

# Heating and Hot Water Safety Policy



## Scope of Policy

This policy sets out the approach of Platform Housing Group (the Group) to ensure the safety of all heating appliances, including 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, biomass or coal, solid fuel cells (BlueGEN) and open fire appliances. Furthermore, this policy also acknowledges the Group's obligation to ensure that hot water installations remain in safe, good working order.

The policy covers not only the appliances but also flues and associated pipework within all properties owned or managed by any member of the 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. The Leasehold Team will 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 the 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 Group, together with other customers, visitors, colleagues, contractors and the general public.
- 1.2 The policy sets out the Group's approach in ensuring appliances and their associated systems, which 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 Group's approach to compliance with all legal obligations, safety guidance and Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP). This includes undertaking periodic safety inspections and the maintenance and servicing of appliances, systems, flues, unvented hot water cylinders, Carbon Monoxide (CO) monitors and smoke detectors.

### 2. Context

- 2.1 This policy is set within the context of relevant legislation or supporting standards and guidance:
  - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
  - The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (Amended 2018)

- OFTEC Guidance
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Building Regulations 2010, including Approved Document J Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems
- Oil Storage Regulations
- HETAS Guidance
- The Housing Act 2004, which introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015)
- L56 – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (Current Edition)
- IGEM/G/11 Gas industry unsafe situation procedure
- Regulator of Social Housing: Consumer Standards - Safety and Quality
- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Other Legislative, Normative (gas Standards) and Informative reference documents documented by Gas Safe within the Legislative, Normative & Informative Document List (as amended).

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Group complies with all legal requirements in respect of gas, oil, solid fuel safety or any other appliance that burns fuel and produces noxious products of combustion, along with associated unvented hot water cylinders. Furthermore, this policy also covers other heating systems such as heat pumps and storage heaters.
- 3.2 We will ensure that customers are aware of our key standards and approach to inspection and servicing of gas, oil, solid fuel burning systems, heat pumps and hot water cylinders.
- 3.3 To ensure that our customers have confidence that their heating and hot water 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, where applicable, Landlord Gas Safety Record (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 flues and appliances and unvented hot water cylinders owned by the Group, including any communal appliances/boilers.
- Ensure that the relevant annual inspection is undertaken on other heating appliances such as heat pumps. For clarity, storage heaters shall be tested as part of the inspection of the fixed wiring installation of the property and any relevant EICR checks.
- Undertake an annual reconciliation between the asset register, performance monitoring dashboards and data held by Xoserve to determine where gas may be installed in properties across the Group's stock.
- Where chimneys are used to remove products of combustion, the Group will maintain these to be fit for purpose. Any Solid Fuel appliance or flue that is the responsibly of the Group shall be subject to an annual safety check, with the associated chimney being swept twice per year.
- Test and inspect smoke & carbon monoxide detectors where fitted at the point of heating service, including checking any carbon monoxide detectors that may have been fitted by customers as part of installations that they are responsible for, in properties where servicing by PHG is being undertaken.
- Ensure that contractors/directly employed engineers working on our behalf are Gas Safe, OFTEC or HETAS registered, are suitably 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 customers 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.
  - isolate if it is beyond its service anniversary date.
  - isolate prior to the service anniversary date should all required visits prior to escalation have been undertaken and evidenced.

- undertake relevant action via the legal process, including court proceedings, to ensure that we ultimately gain access to the property to undertake the relevant safety inspection or isolation.
- Where customers 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 customer will be advised to remove any fuel meter to avoid the customer incurring further debt.
- Where customers have not replenished their fuel oil for a domestic heating system (and in agreement with the customer), 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. A copy shall be provided to the customer within 28 days of the completion of the inspection. For all non-domestic locations, these shall be displayed in a prominent position where applicable.
- 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 customer, 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 issued to the incoming customer.
- 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.
- Ensure that no works carried out within the Group's stock compromise the safety of existing gas installations. Where works are carried out that may impact this, works are to be planned and then suitably assessed upon completion by a suitably competent person.
- When customers 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 customer.
- Monitor and report performance in respect of the percentage of properties with a valid heating service certificate and the status of properties without a valid certificate.
- Undertake third party auditing of a range of activities covered within the policy to provide additional assurance around the works being completed.
- Appoint persons with clear roles and responsibilities to manage the risks associated with gas and other fuel burning installations.
- Regularly review the job profiles, skills, knowledge and experience of those colleagues involved in the delivery of this policy and, where necessary, provide training so that they can deliver this policy.

## **5. Customers Responsibilities**

- 5.1 The tenancy agreements of all members of the Group, allow access to all our properties for the purpose of annual gas, oil, solid fuel, open fire, unvented hot water cylinder servicing, heat pumps or other safety inspections.
- 5.2 The customer 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. Group Responsibilities and Monitoring**

- 6.1 The Group manages over 50,000 homes from the Derbyshire Dales in the north, to the Cotswolds in the south and from Herefordshire in the west to Lincolnshire in the east. Across the Group some 34,000 homes that 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.
- 6.2 The Group is the “Responsible Person” under Health and Safety at Work etc. 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.
- 6.3 The Chief Property Officer is appointed to establish and monitor the implementation of the Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure within the Group. The Director of Home Safety shall be responsible for the delivery of this policy.
- 6.4 The Property Directorate will implement the Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure. However, as Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety is 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.
- 6.5 The Group’s external contractors or in-house engineers are responsible for delivery of the servicing and maintenance programmes to properties. This is driven from information on the groups asset management database system, which is owned by the Strategic Asset Management team. The Group’s external contractors or in-house engineers are also responsible for ensuring they adhere to agreed processes and procedures within 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. Other documentation shall apply for non-fossil fuel fired appliances which shall form part of agreed specification for undertaking any works.

- 6.6 Performance reporting for Gas Compliance is provided to Group Board and the Assets & Sustainability Committee on a quarterly basis. Reporting is provided by the Building Safety Team.

## **7. Equality and Diversity**

- 7.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of 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.
- 7.2 Impact Assessments relating to data protection and equality are to be considered and completed as necessary.

## **8. Complaints**

- 8.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

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

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

- 9.2 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until an updated version is available.

## **10. Associated Documents**

- 10.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- Water Systems (Legionella) Management Policy
- Group Tenancy Agreements
- Asset Management Strategy
- Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Procedure

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- The Building Regulations 2010
- Oil Storage Regulations
- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England
- Regulator of Social Housing: Consumer Standards - Safety and Quality

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