

Request to Approve Implementation of the Housing Services Legionella management Policy (Housing, Simon Allen)

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service has a wide range of policies covering Health and Safety; the Legionella Management Policy will act to bolster the department's compliance performance in its Housing Services.

Within this covering report, details will be provided as to the importance of having such a policy as a supplementary document to the overall health and safety policy.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to approve the implementation of the Housing Legionella Management Policy (Appendix A).

1. Context of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to clearly communicate what the Council will do to ensure that our portfolio of properties is managed effectively, safely and adopt a best practice approach in respect to "The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems L8 (ACoP)"
- 1.2 The Housing Service has produced this document to ensure those affected by our undertaking understand what the Council liabilities are and what works will be undertaken to proactively manage our properties and maintain compliance in respect to the control of Legionella.
- 1.3 The policy clearly details what the Council are liable to maintain and provides clear text on how we will achieve this through control mechanisms and proactive contract management.
- 1.4 The policy takes a best practice approach and by implementing simple, proportionate, and appropriate control measures will ensure risks remains low. For most domestic hot and cold-water systems, temperature is the most reliable way of ensuring the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria is minimised i.e., keep the hot water hot, cold water cold and keep it moving. Other simple control measures to help control the risk of exposure to Legionella include:
 1. flushing out the system prior to letting the property
 2. avoiding debris getting into the system (e.g., ensure the cold-water tanks, where fitted, have a tight-fitting lid)
 3. setting control parameters (e.g., setting the temperature of the hot water cylinder (calorifier) to ensure water is stored at 60°C)
 4. make sure any redundant pipework identified is removed.
- 1.5 The risk is further lowered where instantaneous water heaters (for example combi boilers and electric showers) are installed because there is no water storage.

2. Housing Services Legionella Management Policy

- 2.1 Enclosed with this report is the draft Housing Services Legionella Management Policy.
- 2.2 It is proposed that this policy will be implemented with immediate effect once approved by Housing Committee.

3. Policy Framework Implications

- 3.1 The Housing Services Legionella Policy is one of a suite of policies that will link into the key Housing Services Health and Safety Policy
- 3.2 In addition to duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and COSHH require employers to conduct their work in such a way that their employees will not be exposed to health and safety risks and provide information to other people about their workplace, which might affect their health and safety.
- 3.3 RBC will comply with its duties under the Act by:
 - 1. effectively reducing associated risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable for all customers, visitors, staff, and contractors
 - 2. reducing to the lowest reasonably practicable level the spread of Legionella disease from any RBC Housing premises
 - 3. RBC Housing Technical Services will comply with the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999 by ensuring that a monitored programme of adequate controls is in place. This will be implemented through:
 - 4. identification, assessment, and regular review of risks
 - 5. preparation of a written scheme to reduce, eliminate or control the risks identified
 - 6. implementation and management of the written scheme by appointing adequately trained people who have managerial responsibility
 - 7. maintaining all relevant records and monitoring controls
- 3.4 The risk assessment programme will be prioritised according to the vulnerability of service users and the water systems likely to present the highest risks.
- 3.5 RBC Housing Technical Services will comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 by taking reasonable steps to safeguard people from hazards associated with water supplies, particularly waterborne bacteria.
- 3.6 RBC Housing Technical Services will comply with the duties of the Approved Code of Practice L8 and Guidance HSG274 by:
 - 1. Undertaking an initial risk assessment to identify the risk level of each property. This will identify whether the possibility exists of conditions suitable and liable to facilitate the growth of legionella bacteria and this will determine where a site-based water risk assessment is required.
 - 2. This site-based risk assessment will determine for each property the inspection frequency, remedial works and management actions required.

3. Only suitably competent and experienced legionella/water treatment persons will be permitted to carry out risk assessments and remedial works.
 4. Appointing a responsible person for the prevention and control of risk from Legionella.
- 3.7 This policy will help Housing Services to ensure the safety of staff, contractors, and residents and will assist Runnymede Borough Council in ensuring compliance with current legislative duties.
- 4. Resource implications**
- 4.1 Runnymede Borough Council Housing Service already manages “The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems L8 (ACoP)” in a proactive manner and has in place contracts to mitigate and manage known risks. It is therefore not a request that additional resources are needed to maintain this level of service.
- 5. Legal implications**
- 5.1 The legal implications are contained in the body of the report.
- 6. Equality implications**
- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening form has been completed. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is statutory and, therefore, must be adhered to by all employers, employees, and contractors irrespective of any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**
- 7.1 Effective management of water is essential to minimising the Council’s environmental impact.
- 7.2 The management of Legionella is part of effective water management.
- 7.3 Water management will feature higher in future in the Housing Service’s commitments on climate change.
- 8. Other implications**
- 8.1 Approval of this policy will give further assurance to the Regulator for Social Housing and continue the Housing Services ambition to be accredited with ISO9001.
- 8.2 The Housing Service are not proposing to consult with residents on this policy, as it responds purely to the legislative regime required of landlords. Consultation has been undertaken internally with relevant parties to ensure the content of the policy meets our legal obligations.
- 9. Conclusions**
- 9.1 Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Services Legionella Management Policy will assist the department in reducing and mitigating our risks and

ensuring that we actively manage our portfolio of assets in line with industry standards.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Draft Housing Services Legionella Management Policy

[X:\HousingPoliciesProceduresStrategies\Policies\Draft\Housing_Services Legionella Management Policy FINAL.docx](X:\HousingPoliciesProceduresStrategies\Policies\Draft\Housing_Services_Legionella_Management_Policy_FINAL.docx)

Housing Services Health and Safety Policy

[X:\HousingPoliciesProceduresStrategies\Policies\Approved\Housing Health and Safety Policy 2021-24 FINAL.pdf](X:\HousingPoliciesProceduresStrategies\Policies\Approved\Housing_Health_and_Safety_Policy_2021-24_FINAL.pdf)