Accommodation and Hospitality Services

Inspection and testing of electrical equipment (Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)) policy

Purpose Statement

To ensure that portable and transportable electrical equipment, supplied within University Accommodation, is maintained in a safe condition so as to avoid hazard to persons or property. To raise awareness of the dangers associated with portable appliances – a faulty wire can cause a fire and an electric shock can kill.

Applicability and Scope

This policy applies to all portable appliances provided within accommodation owned and managed by Newcastle University.

Definition

Portable appliance means electrical equipment that can or could be moved from place to place, eg cooker, kettle or toaster, usually having a lead with a plug attached.

Responsibilities

Legislation introduced under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty of care on business and employers to ensure that work equipment is safe to use, efficiently maintained and kept fit and suitable for its purpose. The Regulations also require that proper records are created during the inspection and testing process.

Carried out annually by competent members of our Residences Team who have undertaken the appropriate training or by a University approved contractor, the PAT comprises:

- Preliminary Visual Inspection - Visually checking the appliance for the safety of the plug, fuse, wiring, cable and protective case of the appliance;
- Earth Bond Test - The safety of certain appliances depends upon a connection with the earth for its safety. A test is carried out using electrical test equipment to ensure a safe earth is present in the appliance;
- Insulation Testing - A test is carried out using electrical test equipment to ensure the insulation resistance in the appliance is at a safe level;
- **Load Test** - A test is carried out applying a voltage through a current limiting resistor to the mains supply plug and checks that the current flow will not be excessive when full voltage is applied to the appliance;

- **Earth Leakage Measurement** - A test is carried out to monitor the current flow through the earth lead of the appliance;

- **Functional Check** - A test is carried out to ensure that the appliance is working correctly;

- A label which is attached to the appliance with the date and pass or fail showing clearly;

- A record created during the inspection and testing process.

An inventory of all appliances tested is kept for a minimum of five years.

**Policy Restrictions**

There is no requirement, nor is it practicable, to carry out a PAT on resident’s personal appliances. However, all members of staff have a duty of care and must report any portable appliance which they see within the accommodation which shows any sign of:

- Damage, eg cuts, abrasions (apart from light scuffing) to the cable covering;

- Damage to the plug, eg the casing is cracked or the pins are bent;

- Non-standard joints including taped joints in the cable;

- The outer covering (sheath) of the cable not being gripped where it enters the plug or the equipment. Look to see if the coloured insulation of the internal wires is showing.

Any appliance which fits into the above category will be labelled as dangerous and an instruction issued not to use the appliance until it is has been repaired or replaced. In extreme circumstances, ie an unsafe adaptor which can kill, the appliance will be removed and a Removal Notice (Electrical Safety) completed.

Any resident can request a PAT be carried out on their own personal equipment via Reception. There is a £15 charge for this service and the resident should be given a copy of the appliance test result.