

Chelmer Housing Partnership Chelmsford, Essex, England



Organisation description

Chelmer Housing Partnership (CHP) is the largest registered social landlord in Essex with around 6,600 properties. It was established in 2002 to take on ownership and management of homes previously run by Chelmsford Borough Council. CHP's housing stock comprises of a range of low and high rise flats and maisonettes, houses and bungalows, which range in age from 10 to 90 years old. CHP also now owns a growing stock of new-build properties

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Strategy

Chelmer's 'Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency Strategy' and 'Action Plan' provides the main framework for alleviating instances of fuel poverty in its housing stock - how this fits into the organisations overall corporate objectives was not established however, Chelmer have a very clear understanding of its housing stock and the probable levels of fuel poverty broken down into wards

Identifying and reaching energy poor

Detection focus on 'building' features

- Stock condition and separate SAP evaluating software is run side by side
- Target average SAP rating across all properties a rating of 62 by 2007, with no dwelling to have an SAP rating below 40, and to increase energy ratings starting by selecting properties with the lowest rating and / or presence of single point heating. Thereafter a target average SAP rating of 80, with no property less than 60 by March 2010

Detection focus on 'building features' & 'occupants' situation

- Target resources to dwellings where people in fuel poverty are thought to live for example, the heating programme in 2009 had focussed on changing non-flats that are electrically heated to gas or oil heating - this therefore mainly consists of larger, thus more expensive to heat, houses and elderly persons bungalows. These properties are more likely to house tenants who are in fuel poverty

Communications, awareness and advice

- All tenants are given the opportunity to discuss energy matters which in turn is fed into each strategy and incorporated into the annual report for progress into the Partnership strategy documents. Tenant Forum members have the final say on what is included in the strategy
- Obtain feedback from affected residents of proposed heating and insulation improvements
- Tenant forum members and street representatives are able to attend a one-day energy awareness course
- Staff training is undertaken and is an ongoing process working with the local Environmental Partnership
- Provide tenants with quality face to face energy advice in the home
- All tenants are offered an energy advice visit by the Partnership Energy Officer with a specific target to new tenants
- Produce literature so that tenants are able to make informed choice of heating fuel
- Create energy efficiency leaflet packs to be provided - initially to all new tenants and tenants receiving energy advice visits
- As part of the annual review tenants are asked whether or not they are satisfied with opportunities to participate in management and decision-making processes
- Methods to communicate (as identified through the organisations 'Resident Involvement Policy') includes: Surveys, zonal events, focus groups, mystery shopper, customer panel, street representatives, estate inspection, tenant auditors, recruitment, shareholder members, leaseholder forum, area forums, central forums, and tenant board directors

Choice of retrofit technologies

Choice focus on 'building' features

- Incorporate and review regularly energy efficiency into maintenance and modernisation programmes to maximise energy saving features
- Eliminate design features of properties which contribute to condensation and mould growth
- They aim to take advantage of any Community Heating schemes locally and encourage the use of energy generated from renewable sources

- Install heating systems which combine the lowest running costs with adequate comfort levels
- Standard of energy installations in keeping with 'Best Practice' where possible
- Detailed SAP rating provides clear and unbiased programmes for energy improvements

Choice focus on 'occupant' features

- Tenants are given a choice of fuel type for heating where it is not possible to install gas

Finance

- A commitment to continue to research and pursue available sources of grant funding for energy efficiency schemes - including Low Carbon Building Programme for renewable energy and energy provider grants for energy efficiency and fuel switching

Skills and training

- Formal partnering agreements with main external contractors. This gives the organisation the opportunity to set standards for quality of workmanship (quality control) and customer care

Monitoring and evaluation

- The Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency strategy 'action plans' are reviewed annually and taken to the Board including progress made against individual key performance indicators
- Continue to track performance by calculating performance indicators that monitor progress with objectives and improvements using enhanced in-house database capability
- Tenants receive regular information on energy related matters - CHP is to extend its energy advice programme to those properties receiving new heating and for those in properties with renewable energy technologies