



Heating & Hot Water Policy

Version 1

Approved by: Strategic Board

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Our Heating & Hot Water Policy outlines how and when we'll service heating and hot water systems. It aims to ensure all our heating and hot water systems are regularly serviced and operate safely.

1.2 It applies to:

- Gas, oil or solid fuel supply, flue and appliance(s)
- Electrical heating
- Renewable heating systems
- Solar thermal.

1.3 This Policy applies to all homes, offices, and commercial premises owned or managed by Optivo, where there's a responsibility for maintenance and repair.

1.3.1 This Policy doesn't apply to homeowners, including Shared Owners and Leaseholders. Homeowners are responsible for maintaining and checking their own heating appliances.

1.3.2 Where we manage homes on behalf of a private landlord, we're either:

- Responsible for maintaining the heating and hot water system, including safety checks. However, the private landlord will pay for annual checks and any works required
 - **OR**
- The private landlord is responsible for maintaining the heating and hot water system, including safety checks. We'll monitor and report repairs to the landlord.

1.3.3 Where others manage our properties, or we manage them on behalf of others, the management contract specifies responsibilities for heating safety. If the managing agent is responsible, we retain a duty of care. We'll monitor managing agents to make sure they complete annual safety checks.

1.4 When we use 'you' and 'your', we mean tenants (excluding shared owners and leaseholders). The terms 'we', 'our', and 'us' mean Optivo.

2.0 What are our legal responsibilities?

We need to comply with:

- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Health & Safety Rating System, Housing Act 2004.

3.0 What are our responsibilities?

3.1 We will:

- Carry out an annual gas safety check every year using a Gas Safe registered engineer
- Carry out an annual electrical heating check using an approved electrical contractor
- Carry out an annual oil heating check using an OFTEC (oil firing technical association) engineer
- Carry out an annual solid fuel heating safety check undertaken by a HETAS (heating equipment testing approval scheme) engineer
- Carry out an annual check of all our renewable and solar thermal heating systems using a MCS (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) accredited contractor/engineer.
- Ensure industrial plant is serviced and maintained in accordance with statutory regulations and manufacturers servicing instructions
- Maintain all relevant plant, fittings, pipe work, associated flues, and appliances owned by us
- Carry out repairs to our appliances as required
- Carry out an annual service of our appliances by a qualified engineer.

We will also:

- Keep records of each safety check for two years and provide copies to all relevant persons within 28 days. For communal heating appliances/systems we'll display the certificate in common areas
- Ensure robust procedures are in place to gain access to Optivo properties and plant to carry out the relevant safety check
- Ensure that external independent quality assurance is carried out
- Actively promote the importance of gas safety to all residents
- Provide regular and adequate gas safety training for appropriate staff.

4.0 Who is responsible?

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has overall accountability and responsibility for Health & Safety. The Property Services Director has delegated authority for the safety of heating and hot water systems, where Optivo has control or a responsibility for the maintenance or repair of our homes.

5.0 Your responsibilities

5.1 You are responsible for:

- Immediately reporting to National Grid's Gas Emergency Number on **0800 111 999** if you can smell gas in your home or a communal area
- Allowing access for the safety checks
- Maintaining your own appliances. We recommend you arrange for a Gas Safe, Oftec, HETAS or relevant registered engineer to service your appliances each year
- Immediately reporting any concerns with heating appliances, and turning them off until a registered engineer checks them. It's illegal to use a gas appliance if you think it may be unsafe
- Seeking our permission before installing a new gas appliance
- Seeking our permission before installing any fixed wired (without a plug) heating or hot water appliance
- Giving us copies of installation certificates and appliance technical documents for any new gas, fixed wire heating or hot water appliance.

6.0 Getting access to your home to carry out a heating safety check

6.1 You must allow us, or our contractors, into your home to service/check your heating appliances.

6.2 We'll write to you at least six weeks before your safety check is due, with an appointment. If this isn't convenient, you must contact us to re-arrange the appointment.

7.0 What if an appliance is unsafe?

7.1 If an appliance poses an immediate danger to life or property we'll disconnect it, and make it safe.

7.2 If we find a fault with **our** appliance or system, which may pose a future danger, we'll try to fix it straight away. If this isn't possible, we'll turn it off and note this on the warning notice. We'll arrange an appointment to complete the repair, in line with our [Responsive Repairs Policy](#).

7.3 We won't carry out servicing on appliances that aren't owned and maintained by Optivo. This is **your** responsibility. But if a fault is found on an appliance owned by you, which may pose a future danger, we'll turn it off and record this on the warning notice. You're responsible for repairing or replacing any appliances you own.

8.0 What if we're unable to access your home?

8.1 Most tenants allow access for their annual safety check. If you don't allow us access, you could be in breach of your tenancy, and if so, we'll take legal action. We'll also consider whether there is any cause for concern regarding your safety, in line with our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

- 8.2 If you continue to refuse access after repeated requests, we'll follow our Access Policy to gain access to carry out necessary safety checks and works.
- 8.3 You must make us aware if you have a support or communication need, so we can help. We'll contact you in the best way for you.
- 8.4 We may seek approval to cap off your meter and cut off the gas supply, if:
- Your gas meter is outside your home, **and**
 - There is less than five working days before the certificate expires, and
 - It is approved by a Housing Director (Homes and Communities) after full consideration of the household's circumstances.
- 8.5 Capping will only take place after the existing certificate has expired, unless the property is empty or has been abandoned and needs protecting.
- 8.6 As standard we fit service interval programmers to all new boilers. These will limit the availability of hot water and heating, whilst remaining at a safe level, until deactivated. We'll only activate these if we've had difficulties accessing your home and when authorised by the Property Services Director.

9.0 What happens when a property is let or exchanged?

- 9.1 Before letting a home, we'll carry out a safety check. We'll also carry out a safety check when you mutually exchange.
- 9.2 When you move home, you shouldn't leave any appliances for the incoming resident. We'll remove any appliances installed by you, and recharge you for the cost.
- 9.3 If we don't intend to re-let a self-contained home within 28 days, we'll disconnect the gas supply at the meter or isolate the service at the main isolation switch until re-let.
- 9.4 On new-build properties and those undergoing substantial refurbishment or major repairs, the Development Team will:
- Complete a heating system installation test
 - Produce a commissioning certificate before handover

10.0 Review

- 10.1 We will review this Policy to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.