

Brunata's humidity meters help the residents

December 2011 Lea Holtze

Desperate attempts to reduce heating costs increasingly leads to mould problems in social housing. However, in Elsinore a solution has been found using Brunata's humidity meters

"Here I can see that they are not using all their radiators. Currently, the humidity in the flat is no less than 72.5 per cent. Although it seems like they are airing the rooms well, it does not happen every day, so the humidity increases again," explains Erling Petersen and points to the red graph on his computer screen, which rises steeply towards the top of the screen.

This is Erling Petersen's third year as janitor at the housing estate Sundparken in Elsinore, which like many other housing

meters behind the entrance doors transmit data to Brunata WebMon, where Erling Petersen like the residents can log in and monitor the interior climate pattern.

"The humidity metering provides guidance to the residents so that they do not continue to live in an unhealthy flat. The measurements I can see on the computer prompt me to enter into a dialogue with the residents about the reasons for the pattern, so that any problems can be resolved," he says.

As social housing, where many costs are still shared, Sundparken had another important reason for investing in the humidity meters, says Paul Hansen, Chairman of the housing association, who took the initiative in making the investment.

"Previously, we all had to pay the bill when a resident had damaging humidity behaviour, because it could not be documented. Now we can document with bar charts and graphs if it comes to a lawsuit. It can cost DKK 200,000 to fix a flat with mould and now people have to pay themselves if it is due to their own behaviour. In this way, the humidity meters soon provide a return on investment," he says.



The chairman of the housing estate Sundparken, Paul Hansen (left), has found a solution to the increasing mould problems: The installation of Brunata's humidity meters in every apartment. That gives janitor Erling Petersen (right) a way to monitor the climate patterns.- Photo: Lea Holtze.

associations is experiencing increasing humidity problems resulting in mould. In step with the increase of both oil prices and environmental awareness, people have started turning down the heating and stopped airing the rooms. This is in keeping with the advice not to waste heating, but the problem is that humidity is created and flourishes in the cooler flats, while the humidity generated by hot baths and wet washing is kept inside. In addition, cold, humid air is even more expensive to heat.

Two years ago, Sundparken therefore decided to invest around DKK 160,000 in purchasing and installing Brunata's humidity meter Futura Hygro+ in all the housing association's 392 flats. Minute by minute, the



Every minute the humidity meter Futura Hygro+ report the data to Brunata WebMon, where the residents can log on and monitor their interior climate pattern.

No wonder the approx. 800 residents have all received the meters positively. Birte Flæng Møller, Managing Director of the housing association Boliggården which includes Sundparken, believes they are regarded as an expression of care for the estate and its residents. In the period 2009-2011, the as-

sociation had 120 messages about mould, a marked increase on previous years.

"In fact, I wish more of our estates would install humidity meters, precisely in order to get information about the humidity patterns in the flats, which can then be used as a basis for discussing any humidity issues. So the idea needs selling, for it is a good one," she says.

Brunata is delighted with the positive experiences with the humidity meters, which are in keeping with the company's basic principle that to measure is to know, says Sales Director Hans Henrik Finne. Of course, the humidity meters do not reveal people's activities, but only some patterns in their humidity behaviour, i.e. cases of too high air humidity and the times when the problem arises.

"Precisely this information can be related to actions which people need to know about if they are to change their behaviour. Information is undoubtedly crucial to us human

beings, for fundamentally we know nothing about our own behaviour and it certainly does not seem abnormal to ourselves. However, when our behaviour is suddenly shown to be inappropriate, we are able to assess it and, above all, change it," he explains.

About Brunata a/s

Brunata a/s is a 100% Danish-owned company. We have more than 90 years of experience within developing and producing meters, consumption accounts, meter service and, most recently, district heating units. Today, the meters are often read remotely via radio with access to meter data on the internet. Brunata has a quality system fulfilling DS/EN ISO 9001 and 14001.



All the 800 residents in Sundparken have been positive towards the installation of Brunata's humidity meters. They see us as an expression of care for the place and its residents. – Photo: Lea Holtze.