



The secret is to work smarter, not harder

CDS conference, 23–25 September 2011, Brighton

We know that it can be hard work keeping a housing co-op going, especially when people have so many other demands on their time. You really need to make the best use of the time and energy you put into co-op operations. That's why the theme for this year's CDS training weekend is 'Co-ops Working Smarter Not Harder'.

Over the past year we have completely overhauled the CDS training programme and recruited some highly skilled independent trainers with a vast amount of co-operative experience between them.

But don't just take our word for it – there will be a whole day of taster training sessions at the conference, and a chance to meet the new CDS associates and get an idea of what to expect from the programme.

See pages 3 and 4 for the full programme of taster training sessions and more information about CDS's new associate trainers, who are just the people to help your co-op help itself.

After the success of last year's conference, we are returning to the Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel, which is right on the seafront, and has its own heated indoor pool, sauna and gym.

The weekend kicks off with dinner on the Friday evening, followed by the opening address by CDS's executive director, David Rodgers. There will be plenty of time for networking in the bar area afterwards, with CDS staff and associates on hand to fill you in on the programme.

Saturday night is quiz night, a chance for a bit of fun after all that training. And before you leave after lunch on Sunday, there will be sessions on personal and co-op action planning, to help you make the most effective use of this conference and your own co-op members' time.



Board not bored

Being on the board of CDS Co-operatives is a serious responsibility – but that doesn't mean it is all long boring meetings. Turn to page 5 and our report on the annual visit to client co-ops to find out what put the big smile on board member Lawrence Zollner's face...

Also inside:

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[Your annual report](#)

This newsletter and other documents can be made available in other languages or in large print or audio. Please phone the Help Desk for more information on 03333 21 30 30.

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HELP! It's an emergency. Or is it?



If you've ever had a break-in or a flood in your home, you know that some repairs just won't wait. So if the CDS Help Desk normally handles your repairs, you will be pleased to know it has in place an out-of-hours repairs service for real emergencies too.

But before you ring the emergency number, there are a few things you should know.

First, this service is only for repairs that genuinely cannot wait until the Help Desk opens.

This means *genuine emergencies*:

- A major water leak that you cannot stop by turning off the stopcock.
- Your home has been left not secure by vandalism or a break-in.
- *Total* failure of the communal lighting system (not just the lights outside your door).
- *Total* failure of the communal door entry system (but not if it is just a matter of your handset not working).

At weekends and over bank holidays – but *not overnight Monday to Friday* – we will also attend to:

- A blocked toilet – if it is the only one in the property (if you have another one, please leave the problem for the Help Desk to deal with).
- A blocked main drain.
- A serious roof leak.
- *Total* lack of cold water – but first check with your neighbours, in case it is a general problem for your local water company to deal with.
- *Total* loss of power – but before you call (1) check your fuse and reset the circuit breakers; (2) make sure you still have credit on your key meter if you have one; (3) check that it is not a general power cut, which the electricity company should sort. Do try unplugging your appliances, in case the fault is with one of them.
- *Total* failure of the heating or hot water system (but only from 1 November to 30 April). If the contractor has to order parts, ask them for temporary heaters in the meantime.

Reporting emergency repairs out of hours

Calling the out-of-hours repairs number (**020 7397 5707**) puts you through to a company called

Frontline. They will take the details and if it is a genuine emergency they will try to find someone to do the work.



Don't be tempted to exaggerate the problem. If a contractor comes out and finds the repair could have waited until the next day, you risk being charged for the work.

Do wait in for the contractors. If they can't get in because there is no one at home, it is a waste of time that they could have spent dealing with someone else's emergency. And again, you risk being charged a call-out fee – which could be as much as £100 out of hours.

Reporting other repairs outside office hours

If you have a non-emergency repair to report, you can do so via our website www.cds.coop or email helpdesk@cds.coop. Help us to help you by putting a contact telephone number in your message.

And please, if you lock yourself out or lose your keys, that is *your* responsibility, not ours.



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Co-ops working smarter, not harder

*CDS conference,
23–25 September 2011*

Meet the trainers

The new independent CDS associates have been recruited because of the breadth of their co-operative experience and their knowledge of the social housing sector. The 2011 conference offers a great opportunity to meet them all and find the perfect person to help your co-op through all the issues ahead.

Lockhart Murdoch has been involved in housing for 30 years, working with local authorities, housing associations, housing co-ops and tenant management organisations, covering all aspects of housing management and estate regeneration.

Paul Reeves is the author of *An Introduction to Social Housing*, one of the standard texts on the subject, and the brains behind the session on co-op accounts and financial planning. He has more than 20 years' experience in tenant participation and housing management.

Keith Mann should be familiar to some readers – he spent years at CDS developing training materials and training co-op members, as well as working on the National Tenant Training Programme. He now works for the not-for-profit housing consultancy Priority Estates Project.



Some smart co-operators from Edward Henry House, the first co-op to commission training from CDS's new associates.

Neal Purvis has spent 25 years training, supporting and setting up co-ops, as well as working on regeneration projects; training residents groups, housing association boards, housing and regulator staff; and lecturing.

Book now

The cost for the whole weekend is £410 + VAT, which covers two nights' accommodation, full board and all training sessions. There are also day places available for Saturday 24 September for £165 + VAT.

Act smart, book now.

To find out more, call Maria McCarron on 020 7397 5750 or go to www.cds.coop for a booking form.

Try out the new CDS training programme

During the conference we are offering the following taster training sessions:

Defining a shared vision for our future The benefits of having a clearly defined mission, vision and values.

Supporting member involvement Create the active membership a co-op needs to survive and thrive.

Introducing co-op accreditation How accreditation could benefit your co-op.

How to get the best out of CDS Use CDS services but stay in control.

More overleaf

Conference taster training sessions continued

How good is your co-op? Use the accreditation framework to improve your co-op and its services.

Getting the most out of general meetings Engage all your members in co-op affairs.

How rich is your co-op? Understand the co-op accounts, and the basics behind long-term financial planning.

Commissioning and reviewing the effectiveness of training Find the skills and knowledge your co-op needs for a secure future.

Business as usual at CCH

The Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH) is the national organisation for housing co-ops in England and Wales, so there is generally a good CDS turnout for its annual conference, writes Jane Cameron. And this year was no exception, with tenant members from Senacre, Edward Henry House and Minster among the 70 delegates, as well as CDS staff and board members.

The theme of the conference was 'Business as usual?' – reflecting the need to address the huge changes in UK society over the past 12 months.

Jon Fitzmaurice, who is on the CDS board of management, gave an inspiring keynote speech

Senacre gets tough on crime



Anti-social elements be warned – Senacre housing co-op is no place for you. After a spate of attempted break-ins, the co-op members got together and decided to install monitored security cameras around the estate. As a result, the number of such incidents has been greatly reduced, and the tenants are much less worried about security.

Above, Nurain Abudu, Senacre's co-op support officer, has a stern word with a would-be 'intruder' (who looks remarkably like a certain committee member).

Photograph by Mike the caretaker for Senacre housing co-op – who came back in his own time to catch the 'intruder' in the act!

on making better use of empty homes, and there was a lot of interest in the workshop on the opportunities for building new co-operative homes.

CDS's mutual retirement housing model provided the subject of another workshop, led by Jon Stevens, and other workshops covered good practice and skills issues, CCH accreditation (no surprise to see that on the agenda) and the Greener Living programme.

'The whole conference was really good,' said Jo-ann Arrowsmith, one of the delegates who came from Minster co-op. 'The venue was great and the food was lovely, it was really interesting to see how different co-ops are run in different ways – it's a great way to learn.'

To find out more about the benefits of joining CCH, contact Jane Cameron on 020 7397 5711 or jane.cameron@cds.coop, or check out www.cch.coop.

Rain or shine, we're on the case

Every summer, members of the CDS board of management and representatives of the Resident Quality Services Committee (RQSC) tour some of our client co-ops, to meet their committees and get a sense of how they do things there, writes Maria McCarron, CDS housing services manager.

This year south London was the focus of our annual estates visit, so one spectacularly rainy Saturday in July, 13 of us, including the tenant auditor, set off for **Edward Henry House** in SE1.

Here treasurer Vivienne Legg, backed up by committee member Ellen Mockler, gave us a guided tour of the estate, which has 69 properties, mostly flats. Two of the residents were kind enough to open up their homes to us, giving us a chance to see how different the properties can be. The co-op has a guest room, and its own community hall, which came in very handy when the rain started pouring down. CDS provides financial services and co-operative support to the co-op, who carry



Above: Vivienne Legg, centre, and Ellen Mockler, far right, show the visitors round the Edward Henry House estate.

Right: Natalie Wan of New Cut.

Below: Dragana Roice with board member Steve Smith at Mulberry.

All photographs by Bob Kauders



out a majority of management functions themselves. The estate looked really well maintained, and they are clearly a well governed and managed co-op.

Next stop was **New Cut** in Waterloo, where again CDS provides financial services and co-operative support. Here we were warmly welcomed by Rosa Wright and members of the committee. Most of the residents are either single people or couples, and many of the 30 properties are shared, so it was interesting to see around one of

the estate's seven 'cluster units', a spacious four-bedroom shared property. New Cut has its own community hall too, where we talked to the committee over lunch. It was really encouraging to see such a mix of age groups on the committee.

Then it was on to nearby **Mulberry**, where we met Simon Roice, who was elected as co-op chair this summer – only a year after he and his wife, Dragana, moved into the estate – and the

Continued overleaf

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treasurer, Anaclet Dukuze. The estate is built around a garden square, with its own play area, in the Coin Street community development (there are three other housing co-ops there). Most of the 56 homes here are for families, and many have their own gardens, but they are in urgent need of new bathrooms and kitchens.

The surveyors discussing the specs for Mulberry's new kitchens have probably not been imagining anything like the refurbished 'eco-kitchens' in **Sanford** at New Cross, the last estate we visited and probably the most unusual of all CDS's client co-ops.

Because Sanford is a co-op for single people only, most of them live in shared properties. Some of the communal kitchens have amazing mosaic floors created by their residents. This is a co-op with a real DIY mentality and a determination to live sustainably. Jim Noble, the chair, showed us how they managed to reduce



Above: CDS board member and gardening columnist Lawrence Zollner marvels at Sanford's communal gardens. Behind him is Eric Kissi, one of the RQSC members, and the walls of the co-op bike shed, made out of railway sleepers. Photograph by Bob Kauders

their carbon emissions by 60%, with solar-powered hot water and biomass heating. They have built themselves a bike shed using old railway sleepers, with a stage

above it for concerts and film shows, and they even have an outside pizza oven. It just goes to show what you can achieve with co-operative spirit.



'Yours to share'

The full report on Co-operatives Fortnight will not be available until the end of the summer, but we can tell you that it created a great social media buzz, with more than 220,000 people talking about co-operation on Twitter, Facebook and other sites.

More than 200 co-ops across the country ran events, including New Cut housing co-op, left, where they took the theme 'Yours to Share' as a perfect excuse for a barbecue. That's committee members Ken and Eilene Hamilton supervising the sausages, left. 'It was a great day,' says New Cut chair Rosa Wright. 'Especially as people from Mulberry joined us. It gave us an opportunity to network with our neighbours!'



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CDS people

Sharon Baxter

Resident Quality Services
Committee member



Sharon Baxter and her husband, Graham, could hardly believe their luck when they joined Whitworth housing co-op – ‘It was so lovely, moving into a brand new house,’ she says, after they had been living on the 10th floor of a tower block, with two small boys and another child on the way.

That was in the early 1980s, but the estate is still beautifully maintained, she says. And she knows all about that, having been maintenance officer during the Great Storm of 1987, when the wind sent tiles flying off the roofs, crashing into windows. It was quite a busy time for the Baxters, since Graham was assistant maintenance officer at the time.

Sharon stepped down from the committee when she went back to full-time work. Having been a professional carer, she now

works in the office of a care agency for elderly, vulnerable and disabled people. ‘It’s not a job where you can leave things to tomorrow, not when clients might be left without someone to help them out of bed or make their breakfast in the morning.’

But three years ago she decided to go on the committee again. ‘It’s only one meeting a month, but we make all our own decisions.’ But, like many other co-ops, they find it hard to get new blood on the committee, she says. ‘People are busier. Mums go back to work earlier, and people just don’t have as much time as we did 20 years ago. It’s the older people that keep it going.’ Though Whitworth can boast at least one committee member in her twenties.

And when CDS was looking for volunteers for the Resident Quality Services Committee, she decided to have a go. With one meeting every other month, she says it’s not too time-consuming. And she really enjoyed her first official estates visit (see page 5).

Two of her grown-up children still live with her in Whitworth, although one of them will be moving out soon – he has been helping renovate a place in another CDS client co-op, Shearwood, a shared-ownership scheme in Crayford. This is obviously one family where the co-op ethos has really taken hold.



Watkin Morgan

CDS business development
manager

Watkin Morgan is a busy man. For a start he has not one but two jobs at CDS – executive support officer *and* business development manager.

Both jobs are part-time, but with a job description that includes performance management, policy development, complaints, IT, advising staff on legal matters, writing contracts, designing forms, marketing services, liaising with potential new clients and a lot more, it sounds like they add up to a good deal more than one full-time job. Watkin jokes that he picks up pretty well everything that hasn’t already been given to someone else to do – ‘You could call me the odd job man.’ He even squeezes in consultancy work.

Outside the office, Watkin’s not a man to sit around. Although his firewalking days are allegedly behind him, he still keeps active, walking and cycling. So his colleagues were quite impressed that he found the time to get married this summer...

It's *your* annual report



Beko fridge-freezer warning

Do you have a Beko frost-free fridge-freezer? If so, it could be a potential fire hazard.

But don't panic. It's easy to find out if you have one of the affected machines, and Beko should sort the problem, free, in minutes.

Check the serial number on the label inside. If this begins with 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05 or 06, there is a possibility that in certain circumstances the defrost timer could overheat and cause a fire.

Full details can be found on the website refsafety.beko.co.uk, or call the manufacturer free on 0800 009 4837 between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

Don't delay

'Fires involving any sort of fridge-freezer develop rapidly and produce an enormous amount of toxic smoke,' the London Fire Brigade warns.



Service check



As your tenant auditor, I am here to ensure that you receive the best service possible, keeping a beady eye on what's happening, writes Lynne Walsh.

CDS is committed to the involvement of tenants in decision-making, so I recently arranged a tenant workshop to discuss the Annual Report that is sent out to you every autumn.

We looked at previous reports and thought about how they could be better put together in future. We also discussed suggestions for other things you would like to see in the next one, and talked about ways of

improving the way the information is presented.

You can rest assured that the 2011 Annual Report will have been a real collaboration between CDS staff and tenants. We hope any changes you see are positive ones but, either way, I really want to know what you think of it – and if you have any suggestions for the next one.

Thank you to all those who gave up their time on a Saturday to take part in this valuable exercise. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

I'm hoping to run more workshops on topics such as mystery shopping and other ways tenants can help me keep CDS staff on their toes. If you would like to get involved, do contact me. CDS will provide lunch and cover your travel costs – and it is a good opportunity to meet members of other co-ops. So come on, get involved and have your say!

Email: lynne.walsh@cds.coop

Phone: 07775 820089

Don't be afraid to complain

If you are dissatisfied in any way with our services, you must let us know. Your complaints show us where we are falling down and what we need to do to rectify the problem.

Write to us at:

**CDS Co-operatives, FREEPOST
SW140, London SE1 1EP**

Telephone **03333 21 30 30**

Email enquiries@cds.coop

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