

# Testimonials

## Neil MacKrell, Head of Construction for HBVillages



HB Villages Construct apartments for occupation by individuals with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and behaviours that challenge. Whilst these three groups present distinct and individual difficulties we do in fact house all in the same location. The apartments are specified to cope with the particular group's needs. For example our physical disability units are sized to incorporate relevant turning circles in all rooms, adjustable height kitchen units and bespoke communications systems. Behaviours that challenge require robust finishes etc...

DiscreteHeat and the ThermaSkirt product came to our attention as a solution to our facilities with behaviours that challenge. We cannot install underfloor heating in our apartments for a number of reasons as follows.

1. Responsiveness. The individuals require a system that they can feel working. Typically underfloor heating takes too long to react and this can cause distress.
2. Accidents happen. We are constructing homes rather than medical facilities. Accidents can occur and the underfloor heating over time can cause unpleasant smells.
3. Maintenance. Our tenant team were worried about maintenance should something untoward happen. Given the difficulties working around our potential residents we needed a system that is simple to maintain.

Following a full review of the system we realised, that the ThermaSkirt product would be a simple install with minimal change to the existing Construction works and heating specification. The original design utilised standard wet radiator panels with LST covers, therefore a simple exercise of omit panels and insert ThermaSkirt.

The feedback from the operations team and the residents is that it is a very good system. The location of the heating being in the perimeters of the rooms means that an even temperature is reached very quickly and as the system is in effect a conventional wet system it is simple to understand, use and control.

The added advantage to the wheelchair or walking aid user is space. We allow for a 1500 diameter turning circle in strategic places within the apartments design. Installing an LST radiator compromises the space and we are either forced to construct larger units (not economical) or compromise on the turning circle positions (not acceptable). With the heating at skirting height this problem is instantly resolved.

Finally in terms of design we construct apartments that can be adapted internally. This may mean moving walls or doors fairly late in the construction process. Again the simple nature of the system means that this can be accommodated with minimal fuss and little change to the general mechanical installation.

Currently we have the product installed in two different developments, but we are confident in the product and as such we will be specifying across the portfolio The first installation has been handed over in March 2014 and the second in July 2014, in both projects there was minimal snagging and I understand that the system has not had any issues in operation. Currently this is some 30+ projects (500 apartments) over the next 12 months.

I have not mentioned the cleaning of the system as again we are not involved with the operation of the facilities or the maintenance of systems, but I understand from the care staff that there are two main advantages over panel systems. We have a vinyl floor system (to cope with spills and other accidents) and the care staff can clean the ThermaSkirt at the same time as the floor. Because the ThermaSkirt seals to the walls and the floor it means that there is little risk with collected dust. This in turn means a maintenance operation removed (removing LST covers and cleaning dust) and much less risk of harbouring bacteria in a warm atmosphere.

As I say we will be using ThermaSkirt on the roll out of our latest projects.

Lifeways is one of the UK's leading providers of support services for people with diverse and often complex needs in community settings. Our life changing approach is driven by personal progress. By enabling people to be active and happy in their communities we transform lives, one person at a time.

We currently have a New Build Development Programme which will realise 1400+ supported living apartments between now and August 2018. All are designed to a high specification, are located in the heart of the community, assist people with a range of needs to live independently and safely, fully supported by a dedicated, 24/7, on-site staff presence. The accommodation is purpose-built, contemporary and accessible. From the overall building design, to the design and layout of each individual home, the needs and requirements of the people we support drive each development.

This includes working in partnership with registered housing providers and developers, a development can be generic to accommodate different support needs in one building including profound, high complex support needs, whilst another can be specifically designed around a group of people, for example people requiring support for an acquired brain injury or autism. The additional needs required within a person's living environment can range from widened doors, customised wet rooms/bathrooms and low level kitchen facilities to specialist lighting for people with autism. The design and layout of each development uses the latest in available functional technology, which "designs out" problems and issues and "designs in" functionality and practical solutions.

As a development team it is important to us to have innovative solutions. After being stuck for many years with traditional care sector heating methods (Low Surface Temperature Radiators and under floor heating). Through our partners we were introduced to ThermaSkirt. An energy efficient heating system with is discrete as it sits behind the skirting board in a room. You can't see it so for us as a care provider it has added advantages - so what have they been?

1. More floor space to place furniture - no more radiators hugging the back of beds or sofas.
2. Less clutter, especially important when working with people with some presentation of Autism or Challenging Needs.
3. Easier to keep clean.
4. Cost comparable to traditional heating methods with easy installation by any of our development partner contractors.
5. Less complex than underfloor in that in a 2-3 story apartment complex you do not have to install a blended or mixed system.

I have been developing care facilities on a National Level for 15 years once and a while a new innovation comes to the build market which really makes a difference. ThermaSkirt is one. I would not hesitate in recommending this heating method throughout the care sector and can see the benefits of its application in Health and Social Care.