



Tackling fuel poverty and improving housing stock

The Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) is a not-for-profit housing association that manages over 2,200 rentable properties across the Outer Hebrides.

With a housing stock that is predominantly semi-detached houses and bungalows, 1,850 of which are off-gas, finding a reliable, renewable, low carbon alternative to solid fuel and old storage heating systems was vital.

HHP has been researching heat pumps for several years now and has now installed over 250 Ecodan systems.



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Heating

Case Study Hebridean Housing Partnership

Making a
World of
Difference



HHP has been impressed with both the Ecodan system and the support offered by Mitsubishi Electric.

The Housing partnership manages over 2,200 properties across the Outer Hebrides and 1,850 of these are off-gas. Finding a reliable, renewable, low carbon alternative to solid fuel is vital.



Fuel poverty is a real issue in the Outer Hebrides and this is driving the demand to replace heating systems. The association also needs to look after its properties, yet with previous heating systems such as solid fuel, tenants were sporadic in how they heated their homes and this often led to condensation problems within the building fabric.

In addition, HHP is seeing a rise in the average age of tenants so specifying a heating system that is easy to operate and understand, helps engage tenants and secure their on-going support.

Legislative drivers are another important factor and with a duty to meet Social Housing standards and energy efficiency targets, the HHP board took a decision to use renewable energy heating systems in all future replacements and upgrades.

Peter O'Donnell leads the team responsible for the refurbishment and maintenance programme and has specified Ecodan for the past three years.

The team, have found that the inverter-driven heat pumps are amongst the most efficient available and can provide hot water and heating without having to constantly rely on a back-up immersion heater.

“We are strong believers in heat pumps as they provide low cost continuous heat, benefiting both our tenants and our houses,” he explains.

“They also help us meet our requirements for Scottish Housing Quality standard and future efficiency targets.”

“Experience shows that call outs are fewer and Mitsubishi Electric has an excellent back up team in place if there ever are any issues,” says O'Donnell.



Telephone: 01707 278666
email: heating@meuk.mee.com
web: www.livingenvironmentalsystems.mitsubishielectric.co.uk

UNITED KINGDOM Mitsubishi Electric Europe Living Environmental Systems Division
Travellers Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 8XB, England General Enquiries Telephone: 01707 282880
IRELAND Mitsubishi Electric Europe Westgate Business Park, Ballymount, Dublin 24, Ireland
Telephone: Dublin (01) 419 8800 Fax: Dublin (01) 419 8890 International code: (003531)

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PLPZ-SW140V-A, PLPZ-SW15V-A, PLPZ-SW120V-A,
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Heating



Tenants swapping from solid fuel have seen their heating bills halve and have enjoyed much more reliable and controllable heating, whatever the weather.

Ecodan provides heat 24/7 thereby ensuring that there are no condensation issues within HHP properties.



Case Study

Hebridean Housing Partnership

Making a World of Difference

Around 82% of the UK has gas central heating. In the Outer Hebrides, 82% of HHP homes have no access to gas.

Over the years, HHP has installed several renewable technologies including eight ground source heat pumps when funding was attractive. All the renewable systems are installed alongside cavity and wall insulation and where properties have been previously double glazed.

Exhaust air heat pumps have also been used for a few new-build situations but in the main, HHP has decided to fit Ecodan air source heat pumps and over 250 have now been installed. All of HHP's framework contractors are MCS approved installers.

"There are several reasons why we like Ecodan," explains O'Donnell. "Not only are they amongst the most efficient on the market and offer straightforward controls that are easy for our tenants to understand, we also get excellent support and back up from Mitsubishi Electric."

HHP works to a four-year heating programme and has been successful with DECC RHI funding to help with installing air source heat pumps such as Ecodan.

HHP continually communicates with its tenants to help explain how to get the best out of renewable heating, although as O'Donnell explains, word of mouth is a highly effective way of selling the system to tenants.

"It isn't difficult to engage tenants, especially when the running costs speak for themselves."

"We service the pumps each year and can work out the annual running costs to feedback to current and future users," he says.



Telephone: 01707 278666
email: heating@meuk.mee.com
web: www.livingenvironmentalsystems.mitsubishielectric.co.uk

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Hebridean Housing Partnership

A not-for-profit housing association with headquarters on Stornoway

Managing over 2,200 rentable properties across the Outer Hebrides.

Properties are predominantly bungalows and semi-detached houses.

1,850 properties are off-gas, relying on a mix of solid fuel and storage heaters.

HHP has now installed over 250 Ecodan systems.



Hebridean Housing Partnership
Creed Court,
Glenn Seileach Business Park,
Willowglen Road,
Stornoway. HS1 2QP
Tel: 0300 123 0773
Web: www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk

“We also put out a tenant satisfaction questionnaire and any issues that arise are dealt with immediately to secure tenant satisfaction,” says O’Donnell.

HHP’s servicing regime takes regular meter readings and any high readings can be immediately spotted and dealt with.

The servicing team usually find that these are generally down to the way tenant’s use the system but with proper engagement, these situations can be used to help educate tenants on how to get the best out of their heating in the most cost effective way.

“We’ve had very few complaints about running costs and houses where we’ve installed heat pumps have seen real improvements with condensation,” explains O’Donnell.

“At the same time, we have seen a huge reduction in emissions compared with solid fuel and running costs for our tenants are often halved compared with coal.”

Planning can be an issue with noise a major factor but as the Ecodan has been awarded the ‘Quiet Mark’ of approval from the Noise Abatement Society, O’Donnell has been able to show planners that this is no longer the case.

That’s why he always advises on maintaining close contact and co-operation with local authority planning officers at all times.

“Once we had been able to demonstrate how heat pumps offered consistent improvements in tackling both fuel poverty and emissions, it became easier to gain acceptance from both planning departments and tenants,” he ends.



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