

Water Safety Policy

At the time of Policy approval Flagship Housing Group manages in the region of 30,318 tenanted properties. Water Systems within Blocks and to individual dwellings within the Housing Stock need to be risk assessed, kept safe for use and, if required, be regularly maintained

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| Department | <i>Asset Management</i> |
| Policy Owner | <i>Head of Landlord Compliance</i> |
| Approved Date | <i>30/8/24</i> |
| Date for Review | <i>July 2025</i> |
| Approving Body | <i>Asset Management Committee</i> |
| Associated Legislation/Regulation | Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Technical Guidance (HSG 274) and Approve Code of Practice L8. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). Safety and Quality Standard 2024 |
| Equality Impact Assessment Date | <i>22/07/24</i> |
| Version Number | <i>1.2</i> |

Purpose / Principles

This Policy explains how Flagship Housing Group's commitments to Water Safety will be met. It will be supported by a Water Safety Management Plan providing more detailed guidance and procedures.

Roles / Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibilities | Frequency |
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| Flagship Housing Group Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are the responsible legal entity and must oversee the discharge of the required standards. • They act as Duty Holders and are accountable for ensuring the implementation of this Management Plan and the associated Policy. • They will receive assurance through regular performance reports that the Management Plan and Policy are being implemented and that the regulations are being fully complied with. • In doing so they will ensure the safety of tenants, staff, contractors and any other parties and the wider general public has not been compromised. • They will also ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to keep internal stakeholders, and other interested Third Parties, informed of the regulatory Landlord Compliance position. • The Board will be responsible for ensuring that any necessary Remedial Action, arising from Performance Reports, is undertaken to comply with the Policy and ensure that a regulatory Landlord compliant position is maintained. • Will receive Quarterly KPI reports and commentary on Water Safety Compliance Performance. | 6 Monthly/ Annually |
| Asset Management Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will receive Internal Audit reports and monitor the delivery of managers' actions arising through to successful completion. • They will draw any concerns they may have arising from such reports to the attention of the Board. | Quarterly |
| The Chief Executive Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains the overall responsibility for the monitoring of the consistent implementation of this Management Plan and Policy. • Through the implementation of the Management Plan and Policy to effectively comply with the regulatory standards. | Ongoing |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the regulatory standards are not maintained to report any breach in standards to the Regulator of Social Housing. | |
| Director of Strategic Asset Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and set budgets that are sufficient to meet the compliance requirements. • Appoint/nominate sufficient resources to fulfil the Responsible Person(s) roles for all Water Safety requirements and use this Management Plan to define their duties. • Delegate appropriate authority for in-house delivery or procurement to meet the requirements. • Ensure that the conditions of all contracts are being fulfilled either by Internal Service Provider/s and/or external Contractors. Will ensure the operational delivery of this Management Plan and Policy and compliance with the regulations. • Will oversee the programme of Policy and Strategic Review | Ongoing |
| Director Legal and Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek assurance that the regulations are being adhered to and regularly review Internal Service Provider/s and/or external Contractor operational practices and performance. | Ongoing |
| Director Health and Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an internal assurance testing framework to provide assurance on operational procedures • Provide critical friend support and advice | Ongoing |
| Head of Landlord Compliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will manage the strategic implementation of this Management Plan and Policy and ensure compliance with all regulations. • Will produce, review, and update the Policy at the appropriate review dates. • Will formulate Programmes of Work consistent with the delivery of this Management Plan and Policy. • Will instruct/liaise with internal operational managers and Contractors in respect to the operational delivery of this Management Plan. • Will assist the implementation of this Management Plan and Policy through monitoring. • Will receive audit feedback and act upon the findings. • Receive feedback from Third Party External Validation Consultants and liaise with Contract Managers and Contractors (Internal and/or External) to address any delivery shortfalls | Ongoing |
| Asset Data Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with IT and ensure system(s) and interfaces operate effectively | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the quality and correct storage of all Certification and documents required to demonstrate Landlord Compliance. • Will manage Data Governance Protocols. • Will manage the availability of accurate Stock Data and Landlord Compliance Data sub-sets against which to prepare Work Programmes and Contracts • Will manage the preparation of the KPI/MPI and OPI reporting suite. • Review Property Addresses and reconcile with Contractor Databases to ensure the Programme remains accurate. | |
| Compliance Manager (Water & Heating) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will liaise with Neighbourhood Management Team/Housing Team and tenants to explain the importance of compliance and the need to achieve access to complete Safety Checks and Works. • Managing tenant feedback (enquiries, complaints, and compliments) handling and progress. • Will provide an effective Performance Management Framework that will strengthen risk control and provide greater levels of assurance. • Operational delivery of Planned Legionella Risk Assessments (LRAs), production of Written Schemes of Control and Re-Surveys and other Inspections within Non-Domestic and Domestic Properties. • Implementation of Remedial Works arising from the Risk Assessments and Inspections. | |
| Neighbourhood Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of weekly flushing to ex-sheltered and unmanned schemes • Completion of weekly flushing to all void domestic properties | |
| Specialist Water Surveying /Risk Assessment Consultants and Water Safety Contractors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Water Safety Maintenance Programmes arising from the Risk Assessments. • Liaise with tenants in relation to arranging/keeping appointments. • Liaise with the Compliance Team in relation to access issues. • Update System(s) with accurate data. • Provide appropriate, complete and correct Certification for all Water Safety Works. • Provide Quality Assurance (QA) checks in accordance with the contract. | Ongoing |
| Tenant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing to and keeping appointments to provide access. • Liaising with Flagship Housing Group staff in relation to any poor service, failure to attend/poor repair etc. | As required |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tenant satisfaction information. • Take note of Water Safety advice provided and follow the appropriate procedures in respect to seeking authorisation for any alteration work. | |
| Independent External Auditor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake 5% External Validation of Water Safety Inspections in line with the Management Plan. | Ongoing |

Main Content

Legionella bacteria can cause several diseases including the Legionnaires' disease. The bacterium is common in natural water sources such as rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, but usually in low numbers. They may also be found in purpose-built Water Systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold-water systems, and spa pools. Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, and everyone is susceptible to infection.

The risk increases with age, but some people are at higher risk as detailed in our Management Plan. If conditions are favorable, the bacteria may grow increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease and it is therefore important to control the risks.

The key objective of this Policy is to describe how Flagship Housing Group will meet the required statutory, legislative, and regulatory requirements in relation to Water Safety. It will also cover how Flagship Housing Group's Board, as Duty Holder, will receive assurance of statutory, legislative, and regulatory compliance.

The scope of this Policy includes Legionella Management, Scalding Prevention, and un-adopted Water Systems.

Flagship Housing Group will comply with all current and relevant legislation and specifically as detailed in the following:

- Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Technical Guidance (HSG 274) and Approved Code of Practice L8.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).

Flagship Housing Group takes the view that delivery of the commitments within this Policy will ensure that the requirements of other legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) 1974 and Landlord Tenant Act 1985 will also be met.

In addition, as a landlord and provider of Social Housing, Flagship Housing Group must meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Home Standard.

It is essential to ensure that tenants, contractors, staff and visitors remain safe in Flagship Housing Group's properties. Failure to properly discharge our statutory, legislative or regulatory responsibilities may also result in:

- Prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under HASAWA 1974.
- Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.
- RSH scrutiny and potential determination of a breach of the Home Standard.
- Reputational damage to the Authority and staff.
- Loss of confidence by stakeholders in the organisation.

Policy

To comply with statutory, legal and regulatory standards and obligations, and to ensure the safety of our tenants, staff, contractors and visitors to our properties, Flagship Housing Group will:

Process

Provide clear lines of responsibility for the management of Water Safety supported by written guidance in the Water Safety Management Plan

Ensure that a clear and consistent process including front-line engagement and enforcement is in place to obtain access to properties to undertake Water Safety Checks, which shall include legal action when required.

Proactively assess available data for relevant information about the tenant to help gain access (disability, vulnerability, local connections, etc.).

Delivery

Regularly review existing properties and assess risk within new stock through a desktop review, which will identify those properties at potential High Risk of Legionella.

All properties with Communal Stored Water Systems, and where a potential risk has been identified at desktop review, will have a Legionella Risk Assessment (LRA) undertaken.

All other properties identified through the desktop review of potentially High Risk will be subject to an LRA to determine if further management is required.

The review period for future Risk Assessments will be established through a risk-based approach within the initial Risk Assessment carried out by the Competent Person.

A Water Safety Management and Monitoring Programme will be established as required from the LRA findings.

A sample of Domestic Properties without LRAs will be assessed within an ongoing Annual Programme of LRAs, to determine the level of risk and take action to ensure that staff, tenants, contractors, and visitors are not exposed to Legionella bacteria.

Water systems to Void Properties will be subject to a drain down to avoid potential contamination/bacterial growth. Flushing programs have been considered but tracking/recording actions is impractical.

Shower heads will be replaced as part of the Void Management Process.

Implement measures to reduce the risk of Scalding by installing Thermostatic Mixer Valves (TMVs) to High-Risk properties, as detailed within the Water Safety Management Plan.

Remove lead pipework that may still exist within the housing stock, as Flagship Housing Group is made aware.

Maintain un-adopted Water Systems to the required standards as defined within the Water Safety Management Plan.

Contractors Competency

Only those Legionella/Water Treatment contractors registered with, and licensed by, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)/Legionella Control Association will be permitted to carry out work in our properties associated with Legionella testing.

All associated Water Safety related works will be undertaken by trained and competent contractors. This will include a Competence Assessment against the nature of the work to be completed for any proposed contractor.

Carry out an assessment of all contractor competencies annually or at change of contract/contractor, as detailed within the Water Safety Management Plan.

Internal Competency

Maintain a Skills/Training Matrix to ensure that all staff undertaking key roles within the scope of this Policy have appropriate training.

Data

Maintain an up-to-date Master Database of all properties where Flagship Housing Group has a responsibility to provide Water Safety Checks and maintenance.

For each relevant property, record and maintain up to date data confirming which aspects of the Water Systems and Appliances within the scope of this Policy exist and do not exist and the organisation's associated responsibility.

Hold Water Safety Maintenance Records electronically in the Master Database, by the relevant Operational Department (to be specifically identified in the Water Safety Management Plan), with other Landlord Compliance records. There may be instances where a hard copy is kept on site and these will be detailed again in the Management Plan.

Where a requirement exists hold data and certification relating to the last two Safety Checks and the next due date.

Where a requirement does not exist hold appropriate evidence.

EIA statement

An Equality Impact assessment was undertaken on this policy on 22/07/24 and all identified negative impacts have been mitigated.

Training statement

This Water Safety policy will be trained to the Compliance Team, Asset Management Team, Flagship Services and Gasway

Measuring Effectiveness

Assurance

Ensure that all persons involved with Water Safety are properly trained and accredited.

Carry out works-based assurance activity – including checks on certification and post-inspection of on-site works – to the level stated within the Water Safety Management Plan.

Set a timetable for the review of the Water Safety Policy and the associated Water Safety Management Plan.

Communication

Encourage tenants, through the provision of publicity information, to allow access to carry out Water Safety Checks, inspections, and remedial works.

Implementation

This Policy is approved by Asset Management Committee and is effective from 25th July 2023.

Staff will be made aware of the Policy at priority training and a copy will be available on the Intranet and on the Board App. Where appropriate we will publish on our website.

This Policy should also be read in conjunction with the overarching Landlord Compliance Policy and Water Safety Management Plan.

There will be training provided for all those staff involved with the operational delivery and implementation of the Landlord Compliance requirements and obligations in respect to Water Safety detailed within this Policy.

Consultation

This Policy is based on statutory, legislative, and regulatory requirements and as such consultation with tenants has not taken place. There has been consultation with Internal Teams within Flagship Housing Group.

Monitoring Performance

The following measures will be subject to reporting:

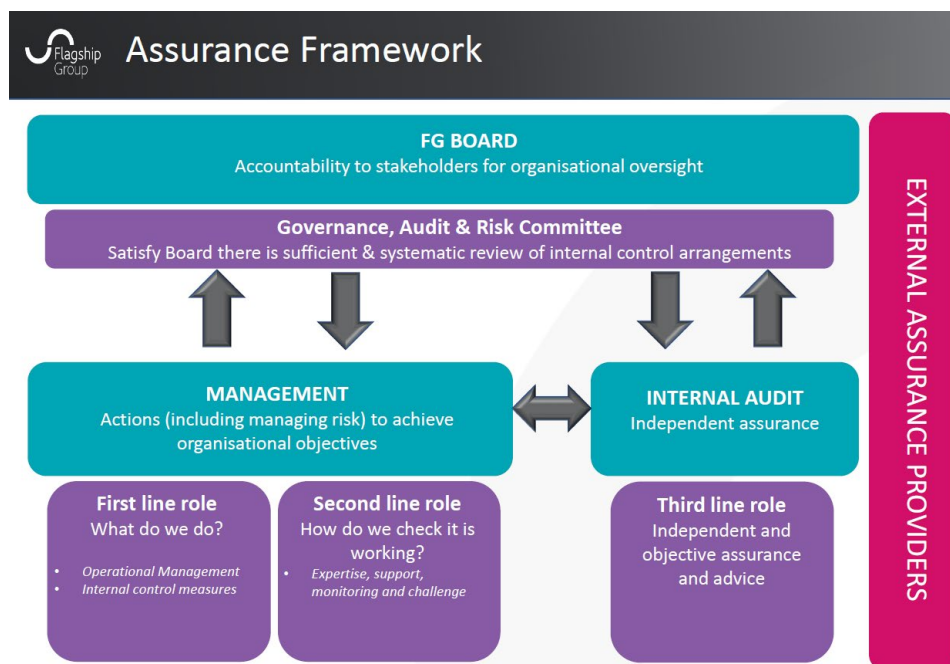
- % of Priority Scheme Properties (against the stated Total Landlord Requirement) with a valid Legionella Risk Assessment.
- % of properties (against the stated Total Landlord Requirement) with a valid Written Scheme where a requirement has been identified.
- % of properties (against the stated Total Landlord Requirement) within a Legionella Maintenance Regime where testing has been completed and valid certification is in place.

- % of remedial works completed within target.
- Total number of outstanding and overdue remedial actions.

Commentary will be provided for any properties out of date to include the date they became overdue, days overdue, and their position within the access legal process to bring them back into a compliant position. Commentary will also be provided if any properties have outstanding overdue actions. Additional context commentary will also include information on the proportion of activities within the reporting period that were undertaken before and after their due date.

A detailed PI suite will be defined within the Water Safety Management Plan.

Quality Assurance (QA) activity will be undertaken using our approach of three Lines of Defence (LOD) and typically over a three-year cycle. Outcomes of the audit program will be reported via the Flagship Group H&S Committee:



Review Period

This Policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if deemed necessary through the Performance Monitoring process.