



Carbon monoxide victims back Gas Access Campaign

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CARBON monoxide awareness campaigners have backed a fight to allow gas safety engineers quicker and easier access to social housing properties.

During Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week (Nov 17-23), the Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety Society and the Dominic Rodgers Trust have both added their names to a campaign led jointly by social housing provider Home Group, CORGI Technical Services and the Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM).

Local authority landlords can gain legal access to properties within 24 hours, but social landlords face lengthy, costly and potentially fatal delays of up to four months in order to gain access to their properties. The campaign calls for social landlords to be given the same rights as their local authority counterparts.

Stacey Rodgers, whose son Dominic died ten years ago from carbon monoxide poisoning, which was found to be leaking from a neighbour's house, has backed the calls for parity.

She set up the Dominic Rodgers Trust following the death of her son and has been campaigning ever since for better awareness and stricter safety measures. She said: "Any delays in allowing appropriate safety checks are potentially fatal. It seems crazy that social landlords, with responsibility for millions and millions of homes across the UK, cannot get the same access that local authority landlords enjoy.

"This has to change and that's why I'm supporting the Gas Access Campaign."

Her sentiments have been echoed by Stephanie Trotter OBE, president of the Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety Society. She said: "This legislation needs to be tackled so we can stop the causes of domestic carbon monoxide poisoning at source, and this is by ensuring all gas appliances are regularly and properly checked by qualified engineers.

"We applaud the efforts being made by Home Group, CORGI and in changing the law to enable swift access to ensure safety. Such a change is just common sense and we really hope the politicians will listen to this reasonable and responsible request."



The Gas Access Campaign has won backing from many quarters, including British Gas, a number of MPs and more than 100 fellow housing associations.

Home Group's chief executive, Mark Henderson, welcomed the support from both parties. "We want to thank the Dominic Rodgers Trust and the Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety Society for getting behind the campaign.

"Through their tireless work, they sadly hear of far too many tragedies involving carbon monoxide poisoning. How many more will it have to take for this Government to understand that it is surely only a matter of time that somebody's life is lost because social housing gas engineers are tied up in red tape just trying to do their job.

"They can put a very quick end to potentially fatal delays by amending the laws to offer us the same access rights as our colleagues in the local authority sector."

Claire Heyes CEO of the AGSM said: "Sadly we still see too many unnecessary deaths and long term suffering as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. Stacey Rogers and Stephanie Trotter have campaigned for many years to help prevent further tragedies from happening to others and their loved ones. They have had a significant impact in raising awareness of this silent, tasteless, odorless killer. We are very pleased to be able to add their voice to our campaign.

"The time has come to update archaic legislation and allow housing providers and gas managers to do their jobs, keep their tenants safe and make sure they are compliant with gas safety regulations."

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

For more information:



<http://www.gasaccesscampaign.org>

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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