

Open fires and wood burners in Papworth Trust Housing



Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the Trusts' approach to open fires and wood burners.

It is applicable to all Papworth Trust owned or managed properties and applies to all types of tenancy agreements.

2. Solid fuels

All solid fuel appliances, be it an open coal fire, a wood burning stove, or a solid fuel cooker will give off combustion gasses because all fires produce poisonous gas. Solid fuel appliances fall within the category of heating appliances.

A solid fuel fire appliance (heating system) will produce poisonous gases that will require a clear and unobstructed flue to carry them away from the property. The property will also require an adequate ventilation system, such as air vents or airbricks that are of an appropriate size to serve the appliance.

Wrong use of a solid fuel appliance can result in dangerous occurrences and chimney fires.

3. Open fires and Wood burners

3.1 Papworth Trust do not permit tenants to have open fires or wood burners within their homes. Tenants who request via the Tenant Alteration Policy to open up an old fireplace or an existing flue will be refused for safety and maintenance reasons.

3.2 Some tenants may already have open fires or wood burners in their homes due to previous practice. In these circumstances the Trust will consider the tenancy file and any permissions that were given to the tenant or if the property was let with an open fire or wood burners. The impact of any legislation on the installation will also be considered.

3.3 If written permission exists then the Trust will continue to allow the open fire or wood burners subject to insurance company stipulations and requirements and will arrange for or direct the tenant to have an annual chimney sweep (as a minimum but dependent on chimney sweep and insurance company recommendation).

3.3a Payment for the 'sweep' and any associated work will depend on the terms of the permission given. As Papworth Trust housing does not have open fires or wood burners as standard in any property and an open fire or wood burners is not the main form of heating (this will be gas, oil or another form) unless stipulated in the permission the cost of the works will be recharged back to the tenant if initially paid by the Trust.

3.3b If the property was let with an open fire or wood burners Papworth Trust will engage in a consultation with the tenant with the aim to remove the open fire because the main heating system will be oil or gas (or another form). If the tenant chooses to keep the open fire or wood burners (subject to insurance company stipulations) then Papworth Trust will arrange for or direct the tenant to have the chimney sweep as per clause 3.3 but the cost will be recharged back to the tenant if the Trust pays initially.

3.3c The Trust will organise the chimney sweep where the tenant is unable to do so or where the permission given stated this. This will be assessed by a Housing Officer if required.

3.4 If the tenant does not allow access at the required frequencies for chimney sweeping and associated works then the Trust will seek access via legal means and recharge all costs to the tenant. Denied access will result in any permissions for an open fire being revoked and the area blocked up.

3.5 If written permission does not exist then the Trust will at its expense make an appointment and block up the open fire or remove the wood burner.

3.6 The Trust will not decorate the affected areas but will prepare ready for decoration.

3.7 If a tenant refuses to allow access to carry out the blocking up of the flue/chimney then appropriate legal action will be taken and costs will be charged back to the tenant.

3.8 The Trust will request all court fees to be recharged to the tenant.

4. Removal of open fires or wood burners

4.1 If a tenant requests an open fire or wood burner to be removed and the area blocked up, Papworth Trust will carry out the work to ensure it is carried out safely and to the required standard.

4.2 The Trust may recharge such work to the tenant depending on any written permissions that were given.

4.3 If a property becomes void for whatever reason the Trust will remove any open fire or wood burner and block up the area.

5. Document control

Owner	Senior Business Manager – Property
Consulted	Tenant Scrutiny Panel
Approver(s)	Business Manager – Housing
Date	November 2022
Next Review date	November 2025
Ratified by	None required

6. Version tracker

Version number	Date Approved	Approved by	Comments/Reason for issue
1.0	17.6.19	Head of Property	New policy
2.0	November 2022	Business Manager – Housing	Reviewed June, taken to Tenant Scrutiny Panel

If you have any feedback or want to suggest corrections to this policy, please contact the policy owner.

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