

# Drone surveys service saves time and money

A bird's eye view of a roof is often the best way to identify issues and quickly find a solution. A new start-up is offering drone services to housing providers which can save them money in scaffolding costs while speeding up the surveying process. Here, the founders explain to Housing Association magazine editor Victoria Galligan how C-Soars works...

**C-Soars was the brainchild of construction entrepreneur Carla Piedade and her tech-savvy and flying enthusiast brother Tony. Carla started off as a carpenter and joiner at the age of 19 and went on to run her own business as a main contractor before managing large-scale projects for bigger construction brands.**

Carla said: "I have always been on the look out for solutions to problems, one of the main concerns was always health and safety...and of course reducing cost and wasted effort. One day almost three years ago I found myself playing with a friend's drone. That very evening, I wrote down my business idea on the benefits of using a drone in the industry.

"Someone else's toy became my ideal tool to solve some of the issues I experienced on site. I then called my brother Tony and we discussed the idea, within a few months I was a qualified pilot with my first drone going out in London and surrounding areas doing roof surveys."

The business is fully registered with the Civil Aviation Authority with all the clearances and authorities to operate in the City.

Tony said: "What I liked about the business idea was the bringing together of a number of things: firstly, Carla's on-the-job experience and keen eye for detail; secondly, the ability to provide property asset owners and managers with data and evidence of the issues they face with given properties.


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Using a drone has many benefits: there's no need for expensive scaffolding, no need for residents to be in to give access, and drones offer the ability to know more about the issues that a contractor might be facing, before they even get on site.

Tony added: "In a joined-up way, C-Soars can survey 20-30 properties and prioritise them using evidence from the footage. The client can then send these to the contractor, who can arrive at each site with a clear understanding of what is required.

## ■ Detailed surveys

During a C-Soars roof survey, the team takes video and still footage of tiles, chimneys, gutters, fascias and compile a comprehensive video report with recommendations for works and further investigations. All this, carried out from the safety



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of terra firma without foregoing the benefits of close-up inspections.

Tony added: "We remove the need for expensive scaffolding to be erected and reduce the inconvenience, impact and intrusion on local communities, not to mention removing the risks associated with working at heights.

"All of our work is GDPR compliant and our policies and processes are designed to ensure full transparency for both our client and all residents affected."

## ■ Efficiency is key

How does this service speed-up the repairs process? Tony added: "A property normally takes days or weeks to have a high-level survey carried out. There is a need to plan the survey, contract a scaffolding supplier, line up the client and surveyor to attend to view the roof/area of works, take some pictures... and then a report is written, before it is submitted to the client for consideration.

"With C-Soars, you get this in a much more condensed space of time. The client's surveyors can

review the footage from the comfort of an office chair and can make judgements on many more surveys than if he/she had to be out in person. We believe that C-Soars can save housing associations thousands of pounds in lost time, effort and more speedy maintenance of priority jobs."

As an example, C-Soars surveyed a block which would have cost about £10,000 to have scaffold erected, to ensure viewing could be carried out in a safe manner.

Tony added: "By using C-Soars the housing association spent just £2,100 on a survey. Furthermore, our drone inspection was able to identify that all the necessary work could be carried out by erecting just one scaffolding tower, in the right place, at the cost of under £700.

"There are also some timing advantages that are harder to quantify, but we were able to perform the survey and have it in the surveyor's inbox within 48 hours, allowing timely decisions to be made."

For more information, see [www.c-soars.com](http://www.c-soars.com)