



## Gas Maintenance and Safety Management Policy

<b>Date of approval</b>	29th July 2024
<b>Responsible director</b>	Paul Butterworth Executive Director of Assets
<b>Policy monitoring body</b>	WCHG Board
<b>Resident input into policy</b>	Equality Impact Assessment Panel Review
<b>Date for policy review</b>	July 2027
<b>Linked strategies/policies</b>	Asset Management Strategy Carbon Reduction Strategy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Fire and Building Safety Policy Empty Homes Policy Continuous Performance Engagement Policy Growing Talent Through Professional Development Data Protection Policy
<b>Statutory and Legal Framework</b>	See Section 2 and Appendix 1
<b>Version/date</b>	V6 10th July 2024

## Gas and Heating Safety Policy

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG/The Group) is committed to delivering all landlord responsibilities, including the maintenance and repairs to homes, communal blocks, and other properties we own and manage. Many of these contain gas installations and appliances, and others will use alternative heating systems. This policy ensures that all heating appliances we provide are safe.
- 1.2. The Gas and Heating Safety Policy supports delivery of the Groups' strategic plan and is specifically linked to the Great Places strategic theme. This includes the building safety and compliance objectives to ensure customers live in safe, well maintained, and compliant homes.

### 2. Legislation, Guidance, Regulatory Standards and Sanctions

- 2.1. **Legislation** – The principal legislation applicable to this policy is:

- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 as amended (Gas Safety Regulations). We have a legal obligation under Part F Regulation 36 (Duties of Landlords)
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Additional legislation relevant to this policy is included at Appendix 1.

- 2.2. **Approved Code of Practice (ACoP)** - The ACoP applicable to this policy is:

- ACoP L56 – Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances (5<sup>TH</sup> Edition 2018).

- 2.3. **Guidance** - The principal guidance applicable to this policy is:

- INDG285 – A Guide to Landlords' Duties; Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 as amended Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2018).

- 2.4. **Regulatory Standards** - We will comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework and consumer standards for social housing in England. The Safety and Quality Standard is the primary one applicable to this policy.

- 2.5. **Sanctions** – Failure to discharge our responsibility and obligations properly could lead to prosecution under the:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Gas Safety Regulations; and via
- Regulatory Judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing.

### 3. Risk Management

- 3.1. The WCHG Board annually review the Corporate Risk Register and agree the risk appetite for each one.
- 3.2. The WCHG Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for overseeing the management of corporate risks associated with this policy.
- 3.3. The Head of Repairs and Head of Assets are responsible for the day to day management and mitigation of risk.
- 3.4. The specific risks associated with this policy are:

**GP2 Failure to meet asset compliance in line with regulatory standards'**

**GP5 Repairs, maintenance and environmental services fail to meet/exceed regulatory/legal requirements.'**

- 3.5. The risk appetite set by the Board is 'Averse', defined as 'avoidance of risk and uncertainty as a key organisational objective. The key focus of the Board is that regulatory compliance continues to be achieved, and the Regulator of Social Housing Standards and Consumer Standards are met.
- 3.6. We will maintain a suite of procedures and processes, and provide adequate resources to implement them, to mitigate the risk of service delivery failing to adhere to this policy.

### 4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy covers the following assets:
  - WCHG tenanted, leasehold and empty domestic properties
  - Communal areas used to access customers' homes
  - Offices depots, community centre and other working environments managed or owned by the group.
- 4.2. This policy covers the following services:
  - Investment work activities
  - Planned and cyclical work activities
  - Empty homes activities
  - Other general gas work activities such as repairs.
- 4.3. This policy governs the landlord responsibilities WCHG has, to maintain and manage gas installations across our assets, and all other heating systems and heating appliances. These may include:
  - Ground source heat pumps
  - Air source heat pumps
  - Oil fired heating
  - Solid fuel heating

- Liquid petroleum gas (LPG)
- Biomass heating
- Solar thermal heating
- Electrical heating
- Any other heating systems.

4.4. This policy applies to the following:

- All WCHG colleagues
- All contractors and third parties working on our behalf.

4.5. The maintenance and safety of Gas installations in 'SOLD' properties remain the responsibility of the Lessee. WCHG will offer a chargeable gas servicing option to leaseholders under the terms of this policy.

4.6. Any property that shares a flue with an adjoining WCHG property will be offered a free safety check of the connected gas appliance.

## **5. Commitments and obligations**

5.1. In line with our obligations set out in Section 2 and Appendix 1, under this policy WCHG will:

5.1.1. Ensure gas fittings and flues are maintained in a safe condition. Gas appliances will be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If these are not available annual servicing will take place, unless advised otherwise by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

5.1.2. Carry out the annual safety check on each gas appliance and flue within 10 to 12 months of the previous safety check.


5.1.3. Have all installation, maintenance and safety checks carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

5.1.4. Issue a copy of the latest safety check record to existing residents within 28 days of the check being completed, or prior to any new resident moving in.

5.1.5. Display a copy of the latest safety check record in a common area of a building where the gas appliance serves a communal heating system to multiple homes.

5.1.6. Ensure that no gas fitting of a type that would contravene Regulation 30 (for example, certain gas fires and instantaneous water heaters) is fitted in any room occupied, or to be occupied, as sleeping accommodation after the Gas Safety Regulations came into force. This includes any room converted into such accommodation after that time.

5.1.7. As a minimum have a battery powered smoke alarm installed on every storey with living accommodation.

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- 5.1.8. Install carbon monoxide alarms to all properties with a gas supply, in any rooms used as living accommodation with a fixed combustion appliance – excluding gas cookers.
- 5.1.9. Annually test, and repair or replace faulty alarms within twenty-four hours of it being reported or discovered, or as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 5.2. WCHG will carry out an annual Health and Safety Inspection to support the safety of customers within their homes, regardless of heating type, and where the property has no gas supply.
- 5.3. All Health and Safety Inspections will be used to:
- Verify any gas supplies installed by customers,
  - Test, inspect, repair and or replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarms,
  - Inspect domestic fire doors to flats
  - Gather/validate key property attributes.
- 5.4. WCHG will keep a record of each installation, renewal, repair or safety check for a minimum of seven years.
- 5.5. A visual inspection will be carried out of the customers own gas cooking appliances and any concerns reported to the customer, in line with the Unsafe Situations procedure.
- 5.6. Where the customer has fitted their own gas fire we will complete an annual safety check and if the appliance is found to be unsafe it will be disconnected and labelled and the customer will be notified.
- 5.7. We will continue to repair existing gas fires if economically viable to so. (As a guide this means if parts are available and the repair costs less than £100 plus VAT). When this is not the case we will offer the customer a choice of leaving the disconnected appliance in situ, or removing and making good the fire opening;(apply plaster finish, fit ventilation and all associated joinery only).
- 5.8. We will remove gas fires from empty homes and refuse permission for customers to install a gas fire within their home. Customers living in high rise accommodation will be refused permission to fit any gas appliances within their home.
- 5.9. We will remove gas cooker supplies from all empty homes, in support of our carbon reduction objectives.
- 5.10. We will cap off the gas supply within forty-eight hours of the property becoming empty. Reconnection will be by appointment agreed with the customer.
- 5.11. WCHG will plan and deliver boiler replacements, as part of our stock investment programme. The anticipated lifespan of a central heating boiler is fifteen years, and for the installation system (e.g. pipework) it is thirty years.

- 5.12. All new and replacement gas central heating boilers will be A rated condensing appliances, to support our commitment to providing energy efficient heating with low running costs for customers.
- 5.13. In support of our Carbon Reduction Strategy and the decarbonisation aspirations for our property portfolio, WCHG will consider the use of alternative heating systems to reduce our reliance on the use of gas to heat our existing homes, and all new homes we provide for rent will be off the gas grid.
- 5.14. All new build properties, those for outright sale, Section 106 homes/purchase units, or shared ownership homes, with a gas installation will be independently audited, and the incoming gas supply will be capped once ownership moves from the contractor to WCHG. We will reconnect by appointment with the customer.
- 5.15. We will take all necessary steps to gain access in order to complete all gas servicing work, and health and safety inspections. This includes tenancy enforcement actions up to and including legal action, and the potential to recharge customers for the cost of legal action.

## **6. Significant Non - Compliance and Escalation**

- 6.1. WCHG defines significant non-compliance as, any incident that has the potential to result in a possible breach of legislation or regulatory standard; or causes a risk to health or safety, and needs to be managed as an exception to routine processes and procedures.
- 6.2. All non-compliance issues will be reported and escalated as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the incident occurred, or of an WCHG employee becoming aware of it.
- 6.3. Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Executive Director of Assets, who will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the Mechanical & Electrical Manager and report details of the same to the Group Leadership Team (GLT).
- 6.4. In cases of serious non-compliance, GLT and the WCHG Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing as required by the regulatory framework, or any other relevant organisation such as the Health and Safety Executive.
- 6.5. We will investigate and manage all RIDDOR<sup>1</sup> notifications submitted to the Health and Safety Executive in relation to gas and heating safety, and will act to address any issues identified or lessons learnt, to prevent a similar incident occurring again.

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<sup>1</sup> RIDDOR is the abbreviation for Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

## 7. Quality Assurance

- 7.1. WCHG will ensure delivery of an annual programme of third-party quality assurance audits of gas and heating safety checks, gas appliance services and gas appliance repair work. This will be:
- 100% of all new installations.
  - 3 field checks per gas operative annually verified by external auditor
- 7.2. In addition we will internally conduct:
- 50% of desktop audits of all LGSR's/certificates using the nine point check
  - 100% of all routine gas certificates
  - 100% of all void gas certificates
  - 2 field checks per in house gas operative annually
- 7.3. We will carry out an independent audit of gas/heating safety at least once every two years, to specifically test for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and to identify non-compliance issues for correction.

## 8. Performance Measurement, Monitoring and Review

- 8.1. We will use a range of key performance indicators (KPI) to monitor and report performance against gas and heating safety. These include metrics that follow the requirements set out in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), specifically **TSM BS01 Gas Safety Check Measure**.
- 8.2. We will annually report performance against the TSM's to the Regulator of Social Housing, in accordance with the definitions set out in Regulatory Guidance.
- 8.3. The WCHG gas safety performance will be reported internally as follows:

Monitoring Body	Frequency
WCHG Board	Every meeting – bi monthly
Group Leadership Team	Every Meeting - monthly
CX Committee	Every meeting – bi monthly

- 8.4. Performance reporting to all monitoring bodies will be a snapshot position on the last day of the month. Access to live daily data is available to all colleagues with strategic and operational responsibility for gas safety, through our performance management system.

8.5. The measures reported will include but are not limited to:

**Data - The total number of:**

- WCHG Properties split by category (domestic, communal, commercial/others).
- Properties on programme split by category.
- Properties not on programme.
- Properties with a valid and in date LGSR/certificate.
- Properties without a valid and in date record LGSR/certificate.
- Properties due to be serviced within the next 30 days.
- Follow on work arising from the programme (in time and overdue)
- RIDDOR notifications to the HSE about gas/heating safety.
- Non-compliance incidents relating to gas safety

**Commentary to explain:**

- Current position.
- Corrective action required.
- Progress with completion of follow-up works.

## **9. Customer engagement**

- 9.1. We recognise the need to provide customers with effective communications to support our delivery of gas and heating safety. We will use a range of mechanisms to maximise customer access for gas safety checks including letters, phone calls and one to one support for vulnerable and hard to reach customers.
- 9.2. In line with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIR's), we will always share information that you are entitled to clearly and transparently. We will make it available to customers through regular newsletters and our external website.


## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 10.1. The WCHG Board is responsible for setting and approving the priorities of this policy and ensuring it is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. They will formally review and approve it every three years or sooner if there is a change in legislation or regulation.
- 10.2. The Group Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring that compliance against this policy is being achieved.
- 10.3. The Health and Safety Committee receive and review performance data related to the delivery of this policy and report to the Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee review assurance reports on the delivery of this policy.
- 10.4. The Customer Experience Committee receive and review performance data related to the delivery of this policy.
- 10.5. The Executive Director of Assets has strategic responsible for the management of gas and heating safety and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained. They oversee the implementation of this policy.

- 10.6. The Executive Director of Assets has been appointed as the Health and Safety Lead under the requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023.
- 10.7. The Head of Repairs and Head of Assets is responsible for the operational delivery, management and monitoring of this policy.
- 10.8. The Mechanical and Electrical Manager has operational responsibility for the management of gas and heating safety and the delivery of these programmes.
- 10.9. The Wythenshawe Works technicians and a range of approved sub-contractors are responsible for the delivery of services within the scope of this policy.
- 10.10. The Living Well Team will support Wythenshawe Works teams to gain access to properties in order to maintain gas safety compliance. This includes taking legal action when required.

## **11. Competence, Training and Professionalism**

- 11.1. WCHG is committed to realising the capability and potential of colleagues by investing in them through learning, training and professional study. Line managers will use the WCHG Continuous Performance Engagement process to ensure that mandatory training and required qualifications are maintained and kept up to date for all colleagues involved in the delivery of this policy
- 11.2. Our Board is recruited to meet the requirements of the governance skills matrix to ensure appropriate strategic control and oversight is provided across the Group's operations. Members receive regular and ongoing training to ensure skill and competency levels are maintained.
- 11.3. The Executive Director of Assets and the senior management team holds or is working towards the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 5 Diploma in Housing, or equivalent.
- 11.4. The Mechanical and Electrical Manager operational lead will hold the Level 4 VRQ in Gas Safety Management or Level 4 VRQ Diploma in Asset and Building Management (if they are not Gas Safe Registered), and full membership of the Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM). If they do not have these already, they will obtain them within 12 months of the approval of this policy.
- 11.5. All gas servicing engineers (internal or external) will maintain Gas Safe accreditation for all areas of gas/LPG works that they undertake and will be members of the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives (ACS).
- 11.6. Only suitably competent Gas Safe accredited contractors will undertake works to gas/LPG fittings, appliances, and flues.
- 11.7. Only suitably competent Oil Firing Technical Association (OFTEC) and/or HETAS accredited contractors will undertake works to oil fired and solid fuel fittings, appliances, and flues.

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- 11.8. Only individuals/organisations with a Microgeneration Certification Scheme accreditation (MCS) will undertake works on ground/air source heat pumps, solar thermal and biomass heating systems.
- 11.9. Only suitably competent NICEIC (or equivalent) electrical contractors and operatives will undertake servicing and repairs to electrical heating systems.
- 11.10. Only suitably competent Gas Safe registered and NICEIC (or equivalent) third party technical auditors will undertake quality assurance checks.
- 11.11. We will check our contractors hold the relevant qualifications and accreditations when we procure them, and thereafter on an annual basis; we will evidence these checks and each contractor's certification appropriately.
- 11.12. We will deliver training on this policy and its supporting procedures through mechanisms including but not limited to:
- Team Meetings
  - One to one meeting
  - On the job training
  - Toolbox talks.

## **12. Data Protection**

- 12.1. Any personal data collected under the Gas and Heating Policy will be treated with respect and used in line with the data protection laws - the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. For further information on how we handle your personal data, and how you can exercise your information rights, please visit our [Group privacy notice](#).

## **13. Equality Diversity and Inclusion**

- 13.1. WCHG are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. We are committed to making our process' accessible and easy to use for all our customers in line with our statutory duties and our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- 13.2. If you require this policy in a different format, translated, large print, easy read, braille, or an audio copy, contact us by phone on: 0300 111 0000 or: 0800 633 5500 or by email: [inclusionanddiversity@wchg.org.uk](mailto:inclusionanddiversity@wchg.org.uk).
- 13.3. A screening document for this policy has been completed and reviewed by the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Panel. Following this review, a full EIA was not found to necessary.

## **Appendix 1 Legislative and Regulatory Framework**

This policy takes account of WCHG's obligations related to:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (as amended)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Building Regulations 2010 (England and Wales)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Building Safety Act 2022