

Your social housing in a changing climate
A report by the London Climate Change Partnership
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Most of the social housing in London was not built with climate change in mind. To meet our changing climate many properties may need to be adapted. Many adaptation techniques are available but have never been tested on a large scale on social housing before now.

This case study reports on the findings of such a large scale test and examines the particular situation for social landlords. The case study focuses on the Colne and Mersea blocks in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. These two blocks, comprising of 200 flats, were scheduled for Decent Homes works and the opportunity arose to adapt them to climate change at the same time.

The *Your Homes in a Changing Climate* report was used as a blueprint for adaptation features adopted in the Colne and Mersea tower blocks.

Adaptation features included in the retrofit:

Water scarcity: low flow kitchen & basin taps, small volume baths, low flow showers & water meters

Overheating: external blinds incorporated in triple glazed windows, external cladding, light external colouring and extractor fans

Flood risk: flood barriers to ground floor flats, flood resilient external wall finish, non-return valves for soil pipes and existing drainage refurbishment

Summary

The project team found that resident acceptance of the works was gained by incorporating the adaptation works with the Decent Homes works. The work was carried out using the installation contractors, United House, who is experienced in working with social landlords. In general the installation of adaptation works went smoothly but integrating the water meters with other heating and utility systems proved to be more problematic than anticipated at the beginning of the project.

The problems were overcome during the course of the project, and by and large, the residents reported being very happy with the works. The new showers were popular and virtually no overheating in the newly clad and triple glazed flats was reported.

There was evidence of awareness amongst residents on water scarcity and overheating, but limited awareness of flood risk. In particular, residents in the ground floor flats were not aware of the flood damage reduction measures installed.

In terms of social benefits there is a strong case to carry out similar works throughout the sector. Key learning and recommendations are reported throughout the report.

Sustainable Homes is in the process of completing the report. www.sustainablehomes.co.uk



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