

Gas boiler installation & response programme

Client situation

LiveWest is a housing association with a portfolio of over 37,000 social housing properties across the South West. It's mission is to help alleviate the housing shortage in the region and offer homes for affordable rent and shared ownership and outright sale.

As LiveWest continues to grow their number of properties and geographical area, they're continually investing in existing homes to maintain or improve the standard of living for their residents.

Some of the challenges include achieving energy efficiency by insulating properties where their existing portfolio is aging; keeping up with changes in legislation; and moving away from gas towards more sustainable heating systems.



Scope of works

In order to maintain heating for residents and stay gas compliant, LiveWest runs an extensive planned programme of annual new boiler installations as well as regular servicing and emergency works. To fulfil these across Somerset and the West of England, LiveWest partners with Gregor Heating for heating installation, gas boiler servicing and repairs.

The partnership contracts began in 2014 and to help manage the work, LiveWest and Gregor Heating developed a shared IT system interface to keep booking information and engineer progress up to date in real time.

Gas servicing

Gregor Heating is responsible for carrying out gas servicing for over five thousand LiveWest properties. LiveWest Team Leader for Gas Safety, Julie Cox, raises the servicing and any repair jobs required after the services.

She is responsible for making sure they are all completed by the due date to comply with the legal duties of the current Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations as a Landlord.

"We normally have between 450-650 service appointments for Gregor Heating to complete each month, so it's a large number, but we are working well together and completing these services before the due dates.

TESTIMONIAL

Gregor Heating gives excellent service. The shared system interface has improved the service massively; it's really helpful that I can see updates straight away without ringing people. Their engineers are all very professional and experienced; they're trustworthy, polite and put themselves out to be accommodating.

Julie Cox, Gas Safety Team Leader, LiveWest

Gas servicing

"I find that the admin team are very accommodating and will move appointments around to get engineers out and get the services completed on time" continued Julie.

"The shared IT interface does work well because I can see any appointments or stage updates from Gregor's as soon as they are added onto their system. When repair jobs are completed by Gregor Heating, they update the jobs on our

system and the outstanding job will be completed, which is a great help" said Julie.

The main logistical challenge for Julie is seeking access to properties, a process which Gregor Heating is also involved with. As Julie explained, "Servicing jobs are raised 90 days before the due date, then an appointment will be generated no earlier than 55 days off the due date, when an appointment letter will be sent by Gregor Heating to the resident. If there's no

access on this appointment, then a second appointment is made and another letter is sent by Gregor Heating to the resident. If still no access, then this service job will be passed back to the Gas Team at LiveWest, my job is then to contact the resident by phone, email or letter to book the third or subsequent appointments. It can be a challenge gaining access, but between myself and the team at Gregor's we work well together and have maintained zero overdues over this last year."



Boiler installations

With planned boiler installations, there were 500 properties to visit each year when the contract started; the number has now decreased to around 175 properties each year including urgent replacements.

LiveWest sends the programme at the start of the year then Gregor Heating plans which properties they'll go to each month. Gregor also provides their health and safety plan including their training to support the contract.

Richard Humphries, project manager for LiveWest's planned boiler installation contract, has been impressed with Gregor Heating's professionalism and teamwork at every level, from their admin team to their engineers.

"We send the initial letter then hand it over to Gregor Heating to communicate with the residents nearer the time. They're very good at going out early on and doing the survey before the engineers go in,"

Richard explained. "The technical surveyor has to confirm whether or not the boiler can go back in the same location, whether there are other issues with the system, and if anything needs replacing, like pipework or radiators. They're very good at picking up on those areas where other heating improvements could be made."

Richard also reflected on the planning and coordination that Gregor helps with for larger scale work, particularly in properties reliant on communal boilers.

"Some of our supported and sheltered schemes have residents with specific medical conditions, where they need heating and hot water all the time. When they have a planned communal boiler replacement, this needs much more consideration. Gregor Heating is very good at liaising with scheme managers in those cases to make sure the work isn't going to compromise the health and safety of residents - it needs a lot more planning."

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Gregor Heating is a family-oriented business - very friendly, that's also very professional. The administration team is very good at answering any queries. Their customer service is top notch and they always go out of their way to help when they can. They're a really nice company to have working for us.

Richard Humphries, Project Manager, LiveWest

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Fast response service

As a boiler can break down at any moment, emergency heating repair works are less predictable. LiveWest takes the calls in their customer contact centre and then hand them over to Gregor Heating to arrange the emergency appointment with the resident.

To maximise the engineers' ability to complete a first-time fix, Gregor Heating stocks all their vans with common parts. They also check with the planned install team to check where a boiler is close to needing replacement, to choose the most economical option for LiveWest. Boiler replacements include a full survey and they are able to turn properties around quickly,

fitting the new boiler within one day in most cases to ensure vulnerable residents are not left without heating or hot water.

As the Head of Investment in planned works at LiveWest, Derek Bolt summed up, "The relationship with Gregor Heating works very well; we've had a long partnership with them with Knightstone and they've adapted the contracts with us since the merger. Gregor Heating play an important part in our compliance on gas and our relationship has helped build trust and confidence that our legal duties are taken seriously. Whenever we have challenges, Gregor Heating are quick to respond."

LIVEST'S RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY MONITORS HOW GREGOR HEATING IS PERFORMING:



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When the Gregor engineer popped by to conduct the boiler service and fire alarm checks, he went above and beyond. My son has autism and usually struggles with other people being around. However, Andy really took the time to explain the process and each time he made a noise or had to leave to go out to the van to collect more tools. This approach was much appreciated and my son was calm and laughing thanks to this interaction. What's more when he had a spare five minutes at the end of the visit, he kindly offered to pump up the tyres on Kyle's bike - he was so delighted. I can't thank them enough for making it such a pleasant experience for us both.

Miss Lisa Higgins, Somerset



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We originally chose Gregor Heating because of their track record and reliability. We have a really open and honest relationship with them, with common objectives for great customer service and a strong safety ethic. They are locally based, know our customers well and they share our value of working together in partnership for the long term

David Greenhalgh, Executive Director Property Services, LiveWest

