Community Housing Cymru

Health & Safety Network Notes

14th July 2016, Coastal Housing Group's offices

Attendees

Organisation	Name
Bron Afon Community Housing	Lisa Hewitt
Bron Afon Community Housing	Gemma Clark
Cantref Housing Association	Hefin Jones
Cardiff Community Housing Association	Allan Brinkley
Cardiff Community Housing Association	Dawn Murphy
Celtic Horizons	Mark Williams
Coastal Housing	Alan Parker
Coastal housing	Chris Mcdonnell
Coastal Housing Group	Rod Gregory
Family Housing Association	Rob Stimpson
First Choice Housing Association	Andrew Mouncher
Linc Cymru	Adrian Brain
Monmouthshire Housing association	Peter Griffiths Jones
Monmouthshire Housing Association	Sue Kidd
Newport City Homes	Andrew Lloyd
NPT Homes Ltd	Jeff Lewis
NPT Homes Ltd	Grant Alden
Pembrokeshire Housing	Seamus Doyle
Pobl Group	Nefyn Cardwell
Pobl Group	Catherine Weller
RCT Homes Ltd	Andrew Davies
Tai Calon Community Housing Ltd	Kieron Golding
Tai Ceredigion	John Jones
Tai Ceredigion	Colin Downham

Apologies

Cynon Taf Community Housing Group	Kerry Hansford
Hafod Resources	Kevin Bateman
Hafod Resources	Leon Clifford
Merthyr Tydfil HA	Paul Berry

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Health Surveillance – Workplace wellbeing

The objectives for health surveillance are:

- To protect the health of employees by early detection of adverse changes or disease;
- To collect data for detecting or evaluating health hazards;
- To provide the opportunity to minimise any damage getting worse;
- To evaluate control measures.

Tier Process

Tier 1 – an initial screening questionnaire will be used as a check for people moving into jobs involving exposure to vibration. All persons who have been selected for screening will complete the 'HAVS self assessment questionnaire' which will be taken to their health surveillance appointment within six weeks of starting their new role. A corresponding report will be prepared by Occupational Health Advisor (OHA) and forwarded to HR.

Tier 2 – an annual screening questionnaire will be issued to those employees exposed to vibration risks and taken with them to their appointment with the OHA to check if there have been any changes since the initial screening and, if so, to determine whether there is a need to refer for Tier 3 health assessment. If no symptoms are reported on the screening questionnaire, no further action will be taken and the employee will continue to take part in the annual screening process.

Tier 3 – this involves a formal health assessment by a qualified person (e.g. OHA). If the assessment shows that the employee has symptoms that may be suggestive of an occupational disease then they will be referred for Tier 4, but if no symptoms are detected no further action will be taken and the employee will continue to take part in the annual screening process.

Tier 4 – this involves a formal diagnosis and is carried out by a doctor qualified in occupational health (Occupational Health Physician - OHP). The OHP will advise on the employee's fitness for work.

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Potential Outcomes of Medical Advice (HAVS Example)

Employee has been diagnosed with HAVS and is not fit to undertake work with exposure to vibration - the employee is at risk of developing disabling loss of hand function if exposure is allowed to continue.

A decision will need to be made by the line manager in conjunction with HR to assign the employee to alternative work (if available) where there is no risk from further exposure to vibration. In this case there may be a requirement for the line manager to complete a capability assessment on the employee involved and in certain circumstances medical suspension may need to be considered.

Employee has been diagnosed with HAVS but is fit for work with exposure to vibration – consideration will be given to taking further action to reduce that employee's exposure.

The line manager should review existing risk assessments, policies and procedures to determine the employee's level of exposure and if there are any opportunities to reduce the exposure to vibration. The line manager should discuss with the employee their role in relation to vibration, including the nature and frequency of tasks undertaken along with the tools and equipment used.

For those employees who fall into this category there is a requirement to complete an operative's assessment form of their exposure to vibration as detailed in Appendix A and B (examples) which should be passed to their line manager on a weekly basis for review. This form will continue to be completed until such time as the line manager is comfortable with the level and type of exposure to vibration by the employee.

Risk Assessment

How

To do a risk assessment, you need to understand what, in your business, might cause harm to people and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent

that harm. Once you have decided that, you need to identify and prioritise putting in place, appropriate and sensible control measures.

5 stages

- identifying what can harm people in your workplace
- identifying who might be harmed and how
- evaluating the risks and deciding on the appropriate controls, taking into account the controls you already have in place
- recording your risk assessment
- reviewing and updating your assessment

What

Your risk assessment should include consideration of what in your business might cause harm and how and, the people who might be affected. It should take into account any controls which are already in place and identify what, if any, further controls are required.

You should be able to show from your assessment that:
a proper check was made
all people who might be affected were considered
all significant risks have been assessed
the precautions are reasonable
the remaining risk is low

You do not need to include insignificant risks. You do not need to include risks from everyday life unless your work activities increase the risk.

When

You should carry out an assessment before you do work which presents a risk of injury or ill health.

You only need to do a risk assessment if you are an employer or a self-employed person.

Who

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Your risk assessment should cover all groups of people who might be harmed by your business.

Think about workers affected because of risks associated with the particular jobs they do, such as setting, production and breakdown/repair and maintenance.

Contractors and shift-workers may not be familiar with what you do and the controls you have in place

Think about **new and young workers** and **migrant workers**. They may be inexperienced, and/or lack maturity/ experience to recognise risks. They may not be familiar with your workplace culture - what is and what isn't acceptable
Think about workers with **poor literacy skills and both migrant and indigenous workers.** If staff can't read, write or add up, this can affect their ability to read, understand and follow guidance and instructions
Think about **new or expectant mothers and young people** who may be more prone to health-related risks (physical, biological or chemical risks)
Think about people with **disabilities whose disability may mean that reasonable adjustments are needed** to enable them to do the work and minimise risks

Additionally, think about any other groups, such as **members of the public and groups of people who share your workplace.**

Your **staff** will be able to help you decide if there is anyone else you need to consider.

Reasonably practicable

This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.

Hierarchy of Control

Risks should be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority. This is what is meant by a

hierarchy of control. The list below sets out the order to follow when planning to reduce risks you have identified in your workplace. Consider the headings in the order shown, do not simply jump to the easiest control measure to implement.

1.Elimination - Redesign the job or substitute a substance so that the hazard is removed or eliminated.
2.Substitution - Replace the material or process with a less hazardous one.
3.Engineering controls - for example use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where you cannot avoid working at height, install or use additional machinery to control risks from dust or fume or separate the hazard from operators by methods such as enclosing or guarding dangerous items of machinery/equipment. Give priority to measures which protect collectively over individual measures.
4.Administrative Controls - These are all about identifying and implementing the procedures you need to work safely. For example: reducing the time workers are exposed to hazards (eg by job rotation); prohibiting use of mobile phones in hazardous areas; increasing safety signage, and performing risk assessments.
5.Personal protective clothes and equipment - Only after all the previous measures have been tried and found ineffective in controlling risks to a reasonably practicable level, must personal protective equipment (PPE) be used. For example, where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall (should one occur). If chosen, PPE should be selected and fitted by the person who uses it. Workers must be trained in the function and limitation of each item of PPE.

Significant risk

Significant risks are those that are not trivial in nature and are capable of creating a real risk to health and safety which any reasonable person would appreciate and would take steps to guard against

Hazard

A hazard is anything that may cause harm, eg chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, noise etc.

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Risk

Risk is the chance, high or low, of somebody being harmed by the hazard, and how serious the harm could be.

Electrical Safety
Resident Landlord Association

Introduction

The Electrical Safety Council has recently published a Landlord's Guide to Electrical Safety.

There is a distinction so far as electrical safety is concerned between the fixed installations (i.e. wiring circuits, switches, sockets, light fittings and circuit boards on the one hand and appliances which can be plugged in and which will often be portable (e.g. refrigerators, electric cookers, kettles, toasters etc on the other).

With rented residential accommodation it is the Landlord's responsibility to ensure that the electrical installation and appliances provided by the landlord are safe when the tenancy begins and are in proper working order throughout the tenancy. At the start of the tenancy and throughout both must be free of risk of injury to tenants and residents. The local authority can take action to enforce electrical safety in residential accommodation under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

For further details click here.

The Guidance makes recommendations regarding inspections and testing of the electrical installations and appliances.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

If the property is a house in multiple occupation then the Management Regulations require the manager to take safety measures and to maintain electrical installations. Very importantly for all HMOs (not just licensable

HMOs) there is an obligation to have fixed electrical installations in every HMO inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding 5 years by a qualified electrician. A certificate must be obtained. The local authority can require a certificate to be produced in 7 days if they ask.

Part P Building Regulations

Part P of the Building Regulations requires that most fixed electrical installation work must meet Building Regulation requirements. Thus, the work must either be pre-notified to the local authority or be carried out by a registered electrician under one of the Government approved schemes. [For further information about Building Regulations and Electrical Safety click here].

Electrical Installations

The Landlord should carry out a regular basic visual safety check of the electrical installation to ensure that these are safe. This should detect broken items such as sockets and light switches or signs of scorching around the sockets due to overloading or damaged cables etc.

The Institute of Electrical Engineers recommends 10 years as the maximum period between tests of the electrical installation by an electrician but this relates to the period between the initial inspection (when the installation was first installed) and the first periodic inspection/test. Subsequent periods for inspection/tests would depend on the condition of the installation. What the Electrical Safety Council now recommends in this latest Guidance for rented accommodation is that period inspections/tests by a qualified electrician are carried out at least every 5 years or on a change of tenancy. As pointed out above, if the property is a house in multiple occupation of any kind (which will include shared houses) there is a statutory requirement to carry out such inspection/test every 5 years anyway.

The Institute of Electrical Engineers also recommends for residential accommodation that an inspection/test is carried out on a change of occupancy. These are inspections/tests by a qualified electrician.

The Electrical Safety Council Guide says that where a change of tenancy occurs within a short period (for example not more than 6 months) a full

inspection/test may not always be required. However, it is imperative that a landlord's representative carries out a visual electrical safety inspection prior to reletting. This should undertake a manual test of any residual current devices.

As an alternative to a full test/inspection the Guide suggests a visual condition report, also carried out by a qualified electrician. However a visual condition report is only suitable where the installations have been inspected and tested in the last two years and the result was satisfactory or any resulting defects have been rectified.

Electrical Appliances

In relation to portable electrical appliances, there is no legal obligation in the case of rented residential accommodation to carry out a portable appliance test (PAT test). The Government have recently confirmed that this is the case. It is left to landlord's discretion. The exception to this would be where you have an employee working or living in rented accommodation (e.g. in a care home type situation). However, the Electrical Safety Council's Guidance recommends portable appliance testing to satisfy the obligation to ensure that any portable electrical appliances which the landlord provides under the tenancy are safe at the point of letting, and at periodic intervals after that.

The Guidance recommends that when providing portable appliances for tenants, the landlord should check that every appliance has a CE mark. It also recommends that you should only provide appliances with additional safety marks e.g. the British Standard Guidance mark or the BEAB approved mark.

Tenants should be provided with instruction manuals and be told to read and follow them.

If you do not undertake PAT tests, the Guidance recommends that portable electrical appliances should be checked by the landlord before letting the property to ensure that there are no cuts/abrasions to the cable, the plug is satisfactory, there are no loose parts or screws, that there are no signs of burning and there is no damage. You are recommended to regularly check them after that.

There is detailed guidance regarding the frequency of carrying out PAT testing. PAT testing must only be carried out by a qualified person. Examples of the recommended periods are as follows:

Period of years between PAT tests (guidance)

Refrigerators/washing machines/electric fires 4
Portable Equipment - table lamps, fans, kettles, toasters, vacuum cleaners 2

Fire Alarms

There is also guidance by the Electrical Safety Council as to when fire alarms should be inspected/tested.

Fire alarm systems need to be regularly tested. The routine tests which are to be carried out frequently do not require specialist knowledge and can either be carried out by the landlord or the tenant. It is essential that a log book record is kept. If the tenant is to be responsible for testing, the landlord must instruct the tenant as to what must be done and periodically check the situation to see if everything is being done (e.g. by checking the log book).

In the case of houses in multiple occupation (i.e. all HMOs; not just licensable HMOs) the landlord is obligated under the management regulations to ensure that fire alarms are in proper working order.

The testing/maintenance requirements vary according to the type of system:

Grade A systems (these are the systems where there is a control panel).

Routine testing - at least one detector or call point in each zone should be tested weekly.

Routine inspections/maintenance - A six monthly service should be carried out by a specialist alarm engineer. This is a full test.

Note:in the past the suggested frequency for such tests was 12 months but the latest guidance is now that these tests should be carried out every 6 months in the case of Grade A systems.

Grade B system (interlinked systems where there is no control panel). These systems should be tested at least once a week by operating all the fire alarm devices. For smoke alarms and heat detectors this can be carried out by use of a test button on each of the alarms.

Routine maintenance - these require periodic cleaning in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Routine inspections - a routine check must be carried out by a qualified electrical every 12 months.

Emergency Lighting

These will require periodic inspection by a qualified electrician in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended frequency.

Maintaining electrical safety is absolutely crucial when letting out your property.

Window Restrictors – Things to consider

Windows do not have to be legally restricted in all cases. The standards and guidelines require risk assessments as to whether windows should be restricted. The risks are falls from open windows and for ground floor windows the possibility of someone walking past the building walking into an open window that protrudes in front of the building. Using plants or uneven paving under a window can overcome the risk of people walking in to an open window, with regard to falls it is important to consider the following when undertaking risk assessments.
These are set to a maximum of 100mm, as this is the distance which scientists have determined will prevent a toddler getting out of a window.

Make sure that restrictors are fitted to all windows two metres or more from the ground

Note that for Healthcare settings there are more stringent risk requirements which are outlined below:

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Risk assessment

There is no automatic requirement to fit restrictors to windows in buildings; this will be determined by the designers who should carry out risk assessments together with the building occupants/ owners. Window restrictors should only be fitted where the risk assessment shows that they are needed - in some buildings the risk of falling from windows may be more than the accidental risk and may include falls related to a confused mental state (eg some SEN pupils, some hospital patients) or deliberate harm.

Judgement need to be made on areas of the building where greater risks may be realised – taking account of the age and nature of the individuals who will use the facilities and the intended use of particular parts of the Buildings.

Factors that could give rise to a higher risk of falling from windows include:

• Where vulnerable building users, which could include mainstream and special schools, hospitals and health care buildings

• Where occupants may display more challenging behaviour and discipline eg referral units

• Where there are windows that users may foreseeably use to gain access/egress to remain undetected eg onto roof areas etc;

• Where the design of the window creates additional risk eg where occupants could sit on window sills/window seating/ radiators/ cupboards etc with wide opening windows, particularly in unsupervised or busy thoroughfares

• Where higher risks of falling from opening windows are identified, the risks can be reduced by restricting the window in some way. Guidance on the amount of restriction to prevent the risk from falls in a range of situations is given in:

BS 8213 – 1: 2004 Windows, doors and roof lights –

Part 1: Design for safety in use and during cleaning of windows, including door-height windows and roof windows – code of practice.

Paragraph 4.2 recommends that a risk assessment should be carried out on the building to establish the relative priority needs of the building's windows including the design for safety in use. The risk assessment should take into account the type of occupancy and
age range of both occupants and visitors to the building, where this can reasonably be predicted. If a significant change of use of the building occurs, the risks should be reassessed.

Paragraph 5.4.1 recommends the fitting of safety restrictors to accessible opening lights where children or adults are at risk of falling out.

Paragraph 3.14 defines a safety restrictor as a mechanical device, which is intended to limit the initial movement of an opening light so that a clear opening of not more than 100mm is achieved at any point.

BS 8213 – 4 2016 Windows and doors. Code of practice for the survey and installation of windows and external doorsets

BS 6180 - 2011 'Barriers in and about buildings – Code of practice' contains advice re: barriers and window openings.

Other vent options to improve air flows if window restriction is required

Some lower level windows will require restricted openings for health and safety or security reasons. In this case louvre vents can be provided that offer a much larger openable free area for ventilation. High level opening windows should not require restrictors to be fitted for health and safety and can be designed to overcome the security risks and can therefore be designed to open fully under summertime conditions.

Entrapment

EN60335 part 2 103:2015: Household and similar electrical appliances. Safety. Particular requirements for drives for gates, doors and windows

Risk assessment required for the risk of finger entrapment, there is no risk above 2.5m above floor level but below this level a risk assessment based on users is required. Eg young school children are more likely to get their fingers trapped compared with adults in an office.

Building Regulations Approved Document K, Requirement K4 requires consideration of restriction of opening windows or other means to prevent collision with open windows.

IMPORTANT NOTE WITH REGARD TO HEALTH BUILDINGS

A patient fell out of a window and died after he forced a window open (that had a restrictor) and climbed out. He was in a confused and agitated state after an operation

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Health Building Note 00-10 Part D 2013: Windows and associated hardware
As well as carrying out risk assessments on window openings it is important to ensure that any window restrictors fitted exceed the requirement of BS EN 14351-1 2010 which recommends that restrictors must be able to hold a window in place for 60 seconds when a static load of 350 newtons is applied to that window.

Note: Therefore selection of appropriate fixing detail is important as the fixing detail is likely to fail before the chain.

For a healthcare setting all actuator screws and fixings **must be tamper proof.**