

GAS SAFE REGISTER

Consumer Policy – Our Service Explained

June 2019

P001_CON001

V7.1



Contents

1.	Scope	3
2.	Our remit	3
3.	Our services	4
4.	Boundaries of service	4
5.	You and your information	6
6.	General communications	6
7.	Gas work inspections	6
8.	Investigating complaints about registered or unregistered businesses	7
9.	How to raise a complaint about a business.....	11
10.	How your complaint about a business is handled	12
11.	Gas safety defects.....	12
12.	Building regulation defects.....	13
13.	Dealing with non-gas safety disputes using alternative dispute resolution (ADR)	13
14.	Suggestions for improvements to the service offered by the Register.....	14
15.	Complaints against the Register	14
16.	Useful contacts for gas emergencies.....	15
17.	How to contact us.....	15

1. Scope

This policy outlines the service that Gas Safe Register offers within our defined contractual remit. It has been designed primarily to support our Customer Charter from the perspective of a 'member of the public', rather than that of registered businesses and engineers.

Gas Safe Register is the official gas registration body for the United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey, and operates under a concession agreement with the relevant Health and Safety Authority for each geographical area. By law, all gas engineers undertaking gas work in each of these areas must be on the Gas Safe Register.

Businesses/engineers can only register with Gas Safe Register if they hold/or employ engineers that hold, up-to-date and appropriate gas qualifications. We do not have any 'enforcement' powers or 'right of entry powers'. However, where required we support enforcement agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive, HSENI or Local Authorities with their actions.

Registered businesses and engineers must adhere to our published Rules of Registration and Registration Policy <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/who-we-are/our-policies/>.

Registered businesses and engineers are **not** employees of Gas Safe Register.

Note: All policies referred to within this document and other supporting documents, such as the Inspection Factsheet, can be viewed at: <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/who-we-are/our-policies/>

2. Our remit

Our primary purpose is to operate a licensing regime for businesses and their engineers who are qualified as competent in safe gas work, in a similar manner to the way that the DVLA licenses drivers that have passed a driving test against national standards. By operating the register effectively, we aim to protect the public from unsafe gas work. We operate the only legal register for gas businesses and engineers in the UK, Guernsey and Isle of Man. The Register helps to raise awareness of gas safety issues to the public and those registered.

We work to protect the public from unsafe gas work through:

- Registering businesses and their engineers, that are assessed by accredited independent assessment bodies as competent in matters of gas safety.
- Issuing registered engineers with an ID card annually, which they are asked to carry and show upon request to demonstrate their registration status.
- Inspection of Gas Safe registered businesses and engineers.
- Investigation of reported illegal gas work using a dedicated National Investigations Team with the purpose of identifying individuals working without registration.

- Raising public awareness of gas safety and the need for registration.
- Investigating reports of unsafe gas work.
- Providing an effective and efficient suite of communication channels to inform and update registered businesses and engineers on changes to gas safety legislation, industry standards and technical guidance etc.
- The provision of gas safety advice and information through a wide range of channels.

3. Our services

As the only legal register for gas businesses, we offer the following services to consumers:

- Find a registered business via the web or telephone services.
- Check a business or engineer is registered via the web or telephone services.
- Investigation of complaints about gas work carried out by **registered** businesses or engineers.
- Investigation of complaints about installation, servicing or maintenance work carried out by **unregistered** businesses or engineers.
- Free gas safety inspections by our independent and qualified inspectors (*see section 7*).
- Provision of gas safety advice via website, telephone advice line and correspondence.
- Provision of a facility for registered businesses in England and Wales to notify gas appliance installations to the local authority as part of the requirements of the Building Regulations.

4. Boundaries of service

As the only mandatory gas registration scheme we are free from commercial interests and other activities that conflict with our role. We operate impartially and only work with factual issues and evidence that can be authenticated. Therefore, there are some areas that we have no authority over and cannot become involved with or comment upon. In these situations, there may be other organisations that can support you and we will help direct you to them.

We are unable to:

- Comment upon how a situation arose.
- Arbitrate disputes including those relating to contractual or financial matters between contesting parties.
- Act as a technical consultant or arbiter.
- Inspect or comment on gas appliances/fittings that have been removed prior to our inspection.
- Inspect or comment on gas work undertaken with a reported fault where rectification work has already been completed by a registered business.

Note: Photographs of gas work can be supportive; however, we may not be able to comment on them, base a report on them or attribute responsibility for any remedial work from them or take any other action as it can often be impractical to independently interpret or authenticate photographs.

- Reinstate unsafe gas appliances and pipework.
- Repair or adjust gas appliances and pipework. However, where we find gas safety faults they will be classified and dealt with in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/gas-safety-in-the-home/warning-labels/>).
- Inspect parts of an installation that may result in damage to property or are not accessible. Examples are: pipework buried in floors or walls, chimneys/flues on a roof or appliances in a loft, without suitable and safe access with no risk to our staff.
- Supervise/manage remedial work.
- Appoint or pay a third party to carry out remedial actions on behalf of registered businesses or engineers.
- Award compensation for the actions of a registered business.
- Pursue non-gas safety defects or Electrical Regulation non-compliance issues beyond agreed protocols. Enforcement of the Building Regulations for this is the realm of your local authority.
- Require a business that is no longer registered to complete remedial actions identified through inspections. Where such circumstances exist, we will investigate alternative options to assist.
- Take action in relation to the correction of identified installation issues and/or gas safety defects where the consumer does not want the defects corrected by the original business that undertook the work.
- Share with consumers the results of investigations at properties other than their own, or sanctions applied to a registered business and/or engineer.
- Refuse application for registration where the criteria for registration is met; unless a higher authority such as an enforcement agency or court has placed a prohibition on a business or engineer preventing them from carrying out gas work.
- Extend our policies beyond our remit and our authority.
- Act as a gas emergency service.
- Request correction of plumbing or electrical work outside the scope of our jurisdiction.
- Determine a property boundary where there are neighbour disputes.
- Act against a registered business because they do not have appropriate insurance policies in place e.g. public liability insurance*.

***Note:** Consumers should always ensure that the registered business they employ is appropriately insured.

We will do everything that we can within our remit to help you and any information we share about registered businesses/engineers or your details will be compliant with current data protection legislation.

5. You and your information

When you interact with us:

- We will collect relevant information about your property, your gas installation and how to contact you.
- We will use this information to help keep you gas safe.
- We may need to share this information with relevant Gas Safe registered businesses (irrespective of registration status) as a result of inspection findings or concerns.
- We may need to share this information with enforcement agencies; primarily where unsafe or illegal gas work is identified.
- If you have concerns or would like to know more about how we will use your data please refer to The Gas Safe Register Privacy Policy, available on our website <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/who-we-are/our-policies/> or contact us to discuss your concern.

6. General communications

To keep our services as cost-effective and environmentally sustainable as possible, we will, wherever practical, use electronic means of communication such as e-mail or telephone as the preferred method of contact.

7. Gas work inspections

We inspect gas work to ensure that registered businesses continue to work in accordance with recognised standards and requirements.

To help us do this, consumers can nominate gas work carried out within the last 6 months for a free inspection by calling us, visiting our website, or by returning the nomination slip sent to you with your Building Regulation compliance certificate. We are unable to guarantee to inspect any gas work nominated, but where your nomination is selected for inspection, we will aim to advise the business that completed the work of the inspection and give them the option to attend the inspection, along with our Inspector, where appropriate and acceptable with you.

We may also contact you asking if we can inspect gas work at your property, or the business themselves may ask you if they can bring one of our Inspectors to inspect the work they have carried out at your property.

During the inspection, we may be accompanied by a representative of the business responsible for the work but, if this is not possible our Inspector will attend alone. We respect the fact that some consumers may ask us not to invite the business responsible for the work but we have an obligation to advise the business of the planned inspection and its outcome.

Where sufficient authenticated evidence supports that unsafe gas work or any breach of the Rules of Registration has occurred our Sanctions Policy will apply.

Note: *An appropriate adult must be present for the inspection. This should be somebody over the age of 18 and could be a carer, relative, friend, health or social care professional. For more information about what happens when we inspect gas work, please see our 'Gas Safety Inspection factsheet', a copy of which can be viewed on our website, <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/who-we-are/our-policies/>.*

8. Investigating complaints about registered or unregistered businesses

Our common principles of complaint investigation and follow up action

Complaint allegations that fall within the scope of our service will be treated impartially and professionally. To allow us to investigate complaints relating to registered businesses thoroughly we require the complainant to allow the registered business who has carried out the work to attend site with our Inspector(s), unless there are exceptional circumstances that may prevent this.

We will investigate all complaints within the following set of common principles

1. They will be investigated robustly against the strength and consistency of evidence that exists to authenticate the complaint allegation.
2. If you are a tenant, we will seek permission from your landlord before undertaking our investigation. However, if you do not wish to engage your landlord, we will only be able to conduct a visual inspection of the installation. Whilst we accept your request this will limit the extent and effectiveness of our investigation into your complaint.

Note: *Where we identify gas related safety defects we may be obliged to inform your landlord or their agent, where known.*

3. For multiple complaint issues of a similar type, for example similar gas safety faults on a new building development, we will inspect samples of work in the first instance to determine any appropriate further actions which may include any need for further inspection activity by us or others.

4. In the case of registered businesses or engineers where sufficient authenticated evidence supports that unsafe gas work or any breaches of the Rules of Registration or Policy have occurred our Sanctions Policy will apply.
5. If defective work is identified during a complaint investigation and the complainant decides not to allow the responsible business to carry out remedial work, the complaint will be closed as there is nothing further we can do to assist in terms of any remedial action required to correct the defects. The complainant/responsible person will need to employ, at their own expense, another registered business to carry out any necessary remedial or correction work. However, where there is evidence of gas safety related defects we will engage with the responsible registered business or engineer and our Sanctions Policy will apply.
6. We are unable to inform a complainant of the details of the actions taken with a registered business or engineer as a result of further investigation activities.
7. The way in which we investigate complaints depends on whether or not the unsafe gas work or the installation of a heat producing appliance and its associated components remains in situ and in its original condition, as carried out by the business concerned:

- **Unsafe gas work or incorrect gas heating appliance and components still in situ**

Where this is the case we can assign an Inspector / Investigations Officer to carry out a site inspection. We will try to make appointments within 10 working days of the date you contact us. If you have a gas emergency and live in Great Britain, please contact the National Gas Emergency helpline on 0800 111 999. Emergency numbers for Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Guernsey & Jersey or LPG Suppliers, can be located in section 16 of this document. Additionally, our advisor can assist you in finding the correct emergency service provider to deal with the issue urgently.

- **Unsafe gas work or incorrect gas heating appliance and components corrected or removed**

Where remedial work has been carried out or pipework has been removed by a registered business prior to our inspection, it can be difficult to investigate complaints of unsafe gas work or incorrect heating appliance and component work. To fully investigate and attribute responsibility it is vital that we can gather robust evidence by investigating the original unaltered work undertaken, before any other work affecting the original condition has been carried out.

However, we respect your needs and accept that due to various factors that this may not always be possible e.g. repairs being carried out quickly to ensure heating and hot water services are established.

This does not mean that we are unable to investigate the complaint allegation. In these situations, we will accept the complaint and any supporting documentation that you have provided will be forwarded to our Inspector so that they can, where possible, investigate the application of competence of the business/engineer in question.

The registered business/engineer will be asked for their comments based on the information you provide. We will also undertake further inspections of the business and/or engineer to assess whether there is an underlying failing in their ability to work competently and safely with gas. What we cannot do is make a decision on any liability or responsibility in relation to work carried out that we have not inspected. Our focus is to assess the ongoing suitability of that business and/or engineer to remain registered.

Investigating complaints of unsafe gas work carried out by registered businesses

Where there is a complaint about unsafe gas work carried out by a known registered business, we can arrange for this to be investigated in line with our common principles of complaint investigation. This may include the installation, maintenance, repair or service of gas appliances and/or pipework.

Investigating other types of complaints about registered businesses

The other types of complaints about registered businesses that we can investigate are listed below and again our common principles apply.

- **Registered business working out of scope of work categories held**

Should a business or engineer have created gas safety defects whilst working outside the scope of the work categories for which they are registered, for example working on a cooker but not qualified and hence not registered, a defect notice will be issued. Where this is the case the business will be responsible for the correction of the defects and will need to employ a suitably registered and competent engineer with appropriate work categories to complete the necessary rectification works.

- **Registered businesses commissioning the work of unregistered gas workers**

Should a registered business or engineer knowingly have commissioned or 'signed off' the work of others without correcting any gas safety defects, a defects notice will be issued. The commissioning business will be responsible for the rectification works.

- **Registered business not applying competent gas work processes**

Where a complaint is received, relating to the working processes of a registered business or engineer that in themselves do not result in the creation of defective work, we are still able to discuss our concerns with the business responsible. An example would be the failure to identify existing gas safety defects in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure.

<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/gas-safety-in-the-home/warning-labels/>

Where these types of complaints are received our Sanctions Policy will apply, and actions may include placing a business and/or engineer into a tightened/increased inspection regime or with an ‘employer’ business carrying out an audit of the relevant areas of their gas safety management systems and acting according to the results.

https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/media/1771/sanctions_policy.pdf

Complaints about unregistered gas workers

In line with the authority delegated to us and our common principles of complaint investigation, we can investigate complaints about gas work that has been carried out by an identifiable business or person(s) that was not registered to undertake that work. This gas work may include the installation, maintenance, repair or service of gas appliances and/or pipework.

If an unregistered person(s) has undertaken gas work, they may have broken the law such as:

- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 in GB
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 as amended and applied by the Gas Safety (Application) Order 1996 in IOM.
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 in NI.
- The Health and Safety (Gas) (Guernsey) Ordinance 2006 in Guernsey.

Once investigated and where appropriate, we will provide a report to the relevant enforcement agency, e.g. the appropriate Health and Safety authority for the geographical region. In their capacity as the enforcers of gas safety legislation it is for them to take whatever action they deem necessary against the unregistered person(s). If appropriate we may also inform other enforcement agencies such as Trading Standards.

If as a result of an investigation into the work of unregistered gas workers they satisfactorily apply and achieve registration, it does not preclude the requirement for the Registration Scheme to send the relevant enforcement agency a report of any site visit or other relevant detail.

Complaints about unsafe gas work in neighbouring properties

Where you have a complaint, which relates to neighbouring properties, our Customer Services Team will use the information provided and attempt to make an appointment with the person responsible for the property for one of our Inspectors or Investigations Officers to investigate the concern further. Where they agree to us carrying out a gas safety inspection, we may be able to address the concerns with the installer of the appliance if they are registered.

Subject to available access, an inspection will be carried out on behalf of the person responsible for the neighbouring property and our Inspector or Investigations Officer will produce a report of their findings to the owner of the property, any relevant registered business and enforcements agencies as appropriate. Where matters are specific to the neighbouring

property, we are unable to take such matters further with any other parties. We are also unable to advise directly or provide a copy of the report on the specific findings of any inspection to other parties unless we are given permission to do so by the property owner. Where a visit directly to the property concerned is not possible, we will contact you to arrange a site inspection from your premises. This type of investigation will be limited and any action that we may be able to take, if any, will be very restricted.

In situations like these it is possible that other organisations such as the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health or Building Control may be able to offer services or advice, or you may consider civil action.

Examples of complaint issues where we are unable to act

The list below is a non-exhaustive illustration of issues with which we are unable to become involved. Should any of these types of issues arise you should in the first instance, take them up with the registered business/individual concerned and other bodies such as Citizens Advice Consumer Services, your Local Authority Building Control or Environmental Health Department or Trading Standards where appropriate:

- Complaints about a registered engineer's personal presentation and conduct.
- Complaints about work outside of gas safety, such as poorly fitted kitchen cabinets or work-tops.
- Damage to household goods, such as carpets or wall coverings.
- Water leaking from radiators, boilers, pipework or heating system performance issues etc.
- Aspects of electrical work which may be identified during an inspection/investigation that do not comply with relevant Building Regulations.
- Complaints about any financial or contractual issues with a registered business

9. How to raise a complaint about a business

You can raise a complaint in any of the following ways:

- **Web** – <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/complaints-report-an-illegal/> and complete the web form with details of your complaint
- **E-mail** – enquiries@gassaferegister.co.uk
- **Post** – Complaints Department, Gas Safe Register, PO Box 6804, Basingstoke, RG24 4NB
- **Phone** – 0800 408 5500 or 01256 650004. Depending on the nature of the complaint you may be asked to put it in writing.

For the purpose of accessibility, if you have any reason why these methods of communication are not suitable, please let us know so that reasonable adjustments can be made to help you communicate with us or access our services.

10. How your complaint about a business is handled

Complaints will be logged and given a reference number. If your complaint falls outside our boundaries of service and authority, we will advise you explaining why and offer advice as appropriate.

If your complaint relates to unsafe gas work or the incorrect installation of a gas heat producing appliance and its associated components by a known registered business, or relates to gas work carried out by an identifiable unregistered business, we will investigate this as follows:

- 1) Our priority is to ensure that you are gas safe so if we believe the situation is serious and may be dangerous we will advise you to contact the gas emergency services immediately.
- 2) We will establish with you whether it is appropriate to send an Inspector to inspect the work. In most cases this appointment will be within 10 business days. To allow us to investigate the complaint effectively we require the registered business who undertook the work to attend during our visit, unless there is an exceptional reason not have them there. If the business you are making the complaint about does not attend the complaint inspection, we will advise them of the complaint and the outcome.
- 3) Following a site visit to inspect the work we will produce a report for the complainant and any relevant registered business. This report may be provided by email subject to the stated communication preference. Investigation reports are not provided to unregistered businesses.

Note: *Complaint resolution can be more effective when the registered business responsible for the work carried out is invited to attend the complaint investigation.*

11. Gas safety defects

If through the course of inspection or complaint investigation gas safety defects are identified, they will be classified and actioned in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure

[\(https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/gas-safety-in-the-home/warning-labels/\)](https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/gas-safety-in-the-home/warning-labels/)

Where there is evidence* to support attributing defects to a registered business we will issue a defect notice with a timescale for expected completion. We will monitor for the completion of the rectification work and when requested we can arrange to re-inspect any rectification work where there has been unsafe gas work attributed to a registered business.

Should the property owner/responsible person not permit the rectification work requested in a defect notice to be completed, the notice and complaint will be considered closed. However, our Sanctions Policy may still be applied to the registered business or engineer where there is evidence of gas safety related defects.

Where a registered business fails to complete the rectification, work associated with attributable gas safety defects without proper justification our Sanctions Policy will apply.

Where new or existing gas-related defects are identified, and cannot be attributed to a registered business they will be recorded for the information of the property owner/responsible person. Any correction work is their responsibility and where undertaken, must only be carried out by a suitably competent and registered engineer.

** Note: Evidence can be in the form of an invoice, a receipt, a commissioning document e.g. a Benchmark booklet, a copy of a work record or Building Regulation Compliance Certificate.*

12. Building regulation defects

If through the course of inspection or complaint investigation Building Regulations defects are identified and, where there is robust evidence to attribute that work to a Gas Safe registered business, we will issue a defect notice to the business with a clear timescale for the expected completion of any corrective remedial work. We will monitor for the completion of the rectification work and, when requested, we can arrange to re-inspect any rectification work where there has been incorrect building work attributed to a registered business.

Should the property owner/responsible person not permit the rectification work requested in a defect notice to be completed, the notice and complaint will be considered closed.

Where there is a failure of a registered business to complete the rectification work attributable to the business and identified on a defect notice our Sanctions Policy will apply.

Where new or existing Building Regulation related defects are identified, and cannot be attributed to a registered business, they will be recorded for the information of the property owner/responsible person. Any correction work is their responsibility respectively and, where undertaken, must only be carried out by a suitably competent person.

13. Dealing with non-gas safety disputes using alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

Occasionally, contractual disputes arise between consumers and registered businesses which fall outside our gas safety remit and authority. Often disputes of this type can be challenging to resolve and might result in small claims or civil action in the courts. However, there is an alternative option which the courts will expect to have been explored prior to their considering any case, alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

What is ADR? – Alternative dispute resolution is a process that enables disputes between a consumer and a business to be settled via an independent mechanism outside of the court system.

ADR can offer a cheaper and quicker alternative to the courts for disputes where a consumer is not able to resolve their complaint directly with the business from whom they made their purchase of goods or services.

Currently the use of ADR in relation to disputes concerning contractual matters is not mandatory and it is up to both parties to agree to use ADR to resolve any dispute.

Registered businesses must provide information about whether they will use ADR to settle any dispute not related to gas safety. However, we recommend that consumers confirm the business's position before engaging them to undertake work.

Any registered business that has voluntarily committed to use a certified ADR provider to resolve disputes, should provide information about that certified ADR provider to their customers and, if applicable, in the terms and conditions of sales or service contracts;

A list of certified ADR providers can be found via <https://www.tradingstandards.uk>

14. Suggestions for improvements to the service offered by the Register

We are committed to continual improvement and accept suggestions on how we may improve our service within our remit. If you have a suggestion that you would like us to consider, please let us know by phone, letter or email, addressing any written correspondence for the attention of the Business Improvements Manager.

15. Complaints against the Register

Every year we deal successfully with tens of thousands of consumers. We aim to provide a high level of service to all our customers, but sometimes things can occasionally go wrong or your expectations are not always met.

If you have a complaint about the way we have dealt with you or about any of our services, we want to know. We always welcome feedback and suggestions to help us improve our performance. You can make a complaint against the Register, in writing by letter or email*. For more information about making a formal complaint please refer to the Complaints against the Service provided by the Register Policy. Information about how we operate and how to make a complaint is available at the following web page: <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/who-we-are/our-policies/>

***Note:** For accessibility, if you have any reason why these methods of communication are not suitable, please let us know so that reasonable adjustments can be made to help you communicate with us or access our services.

16. Useful contacts for gas emergencies

If you smell gas, or have a gas emergency, contact the Gas Emergency Helpline for your area. Other useful contact numbers can be found by visiting our website

<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/useful-contacts/> .

Natural Gas

Great Britain	0800 111 999
Northern Ireland	0800 002 001
Isle of Man	0808 1624 444
Guernsey	01481 749000
Jersey	01534 755555

Main LPG Suppliers in Great Britain

Calor	03457 444 999
Flogas	0800 574 574
Avanti Gas	0808 208 0000

17. How to contact us

Telephone: Consumers: 0800 408 5500

Engineers: 0800 408 5577

Post: Gas Safe Register
PO Box 6804
Basingstoke
RG24 4NB

Fax: 01256 341501

E-mail: enquiries@gassaferegister.co.uk

Website: www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk