Information, advice & guidance
for RMCs and Property Managers

FlatLiving Magazine

November 2021

Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

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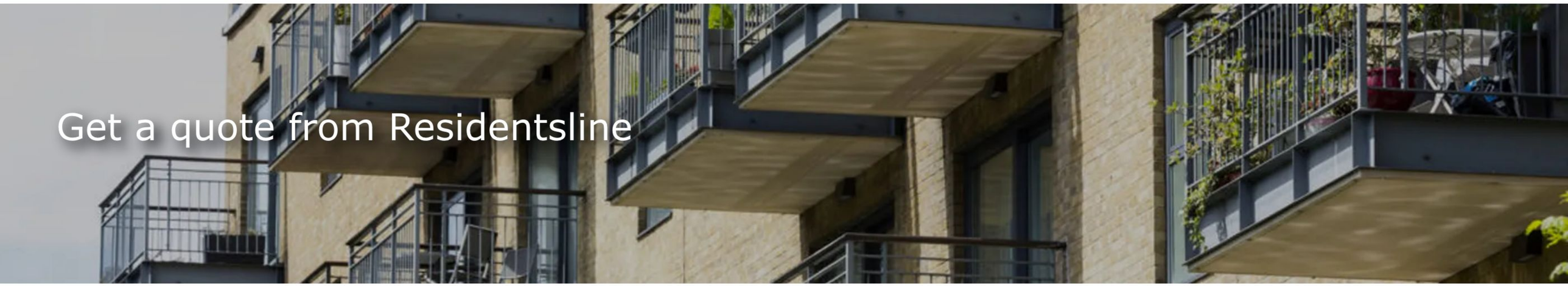

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Welcome

Welcome to the November issue of Flat Living Magazine

In this issue of Flat Living Magazine, we have a feature on Maintenace and Cleaning for leasehold properties.

We have articles on Planned Maintenance Programmes, contractors, risk, and so much more all related to the maintenance and cleaning of blocks.

In the news this month we bring you an update on the recent ALEP Conference, look at the price to pay for good neighbours, learn about a new Property Manager at Principle Estate Management and share news of an acquisition from Cleaver Property Management.

Plus we have the latest jobs from Block Recruit and an array of interesting topics for you to discover.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Flat Living Magazine.

Rebecca Kelly
Head of Partnerships, Flat Living

Start Reading

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News

All the latest property management news:

£10K: The Price To Pay For Good Neighbours

Hundreds Attend ALEP's Virtual Conference

Property Manager With 17 Years' Experience in The Sector Joins Principle

Wokingham Agent Acquires Beverley Williams' Block Management Portfolio

£10K: The Price To Pay For Good Neighbours

- Third of Brits would pay £10k more for a home to ensure good neighbours
- 54% of Brits exchange more messages with neighbours than pre-pandemic and a third thank tech for sense of local community
- Manchester named as Britain's friendliest 'online' neighbourhood

Proving that loving thy neighbour is more important than ever, nearly one in three (32%) Brits would pay a £10,000 premium for a property if it guaranteed good neighbours, while 32% wouldn't consider moving because they get on so well with those living nearby.

The survey of 2,000 adults by FirstPort, the UK's leading residential property services provider, found that Brits are now connecting with their neighbours on an almost daily basis with nearly a quarter (23%) admitting they speak to their neighbours more often than their family. Following a year of local lockdowns and restrictions, almost a third (31%) say they have struck up a friendship with a neighbour in the last 12 months.

According to the findings, social media has been a major catalyst for people getting to know others in their local community and the people who live within it. Swapping the garden fence for Facebook, Brits receive or exchange an average of five messages a week on apps, social networks or email with their neighbours. Over half (54%) message them more now than before the pandemic, and a third (33%) say apps and social networks have helped foster a sense of community.

Facebook is the most popular neighbourhood network with over a third (33%) connecting locally via the platform, with WhatsApp a close second (29%). Three in ten (30%) said using online platforms has helped tackle crime in their area, and four in 10 (45%) said they feel safer having a strong neighbour network around them.

The top ten cities with the friendliest online communities:**

1. Manchester
2. Glasgow
3. London
4. Leeds
5. Norwich
6. Cardiff
7. Bristol
8. Birmingham
9. Sheffield
10. Newcastle

David Young, Chief Operating Officer at FirstPort (pictured), commented on the findings:

"It's clear from our research that technology plays a significant role in strengthening not only neighbourhood friendships, but neighbourhood safety. We understand the pandemic has been a catalyst in bonding our communities and people now value neighbourhood connections more than ever. As a property manager, we encourage and support our residents to build relationships using community forums, and we're investing in our own technology so that we're responding to how our customers want to interact with us too.

Despite the increasing number of neighbours connected online, we understand that not everyone uses tech the same way. The results show that face to face connection is still as important as ever as nearly a third (31%) would like to catch up with their neighbours over food and drink. Our aim is to make sure our residents have options that allow them to connect with their communities in the best way for them and this extends to communicating with their property managers, so we are here for them however and whenever they need us."

Ground rents, commonhold and human rights on the menu as hundreds attend ALEP's Virtual Conference

Barristers, solicitors and valuers attended the Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners' (ALEP) Annual Conference, which returned with a fully virtual format for the second year running.

The four-day conference featured a number of different online seminars, talks and panel sessions all aimed at tackling issues impacting the leasehold enfranchisement sector.

Leasehold issues have continued to generate headlines throughout 2021, including the recent decision by a number of leading housing developers to take action on unfair ground rents, along with continued consideration of commonhold as an alternative option to leasehold. This year's conference covered these topics, with sessions focussing on ground rents, commonhold and the role of human rights in leasehold reform.

Split into morning sessions for junior practitioners and afternoon sessions for all delegates, ALEP Conference Week, sponsored by insurance firm Kerry London Ltd, was attended by in excess of 200 delegates over the four days.

The sessions were introduced by ALEP Director Mark Chick, who said: *"Conference Week has provided our delegates with interesting content, and fostered discussion and debate about the issues and challenges they face in their respective professions. This year we were treated to an outstanding line-up of speakers who provided insights on the key topics and trend, not only in leasehold enfranchisement, but also the wider property sector."*

The comprehensive programme commenced with a panel discussion on the impact of proposed changes to ground rents. Mark Chick, Mark Wilson and Clive Scrivener were joined on the panel by Fiona Haggett RICS, Head of Valuation and Mortgages at Barclays, who outlined what constitutes an 'onerous ground rent', what the Council of Mortgage Lenders guidance says about this, and provided insight into how lenders are responding to it.

The second session featured a number of industry experts who discussed their personal views on the progress of Commonhold and the items that need to be addressed to make it a workable solution for the future of flat ownership in the 21st Century.

Meanwhile the third session, led by Zoe Leventhal from Matrix Chambers explored the potential for human rights legislation to affect the potential scope for reform. The final conference session featured Anthony Radevsky and Tamsin Cox from Falcon Chambers who provided an overview of cases that have made headlines in 2021 and updated delegates on the steps being considered to reform leasehold legislation.

Mark Chick continued: *"We are delighted that this year's virtual conference was so well attended once again and prompted some lively discussions and debates watched by over 200 delegates online. The online format allows us to present a more conversational feel to our sessions but we plan to hold our spring lecture 'in person' which will provide much needed opportunities to network and socialise."*

Property Manager With 17 Years' Experience in The Sector Joins Principle

An experienced property manager who worked for bosses at Principle Estate Management earlier in her career has now been recruited by the company.

Catherine Ghaffoori (pictured) was first appointed by Principle's managing director Brett Williams when he worked at what was then known as Curry & Partners back in 2004.

Mrs Ghaffoori developed her career with what become CPBigwood and latterly SDL , working in property management and then business integration until 2016, before moving to Savills in Lichfield as a property manager.

While at Savills, she looked after residential rented properties, including overseeing refurbishment, compliance and re-letting, and was also involved also in managing agricultural tenancies and buying residential properties.

She is a Member of the Institute of Residential Property Managers and an Associate of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Andrew Winstanley, property operations manager at Principle (pictured), who has also previously worked with Mrs Ghaffoori, said: *"We're delighted to welcome Catherine to our team, and it's great to be able to recruit a known person to the team.*

"She has a wealth of experience, is naturally charming and will be great at customer service, which is so important to us.

"It reflects our growing stature in the sector that we can recruit another member of staff from a blue-chip property advisor such as Savills."

Mrs Ghaffoori will be working on a portfolio of freeholder and residential management company (RMC) instructions across the country, supported by Principle's regional property inspectors, dedicated customer services and finance teams.

Mr Winstanley added: *"Catherine's recent experience in managing residential rented property will be useful as we have expanded into this area and see it as a potential for future growth as the build-to-rent sector continues to mature.*

"Our portfolio freeholders continue to instruct us on new properties and we are winning more RMC and developer instructions, so it's important to have people with the right skills and mindset to manage these properties."

Mrs Ghaffoori, married with two daughters and living in Lichfield, will be working in Principle's new 'hybrid' style, partly from home and partly in the office.

She said: *"Having watched Principle's reputation grow, it's wonderful to now be working at the company.*

"I was attracted by what I think is a superb structure that allows property managers to concentrate on the more strategic side of property management, such as long-term maintenance and financial planning to push through major works.

"It's great to be one of a team of seven property managers, and an exciting time to be joining Principle as it continues to grow and refine its property management services."

Mrs Ghaffoori added: *"I like the idea of hybrid working as it's the best of both worlds, working at home for projects and in the office for collaboration with colleagues."*

Principle Estate Management has more than 35 staff who look after well over 7,500 units in more than 300 developments across the UK.

Wokingham Agent Acquires Beverley Williams' Block Management Portfolio

Cleaver Property Management, a family-run business in Wokingham, has announced the acquisition of Beverley Williams Associates Block Management Portfolio.

Beverley Williams' Sunninghill practice was acquired by Duncan Yeardley in May 2021, following his retirement. Duncan Yeardley will continue to run the Estate Agency and Lettings division, while Cleaver Property Management has now taken on the Block Management Clients.

Cleaver shares many of the traditional customer service values that Mr. Williams has built his business on over the past 24 years. Among them, honesty, local knowledge, and a healthy balance of professionalism and approachability. So this certainly feels like the right move for both businesses and the clients involved.

Martin Cleaver, Director at Cleaver Property Management, says *"We are pleased to acquire the Block Management portfolio from Beverley Williams Associates. This will strengthen our position in the area, and we will look to continue the high standard of management delivered to these important clients. This is an exciting move for Cleaver Property Management, and we wish Beverley Williams all the best for a well-earned retirement."*

The purchase took effect on 1st October 2021. Cleaver Property Management is now working closely with the team at Beverley Williams on the handover process. All Clients have been notified and will be kept updated throughout the transition.

Cleaver Property Management is an independent block managing agent. They now manage 183 sites throughout Berkshire, the Thames Valley, and surrounding areas.

ARMA Annual Conference 2021 - Roundup

After a year dominated by a pandemic, ARMA's 2021 Annual Conference took delegates back to the future of residential property management by refocusing on the key issues set to shape the sector over the coming years.

Delivered to delegates as an online webinar across four days, ARMA members and the wider industry came out in full support of the flagship event with hundreds of delegates logging-in from offices and homes across the country.

Day One: ARMA Updates and Wellbeing

Day one began with a welcome from ARMA Chairman, Michael Jacobs of MLM Property Management. Touching on the trials and tribulations of 2021, Michael commended the way the industry had adapted to new ways of working and pondered which elements of flexible working are likely to remain in the future. Turning to the work of managing agents, he highlighted the need for stretched workforces with limited resources to provide a realistic service to residents.

The first full session of the day was delivered by ARMA CEO Dr Nigel Glen who took stock of ARMA's activities and performance as a membership body over the past 12 months. Today ARMA enjoys a record membership total of 509 firms, with 1.45 million homes currently under ARMA member wings across England and Wales.

Nigel explored the findings of the recent ICG Commissioned 'Members' Needs' survey. Overall, the survey showed ARMA meets today's needs well, but some gaps suggested ARMA was not fully informing members and the sector about its extensive lobbying activity. Nigel went on to summarise the tremendous amount of Government interaction ARMA continues to have. Alongside government groups, ARMA engages with various industry bodies on a regular basis, namely RoPA (Regulation of Property Agents), the Cladding Strategy Group, the Industry Response Group and the Building Safety Alliance council.

Nigel also covered the progress of several ARMA-led initiatives, including its Building Safety Group (which regularly has over 90 attendees including government officials), ARMA Insure, ARMA Network, ARMA Energy and the ARMA leaseholder forum.

With the pressures of a building safety crisis further compounded by a pandemic, property managers have faced mounting pressure in their day-to-day roles. Our second session of the day was therefore a timely one. Delivered by MLM's Shelley Jacobs, a business psychologist, the presentation on 'Wellbeing and Resilience' focused on preparing the industry for more testing times ahead. To demonstrate the immense strain that many are facing, Shelley referred to findings from ARMA and IRPM's Wellbeing Survey published earlier in the year.

With less than 10% of employees feeling comfortable talking to their managers about mental health problems, there is plenty still to be done. Shelley cited several strategies to help employers create sustainable cultures of wellbeing at work and shared some self-care tips for managing stress.

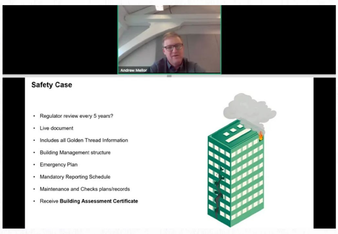
Day Two: Building Safety

Day two opened with Dr Shaun Lundy of Tetra Consulting offering a breakdown of the Building Safety Bill in its current state, and its road to becoming law. As part of this he drew out the key roles which will be required by the new safety regime, namely the Accountable Person and the Building Safety Manager. While many of these positions will be fulfilled by safety specialists, Shaun noted the need for all parties, including property managers and residents themselves, to play their part in upholding residential building safety.

Shaun emphasised the need for a proportionate, risk-based approach to avoid excessive costs with no benefit and the allocation of limited funding to the wrong risks. He also covered the PAS 9980 which will give recommendations and guidance on fire risk appraisals and assessments of the external walls of residential blocks.

The second session of day two was delivered by PRP Architect's Andrew Mellor who outlined the building regulations landscape, paying close attention to the Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill. With regards to scope, Andrew commented that the current, arbitrary definition of a higher-risk building could change from what it currently is.

He also pointed out the importance of a complete digital record of a building for the creation of its safety case, a requirement of the new building safety regime. A safety case will be a live document which will include all golden thread information, an emergency plan, maintenance and checks plans/records and a mandatory reporting schedule, among other items. Paying particular attention to a building's golden thread, Andrew highlighted its role as a holistic record of all aspects of a building, including façade, structural and safety related features.



Day Three: Legal Updates & Ethical Leadership

Day three began with a joint legal update presentation from Cassandra Zanelli of PM Legal Services and Justin Bates of Landmark Chambers, discussing recent legal cases which have passed through the Upper Tribunal or Court of Appeal. Several of the cases highlighted the need for getting contractually valid demands in place to avoid Section 20b issues. Touching on the legal implications of the Building Safety Bill and the Fire Safety Act, they estimated the latter would likely become law in early 2022.

The day ended with a presentation from Linn Byberg, a Senior Engagement Officer at the Institute of Business Ethics. Linn looked at what constitutes ethical leadership, what doesn't, and how businesses can develop leadership at all levels by empowering people to make good decisions.

Day Four: Tech Talks

The final day of the conference allowed delegates to engage with ARMA Partners during 15-minute webinars divided up across two separate 'Tech Talk' streams, covering Business Support and Technical Support topics.

These sessions gave delegates the chance to work through their current challenges with a hand-picked selection of industry experts, including EV charging, Heat Network Regulations, Service Charge Accounting, the Fire Safety Act and Asbestos Surveys.

ARMA's online Annual Conference once again provided an important platform for those working within the residential leasehold sector to gather and discuss the issues on the horizon.

It's evident that a national building safety crisis will be at the fore for years to come, as will the need to keep hold of a talented and experienced workforce.

Our thanks go to all speakers and sponsors of the event, as well as all those who attended.

Did you attend the conference? Make sure you leave us feedback via our SurveyMonkey feedback email.

Founded in 1991 to bring together professionals involved in private residential block management, ARMA is now the leading trade association for residential leasehold management.

www.arma.org.uk | info@arma.org.uk | 0207 978 2607

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HELPING YOU
BUILD YOUR FUTURE,

BLOCK BY BLOCK

"Stella was great throughout the whole process. She was very easy to speak to, always answered my calls and emails promptly. Excellent service!"

- 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

Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

How a Planned Maintenance Programme Can Help Effectively Plan Your Service Charge Budget

Written by Fiona Bonney James, Partner at Hamilton Darcey LLP

As the world has changed significantly over the past year with the effects of the pandemic taking hold, it has never been more important for property managers and leaseholders alike to have certainty on the costs to properly and effectively maintain residential blocks.

The best way to avoid significant unforeseen spikes in costs over a long period by setting out a clear, long-term set of measures to keep it in prime condition.

Plan Ahead

A Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) should cover everything from structural checks to re-decorating and gutter clearing. And although not dramatic, its effects can be hugely beneficial to all parties involve with a block.

Also, when there are a group of leaseholders collectively responsible for repairs, a comprehensive PMP, prepared by an independent third party can avoid disputes, which potentially require expensive and time-consuming resolutions.

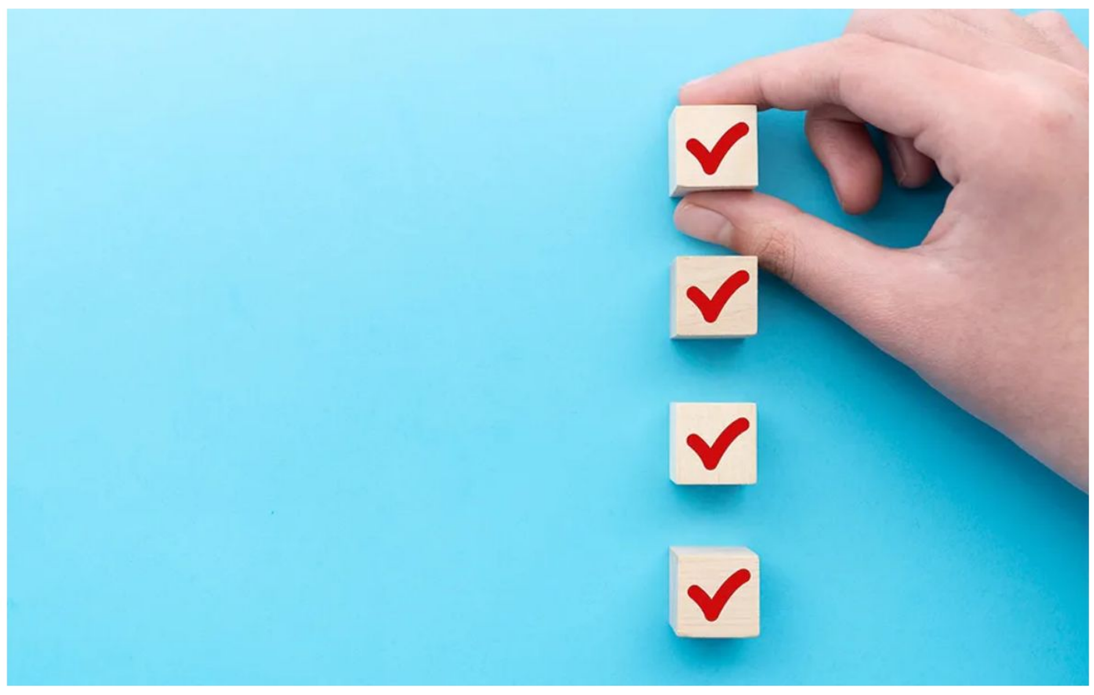
The key to getting planned maintenance right is to develop a programme of maintenance work that is comprehensive, well-organised and appropriate.

A PMP is a vital tool to help managing agents or property owners set reliable levels of service charge expenditure or reserve funds for the cost of future repair and maintenance of a building.

Who Can Help?

To put an effective PMP in place for your block, you should commission a professional – preferably a Chartered Building Surveyor – to draw up a costed schedule of works for you that will identify any work that needs to be done urgently and pinpoint future maintenance issues.

The first step is for the surveyor to produce a detailed survey of your building so that any necessary work on the building can be prioritised and to ensure that any initial structural work is carried out at the same time to create economies of scale in relation to fixed costs like scaffolding and access.



What is Included?

Incorporate recommendations from Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessments, such as emergency lighting installation or a fire alarm upgrade.

Asbestos reports should also be included as any recommended works will need to be undertaken prior to the commencement of any works.

Poor maintenance can not only reduce the performance and value of the property but also affect the residents' heath as well as threaten the safety of occupants.

What Will it Cost?

Once this work has been carried out, the surveyor should be able to put in place a plan to demonstrate the best way to maintain the building in that condition, avoiding any spikes in expenditure. Depending on the size of the property, the detailed plan and cost schedule should only cost between £500-£3000.

This is a small price to pay for the reassurance it provides and the issue-avoidance that results. Once this framework is in place, RMC directors will be able to monitor and update the PMP regularly and a review by a surveyor should only be necessary once every couple of years.

Hamilton Darcey LLP is an RICS regulated Chartered Surveying practice with offices in London and Birmingham. We undertake instructions relating to all aspects of Building Surveying and Design services with particular specialist knowledge in the commercial and high end residential sectors.

With a wealth of experience spanning a range of disciplines, including major works project management, party wall and neighbourly matters, Licence for Alterations, Dilapidations and technical due diligence, we act as a trusted advisor to both individuals and corporate entities.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

How to Get Maintenance & Cleaning Contracts Under Control

Written by Kevin McCabe of Clear Building Management

Clear Building Management
QUALITY | VALUE | TRANSPARENCY

Kevin McCabe of Clear Building Management offers advice on what to include in your cleaning and maintenance contracts to ensure a consistent approach that is understood by all.

When taking over a new block, managing agents almost always inherit contracts from the previous property management company. In our experience however, we have found it rare to get details of all the contractors' responsibilities – especially when it comes to cleaning and grounds maintenance.

This lack of clarity can lead to confusion for leaseholders about what the contractor has been instructed to carry out, and some contractors may not complete all the requirements previously agreed.

We have found over the years that standardising contracts is key to delivering an excellent property management service. Here's what we include, and how we work with our contractors to create a positive and long-lasting relationship.

What to Include in a Standard Contract

We always kick off proceedings with our standard contracts template. This will initially include all customary requirements and best practices that you would expect from a quality contractor, such as:

1. Satisfactory financial and background checks
2. Evidence suitable qualifications, trade association memberships and demonstrate previous experience
3. Supply a courteous, trustworthy and experienced workforce
4. Comply with all health and safety codes and regulations and supply an up-to-date copy of their Health & Safety policy
5. Have a clear Equality & Anti-Discrimination policy
6. Ensure that staff wear uniforms and carry ID at all times
7. Agree not to park in any residents' parking space and keep disruption to an absolute minimum
8. Only carry out work during reasonable working hours (except emergency repairs)
9. Commit to responding to all requests for quotes and work orders within a prescribed timeframe
10. Not sub-contract any jobs without prior written approval
11. Maintain suitable Public Liability Insurance cover
12. Maintain adequate Employers Liability Insurance cover
13. Demonstrate that all work completed provides value for money and indemnify the client in full against all charges and expenses arising from claims which may be made against them as a result of the work carried out
14. Agree that no rebates, commissions, over-riders or any other inducements are to be made to the managing agent or any of its management, employees, suppliers or contractors
15. Offer their keenest pricing, and pass on any volume discounts and the like to the quotation

From here, through having conversations with leaseholders and directors, we can add more specific responsibilities relating to cleaning and maintenance services, or remove them if they're not necessary at that site; being as precise as possible at this stage can help avoid any confusion.

This communication ensures that leaseholders are getting the service that they want to receive, that suppliers will work to the standards that you and your residents require, and it also confirms that everyone is on the same page with what is to be expected of the contractor.

Making Price Comparisons a Breeze

Having a standard list of requirements in place also enables managing agents and RMCs to complete a true, like-for-like comparison between maintenance contracts.

Without a standard list, price comparisons can be much trickier; many contractors fail to provide a full breakdown of their services, so it can be tough to see exactly where the bulk of your budget is being spent.

Not Just a One-Way Street

At Clear Building Management, we rely heavily on our contractors, and we value their contribution to delivering a good experience to our customers. As part of our commitment to our contractors we will never allocate maintenance or cleaning work orders where there are no funds for the works being requested, and we commit to settling all invoices promptly.

The contract also provides a prudent opportunity for you to set out this information, so the contractor knows what they can expect from you in return for their commitment.

As a managing agent we never forget that we are spending other people's money. As part of this, it's our job to not only get the best possible deal but also the best possible value – and this generally means choosing the best person to do the job, whether it's cleaning the windows or undertaking complex emergency works.

If you think your managing agent could be doing a better job of your maintenance programme then please do talk to the team at Clear Building Management.

Clear Building Management offers a fresh approach to residential property management.

Formed by qualified and experienced professionals from the UK residential block management agent industry who recognised that there is a better and more inclusive way to manage residential buildings and apartment blocks, a way that embodies our core values of quality, value and transparency.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Pre-Planned Maintenance & Capital Expenditure: Planning is Key

Written by the team at Omnia Estates

To help landlords and managing agents plan and budget for repairs, it is good practise in property management to ensure that PPM (Pre-Planned Maintenance) schedules are in place for day to day and reoccurring contractors, alongside CapEx calculators which can help to budget for any big ticket items such as roofs, carpets and lift upgrades.

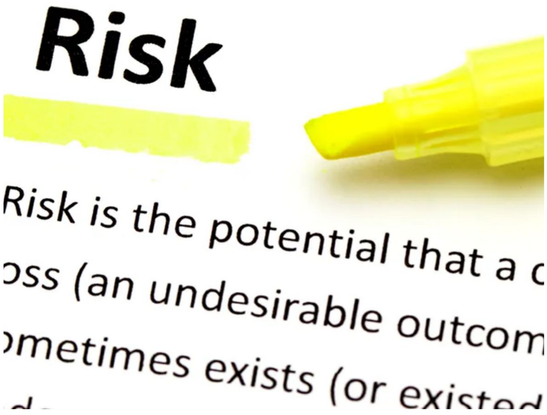
Often these calculators are used to ensure that sufficient funds are being collected into the reserve accounts and sinking funds (where the lease allows for this) to avoid unnecessarily large invoices, which can have a huge impact on leaseholders.

Risk Assessments and Method Statements: Safety First

Risk Assessments are used to establish whether contractors have successfully identified the various risks they may encounter and the control measures that have been implemented to remove or reduce those risks.

In addition to the general risks posed by the nature of the work itself, when carrying out works in residential properties it's important that contractors recognise the various risks they may be faced with which they may not have any direct control over, such as the possibility of residents entering the work area or any obstructions which may be caused.

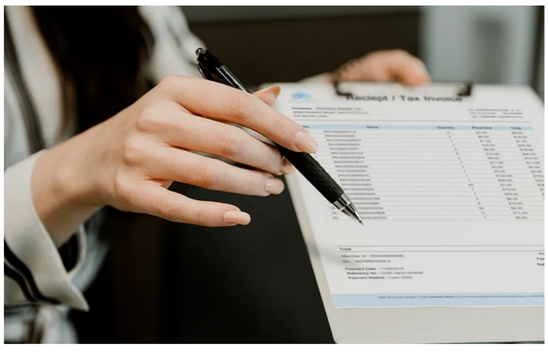
Often overseeing high risk activities such as working at height or with hot equipment, contractors should be able to evidence the safe system of work they employ, specific to the task at hand. This is provided in the form of a Method Statement.



A contractor's Method Statement will provide a full breakdown of each task they will be undertaking and the actions they will take to mitigate any risks which they either inevitable will, or potentially could, encounter.

As each property is different, Landlords and Agents should ensure that both their Risk Assessments and Method Statements are site-specific. They should also be reviewed by a competent person, and somebody who is familiar with the location of the works.

Section 20: One Must Never Forget



When planning works (either for planned or reactive repairs) it is crucial to consider the Section 20 Procedure Consultation for Major Works.

The Section 20 consultation procedure is triggered when any works will cost more than £250 for any one leaseholder (including any VAT which may be added to the costs of the work). Additionally, any properties which have Service Charge Apportionments that vary between the apartments would need to consider that this trigger applies if any one apartment pays more than £250, therefore it is important in cases like this that the threshold for the Consultations is identified from the offset to avoid inadvertently breaching the Section 20 process. Any breaches may result in the Landlord or Management Company being unable to recover the full costs of the works.

Where properties have a high number of units contributing to the Service Charge it is less common that they are required to undertake the Section 20 procedure due to having a larger number of leaseholders to share the costs, but with smaller properties it is more common that the procedure is triggered, as the costs is shared over fewer leaseholders.

Whilst most people would be led to believe that the smaller properties are easier to manage and maintain, this is not always the case. It takes considerably more forward-planning to reduce the number of any reactive repairs which may trigger the consultation procedures, as well as careful budgeting to ensure that there are funds available to carry out works when they are needed.

Impact

There are many different risks and areas of concern that Managing Agents and Landlords must consider when running a well-functioning maintenance and management regime. The implications of poor planning, contractor vetting and risk management can be detrimental to the management of any property. It's likely to result in delays with works being carried out and increases the likelihood of incurring further costs.

In addition, failure to consider and comply with the Section 20 consultation procedure could add further complications if repairs cannot be carried out in a timely manner due to consultation time frames, or the financial impact which may arise if the consultation procedure is not carried out correctly.

The overall impact on the property could be significant when the process for proper planning and management of maintenance, repairs and major works is not in place.

Omnia Estates is an ARMA accredited property management division that works with private landlords, developers, lessees, management companies and freeholders across a mix of conversion, new build, and listed properties across the UK.
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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Setting Up a Fool-Proof Maintenance Programme

Written by Rich Smeeton from Manage Your Block

ManageYourBlock™

Rich Smeeton from Manage Your Block explains how to set up a fool-proof maintenance programme for your block of flats.

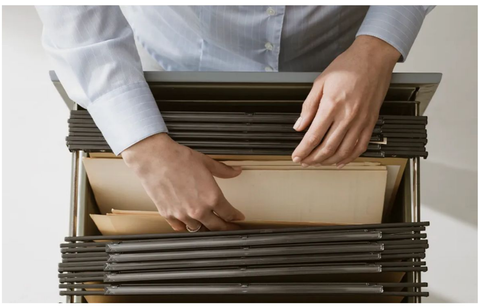
When you think of looking after a block of flats, the first thing that comes to mind is handling maintenance issues- not just as a legal and statutory requirement but also as an essential element in maintaining the health, safety and happiness of the residents of your block of flats.

Taking care of your block of flats and preventing problems reduces expenditure and creates trust with your residents. A great maintenance programme can get you ahead of the game; helping you to avoid falling into a purely reactive role.

Why Set Up a Planned Maintenance Programme?

With so many reasons to keep on top of your block of flat's maintenance there are a few too many to list here but the main ones are:

- Legal Requirements: It's a legal requirement to maintain and repair.
- Statutory Compliance: Lift inspections and electrical testing are just two examples.
- Safety Reasons: Lack of preventative maintenance can lead to hazards.
- Resident Comfort and Satisfaction: a well-maintained block of flats should include a safe, well maintained, clean communal area.
- Cost Effective: Prevention is always better than the cure- early intervention is likely to save on expenses in the future. Works can also be budgeted for through the year.
- Reduced Insurance Premiums: Insurers look for evidence of planned maintenance, as well looked after blocks of flats are less likely to suffer water damage etc.
- Resale Value: Potential residents will always look for signs of a well-maintained building and existing residents will look after their surroundings if they have a sense of pride in where they live.
- Minimising Disruption: Thoughtful planning can reduce lengthy or unexpected disruption for your residents.



What's Involved in a Planned Maintenance Programme?

Your Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) should include everything from regular day-to-day cleaning through to major projects such as re-pointing or re-roofing. With everything mapped out across the year, you should reduce your chances of nasty surprises in terms of expenditure, complaints and accidents.

A great place to start is to check the building's maintenance records. From here you can book in any annual or bi-annual checks with your suppliers and get more of an idea of any areas that may have been neglected for too long.

If you're new to the block and/or if paperwork or records are sparse, booking a visit from a surveyor is the best place to start. They can give the building an overall health check and advise if any particular areas may need specialist attention.

Health & Safety

The building's health and safety documentation should let you know if anything needs attending to urgently as well as allowing you to map out future plans. Any contractors working on site should also have access to the documentation for the sake of compliance with safety legislation.

A periodic Health & Safety Report will identify any specific requirements for the building such as lift inspections, water testing and fixed wiring tests etc. If you find your most recent report is out of date (if one can't be found at all!) then you should book in for one asap. It should then be reviewed regularly to ensure your overall plan is being stuck to and is suitably effective.

Everyday Maintenance

While booking in any major upkeep, everyday maintenance shouldn't be allowed to slide. Keeping on top of more regular tasks will reduce the need for major jobs in the future and will keep a sense of pride in the building for your residents.

If you need to spread the load a little, look at the regular contractors you have on site such as gardeners or cleaners and consider what routine tasks they could potentially handle for you. For example, checking drainage outlets and gullies are clear could fall to the gardener. Cleaners could let you know about any light bulbs in need of replacement or if they spot any damp appearing.

PMP Reviews

The plan for your block of flats should be regularly reviewed and adjusted as circumstances change. What may look like a great plan for the year in January may need to be re-evaluated several times before Christmas!

While it may evolve, the plan shouldn't be adjusted by moving major projects further and further down the line if this can be avoided. You may find yourself with a list of hugely expensive tasks to do within one financial year if you fall into that trap.

We're not here to tell you how to run your block of flats, but we can provide you with highly specialised software to make the management of your block much easier. Contact us for more details on 0333 577 9070 or email info@manageyourblock.co.uk.

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.

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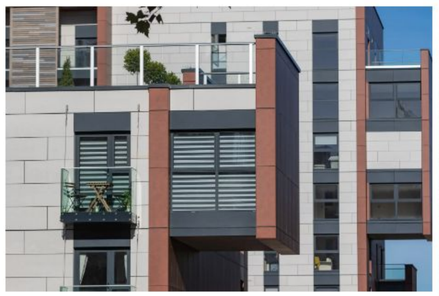

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Health and Safety Considerations for Maintenance Works: A Guide for Property Managers & Landlords When Employing Contractors

Written by the team at 4site Consulting

4site Consulting Ltd

Whether you have regular planned maintenance, or maintenance works are needed in response to an emergency, you will need to consider any risks to health and safety and ensure that you are providing a safe working environment for contractors.

Employing Safe Contractors – What is My Duty?

In accordance with the Health and Safety at work Act 1974, if you are employing contractors you will need to "ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, [their] health, safety and welfare at work."

As a Managing Agent or owner, you have a responsibility to ensure that your contractors' work place, i.e., the buildings that you manage or own, are safe to work in and that contractors are made aware of anything that may pose a risk to their health and safety.

For example, you should be ensuring that any contractors carrying out maintenance works on your building(s) are informed of other health and safety procedures, such as the emergency procedures and fire evacuation plans for the building. One of the ways in which you can do this, is by displaying a 'Smart Safety' QR in the communal areas of your block for contractors to scan and access this information (please get in touch for more details on this).

Asbestos and Maintenance

Another potential risk that contractors face when carrying out maintenance works on residential blocks is the risk of exposure to asbestos. If a building was built before the year 2000, then it may contain asbestos and contractors will need to know the location and condition of any Asbestos Containing Materials before works commence.

If you are the responsible person for a building, it is your responsibility to ensure contractors have access to Asbestos Surveys and the Asbestos Register. Of course, it is also their responsibility to ensure they are checking this before they begin.

The Asbestos Register must be viewed and acknowledged by all contractors before any work starts to ensure they are aware of any Asbestos present. If you are sending contractors the Asbestos Register by email, you should ask that they reply to the email to confirm they have received this and crucially understood the contents in relation to the works they are doing.

Contractor Vetting

Before considering all of this, it is important that you are ensuring that the contractors you are using are safe!

You may be wondering how you can tell if a contractor or company has safe working practices?

In order to do so, you can 'vet' your contractors, for example, to ensure they have:

- Sufficient insurances
- Sufficient health and safety training for staff
- Health and safety certifications (such as ISO accreditations)
- A program in place for equipment maintenance and inspections
- A program in place for effectively assessing subcontractors
- And many more!

This is something we have discussed previously, and there are many services you can use to vet contractors on your behalf including Safe4site.

If you would like any further information or have any questions, please get in touch with the team at 4site Consulting today.

4site Consulting provide independent residential and commercial assessments and surveys for owners and managers of property.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

It's So Much More Than Maintenance and Cleaning

Written by the team at Fraser Allen

Fraser Allen
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You've heard the saying first impressions count, well, they really do. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression which is why cleaning and maintenance are vital to maintain the value of your property investment.

But it's so much more than just finding the right cleaner, or gardener or reliable tradespeople.

Potential purchasers will be searching for properties which are well maintained and offer little hassle.

Let's Talk Maintenance

First things first check the lease - what does it stipulate?

Every block is different and the maintenance programme should be developed to suit that building's unique characteristics, such as its age, construction method, overall condition and any objects that will eventually require repair or replacement.

So, what's the plan?

Like any investment, you need to maintain the investment and ensure your return on investment - so what's the plan? What is the cyclical plan for maintenance, whether it's the painting, or the roof, or the windows - what is the plan?

We were approached recently by a prospective client in Brighton who has a 84 unit block and they all have metal balconies - he said they'd started painting and repairing them eight years ago and it was painting the Forth Bridge - describing a never-ending job, one which takes so long that when you have finished it, it is time to start again

Are there building works that you've been meaning to sort out for months? Do you have any niggling problems that you see everyday and just haven't got around to sorting out? Many of the blocks we've been talking to haven't got together for months due to Covid and lockdown, so this is the perfect time.

Follow this simple 3 stage process for your Fresh Start:

Step One: Get all the leaseholders together and start a wish list of all the work that needs attention. It would be great to involve your Property Manager from your block management company at this stage. Just so everyone is aware of the plans.

This is especially important this year as many management companies did not get together and hold their regular meetings and Annual General Meetings due to Covid.

It is important to keep up regular and consistent communication. What we have found is that when communication breaks down, relationships break down, and that doesn't help anyone!

Step Two: Next categorise the list in order of importance - High, Medium and Low.

Step Three: Next categorise each task with a timeline:

- Urgent (within 1 week)
- Non Urgent (within 1- 3 months)
- Nice to Have (3 - 6 months)

Obviously super urgent tasks you'll (hopefully) already be planning.

Step Four: The next step would be to assign costs against all these tasks - this is where your managing agent comes in. They'll have the contractor contacts and will need to arrange three quotes of the work and issue Section 20 notices if required.

Here's my final piece of advice:

- Get in touch your managing agent and arrange to talk about your planning your Fresh Start
- Get all your leaseholders together and seek their input
- Follow this simple 3 step approach

There are so many great and compelling reasons to keep up with your maintenance, there are so many but the obvious ones are:

- Maintenance is detailed within your lease
- There will be legal requirements
- There are health and safety requirements
- It will help maintain the comfort for the leaseholders
- Catching issues early on is likely to save higher costs in the future
- A well-maintained property is likely to cost less to insure

Let's Talk Cleaning

Making sure communal areas are regularly cleaned and maintained can be a nightmare, especially as the standard and quality of cleanliness is subjective and one person's clean could still be another person's dirty, depending on how exacting your standards are. So how can you agree what "great" or even 'good enough' looks like when it comes to communal cleaning?

That's where a professional Property Manager comes in. It all comes down to planning and communication - again!

We usually find when leaseholders try and save money and someone steps up to do the cleaning, or they create a rota it is never done to everyone's satisfaction, it gets forgotten, or missed. This causes frustration and resentment and communication and relationships break down and what was a simple cleaning job spirals out of control.

So we would always recommend employing a cleaner. It will cost £15 - £20 per hour, but what is your time worth?

The exact cleaning needs of your block will depend on its size, design and use. For example:

- Is the hall carpeted, or is it tiled or has a wood floor?
- How many residents use the shared spaces?
- Is there a lot of glass or are there other fixtures that can gather dust and grubby fingerprints?
- Can people store stuff in shared spaces, like bikes or buggies?
- Are there communal bins in the hallways?
- What's the plan for the post?
- Where are the recycling bins kept?

To ensure the right job is being done to the right standards, we recommend that you have a plan and communicate regularly, to make sure your communal areas continue to do your block justice and create the best first impression.

1) A Detailed Cleaning Schedule

If your building is being managed properly, a detailed cleaning schedule should have been worked out in advance between the managing agent or landlord and their professional cleaning contractor. An initial site visit would take into account all of the specific needs of your building, working out what needs to be cleaned, how and when.

In our experience, this cleaning schedule should also be reviewed regularly to make sure the jobs on the list and the frequency they get done continue to be right for the block and it's residents.

2) Regular Cleaning

If your block isn't being cleaned and taken care of regularly it's very easy for things to get out of hand. What starts off as an annoyance can easily escalate into a health and safety concern. For instance, rubbish left in shared areas for too long can quickly attract insects or vermin, and dirty floors and door handles can become a breeding ground for germs. Not good.

Regular cleaning doesn't necessarily mean the entire block needs bleaching to within an inch of its life every week. There might be some jobs that only need doing once every few weeks or months (for example, window cleaning or a deep clean of carpets). The important thing is that the right jobs get tackled at the right time.

If you're concerned about the frequency of scrubbing in your block, why not ask your managing agent for a copy of the cleaning schedule so you can see what is supposed to be done and when? If you have any concerns, raise them quickly to help prevent little problems escalating into big ones.

3) A Cleaning Record

It's not always possible to catch sight of staff from the appointed cleaning company if you're out at work during the day, but that doesn't mean they're not doing the job. We always request that our cleaning contractors pin up a visible record sheet that is signed each time an area is cleaned. If there isn't one in your block, why not ask for one to be put up so cleaning is easier to track?

Finally, don't think of it as boring maintenance and cleaning - reposition your approach and attitude, and instead think of it as maintaining your investment.

If you like the sound of the way we work at Fraser Allen and you'd like your property to be in safe hands, then please call 01242 399150 or email us on info@fraserallenem.co.uk and let's see how we can support you.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

How to Improve Your Repairs & Maintenance Management Through Process Optimisation

Written by Simon Bushell, Sales Director at Fixflo

Fixflo

As we approach the end of 2021, you may be starting to reflect on how the year has been for your company and thinking about where you can improve based on leaseholder and resident feedback. The management of repairs and maintenance is one of the most important ways you serve these groups and one of the areas that can have the most significant impact on their satisfaction. It's also one of the most important ways in which you can ensure that the blocks you manage stay legally compliant. Here are some of the ways in which your agency can optimise these processes.

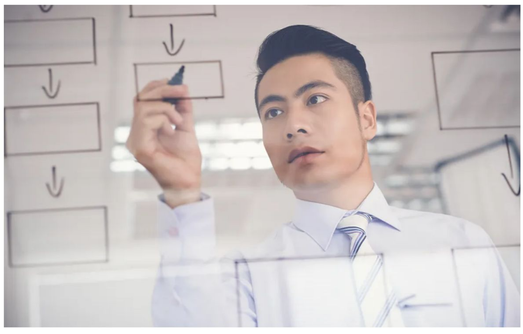
Who Owns Each Process?

Unless you're the only staff member in the agency, the chances are that not everyone involved in repairs and maintenance for your blocks has an identical understanding of how things are being carried out. So before you can optimise your processes, you first need to gain an understanding of the current situation.

From scheduling planned maintenance for staying compliant with legislation to communicating with contractors, the head of the department should figure out who is accountable for the success metric(s) of each process. For example, for planned maintenance, the success metric could be the number of planned maintenance items completed compared to the number required for a block to remain compliant throughout the year.

These process 'owners' don't necessarily have to execute the processes themselves, but they have to be accountable for the outputs. It is not unusual to have a 'key person' who is highly motivated and is relied upon for many different outputs in a company. Still, we should refrain from assigning too many processes to any individual. The process owner has to, in the future, manage the process on an ongoing basis. Too much work on one person could set us off on a path to failure. Every block management company is different - some directors are very involved in the day-to-day running of the firm while others are not. If you are both the director and the 'key person' in the business, you might need to consider delegating some processes so that you can focus on your top priorities in the new year.

Map, Compare and Align



Once we have a list of processes, desired outputs and owners, it's time to get to work and map out your processes. This step may sound straightforward, but it is often the one that requires the most effort in a process optimisation project!

Not only should the process owner document the process, but they should invite relevant team members to do so individually. Only once everyone involved has mapped out their understanding of how something is done can you detect gaps, discrepancies and room for improvement. This is when the business management buzzword 'alignment' comes into play. Ironing out any mismatched understanding now is key to identifying opportunities for optimisation in the next steps.

Use Tech to Create Efficiency

Tech solutions can standardise and optimise processes in one go.

Think about your processes for planned maintenance. How do you ensure that the right risk and safety assessments are made to a building and its common areas when they're due? How do you ensure assets like lifts are serviced at the right intervals? Identify how these processes are carried out and how tech might be able to help you. For instance, automation and scheduling can be used to ensure no maintenance events slip through the cracks, while the right contractors or assessors can be assigned job tasks without the need for manual intervention.

Your human resources can then be diverted to reviewing assessment reports and any recommended remedial works. Your experienced block managers are trained to ensure relevant processes, especially when a Section 20 consultation is required, are properly carried out and not to administer repetitive manual tasks.

To complete a repair job for a building's common area usually requires the managing agent to receive the repair request by phone or email, verify the issue with the resident and confirm access, arrange appointments with contractors and then follow up to ensure the job is carried out to a suitable standard.

Using a specialist repairs and maintenance management system, you can automate these manual steps, simplify processes and standardise your entire team's way of managing these requests.

Optimise Over Time

Business optimisation is not a one-time exercise but a continuous process. But this should not be a reason to change processes frequently and aimlessly. Allow time for your new repair and maintenance processes to become embedded and measure their effectiveness consistently. With the introduction of new legislation such as the Building Safety Bill, client expectations and compliance requirements will not stay the same year after year, so be sure to review your processes regularly with process owners. Consistent control and monitoring will help you make data-based decisions in future process optimisation initiatives.

For more on the latest legal and compliance topics block managers should be keeping an eye on, watch our Quarterly Legal & Compliance Update for Block Managers webinar with solicitor Cassandra Zanelli, CEO of Property Management Legal Services, free on Fixflo's website.

Managing residential blocks is a huge responsibility. You could be in charge of the health and safety of thousands of residents in one building alone. On top of that, you need to make sure that communal facilities are serviced regularly. Manage proactive and reactive maintenance tasks, communicate with stakeholders and stay compliant easily with Fixflo's leasehold and block management solution.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

An Inherited Risk

Written by Phil Parkinson, Legal Director at JB Leitch

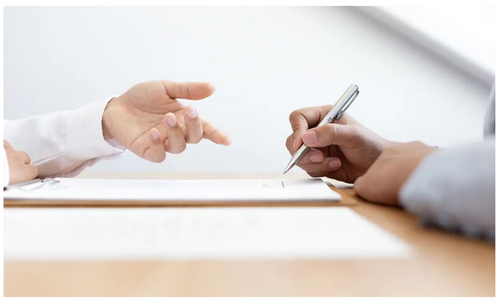
Phil Parkinson, Legal Director at specialist property solicitors JB Leitch, looks at the issues surrounding inherent defects – and the obligations and implications for both landlords and leaseholders…

With this issue's focus on repair and maintenance, and the industry wide prioritisation of remedial works to ensure building safety, this article looks at the issues surrounding inherent defects – issues in design, faulty installation, or the use of inadequate materials which can lead to significant problems later, and crucially, disputes as to who bears the liability to remediate or resolve the issues uncovered. In contrast to issues surrounding disrepair, which typically arise due to the use of the property over the passage of time, inherent defects are attributable to defective design, workmanship or materials.

Damage & Disrepair

Disputes over inherent defects in leasehold property will often lead to careful scrutiny of both the terms of the landlord's and the tenant's repairing covenant in the lease. For liability to arise, there must have been some disrepair or damage suffered leading to a departure from the original condition.

Therefore, in situations where inherent defects do cause damage, liability will remain as the need to repair is a consequence of an inherent defect – in short, the responsibility to repair may also encompass the need to remedy the defect.



Improvement or Repair?

Conversely, where there is no disrepair, remedying such a defect would be an improvement rather than a repair - and therefore it is important to note that a covenant to repair does not carry with it an obligation to remedy poor design, installation or other defects that have not caused damage to the property – unless specifically stated within.

Implied Obligations?

As in almost all landlord and tenant disputes, the lease is generally regarded as the governing foundation of the landlord and tenant relationship. As such, when considering liability, much will depend on the precise wording of the landlord's or tenant's covenant to repair.

Considering the points above, in Grand v Gill [2011] All ER (D) 187 (May), a landlord had a long head leasehold interest in the flat demised to the tenant, but no interest in the rest of the building. The Court of Appeal held that the landlord was not liable under his repairing covenant for damage caused by condensation to the extent that it resulted from a design defect in the building. However, it was found that the landlord was liable for damage to the plasterwork within the flat, as this was physical damage which was covered by the landlord's repairing covenant (as the plasterwork formed part of the structure of the flat).

Considering the Options Available to Landlords & Tenants

While recognising that tenants typically contribute to the cost of repair through a service charge, a landlord's covenant to keep a property in repair does not automatically assume an obligation to remedy inherent defects nor be able to recover those costs from its tenants under the service charge. in Ravenseft Properties Ltd v Davstone (Holdings) Ltd [1980] QB 12. the court confirmed that remediation of inherent defects could qualify as a repair, when considering the cost, value and benefit of the work required, yet alternatively in in The City of London v Various Leaseholders of Great Arthur House [2021] EWCA Civ 431, the Court of Appeal found costs were not recoverable as the leases specifically excluded from the service charge the cost of repairs which amounted to the making good of structural defects. The key point again is that careful consideration of the lease covnenants is required in identifying whether those costs can be passed on to the tenant.

In Summary

In clarifying – and ultimately mitigating risk for both themselves and tenants - landlords should consider whether leases specifically provide for the remediation of inherent defects as part of their repairing covenant, and importantly whether there are specific definitions of what constitutes an inherent defect in relation to design, workmanship or materials, for example.

Warranty protection also offers a mechanism for assurance. In this instance, a landlord, developer or a third party may provide collateral warranties specifically for the benefit of a tenant from the contractors or parties, with material responsibility, Thereby, if a defect arises which can be attributed to a warrantor, the leaseholder may have direct recourse against the third-party contractor or supplier. Again, it is advisable that any such terms (and limitations) are set out clearly and unambiguously. Lastly, specific defect insurance may be a consideration, but policies should be carefully considered, particularly in relation to exclusions, such as water ingress.

In conclusion, the question of inherent defects can be seen to fall between interpretation of the individual fact and degree of matters that emerge, in tandem with what is explicitly set out in the terms of the lease. Should you wish to discuss this topic further, please contact us directly: p.parkinson@jbleitch.co.uk.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Maintaining Your Tenants Heating Systems

Written by the team at Jigsaw Infrared

You can just leave your tenant's heating system to run. Correct? No annual maintenance, no cleaning, no degradation of performance. You can't? Really?

Your Duties as a Landlord

If you're a landlord you'll know about the responsibilities you have, to ensure a safe and efficient heating system for your tenants.

It's your duty as a landlord to make sure the heating system you provide your tenants is both sufficient and operational and can provide a minimum indoor temperature of 18ºC in sleeping rooms and 21ºC in other rooms.

This means both regular maintenance and cost for traditional heating systems. If your properties are heated by gas, then you're tied into an annual gas safety inspection. You also have a gas boiler losing efficiency rapidly.

As a landlord you're also responsible for any repairs required to the boiler, heating and pipes. As I'm sure you're aware, Under Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, if your tenant is without heating and / or hot water this is treated as an emergency repair and as a landlord you should ensure repairs are completed within 24 hours.

There's a lot of responsibility and potentially a lot of headaches with the maintenance and upkeep of a traditional heating system.

Fuel Poverty

If you have installed convection based electric heating into your properties (whether that is a form of storage heater, or a fan heater, or oil filled electric radiators for example) then you run the real risk of tipping your tenants into fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty for your tenants generally results in one or two scenarios;

(i) You have a high turnover of tenants in your properties because the day to day living costs are too high for them, or...

(ii) Your tenant does not properly heat the property resulting in real maintenance issues over time and regular redecoration caused by damp and black spot mould.

What's the Alternative?

So, what's the alternative? Ideally a highly efficient, low maintenance heating system that your tenants find easy to use.

Is there such a thing? There is.

A heating system which can be wall or ceiling mounted, which can offer fine tune control, room by room, rather than from a single thermostat. A system which reduces condensation (and therefore black spot mould) and provides your tenants with a much more comfortable atmosphere to live in. One that can also save them money.

Jigsaw Infrared heating is a highly efficient form of electric heating. It does not work the same way as convection heat which is reliant on creating a convection air flow meaning the whole volume of space must be heated before your tenant feels any benefit.

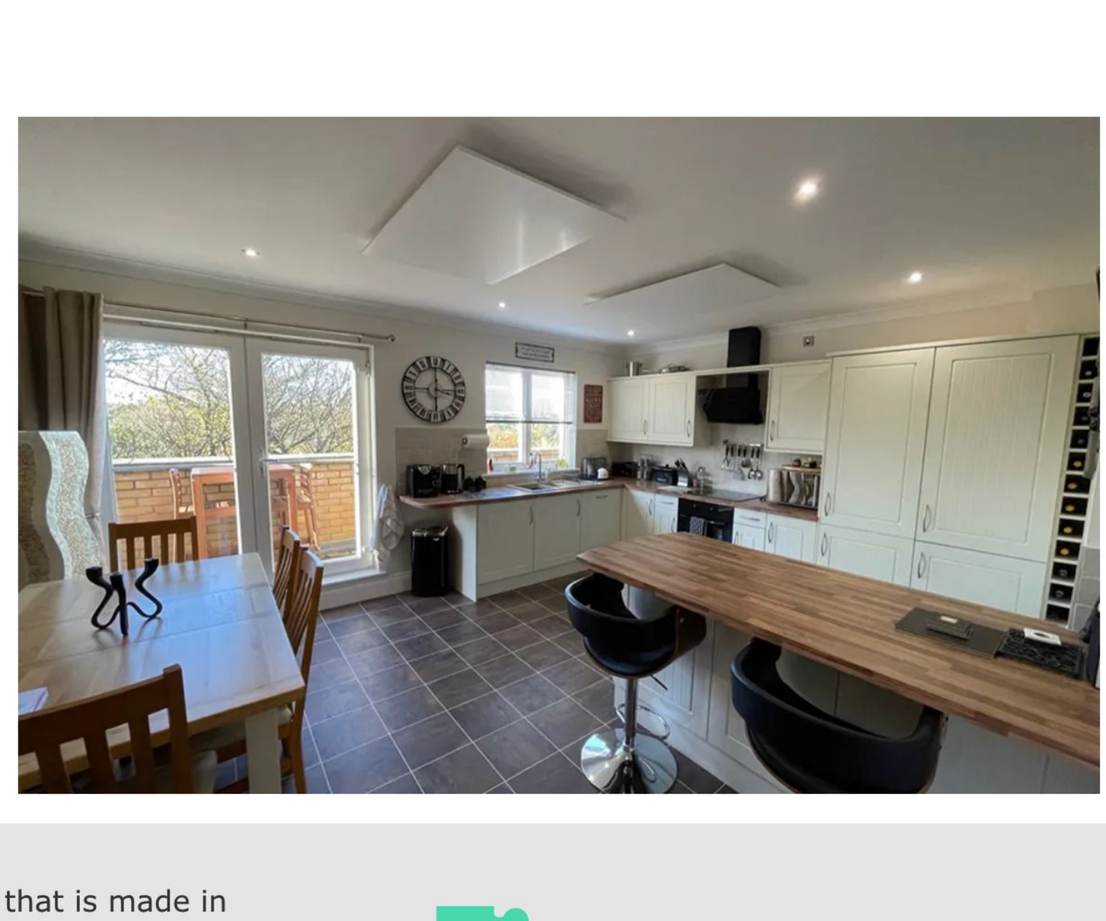
Infrared heating warms people and objects first, whilst gently heating the structure of the space. Heat loss is much reduced resulting in your tenants feeling warmer sooner and for longer.

Jigsaw infrared heaters contain only one moving part, a sensor rated for 100,000 cycles meaning annual maintenance for this heating system is limited to wiping the dust off – something your tenants are more than capable of doing.

Infrared heating (combined with our smart electric water heating) means that you can consign boiler maintenance and gas safety checks to a thing of the past. Not only that, but you can do so knowing that you are improving living conditions and heating costs for your tenants.

Would you like to know more? We'd be pleased to help: www.jigsawinfrared.com

(Pictured, right: Jigsaw premium aluminium infrared heaters 800w on ceiling)



Infrared heating is the efficient, greener and comfortable heating system that is made in the UK. Unlike 'normal' convection heating, infrared warms the surfaces and the people in the room first. This is more efficient and more natural as it replicates how we feel when we're in the sun.

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

How Property Managers are Helping Residents to Maintain a Happy Home

Written by the team at FirstPort

For many people, communal areas and facilities make up a huge part of the place they call home, and it's important that these are kept clean, tidy and fully functional, to ensure that residents are happy and safe in their homes.

You can watch the below video to see exactly how FirstPort, the UK's leading residential property service provider, cares for the homes it looks after.

Four Decades of Looking After the Places People Call Home

As a property manager, our job is to keep the areas that residents share with their neighbours safe, clean, comfortable and in great condition, which helps to protect the value of the properties themselves.

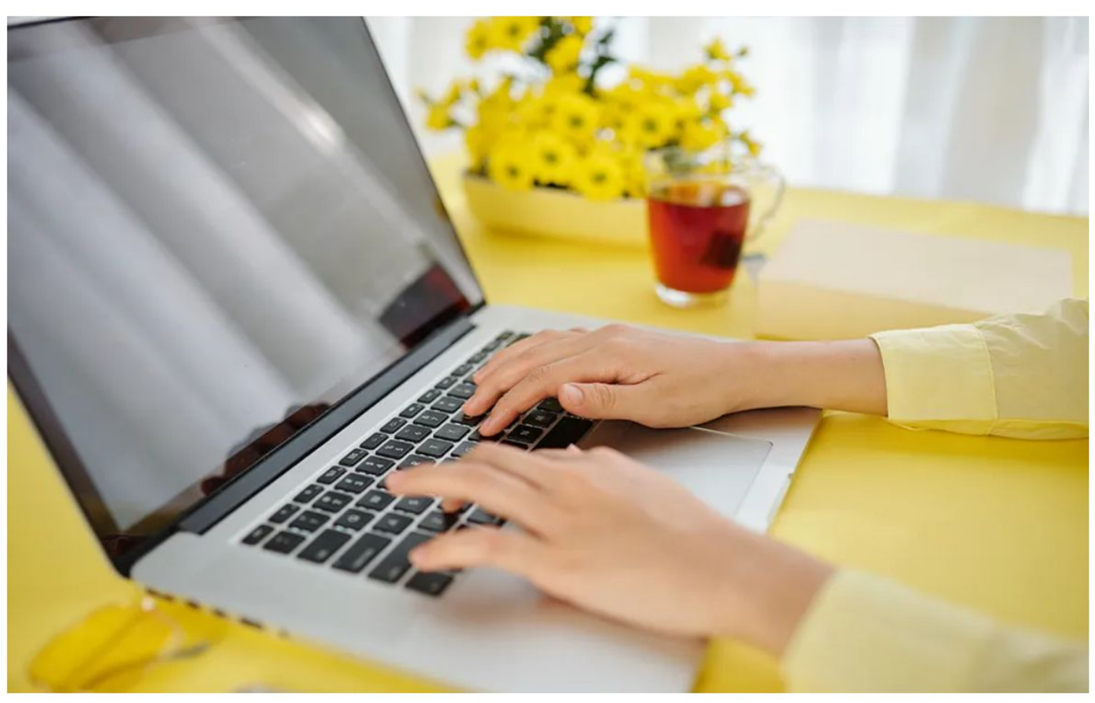
At FirstPort, we've been doing this for more than 40 years and our property management teams, whether visiting or based at a development, go the extra mile to make sure our residents can sit back, relax and enjoy their homes.

We make sure communal areas are looked after and kept clean and tidy. From replacing light bulbs in the corridors to making sure the gardens are planted and watered, we handle all of the day-to-day maintenance around of the development.

As well as day-to-day maintenance, including cyclical works, as a property manager, we make sure the big repairs get sorted too. If the lifts need refurbishing or replacing, a storm has damaged the roof, or the building needs a fresh coat of paint, we'll get it sorted. This meant that residents don't need to coordinate the complex process of finding the best person for the job, getting multiple quotes, or figuring out how to split the bill with their neighbours. We've brought together a network of experts, each approved by us with the right credentials to do the job safely and professionally.

Clear Communication

In order to ensure these processes are as effective and efficient as possible, clear and slick communication is vital. At FirstPort, we have embarked upon a transformational digital programme, which includes the rollout of a new platform, which allows maintenance issues to be logged and addressed quickly. With all relevant information being housed on a single portal, communication between residents, FirstPort staff and contractors is streamlined, meaning necessary work can be carried out as swiftly as possible, with up-to-date, transparent status updates throughout.



As a property manager, we also understand that emergencies can occur from time to time. Whether water gets cut off, the car park gates aren't budging, or lightning strikes your building (it's rare but it has happened!), having a specialist managing agent means that support can be accessible around the clock, whatever the emergency.

For the more complex maintenance issues, our staff on the ground are supported by specialist support teams, including Health and Safety, Accounting, Surveying, Human Resources and in-house legal expertise. Whether they're taking calls at head office or looking after our IT, we ensure that every aspect of managing the homes under our care is carried out by expert professionals.

Safety First

With any maintenance work, the health and safety of our residents is always our number one priority. Whether recognising the exact requirements of each issue or ensuring that the most competent contractor is appointed to do the job, an experienced property manager will have the knowledge, the contacts and the attention to detail, to ensure this remains the case.

We're the first property management business in the UK to receive a five-star rating from the British Safety Council – which we've achieved for four consecutive years, as well as the prestigious Sword of Honour.

Now in our fifth decade as a property manager, we recognise now, more than ever, the importance of feeling safe and happy in your home. By continuing to provide these services for households across the country, we can ensure that our customers continue to enjoy the best possible standards.

FirstPort is the UK's leading residential property services provider. With more than 40 years' experience, we work with over 1,000 resident managed developments, helping RTM and RMC Directors meet their management and legal obligations, all while delivering a great service for residents too.

firstport.co.uk | rmc@firstport.co.uk | 01582 393756

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Lift Maintenance

Written by the team at Ardent Lift Consultancy

ARDENT LIFT CONSULTANCY

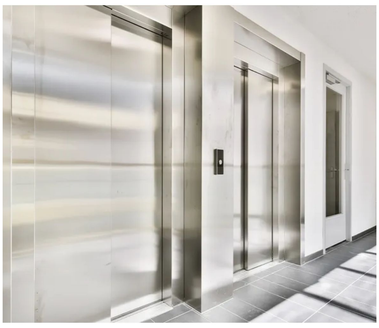
During our many surveys at properties, we witness various levels of maintenance of equipment, for the most part good, but occasionally we see substandard levels of workmanship. The reasons for poor maintenance can be attributed to numerous things including:

- Time constraints (engineers being allocated too short a period to undertake their tasks)
- Unfamiliar installations (engineers not suited the lift equipment they are working on)
- Operating environment (if a building is busy and the lifts are in constant demand)
- Health and safety concerns (access to equipment puts operatives at risk).

Back in in September last year, we looked at the obligations of lift owners under current regulations to provide a safe working environment for engineers to carry out lift maintenance.

In this month's issue of Flat Living Magazine, we answer questions commonly received regarding lift maintenance including how to approach choosing the right contractor, the appropriate levels of cover for your lift and how Ardent can help guide you through these decisions.

We are looking to implement a new maintenance contract for our lift. What level of cover should we look to obtain?



As "owners and operators", it is your responsibility under LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998) and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure your lift is maintained on a regular basis. There are many variables in determining the frequency of programmed maintenance, i.e., the type of lift you have, the number of floors it serves and the level and type of use it is subjected to.

When deciding on the type of maintenance and maintenance company you require, it is important to remember servicing should be about preventative maintenance, highlighting the deterioration of components before they fail, providing a reliable lift service and lower running costs in the medium to long term.

Generally, within the lift industry, there are three levels of cover:

Basic - This level of cover allows for the maintenance only of lift equipment. Often described as an "oil and grease" contract, the lift company should be servicing components of the lift installation, but within this cover breakdowns, parts and labour are often excluded and are chargeable by the contractor.

Intermediate - As the title suggests, this cover sits somewhere between the basic and comprehensive and should cover breakdown attendances (usually during working hours) provided they are not due to misuse of the lift equipment. Some levels of intermediate cover will include perishable items (door rollers, car shoes, etc.) but this would be subject to the terms agreed within the cover.

Comprehensive - comprehensive cover should include all maintenance, breakdowns and parts required to maintain and repair the lift throughout the duration of the contract. However, there are often caveats to this (such as controllers, machines and door operators being excluded as high-cost items), so it is always important to review the level of cover prior to signing the contract.

We often find that a comprehensive level of cover offers better long-term value (despite often costing twice the annual cost) to the Client as it means the Lift Contractor is more focused on preventative maintenance and a first fix for breakdowns.

How do I ensure that what my maintenance company is doing is correct?

Good maintenance coupled with technical support is essential for providing a reliable lift service. Lift designs vary greatly and require different levels of technical ability to maintain correctly. Unreliability may be due to the age of equipment and obsolescence of replacement parts. Other causes may include inadequate workmanship, poor adjustment levels or poor quality of maintenance.

An unreliable lift is not only measured by the frequency of breakdowns. Other issues such as poor levelling, noisy operation and performance issues are tell-tale signs that the lift is not correctly adjusted, which could potentially lead to larger issues.

Some simple signs to look for from your lift would be the following:

- Lift stopping too high or too low at the landing floors
- Doors opening or closing frequently before commencement of travel
- Scrapes, knocks or bangs when the lift travels through the lift well
- Excessive noise or heat emanating from the machine room (space)
- Incorrect floor designation when the lift is called

Behind all the above issues, there are often simple causes that require minor adjustment to rectify, provided the problems are diagnosed in the correct manner.

Regular maintenance should be coupled with Thorough Examinations of the equipment by a Competent Person. Thorough Examinations should NOT be confused with preventative maintenance, although they have some elements in common.

LOLER Inspections- Who is a Competent Person?

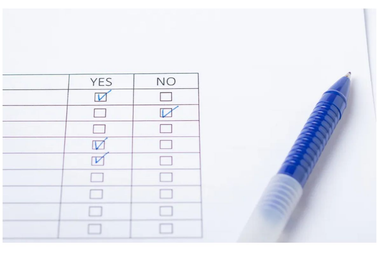
The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) introduced new requirements for the safe provision and use of lifting equipment. Regulation 9 of LOLER requires that all lifts provided for use in work activities are 'thoroughly examined' by a Competent Person at regular intervals.

So, who is a Competent Person?

- Lift Insurance Inspectors
- Client appointed persons (The person who is responsible for ensuring compliance to LOLER 1998 & HASAWA 1974 for that client) usually in larger organisations
- Lift Engineer where they deem a specific component to be requiring a further in-depth examination

A Thorough Examination is a systematic and detailed examination of the lift and all its associated equipment. Its aim is to detect any defects which are, or might become, dangerous. The Competent Person should then report them to the duty holder and if appropriate the enforcing authority (the Health and Safety Executive or Local Authority).

The Competent Person is legally required to send you a written and signed copy of the report identifying any defects which need to be addressed. Giving details of any repair, renewal or alteration required to remedy the defect and a date by which it should be undertaken.



How do I know if my service provider is addressing the identified defects?

It is important to obtain written confirmation of the completion of the identified defects, particularly those of a timed nature. Subject to the level of maintenance contract in place, many items highlighted within the LOLER inspections can be addressed during the next scheduled maintenance visit.

However, on occasions, the Lift Contractor will need to quote for works beyond their contractual remit. This is often where the process falls down as the Client is not always keen to spend further monies on works and often results in repeat items being seen on the reports. Key to this is often ascertaining what is mandatory for the client to undertake and what is recommended but not enforceable.

ARDENT Lift Consultancy can assist our clients with all maintenance issues by undertaking maintenance audits to assess quality of workmanship, adjustment levels, cleanliness and compliance with current Health and Safety legislation whilst inspecting documentation found at site, ensuring the performance, reliability and life expectancy of the equipment is maximised in a cost-effective manner and providing alternative solutions where required. For more information, click here or contact us via the details below.

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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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Making the Most of Outside Space

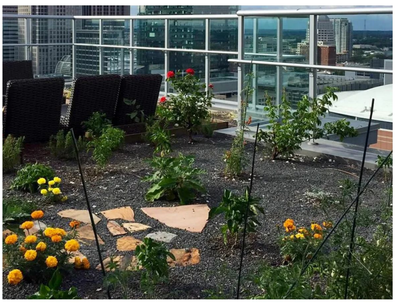
Written by Darren Bagnall of Flat Living Insurance

Darren Bagnall of Flat Living Insurance helps you make the most of any available outside space at your block of flats.

While flat dwellers may not have access to swathes of land, many can take advantage of balconies, potted plants and rooftop gardens. With greenery being linked to our overall health and wellbeing, property managers should not only allow but encourage their green-fingered residents' efforts wherever possible.

For those lucky enough to have a communal garden with their block of flats, maintenance is key to resident satisfaction. Below, we've put together some advice for those that want to make the most of their limited outdoor space as well as some tips for general communal garden upkeep.

Balconies and Rooftops



For those with rooftop access, a garden space could be easy to create for your block of flats. You can install raised flower beds and use trellis walls to divide the expanse into smaller areas.

Keep in mind that many plants will need shelter from the wind and sun- it may be best to seek professional advice when choosing plants and deciding what to put where. Installing netting material 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 individual needs of the plants should always be considered. Don't spend hundreds on plants that will wither and die simply because they've been positioned incorrectly! Map out your plans based on their sun and shade requirements.

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 your favourite trailing plants dangle over the front of the box.

Window Boxes

No garden, no balcony? No worries- window boxes are a great solution. You can use them for growing flowers (nasturtiums, daisies or marigolds work well) or, for a useful addition to your kitchen, you can grow salad vegetables such as lettuce or radishes.

You can also create your own herb garden with chives, thyme, parsley or sage. Mix up the more useful options with some flowers to enjoy the best of both worlds!

When designing a window box, select plants with a variety of growth habits; those that grow upright, those with bushy tendencies and those that vine or trail.

Hanging Baskets

Hanging baskets are one of the easiest ways to fit in some greenery- and a perfect choice for the apartment gardener. Fuchsias and ivy will flower in fairly shady sites or try geraniums if your space gets full sun.

Garden Maintenance Budget

As a Residents' Management Company (RMC) director, you may be surprised by the budget set aside for garden maintenance for your block of flats. You may even ask yourself; is this is really necessary? Surely anyone can cut grass, de-weed and prune a few hedges at a much lower rate?

This may be true, but if you use a low-cost gardener, you need to ask the following questions:

- What experience do they have?
- Do they have any references?
- Do they have a local site you can look at?
- Are they correctly insured?
- Do they have a spraying licence (PA1 / PA6)?
- Do they have a complaints procedure?

A good garden maintenance company will offer all the above, and they'll also be able to advise you on what maintenance is required dependant on your budget, your space and the plants involved.

If you have a very limited budget, you will need to accept that the gardens may not look perfect all year round. Your gardener will advise you re the best schedule to cover all bases as far as possible to satisfy your residents and to keep your block of flats looking great.

Gardening Schedule

As a rule of thumb, the following basic tasks need to be carried out throughout the year, but obviously this will depend on the frequency of the schedule that has been agreed with your contractor:

Spring:

- Define beds
- Weed and feed grass
- Some pruning of certain hedges/shrubs
- Starting to cut grassed areas
- Any spring bulbs should be allowed to die off naturally as cutting these back too soon will stop them from flowering next year

Summer:

- Weeding and cutting grass will still need to be done but by midsummer the grass will slow its growth and in the heat you should not cut the grass too short
- It is not advisable to prune back any hedges/shrubs that are flowering as this will stress the plant and may cause flowering the next season to be limited
- If you know that the weather is going to be hot and dry for a few weeks, it's not advisable to put down any feed for grassy areas as the majority of these require watering in

Autumn:

- Cleaning up fallen leaves
- The last feed of the year
- Cutting back shrubs and hedges
- Cutting of grassed areas will be less frequent but if the warmer weather staying longer you will need to be cutting into mid-November
- Edge all borders and hoe the beds before the ground is too hard
- Think about planting any spring and summer bulbs at the beginning of October

Winter:

- Keep on top of any shrub/hedge pruning
- Some contracts may include that rock salting is to be done when needed
- Paths to be kept clear of snow and ice

Reading the above may help you bear in mind that, once you have chosen a contractor for your garden maintenance at your block of flats, you should allow a reasonable time before you expect to see results as work done in the Autumn may not show until Spring or Summer. It may also go some way to explaining the depth of knowledge required for a garden to be maintained to a high standard.

Flat Living Insurance provides specialist insurance policies for blocks of flats and apartments. For more information or a quote, please contact a member of the Flat Living Insurance team on 0333 577 2044.

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: Maintenance & Cleaning

The Importance of Out of Hours Support

Written by the team from Block in a Box

Block in a Box explains the importance of out of hours emergency cover, particularly leading up to winter.

As much as most Property Managers and Residents' Management Company (RMC) Directors may feel like they work 24/7, no one can be by their phone day and night. For the most part, maintenance issues can wait to be handled in office hours, but what if the worst happens at your block of flats in the middle of the night? Swift action may be needed to minimise the damage and disruption- do you have anyone on hand to start the process?

Contracting out of hours support may sound like a luxury, but believe us, you'll be grateful for the back up when the time eventually comes…

The Water Leak

A burst pipe in one flat is leaking water into the flat below, damaging two units and causing chaos. It's bad enough handling this during working hours (what with the speed necessary to stem the flow of water and the customer service training needed to handle panicked, potentially angry residents) let alone at 2am!

Leaseholders will always call their managing agent or RMC director first. Even if you happen to sleep with your phone on and next to your head, will you have access to the necessary files or contractor contact details to do anything useful?

Expecting property managers to handle stressful calls they're not equipped to deal with at antisocial hours isn't fair on them or the residents of the building.

Cost Control

If we carry on with our water leak scenario, we can look at the money saved by your out of hours investment.

Water is leaking from a kitchen into the kitchen below. The resident who's ceiling is leaking has no idea where to find the stopcock and instead immediately picks up the phone to call the out of hours service. An emergency plumber is sent to site and has the situation under control within 2 hours, avoiding the collapse of the ceiling and limiting the cost of the damage to around £750.

If the water had been allowed to continue to escape for another 2 hours, the ceiling could well have collapsed. Replacing it and redecorating the kitchens could have cost something in the region of £2,750.

Left to continue for anything closer to 8 hours, the leak could have resulted in a full kitchen refit, rendering the flat uninhabitable and therefore adding loss of rent and alternative accommodation costs into the equation.

The water could also have made its way to the next flat below by this point, bringing the total cost to something around £22,750.

Spiralling costs and displaced, angry tenants could be so easily avoided by the provision of an out of hours service.

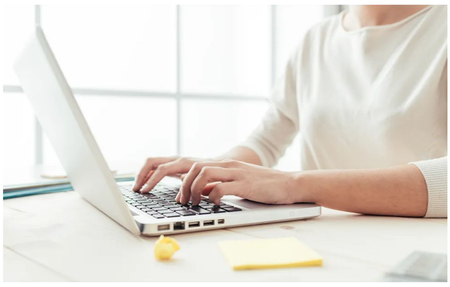
A Modern Service

24-hour mobile access to everything from fast food to banking is now the expected norm- why should property management be any different? Leaseholders may well be very surprised to learn that there's no out of hours provision for emergencies, especially when they are expected to pay service charges which, to them, may seem very expensive.

As property management professionals, we know what goes into the running of a building, but to leaseholders these fees can feel extortionate. An out of hours phone line (as well as you're a-class service levels of course) can add some serious value.

A Helping Hand

Besides resident satisfaction and minimising the fall out caused by emergencies, having an out of hours team is of huge benefit to property managers too.



Instead of sitting down to an overflowing inbox full of panicked messages and competing priorities on a Monday morning, you could find an ordered update re any situations that arose over the weekend.

You won't have to panic and leap into action. Instead, you'll have an up-to-date grasp of the situation, safe in the knowledge that the process to rectify any damage is underway.

What Makes for a Great Out of Hours Service?

When choosing a provider, we suggest you look for the following elements:

- A UK-based call centre with modern IT and phone systems
- A professional and experienced team with industry knowledge and amazing customer service skills (check their reviews)
- A triage-based approach with call handlers that use educated discretion to decide if an out of hours visit is really necessary
- A pre-approved network of contractors with set service levels and rates

Block in a Box suggest Flat Living Insurance's Home Emergency Policy which is only £36 per annum, per flat (all flats in the block must be included in the policy). This includes overnight alternative accommodation if the unit is unsafe or uncomfortable to stay in, a 12-month guarantee for all repairs as well as cover for all of the following domestic emergencies:

- The complete breakdown of your heating system
- Plumbing and drainage problems
- Damage that affects your security, including locks and windows
- If your only toilet is broken
- Loss of your power supply
- Lost keys
- Vermin infestation
- Roof damage

Block in a Box don't only provide information on how to protect your block of flats against emergencies over winter. We can also help with utilities, repairs, insurance, health and safety, and just about any other issue a flat owner or manager might face. To learn more about leasehold management companies or freehold management companies, contact our friendly and professional team today.

Block in a Box was 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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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

External Redecoration and Some Quick Tips for Winter

Written by Sinead Campbell of London Flats Insurance

Sinead Campbell of London Flats Insurance provides some quick tips to protect your block of flats over winter 2021 and to plan for a positive 2022.

If you've just started managing your block, or if things have been bit delayed this year (we can't think why?!), then you may be looking for some quick, easy ways to prepare your block of flats for winter. Now may also be a good time to start planning for any major works you'd like to undertake next spring as the Section 20 process can be lengthy.

We thought we'd give you some tips for both.

Roofs, Terraces and Balconies

With winter comes rain and with rain comes water ingress- a property management nightmare. Often it only takes some simple preventative measures to avoid leaks and other issues:

- Remove any build-up of leaves or debris that may clog drainage outlets
- If there are any exposed pipe runs, replace any missing insulation that might expose the pipes and lead to them freezing
- Repair any serious faults in the waterproofing such as cracks or lifting seams which might allow water in
- Make sure any rooftop plant rooms are watertight by dealing with ill-fitting doors etc.

It's worth mentioning that safety should be your top priority while carrying out these checks. They should only be carried out if the areas can be safely accessed and solid handrails are in place.

Paths, Steps and Railings

Residents or staff slipping on ice can lead to serious injury and to legal claims for negligence. Don't let something as simple as a frozen puddle cause such anguish! If you notice a stubborn puddle after summer showers, be sure to note it and get the path dealt with. That little puddle will be an icy hazard in the winter months. If the issue can't be rectified for any reason, either cordon off the area or ensure it's regularly salted. Steps should be well salted too, and railings should be secure enough to hold firm when they're needed most.

Check Your Insurance

Even with the best of intentions and with all the preparation in the world, accidents can still happen- would your current cover protect you? Here are some key points to check in your paperwork or with your provider:

- Check that your policy has public liability cover to deal with any claims arising from accidents on the premises
- Look at whether you have the correct water damage cover
- Most importantly, look at the level of the current sum insured and declared value

The policy will have a declared value (which means an overall figure to cover the costs of a hypothetical situation where a total loss has occurred and the building has to be replaced completely). If this is too low, then your premium will be effectively undercharged and, in the event of any claim, the insurers may apply a pro rata deduction based on the percentage under insured. On the other hand, if it's too high you might be paying more than you need. If you're unsure, feel free to give us a call.

Looking Ahead

If your block of flats is looking a little lack lustre (or indeed, if the lease dictates a regular schedule for external redecoration) it may be time to start planning for some major works. This will involve working through the Section 20 procedure; a long process that can mean it takes months to get boots on the ground, even with money in the bank and no objections from your residents... Why not start now so your ducks are in a row come springtime?

External works are best done in the summer months for obvious reasons. The duration of the works will depend on the building concerned and the works required, but considering even the most simple jobs can take say, eight weeks, it's not uncommon for projects to run for up to six months.

If you want the project completed by early October when the weather (normally) breaks, allow plenty of time to get the work done by starting as early as possible:

Appointing a Surveyor

If you don't have someone in mind already, request several proposals from firms with experience in leasehold properties. Interview them and look carefully at their track record. Proposals should include their initial observations and give a clear idea of their fee structure.

Once appointed, the surveyor should clarify the brief, prepare some ballpark budgets and proceed to draft the specification for approval in line with some mutually agreed timescales. It's at this time that the first section 20 consultation notice should be drawn up and provided to residents.

Make sure you provide you surveyor with as much information as possible re the maintenance history of the property. If, for example, there have been numerous leaks around the building in recent years, make sure the surveyor has the details so they can properly address any underlying issues.

Consideration of Scaffolding Costs

A large part of the cost of any external project is the scaffolding. There is nothing more frustrating than paying £1500 for scaffolding to fix a £150 leak, one year after a major project has been finished. Make sure that the scope of works to be done is comprehensive and that each element is assessed in terms of whether, if left now, it can last for the next 5 years or until the next set of scaffolding is likely to go up!

Consider phasing the works if the budget is tight. It's far better to do half a building comprehensively one year and the rest the following, instead of trying to get away with a one-shot job of limited scope. This frequently leads to a disappointing result when the scaffolding comes down.

Obtaining Contractor Bids

Take care when choosing contractors and inviting them to bid for the works- our top tips are below:

- Request bids from firms of comparable size and that are appropriate for the job in hand- it's pointless asking a large firm (with high overheads) to bid alongside a selection of small traders and vice versa.
- Any previously unknown firms should be vetted carefully by your surveyors- even those nominated under consultation procedures may be rejected if they prove unsuitable.
- Make sure the process is handled fairly and honestly. With such large sums involved, most surveyors will enter into a sealed tender process, and you should be invited to view the bids alongside your surveyor when the time comes.
- Be realistic about the costs involved and, if a bid comes in that sounds too good to be true, it most likely is.

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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London Flats Insurance

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Feature: Maintenance & Cleaning

Frozen Pipe Emergencies: Vital First Steps & Preventative Measures

Written by Belinda Thorpe, Managing Director at Residentsline Flats Insurance

Belinda Thorpe, Managing Director at Residentsline Flats Insurance, explains how to ensure your block of flats is protected in the event of frozen or burst pipes this winter.

Winter will soon be upon us, and one of the most prolific issues a block of flats can face during the cold months is frozen pipes. The water damage that can result from a frozen pipe is not to be underestimated; the frozen water expands, bursting the pipe and allowing thawed water to escape. And we all know how fun water leaks are to deal with!

Follow our guidance below for what to do if you discover a frozen pipe in your building. We've also put together some steps you can take to prevent a winter disaster.

First Steps

Step One: Turn the water off!

It sounds obvious, but when you're in a bit of a panic it can be hard to think straight.

Make sure you know where your stop cock is- you should find it under the kitchen sink or wherever the service pipe enters your flat. Also, turn off the stopcock in your cold-water tank if you have one.

Step Two: Protect the area

Protect the surrounding area of your flat and contents. Cover furniture and floors with plastic sheeting etc- you could even have some sandbags on hand for this purpose.

Step Three: Thawing out

Before grabbing the hairdryer, turn on the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen. This will allow the thawed water to flow through once it's melted.

Then you can gently heat the frozen pipe with either a hairdryer or a hot water bottle. Take extra care with hairdryers- electrical equipment and water do not mix! Start from the tap end of the pipe and work backwards towards the cold-water tank.

Don't be tempted to use a more ferocious source of heat- we've heard a few disaster stories involving heat guns and blow torches. Trust us, just don't. Gentle heat is always best.

Preventing Frozen Pipes

Prevention is always better than cure and burst pipes are no joke for a block of flats.

Tick through this list in the autumn months to protect yourself and your residents:

- Insulate your loft, the sides of your water tanks and all pipes.
- Open the loft trap door on cold days to let heat in.
- If a resident of one of your flats is planning on being away for a while, suggest that they ask a friend or relative to check on their home to make sure pipes haven't burst or frozen.
- Dripping taps may freeze and block pipes- always replace faulty washers promptly. You may also save around a litre of water a day!
- Make sure you and your residents know where the stop cock is and check regularly that you can turn it off easily. Consider labelling it so you remember where it is in a panic.
- In very cold weather, the heating is best to be set to low or to come on a couple of times a day, especially if the property will be empty for a while. Most modern boilers have a frost-protection thermostat which turns on automatically if the temperature drops to a level that will cause your pipes to freeze.

Preventative Measures for Other Winter Issues

Frozen pipes aren't the only issue you may face as the temperature drops so we thought a quick round up of some other preventative measures may be a handy and timely reminder for your block of flats:

Flat roofs: These should be checked regularly (even within their ten-year guarantee period) to ensure their condition. We recommend an annual check by a professional roofer. Your insurer may well ask for a copy of their report along with confirmation that any necessary maintenance has been carried out.

Trees: Take care to note any trees that look unstable or like they may be easily blown over in a storm. Remove any unsecure branches too.

Gutters: Avoid the expense and inconvenience of having to replace uncared for gutters or deal with the water damage and mould caused by blockages. A professional clear out once every two years should be sufficient unless you have lots of trees nearby or a mossy roof, in which case an annual clean might be needed.

Fences: Replace any loose or weather-worn panels around your block and give each one a shake to make sure they're secure.

Garden furniture, pots and ornaments: Store these away wherever possible- they can be knocked over and damaged or could even be picked up by strong winds.

Preparation is everything and a little time spent in the autumn months can save you a lot of time, money and stress as the deep freeze approaches. Your residents will thank you.

Head to the Residentsline website for information on all our products and services or, if you'd prefer to speak to a member of our fantastic, specialist team, give us a call on 0800 281 235.

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.

residentsline.co.uk | info@residentsline.co.uk | 0800 281 235

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Repairing Covenants in Long Residential Leases: The Importance of Understanding Obligations (Part Two)

Written by Lee Stafford, Partner at Bishop & Sewell

A year ago I wrote an article for Flat Living about the case of Tedworth North Management Limited & Anor v Miller & Ors [2016] UKUT 0522 (LC), in which the First Tier Tribunal, and subsequently the Upper Tribunal on appeal, held that notwithstanding the benefits provided by double-glazing windows for all of the leaseholders in the landlord's building, the replacement of existing window frames with new and improved windows did not constitute repair (as per the landlord's repairing covenant in the leases) and so the costs of such work could not be charged by the landlord to all leaseholders by way of service charges.

By way of a follow-up to that article, I now consider and comment below on the case of London Borough of Southwark v Michelle Baharier [2019] UKUT 0073 (LC) ("Southwark v Baharier"), which also went to appeal before the Upper Tribunal.

Facts

Southwark v Baharier concerned the terms of Ms Baharier's ("the Tenant") long residential lease for 37 Gilesmead, 79 Camberwell Church Street, London E5 ("the Lease"), which was one of 40 flats and maisonettes making up a low-rise block of flats ("Gilesmead"), with the London Borough of Southwark as the Tenant's local authority landlord ("the Landlord").

Gilesmead had been built in 1968 and all of the flats and maisonettes were served by the original out-dated communal central heating and hot water system. Further, and with the existing the communal central heating and hot water system being no longer considered fit for purpose, the Landlord proposed replacing the same with a new replacement communal central heating and hot water system, because the installation of individual boilers in each flat and maisonette was discounted not being technically feasible.

The anticipated overall cost of the new communal central heating and hot water system was £800,000 and the Tenant's proposed contribution to this cost was estimated to be £24,486.88, which the Landlord sought from the Tenant as an advance service charge under the terms of the Lease.

First-tier Tribunal ("F-tT") Decision

When the case was heard by the F-tT, the Tenant did not dispute that the original communal central heating and hot water system at Gilesmead did not comply with modern standards, and in 2012 she described the same as "extremely expensive" and "completely ineffective", with the need for her to supplement the system by using electric heaters.

However, what the Tenant did seek to argue was that the Landlord's proposed costs for replacing the communal central heating and hot water system related to an "improvement" and not a "repair", and therefore was not a recoverable service charge under the terms of the Lease.

Neither party was professionally represented before the F-tT, with the F-tT finding that:

- The Landlord's proposed works to replace the communal central heating and hot water system at Gilesmead were an "improvement" and not a "repair"; and
- Accordingly, the costs of the same were irrecoverable by the Landlord from the Tenant under the terms of the Lease.

The Landlord appealed to the Upper Tribunal.

Appeal to the Upper Tribunal

At the appeal the Upper Tribunal held that:

- The issue was not whether the proposed replacement of the communal heating and hot water system at Gilesmead was an "improvement" rather than a "repair"; and
- The Lease contained a covenant which required the Landlord to provide certain services, including space heating and hot water, and to ensure that, insofar as practicable, the services were maintained to a reasonable level.

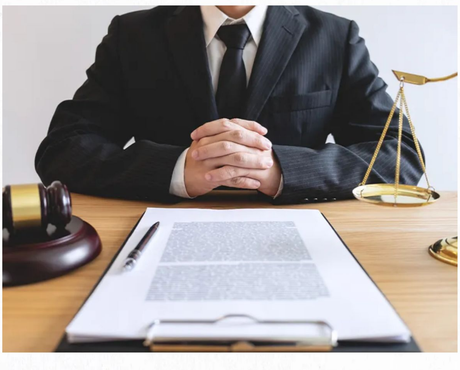
Therefore, and based on the above, the Upper Tribunal concluded that the Landlord's costs of replacing the communal heating and hot water system at Gilesmead were costs of providing the service; consequently, the Tenant was required to pay her proposed contribution towards the costs and expenses of, or incidental to, providing the services through the replacement of the communal heating and hot water system.

Lessons to Learn

The outcome of this case turned on the requirement in the Lease for the Landlord to provide a particular service rather than just to maintain the existing communal heating and hot water system at Gilesmead. The issue of "improvement" as compared to "repair" was ultimately a red-herring.

In any event, my words of warning for landlords and tenants alike remain to always carefully consider the wording of any covenants which require the landlord to maintain, repair or provide services and/or the tenant to pay service charges.

This case is a clear example that just because one set of costs could be discounted from one covenant, they may nonetheless be recoverable under other lease provisions. Therefore, if in doubt, tenants and landlord alike should seek suitable legal advice before pursuing lengthy and costly disputes.



Advising on property law is at the heart of Bishop & Sewell. Founded on property work, the issues matter to us as much as they do to our clients. We take pride in simplifying complex property issues, providing services covering every aspect – from purchase and sale, development and financing, to rental and enfranchisement.

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Property Managers – What do you actually do?

Written by Molly Wheeler, a Property Manager at Remus, completing her Senior Housing & Property Management Apprenticeship with Learning Curve

The role of a property manager takes on many responsibilities that are not always clear to residents, the phrase *"what do you actually do?"* is heard a lot in the industry. A number of residents are not always aware that the development they live in has a property manager until they receive a letter or bill, which understandably is frustrating. This article will help explain what a property manager is and what a management agent does.

The definition of a residential managing agent as stated by ARMA, the Association of Residential Managing Agents, is *"the company appointed by the landlord to run and manage the building and services. They will collect service charges from leaseholders in accordance with the terms of the lease. The service charges will include management fees which are their fees for this service. This is usually only a very small element of the total service charge."*

So, what does this really mean?

It means that your managing agents manage your block or estate based on the requirements in your lease or the TP1 documentation you receive when buying your property. If you own a house this will be your TP1 and if you have purchased a flat this will be your lease.

Your managing agent and property manager will have knowledge of the Landlord and Tenants Act 1987. As well as Health and Safety requirements which will include the more recent exposure on cladding following the Grenfell Tower Fire on the 14th June 2017. Accountancy to run the finances of the management company appropriately and section 20 project works to coordinate these major works effectively. These are just a few of the responsibilities that are carried out by the managing agent to maintain the development aesthetically and in line with safety regulations.

What is a managing agent and why do we need one?

Managing agents carry out the required works and actions set out in the lease or TP1 on behalf of the client, which is either a Landlord, Freeholder, Resident Management Company (RMC) or a Right to Manage (RTM) Company.

These are set up once the development has been handed over from the developers that built the site. ARMA states in their What Does a Managing Agent Do publication that there are benefits to having a management agent in place. The services that will be provided will be stated and agreed in the management agreement and will note any duties the client wishes to include. The management agreement is a contract and not dictated by any legislation.

How does a management company work?

The development will have been registered with a management agent prior to handover from the developers, alongside this they will have set up a Management Company for the development so the company can take over the costs for any contracts that are outstanding. Residential directors are then appointed to manage the company. Management agents will provide the development with a Property Manager that will be working with the directors and supporting them with running the development.

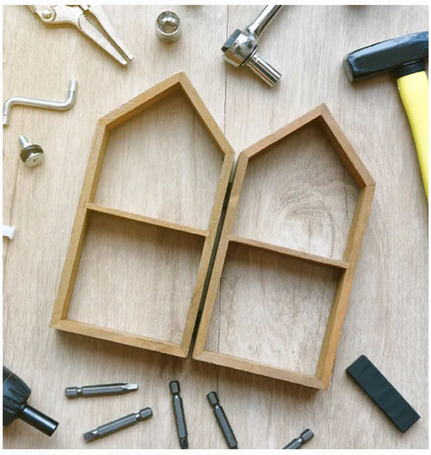
Your Property Manager will then take on the role of becoming your central point of contact for the development. They will carry out all the roles necessary to continue safe and consistent management on behalf of the management company, these include:

Finances

- Creating and disseminating the annual budget for the collection of service charges which will include contracts where they apply such as
- Cleaning, Gardening, Fire Management Systems and Health and Safety Inspections.
- Payment of invoices from contractors employed to carry out minor repairs and scheduled contracts.
- Preparation of the end of year service charge accounts, so residents and Directors know the expenditure and where the money collected in the service charge has been allocated to.

Leaseholder and Resident Enquiries

- Making sure all parties are kept up to date on outstanding items to build a relationship with those who live in the development.
- Answering conveyancing questions, repairs, and maintenance queries, service charge questions and permissions requests that are requested by residents.



Covenants Compliance

- We ensure that the covenants of the lease/TP1 are carried out which ensures residents safety, and the aesthetics of the development are upheld..

Repairs and Maintenance

- Organising minor day to day repairs throughout the development.
- Organising section 20 works when they are required.
- Prepare specifications and contracts for scheduled maintenance and re-tender contracts regularly to ensure the most competitive price is obtained.

Health and Safety

- Update and track any health and safety requirements such as cladding surveys, fire risk assessments and asbestos reports alongside any specific requirements that may be in place in the development.

When residents are aware of a property managers roles and responsibilities it contributes to smooth and efficient management. When residents are aware of the details above it helps streamline the development and residents feel supported and understand what is expected of them as well as what to expect from their property manager.

I hope that reading this has given you a better understanding of what a Property Manager does, but if there is anything more you would like to know please get in touch and I'd be happy to help.

Learning Curve Group work with businesses throughout the UK, supporting impactful training and skills strategies that help you meet core organisational objectives such as performance and output. From short-term vocational qualifications to longer-term apprenticeships, including the best way to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy, we help over 4,500 employers every year with their workplace training plans. With a number of different models, from short to long term, and access to over £20m of adult skills funding, our offer is attractive to a range of sectors.

learningcurvegroup.co.uk | Stuart.shield@learningcurvegroup.co.uk | 01388 777 129

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ManageYourBlock™

Manage Your Block is a property portal designed to help **you** manage your block of flats.

Call for a free demo on 0333 577 9070

Who can use Manage Your Block?

We've designed Manage Your Block portal for:

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

We know that handover periods between new directors can be a challenging time. Managing a block comes with an enormous amount of information, from insurance documents to residents' contact information as well as the entire documented history of the block.

With our Manage Your Block portal, you'll never have to worry about finding information again. We'll provide you with a safe, reliable place for you to store and amend your documentation, contact your residents and manage your service charges…plus much more!

What can I do on the Manage Your Block portal?

The Manage Your Block portal has a massive range of functions, all created to make your processes as streamlined and simple as possible.

Share account information with other directors

You'll be provided with a username and password for your account which you can share with other directors, so that you're all always on the same page. This is especially handy during handover periods, as new directors will have all the information they need available to them at the touch of a button.

Have access to a contact list

Store, view and easily change your contacts list, making sure your residents' information is always up to date

Use the calendar

Our easy-to-use calendar function will help you to keep your block as organised as possible.

Send alerts

If your block suffers a power shortage, a broken lift or even crime-related incidents in the local area, you'll be able to send an alert out to your residents through your Manage Your Block account. Not only does this make it simpler for you, it makes communication a lot quicker and easier between your residents

Keep contact info for your contractors

Maintain all your contractors' details in one place so you never lose a name or number. This is especially handy in case of an emergency.

Quotes

You'll be able to obtain quotes for maintenance around your block from your preferred contractors or one of ours. You'll be able to choose from a range of discounted specialist services such as legal assistance, accounts and buildings insurance valuations, and manage all quote requests from your Manage Your Block account.

Manage your documentation

On Manage Your Block, you'll be able to store all the documentation relating to your block in one easy-to-reach place. This may include copy leases, financial records, fire evacuation procedures, along with other day-to-day procedure documents. You will have instant access no matter where you are; it's everything you need at the click of a button.

Keep a diary

Receive diary reminders to ensure you don't forget anything, such as health and safety risk assessments, gate inspections, fire drills and much more.

Notes

To make sure you don't forget anything, you can now keep important notes which will be saved securely on your account.

And now also collect service charges

This year, we've upgraded our property portal to include a function which will help you manage your service charges. You'll now be able to prepare, process and print out service charge demands for your block, meaning your in-house processes can be far more streamlined and efficient. Likewise, all the documents you produce will be collated with the required Summary of Tenants' Rights and Obligations.

ManageYourBlock™

For more information, or for a free, no-obligation demonstration of the Manage Your Block Portal, please contact a member of the team on 0333 577 9070 or visit manageyourblock.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.

Senior Block Manager

Location: North West London

Salary: £25,000 - £40,000

Tell me more

Senior Property Manager

Location: South West London

Salary: £40,000 - £50,000

Tell me more

Property Manager

Location: Essex

Salary: £20,000 - £28,000

Tell me more

Property Manager

Location: Hampshire (Part Home-Based)

Salary: £25,000 - £30,000

Tell me more

Property Manager

Location: South Yorkshire

Salary: £30,000 - £35,000

Tell me more

Block Manager/ Team Leader

Location: Home Based

Salary: £35,000 + Bonus Scheme

Tell me more

Homebased Property Manager

Location: Kent

Salary: £34,000 + Car Allowance

Tell me more

Property Manager

Location: West Midlands (County)

Salary: £32,000 - £36,000 + Car Allowance

Tell me more

Property Manager

Location: Dorset

Salary: £25,000 - £40,000

Tell me more

Block Recruit

Block Recruit speicalise 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

Property Management Events

All the latest conferences, seminars, webinars and events taking place in the industry.

18th November 2021

NLG Annual Conference

Save the date for the NLG Annual Conference taking place in London.

Find out more

1st - 3rd April 2022

IRPM & PM Legal: Oxford Weekender

The Oxford Weekender is back! A three day conference to be held at St Hugh's College, Oxford.

Express your interest

Upcoming ARMA Tech Talks

We've now moved our popular Tech Talk events to the small screen, meaning ARMA members can benefit from the excellent advice and knowledge of our ARMA Partners, without leaving their desks!

ARMA Tech Talks are a series of free-to-attend roundtable sessions where we gather members to explore the latest trends, challenges, and topics of common interest in an informal atmosphere, led by our ARMA Partners and industry experts.

Upcoming Tech Talks

Building Services Maintenance: Reducing Risk and Improving Building Efficiency - Hosted by DMG Delta

Dates: Monday 8th November 2021

Time: 10:00 - 11:00

Where: Online via GoToMeeting (Joining details will be sent a few days before the session)

This online Tech Talk session will look at a range of building services and importance of ensuring they operate safely and effectively, providing guidance on how to develop a comprehensive maintenance programme tailored to the specific needs and objectives of your building portfolio.

We are delighted to be joined by experts from ARMA Partner, DMG Delta, Paul Martin and Christian Koch for this Tech Talk, which will cover the importance of ensuring building services operate safely and effectively.

This session aims to provide guidance on how to develop a comprehensive maintenance programme tailored to the specific needs and objectives of your building portfolio, covering:

- Heat networks and energy centres
- Heating, hot water and boiler plant
- Air conditioning systems
- Water treatment and hygiene
- Electrical

For more information and to book this Tech Talk, click the button below.

Book your place

Service Charge Accounting: Be Prepared – Hosted By BDO

Dates: Tuesday 23rd November 2021

Time: 10:00 - 11:00

Where: Online via GoToMeeting *(Joining details will be sent a few days before the session)*

With the aim of helping you to understand what you are getting from your accountants or auditors, this Tech Talk, led by Katy Middleton, Senior Audit Manager at BDO, will explore the different types of assurance work and what these mean for you and your leaseholders.

Additionally, by sharing some crucial auditor insight into some of the more common areas of risk associated with service charge accounts, we will help you ensure a 'right-first-time' approach and quality reporting.

For more information and to book this Tech Talk, click the button below.

Book your place

Important Booking Information

For more information, and to book your free place(s) on any of these ARMA Tech Talk events, **click here** and follow the new booking steps as usual, to select attendees and confirm the Terms & Conditions. After selecting **'Proceed to Payment'** you will be taken to the invoice screen. Click **'PAY'** when you reach the invoice screen (the invoice will show £0.00) to confirm your booking.

If you are not the Admin User for your organisation, please ensure your Admin User approves your booking request quickly, or your booking will be cancelled automatically within a couple of days.

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 Training Courses this Autumn

ARMA's Autumn training courses cover a range of topics which can help keep staff prepared for the modern world of property management. Courses will focus on residential service charges, managing contractors, section 20 consultations, common legal challenges 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

Information on Block Booking discounts can be found after the listings below.

Upcoming Training Courses

TC27: Section 20 Consultation

Dates: 03/11/21 – 05/11/21 (3 day event)

A 6-hour course being run over 3 consecutive days (2-hours per day) covering the requirements and procedures of Section 20 (qualifying works and qualifying long term agreements), exemptions, OJEU Public Notices and the growing body of Case Law.

Book your place

TC83: Developing Resilience

Dates: 08/11/21 – 10/11/21 (3 day event)

This practical and highly engaging 6-hour course being run over 3 consecutive days (2-hours per day) provides delegates with a range of tools and techniques to develop and maintain their own resilience, providing significant benefits to mental, physical and emotional well-being.

Book your place

TC53: Managing Contractors And Implementing CDM 2015

Dates: 22/11/21 – 23/11/21 (2 day event)

A 6-hour course covering a managing agents' duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 when instructing or employing contractors and the duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 when the work 'requires construction skills and uses construction materials'. It will help you understand your legal duties and will explain what actions you need to take to comply with those duties. Please note that this course will not address Section 20 issues which are the subject of a separate course.

Book your place

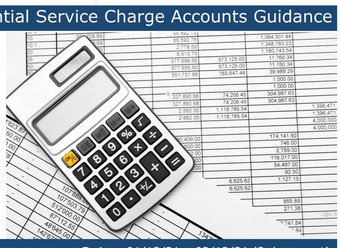
TC102: Company Directors and Secretarial Duties and Responsibilities

Dates: 25/11/21 – 26/11/21 (2 day event)

A 6-hour course being run over 2 consecutive days (3-hours per day) for managing agents who are managing blocks for and on behalf of management companies, particularly those providing company secretarial services. Residents' Management Companies and RTM companies are subject to the same rules and regulations as all other limited companies in England and Wales. This online training course highlights the key responsibilities and duties of Company Secretaries and Directors in relation to RMCs and RTM companies.

Book your place

TC11: Residential Service Charge Accounts Guidance



Dates: 01/12/21 – 02/12/21 (2 day event)

A 6-hour interactive webinar taking place across 2 days (3-hours per day) addressing best practice for service charge accounting. The webinar will enable attendees to understand the difference between corporate and service charge accounting. Attendees will also gain an overview of corporate accounts including RMCs, dormant companies, legal requirements, etc. Attendees will also learn best practice for service charge accounting from budget to year end.

Book your place

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

Block Booking Discounts

ARMA members who invest in staff training in 2021 can now save money on block bookings of ARMA online training courses.

Simply pay for 10 or more full-day training course places (they can be different courses) in one booking and you'll save 20% ON THE USUAL MEMBER PRICE – a saving of £20 per place!

How to claim your discount:

Drop us an email on info@arma.org.uk to book your 10+ places and claim your 20% discount on the usual Members price of £100 + VAT per place. Please note this offer is only available to ARMA members & all course places must be booked by **31/12/2021**.

To book on to a training session via our online portal, click here.

Get in touch

Website: www.arma.org.uk

Phone: 0207 978 2607

Twitter: @ARMAleasehold

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

National Leasehold Group

The NLG (National Leasehold Group) is a countrywide networking group of leasehold management professionals with the Social Housing sector.

We have a stated aim of improving property management standards and achieve this through a variety of training, seminar and conference offers.

The NLG prides itself on quality events that are accessible to all members at affordable rates

Upcoming Training & Events

Leasehold Management Training

Two training courses providing the basics and advanced training on Leasehold Management.

Find out more

Service Charge Conference

Taking place on the 23rd September in Milton Keynes is our much-anticipated conference.

Find out more

Annual Conference

Save the date for our 2021 Annual Conference which will be taking place virtually and in-person in London.

Find out more

With thanks to our 2021 Partners

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BLOCK in a BOX

Block in a Box is a tool-kit of services and solutions to help you Manage Your Block

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Accounting Solutions

Company Secretarial

Contractor Accreditation

Cyber Security Training

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FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

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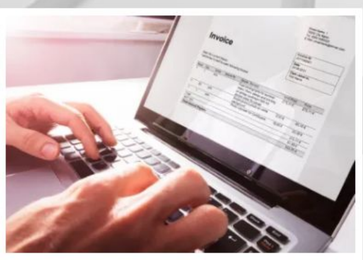
Repair & Maintenance

RMC Director Training

Rooftop Extensions

Service Charge Arrears



Service Charge Collections

SmarkLink45 Prepay Meter

Utilities

Water Leak Detection

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

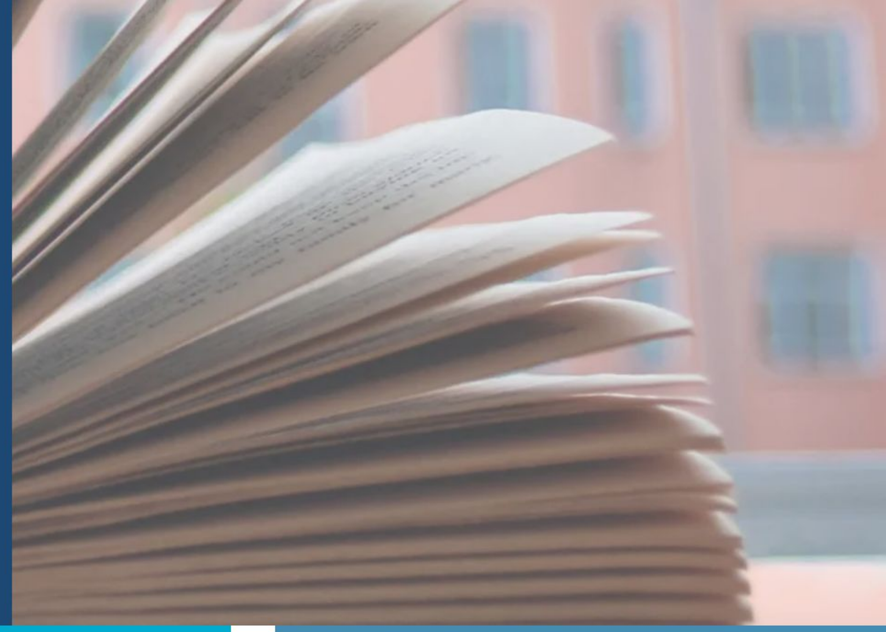
call us on 0333 015 4145

email info@blockinabox.co.uk

or visit our website blockinabox.co.uk

Directories

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



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Managing Agents

02
Suppliers

03
ARMA Agents

04
ALEP Members

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Featured Managing Agents are listed alphabetically.

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Nationwide

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Bristol / South West

Fraser Allen Estate Management

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Nationwide

Omnia Property Group

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Trinity Estates

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Remus

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Raising standards in retirement housing

RAISING STANDARDS FOR OVER 25 YEARS

The ARHM are the largest trade association body for the retirement sector, with 55 members representing more than 100,000 homes across the UK.

Our mission is to continually raise standards within the sector by promoting best practice and ethics amongst those managing retirement housing.

About Us

Discover more about the ARHM and our mission

Code of Practice

Our Government approved Code goes above and beyond statutory legislation, providing good practice for managers of leasehold retirement developments.

Events & Training

Regional training, events and conferences

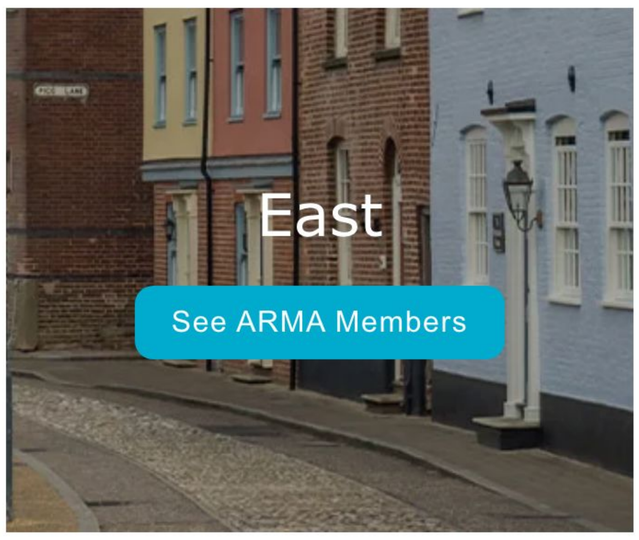
arhm.org | enquries@arhm.org | 07974 311 421

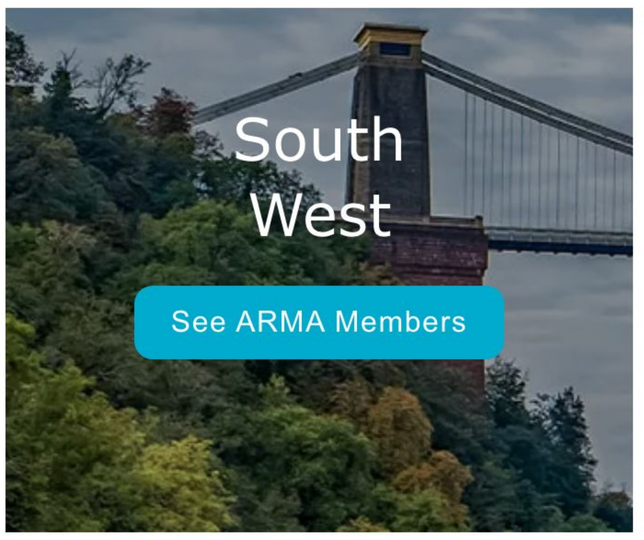
Find an ARMA Member

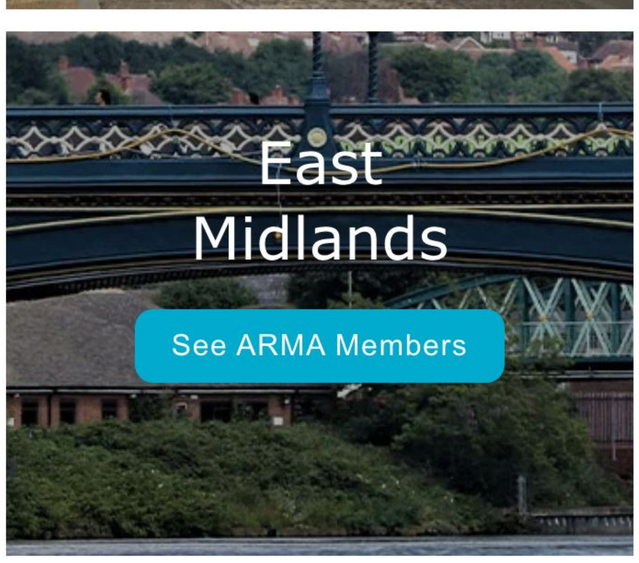
Are you considering a new managing agent?

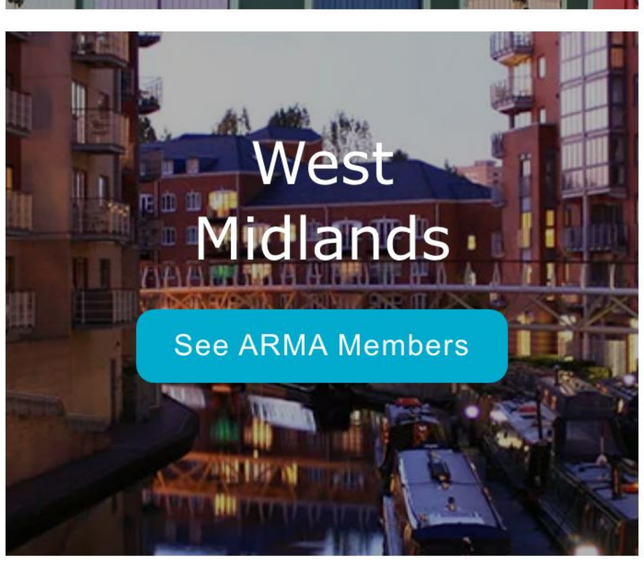
Below are a list of ARMA (Association of Residential Managing Agents) members by region.

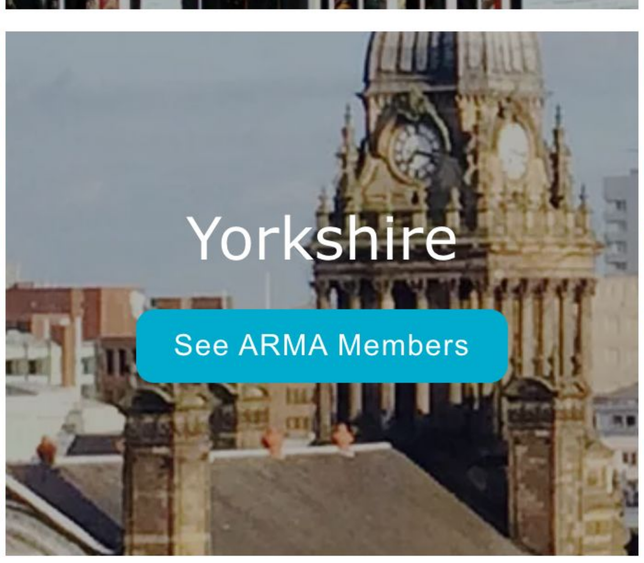
A managing agent that is a 'member' of ARMA will have successfully achieved ARMA Accreditation and is required to comply with the ARMA Bye-Laws, RICS Code, relevant legislation and ARMA Consumer Charter & Standards.

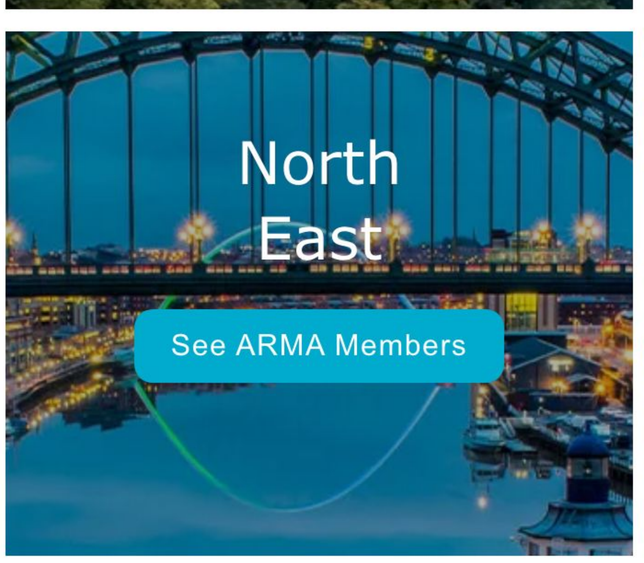


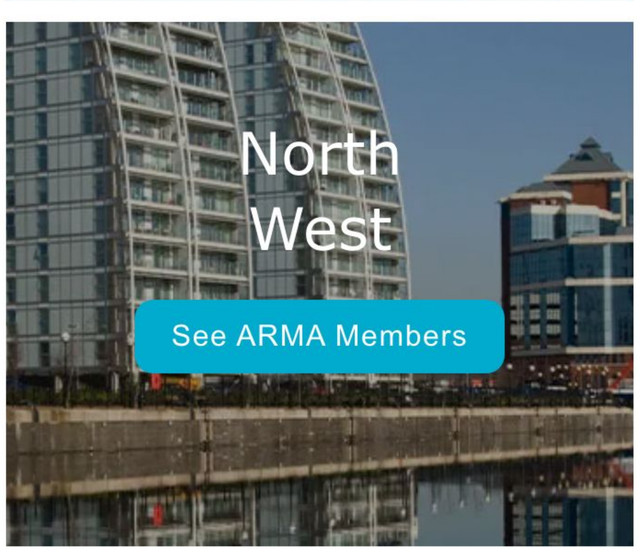


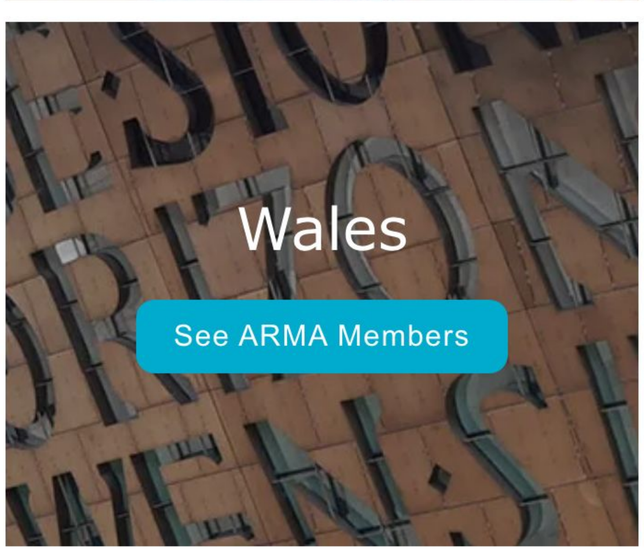


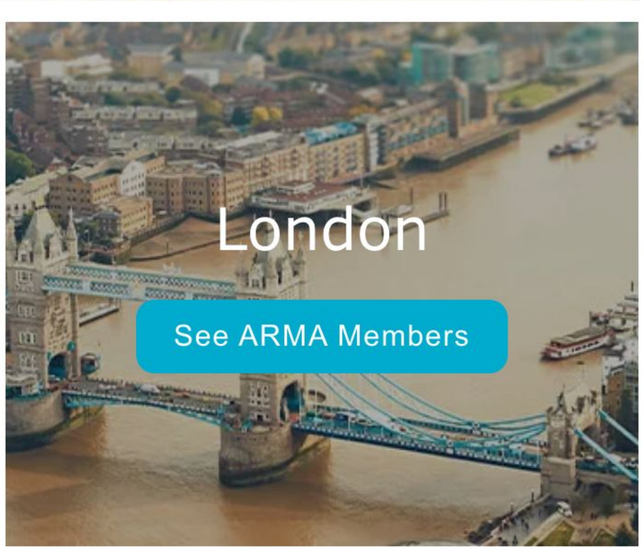


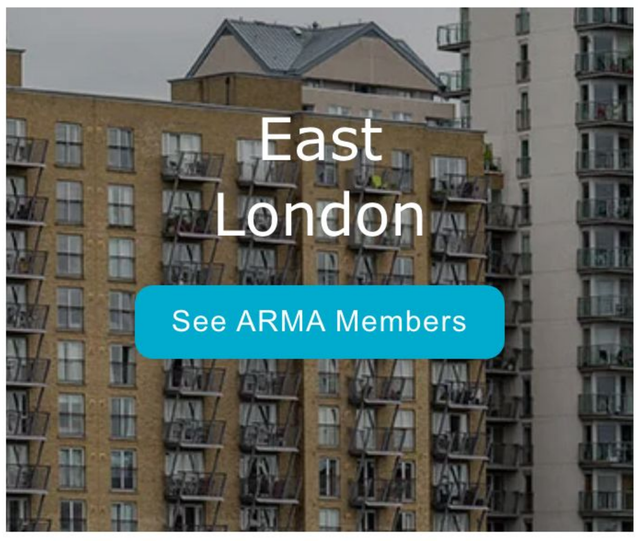












Setting the Standards in Property Management

TRANSPARENT
STANDARDS
AUDITED
SERVICE
REGULATED

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

Find an ALEP Member

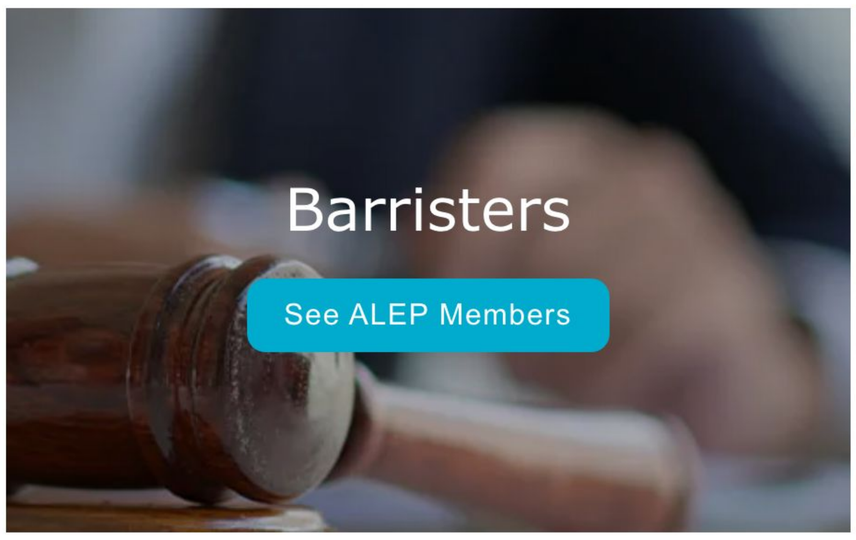
ALEP (Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners) member firms are rigorously vetted so you can be confident that they have a proven track record in leasehold enfranchisement.

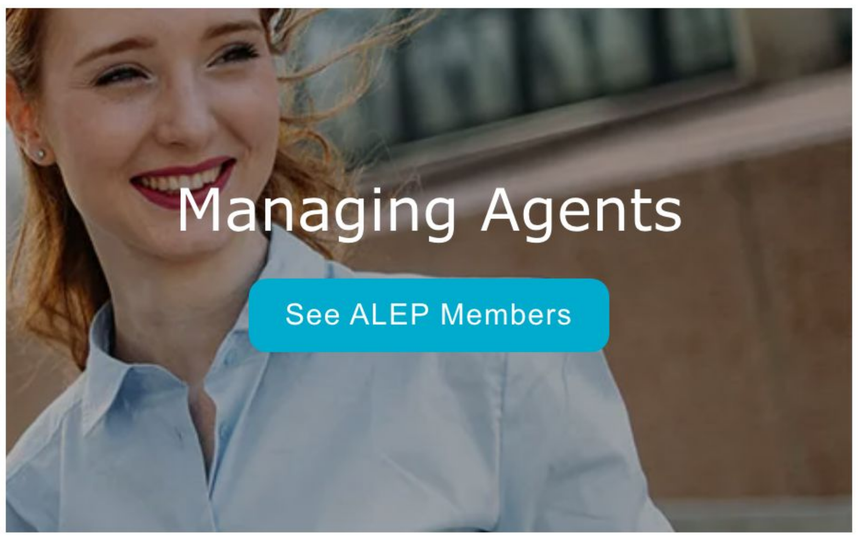
ALEP members can advise or assist with:

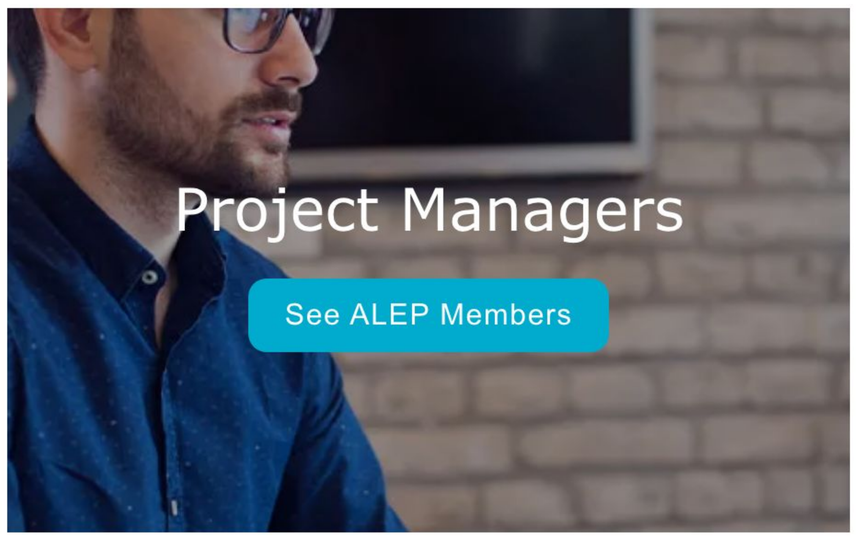
- Extending a lease;
- Buying a share or freehold of a building;
- Exercising the Right to Manage;
- Section 5 Notice;
- Dealing with freeholder or leaseholder disputes

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

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







ALEP
ASSOCIATION OF LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT PRACTITIONERS

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

LEASE

THE LEASEHOLD ADVISORY SERVICE

Government funded, independent advice for residential leaseholders and park home residents

www.lease-advice.org

We hope you enjoyed this issue of Flat Living Magazine

You can read more on the Flat Living website which has over 1,000 articles for Residents Management Companies, Directors and Managing Agents.

Flat Living Website

Social Media
Keep up to date with all the latest by following us on social media.

LinkedIn

Sign Up
Make sure you receive a copy of Flat Living direct to your mailbox every month.

Sign Up

Contact Us
We would love to hear from you if you have a question or would like to find out about working with us.

Contact Us

ARMA Members
South East

Adur Property Management	Shoreham By Sea	01273 252526	Full Member
Allsop Letting and Management Limited	Brighton	01273 322000	Full Member
AM Surveying & Block Management	Aylesford	01732 220 598	Full Member
Amber Management	Ware	0800 567 7567	Full Member
Appre Management Services Ltd	Leatherhead	01372 376 536	Full Member
Arko Property Management Limited	Hastings	01424 439786	Full Member
Atlantis Estates Ltd	Reading	0118 903 5902	Full Member
Austin Rees	Hove	01273 207 501	Full Member
Bamptons Sustainable Property Management Ltd	Broadstairs	01843 609 388	Full Member
Banner Property Services Limited	High Wycombe	01628 522888	Full Member
Bartley Management Limited	Winchester	0345 017 9969	Full Member
BBM - Burkinshaw Block Management	Tunbridge Wells	0207 978 2607	Full Member
Belgarum Property Management Ltd	Winchester	0800 298 0069	Full Member
Boydens Ltd	Colchester	01206 762244	Full Member
Bridgeford & Co	Lymington	01590 677725	Full Member
BW Residential Limited	Southampton	02380 847111	Full Member
Cable Rock Ltd	Eastbourne	01323 345045	Full Member
Canbury Management Ltd	Staines	01784 466501	Full Member
Caxtons	Gravesend	01474 537733	Full Member
Charles Cox Property Management	Denton Island	01323 894 400	Full Member
Cleaver Property Management Ltd	Wokingham	0844 499 3411	Full Member
Collinson Hall	St Albans	01727843222	Full Member
Cosgroves Block Management	Southsea	02392 827 827	Full Member
Courtney Green Ltd	Horsham	01403 246 170	Full Member
Covenant Management Limited	Witney	01993 899 840	Full Member
Deacon Crickmay Asset Management	Hove	01273 421 286	Full Member
Denfords Property Management	Southampton	023 8038 6970	Full Member
DJC Property Management Limited	Wickford	0345 459 2812	Full Member
DMG Property Management Limited	Marden	01622 831017	Full Member
Eastbourne Lettings Limited	Eastbourne	01323 430811	Full Member
Essex Properties Limited	Chelmsford	01245 329652	Full Member
Evolve Block & Estate Management	Ringwood	01425206595	Full Member
Fell Reynolds	Folkestone	01303 228688	Full Member
FirstPort Property Services Limited	Luton	01582 393700	Full Member
FirstPort Retirement Property Services	New Milton	020 3117 2612	Full Member
FPE Management	Hastings	01424 457750	Full Member
Fresh Property Management Ltd	Borehamwood	020 3651 6000	Full Member
Gem Estate Management Limited	Letchworth	01462 480 481	Full Member
Graves Son & Pilcher LLP	Brighton	01273 321123	Full Member
Hamways Ltd	Oxted	01883 730890	Full Member
Helen Breeze Block Management	Sevenoaks	01732 740789	Full Member
Hera Management Services	Billericay	0345 683 8812	Full Member
Heritage Management Limited	Kingswood	01737 850260	Full Member
HES Estate Management Ltd	Leatherhead	01372 450 655	Full Member
Housemartins Property Management	Seaford	01323 896418	Full Member
HPS	Wokingham	0118 962 7493	Full Member
Hunt Property Management	Eastbourne	01323 644288	Full Member
Hurford Salvi Carr Property Management Ltd	Hertford	01992 500 040	Full Member
Hydehead Ltd	Peacehaven	01273 579796	Full Member
Jacksons	Hove	01273 328 556	Full Member
Jennings & Barrett	Erith	0203 598 9665	Full Member
JH Property Management Limited	Sittingbourne	01795 476 249	Full Member
Jordan & Cook Ltd	Worthing	01903 820740	Full Member
Kent Gateway Block Management	Rochester	01634 814867	Full Member
Kent Property Management	Canterbury	01227 678016	Full Member
Let Solutions	Canterbury	01227 456466	Full Member
MCS	Hertford	01920 466500	Full Member
Oakfield PM Ltd	St Leonards on Sea	01424 854 814	Full Member
PACE Property Lettings & Management Ltd	Southend on Sea	07810 801485	Full Member
Park Lane Block Management Ltd	Southampton	02380 330706	Full Member
Peerless Properties (Oxford) Limited	Oxon	01869 331198	Full Member
Pembroke Property Management Ltd	Tumbridge Wells	0333 3442 100	Full Member
Pinnacle Property Management Ltd	Hurst	01189 320180	Full Member
PJJS Management Services Limited	Maidstone	01622 861 533	Full Member
PMS Managing Estates Limited	Essex	01206 835350	Full Member
Premier Block Management	Borehamwood	020 8236 1270	Full Member
Property Management Solutions	Bournemouth	01202 901 709	Full Member
Qube Property Management	Hertfordshire	0333 014 3330	Full Member
Rayners	Godstone	01883 742690	Full Member
Residential Management Group Ltd	Hoddesdon	0345 002 4444	Full Member
Roger McMillan Properties Ltd	Cobham	01932 576444	Full Member
Rushbrook & Rathbone Ltd	Hitchin	01462 420201	Full Member
Scott Estates Management Ltd	Hastings	01424 722 586	Full Member
Sebright Property Management Limited	Harrow	020 8863 2767	Full Member
Sensible Property Management (Eastbourne) Ltd	Eastbourne	01323 738886	Full Member
Sheridan's	Beds	01462 814087	Full Member
Sweetings Property Management Limited	Surrey	020 8941 7799	Full Member
Trent Park Properties LLP	Borehamwood	020 3384 0583	Full Member
Trinity Estates	Hemel Hempstead	01442 437 656	Full Member
Virtus Property Management	Bishops Stortford	01279 461281	Full Member
Warwick Estates Property Management Ltd	Harlow	01279 626 616	Full Member
Acquis Management Limited	Dorking	01306 881884	Associate
Eaves Property Management Services Limited	Maidenhead	01628 947908	Associate
LevelUP Property Management	Northfleet	07920 000144	Associate
Metta Property Management Limited	Westcliff-On-Sea	0330 133 0242	Associate
Orchard PM Limited	Worthing	01273 030 271	Associate
Sennen Property Management Ltd	Camberley	01276 804 781	Associate
Vertical Village	Esher	020 8399 0170	Associate
Zone Property Management	Sawbridgeworth	07983 447522	Associate

ARMA Members
North London

• Ariston Property	London	020 7272 9988	Full Member
• City Estates	London	02088 095 051	Full Member
• Colin Cohen Property Management	London	020 8959 6870	Full Member
• Cotleigh Property	London	02088 020 111	Full Member
• Defries & Associates Ltd	Edgware	02082 020 759	Full Member
• Dillons	London	02075 615 230	Full Member
• Drivers & Norris	London	02076 075 001	Full Member
• Hallmark Property Management Ltd	Enfield	01992 761 419	Full Member
• Islington Properties Limited	London	02078 120 480	Full Member
• James Andrew Residential Ltd	London	02083 497 171	Full Member
• K&M Property Management Limited	Barnet	02084 401 034	Full Member
• Lamberts Chartered Surveyors	London	02071 486 797	Full Member
• London Block Management Ltd	London	02078 704 000	Full Member
• Parkgate-Aspen Property Management	London	02087 328 888	Full Member
• Parkwood Management Company (London) Ltd	London	02083 688 111	Full Member
• Sterling Property Management (UK) Limited	London	02030 310 850	Full Member
• Trust Property Management Ltd	London	08452 601 515	Full Member
• Y & Y Management Ltd	London	02082 111 550	Full Member

ARMA Members
South London

• M H Associates	London	020 7737 2552	Full Member
• Moss And Co	London	020 8946 7661	Full Member
• Prior Estates Limited	Bromley	020 8460 9690	Full Member
• Rendall & Rittner Ltd	London	020 7702 0701	Full Member
• SL Property Consultants Ltd	London	020 7622 9259	Full Member
• VFM Property Management	Beckenham	020 8658 6824	Full Member
• Denar Property Management	Kingston upon Thames	020 8117 9930	Associate

ARMA Members
Wales

• Birt & Co	Tenby	01834 842 204	Full Member
• Compton Property Management Ltd	Swansea	01792 315 488	Full Member
• Seel & Co Ltd	Cardiff	02920 370 100	Full Member
• Western Permanent Property	Cardiff	02920 235 151	Full Member
• Westquay Property Management Ltd	Barry	01446 506 079	Full Member

ARMA Members East

Alexander Faulkner Partnership	Fareham	01489 296 000	Full Member
APT Property Management	Fenstanton	01480 192 065	Full Member
Belgravia Block Management Ltd	Peterborough	01733 345 278	Full Member
Block Management Uk Limited	Sudbury	01787 211 801	Full Member
Carringtons Residential Management Ltd	Harlow	01279 408 740	Full Member
Encore Estate Management	Cambs	01223 866 980	Full Member
Flaxfields Limited	Linton	01223 941380	Full Member
Hegarty Property Management	Market Harborough	07890 064 232	Associate
Hill & Clark	Boston	01205 352019	Full Member
Home From Home	Ipswitch	01473 858690	Full Member
Janeteva Estate Management	Melbourn	01223 655734	Full Member
Letters Block Management	Peterborough	01733 898 589	Full Member
Norwich Residential Management Ltd	Norwich	01603 670 050	Full Member
PREIM Ltd	Peterborough	01778 382 210	Full Member
Redwood Estate Management Ltd	London	02083 168 990	Full Member
Rounce & Evans Property Management Ltd	King's Lynn	01485 544 740	Full Member
St Andrews Bureau Ltd	Cambridge	01223 352 170	Full Member
TLC Estate Agents	London	0207 370 4000	Full Member
TW Property Block Management	Tunbridge Wells	01892 530 109	Full Member

ARMA Members
North East

• Clear Building Management Limited	Manchester	03333 444 996	Full Member
• Kingston Property Services Limited	Newcastle upon Tyne	03301 231 133	Full Member
• Potts Gray Management Company Ltd	South Shields	03300 104 188	Full Member
• Town & City Management Limited	Darlington	01325 389 689	Full Member

ARMA Members North West

• Anthony James Consultancy Ltd	Merseyside	01704 545 800	Full Member
• Casserly Property Management	Manchester	01617 876 197	Full Member
• Haymarket Block Management	Salford	01615 490 909	Full Member
• Homestead Consultancy Services Ltd	Lytham St Annes	01253 640 040	Full Member
• Livingcity Asset Management Ltd	Manchester	01612 741 400	Full Member
• Manchester Residential Management Ltd	Manchester	01617 074 873	Full Member
• Matthew's Of Chester Limited	Chester	01244 346 226	Full Member
• Oakland Residential Management Limited	Hale	0161 929 6151	Full Member
• Premier Estates Limited	Cheshire	03454 918 899	Full Member
• Realty Management Limited	Stockport	01614 747 677	Full Member
• Red Rock Estate & Property Management Ltd	Beaumont	03331 235 670	Full Member
• Regency Estates	Bolton	01204 695 919	Full Member
• Revolution Property Management Ltd	Salford	01618 500 022	Full Member
• Scanlans Property Management LLP	Manchester	01612 368 888	Full Member
• Stevenson Whyte	Manchester	0161 832 5060	Full Member
• Urbanbubble Limited	Manchester	01612 363 336	Full Member
• Zenith Management Limited	Manchester	01612 451 166	Full Member
• Entire Spaces	Manchester	0161 826 6807	Associate

ARMA Members
West Midlands

• Blocsphere Property Management	Ludlow	03333 601 601	Full Member
• Centrick Limited	Birmingham	0333 012 4125	Full Member
• Compass Block Management	Birmingham	0121 236 5757	Full Member
• Cottons	Birmingham	0121 247 2030	Full Member
• Exclusive Property Management Ltd	Solihull	0121 707 7727	Full Member
• Hadrian Property Management Company Limited	Lichfield	01543 410922	Full Member
• KT Management Co (UK) Ltd	Merry Hill	01384 573 637	Full Member
• KWB Property Management Limited	Birmingham	0121 233 2330	Full Member
• Longlease Property Management	Stratford upon Avon	01789 333 464	Full Member
• Mainstay Residential Ltd	Worcester	01905 357777	Full Member
• Metro PM	Birmingham	0121 428 4747	Full Member
• Pennycuick Collins	Birmingham	01214 561 700	Full Member
• Philip Laney & Jolly	Great Malvern	01684 580974	Full Member
• Principle Estate Management	Birmingham	0121 289 4315	Full Member
• Proxim Property Management Ltd	Alcester	01789 713112	Full Member
• Regalty Estates	Congleton	0845 456 4980	Full Member
• Specialist Property Asset Management Ltd	West Midlands	0121 725 3620	Full Member

ARMA Members
East Midlands

• Butlin Property Services	Leicester	0116 2703705	Full Member
• Kingston Real Estate (Property Management) Ltd	Northampton	01604 631 551	Full Member
• Orchard Block Management Services Ltd	Northampton	01604 620 422	Full Member
• PMD Block Management Ltd	Kettering	01536 513 978	Full Member
• Blue Property Management UK Limited	Nottingham	0330 053 8770	Associate
• SDL Property Management	Nottingham	07920 542 665	Associate
• Stoneyard	Nottingham	01159 243 304	Associate

ARMA Members
East London

• ERA Property Services Ltd	London	02078 376 186	Full Member
• Fortune Block Management Ltd	Potters Bar	02089 051 621	Full Member
• Galleons Point Management Ltd	London	02075 118 585	Full Member
• Ian Gibbs	Middlesex	02083 704 810	Full Member
• Maunder Taylor	Potters Bar	01707 665 666	Full Member
• Montalt Management Ltd	London	02082 239 820	Full Member
• Omnicroft Ltd	Rainham	01634 362 097	Full Member
• Parc Properties Management Ltd	London	02075 153 553	Full Member
• POD Management	London	03335 776 656	Full Member
• Strangford Management Ltd	London	02039 462 650	Full Member
• Strettons Limited	London	02085 094 435	Full Member
• Vision PEM & Vision RTM	London	08454 568 775	Full Member
• Charlesons	Ilford	02085502221	Associate
• Hawk Block Management	London	02080 161 178	Associate
• Letting International Limited	Ilford	02085 549 999	Associate
• Managed Partnerships Limited	Romford	0203 475 9067	Associate

ARMA Members
London

2 Manage Property Ltd	Sunbury on Thames	01932 765 493	Full Member
ABC Block Management Limited	Edgware	02086 214 000	Full Member
Acorn Estate Management	Bromley	02083 156 980	Full Member
Adelaide Jones	London	02077 255 800	Full Member
Alliance Managing Agents Ltd	London	02033 281 950	Full Member
Andrew Purnell & Co	London	02088 797 888	Full Member
Blenheims Estate and Asset Management Limited	London	02073 684 150	Full Member
Bowood (London) Limited	London	02072 236 940	Full Member
Brackenbury Property Management Ltd	London	02030 023 600	Full Member
Centro Plc	Sutton	02084 011 000	Full Member
Cluttons LLP	London	02074 081 010	Full Member
Colin Bibra Estate Agents Limited	London	02085 670 077	Full Member
Crabtree PM Limited	London	02083 717 070	Full Member
Craig Sheehan Chartered Surveyors	London	03452 077 400	Full Member
D&G Block Management	London	02079 328 500	Full Member
Dauntons Soar Management Limited	London	02078 341 032	Full Member
Esskay Management Services LLP	London	02073 318 888	Full Member
Fairoak Estate Management	London	02030 789 824	Full Member
Fifield Glyn	London	02076 296 457	Full Member
Fry & Company	London	02078 210 099	Full Member
Grace Miller & Co.	New Malden	02086 051 200	Full Member
Hammond Properties	Sidcup	02083 004 811	Full Member
HML	Croydon	02086 628 800	Full Member
Houston Lawrence Management Ltd	London	02078 013 201	Full Member
JCF Property Management Limited	London	02087 889 700	Full Member
JFM Block And Estate Management	Harrow	02038 657 789	Full Member
Kensington Flats	London	02075 896 699	Full Member
Kinleigh Folkard & Hayward	London	02035 420 147	Full Member
KMP Solutions Limited	London	02083 719 171	Full Member
London Wharf Property Management Co Ltd	Erith	07543 247 144	Full Member
May & Co Management Ltd	London	02073 763 726	Full Member
Michael Laurie Magar Ltd	Borehamwood	02084 929 850	Full Member
Moonstone Management	London	02083 009 281	Full Member
Pinnacle Housing Limited	London	02074 275 182	Full Member
Prime Management (PS) Limited	Bromley	02037 008 733	Full Member
Prime Portfolio Ltd	London	020 7409 0209	Full Member
Property Hub	Wembley	0208 459 3333	Full Member
Urang Property Management Limited	London	02077 518 355	Full Member
Aston Square Ltd	London	020 3982 8282	Associate
Barosa Property Limited	Stanmore	02030 867 130	Associate
Blue Crystal Residential Ltd	London	020 8994 7327	Associate
Charles David James Ltd	London	020 7704 0660	Associate
Davies Daniel Ltd	London	02034 170 425	Associate
Eight Asset Management	London	07951 622 643	Associate
JSG Block Management Ltd	Ruislip Manor	01895 604 446	Associate
Navana Asset Management Limited	London	0203 9979 918	Associate
Nicolas Van Patrick Ltd	London	02075 901 200	Associate

ARMA Members
Yorkshire

• Commerson Estate Management Ltd	Leeds	03301 112 610	Full Member
• Horizon Management	Sheffield	0300 030 1035	Full Member
• Hunters RBM	Elland	01422 893 726	Full Member
• Inspired Property Management Limited	Doncaster	01302 729 500	Full Member
• LIV Group Limited	Leeds	0113 244 2444	Full Member
• Mulberry PM	York	01904 655200	Full Member
• Omnia Estates Ltd	Sheffield	0114 2792840	Full Member
• Premier Property Management & Maintenance	Barnsley	01226 770088	Full Member
• Venture Block Management Ltd	Leeds	01138 313 235	Full Member
• Watson Property Management	Leeds	0113 273 8788	Full Member
• Elmfield Real Estate	Bedale	01677 450300	Associate

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• Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Kay & Co	London	020 7467 2027	Full Member
• Bold and Reeves Limited	London	020 7408 7590	Full Member
• Brunsfield Ltd	London	020 3601 7676	Full Member
• Burlington Estates (London) Limited	London	020 7499 3207	Full Member
• Castlereagh Management Limited	London	020 7258 9670	Full Member
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• Principia Estate & Asset Management	London	020 7341 0220	Full Member
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• Raglan Limited	London	020 7937 5272	Full Member
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• SBA Property Management	London	020 7629 4949	Full Member
• Sears Morgan Property Management Limited	London	0844 257 2222	Full Member
• SHW	London	020 7389 1500	Full Member
• Sloan Block Management	London	020 7221 4935	Full Member
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• Burns Hamilton	Bournemouth	01202 391663	Full Member
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• GH Property Management Services Limited	Southampton	03453 080 988	Full Member
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• KTS Estate Management Limited	Arundel	01903 889 799	Full Member
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• HC Block & Estate Management Ltd	Camberley	0118 338 8794	Associate
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• Stephen & Co Block Management Ltd	Weston super Mare	01934 621101	Full Member
• Tuffin & Co Property Management Ltd	Plymouth	01752 254 222	Full Member
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• Koti Property Management Ltd	Bodmin	01208 510050	Associate
• Smeaton Block Ltd	Plymouth	01752 938208	Associate
• Southernhay Estates Limited	Exeter	07788 437522	Associate

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• 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
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• David Toogood	Harding Chartered Surveyors	020 7736 2383
• Harriet Fleming	Harriet Fleming Surveyors Ltd	07855 454707
• Kevin Broadhurst	Jackson Green & Preston	01472 311113
• Joe Fraser	Joe Fraser Chartered Surveyors	01642 262728
• Marcus Clark	Joe Fraser Chartered Surveyors	020 7206 2612
• Andrew Tucker	Johnson Tucker LLP	0191 269 7890
• 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	020 7520 2317
• Keith Chew	Lawrence & Wightman	0121 779 0999
• Justin Bennett	LBB Chartered Surveyors	020 7822 8850
• Kevin Broadhurst	Leasegevity Ltd	0300 400 3279
• Robert Kaye	Leasehold Assist Ltd	07714 570858
• Ryan Bridges	MAP Chartered Surveyors	020 8300 1144
• Prosper Marr-Johnson	Marr-Johnson Stevens LLP	020 7499 3199
• John Keenan	Mathieson Keenan	01932 345698
• Ross Maunder Taylor	Maunder Taylor	020 8492 5526
• Chris Baker	McDowalls Surveyors Ltd	020 8472 4422
• Kieron Mckeown	Mckeown & Co LLP	01722 439518
• Tim Palmer	McNeill Lowe & Palmer	01582 469946
• 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
• Panicos Loizides	Quest Property Consultants LTD	020 7813 9155
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• David Nesbit	RES Property Surveyors Limited	07824 441673
• Angela Commons	Richard John Clarke Chartered Surveyors	020 7499 8043
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• Saul Gerrard	Saul Gerrard Surveyors	020 8203 2012
• Alastair Stimson	Savills Commercial Ltd	020 7016 3728
• Clive Scrivener	Scrivener Tibbatts Ltd - Chartered Surveyors	020 8947 7040
• Adam Robinson	Selkent Surveyors Ltd	01732 752099
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• Simon Brook	South East Leasehold	020 8832 9069
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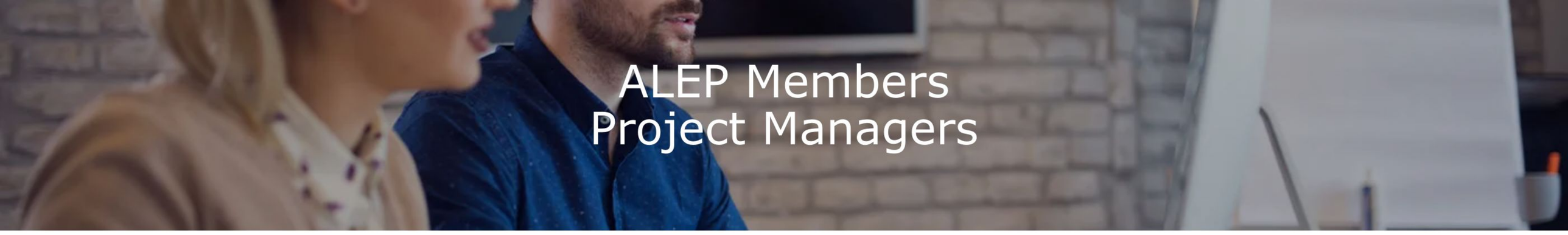

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