



Gas Maintenance and Safety Management Policy

2022 - 2024

Date of approval	September 2022
Responsible director	John Burrell – M&E Manager
Strategy monitoring body	Board
Resident input into strategy	Great Places Panel Customer Experience Committee Scrutiny Group
Date for strategy review	October 2024
Linked strategies/policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive Repairs Policy • Void Management Policy • Asset Management Strategy • Electrical Safety Management Policy • Asbestos Management Policy
Statutory and Legal Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 GSIUR • Health and Safety Policy • Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
Version/date	Version 6



1. Aim of the Policy

- 1.1.** Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) recognises the potential health and safety risks associated with gas installations and general appliances within housing stock. The Group is committed to maintaining and promoting the Health and Safety of all employees, customers and members of the public that may be affected by a situation arising from the escape of un-burnt natural gas, LPG, or the products of combustion of burnt gas.
- 1.2.** The Policy outlines specific responsibilities to ensure that safe systems of work are implemented across all housing stock to create a great place to live & work. Specifically, it considers areas of work that may have an impact on gas safety including gas installations, non-gas properties and related trades.
- 1.3.** WCHG will implement all reasonable steps to ensure employees, customers and members of the public are not put at risk from the effects of gas, carbon monoxide or unsafe appliances within our homes.
- 1.4.** This policy applies to;
 - all WCHG employees and contractors undertaking work on our behalf
 - all WCHG managed properties, including domestic rented/leasehold properties and non-domestic properties
 - anyone likely to be put at risk from work on those properties
- 1.5.** For the purpose of this policy the term "Contractor" will mean those bodies outside WCHG who deliver gas work activities on behalf of WCHG.
- 1.6.** The term "Operative" will mean individuals employed by Wythenshawe Works or their Contractors who are undertaking gas work activities on behalf of WCHG.

2. Scope of the Policy

Assets and Services

- 2.1.** Assets covered include but are not limited to:
 - WCHG tenanted, leasehold & empty domestic properties



- Communal areas used to access customers' homes
- Offices, depots, community centres and other staff working environments managed or owned by the group

2.2. Services covered include but are not limited to:

- Investment work activities
- Planned and cyclical work activities
- Empty homes activities
- Other general gas work activities such as repairs

3. Stock Asset Information

3.1. Stock asset information in relation to gas installations and equipment will be held on the Groups Management Systems (Promaster, Orchard, First Touch and PowerBI). The gas management team will be able to interrogate a suite of reports held on this system to obtain information to ensure that all statutory obligations are being achieved by all gas service providers.

3.2. The Group will allow the attachment of electronic signatures to the authorisation of certification and works by the in-house gas qualified staff.

3.3. A record of each installation, renewal, repair or safety check will be kept for a minimum of seven years, in accordance with regulations.

3.4. All staff and contractors undertaking work on gas installations for WCHG will be Gas Safe Registered and competent for the categories of work they are expected to undertake. A recording mechanism will be employed to ensure this requirement is met with regular audit reviews in place by the Mechanical and Electrical Manager.

4. Energy Efficiency

4.1. WCHG are committed to providing energy efficient heating systems for their tenants in well-insulated homes thus ensuring that the running cost for tenants are kept to a minimum.



- 4.2.** The Group will review annually its investment choices and component renewals as part of the budget process to maximise value from its annual investment and prioritise affordability for customers.
- 4.3.** All new gas central heating boilers will be 'A-rated' condensing appliances. All associated parts and equipment will always be manufactures approved replacements.
- 4.4.** We will endeavour to move away from gas central heating boilers in line with the Groups Carbon Reduction Strategy but gas will remain the main source of heating/hot water for our customers in the coming years for existing homes.
- 4.5.** WCHG will annually assess the condition, age and efficiency of the gas central heating boilers to predict & optimise when an appliance should be replaced, maximising value for money. Replacements may also be identified through intervention and data insight from our Gas Repairs Team. Associated boiler pipework and heating emitters will be programmed every 30 years for renewal.

5. Training

- 5.1.** Training will be reviewed on a role by role basis by the Mechanical and Electrical Manager to ensure that all operational and management staff are sufficiently equipped with the appropriate competencies to carry out their responsibilities. Individual managers will be required to ensure the necessary training is provided for their team as part of the annual appraisal and business planning budget process.
- 5.2.** All training and competencies of all Contractors and their staff will be checked quarterly by the gas managers under this Policy and accompanying procedures with records maintained.

6. Service, Maintenance and Gas Installations

- 6.1.** The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 places duties on landlords of all properties to ensure that gas appliances, their flues and gas pipework are maintained in a safe condition. This duty requires that annual safety checks are carried out, and records are kept and issued within 28 days of



completion of works or in certain cases displayed to tenants. These duties are in addition to the more general ones that landlords have under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

- 6.2.** WCHG will service and check the safety of all relevant gas appliances annually, including gas pipework, in all domestic properties managed by the Group. The relevant appliance or appliances are those which cannot be legally removed from our properties.
- 6.3.** For properties that currently do not have a live gas supply, WCHG will carry out Annual Health and Safety Inspections including checking of smoke alarms and documenting expiry dates. The safety Inspection will enable the Group to verify gas supplies that have been installed by a customer and test and inspect other safety devices owned by the Group, (eg smoke alarms). The safety inspection will also gather key property attributes for the Groups Asset Management database.
- 6.4.** The Corporate Performance monitoring process will monitor compliance in relation to access for annual gas servicing of relevant appliances and flues, and Health and Safety Inspections. This will be done on a monthly basis and relevant information reported to the executive team and Board on a regular basis.
- 6.5.** An MOT style approach to Gas Servicing has been adopted by WCHG. In order to accommodate any access problems encountered, the Group will carry out gas safety checks within a window of 10 to 12 months after the previous check. Within the system, checks are treated as if they were carried out on the last day of the 12-month period (the anniversary date), preserving the existing expiry date of the safety check record, in accordance with updated current regulations.
- 6.6.** Commercial boilers will be on an 11-month Gas Servicing cycle. The Group will seek to minimise the use and installation of gas appliances in individual homes in high rise buildings, (i.e. over 18m).



- 6.7.** Where a tenant has connected their own gas fire to the chimney within a property, in order to be certain there is no risk to the Group, its employees, customers and members of the public, a gas safety check will be undertaken on that appliance. The safety check will include, but will not be limited to, those checks detailed in the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations, Regulation 26 (9). Gas fires or chimneys which are found to be unsafe will have the fire disconnected and appropriately labelled and the tenant notified. The safety checking of a tenant's own appliance may result in a recharge (see the Rechargeable Repairs and Recoverable Costs Policy).
- 6.8.** In respect of tenant's own gas cooking appliances, these will be visually inspected only, any areas of concern will be brought to the attention of the tenant and the industry adopted 'Unsafe Situations' procedure will be followed.
- 6.9.** The Group will continue to repair existing gas fires but where not economically viable the Group will offer a choice of leaving the disconnected appliance in for visual effect or remove the appliance and make good the fire opening, apply plaster finish, fit ventilation to the opening and fit all associated joinery.
- 6.10.** If repairs are required to an existing gas fire there will be a maximum repair cost of £100.00 plus vat per appliance, beyond this, the gas fire will be condemned and considered beyond its economic life.
- 6.11.** WCHG will adopt this robust policy/procedure and the gas team will ensure that all responsibilities are appropriately discharged and are delivered by the dedicated Gas Service, Maintenance and Installation Team.
- 6.12.** WCHG must ensure that all existing solid fuel appliances that fall within our responsibility are kept in good working order and are safe to use. We are responsible for carrying out annual checks on the appliances and ensuring that remedial works are carried out within an appropriate time scale. Tenants are also responsible for ensuring that WCHG is given reasonable access in order to carry out any relevant works involved in the maintenance and safety inspection of the appliance and chimney. Where a tenant has installed a Solid Fuel appliance without the Groups knowledge, the costs for the servicing will be re-charged to



the tenant. The Group will not allow the installation of solid fuel heating appliances, (including log burners) in properties.

Tenants have the following responsibilities:

Tenants are responsible for the property they occupy which includes operating any existing solid fuel appliance safely and in the correct manner. Safe use of the appliance includes burning only approved materials and that do not harm the environment; keeping ventilation clear & unobstructed and using a suitable fire guard. Tenants are also responsible for ensuring WCHG is informed of any visual defect to the appliance. These responsibilities will be routinely published to customers.

- 6.13.** WCHG will have in place a "Works Management System" to ensure repairs, servicing appointments and labour resources are appropriately managed to deliver this function effectively and efficiently (currently Orchard/).
- 6.14.** WCHG carry out all legal work supporting the gas servicing and H&S inspection process adopting an in-house Legal Support Officer to take prompt tenancy enforcement action if access is not gained. The Group will enforce recharges back to customers if authorised by the Courts. A separate detailed process is in place to ensure prompt escalation of "no access" cases. The Legal Support Officer will in addition have access to legal advice external to the Group and be routinely audited by an external legal review process.
- 6.15.** The Group will adopt a robust approach to Solar Thermal and unvented hot water servicing; this will be carried out on a 10-month servicing programme by an external specialist contractor, appropriately accredited for these specific areas of work.
- 6.16.** WCHG will remove gas fires when a property becomes void and make good the opening and joinery. WCHG will also remove gas cooker supplies in blocks of flats over two storeys when they become void.



- 6.17.** All void properties will have their gas capped off within 48 hours of being received. Re-connection will take place after the new tenant takes occupancy by mutual appointment.
- 6.18.** The Group will inspect all domestic front fire doors to flats as part of the annual H&S inspection/gas safety check in accordance with the Fire Safety Management policy and record findings within the Management System.
- 6.19.** The Group will continue to promote and trial other technologies to replace gas heating and trial Air Source Heat Pumps/explore new technologies in line with our Carbon Reduction Strategy. This remains under close monitoring and only when broader home retrofit occurs to ensure customers are not financially impacted by this change.

7. Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors

- 7.1.** All WCHG properties that have a gas supply will have a battery fitted carbon monoxide detector which will be tested as part of the gas safety/service check/Solid Fuel servicing. Where the Carbon Monoxide Detectors have been removed or damaged by a customer, a recharge for renewal will occur.
- 7.2.** Smoke Detectors are fitted and checked on the annual gas service/safety check and expiry dates recorded. Any repairs or replacements will be undertaken. Where the Smoke Detectors have been removed, a recharge for renewal will occur, all new smoke detectors will be mains wired with battery backup facility.

8. Gas Investment Works

- 8.1.** Planned investment works will be delivered by an approved framework contractor(s). In addition to the checking mechanisms within the original procurement exercise there are a range of procedures in place for measuring the ongoing capabilities and performance of the contractor(s) undertaking investment work. This will be overseen by the Mechanical and Electrical Manager.



8.2. All Mechanical and Electrical works within new build properties will be the responsibility of the contractor appointed by WCHG until the day of property handover to WCHG. All new build properties having a gas installation will be 100% audited by independent auditor.

8.3. All new build/shared ownership properties will require the incoming gas supply capped once ownership moves from contractor to WCHG, the gas will be recommissioned by WCHG via an appointment system on the first day of tenancy. From 2022, WCHG will only commission new homes for rent off gas grid.

9. Intervention

9.1. Where checking procedures determine that the service providers are not meeting statutory and/or requirements set out in the relevant procedures an escalation procedure will be implemented. This will allow the Mechanical and Electrical Manager to take action deemed appropriate under the escalation procedure against the service provider or operative(s) with an ultimate sanction of permanent removal from WCHG work activities. The gas team will adopt the Groups Incident Reporting Escalation Policy in the event of gas incidents.

10. Performance Measurement

10.1. In addition to the pre-work checks of contractors through the procurement process, there will be ongoing internal and third-party external audit regime detailed within the relevant procedures. This covers but is not exclusive to:

- Statutory compliance
- WCHG procedural compliance
- Compliance with WCHG gas specification
- Compliance with contractor's management arrangements
- Operative competencies
- Set annual targets of audits
- Track, monitor and report on audit findings and utilise as part of the contractor and operative performance management framework



- 10.2.** Provision will be made for the full collation and interrogation of audit information so that this can be used not only as contractor/operative challenge mechanism but also to develop the respective services moving forward.
- 10.3.** Satisfaction with Gas Servicing and Gas Repairs will be collated after each visit to develop our service offering and learn from any feedback.

11. How the Policy will be Delivered

- 11.1.** Third party validation audits will be based on a risk assessment format. They therefore do not rigidly adhere to set numbers of audits being undertaken, instead a risk matrix is in place, so as the amounts of audits can be either increased or decreased dependent upon results, this will be reviewed annually by the M&E Manager.
- 11.2.** Where contractors are employed, a percentage rate of quality control inspections should also be provided by themselves. Confirmation that a quality service is being delivered should also be verified by the WCHG's third party quality control provider, a minimum of 10% will be demanded but increased for new partners.
- 11.3.** All performance information will be collated by WCHG and held on a central electronic system.
- 11.4.** The Gas Team Leaders will undertake 10% audits of directly employed Gas Engineers and results reported and monitored/reported monthly.

12. Leaseholders

- 12.1.** Under the terms of leases, Responsibility for the gas installations in sold flats remains with the Lessee. WCHG will periodically remind leaseholders of the importance of having gas installations serviced. WCHG will offer a gas servicing option to all Leaseholders; financial charge levels will be reviewed annually and paid in advance for this service to Leaseholders. Charges will reflect the actual cost incurred by WCHG. The Group may undertake safety checks in high rise



buildings and chose not to recover costs in order to satisfy itself on the safety of occupants.

- 12.2.** Responsibility of faults and costs found on the central heating system and gas appliances will remain with the Leaseholder. WCHG will offer a solution and cost proposal in such circumstances.

13. Shared Flue Properties

Shared flue properties will be offered a free safety check of that gas appliance connected to the flue adjoining a WCHG property.

14. Management and Review

- 14.1.** WCHG is committed to the effective operation of this Gas Maintenance and Safety Management Policy and Procedure across the whole of the Group. WCHG will ensure that adequate resources are made available to implement appropriately. Responsibilities will be effectively delegated to key personnel that are sufficiently skilled and trained so as to competently manage the operational demands placed upon them.

- 14.2.** To ensure that the Gas Maintenance and Safety Management Policy and Procedure remains up-to-date and abreast of the 'best methods of work', WCHG will ensure that it is reviewed every two years or sooner should there be a change in legislation or regulations.

15. Equality and Diversity

- 15.1.** The Group will provide equal service in accordance with the Equality Act. The Group will develop services, facilities and working practices that are equally accessible to and appropriate for all customers irrespective of their gender, age, race, sexuality, transgender, disability, religion, marital status /civil partnerships or income.



- 15.2.** We will provide information in languages other than English, in Braille, Large Print, CD and Audiotape. Our reception and interview room are fitted with a hearing loop system.