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Gas issues

Phil Brennan, Principal Advisor

Gas issues



- **Facts and Figures**

- 23m UK homes use gas for heating, hot water and cooking. Inspections conducted by Gas Safe Register found unsafe gas appliances in 1 in 6 UK homes. What are your ratios?
- 250,000 illegal gas jobs are carried out each year say GAS Safe. How many are in your properties?²
- Carbon monoxide poisoning leads to 200 hospital visits and 40 deaths each year in the UK. ³
- 350,000 serious injuries and 70 deaths are caused each year by electricity
- 49% of Brits either can't remember when, or have never had an electrical check on their current home
- Of the 258 house fire related deaths last year, 146 occurred in homes without a working fire alarm⁴
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Performance Networks data



- PI 04 - Gas safety checks (financial year)
- Average – 98.80%
- Highest - 100%
- Lowest - 86.81%

- Top quartile 100%

	What length of service cycle others have in place (10, 11 or 12 months)	Whether external gas supplies or meters are capped off	If forced entry is used and whether powers under the EPA (environmental protection act), NOSP (notice of seeking possession) or other powers are used.
Falkirk	Plan first visit 35 calendar days before anniversary date of previous visit.	Gas meters are capped off at forced access visit if access is not gained into the property. Gas meter is also capped when a property becomes void.	Under Section 317(3) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and in accordance with the provision of the Tenancy Agreement, we are entitled to force entry to carry out work, provided that we have given the tenant 24 hours notice
Renfrewshire	12 months	External Meters are capped off if we do not gain access to property .Forced entry is used if internal meter is in property	Forced Entry " gain access " is used under Section 5j of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
Durham	10 months	You cant legally cap the gas meter without permission of the tenant (if we have a concern for safety you can contact the gas supplier who will then cap) we do however cap meter if the tenant agrees, usually this is in cases where tenant's are in dispute with gas suppliers or have no credit on meters. If we cap a gas meter we inspect every 6 months to check the supply and housing management are involved to look at tenancy sustainment and offer any help they can.	We no longer force entry but used to, we would go down the NOSP route but have not needed to yet (fingers crossed)

Leeds	<p>Housing Leeds operates a range of service cycles in different parts of the city - a 10month and an 11month. Analysis is currently underway as to the cost/benefit of each with a view to rolling out a consistent approach across the city.</p>	<p>Housing Leeds does not currently cap external meters of overdue properties. This option has been seriously considered on a number of occasions, but a combination of legal advice and consultation with tenants & senior management led us to consider alternative options.</p>	<p>Housing Leeds currently utilises both Section 80 (EPA) and Section 54 of the Housing Act. We find EPA a more effective and efficient route and employ this in the vast majority of legal cases pursued. Section 54 is retained as an option, but rarely now used, primarily because the injunction received does still not allow forced entry. As with many organisations, access is amongst the highest risks to Housing Leeds in relation to managing our statutory obligations. We manage a total of c.56,000 properties across the city and significant amounts of resource is dedicated to this matter. While a coherent and clear legal route is entirely necessary, it must be said that still the most effective way to gain access to hard to access properties remains persistence and perseverance, e.g. calling out of hours, cold calling. It is not missed by us that this comes at a significant cost.</p>
Anglesey	11 months	All gas supplies are capped on void properties, as well as when we service, but when there is no supply /credit in the meter	This authority does carry out forced entries with the assistance of S54 through the courts after receiving no access on two letter appointments
Swansea	12 months	We do not shut off gas supplies externally or cap meters.	<p>We use forced entry under EPA, once we have a no access to a pre-arranged appointment we put all repairs at the property on hold and no new repairs other than emergencies will be raised until the gas service has been carried out. Once we have two failed attempts to access we then pass this to our colleagues in the Housing department who will arrange for a warrant to be issued to allow forced entry to the property to allow us to carry out the service. This system resulted in us for the first time ever complete 100% of our servicing within the last financial year.</p> <p>We have in the past tried service interval timers and gas shut off valves none of which proved to be successful.</p>

Slough	10 months	In some circumstances gas supplies and metres are capped off. This is normally where a resident is not using the supply. In these instances the supply is still checked annually to ensure safety of our residents and properties. We are currently also investigating the user of inhibitors as a further measure to properties where residents go over our letter 3 no access letter or for repeat no access offenders.	Slough Borough Council as standard procedure follows a 3 no access letter procedure which at stage 3 is passed to our Legal Department to sometimes enforce access. Depending on the circumstances Neighbourhood Services will also work with Interserve and other departments should there be an alternative measure that is holding up access, for instance an environmental issue or safe guarding issues.
NCH	We are currently servicing on an 11 Months program. We will shortly be moving to a ten and a half month programme and we are also looking at a two tier system approach for customers who we always get access first time and those who are more problematic to get access to.	We do disconnect on the grounds of safety both at internal and external meters.	We do not force entry at this moment in time, we use court injunctions or the Housing Office will go down the abandonment procedure, possession notice. We are moving towards a 10 ½ months program with forced access using the terms and condition of the tenancy agreement.
NPT Homes	We currently work on a 11 month cycle (although preference would be 10 month if financially viable)	Yes, external meters are capped once the property is out of compliance and the No Access Policy fully followed	Yes, Forced Access is used as a last resort under the auspices of the Tenancy Agreement
Kirklees	11 months	No don't cap external supplies	NOSP
West Dunbartonshire	10 months	External meters are capped off where no gas cooking facility exists in the property	Forced entry takes place using clause 5.12 of the secure tenancy agreement. This requires that we serve a 24hr notice stating our intentions if tenant still refuses access to property.

2013 costs	
Powys	£39.50 for gas and LPG installations
West Lothian	Average cost for a gas service is in the region of £38.50, labour on
Swansea	Just under £30
Luton	<p>The cost of a Gas service including a LGSR (CP12) and a visual check to any additional appliance such as a gas cooker, is charged at £39.11. While the engineer is at the property a check is made to the CO and smoke detector/s which adds an additional £1.53 per item, making the average cost approximately £42.17.</p> <p>The engineers are also required to do any minor repairs such as case seals, which have an additional charge. At busy times LBC employ a subcontractor who charges £48 for the same checks that the DLO carry out.</p>
W Dunbartonshire	Cost of annual service per property = £29.17
Crawley	Service cost for Crawley Borough Council – Crawley Homes is £116 per unit (3* all inclusive contract)
Lincoln	The cost of a gas service and safety inspection from our current provider is £29.58, During the visit the contractor tests the smoke and CO alarm and completes a visual asbestos inspection and updates the asset register on a PDA.
Renfrewshire	Charge only for the time on the job and materials used. As there is normally no materials involved in the servicing of boilers and the servicing is approximately 1 hour therefore the cost would be in the region of £45.00 per service (including travel)
Bristol	Our cost for servicing £77 per property based on an average of 1.5 appliances
Stockport Homes	<p>Gas servicing contract - recently been retendered and now incorporated the costs to carry out breakdown and repairs as well as the servicing element (simplifies invoicing procedures and admin). Consequently we now have 1 invoice each month to cover the servicing and cost to respond to breakdowns. We carry out an annual reconciliation to make sure that property numbers and services carried out are accurate and to pro rata the rates to the actual numbers of properties serviced.</p> <p>In terms of servicing we paying £72.23 per property based on the tendered number of 8758 properties that had gas at the time. This rate is also used for any 3rd party works we may carry out (private owners and social lettings etc). The contract is fully comprehensive and covers the cost of most components eg pumps, motorised valves, also the cost for unfreezing condensate lines in the case of bad weather as well as servicing and checking the boiler, checking gas fires /electric fires, smoke alarms and immersion heaters where applicable.</p>
Blackpool	BCH Gas R&M contract is constructed on an 'all inclusive' basis. The cost to provide both servicing and repairs to each individual property works out at £115.44 This is paid on 50/50 split - 50% paid monthly for the repairs element and the remaining 50% paid pro rata to the number of services completed.
N Ayrshire	£28.88. This is per property not per appliance.
Kirklees	Service cost per prop - £36.45; repair cost per prop - £74.45; Combined cost - £110.91

Gas issues



- Evidence and records
- Access and availability

- Cost of a failed appointment?
- What is the cost of partial process towards forced entry?
- How much does forced entry cost? – Police, solicitor, joiner gas engineer, tenant officer
- What about getting costs back?

- Difficult tenants

- Alarms, shut downs, service reminders – how widely used?

- Get in at any cost?

Gas issues



- How many out of date premises do you have?
- 2015 - Yorkshire Housing, Guinness Partnership - contacted HCA about outstanding properties
- Gallions HA - 2 years after inspection
- Quality checks – post inspections of repairs; gas servicing or flues?
- Poor workmanship – Birmingham case
- What info do you have on capped chimneys or blocked flues?

Gas issues



- Asset data – what do you do with the information when you find a problem which might have led to an incident e.g. a blocked flue or suspect equipment?
- What about when you find that work has been done that is not up to standard?
- Electric or solid fuel checks



Audit

- What would an audit look at?
 - Corporate gas management policy
 - Specific contractor instruction /contract document
 - Qualifying contractors and operatives
 - Uniformity of documentation (LGSR, CP1, CP4, CP14)
 - Unsafe situations procedure
 - Gas escapes and carbon monoxide procedure
 - Access procedure for servicing



Audit

- What would an audit look at?
 - Voids and exchange procedure
 - Quality control procedure
 - LGSR storage and retrieval
 - Database management
 - Gas safety awareness (training and induction)
 - Programme for annual servicing and safety inspections
 - Responsive repairs via an external contractor



Audit

- Who would be contacted?
- Thoughts on policies and procedures
- Prompts - their role and the wider process
- Qualifications
- Audit and inspection
- Accreditation
- Implementation across all departments
- Awareness of the organisations responsibility
- Awareness of other departments



Training

- gas safety management in social housing qualification. Level 4 VRQ. (CORGI)
- 4 years old
- Unique industry specific
- Content
 - Gas Safety Legislation
 - Gas in Social Housing
 - Carbon Monoxide
 - Flues and Ventilation
 - Appliances, Meters and Pipework



Benefits

- Confidence to all staff with gas responsibility
- Backed up with revised comprehensive gas safety procedures
- Policies and procedures available to all
- Informed advice from colleagues
- Reduced risk for tenants, neighbours and operatives



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