

## **WATER & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE E-BULLETIN**

### **\*Special issue on water use in social housing\***

Waterwise in collaboration with Kathryn Rathouse Social Research, June 24, 2009

We are excited to announce that Waterwise, in partnership with Kathryn Rathouse Social Research and Global Action Plan, have been successful in securing funding from **Defra's Greener Living Fund** to roll-out a programme of water efficiency retrofits and engagement activities in three regions of England, working with Sutton and East Surrey Water and Raven Housing Trust in Redhill and Merstham, Severn Trent Water and Whitefriars Housing Group in Coventry, and (though this is still to be confirmed) with South West Water and Devon and Cornwall Housing Association in the South West. For more information, please visit <http://www.greenerlivingfund.org.uk/projects/share-project/>.

**Thanks very much** to everyone who responded to our request in the April e-Bulletin for information on initiatives and research concerned with reducing water use in social housing. No doubt the acceptance of our application to the Greener Living Fund was in part due to the evidence we presented. Here is a brief summary of responses we received:

### **Trials/initiatives**

(1) **Wessex Water** undertook a water efficiency trial in 2008-2009 conjunction with **Somer Community Housing Trust**, the **Environment Agency**, and **Resource Futures** in 2008/09. The trial involved assessing the uptake, effectiveness and costs of different water efficiency interventions in 24 blocks of social housing flats in Bath. The blocks were split into four groups: device installation, engagement visits, device and engagement, and control (no interventions). Take up of the retrofits was recorded, water use in each block was monitored before and after the interventions, and residents took part in a survey. For further details, contact [water.resources@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:water.resources@wessexwater.co.uk).

(2) Claire Lipop recently spoke at the Waterwise conference about the **Preston Water Efficiency Initiative**. The project was initiated and coordinated by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council with funding from the Government's New Growth Points Programme, and was delivered in partnership with Raven Housing Trust, Sutton and East Surrey Water, the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council and Waterwise. The initiative involved water efficiency retrofits in 205 homes, bathroom refurbishments in 206 homes, rainwater harvesting for a block of 12 flats, as well as work with a local school and leisure centre. In properties with the retrofit water savings of 14% were measured, while in properties with refurbishment water savings of 23-28% were measured. Tenant feedback about water efficient fittings and devices was also collected. A report on the initiative is available here <http://www.waterwise.org.uk/images/site/Research/preston%20water%20efficiency%20initiative%20-%20final%20report%20-%20march%202009%20-%20waterwise%20with%20partners.pdf>.

(3) **Devon and Cornwall Housing Association** was funded by Defra's Environmental Action Fund from 2005-2008 to work with residents on several estates as well as sheltered housing and foyers, on a range of environmental issues including water use. For further information go to <http://www.dcha.co.uk/sustain/>; details are available from Rose Hunter at DCHA ([Rose.Hunter@dcha.co.uk](mailto:Rose.Hunter@dcha.co.uk)).

(4) **London Sustainability Exchange** is working in partnership with **L&Q Group** and **Thames Water** to "encourage and support L&Q residents to take up greener lifestyles through peer to peer activities". They are training London and Quadrant residents as Green Champions who will give their neighbours tips on saving water as well as saving energy and cutting waste. Further details are available here: [http://www.lsx.org.uk/whatwedo/smallstepstoagreenerlifes\\_page3224.aspx](http://www.lsx.org.uk/whatwedo/smallstepstoagreenerlifes_page3224.aspx).

### **Research**

(1) The **Broadclose** housing development near Bude in Cornwall is a new-build project involving **Guinness Trust, North Cornwall District Council, Westcountry Housing Association** and **Midas Homes Ltd**. Broadclose contains 173 homes divided across 13 'home zones', each of which has a communal rain water harvesting system, collecting runoff from south facing roofs, which is used for WC flushing. Water consumption in eight properties will be monitored and user perception surveys will be conducted across the entire development. For further details, contact Sarah Ward at University of Exeter [sw278@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:sw278@exeter.ac.uk).

(2) **Essex and Suffolk Water** commissioned some research in 2006 into social housing residents' perceptions of water efficient technology and personal water use at Heybridge. The report was written by Cathy Knamiller, Will Medd, Christine Sefton and Liz Sharp. Contact Claire at Essex and Suffolk Water for more details: [clare.ridgewell@eswater.co.uk](mailto:clare.ridgewell@eswater.co.uk).

(3) **Christine Sefton's** PhD thesis was a case study on SUDS on a housing estate in Sheffield. Contact Christine ([c.sefton@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:c.sefton@bradford.ac.uk)) for further details.

(4) **Waterwise** has carried out a stock take survey of social housing providers in the Greater London Area. A key outcome was that an estimated 70% of social housing stock have baths but not showers. Using past examples of social housing retrofits combined with planned visits under Decent Homes, the report estimated the water, energy and carbon impacts of installing showers. Contact Gareth Walker at Waterwise for more information: [gwalker@waterwise.org.uk](mailto:gwalker@waterwise.org.uk).

### **Context**

2006 English House Condition Survey suggests that the social housing sector, particularly local authority homes, are much less water efficient than owner occupied homes. About two thirds of local authority homes have WCs with 9-litre flush or above, compared to about one third of owner occupied homes. Source: CLG, November 2008, Housing Surveys Bulletin, Issue Number 3. See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/housingsurveysbulletin3.pdf>.

Please email Joanne at [jzygmunt@waterwise.org.uk](mailto:jzygmunt@waterwise.org.uk) or Kathryn at [Kathryn@krsrc.co.uk](mailto:Kathryn@krsrc.co.uk) to include items in the next issue of the e-Bulletin or to un/subscribe. Past issues are at [http://www.waterwise.org.uk/reducing\\_water\\_wastage\\_in\\_the\\_uk/research/water\\_and\\_behaviour\\_change\\_bulletin.html](http://www.waterwise.org.uk/reducing_water_wastage_in_the_uk/research/water_and_behaviour_change_bulletin.html).

The purpose of this e-Bulletin is to share research and other activities related to water and behavioural change. We hope that the e-Bulletin will be interactive; we ask that subscribers email us with news, announcements, events, requests for information, opportunities for collaboration and other information, which will include in future W&BC e-Bulletins. We release about two e-Bulletins per month.

Best wishes,  
Joanne and Kathryn