



Is PVC-U for you?

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Social landlords need to be more cash conscious than ever before and ensure their money is being invested on long-term solutions.

The UK's affordable house building targets, changes and caps to revenues and benefits, as well as the one per cent yearly rent reduction, are putting pressure on spending.

What's more, uncertainty around Brexit, means that the cost of certain building materials in the supply chain may rise.

As a result, asset managers in housing associations have increasingly challenging criteria to meet when specifying building materials for use in new-build social housing projects and small or large-scale refurbishment drives.

This criteria is complex: there are factors that come into play which are unique to each housing association depending on their individual needs, such as cost, performance and aesthetics.

Investing in state-of-the-art PVC-U windows and doors presents an opportunity for housing managers to future-proof their stock, recoup the whole life cost and contribute towards improving living conditions for tenants.

Why PVC-U?

In the 1980s and 90s PVC-U windows and doors didn't always have the best reputation in terms of quality and durability, when compared with aluminium or timber alternatives.

However, over the last 10 years many significant advancements have been made in PVC-U manufacturing and fabrication, which means that it is a cost effective, highly engineered building material which presents social landlords with significant cost and time-saving benefits.

It is a misconception to think that PVC-U is of a lower quality than timber and aluminium. PVC-U possesses superior thermal, weather, and acoustic performance and stands up on aesthetic and cost factors also.



Taking a fabric first approach to energy efficiency can help social landlords and their tenants to make notable long-term savings and a return on investment.

PVC-U windows and doors have insulation properties, which provide excellent thermal performance. For example, a U-value as low as 0.8, as well as Window Energy Ratings up to A++, can be achieved when PVC-U windows are coupled with energy efficient glazing options.

The foiling technology at our disposal now means that PVC-U windows and doors can be fabricated in an extensive range of colours, meaning the visual appearance of the products fit neighbouring property schemes to create cohesive communities.

Design advancements, such as flush casements, make it possible to achieve cleaner, more modern-looking lines, while providing functionality that meets tenants' lifestyles. For example, a flush tilt-turn window is easier for tenants to clean and maintain.

What's more, as security is often a major concern for a social landlords, PVC-U windows and doors can be manufactured to Secured by Design standard for added assurance.

Given that PVC-U windows and doors are the most cost effective option and can be configured to the highest thermal and design specification, they make both functional and aesthetic sense in this regard.

Future-proofing

When specifying products for use in a social housing new build or refurbishment project, social landlords should be looking for ways to future-proof their stock, alongside meeting environment, health and safety and security regulations.

Considering the whole-life value of a material such as PVC-U will help to address unpredictable change in an uncertain economic climate.

As social housing budgets tighten, it is vital to do whatever possible to reduce ongoing repairs and maintenance schedules - one of the sector's costliest outlays.

PVC-U windows and doors can be manufactured to meet even the most rigorous specifications, and these durable designs can last for 35 years - the BRE life cycle - if properly maintained.

By achieving the lowest U-values and preventing heat from escaping properties, the use of PVC-U helps to alleviate any mould or damp problems caused by condensation, which are costly to repair and can ultimately result in tenants' ill health.

In short, future-proofing is about selecting products that fulfil current technical and aesthetic demands, while navigating any new requirements that might feasibly arise.

The right partners

It's imperative for social landlords to work closely with suppliers at the specification stage in order to meet their exacting business requirements - including financial pressures and sustainability goals.

Profile 22 has a free design and specification service including building information modelling (BIM) objects. This ensures social housing clients window and door projects will comply with building regulations or match the look and feel of a surrounding scheme before financial commitments are made.

Forging close partnerships between the manufacturing supply chain and customers will help guarantee that the right products are being specified in social housing.

Supply chain networks, such as the Profile 22 Approved Window Contractor scheme, can give reassurance that a contractor has the necessary accreditations and experience in social housing, and understands complex contract obligations.



Local authorities should be able to rest assured that a manufacturer, fabricator or installer possesses guaranteed public sector experience, benefits from professional training and receives the full support of a wider specification team throughout a new-build or refurbishment project.

This emphasis on building close relationships with the social housing sector was at the heart of Profile 22's refurbishment work for Merseyside-based, not-for-profit social housing provider, One Vision Housing.

As part of an energy efficiency drive, the landlord aimed to reduce carbon emissions and the effects of fuel poverty on 96 units in eight blocks that comprise Hornby Flats in Litherland, Liverpool.

Triple-glazed PVC-U windows and doors were manufactured using the Profile 22 70mm system by Walsall-based Profile22 Approved Window Contractor Select Windows, a member of the network with extensive experience in social housing.

Profile 22 worked closely with Select Windows and One Vision Housing, facilitating the entire process from design and specification, through to manufacturing and installation.

As such, the project was completed on time and in budget and One Vision Housing was able to future-proof against the years ahead, while improving the quality of living for tenants.



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