



Gas Access Campaign gives people chance to send message direct to Westminster

8 October 2014

SUPPORTERS of a campaign aimed at making it easier for housing providers to protect their tenants are being urged to make their voices heard in the corridors of power.

The Gas Access campaign has set up an [on-line petition](#) which will make it easier for social landlords, their tenants and other interested groups to demonstrate their support.

The campaign is aimed at tackling a deficiency in the law which prevents housing associations from gaining entry to customers' homes in a timely manner if they are denied access by customers. The full details of the campaign can be found at www.gasaccesscampaign.org.uk

Now a government e-petition has been created which if it attracts more than 100,000 signatures could force a debate in Parliament on the subject.

The Gas Access campaign is being co-ordinated by Home Group in conjunction with the Association of Gas Safety Managers and CORGI Technical Services. They aim to change the law to give social landlords the same rights of entry to properties as local authorities.

Mark Henderson, Home Group chief executive, said: "The idea of attracting 100,000 signatures may seem ambitious to some and it's fair to say not many e-petitions hit this target. However the sign up from social housing providers to this campaign has been phenomenal.

"The sign ups so far show just what an important issue people in the sector feel this is. If we could encourage every association and supporter of the campaign to get even a small percentage of their customers to sign the petition I'm convinced we'd hit the target and force a much needed debate at Westminster."

Social landlords are legally required to ensure the safety of gas appliances every 12 months yet a small but significant percentage of tenants refuse workmen access.

It's estimated this problem will cost social housing providers as much as £500m in the next 10 years through the cost of missed appointments and legal action to gain access.



Claire Heyes, chief executive of the AGSM said: “Together we’re stronger and it’s clear that social housing providers have had enough - they are no longer willing to be told it’s too all too difficult. The response to the campaign has been overwhelming which makes our resolve even greater. The stakes are high and I am confident that Executives and Gas Managers will support all of our initiatives in this campaign - they are fully aware of the significance of what we are trying to achieve.”

Currently local authorities are able to apply to a court to gain lawful entry into homes within 24 hours of refusal by a tenant. Housing associations can take as long as four months to legally gain entry to a property.

To sign the Gas Access petition visit: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68910>

ENDS

For further information contact Robert Weatherall on 0191 290 7908 or email robert.weatherall@homegroup.org.uk

About Home Group Limited:

- Home Group is one of the UK’s largest providers of high quality housing and supported housing services and products.
- Home Group is a social enterprise and a charity (Charitable Community Benefit Society No. 22981R) with a turnover of £327m.
- Our mission is *“to help our customers and clients to open doors to new opportunities and healthy lives.”*
- We provide general needs housing and supported housing services targeted towards helping some of society’s most vulnerable people take control of their own lives. We:
 - house more than 120,000 people a year in 55,000 homes across 200 local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales.
 - work with almost 30,000 vulnerable people through 500+ supported housing, justice and health services each year.
- Care and Support services focus on housing related support, criminal justice and health services.

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The Association of Gas Safety Managers

The Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM) is for managers in Social Housing and Facilities Management organisations who are responsible for all aspects of gas safety. The Association was been set up by CORGI in response to a demand from gas managers for a professional Association which can address industry issues with key stakeholders and create one voice from the sector to key government departments. It also provides members with support, networking opportunities, training and many other benefits. All members are undertaking or have completed CORGI's Level 4 VRQs in Gas Safety Management or have an equivalent level of qualification or experience and collectively look after the gas safety management of nearly two million homes across the country. www.agsm.uk.com