



BURY HOUSING SERVICES

LEGIONELLA POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how Bury Housing Services will comply with its duties as the Appointed Person in respect of the effective management of water systems to ensure the health and safety of tenants, staff and the general public by minimising the risk posed by legionella.

The Duty Holder for Legionella management being Bury Council.

This policy covers domestic properties only.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to set out a clear approach to assessing, controlling and monitoring the risk of legionella within water systems within the housing stock managed by Bury Housing Services.

3. Key legal, statutory and regulatory requirements

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** (HASAWA) makes provision for relevant health and safety legislation to apply to landlords to ensure a duty of care is shown to their tenants' with regard to their health and safety.
- The **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002**(COSHH) provides a framework of actions to control the risk from a range of hazardous substances, including biological agents (eg Legionella) - to identify and assess the risk, and implement any necessary measures to control any risk.
- **L8 Approved Code of Practice** (ACOP- November 2013), has a requirement for landlords of both domestic and business premises to assess the risks from exposure to Legionella to their tenants.

Under these requirement Bury Housing Services has a responsibility to:

- Identify and assess sources of risk
- If appropriate, prepare a written scheme for preventing or controlling the risk
- Implement, manage and monitor precautions
- Keep records of precautions
- Appoint a competent person with sufficient authority and knowledge of the installation to help take the measures needed to comply with the law.

4. Duty Holders and Nominated competent persons

Duty Holders

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council – the Landlord

Appointed Person

Chief Executive - Overall duty to ensure the organisation has sufficient resources and systems in place to achieve and maintain statutory compliance.

Responsible Persons

Business Manager Sustainability & Investment - responsibility for delivering statutory compliance.

Asset Management Co-ordinator - Responsible for delivery of legionella management plan, reviewing policy & procedures regularly and for associated budgets.

Asset Planner - Responsible for day to day delivery, maintaining the compliance register & compliance with the ACOP.

Gas Co-ordinator - Responsible for servicing & remedial works to heating systems (all systems) & thermostatic mixing valves (domestic only)

Nominated Competent Persons

Bury Housing Services will employ a suitably qualified consultant and contractor to act as the nominated competent person.

Legionella consultants/contractors must comply with the following requirements:

- Membership of a recognised body such as the Legionella Control Association
- Public Liability, Employers and Professional Indemnity insurance is in date .
- Employees hold sufficient qualifications and maintain training records

5. Risk assessments

In accordance with the COSHH Regulations 2002, and good practice set out in the HSE ACOPs, Bury Housing Services has a duty to assess the risk from exposure to legionella to ensure the health and safety of tenants.

However, Bury Housing Services manages 8,000 domestic properties in ownership or management. Carrying out full risk assessments for every property would not be practical and a proportionate approach will be taken as set out below.

Initially, an in-house assessment will be made for properties to group them into the following risk categories:

Low risk – An example of a low risk property might be general needs domestic premises, including houses, flats and maisonettes where the water systems are small-scale domestic type with high turnover, i.e. in daily use with cold water gravity fed tank to a conventional copper storage cylinder, or mains water system with a combination boiler. (system boilers and combination boilers)

Medium risk – Examples of medium risk properties might be shared premises

(Sheltered housing, Extra Care Schemes, HMO or hostel accommodation for example) with cold water system fed via stored water and/or hot water via calorifiers with pumped distribution or mains water system, or domestic premises with some form of shared water storage. Properties with equipment such as a fire sprinkler systems will also be classed as medium risk.

High risk – Examples of high risk properties might be healthcare or commercial properties with cooling towers or air conditioning systems.

This initial assessment will be based on written or drawn information about properties along with site visits to a representative proportion of properties.

In addition to the risk categories detailed above, we have identified an increased level of risk associated with void properties which remain void for longer than 7 days. The approach to reducing the risk attached to void properties is set out in Section 8.

6. Controlling the risks

For each risk category, a written scheme of control has been prepared ensure the ongoing safe control of the water systems and is set out below:

Low risk properties – where properties have been identified as low risk, the ongoing control measures will include:

- Avoidance of debris entering water systems – systems with stored cold water to be checked to ensure tanks have tight fitting lids
- Control parameters for the system to be checked, for instance temperature settings for hot water tanks
- Redundant pipework identified and removed
- Advice provided to new tenants on maintaining safe water systems
- Advice provided to existing tenants via the website and periodically in tenant newsletter

For low risk properties, the in-house risk assessment will be reviewed every 2 years or where there is a significant change to the property (for instance the installation of a new heating system).

Medium and high-risk properties – a specialist water quality consultant will be appointed to carry out a detailed, site specific risk assessments for all medium and high risk properties and to prepare site specific written schemes of control.

The site specific written schemes of control will include:

- Details of the water systems including up to date plans or schematics
- Details of who is responsible for managing the property and carrying out the maintenance work
- Details of the safe and correct operation of the relevant systems
- Details of what control methods and precautionary measures are to be taken, and by whom
- Details of the frequency and type of checks that are required, and who will undertake these

The written scheme will be incorporated into a site log book which is to be available on site and is to be kept up to date at all times. All persons with any duty under the written scheme, including staff and contractors, are to be advised of the presence and location of the log book.

For medium and high risk properties, this risk assessments will be reviewed annually or where there is a significant change to the property.

Void properties

Legionella bacteria will begin to multiply if left undisturbed in stagnant water for too long. In void properties we will:

Short term voids (less than three weeks)

- Ensure water outlets (taps, wc, whb, shower etc) are run weekly
- Remove the shower head and disinfect or replace with new prior to the tenant moving in.
- Flush the system through completely immediately prior to the new tenants moving in if the property has been void for longer than 2 weeks.

Long terms voids (more than three weeks)

Where a property will be void for longer than three weeks, it will usually be more cost-effective to drain down the water system. Immediately before letting, a specialist contractor will charge up the system, calculate the system capacity, chlorinate/disinfect accordingly and carry out a PH test to ensure levels are safe.

This must be carried out in line with BS EN 806.

- If the decision is taken not to drain the system down, then a weekly flushing regime must be strictly followed.

For all voids

- During void works, if dead legs are identified in the plumbing system they will be removed
- Cold water storage tanks will be checked to ensure lids are securely fitted.
- Missing or damaged lids will be replaced.
- System controls will be checked to ensure they meet safe limits.

Further control arrangements are shown at appendix 1.

7. Monitoring and recording

Business Managers' in conjunction with the respective Scheme Management will ensure that all routine measures detailed in the written schemes are implemented in accordance with the required time intervals and that accurate, complete and up to date records are kept.

Specific controls for at risk properties will be detailed in the log book for that property along with a record of when measures were last carried out and are next due.

Controls may include any of the following measures to prevent the growth of legionella within the water system:

- Carrying out maintenance or remedial works
- Disinfection of the system
- Keeping water cisterns covered, insulated, clean and free from debris
- Ensuring water cannot stagnate anywhere in the system eg removing redundant pipe work, running taps / showers in unoccupied rooms
- Insulating pipework
- Maintaining the correct temperature at the hot water cylinder
- Advising personnel working on the system about the risks and how to minimise them
- Advising tenants about the risks, the control measures and precautions that can be taken to minimise them

In line with best practice legionella records will be retained for a minimum of five years.

The Business Manager Sustainability & Investment will arrange for periodic audits of legionella processes to ensure measures are being carried out timeously and records are being kept up to date.

8.Contractors

Bury Housing Services will ensure that any appointed specialist water quality consultants /Contractors are competent to carry out their duties, which may include:

- Provision of detailed risk assessments and written schemes for the prevention and control of water borne infections including Legionella
- Plumbing and engineering works on air conditioning systems and hot / cold water systems
- Cleaning of water systems and chemical treatment of water supplies
- Bacterial and chemical water testing and analysis

9.Legionella awareness for tenants

For risk levels to remain low in properties it is essential that tenants are aware of the need to have a regular turnover of water from outlets such as taps and shower heads. Risk levels will increase in properties that are left empty for long periods.

New tenants will be provided with a legionella awareness leaflet in their tenancy pack. The leaflet will be made available to existing tenants through our website and legionella advice will also be communicated through other forums such as a newsletter.

High risk tenants (older tenants and those with existing medical conditions) who have to leave their properties for long periods of time (for instance to go in to hospital) will be advised to contact Bury Housing Services for advice on reducing the risk when they return to their home.

Advice to be provided to tenants is shown at Appendix 2.

10.Actions to be taken in the event of an outbreak

An outbreak of legionella is defined as two or more cases where the onset of illness is closely linked in time and where there is evidence of a common source of infection.

The investigation into an outbreak is led by the relevant Local Authority's nominated 'Proper Officer' (usually a Consultant in Public Health Medicine). The Proper Officer will declare the outbreak and invoke an Outbreak Committee with responsibility for protecting public health and preventing further infection.

The Health and Safety Executive may be involved in the investigation, with the aim of pursuing compliance with the health and safety legislation

In the event of there being an outbreak that is traced back to a water system under the control of Bury Housing Services, the Chief Executive and Business manager Sustainability & Investment should immediately be notified and will in turn notify the appropriate Local authorities.

11.Training

All staff involved in legionella management will be provided with adequate training to allow them to undertake their duties effectively.

12.Audit, monitoring and review

All health and safety policies, guidelines and procedures are subject to regular audit and review by the Health and Safety Committee.

Compliance with good practice will be monitored through a variety of processes including performance reporting to internal and external stakeholders and internal and external audits.

Legionella performance indicators will include compliance in respect of Legionella monitoring assessments, remedial measures and legionella incidents. These indicators will reflect national standards and measures required by the enforcing authorities.

The effectiveness of health and safety training will be evaluated and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Health and Safety Committee.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

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Signed	Robin Lawler
Role	Chair of STH Board
Date	06/12/2023

Please feel free to get in touch if:

- *You feel this document is not as clear and easy to read as you would expect; or*
- *You believe that we aren't doing the things that this document says we will do; or*
- *You just want to talk to someone about this document*

Whatever the reason, if you want to talk to us about this document you should contact:

Head of Compliance
enquiries@sixtownhousing.org

Appendix 1 – Additional Control measures.

Water Fittings and System Requirements

Bury Housing Services will ensure that all water fittings in contact with water intended for domestic for domestic purposes will not contaminate the water and shall comply with relevant legislation and have the CE mark, British Standard kitemark or appropriate equivalent.

Specialist advice will be obtained in the selection of all water systems fixtures and fittings. Flexible hoses must have been assessed by a competent laboratory for compliance with BS6920: Parts 1 to 3

Bury Housing Services will ensure that all water fittings are suitable for the purpose intended.

Hot water shall be stored in tanks at a temperature of at least 60°C.

Water pipes shall be as short and direct as possible and pipes and tanks will be effectively insulated. Tanks will be protected against contamination and materials used which do not encourage Legionella growth.

Hot water shall reach taps at temperatures greater than 50°C (55°C within Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes) within 1 minute of running.

Cold water shall be stored at a temperature of less than 20°C. Cold water shall reach taps at temperatures less than 20°C within 2 minutes of running.

All little used outlets shall be routinely flushed through.

Where water is used or stored for consumption in any devices, e.g. water coolers, tea urns, drinks machines etc., an effective system of regular cleaning and disinfecting shall be introduced, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Disinfection

Water services will be disinfected when any of the following situations occur:

- If a routine inspection or risk assessment shows it necessary to do so;
- After any prolonged shutdown of a month or longer (a risk assessment may indicate the need for cleaning after a period of less than one month, especially in summer where temperatures have been high);
- If the system or part of it has been substantially altered or entered for maintenance purposes in a manner that may lead to contamination;
- Following an outbreak or suspected outbreak of Legionnaires' disease or any other water borne infection/disease.

Void Property Actions

It is recognised that all void properties have the potential to exhibit increased risk of Legionella due to the possibility of stagnant water remaining undisturbed within pipework for prolonged periods.

To mitigate the increased potential risk associated with voids, the contractor appointed to carry out repair and re-decoration works on all standard properties will carry out and record the following:

- Thoroughly flush all taps;
- Clean and disinfect, or replace, all shower heads;
- Inspect and report on water storage tank, where present.

Appendix 2 – Advice to Tenants

Legionnaire's Disease

This leaflet has been provided to inform you about the risks of contracting Legionnaire's disease, and how to safely prevent it. As your Landlord / Agent we have a legal obligation to ensure you are aware of the possible causes and symptoms of Legionnaire's disease so you can identify any problems easily and report any concerns to us.

What is Legionnaire's disease?

Legionnaire's disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, which can affect anybody. It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets of water from contaminated sources containing legionella bacteria.

Where is Legionella found?

All hot and cold water systems in your home are a potential source for legionella bacteria growth. The main areas of risk are where the bacteria can multiply and increase to dangerous levels and then spread, e.g. in spray from showers and taps,

even in dishwasher and washing machine pipes. Conditions ripe for colonisation are where water of between 20°C and 45°C stagnates, and where there is sludge, rust and scale present for the bacteria to feed upon and multiply.

Who is at risk?

Legionnaire's disease most commonly affects the elderly, or people with chest or lung problems. Not everyone exposed to legionella bacteria becomes ill. Legionnaire's disease is not contagious and you cannot get it from drinking water.

On average, there are approximately 500 reported cases of Legionnaire's disease a year. Legionnaire's disease is easily preventable by putting in place some simple control measures. The information within this leaflet will help you to do this

What precautions can I take?

Taking the following simple precautions will help keep you safe:

- Flush through showers and taps for 10 minutes following a period of non-use (i.e. after you have been on holiday or if a room is not in regular use)
- Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth
- Keep hot water at your boiler system at a temperature of 50°C or greater and 55°C in Sheltered or Extra Care Schemes

WARNING: BE AWARE OF SCALDING!

- Report any deposits such as rust or any unusual matter flowing from your water outlet
- If you have been away for a week or more, run the water through to clear the water that has been sitting in the hot and cold water system. Turning on taps in basins and baths and flushing the toilets is the most effective.
- To wash through the shower head, put the shower head down in the bath or shower tray to avoid too many water droplets in the air. If you have been away in the summer the cold water storage tank could have sat for the whole time at over 20°C encouraging breeding. This is less likely to be a problem in the winter when the cold water will be stored at a cooler temperature.
- The hot water will be set above 45°C to prevent bacteria breeding in the hot water tank. This means that each time the water is heated, it should be making it hard from the bacteria to breed. You should not attempt to adjust the temperature of the water yourself.

- If you are concerned that the hot water is too hot or too cold inform your Repairs Service. Similarly, your cold water should be 20°C or less. If your cold water supply is warm or you suspect it is over 20°C then you need to inform your Repairs Service.
- Run water through unused outlets. For example, if you have a separate toilet or taps in the house that are seldom used, then ensure you run water through both taps on the wash hand basin and the toilet and shower periodically and certainly before anyone might be using those facilities.

Carrying out these simple precautions will dramatically reduce the risk of contracting any of the diseases associated with this bacteria.

Appendix 3 – Legionella Management Plan (action plan review to be completed December 2023 by Interim Head of Compliance)

Action Plan Item	By Whom	By When	Comments
Undertake Legionella Risk Assessment across the domestic housing stock including physical sampling of a selection of properties	Benedict Lane	March 2023	
Identify Low, Medium and high risk properties	Benedict Lane	March 2023	Monitoring and sampling arrangements in place
Implement low risk property control measures	Wayne Campbell	Completed – October 2020	See Low risk control measures

Implement Medium risk measures	Benedict Lane	On-going	See Medium risk measures
Appoint / Train internal Legionella testing personnel to undertake low risk control measures and provide any necessary equipment	Wayne Campbell	Completed 2019 Annual refresh	To include inspection and testing of Thermostatic Blending Valves. Domestic stock with system or combi boilers. Flushing and recording seldom used outlets. Temperature checks.
	Extra Care / Sheltered Housing Scheme Managers	Completed 2019 Annual refresh	Flushing and recording seldom used outlets
Appoint external consultants to undertake and prepare site specific schemes of control for medium/high risk properties	Benedict Lane	Completed - with risk assessments on-going	Sheltered Housing, Extra Care Schemes
Ensure site logs are prepared and are available on site for medium/high risk properties	Benedict Lane	Completed - August 2019 On-going	Sheltered Housing, Extra Care Schemes. Void records maintained on QL
Ensure control measures are implemented for all categories of void refurbishment	Wayne Campbell	Completed - September 2019 On-going	Void properties are potentially medium risk. Drain down or flushing regime Chlorinating / disinfecting process as per BS EN 806 Shower heads replaced Legionella info pack Records retained on QL

Tenants are made aware of the risks and control measures associated with Legionella through the provision of information in a variety of formats	Benedict Lane	Completed - September 2019 Annual refresh	Leaflet Website Newsletters
High risk tenants receive information / guidance on the control measures to be implemented when they are aware from their homes for more than 3 weeks	Adam Greenhalgh / Maria Worthington	Completed - September 2019 Annual refresh	Guidance leaflet Website
Staff are to receive legionella training appropriate to their responsibilities within the legionella policy	Steven Molloy	Completed - October 2019 Annual Refresh	Online refresher
Job descriptions and person specification include the specific responsibilities of duty holders and nominated competent persons as contained within the legionella policy	Business Managers	Completed - October 2019 Annual refresh and reminder	
Water fitting are procured with regard to the relevant legislation and have CE Mark, BS Kitemark and/or WRAS approved Non –metallic materials comply BS6920	Wayne Campbell / Paul Webb	Completed - August 2019 Annual refresh	Capital programme procurement Repairs procurement – Bury Stores

Flexible hoses comply with BS6920: Parts 1 to 3 and WRAS Approval Scheme			
Undertaken internal audit of systems in place	Benedict Lane	October 2023	
External Audit of systems in place	Bury Council Internal Audit Team	TBC	
Low risk properties risk assessment reviewed	Benedict Lane	Review– October 2023	
Medium / High risk properties risk assessment reviewed - annually	Benedict Lane	Review - October 2023	
Legionella records retained for 5 years	Benedict Lane	On-going	
Policy and Action plan reviewed by Health and Safety Committee	Paul Webb	October 2022	
Policy and Action plan reviewed by appropriate Committee	Paul Webb	October 2023	