

# Policy

## Gas servicing

<b>Date authorised</b>	26 July 2016
<b>Review date</b>	2019

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to ensuring the safety of our tenants, their family and the property
- 1.2 We are aware of our obligations as a landlord and have a robust process for ensuring that all gas appliances we own are maintained appropriately. Our policy is to conform to all appropriate legislative requirements and good practice
- 1.3 Our service will be provided in a consistent manner irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation

### 2. Our standards

- 2.1 We will:
  - Use gas safe qualified and competent contractors and staff
  - Ensure that our contractors and staff respect our tenants homes
  - Ensure that tenants are offered an am or pm appointment for servicing and repairs
  - Provide our tenants with the appropriate contact numbers, including an out of hours emergency number
  - Provide emergency heating where the contractor is unable to provide a working heating system – minimum of 2 heaters per home (between 1 October and 1 May)
  - Ensure all contractors abide by our Codes of conduct, Service standards and Single equality policy
  - Promote gas safety awareness by various means including the internet, new resident sign ups and newsletters

### 3. Our service

- 3.1 We have a legal responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances owned by us are maintained in a safe condition. We also have a duty of care to our residents.
- 3.2 The legal obligation contained within the Gas safety (installation and use) regulations 1998, requires us to adequately and competently install, maintain and

service all gas installations, appliances, flues and installation pipe-work under our liability.

- 3.3 We do this by carrying out a gas safety check every year. The check includes a service to the gas appliance, not only to ensure it is operating safely but also to spot any potential problems, reducing the risk of a breakdown.
- 3.4 Where a flue passes through a void space within a property, we will ensure that there are sufficient access panels in accordance with current HSE technical bulletin recommendations and current Building regulations, approved document Part J. Concealed flues must be fully inspected by a Registered gas engineer.
- 3.5 Where tenants have a gas fire in the bedroom or choose to sleep in their lounge that has a gas fire, if the unit does not have an oxygen depletion device, it will be labelled "at risk" by our contractor. If a room sealed gas boiler is installed in a bedroom a CO detector will be fitted. If a property becomes void which has a gas fire or back boiler, these will be removed during the void process.
- 3.6 Hard copy Landlord gas safety certificates are issued to tenants within 28 days of the gas safety check being undertaken both in the case of annual safety checks and those carried out during the mutual exchange process. All new tenants, with the exception of mutual exchanges, are issued with a Gas safety certificate on the day of sign up.
- 3.7 When a property becomes void, a safety check is carried out to the system and it is capped. This is to reduce risk to the property during the period the property is void. At sign up, the tenant is issued a letter requiring them to arrange an appointment for our contractor to attend site, reconnect the system and issue an LGSR to the tenant. If there is no gas supply, the tenant will need to arrange this prior to the contractor reconnecting the system.
- 3.8 On-going maintenance is carried out by our gas contractors so that all breakdowns and remedial work are carried out quickly and efficiently ensuring that the loss of amenities (heating and hot water) is kept to a minimum. For family sized homes with vulnerable occupants, additional heating may be offered dependent on the household needs.
- 3.9 The response times for breakdowns and repairs are:
  - Between 1 October and 1 May (heating and hot water failures):
    - Priority breakdown (for tenants over the age of 65 or with young children up to the age of five years) – contractor to attend within three hours and completely resolve the issue within 24 hours (subject to parts availability).
    - Breakdown (for all other tenants) – same day attendance by the contractor and problem to be resolved completely within 24 hours (subject to parts availability).
  - Between 2 May to 30 September (hot water failures only and unless the property has an immersion heater):
    - Priority breakdown (for tenants over the age of 65 or with infant children up to the age of two years) – contractor to attend within three hours and completely resolve the issue within 24 hours (subject to parts availability).
    - Breakdown (for all other tenants) – same day attendance by the contractor

and problem to be resolved completely within 24 hours (subject to parts availability).

- Between 2 May to 30 September (heating failures or properties with an immersion heater:
  - Breakdown – contractor to attend the next working day.

3.10 Where the contractor cannot fix the problem due to the need to order parts, tenants will be provided with temporary heaters between 1 October and 1 May. Tenants will be kept informed of progress regarding parts on order.

#### **4. Tenant and leaseholder responsibilities**

4.1 During the annual gas safety checks in tenant's homes, we will also carry out gas safety checks to their own gas appliances such as gas fires and cookers. The safety checks to tenants own gas fires includes a flue flow test, spillage test, ventilation check and a check to ensure any safety devices are working correctly. If an appliance is found to be unsafe, it would be turned off and labelled "at risk". Tenants will be informed that they must replace the unsafe item and installation must be carried out by a gas safe registered engineer. The tenants own gas cooker will have a visual check to ensure the correct operation, if the unit fails tenant will be informed and recorded on the CP12.

4.2 Although we do not have any legal responsibility to ensure that leaseholders maintain their gas installations, in order to minimise any risk to our stock, tenants and members of the public, we have a duty to ensure that leaseholders are informed of their obligations. We will notify leaseholders of the importance of gas safety through a variety of methods and where leaseholders sub-let their homes, we will ask for a copy of the LGSR that they must provide to their sub-tenant under their landlord obligations. If we are able to secure cost effective servicing arrangements through our own supply chain, we will promote this to leaseholders.

#### **5. Accessing tenants' homes**

5.1 To access a tenant's home to carry out a service, we follow the following procedure:

- First letter sent with an appointment (42 working days prior to service date).
- If no access, second letter sent with an appointment (21 working days prior to service date).
- If no access, third letter sent requesting urgent access (16 working days prior to service date).
- If no access, fourth letter sent recorded delivery by the Technical officer (11 working days prior to service date).
- A solicitors letter is sent is seven working days prior to service date advising that legal action will be commenced and confirming the costs associated will be charged to the tenant.
- If a gas meter is located outside the property we will advise the resident in writing that if they fail to provide access the meter will be capped and only reinstated once we have carried out the gas safety checks.

- 5.2 At this point, if there has still been no access, we would instigate legal action to obtain a court injunction at the earliest opportunity. Should the tenant fail to provide access following an injunction, we would seek possession of the property. For cases where tenancy enforcement action is required, the Gas officer and Neighbourhood officer will determine whether there are any other breaches of the tenancy which can be combined into one enforcement process.
- 5.3 At all times the Resident profile data is checked to determine whether there are any vulnerability issues and where we have been unable to make contact with tenants directly; their Next of kin are contacted in order to ensure that every effort is made before legal action is started.
- 5.4 Where tenants are genuinely unable to provide access in normal working hours, the gas contractor will offer appointments up to 7pm or on Saturdays between 8am to 12pm. Where access has not been provided, tenants are reminded by text to make contact for an appointment.
- 5.5 The Gas officer maintains a detailed record of these access issues and reports where necessary to the Neighbourhood team, Customer services team, Rosebery repairs and the Asset management team. The list is made available to all staff detailed above, so that overdue services are identified when residents contact us on other matters. Following no access at the third attempt, a flag will appear on the CAPITA/IBS database advising that the property has, or will soon have, an invalid Landlords gas safety record.

## **6. Performance monitoring**

- 6.1 Our target for ensuring gas safety certificate compliance is 100%. The cycle is scheduled throughout the year and is on a 10 month cycle so that no appliance goes over 12 months without the process for enforcement being commenced.
- 6.2 We have a robust monitoring process to ensure that the gas servicing contractor is fulfilling their requirements under the terms of the contract and that residents receive an excellent service. 10% of services are physically checked by a Gas safe registered third party. We have monthly operational meetings with the gas contractor to review performance.
- 6.3 At the management meetings the contractor is required to report and pass on:
- Copies of the latest Landlord Gas Safety Records (LGSR's)
  - Progress on the servicing/landlord's gas safety certificate programme
  - Report on responsive maintenance in terms of the number of calls, categories and performance indicators
  - Weekly reports upon the progress in achieving access to those properties where access has proved to be difficult
- 6.4 Strategic core group meetings take place on a quarterly basis.
- 6.5 Performance on compliance for gas appliance safety is reported to our Board.

## **7. Record keeping**

- 7.1 All property records on the CAPITA/IBS database are maintained and updated regularly to ensure that there is an accurate record of when appliances require safety checks. Copies of LGSR's are stored electronically against each property to ensure compliance with regulations. Contractor records are reconciled with our own to identify any discrepancies and minimise the risk of properties not receiving a gas service check before the existing LGSR has expired.

## **8. Tenant involvement and feedback**

- 8.1 Tenants have been involved in agreeing the service and standards associated with gas safety and servicing. Tenants attend monthly contract meetings with us and the contractor to ensure continued involvement in the delivery of the service. All correspondence sent to tenants have been reviewed and approved by tenants.
- 8.1 Tenants feedback is sought through a variety of methods, including, independent telephone surveys, and in-house post inspections and via our monthly quality inspections. Handheld computers are used to capture feedback from tenants at the time of the service or breakdown call. This information is used to review performance and identify improvements to the service.