



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

Radon Management Policy

2023

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DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

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THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

1. The Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017
2. Approved code of practice L121. Work with ionising radiation
3. The Housing Act 2004
4. The Health and Safety at Work Act. 1974
5. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
6. HM Government Building Regulations
7. The Management of Health and safety at Work regulations. 1999
8. Housing, Health and Safety Rating System

REVISION HISTORY

| Revision date | Previous revision date | Summary of Changes | Changes marked | Version |
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| April - 2022 | May - 2020 | | | |
| October 2023 | April 2022 | Policy checked to ensure it complies with current legislation | | A |

DISTRIBUTION – This document has been distributed to:

| Name | Job Title | Date of Issue | Version |
|------|-----------|---------------|---------|
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1. Purpose and Context

1.1 The radon management policy sets out Northamptonshire Partnership Homes' (NPH) policy, organisation and procedures for managing the risks from radon gas in all premises under its managerial control.

Radon is a colourless, odourless gas occurring through the radioactive decay of uranium in some forms of rock below ground. The HSE estimates that 48% of radiation exposure received by the UK general public comes from exposure to radon gas and is generally considered the second highest cause of lung cancer after smoking. Most radon gas breathed in will be exhaled and poses little risk. However, as radon gas decays, particles can solidify and bond to airborne dust and water particles. These particles may be inhaled and deposited in the lungs of anyone living or working in that area. These particles are radioactive and emit alpha particles which when lodged in the soft tissue of the lungs (*in large enough quantities*) can cause lung cancer to develop. This may take many years to develop and will depend on the length of exposure, the levels of gas present in the atmosphere and whether the person is a smoker.

If the gas enters enclosed building spaces such as basements, wall cavities, cracks in floors, etc. where dilution of the gas by natural ventilation is very small, the level of gas may reach concentrations that could be harmful to health. Normally the gas decays over a few days, but if the levels are being constantly added to, the overall levels can remain consistent. As the gas is colourless and odourless, it can only be detected by using specialist detection equipment.

Should a property be affected by radon gas, there are many factors that can affect the levels within it. These are mostly due to the property construction type and floor level. Suspended floors will normally have lower levels due to cross-ventilation below the floor. Solid floors in direct contact with the ground below will generally present a higher risk. The gas levels can also be affected by factors such as seasonal ground water levels and the levels of ventilation etc. Generally ground floor properties pose a higher risk than those at first floor and above, with below ground or partial below ground accommodation posing the highest risk of all. Post 1992 properties should represent the lowest risk as they should be constructed with some form of radon remediation measures built in.

In 1992, Northampton was declared a 'Radon Affected Area'. This means that homes within the County have a 1% probability of having radon levels above the government action level of 200 Bq/M³ (*Bequerels per cubic metre of air*).

In terms of workplaces, employers have specific responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health and safety of employees and non-employees, and a limit of 300 Bq/M³ was set for work-places.

1.2 NPH are the managing organisation acting as landlord, on behalf of Northampton Borough Council (NBC) for all residential social housing in NBC ownership. NPH has a legal responsibility to ensure that all council-owned domestic housing premises, community hubs, office buildings and stores are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and free from risk to health. This includes eliminating and reducing risks associated with radon gas (*where possible*).

The properties subject to this policy are:

- All Offices, stores, plant rooms, etc. – Managed and occupied by NPH’s employees.
- Housing (Domestic) – Domestic properties managed by NPH on behalf of NBC.
- Community buildings within housing estates managed by NPH.

1.3 NPH acknowledges the health risks from exposure to radon gas and will take all reasonable steps to ensure residents and employees are prevented from exposure to ionising radiation. Where exposure cannot be prevented, levels will be kept as low as reasonably practicable.

1.4 NPH will endeavour to comply with the Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017. NPH will ensure compliance with the regulations through the following.

Following consultations with Public Health England (PHE), we will:

- a) Actively promote the availability of testing to tenants within the borough. This will be through local media, social media and the NBC Contact Centre
- b) Upon request of a test, the tenant will be asked to liaise with PHE, who will send them the testing kit, together with instructions regarding its use and when to return it
- c) Upon receipt of the returned testing kit, PHE will analyse the results and make NPH aware of the outcomes
- d) NPH will then contact the tenant to discuss the results and organise any required remedial works
- e) The tenant will not be charged for any of the above actions
- f) Following any remedial works, NPH will check and maintain radon sumps, fans etc to ensure that they are still effective in maintaining levels of Radon gas below the recommended action levels.
- g) Providing the necessary information, instruction and training to employees with specific responsibilities under this policy and the Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017.
- h) Undertake regular testing of community centres, Westbridge depot offices and stores, ensuring remedial actions are taken, should testing identify results over the action level
- i) Liaise with NPH planned works teams on potential remediation measures needed for conversion projects.

2.0 Policy Statement

NPH will ensure that adequate resources are provided to meet its legal responsibilities under applicable legislation and guidance, and it will support all persons carrying out works associated with it. In addition, it will periodically review the effectiveness of this policy and will ensure that any necessary changes are made.

NPH will only engage appropriately trained, qualified and competent persons to undertake any works associated with the testing for and remediation of radon gas.

NPH will arrange for the provision of competent, technical advice and support on matters, where required, in order to achieve the successful implementation of this policy.

2.1 Applicable legislation

NPH has a legal duty to comply with the following legislation and guidance in relation to radon gas management.

- The Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017.
- Approved code of practice L121. Work with ionising radiation.
- The Housing Act 2004.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act. 1974.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- HM Government Building Regulations.
- The Management of Health and safety at Work regulations. 1999.
- Housing, Health and Safety Rating System

Failure to comply with these laws is a criminal offence that could result in unlimited fines for NPH (*e.g. Section 3 HSWA*) and possibly fines and imprisonment for individuals found to be individually culpable (*e.g. Section 7 HSWA*).

It is important to note that a 'latent disease' such as Lung cancer is uninsurable and cannot be offset against Employers or Public Liability Insurance. Any civil claim would have to be met directly from NPH funds.

2. Policy

3.1 Testing of Non-domestic premises

A rolling programme of testing will be carried out on operational offices, initially targeting the main office in Westbridge and any associated stores. This will also include other properties not necessarily occupied by NPH employees but used by the general public (*community hubs*). In determining properties to be tested the following criteria will be taken into consideration:

- Spaces used or occupied by employees or accessed by members of the public on the ground floor.
- Other NPH non-housing properties located in geological high-risk areas.

Priority will be given to those properties that have not been previously tested and which are occupied by NPH employees and/or accessed by members of the public. Properties which have been previously tested and where remedial work has been carried out will also be tested to check that control measures are still working effectively.

Where a property has a result that exceeds the action level, NPH will inform the radiation protection advisor (NPA) of the levels and seek advice. NPH will then engage a specialist radon remediation company to specify what actions will be required to bring the levels down to below 300 Bq/M³.

Any building or areas in a building which as a result of testing, demonstrate levels of Radon gas in excess of 300 Bq/M³ will be designated a 'Controlled Area' and access to that area restricted to authorised personnel only. 'Supervised Areas' will also be designated in consultation with the

Northampton Borough Councils' Radiation Protection Adviser and Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.

The Health and Safety Executive will be notified in writing by NBC as required by Regulation 6 of the Ionising Radiation Regulations when properties, or areas of properties, exceed the 300 Bq/M³ threshold. The NBC Environmental Health department will be responsible for notifying the NBC Health and Safety Adviser in such cases, who in turn will be responsible for notifying the Health and Safety Executive.

Local rules will be drawn up and displayed in a prominent position in the affected building. Signs will be displayed complying with the Safety Signs and Signal Regulations warning people of the hazard and denoting the boundaries of the 'Controlled Area'. The sign will give the warning 'Radon Gas Inhalation Hazard – Radiation Controlled Area'.

NPH will adopt the following hierarchy of measures to prevent and/or reduce exposure to Radon Gas (*dependent on radon levels and NPA advice*).

1. Vacate a property or affected area; relocate temporarily if necessary;
2. Installation of Radon Sumps and fans or any other approved system;
3. Providing general mechanical and/or natural ventilation; and
4. Limiting individual exposure by time / segregation.

A logbook will be located at the entrance to each controlled area. Each person who enters the 'Controlled Area' must sign in the logbook and sign out on completion of visit, as established by NBC.

3.2 Remediation works to Non-domestic properties.

Simple recommended remediation works (*such as the installation of additional air bricks*) will be carried out by DLO staff. Where more complex solutions are required (*such as installing a below ground sump or mechanical ventilation installation*), a specialist contractor will be engaged to specify and carry out the installation.

All properties having remediation works carried out, will be retested to ensure that the installation is reducing the property radon level.

3.3 Testing of Domestic premises

Rather than proactively managing the risks from radon, it is reasonable to provide a reactive service. This will only be seen to reasonable though, if tenants are consulted about the risks and have an opportunity to request a reactive service. The following consultations will therefore be undertaken:

- Annual article in the Voice – advising Northampton is a known high radon risk area. This will provide information on Radon and the health issues associated with living in a Radon area. This information will be sourced from the PHE which is readily available to the public
- The same information will be issued via the new tenant sign up packs
- The same information will also be issued to our leaseholders
- Our website will be used to promote radon safety
- The above will confirm there are free tests available (paid by NPH - £60.00 / test) and the process to request a test kit. We will also offer to fit test kits for vulnerable tenants.

Testing

Upon receipt of the outcomes of the test, we will advise the tenant of the results and any proposed remedial works.

Remedial works

Where a property has a result that exceeds the action level, NPH will engage a specialist radon remediation company to specify what actions will be required to bring the levels down to below 200 Bq/M³.

Simple recommended remediation works (*such as the installation of additional air bricks*) will be carried out by DLO staff. Where more complex solutions are required (*such as installing a below ground sump or mechanical ventilation installation*), a specialist contractor will be engaged to carry out the installation.

All properties having remediation works carried out, will be retested to ensure that the installation is reducing the property radon level. The Compliance Team will be responsible for arranging routine servicing and repairs on any remedial works.

Where mechanical remediation equipment has been installed, the tenant will be advised on the correct operation of the sump/fan and encouraged to report any defects to the Compliance Team. In addition, electrical remediation systems will be inspected as part of ongoing EICR testing and any defects reported on the accompanying certification. Any damaged or faulty equipment identified will be repaired. Any installed mechanical remediation systems will be powered via the existing property power supply.

These will be completed on a risk-based approach. This approach will consider the actual results, the property type and any vulnerabilities within the household.

Eg. If the results received are 250bq (action level is 200bq) and the tenants have no vulnerabilities, the required remedial works will be deferred until later in the programme, to allow us to prioritise situations where results of 1900bq and vulnerable tenants reside are received.

Proposed plan of works

1. Fitting of fans to properties already tested, where readings exceed the intervention levels
2. Advertisement and consultation exercises with tenants and leaseholders
3. Reactive testing, upon request
4. Undertaking remedial works on a risk-based approach

When determining the priority of any remedial repairs, the test results will be compared to the assigned risk for each property which is determined by the NPH risk matrix tool (Appendix A). This matrix will assess the risk based on two property characteristics.

1. The postcode risk rating. This is based on information supplied via Public Health England (PHE). This assigns a probability of action levels being exceeded based on existing property data held by PHE.
2. Property risk rating. This is based on three property characteristics. These being:

- a. Property floor level. Ground floor, first floor, etc.
- b. Floor construction type. Solid, suspended, etc.
- c. Age of build. Post 1992 properties are likely to have some form of radon remediation fitted as part of building regulations approvals.

The Compliance Team will use this risk rating together with the testing outcome to determine the actual priority of the remedial works required.

All results will be recorded on the NPH property system.

3.4 Retesting of properties.

3.4.1 Non-domestic.

- Where levels have been found to be significantly lower than 300 Bq/M³ (below 200 Bq/M³), the premises will be retested every 10 years.
- Where levels have been found slightly below the 300 Bq/M³ (between 200 and 300 Bq/M³), the premises will be retested every 5 years.
- Where initial levels were above 300 Bq/M³ and remediation works have been carried out, the premises will be retested every 3 years to verify continued effectiveness.

3.4.2 Domestic.

- Where levels have been found to be significantly lower than 200 Bq/M³ (below 100 Bq/M³), the premises will be retested every 10 years.
- Where levels have been found slightly below 200 Bq/M³ (between 100 and 200 Bq/M³), the premises will be retested every 5 years.
- Where initial levels were above 200 Bq/M³ and remediation works have been carried out, the premises will be retested every 3 years to verify continued effectiveness.

4 Policy Arrangements

The NPH Radon Management Policy and procedures clearly identifies the broad responsibilities for employees, to demonstrate basic legislative compliance. However, within the Operations Directorate it is important to demonstrate that individuals are fully aware of their specific responsibilities. The overall management responsibilities specific to radon management within Property Services has been defined as:

4.1 Board Members

NPH board of representatives have ultimate responsibility for the application of radon Management, responsibility for achieving the objectives of its radon management policy and for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to cater for the needs of radon management.

4.2 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for ensuring that all NPH's Health & Safety Policies, including the radon management policy, are applied throughout the organisation,

ensuring that all relevant and appropriate matters are brought to the attention of, and considered by, NPH and its Board and Committees. In addition, Directors have the same specific responsibility in respect to their own division and service portfolios.

4.3 Director

The Executive Director has the overall responsibility for ensuring that;

- The NPH Health and Safety Policy is in place and ensure that radon management feeds into this.
- The provision of adequate resources and structure for the successful implementation of this policy.
- The objectives of the policy are understood by all **Directors** and that the appropriate management arrangements are in place.
- Health and safety management is discussed by the corporate management team.

4.4 Director of Property Maintenance and Compliance

The Director of property Maintenance and Compliance has the overall responsibility for ensuring that;

- The radon policy is implemented with respect to properties under NPH control and in conjunction with NPH General Health and Safety Policies.
- Arrange for suitable radon training for all staff (*where required*) following liaison from the **Building Safety and Compliance Manager** and the **Health and Safety Manager**
- Advising relevant **Directors** of any identified failures to comply with their requirements under this policy.
- Reviewing the level of resources required to implement the policy generally including the undertaking of risk assessments and associated recommendations and to advise other **Directors** and senior NPH management accordingly.
- Advising **Director of Finance and Assets** on the status of existing controls, deficiencies and possible consequences, and the need for additional measures.
- Advising appropriate managers of any immediate hazards and any measures that require urgent action.
- Ensuring that the competent persons/contractors/consultants appointed to carry out the assessments, drawing up and implementing precautionary measures, etc. have suitable and sufficient ability, experience and qualifications.
- Communicating information internally as appropriate to circumstances.
- Developing and implementing appropriate training programmes for all employees who plan, manage or implement works that may involve radon gas risk.
- Liaising with NBC regarding budget provision, risk and outcomes of testing undertaken

4.5 Compliance Manager.

The Compliance Manager has the overall responsibility for ensuring that a robust system of maintaining an appropriate and documented management plan for radon gas remediation is in place. This to include;

- Liaison with PHE ensuring our proposals are understood and they can accommodate them
- Liaison with NPH Communications Manager and NBC Contact Centre, ensuring our plans to promote radon risk with our tenants are communicated effectively
- Monitoring tests requested, issued and returned to PHE
- Ensuring results from testing are referred to us in a timely manner
- Ensuring tenants who have requested a test are kept informed of progress and any remedial works identified
- Ensuring that a programme of remediation works is undertaken to any domestic property where testing data has identified radon levels above the domestic action level of 200 Bq/M³.
- Ensuring that any domestic property where radon remediation has been installed is retested to ascertain the effectiveness of the installation.
- Ensuring that an action plan is put in place or remediation works is undertaken to any non-domestic property where testing data has identified radon levels above the workplace action level of 300 Bq/M³.
- Ensuring that NPH Liaise with the Radon Protection Advisor and that suitable control and supervision areas are set up where a non-domestic workplace level over 300 Bq/M³ is found.
- Ensuring that any non-domestic property, where radon remediation has been installed, is retested to ascertain the effectiveness of the installation.
- Ensuring that installed remediation equipment is serviced in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and repaired when required.
- Liaising with NPH system's team to ensure that any available radon gas data is entered onto the NPH property management system.
- Providing regular performance and progress updates to the **Director of Property Maintenance and Compliance** showing progress with communications, testing and remedial works
- Ensuring that the **Director of Property Maintenance and Compliance** is advised on the status of existing controls including any deficiencies, possible consequences and the need for additional measures.
- Provide details of any cost implications for remedial actions in order to obtain the appropriate resources to carry out the necessary work.
- Provide advice to any **Directors** or appropriate Managers regarding any immediate hazards and any measures that require urgent action.

4.6 Compliance Team.

The Compliance team (*specifically the Officer assigned to manage radon gas*) have the overall responsibility for;

- Managing any radon remediation installation works (*following test results identifying radon levels exceeding the applicable action levels*). Including any contract administration, agreeing specifications, agreeing equipment locations, providing asbestos information etc. and liaising with any applicable parties on a day to day basis.
- Ensuring that any installed remediation equipment is included on the components section of the NPH property management system.

- Assisting the Building Safety and Compliance Manager in the communication of radon risk to our tenants
- Manage any queries or questions from tenants and staff regarding our testing regime, remedial works, policy and associated procedures.
- Liaise with PHE regarding testing results.
- Providing advice regarding appropriate legislation and guidance to appropriate persons and generally acting as the point of contact for radon queries from NPH colleagues.
- Liaison with NPH voids and planned works teams, where remediation equipment is installed or due to be installed in properties undergoing any works.
- Management of any contracts / works on site.

4.7 Director of Asset Management.

The Assistant Director of Asset Management has the overall responsibility for ensuring that;

- All new build properties are designed in accordance with current standards of the UK Building Regulations.
- All planned refurbishment works carried out in existing properties take account of the risks posed by radon gas and that any replaced/upgraded building elements are installed in accordance with current building regulations.
- Any installed remediation equipment in a property is maintained in good working order.
- Ensuring that planned works teams liaise with the compliance team on any proposed property alterations that are likely to have an impact on the effectiveness of any existing remediation equipment.
- Liaise with the compliance team on any forthcoming adaptation works to ensure potential radon levels are kept to a minimum.

4.8 Repairs and Voids Managers

NPH Repairs and Voids managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that;

- All repair/replacement works carried out in existing properties take account of the risks posed by radon gas and that any replaced/upgraded building elements are installed in accordance with current building regulations and or industry best practice.
- Any existing remediation equipment in a property is maintained in working order.
- Ensuring that voids works teams liaise with the compliance team on any proposed property alterations that are likely to have an impact on the effectiveness of any existing remediation equipment.

4.9 Contractors and direct labour workforce

Contractors working on NPH managed property will ensure that:

- Any remediation works carried out, do not compromise any existing fire stopping or other building elements that have the potential to affect the Health and safety of any building occupants.
- No works are carried out until the appropriate property asbestos information has been received and acknowledged.

- Any new electrical systems are installed in accordance with the IET Wiring Regulations (18th edition) and the applicable certification is forwarded to the Compliance team as soon as reasonably practicable.
- All contractors have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience in order to carry out the works for which they have been employed.
- All contractors have valid public liability insurance up to the value of ten million pounds.

4.10 Radiation Protection Adviser

The Radiation Protection Adviser will be responsible for providing advice to all duty holders under this policy to ensure compliance with the Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017. The appointment of a Radiation Protection Adviser is a statutory requirement and the role will normally be fulfilled by a qualified consultant. NBC currently undertake this function as the managing local authority.

4.11 Radon Risk Rating Methodology

The assigned risk rating is comprised by assessing 2 elements relating to the property.

1. Post code risk rating.

This indicates the likelihood of a high radon level in that property. This information is supplied by Public Health England based on existing testing information.

| <u>Likelihood of high radon level</u> | <u>Assigned risk level</u> | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Over 30% | Very High | 5 |
| 10-30% | High | 4 |
| 03-10% | Medium | 3 |
| 01-03% | Low | 2 |
| Below 01% | Very Low | 1 |

2. Property type risk

This is based on 3 elements relating to the property. These being floor level, floor construction and property age.

| <u>Property</u> | <u>Assigned risk level</u> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Occupied basement or part below ground level | 5 |
| Ground floor – Unknown construction | 4 |
| Ground floor – Unknown construction/part suspended | 3 |
| Ground floor - Suspended | 2 |
| 1 st floor and above/post 1995 construction | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|----|----|----|----|---|--------------------|--|---------------|--|-----------------|--|--------------|--|
| Radon likelihood | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Very High Priority</td> <td style="background-color: red;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>High priority</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium Priority</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low priority</td> <td style="background-color: green;"></td> </tr> </table> | Very High Priority | | High priority | | Medium Priority | | Low priority | |
| | Very High Priority | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | High priority | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Medium Priority | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Low priority | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Property risk level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

5 Guidelines

This document should be read in conjunction with the following documentation;

- NPH Electrical Management Policy 2019
- NPH Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2019
- NPH tenant’s handbook 2015 edition

6 Review Date

6.1 Review

NPH will ensure a periodic review of the effectiveness of this policy and will ensure that any necessary changes are made. This policy will be reviewed at least annually or;

- In the case of a change to legislation or industry recognised best practice relating to ionising radiation, specifically radon gas.
- When there is reason to believe that the policy is not suitable
- If there are changes to NPH governance structure.

6.2 Competency

Any employee with specific responsibilities under this policy will be provided with the appropriate information, instruction and training as deemed necessary by the NPH health, safety and wellbeing officer. NPH will ensure that all staff involved with radon gas testing and or radon gas remediation possess the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out the duties assigned to them.

NPH will ensure that copies of all Contractor’s qualifications, industry accreditations, insurances, etc. are recorded and the accompanying list/training matrix is updated on a regular basis.

6.3 Monitoring

NPH will ensure that all contractor activities on site are monitored via;

- Monthly contract meetings with any contractors involved in remediation installations.

- Any agreed contractor KPI's are produced and reported to compliance manager for inclusion in monthly reports to NPH senior management committee, Internal or external auditors, tenant boards, etc.
- Contractor quality control checks will be carried out by the compliance team on at least 25% of installed remediation systems, in order to verify legislative compliancy and sufficient monitoring and recording of certification and accreditation.

NPH will ensure that contractors working on its behalf adhere to all standards laid out in applicable legislation, follow agreed safe systems of work, etc.

Following the principles of NPH's Policy Statement, each Directorate and Service Area must interpret the radon management policy in a realistic written form to suit their identified needs. A signed copy of the radon management procedures and arrangements must be made available for all staff within the Directorate.

The regular corporate Health, Safety and wellbeing group, Executive Management Team and the Operations and resource committee will monitor these arrangements and recommend required improvements where necessary.

A copy of this policy statement, following organisation and arrangement documents and associated procedures will be made available to all employees. Further guidance and information will supplement and expand the arrangements, where necessary, and held within the departmental divisional plans and upon NPH intranet.