



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Fire Safety Management Policy 2022

Fire Safety Management Policy

Managed Housing Service

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Interim Policy whilst awaiting outcome and impact from fire safety and building safety legislative reforms.

1 Introduction

Solihull Community Housing (SCH) provide a managed housing service on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) for its own housing stock and those owned by the local authority. SCH is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), owned by SMBC. SMBC remain accountable for tenant fire safety as the registered landlord and provider for social housing and are responsible for ensuring SCH fulfil its responsibilities to manage tenant fire safety on its behalf to ensure:

- Tenants feel safe in their homes.
- The requirement of the Home Standard regulatory standard is discharged/met.
- Relevant fire safety legislation is complied with.

This policy is applicable to all residential properties under the management of Solihull Community Housing (SCH) where SCH is the landlord, but not necessarily the owner. There is a separate Fire Safety Policy for workplaces and non-residential properties under the control of SCH.

Fire is a significant hazard to the safety of both buildings and their occupants. SCH is committed to ensuring fire safety is managed through the provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate fire precautions and management systems to enable the safe evacuation of employees, tenants, and others and to minimise fire damage should a fire occur.

This Policy describes the fire precautions and management arrangements SCH has put in place to ensure that the risk of fire is effectively managed and delivers compliance with all applicable fire safety legislation and industry best practice.

1.1 Key Legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO 2005) brought together different pieces of fire legislation. It applies to all non-domestic premises, including communal areas of residential buildings with multiple homes. RRFSO 2005 designates those in control of premises as the responsible person for fire safety and they have a duty to undertake assessments and manage risks. RRFSO 2005 is enforced by the Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Fire Safety Act 2021 sets out to amend the RRFSO 2005 and is designed to ensure that people “feel safe in their own homes and that a tragedy like the Grenfell Tower fire never happens again” in England. The Act clarifies that for any building containing two or more sets of domestic premises the RRFSO 2005 applies to the building's structure and external walls and any common parts, including the front doors of residential areas.

It also clarifies that references to external walls in the RRFSO 2005 include “doors or windows in those walls” and “anything attached to the exterior of those walls (including balconies).” These amendments to the RRFSO 2005 aim to increase enforcement action in these areas, particularly where remediation of aluminium composite material cladding is not taking place.

In summary, the Duty Holder/building owner for multi-occupied, residential buildings must manage the risk of fire:

- The structure and external walls of the building (e.g. cladding, balconies and windows)
- Entrance doors to individual flats that open into communal areas.

1.2 Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards

Under the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, all registered providers of social housing have an obligation for their tenants' safety, which includes fire safety. The objectives of the Regulator are set out in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

As the registered provider, SMBC remain accountable for overall tenant fire safety and are responsible for ensuring SCH fulfil its responsibilities to manage tenant fire safety on its behalf to ensure tenants feel safe in their homes and the requirement of the Home Standard duty is discharged/met.

1.3 Strategic intention

SCH takes its responsibility to manage the risk from fires within its managed housing stock very seriously and strive to reduce this risk through:

- Defined roles and responsibilities for fire safety, including individual responsibilities.
- Compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021 and any other relevant legislation.
- Ensuring fire safety is included when designing and constructing new and/or refurbishment projects.
- Ensuring that appropriate funding is allocated where deficiencies in fire safety measures are identified and for significant issues SCH Board and SMBC are consulted.
- A comprehensive programme of fire risk assessments, undertaken by competent person(s).
- Ensuring suitable and sufficient fire precautions and management systems are in place.
- A programme of regular fire safety inspections based on building risk.
- Providing regular fire safety awareness updates to residents, employees and others every three years, unless significant changes to fire safety have occurred sooner.
- Making information on the specific fire safety arrangements in each residential building of two or more domestic properties readily available to:
 - Residents to ensure they are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fire is minimised.
 - Employees, contractors, visitors.
- Fostering and maintaining good working relationships with partner services and relevant stakeholders, including West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service.

1.4 Specific Fire Safety Objectives

To ensure tenants feel safe in their homes and the risk from fires is effectively managed, SCH have identified a number of objectives for all its managed housing stock of domestic properties with two or more flats:

- Fire Risk Assessments have been undertaken by competent persons in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and current standards.
- Fire Safety measures are included in all new construction projects, existing building renovations and improvement programs undertaken on its building portfolio.
- Fire Safety risks posed by the structure and external walls (including cladding, balconies and windows and front doors) are assessed in line with current standards.

- The ongoing suitability and effectiveness of current fire safety measures in buildings classed as 'High Risk' are reviewed at least annually or after a fire incident, as part of the overall fire risk assessment process.
- The ongoing suitability and effectiveness of current fire safety measures in buildings classed as 'Low Risk' are reviewed at least every 3 years or after a fire incident, as part of the overall fire risk assessment process
- Fire safety priorities, improvement areas and areas of non-compliance are identified and actioned.
- All relevant residential buildings under its control will, where appropriate, have adequate fire warning systems, signs, means of escape and fire-fighting equipment.
- All fire safety precautions are inspected, maintained, serviced, and tested to ensure they are always fully operational, in accordance with statutory requirements and manufacturer's instructions.
- Regular inspections are undertaken of communal areas to ensure good housekeeping practices are in place to minimise the risk and spread of fire.
- Gas and electrical safety inspections are undertaken in each residential property where SCH is the landlord to ensure that these do not present a fire risk to the tenant or building.
- All fire incidents are reported, logged, investigated and discussed at the monthly Building Safety Meetings. Plans are in place to move towards capturing these on the Health and Safety Management Reporting system (Assure).
- Relevant employees are provided with the necessary skills and training to undertake their duties defined in this policy in relation to Fire Safety.
- Suitable and sufficient records are kept and available to be audited at appropriate intervals.
- It keeps up to date with changing legislation and fire mitigation measures.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities within SCH in relation to fire safety for tenanted properties with two or more domestic flats.

2.1 Solihull Community Housing Full Board

The SCH Board are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to ensure there is adequate fire safety management implemented and embedded across the organisation.

The Board is responsible for monitoring compliance with this Policy. In order to achieve this, the Board (or its nominated sub-committee(s)) will review this Policy every three years and analyse quarterly performance reports to ensure that issues of significant risk are actioned appropriately.

2.2 Chief Executive (Duty Holder)

The Chief Executive has the overall accountability and responsibility for health and safety, including fire safety.

In addition to performing the role of employer, SCH act as a landlord and building manager in respect to its managed housing stock with communal areas and supported living residential accommodation. To meet their responsibilities as an employer and landlord they will ensure that:

- There is an effective Fire Safety Policy covering both workplace fire safety and fire safety within the managed housing service and that these are reviewed every three years, or sooner if significant changes occur.
- Adequate funds and resources are available to meet fire safety requirements
- There are sufficient numbers of competent employees to meet its responsibility for fire safety
- Audit arrangements exist to oversee fire safety compliance.
- Fire safety risks are effectively managed within the properties that SCH manage to ensure tenant safety.
- That members of the public, employees and contractors are not unnecessarily exposed to fire risk.

2.3 Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) comprised of the Chief Executive and the Executive Directors, are ultimately responsible for:

- The implementation of the relevant areas of this Policy in their Service Areas.
- Ensuring the provision of adequate resources to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021 and other relevant legislation and guidance.
- Ensuring sufficient consideration has been given to support vulnerable residents who are unable to evacuate the building unaided. This will be subject to review following publication of government guidance.

Day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the relevant Heads of Service, Facilities Manager, and specific building managers.

2.4 Executive Director Assets and Development (Corporate Responsible Person)

The Executive Director for Assets and Development is the corporate member of ELT with responsibility for Health and Safety and is the **nominated corporate responsible person for fire safety**, responsible for the strategic management of fire precautions within SCH, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and part of the Executive Leadership Team.

The Corporate Responsible Person will ensure that:

- Fire risk assessments (FRA's) have been undertaken for the managed housing stock owned or managed by SCH. FRA's identify risks associated with fire and ensure mitigating actions are in place to considerably reduce the risk of fire to keep people safe.
- A scheduled program is in place for FRA's, including their review.
- Fire risk assessments are kept up to date and reviewed, considering any changes to the premises that may affect the fire safety e.g.:
 - Where there are any significant changes to the structure or layout a building.
 - Substantial changes to the number of people using the premises or the hours in which the premises are occupied/operate.
 - In the event of any fire incident.
 - Any changes in legislation.
- The organisational arrangements in place are adequate, sufficiently resourced and persons are competent to fulfil the requirements of this policy.
- General fire precautions are in place for the safety of residents, employees, customers, service users and visitors.

- Heads of Service, the Operations Service Delivery Manager and Safer Homes Team manage the day to day fire safety measures and the detailed arrangements necessary to manage the risk of fire within the residential properties under their control.
- This Fire Safety Policy and associated arrangements are reviewed and amended to ensure they remain effective at managing fire risk and fulfil the objective of this policy.
- The provisions within the Fire Safety Policy are being enforced to the standard required through an effective assurance process.
- Sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out.
- All fire precautions are maintained effectively.
- All fire incidents are reported, logged and investigated.
- They oversee and delegate, as required, the investigation of fires and introduce controls to reduce the risk of such incidents recurring.

The Executive Director for Assets and Development delegates the work required to meet its fire safety responsibilities for its managed housing stock and day-to-day responsibility to the Head of Service for Asset Management, the Operations Service Delivery Manager, Safer Homes Team and Building Managers for day to day fire safety measures. For staffed residential properties, responsibilities are delegated to the Housing Options and Wellbeing Services Manager.

2.5 Head of Service for Asset Management

On behalf of the Corporate Responsible Person, the Head of Asset Management is responsible for the implementing the detailed arrangements necessary to manage the risk of fire within the housing stock managed by SCH, including:

- Overseeing compliance with this policy.
- Ensuring there is competent fire risk assessment process in place utilising competent fire risk assessors.
- Ensuring capital projects, refurbishments and repair work consider fire safety implications and comply with fire legislative requirements.
- Ensuring there is an effective inspection programme for properties to check fire safety measures are in place
- Considering fire safety when any refurbishment work is undertaken or if any new items of plant or machinery are installed.
- Ensuring that any visitors and contractors are provided with sufficient information and instruction to enable them to comply with the fire safety arrangements in place.
- Making sure that the results of fire risk assessments, inspections, and spot checks feed into routine business planning processes so that appropriate resources are made available to implement any additional actions.

2.6 Service Delivery Operations Manager

The Service Delivery Operations Manager fulfills role of **Responsible Person** for fire safety management for low and high-risk residential properties comprising of two or more flats.

The Responsible Person will make sure that adequate fire safety measures are in place to ensure resident safety, including:

- Ensuring that fire risk assessments are undertaken and recorded by competent persons and reviewed when any major change occurs within a building, such as structural changes or changes in processes or substantial increase in population.

- Ensuring fire protection and detection equipment is maintained and regularly serviced.
- Ensuring the necessary local checks of fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting, fire alarm and detection systems are completed daily, weekly, or monthly, as required, and recorded.
- Ensuring appropriate records are kept of the servicing and maintenance of fire safety systems, equipment and installations and internal systems, are updated with the relevant details.
- All statutory records, registers, training records and other documents concerning the provision, installation, inspection, testing and maintenance of plant and equipment are kept in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Ensuring a Premises Information Box (PIB) is installed at each high-rise residential building that provides information to be used by the Fire and Rescue Service during the response to an emergency incident. This includes building and floor plans and details of residents with mobility, cognitive or sensory impairment(s) where available, a copy of the fire current evacuation strategy. A Code of Practice on PIB's has been produced by the [National Fire Chiefs](#).

The Responsible Person has the duty to ensure that control measures are in place and any action plan findings are acted upon within the timeframe given and recorded within the fire risk assessment action plan. The fire risk assessment is made available electronically to all building occupants and any visiting authority, including the Fire and Rescue Service.

2.7 Contracts Officer Fire Safety Day to day Responsible Person

The Service Delivery Operations Manager delegates the role of day to day responsibility for fire safety in Residential buildings, comprising of two or more flats, to the Contracts Officer.

They will:

- Ensure each high-risk property with two or more flats has a defined fire safety management plan which includes emergency evacuation arrangements in case of fire.
- Ensure plans are in place for low risk properties with two or more flats to have a defined fire safety management plan, which includes emergency evacuation arrangements in case of fire.
- Ensuring the management and maintenance of the premises' fire logs.
- Taking precautions against arson, such as making sure that fire safety hazards are removed away from the sides of buildings, including refuse bins, fly-tipping and other potential fire safety risks within agreed service standard timeframes.
- Ensure PIB's are inspected post incident, monthly and annually. Checks include ensuring the contents are up to date and the box is in good working order.

2.8 Wellbeing Service Manager and Housing Options Manager

On behalf of the Corporate Responsible Person, the Wellbeing Service Manager and Housing Options Manager are responsible for the detailed arrangements necessary to manage the risk of fire within staffed residential properties, such as temporary accommodation facilities, Saxon Court and other extra care facilities where SCH are the landlord. This may include privately owned premises leased to SCH.

Note: For staffed residential buildings, managed and staffed by SCH, the site manager will undertake the role of the Responsible Person for Fire Safety relating to the day to day arrangements outlined in the Organisational Arrangement of this policy and also the Fire Safety Policy for Workplaces.

For staffed residential buildings managed by a third party, the third party will fulfil the role of Responsible Person. SCH will manage the fire precautions as the landlord for the building.

The Responsible Person will make sure that adequate fire safety measures are in place to ensure resident safety, including:

- Ensuring that fire risk assessments are undertaken and recorded by a competent third party, where SCH is the landlord.
- Ensuring relevant premises have a detailed fire safety management plan which includes emergency evacuation details in case of fire.
- Ensuring sufficient consideration has been given to support vulnerable residents who are unable to evacuate the building unaided.
- Ensuring that regular workplace inspections and spot checks to identify any fire related issues, such as poor housekeeping are undertaken.
- Making sure that the results of fire risk assessments, inspections, and spot checks feed into routine business planning processes so that appropriate resources are made available to implement any additional actions.
- Ensuring that the evacuation process is practised ideally every six months and as a minimum annually.
- Ensuring there are enough Fire Wardens (including sufficient cover for annual leave and other absences); to cover the times when the building is staffed.
- Ensuring that relevant employees:
 - undertakes appropriate fire safety training and refresher training as a minimum every three years (annually for staffed residential properties).
 - is aware of and complies with safe working arrangements related to fire safety
 - observes basic fire precautions.
- Making appropriate arrangements to publicise the names and contact details of the appointed Fire Wardens so that everyone is aware of who they are.

2.9 Heads of Service / Managers

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'manager' relates to all employees and interim/ agency personnel who manage staff and/or services, or to any extent has control at work over people and projects.

Heads of Service and managers are generally responsible for ensuring that:

- They understand their role with regards to this policy and implement it into any service or property specific procedures.
- Relevant staff attend any fire safety specific training as required by their role.
- Deficiencies in fire safety measures are remedied or reported to the Responsible Person.
- All staff, visitors and contractors are provided with sufficient information and instruction to enable them to comply with the fire safety arrangements in place at the building they are working in or visiting.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to publicise the names and contact details of the appointed Fire Wardens (where appointed) so that everyone is aware of who they are.
- Each employee:
 - Undertakes appropriate fire safety training and refresher training every three years and at a level relevant to each individual's role.
 - Participates in fire drills.
 - Is aware of and complies with safe working arrangements related to fire safety.

- Observes basic fire precautions.

2.10 Estates Assistants (under the management of Housing and Communities)

For the residential premises allocated to them, Estates Assistants will:

- Carry out Fire safety inspections and checks within the appropriate timescale. These are recorded and include reference to all actions taken where defects are found.
- Report any fire safety related concerns to their appropriate line manager as applicable.
- Report all fire safety accidents, near misses and false alarms to their line manager.

2.11 Fire Wardens (Where appointed)

Fire Wardens are in place in any staffed residential accommodation, they will attend the Fire Warden training. This training should be repeated in line with the Fire Risk Assessment, as a minimum every 3 years. Although the specific duties can be agreed at local level having considered the findings of the relevant fire risk assessment, typically these duties will include:

- Act as a focal point on fire safety issues for local staff.
- Organise and assist in the fire safety routine within local areas.
- Raise issues regarding local area fire safety with the relevant management.
- Assist with coordination of the response to an incident within the immediate vicinity.
- Participate in regular Fire Warden training and apply the information and duties to the workplace.
- Following any evacuation situation, Fire Wardens will provide feedback to the Building Manager and include the Fire Safety Responsible Person on problems encountered, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- As appointed by the Responsible Person, may be required to act as immediate liaison with the Fire Service during an incident.

2.12 Employees

All employees have a duty to take care for their own and others' health and safety and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the fire evacuation procedures that may be in place where they are working, including residential settings, even temporarily.
- Undertake fire safety training as and when required.
- Comply with fire safety procedures, safe systems of work information, instruction and training provided.
- Not do anything that will put themselves or other people at risk from fire.
- Report any problems relating to fire safety and ensure tenant safety is a number one priority.
- Not interfere with or misuse any fire safety equipment e.g. wedging open fire doors, misuse of fire-fighting equipment or similar acts.
- Co-operate in undertaking fire drills and evacuation.
- Follow the instructions given by appointed Fire Wardens and leave the building in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- Inform their immediate manager of any disability that may impact their ability to self-rescue from the premises in the event of a fire or emergency situation.

NOTE: *Any person who refuses to comply with such instructions and remains in the building without proper authority, will do so at his/her own risk and may be subject to disciplinary action,*

without prejudice to any action that might be taken by other appropriate authorities, for example, the HSE or Fire Service.

2.13 SMBC Health Safety and Risk Support Team

SMBC Health, Safety and Risk Support Team are responsible for providing health and safety support and guidance to SCH to help ensure that the requirements of this Policy can be implemented. A dedicated senior health and safety adviser will:

- Provide advice and assistance as the competent person for health and safety matters.
- Review any reported fire safety related incidents to ensure appropriate action is taken and that they are monitored and reviewed.
- Advise on suitable fire safety training for employees.
- Provide SCH with any updates relating to fire safety legislation and any associated best practice.
- Report to ELT with any concerns of non-compliance or policy failures and any recommendations for improvement.

2.14 Responsibilities to Tenants

To provide a level of assurance and confidence to tenants, fire safety information on the specific fire safety arrangements for a particular residential building will be provided in an easy to understand format both electronically and physically inside each relevant building. This will also include tenant responsibilities to help ensure everyone's safety.

All tenants will be briefed on fire safety measures specific to their new home at sign up. They are to be advised that West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) offer a home safety check and urged to accept the offer, which is free of charge.

2.15 Tenant Responsibilities

As part of their tenancy agreement, new and existing tenants must be made aware of their own obligations to reduce the risk of fire within their homes and not create a fire risk, both within their home and in any communal areas that may affect the safety of others.

A detailed list of specific responsibilities is attached as an Appendix to this policy. This is issued to tenants as part of their tenancy agreement.

2.16 Capital Projects

Any capital programmes and extensive renovation work undertaken will include fire safety measures in any design or proposed changes to an existing building. The fire risk assessment will need to be reviewed and revised.

Specific requirements have been introduced for high rise residential buildings that are yet to be built requiring fire statements as part of the planning process. [Fire safety and high-rise residential buildings \(from 1 August 2021\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fire-safety-and-high-rise-residential-buildings-from-1-august-2021)

2.17 Asset Management Team

Any repair work will need consider fire safety measures and not compromise escape routes or fire detection and alarm systems, either when being undertaken in-house or by contractors.

Certain repair work will need to meet fire safety standards where fire integrity may be affected.

2.18 Building Safety Group

The Building Safety Group, attended by senior manager representatives from all areas of the business and chaired by the Executive Director Assets and Development, reviews all aspects of building safety for the managed housing service provided by SCH, including fire safety.

Meetings review:

- Updates in legislation and related guidance.
- The fire safety plan and any outstanding actions.
- Fire incidents and false alarms, including patterns and trends.
- Contact with enforcing authorities.
- Feedback from the fire risk assessments.
- Feedback from fire investigations.
- Results of fire safety related audits and inspections.
- Fire safety related training delivered.
- Fire related objectives.

Further advice from relevant bodies, for example fire risk assessors, insurers, architects and fire safety provision engineers, will be sought as and when necessary.

2.19 Fire Risk Assessors

Regardless of who carries out the fire risk assessment, SCH retains the responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of that assessment and will take all reasonable steps to appoint a specialist who is competent to do the job properly. This will be done by ensuring:

- Those providing the service have independent registration with, or certification from, a professional or certification body.
- They meet the competency criteria established by the Fire Sector Federation.
- They are working towards Level 5 Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) higher education award.
- They have experience of undertaking fire risk assessments for the type of residential property.

Accredited third party certification and professional body membership is deemed essential for fire risk assessors. Competence of fire risk assessors can be assured by either certification of the individual fire risk assessor or through a company providing fire risk assessments under a third party certification scheme accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS), or by registration of the fire risk assessor by a Professional Engineering Institution (PEI) that is licensed by the Engineering Council (EngC).

In the event that major change occurs within the building, be it either structural, change of processes or substantial increase of population, the Responsible Person must ensure that any proposed work meets fire safety legislative requirements and that any fire risk assessment is reviewed by a competent person who meets the criteria detailed above.

2.20 Managing Contractors

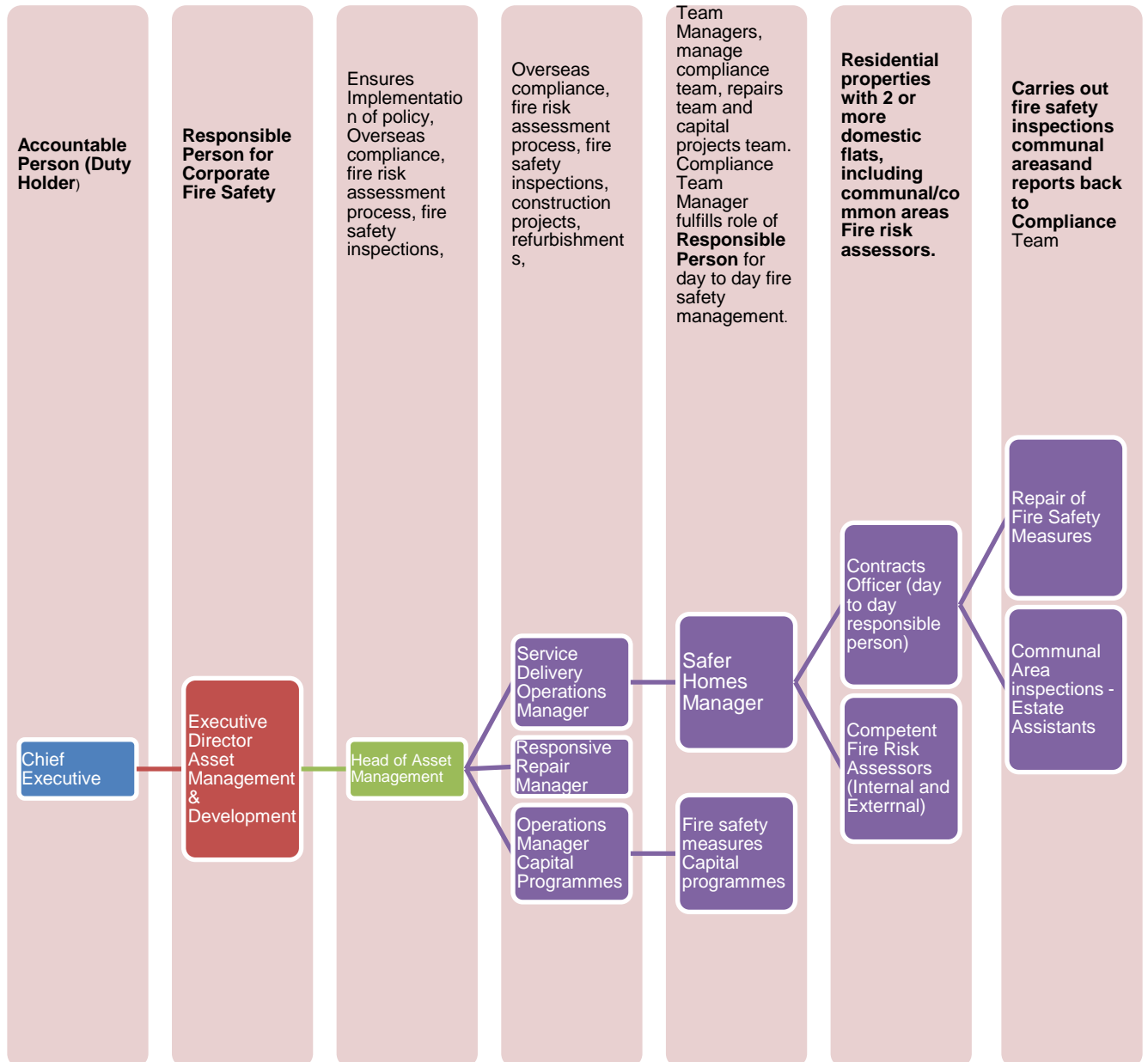
If contractors are used to undertake any work (including fire safety) in residential properties, including communal areas, they must be:

- Competent, suitably qualified and can demonstrate their ability to meet all statutory requirements.
- All works relating to fire safety are adequately monitored, controlled and post inspected.
- Fire safety works are completed in a timely manner and prioritised based on risk.
- Records are kept with details of the fire safety works completed and any fire risk assessment and associated building documentation is updated with relevant details.
- Capital programmes must include fire safety requirements and be designed with fire safety in mind.

Contractors are required to:

- Co-operate with SCH and follow any instructions relating to fire safety given.
- Ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction, and training (including induction training) to enable them to comply with this policy and any emergency arrangements.

2.21 Overview of Fire Safety Management Organisation – Managed Housing Stock (excluding staffed residential properties managed by SCH)



3 Organisational Arrangements

The following section explains the day-to-day arrangements that SCH have in place to minimise the risk of fire. SCH have a duty, as the registered housing provider for Solihull, under fire safety legislation to carry out fire risk assessments of all residential properties comprising of two or more domestic flats.

The day to day arrangements to managing the risks of fire is underpinned by:

- A programme of comprehensive fire risk assessments, including
 - Assessing the risk from fire, including a building's structure, the external walls (including doors or windows in those walls, anything attached to the exterior of those walls such as balconies) and any common parts, plus all doors between the domestic premises and common parts.
 - Evaluating the adequacy of existing fire protection measures and identifying additional measures that minimise the risk of fires starting and spreading.
 - Assessing compliance with all relevant legislation and relevant standards.
- The provision and maintenance of appropriate fire detection, alarm systems, emergency lighting, fire-fighting equipment (where in place), evacuation signage, appropriate means of escape and protected escape routes in communal areas of residential properties.
- The provision of essential training and fire safety information for all employees and more specifically residents.
- Appropriate instruction for contractors and other visitors on the action to be taken in the event of a fire in any property they may be working in.
- Reporting, reviewing and investigation of all fire related incidents and measures put in place to prevent a recurrence, where possible.
- Zero-tolerance relating to the storing of items by residents in communal areas.
- Strict enforcement of no-smoking in communal areas.

3.1 Fire Risk Assessments

The level and complexity of any fire risk assessment undertaken in residential buildings, comprising of more than two flats, managed by SCH varies dependant on risk.

A schedule of fire risk assessments has been drawn up and these will be undertaken by competent persons or third parties depending on risk.

A fire risk assessment must:

- Identify the fire hazards, including those posed by the structure of the walls, doors, and windows.
- Identify people at risk.
- Evaluate, remove, or reduce the risks.
- Record findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training.
- Be reviewed and updated regularly, in particular when something changes that could affect fire safety or where there it is no longer valid e.g. a change in:
 - occupancy;
 - the building;
 - nature of contents or after a fire.

Fire risk assessments will include:

- The structural ability of the building and individual flat to withstand fire, prevent fire spread and contain a fire in a single flat, where Stay Put fire evacuation policy is in place.
- Emergency routes and exits.
- Fire detection and warning systems.
- Firefighting equipment.
- The removal or safe storage of dangerous substances.
- Details of the emergency fire evacuation strategy.
- Details of any vulnerable residents, where known, with temporary or permanent disabilities, including mobility issues or sensory impairment(s).
- Providing information to residents, employees, and other people on the premises.
- Fire safety training for employees and Fire Wardens (where in place) for staffed residential properties.

Actions arising from any fire risk assessment will be acted upon in a timely manner.

All fire risk assessments will be reviewed annually by a competent person and updated to reflect any changes in the building or recommend whether a more comprehensive fire risk assessment is required due to more significant changes.

3.1.1 Fire Risk Assessment types

| Type | Definition |
|------|---|
| 1 | <p>Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is non-destructive, and the most common. It assesses all the common parts of a building, such as a lobby area in a shared block of flats – but not individual dwellings. In some cases, a Type 1 FRA will inspect construction points between individual dwellings (such as shared supportive walls).</p> <p>Type 1 FRA's have the purpose of ensuring that common parts of a building have the arrangements which allow people to escape if there was to be a fire – such as clear signage pointing to entry and exit points.</p> <p>The results of a Type 1 FRA may reveal the requirement for further FRAs. If this is the case, the Type 1 FRA will list reasons why this would be required.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Type 2 Fire Risk Assessments are normally only recommended if a Type 1 FRA concluded that there may be serious structural flaws in a building which may increase the risk of fire spreading.</p> <p>Type 2 FRA includes destructive sampling. Applies to common areas only.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Type 3 Fire Risk Assessment is comprehensive. This type of assessment covers all common areas of a building – and individual dwellings.</p> <p>Type 3 FRA considers all means of escapes (including those within individual dwellings), structures, and compartmentation between flats and any means of fire detection.</p> <p>Type 3 FRA is non-destructive – and is usually only considered necessary if there are fire risks within individual dwellings.</p> |

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| 4 | Type 4 Fire Risk Assessments are similar to Type 2 FRAs, as they include a destructive sampling, but in both the common parts of a building and living areas – such as apartments. Type 4 FRAs are more comprehensive – and complicated to complete. This is because access to individual dwellings is required and destructive sampling can lead to a need for repairs. |

3.1.2 Low risk residential properties

These are defined as low rise blocks below 18 meters comprising of two or more flats.

Type 1 FRA's are undertaken by a team of competent in-house fire risk assessors for low risk properties every 3 years. Individuals in the team have a recognised level of competence that includes a formal fire qualification.

3.1.3 High rise, high risk residential properties

These are currently defined in legislation as those over 18 meters in height with 7 storeys comprising of more than two flats.

Type 1 Fire Risk Assessments will be undertaken annually for common areas and means of escape in high risk residential buildings with two or more flats. Every third year a Type 4 fire risk assessment will be undertaken.

High rise, high risk residential buildings have had a Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment undertaken for buildings built before 2000. These have been undertaken by an accredited, competent third-party organisation, taking into account the structure of walls, doors, and windows, cladding and balconies.

All FRA's for high rise, high risk buildings will be undertaken by a competent accredited fire risk assessor.

3.1.4 Fire Risk Assessment Outcomes

SCH will endeavour to undertake any outcome from the fire risk assessment. Where destructive FRAs result in the need to complete building work to reduce identified fire risks, including additional ventilation, to allow smoke to escape or additional fire compartmentation additions. In cases where it is not practical to complete such works, a more comprehensive FRA may identify that SCH may need to change 'stay-put' policies or fire evacuation procedures.

3.1.5 Asbestos Considerations

If destructive FRA's are to be undertaken, SCH will provide information on the presence of any asbestos and commission a Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D) survey as required.

3.1.6 Shared Occupation/Lettings/Landlord Responsibilities

In the case of residential buildings where SCH remain the landlord but other service providers are contracted in to provide the services provided within the building such as, homeless and temporary accommodation, care and support services to elderly and vulnerable, clear fire safety arrangements should be in place as to who is responsible for managing the day to day fire safety arrangements.

SCH, as the landlord, is responsible for ensuring that a fire risk assessment is undertaken. This may require communication and cooperation between all parties to ensure coordination of fire safety provisions, fire-fighting measures, evacuation procedures etc.

In the event that part of a building may be let – the building manager has the responsibility to ensure that those hiring the site are aware of the fire risk assessment for the site, evacuation procedure, including contact names in the event of an emergency.

3.2 Reporting of Fire Incidents

Any incidents of fire, regardless of how minor, must be reported. Incidents must be investigated, and lessons learnt to prevent a recurrence.

SCH will liaise with external emergency services, where required, to minimise the potential risks that could arise from activities where there is a reportable incident related to fire within properties that they manage.

3.3 Fire Strategy for High-Rise, High Risk Residential buildings

A fire strategy is a complex document specifically tailored to a building, reviewing all aspects of the building's fire safety features including construction, compartmentation strategy, means of escape and other fire safety features/measures - including management arrangements in place to ensure it is fit for use for the end user of the premises or intended purpose group.

Where a building is erected or extended, or has undergone a material change of use, Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations requires that a package of fire safety information must be assembled and given to the responsible person of the premises. A fire strategy is commonly used as a means for collating and providing that information.

SCH will ensure that all high-rise, high risk residential buildings will have a documented Fire Strategy for each building, pulling together all the fire safety information relating to it.

3.4 Information provided to West Midlands Fire Service

SCH has provided West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service with specific information relating to their High-rise residential buildings, including:

- Information about the design of its external walls together with details of the materials of which they are constructed and to inform them of any material changes made to them.
- Up-to-date plans in both paper and electronic form of every floor of the building identifying the location of key fire safety systems.

Information is also contained in a premises information box for each high-rise residential building, including a copy of the up-to-date floor plans, information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the fire and rescue services and details of vulnerable residents.

3.5 Lifts

Where SCH have any high-rise residential building with any lifts that are designed to be used by firefighters in an emergency, these are regularly inspected and tested, including the mechanism that allows firefighters to take control of the lifts. The results of the inspections are provided to the fire service each month.

3.6 Fire Evacuation

Each residential building with more than two sets of flats will have a clearly defined evacuation strategy, determined by its fire risk assessment and overall risk to the occupants. Tenants will be made aware of the fire safety and evacuation arrangements in place in the building they live in. This is particularly important for high rise buildings.

Any evacuation plan should include:

- The action residents should take if they discover a fire.
- How people will be warned if there is a fire and how this is linked to the fire service and landlord.
- Key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to places of safety.
- Arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children and babies and those with disabilities or cognitive impairment.
- Where people should assemble after they have left the workplace and clear directions to the assembly point.

3.6.1 Stay Put Policy

Currently SCH operate a 'Stay Put' policy in most of its high-rise residential buildings containing self-contained flats and communal areas. This requires occupants not directly affected by any fire to stay in their flat. This is regularly reviewed as part of the annual fire risk assessment review to ensure it is the safest strategy to employ. The 'Stay Put' policy may change during a major fire event and this decision will be managed by the Incident Commander from the fire service dealing with the emergency situation at the time.

Additionally, SCH will have internal procedures in place for responding to a fire incident in any of its properties, including procedures for liaising with the fire service on arrival and notifying them of any special risks or vulnerable residents.

All Solihull's high-rise residential buildings rely on a 'Stay Put' policy for the majority of residents in the case of a fire breaking out. It is understood that this policy is under national review and SCH await the development of national guidelines by the government for carrying out a partial or total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings. In the meantime, SCH will look at further measures it can take, including how it can:

- Further protect fire exit routes.
- Develop procedures for evacuating persons who are unable to use the stairs in an emergency, or who may require assistance (such as disabled people, older people, and young children).
- Work in conjunction with the fire and rescue service to develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings.
- Draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises.
- Include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises information box.

Sprinkler systems are installed or are in the process of being installed in all high-rise, high risk residential buildings that will further safeguard tenants in their own home in the event of a fire.

3.7 Saxon Court

Saxon Court is a purpose-built extra care facility containing apartments providing supported living for those aged 55 and above. The building is staffed Monday to Friday, during office hours.

3.7.1 Fire Safety arrangements

Saxon Court has a number of fire safety measures installed as part of its design including sprinklers throughout its communal areas and apartments. The fire alarm system is linked to 24hr CCTV monitoring centre and is tested weekly by SCH's Court Manager. External contractors test the system monthly including emergency lighting.

Fire risk assessments are undertaken by a competent third-party provider.

Weekly building inspections are undertaken, with formal monthly inspections being completed and logged by an external provider.

Information is held regarding vulnerable residents.

3.8 Keeping records - Fire Logbook

SCH will keep records of tests, maintenance and safety training relating to each residential building of two or more flats. An effective way of demonstrating compliance is to keep records in a well-maintained fire logbook.

SCH will keep records up to date and readily available for inspection by any visiting authority when required. Records that will be kept include:

- Fire alarm system - record of testing, maintenance, and false alarms.
- Emergency lighting – record of testing and maintenance.
- Fire drill - if held.
- Staff fire training – basic fire awareness and fire warden training (Saxon Court).
- Portable fire-fighting equipment – a record of maintenance and checking (fire extinguishers, fire blankets etc.).
- A record of any visits by the Fire Service or other enforcing authorities.
- Hose reel(s) – a record of monthly visual inspections.
- Dry/wet riser – a record of monthly riser inspections.
- Hose reel and hydrant servicing, testing and Inspection - record of hose reel and hydrant maintenance.
- Dry/wet riser - record of dry/wet riser test and inspection.
- Refuge point communication - record of refuge point communication test and Inspection.

All records of servicing by nominated contracted servicing companies will be retained and kept.

3.8.1 Premise Information Boxes PIB

A PIB is installed at each high-rise residential building comprising of two or more flats. The [National Fire Chiefs Code of Practice](#) is followed in regards to installation, contents, maintenance and review.

3.9 Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in communal areas, doorways, and refuse areas. Signage is displayed informing residents of this.

3.10 Training and Instruction

SCH will provide fire safety awareness training to employees. This is currently via eLearning. Tenants and relevant persons will receive information on the fire safety arrangements in the building where they live or work and the action they need to take in the case of a fire.

Employees working in staffed residential properties will be instructed by their line manager in the following:

- What to do if there is a fire.
- What to do if the fire alarm sounds.
- The location of the nearest fire alarm.
- The location of the nearest fire exit, as well as a secondary route.
- The location and route to the designated assembly point(s).

All employees are required to complete regular refresh training every three years, however employees working in residential care premises and services which include sleeping accommodation or other high-risk activities must undertake fire awareness training on an annual basis.

3.10.1 Training table

| Training | Who |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Fire Awareness (e-Learning) | All new starters Facilities / Building Managers All staff who work within services with sleeping accommodation or other high-risk activities |
| Fire Warden Training | Fire Wardens |
| Fire Risk Assessors (internal) | NEBOSH Fire Safety Certificate FPA Fire Risk Management in Residential Properties (CO8) Working towards Level 5 Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) higher education award (as a minimum) to achieve accredited third-party certification and professional body membership is deemed essential for fire risk assessors |

4 Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA)

This Policy was subject to a Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA). No significant issues were identified. When implementing this policy, we will consider the needs of diverse employees and customers and take appropriate and necessary action to reduce barriers for older, disabled, and vulnerable people.

5 Policy Review

This Policy shall be reviewed and updated every three years or if there are any significant changes to current fire Legislation, HSE approved codes of practice or guidance, or as the result of the outcome of an incident review.

Policy reviews will be reported to the both the Corporate Health and Safety and Building Safety Boards.

6 Further Advice and Guidance

The Health and Safety Support Team has an extensive intranet site where further advice and guidance is available on all aspects of health and safety. Alternatively, please contact the Health and Safety Support Team, telephone 0121 704 6328, or via email healthandsafetysupport@solihull.gov.uk

7 Legislation and Guidance

7.1 Legislation

The Fire Safety Act 2021

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order

The Health and Safety at Work

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations

The Building Regulations [Approved Document B – Fire Safety](#)

7.2 Guidance Documents

Fire Sector Federation ACOP - A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency

Fire Sector Federation - A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor

[Fire Risk Assessment in Residential Care Homes](#)

[Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Means of Escape for Disabled People](#)

[HSE Fire Safety Webpages](#)

PAS 79-2:2020 Housing – British Standards BSI

PAS 9980:2022, Fire risk appraisal of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats – Code of practice

BS991 Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings. Code of practice (under review)

[PIBS Guide_06-21_V2.pdf \(nationalfirechiefs.org.uk\)](#)

1 Appendix 1 Specific Fire Safety Arrangements for Tenanted Properties

1.1 Fire Safety Measures

Each residential building comprising of two or more flats will have a number of fire safety measures installed. These will have been assessed as the most suitable for that particular building as part of the fire risk assessment and can consist of a combination of the following:

1.1.1 Fire Detection and Alarm Systems

Where appropriate, buildings will be fitted with automatic fire detection and alarm systems in line with current regulations, standards and guidelines. Where these systems are in place they are periodically serviced and inspected by a competent service provider in line with the relevant British Standard. The period between visits to undertake inspection and service should be based upon a risk assessment and manufacturer's guidance but the maximum period between visits should not exceed six months. All visits should be recorded in the site's fire log book.

The responsible person should ensure that regular weekly checks and testing of the alarm system are carried out on a local level in line with the manufacturer's instructions. All activations of the fire alarm should be recorded within the fire log book – testing, maintenance and false alarms.

1.1.2 Emergency Escape Lighting

Emergency escape lighting is lighting that comes on when the power supply to the normal lighting provision fails. It provides illumination for the safety of people leaving a location or attempting to terminate a potentially dangerous process beforehand. Emergency lighting must be periodically serviced and inspected by a competent service provider in line with the relevant British Standard. The period between visits to undertake inspection and service should be based upon a risk assessment and manufacturer's guidance but the maximum period between visits should not exceed twelve months. All visits should be recorded in site's fire log book.

The responsible person should ensure that regular monthly checks and testing of the emergency lighting are carried out on a local level in line with manufacturer's instructions. Tests should be recorded in the fire log book.

1.1.3 Fire Fighting Equipment

The Fire Risk Assessment will determine what is suitable and sufficient fire-fighting equipment for all buildings managed by SCH. In most cases this will include fire extinguishers and fire blankets (recommended for all kitchen areas).

The Responsible Person must ensure that any fire-fighting equipment is inspected annually by a competent person to ensure it remains in an operational condition and is kept in an easily accessible position. A record of these services must be recorded in the fire log.

In addition to an annual service, the Responsible Person must ensure that fire extinguishers are kept in good order and available for use at all times. This can be achieved by regular inspections by a nominated person and should include checking:

- That the tamper indicator is not broken - this is usually a plastic tag or disc to show the pin has not been removed or tampered with.
- That the pressure gauge needle is in the green area - if there is no pressure gauge, the extinguisher is discharged using an internal gas cartridge, therefore no check is required.
- The unit has no signs of corrosion, dents, damaged, discharge or deterioration.

Any issues found must be reported to the contracted service provider and entered into the fire log book.

It must be emphasised that employees are not expected to put themselves at risk by fighting fire. However, if they have been given training in the use of extinguishers, or are familiar with the operation of and appropriate use of extinguishers, small fires, no bigger than the size of a waste paper basket, may be tackled. This must only be done after raising the alarm. It is imperative that, if employees feel themselves to be at risk, they leave the fire and make their escape.

1.1.4 Fire and Flat Entrance Doors

Fire doors within communal areas, such as staircase and cross-corridor doors, and flat entrance doors opening onto communal areas of a residential building containing two or more flats are checked and regularly maintained in working order.

The inspection frequency for these doors will be determined by risk as part of the fire risk assessment. Checks ensure that fire doors are correctly installed, of the right specification and maintained in working order, including an effective, working self-closing device.

Estate Assistants carry out a formal programme of visual fire safety inspections which include visual checks on communal area fire doors and report on any areas of concern relating to fire safety.

Further guidance on formal fire door inspection frequencies is awaited. The following guidance will be followed in the meantime [Annex A - Assurance and Assessment of Fire Doors - January 2020.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

1.1.5 Passive Fire Protection

Passive fire protection (PFP) consists of products installed in a building to improve its fire safety rating. PFP keeps people safe and limits damage to a building's structure and its contents by restricting the spread of fire and smoke, and shielding escape routes long enough for occupants to exit the building calmly and safely. PFP products include but are not restricted to:

- Fire protection to the structural frame of the building.
- Fire-resisting doors and fire door furniture.
- Fire shutters.
- Compartment walls and floors.
- Fire-resisting walls and partitions.
- Suspended ceilings.
- Fire-resisting glazing.

- Fire doors and hardware.
- Industrial fire shutters and curtains.
- Fire-fighting shafts and stairwells.
- Fire-resisting ductwork.
- Fire-resisting service ducts and shafts.

PFP can sometimes be damaged or even removed during building and maintenance works or the installation of cabling and ductwork. When commissioning contractors or when any in-house works are undertaken the Responsible Person for the residential building must ensure that PFP is maintained in tact or suitably replaced or repaired with like for like materials to ensure the fire integrity is preserved.

1.1.6 Sprinklers and Smoke Control Systems

Sprinkler systems are installed or are in the process of being installed in all high-rise residential buildings. These are tested and inspected annually by a competent person. Pumps are fitted with a weekly self-check system and flow switches are fitted with an auto check system that runs every quarter. All results of any inspections are entered in the relevant building fire logbook.

Where smoke control systems are in place, these are tested weekly by the building owner to ensure that they are operating effectively, with a full system inspection and test carried out by a suitably qualified person at least annually

1.2 Signage

Every new tenant within a residential building comprising of two or more flats receives information regarding fire safety arrangements for that building. Regular newsletters and safety information is available on the SCH internet pages. Social Media channels are also utilised for general fire safety advice.

Where required, communal areas of residential buildings have clearly displayed Fire Action notices providing instructions in both pictures and words to tenants of what to do in case of a fire in their flat or a fire elsewhere in the building.

Signs denoting the floor identification numbers and flat indicator signs accessed on each floor are prominently displayed on each floor. The signs are on a contrasting background, easily legible and readable in low level lighting conditions or when illuminated with a torch.

1.3 Tenant Fire Safety

As part of their tenancy agreement, new and existing tenants must be made aware of their own obligations to reduce the risk of fire within their homes and not create a fire risk, both within their home and in any communal areas that may affect the safety of others.

A detailed list of specific responsibilities is attached as an Appendix to this policy. This can then be issued to tenants as part of their tenancy agreement.

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Do not create a fire hazard in their home, for example;

- Storing flammable items on their balcony, in common areas or by blocking fire escape routes, including not storing, parking or charging (however temporary) petrol and/or battery driven items such as motorbikes and mobility scooters.
- Not leaving candles lit and unattended
- Avoiding smoking in bed and dispose of cigarettes safely if smoking inside the home.
- Leaving chip pans and items cooking unattended
- Not smoking in communal areas, this is prohibited.
- Ensuring electronic devices are charged responsibly using a British Standard charger.
- Not allowing stored items to build up within their home.
- Not leaving domestic rubbish on communal landings.
- Not placing large items or forcing large items into Refuse chutes that may cause blockages and result in a fire hazard.
- Not leaving large bulky items or rubbish in communal areas or outside, against the building. This is a breach of the tenancy agreement.
- Are aware of fire safety measures, including the evacuation plan for their building.
- Do not make any structural alterations to their flats.

All tenants will be briefed on fire safety measures specific to their new home at sign up. They are to be advised that they may be contacted by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) who will offer a home safety check and urged to accept the offer, which is free of charge.

1.4 **Managed Use of Communal Fire Escape Routes**

SCH have adopted a policy of zero tolerance relating to the placing and storing of objects in fire escape routes and stairwells. This is to reduce the risk of fire breaking out in these areas and the potential for any fire to compromise fire escape routes as well as creating obstructions and restricting access to the fire and rescue services.

In communal stairwells and corridors, residents are **not permitted** to keep and/or store:

- Bicycles, prams and mobility scooters
- Combustible materials e.g. Paper, books
- Plastic or fabric plants and flowers
- Rubbish awaiting disposal
- Furniture
- BBQS
- Motorcycles, mowers and other gardening equipment containing petrol or other fuels
- Plastic or timber sheds or lockers
- Hazardous chemicals, gas containers, or flammable liquids in the communal area or storage cabinets, dedicated storerooms or cupboards
- DIY materials or tools
- Electrical appliances, such as tumble dryers and washing machines
- Toys and play furniture
- Recycling materials
- Bedding, clothing and shoes

- Curtains, including nets
- Food or other organic matter
- Items that present a hazard, such as panes of glass, fairy lights and decorations
- Any other bulky items

In addition, residents are not allowed to charge mobility scooters, batteries, or other electrical equipment in escape routes. There is a separate policy relating to Mobility Scooters.

Where items are found in escape routes and stairwells, SCH will give notice to residents to remove said items. If ownership of items is unknown, a notice will be attached to the item. However, goods that present a significant fire risk will be removed immediately without notice.

Failure to remove items will result in SCH removing them. They will be placed in storage for a period one month [in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1982]. Any goods that are not reclaimed will be disposed of without compensation. The costs associated with removal, storage and disposal may be re-charged to the resident concerned. Appropriate legal action may be taken against any person who persistently breaches rules relating to the use of communal escape routes and stairwells.

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