

Wolverhampton Homes

NHMF Best Practice Awards 2009

Submission for: -

The client organisation that was best at meeting residents' needs in the provision of a maintenance service

Leaseholders' gas maintenance plan

When did the activity start?

February 2008

What was the activity?

Wolverhampton Homes has launched a new gas servicing scheme for leaseholders – improving its services and working towards being a three star organisation.

Letters have been sent out advertising this new programme to all leaseholders.

Wolverhampton Homes achieved two stars in an Audit Commission inspection at the end of 2007. This shows it has promising prospects and is improving well, it is now working towards achieving three stars.

Helen Bellingham, head of home sales and leases for Wolverhampton Homes, said: "Providing this new service is the sign of a three star organisation.

"The gas servicing scheme is something we have wanted to introduce for some time and it offers leaseholders a range of services so their gas appliances can be checked every year to improve their safety and security."

Leaseholders have four options: -

- An annual basic gas boiler service only
- An annual gas boiler and controls service, maintenance and repair
- An annual gas boiler, controls and central heating service, maintenance and repair

- A fee for each additional appliance ie gas fire for an annual service, maintenance and repair

All leaseholders, who have purchased their council flat, are responsible for making sure their gas appliances are checked annually by a Corgi registered fitter and they have a safety certificate.

Figures

We have more than 1,900 leaseholders, of which 1,440 have gas connected to their properties.

More than 290 have completed application forms so far to join our scheme.

To date we have received requests from 276 leaseholders requesting a free survey.

We have completed 125 surveys with 116 to go.

The scheme is still in its early stages and we are confident it will go from strength to strength.

The scheme



Wolverhampton Homes

LEASEHOLDERS GAS MAINTENANCE PLAN

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Description of the plan

Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of Wolverhampton City Council, services gas boilers, other gas appliances and central heating systems for its secure tenants. For leaseholders, once a flat has been bought under the Right to Buy scheme, any maintenance of internal fixtures of the flat such as gas boilers and other appliances becomes the leaseholders' responsibility.

Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of the City Council, as the landlord, retains overall responsibility for managing the blocks and estates. This includes checking that individual leaseholders are complying with their internal maintenance obligations and if they are not, taking appropriate action to ensure safety for all local residents.

We have received requests from leaseholders asking if Wolverhampton Homes can provide a gas servicing and maintenance scheme. In response to these requests we are pleased to offer to all leaseholders our leaseholders gas maintenance plan.

- Annual service maintenance and repairs of a gas boiler.
- An annual service, maintenance and repairs of any additional approved gas appliances.
- An inspection and report on a gas cooker where applicable.
- Depending on the plan chosen an annual check on the operation of the central heating system together with maintenance and repairs.
- Call outs for maintenance and repairs during the year will be covered by the plan at no additional cost.

Prior to acceptance into the plan we will do a FREE SURVEY AND REPORT to assess the condition of the gas appliances and systems. This survey helps us establish the condition of each appliance and also highlight any faults or problems. If the survey concludes that remedial work is required to return an appliance to a serviceable condition, the leaseholder will be supplied with a copy of the survey's findings detailing all the works required.

If we discover any serious faults we will provide the leaseholder with a quotation to rectify them. It is a condition of the scheme that all appliances and systems are in a sound condition prior to acceptance into the plan.

Plan GMP 1

Annual gas boiler and controls, service, maintenance and repair. **Annual fee £132.00 or £11 per month Direct Debit**

Plan GMP 2

Additional appliance, annual service, maintenance and repair. **Annual fee £35.00 or £2.92 per month per additional Appliance**

Plan GMP 3

Annual gas boiler, controls and central heating service, maintenance and repair. **Annual fee £180 or £15 per month**

Upon completion of the Annual Service we will issue the leaseholder with a "Home Owners Gas Safety Record", this record will list **ALL** gas appliances contained within the property. It will also list **ALL GAS APPLIANCES SERVICED AND MAINTAINED** under the terms of our contract with you.

Benefits of the leaseholders gas maintenance plan

- **NO CALL OUT FEE FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS**
- **COVERS PARTS AND LABOUR**
- **24 HOUR CUSTOMER HELPLINE, 365 DAYS PER YEAR**
- **ANNUAL SERVICE AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

Important safety information

Regular servicing of your gas appliance will

- Help to keep you and your family safe
- Reduce the likelihood of your appliance breaking down
- Ensure it operates safely and efficiently
- Help to reduce running costs
- Give you peace of mind

Gas Safety and carbon monoxide awareness Carbon Monoxide can kill

Every year people die or suffer ill health from carbon monoxide poisoning. Gas appliances and flues that have not been properly installed or maintained often

cause this. When gas does not burn properly, as with other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess carbon monoxide is produced, which is poisonous.

YOU CAN'T SEE IT. YOU CAN'T TASTE IT. YOU CAN'T SMELL IT. But carbon monoxide can kill without warning in a matter of hours. You are particularly at risk when you are asleep because you cannot recognise the early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

These include:

Tiredness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, pains in the chest and stomach pains.

These symptoms can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with flu or simple tiredness. If you or your family experience the above symptoms, and you believe carbon monoxide may be involved, you must seek urgent medical advice.

You are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your appliance was poorly installed
- Your appliance is not working properly
- Your appliance has not been checked for safety or maintained regularly
- There is not enough fresh air in the room
- Your chimney or flue gets blocked up
- You allowed non-CORGI Registered engineers to install or maintain your appliance(s)

Gas leaks

If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas escape, or carbon monoxide leakage you should immediately do the following:

- Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve. If gas continues to escape call: **Transco on the Gas Emergency free phone number 0800 111 999**
- Open all door and windows
- Do not use naked flame
- Do not use electrical switches including light switches

Simple precautions

NEVER use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly. Signs to look for include yellow or orange flame except fuel-effect fires that display this colour flame, soot or stains around the appliance and pilot lights which frequently blow out.

NEVER cover an appliance or block air vents.

NEVER block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks.

Whenever draught exclusion, ceiling or extraction fans, double glazing or conservatories are fitted to a room containing a gas appliance, the appliance should be checked for safety.

Carbon monoxide alarms are a back-up precaution but must not be regarded as a substitute for installation and maintenance. If you decide to buy a carbon monoxide alarm, make sure it meets current safety standards (BS 7860 or BS EN 50291) and carries the kite mark.

The law

By law – only a competent person can carry out work on gas appliance or fittings. Do-it-yourself work on gas appliance or fittings could be dangerous and is likely to be illegal.

By law – you must not use any gas appliance or fittings you know or suspect to be unsafe. Through CORGI, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has instructed us to disconnect any gas appliance or fittings, which are so dangerous as to be a threat to life if used. This will be in the interests of your own safety, and that of others. Before you use this appliance or fitting again, you will need to have it repaired by a CORGI registered installer.

By law – For properties owned by the City Council we are responsible for making sure that gas fitting and flues are maintained in good order, and gas appliances and flues are checked for safety once in a period of 12 months. We must also keep a record of the safety checks for at least two years and issue the latest certificate to existing tenants and any new tenants before they move in. We are pleased to offer this service to leaseholders too.

Getting your gas appliance serviced

If you have gas appliances in your property, and wish to use Wolverhampton Homes for gas maintenance and repairs, we will contact you every year, to let you know that they are due for servicing and advise you of an appointment date giving you sufficient notice.

The appointment will be for either a 'morning' or 'afternoon'. If the appointment time is inconvenient, you should arrange another appointment, using the telephone number provided in the appointment notification. It is your responsibility to provide access to the property to allow for the servicing of gas appliances.

You will be sent a customer satisfaction form, which we ask you to complete and return after the service has been completed. We value your comments, and the information you provide will be used assist in improving the service.

Gas breakdowns

If your gas appliances breakdown, you should contact:

Homes Direct on 01902 556789

APPLICATION FORM

How to join the scheme

To register for the scheme all you need to do is fill out application form. We will then arrange for a FREE SURVEY to be carried out and following this we will contact you again.

What happens next?

Once you have joined the scheme, subject to a satisfactory survey, you will be contacted to arrange an appointment for the first service to be undertaken.

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact us at the Home Sales Unit.

We will keep a record and contact you again once your annual cover is close to expiring.

You should already have an existing contract in place but you will be able to transfer to the Wolverhampton Homes scheme when your existing contract expires if you so desire.

If you do not want to join the scheme

You do not have to use Wolverhampton Homes to carry out your gas servicing, maintenance and repairs but it is essential that you have your boiler and other gas appliances serviced annually. We will need proof that your boiler and gas appliances have been serviced and would therefore ask you to send us a copy of your "Home Owner Record" which should be supplied by whoever carries out the service along with a stamped self addressed envelope.

If you have any questions or would like further information, do not hesitate to contact the Home Sales Unit.

GENERAL EXCLUSIONS

Design or existing faults

The cost of repairs needed because of design faults (unless the contractor is responsible), or faults which existed before you entered into the agreement and which could not be identified on initial inspection using reasonable care and skill.

Further exclusions:

Third – party or accidental damage

The cost of repairs relating to damage caused by you or someone else.

Consequential loss

Unless the contractor is responsible for it, loss or damage to property caused by the appliance, boiler or system breaking down (for example, damage to furniture caused by water leaks).

If the contractor has to dig on your property, they will fill any holes and leave the surface level but we will not necessarily replace the original surface or construction. Any redecoration that may be needed following the contractors work is your responsibility, unless the contractor has been negligent.

Normal insured risks

The cost of repairing faults or damage caused by freezing weather, subsidence, structural repairs, accident, fire, lightning, explosion, flood or storm. The cost of repairing damage caused by changes to, or problems with the gas, electricity or water services. You should check your household insurance to make sure you have enough cover for these risks.