

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 3 June 2021

## Gas Service Improvement Plan

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee are asked to note:
  - 1.1.1 The progress made and the updated action plan for the Gas Service Improvement Plan since it was presented to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on [23 March 2021](#); and
  - 1.1.2 That progress will be reported to Committee as part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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# Report

## Gas Service Improvement Plan

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on the progress made with the Gas Service Improvement Plan since it was presented to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on the [23 March 2021](#). Details were set out in the plan to build on and improve the Council's approach to gas safety. The report has been referred to this committee.
- 2.2 An update of the Gas Service Improvement Plan is attached at Appendix 1.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 On the 23 March 2021 the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee considered a report on a Gas Service Improvement Plan, which provided details on the history of inspection, the review of the Council's gas inspection and management and maintenance.
- 3.2 This report was referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee and is attached under the restricted agenda for this meeting.
- 3.3 This report set out Gas Safety Improvement Plan to build on and improve the Council's approach to gas safety.

### 4. Main Report

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- 4.1 Good progress has been made with taking the action plan as set out below:
  - 4.1.1 CORGI have reviewed Housing Property's policy, procedures and processes in relation to all aspects of Gas. Specific training events and briefing sessions are currently being delivered to embed these into working practices;
  - 4.1.2 Covid-19 risk plan has been reviewed which has enabled the safe re-introduction of gas force entry. This has driven up the percentage of 'in date' gas services from 86% to 94%. The remaining 6% will be achieved by mid July 2021.
  - 4.1.3 Training has been delivered by CORGI to all gas engineers and team leaders on the most up to date Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulation. Gas

team leaders have also enrolled onto an 18-month training programme facilitated by CORGI, a level 4 Gas Safety Management in Social Housing.

4.1.4 A suite of specific gas meetings is now set up. These include team meetings, toolbox talks, contractor reviews, audit and compliance, service improvement and performance. These meetings are now embedded as business as usual.

4.1.5 An on-site coaching template has been produced and will be trialled now that Covid-19 restrictions have been relaxed.

4.1.6 An initial assessment has been completed by CORGI and a plan is in place for Housing Property to become CORGI Gas accredited.

4.2 Further work is required to recruit a Health and Safety/Life and Limb specialist as a previous recruitment process failed to attract a suitable candidate. A second recruitment phase is currently underway.

## **5. Next Steps**

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5.1 Progress will be reported to Committee as part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan. Updates are provided to Committee on a six-monthly basis, with the next report due in January 2022.

## **6. Financial impact**

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6.1 The repairs service is paid for by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is funded from tenants' rents, fees and service charges for services provided to tenants and assets held on the HRA account.

6.2 Costs incurred as a result of the Gas Service Improvement Plan are managed within service budgets.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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7.1 Quarterly meetings take place with the Edinburgh Tenants Federation to discuss repairs, maintenance and performance. Gas safety progress updates will be provided through these discussions.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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9.1 Appendix 1 – Gas Service Improvement Plan.

**APPENDIX 1**

**CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING PROPERTY SERVICE - GAS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021**

**SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: WILLIE GILHOOLY**

**LEAD OFFICER: CAROL REID**

**This plan will be reviewed quarterly and amended as required**

**FEBRUARY 2021 (UPDATED MAY 2021)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out the gas service improvement plan for 2021.

The plan takes account of the findings of various audits, inspections and reviews over the last four years. While some progress has been made, the overall approach to service improvement has been fragmented and has not been as effective as it could have been.

These issues have been addressed in the development of this plan, which includes areas for improvement in record keeping, training and the management of processes and procedures.

The plan places an emphasis on enhancing a working culture that:

- promotes ownership and responsibility;
- deepens understanding of risk and how it is managed;
- actively seeks improvement and challenge;
- builds supportive teams;
- enhances skills through training and professional development; and
- embraces new technology to support service delivery and customer care.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Council has legal duties to ensure the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems within tenants' homes. As an employer of gas engineers and as a landlord the Housing Property service is responsible for maintaining gas fittings and flues in a safe condition and carrying out safety checks for appliances and flues. Maintenance is carried out by an accredited in-house Council team and external accredited contractors.

All gas businesses must be registered with Gas Safe, the approved gas registration body of gas business and engineers in the UK. Gas Safe have a team of inspectors who monitor that gas work is being undertaken competently and safely.

Over the last four years these services have been subject to a series of external audits and inspections, including two by Gas Safe Register in 2017 and 2019.

In 2017, the Gas Safe Register inspection identified 21 areas for improvement, 19 areas that were satisfactory and 3 areas of non-compliance out of a total of 43 categories. The areas of non-compliance were corrected immediately and refresher training for team leaders and engineers was undertaken jointly with Gas Safe following the inspection.

In 2019, Gas Safe Register carried out a further inspection against 51 categories. The inspection identified 10 categories for improvement, 41 categories that were satisfactory and no non-conformities. Six of the ten categories for improvement were also identified in 2017.

Prior to the inspections by Gas Safe Register, the service commissioned a Fitness Check from Capita in August 2016. Capita found that, while the gas team had a good overall understanding of the requirements for managing gas safety, there were areas of concern. These were that some operational documents and work practices which were out of date and in need of re-evaluation and update and records did not accurately reflect the competence, experience and training of gas engineers. Some of these concerns were reflected in the areas for improvement identified in the 2017 Gas Safe audit.

In 2020, a further review of the management of gas safety was undertaken. This concluded that, at times, the service had been slow to action recommendations and that the same areas for improvement had been identified in successive reviews. The review welcomed the commission of Corgi to provide additional oversight, gas auditing services and technical support.

## **IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The plan sets out a programme of skills development, training and support for gas team leaders and has an increased focus on professional development. Plans to provide additional on-site training, coaching and support to gas team leaders and engineers have been delayed for much of 2020 following the adoption of safe working practices and regulations to control the spread of infection (Covid-19). However alternative approaches to providing training, coaching and support, including the use of empty homes and technology have been set out in this improvement plan.

## **IMPROVEMENT PLAN STRATEGY**

The improvement plan seeks to strengthen the service's approach to protecting the safety and well-being of our tenants, protecting them from the risk of harm and reducing the risk of gas related accidents.

The plan aims to address weaknesses in record keeping, processes and training.

The improvement plan also includes preparation to join the Corgi Quality Accreditation Scheme for landlords and contractors towards the end of 2021/early 2022. Accreditation covers ethos and policies, work scope, training and qualifications, work allocation, supervision and quality control, procedures, work documentation, technical support, gas compliance procedures and working with contractors.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The plan will be reviewed with Corgi Technical Services and updated to reflect the development of the plan through specific stages, with key milestones to be achieved at each stage. Planned actions will be aligned to these milestones at regular review points.

The Housing Property Gas Service Board will have oversight of the service improvement plan and operational performance. It will be chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer and will include Operations Managers (from within the Housing Property Service) representation from Corgi and Gas Service Team Leaders and will meet monthly.

## GAS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - ACTION PLAN

On track to complete on time/has been completed on time	At risk of completing on time	Completed late/will be completed late
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### 1. Compliance

	Action	Completion Date	Status	Owner
1.1	Review annual inspections COVID risk plan and identify further measures to maximise compliance with annual inspection requirement. (TEAM: Consult with Corgi)	February 2021	Complete	WC/CR
1.2	Internal compliance review of policy and procedures. Review against Gas Safe inspection categories and improvement actions from 2019 inspection and changes to operational processes. (TEAM)	February 2021	Complete	CR/WC
1.3	External (Corgi) compliance review of policy and procedures. Review against Gas Safe compliance checklist and improvement actions from 2019 inspections. To include Housing Property's Current Gas Procedure (version 5) (CORGI)	March 2021	Complete	CR/WC
1.4	Implement monthly briefing and contract review meeting with new framework contractors. (TEAM with Corgi)	April 2021	Complete	TB/WC
1.5	Review team leader essential task and responsibilities check list. (TEAM with Corgi)	June 2021	Complete	TB/WC
1.6	Review checklist compliance and audit team to meet risk and statutory requirements. (TEAM with Corgi)	April 2021	Complete	TB/WC
1.7	Corgi to undertake Gas Safe + Mock Inspection Stage One – improvements and non-compliances to be addressed. (Corgi lead with TEAM)	May/June 2021	To follow 2.1 completion	TB/WC
1.8	Corgi to undertake Gas Safe + Mock Inspection Stage Two – improvements and non-Corgi to be tested. (Corgi lead with TEAM)	Aug/Sept 2021	To follow 1.7 completion	TB/WC
1.9	Gas Contractor Review – carry out review of a) contractor policy and process and b) performance. (TEAM/Corgi)	July/August 2021	On track for 3 month after new contracts start.	WC
1.10	Monthly Audit and Compliance Review with CORGI – Report on Risks and Issues. To involve Senior Manager/Operations Manager and, Team Leaders. (TEAM with Corgi)	Ongoing	Complete	TB

## 2. Skills, Training and Coaching

2	Action	Completion Date	Status	Owner
2.1	Policy and Process Refresh Day Training – Gas Team Leaders, Operations Managers as appropriate (Corgi). Update – series of workshops over 8 sessions started	April 2021 October 2021	Progressing	CR/WC
2.2	On Site Coaching Day training - Gas Team Leaders, Operations Managers as appropriate (Corgi). Use empty homes while physical distancing applies.	April 2021 October 2021	Progressing	CR/WC
2.3	Policy and Process Refresh Day Training – Gas Engineers/Operatives Refresh (Corgi with team leaders)	May 2021 November 2021	To follow 2.1 completion	CR/WC
2.4	On site refresh and coaching of gas engineers and operatives. (Initial round with Corgi + gas team leader.) Use empty homes while physical distancing applies.	May/June 2021 repeat annually	Progressing	CR/WC
2.5	Establish coaching programme including monthly on-site half days with team leaders/gas engineers. (Corgi to attend quarterly).	July 2021 onwards	To follow 2.4 completion	CR/WC
2.6	Policy and Process Refresh (Gas Team Leaders Quarterly Briefing with Corgi and Operational Managers)	June onwards 2021	To follow 6 months after 2.1 completion	CR/WC
2.7	Gas team leaders to re-establish monthly toolbox talks/team meetings with engineers with set briefing on policy and practice updates. (Corgi to provide brief and attend as requested/appropriate). Review of improvement plan. Training/coaching as required.	April 2021	Progressing	WC
2.8	Team Leaders and Engineers to attend training session on updated <u>Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR)</u> . (Corgi)	March 2021	Complete	CR/WC
2.9	Update template for recording coaching on site observations. To be adapted for TOTAL MOBILE. (Corgi with TEAM)	March 2021	Progressing	CR
2.10	Corgi level 4 certificate in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing – 18 month programme to begin (Corgi)	May 2021	Complete	CR
2.11	Corgi level 3 certificate in Gas Auditing Procedures to be completed by Team Gas Audit Inspector* (Corgi)	Aug 2021	Agreed in principle with Corgi	CR/TB

## Leadership, Culture and Performance

3.	Action	Completion Date	Status	Owner
3.1	Fortnightly service improvement and performance meeting with gas team leaders and relevant operations managers. (TEAM)	February 2021 onwards	Complete	WC- Lead TB - Compliance and Standards CR - Service Improvement
3.2	Annual in-house team planning with service managers and Corgi. Service improvement plan review. (TEAM with Corgi)	October 2021	Review to take place after 6 months of the Service Improvement Plan	TBC
3.3	Monthly performance and compliance reporting to be reviewed – Corgi to review and advise. To review policy, processes, training and coaching programme. (Team with Corgi)	May 2021	Progressing	TB

### Health and Safety/Life and Limb

Action	Date	Status	Owner
Continue recruitment process for health and safety/life and limb specialist role with HR/CH&S (TEAM)	May 2021	Progressing – no successful recruitment in first round	WG/TB
Procure Risk Management Consultant specialising in housing health and safety/life and limb specialist role with CH&S input. (TEAM)	Date for appointment	Progressing	WG/TB

### Service Improvement Plan –

Action	Date	Status	Owner
Service Improvement Plan Review Complete (TEAM with Corgi) Quarterly Review thereafter with monthly progress monitoring.	April 2021	Complete	CR
Quarterly Review of Service Improvement Plan (TEAM possibly with Corgi)	April, July, and October 2021, January 2022	Complete	CR
Agree timescale and assessment plan for Full CORGI Accreditation (TEAM with Corgi)	July 2021	Progressing	CR