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Head of Division  
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**Date:** 12 March 2020

**Reference:** Janet Shirley Jasper Inquest

Dear Mrs Rawden,

I am writing in response to the Regulation 28 – Report to Prevent Future Deaths issued by you on 17 January 2020 in relation to the Janet Shirley Inquest.

In your report you highlighted the following area of concern:

The Court heard that there are two hundred and fifty four properties within the immediate area of the incident which are at risk of floors failing in a similar manner.

The Court also heard that there is inconsistency in the policies of the four gas distribution networks with some requiring first call operatives to inspect adjoining properties for gas and some permitting the operative to make that decision based on the circumstances and findings on scene.

In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths may occur unless the risk to the other properties within the immediate area of the incident is properly and quickly address, and a consistent approach to inspecting adjoining properties developed.

I am writing to confirm the activity that has taken place and/or been agreed since the incident.

## 1. GDN policies and procedures

The Gas Distribution Networks met 5 February 2020 to review their current EM72 policies, the policies that describe the action that should be taken when responding to a callout about a possible gas leak. In particular, the meeting was looking at the policies in relation to “no trace” declarations when attending a reported internal smell of gas and whether these were -fit for purpose, consistent between each GDN, and consistent with their approach to investigating CO incidents.

At this meeting all GDNs agreed, in principle, to adopt a new and consistent policy:

If at an internal PRE and there is no trace at the reported address then the operative:

- MUST check those properties which are immediately adjoined or adjacent including building line, points of ingress, letterbox and knock for entry.
- If access is gained ask questions about whether a smell of gas has been noticed.
- If no smell of gas reported, carry out gas detection checks (tightness test not required).
- If a smell of gas is reported or detected undertake a tightness test and follow normal gas escape procedures.

If no readings are found either inside or via letterbox checks, then report work as no trace.

This new policy will bring the policy in relation to reported internal smell of gas in line with those on external gas smells and for CO response, which in turn should provide a significant improvement in safety.

Each GDN will now agree these new policies with their relevant Director’s and legal departments prior to implementation.

HSE has agreed that if any changes are made to the revised policy prior to rollout this must be discussed and agreed with HSE first.

## 2. Other properties in the immediate area at risk

HSE, along with the Gas Safe Register, undertook extensive communication activity with both residents and gas engineers in the local area to advise them of the cause of the incident, the risk to their own properties and the action they could take to mitigate this. This included:

- Hosting a residents meeting,
- Providing leaflets for residents to explain the potential risk and actions. These leaflets were dropped through the letterboxes of affected properties and additional copies were provided to the local authority.

- Providing information from Gas Safe Register specifically for local gas engineers to explain what should consider and do when attending these properties
- Providing additional briefing and material for HSE and Gas Safe Register staff that might deal with calls from concerned residents and/or engineers

Both HSE and the GDNs have taken your concerns seriously and taken action to address the issues raised.

Yours sincerely,



Head of Manufacturing and Utilities Unit  
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