

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Housing Cabinet Committee

Date: 7 June 2021

Reporting officer: Nicole Arthur, Service Delivery Manager (Housing Repairs)

Subject: Draft Electrical Safety Policy

Purpose and summary of report:

To inform Housing Cabinet Committee of the proposed Electrical Safety Policy and to seek comments prior to the policy being agreed by the Cabinet Member, Housing Services.

Recommendations:

1. For Members of the Housing Services Committee to discuss and provide feedback on the draft Electrical Safety Policy for the Cabinet Member, Housing Services, to consider prior to authorising the policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Gravesham Borough Council has a statutory duty to ensure:
 - 1.1.1 As a landlord, that our housing stock provides a safe living environment for our residents, free from health hazards within legislative guidelines.
 - 1.1.2 As an employer, that it provides a safe working environment ensuring their premises do not endanger those that work within them.
 - 1.1.3 As a client, ensures that our contractors and sub-contractors operate within legislative guidelines ensuring health and safety is at the forefront and given the highest degree of importance as part of their business and operations.
- 1.2 In fulfilling these health and safety obligations, Gravesham Borough Council is committed to mitigating the risks posed by the use of electrical systems within the buildings it owns and controls. The risks include:
 - Electrical shock
 - Electrical burn
 - Fires of electrical origin

- Electric arcing
 - Explosion initiated or caused by electricity
 - Electrical fire
- 1.3 There is an increasing public awareness of issues affecting health and safety within social housing, the last notably being the Grenfell tragedy. With the increasing awareness there is a correlation in the increased concerns being expressed as to how the risks are being managed, both within the business and by members of the public. The council needs to ensure there are clear specific guidelines, processes and procedures in place which serve to re-assure residents and provide guidance and advice to our workforce.
- 1.4 The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper, sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect from their landlord, which includes ensuring that their home is safe and secure. The government will be consulting on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety.
- 1.5 In June 2020 it became law for private landlords to test and inspect electrical installations within their properties every 5 years. As a social landlord the intervals between inspections are not absolutely set within any regulations, however, best practice guidance from the Electrical Safety Council and from BS7671:2018 states that electrical installations should be tested at intervals of no longer than 5 years from the previous inspection. In order to lead by example as a landlord, and put the safety of tenants first, the Asset Management team introduced a successful planned work programme a number of years ago to undertake a test and inspection 5 year rolling programme on the housing stock.
- 1.6 The responsibility for delivering this planned work programme transferred to the Service Delivery Manager (Housing Repairs) from 1 April 2021 as part of the Phase 2 expansion of the workforce.

2. Proposed Policy

- 2.1 The Electrical Safety Policy details how Gravesham Borough Council meet the requirements for electrical safety under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Housing Act 2004 and the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. In addition to this, the policy provides assurance that measures are in place to ensure compliance with these regulations and to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with electrical installations.
- 2.2 The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 places duties on landlords to ensure that electrical installations in rented properties are:
- Safe when a tenancy begins
 - Maintained in a safe condition throughout the tenancy
- 2.3 The policy is relevant to all employees, tenants, contractors and other persons who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services. It should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon the council to maintain a safe environment for tenants

and employees within the home of each tenant and within all nondomestic (communal) areas of buildings.

- 2.4 Monitoring of electrical compliancy against the policy will be reported to the Compliancy Team quarterly to be included within the Compliancy Data Dashboard.

3. Background Papers

- 3.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS**APPENDIX 1**

Failure to implement the policy could mean that we fail to fulfill our responsibility as a Landlord, particularly in relation to health and safety issues that may put both the tenant and the structure of our property at risk

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| Legal | As a landlord, Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) has a legal responsibility to ensure the health and safety of their employees, contractors, tenants and others, by keeping the property safe and free from health hazards |
| Finance and Value for Money | N/A. |
| Risk Assessment | Any breach of health and safety regulations is a criminal offence and as such, any company or individual manager found to be in breach of these health and safety regulations could face prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment | <i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i> |
| | a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data ? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. |
| | b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A |
| | c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk . N/A |
| Equality Impact Assessment | a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No. |
| | b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No. |
| | <i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i> |
| Corporate Plan | # 1 People Provide a Proactive, Supportive & Financially Efficient Housing Service: high quality tenant management experienced through a service making full use of its assets. Put Our Customers First: Implement a suite of quality and effective front line service |
| Climate Change | N/A |
| Crime and Disorder | N/A |

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| Digital and website implications | The website will be updated to ensure there is clear information regarding Electrical Safety. |
| Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults | N/A |