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UNSAFE GAS APPLIANCES IN A RENTED PROPERTY "COULD EASILY HAVE ENDED IN A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY"

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21 October 2014 – The successful prosecution of two landlords for failing to arrange mandatory annual safety checks on gas appliances in their rented property is a reminder that landlords who flout the law will not go unpunished.

Two landlords, husband and wife Mehboob and Suraiya Bobat of Bolton, Lancashire, have been fined and each sentenced to 80 hours of community service after a four-month-old baby and both his parents were taken to hospital with carbon monoxide poisoning.

Over a period of time the young family had experienced some of the classic symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning including severe headaches, fainting, dizziness and difficulty breathing. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found four unsafe appliances in the Bolton property they rented from Mr and Mrs Bobat.

Roderick Pettigrew, Chief Executive of B&ES, the Building & Engineering Services Association, who operate Heating Helpline, the free consumer advice service, comments, "The Courts have just served a timely reminder that landlords who flout the law by failing to ensure the safe condition of tenants' gas appliances will not escape punishment. This could easily have ended in a terrible tragedy and thankfully it didn't.

"Poorly maintained or defective gas appliances can leak potentially lethal quantities of carbon monoxide (CO) and around 40 people still die every year from CO poisoning, with thousands more made ill."

Speaking after the court hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Mike Sebastian said, "A young couple and their baby son were needlessly made ill for several months because Mr and Mrs Bobat failed in their legal duties as landlords to arrange an annual gas safety check.

"It's shocking that all four of the gas appliances in the property had the potential to cause carbon monoxide poisoning. If the baby's father hadn't acted quickly to call an ambulance when his wife collapsed the effects could easily have been fatal."

Mr Pettigrew adds, "Gas appliances in all rented accommodation should be serviced annually in accordance with manufacturers' instructions by a Gas Safe registered installer in addition to having annual gas safety checks carried out on them – that is the law.

"Tenants can ask the landlord or letting agent to see a copy of the gas safety certificate issued following the annual safety check by a Gas Safe

registered engineer, and they should not hesitate to contact the Health & Safety Executive (T: 0300 003 1747) if the landlord cannot provide this.”

For more information on gas safety in the home, including rented properties, contact the free Heating Helpline on 0800 810 8303 or visit the website at: www.heatinghelpline.org.uk. Heating Helpline has produced a series of guides including ‘Gas safety in a rented property – information for landlords & tenants’; for your free copy, just call the Helpline or download the leaflet from their website.

Ends

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Notes to editors

Since its formation in 1904, B&ES, the Building & Engineering Services Association (formerly the HVCA) has represented the interests of companies engaged in a wide range of building and engineering services including domestic heating and renewable technologies.

B&ES members are subject to regular, third-party inspection and assessment of their technical competence and commercial capability, carried out by an independent certification body at least every three years.

B&ES members who undertake gas installations are registered with Gas Safe – the gas safety watchdog body – and are also members of TrustMark, the Government-endorsed scheme designed to direct customers towards reliable tradespeople.

B&ES operates the *Heating Helpline* (www.heatinghelpline.org.uk) to provide consumers with free, impartial advice on every aspect of home heating.