



## Housing Association realises immediate benefits and savings following damp and timber training from PCA

*“The PCA training offering stood out as it was clearly laid out how it would meet our specific training needs as a housing association.”*

**Craig Allen, Development and Compliance Manager, South Tyneside Homes**

*“The course was excellent best I’ve been on whilst working for the company. The Trainers’ knowledge was second to none! They really knew their stuff. It was all well-structured with good learning materials/ handout packs etc and good samples of such things like beetle and fungal decay to timber to look at during the training.”*

**Paul Moore, Building Surveyor, South Tyneside Homes**

### South Tyneside Homes

Based in South Shields, South Tyneside Homes manages a portfolio of some 17,500 properties on behalf of local councils. As well as managing existing housing stock through a comprehensive repairs, maintenance and management process, the Housing Association is also beginning to venture into house building to help meet the increasing demands for housing.

Customer care is a high priority for the organisation. They have dedicated teams (including the Empty Homes Management Team, Responsive Repair Inspection Team and the New Build and Major Works Team) who are responsible for maintaining properties and ensuring a quality service is provided to tenants.

**Surveyors from across these teams recently undertook professional training with the Property Care Association (PCA) to help develop their knowledge and understanding when dealing with problems caused by condensation and damp.**

### Training that matched the organisations needs

Craig Allen, Development & Compliance Manager at South Tyneside Homes undertook research to find a suitable training option for the organisation’s surveyors. He was struggling to find suitable training until he became aware of the in-house training options from PCA.

Craig explained: *“The PCA training offering stood out as it was clearly laid out how it would meet our specific training needs as a housing association. When allocating training budget we are acutely aware of the need to do so in a way that will deliver a return on that investment, especially when budgets are tight. Following the PCA training, we have seen the benefits straight away.”*

### Effective and informed communication with tenants

Individuals who attended the training, and who also undertook the associated qualification, are now more confident when evaluating properties and talking to tenants. Surveyors are now able to talk about issues involving condensation and damp more confidently and with more conviction with tenants. Messages are communicated more effectively which helps facilitate the management of issues and helps prevent further problems arising.

## Hours of surveying time saved

Using insights from the training changes have been made to information and advice conveyed to tenants via the repair diagnosis telephone service. This has helped to reduce the number of physical surveyor visits required to properties.

Craig explained: *“At a time when rents are being reduced but costs are rising, it is increasingly important to make savings in areas like the repair and maintenance budget. These changes alone have contributed towards an estimated saving of around £30k a year.”*

## Increased confidence when dealing with specialist contractors

When dealing with specialist contractors for damp related works, surveyors are now able to discuss recommended works with a greater understanding and confidence. Craig said: *“Our surveyors are no longer going into discussions about work specifications uninformed. They can now confidently ask questions and challenge on any aspects where they feel necessary to ensure appropriate work packages are commissioned.”*

## In-house delivery option saved on travel & accommodation costs

*“The option to have the training delivered in-house in South Tyneside helped us save money on travel and accommodation. This was not the deciding factor for choosing the PCA training, but it was definitely an additional benefit for us,”* explained Craig.

Given the benefits from having fully trained surveyors in their teams, South Tyneside Homes are looking to potentially enrol other members of staff in training as they are so impressed by the benefits realised so far.

Craig said: *“The PCA team were very helpful, and incredibly patient, in helping to put together a training package that suited our surveyors needs perfectly. We are now exploring training options for our Housing Officers to help raise their awareness and understanding of damp and condensation issues. They see properties on a regular basis and have an important role to play in the maintenance of the fabric of buildings and managing failures through identifying potential problem areas.”*

**“ I would recommend PCA training hands down. It is a great way to invest your training budget and invest in your staff to help with staff retention.**

**Many of our surveyors have stated that is the best training they’ve ever done and that they’ve been able to realise the benefits in the workplace straight away. ”**

*- Craig Allen, Development and Compliance Manager, South Tyneside Homes (March 2018)*

## Case Study Facts & Figures

### Training undertaken:

- ◆ Surveying Timber & Dampness in Buildings (3 day training)
- ◆ Examination preparation (2 days)
- ◆ Examinations: Certificated Surveyor of Timber & Dampness in Buildings (CSTDB)

### Venue:

- ◆ All delivered at a location chosen by South Tyneside Homes

### Timescale:

- ◆ Delivery schedule developed to suit South Tyneside Homes

### Numbers trained:

- ◆ 12 surveyors trained
- ◆ 11 sat CSTDB examinations

## Find out more :

Training and resources for Housing Association professionals  
[www.property-care.org/professionals/training-housing-association/](http://www.property-care.org/professionals/training-housing-association/)

Talk to Jade Stocker, Sr Training Administrator: Tel. 01480 400720 E-mail: [Jade@property-care.org](mailto:Jade@property-care.org)