

Date: January 2009

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## **CORPORATE GAS POLICY**

### **1.0 Policy Statement**

As part of the wider requirement to maintain the Company's housing stock and preserve its asset value, SLH will provide a fast, efficient and cost effective maintenance regime and servicing programme that meets our legal and regulatory obligations to undertake annual gas safety inspections as required under the provisions of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. We shall engage with and empower our customers through a participative process so that they have the opportunity to contribute and influence the future direction of the Gas Servicing and repairs service

### **2.0 Introduction**

Gas servicing covers the provision of cyclical servicing and safety checks and related repairs to all properties owned or managed by South Lakes Housing (SLH) where there is a natural gas or LP (liquefied petroleum) gas domestic installation present.

As a landlord, SLH recognises that we have legal responsibilities to ensure that gas pipework, appliances, fittings and flues installed for our residents use are safe.

It is also a key component of our Asset Management Strategy ensuring that the useful life of individual heating system components is maximised and value for money optimised.

### **3.0 Aims and Objectives**

In conjunction with the Policy Statement, SLH has the following aims and objectives:-

- To maintain all gas appliances that are SLH responsibility in safe working order and to manufacturers' instructions
- To undertake a safety check and gas service at a change of tenancy and for every new tenancy, irrespective of the date of the last inspection, and provide advice to the tenant over the use of the installation
- To keep and maintain a record of services carried out by registered members of the current gas installer registration scheme and quality check a percentage of completed services to assess customer satisfaction and technical compliance with the current industry guidelines
- To fulfil our commitment to equality and diversity while delivering the gas servicing and repairs service to our residents
- In line with the requirements of gas safety legislation, to notify the tenant and/or disconnect as appropriate tenants' own appliances which fail the safety check. The tenant is entirely responsible for the repair or renewal of appliances not owned by the Company and must not attempt to reconnect or use an appliance as notified as potentially dangerous

- Each one of South Lakes Housing's staff, Board Members and contractors will be expected to adhere to the principles laid down in this policy and have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is actively applied in practice

## 4.0 Strategic Links and Context

### Legal Framework

- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1988

### Guiding Principles

- Tenancy Agreement
- Asset Management Strategy
- Communication Strategy
- Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

## 5.0 Key Standards

### 5.1 General

In order to meet our aims, we will:

- Maintain all SLH managed gas appliances, flues and associated pipework in a safe condition and carry out annual gas safety checks on all gas appliances and flues in SLH managed housing stock in accordance with the current gas safety regulations and legislation
- Ensure that all work to gas appliances and fittings are carried out by a competent and suitably qualified engineer who is CORGI registered
- Ensure that all gas appliance installations are fitted and conform to current legislation, codes of practice and manufacturer's instructions
- Employ sufficient and suitably qualified staff, consultants and contractors to enable us to meet our gas servicing and repairs responsibilities

### 5.2 Gas servicing

We will:

- Operate clear, concise, convenient and well published arrangements to complete the annual gas safety check, service and any necessary repairs
- Maintain a gas property database that clearly details the property's gas servicing history and date that the next service is due, the gas appliances installed, gas access procedure records and timescales etc.
- In cases of 'no access', we will ensure that we meet our legal obligations to complete the statutory annual gas safety check. We will do this where necessary through the use of legal proceedings in accordance with our procedures

- On completion of the gas safety check, service or new installation, issue to the resident a copy of the landlord's gas safety certificate (CP12) and maintain a hard copy of the CP12 on file for at least two years
- Annually review the effectiveness of our arrangements for servicing and the legal action we take to gain access by involving the gas team, subcontractors, staff, residents and legal service

### 5.3 Responsive Repairs

All responsive repairs to gas installations will be undertaken in accordance with 'Right to Repair' statutory requirements and SLH's 'Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy' with all work being undertaken by registered members of the current gas installer registration scheme. Responsive repairs to gas installations will mainly be undertaken as emergency or urgent due to the nature of the works.

### 5.4 Tenants' Obligations

Our tenants have a requirement to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy and take reasonable care of the building and its fixtures and fittings. However, with gas installations tenants have a specific requirement to comply with the law, not to use any dangerous or potentially dangerous appliance and not to allow any non competent person to work on an appliance on their behalf.

### 5.5 Customer Service and Satisfaction

We will:

- Seek to identify and respond appropriately to the specific needs of our tenants and ensure that every resident is aware of the importance of the annual gas safety check and service and are fully informed of their rights and duties in this respect
- Positively promote the importance of gas safety to our residents through newsletters, Bulletins and letters ensuring that relevant information is made available upon request in Audio versions, Large Print, Braille and in other languages
- We will undertake customer satisfaction monitoring and adopt a pro-active approach to customer feedback from the gas-servicing programme
- Develop and implement, in consultation with our customers, clear procedures to gain access to undertake the gas safety check and service every 12 months
- Ensure that the operative who installs a gas appliance or heating system on behalf of SLH issues the manufacturer's operating instructions to the resident and explains how to use the appliance controls
- Carry out quality assurance checks (including external audits at 10% of gas servicing properties) on new installations, gas servicing, repairs and landlord's CP12 certificates to ensure that the works and certificates are completed in accordance with current legislation and codes of practice
- Adopt a systematic approach to performance management in monitoring the gas servicing and repairs service; reporting the key performance results and outturns
- Implement the Company's Communication Strategy and encourage our customers to provide feedback on the standard of services they have received
- Ensure that all staff, contractors and consultants employed to deliver SLH's gas servicing and repairs adhere to the Company's Code of Conduct for staff and contractors and carry photographic ID

### 5.6 Training

South Lakes Housing will support craft training to develop a local sustainable workforce.

Craft training will use the modern apprenticeship scheme working in conjunction with local Technical Colleges.

South Lakes Housing will also encourage its contractors to fully support this initiative.

## 6.0 Quality Management

SLH operates a quality management system to the BS EN ISO 9001:2000 Standard that is verified by a recognised Certification Body, ISOQAR Limited.

Quality assured procedures relating to this Policy have been written and appear as follows:-

- QS41 Gas Servicing (Quality Procedures Manual)
- GSPR.1 Gas Servicing (Quality Assurance Manual)

## 7.0 Key Targets and Performance Indicators

- Percentage of gas appliances serviced on schedule
- Percentage of customers satisfied with gas servicing
- Percentage of customers satisfied with gas repairs
- Percentage of satisfaction forms returned
- Percentage of external audits carried out on gas servicing properties

## 8.0 Monitoring and Consultation

Reports will be made to the Board, South Lakeland District Council and the Tenants' Committee identifying performance against targets on a quarterly basis.

An annual report will be made to tenants and regular reports made to tenants groups.

Consultation will take place with tenants and tenant groups.

## 9. Responsibility

9.1 It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and senior officers to ensure that:

- staff are aware of South Lakes Housing policies;
- staff are trained on the policies;
- monitoring of records is maintained;
- customers are adequately informed of the policies;
- appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy

9.2 It is the responsibility of the Contract Partnerships Manager to ensure that:

- all relevant staff are aware of the Corporate Gas Policy
- all relevant staff are trained on the Corporate Gas Policy and the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- customers are aware of the Corporate Gas Policy

9.3 South Lakes Housing will develop procedures to ensure effective implementation of this policy and provide training for staff to ensure they understand the wider issues surrounding legislative framework and procedures.

9.4 The Director of Operations will be responsible for ensuring that managers oversee or co-ordinate the process and that they formally communicate with other relevant internal sections and personnel to ensure those involved in delivery are aware of their responsibility.

9.5 The Director of Operations will ensure that officers involved in the implementation of this policy are suitably skilled to deliver the required procedures to any agreed timescales.

9.6 It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this policy is applied.

9.7 The Director of Operations of South Lakes Housing will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.

## **10.0 Equality and Diversity**

South Lakes Housing recognises that there is a broad range of visible and non-visible differences that characterise its tenants. Some of these qualities include race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnic background, colour, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, literacy and income level. By understanding and respecting this diversity it is able to set a policy which ensures that all tenants are able to access services provided by South Lakes Housing in an equitable manner.

South Lakes Housing is committed to providing information and services equally and without discrimination so that they meet the needs of all sections of the community. These include our tenants, leaseholders and those living nearby or seeking access to or information on housing services in the South Lakeland area. In carrying out all housing management policies, South Lakes Housing's Equality and Diversity Policy will be adhered to.

## **11.0 Service Development and Review Priority**

Changes to the service may take place as the result of the work of relevant tenant orientated Service Improvement Groups. The policy will be reviewed at least once every three years to ensure that it is meeting the current needs of the community, and to ensure that it takes into consideration any changes to legislation at any given time.

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