

Gas Safety Letters and Leaflet Review Resident Involvement Report

20 July 2020

**Johanna Winch
Customer Involvement Officer**

Contents

Report Purpose	3
Consultation Themes.....	3
Consultation Methodology.	3
Respondent profile	3
Consultation findings	3
Report summary	8
Recommendations.....	10



Report Purpose

The Group are reviewing the Gas Safety/ Servicing process. Whilst the Gas Team are always between 98-100% compliant, there are some customers who do not allow Southern Housing Group (SHG) access to their property first time to complete their service, which causes a delay to the process.

The gas safety letters and leaflet, which are sent to customers to book appointments and to follow up on any missed appointments, have been updated. Our resident reviewers were invited to give their comments on these updated documents.

Consultation Themes

The themes were to ensure that all documents were easy to read and understand, explained why letters are being sent, highlighting customer safety, included the right information and provided details of who to contact.

Consultation Methodology.

This report sets out the findings of the review undertaken by resident reviewers of the three gas safety letters and leaflet. Resident reviewers were emailed the documents and were asked to give their feedback either by completing a paper survey form, over the phone with the Customer Involvement Officer or by completing an online survey via Survey Monkey.

The Customer Involvement team were responsible for the design, co-ordination and delivery of the review and report findings to the Customer Services Improvement Team.

In line with standard research practice, and due to the numbers of residents involved, the findings of this review group cannot be viewed as providing representative feedback on the views of all the Group's residents. These results do provide an insight into the views and opinions of residents.

Respondent profile

83 residents were offered the opportunity to participate with 23 residents responding; via email, phone or survey monkey. There is also feedback from residents who did not wish to complete the survey but provided feedback.

Consultation findings

Letter Feedback

1. How easy was the 3 Gas Safety letters to read and understand?

1 found it satisfactory, 6 very good and 7 felt they were excellent

Comments:

- Clear and precise
- Very easy x 2
- I found it very easy to read and I liked the Red Text. It was enough but not too much.
- I didn't think it was that much removed from what we are usually sent
- Simple and easy to read language
- Although easy to read if the text is going to be highlighted in yellow this may be difficult for some people to read. Those with dyslexia for example, where some colours are difficult to read
- I think the letter was easy to read and understand

- At first, I thought the first one was too "chatty" but having read the following two I think you have hit the right note with all of them.

2. Do the gas safety letters clearly explain the reason why they are being sent?

4 found them very good and 8 felt they were excellent

Comments:

- This does explain why, but I feel that the legal implication should be spelled out from the outset. I know it is in the FAQ, but many people will not bother to read them.
- They emphasised the need for safety
- Very clear x 2
- Yes, they do explain clearly - I understand this is a legal requirement on SHG, and also out of consideration for the well-being and safety of people living in your properties.
- It is clear that it is for a gas check and the date, but I think the information about how to change the appointment or any other problems should be bolder.
- It was a clear explanation
- Feel they are fine – to the point etc.

3. Do the gas safety letters clearly highlight the significance of customer safety in undertaking the gas safety check?

1 found them satisfactory, 5 very good and 7 felt it was excellent

Comments:

- They emphasised the need for safety
- Very highlighted
- Yes –it explains clearly why the check is necessary
- Yes, it does, but someone with mental health issues might get panicked or anxious about this.
- Yes, it is quite clear
- Very to the point
- To keep customers safe and legal requirements to do so, so yes

4. Do the gas safety letters clearly encourage first time access to do annual check?

1 found it satisfactory, 5 very good and 7 felt it was excellent with one responding yes.

Comments:

- I think more emphasis needs to be put on the fact that this is a legal requirement and the process of what might happen if no access is granted.
- This highlights the necessity and the obligations for the check.
- It encourages the resident to have the check to be carried out as soon as possible
- I would do it
- I cannot see why anyone would refuse this annual check and the letter clearly explains why it is necessary.
- Yes, it was clear to me
- I believe so
- Feel the letters are fine generous giving 3 options to rearrange by calling or email

5. Do the gas safety letters clearly explain what the resident has to do next?

1 found it poor, 1 satisfactory, 5 very good and 6 felt it excellent and with 1 yes.

Comments:

- Yes, very clear
- Yes clearly
- Yes, keep appointment, what to have ready, how long it will take and call or email to rearrange if needed.
- Bolder and more inviting to contact SHG first if a problem has arisen, talking to 3rd party contractors can be a bit intimidating and staff may not care so much
- Yes - nothing if the proposed date/time is acceptable, contact and rearrange if it is not convenient.
- Very simple in its layout

6. Do the Gas Safety letters make it clear that help is available and who residents can contact?

1 found it poor, 3 satisfactory, 2 very good and 7 felt it excellent with one yes

Comments:

- It does not clearly state who they should contact if they have queries about the gas checks.
- It does
- It does give information on who can be contacted to re-arrange the appointment but does not make it clear that this is also for help if needed.
- Again, this should be bolder
- Very clear and concise
- Yes, can call or email

Do you have any other comments?

- I think for the foreseeable future there needs to be mention of COVID and that engineers will have appropriate PPE etc.
- One needs to be aware that some forms of dyslexia manifest themselves in the difficulty to see clearly some colours. If it is the intention to use yellow highlight on the gas leaflet this may be difficult to see for some people. All the information is there but I would suggest that the legal obligation is set out in the early part of this leaflet.
- I believe that all residents should either confirm or reschedule their appointments. This help eliminate wasted visits and confirms the resident has received the letter and/or leaflet.
- In this time of lockdown, what happens if an appointment is cancelled at very short notice for one reason or the other?
- No, they're very clear to read and get the message across
- No, they were self-explanatory
- The letters were clear and concise. I can't think of any way to simplify them or improve them, and they seem like they should work perfectly.
- Apart from the size of print on the leaflet and explained felt all is fine.

Leaflet Feedback.**1. How easy was the Gas Safety leaflet to read and understand?**

1 found it satisfactory, 5 very good and 8 felt it was excellent

Comments:

- Nice and simple
- It is fit for purpose
- Its easy but ugly
- It was concise and to the point. I guess you realise that one line has gone onto a third page?
- But is sounding like a threat not a vital service
- Easy to understand
- Very simple and straight forward
- On page 1 of the leaflet it would be better if all the yellow / red writing was the same size and all the black print was also the same size. This will make it easier to read and ensure tenants read it all, as it is all important. The smaller bits tend to get ignored which goes against what your trying to achieve. it is needed for the safety of the people so must be all read. Other than that, the leaflet is fine.

2. Do you feel the first page of the leaflet clearly show what the leaflet is for and would encourage residents to read it?

1 found it satisfactory, 3 poor, 6 very good and 3 felt it was excellent with one responding yes

Comments:

- No mention of the legal obligation to have this check carried out. Some people may not be bothered to read the FAQ on the back and may just throw the leaflet away. Consequently, the reader may only read the first line and not bother with the rest of the letter and view it as just another spam leaflet because their attention was not garnered with the leaflet in the first place.
- I don't like the flame emoji, feels cheap and too easy
- Yes – very clear and not too wordy
- As with all leaflets it depends on size, but honestly, I hardly read leaflets myself
- Didn't like the colour
- It is catchy enough to look important enough to read
- I believe so. It is bright and gets your attention
- As stated above, print should be the same size all yellow/red the bigger size, and the black print the bigger size, as its all important and must be read, currently some bits are smaller which makes it feel it is less important than the rest. If this was done I would give 5.

3. Does the gas safety leaflet include the right questions that residents may ask?

3 found it poor, 1 satisfactory, 6 very good and 3 felt it was excellent with one responding yes.

Comments:

- I can not think of any more
- Yes
- It covered everything I would ask, so yes.
- Yes, and I can't think of any other questions that may be needed

- I believe so except my question is always can this be done out of hours or flexible hours as I work full time and it is awkward to get someone to house sit or I have to take time off. However, I can see letter 1 does mention making an appointment.
- I feel it does! Feel the main ones such as 'What happens if I refuse?' 'rent arrears' etc.

4. Does the Gas Safety leaflet make it clear that help is available and who residents can contact?

1 found it very poor, 2 poor, 1 satisfactory, very good 3 and 6 felt it was excellent with one responding yes.

Comments:

- There are no contact details for support on the leaflet. I can see that there will be contact details of how to book etc.
- It doesn't have contact details of either SHG or the contractors
- I couldn't see anything that said help was available and who to contact.
- Yes, I think it is clear that help is available if there is any confusion or worry
- Yes, the contact information will be at the bottom
- Yes, having an email and phone number

Do you have any other comments?

- I don't like the yellow and red
- The leaflet is very concise and clear - my only reservation is that it does not give any information on who to contact if help is needed. However, if it goes out with the letter, the letter does contain that information.
- The colour on the front made the writing hard to read
- The letters were well written and very easy to read and understand
- The leaflet on gas I found awful. The picture is good, the wording on the reverse is far too small. The flyer needs to be A4 in size
- It all seems like good work to me and looks like it should work properly
- The leaflet is fine - perhaps it might mention that all properties are tested (just for those who suspect they are being targeted for some unknown paranoid reason - alas it happens)

Other residents didn't want to complete the survey but wished to share their experiences.

- Resident relayed their experience of gas servicing. Approx. 9 years as tenant, communal gas central heating but radiators in their flat have never been serviced. Andy, from K&T, is really good but another K&T colleague just ticks that flat radiators have been serviced even though they haven't. Communal radiator reported for repair and still not done and on full all the time. When spoke to a K&T engineer they were very rude to the resident. Happy to chat to project lead about their experience
- One of the biggest problems with gas service inspections is the system, I have received 2nd and 3rd letters not because I have refused, in fact I have sat at home waiting however KT never sent anyone to my home. It is really unpleasant to receive this type of letter for doing nothing wrong. More recently I cancelled my gas safety inspection due to having to shield as an extremely vulnerable person, yet they tried to strong arm their way in. The letters are brilliant. This resident is happy to chat to project lead about their experience.

- I live in east London which is covered by TSG, I had engineer just show up before Christmas NO LETTER sent to let me know he just showed up late one evening, I did report this to my HSM. I phoned TSG who made appointment for the new year, the engineer had on a sweatshirt for Robert Heath. He couldn't do the water pressure as the engineer last year broke the screw head a second engineer came out and the same this year, he requested a water fill. I kept ringing TSG I had engineer out three times in the end he just showed up in June at replaced the screw head it took him five minutes.
This resident is happy to chat to project lead about their experience.

- With reference to the surveys being done here at my scheme I am a little surprised that K&T Heating have not thought it necessary to wear PPE when entering the flats of residents, many of whom are very vulnerable. Face Masks, gloves and foot coverings should be worn. When they come here on 9th July, I shall not allow them in unless they are wearing this equipment.

This was followed up with Heating Manager who confirmed minimum PPE should be worn and this was relayed to the resident. Resident at the estate confirmed K&T wore PPE on visit.

- Communication, Communication, communication. Internal as well as external. Just this weekend we had a letter from TSG, arrived Friday or Saturday, announcing the yearly gas inspection for Monday. TSG knows from previous encounters that we are a vulnerable household, and again they give 1 working day notice. All this while shielding is still going on, and the previous check was only 8 months ago, so not immediate need for a new check. SHG should train subcontractors to be more considerate.

Report summary

The key outcomes have been summarised and reflect majority opinion from the qualitative and quantitative data:

1. How easy was the 3 Gas Safety letters to read and understand?

Overall 13 residents felt the letters easy to read and understand commenting that they were clear, easy to read, precise and simple. One comment liked the red text saying it was enough to highlight but not too much.

2. Do the gas safety letters clearly explain the reason why they are being sent?

Overall 12 residents felt the letters were clear with the reason they were being sent commenting that they were very clear, fine and to the point. It was requested for legal information to be spelled out from the outset and how to change the appointment needs to be clearer

3. Do the gas safety letters clearly highlight the significance of customer safety in undertaking the gas safety check?

Overall 12 felt the letters clearly highlighted the significance of customer safety commenting that they emphasised this. It was requested to consider how someone with mental health issues might become panicked or anxious upon receiving the letters.

4. Do the gas safety letters clearly encourage first time access to do annual check?

Overall 12 residents felt the letters clearly encouraged first time access commenting that they were fine, clear, highlights necessity and obligations for the check and gives 3 options for

rearranging appointment. It was requested to put more emphasis on the fact that this is a legal requirement and the process of what might happen if no access is granted.

5. Do the gas safety letters clearly explain what the resident has to do next?

Overall 11 residents felt the letters clearly explained what the resident had to do next commenting that they were clear they need to keep appointment, what to have ready, how long it will take and how to rearrange appointment. It was requested for the letters to be bolder and more inviting to contact SHG first if a problem has arisen, talking to 3rd party contractors can be a bit intimidating and staff may not care so much.

6. Do the Gas Safety letters make it clear that help is available and who residents can contact?

Overall 9 felt the letters made it clear that help was available and who to contact but suggested that they do not clearly state who they should contact if they have queries about the gas checks, does not make it clear that this is also for help if needed and contact information should be bolder.

Do you have any other comments?

- Consider information on what PPE engineers should wear during COVID 19
- If it is the intention to use yellow highlights on the gas leaflet to be mindful that some residents may find this hard to read.
- Legal obligation should be set out in the early part of this leaflet.
- Look to request residents confirm or reschedule their appointments to help eliminate wasted visits and confirms the resident has received the letter and/or leaflet.
- In this time of lockdown, what happens if an appointment is cancelled at very short notice for one reason or the other?

Leaflet Feedback.

1. How easy was the Gas Safety leaflet to read and understand?

Overall 13 felt the leaflet was easy to read and understand commenting that it was simple, fit for purpose, concise, to the point, easy to understand and straight forward. It was suggested that it did sound a bit like a threat not a vital service. It was requested to make sure text is the same size for ease of reading and that it was felt that smaller text people would ignore.

2. Do you feel the first page of the leaflet clearly show what the leaflet is for and would encourage residents to read it?

Overall 9 felt the leaflet showed what it was for and encouraged residents to read it commenting that it was clear, not too wordy, catchy enough to look important enough to read, bright and gets your attention. It was requested to look at having the legal requirement information at the beginning of the leaflet, keep the text the same size and the flame emoji feels cheap

3. Does the gas safety leaflet include the right questions that residents may ask?

Overall 9 felt the leaflet included the right questions and there were no further questions that should be included. It was requested to review if gas safety checks can be done out of hours or flexible hours due to residents who work full time.

4. Does the Gas Safety leaflet make it clear that help is available and who residents can contact?

Overall 9 felt the leaflet made clear the proposed contact details will be included. It was requested to include contact details for support.

Do you have any other comments?

- The yellow and red text was not popular and made it hard to read.
- There was reservation that it does not give any information on who to contact if help is needed. However, if it goes out with the letter, the letter does contain that information.
- The leaflet on gas I found awful. The picture is good, the wording on the reverse is far too small. The flyer needs to be A4 in size
- The leaflet is fine - perhaps it might mention that all properties are tested (just for those who suspect they are being targeted for some unknown paranoid reason - alas it happens)

Recommendations

These recommendations have been summarised and reflect majority opinion from the qualitative and quantitative data:

LETTERS

Recommendation 1 – To review the request for the letters to include legal information to be spelled out from the outset and how to change the appointment needs to be clearer

Recommendation 2 – To consider how someone with mental health issues might become panicked or anxious upon receiving the letters and how this could be overcome.

Recommendation 3 – To review the request to put more emphasis on the fact that this is a legal requirement and the process of what might happen if no access is granted.

Recommendation 4 – To review the request for the letters to be bolder and more inviting to contact SHG first if a problem has arisen, talking to 3rd party contractors can be a bit intimidating and staff may not care so much.

Recommendation 5 – To review the clarity in the letters for who they should contact if they have queries about the gas checks, does not make it clear that this is also for help if needed and contact information should be bolder.

Recommendation 6 – To consider including information on what PPE engineers should wear during COVID 19 and information on what would happen if an appointment is cancelled at very short notice for one reason or the other.

Recommendation 7 – To consider including in the process a request for residents to confirm or reschedule their appointments to help eliminate wasted visits and confirms the resident has received the letter and/or leaflet.

LEAFLET

Recommendation 8 – To review the wording to reduce the feeling that it comes across as potentially a threat.

Recommendation 9 – To review having the legal requirement at the beginning of the leaflet.

Recommendation 10 - To review including contact information for support in the leaflet.

Recommendation 11 – To review including that all properties are tested (just for those who suspect they are being targeted for some unknown paranoid reason - alas it happens)

DESIGN

Recommendations 12 – To be mindful that some residents may find some coloured texts hard to read. To consider the request for text to be the same size as it was felt residents would read it all rather than the larger text. Not to use flame emoji. Consider leaflet to be size A4.

WIDER PROCESS

Recommendation 13 - It was requested to review if gas safety checks can be done out of hours or flexible hours due to residents who work full time.

Recommendation 14 – To review additional feedback from residents about their personal experience with gas safety checks and follow up with individuals.

Feedback from Project Lead

Thank you for your comments and feedback on the Gas Safety Inspection letters and leaflet. As you know, these documents are sent in advance of an Inspection and with your help, we wanted to make sure that they:

- Are easy to read and understand
- Highlight the importance of resident safety
- Explain what the resident has to do next
- Make it clear that help is available

We very much appreciate you taking the time to review the documents as this will help us to shape and improve the information, we send to you, our residents.

Following your feedback, we provided a number of recommendations to the project team. I am pleased to let you know the outcomes for each recommendation, listed below:

Letters

1. To review the request for the letters to include legal information to be spelled out from the outset and how to change the appointment needs to be clearer

The first letter is an informative and friendly reminder that the inspection needs to happen, with the following letters increasingly emphasising the next steps, if the inspection doesn't take place. We don't want to worry or scare residents into the specific possible legal implications straight away, when many residents respond positively to the first letter and have their inspection carried out. The letters try to balance this and as a result, we've decided not to increase the emphasis on legal action in the first letter and instead have the 2nd and 3rd letters focus more heavily on this, if access hasn't been given after the first letter. 85% of residents felt the letters clearly explained what the resident had to do next, commenting that they were clear on how to rearrange an appointment, which was really helpful. That being said, when we start to use the letters, we'll continue to monitor their effectiveness and may come back to this recommendation in the future.

2. To consider how someone with mental health issues might become panicked or anxious upon receiving the letters and how this could be overcome.

This is a great point. Further to the first recommendation, we have attempted to reduce and deter resident anxiety and panic by approaching the subject in a gentle and welcoming manner. We've also provided contact details should the resident require further information or help. It's really important to us that we support resident wellbeing and our front-line teams will continue to work with and support customers where needed.

3. To review the request to put more emphasis on the fact that this is a legal requirement and the process of what might happen if no access is granted.

You're right, this is really important. We decided to take a phased approach, so each letter provides additional emphasis to our legal process. We have to keep in mind that many of our customers do allow the inspection to take place after the first letter, so we don't want to be too heavy handed. With this approach we've attempted to reduce and deter resident anxiety and panic from the outset. In letters 2 and 3 we increase the focus on the possible implications of legal action and what might happen should no access be granted. If residents still do not allow us to carry out the inspection, our solicitors also send a letter which again increases the focus of legal action.

4. To review the request for the letters to be bolder and more inviting to contact SHG first if a problem has arisen.

You're right, residents do need the option of contacting someone if they need any help. The letters initially explain that the contractor is available to assist the residents with the booking of any appointments. Generally, other residents during our consultation told us that the letters were clear in explaining what they had to do next, which was really helpful. However, we do understand that residents may need further help, so we've also provided a phone number to our customer contact centre, who are on hand to provide the service that our residents require and deserve.

5. To consider including information on what PPE engineers should wear during COVID 19 and information on what would happen if an appointment is cancelled at very short notice for one reason or the other.

This is a great idea. When we send each letter, we will also be including a resident guidance on home visits and Covid-19, including details around PPE.

6. To consider including in the process a request for residents to confirm or reschedule their appointments to help eliminate wasted visits.

You're right. Residents do, on occasion, need to reschedule their appointments. In the letters we've provided a day/date/time of an appointment, but we've also encouraged residents to get in touch if they need to re-schedule this, to help eliminate wasted visits. We'll continue to monitor any missed appointments to review whether we need residents to contact us to confirm their day/date/time, in future.

Leaflet

7. To review the wording in the leaflet to reduce the feeling that it comes across as potentially a threat.

It's important that the leaflet isn't seen as a threat which is why we have written it in a friendly, helpful and informative manner. 93% of residents felt the leaflet was easy to read and understand, commenting that it was simple, fit for purpose, concise, to the point and straight forward which is really positive. On the back of the leaflet we've also provided helpful answers to questions that are frequently asked, to reassure residents of our approach and to set their mind at ease before the day of the appointment.

8. To review including contact information for support in the leaflet.

We agree that the leaflet should provide contact details, which is why we've included details of the contractor at the bottom. We want to make it easy for residents to get in touch if they're unsure of anything, so we've also provided a phone number to our customer contact centre in the letter, should a resident need any further support. Residents provided us with feedback saying that "it's clear that help is available if there is any confusion or worry" and "the leaflet made clear the proposed contact details", which is good to know.

9. To review including in the leaflet that all properties are tested (just for those who suspect they are being targeted for some unknown paranoid reason - alas it happens)

We acknowledge your feedback, however we do have certain properties where we don't complete a Gas Safety Inspection, for example, Shared Ownership or Leasehold properties. This is why we don't mention that all our properties are tested.

Design of the documents**10. To be mindful that some residents may find some coloured texts hard to read. To consider the request for text to be the same size as it was felt residents would read it all rather than the larger text.**

This is a great point. We have decided to amend our letters and leaflet to reflect the feedback and we can confirm that no wording will be highlighted in red. We will also be reviewing the text size in the leaflet when completing the final design.

Wider Process**11. It was requested to review if gas safety checks can be done out of hours or flexible hours due to residents who work full time.**

You're right, many residents do have other commitments and we know that life can be busy, so we want to make the re-scheduling of appointments as easy as possible. The letters encourage residents to get in touch if their appointment is unsuitable. Once a resident has made contact, we'll work together in helping to find them an alternative solution, including offering appointments outside of working hours, if needed.

Thank you, once again for your feedback and we do hope that you find this information useful.

There are other aspects of the Gas Safety Project which are currently being explored and we can confirm that your thoughts and suggestions will be taken into account in these and in any future reviews.

We look forward to your continued involvement.