



## PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES SOLID FUEL APPLIANCE SAFETY POLICY

<b>Version:</b>	2.0
<b>Lead Directorate:</b>	Homes and Communities
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Head of Homes and Safety
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## 1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline Plymouth Community Homes' (PCH) approach to managing and phasing out solid fuel-burning appliances to improve tenant safety, enhance energy efficiency, and align with environmental sustainability goals.

1.2 PCH is committed to replacing solid fuel appliances with safer, more energy-efficient alternatives and ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations through regular servicing and safety measures.

1.3 This policy supports PCH's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and minimising future maintenance costs while also considering tenant fuel needs to prevent fuel poverty.

1.4 The policy ties into PCH's broader Environmental Policy, contributing to sustainability initiatives, including carbon reduction and energy efficiency improvements.

1.5 This policy applies to all PCH-owned or managed properties with solid fuel-burning appliances. It covers rented properties, communal areas, and other locations where such appliances are present.

## 2. Introduction

2.1 Solid fuel-burning appliances pose a range of risks, including fire hazards, carbon monoxide poisoning, and increased environmental pollution. Also being connected to an ageing chimney stock. PCH acknowledges these risks and is committed to phasing out these appliances, focusing on tenant safety and environmental responsibility.

2.2 The removal of solid fuel appliances aligns with PCH's broader strategy to support net zero carbon initiatives, reduce maintenance costs, and improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock.

2.3 This policy supports PCH to ensure that our obligations as a landlord, tenant management organisation and employer are being met, and seeks to provide assurance that solid fuel appliance safety is appropriately managed, until they are phased out.

## 3. Policy Statement

3.1 PCH will phase out solid fuel appliances by January 2027 where practicable.

- Void Periods: Prioritising the removal of appliances during void periods, with all appliance openings being bricked up to prevent unauthorised future use or tenant modifications.

- Tenanted properties: Removal of appliances from tenanted properties, with all appliance openings being bricked up to prevent unauthorised future use or tenant modifications.

- Tenant Consent: Seeking tenant consent for removal where solid fuel appliances are still in use, offering suitable alternatives such as gas or electrical appliances.

3.2 To safeguard health and safety, PCH will:

- Ensure the installation of carbon monoxide detectors and purpose provided ventilation in all properties with solid fuel appliances.
- Conduct twice-yearly servicing of solid fuel appliances until they are fully phased out, addressing any maintenance issues that may arise. Making safe any dangerous appliances.

3.3 PCH's building insurance does cover solid fuel appliances. This policy reflects PCH's strategic decision to phase out such installations to reduce insurance risk and future liabilities.

3.4 PCH will steer the decision to remove solid fuel appliances based on the following principles:

- Support of net zero carbon and environmental sustainability, in alignment with PCH's Environmental Policy.
- Energy efficiency improvements, including reducing reliance on inefficient fuel sources.
- Minimising future servicing and maintenance costs associated with solid fuel appliances.

3.5 PCH is mindful of fuel poverty concerns and will not seek to remove solid fuel appliances where they represent the tenant's primary source of heat without first providing a suitable and cost-effective alternative. In cases where solid fuel is the main heat source, PCH will strategically review alternative heating options, including gas or electric systems, and work with residents to ensure they are not adversely impacted.

3.6 Tenants who have solid fuel appliances replaced will be offered replacement electrical appliances (fire suite) as part of PCH's phased approach to removing these systems.

3.7 Tenants who refuse to allow PCH to implement this policy will be managed through the tenancy agreements, with any refusal addressed in line with PCH's rights and responsibilities as a landlord.

3.8 PCH's communications team will support the circulation of PCH's plans to implement this policy to affected residents. The team will also provide advice and guidance as needed to ensure tenants understand the removal process and the available alternatives.

#### **4. Related Documents**

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Housing Act 2004
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- The Building Regulations 2010 (Part J: Combustion Appliances)
- PCH Environmental Policy

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **5.1 Board Members**

The Board has the overall governance responsibility for ensuring that PCH is compliant with regulatory standards, legislation, and codes of practice. The role of the Board includes:

- Establishing key Health and Safety policies
- Awareness of risks and risk controls in place
- Agree performance targets and a performance monitoring framework
- Ensuring availability of adequate resources and competencies for delivering policy commitments

- Ensuring appropriate reporting and auditing activity
- Hearing the voice of residents.

5.2 Under this policy, PCH has identified the following appropriate persons within the organisation to manage this area of risk with the support of appointed specialist contractors and consultants. Only competent and suitable qualified contractors will be appointed by PCH.

5.3 Duty Holder

Duty Holder	Chief Executive
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The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for health and safety across the organisation and will nominate appropriately qualified and suitable experienced people to discharge those duties in relation to solid fuel appliance management.

5.4 Policy Management and Assurance

Responsible Person	Position:	Executive Director of Homes and Communities
	Responsibilities:	Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and ensuring that adequate resources are made available to enable the policy objectives to be met.  To ensure that appropriately qualified and suitably experienced people are employed to implement this policy, that appropriate programmes of work are in place to discharge relevant duties.
Deputy Responsible Person	Position:	Head of Repairs Voids and Compliance
	Responsibilities:	Ensuring the solid fuel appliance policy is implemented, relevant, current, and practical.  To ensure that all activity required for compliance with this policy is carried out.  Provision of quarterly performance reports to the Board as part of the monitoring framework.  Reviewing the procedure plans every 12 months with all relevant parties to ensure the systems outlined in the plan are working.
Appointed Competent Persons	Position:	Senior Compliance Manager and Gas Compliance Manager have joint responsibility
	Responsibilities:	Administer associated contracts and act as the first point of contact for solid fuel safety related queries.  Ensure effective management of PCHs' solid fuel appliance programmes and risk register.

		<p>Ensure that solid fuel appliance information is available for relevant persons.</p> <p>Liaising between the employees, contractors, safety professionals, and residents about matters pertaining to solid fuel safety for locations within the scope of this policy.</p>
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**6. Data Protection**

In applying this policy, all members of staff must comply with PCH’s Data Protection Policy and ensure that the personal information supplied by customers is protected at all times.

**7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

PCH will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

PCH will make this policy available in other languages and formats on request. We will carry out an equality impact assessment on this policy, in line with our corporate procedure.

PCH comply with the Equality Act 2010 by having due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**
- **Advance equality of opportunity for people who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and**
- **Foster good relations between different groups.**

We will ensure that no resident is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We will make reasonable adjustments to support residents with additional needs, ensure accessible information, and review our processes regularly to identify and address any inequalities arising from the implementation of this policy.

All contractors employed by PCH or carrying out works on PCH owned or managed premises are required to adhere to the commitments we have made to valuing and promoting equality and diversity and inclusion across our services.

**8. Communication**

8.1 PCH will ensure that appropriate solid fuel information is provided to relevant persons upon request.

8.2 PCH will ensure effective emergency procedures are in place and that staff and contractors are clear on their responsibilities.

8.3 PCH will promote awareness of solid fuel related risks through training and induction of relevant staff. The training will be designed to fit the needs and roles of the employees being trained.

8.4 To ensure that appropriate and suitable training is provide to staff, PCH will carry out training needs where appropriate.

8.5 PCH has adopted and is undertaking surveys in accordance with the Regulatory standard tenant satisfaction measures. These will be utilised to address any reports on outstanding works, issues or concerns that warrant further action or learning and will be shared with out contractors delivering services.

#### Document Control – Change History

Version	Effective Date	Responsible Policy Lead	Details of Review / Amendments
1.0	January 2015	Head of Project, Performance and Policy (Homes & Neighbourhoods)	New Policy
2.0	March 2026	Head of Homes & Safety	Policy reviewed and updated in line with PCH phasing out solid fuel appliances by January 2027 where practicable.