

# Omfax News

## Interesting times

All sorts of new things have been going on. We are keen to let you know about them and this newsletter gives you the opportunity to catch up with us. Once again we are giving you both Omfax news and Keyfax news.

Those of our clients who were able to get to our conference in May will be aware that Keyfax Inter•View, is now up and running. Several of our clients, and any new clients coming on board, are getting this genuinely 'intelligent' software installed. Likewise, a new Case Management System that integrates with Keyfax is also fully developed and making the whole process of handling 'cases' efficient, well documented and easy to monitor. So far it is being used for complaints, money advice and nuisance.



The Omfax 'handbook' division continues to expand its 'portfolio' launching a Welcome DVD for tenants that makes it easier for them to understand the basics of their tenancy and what role you play in providing services and advice.

Finally, we hope you will be excited to read about our new e-training course. Effective Repairs Reporting is now available allowing your staff to learn in their own time about parts of the house and how it works, how to decide whether the householder or the landlord is responsible for a repair and what to consider when deciding how quickly you need to respond.

Please, read on and find out about all these new developments in the following pages.

### Prefer an electronic newsletter?

We send out a newsheet twice a year and occasionally short bulletins featuring interesting case studies of how our clients are using our products.

We don't want to fill your inbox with yet more e-mails but if you would prefer to get these newsheets and bulletins in electronic form rather than sent through the post, let us know. Please e-mail [gail@omfax.co.uk](mailto:gail@omfax.co.uk) or phone 01869 242967.



## News at a glance

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### Keyfax

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## Repairs Training on line

Do your staff really know what they are talking about when they talk to tenants about repairs? Do they understand how a house works and what they should be asking tenants to check? Do they know how quickly they should be responding to different repair problems, and what is likely to be damage by the tenant rather than 'fair wear and tear'?

If they just 'pick it up' and muddle through, is this right? More importantly, is it fair on your customers that you have staff of different levels of competence dealing with this important aspect of your service? Consistency in level of service you provide; what you expect tenants to do, and how quickly you respond, needs to be the core of your customer service.

Omfax has the solution. We are launching a Repairs E-training course which we have been building in consultation with Orbit Housing Association.

Even if you have a repairs system, such as Keyfax, that leads staff through a repairs diagnostic process, there is still a need for each individual to get some wider repairs training.

*We felt there was a need to give our new Customer Service Centre Advisers some basic training on the different elements of a building and common faults. Although the Keyfax scripts and diagrams are very useful at guiding them, we find that they acquire building knowledge haphazardly as they handle repair calls. It would be far better to provide them with a structured training package so they all learnt the same information to the same level.*

*The beauty of the e-learning system we are working on with Omfax is that Advisers can learn at their own pace, with or without the support of a trainer, and it can be used easily for both new and existing staff without having to organise traditional training sessions.*

*Daphne Arnold, Maintenance Support Manager, Orbit Housing Customer Service Centre.*

Equivalent of a 3-4 day traditional classroom course, your staff will be able to work through the various modules of the course at their own pace, testing themselves as they go along.

The Omfax Repairs E-training course gives you the realistic opportunity to have all your staff trained to the same level.

*We will have close to 60 Customer Service Officers by the end of this year, all phone based. We would like to have all of them meet recognised standards for repairs call handling. Your offering has savings in costs and time and allows much more flexibility in completion. We could build it into initial training of new starters and bring any existing staff through the same process. The only constraint would be the amount of budget available each year for existing staff. We would do all new starters anyway and build the cost into total recruitment costs.*

*Mike Kemp, Head of Customer Service Centre, Sanctuary Group*

The course is very practical but not too technical. It has lots of explanatory diagrams and self test exercises so staff are given a good grounding in how the water, drainage, heating and electrical systems work, and are able to name with ease the different fittings and fixtures in the home. It also covers typical problems, typical damage, who is responsible for which types of repairs, and how quickly to respond bearing in mind health and safety issues.

Buying into this training means you can programme staff learning time to suit your workloads and, through the Omfax Learning Management System, monitor the progress of each person and you can encourage and support them as they progress. When they are ready, you can arrange for them to take the formal test for the module they have been studying. The testing system will be strict. We want it to have integrity and to set a standard of achievement - so there is a minimum pass rate and we will issue a certificate only when they have passed the tests for every module.

We demonstrated a prototype section of this course at our Conference in May and it was greeted with enthusiasm. The first modules are now ready to roll. To see what the course looks like, you can link to [www.omfax.co.uk/repairstraining.aspx](http://www.omfax.co.uk/repairstraining.aspx)

Let us know if you are interested in this course for yourself and we will send you more details.  
[sales@omfax.co.uk](mailto:sales@omfax.co.uk) 01869 242967



# The quick start DVD for tenants

When you get a new appliance: tv, camera, phone or computer, you usually get a 'quick start' guide as well as the full manual. "That's because most providers have come to understand that many of us just need to get up and running. We don't want to read all the technical details until we come across a problem", says Alice Walters.

"We believe that tenants should have the same opportunity with their tenancies. So, we have developed a 'Welcome DVD' - a quick and friendly way of getting across the most essential information you would like tenants to know and understand. Based on a model format and content, the DVD can be adapted for different organisations. This makes it easy to adopt while still fully reflecting your image and ethos."

"What does it cover?" Obviously, essential topics such as how and when to pay rent, what the tenancy agreement is and why it is important to keep to it. But, we can also include general messages about how you provide support and advice, and how you can help tenants get involved in their community and encourage them to participate in decision-making. Added to this, the whole mix of statements and visuals gets across your 'image' and what kind of organisation you are.

"Using the DVD format means you can reach out to many more of your customers and also to members of their households. In particular, it will suit those who struggle with reading or find it difficult to recall everything you explained to them at sign-up. Added to this, it will be a real bonus for people who

have difficulty understanding English; you can offer a language choice and they can read and hear the explanations at their own pace."



"Good idea, but what does it cost?" This depends on how many DVDs you want to produce and whether you want to include foreign languages. However, this is something that will give real value to both you and your customers. So, we have looked carefully into how to make it affordable. Without using expensive filming and footage we can produce a really professional looking DVD, tailored to your organisation and produced within just 4-6 weeks. We believe that we are offering a solution that will allow more organisations to go down this route.

## .....Accord goes first

Our first customer for this DVD is the Accord Group. Their tenants were really enthusiastic about it and were involved in agreeing both the content and the look of it. Accord will shortly be distributing the DVD and their new Residents' Handbook (also developed by Omfax) to all their tenants. Have a look on our website and see what this DVD looks like [www.omfax.co.uk/welcomedvd.aspx](http://www.omfax.co.uk/welcomedvd.aspx)

*Amanda Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive of Ashram Housing Association, who lead the project for the Accord Group, said:*

*Making services as accessible as possible for our diverse communities is crucial, and the DVD and new handbook help to do exactly that. Good, clear communication is really important for the Accord Group. Our residents have been involved throughout this project to ensure the handbook and DVD both work for them.*

If you are interested in developing a similar DVD for your organisation, please get in touch. We will talk you through the process and give you a quotation.

## Affordable Handbooks

Despite the need for our clients to tighten budgets, we are still experiencing a steady flow of orders for new books. This clearly reflects how central many of you consider the role of good explanatory information in working effectively with your customers.

The Omfax development 'package' obviously appeals to many organisations who want to develop something specific to their organisation without having to start from scratch. What we offer means you get your own unique book without having to write it yourself or research formats and so on. You do the consultation with staff and residents, we sweat the text and layout, design the cover, organise the print and can even mailout the book to your customers.

Of course, concentration on value for money has been even more important in recent months, so the expansion of our range off-the-shelf handbooks has proved timely. In particular, our Repairs Reporting Guide is now seen as the best product available of its kind and the ability to buy it off the shelf means you can buy just as many as you need at any time.

### ... and in Welsh

We were very pleased to help North Wales Housing Association produce the Repairs Reporting Guide as a back-to-back Welsh/English edition. We took the opportunity of investing in copies ourselves so, we are now able to offer these off-the-shelf to other Welsh housing organisations.

## Recent new orders for handbooks

- Raglan Housing
- East Durham Homes
- South Derbyshire Housing
- City West Housing Trust
- Grampian Housing Association
- Nacro
- North Wales Housing Association
- North Lincolnshire Homes
- Reading Blue Coats School

## Publications by Omfax include:

### Guides

- Handy hints
- Gadgets guide
- Think safety
- Repairs Reporting Guide

### Handbooks

- Repairs Handbook for tenants
- The Tenancy Handbook
- Leaseholders Handbook
- Sheltered Housing Handbook

To find out more about any of these, go to our website [www.omfax.co.uk/guides.aspx](http://www.omfax.co.uk/guides.aspx) or [www.omfax.co.uk/omfax-Handbooks.aspx](http://www.omfax.co.uk/omfax-Handbooks.aspx)

## Want more information?

Please email [sales@omfax.co.uk](mailto:sales@omfax.co.uk), give us a call on 01869 242967 or visit [www.omfax.co.uk](http://www.omfax.co.uk)

