



ASTON STUDENTS' UNION, ASTON BROOK GREEN HEALTH & SAFETY / RISK ASSESSMENT

Property owner / Landlords – Midland Heart Housing Association Ltd.
Managing Agents – Aston Students' Union

It is clear that there are certain risks/dangers at Aston Brook Green. This report covers what the risks are, who the risks may endanger and the measures currently taken or to be taken to reduce/eradicate the potential dangers.

It is essential to note that as Managing Agents for the landlords, Midland Heart, Aston Students' Union (ASU) is not responsible for the repair and maintenance of the fabric of the properties or their fixtures and fittings but only for the supply and repair of furnishings and white goods, i.e. carpets, curtains, cookers, fridges and furniture.

Who may be at risk?

- The Tenants or their guests
- Landlord's contractors
- The Housing Manager

What are the risks?

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| 1. Fire | Injury or death |
| 2. Gas | Explosion or CO poisoning |
| 3. Electricity | Death or injury from electric shock |
| 4. Machinery | Injury from moving parts, flying matter or electric shock |
| 5. Manual Handling | Injury through lifting |
| 6. Hazardous Chemicals | Poisoning, chemical burns and explosion. |
| 7. Scalding..... | Severe or fatal scalding |

1. FIRE

The risk of fire affects all of the risk groups. All flats, including the Office are fitted with mains operated fire/smoke alarm detectors and with fire extinguishers. Qualified technicians check the fire extinguishers, supplied by ASU, annually and certificates kept in the office at Flat 1 Aston Brook Green. In the event of an extinguisher being discharged replacements are kept in the office at Flat 1. The annual inspection and maintenance of the fire detector systems is covered by an annual maintenance contract.

Another area of potential risk is the use of portable gas or paraffin heaters. A clause in the Tenancy Agreement specifically forbids the use of this type of heater by the tenants. As the flats are centrally heated there is no need to use this kind of appliance and I have never seen one on the site.

All the furniture, including carpets and curtains, provided by the project (i.e. Midland Heart and/or the Union) meet current safety regulations concerning combustion and burning rate. Tenants are told that they are not to supply their own soft furniture such as settees and armchairs. Where these are found tenants are instructed to remove them.

A full fire safety inspection has been carried out at the site and all of the recommendations have been carried out. A copy of the report has been sent to the Housing Association and they are looking at carry out some supplementary works.

All properties have fire alarm/smoke detector systems in them and all communal stairwells also have their own fire alarm/smoke detector systems. Staff check the systems in the flats monthly with tenants being asked to run a simple check on a weekly basis. The systems are tested weekly by staff in the communal areas

2. GAS

All gas appliances (central heating and cooker) and the supply are checked every 10/11 months by Midland Heart appointed Gas Safe registered fitters. This measure is a statutory requirement and adequately covers the danger of gas or carbon monoxide escape. The Housing Association and Housing Manager keep a record of when all services are carried out.

3. ELECTRICITY

Since the start of the project there have been no reports of any incidents or accidents resulting from electric shocks. The electrical dangers may be divided into two areas:

i. Wiring

All flats are regularly safety checked by NECEIC qualified electricians and all have current safety certificates. The Housing Manager keeps copies of these certificates.

ii. Appliances

All appliances supplied by the Managing Agent - vacuum cleaners, fridges and some of the gas cookers (for ignition) are annually PAT tested and records are kept by the Housing Manager.

4. MACHINERY

No machinery is used on the site apart from that used appointed contractors of Midland Heart or ASU.

5. MANUAL HANDLING

The items that require lifting and are of adequate weight to potentially cause injury through faulty lifting are larger items of furniture e.g. fridges, beds/mattresses, etc. The only people who carry out these types of duties are the Housing Manager and Handyman who is employed by Midland Heart.

The tenants themselves may move furniture around but I see no potential risk to them as they are unlikely to be moving the larger items and to date we have had no reports of injuries to tenants caused by this activity.

6. HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

There are only 3 categories of hazardous chemicals that are currently stocked on the site and the disposal of old fluorescent tubes to be considered.

i. Paint

All tins of paint are stored in an external locked store and are properly sealed after their use.

ii. Cleaning Materials

This category includes bleach, oven cleaner, disinfectant, carpet shampoo, etc. It is currently stored in a cupboard in the office of Flat 1. Only the Housing Manager has access to this area. All users of these materials have access to protective rubber gloves and safety glasses and are instructed to wear these items when using or preparing for use these chemicals. They are also instructed to follow the manufacturers' recommendations on usage are to be strictly adhered to.

iii. Fluorescent Tubes

Fluorescent tubes contain small amounts of mercury and must be disposed of safely. These are disposed of correctly at the University or with suppliers.

To date there have been no incidents involving these materials and I am satisfied that the above measures will ensure their future safe use and storage.

7. SCALDING

Overview

There are 61 properties/households at Aston Brook Green. Each has its own heating system that is controlled by the tenants. Tenants at Aston Brook Green are students in the age range 18 to 25. The risk of scalding in the properties at Aston Brook Green only arises from the hot water taps to the sinks and bath or the shower.

Level Of Risk

Given the tenants are young and fit the chances of serious scalding are extremely remote. The only risk of serious or fatal scalding would be if a tenant were to immerse him or herself in a bath of scalding water.

A combination boiler heats the hot water. The tenants have access to, control and set the heat of the tap water. Likewise the showers are electric and the user sets the water temperature.

Disability

The University on campus accommodates students with more severe disabilities. Currently the Agents, ASU, would not be aware if a tenant is, for instance, epileptic or diabetic. All future application forms for accommodation at Aston Brook Green will contain a question asking if an applicant suffers with any disability or serious illness.

Where a student has a serious disability they will be referred to the University Accommodation Office. In the case of a less serious disability the application will be assessed on the level of serious scalding risk to that individual.



Action Taken

Yellow warning stickers have been stuck above all bath hot water taps in all properties at Aston Brook Green.

Further Actions

Booklets about how the site is managed, including how to operate the central heating systems, are circulated to all flats 2 to 3 times a year. The booklets include a section on scalding risks and the information is also available on the Aston Students' Union website.

Another possible course of action would be to have the maximum hot water temperature set at a fixed level. The Agents are not aware of whether this is possible and given that the boilers are supplied and maintained by Midland Heart this work would need to be carried out

by the landlord.

Accidents and Incidents

Records of accidents and incidents along with the actions taken are kept by the Housing Manager in the office at Flat 1 Aston Brook Green.

Conclusion

In general the risk of serious scalding to this user group is extremely low. In the 35+ years that the Agents have managed the site there have been no reports of scalding. This includes a 20-year period where there were no showers on the site, only baths.

8. AN INCIDENT LOG BOOK IS KEPT IN FLAT 1 ASTON BROOK GREEN

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