

## Guidance on Legionnaires' disease for tenants and residents of rented domestic accommodation

### Domestic hot and cold water systems can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow.

This can cause Legionnaires' disease which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing Legionella bacteria. The consumption of water is **not** a risk and the risk of inhalation is very low.

This advice sheet gives tips for residents of rented domestic accommodation such as houses, bungalows and flats in small blocks.

### Most importantly, make sure that:

- Hot water in the system remains hot
- Cold water is kept cold
- The water is kept circulated

### In particular, it is important that you –

- Do not interfere with the settings on your boiler or hot water system. The hot water should be set so that the water is heated up to 60°C.

### Tell your Agent/Landlord if:

- The cold water is still running warm after you have initially run off any water which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C.
- There are any problems, debris or discolouration in the water.
- The boiler or hot water tank is not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for a minute at the latest.

### Where showers are fitted –

- If they are used only occasionally then flush them through by running them for at least two minutes every week. Keep out of the way whilst this is being done as far as possible to avoid inhaling any droplets, perhaps by switching it on and then leaving the room.
- Clean the shower head periodically, descale and disinfect it. This should be done at least every six months.

Where a property is left vacant for over five nights, make sure that when it is occupied again at the outset both hot and cold water systems are flushed through by running all outlets for at least 2 minutes.

