

Briefing note: Housing Compliance Audit

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1.0 Background

1.1 A Housing Compliance Audit was conducted during the 2022/2023 audit work programme. A draft audit report was issued in April 2023 setting out several recommendations. The audit included gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, asbestos management and water safety. The audit contains findings which the service has sought clarification on, specifically relating to statutory requirements on electrical safety. The service believes the fieldwork does not include testing across the full spectrum of responsibility. Subsequently, the service disputes the limited assurance rating given by the auditor. However, the service recognises that the audit should not remain in dispute where a mutual agreement cannot be reached.

2.0 Current performance

2.1 The Councils responsibilities and current performance is set out in the table below.

Compliance area	Action required	YTD performance	Comments
Gas safety	3025 annual landlord gas safety checks.	100%	Landlord gas safety records are up to date for all domestic and communal appliances.
Electrical safety	3834 electrical installations.	98.46%	There are 59 properties within the current years programme where the last inspection was carried out more than 5 years ago. All outstanding cases are being progressed through the no access procedure.
Fire safety	43 individual fire risk assessments are conducted annually.	On track.	Valid fire risk assessments are in place for all operational HRA buildings. The 2023 FRA programme is being carried out.
Asbestos management	17 asbestos management plans are in place across the HRA portfolio.	100%	2023 reviews have been completed. One remedial action was identified which is complete.
Water safety	14 sites require risk assessments across the HRA portfolio.	100%	All risk assessments are in place and up to date. There are no outstanding remedial actions.

3.0 Key considerations and next steps

- 3.1 **Electrical Safety.** The service has operated an accelerated programme throughout 2023/2024 to ensure readiness for anticipated changes in legislation. The Council continues to ensure that category 1 electrical hazards are rectified immediately upon identification and ensure all other remedial actions are followed up and completed.
- 3.2 **Governance- policies and procedures.** The service uses a blended approach of contracted out works and its own in-house housing repairs team. Where works are contracted out, the specification, contract and oversight are commissioned and managed by the Housing Service. However, the service accepts that oversight of controls would be better supported by a suite of refreshed policies and procedures to ensure transparency of the departments approach.
- 3.3 **Governance- system improvements.** The service uses NEC Housing to manage both tenancy and property matters. The system is configured to interface with contractor portals where appropriate, e.g., for landlord gas safety records. The service acknowledges that continuous improvement is required to ensure that all processes related to compliance are managed through NEC Housing and contractor portals are effectively interfaced where required.
- 3.4 **Governance- compliance reporting.** Oversight of performance in the Housing Service has been highlighted as an area for improvement. This is acknowledged by the service and compliance reports are provided to the Portfolio holder and Senior Leadership Team at agreed intervals.
- 3.5 **Procurement.** The Housing Service has a Technical Contracts Officer who supports the service in drafting tender documents to support the procurement of specialist contractors to deliver a range of compliance and improvement contracts.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Whilst the service continues to challenge the assurance level given. The continuous delivery and sustained performance of compliance works remains a priority for the service. The service will deliver a programme of improvements in strategy, policy and processes to ensure controls can be tested effectively and the risk of non-compliance reduced.

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