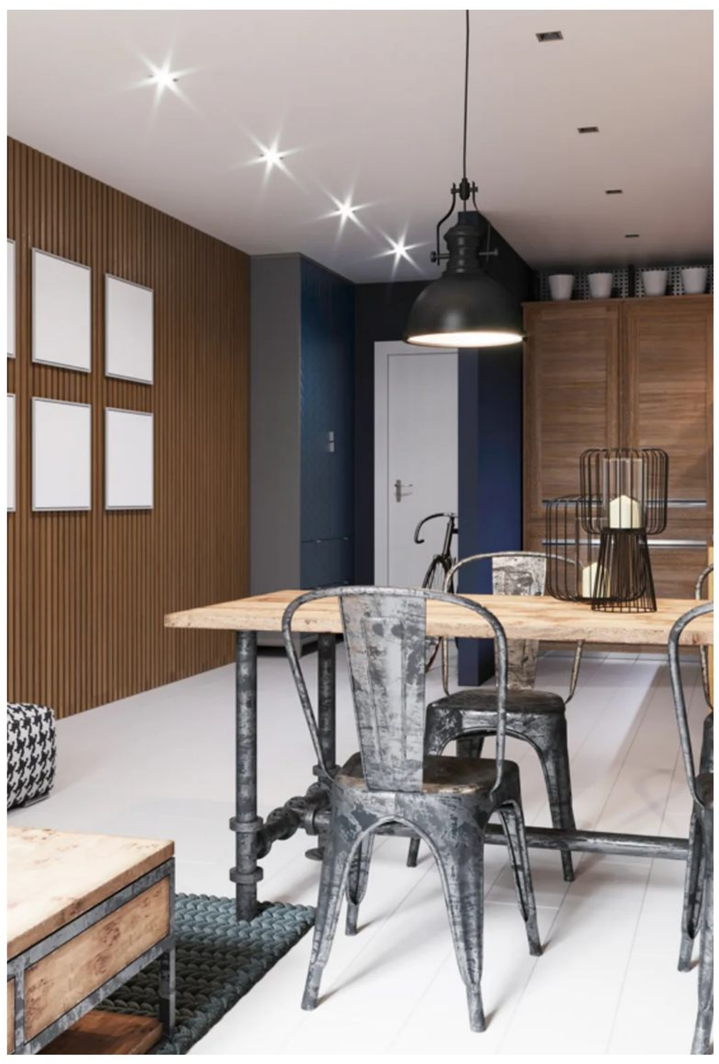
As the days become longer and the sun shines brighter, this spring may be just the time that you realise how dark, dated or tired your internal common areas have become.

When we talk about the common areas to a block of flats, we typically think of entrance lobbies and corridors, fire doors, lifts, car park, basement storage, plant rooms and even leisure facilities such as swimming pools or gymnasiums. These are the parts of a building that are not demised to individual leaseholders and are the responsibility of the landlord/RMC/RTM to maintain, check, clean, insure etc, usually delegated to managing agents.

The common parts are, too often in my view, seen as merely a means by which residents access their flat, and in turn they're assigned far less importance than, for instance, the décor within the flats. Why should this be a concern? For several reasons:



Five Reasons Not To Neglect the Common Parts

First and foremost, the requirements of the lease may dictate how often the common parts should be redecorated. If the landlord fails to comply with the covenants of the lease, it could be held in breach.

Secondly, the value of the individual flats will inevitably be affected by the state of the common areas. First impressions last, and prospective purchasers (or renters) will look at the state of the common parts and come to their own conclusions about the quality of building management. My colleagues and I regularly walk into dishevelled common areas, then step across the threshold of a flat and are immediately wowed by the contrast! Just think what the flat would be worth if the wow factor was experienced immediately when stepping in off the street.

Thirdly, it's not just about the décor. The internal common parts of a block of flats are subject to numerous pieces of health and safety and compliance legislation, so ensuring these areas are safe for residents, their visitors, site staff and contractors, is of paramount importance. Similarly with security: The front entrance door ought to be very secure to keep unwanted people out, yet easy to access for residents.

Fourthly, attention on the common parts may save service charges, through a focus on energy efficiency. The cost of electricity and gas is likely to remain high and unpalatable for some time to come, so combining a refresh to the common areas with a focus on reducing energy costs, will only please your leaseholders.

Fifthly, the common parts should still be regarded as part of someone's home and the wellbeing factor of walking into clean, uncluttered, nicely decorated, and homely common parts should not be underestimated.

Sustainability and Affordability

Internal common parts refurbishments tend to be classed as 'major works' by most managing agents and surveyors, not least because 'section 20' notices are likely to be served and reserve fund monies are expended. But to make a tangible difference, the expenditure need not be 'major', depending on what you have to work with. For instance, exchanging traditional halogen lighting for LED replacements will reduce the energy consumption within the building resulting in cost savings for service charge payers. Lighting controls within the common areas can also impact upon the atmosphere and feeling of security within the common parts. Motion sensors can illuminate the passages ahead whilst the "corridor function" of the light fitting at say 25% output, ensures that the common areas are never fully in the dark.

With sustainability in mind, my colleagues and I are all looking for ways to extend the life-cycle of what we have, rather than ripping out and starting again.

For instance, steam cleaning of carpets can extend periods before replacement and refresh the appearance of common areas, yet the option is often overlooked. And unknown to many, high quality carpet roll laid to stairs can be reserved so with some investment in labour, turning the carpet over will make the pile feel luxurious underfoot once more!

Elevate Your Common Parts

In blocks with lifts, the stairs are used infrequently, with the majority of residents opting for an easier ride. Lifts must undergo statutory inspections and maintaining them to ensure a clean bill of health from the inspector is essential. Maintaining lifts over the long term is costly and there is concern in the industry that some parts are becoming harder to find which will push prices up further. The mechanics of the lift and its safe operation are of primary concern, that but does not mean the aesthetics of the lift car should be ignored; the condition of the lift car may leave a lasting impression on a resident or visitor. The improvement of lift cars can be relatively easily achieved through improvements in lighting, addition of a new mirror or replacement laminate or tiled flooring. Lift improvements should always be conducted with the help of the contracted engineers, as the lift may require re-calibrating as a result of a change in the load.

New Fire Door Legislation

With the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 coming into force on 23 January 2023, there are now quarterly fire door checking requirements for common parts doors in blocks of flats over 11 metres in height. Ill-fitting or damaged fire doors can seriously compromise compartmentation and can hinder safe escape. If you are planning a common parts refurbishment, it may be an opportunity to replace older, non compliant doors with new, modern, effective units, rather than piecemeal remedial repairs.

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Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Lift Advice from Ardent

ARDENT LIFT CONSULTANCY

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Lift background

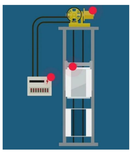
Many residential blocks benefit from having a lift installed to access upper floors, where less able-bodied residents, young mothers with pushchairs, and the Waitrose delivery drivers find them invaluable!

From 1930s mansion blocks with ornate mesh clad lifts, 1960s block conversions with the lift squeezed into a stairwell, to the modern property with purpose-built lift shafts; with each differing style and design of building, there are often just as many varying designs of lift.

The modern passenger lift has roots in the mid-1800s and has undergone numerous transformations with the advancement of technology, with safety levels always at the forefront of these changes, making lift travel one of the safest modes of transportation in the world.

However, because of the safety-first attitude of the industry, standards are forever being reviewed and amended, meaning lifts (even relatively modern lifts) can often be behind the current safety levels of new technology – though still considered safe for public usage.

Capital Expenditure



As with all electro/mechanical equipment, lifts reach a point when parts begin to fail, and the reliability of a unit is compromised. The balancing act is to pre-empt this before major component failure, resulting in a lift being out of service for a prolonged period – a controller failure for example can leave a lift out of service from 8-12 weeks on average.

Some modern lift equipment has a design life of 15-18 years, provided the maintenance and technical support is to a good standard. Equipment from the seventies generally had a life span of 25-30 years and lifts from the sixties even longer.

Lift replacement/refurbishments can be costly, with the average lift replacement costing circa £80,000 and a full refurbishment costing an average of £70,000 (based on a 4-floor traction lift). However, correctly specified lift works will offer a further 18-20 years to the life span.

In many cases refurbishment is a better option than replacement, not only is it the cheaper option in most cases, but it also gives the lift a longer life expectancy. The refurbishment of a robust lift may even give you 25-30 years' service with the potential to refurbish again after that time.

With any capital expenditure in shared accommodation (such as flat roof repair, boiler renewal), the correct level of planning is critical to ensuring the works will be completed to the required standard, while enabling funds to be collected over a prolonged period – particularly if there are not many flats to share the cost.

Below are some pointers on how best to plan for and execute the eventuality of major works to any lift(s) you may have in your property:

1) Know your lift

In most instances, the lift is generally of the same age as the property. There are exceptions when lifts have been added to the building, but these are infrequent. With 20 years a good rule of thumb for the life span of many components, check whether the lift has undergone major refurbishment works. Review comments from the service provider and insurance inspector (LOLER reports) to ensure the lift is in good condition.

Some simple things to look out for as Property Managers, which often indicate other underlying issues are as follows:

- Increased number of breakdowns/lift failures
- Poor levelling of the lift or erratic movement in starting/stopping
- Unusual noises emanating from the lift shaft, motor room or lift car
- Increasing repair costs from the maintenance company
- Doors reopening or not correctly closing the first time
- Problems highlighted in insurance inspector's report

If in doubt, have the lift surveyed. An independent survey report is the most cost-effective way to see the current condition, future life span, and potential expenditure over the short, medium, or long term. These are the perfect tool when budgeting for capital works.

2) Decide how best to proceed

Remember, it is better to plan for major works to the lift, rather than firefight as components fail. Lift equipment cannot be bought off the shelf in many cases, as most manufacturers only make to order. For example, if a machine seizes, the manufacture of a new machine may take 6-8 weeks, factor in delivery and installation and a lift can be out of service for 10 weeks if the existing machine cannot be repaired. Works of this nature will cost between £6-10,000, yet the lift will be in the same general condition in all the other areas, which could lead to further failures and expense!

Independent survey reports by a lift consultant will offer guidance on which course of action to take, possibly recommending refurbishment over replacement, but always highlighting key areas to address to ensure the lift does not fail through neglect.

3) Consultation stage

Due to the costs associated with major works to lifts, generally the refurbishment/replacement will require the Section 20 Notice (as amended by the Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002) to be implemented. This is when the plans for the lift works need to be clearly identified and explained to the leaseholders, explaining why the works are to be undertaken, what they are planning to achieve, budget costs, and timescales for the works.

The correct level of information to leaseholders is critical at this stage to ensure the project is well received and can be accepted by all. Often major works cost substantial sums of money, which can be an emotive subject, but well produced evidence and plans can ensure the reason for works is clearly demonstrated and necessary.

4) Specification and tender works

A correctly specified level of works has two distinct benefits, firstly it ensures the requirements of the client are clearly listed to provide a lift that meets and often exceeds the level of expectation. The other benefit is to ensure only those areas that need attention are addressed. It is easy to throw the baby out with the bathwater here and replace too much, for which the client needs to pay. Provided a specification is clear in intent, the correct pricing from the lift contractors can be achieved, which results in savings for the residents in the long run.

It is always recommended to handpick the contractors for the tender stage too; the UK lift industry has many companies from multinational powerhouses to sole traders. You may get a good job from both ends of the spectrum, but it is vital they are used for projects that match their skill set. A spread of 4-5 companies will ensure a competitive tender return is achieved. Your chosen independent consultant should be present at all vital stages to advise and guide you through the process, leading to simple decision-making based on value.

5) Lift replacement/refurbishment

A well-planned lift replacement/refurbishment scheme is not quick in planning or execution but timed right can ensure downtime is planned for and kept to a minimum. Typical timescales for a lift replacement scheme are as follows:

- Survey of a lift and produce report – 2 weeks
- Review survey report and plan works – 4 weeks
- Write site specific specifications – 4 weeks
- Tender works to five companies – 4 weeks
- Tender analysis and post tender meetings – 4 weeks
- Place order and procure materials – 14 weeks
- Undertake lift refurbishment – 8 weeks

As detailed above, from the survey stage to the start of a replacement can take 32 weeks or more, which will enable residents who rely on the lift to make alternative plans while the works are undertaken, minimising disruption. Lift service will be unavailable while the lift is replaced or refurbished, so knowing when this will take place always makes residents' lives much easier.

6) Defects liability period (warranty)

Following on from the lift installation, the lift will be covered under a warranty period by both the manufacturer and installer. This is where the lift performance should be monitored to rectify general teething troubles, while ensuring any more significant issues can be dealt with as part of the contract.

The lift industry standard warranty period is 12 months, but increasingly lift contractors are prepared to negotiate longer periods of cover, after all with the expense of a lift replacement, it is important to ensure peace of mind that the lift will operate safely and reliably for many years to come.

Case Study

South London Block

On behalf of:

Warwick Estates

Details of project:

We were approached to survey the lifts in 2019 whereby we produced a report recommending the full refurbishment of the 60+ year old equipment. The scheme offered opportunities for enhanced performance of the lifts, large reductions in energy consumption and a chance to address a number of health and safety issues that had been apparent for decades.

An enthusiastic and engaged client helped us, by sharing our vision for the improvements of their lifts (both in terms of performance and aesthetics), enabling the specification to be written with the best long-term interests of the building at heart and without engineering compromises.

Below is the reference received from the client following the successful completion of the project:

"We got in touch with Ardent to provide us with a full condition survey for our existing lifts.

Their findings suggested a full refurbishment of our existing lifts was to be carried out, phased out to allow for adequate spread of cost to our leaseholders.

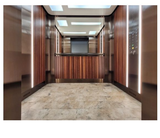
Our site is quite complex and unique but great service has been provided at all times; Ardent were also presented with challenges and complexities, given to the nature of our listed and aged buildings.

Although we started engaging them during COVID-19 restrictions, our communication has always been very positive and productive, given attention to all key aspects of our project.

I would recommend working with them and we will certainly do so for other projects."

- Alessia Scola, Director, Metro Central Height RTM Company Limited.

The full case study can be found on our website: Multi-residential block lift refurbishment – Ardent Lift Consultancy (ardentlc.co.uk)



Lift Consultancy

With constant changes in both technology and regulations, it is very difficult to keep abreast of both, to ensure that the best value is always being obtained from the lift industry. This is where an independent expert, like Ardent Lift Consultancy, can assist with measured, professional advice on the "must haves" along with the specific performance of equipment and contractors alike.

The correct level of Lift Consultancy can be utilised to:

- Assess the condition of a single lift or of a whole portfolio
- Analyse the lift requirements of a building
- Specify a replacement or refurbishment to give the maximum value allowed within the budgetary constraints of the client

While consultants can sometimes be viewed as an added expense, an expert in a certain field will often obtain the best value from the parameters they've been given, which will frequently outweigh the fees they would charge for their services.

Ardent Lift Consultancy offer a range of services to assist with the ownership and management of lifts, below are some of the services offered:

Survey Reports – A survey report will look at the current condition of lift equipment and highlight operational issues, typical energy consumption values, predicted life span and recommendations with associated budget costing.

Specification Writing – Whether your Ardent survey report has recommended minor repairs, major refurbishment, or full replacement, we will write a full specification to ensure contractually and technically the requirements of the building, client and passengers are adhered to.

Project Overview – With the lift repair, refurbishment or replacement being undertaken, Ardent will work closely with the lift contractor, commentating on all the paperwork and technical documentation, by ensuring regular site visits to ensure workmanship and program are in accordance with expectation. We communicate with the client and contractor throughout this process to ensure all parties are aware of timescales and progress.

Witness Testing – Upon successful completion of the project, Ardent's qualified engineers undertake a full witness test of the installation to ensure the lift is safe, reliable and in accordance with both the specification and to all regulatory requirements. This service also includes monitoring of the lift during the defects liability period and beyond.

Gareth Lomax and his team at Ardent Lift Consultancy is always happy to field questions on lifts and ARDENT cover the UK to assist clients with their portfolios, wherever they may be.

Gareth can be contacted on 07792 395259, at gareth@ardentlc.co.uk or alternatively please refer to their website www.ardentlc.co.uk for further details.

As independent lift consultants, ARDENT Lift Consultancy recognise the importance of offering unbiased and accurate advice to our clients. This has developed mutual respect between our team of lift consultants and those we work with. Whether working with architects looking to build practicality into their vision, or a property manager with time constraints seeking immediate solutions, we totally understand individual client requirements and provide timely, well considered and accurate advice.

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Advice you can trust

As independent lift consultants, ARDENT Lift Consultancy recognise the importance of offering unbiased and accurate advice to our clients.

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Our services to support you on every level!

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- Condition Surveys
- Traffic Analysis
- Specification Writing
- CDM Principal Designer Role
- Project Management
- Witness Testing

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Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Living with Damp: How to Treat and Avoid the Issue

Written by Flat Living Insurance

www.flatlivinginsurance.co.uk

Living in a flat that is affected by damp and mould can be truly miserable. It can aggravate asthma and other respiratory illnesses, ruin furniture and belongings and damage interiors. But as damp can be caused by many different factors, it can be hard to pinpoint who is responsible for dealing with it. It can also be very difficult to find the cause of stubborn cases without genuine help from the freeholder.

Here we'll be explaining what can cause damp, how to avoid it and what your freeholder should be doing to help if the issue is structural.

Different Kinds of Damp

The 3 most common types of damp experienced in the UK are:

- Rising
- Penetrating
- Condensation

Rising damp is caused by moisture working its way up through the walls of the building from the ground below it. This is a relatively rare form of damp, as most modern homes are built with a Damp-Proof Course in place to prevent it. In buildings built 100 years ago or earlier, the issue is usually caused by a faulty or missing Damp-Proof Course. In more modern buildings it's often caused by adjoining structures that suffer from rising damp introducing moisture to the building above the Damp-Proof Course.

Penetrating damp is caused by water making its way into a building, usually due to damage or disrepair on the exterior. Most commonly its caused by bad design or by blocked gutters and downpipes. It can also be caused by minor leaks in pipes going unnoticed for a long time.

Rising and Penetrating damp will need to be treated by your freeholder. A damp-proof course is required for rising damp issues and damaged exteriors should be repaired to solve penetrating damp.

Condensation dampness is the most common issue in flats. It occurs when warm, moist air touches cooler surfaces such as walls, mirrors and windows. Condensation can be tricky to solve as it can be put down to the ventilation, heating or insulation of the building, as well as the behaviour of the occupant.

Causes of Condensation

Most condensation can be avoided or minimised by the occupant of a flat. It's amazing how many activities can contribute to dampness.

This list includes:

- Showers
- Baths
- Drying clothes
- Fish tanks
- Boiling kettles
- Boiling water for cooking
- People breathing!

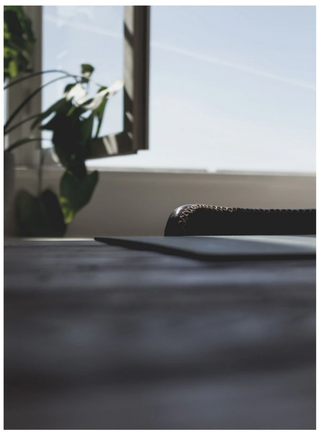
All the above add moisture to the air in your flat and, without taking appropriate countermeasures, that moisture can build up and condensate on cool surfaces. Those without central heating or who can't afford to use their central heating appropriately will almost invariably suffer from condensation damp.

Sometimes, the building itself is also to blame. If the block's heating systems, ventilation and/or insulation isn't up to scratch, issues with condensation can be exacerbated. Poor insulation and ineffective heating lead to cold walls for moisture to condensate on. Lack of ventilation leaves nowhere for the moisture to escape, and too much ventilation can make the building difficult to heat.

How to Contend with Condensation

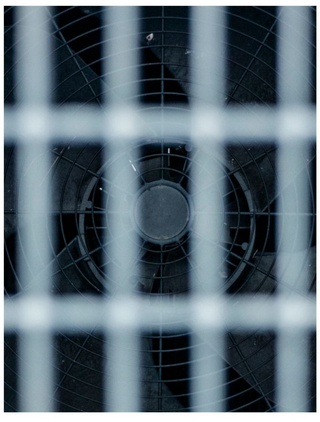
Firstly, you'll need to tick all the boxes for minimising damp-causing behaviours:

- Make sure you're ventilating the property by opening windows as much as you can
- Utilise any extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens, keeping them on for about half an hour after a bath/shower/cooking
- Dry clothes outside wherever possible
- If you have a large fish tank, consider removing it
- Use a dehumidifier in affected rooms
- Move furniture a few centimetres away from the walls to allow air to circulate
- If possible, keep the temperature at around 18 degrees Celsius
- Keep a diary of changes and take lots of photos of the issue before and during your efforts



If you've followed those steps for a few weeks and haven't seen an improvement or a slowdown in mould growth, the issues may well be structural. At this point you'll need to speak to your freeholder.

Providing them with your photos and diary of changes made as well as details of any fellow occupants who are experiencing the same issues may go a long way to convincing them that the issue falls within their remit.



Your Freeholder's Responsibilities

Firstly, they may need to install or upgrade the existing extractor fans in the property. Secondly, they will need to instruct a specialist to confirm the cause of the issues before making an action plan based on their recommendations.

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, section 11 states that the freeholder is responsible for maintaining the exterior and structure of the building in good repair. If damp is being caused by disrepair, it's definitely down to them to fix it. If the issue is caused but the design of the building then, in England and Wales, they don't have a responsibility to put it right. It works differently in Scotland, where landlords are expected to ensure the property is wind and watertight at the start of the tenancy and throughout.

But it's not just the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 that holds freeholders accountable, they must also abide by the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. This states that the landlord must ensure the flat is "suitable for human habitation", meaning that is the issue is currently or is likely to make you ill then they must step in.

Mould and damp is also listed as a potential hazard that landlords must address in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, introduced under the Housing Act 2004.

For more information from Flat Living Insurance, please click here. For more information from Flat Living, then alternatively click here.

Flat Living Insurance only provides insurance for blocks of flats and apartments. Our flats insurance policies are designed to concentrate on understanding what protection your block of flats needs and delivering it.

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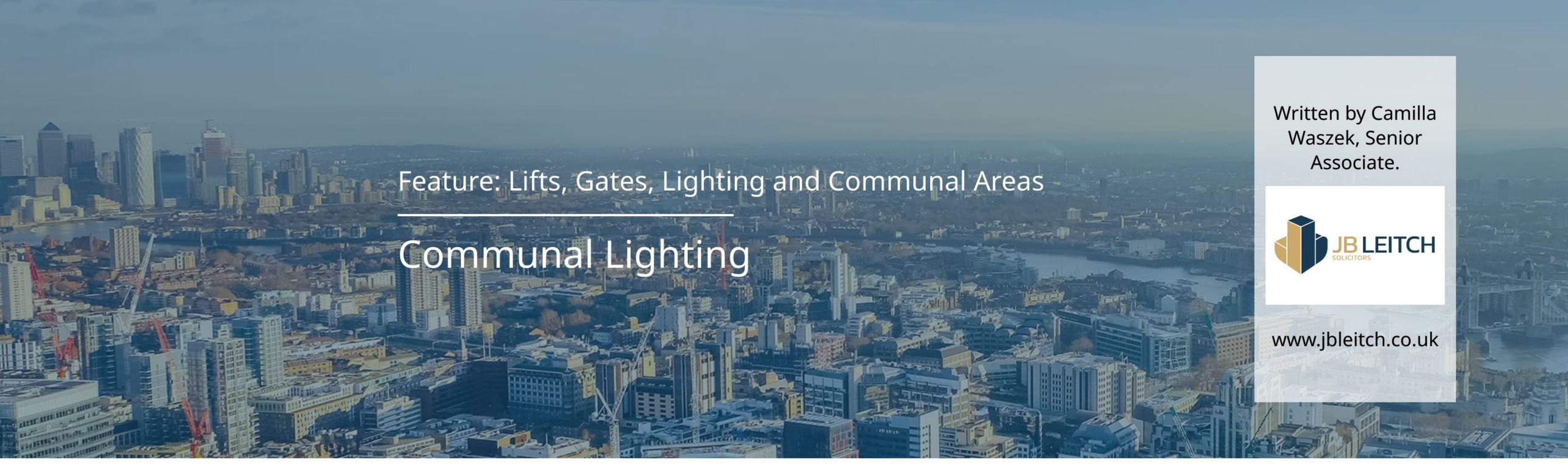

Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Communal Lighting

Written by Camilla Waszek, Senior Associate.

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www.jbleitch.co.uk

Communal lighting is often provided both internally, such as within the corridors to a block, and externally, both immediately around the block and also, where a building forms part of a wider development, across the development.

The primary purpose of such lighting appears to be to allow easier access to properties outside of daylight hours, but also provides a security and health and safety feature. However, with the rising costs of energy, it's sensible to review the requirements for the lighting.

Obligation to provide Communal Lighting

In general, simply where a person has an easement with a right to pass over the corridors/estate, this doesn't place an obligation on the grantor (i.e. the person giving the right to the other to pass over the land) to light the way. Exceptions to this include where the right to pass over is useless without it, such that the grantor has an obligation to take reasonable care to maintain adequate lighting, or where the grantor (typically the landlord) covenants in the lease to do so.

Where a landlord has covenanted to provide lighting, the extent of the lighting to be provided is often a matter of construction of the relevant lease.

For example, a landlord's obligation to keep a staircase "well and sufficiently lighted" obliges the landlord to do so to a standard that will not be a trap for a normally-sighted person.

What areas must be lit may also be an issue; the areas will also be a question of construction of the lease. It has previously been held that where a leaseholder occupied a basement flat with only exterior access, an obligation on the landlord to light the "entrance hall, stairs and pages" was held to include an exterior access passageway.

Recovery via the service charge

Whether a leaseholder is obligated to contribute to the cost of the lighting will, again, depend upon the construction of the lease, and whether the provision of lighting falls within the scope of the services to be provided as part of the service charge. This obligation may also be considered by reference to the provisions with regards safety and security.

Cost of Energy

An issue now being faced by leaseholders, landlords and management companies alike is the ever increasing cost of energy. Given that the cost of electricity for lighting common parts is often a significant cost within the service charge, particularly in the case of large developments, then it is an item of expenditure where possible reductions are being considered.

With respect to whether or not, in order to save costs, the lighting can be removed (or reduced) will be a matter of construction of the lease.

A key method of reducing lighting costs is for sensors to be installed, so that lighting is only provided during the periods in which it is required. This is often useful for internal corridors, but often isn't practical externally.

Externally, whilst there have been many suggestions about steps that could be taken to save costs, when considering those suggestions landlords should have regard to not only the terms of the lease with regards to its obligation to provide lighting, but also its obligation in relation to security, health and safety, fire safety and its insurance obligations.

For example, if external lighting were to be turned off entirely during certain hours (i.e. between midnight and 5am), because there is limited use of external areas at this time, there are potential risks to all parties. In particular, there may still be residents and occupiers passing over the external areas, such as those who work unusual shift patterns, or those returning from social events. The lack of external lighting may provide for residents to not only feel unsafe, but also increase the risk of accidents due to poor lighting. The removal of such lighting may also increase the risk of criminal activity, due to those engaging in it having the benefit of darkness. Lastly, in the event of there being an emergency, this could also hamper swift evacuations and/or hamper emergency services attendance. In such circumstances, if there was no lighting provided, this could potentially void an insurance claim.

Therefore, if steps such as reducing the hours for lighting, or the number of street lighting in operation is considered, suitable risk assessments must be undertaken.

Conclusion

The question of provision of lighting is often a matter of construction of the lease; the benefit of lighting is clear to see, and sensible landlords and management companies should give consideration as to whether any steps can be taken to save energy costs in respect of lighting, but it is imperative in having such considerations sensible risk assessments be undertaken.

About the Author:

Camilla Waszek, Senior Associate.

Camilla is a highly motivated lawyer with considerable experience in dealing with complex, defended and multi-track cases. For over six years Camilla has been an integral part of the senior litigation team and has built a strong reputation for providing clients with practical and commercial advice - in addition to being highly effective in First-tier Tribunal matters. Camilla's expertise and versatility encompasses a wide range of litigation matters. Camilla has recently been listed in the Legal 500 (2023) as a recommended lawyer.

Should you wish to discuss service charge recovery and the impacts of the Building Safety Act, please contact us:

BuildingSafety@jbleitch.co.uk

JB Leitch are specialist solicitors for freehold investor and property management companies.
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Is Leasehold Broken?

www.b-hivepartners.com

IS LEASEHOLD BROKEN?

I've worked in the property sector for 35 years and in the block management world for 28 years. I believe that leasehold is not broken but the future of how we service our customers is evolving.

As the CEO of a business that manages in excess of 3,000 developments, with some 100,000 units under management, I fully appreciate the arguments around the shortcomings and failings of leasehold but more to the point the failings of the customer experience from those delivering it.

In a career that extends over 3 decades within the sector I would also argue it is not as broken as it might appear. The pricing model is the root cause to its failings but delivering a message that 'you get what you pay for' is hardly an easy sell when the work done by an agent is not currently valued and is misunderstood. This results in unhappiness for the client, the leaseholders and the agent.

However, as Government look to clamp down on leasehold abuse around escalating Ground Rents, they talk about capping some of the fees agents charge, they look to manage the challenges that have been thrown up as a result of the Grenfell tragedy, they flip flop around the benefit of regulating agents and cannot agree on whether there is a need for a Building Safety Manager or not, whilst also exhorting the virtues of Commonhold as being the solution, with neither of these options addressing service delivery.

As a business we employ over 400 people who provide a service predominantly made up of Resident Management Companies, whereby the people that own their own leases are empowered to manage their own buildings. We act as advisors to help them understand the minefield of landlord and tenant, along with understanding Company Law, Health and Safety Law, fire safety, gas safety, asbestos management, powered gate regulations, waste management, recycling, parking legislation, anti-social behaviour, environmental issues, accident recording, mixed tenure, trespass, name your hobby and we need to understand it, as well as be mediators, social workers and if some clients had us believe be the police too.

All said from where I sit I do not believe leasehold needs a great deal of change to make it work.

Today I am a CEO of a large business but less than 10 years ago I managed a small, local and traditional managing agent. As a business we employed twelve staff, managing 3,200 units spread across 200 developments. I knew most buildings and, in many cases, knew the Directors of the Resident Management Companies by name, many I would have said became friends. The commonality between these two different businesses was the focus on Resident Management Companies as opposed to working for Freeholder clients or Developer clients but the goal between the two different businesses is no different - both want to deliver an exceptional customer service to their clients, no one sets out wanting to do a bad job.

In all honesty neither are probably succeeding in achieving excellent customer service.

NATIONAL OR LOCAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT?

The large national agent has the machinery, the expertise, the knowledge and most likely the resource, due to investment in technology as a result of scale to be able to deliver an exceptional service but they do not have the ability to operate on a personal and local level.

Meanwhile the small local agent has the local knowledge and the ability to become familiar with the building inside out because it is on their doorstep, they understand the people that live in the building and can tailor their service as a result. However, the negatives are they are handtied to scale up with the investment in technology which is often outside of their financial constraints and probably knowledge. The changing legislation involves having to employ experts that cost and that cannot be scaled due to the size of their business, the demands of change impact their learning journey and so keeping abreast of their areas of expertise is too demanding. Furthermore, the complexities of compliance distract them from doing exactly what makes them different from the national agent and that is getting to know their clients, developing a relationship and having the time to understand the buildings they manage.

Both the national agent and the local agent have a very valid place in the market, but the complexities of that market have become such that the solution to providing that excellent customer experience cannot be met by either service provider. I believe marrying the qualities of big and small or national and local together is what is needed.

That solution exists with B-hive Block Management Partners. It is not a franchise service, it is a partnership - a partnership between national and local. The national brings the technology, the compliance around service charge accounting, the delivery of services concerning Health and Safety, whilst supporting investment in legal departments. B-hive have expertise in many different directions, thus being on tap for the local agent to use and call upon as and when it is needed, thus enabling the local to focus on understanding the fabric of the building and the relationship between the residents, along with being the conduit between the building and the compliance needs provided by the national agent.

60 AND COUNTING...

Without making it too complex the partnership looks to embrace the best of both parties' skill sets.

Many companies and individual property managers agree this is another way for customers in the future. We have already signed up over 60 partners and we have many in the pipeline. B-hive have partnered with surveying firms, sales and letting agents and experienced property managers who have chosen to set up on their own block management business with the knowledge that they can provide local and excellent customer service, supported by a trusted, capable and credible partner.

I believe the future will see more and more local agents and property managers adding block management to their existing service provision or setting up their own businesses and as a result getting a better quality of life.

There is no doubt that some buildings located in a large metropolis like London will always require a highly skilled and experienced operator. The Governments reform only seems to concentrate on these developments, but they need to understand that some of the other buildings in London and other locations like the West country, East Anglian villages, the Cheshire plains and Cumbria are inherently different to big blocks in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds and need a very different solution without compromising on safety and compliance.

In any event and in any location, with any level of complexity our partners are able to provide the best of both worlds, a first-class customer experience and a current and future proof compliant service.

Have a look at the B-hive proposition – www.b-hivepartners.com

Alec Guthrie is the CEO of the Vegner Group, which owns HML, Faraday Property Management, Dauntons Soar, Shaw & Co Surveyors and over the last few years has successfully acquired more than 50 businesses.

B-hive Block Management Partners is a specialist division that offers solutions for existing property professionals and is a trading name of HML PM Ltd. HML's extensive experience is derived from being specialists in the estate and block management sector for more than 50 years and managing circa 100,000+ units.

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Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Getting Your Block Spring-Ready

London Flats Insurance
www.londonflatsinsurance.co.uk
020 7993 3034

After battening down the hatches for winter on a couple of short months ago, it's now time to start planning for Spring. Now is a great time to get your ducks in a row and book in the contractors you need to make sure your residents can enjoy everything their block has to offer when the sun starts peeking through again.

We'll be looking at giving both the inside and outside of your block a spring clean, as well as making the most of any gardens or communal facilities you oversee- and let's not forget the importance of ensuring your facilities are covered by the best insurance policies for your block.

The Great Spring Clean

After the rain and mud and ice of winter, your block could be looking a bit worse for wear. Getting a full building clean booked in for early springtime can give your building the facelift it needs, as well as giving your residents a boost.

Consider a full pressure wash of the exterior once the weather has started looking up, and book in your window cleaner for a full spruce up. While you're at it you can have the roofs, gutters and downpipes cleaned and checked for defects- they've worked hard in the recent wet weather!

Inside the building, a deep clean of the common areas (including carpet shampooing and possibly a lick of paint where needed) can really refresh the building and ensure resident satisfaction. If pets are allowed in your building or if pests have been a problem in the past, this may also be a good time to enact your pest control processes. Cleaning the inside of communal windows is also appreciated.

Inspections and Servicing

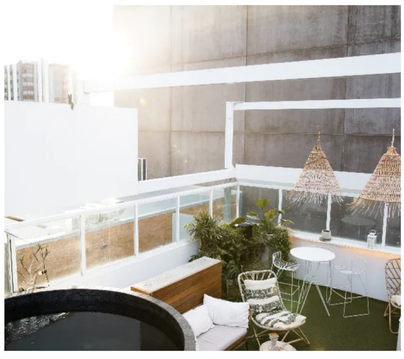
As boiler engineers are run off their feet during winter, now can be a better time to book in for a regular service of any HVAC systems you have in place. Correcting any issues now could save a lot of money and hassle when next winter creeps around.

If your building has a lift, you should make sure it's being inspected as per the rules of LOLER. If it's been a while since your last inspection or if you're new to managing the building, now could be a great time to book in your inspection so it's looked at in Spring and Autumn each year.

Any outdoor lighting may have been put through the mill in the wind and rain of the winter months. Checking each unit for functionality and signs of wear and tear now means less issues when their use is in demand next winter. Outdoor lighting is a health, safety and security issue, so best to keep on top of it.

Gardens and Outside Spaces

After the snow, ice, rain and wind we've had this year, it's likely that your gardens and outdoor spaces are looking a little sad. Spring is a great time of year to spruce up your gardens as well as create pockets of outside space for residents to use throughout the summer.



For those with rooftop access, a garden space is relatively easy to create. You can install raised flower beds and use trellis walls to divide the space into smaller areas. It may be best to seek the advice of a professional when choosing which species to put where, as any plants you choose will be pretty exposed to the elements. Installing netting for vine plants to grow along can be a great solution; you can grow beans or peas while creating a natural shelter for the plants below.

The same applies for balconies- flower pots and balcony planters that fit over railings are great but make sure you're using the best varieties for the conditions your space offers. If you're making a flower bed, choose plants that bloom in complimentary colours and consider the shapes of the foliage for full effect. Place the tallest plants in the back of the box, a few on the sides, and let trailing plants dangle over the front of the box. If you don't have gardens or balconies, hanging baskets are one of the easiest ways to fit in some greenery for your residents.

Hopefully you already have a fantastic groundskeeper who's aware of what needs to be done in Spring, but here's a few of the main jobs if you'd like to make yourself aware:

- Flower beds should be defined
- Grass should be weeded and fed (and cut in some areas)
- Certain hedges and shrubs should be pruned
- Spring bulbs should be planted (they should be also be allowed to die off naturally, as cutting these back too soon will stop them from flowering next year)

Sports Facilities

If your block is furnished with a gym, swimming pool or tennis courts, your residents a likely to be chomping at the bit to make use of them as they 'spring' into the new year.

Any indoor facilities will likely be in a good state as they're used and cleaned year-round, but it's still a good time to service any equipment, give the space a lick of paint and give everything a deep clean. Outdoor facilities are likely to have been left to languish in the rain, so a pressure wash and in-depth check-over are probably needed!

Car Parks

While the rest of the block gets a refresh, don't forget your carparks. While you're in cleaning and inspection mode, make sure your carparks get a once over. Check all gates and doors are in good working order, ensure any CCTV is functioning well and if your spaces could do with a repaint, now's the time.

OZEV grants for EV charging facilities in blocks of flats were introduced in April 2022- if you've not yet taken advantage then you may want to consider applying. The funding can provide up to £30,000 per building towards the cost of installing charge points.

Insurance

It's always a good time to check your buildings, lift and facilities insurance policies. Re-read the wording and call your broker if you have any concerns that you could be underinsured or paying for more than you need.

You can find details of our policies here:

- Buildings Insurance
- Lift Inspection and Insurance
- Terrorism Insurance
- Legal Expenses Insurance
- Home Emergency Policy

Our team have the experience and expertise to provide you with the best and most suitable insurance policy for your specific block of flats or apartments. We only provide insurance products for flats and apartments, it's all we do, so you are assured of our full attention and best possible service.

Apologies if we've added to your already full to-do list, but all of the above can reduce stress and financial costs further down the line- as well as improving the saleability of your block and boosting resident satisfaction. Getting ahead of the game now will stand you in good stead for the year ahead.

For more from London Flats Insurance, click here.

At London Flats Insurance, we only provide policies for blocks of flats and apartments, which means that we are specialists in this field. We know that each block of flats is different, which is why every flats insurance policy we offer is tailor-made to suit you, your block and its residents. Plus, we always work with A-rated insurance companies, so you can be sure that our insurance policies are a great solution when insuring your block of flats.

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South West Firm Sponsors International Women's Day Event in Swindon

Fraser Allen
— Estate Management —
www.fraserallenem.co.uk

South West block management firm, Fraser Allen Estate Management, are sponsoring an International Women's Day Afternoon Tea & Networking Event on Wednesday 8th March.

The three-hour event, which aims to recognise and celebrate women female leaders in the local community, will be held at Basset Down Complex, off j16 of the M4, from from 11am – 2pm.

The women-only networking session provides a valuable opportunity to make new connections while enjoying a buffet style afternoon tea with fizz. Attendees will be able to table swap to maximise the opportunity to meet as many people as possible.

Jodie Fraser, managing director of Fraser Allen Estate Management, explains why her company is involved in recognising the day:

"It's important to continue to mark this day, because despite the changes being made around the gender pay gap and women's rights in general, there is still a long way to go. Flexible working is going to be key to ensure more women can maintain their positions in the workplace, and until we are all on a level playing field, we must continue to support awareness days such as this.

"International Women's Day is also important to me as my company is the only female led managing agent in the area and that comes with its own challenges. However, it's also a huge achievement to work in a very male dominated industry and still be a success within residential property management."

This year's theme is #EmbraceEquity, meaning creating a fair and equal world. At the event will be Nick Gazzard who set up the Hollie Gazzard Trust, a Gloucestershire based charity started by Nick after his daughter Hollie was murdered by her ex-partner in 2014, following months of obsessive behaviour, stalking and harassment.

Jodie Fraser is also a corporate ambassador for the charity and will be talking to Nick Gazzard about the importance of the charity, and how women can keep themselves safe through his safety app known as Hollie Guard.

"Nick lost his daughter Hollie in the most traumatic way you could imagine. I am inspired by his drive and ambition to keep young women safe, and when I heard about **Hollie Guard**, I knew it was something that would be a huge benefit to lone workers within my industry.

"For us to tell the attendees about the Trust and the app is so important to keep raising awareness around personal safety." To book tickets for this event hosted by digital marketing company Total Swindon visit **https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/international-womens-day-afternoon-tea-networking-tickets-507464448827**

Fraser Allen Estate Management specialise in Residential Block Management and are committed to ensuring your needs are put first. We bring an innovative, organised and reputable approach to the industry with a friendly team who are on hand to assist you.

Fraser Allen Estate Management | info@fraserallenem.co.uk | 01242 399150

Fraser Allen
— Estate Management —

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The Future of Customer Service

Written by the Adiuvo team

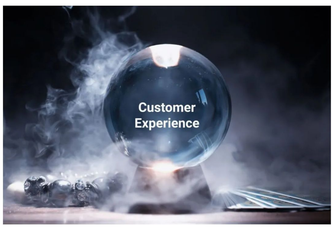
adiuvo

www.adiuvo.org.uk

As customer preferences change and technology makes astounding leaps what will customer service look like in the next few years? Colin Stokes, MD of Adiuvo examines how CX might evolve.

What truly makes for a good experience? That should be the first consideration or question in any customer facing organisation. As a company that, for example, dealt with over 27,000 interactions in 11 days of the Christmas holiday alone its something we often ask ourselves.

Our answer and the combined wisdom of CX experts suggest is; Speed, Convenience, Consistency. Friendliness and Personalisation all carried out with a human touch—that is, creating real connections by making technology feel more human and giving employees what they need to create better customer experiences.



Speed and convenience are 2 of the easier facets to attain, it's a question of resources and management making enough of those resources available to fulfil your customers needs. Obviously enough staff to ensure quick responses be it emails, chat bots or phone calls with true consideration given to when your customer needs to contact you (evenings and weekends perhaps).

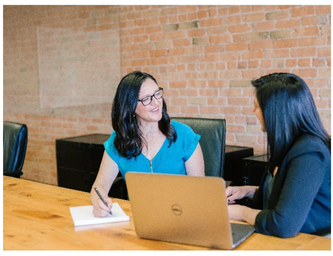
Consistency is a quality issue and only by investing in training and quality control can an organisation ensure that all channels provide customers with the correct information on, almost, every enquiry. Friendliness is not only about how your staff or technology interacts but how user friendly any experience is and any touchpoint should be reviewed whether its your initial IVR or webforms or FAQ's.

With personalisation no company can afford to or needs to deliver a fully customized "ideal experience" to each individual customer across the range of digital, human, and static touchpoints and interactions. The fact is, some customers are simply worth more than others, and it takes a great deal of thought and data to identify which ones and act accordingly, but the results can be more than worth it and it's the hardest thing for competitors to copy and enables companies to create truly differentiated, category-leading experiences that make interacting with them so relevant, so much more convenient, and so perfectly suited to customers' wants and needs that they won't even consider switching to a competitor.

With all that in mind what's the delivery trends for customer interaction that will be coming to the fore?

1. Face-to-face video communication will increase.

Eye contact is powerful, and customers, more and more, will look at non-video, real-time voice conversation as a thing of the past. Companies using video — asynchronously, as "video voicemail" (e.g. Loom) or synchronously, as "video conference" (e.g. Zoom with video) — are a generation ahead.



We know that eye contact improves relationships and facilitates openness (whether that's in business or in your personal life), so video is not just a growing expectation of consumers, but a viable business-improving tool for vendors. You should start using video voicemails now, and scheduled meetings with customers should involve a face-to-face meeting whenever possible.

2. Customers will expect an omni-channel service experience.

Customers need to be able to engage your company through a variety of digital mediums.

This increased accessibility will drive the need for omni-channel experiences. Omni-channel support is distinctively different from multichannel support as omni-channel syncs your communication channels together so both your team and your customers can work seamlessly between them.

For example, rather than customers having to navigate away from your social media page, your service team can respond to them wherever they're engaging your business. Then, if the problem can't be solved on one communication channel, your reps can easily transfer the case to another medium where they can better support the customer.

This reduces friction in the service experience because customers don't have to log off one interface just to log into another one to continue working on the same problem.

3. Real-time messaging will outpace email.

Email is dead, and long live chat. Right?

Well, yes and no. Just like video, customers expect you to be always on — and most of them prefer to interact using chat than phone or email. Whatsapp or Messenger as a channel for support has pushed us ahead light years! Now, you can converse with businesses in real-time, and Facebook will even show you their average responsiveness (and if that responsiveness is poor, forget even engaging at all). The world operates in synchronous time now — so that means you need to amp up your communication technologies and strategies while still using email to share important documents and communications your customers will want to come back to again and again.

4. Remote work will become more normal.

The future of customer service will not only push customers online, but it'll move service reps there, too.

These agents will have more tools to work remotely. They'll field customer inquiries from the comfort of their homes, instead of having to work in an office setting.

5. Bots (and AI) will help professionals, not replace them.

Almost everyone has seen the recent impact of OpenAI and their ChatGPT project and the impending integration to Microsoft and bots will make huge jumps forward in their uses especially as they can be there when you can't, like while your customer service team is asleep as well as improving self-service for customers therefore reducing expenses.

Over the next 10-25 years, this technology will continue to make huge advances and will be capable of doing even more of what humans are doing today. It will be smart for customer-facing teams to keep up with bot progress and stay on the cutting edge here to provide increasingly better experiences at increasingly lower costs.

Bots and AI will be a game-changer for customer support where reps spend close to 90% of their time on the job repeating the answers to the same questions and helping customers with the same issues over and over again. And even learning new skill.

6. Self-service will become an absolute necessity.

Since the first time someone wrote a user manual, self-service has existed. And as mentioned above, bots and AI offer new frontiers of self-service.

But more meaningfully, customers and users are changing rapidly, and they expect more self-service avenues than ever before.

to stay ahead of that curve once it arrives — and if you're already doing customer success at your company now, you're ahead of the game.4. Remote work will become more normal.

The future of customer service will not only push customers online, but it'll move service reps there, too.

These agents will have more tools to work remotely. They'll field customer inquiries from the comfort of their homes, instead of having to work in an office setting.

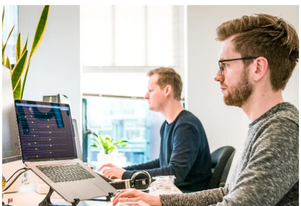
7. Social media will become a standard customer service tool.

Companies will have to adapt their social media accounts to handle customer service situations. Whether this is a messaging service or a dedicated rep, businesses will need to devise a game plan that manages spontaneous social media interactions. This means that social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram will become viable options for customers that are looking to submit feedback.

In the past, these mediums wouldn't even be considered as customer service options. However, as social media continues to open up new outlets for customer reviews, companies will be forced to engage with these consumers on their own online turf.

8. New technology will create new customer service positions.

Some technology will become the catalyst for new customer service positions. For example, augmented reality may pave the way for virtual assistants who can help customers learn how to use products and services. Customers will not only be able to simulate a product, but they'll also have someone digitally supporting them as they become familiar with its features.7. Social media will become a standard customer service tool.



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In the past, these mediums wouldn't even be considered as customer service options. However, as social media continues to open up new outlets for customer reviews, companies will be forced to engage with these consumers on their own online turf.

9. Customer service reps will solve fewer problems.

This one sounds bad, but it really isn't!

With more AI and self-service resources becoming available to customers, customer support will see a decrease in case count. This is because smaller, less-complicated problems will be solved by either the customer or a service technology.

So does that mean you can fire your customer support team? No! Your reps will be able to use this added time to focus on solving more difficult product or service problems. That significantly improves the customer experience because it allows your reps to provide a more personalized interaction. Instead of feeling the pressure of a growing case queue, customer service teams can be more thorough in their work and avoid costly troubleshooting errors.

Formed in 2007 by ex-London Property Managers, adiuvo (from the Latin to help or assist) to initially offer a service that had, in their opinion, been severely lacking; a professional and knowledgeable office based emergency out of hours' response for Property Managers.

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BLOCK BY BLOCK

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- Melissa Bagot

“With Alice's help and using the information she gave me I have secured a role with an amazing company and I couldn't be more grateful. If you're looking for someone with a wealth of knowledge and a real passion for what they do I couldn't recommend Alice enough”

- Max Braun

www.blockrecruit.co.uk

Featured Job Vacancies

Are you looking for a new role, maybe a step up the career ladder? Take a look at a range vacancies in the block management sector from Block Recruit.

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Caretaker

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Block Manager (Home Based)

Location: Surrey

Salary: £30,000 - £40,000

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Property Manager

Location: Northamptonshire

Salary: £30,000 - £45,000

Tell me more

Senior Block Manager

Location: Central London

Salary: £50,000 - £60,000

Tell me more

Service Charge Accountant

Location: Central London

Salary: £35,000 - £45,000

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Block Manager

Location: Hertfordshire

Salary: £35,000 - £45,000

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Assistant Block Manager

Location: Norfolk

Salary: £22,000 - £25,000

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Block Recruit

Block Recruit specialise in providing property professionals to all areas of the block management industry in the UK.

Visit the Block Recruit website to find out about other vacancies they have and how they can support you in finding the perfect new role.

BLOCK RECRUIT

Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Are Your Communal Areas Correctly Insured?

Written by the Residentsline Team

Residentsline Flats Insurance

www.residentsline.co.uk

With all of the insurance requirements entrusted to Property Managers and Residents' Management Companies, it can be easy to overlook the communal areas of your estate.

If you have outbuildings, grounds, private roads or if you're looking after a gated estate, you'll need to make sure that everything within your remit is covered.

Here's we'll be explaining how Residentsline can help make sure you've got all your bases covered.

Gated Estates and Private Roads

Gated Estates are very popular due to their security advantages and the privacy they offer to occupants. They also tend to offer leaseholders access to facilities such as gyms, swimming pools and other sports facilities.

Managing this kind of estate brings with it a very specific set of challenges in terms of maintenance and insurance. It's true that gated estates experience fewer security issues than their street-side counterparts, but specialist insurance is certainly needed to cover the varying circumstances that only come from managing communal areas.

As property insurance specialists, we're fully aware that one standardised policy does not fit all- that's why we have tailor-made our Roads and Private Estates Insurance to cover you against your responsibility for communal areas within the estate.

What Exactly is Covered?

The full policy wording is available to read here, but in essence, our policy is designed to protect you against a huge scope of unforeseeable and accidental incidents such as:

- Storm damage to your fences
- A delivery vehicle hitting your gates
- A fire destroying your bin store
- A visitor sustaining an injury after tripping on uneven paving

The policy covers accidental damage to communally owned property, as well as including Employers Liability and Property Owners Liability cover.

Material damage is included as standard, insuring your estate against damage to outbuildings and any other structures within the grounds such as:

- Car parks
- Car ports
- Lampposts
- Street furniture
- Roads
- Pavements and paths
- Gates
- Fences
- Bin stores
- Playground equipment
- Landscaping
- Fixed fuel oil and liquid petroleum tanks
- Underground services, septic tanks, cesspits and pumping stations

This cover is provided on a 'no sum insured' basis and the maximum payable under this policy for any one period of insurance is capped at £100,000.

The Employers Liability element protects you against your legal liability towards accidents or injuries happening to employees working on the estate. Maintenance staff, cleaners and gardeners can all be included.

The policy also includes Property Owners Liability as you may well have a responsibility for an un-adopted road, or you may be lucky enough to enjoy the benefits of having a gym, tennis court or swimming pool on your grounds. With these benefits comes the responsibility to protect those that own, use or visit these facilities.

The Limit of Indemnity for these covers is £10,000,000. We also recommend that you consider our optional extras: Legal Expenses Cover and Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.

What Can I Claim For?

Our Private Roads and Gated Estates Insurance is designed to be as all-encompassing as possible. Below are just a few of the costs you can potentially claim for under the policy:

- Architects and professional fees
- Removal of debris
- Claim preparation costs/fees
- Clearing of drains
- Emergency costs of minimising losses
- Government fees, contributions or imposts
- Legal fees
- Storm damage to gates and fences
- Temporary protection
- Tsunami damage
- Workmen fees

Why Choose Residentsline?

We know how important a comprehensive insurance policy is- no matter what type of property you have. Gated estates (and the shared property within them) aren't massively common, so it's not surprising that they require a bespoke policy to achieve full insurance coverage. Our policy is tailored specifically to these property types, giving you peace of mind that you'll be covered against the unexpected, no matter what.

For a quote, you can give our friendly, knowledgeable team a call on 0800 281 235 or you can email us at info@residentsline.co.uk or request a quote online. We'll aim to get your quote back to you within two hours.

For more from Residentsline please click here. Alternativly, click here to read more from Flat Living.

Residentsline's sole focus has always been insurance for blocks of flats. Today, 25 years on, Residentsline is still the best choice for flats insurance.
At Residentsline, our flats insurance policies are tailored to your needs; created for all sizes and types of blocks of flats and apartments. Our insurance cover also includes the option to include directors and officer's liability insurance, terrorism insurance, lift cover or legal expenses protection as part of your policy or as a separate policy if desired.

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Residentsline Flats Insurance

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Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

The Importance of Lift Maintenance and Breakdown Cover

Written by the Block in a Box Team

www.blockinabox.co.uk

For resident leaseholders in a block of flats, the lifts in the building can hold varying importance. For some, they're a welcome convenience. For others, a lifeline. For everyone using a lift, a lot of trust is placed in the managers of the block of flats.

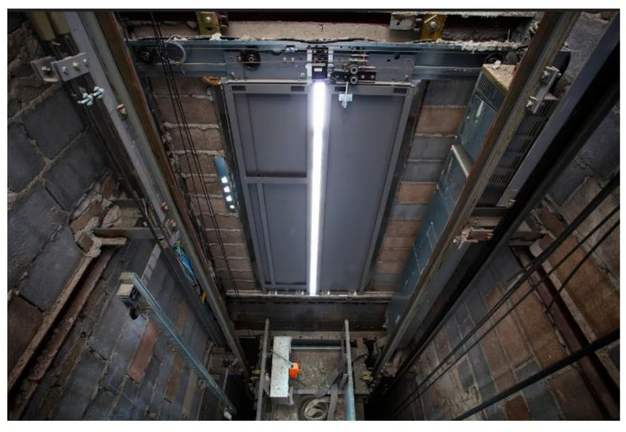
Neglected lifts can lead to serious accidents causing entrapment or injury, as well as stress for those whose access to the outside world is hindered or cut off entirely by breakdowns.

Planned, professional maintenance of your lift can not only ensure the safety of your residents, but it can also massively extend the life of your lift. It can also affect your insurance premiums.

The Importance of Lift Maintenance

Lift maintenance is vital for the safety and satisfaction of your residents, but it's also a legal responsibility, As a Property Manager or Residents Management Company you are an 'owner or operator' and are legally required to have your lifts inspected by a competent person once every 6 months (see the Health & Safety Executive website for more information).

It's also paramount in terms of your insurance. Your buildings insurance policy will insure your lift in the event of damage caused through 'insured perils' such as fire, accidental damage or malicious damage, but this cover does not extend to general breakdowns or maintenance works.

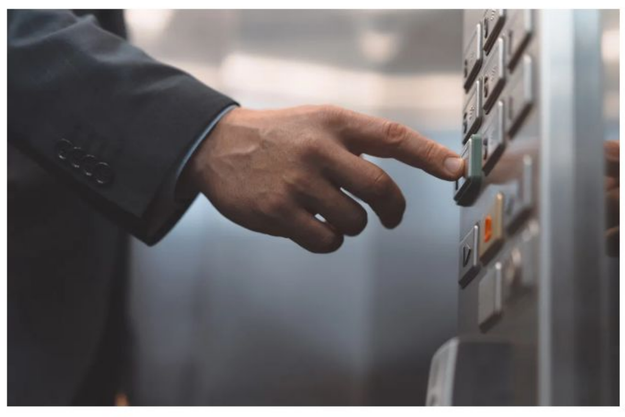


Your 6-monthly inspections and any maintenance works suggested by your competent person are the key to warding off any catastrophic breakdowns and therefore any unexpected costs.

Lift Inspections

As well as your legal duty to maintain the lift, you are also required under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) to have your lift "thoroughly examined by an independent 'Competent Person' who will assess the safe operation of your lift". These inspections are often referred to as Insurance Inspections and also need to occur every 6 months (as well as prior to new equipment going into service and after any major alterations).

A "thorough examination" is defined as a "systematic and detailed inspection of the lift and all its associated equipment". The aim of the inspection is to identify any current defects as well as anything that may become dangerous in the future. The competent person must then report these issues to the owner/operator/duty holder for them to rectify. They must also report certain issues or circumstances to the relevant enforcing authority such as the Health and Safety Executive or the Local Authority.



How Do I Know if My Lift Isn't Functioning Properly?

Other than the obvious breakdowns, here are a few signs to look out for that may indicate your lift isn't as happy as it could be:

- The lift isn't stopping perfectly in line with the landing floor (it's stopping just above or just below)
- The doors open and close a few times before the lift moves
- Residents report noises that indicate the lift may be touching the walls of the lift shaft when in motion
- Unusual noise or heat coming from the machine room
- The lift indicates the wrong floor designation when called

If any of the above are experienced or reported, an inspection should be carried out as soon as possible to avoid any further issues.

How Can We Help?

Block in a Box partners with and is sponsored by trusted professionals from across the industry who are best placed to support you as a property manager or RMC. For Lift Insurance and Inspection cover, we highly recommend Flat Living Insurance.

Their policies in a nutshell:

- Lift Machinery Breakdown Insurance: Available with AVIVA Insurance and starting from only £112.00 for one lift up to 5 floors, this policy includes 'failure to services' with a Limit of Indemnity of £250,000
- Lift Inspections: These are available with a range of providers with prices starting from £280.80 for one lift up to 5 floors.

Head to Block in a Box for advice and signposting to competent professionals who are ready to help with all roles to help you keep your block of flats maintained.

Block in a Box has been created to assist self-managed Residents' Management Companies, Right to Manage Companies and Residents' Associations, their blocks of flats and the leaseholders that live in them by providing a mix-and-match toolbox supplying all the services you need.

We designed it with a steering committee of directors and association members to provide something that would truly help.

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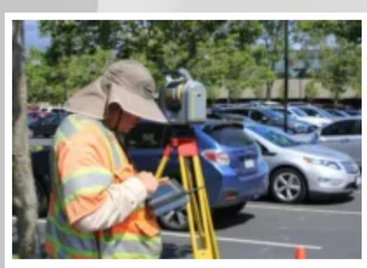

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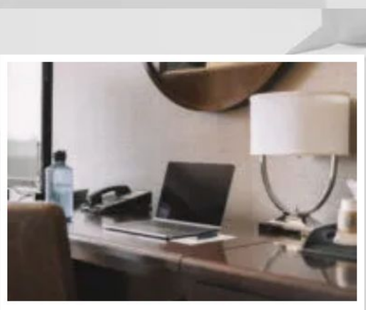
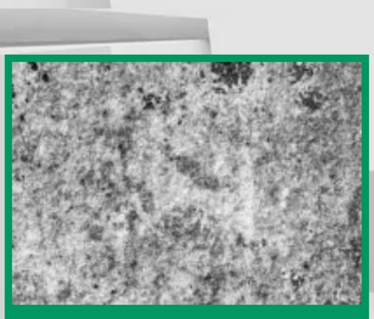
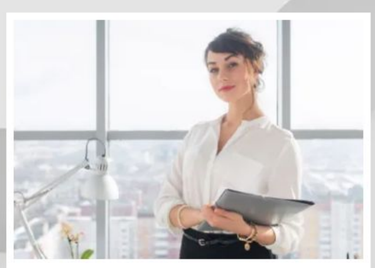


Alternative Accommodation



Asbestos Survey and Management



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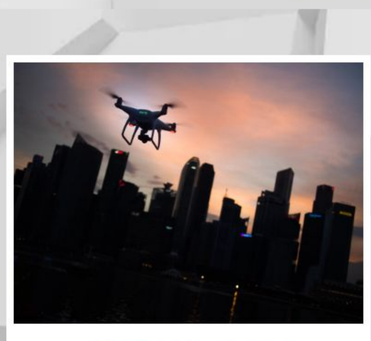
Contractor Accreditation

Cyber Security Training



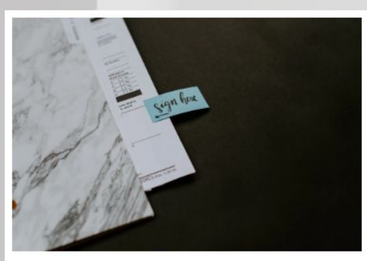
Drone Surveys

Directors and Officers Liability

Emergency Assistance

Electrical Charging Points

Enfranchisement



EWS1 Forms

Fire Risk Assessments

Fire Door Inspection

FPRA

FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

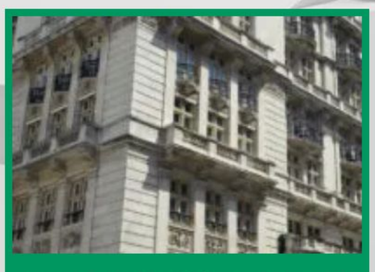
FPRA

Flat Living

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Risk Assessments

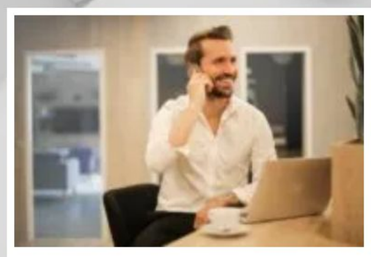
Health and Safety Awareness Training



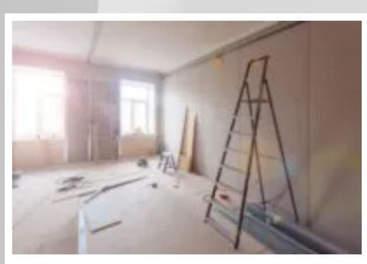
Historic Building Repair

Insurance Solutions

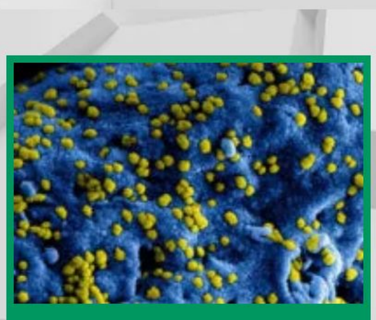
Lease Variation



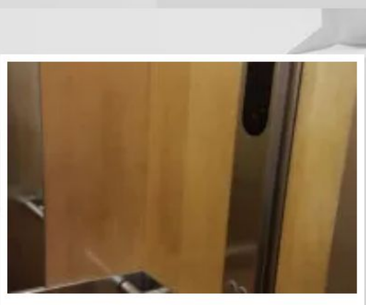
Lease Extensions



License to Alter



Legionella Risk Management



Lift Wrapping

Out of Hours Helpline

Planned Maintenance Program

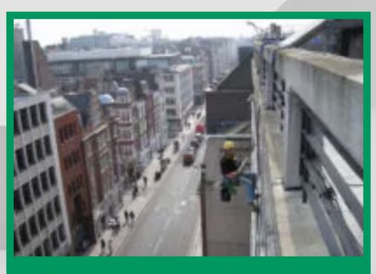
Party Walls

Reinstatement Cost Assessments

Right to Manage

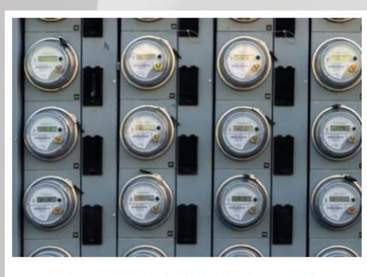
RMC Director Training

Rooftop Extensions



Rope Access Surveys

Service Charge Arrears



SmarkLink45 Prepay Meter

Service Charge Collections

Utilities

Water Leak Detection

Get in touch for a quote on anything you need for your block

call us on 0333 015 4145

email info@blockinabox.co.uk

or visit our website blockinabox.co.uk

Feature: Lifts, Gates, Lighting and Communal Areas

Using Manage Your Block Features to Support Communal Maintenance

ManageYourBlock™

www.manageyourblock.co.uk

tel: 0333 577 9070

Managing a building's communal areas, lifts, gates and lighting can become very complicated if you're not using the right tools to support you. Compliance is an absolute must, but no one would be able to handle all those due dates, requirements and plans by memory or by using a paper diary.

Manage Your Block has a wealth of features designed to support you. Here we'll be detailing how those features can be utilised to make sure you're meeting your responsibilities when it comes to your communal areas and facilities.

Calendar and Diary Reminders

You and your team have constant access to the Manage Your Block calendar where you can enter keys dates for your block. You can schedule in your Health & Safety, Fire and Lift inspections, service charge reminders and insurance renewals as well as setting reminders to alert you when things are due.

You can also note when garden maintenance will be happening, cleaning staff will be on site, team birthdays, resident events... the list is endless. It can all go in one place with reminders set so you can relax in the knowledge that your mental to-do list is no longer needed.

Documents and Notes

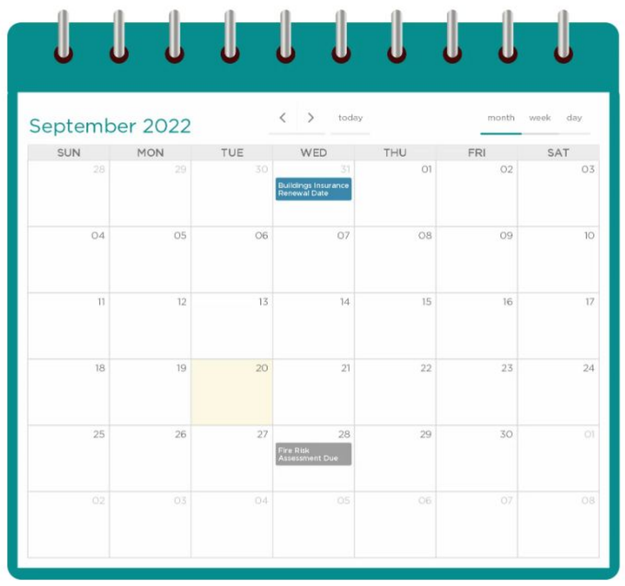
Once you've carried out the necessary inspections and have ensured the suggested maintenance has been carried out, those reports can all be saved within Manage Your Block. You can also save leases, financial records, evacuation procedures, meeting minutes etc- no more searching through files or piles of paper.

You can also add your own notes to the system to detail any important information that other directors or future managers of your block may need.

All the documents and notes will be accessible anywhere and anytime as the system is cloud based.

Contractors and Quotes

If you identify issues with your communal areas, lift, gates or lighting, you need to know who to call. We have a wealth of recommended suppliers detailed via Block In A Box. Once you've chosen the right person for the job, you can save all of their contact information under the Contractors section within Manage Your Block. Once their information is stored, you can request quotes and send works orders straight from Manage Your Block.



Contacts and Alerts

When things go wrong within your block, communication with your residents is key. You can store all your residents' contact details within Manage Your Block and then use our Alerts function to make everyone aware of issues or works being carried out, all in one go.

If you have scheduled maintenance coming up, let them know. If the lift has broken down, let they know and inform them of the plan to fix it. If a resident reports that an external light is out or that some cleaning is needed in the hallway, you can let all your residents know that the issue is known and will be dealt with.

This can save you so much time and stress as you won't have to deal with multiple reports for the same issue or angry residents who have been inconvenienced without notice.

These are just some of the ways Manage Your Block can be used to support you in the complex role of managing a block. For more information about the system, head to our website where you can request a free demonstration or 7-day trial to experience the software first-hand.

Manage your Block has been created to assist Residents' Management Companies, Right to Manage Companies and Residents Associations to self-manage their block.

It's a secure, easy-to-use portal that offers access to your block's details at the touch of a button. Designed to make your life easier, it saves you time and offers a fast and efficient interface to connect you, your residents, and your block.

manageyourblock.co.uk | info@manageyourblock.co.uk | 0333 577 9070

ManageYourBlock™

Share this page on social media

ManageYourBlock™

Store, Save & Secure – Self management software!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

An **online portal** designed for RMC's, Directors and Owners of apartment blocks. With Manage Your Block, you can update, control and navigate your documents all in a user-friendly hub. This is accessible through any device at a touch of a button 24/7 personalised to suit your needs.

Who is Manage Your Block For?

Manage Your Block is a nifty online portal specifically designed for anybody managing a block of flats, including:

- Residents' Management Companies
- Right to Manage Companies
- Residents Associations

Do you want to make managing your block easier? Consider our trusted software solution used by thousands of professionals nationwide!

Tel: 0335779070 Email: info@manageyourblock.co.uk

OUR FEATURES

Diary

Set diary reminders to ensure you don't forget anything.

Documents

Securely hold all your block's documents in one place. Examples of what you may want to store include: copy leases, financial records, fire evacuation procedures, along with other day-to-day procedural documents.

Notes

Make sure you have an audit trail by adding notes for anything important.

Quotes

Request quotes from your preferred contractors or use one of our recommended specialists. You can also issue work orders to accept quotes.

Save

Our trustworthy online space lets you keep your most important documents safe, and you will have access day and night, wherever you are.

Contractors

Keep a list of your key contractors, for example, plumbers, decorators, gardeners, window cleaners in one place.

Contacts

All the owners and residents in your block can be added to your contact list, so you can keep track and update it. You'll always have all of this contact info at your fingertips.

Calendar

Record key dates and reminders, for example insurance renewal date, health & safety risk assessment due date, date to send out service charges.

Alerts

Broken down lift? Power shortage? Local crime issues? Provide instant alerts out to all residents with one simple alert.

London Flats Insurance

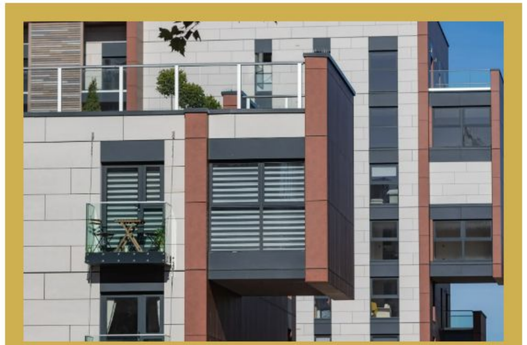
Insurance specialists for blocks of flats and apartments within London

Our team at London Flats Insurance have the experience and expertise to provide you with the best and most suitable insurance policy for your specific block of flats or apartments.

To obtain a quote, simply click the button below or contact us

Tel: 020 8038 8977 Email: info@londonflatsinsurance.co.uk

Click here to get a quote today!

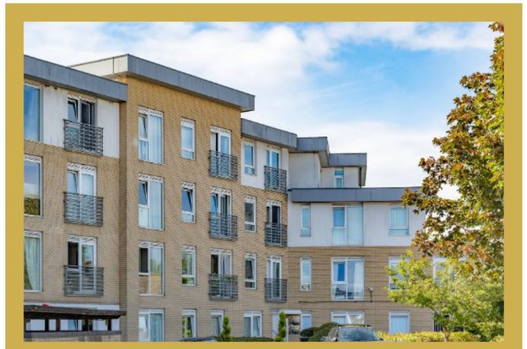


Buildings Insurance

Learn more

Directors & Officers Insurance

Learn more



Terrorism Insurance

Learn more

Lift Insurance and Inspection

Learn more

Upcoming ARMA Training Courses

TC108: INTRODUCTION TO THE BUILDING SAFETY ACT FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

Dates: 21/02/2023 - 22/02/2023

Online

This course delivers guidance on managing buildings in scope under the Building Safety Act 2022. Through interactive and engaging contents participants will gain confidence in delivering positive building safety outcomes in their areas of responsibilities.

Who should attend?

Property Managers in the UK with responsibilities for managing buildings in scope under the Building Safety Act.

Aim:

To enable property managers to better understand their role in managing building safety under the Building Safety Act efficiently and effectively within their area of responsibility.

Book your place

TC55: INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

Dates: 05/04/23 - 06/04/23

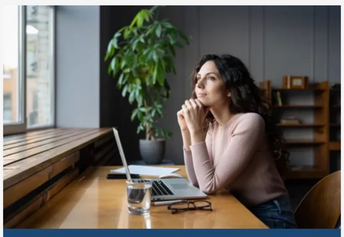
2-day course

A 6-hour course being run over 2 consecutive days (3-hours per day). This course is designed to introduce new entrants to the sector to the minimum Health & Safety knowledge essential to their career path.

This course is not intending to turn beginners or new on-site staff into Fire Safety Risk Assessors, CDM experts, etc. merely to furnish them with the awareness to perform the day job safely and give comfort to their employers.

Book your place

TC106: EFFECTIVE ARREARS MANAGEMENT AND NAVIGATING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS



Dates: 16/01/23 - 18/01/23

Online 2-day course

This course deals with providing you with the tools to complete arrears recovery in an effective and professional manner, while also taking into account the challenges both leaseholders and clients face in the current cost of living crisis.

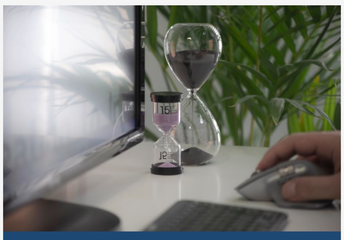
Who should attend?

This course is suitable for all professionals within residential block management to whom the responsibility falls to advise clients in determining when to pursue unpaid service charges and whether to retain legal services.

This course would also be suitable for those in lettings moving into residential leasehold management.

Book your place

TC104 – EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT



Dates: 26/04/2023

Online

Time management is a term that we often use but, we can't actually 'manage' time. We can't slow it down or speed it up. However, what we can do is understand how to use our time more effectively to be more productive and get more 'stuff' done.

This practical and highly engaging half-day course provides delegates with a range of tools and techniques to use time more effectively, providing significant benefits to work output, mental well-being, work-life balance and motivation.

Book your place

TC105: EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS HANDLING

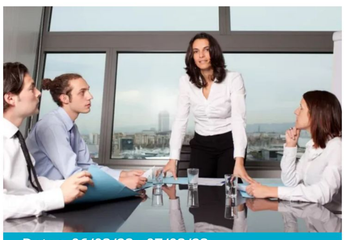
Dates: 16/03/23

Online

The aim of this course is to help you and your team understand how best to deal with complaints to repair the relationship between your organisation and the complainant, so that great customer relations can be built and maintained.

Book your place

TC1: INTRODUCTION TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Dates: 06/03/23 - 07/03/23

Online

A 6-hour course being run over 2 days (3-hours per day) by Jackie Dickens from HQN, for those new to residential leasehold property management. It will provide an overview of the controls and processes required to effectively manage a leasehold block.

Book your place

ARMA Training Costs

ARMA's upcoming training covers a range of topics to help keep staff prepared for the modern world of property management. Courses and webinars will focus on fire safety for property managers, accounting, insurance and more.

Online Training Course Costs

(Please note: IRPM members are eligible to receive our discounted member rate)

Full-day Course
Members: £100 + VAT
Non-Members: £175 + VAT

Half-day Course
Members: £60 + VAT
Non-Members: £100 + VAT

To view ARMA's full list of training courses, **click here**.

Get in touch

Website: www.arma.org.uk

Phone: 0207 978 2607

Twitter: @ARMAleasehold

ARMA

Upcoming Events

Oxford Weekender 2023

Dates: 31st March -2nd April 2023

The three-day conference runs from Friday to Sunday with the theme of Property managers: what's in your toolkit?.

Over the weekend, there'll be a plethora of keynote and break-out sessions, designed to inform, equip and support property management professionals to plug any gaps in their knowledge and expand their skills in all the areas that now impact our sector.

Delegates will hear from industry-leading speakers who will be presenting over 40 keynote addresses, workshops and updates over the course of the weekend.

Book your place

IRPM Annual Seminar 2023

irpm
setting standards

Date: 11th May 2023

Like all of the past IRPM Seminars, our 2023 seminar will be touching on the most pressing issues facing our sector and professionals. We'll have industry experts giving you the most up-to-date information and guidance throughout the day.

Topics that will be delved into:

- Building Safety
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Customer Service & Communication
- Recruitment and Retention of staff
- Legendary Legal Update
- Economic Update

A full programme is being worked on and will be released in due course.

Book your place

Setting Standards in Residential Property Management

The Institute of Residential Property Management (IRPM) is the professional body for residential property management specialists and provides nationally accredited qualifications, guidance on career pathways and resources, to assist property managers within their roles. IRPM is dedicated to supporting, building, and setting the standards of the profession.

IRPM Key Objectives

Setting & Raising Standards across the residential property management sector

To be the **trusted** source of **expertise**, **knowledge**, & **qualifications**

Providing individuals with an independent **professional accreditation**

Provide **knowledge**, **leadership**, and **proficiency** in the property management sector

Join the IRPM

Directories

Find Managing Agents, Suppliers and ALEP Professionals who know and understand leasehold property.

01
Flat Living Directory

02
Recommended Suppliers

03
Find an ARMA Member

Find a Supplier

Featured suppliers from BLOCK in a BOX

3D Surveys

SCANiX

Find out more

Accountants

Flat Management Co. Accounts Limited

Find out more

Alternative Accommodation

ICAB Insurance Claims Accommodation Bureau

Find out more

Asbestos Surveying and Management and many more

4site®

Find out more

Company Secretarial Solutions

Garratts Chartered Accountants

Find out more

Cyber Security Training

intelectGroup eLearning

Find out more

Directors and Officers Liability

Find out more

Drone Surveys

MIRU

Find out more

Electric charging points

FUTURE GROUP

Find out more

Landlord Emergency Assistance Insurance Solutions

FlatLiving® Insurance

Find out more

Lease Variations, Lease Extensions, Right to Manage and Enfranchisement

BLOCK in a BOX

Find out more

FPRA

FPRA FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Find out more

Historic Building Repair, Party Walls, Planned Maintenance Programs and License to Alter

EarlKendrick Building Surveyors

Find out more

Lift Wrapping

Distinct LIFT WRAPS

Find out more

Out of Hours Helpline

adiuvo

Find out more

Reinstatement Cost Assessments

BARRETT CORP HARRINGTON

Find out more

RMC Director Training

LEASE The Leasehold Advisory Service

Find out more

Rooftop Extensions

Sussex Airspace Developments

Find out more

Rope Access Surveys and Safety Testing

RopeAccess Surveys

Find out more

Service Charge Arrears

SLC solicitors | debt | prs | property asset management

Find out more

Service Charge Collections

ManageYourBlock™

Find out more

Smartlink45 Prepayment Meters

SmartLink45®

Find out more

Utilities

RMC utilities specialists in resident management energy

Find out more

Water leak detection and solutions

Waterguard

Find out more

Insurance

FlatLiving® Insurance

Find out more

Insurance

London Flats Insurance

Find out more

Insurance

Residentsline Flats Insurance

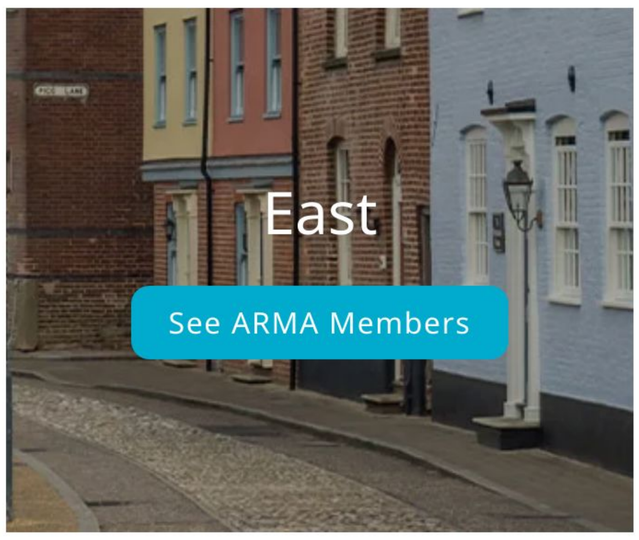
Find out more

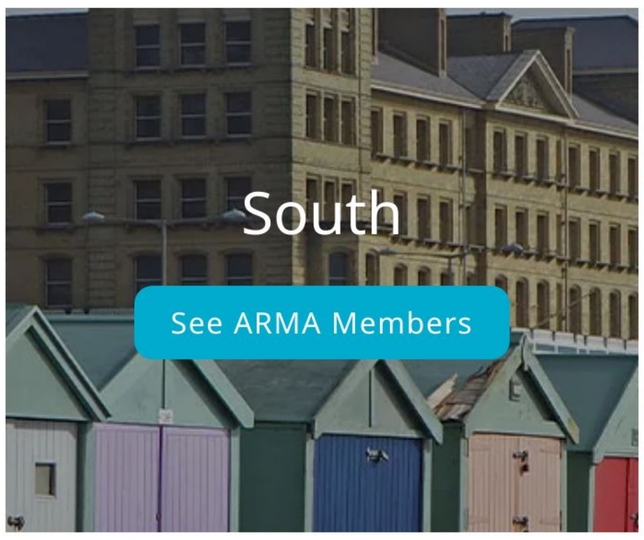
Find an ARMA Member

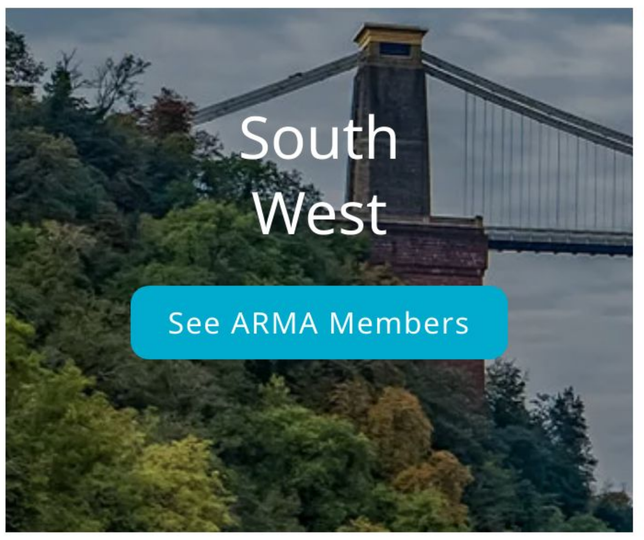
Are you considering a new managing agent?

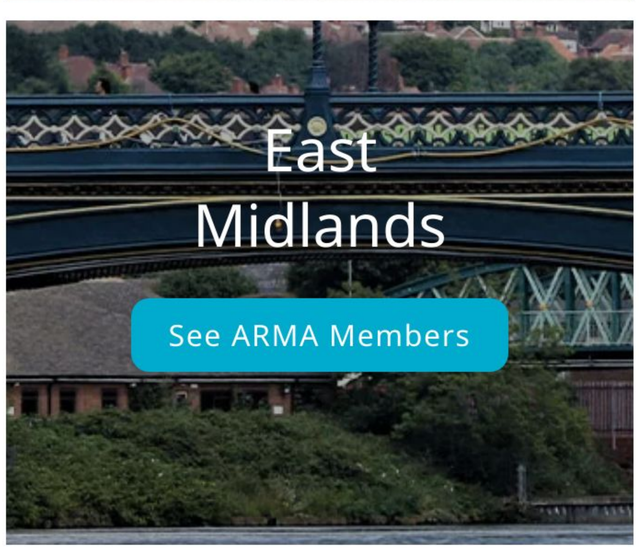
Below are a list of ARMA (Association of Residential Managing Agents) members by region.

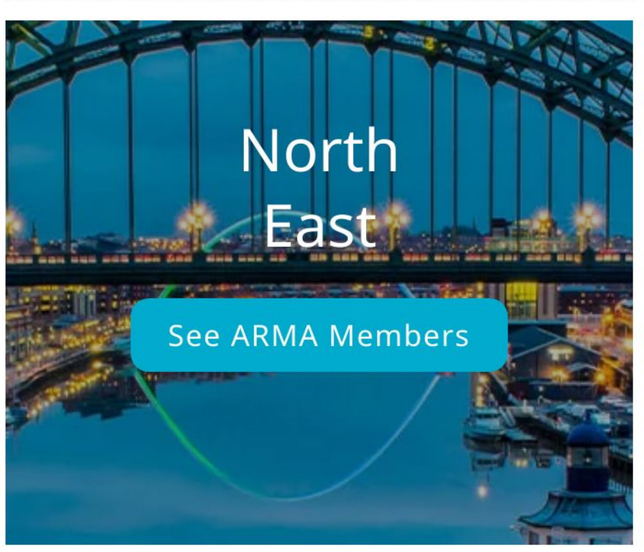
A managing agent that is a 'member' of ARMA will have successfully achieved ARMA Accreditation and is required to comply with the ARMA Bye-Laws, RICS Code, relevant legislation and ARMA Consumer Charter & Standards.











Setting the Standards in Property Management

Whether you are a leaseholder, residents' management company, developer, landlord or freeholder - you need a managing agent you can rely on to professionally manage your apartment block.

So look for the ARMA logo for accredited managing agents who are compliant, audited, independently regulated, transparent and will hold your service charge in TRUST.

For information on the advantages of appointing an ARMA member contact:

020 7978 2607 | www.arma.org.uk

ALEP - the voice of the enfranchisement sector promoting best practice

Leasehold enfranchisement includes the processes of lease extension, freehold acquisition and correction of management problems within leasehold properties.

The Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners (ALEP) serves as the leading organisation representing professionals working in this sector.

Established in 2007, ALEP was formed to bring together firms working within leasehold enfranchisement under one, all-encompassing membership organisation. Barristers, managing agents, project managers, solicitors and valuers all form part of the ALEP community.

Our Work

One of ALEP's key aims is to work with member firms within this sector to raise and maintain standards across the board. The Association holds regular seminars and networking sessions, as well as its popular annual Conference and Lecture events, all with the objective of bringing the sector together to share ideas, discuss key issues and encourage best practice.

ALEP also acts as the 'voice of the sector' and represents its members' views to the wider industry, the media and to the general public. More recently, ALEP is proud to have been invited by the government to contribute to several consultations concerning the future of leasehold enfranchisement.

Our Members

ALEP has 260 highly respected member companies and individual barristers – this equates to just under a total of 1,000 professionals – all of whom operate within the enfranchisement sector and who regularly come together to network, compare notes and agree best practice.

ALEP accreditation acts as a badge of assurance for leaseholders and freeholders alike when looking for professionals to handle their enfranchisement transactions. All members are vetted to ensure they are experienced in dealing with the various and complicated issues surrounding leasehold enfranchisement.

Areas ALEP members can help with include:

- Extending a lease
- Leaseholder vs. freeholder disputes and resolutions
- Informal lease extension implications
- Marriage value
- Collective enfranchisement
- First-tier Tribunals
- Leasehold Valuation Tribunals
- Over-inflated ground rent, service charges and insurance

For more information and to find an ALEP member in your area please visit: www.alep.org.uk

Find an ALEP Member

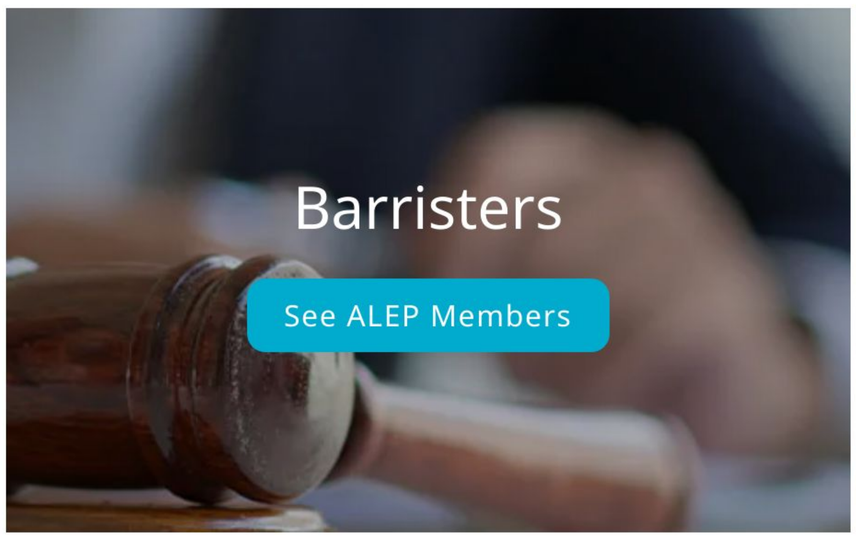
ALEP (Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners) member firms are rigorously vetted so you can be confident that they have a proven track record in leasehold enfranchisement.

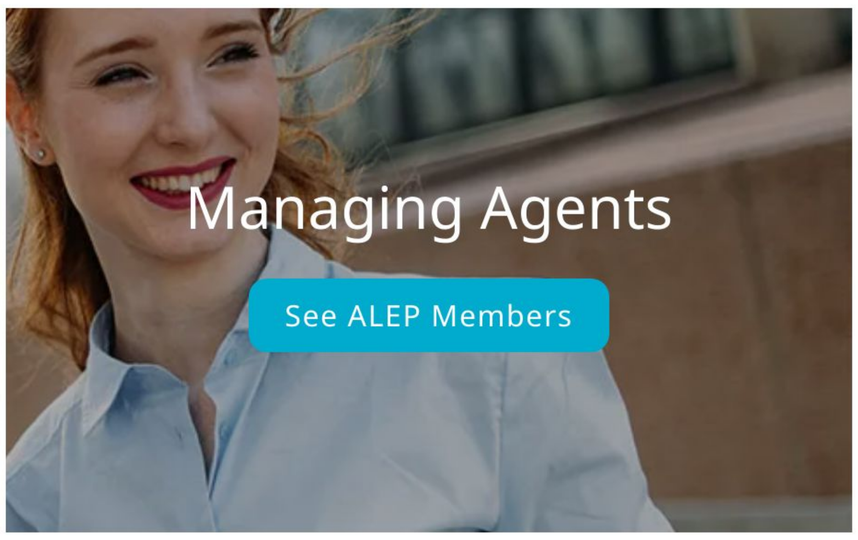
ALEP members can advise or assist with:

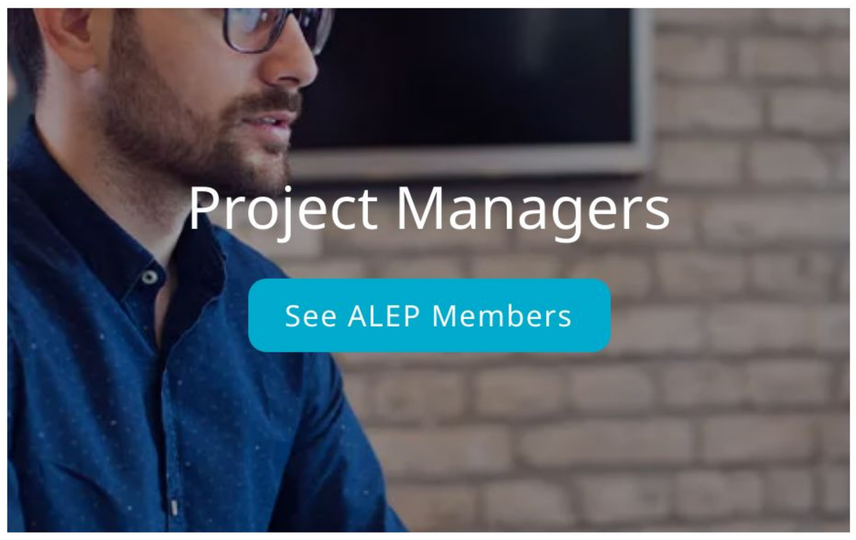
- Extending a lease;
- Buying a share or freehold of a building;
- Exercising the Right to Manage;
- Section 5 Notice;
- Dealing with freeholder or leaseholder disputes

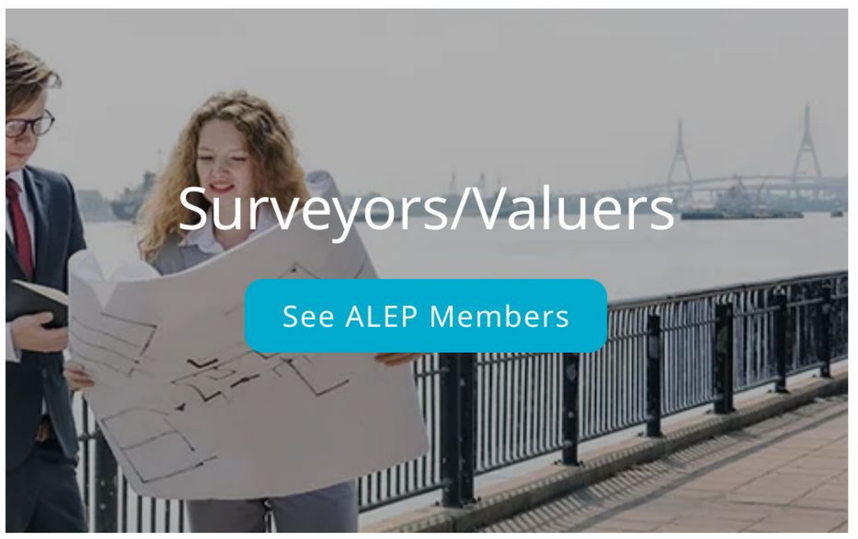
Below are details of ALEP Professionals (alphabetically) in the following areas:

- Barristers
- Managing Agents
- Project Managers
- Solicitors/Legal
- Surveyors/Valuers









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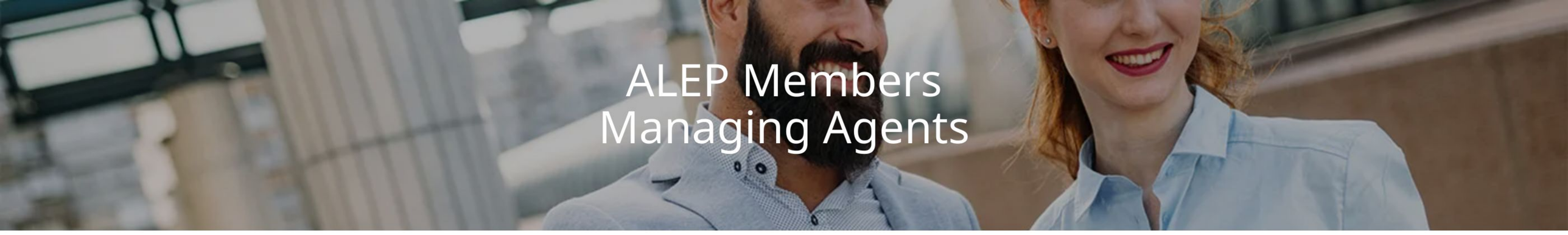
Graham Jaffe	Gregory Abrams Davidson	07502 295748
Sarah Finch	Hamlins LLP	020 7355 6085
Andy Finkel	Harold Benjamin Solicitors	020 8872 3066
Lewis Myatt	Hart Brown Solicitors	01483 887 561
Daniel Winslow	Healys LLP	020 7822 4000
Jason Richardson	Henriques Griffiths	0117 090 4600
Samantha Laker	Herrington Carmichael LLP	01276 854661
Tom Henry	Hethertons Solicitors	01904 528200
Ashley Connell	Hetts Solicitors	01724 843287
James Garvey	Hockfield & Co part of GT Stewart Ltd	020 7582 8784
Tim Reid	Hogan Lovells International LLP	020 7296 5873
Phil Davies	Holmes & Hills LLP	01206 593 933
Ash Oberoi	Housing and Property Law Partnership Solicitors	020 7553 9000
Amanda McNeil	Howard Kennedy LLP	020 3755 5598
Craig Rennie	HRJ Foreman Laws	01462 458711
Joanna Themistokli	Irwin Mitchell LLP	020 7650 3809
Amelia Hayes	Jefferies Essex LLP	01702 332311
Daniel Swimer	Joelson JD LLP	020 7580 5721
Yashmin Mistry	JPC Law LLP	020 7644 7294
Daniel Tang	Judge and Priestley LLP	020 8290 7373
Julie West	Julie West Solicitors	01372 383273
Belinda Walkinshaw	Jury O'Shea LLP	020 3176 4255
Katie Cohen	Katie Cohen operating as Keystone Law	020 3319 3700
Liz Rowen	Keebles LLP	0114 276 5555
Harriet Thornton	LCF Law Limited	01274 386597
Jade Wilson	Lease Law Limited	0204 511 9100
Suki Samra	Lester Aldridge LLP	01202 786317
Polja Atkins	Longmores Solicitors	01992 300333
Richard Hornby	Lynch Hall & Hornby	020 8864 0722
Tamara Lester	Manuel Swaden Limited	020 7431 4999
Andrew Edwards	Martin tolhurst Solicitors	014 7456 013
Joanna Ironside	Mayo Wynne Baxter LLP	01903 743201
William Essex	McGlennons Solicitors	020 8946 6015
Beth Rose	Meaby & Co Solicitors LLP	020 7703 5034
Tim Wild	Mills & Reeve LLP	020 7648 5289
Shazda Ahmed	Monarch Solicitors	020 8889 8888
Louise Uphill	Moore Barlow LLP	023 8071 8885
Matthew Hearsum	Morr & Co LLP	020 8971 1085
Shelley Fitzpatrick	Mullis & Peake LLP	01708 784000
Adam Davis	Naylor Solicitors LLP	020 7963 8689
Lucy Riley	Nockolds Solicitors Limited	01279 712586
Chris Connor	Norton Connor Limited	0113 239 0088
Tim Morgan	ODT Solicitors	01273 221582
Deborah Mantell	Oliver Fisher Solicitors	020 3219 0145
Guy Osborn	Osbornes Solicitors LLP	020 7681 8667
Nick Demos	P George & Co Solicitors	020 8341 9080
Laura Simpson	PainSmith Solicitors	01420 565310
Jennifer Sanders	Paris Smith LLP	02380 482125
Lorraine Lancaster	Paul Robinson Solicitors LLP	01702 338338
Reece Wheeldon	PDC Conveyancing Limited	01992 879020
Martin Codd	Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP	020 7457 3000
Victoria Gower	Peter Brown & Co	020 8447 3277
Stephen Eccles	Pinney Talfourd LLP	01708 511000
Daniel Gardner	Daniel Gardner	01202 292424
John Sheldrick	Redferns	020 8424 7070
Stuart Jacobs	RIAA Barker Gillette incorporating Tibber Marks	020 8954 4705
Lee Harle	Ringley Law LLP	020 7428 1977
Caroline Knowles-Ley	Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP	01273 766917
David Moore	Rodgers & Burton	020 8939 6300
Elizabeth Clarkson	Rollits LLP	01482 337260
Ben Frost	Ronald Fletcher Baker LLP	020 7467 5757
Tom Parkinson	Rowlinsons Solicitors Limited	01928 735333
Jacqui Walton	RWK Goodman LLP	0207 842 1424
Shabnam Ali-Khan	Russell-Cooke LLP	020 3826 7306
Gary Dunger	SA Law	020 7183 5683
Saul Marine	Saul Marine and Company	020 8959 6090
John Midgley	Seddons	020 7725 8068
John Summers	Setfords Law Limited	020 3962 4031
Jane Canham	Solomon Taylor Shaw	0207 431 1912
Julian Spalter	Spalter Fisher LLP	020 3328 5822
Gary Scott	Spector Constant & Williams	07399 815337
Glenn Stevenson	Stevensons Solicitors	01362 860300
Elizabeth Cobb	Stone Rowe Brewer LLP	020 8891 6141
Jane Canham	Storrar Cowdry Solicitors	01244 400567
Iris-Ann Stapleton	Streathers Solicitors LLP	020 7034 4200
Kathryn Millner	Streather Highgate LLP	020 8347 2480
Tim Farrington	Streeter Marshall	01883 622433
Nilloosha Ponnuthurai	Taylor Rose MW	0203 004 5460
James Khakpour-Smith	Taylor Walton LLP	01727 818513
Jim McKeever	Teacher Stern LLP	020 7242 3191
Vikki Herbert	Thackray Williams LLP	020 8290 0440
John Crosbie	The Chambers Property Group T/a Brendons & Bunting Surveyors	0208 566 3323
Frances Watts	The Head Partnership Solicitors LLP	07789 764571
Jason Winton	Thirsk Winton LLP	020 8505 4777
Laura-Pauline Adcock-Jones	Thompson Smith and Puxon	01206 574431
Samantha Wicks	Tinklin Springall Solicitors	020 8402 7222
Robert Plant	Tolhurst Fisher LLP	01702 352 511
William Bethune	Trowers & Hamlins LLP	020 7423 8558
Peter Thibault	TV Edwards	0203 440 8323
Becky Budd	TWM Solicitors	01483 752700
Christina Le Riche	Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP	020 7665 0929
Samantha Bone	Wallace LLP	020 7636 4422
Matthew Jones	Weightmans LLP	0113 213 4008
Sophie Jones	William Sturges LLP	0207 873 1000
Richard Barca	Wilson Barca LLP	020 7272 2072
Simon Livesley	Winckworth Sherwood LLP	0207 593 0387
Chris Ledgerwood	Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP	0191 279 9808
Nick Kephalas	YVA Solicitors LLP	020 8445 9898
Mark Curtis	Z Group	020 8944 1180

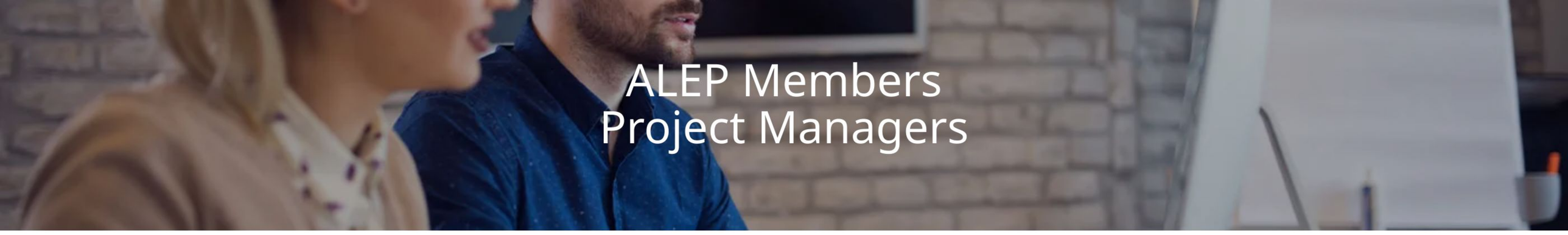


ALEP Members Managing Agents

• Colin Cohen	Colin Cohen Property Management	020 8959 6870
• Fiona Docherty	James Andrew Residential	020 8349 7171
• Michael Maunder Taylor	Maunder Taylor	01707 871703
• Michael Jacobs	Michael Laurie Magar Ltd	020 8492 9850

ALEP Members Surveyors/Valuers

• John Rhoades	ABV Rhoades Chartered Surveyors	07831 135203
• Alison Stone	Alison Stone Surveyors	07917 106437
• Andrew Lester	AML Surveys & Valuation Ltd	020 8960 7573
• Andy Christou	Andrew Creighton Chartered Surveyors	020 3696 1090
• Tom Hobman	Andrew Pridell Associates Ltd	01273 202620
• Grace Clarke	Arnold & Baldwin	020 8642 2999
• Patrick Oliver	Aston James Associates	0800 035 6473
• Stewart Gray	Austin Gray LLP	01273 201988
• Henrietta Hammonds	Beckett & Kay LLP	020 7439 6667
• Roshan Sivapalan	Blakes Surveyors Ltd	020 8296 1234
• Thomas Dogger	BN Surveyors Ltd	020 7101 3382
• Katy D'Souza	Brasier Freeth LLP	07808 249262
• Christopher Spratt	C G Spratt & Son	01903 234343
• Paulina Reade	Carter Jonas	020 7581 3215
• Keith Chapman-Burnett	Chroma Surveyors Ltd	01202 871116
• Johanne Coupe	Coupe Property Consultants Limited	01179 596487
• David Coleman	David Coleman & Company	0121 655 0998
• David Graham	David Graham (Chartered Surveyors)	07973 364162
• Adrian Hau	Douglas and Gordon	020 7591 8746
• Wilson Dunsin	Dunsin Surveyors	020 7233 6762
• Jackie Collis	Each Side Leasehold	07842 395767
• Emma Biddle	Egerton Ltd	020 7664 6648
• Chris Clark	Ely Langley Greig	023 8027 4211
• David Haines	Extend Your Lease	020 7586 0044
• Angus Fanshawe	Fanshawe White	020 7099 8465
• Andrew Georgiou	Fifield Glyn	020 7205 7172
• Andrew Perrin	Fraser Wood (Midlands) Ltd	01922 627 686
• Jenni Freeborn	Graves Son and Pilcher	01273 321123
• David Toogood	Harding Chartered Surveyors	07808 161 463
• Harriet Fleming	Harriet Fleming Surveyors Ltd	01727 750045
• Colin Horton	Hortons Valuers Ltd	020 3058 3200
• Kevin Broadhurst	Jackson Green & Preston	01472 311113
• Joe Fraser	Joe Fraser Chartered Surveyors	0330 1740 644
• Malcolm Angus	George F White LLP	0333 920 2220
• Simon Coates	Jones Lang LaSalle Limited	020 7087 5911
• Julian Wilkins	Julian Wilkins Chartered Surveyors	01903 872211
• Nathan Hall	Kempton Carr Croft	01628 771221
• Gavin Lewis	Kingston Morehen Chartered Surveyors	01323 411088
• Steven Harding	Kinleigh Folkard & Hayward	020 8739 2040
• Jean Howe	Kirkby Diamond	01582 738866
• Jeremy Dharmasena	Knight Frank	020 7861 1587
• David Parkin	Lamberts Chartered Surveyors	07764 577535
• Keith Chew	Lawrence & Wightman	0121 779 0999
• Justin Bennett	LBB Chartered Surveyors	020 7822 8850
• Kevin Broadhurst	Leasegevity Ltd	0300 400 3279
• Ryan Bridges	MAP Chartered Surveyors	020 8300 1144
• Prosper Marr-Johnson	Marr-Johnson Stevens LLP	020 7499 3199
• John Keenan	Mathieson Keenan	07710 475 094
• Ross Maunder Taylor	Maunder Taylor	020 8492 5526
• Chris Baker	McDowalls Surveyors Ltd	020 8472 4422
• Kieron Mckeown	Mckeown & Co LLP	01722 439518
• Michael Lee	Michael R Lee Chartered Surveyors	020 3376 3032
• Michael Boaden	MJ Boaden Chartered Surveyors	0191 495 6182
• Paul Holford	Morgan Sloane Chartered Surveyors	0800 161 5767
• Mark Wilson	myLeasehold Ltd	020 7034 3435
• Simon Levinson	OCK Chartered Surveyors	020 8202 7948
• Michael Aldous	Perry Hill Chartered Surveyors	01483 237333
• June Dunne	Prickett and Ellis Surveyors Ltd	020 8442 2491
• Paul Holder	PS&B	01273 274018
• Panicos Loizides	Quest Property Consultants LTD	020 7813 9155
• David Nesbit	RES Property Surveyors Limited	07824 441673
• Richard Murphy	Richard John Clarke Chartered Surveyors	020 7499 8043
• David Robson	Robsons	020 8402 6666
• Saul Gerrard	Saul Gerrard Surveyors	020 8203 2012
• Alastair Stimson	Savills (UK) Ltd	07812 965513
• Clive Scrivener	Scrivener Tibbatts Ltd	020 8971 2983
• Richard Galbraith	Sedgwick Turner Limited	01843 846888
• Adam Robinson	Selkent Surveyors Ltd	01732 752099
• Matthew Gawne	Shaw & Company (Surveyors) Ltd	0208 394 5371
• Richard Bull	SHW	01273 876207
• Simon Brook	South East Leasehold	020 8832 9069
• David R Aspey	Sussex Surveyors LLP	07703 131681
• Emma Echafi	Symington Elvery Ltd	020 3324 0360
• Ray Smith	Watsons	01603 751577
• Richard Stacey	Websters Surveyors	020 3011 5310
• Roger Armstrong	Westburys Chartered Surveyors	07801 258330
• Simon Hanton	Willmotts Chartered Surveyors	07734 022826



ALEP Members
Project Managers

- Linz Darlington Homehold Services Limited 020 3997 8950
- Mike Somekh The Freehold Collective 020 3488 3148
- Silvana Goddard Start Lease Extensions 020 8315 6901

ALEP Members
Barristers

- Paul Letman Falcon Chambers 020 7353 2484
- Anthony Radevsky Falcon Chambers 020 7353 2484
- Tamsin Cox Falcon Chambers 020 7353 2484
- Tom Jefferies Landmark Chambers 020 7430 1221
- Aaron Walder Landmark Chambers 020 7430 1221
- Justin Bates Landmark Chambers 020 7430 1221
- Ellodie Gibbons Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Philip Rainey Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Mark Loveday Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Christopher Heather QC Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Nicola Muir Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Jonathan Upton Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Piers Harrison Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Richard Alford Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300
- Daniel Dovar Tanfield Chambers 020 7421 5300