

Gas servicing programme and renewable energy installations



Client situation

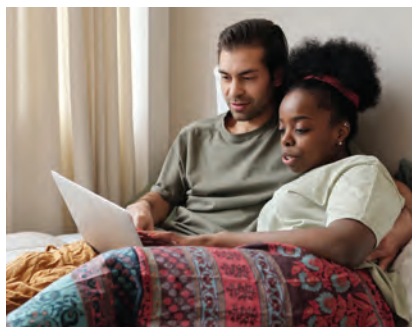
Formed in June 2020, Willow Tree Housing is a strategic partnership between South Western Housing Society and Tamar Housing Society. Their mission is to build and manage quality, affordable homes for people who don't have access to the housing market. Together the societies own and manage over 1,400 properties. The challenge for Willow Tree is the sheer scale of geography they cover: homes are spread across South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Their housing stock is mixed; some properties date back to 1940's-1950's and some are brand new developments in which Willow Tree has invested more recently.

Scope of works

In line with their mission, Willow Tree Housing takes every opportunity to reduce their tenants' heating costs and install renewable energy efficient systems. South Western Housing Society previously managed their heating using various local gas contractors, with separate contracts to maintain the oil

heating and renewable energy systems. When putting the work out to tender, it made sense for them to bring everything under one roof; Gregor Heating became their sole contractor for all Gas, Oil and Renewable heating. Tamar Housing also uses Gregor Heating in a similar capacity.

Asset Manager Neil Buckland explains, "We have a rolling programme for boiler replacements every 15 years and there are between 430-440 gas boilers to service every year. As the properties age, we manage planned works to replace the whole system; where we rely on the technical guidance from Gregors to install the latest technology, often choosing renewables - either air to water or air to air heat pumps - to ensure our homes are becoming more sustainable and efficient.



Renewable energy was a key part of the decision when we chose to work with Gregor Heating, as they were already our supplier for that; we've had a long working relationship with them."



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With heating, it's very much weather-related; lots of residents put their heating back on as it gets colder. We receive an excellent service, even though it is more difficult for them to get parts and spares for the renewable heating systems - Gregors are an excellent company, very responsive and great to work with.

*Dawn Kirby, Maintenance Officer,
South Western Housing Society
(part of Willow Tree Housing Partnership)*





Gas servicing

Gregor Heating's administration team handles all the appointments to arrange the gas boiler services. Maintenance Officer Dawn Kirby says, "The team at Gregor's are really efficient and friendly - we've built a good working relationship with them. If they have problems gaining access, they work with our business support team and housing officers to book the appointment in and avoid any overdues. I speak to Rob [at Gregors] on a regular basis and we get the spreadsheet back from the admin team with weekly updates. We also get the gas certificates sent back electronically very quickly from them."

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period, Gregor Heating has stayed on top of the servicing schedule and been more responsive than ever. Neil reports, "The service delivery from Gregors is good and it's been even better this year, in spite of the circumstances. Our business support team sends out text messages to monitor the service, seeking feedback from our residents and we've never had any negative comments. Gregors also do their doorstep survey to ensure they're tracking performance on every visit; they're all highly competent, qualified engineers."

Planned works

Gregor Heating supports Willow Tree Housing with a programme of planned works each year to upgrade their properties where needed. In the annual reporting year of 2019/20, Gregor Heating carried out the installation of latest energy efficient replacement boilers and associated controls within 9 properties across the portfolio.

For the Glovers Close scheme, Gregors was instrumental in helping South Western Housing Society to apply for a

government grant; the renewable heating incentive payment scheme. Qualifying as a capital investment into renewable energy, the scheme enabled them to invest in replacement heating, removing electric night storage heaters and replacing them with renewable systems.

Neil highlights, "We rely on Gregors for their technical advice and guidance - choosing the latest technologies, with a focus on installing renewable energy wherever we can. When we have had monthly contract meetings, they'll always alert us to any changes in regulations that are coming up, so we can review the impact. One of our upgrade projects even resulted in lower heating bills for the residents. And Gregors know it matters to choose systems with easy-to-use controls for our residents to get the best out of the systems."

Social value for the community

Over and above the heating contracts, Gregor Heating supports Willow Tree Housing Partnership to provide value to their local communities. As part of South Western Housing Society's commitment to deliver more in all aspects of housing, the staff team came together in November 2019 to plan and organise a 'Giving Back' day at the Weston Super Mare Night Assessment Centre (NAC); a project that delivers vital support to people who are street homeless. A team of people from Gregor Heating and the Society's other contractor partners (Jones Building Group, Dale Building Maintenance and E G Carter & Co) carried out some improvements - to upgrade the existing shower room, install new shelving, provide lockable cupboards and paint the sleeping area. These works were completed in time for the NAC's first birthday.

Client satisfaction scores

2020	VERY SATISFIED
APRIL	100%
MAY	94%
JUNE	100%
JULY	96%
AUGUST	100%
SEPTEMBER	100%



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At the core of it, it's all about service delivery to our tenants; providing safe, affordable and sustainable homes for them. Gregor Heating are a well-respected company and Steve Gregor shows a very personal commitment to support the work the Housing Partnership is doing. He's very involved, keeping oversight of how his team is working and helping out if the day-to-day process needs to be adjusted - it's really great to have the business owner directly involved. If we have had problems, they're always sorted quickly.

**Neil Buckland, Asset Manager,
Willow Tree Housing Partnership**

