

Electrical Safety Policy



Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out specific guidance to ensure the safety of fixed electrical installations and portable appliances (where applicable) in properties we own and manage. Installations in dwellings owned and managed are to be installed, maintained and serviced to required standards and inspected at appropriate intervals to minimise the risk of electrocution, fire, damage to property, injury and or death.

We will ensure that a specific Electrical contract is in place, in accordance with best practice, which provides adequate provision for suitably qualified and accredited electrical contractors to manage all aspects of the delivery of electrical testing, repairs, upgrades and the provision of new installations.

Aims and objectives

This policy aims to ensure that the Council meet its obligations as a landlord, and seeks to provide assurance that electrical safety is adequately managed, ensuring the safety of our tenants, leaseholders and the general public.

The main objectives of this policy are to:

- Set out a clear approach for the maintenance and upgrading of electrical installations.
- Ensure a prompt, efficient and cost effective electrical repair, servicing and inspection service.
- Ensure legal compliance and promote good practice.
- Ensure remedial works are carried out within appropriate timescales so that homes remain safe and electrical installations are maintained to a high standard.
- Outline a comprehensive electrical inspection and monitoring system.
- Ensure adequate records and quality monitoring systems are implemented.

Legislation

The Council is committed to ensuring our tenants 'and leaseholders 'homes remain safe and fit for purpose. In achieving this we will comply with all relevant legislation and regulations.

In particular, the Council is committed to achieving compliance with the 17th Edition of the Institution of Engineering and Technology Wiring Regulations (BS 7671:2008). This determined that all domestic wiring installations must now be designed, constructed, inspected, tested and certificated to meet the requirements of BS 7671:2008. Although these standards are not applicable to all the works covered by this policy we will endeavour to apply them when undertaking any electrical improvement work.

Any contractor undertaking electrical installation work must be registered through the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) the Electrical

Contractors Association (ECA), National Association for Professional Inspectors (NAPIT) or other accredited body.

Where 'notifiable' works are required contractors must be registered with a competent person self-certification scheme, in order to certify compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations. Individual engineers working on electrical installations must be trained, competent and hold a relevant industry recognised qualifications.

Scope

An electrical installation is made up of all the fixed electrical wiring and equipment that is supplied beyond the electric meter of a property. It includes the cables that are usually hidden in the fabric of the building (walls, floors and ceilings), accessories (sockets, switches and light fittings), and the consumer unit (fuse box) that contains all the fuses, circuit-breakers and residual current devices (RCDs).

This policy covers repair, upgrading, testing and inspection of all electrical installations. All electrical repairs, upgrades and renewals will be categorised to ensure that the correct levels of priority are given. The Council will take specific account of any health and safety requirements during the prioritisation process for these works.

The policy also covers any portable equipment owned by the Council that is used to provide services or is located in the communal areas of buildings.

Electrical systems will be repaired, renewed, upgraded and tested in accordance with industry guidance and manufacturers' recommendations.

Typical installations and systems covered include:

- Domestic electrical installation.
- Communal landlord installations.
- Emergency lighting systems.
- Fixed fire or carbon monoxide alarm installations.
- Door entry systems.
- Electric heating systems (including convectional and sustainable heating systems, i.e. air source heat pumps).
- Portable equipment owned by the Council .

Electrical testing and certification

Only appropriately skilled and competent persons will carry out electrical inspection and testing. A person shall be deemed skilled to carry out the appropriate inspection and testing only if they have sufficient qualification, knowledge and experience.

The Council will ensure that all our homes and communal installations are tested in accordance with the Institute of Engineering Technology (IET) Regulation statutory timescales. We test and issue certification prior to the re-letting of our properties. We will also carry out Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) testing on all properties that are subject to particular types of improvement works where electrical circuits are affected.

The frequency of inspection and testing will be determined taking into account:

- The type of installation and adequacy of earthing and bonding.

- Suitability of the switchgear and control gear.
- Serviceability of accessories and fittings.
- Type of systems and their condition.
- Extent of any wear and tear, damage or other deterioration of other parts of the installation and level of misuse (e.g. vandalism).
- Presence of adequate identification and notices.
- Any change in use of the premises which have led to, or might lead to, deficiencies in the installation.
- EICR observations and recommendations.
- The frequency and quality of maintenance.

We will regularly review and monitor the qualifications of all contractors' employees delivering works to ensure that only appropriately trained and skilled employees are engaged on these works.

All new installations shall be provided with an Electrical Installation Certificate complete with a schedule of inspections and test results. The documents shall be suitably completed and comply with the appropriate regulations. .

On completion of a periodic test, certification will be issued. This will make recommendations which will be reviewed by a competent person and the necessary remedial works prioritised accordingly.

Where appropriate, works will be batched and delivered through programmes, although all code C1 and C2 recommendations will be completed at the time of the periodic test and not be subject to batching.

Where recommendations relate to observations only (i.e. C3), these will be monitored through subsequent inspection and testing.

Electrical works identified on certification are recorded using the following categories:

- Code C1: Where a real and immediate danger is observed that puts the safety of those using the installation at risk. The contractor will advise in writing, immediately, of the urgent work necessary to remedy the deficiency.
- Code C2: An observed deficiency not considered to be dangerous at the time of inspection but would become a real and immediate danger if a fault or other foreseeable event was to occur.
- Code C3: Used to indicate that, whilst an observed deficiency is not considered to be a source of immediate or potential danger, improvement would contribute to an enhancement of the safety of the electrical installation.

Our homes will be subject to a full electrical condition report (EICR) test at the following times:

- All properties and communal areas are to be inspected every five years.
- At a change of occupancy, including mutual exchanges.
- Following any major upgrade works where electrical installations are affected.
- After any significant fire, flood or activity or occurrence that would warrant inspection.

Portable appliance testing

All portable electrical equipment owned/managed by the Council to provide services or located in communal areas will be subject to an annual portable appliance test (PAT). Appropriate labelling of equipment and recording of all equipment will be undertaken in accordance with the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994.

The Mobility Scooters in our Sheltered Schemes Policy defines the requirements in regard to the PAT testing of tenant's own mobility scooters.

Monitoring and control

In order to ensure full compliance, monitoring will be undertaken regularly through the use of the IT system or Register, documenting all assets and their relevant testing timescales. Operational teams will review the register regularly and performance information will be shared internally and with the relevant committee meeting.

Inspection certificates will be reviewed and stored electronically.

The Council may also engage a 3rd party audit to check for errors in both condition reports provided, and to check the quality of work undertaken on site.

Responsibilities

The following roles have responsibilities:

- The Chief Executive - overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- Director of Housing - responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to enable the objectives of this policy to be met.
- Contracts Manager - will take the lead on contract management for the main service areas involving electrical testing and installation.
- Compliance Manager - has day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, including: ensuring adequate processes and procedures are in place to manage the risks arising from electrical works; ensuring sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out; monitoring the performance of contractors;

Employees

All employees, irrespective of their position shall:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be adversely affected by electrical works, including members of the public, tenants, visitors and contractors.
- Co-operate as appropriate with other staff and agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and all other legal requirements.
- Halt works that, constitutes a serious risk to health and safety.
- Report any concerns that they may have in relation to the management of electrical compliance and electrical safety.

The Council's Approach to Electrical Safety

The Council will take every opportunity to involve interested tenants in managing and developing this service. Including utilising their skills in procuring contracts, challenging contractor performance at core groups, and advising on and revised policy changes.

The Council will ensure that prior to any works commencing the appointed person must assure themselves of the technical competence of the contractors and gain appropriate information relating to the skills and competence of those responsible for carrying out the works.

The Council recognises that in certain cases there may be underlying issues that contribute to access problems. These can relate to a support need, language or format issue, or a specific tenancy management problem. In these circumstances, where it is reasonably practicable to identify the need we will try to overcome or resolve the cause of the problem and be sensitive to the issue before pursuing legal action.

Appropriate and regular electrical safety awareness training will be provided to all property and first point of contact staff. Contract Management will be undertaken in accordance with the specific requirements set out in the Electrical Works Contract.

Tenant's responsibility

Under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement tenants must allow access to their property for maintenance and/ or safety checks to be carried out. In order to undertake works it may be necessary to cut the electrical supply to the property.

Prior to undertaking any works, written confirmation will be provided in accordance with our general Consultation Strategy. It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that:

- Any action in relation to saving electronic files i.e. IT related software, programmes or other electronic storage is taken prior to the commencement of the work.
- Any contingency arrangements arising from the absence of electrical supplies are highlighted and agreed in advance of works.
- Appropriate access and relocation/removal of any obstacles will need to be undertaken (in situations where the tenant is unable to manage support will be agreed). The emptying and storage of freezers/ fridges etc.
- Loft spaces kept empty.
- Any repairs or faults are reported in a timely manner.

Where tenants carry out property alterations and improvements, which include additions/alterations to the electrics, they should seek authorisation prior to any works being undertaken. If works are approved, tenants are responsible for ensuring appropriate safety checks are carried out and all relevant certificates are supplied following the works/installation. Tenants are also responsible for meeting the cost of this.

Any defective or unauthorised works needing rectification may incur a recharge. If any installation has been undertaken without our permission, and is found to be defective, the supply may be terminated.

Leaseholders and shared owners responsibility

Typically, these groups do not fall directly under the Council's responsibility for ensuring electrical safety, as the responsibility for this remains with the leaseholder or shared owner.

Contractor's Responsibility

When undertaking any electrical installation works, the contractor will also be required to conform in full with the requirements of this policy.

All appointed electrical contractors shall be registered with the NICEIC, ECA, NAPIT or other accredited body and shall be registered under a recognised Domestic Installer Self-certification Scheme in compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations.

Every effort will be made to arrange a convenient time and date with the tenant for access to complete the works. Appointments will be made and in certain situations written notice provided. In cases where access is denied on a number of pre-arranged occasions and following several written notifications, we will consider using legal action to gain access

Risk

Prior to commencement of any work activities, a suitable risk assessment covering the full scope of works will be completed. This assessment will include the impact of works on all tenants and leaseholders affected, especially those who are vulnerable.

The main hazards would include:

- Contact with exposed live exposed parts.
- Faults which could cause fires or electrocution.
- Fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of the ignition.
- Defective and inoperable systems.
- System overload.
- Inadequate or deficient earthing and bonding.
- Failure to comply with legislative requirements.