

Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Policy

Scope of Policy

This Policy sets out Platform Housing Group (the Group) approach to ensuring the safety of all fuel burning appliances that produce noxious products from combustion such as Carbon Monoxide. Examples of fuels that produce noxious products from combustion include Gas, Oil, LPG, Solid Fuels including wood, Bio mass or coal, Solid Fuel cells (BlueGEN) and Open fire appliances.

The policy covers not only the appliances but also flues and associated pipework within all properties owned or managed by any member of the Platform Housing Group.

Installations in individual properties, as well as communal areas are covered by this policy. Safety checks in leasehold or shared ownership properties are not the responsibility of the Group, and are therefore not covered by this policy. We will however, exercise our duty of care towards our leaseholders and shared owners and periodically remind them of the importance of undertaking regular servicing on their appliances and systems by a suitably qualified, registered engineer.

Applicability

The Policy applies to all members of Platform Housing Group.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The overall aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of individuals who reside in homes or buildings owned or managed by any member of the Platform Housing Group, together with other customers, visitors, staff, contractors and the general public.
- 1.2 The policy sets out the Group's approach in ensuring appliances and their associated systems, that burn fuel remain safe to operate and individuals who reside or use Group buildings in which these appliances and systems are located are safe and protected from noxious products of combustion.
- 1.3 The policy also sets out the Groups approach to compliance with all legal obligations, safety guidance and ACOPs. This includes undertaking periodic safety inspections and the maintenance and servicing of appliances, systems, flues, unvented hot water cylinders, CO monitors and smoke detectors.

2. Context

- 2.1 This policy is set within the context of relevant legislation:
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

- OFTEC Guidance
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Building Regulations 2010
- Oil storage Regulations 2015
- HETAS Guidance

It also takes account of the regulatory expectations as outlined within the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (April, 2012).

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that at all times, the Group complies with all legal requirements in respect of Gas, Oil and Solid Fuel Safety or any other appliance that burns fuel and produces noxious products of combustion.
- 3.2 We will ensure that tenants are aware of our key standards and approach to inspection and servicing of gas, oil, solid fuel, smoke and CO detection and the legal responsibilities applicable.
- 3.3 To ensure that our tenants have confidence that gas, oil, solid fuel and pressurised unvented hot water cylinders systems in all our properties are well maintained and do not present an uncontrolled risk of harm to both themselves or visitors to the premises.
- 3.4 To ensure that the Group has accurate and up-to-date records of all servicing and safety checks carried out to properties, including remedial actions required and taken and that copies of relevant certificates are held electronically.
- 3.5 To ensure that on completion of all new installations, the Group receives a commissioning certificate and LGSR certificate and at the end of any guarantee period, the properties are included in ongoing servicing and maintenance contracts.
- 3.6 To ensure that where systems or appliances are identified as not meeting legal requirements, they are made safe, repaired or isolated immediately and removed as soon as possible afterwards.

4. Policy outline

- 4.1 As part of our overall approach, the Group will:
 - In accordance with manufactures instructions, repair and maintain gas, oil and solid fuel, open fire installations and unvented hot water cylinders, pipework, flues and appliances owned by the Group
 - Ensure an annual safety check on all gas, open fire, oil and solid fuel flues and appliances and unvented hot water cylinders owned by the Group, including any communal appliances/boilers
 - Where chimneys are used to remove products of combustion, the Group will maintain these so as to be fit for purpose
 - Test and inspect smoke detectors at the point of heating service

- Ensure that Contractors/directly employed engineers working on our behalf are Gas Safe, OFTEC or HETAS registered, competent and have safe systems in place for the work to be undertaken
- Ensure that all supervisors managing service and directly employed operatives undertaking annual safety checks or works to equipment and/or appliances owned by the Group are suitably qualified and experienced
- Where tenants refuse us or our contractor access to undertake our legal obligations, we will utilise robust legal proceedings and/or make safe/isolate the supply if we suspect an appliance, system or the supply may be unsafe
- Where tenants have no credit on the fuel supplying the property and confirm they no longer use the gas, oil or solid fuel system, the fuel supply, oil or solid fuel appliances will be isolated and following a welfare check the tenant will be advised to remove any fuel meter to avoid the tenant incurring further debt
- Where tenants have not replenished their fuel oil for a domestic heating system (and in agreement with the tenant), the oil supply will be capped at the tank and the appropriate housing officer will be informed to conduct a welfare check
- Review all safety certificates to ensure that they are completed correctly and that any follow up work is completed in a timely manner
- When properties become empty, we will isolate the gas/oil supply until the property is ready to be reoccupied. On reconnection and before occupation of the new incoming tenants a full gas/oil/solid fuel service and safety check will be undertaken and a copy of the new gas/oil/solid fuel safety certificate issue to the incoming tenants. Cookers left in a property will be removed unless they are built in and/or the responsibility of the Group, in which case they will be tested for operation and safety
- When tenants move properties utilising the Mutual Exchange scheme a full gas/oil service and safety check will be undertaken and a copy of the new gas/oil certificate issued to the new tenant
- Monitor and report performance in respect of the percentage of properties with a valid gas/oil certificate and the status of properties without a valid certificate

5. Tenants Responsibilities

- 5.1 The tenancy agreements of all members of the Platform Housing Group, allow access to all our properties for the purpose of annual gas, oil, solid fuel, open fire, unvented hot water cylinder servicing or safety inspections.
- 5.2 The tenant is responsible for immediately reporting any concerns with gas, oil or solid fuel, open fire, unvented hot water cylinder appliances and for turning them off until they are checked by a suitably qualified, competent and registered engineer.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.
- 6.2 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of this policy and no negative impacts on any person or group with a protected characteristic has been identified as a direct result of this policy.

7. Group Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 Platform Housing Group (the Group) manages forty five thousand homes across the Midlands. Across the Group some thirty four thousand homes contain appliances that burn fuel and therefore require servicing and safety inspections. To manage the safety of fuel burning appliances for such a large number of homes, in addition to this policy the Group has developed comprehensive procedures and systems in relation to servicing, inspecting, repairs and maintenance of gas, oil, solid fuel, open fires and other appliances that burn fuel.
- 7.2 The Group is the “Responsible Person” under Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations, 1998 and any other statutory instruments that cover Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety, the Group Chief Executive emphasises the responsibility is acknowledged and lies at the top of the organisation and is cascaded down through the organisation.
- 7.3 The Group Commercial Director is the Director appointed to establish and monitor the implementation of the Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure within the Group.
- 7.4 The Group’s Mechanical Services Team will implement the Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure. However, as Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety is considered to be of utmost importance, the Group engages either external contractors or in-house qualified Gas Safe, OFTEC or HETAS engineers to ensure it systems meet the required standards and are well maintained.
- 7.5 The Group’s external contractors or in-house engineers are responsible for delivery of the servicing and maintenance programmes to properties issued by the Group’s Mechanical Services Team. The Group’s external contractors or in-house engineers are also responsible for ensuring they adhere to the Group Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure and conduct inspections, servicing and maintenance of the Groups Gas and Fuel Burning Appliances in line with statutory, ACOP and manufactures guidance to ensure the safety of occupants.

- 7.6 We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy, procedures and systems through relevant performance information which will be reported through the Group Board, Group Executive Team, Group Audit & Risk Committee, The Leadership Group and appropriate Customer Panels.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidelines, whichever is the sooner.

8. Associated documents / policies

- 8.1 List of documents/associated policies/publications:

- Group Health and Safety Policy
- Group Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- Group Tenancy Agreements
- Group Asset Management Strategy
- Group Void Policy
- Group Maintenance Policy
- Group Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations, 1998
- The Building Regulations 2010
- Oil Storage Regulations 2015
- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England

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