



<b>TECHNICAL</b>
<b>Management of Water Systems and Legionella</b>
<b>JUNE 2020</b>
<b>JUNE 2025</b>

<b>Policy on :</b>	Management of Water Systems and Legionella
<b>Compliant with Charter :</b>	<p>4. Quality of Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants' homes as a minimum meet the SHQS by 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter and when allocated are always clean and tidy and in a good state of repair</li> </ul> <p>5. Repairs, maintenance and improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.</li> </ul>
<b>Compliant with Tenant Participation Strategy:</b>	No consultation undertaken.
<b>Compliant with Equal Opportunities :</b>	Yes
<b>Compliant with Business Plan :</b>	Yes

<b>Date Approved :</b>	<b>29/6/2020</b>
<b>Date for Review :</b>	<b>June 2025</b>

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# **Policy on the Management of Water Systems and Legionella**

**Purpose: The aim of this Policy is to ensure the effective inspection, maintenance and management of all water systems within domestic and commercial properties owned by Paisley Housing Association.**

1.1 Paisley Housing Association provides services to Paisley South Property Services (PSPS). However as a factor PSPS has no legal duties in relation to the management of Legionella for factored owners.

1.2 The actions detailed within this section have been written to ensure all reasonable steps have been taken to comply with The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended), The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Byelaws 2014 and all other relevant legislation.

## **2. Background information and Definitions**

### **Legionella Information**

2.1 Legionella bacteria is common in natural water (such as rivers and ponds). However, legionella can grow in other water systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, showers, spray apparatus and hot and cold water systems.

2.2 Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by the inhalation of Legionella bacteria. This includes the most serious Legionnaires' diseases, as well as the similar but less serious conditions of Pontiac Fever and Lochgoilhead Fever. The bacteria is normally contained within fine water droplets (aerosol) that may be caused by operating a cooling tower, shower, spray apparatus, running a tap outlet or operating a humidifier.

2.3 Legionnaires' disease has the potential to affect anybody. However, those more susceptible are normally in the age range of 45 and above, smokers, heavy drinkers, or suffer from chronic respiratory or kidney disease or have impaired immune systems.

2.4 Legionella survive low temperatures and thrive at temperatures between 20-45 degrees C if the conditions are right (e.g. if a supply of nutrients is present such as rust, sludge, scale and other bacteria).

## **Definitions**

### 2.5

Legionella - “a potentially dangerous type of bacteria when inhaled with water vapour. Bacterium grows best in warm, nutrient rich water.”

Legionella Risk Assessment – “a specific risk assessment carried out to determine the risk level of Legionella Assessment proliferation, and exposure from a specific water system.”

Log Book – “a record book provided to record all local checks and tests carried out, as specified by legionella risk assessment.”

Legionnaires’ disease - “a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by the legionella bacteria.”

## **3. References**

British Standards 8580:2010 – Water Quality: Risk Assessment for Legionella

HSG Health and Safety in Residential Care Homes (2001)

HSG274 Legionnaires Disease – Technical Guidance (in 3 Parts) (2013)

IACL27 (rev2) Legionnaires Disease – A guide to Employers

INDG 458 Legionnaires Disease – A brief Guide for Duty Holders (2012)

Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008

The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, as amended

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Private Water Supply (Scotland) 2006

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland) Byelaws 2014

The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 2001

## **4. Legal Duties**

4.1 Paisley Housing Association as an employer and a landlord has several specific legal duties which relate to water safety and, in particular, Legionella risk management. These include:

- Identifying and assessing sources of risk;
- Managing the risk
- Preparing a scheme for preventing or controlling the risk;
- Implementing and managing the scheme;
- Keeping records and periodically checking what has been done is effective.

## 5. Legionella Policy

5.1 Paisley Housing Association will aim to minimise and control the risk from Legionnaires' disease and, to this end, has appointed the Head of Technical as the 'responsible person' who will have a duty to put in place an **Action plan** to minimise the risk of Legionella and to manage and monitor the necessary work systems and procedures.

5.2 We will identify and assess sources of risk (e.g. where conditions are present that may encourage Legionella bacteria to multiply or where there is a means of creating and disseminating breathable droplets), and establish any items of non-compliance;

5.3 We will assess the level of risk through an ongoing structured Legionella Risk Assessment programme, and aim to eliminate or reduce the risk to an acceptable level;

5.4 Based on the above we will arrange for routine inspection and maintenance of water systems, and where needed, a programme of disinfection.

5.5 We will retain records of maintenance, inspection and testing for a minimum of 5 years.

## 6. Risk Assessment

6.1 The Health and Safety Executive advice is that;

'All water systems require a risk assessment but not all systems require elaborate control measures. A simple risk assessment may show that there are no real risks from Legionella, but if there are, implementing appropriate measures will prevent or control these risks.

The law requires simple, proportionate and practical actions to be taken. (See section 4 above.)

For most residential settings, the risk assessment may show risks are low, in which case no further action may be necessary e.g. housing units with small domestic-type water systems where water turnover is high. If the assessment shows the risks are insignificant and are being properly managed to comply with the law, no further action may be required, but it is important to review the assessment periodically in case anything changes in the system. However the frequency of inspection and maintenance will depend on the system and the risks it presents.'

6.2 PHA used an external company to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment programme in 2012 across all our tenements with stored cold water. This was to identify and assess the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria from common water systems.

6.3 We mitigated the identified risks by switching heating systems to combi boilers and removing storage tanks where possible. There are currently two tenements and our multi storey block, where we have tenants, which still have stored water systems. These are treated annually.

6.4 Although there is no legal requirement to do so, where factored owners request preventative water treatment, this is arranged by PHA and recharged by PSPS.

6.5 Where we consider necessary, we will use a competent external company with qualified Legionella Risk Assessors to refresh the risk assessment programme. This may be for specialist or higher risk stock.

6.6 PHA will determine an appropriate in-house programme of domestic risk assessing, which may involve the use of 'representative' assessments followed by an ongoing programme or rotation across different addresses.

6.7 All recommendations and remedial action for high risk sites will be recorded in a log book. The recommendations will also highlight the management control actions that may be carried out in-house and those which require an external contractor.

6.8 The risk assessment for high risk stock will be reviewed at regular intervals (at least every 2 years) or when it is believed that the original risk assessment is no longer valid (e.g. following a change in the building or water supply, or following an incident).

## **7. Water Fittings and System Requirements**

7.1 PHA will ensure that all water fittings comply with relevant legislation and have the CE mark, British Standard kite mark or appropriate equivalent. Specialist advice will be obtained in the selection of all water systems fixtures and fittings.

7.2 We will ensure that all water fittings are suitable for the purpose intended.

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

7.4 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.

7.5 Hot water shall reach taps at temperatures greater than 50°C within 1 minute of running.

7.6 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.

7.7 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.

## **8. Disinfection**

8.1 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.

## **9. Void Property Actions**

9.1 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.

9.2 To mitigate the increased potential risk associated with voids, the Technical Officer in charge of making the property ready to let will ensure the following are carried out and be responsible for recording these actions:

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

9.3 All adapted property becoming void will be assessed individually and on their own merits.

## **10. Contractors**

10.1 Where a competent external contractor is appointed to carry out legionella preventative monitoring and water hygiene services as a minimum requirement,

contractors are required to be a registered member of the Legionella Control Association (LCA) or the Water Management Society (WMSoc). Contracted works may include legionella sampling, tank inspections, water sampling, (for all bacteria) and other associated services, as identified in the Legionella Risk Assessment programme.

## **11. Notification Requirements**

11.1 If it is suspected or confirmed that a tenant, employee or visitor has contracted Legionnaires' disease, the Organisation will report the incident to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

## **12. Tenant Responsibilities**

12.1 Tenants will be provided with information on good water management and Legionella control through information leaflets/electronic media.

12.2 Tenants will be advised to clean shower heads, descale and disinfect them at least every two months.

12.3 For showers that are only occasionally used, tenants will be advised to flush the shower through by running the water for at least 2 minutes once a week.

12.4 Where a property is left vacant for any time (e.g. when on holiday), tenants will be advised to flush both hot and cold water systems by running all outlets for at least 2 minutes.

12.5 Tenants will be advised to inform PHA immediately if there are problems, debris or discolouration in the water.

## **13. Data Protection/GDPR**

13.1 When implementing the policies and procedures of Paisley Housing Association all staff and Board members must adhere to and be aware of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("the GDPR").

13.2 In situations where there may be any doubt about the requirements of the above, the Association may seek the views of its legal advisors.

13.3 The Technical section will retain information on testing carried out to properties. It will not retain personal information on the tenant of the property.

## **14. Equal Opportunities**

14.1 The Association promotes equal opportunities and will not discriminate between persons on grounds of gender or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

See our **Equalities and Diversity Policy**

## **15. Complaints procedure**

15.1 The Association aims to ensure that the service provided to tenants is of the highest quality. If this is not the case, a **Complaints Policy and Procedure** is in place to allow all residents or affected parties to state their grievance. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is the final stage of this process.

## **16. Review**

16.1 This Policy will be reviewed five years from the date of approval.

16.2 Consideration will be given to any changes in legislation, good practice or operational changes which may affect the content.