

Gas Servicing & Access Policy

Summary	This policy sets out how we will ensure the safety of people in properties owned or managed by the Group, that have gas-fuelled heating appliances.
Who to contact	The Heating Team
Effective from	February 2020
Planned review date	Q3 2020
Review frequency	Annual
Version Number	2

Contents

- [1. Policy purpose and scope](#)
- [2. Policy statement](#)
- [3. Roles and responsibilities](#)
- [4. Legislation and regulation](#)
- [5. Data protection](#)
- [6. Diversity and inclusion](#)
- [7. Value for money](#)
- [8. Monitoring our performance](#)

1. Policy purpose and scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of people in properties owned or managed by the Group, that have gas-fuelled heating appliances. Gas appliances and their associated chimneys and flues can pose a serious risk to health if they are not properly installed and maintained. We aim to protect the occupiers of our properties, as well as other residents, visitors, staff, contractors and the general public, from the risks of gas so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 1.2 We service and repair all gas appliances and systems installed and owned by the Group, whether in a resident's home or in a communal area. These responsibilities may also extend to the homes we manage on behalf of other landlords, depending on the arrangements we have for those schemes. The annual gas inspection also extends to properties with no gas appliances where there is an inactive gas meter or service pipe which requires inspection.
- 1.3 If we are carrying out a service or a safety check in a property where the resident has their own gas appliance installed then we will also make a basic safety check of their appliance. However residents must remember that they are still responsible for the condition and safety of their own appliances.
- 1.4 Any reference to 'we', 'our' or 'us' refers to Southern Housing Group.

2. Policy statement

2.1 Making sure homes are safe

2.1.1 We are committed to complying with the requirements of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and other gas safety protocols relating to landlord and building management provisions.

2.1.2 We will:

- service every gas appliance and system that is installed and owned by the Group at least every 12 months
- provide a comprehensive service to deal with gas repairs for these appliances and systems
- keep detailed electronic information (for at least 2 years) of all landlord gas safety records

2.1.3 It is very important that we inspect and service all of our gas appliances and systems every 12 months. We take this responsibility very seriously. To help us achieve this we appoint approved Gas Safe Register contractors to cover both day to day maintenance as well as our annual gas servicing programme. Allocating all of our gas repairs and servicing work to the same contractors helps us to organise and manage the work more reliably and provide Value for Money.

2.1.4 We have detailed monitoring arrangements in place to identify any properties where our annual check has not yet been completed, including where residents have failed to provide access.

2.2 Providing access for gas safety checks

2.2.1 Our tenancy agreements contain terms and conditions for reasonable access to be given for essential maintenance works. If access is denied we will take appropriate action to ensure that we meet our legal and regulatory obligations.

2.2.2 Where reasonable access has not been given, we will investigate other options available to ensure residents' homes remain safe. These options include the use of a forced access injunction or capping off (switching off) the gas supply. Capping (switching off) of the gas supply process requires a risk assessment to be completed and approved by a director. The contractor will then be instructed to attend the property and cap off (switching off) the gas leaving a notice on the meter and visit card through the letterbox; offering the resident to call them to attend within 24 hours to uncap (switch back on) and test the appliances.

2.2.3 We will contact residents to arrange the annual gas service and safety check at least 60 days before the current certificate expires. Our process includes the following stages:

- Our contractors will send a written request giving a date and time for the appointment. If the resident can't make this appointment they can contact the contractor to book an alternative appointment.
- If there is no-one at home when the contractor attends for the prearranged appointment, the contractor will send a second written notification of an appointment date and time.
- If access is not obtained following a second written appointment request from our gas contractors requesting contact, the matter will be referred to the Group's Heating Team who will then make efforts to contact the resident.
- A written appointment from the Group urging the resident to comply or agree an alternative appointment is followed up with a phone call where possible. We also assess any management issues (including vulnerability) which may explain the inability to gain access and attempt further telephone or personal contact to resolve the situation.
- If all of this has been unsuccessful then we will consider all remedies available to us. This will include the use of capping (switching off supply to) gas meters, seeking injunctions for forced access or instigating possession proceedings for a breach of tenancy. If legal action is pursued we shall seek to recover any costs incurred.

- If the meter is capped (and the gas supply switched off) then the property shall be added on to the 'No heating and hot water' property list, which is monitored by the Heating Team on a weekly basis. The Home Services Manager will be required to carry out a welfare visit within 1-2 days of the meter being capped (and supply being switched off).

2.3 Delivering excellent service

- 2.3.1 When we carry out service and safety inspections, our gas contractors will provide our residents with a copy of the safety record within 28 days, so that they know the gas supply in their home is safe.
- 2.3.2 When we carry out service and safety inspections, our gas contractors will disconnect or isolate any potentially dangerous appliances and inform the relevant department immediately.
- 2.3.3 When we carry out service and safety inspections, if a resident's own gas appliance is found to be defective upon our contractor carrying out a basic check, the appliance will be disconnected and labelled as dangerous. The resident will be advised immediately of the defect and advised it is their responsibility to carry out the necessary repair.
- 2.3.4 As well as carrying out these inspections every 12 months it is also our policy to ensure that properties are re-inspected every time a new resident moves in. For newly built properties this work is done at the development stage. For existing properties we will re-inspect just before the new resident moves in. If this is not possible then we will arrange a convenient day and time once they have moved in. Residents will be provided with a copy of the landlord's gas safety record.
- 2.3.5 If a resident is unsure whether their landlord gas safety record is in date, then they can call our gas contractors for advice about when the inspection or service is next due.
- 2.3.6 Where we are responsible for appliances or systems we provide residents with a complete repair service. This enables our residents to contact our gas contractors during normal office hours for a responsive service. For out of hours emergencies our residents can contact the Group's out of hours service, Monday to Friday, weekends and bank holidays.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chief Executive retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 3.2 The Executive Director Customer Services is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to enable the objectives of the policy to be met.

- 3.3 The Property Maintenance & Investment Director is responsible for the operational delivery of the policy and ensuring this policy is reviewed and kept up to date.
- 3.4 The Head of Customer Safety is responsible for ensuring that any associated procedures are up to date and that the policy and associated procedures are implemented, as well as responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training and policy development.
- 3.5 The Heating Team organises, manages and monitors the heating contract and annual gas servicing programme.

4. Legislation and regulation

- 4.1 The principle legislation controlling the installation and use of gas is the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 which came into force on 31 October 1998 and places duties mainly on installers, landlords and some gas suppliers.

5. Data protection

- 5.1 We are committed to taking all relevant measures contained within the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure the confidentiality of data. For more information on how personal data is used please visit our website to read our privacy policy www.shgroup.org.uk/information/privacy/what-data-protection-means-to-you
- 5.2 For more information on the Group's data protection policies and procedures please visit www.shgroup.org.uk/information/privacy/our-approach-to-data-protection/

6. Diversity and inclusion

- 6.1 The Group aspire to embed diversity and inclusion within all of our business activities to enable these principles to become part of our everyday processes.
- 6.2 If our contractors are unable to gain access to a property to carry out a gas safety check, it is recognised that there may be reasons for this such as a language barrier, disability, cultural needs or vulnerability. In these circumstances we will work with residents to ensure that their specific needs are taken into consideration where this does not compromise health and safety to individuals and the wider community.

7. Value for money

- 7.1 The Group's Value for Money (VfM) principle underpins the decision-making process for both procurement and delivery of gas services.

8. Monitoring our performance

8.1 In order to comply with current regulation, the Group has set a target of 100% for holding current Landlord Gas Safety Records. Gas safety compliance is reported to the Executive Management Team, the Safety Committee and the Board.

Author	Barry Stephens, Heating Manager
Approval date	18 November 2019
Approved by	Customer Safety Committee
Policy Owner	Property Maintenance & Investment Director