



Wigan 
Council

Water Hygiene & Legionella Policy (Housing)

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Policy Name	Water Hygiene & Legionella Policy (Housing)
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1.0 Introduction and Objectives

- 1.1 This policy covers all assets that fall within Wigan Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Public Buildings are covered by their own separate policy. The property types that the policy applies are housing communal blocks, sheltered / independent living schemes and domestic properties.
- 1.2 Also advise that some aspects of this policy will also apply to individual domestic properties, such as houses, flats, bungalows or so on. Advise that applicable items will be clearly referenced.
- 1.3 As a landlord, Wigan Council must meet the legal obligations which require them to deal with the risks associated with legionella bacteria within the properties they own or manage. Legionella bacteria can cause a potentially fatal form of pneumonia called Legionnaires' disease. People contract Legionnaires' disease by inhaling small droplets of water containing the bacteria.
- 1.4 As far as reasonably practicable, Wigan Council will introduce measures to reduce and/or control exposure to legionella bacteria, including managing the conditions that support the growth of the bacteria in water systems.
- 1.5 These obligations are delivered by the Statutory Compliance Team on behalf of Wigan Council and will undertake any servicing, monitoring, maintenance and repairs as appropriate.
- 1.6 The key objective of this policy is to ensure that Wigan Council, Wigan Council's Senior Management Team (SMT), employees, partners and residents are clear on their legal and regulatory water hygiene obligations. This policy provides the framework that staff and partners will operate within to meet these obligations.
- 1.7 This policy forms part of the wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors. It will be distributed to all relevant members of staff, partners and residents as necessary.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is relevant to all employees, residents, contractors, stakeholders and other persons who may work on, occupy, visit or use premises owned or managed by Wigan Council, or who may be affected by Wigan Council's activities or services.

2.2 The policy should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon Wigan Council to maintain a safe environment for residents and employees within the home of each resident and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties they own or manage. Adherence to this policy is mandatory.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Wigan Council has overall governance responsibility for ensuring this policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. As such, Wigan Council will formally approve this policy and review it every two years (or sooner if there is a change in legislation or regulation).

3.2 For assurance that this policy is operating effectively in practice, Wigan Council will receive regular updates on its implementation, water hygiene safety performance and non-compliance.

3.3 The Senior Leadership Team within the Place Directorate will receive monthly performance reports in respect of water hygiene safety and ensure compliance is being achieved. They will also be notified of any non-compliance issue identified.

3.4 The Assistant Director, Property and Assets has strategic responsibility for the management of water hygiene safety and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained. They will oversee the implementation of this policy.

3.5 The Statutory Compliance Manager has operational responsibility for the management of water hygiene safety and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of these programmes.

3.6 The Statutory Compliance Manager is the Responsible Person and has contract management responsibility and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the water hygiene programmes.

3.7 The Statutory Compliance & Building Safety Team Manager (Asbestos, Legionella & Lifts) Manager is the deputy responsible person who will provide cover to the Statutory Compliance Manager in their absence.

3.8 Housing Teams will provide support where gaining access to properties is difficult.

3.9 Under the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 we have appointed a Senior Health and Safety Consultant as our Health and Safety Lead.

4.0 Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Standards

4.1 **Legislation** - The principal legislation applicable to this policy is as follows:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (The Management Regulations).
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH).
- This policy also operates within the context of additional legislation (see Appendix 1).

4.2 **Approved Code of Practice (ACoP)** – The principal ACoP applicable to this policy is:

- ACoP L8 - Legionnaires' disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems (4th edition 2013).

4.3 **Guidance** – The principal guidance applicable to this policy is as follows:

- HSG274 - Legionnaires' disease: Technical guidance Part 2: The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems (2014).
- HSG274 - Legionnaires' disease: Technical guidance Part 3: The control of legionella bacteria in other risk systems (2013).
- INDG458 - Legionnaires' disease: A brief guide for dutyholders (2012).
- BS 8580-1:2019 Water quality, risk assessments for Legionella control – Code of practice.

4.4 **Regulatory standards** – Wigan Council must ensure we comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework and consumer standards for social housing in England; the Safety and Quality Standard is the primary one applicable to this policy.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 changes the way social housing is regulated and may result in future changes to this policy.

4.5 **Sanctions** – Failure to discharge our responsibilities and obligations properly could lead to sanctions, including: prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (the HSE) under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; prosecution under the Coshh Regulations; prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007; and via a regulatory judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing.

5.0 **Obligations**

- 5.1 The Management Regulations and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 place a duty on an employer and Wigan Council as landlord, to ensure employees and others affected by undertakings (for example residents) are not exposed to health and safety risks including the risk from legionella.
- 5.2 Wigan Council have a legal obligation under Coshh to prevent or control exposure to biological agents including legionella.
- 5.3 Wigan Council is the “Duty Holder” for the HRA as defined by the ACoP L8 and must take necessary precautions to prevent, reduce or control the risks of exposure to legionella.
- 5.4 As the Duty Holder, Wigan Council must:
 - Carry out a risk assessment for all hot and cold-water systems, cooling plant and any other systems that can produce water droplets to identify and assess potential risks.
 - Implement measures to either eliminate, reduce or control identified risks.
 - Appoint a Responsible Person to take managerial responsibility for:
 - Carrying out risk assessments.
 - Producing written schemes of control (a practical, risk management document used to control the risk from exposure to legionella).
 - Implementing the written scheme of control.
 - Appoint a Deputy Responsible Person who will provide cover to the responsible person in their absence.
 - Keep associated records for five years.

6.0 Statement of Intent

- 6.1 Wigan Council acknowledges and accept our responsibilities and obligations under the legislation outlined in Section 5.
- 6.2 Wigan Council will review legionella risk assessments every two years or more frequently where a water system is likely to undergo change and is therefore a higher risk. Properties will be assessed as high, medium or low risk.
- 6.3 Written schemes of control will be in place for all properties risk assessed as requiring controls to manage the risk of legionella exposure.
- 6.4 When properties become void, Wigan Council will drain and flush the water system, including any shower loop, before undertaking any work. The water system will then be flushed and recommissioned before the property is let and the shower head replaced or sterilised.
- 6.5 Wigan Council will carry out surveys to identify pipework 'dead legs' and high-risk installations, then remove them within void properties and any properties where we are carrying out adaptations or planned investment work.
- 6.6 When Wigan Council acquire properties (existing or new build) we will follow the same process as for void properties and we will ensure that there are no pipework 'dead legs' present when we take possession of the property.
- 6.7 Wigan Council will operate a robust process for the management of immediately dangerous situations identified from the legionella risk assessment, water testing/monitoring regime or suspected legionella outbreak.
- 6.8 Wigan Council will use the legal remedies available within the terms of the tenancy and lease agreement should any resident, leaseholder or shared owner refuse access to carry out essential water hygiene related inspection and remediation works. Where resident vulnerability issues are known or identified Wigan Council will safeguard the wellbeing of the resident.
- 6.9 Wigan Council will operate effective contract management arrangements with the contractors responsible for delivering the service including ensuring contracts/service level agreements are in place, conducting client led performance meetings and ensuring that contractor's employee and public liability insurances are up to date on an annual basis.

- 6.10 Wigan Council will establish and maintain a risk assessment for water hygiene management and operations setting out our key water hygiene risks and appropriate mitigations.
- 6.11 To comply with the requirements of the Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM) a construction phase plan will be in place for all repair works to void and tenanted properties (at the start of the contract and reviewed annually thereafter), component replacement works and refurbishment projects.
- 6.12 Wigan Council will ensure there is a robust process in place to investigate and manage all RIDDOR notifications made to the HSE in relation to water hygiene safety and will take action to address any issues identified and lessons we have learned, to prevent a similar incident occurring again.

7.0 Programmes

- 7.1 **Communal blocks and other properties** – Wigan Council will ensure all communal blocks or other properties (supported schemes/offices/shops) owned or managed are subject to an initial visit to establish whether a legionella risk assessment (LRA) is required. Thereafter, if an LRA is required, the property will be included on the LRA programme. If an LRA is not required, this will be recorded on the core asset register.
- 7.2 For all properties on the LRA programme, Wigan Council will undertake LRA's and review the LRA every two years, or more frequently where a water system is likely to undergo change and is therefore a higher risk.
- 7.3 LRAs will be reviewed in the following circumstances:
 - o Change in building use.
 - o Change in internal layout of water system.
 - o Change in building occupation that increases the risk due to health.
 - o After a confirmed or suspected outbreak of Legionella.
 - o Following a water hygiene audit (if required).

- 7.4 **Domestic properties** – Wigan Council will undertake a non-cyclical programme of sample surveys in domestic properties. These will be prioritised according to the perceived level of risk (based on design, size, age and type of water supply). A risk-based approach will be used

including a desktop assessment to identify properties with high-risk installations and/or vulnerable persons, a sample or risk assessments on domestic stock based on risk levels, then programmes in place to reduce/manage the risks within these properties.

- 7.5 **Testing and monitoring** – Wigan Council will undertake testing and monitoring (for example, monthly temperature checks) as set out within any written schemes of control.
- 7.6 Wigan Council will ensure there is a robust process in place for the management of any follow-up works required following the completion of an LRA or ongoing monitoring (where the work cannot be completed at the time of the assessment or check).

8.0 Data and Records

- 8.1 Wigan Council will maintain a core asset register of all properties it owns or manages within HMIS, setting out which properties require an LRA and Wigan Council will also set out which properties require ongoing testing and monitoring as prescribed by the written control scheme (for example, monthly temperature checks).
- 8.2 Wigan Council will operate a robust process to manage all changes to stock, including property acquisitions and disposals, to ensure that properties are not omitted from water hygiene programmes and that the programmes remain up to date.
- 8.3 Wigan Council will hold LRA inspection dates, LRA's and testing and monitoring records against all properties on each programme. These will be held in the HMIS system.
- 8.4 Wigan Council will keep water hygiene logbooks electronically (or securely on site where practical) for all properties on the LRA programme.
- 8.5 Wigan Council will keep all records for at least five years and have robust processes and controls in place to maintain appropriate levels of security for all water hygiene related data.

9.0 Resident Engagement

- 9.1 Wigan Council consider good communication essential in the effective delivery of water hygiene programmes and therefore will establish a resident engagement strategy and communication programme to support residents in their understanding of water

hygiene and legionella risk. Wigan Council will advise them of how they can manage the risks within their properties and to encourage them to report any concerns about water safety. Wigan Council also aim to successfully engage with vulnerable and hard to reach residents.

- 9.2 Wigan Council will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to residents via regular publications and information on its website.
- 9.3 Wigan Council will display written schemes of control in communal areas of buildings to inform occupants how the risk of exposure to legionella bacteria is being managed and controlled.

10.0 Competent Persons

- 10.1 As The Responsible Person and a Deputy Responsible Person as detailed in section three Roles & Responsibilities will be both be trained, instructed and informed to the same level and should assist in the frequent monitoring of written control schemes.
- 10.2 Therefore, they should hold a relevant qualification such as BOHS P901 – Management and control of building hot and cold-water services, Level 2 Award in Legionella Awareness (or equivalent), or Level 4 VRQ Diploma in Asset and Building Management. If they do not have these already, they will obtain them within 12 months of the approval of this policy.
- 10.3 Only suitably competent consultants and contractors, registered with the Legionella Control Association (or equivalent) will undertake LRA's, prepare written schemes of control and undertake works in respect of water hygiene and legionella control.
- 10.4 Only suitably competent consultants and contractors, registered with the Legionella Control Association (or equivalent) will undertake third party technical quality assurance checks.
- 10.5 Wigan Council will check that our contractors hold the relevant qualifications and accreditations when procured and thereafter on an annual basis. We will evidence these checks and each contractors' certification appropriately.

11.0 Training

11.1 Wigan Council will deliver training on this policy and the procedures that support it through appropriate methods including team briefings, basic water hygiene awareness training and on the job training for those delivering the programme of LRA's and water hygiene testing and monitoring as part of their daily job. All training undertaken by staff will be formally recorded.

12.0 Performance Reporting

12.1 Wigan Council will report robust key performance indicator (KPI) measures for water hygiene safety that follow the requirements set out in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which came into force 01 April 2023. The senior leadership team receive monthly KPI's.

12.2 Wigan Council will engage with customers and develop our approach/systems to report to them on a regular basis. The relevant TSM for Water Hygiene is defined as follows:-

- BS04 – Water Safety Checks – Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.

12.3 This measure ensures that all individual dwellings that may be at risk because of non-compliance are identified.

12.4 Wigan Council will also report on the following:-

Data – the total number of:

- Properties – split by category (domestic, communal, commercial and others);
- Properties on the LRA programme;
- Properties not on the LRA programme;
- Properties with a valid and in date LRA;
- Properties without a valid and in date LRA;
- Properties due an LRA within the next 30 days; and
- Overdue follow-up works/actions (split by priority).

Narrative - an explanation of the:

- Current position;
- Corrective action required;
- Anticipated impact of corrective action; and
- Progress with completion of follow-up works.

In addition:

- o The number of RIDDOR notifications to the HSE with regards to water safety.

12.5 The full detail of our performance measures for Water Hygiene Safety will be outlined in a KPI Definition Document which includes the relevant data sources used for each calculation, the calculation methodology, any exclusions and the accountable roles for producing and managing KPI's.

13.0 Quality Assurance

- 13.1 Wigan Council will ensure that there is a programme of third-party quality assurance audits of LRA's. Annual audits will be undertaken to all systems identified as high risk, this will be introduced within 6 months.
- 13.2 Wigan Council will undertake an internal desktop of certifications once uploaded.
- 13.3 Wigan Council will carry out an independent audit of water hygiene safety at least once every two years, to specifically test for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and to identify any non-compliance issues for correction.

14.0 Significant Non-Compliance and Escalation

- 14.1 Wigan Council's definition of a significant non-compliance is any incident which could possibly result in a potential breach of legislation or regulatory standard, or which causes a risk to health and safety. All non-compliance issues will be reported and escalated as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the incident was identified or of a Council employee or agent becoming aware of it.
- 14.2 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Responsible Person in the first instance, who will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the appropriate members of staff. Further non-compliance would lead to the issue being escalated to the Assistant Director and Senior Leadership Team.
- 14.3 In cases of serious non-compliance, The Senior Leadership Team will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing as required by their regulatory framework or any other relevant organisation such as the Health and Safety Executive.

15.0 Glossary

15.1 This glossary defines key terms used throughout this policy:

- **BOHS:** British Occupational Hygiene Society.
- **Duty Holder:** the owner of the non-domestic premises or the person or organisation that has clear responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises, for example through an explicit agreement such as a tenancy agreement or contract.
- **Legionellosis:** a collective term for diseases caused by legionella bacteria including the most serious Legionnaires' disease, as well as the similar but less serious conditions of Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever.
- **LRA:** Legionella Risk Assessment – an assessment which identifies the risks of exposure to legionella in the water systems present in a premises and the necessary control measures required.
- **Dead legs:** also known as dead pipes, are sections of plumbing that are infrequently used or completely unused, leading to stagnant water conditions.

Appendix 1 - Additional Legislation

This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- The Defective Premises Act 1972
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988
- The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (the Management Regulations).
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999
- Housing Act 2004
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023