

How to avoid a serious detriment assessment and downgrade – HQN analysis of gas safety problem cases

We have looked at the issues which prompted the HCA to take a hard line on gas safety and combined this with HQN's guidance on best practice.

The typical problems to focus on and avoid are:

- Insufficient scrutiny by board and senior management – not keeping the board or senior management team properly informed about gas servicing and maintenance performance on a regular basis
- Not maintaining the integrity of your gas records including over-reliance on your contractor's data and information and a lack of processes to ensure that a robust reconciliation takes place on a regular basis
- Inability to track or identify on an ongoing basis properties which are at risk of passing their anniversary date for servicing
- Insufficient monitoring and reporting of properties without a current and valid gas safety certificate – and the action that is being taken to gain entry
- Failing to take timely and robust action (including legal) against tenants who refuse access for gas servicing
- Having a variety of standalone systems and gas databases which do not link with one another thereby increasing the risk of human error occurring when they are updated, causing confusion about which records to use and making it hard to alert staff which properties are coming up for servicing so that they can take appropriate action
- Having unduly lengthy policies and procedures, without clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and with little clarity about what action to take in the event of non-access
- Not offering flexible arrangements for servicing including evenings and weekends
- Not having good historic knowledge about properties that you are likely to experience difficulties in carrying out servicing/accessing – so that preventative steps can be taken early
- Not having special arrangements for those difficult to access properties
- Not actively promoting gas safety, the importance of annual servicing and tenants' obligations i.e. on the website, at the start of the tenancy, newsletters.



In a nutshell, the HCA is taking action against:

Breaches of the Home Standard by failing to comply with the Gas Safety Regulations 1998 and that this breach has the potential to cause serious detriment to tenants.

The Excellence in Asset Management Network produced a gas servicing toolkit to help members undertake their own self-assessments. We are happy to do a quick review of your self assessment – it's free and confidential. For more information on the Excellence in Asset Management Network please contact the team on 0845 47 47 004 or by emailing teamnet@hqnetwork.co.uk

We can also carry out health and safety compliance checks, audits and reviews courtesy of our Excellence in Health and Safety Network. For more information on the network please contact the team on 0845 47 47 004 or by emailing safetynet@hqnetwork.co.uk

To find out how HQN can support you, please contact Anna Pattison, Business Manager, on 01904 557197 or by emailing anna.pattison@hqnetwork.co.uk