

SWITCHEE CASE STUDY PACK

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SUPPORTING AT RISK RESIDENTS WITH SWITCHEE'S FUEL POVERTY ENERGY VOUCHER FUNCTIONALITY



Switchee has introduced new functionality that extends our technology's capability to identify homes most at risk of fuel poverty and respond effectively.



PROACTIVELY COMBATING MOULD AND DISREPAIR

Fairhive Homes partner with Switchee to tackle damp and mould head on.



FIGHTING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Combat Fuel Poverty and Improve Energy Efficiency for their Residents.



THE DRIVE TOWARDS NET ZERO

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NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION SURVEY

Flagship Group sets industry benchmark, powered by Switchee communications.



BEST PRACTICE OF MOULD TRIAGING

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting social housing providers, Switchee are supporting social housing landlords in proactively identifying and tackling condensation, damp, and mould in their property portfolio.



SUPPORTING AT RISK RESIDENTS WITH SWITCHCHEE'S FUEL POVERTY ENERGY VOUCHER FUNCTIONALITY

Switchchee has introduced new functionality that extends our technology's capability to identify homes most at risk of fuel poverty and respond effectively.

This enhancement involves leveraging our trusted direct-to-resident messaging functionality and collaborating with PayPoint to deliver energy vouchers directly to your most vulnerable residents.

FUEL POVERTY, SWITCHCHEE AND HOUSING PROVIDERS

Fuel poverty poses a significant challenge that requires attention from across the social housing sector: our Housing Fuel Poverty Index (HFPI) data shows that in the winter of 2022 to 2023, 1 in 4 social homes were in fuel poverty.

It's more than just a statistic; it can be debilitating for vulnerable households, causing a whole host of health and wellbeing issues, as well exacerbating problems such as damp and mould.

Switchchee understands the importance of addressing this issue, standing alongside housing associations in a shared commitment to finding practical solutions. Through initiatives like the HFPI, energy advice campaigns, our fuel poverty risk metric, and now our fuel poverty voucher functionality, we're here to support housing associations in making a positive impact.

Fuel poverty voucher functionality is highly targeted, allowing housing associations to prioritise those most in need, simultaneously protecting residents whilst in many cases solving the root causes of pervasive issues such as damp and mould.



DATA-DRIVEN PRECISION

Switchchee is the first platform of internet-connected devices in social housing, receiving over 16 billion data points per year, giving real-time actionable insights into property performance and fuel poverty risk.

Switchchee follows Public Health England's recommendation that everyone heat their home to at least 18°C. Switchchee classifies a home as being at high risk of fuel poverty if the home's internal temperature does not reach 18°C for more than half of the last 30 days.

Not only does Switchchee let housing providers easily identify houses most at risk of fuel poverty, they can also see where other issues such as damp and mould may be caused or correlated with fuel poverty.

Additionally, residents who are financially unable to maintain a temperature of 18°C in their homes, create conditions conducive to mould growth. Research therefore indicates that fuel poverty significantly increases the risk of dampness and mould formation.

Further, Switchchee data on property performance also gives housing providers much broader context with regards to fuel poverty. Switchchee metrics such as Heat Loss Rate (HLR) show the time taken for a property to lose 1°C of internal air temperature. Perhaps a home with poor insulation or an ineffective heating system is exacerbating fuel poverty. In this case energy vouchers may form part of a shorter term solution while longer term retrofit measures are needed.



EXCEPTIONAL RESPONSE RATE

In a recent initiative, we identified and contacted 300 households deemed at the highest risk of fuel poverty based on this comprehensive analysis.

The results were remarkable. Switchchee's messaging capability achieved an outstanding 87% response rate from the targeted households. This high level of engagement underscores the effectiveness of utilising technology to connect with residents facing fuel poverty challenges.

87%
response rate

VOUCHER REQUESTS REFLECT URGENT NEED

Out of the 261 households that responded to our messages, a staggering 72% expressed an immediate need for financial support by requesting energy vouchers. This statistic emphasises both the urgency and magnitude of the fuel poverty issue and effectiveness of following a targeted and data-led approach.

72%
expressed an immediate
need for financial support

DIRECT DELIVERY FOR TIMELY ASSISTANCE

Through our partnership with PayPoint and our direct-to-resident communications, the fuel poverty energy voucher functionality enables Switchee to cut through barriers presented by letters and phone calls to deliver assistance quickly and where it is needed the most.

This not only streamlines support and reduces cost, but ensures that residents experiencing fuel poverty can access financial aid promptly, preventing further hardships.

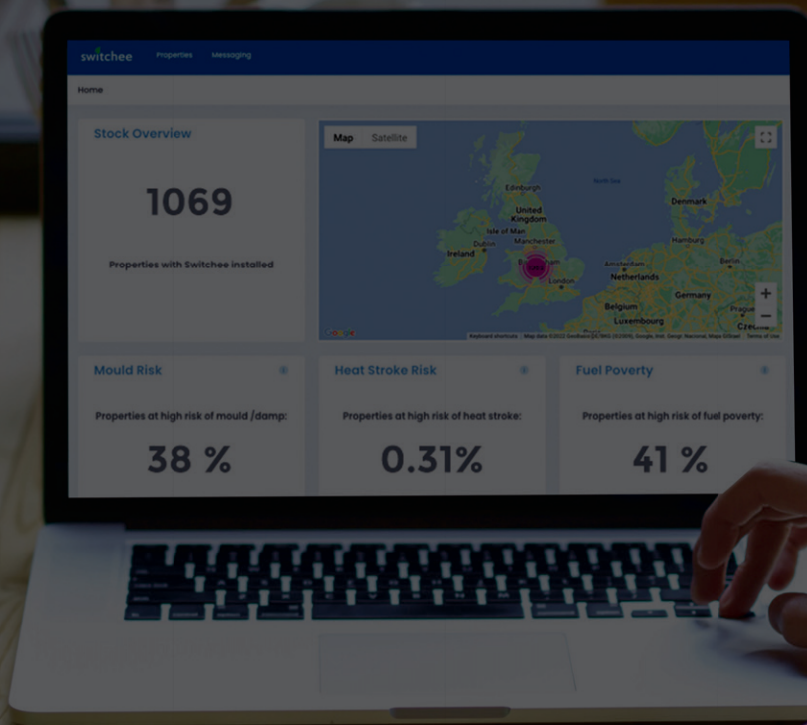
REAL-TIME IMPACT ANALYSIS

Switchee's data-driven solution allows housing providers to measure the real-time impact of these projects, enabling them to gauge the impact of their respective fuel poverty voucher program continually.

CONTRIBUTING TO ESG (ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE) GOALS

Beyond the immediate impact on residents' lives, Switchee's initiative helps housing providers to align with broader social goals as part of ESG initiatives. By addressing fuel poverty, housing providers can transform the lives of residents and may even save costs on damp and mould by addressing the root cause of the issue.





SET UP YOUR OWN FUEL POVERTY ENERGY VOUCHER PROGRAMME NOW

For Switchchee customers, if you would like to learn more about initiating your own fuel poverty voucher energy programmes, please get in touch with your Customer Success Manager and our team will support you in implementation and strategy.

If you'd like to learn more about Switchchee and all our solutions, please also get in touch. Switchchee provides real-time actionable insights for social housing providers including damp and mould risk and fuel poverty risk and can support in education and retrofit programmes with insights on property performance.

SWITCHCHEE FOR YOU

Discover how Switchchee can support your business needs.

Contact sales@switchchee.com to get in touch with our team of experts.

switchchee.com



PROACTIVELY COMBATING MOULD AND DISREPAIR

Fairhive Homes partner with Switchee to tackle damp and mould head on

THE CLIENT

20,000

Housing for over 20,000 people

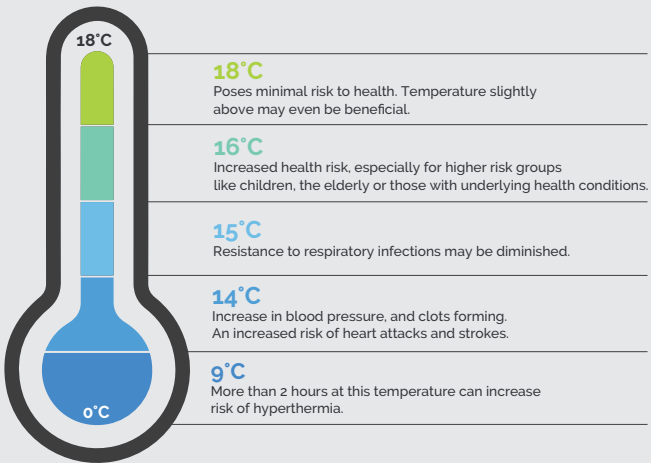
9,000

Responsible for over 9,000 homes

Fairhive Homes is a ‘not-for-profit’ Registered Social Landlord (RSL) providing affordable housing for over 20,000 people in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas. They are a leading local social housing provider, with nearly 300 employees, responsible for over 9,000 homes.

THE SITUATION

The UK is in a cost of living crisis. Energy prices have increased by 96% in the last 12 months, forcing many residents to make tough decisions between heat or eat. As the number of people estimated to be living in fuel poverty in the UK reaches 6.7 million people, the cold homes that they live in create an ideal environment for another problem to take hold; damp and mould. The Regulator of Social Housing estimates between 3-4% (120,000 to 160,000) of the four million social homes in England have notable amounts of damp and mould and there has been a 77% increase in the number of enquiries and complaints with The Housing Ombudsman about mould.



THE CHALLENGE

The number of residents and homes in need of support continues to rise at an alarming rate. Furthermore, the recruitment and retention of surveyors into the industry has never been more challenging resulting in an overworked workforce and poor resident experience.

Fairhive Homes identified the need to be more proactive in their approach. They needed a solution that would help them better manage their resources, saving them time and money.

The ability to diagnose issues occurring in residents homes, remotely, and assess if solutions put in place had worked, could transform how they work.

THE SOLUTION

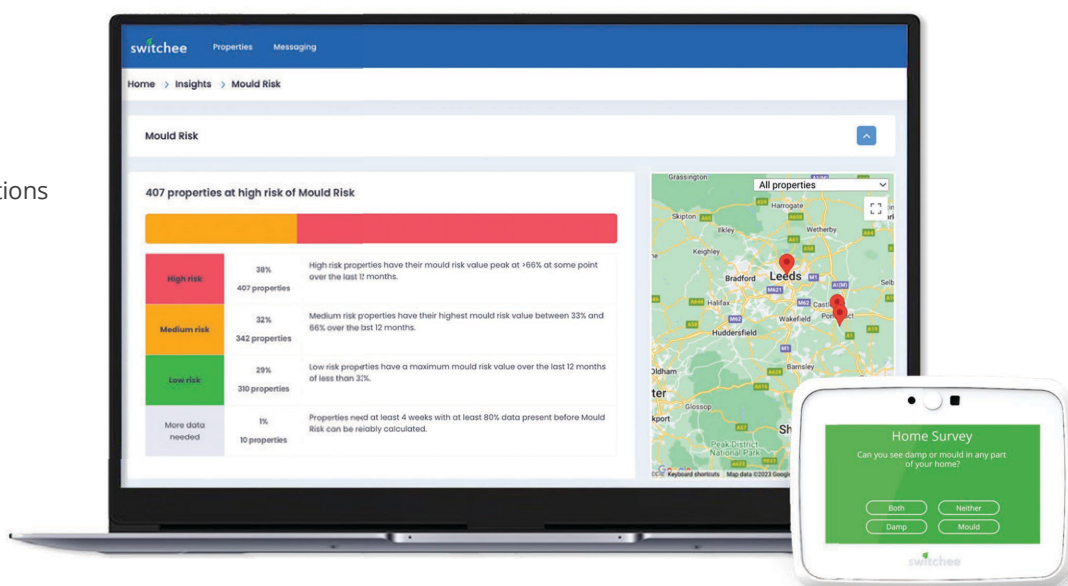
As thought leaders within Social Housing, Fairhive Homes chose to install Switchee smart thermostats into their residents homes, utilising data to gain valuable insights on the performance of their housing stock.

This would enable them to proactively identify and support residents at risk of damp, mould and fuel poverty using Switchee's pre-programmed damp and mould triaging survey that yields a 90% average response rate with no additional cost.

In order to ensure minimal disruption to residents, Fairhive Homes utilised a number of existing installation opportunities including their boiler replacement and voids programmes as well as any planned major works.

Cross-functional collaboration was key to achieving success and extracting maximum value from the Switchee devices. A steering group was formed with representatives from a number of departments within the organisation including:

- Asset Management
- Welfare Support
- Resident Support
- Business Intelligence
- Marketing & Communications



The above image contains fictional data for marketing purposes only.

THE RESULTS



Using real time Switchee data, Fairhive Homes are now able to proactively identify and support residents whose homes and health are at risk of damp and mould.

Using Switchee's Damp and Mould Triaging Survey to communicate with residents about the condition of their home, Fairhive Homes have increased resident satisfaction and engagement, achieving a 94% overall response rate of which 74% were received in the first 24 hours. A 74% increase in engagement rates compared to those typically received via traditional communication methods such as letters and text messages.

Switchee Appointment Scheduling also proved an extremely effective tool, enabling Fairhive Homes to achieve a 100% access rate for surveyors visiting the homes of those residents who reported signs of damp or mould. In one case a new envirovent system was fit, for which Switchee data could validate its performance, which proved a 12% reduction in absolute humidity.

94%

mould survey response rate

£270,000

estimated savings across the full portfolio for just 1 mould triaging campaign

100%

resident home repair works access rate

Key Successes

- Using Switchee data to **proactively identify and resolve issues** at the earliest opportunity **saving thousands in remedial works**
- **Reduced the risk of disrepair claims** from properties with existing damp and mould
- **Increased resident engagement** by 74% with a 94% response rate and 100% access rate
- **Saved £12,000 communicating with residents** via the Switchee devices compared to letters and text messages, **a full portfolio saving of £270,000.**



THE FUTURE

We're looking to add Switchee's to all of our 9,000 properties in the next few years...

We are installing them in all void properties and when we replace kitchens and bathrooms.

Andrew Rysdale, Assistant Director of Property



FIGHTING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Combat Fuel Poverty and Improve Energy Efficiency for their Residents

THE CLIENT

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is a local authority housing provider based in the West Midlands. Their housing stock of 22,000 properties has an average age of over 70 years, with the majority being terrace and semi-detached urban houses or bungalows and some tower blocks.

22,000

Total housing stock

THE CHALLENGE

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council needed large scale, OJEU compliant rollout of technology that could provide data driven decision making whilst minimising per property investment.

For their residents, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's goal was to reduce fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency; helping residents homes to be safer, warmer and improving their standard of living, whilst not adding any additional burdens.

Their priority was to focus their efforts on the worst EPC rated homes of E, F and G.



THE SOLUTION

A project of 5,000 Switchee's are to be installed over a 5- year period.

To offset the cost of installation, it was decided that Switchee devices would be installed alongside the boiler replacement scheme. Key objectives for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council were as follows:

- Gather data to monitor property performance
- Analyse the impact of retrofit measures
- Understand when properties are being over and under heated
- Identify residents at high risk of fuel poverty and condensation, damp and mould
- Communicate digitally with residents

An extension to the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council team, Switchee's dedicated Customer Success Team provide additional value to the project by:

- Messaging energy saving tips and advice to residents in partnership with home energy installations in their homes
- Receiving live alerts for 'time to heat' and 'overheating' for when heating duration was too low and temperatures too high in residents homes
- Running a series of flexible, resident focused messaging campaigns, to multiple target groups
- Proactively identifying and communicating with their highest risk of fuel poverty and condensation, damp and mould residents
- Enabling strategic, data-lead resource allocation to residents in most need and their homes

Switchee's Customer Success and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council teams worked together and decided to run a series of resident communication campaigns in the following areas:

- Energy advice
- Warm home discount
- Condensation, damp and mould triaging
- Winter boiler testing



THE RESULTS

Actionable Data

The Switchchee dashboard has provided the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council teams with clear, easy to understand actionable data, to more effectively target their resources and communications at those residents and homes where it is most needed, saving them and their residents money.

Cost Efficient Installation

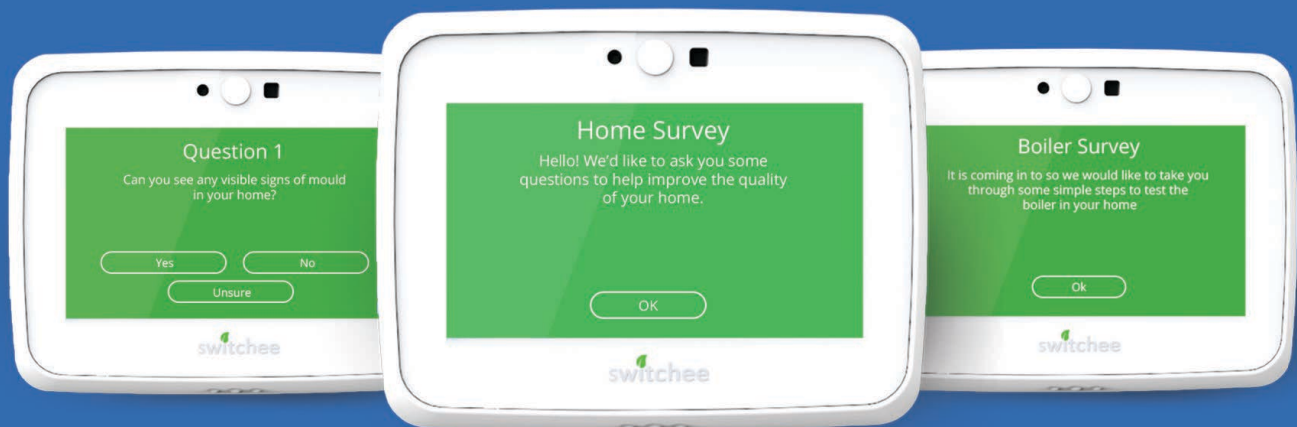
By offsetting the cost of Switchchee installations with boiler replacements, this not only reduces budget requirements but also improves the efficiency of the project as both installations can be completed in tandem.

Net Zero

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council has been able to pursue their carbon reduction targets, reducing carbon use by 939 tonnes per year.

Targeted Resident Communications

Switchchee messaging campaigns have enabled Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to more effectively communicate with their residents, targeting them appropriately, giving them responses and result, fast. The result not only improved communication between the residents and their landlords, but also saved both parties money.



Resident Focused Communications Campaigns

Energy Advice

- **93%** survey response rate
- **97%** response within 24 hours
- **107** requests for advice (or 1 in 4)
- **£10K** in resident savings

Warm Home Discount

- **82%** message response rate
- **17** requests for advice
- **£2,100** funding accessed for residents

Condensation, Damp and Mould Triaging

- **91%** response rate
- **69** requests for advice
- **51** homes resulted in a reduced risk of condensation, damp and mould through intervention and advice
- **61%** reduction in mould in one home alone

Winter Boiler Testing

- Proactively ensured residents tested their boiler
- Step-by-step boiler testing process
- Reduced boiler call outs

939

tonnes of CO₂ saved
per year

£12k

in resident
savings

121k

in predicted future savings
for 5,000 devices

88%

average response
rate



Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Engaging with our tenants is very important to us and the Switchee messaging service gives us a new, exciting way of offering information and support to help residents to afford to heat their homes.

Helen Langley, Senior Support Officer



THE DRIVE TOWARDS NET ZERO

Northwards Housing improve energy efficiency of their housing stock with Switchchee

THE CLIENT

Northwards Housing is the housing arm of Manchester City Council and manages approximately 12,500 homes in north Manchester.

With ambitious targets to be Net Zero by 2038, Northwards Housing has completed several projects to improve the energy efficiency of their stock. The result, a 48% reduction in CO₂ achieved over the last 15 years.

12,500

Homes in north Manchester

48%

Reduction in CO₂

ABOUT US

Switchchee exists to improve the quality of life for people living in rented homes.

We help landlords like Northwards fulfil their aim of solving the housing crisis by providing self-managing and high-quality homes. Since our founding in 2015, we have dedicated ourselves to developing the technology that will enable Social Landlords and residents to innovate and save. Our team are committed to solving real problems for real people, like fuel poverty, condensation, damp and mould, overheating and heating system failures. Switchchee combines social purpose, intelligent analytics and smart in-home technology to create services which enable residents and landlords to do more with less. We earn a place in people's homes by making their lives more comfortable and saving them money, and we earn our place in society by addressing the climate emergency.

THE PROJECT

One such project, the Homes as Energy Systems (HAES) is a £13.8m project, with £6.9m part funded by the European Regional Development Funds through the 2014-2020 England Operational Programme

HAES is delivering an estimated 1,000 retrofit interventions with the aim to increase the energy efficiency in the housing sector and decrease the annual emissions of Green House Gases (GHG) by 2,750 tonnes of CO₂e in the Greater Manchester region¹.

All interventions have been identified and comprise of a set of capital works that include ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps, photovoltaic systems, batteries, external wall insulation and deep energy demand reduction retrofit.



Northwards Housing included 540 properties where either the inefficient communal gas boiler or individual gas boiler was replaced with renewable heating. Of which, 55 also benefited from Switcher smart heating controls where Ground Source Heat Pumps were installed.

1. The delivery partners for the project include Procure Plus, Manchester City Council (Northwards Housing), Stockport Borough Metropolitan Council, Stockport Homes Group, Kraken Flex and University of Salford.

THE CHALLENGE

Northwards Housing has the same challenge as many other providers, to upgrade and deliver energy efficiency solutions within a constrained budget. Following the implementation of Net Zero 2038 targets, there is now even a greater need to deploy retrofit measures at scale and speed. Deployment of the improvements is just one part of the solution.

To realise the full potential of the energy efficiency measures, resident education and adoption of the new technology is key - yet can be a challenge in its own right.

Delivering the project during the COVID-19 pandemic brought additional challenges in providing onsite and in person support to help with the residents' transition and adoption of the new system.

COST OF HEATING

The existing communal heating replacement, with modern efficient heat pumps, resulted in residents moving away from paying for their heating through a service charge as part of their weekly rent to an individual cost on their electricity bills. This provided a challenge for most residents, as it was something they'd never had to manage before.

ADOPTION OF RENEWABLE HEATING SYSTEMS

The project involved significant resident engagement to help residents adapt and adopt renewable heating systems using the heat pumps. Previously, the communal heating system had no programmable heating controls, residents only had a choice of having their heating on or off and relied on the thermostatic radiator valves to manage their room temperature. As a result, residents had an embedded habit of opening windows to control their desired comfort levels which is not good from an emissions perspective.

Reliance on them using a thermostatic control without any additional support was not practical. A method was needed to identify those households who would require support and education to adapt to the new system.

Having visibility of their energy use on electricity bills, at first, generated a lot of queries from residents with concerns over the increased costs. To overcome this, Northwards provided additional support and advice, to explain how best to both use their new heating system and the associated costs. This was done with direct contact with their energy adviser, by telephone and (when restrictions were lifted) in person visits. A frequently asked questions document was produced and issued to residents to assist with a further understanding of the new system. A commissioning checklist was also produced to ensure that, at handover via the contractor, the residents understood the system better. This was tied in with easy user guides from the suppliers.

THE SOLUTION

By using Internet of Things (IoT) technology, Northwards have access to real-time data insights and tangible evidence on running costs, temperature and usage, empowering them to give support and engage residents.

Switchee's were installed as the main heating control in 55 homes (1 bed flats), providing residents with an easy-to-use Smart Thermostat without the need for them to have their own internet or Wi-Fi connection.

With inbuilt sensors, Switchee understands occupancy and optimises heating settings, saving residents up to 17% on their energy bills². Real time data is transferred via the GSM network to produce a dedicated dashboard for Northwards.



The project was delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic which brought additional challenges to provide onsite and in person support. During the period when residents were adapting to their new system, as Switchee can remotely connect to the devices we were able to provide this remote support. This was a key success during the pandemic, as it meant that visits to help amend timers and profiles for residents wasn't needed - providing remote assistance and having a hidden saving cost of an in person visit.

The Switchee Portal provides a range of welfare and maintenance KPIs, including risk of fuel poverty, damp and mould, and risk of heat stroke. Northwards have been empowered to proactively monitor the performance of the heating system and identify those most at risk or who would need additional support. Furthermore, having a visual method to understand and use in helping both education and queries for residents and using the insights to show where further efficiencies can be achieved.

2. NEA and Together Housing Study

FINDINGS ON BEHAVIOUR V CO2 USAGE

Whilst the initial project was delivered and completed during December 2020 - July 2021, the ongoing insight through the devices has provided Northwards with evidence of how significant the use of different heating systems and controls affects CO2 emissions and energy consumption.

Having real time data to evidence and validate the cost of energy usage of a heat pump system, combined with the ability to compare against the previous service charge cost (circa £8 p/w) has been one of the key outcomes for Northwards. The information provided in the graphs and tables below compares two neighbouring properties (within the same 4 block, low rise block) in terms of comfort and energy use. Using the Switchee data, Property 'A' uses the system 'as instructed' in terms of leaving the temperature at a set level and helping the heat pump manage itself as efficiently as possible. Property 'B' turns the settings up and down (despite much advice and guidance to the contrary) leading to a more inefficient way of operating the heat pump.

The graph below provides the actual usage, over a 12-month period, showing the target temperature set at a constant 21' degrees for Property 'A'. The resident has left the heating on, since installation, on 21 degrees – in the few initial days directly after install the setting was higher until the resident found their comfortable setting at 21 degrees. The room temperature closely mirrors the target temperature in the graph although understandably goes over this in the summer months – this means the heating will not come on at all during these times and save the resident money versus the previous service charge (approx. £8/week).

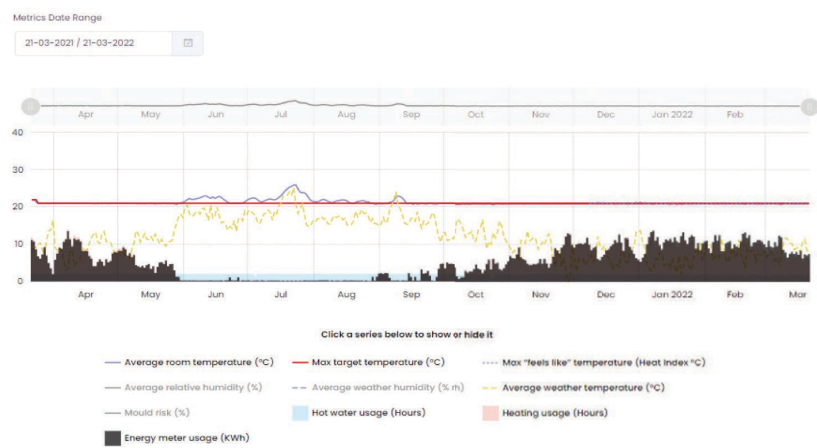


Figure 1 – Property 'A' 12-month property data set.

Figure 2, provides the actual usage for Property B, over a 5-month period inclusive of the colder months. This does not have a full 12-month data set, as per property 'A', as the installation was completed at a later programme date. The target temperature settings are consistently altered by the resident despite advice to the contrary. The resident has higher bills as a result (see Figure 3) during this period and has also raised issues about comfort levels.

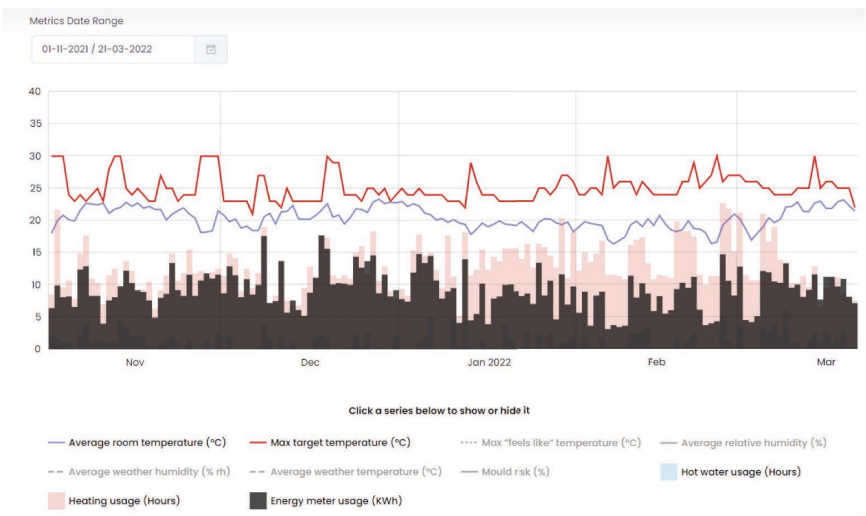


Figure 2 – Property 'B' data set. Note this is not over 12 months due to installation being undertaken later in programme than Property 'A'.

By comparing the usage patterns of desired temperature, kWh of the heat pump and the actual temperature over a number of homes³, Northwards have been able to establish the following:

Homes where heating is at a set temperature consume, on average, 1.2 kWh less electricity per day⁴, equivalent to circa 0.25kg less CO2. In addition, properties maintain a 1.5’c higher temperature than those where residents select inconstant and intermittent heating preferences.

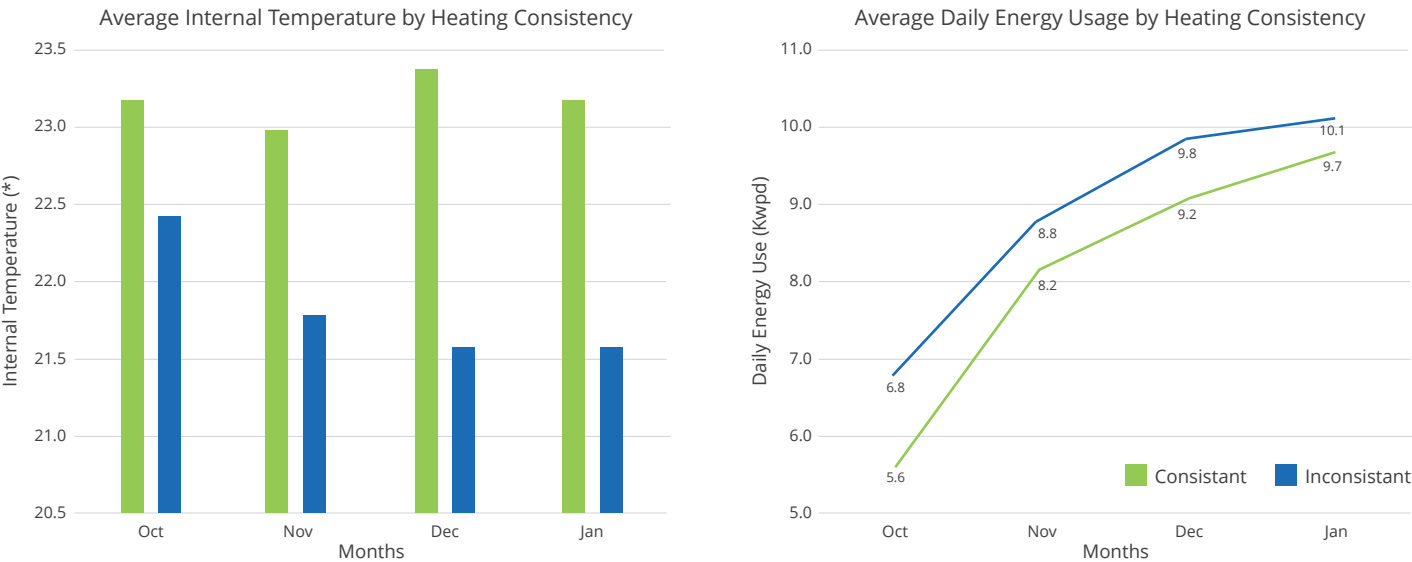


Figure 3 – Average internal temperature and energy use comparison on properties using heat pump systems consistently (Property 'A') and inconsistently (Property 'B').

In summary on properties 'A' and 'B' the following was identified:

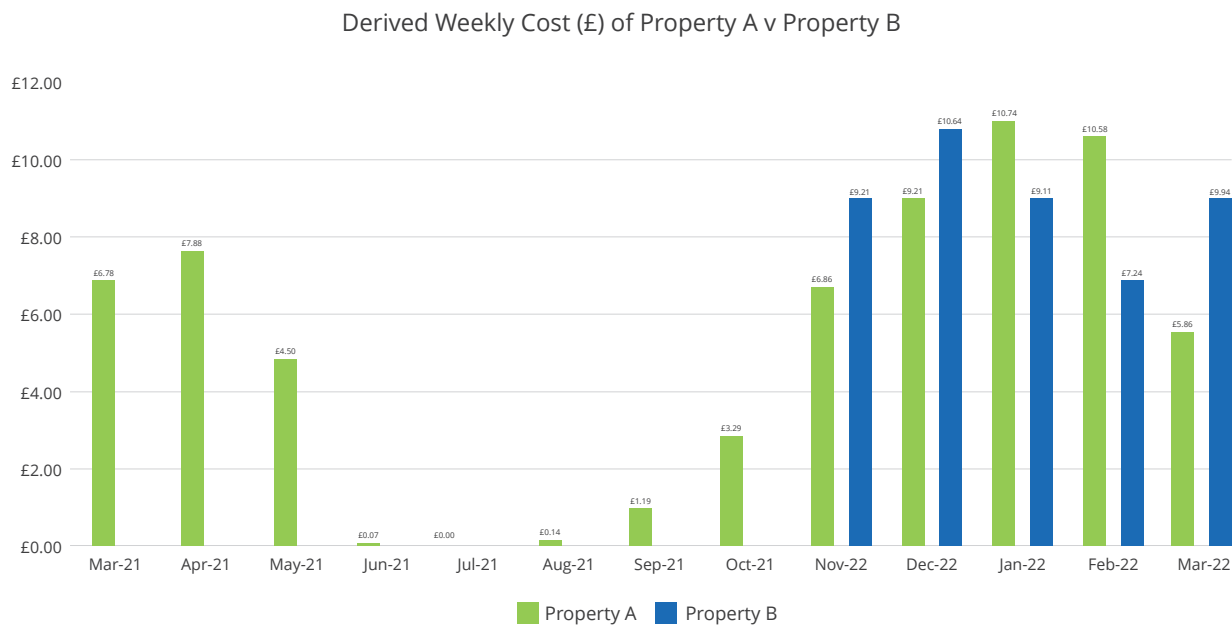
- Property 'A' had set their temperature set at a constant 21 degrees.
- Property 'B' used their heating system ad-hoc.
- Property 'A' used 60Kwh less than Property B during the same (winter) time period⁵.
- Property 'A' achieved a higher average temperature than property B and higher comfort levels.

The table below shows the actual kWh usage by month⁶. (Data for property B only available from November, as heating and data wasn't upgraded until November 2021).

Month	Property A	Property B
Mar-21	71	
Apr-21	225	
May-21	133	
Jun-21	2	
Jul-21	0	
Aug-21	4	
Sep-21	34	
Oct-21	97	
Nov-21	196	263
Dec-21	272	314
Jan-22	317	269
Feb-22	282	193
Mar-22	173	264
Grand Total	1806	1303

3. Analysis over 55 homes undertaken for the period October 2021-January 2022
4. 1303 kWh (Property 'B') v 1240kWh (Property 'A') November 2021-March 2022
5. 1303 kWh v 1240kWh November 2021-March 2022
6. Property B data available from November 2021

Furthermore, the ability to understand the KWh usage over a full year (March 2021-2022), when leaving the desired target temperature at a constant 21°, shows that the overall average weekly KWh usage equates to £5.20 per week cost, providing a resident saving circa £2.70 per week, when compared to the Service Charge Cost⁷.



In monetary terms, this provides evidence that it is more cost effective to run the heat pump than the service charge residents had previously been charged⁸.

Month	Average Weekly cost by month
Mar-21	£6.78
Apr-21	£7.88
May-21	£4.50
Jun-21	£0.07
Jul-21	£0.00
Aug-21	£0.14
Sep-21	£1.19
Oct-21	£3.29
Nov-21	£6.86
Dec-21	£9.21
Jan-22	£10.74
Feb-22	£10.58
Average cost per week	£5.10

34% energy price saving (against 52 weeks x £8 service charge equating to £416 per year).

7. Based on Assumed Service Charge of £8.00 pw (£416 pa)
8. Calculations based on actual KWh usage at a notional tariff of £0.15 per KWh which was standard tariff during winter 2021. Service charge under review due to energy price hikes and actual individual tariffs unknown to both properties at this stage.

The overall findings are that the best performing homes are those which leave the heating system alone, and benefit from lower running costs, regardless of the heat loss perimeter and higher heat loss figures. This, combined with the above evidence, that even with a higher heat loss value, those who kept their heating on a constant temperature were still able to heat their home more efficiently, producing less CO₂ than the archetypes with a higher heat loss value.

Retrofitting and insulation of homes, coupled with the adoption of renewable heating systems and installation of IoT technology will most certainly provide the route to help Northwards achieve zero carbon by 2038. If every one of their tenants were able to set their heating at a set temperature, then collectively over a full year this would equate to an additional saving of 1,140 tonnes of CO₂ in addition to the measures installed.

THE RESULTS

Having visibility of property performance, Northwards can now efficiently respond to enquiries and proactively identify households who require additional support, including risk indicators for fuel poverty, damp & mould.

The ERDF HAES project is a great example of how operations can be transformed from reactive maintenance to proactive Asset Management. Through combining the latest technology and ensuring residents' engagement and adoption, this is a fantastic example of how Housing Providers can reduce tenants' energy bills, better maintain housing stock while driving towards challenging Net Zero targets.

PROJECT PARTNERS



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER





NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION SURVEY

Flagship Group sets industry benchmark,
powered by Switchee communications

THE CLIENT

Flagship Group is the largest provider of social homes for sale and rent across the East of England. Maintaining a large portfolio of homes through a partnership between three housing associations, they are proud to provide affordable homes their customers love, and build sustainable communities.

Flagship Group began their relationship with Switchee in 2016 with the goal of innovating their end-to-end customer journey, and for their teams to find a solution to aid their ambition of preventative rather than reactive maintenance. They are now installing 3,000 Switchee devices a year through their boiler replacement schemes, new builds and targeted damp and mould prevention.

32,000

homes managed

£200.2m

Turnover of £200.2m (2022)

THE SITUATION

Housing Providers are underfunded, under-resourced and under increasing pressures. They need more effective means of communicating with their residents so that they can provide them with safe living environments, and support their needs effectively. Engaging residents equips social landlords with valuable insights that enables them to effectively allocate resources and budgets in order to improve living conditions. Average response rates for standard multi-channel communication methods are typically between 3%-12%.

The **Flagship Group's** 24-person-strong Neighbourhood Services team carry out monthly face-to-face surveys during neighbourhood inspections, with the aim of completing one survey, per inspection.

Flagship Group will typically see:

24

team members conduct
the surveys

60%

survey participation
rate

430

surveys collected per
quarter

70

hours to complete all surveys
(10 minutes per survey)

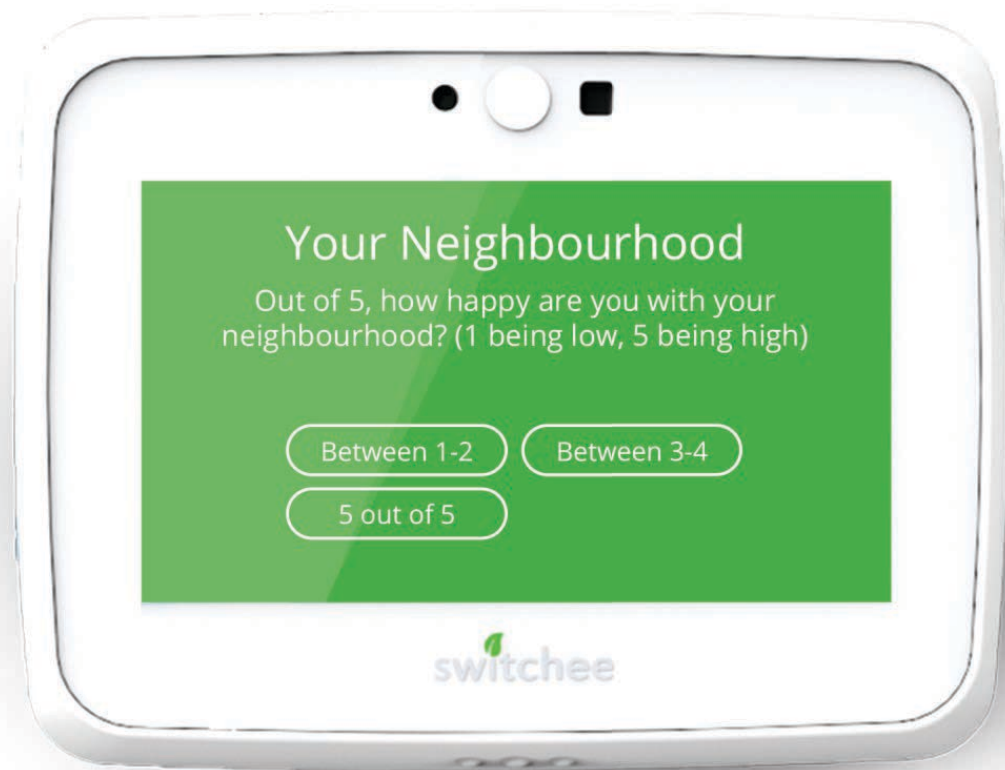
THE CHALLENGE

External factors like the cost of living crisis are not going anywhere soon, meaning housing providers need to ensure their budgets are allocated to those neighbourhoods who need it the most in the most cost effective manner. Many housing providers are also experiencing data blind spots due to a lack of system integrations. Obtaining accurate data in volume is key to having a clear understanding of the majority of residents views and feelings. Internally, staff shortages add increasing pressure on teams to capture, analyse and action data collected in a timely fashion. The rural and spread out locations of homes managed by **Flagship Group** adds to this challenge.

Whilst face-to-face surveys can be insightful and qualitative, they have limitations:

- With 32,000 homes it would take a significant amount of time to conduct face-to-face surveys, manually input responses, and analyse data to gain insights to action
- Difficulties recording data accurately and securely whilst actively listening
- Conducted during the working day so many residents aren't home to participate
- Some residents are not comfortable being candid

Flagship Group took all of the above in to account, recognising the need to diversify their survey collection methods. By reaching out to Switchchee, Flagship have fulfilled this challenge.



THE SOLUTION

As part of **Flagship Group's** Digital Transformation Strategy, Switchchee devices are being installed in an effort to improve resident communications and proactively manage maintenance repairs. Switchchee's secure two-way messaging feature enables **Flagship Group** to communicate directly with residents via their in-home display.

With an average response rate of 90%, replies are routed into Switchchee's dashboard, providing a safe and cost-effective two-way resident communications platform.

Flagship Group, working with Switchchee's Customer Success team, mirrored their face-to-face survey structure and sent residents a digital survey via their Switchchee devices.

THE RESULTS

With a 400% increase in the number responses collected per survey - from an average of 430 to 2,143 in one go - data captured was from a significantly larger portion of residents and so more accurately represented Flagship Homes customer satisfaction levels. 89% of all responses were returned within 24 hours, with 40% of responses within just 1 hour of survey distribution.

This was also coupled with a reduction in survey collection time by 92%, and in team members required from 24 to 1.

The purpose of the survey was to identify neighbourhoods where residents are dissatisfied, and find out why. This enables the Neighbourhood Services team to make targeted improvements in those areas and then track the impact of those changes by repeating the survey to see if the sentiment among residents has improved.

400%

increase in the number
of surveys conducted

92%

reduction in survey response
and collection time

89%

of responses
in 24 hours

An icon consisting of a magnifying glass with a circular handle, positioned over a network of interconnected circles of varying sizes.

BEST PRACTICE OF MOULD TRIAGING

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting social housing providers, Switchchee are supporting social housing landlords in proactively identifying and tackling condensation, damp, and mould in their property portfolio.

WHAT ARE SOCIAL LANDLORDS DOING TO ADDRESS DAMP AND MOULD?

A number of landlords (Flagship Group, Basildon Council, Fairhive, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Riverside Group, Sovereign, Places For People etc) are using Switchchee to proactively assess the damp and mould risk levels in their properties. Switchchee is a data analytics company which built a smart thermostat developed for social housing with, among others, built-in temperature and humidity sensors giving real-time actionable insights into property performance.

Switchchee's personalised dashboard empowers social landlords to proactively identify properties at risk of condensation, damp or mould, with real-time data collected by a smart thermostat installed in residents' homes. The data also helps understand the cause of the problem, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of post-visit interventions.

CAN SOCIAL LANDLORDS MONITOR DAMP & MOULD ISSUES?

Yes. There are a variety of systems available that provide remote monitoring of internal environmental conditions – relative humidity, temperature, and CO2 levels (a good indicator of ventilation efficacy). Some extractor fans and ventilation systems have such sensors built-in.

One such example is Switchchee. With the sensor data built into their smart thermostat, Switchchee are able to proactively predict the likelihood of condensation and mould growth developing in a property. This avoids the reliance on residents reporting the issues.

Landlords can proactively triage the severity of the issues with the residents using Switchchee's communication capability, which achieves an 89% response rate on average.

CDM TRIAGING EXAMPLE

Of the properties flagged by Switchchee as high risk, on average over half (55%) already have visible mould, of which 20% are classed as severe.



Fig 1.1 Mould risk survey



Fig 1.2 Mould risk survey

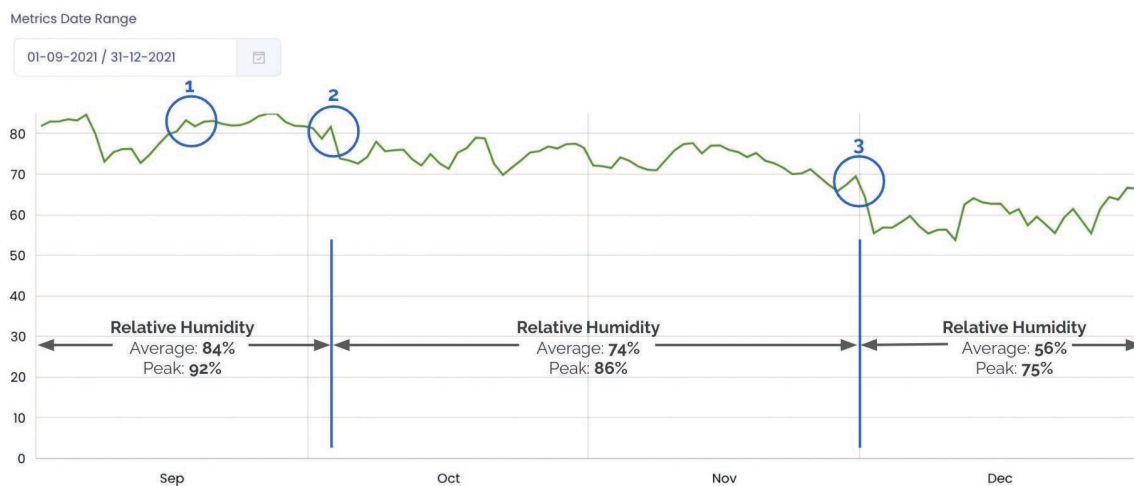
Surveyors can be informed of problems early – before both the cost of repair and the potential health impact on residents increase dramatically.

Here are photos from one of the cases they went to see:



The sensor data is crucial for record keeping. It helps to monitor the impact of any interventions carried out following the surveyor visits, ensuring their effectiveness and avoiding the recurrence of the problem.

Here is the average humidity in the above property over a four month period, with the interventions annotated on the graph.



INTERVENTIONS:

1. 20th September

First visit uncovered a tumble dryer in an open larder cupboard being vented into a box. Advice given to tenant on ventilating the property and reducing moisture productions.

2. 4th October

Discussed best heating practices and recommended damp-prevention measures. This resulted in the average relative humidity in the property reducing from 84% to 74%.

3. 1st December

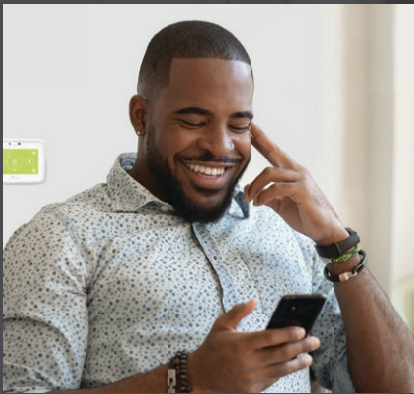
Positive input ventilation system installed, which resulted in a further reduction in relative humidity to 56%.



THE FUTURE

Due to the outstanding, business-wide benefits and success of installing Switchee devices in residents homes, Flagship are continuing their digitisation with Switchee as a core component.

The success of the resident communications offering of the Switchee devices means Flagship homes now plan to roll out these surveys periodically.



SWITCHCHEE FOR YOU

Discover how Switchchee can support your business needs.

Contact sales@switchchee.co to get in touch with our team of experts.

switchchee.com