

Joint operation identifies dangerous gas appliances

A joint initiative between the Health and Safety Executive and Gateshead Council has resulted in two care homes being told to take action over potential dangerous boilers.

A team of officers from HSE and the council visited a number of privately rented properties in the Bensham and Chopwell areas of Gateshead recently. A selection of residential and nursing care homes were also visited.

In one residential care home the team discovered a potentially dangerous back boiler with insufficient ventilation and a dangerous flue. The boiler was condemned and its use prohibited. The owner of the home had to make temporary arrangements to provide hot water and heating for the residents before replacing the outdated boiler with a brand new combination boiler.

In addition a nursing care home was running large commercial boilers which had been identified as being “at risk” at the annual safety check. The burners were damaged and needed to be replaced but the home had continued to run the boilers for two months. After the intervention by HSE and the council, the boilers were replaced.

HSE Inspector, Fiona MacNeill, said: “During our visits we found that the residential and nursing care homes all had annual safety checks done on their gas appliances but they had not always acted upon the defects identified. The competence of those carrying out the gas safety checks was also an issue. In one case a registered engineer who was only qualified to work on small domestic appliances had worked on large commercial boilers.

“The visits to private properties found that the majority of landlords were complying with their duties to ensure that an annual safety check was being done on gas appliances by a registered installer. However landlords did not always act on the information in the CP12 gas safety certificate.

“Our message to landlords and care home owners is to heed the warning – don’t just file the gas safety certificate away. Look at it and take immediate action on the areas requiring attention.”