

**CITY BOARD
30 AUGUST 2012**

ITEM A10

REPAIRS TEAM - GAS & ELECTRICAL TESTING PROPOSAL

Report of the Director of Investment & Regeneration

1. SUMMARY

This report updates the City Board on the direction the Gas Team want to take.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the existing £10 Missed Appointment Scheme can be extended to include Gas and Electrical Safety Testing appointments from the 1 October 2012.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The principle of charging and compensating tenants is already in place as the scheme currently applies to missed day to day repairs appointments.
- 3.2 This existing scheme is seen as successful and the intent is to replicate it for Gas Service and Safety checks and for Electrical Periodic Safety Testing appointments. It is expected that this will improve the success of early access. The result of this will be that there will be a saving in cost due to doing less abortive calls and will be less likely that Gas Certificates will expire and be non-compliant.

Access Figures for Gas - Quarter 1 (April - June12)

- 3.3 A total of 5087 gas safety checks were completed during the quarter. It took 7344 calls by gas operatives at each property to achieve this, therefore 2257 calls resulted in "no access".
 - 3.4 Of the 2257 appointments resulting in no access less than 50 were missed by us. Over 2200 appointments were missed by tenants.
 - 3.5 The balance of compensation at £10 per missed appointment would be:

£22,000 charged to tenants
 - £500 paid to tenants as compensation
 £21,500 per quarter (* less exceptions below)
 - 3.6 The electrical periodic safety tests run at approximately one tenth of gas (because gas testing is broadly annual and electrical testing is broadly 10 yearly) but the access rate is slightly worse for electrical testing.
- #### **Rearrangements and Exceptions**
- 3.7 Should we or the tenant agree to rearrange the appointment then no compensation payment is proposed either way.

- 3.8 In general it is expected that agreed rearrangements would happen at least the day before. However, serial re-arrangers would be charged if the date of the previous certificate had less than 14 days before expiry.
- 3.9 *We expect to have to exercise some flexibility regarding charges and will waive the charge for a missed call if the tenant is involved in a tragedy, or is rushed to hospital, or the like.

Notification to Tenants of the Appointments

- 3.10 It is important that we clearly communicate the appointment made and agreed. The existing “No Access” procedure facilitates this:
- The first access attempt is confirmed by letter approximately 30 days before the appointment and by a reminder letter sent approximately 7 days before the appointment
- (Please note: unlike day to day repair appointments it is not possible at present to confirm appointments by text, but this is included in future improvements which are proposed for the automation and electronic data handling of service appointments).
- The second access attempt is confirmed by a card posted through the door at the time of the first abortive call
 - The third access attempt is confirmed by letter
 - The fourth access attempt is confirmed by the date on the big red sticker posted onto the front door of the property at the time of the third abortive call
 - Any subsequent access attempts are usually made in conjunction with the local housing office and would normally (given time) be confirmed by letter.
- 3.11 We propose to amend the gas “no access” card we post, to mirror those used for day to day repairs, to read:

“You may be charged £10 if you have failed to keep a Safety Check appointment”

Administration

- 3.12 The Enquiry Centre staff report so that the individual charges / compensations can be administered for day to day Repairs. It is proposed that gas and electrical reports will be generated by the Testing Team and passed to the Enquiry Centre so that the administration can be completed in a consistent and effective manner.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Based on actual access attempts for Gas Service and Safety Check appointments between April and June 2012 the financial balance of compensation for us missing appointments versus the charges to tenants for them missing appointments at £10 per missed appointment would be £21500 income to us. However, the purpose of implementing the scheme is primarily to improve access not to generate income.
- 4.2 The figure of £21,500 excludes any exceptions which we expect to make for tenants with “legitimate” reasons for missing our appointments.

5. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 On 30 July Mick Archer and Steve Giblenn presented these proposals to the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP). After the presentation there was significant discussion with many DACP members contributing and commenting.
- 5.2 Voting took place and the majority agreed that the proposals were a positive step which should be taken to the City Board for agreement.
- 5.3 In preparation for an implementation date of 1 October, it is further proposed that the scheme will be advertised on the Website, Twitter, Facebook and in the local press.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author.

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Background Information: None
Supporting Information: None