

Housing Gas Safety Policy

1. Overview / Policy Statement

- 1.1 This joint policy outlines approach of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils (the councils) to managing gas safety and addressing the risks associated with gas appliances in the properties they provide as housing accommodation.
- 1.2 The councils' have a legal responsibility to comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended), the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Safety and Quality Standard, along with other relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- 1.3 Natural gas is a widely used fossil fuel in gas appliances and other heating sources. Natural gas itself is colourless, odourless, and tasteless, making it difficult to detect in the event of a leak. To mitigate the risk of undetected leaks, a chemical called mercaptan is added, which gives it a distinctive rotten egg smell for safety purposes, which means it can be smelt at very low, non-combustible concentrations. Natural gas itself is not toxic, but it is highly flammable, and this may cause explosions or fires. Incomplete combustion of natural gas may result in carbon monoxide production.
- 1.4 Gas and Carbon Monoxide (CO) related risks are present when gas appliances and other heating sources are installed in properties.
- 1.5 CO is a serious risk for anyone with a fuel-burning appliance in their home. It may be impossible to detect without a proper detector. Regular servicing and safety checks of appliances like gas boilers, fires, and flues ensure they operate safely and efficiently, reducing the risk of CO poisoning or gas explosions.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure that the councils, through their Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations team and its contractors, take all reasonable steps to minimise and manage gas and heating risks to tenants.
- 2.2 The councils will monitor the success of this policy through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These will track gas safety compliance with the goal of ensuring that all of their properties have a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR).

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all housing accommodation provided by the councils.

4. Roles and Responsibilities for Delivery

- 4.1 This section outlines the different roles and responsibilities for the delivery of this policy.
- 4.2 The RSH Safety and Quality Standard require Registered Providers of social housing to meet all relevant statutory health and safety requirements, including those related to gas safety. The councils are committed to ensuring tenant safety and compliance with the Regulator's expectations.
- 4.3 To reduce risks and meet obligations under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (amended by the Gas Safety [Installation and Use] [Amendment] Regulations 2018) and other relevant legislation, the Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations team will:
- Ensure gas fittings, flues, and appliances are maintained and checked for safety every 12 months by the appointed contractor
 - Retain records of safety checks for at least two years
 - Manage appointed contractors, the void process and any works required to ensure compliance
 - Provide technical support in relation to contractor works
- 4.4 If any appliance is found to be immediately unsafe it will be disconnected from the supply and a warning notice will be served.
- 4.5 The councils will arrange works to repair gas pipe work and appliances which are its responsibility to maintain. If the tenant has installed their own gas appliance e.g. a gas hob or own boiler in the home, they are responsible for repairing or replacing these at their own cost. Any repairs arranged by the tenant required to be carried out to such appliances must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- 4.6 As stated in the tenancy agreement, tenants must give access to our gas engineers to carry out the annual gas safety check. Failure to provide the councils with access may result in court action being taken against the tenant and will ultimately lead to the councils forcing entry to the home to carry out this essential safety check. Tenants will be liable for the councils' costs of any legal action or additional work needed in the event the councils have to force entry to the home to carry out these safety checks.
- 4.7 The Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations team will maintain records for installations, safety certificates, servicing, and inspections. Contractors will provide these records to the Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations team, which will store them in concerto and ensure all relevant data is available for monthly reporting to the Housing Delivery team.

All data pertaining to this policy will be stored and managed in line with statutory data protection requirements, as outlined in the councils' data protection policy.

5. Legislation

5.1 The relevant legislation is listed below:

- [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK](#)
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (amended by the 2018 Gas Safety [Installation and Use] [Amendment] Regulations)
- Housing Act 2004
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

6. Relevant Policy and Procedure

6.1 The relevant policy and procedures are listed below:

- Housing Compliance Policy
- Housing Electrical Safety Policy
- Housing Fire Safety Policy
- Housing Repairs Policy
- Housing Void Policy
- Data Protection policy

6.2 The relevant health and safety policy and codes for the councils will also apply to this policy. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- First Aid
- Violence and Aggression at work
- Workplace Safety
- Working at Height
- Electrical Safety Personal Protective Equipment
- Asbestos Management
- Incident Reporting and Investigation
- Manual Handling

7. Policy and Procedure

Annual Gas Safety Checks

7.1 The Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations team will arrange for a Gas Safe registered engineer to carry out an annual gas safety check on each appliance or flue provided for tenant use, whether through an appointed contractor or internal resource. Tenants will receive a copy of the LGSR at sign up prior to moving in.

7.2 If any gas appliances fail the safety check, they will be disconnected from the gas supply, and the tenant will be advised not to use them until they are repaired or replaced. Repairs or replacements will be prioritized according to our Repairs Procedure. Safety check records will be kept for two years in electronic format.

This may result in a temporary decant e.g. in winter or when a tenant has additional support needs.

- 7.3 The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (amended by the 2018 Gas Safety [Installation and Use] [Amendment] Regulations) allow flexibility in scheduling annual gas safety checks. The check can be done between 10 and 12 months after the previous one, while still retaining the original deadline date as if it were exactly 12 months later.

Responsive Repairs

- 7.4 Responsive gas repairs will be completed within the timeframes outlined in the Repairs Procedure, depending on the urgency. Major repairs requiring tenant relocation will follow the forthcoming Housing Decants Procedure (a process to move a tenant due to a home becoming uninhabitable, usually through fire/water/flooding/harassment). All internal flues will be checked to ensure there is no damage to pipework.

New Tenancies and Voids

- 7.5 Before any property is let, a gas safety check will be carried out, and a new LGSR (or equivalent certification for oil or solid fuel appliances) issued. Any faults identified during previous service must be addressed before letting, and a new LGSR issued. This will be recorded in the councils' IT system (Concerto) and the individual property compliance file.
- 7.6 If a self-contained property with a separate gas meter becomes void, the gas safe engineer must arrange to cap the gas supply within 24 hours of receiving the keys (or by the next working day).
- 7.7 Once void works are complete and the gas supply is reinstated or a new energy supplier is selected, the gas safe engineer will uncap the supply, conduct a full service, and issue a new LGSR. This record will be valid for up to 12 months unless further work affecting the gas supply or appliance safety is carried out.
- 7.8 For newly purchased or refurbished properties, a gas safety check and an updated LGSR will be required at the point of handover (within 10 days prior). The installer will provide a Gas Safe compliance notification.

Planned Maintenance

- 7.9 Cyclical maintenance will follow manufacturer instructions for appliances and will occur annually or as advised by a certified Gas Safe installer. Maintenance dates will be recorded in Concerto and the property's compliance folder.
- 7.10 In cases where no heating is available due to repairs or maintenance, contractors must provide suitable temporary heating, especially for residents with additional support needs. The Housing team may consider a temporary decant where appropriate.

Gas Safety and Tenants

- 7.11 The councils, or their contractor, can enter a tenant's property for gas safety checks with at least 24 hours' notice. Tenants must allow access for gas checks as per the tenancy agreement. If access is denied, contractors will inform the councils who may follow procedures to gain entry, which may involve legal action.
- 7.12 The councils will work with Contractors to ensure a reasonable system of gas servicing and repairs that is tenant friendly and considers the potential impact of any additional support needs or language barriers.
- 7.13 New tenants will receive information about gas safety, including how to use heating controls and precautions to take with gas appliances. Gas safety advice is also available on the councils' websites.

Appliances

- 7.14 The appointed contractor will inspect all council-owned gas appliances, pipework, and flues in relevant properties. This will happen as part of annual gas safety checks and during void periods. As part of a desire to move away from the use of gas in council-provided properties, gas appliances may be replaced with electric ones, and the gas supply capped off permanently.
- 7.15 New flue-less gas appliances (e.g., cookers) must be fitted with a Flame Supervision Device (FSD) to cut off the gas if the flame goes out. Contractors must note any non-complying appliances during safety checks and inform residents of the regulations.
- 7.16 Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) appliances, including portable gas barbecues, are not permitted in council-managed properties. Identified LPG appliances will be removed and, where applicable, replaced with fixed alternatives.
- 7.17 Communal flues in hostels will be inspected annually by an independent inspector. A report with recommended remedial actions will be provided to the councils if required.
- 7.18 For relevant domestic properties, a new LGSR (or other certification for oil and solid fuel appliances) will be completed following any work affecting gas appliances, pipework, or flues, including repairs to roofs, chimneys, or the installation of insulation.

Gas Safety

- 7.19 All suspected gas leaks and carbon monoxide poisoning should be reported to National Grid Gas plc at 0800 111 999. Only a competent Gas Safe engineer can reinstate the gas supply after a temporary shutdown due to a leak.
- 7.20 Gas engineers must report any incidents involving death or serious injury caused by gas installations, as outlined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

- 7.21 Carbon monoxide detectors/alarms will be installed in all council-managed properties with gas appliances. These will be tested through asset and landlord inspections and installed through the void procedure.
- 7.22 Smoke and heat detectors will be tested as part of the five-year Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) program. They will also be tested as part of routine tenancy inspections. This will be covered in the Electrical Policy.

8. Employment Contractual Status

- 8.1 This policy does not form part of the contract of employment for South Oxfordshire District Council or the Vale of White Horse District Council.

9. Communication and Contact Information

- 9.1 For further information about this policy, please contact the Housing team via email: email tenants@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422422.

10. Alternative Formats

- 10.1 Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Housing team if you would like this policy in an alternative format, via email tenants@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422422.

11. Change Records

Change Record	
Policy title	Gas Safety Policy
Version number	1
Owner(s)	Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations Manager/Housing Delivery Manager
Author(s)	Development and Corporate Landlord Property Operations Manager/Housing Delivery Manager
Approved by	ICMD
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