

Policy title:	Gas Safety, Alternative Heating Sources and Carbon Monoxide Policy		
Scope:	Group - wide		
Policy owner:	Executive Director of Customer Experience		
Approver:	Executive Team		
Date:	Sept 2020	Review Due Date:	Sept 2023

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out how Aspire Housing will manage and control risks associated with gas appliances in properties where Aspire has a legal responsibility to comply with the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 2018 (GSIUR) and other associated statutes, regulations and codes of practice.

1.2 This policy also applies to Aspire owned and managed properties with alternative heating sources (e.g. electrical heaters, ground source heat pump, air source heat pump and oil).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a danger to anyone with a fuel burning appliance in the home. This toxic gas is odourless, colourless, and tasteless, meaning that most don't even know they are being poisoned. Regularly servicing of appliances such as gas boilers and other fossil fuel burning appliances ensures the appliances are combusting fuel safely and efficiently, minimizing the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning or explosion.

2.2 This policy is designed to ensure that Aspire Housing takes all reasonably practicable steps to minimise and manage risks associated with gas and other forms of heating to customers, employees, visitors, and partners.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Aspire is committed in so far as reasonably practicable to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of persons at its premises. A reasonably foreseeable risk exists wherever there are gas appliances and other sources of heating installed in properties. Aspire accepts that it is the legal Duty Holder for its premises, and has a responsibility to protect its customers, employees and others from the risk associated with fuel burning appliances. Aspire will provide resources, information, training, and supervision as is needed for this purpose.

3.2 The Governance and Financial Viability Standard of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) states

that Registered Providers, like whg, shall adhere to all relevant law.

3.3 The RHS's Home Standard requires Registered Providers to meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes, including gas safety.

3.4 Registered Providers are subject to regulatory intervention and enforcement action if found to have caused "harm or potential harm that may be caused to tenants by a breach of standards" known as serious detriment

3.5 In order to mitigate risk and meet the statutory obligations set out in Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 2018 and other associated legislation pertaining to the supply and maintenance of gas appliances and other sources of heating, Aspire Housing will:

- Develop procedures and processes that will support the implementation of this policy.
- Make this policy available to customers, staff and partners on the Aspire website and on request.
- Ensure all planned and re-active works are carried out to approved standards in line with the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 2018.
- Ensure that all planned and re-active work is carried out by a suitable qualified and competent person.
- Ensure all planned and re-active works on other heating sources are carried out by a competent person.
- Ensure all work carried out on behalf of Aspire Housing is completed by suitable qualified and competent engineer.
- Develop and carry out a programme of annual gas safety checks on each appliance/ and or flue in all properties where Aspire is responsible.
- Develop and carry out a programme of checks on all heating sources in all properties where Aspire is responsible. Please see 'Frequency Table' frequency of the planned programme.
- Ensure that all gas fittings, appliances and associated flues which Aspire own are maintained in a safe condition and are serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure that a Gas Safety inspection is carried out in response to a change in occupancy.
- Ensure that details records are kept and administered, including providing customers with a copy of the annual gas check record. Where there are communal gas appliances, a copy of the annual gas safety check records will be displayed in the communal area.
- Aspire Maintenance will write to all Leaseholders and Shared owners annually to offer a gas safety check/inspection on a goodwill free of charge basis.
- Ensure Commercial leaseholders are responsible for appliances in their properties and are required to provide Aspire with a copy of the annual Gas Safety check.

4. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION & RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 2018
- The Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure – IGEM11
- Health & Safety at Work Act etc. 1974
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985

- Aspire Housing’s Gas Procedure
- Aspire Housing’s Repairs Maintenance & Improvements Policy

5. SCOPE OF POLICY

5.1 This policy applies to all Aspire staff, partners & customers involved with the maintenance, installation & use of gas appliances and other heating sources.

5.2 This policy applies to the following locations

- Rented properties
- Appliances in communal areas
- Appliances in Aspire offices
- Void properties
- Mutual exchanges
- Leaseholders and shared owners, living in self-contained accommodation,

5.3 The policy also covers the following:

- All gas installations, appliances, and systems for which Aspire Housing is responsible
- Solid fuel appliances
- Open flue appliances
- Alterations to premises with a gas fitting
- All other forms of heating (e.g. electrical heaters, ground source heat pump, air source heat pump and oil)
- LPG installations, with the exclusion of Butane cabinet heaters being used in properties

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The responsibility for establishing a health & safety framework for the management of risks associated with gas & other heating sources sits at Executive Level. The Executive recognises the importance that is given to the management of Aspire’s assets from a health & safety and commercial perspective.

6.2 Under this policy, Aspire has appointed appropriate persons within the organisation to manage this area of risk with the support of appointment specialist contractors.

6.3 Duty holder for Aspire Housing

Duty Holder	Position:	Group Chief Executive
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The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for health and safety across the Group and will nominate appropriately qualified and suitably experienced people to discharge those duties in relation to gas safety and the safety of other forms of heating.

6.4 Compliance Delivery & Technical Competency

6.4.1 Operations Directorate

Overview of Directorates core activity areas:

1. Servicing and maintenance of all gas installations, appliances, and systems for which Aspire Housing is responsible
2. Servicing and maintenance of solid fuel appliances
3. Servicing and maintenance of open flue appliances
4. Alterations to premises with a gas fitting
5. Servicing and maintenance of all other alternative heating forms (Electrical heating, ground source heat pump, air source heat pump and oil.)
6. Installation of new boilers and alternative forms of heating through component replacement programmes
7. Commissioning of third-party quality assurance relating to operational activity
8. Test smoke alarms during annual gas safety check

Responsible Exec	Position:	Executive Director of Customer Experience
	Responsibilities:	Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and to ensure that adequate resources are made available to enable the policy objectives to be met
Responsible Person	Position:	Director of Maintenance
	Responsibilities:	To ensure that appropriately qualified and suitably experienced people are employed to implement this policy, that appropriate programmes of work are in place to discharge relevant duties, and to ensure compliance with gas safety regulations.
Deputy Responsible Person	Position:	Operations Manager Aspire Maintenance
	Responsibilities:	To ensure that inspections and servicing, and the data arising from servicing programmes, are compliant with regulations and discharge legal and regulatory duties. Provide such information as required to evidence compliance through performance reporting.
Appointed Specialist Contractor	Name:	Phoenix Gas
	Telephone:	01782 562038
	Email:	info@phoenixgasservices.co.uk
Appointed Specialist Contractor (QA)	Name:	Blue Flame Associates
	Telephone:	0845 194 90 38
	Email:	admin@blueflameassociates.com

6.4.3 Property Directorate

Overview of Directorates core activity areas

1. Management of assurance in relation to gas and other forms of heating in Aspire owned retail premises/Commercial shops.
2. Organisational performance reporting and monitoring of assurance in relation to gas and other forms of heating.

Responsible Exec	Position:	Executive Director of Property
	Responsibilities:	To ensure that an appropriate and robust performance and assurance reporting framework is in place relating to gas and other forms of heating.
Responsible Person	Position:	Head of Asset Management
	Responsibilities:	To ensure that appropriate and effective systems are in place, both to enable the reporting of performance and assurance relating to gas and other forms of heating and to verify the accuracy of records/data held.
Deputy Responsible Person	Position:	Compliance Manager
	Responsibilities:	To compile appropriate performance and assurance reports relating to gas and other forms of heating. To ensure that all relevant assets form part of the inspection and maintenance programmes relating to gas and other forms of heating.
Appointed Specialist Contractor (QA)	Name:	Blue Flame Associates
	Telephone:	0845 194 90 38

6.5

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

To ensure that the Company has adequately carried out its obligations under GSIUR, an independent Gas Safe Registered Quality Assurance Contractor will be commissioned by Aspire maintenance to conduct audit inspections on up to 5% of the Organisation's gas remedial and installation work. Copies of all audit inspections will be held on the contract file and made available to Aspire maintenance and the Compliance Team. Any issues raised will immediately be brought to the attention of the Gas Servicing Team and Compliance Team

The annual service programme address list will be reconciled against our Asset register on a regular basis with all issues raised immediately and brought to the attention of the Compliance Manager (Compliance Team) with appropriate action being taken.

A weekly performance report will be provided by Aspire maintenance to the Executive Director of Customer Experience.

Reports are to be provided to the Executive Team monthly showing the proportion of stock with a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) and for any property with an overdue LGSR.

Quarterly statistical reports will be submitted to the Board giving details of:

- Gas service progress including a periodic time banded profile of overdue annual safety checks.
- Performance monitoring

The management of gas safety will also adhere to the guidance provided in the Management Review, Objectives and Audit Policy. This provides an audit regime as follows:

- Internal audit programme
- Blue Flame Gas Audits – Quarterly
- C365 Compliance Dashboard
- Risk Map Reviews
- Compliance Updates

6.6 Access

Aspire Housing actively promotes the importance of Gas Safety Checks and the importance of access as required within its Tenancy Agreements.

Aspire Housing’s Tenancy Agreement states that customers “must allow access to the Premises for inspection, management, maintenance or improvement reasons when at least 24 hours written notice has been given. Additionally, we reserve the right for Aspire or/and our agents to force access in the event of an emergency without giving notice”.

6.7 Frequency of Servicing Events

FORM OF HEATING	STATUTORY/RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY	ASPIRE FREQUENCY
Domestic LGSR	12 - Monthly	Aspire operate on a 10 - Monthly programme
Non-Domestic (communal schemes)	6 - Monthly	Less if identified by an engineer's recommendation
Solid Fuel	6 - Monthly	Aspire service solid fuel appliances twice per year within a programme that is completed in March and September, regardless of previous service anniversary dates. This is in line with best practice relating to the start / end of heating seasons
Alternative Heating Sources	12 - Monthly	Aspire operate on a 10 - Monthly programme

Smoke alarms	12 - Monthly	Aspire operate on a 10 - Monthly programme in line with gas servicing properties
Carbon monoxide alarms	12 - Monthly	Less if identified by an engineer's recommendation

6.8 Annual Gas Safety Inspection and Service Content

Under GSIUR all appliances owned by Aspire Housing have to be checked in respect of the effectiveness of any flue, the supply of combustion air (ventilation), operating pressure or heat input or, where necessary both, and operation so as to ensure safe operation

Every property regardless of whether there is a gas supply or record of any gas appliances will be checked to ensure that the supply is safe and that no appliance or meter has been installed without the Company's knowledge. Every property where a tightness test can be carried out will be tested. Any capped gas supplies or redundant supplies will be tested with leak detection fluid to ensure there are no gas escapes.

This safety inspection will also include any of the customer's own appliances. Cookers will be subject to a visual safety check only and all carbon monoxide alarms will be tested as per the manufacturer's instructions or replaced as per the 10 year life cycle of the alarm.

Also, during the annual safety inspection, Aspire maintenance will install carbon monoxide alarms in properties on an annual installation programme. Alarms will be installed for each fuel burning appliance within the property, regardless on the number of appliances. The alarms will be fitted as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Gas fires will be serviced in line with manufacturer's recommendations where available. If the manufacturer's instructions are not available, the Contractor will isolate the gas supply until the manufacturer's instructions are available. The Contractor will source the manufacturer's instructions and when available the Contractor will arrange a re-visit to carry out the service.

Aspire will incentivise the removal of gas fires by offering to install an electric fire at no cost to the customer.

Where other forms of heating appliances are provided by Aspire, these will be serviced to the manufacturer's instructions.

The customer will be provided with a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Record following completion of the inspection.

6.9 Leaseholder and Shared Ownership Gas Safety

All Shared Owners and Residential Leaseholders will be written to at their home address (and the

correspondence address if applicable). There will only be one annual letter offering a free gas safety/property safety check sent to this type of tenure. It is the responsibility of leaseholders and shared owners to ensure that their gas and heating appliances remain safe in use and the offer from Aspire Housing is on a goodwill basis.

Retail leaseholders are responsible for ensuring that their gas and heating appliances remain safe in use and will be expected to provide evidence to support this in line with the terms of their lease.

6.10 Open Flue/ Flueless Gas Appliances

Aspire is committed to the removal of all open flue and flueless gas appliances (except for natural gas cookers) from its housing stock due to the high risk nature of these appliances. This will be delivered through the following means:

- Faulty gas fires or flue's beyond economic repair will not be repaired but will be removed and a replacement electric fire will be offered to the customer and if the customer does not want an electric fire the opening will be made good and any vacant the pipes / supply being permanently removed.
- Removal of all gas fires installed in properties where a new boiler installation is undertaken (with the agreement of the customer).
- Removal of gas fires from all void properties.
- Permission will be refused to customers for any open flue or flu-less gas appliance to be installed within one of its properties (other than a natural gas cooker). If an open flue or flueless gas appliance is identified, it will be removed and the customer maybe subject to a removal charge.

Where a gas fire is removed, the flue opening will be bricked up and the gas supply permanently removed and cut back as far as is reasonably practicable to remove any dead legs.

The radiator located in the room from which the gas fire has been removed shall be adequately sized to heat the room sufficiently and will be replaced if required.

An electric fire will be offered to customers by the engineer on site. Where an agreement cannot be reached, Aspire may incentivise removals by offering a complete fire suite in these cases.

6.11 Customers Sleeping in a Room which contains an Open Flue Appliance

Aspire will not permit any person to sleep in a room which contains an open flue heating appliance.

If any person is found to be sleeping (or there is evidence that suggests that the person is sleeping) in a room which contains an open flue appliance the appliance will either be immediately disconnected until the person is able to stop using the room as sleeping accommodation or the appliance will be replaced with one which meets the minimum requirements (i.e. a room sealed appliance).

Every occasion upon which a person is found to be sleeping in a room which contains an open flued

appliance, the information and the outcome will be recorded by Aspire Maintenance within Orchard and the Compliance Manager of Asset Management advised for recording within Keystone.

If the customer refuses to allow access for the situation to be verified and the appliance is disconnected, then Aspire will follow the Access Procedure.

6.12 Solid Fuel Appliances

Aspire is committed to the removal of all solid fuel appliances from its housing stock. This will be delivered through the following means:

- A programme of future work to ensure that all solid fuel appliances (which form the main source of heating to the property) will be replaced with an alternative heating solution.
- If a solid fuel appliance is beyond economic repair, Aspire will aim to decommission the appliance and replace it with an alternative heating source.
- Removal of all solid fuel appliances installed in properties where a new boiler installation is undertaken.
- Removal of solid fuel appliances from all void properties and replacement with an alternative heating solution.
- Permission will be refused to customers for any solid fuel appliance to be installed within one of its properties.
- Aspire will incentivise the removal of any solid fuel appliance for which permission was previously granted through the offer of a replacement system or compensation. Aspire will remove and make good these installations at no cost to the customer.
- Where a solid fuel appliance is found of which Aspire has had no record, it will be decommissioned and removed as a matter of urgency with the cost associated with the work recharged to the customer.

The radiator located in the room from which the solid fuel appliance has been removed shall be adequately sized to heat the room sufficiently and will be replaced if required.

An electric fire will be offered to customers aged 55 or above and to vulnerable customers. Aspire may incentivise removals by offering a complete fire suite in these cases.

6.13 Alterations to Premises where there is an existing gas fitting (Regulation GSIUR)

Before an alteration is undertaken to premises where a gas appliance is installed (e.g. installation or removal of windows, air bricks, extractor fan units etc) any implications for gas appliance/fitting safety need to be properly addressed. In some cases, the effects of particular work for gas safety may be obvious. For example, where a chimney is being reduced in height or capped, its effectiveness in removing flue gases may be drastically affected.

Irrespective of how obvious the implications of the work are for gas safety, colleagues need to keep these matters in mind, and ensure they are properly addressed when alterations to premises are planned. Colleagues with specific responsibility for commissioning and delivering repairs, alterations

or improvements to Aspire properties must ensure that risk assessments take account of any implications for existing gas installations.

Any information relevant to alterations of premises where there is an existing gas fitting will be recorded by Aspire maintenance on Orchard.

6.14 Customer's Own Appliances and Improvements

Customers must request permission from Aspire for the installation of any natural gas appliances. Permission will be refused for the installation of any open flue, flueless appliance and LPG appliance, therefore permission only applies to the installation of natural gas cooker installations.

Any gas appliance (natural gas cooker) which the customer wishes to install must be installed by a suitably qualified Gas Safe Registered Engineer, following all installations Aspire must be provided with a certificate confirming the appliance is safe to use and details the specific requirements described in Regulation 26/9 (GSIUR 2018).

This includes the fitting of smart meters, where customers may have been contacted directly by utility companies.

Where customers ask permission to carry out their own improvements, for example the erection of a porch or extension, consideration must be given to the gas installation, appliances and flues in reaching a decision about whether to allow the works, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the GSIUR.

6.15 Gas Escapes including Carbon Monoxide (CO) activations

All reports of gas escapes (including CO activations will initially be attended by the national emergency service provider who will make the installation safe.

Aspire Housing should be notified immediately after attendance (by national emergency service provider) if the gas supply has been disconnected due to a gas escape or if there has been a CO (Carbon Monoxide) activation. When notified of any gas escape (either natural gas or CO) Aspire will attend to all reported natural gas escapes, locate the leak and complete any required work to ensure the installation is left "tight" (i.e. free from any drop in tightness)

All reports of CO activation will be attended by Aspire's nominated Contractor who will investigate and leave the installation safe. Should any further work be required the Contractor is responsible for notifying Aspire.

Following the investigation completed by the Contractor, Aspire maintenance will install a carbon monoxide alarm at the property and will advise the customer on what to do if the alarm activates.

All Gas escapes require the completion of all relevant certification. Aspire Response will be responsible for checking any paperwork in relation to Gas Escapes and for updating Orchard, C365 and Keystone systems.

Aspire Response will be responsible for checking any paperwork in relation to inspections, repairs, and installations and for updating the attributes on the Orchard, Keystone systems as well as report flammable gas incidents to the HSE

7. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Gas Fittings** - Gas pipework, valves, regulators and meters, and fittings, apparatus and appliances designed for the use of the consumer for heating, lighting, cooking, or other purposes for which gas can be used.
- b. **Gas Safe Register** – the official register of gas engineers who are registered to work safely and legally on gas appliances.
- c. **Contractor** – Supplier appointed by Aspire Housing to carry out work on behalf of Aspire housing.
- d. **Staff/Employees** - Any person employed by Aspire
- e. **Duty Holder** - The Duty Holder, the person(s) with overall responsibility for Aspire Housing premises and must appoint someone competent to ensure that Aspire Housing comply with its health and safety duties to take responsibility for managing the risks.
- f. **Responsible Person** - The responsible person should have sufficient authority, competence and knowledge, to ensure that all operational procedures are carried out in a timely and effective manner. The responsible person should have a clear understanding of their duties and the overall health and safety management structure and policy in the organisation.
- g. **Alternative Heating Forms** – Properties which contain electrical storage heaters as their main source of heating will receive a property safety check and will be issued a Landlords gas safety certificate, electrical storage heaters will be tested during their Electrical inspection condition report on a five-yearly cycle. Air Source heat pumps, Ground source heat pumps and Oil boilers will be serviced annually as per their manufacturer’s instructions.

8. POLICY REVIEW

Reviews and amendments to this policy and the associated access procedure will include all relevant stakeholders in the Operations and Property Directorates.