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Windows and doors are such a ubiquitous part of people's lives that we often barely notice them till something goes wrong. However, these vital building features essentially define a person's home, turning an empty shell into a safe and welcoming space.

Like any other aspect of a domestic building, windows and doors require maintenance, occasional repairs and scheduled replacement. Despite advances in technology, things do go wrong: seals rupture, windowpanes crack, door locks break, frames swell and the existing uPVC is still good and will remain structurally sound for at least two 30 years lifecycles – mainly because most of our solutions/services depend on this uPVC integrity.

For a Housing Association or city council, maintaining windows and doors in good condition is an important part of asset management. A Head of Asset Management may have overall responsibility for 30,000 or more social housing units. If we say that an average house has five windowed areas and two external doors, then this gives a ballpark figure of 150,000 windows and 60,000 doors to maintain.

By any standard this is a lot of windows and doors! This free guide has been written to help you manage your assets more effectively by reducing the cost of window and door maintenance in social housing.

By implementing a proactive schedule of window and door maintenance you can save substantial costs and improve the quality of life of your residents.





A Window Is Not Just A Window!

A window isn't simply a nice feature that allows someone to gaze out into the world. They are essential to retaining the heat and warmth in a home, as well as keeping a house safe from intrusion. The quality of the windows in social housing therefore has a direct impact on how much a resident spends on heating, the quality of the air within their home and the security of their family and possessions.

With this in mind, asset management of windows and doors is a fairly high-stakes undertaking. And, of course, windows and doors are not a single proposition; some units are better at doing the job than others.

For instance, there is a huge difference between the performance of single glazing, first generation uPVC double glazing and second generation uPVC double glazing.

The difference between types of window and the choices made for social housing have a direct impact on resident's lives. Perhaps the most visible of these is energy efficiency. The Energy Saving Trust estimates that in uninsulated homes with only single glazing, up to 18% of heat is lost through the windows. This can be drastically reduced by replacing window panes with 'B' rated double glazed windows. For residents, this could mean an annual reduction in heating bills of up to £170. Providing energy-efficient windows offers much needed help for families juggling multiple demands on their monthly income.









General Contractors and Unnecessary Costs

As a Social Housing provider, you strive to provide the highest standard of security and fuel efficiency for your residents, but do not have an unlimited maintenance budget. You therefore need to carry out maintenance and repairs in the most cost-effective manner.

The maintenance problem arises from the fact the most general contractors do not know about windows and doors from a purely mechanical/hardware perspective. This leads to frequent misdiagnoses of issues with windows and doors,

It is not uncommon for a general contractor to replace the wrong hardware when the cause of the issue originates with something else. For example, a handle and a set of hinges may be replaced when in fact the opener just needs a minor adjustment. Hence, you get an ineffective service and higher cost than necessary on your maintenance bill.

Who This Guide is For:

This guide has been written for asset managers working for councils and housing associations who have responsibility for maintaining windows and doors in social housing. It may also be of interest to managers working for large landlords within the private sector. Our aim is to help you control your maintenance budget within tight financial limits and reduce costs where possible, while maintaining an excellent level of service for your residents.

You can find out more about our business. Mila Maintenance, in the final section of this eBook. In the meantime, if you have any questions while reading this guide, please give us a call on **0808 100 8881.**





Four Reasons Why Windows & Doors Are So Important





Four Reasons Why Windows



Windows and doors are far more than simply property assets. For residents, they are integral to the security and comfort of their home. A resident is likely to react far more strongly to an issue with a window or door, then they would to an issue with their microwave or TV aerial, as there is far more at stake; namely an increased risk of fuel poverty, increased chance of burglary and reduced air quality.

For housing associations and councils, windows and doors are the key to resident satisfaction, asset value and reduced running costs.

Windows and doors are part of the external fabricate of a home and they are thermally the place where the heat escapes from most, often more so than through the loft-space and roof. Hence, residents will complain if there are draughts, condensation or if any of their hardware fails.

This section is about the four main reasons doors and windows are important, and the issues that can occur if things go wrong:







1) Energy Efficiency

A typical house loses 10% of its heat through its windows¹. Depending on how efficient the window is and the material used in its construction, this figure may be lower, or it may be significantly higher. This is a serious concern in social housing because of the risk to residents of fuel poverty.

The problem of fuel poverty: Social housing is generally the most energy efficient type of house build, with SAP ratings around seven points higher than other housing groups. The average for Social Housing is SAP D. However, this may not be enough to keep some residents out of Fuel Poverty, The Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014 set a fuel poverty target to ensure that as many fuel-poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030.

Improving the energy efficiency rating of building will help residents with their fuel bills. This is important as landlords look to assist residents with their living costs to ensure they can continue to pay rents when Universal Credit is launched and payments are made directly by residents, rather than through Housing Benefit.



¹Greenspec Report - http://www.greenspec.co.uk/building-design/windows/









2) Environmental Sustainability



The issue of fuel-inefficient housing is not set to disappear overnight. It is estimated that 70% of our current inefficient housing will still be in use in 2050. Not only does this raise the ongoing spectre of fuel poverty for residents, but it also poses a worrying environmental risk:

According to the Saint-Gobain Group, one of the UK's leading glazing suppliers, replacing single glazing with A-rated double glazing could save a resident £8,211 and 22 tonnes of CO2 in a typical detached house, or £5,855 and 16 tonnes of CO2 in a typical semi-detached house, by using the Glass and Glazing Federation's energy saving and carbon calculator².

Housing is responsible for a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. As large housing stock owners, social landlords have an ethical responsibility to reduce the carbon emissions from their properties. Ensuring windows and doors are properly maintained is an easy way to do this.

There is a positive trend of social housing units becoming more environmentally sustainable. Around 2.6 million social dwellings in the UK underwent uPVC window and door replacement programmes before 2002 and improvement programmes have continued. However, the majority of windows installed before 2002 typically offer a 'G' Window Energy Rating (WER), the lowest rating available now, meaning they are much less efficient than they could be if the glass was modernised and the window upgraded. It is incumbent upon social landlords to ensure their housing stock responds to changes in window technology to maximise eco-sustainability and offer optimum fuel-economy to residents.

By today's thermal standards, these turn-of-the-century windows and doors are already light years behind. As a result, they are contributing to the serious problem of fuel poverty for low income households as they struggle to keep pace with rising heating costs.

2. Savings calculated on the GGF Energy Saving and Carbon Calculator on 18th February 2010, (www.ggf.co.uk/carbonCalculator.aspx), based on gas central heating, over a 20 year period, with gas costs rising 6%/year, reflecting actual inflation, www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/publications/prices/prices.aspx









3) Healthy Living Space

If Windows are not properly operational then they can't be opened for ventilation.

As recognised by Building Regulations Part F, poor ventilation is one of the commonest causes of damp. Buildings need to "breathe" and rely on constant air circulation to maintain air quality. Anything that impedes the flow of air through a house prevents moisture from escaping or evaporating and leads to damp.

In 2012, a shocking 116,000 council houses were reported as suffering from chronic damp, a number accounting for seven per cent of the total stock in England. Why is damp such an issue – because it provides a breeding ground for toxic black mould, which can contribute to deadly lung infections, allergies and asthma.

In 2013, the Direct Works Forum (DWF), which represents housing maintenance staff in more than 100 housing associations and local authorities, said a poll of its members carried out in November of that year found that 90% had noted increased reports of condensation dampness.

Correctly functioning windows contribute positively to this problem by improving airflow, reducing damp and correspondingly decreasing growths of mould and fungi that pose a hazard to human health.







4) Home Security

Inadequate doors and windows leave a house vulnerable to break-ins. In the UK. twothirds of burglars gain entry through a door and one third get in through a window. Fitting your housing stock doors and windows with good locks can go a long way to deterring burglars. Most burglaries are opportunistic, rather than planned, with perpetrators being jumpy and easily deterred. Most would-be thieves are unwilling to take the risk of being caught while struggling to break through a secure, well-guarded door or window

For example, in 2008-09 the council-run Nottingham City Homes (NCH) installed Secured by Design (SBD) standard double glazing windows and new doors as part of Nottingham's Secure, Warm, and Modern scheme, the city's Decent Homes programme. Following the work, NCH and Nottingham Trent University conducted a two-year impact study on the benefits of the work, comparing crime rates and perceptions before and after.

Here are some of the highlights from the results:

- » Bells Lane and Broxtowe estates saw a fall of 42% from the 227 burglaries suffered prior to the work. The city's overall decrease in burglaries of 21% was significantly smaller than in areas of secure work.
- » Prior to having new windows installed, one third of survey respondents said they felt unsafe alone in their home at night. Following the work, none of these people expressed concern.

This brief overview of the importance of doors and windows demonstrates how important modern, securely fitted assets are to combating issues such as fuel poverty, damp-related health issues and domestic theft. Equally important is the perception and value residents attribute to windows and doors. A resident with good windows and doors will feel secure and safe in his or her home, and is likely to have a correspondingly positive view of their landlord.



The Typical Social Housing Approach to Maintenance





The Typical Social Housing

Approach to Maintenance

Although no two housing associations or councils are exactly the same, across the board there is a typical approach to facilities management and maintenance. This approach has evolved for a reason and has some strengths, but there are also weaknesses in this way of working.

The typical social housing approach to maintenance looks something like this:

- » All maintenance issues, including windows and doors, are dealt with by a general operative, either directly employed or working for a third-party contractor.
- » Maintenance reacts to faults as and when they are reported by residents.
- »There is little or no planned or regular maintenance
- » The emphasis is on replacing parts rather than repairing or refurbishing them. This is deemed to reduce disruption, but it actually only increases waste and reduces value per unit.
- » Replacements are made when an unfixable fault is believed to occur. There is no schedule of replacements. This means that replacement times and life cycles are difficult to estimate and overall maintenance costs are imprecise.
- » Reliance on 'guesstimates' rather than sound financial plans and predictable refresh timetables.







The Typical Social Housing Approach to Maintenance

Problems arising from this approach

This approach is fraught with several problems, both to the housing association and to their residents.

For Residents: A negative perception is immediately created by virtue of the resident having to report the problem themselves. This is compounded if the issue requires more than one visit to resolve; which is frequently the case with general maintenance contractors who do not have specialist knowledge of doors and windows. The more visits that are required, the more disruption is suffered by the residents. Contrary to this, preventative maintenance, which we will explore in more detail in the following section, creates a positive perception as it shows the housing association proactively cares about its tenants.

For the Housing Association / Council: The typical approach has a negative effect in terms of asset values. This all comes down to depreciation. If the repair is ineffective and is only good in the short-term, the asset value may depreciate quicker than anticipated. This has two unwanted consequences: Firstly, the relative cost of your assets increases as the average life cycle length is reduced; and secondly, accelerated depreciation makes it more difficult to secure funding for growth and development.

Reaction Vs Prevention in Asset Management

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The root of the problem with the typical approach is that it is reactive rather than preventative. There is no accurate way to predict when faults will occur and repairs will need to be made. This means that social landlords have to make multiple repair visits to their properties each year to carry out repairs in response to faults.

The Housemark Benchmarking Report shows that the average housing unit requires three to four visits per year at an average cost of £130 per visit

This increases the risk to landlords, is inefficient and costly, and is more disruptive for residents.









The Typical Social Housing Approach to Maintenance

Why the reactive approach is costly and inefficient

As we have seen, the reactive approach increases costs to landlords because it increases the number of repairs per property. This in turn increases labour, management and administration costs. Also, evidence shows that landlords are experiencing significant differences in their window replacement cycles:

If you look at the replacement cycles for windows across a number of large housing associations, you will see huge variations of between 25 years and 40 years in terms of replacement cycles.

The impact of this is huge for the sector and for individual landlords with shorter replacement cycles. Over an 80-year period, 'Landlord A' with a 40-year replacement cycle would replace their windows twice, while 'Landlord B' with a 30-year cycle would replace their windows three times.

At an average replacement cost per property of around £3,000, 'Landlord B' would spend an extra £30 million per 10,000 properties over the cycle.

More worryingly, if 'Landlord B' expects to replace windows every 30 years but actually replaces them every 15 years due to faults, half the cost of the old window would be written off upon replacement.

So, over the 80-year period 'Landlord B' will replace their windows almost three times as often as 'Landlord A'.

The alternative, as offered by Mila, is planned, preventative maintenance...





At Mila, we aim to break the mould of the traditional approach to window and door maintenance by providing active and responsive care for your assets throughout their life-cycle. For you, this gives better value for money and greater efficiency than reactive repairs. It also leads to greater resident satisfaction and an increase in social value within your community.

In this section we will outline our alternative approach to long-term window and door maintenance. The long-term approach is always to sustain the existing items, by regular maintenance, to ensure they last and are problem-free. This approach has been proven to maintain units in near-perfect condition, even in stocks that are beyond their write-off period in the lifecycle.

There are several principles that underpin our approach:

- » Regular maintenance increases asset value by extending the lifecycle of windows and doors. This reduces asset depreciation rates.
- » A regularly maintained stock profile demonstrates competence and makes it easier to secure development funds from lenders.
- » Windows and doors are a different proposition to other household assets and should therefore be treated separately to general facilities management.
- » It is more cost-effective for you, and less disruptive to your residents, to refurbish and renew existing doors and windows whenever possible, rather than replacing them. This also reduces waste.
- » Maintenance should not only be reactive, i.e. maintenance in response to a reported fault, but should be carried out at regular intervals throughout the lifecycle.
- » Regular Preventative Maintenance is essential if you are looking to get the full costbenefit from your assets over time.



Asset Value and Lending Costs

Funding for growth and development is very much dependent on lender's confidence in the value of the sector's assets. A lender's trust that assets are well maintained reduces risk in valuations.

Lending is based on the security of the value of your Housing Stocks and how this is maintained throughout the lifecycle.

You need to demonstrate that your assets are well-maintained and in good condition. Therefore, an effective programme of window and door maintenance proves to lenders that you can sustain the value of your assets over time without noticeable depreciation.









Why You Should Separate Windows & Doors from General FM

It is tempting to assign all of your facilities management tasks to a general contractor, including windows and doors. On the surface, it makes sense to only deal with one supplier, as this keeps it simple.

However, we know from experience that there are over 300 specifications of window and door hardware in the UK social housing market, borne out of a relentless sales drive over many years by the companies who specialised in their production.

Unfortunately, most of those specifications are now redundant and replacement parts are very much obsolete. That is where the skills of a specialist contractor come to the fore. We know when we visit a resident's home we will be able to identify the parts that were fitted originally, and that we will be able to source and procure suitable 'fit for purpose' replacements.

We also know that we will be able to reinstall them correctly and offer a new guarantee back to the client that extends the life of their asset, and that there is a controlled record keeping system to update the specification of the hardware which has been replaced.





Beyond this, there are three other important reasons why we recommend you separate windows and doors from general FM tasks:

- 1) Correct diagnosis: Our engineers are window and door specialists. We have expert knowledge of the hardware and are more likely to make a correct diagnosis first time. Modern windows and doors are complex units with a number of parts that can go wrong. It is easy therefore for a non-specialist to make an error in diagnosis, resulting in unnecessary expenses for the wrong parts.
- 2) Better first time fix rate: Our engineers keep a wide stock of common parts in their vans. Combined with their accurate diagnostic ability and technical expertise, this results in a high first-time fix rate.
- 3) More cost-effective: By reducing of the number of wrong diagnoses and repeat visits, you end up with a far more cost-effective service, which fixes faults quickly and increases resident satisfaction.
- 4) Better customer satisfaction through minimal disruption: Each housing unit under your care is home to a family, couple or individual. We have a duty of care to provide the highest level of service to your residents with the minimum of disruption. Approaching each job in this way yields greater customer satisfaction results in consistent surveys.





How to Plan Window & Door Maintenance

If regular window and door maintenance is the most cost-effective option, is there a formula for how maintenance should be planned?

How Often? The short answer is 'as often as necessary', but the precise schedule will depend on the lifecycle of your assets. For instance, new windows will not need to be expected and maintained as regularly as older windows. There is also seasonal variation. Many common faults occur over the winter as a result of damp, or at the height of summer due to expansion and contraction due to heat. Some maintenance schedules may therefore include routine checks at the beginning and at the end of winter.

By Whom? Maintenance and checks should be carried out by a qualified windows and doors engineer, such as the team employed by Mila.

What type of work? The type of work will vary depending on what is necessary. However, as part of regular maintenance we create a Survey To Maintain Report that highlights window and door issues and diagnoses the solutions that can be applied to solve them.



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Why Maintenance Is Important

Modern windows and doors depreciate rapidly in value when left to their own devices. Maintenance can slow this decline and extend the active life cycle of each unit, reducing waste and replacement costs. Damage can occur in a number of ways:

Existing uPVC is still good and will remain structurally sound for at least two 30 years lifecycles – mainly because most of our solutions/services depend on this uPVC integrity.

Housing Association Property Mutual, a major defect insurer for housing associations, state in their Component Life Manual that uPVC must be cleaned every six months, lubricated and adjusted annually and have weather stripping and gaskets renewed every ten years.

Much of the door and window hardware sold in the UK has a ten year guarantee. One of the things that is almost always written into the guarantee terms is an appropriate level of maintenance. Generally, hardware systems should be checked regularly in order to ensure they are lubricated, functioning properly and free of dirt and corrosion. Often this is needed only once a year, although if the hardware is exposed to a more aggressive environment, the maintenance may be needed more often.

Having a regular maintenance schedule in place means it is easy for you to prove you have met the terms of the guarantee should you need to make a claim. The warranty provider is thereby not given a get-out clause.

In the next section we will look at the tangible benefits of preventative maintenance to your day-to-day business.



The Benefits of Preventative Maintenance





The Benefits of Preventative Maintenance

As we have explained in the previous section, our approach at Mila is to separate out windows and doors from general facilities management and focus on a regular schedule of preventative maintenance. The result is a quantifiable reduction in the lifetime maintenance cost of windows and doors per unit, leading to reduced repair budgets for social housing providers.

In social housing asset management there are three main markers of success: benefit to residents, the value of assets and the impact on the development and growth of your organisation.

By all three criteria, preventative maintenance for windows and doors is proven to be the most cost-effective repair and servicing model. Here's how:

For Residents:

How happy your residents are is measured by customer satisfaction surveys. Residents are rightly concerned about the condition of their windows and doors, for the reasons we have mentioned in previous sections. When regular, preventative maintenance is implemented, our clients report figures in the high 90's in terms of customer satisfaction figures.

To put this in context, according to the Housemark VFM Repairs Report, the North of England Housing Association's resident satisfaction level is around 83%, which is more than 10% less than Mila's recent customer's resident satisfaction responses.

A survey by the Tenants' and Residents' Organisations of England (TAROE) in October 2014 revealed that responsive repairs services were the top priority of 40% of respondents – more than any other issue. If landlords get it right, then tenant satisfaction will soar







The Benefits of Preventative Maintenance

For Asset Value

Depreciation over time is the biggest factor when assessing asset value. For our customers, a preventative maintenance service regime has been shown to drastically reduce depreciation rates, to the point where there is almost no loss of asset value over the lifetime of the asset.

Reports show shallower to almost flat-line depreciation rates, when compared to reactive maintenance approaches.

Not only does preventative maintenance offset many common issues and extend the lifetime of an asset, but it also gives an in-depth knowledge of your stock condition. This is powerful information to have, and allows you to tie in your asset management strategy with the growth goals of your business.

For Financial Planning

For housing associations and councils, a portfolio of well-maintained assets demonstrates competent management and a commitment to best value. It therefore gives an organisation a better chance of successfully securing business loans and development grants, thus contributing to the growth of your organisation.

A Change in Culture

Over the past few years there has been a definitive shift from the passive to the proactive approach in asset management. The fundamental principle of asset management is to intervene at strategic points in an asset's normal life with optimised repair and maintenance activities, in order to maintain the performance of an asset and extend its life. Proactive asset management therefore provides a holistic view of what your organisation owns (or leases), where it is, what state it is in, and when it will next be maintained or replaced. The benefits of adopting this approach will be felt throughout your organisation.





Find Out More





Find Out More

Having read this eBook, you may now be interested in finding out more about the Mila approach to preventative window and door maintenance, and the services we can provide for your organisation. While there are a number of other providers on the market, we believe our unique service philosophy, highly qualified team and competitive prices give us the edge on our competitors and make us ideal maintenance partners.

We would therefore like to conclude by providing a bit of background information about our company, why we feel we are qualified to issue a guide such as this, and what you can do if you want to take this further.







About Mila Maintenance

At Mila we are a team of highly qualified door and window maintenance engineers specialising in social housing. We have been in business for more than 25 years and in this time have carried out over one million repairs.

Our experience of social housing makes us the ideal maintenance partner for housing associations, councils and other social landlords. We have a passionate commitment to the wellbeing of our clients and their residents, placing the welfare of residents at the forefront of everything we do. We carry out our repairs, refurbishments and replacements to the highest possible quality, and with a minimum of disruption.

We are also committed to the industry we work in. Over the years we have developed a reputation for professionalism and value that has made as an authority in the industry. We use this position to advocate for change, best practices and innovative service throughout the industry, and regularly comment on issues affecting the industry.

Technology in the window and door industry is constantly changing. We place ourselves at the forefront of this trend by adapting new technologies to the needs of social housing. An example of this is our innovative window regeneration service for High Rise residences, which creates a more secure and user-friendly window for apartment residents.

You can read our latest news and blog posts by visiting our website here: www.milamaintenance.co.uk/in-the-press

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Key Performance Indicators

We aim to build up relationships of trust and respect with our clients and are transparent about our performance. We like our results to speak for themselves, and so publish our performance based on four important KPIs on our website. You can view them here http://www.milamaintenance.co.uk/kpis/

At the time of writing, this is how we measured up:

- » 1,122,028 repairs
- » 98.19% of jobs completed on time
- » 98.31% of jobs fixed first time
- » 96.4% customer satisfaction rate

We believe that a company is only as good as its customers believe it to be, so don't take our word for this. Click on the link below to view feedback and testimonials from some of our clients and their residents. All ratings on this page are provided by The Independent Ratings Company.

www.milamaintenance.co.uk/resident-client-feedback









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To speak with one of our service advisers, please contact us by any of the following means:

- » Visit our website: www.milamaintenance.co.uk
- » Request a quote: sales@milamaintenance.co.uk
- » Make an enquiry or request a call back: www.milamaintenance.co.uk/contact-us
 - » Chat to an advisor: 0808 100 8881
 - » Follow us on Twitter: @milamaintenance









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