



Solihull
Community Housing

Shaping our neighbourhoods

SCH Building Safety Agreement



Solihull

METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Merton House

1. Introduction

Welcome to your High Rise Building Safety Agreement. This is an important document specific to Merton House as it contains lots of useful information about your block. We hope you find the time to read it and save your copy so that you can refer back to it in the future.

You may be aware that a number of new regulations have been introduced recently around building safety. This document is designed to keep residents informed and aware of these. It will also explain the things Solihull Community Housing and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council must do to ensure that we are meeting and exceeding our responsibilities.

Having greater knowledge of your block will help keep you safe. As a resident, you can also play a huge part in building safety. This agreement sets out how you can have a greater say in how your block is managed and the decisions that are taken about it. It also provides you with details on how you can raise any concerns you may have with the safety of your block.

We have a growing network of volunteer Building Safety Advocates (BSAs) who are doing some great work, reporting any concerns they may see direct to our trained staff. By having supportive BSAs we are able to spot and respond to any issues more quickly. If you think becoming a BSA

may be for you, we encourage you to contact our Customer Engagement team to find out more. Just call 0121 717 1515.

Working in partnership to listen and act on what you tell us is very important in making sure you stay safe in your home. It also helps us to create and deliver the best services, homes and neighbourhoods as possible. Each year we stage a series of friendly drop-in events at our high rises. We promote these on social media and with posters in the block. Please pop along to see us the next time we visit you.

We have an Inclusive Services Register to support our more vulnerable residents. This helps us and the fire service support you directly in the event of an emergency. If you would like to find out more about this, please speak with our Customer Engagement team.

We hope you take time to read this safety guide to Merton House.

Mary & Fiona



Your Landlord



Mary Morrissey, SMBC's Director of Economy and Infrastructure

Your landlord is Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Mary Morrissey is the Director of Economy and Infrastructure and fulfils the role requirements of the Principal Accountable Person under the Building Safety Act 2022.



Fiona Hughes, SCH Chief Executive

Solihull Community Housing manage your home on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and are responsible for making sure that services relating to Building Safety are delivered effectively and meet legal requirements.

Chief Executive Fiona Hughes is the responsible person for Building Safety at Solihull Community Housing.



The information in this Agreement should be made available to all occupants over the age of 16 living in our high-rise buildings.

We are using your feedback and working with you to make sure you and your block stay safe.



2. Summary of Contents

About your building: Page 6

Here you will find all the information you need to know about Merton House.



Keeping you safe: Page 7-9

It is very important that our customers feel safe in their homes. Find out more about how we are keeping you safe and your safety responsibilities as a tenant of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.



Stay Put Policy: Page 10

We operate a 'Stay Put' Policy in all our high-rise buildings which has been approved by West Midlands Fire Service. This means you must remain in your flat if there is a fire elsewhere in the block.



Zero Tolerance Policy: Page 11

All residents must be compliant with our Zero Tolerance Policy, making sure that landings, stairwells and communal areas are kept clear at all times. This approach means residents can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire, and the Fire Service can access all areas of the block with ease.



Responsible Teams: Page 12-13

We have teams within Solihull Community Housing that are responsible for various safety concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, Estate Assistants, Concierge, Building Safety and Customer Engagement. To read more about their responsibilities, look at the information on these pages.



Sharing information with you: Page 14

We will regularly communicate important safety information with you. Visit the above page to find out how and when this will happen.



Getting involved: Page 15-16

We would love for you to be involved in making a difference to where you live. There are several ways you can do this through attending events at your block, becoming a Building Safety Advocate and much more.



Reporting issues and concerns: Page 17

It is important that we work together to identify issues and concerns in your block. This will ensure that we keep you, your neighbours, and your block safe. There are a few ways you can report concerns to us which are all explained in this document.



Measuring how we are doing: Page 18

At least once a year we will provide you with information on how we are performing and the overall safety of your block.



Available support and advice: Page 18-19

We have provided a few accessible support services and their contact details if you would like to get in touch with additional services about safety, resident engagement, bulky waste services and more.



3. About your building

- You live in Merton House which was built in 1968 using a construction type called Bryant – Bison DH. This type of construction consists of loadbearing precast concrete wall and floor units, jointed on site with insitu concrete and dry packed mortar after erection. Externally the block consists of concrete panels with a mosaic finish applied during manufacture. No RAAC concrete was used in the construction of your building.
- There are 42 flats and 11 floors that are all connected by 1 staircase and 2 lifts.
- Your building has 2 entrance and exit doors, 1 at the front and 1 at the rear. All doors are accessible at all times through a main communal lobby.
- Your home has an Electric - Mix supply as the principal fuel for heating your home.
- Sprinklers were installed in 2023.
- Merton House, like all our other high rises, has a 'stay put' policy, agreed with the West Midlands Fire Service. This means if there is a fire in another part of your block you must stay in your flat and only leave if you feel at risk from smoke, fire or are asked to leave by the fire service.
- If there is a fire in your block, this will be contained in the flat or area where it starts. This is down to the design of your block.
- We have a fire door inspection programme which is generating repairs and replacement requirements which will be added to a works programme (unless urgently required).
- Fire risk assessments are carried out annually on your building by an independent fire risk assessor.
- We have contacted every household in your block to find out about their personal circumstances, such as mobility or health requirements and language support. All this information has been logged on our Inclusive Services Register. If there is ever a fire in your block, this will help us identify which residents need help to get out. If you need to update your details, please visit www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk/inclusive-services-register-questionnaire/ or scan the QR code.



4. Keeping you safe

Safety responsibility in your block

To keep you safe, we will ensure:

- All new tenants receive a welcome visit from their Estate Assistant approximately 6 weeks after they move in. This visit will be used to share useful information about high rise living, including keeping safe in the home and how we maintain the building.
- Your block is safe for you to live in and we adhere to all building safety regulations, including the new Fire Safety Act, Building Safety Act and Fire Safety (England) Regulations.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (carbon monoxide detection where there is a gas supply and appliances) are installed in every property.



Fire Safety Act
2021



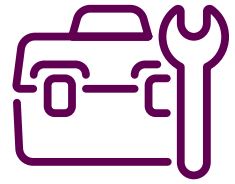
Building Safety Act
2022



Fire Safety (England)
Regulations 2022

- Fire doors are well maintained and meet legal standards/requirements. We will continually work to be compliant with legal standards, but if there are major works required, we may need to manage the risk through additional inspections until the works can be completed.
- We carry out fire integrity checks twice a week.
- We carry out fire risk assessments once a year, and make sure any recommendations are actioned in a timely way. If something changes during the year, we will need to review and manage the risk until the required work is complete.
- Your block is structurally sound and undertake any repairs, if needed.

- Any asbestos in the block is well maintained and managed.
- Electricians in communal and individual homes are tested every five years and all gas supplies are serviced annually. Any safety repairs are carried out in a timely manner.
- Communal lifting equipment is inspected, tested and serviced in line with legal requirements.
- Escape routes are always well lit.
- Systems are in place to ensure staff and contractors working in your block are competent to do so.
- We communicate and work closely with West Midlands Fire Service to keep you safe.
- That you have access to all relevant building safety information.

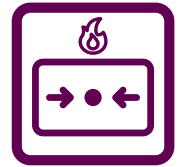


It is your responsibility to:

- Be respectful to your neighbours.
- Keep communal areas, including outside your front door, free from obstruction at all times.
- Make sure your own flat escape routes are clear so you can safely leave your home if there is an emergency.
- Let us know if there are any changes to who is living in your property and any support needs they might have.
- Seek permission from us before carrying out any alterations to your property. Information on how to do this can be found in your Tenant Handbook which you can find on the website under About Us then Policies and Procedures.
- Check your smoke detectors are working every month by pressing the 'test' button. If your detector does not work, please report this to us immediately by calling our Customer Contact Centre on **0121 717 1515**.
- Not tamper with any building safety equipment and facilities such as smoke and fire alarms, fire doors, emergency lighting, sprinklers or firefighting equipment.



- Provide access to our employees and contractors to complete legally required and essential safety checks, repairs, maintenance, and improvements such as electrical tests and gas servicing.
- Use the bin chutes correctly – please speak with your assigned Estate Assistant if you have problems disposing of larger items.
- Not smoke or vape in any communal areas.
- Use the drying areas for drying clothes only and not storing items.
- Not use cabinet heaters or calorgas (or similar). We can offer advice and support if you are worried about heating your home.
- Let us know if you have a mobility assistance device, this includes e-scooters or e-bikes.
- Regularly check your charging device and battery if you do have a mobility assistance device, e-scooter or e-bike.
- Not use barbeques or camping stoves in your home, on your balcony or in communal spaces.
- Report any safety issues to Solihull Community Housing immediately by calling **0121 717 1515** or reporting them online 24/7 by scanning the QR code.



By working together and playing our part, we can ensure your block and all residents remain safe at all times.

5. Stay Put Policy

Fire safety is of particular importance in your block. We already have many safety features in place. The sprinklers, coupled with the alarm system, provide residents with a significantly increased level of safety. Please remember our fire doors – both to the landing and individual flats – also offer an additional layer of safety.

For this reason, **we operate a 'Stay Put' policy** in all our high rises. This means that you must remain in your flat if there is a fire elsewhere in the block – and only leave if told to do so by the fire service. We work very closely with West Midlands Fire Service across all aspects of fire and building safety. They have worked closely with us, and support our sprinkler installation programme. More details of this can be found here and on your noticeboard.



Fire Action In the event of a fire

Fire in your own flat



Get everyone out of your flat, close the doors behind you and stay out



Leave the building by the stairs. Do not use the lift



Call 999 to report the fire



Meet the Fire Service on arrival to brief them on the fire

Fire in another flat



Stay in your flat. If you are in a communal area, get out by using the stairs



Call 999 to report the fire



Close all doors and windows and stay put



Only leave your flat if you feel at risk from smoke, fire, or are asked to leave by the Fire Service

6. Zero Tolerance Policy

Our team of Estate Assistants deliver a key service in our high rises. They regularly check that communal areas – such as landings and stairwells – are kept clear at all times. This is to ensure full compliance with the **zero tolerance approach to leaving anything in communal areas**.

By keeping these areas clear at all times, it means residents can be safely evacuated if the Fire Service needs to do this in the event of an emergency.

Please do not leave anything outside of your front door, in your high rise block.



We will enforce our Zero Tolerance policy by removing any items left in communal areas.

7. It is important that we work together to keep you safe. The following teams are responsible for safety in your block.



Estate Assistants

Each of our 37 high rise blocks receive a Fire Integrity Check twice a week. Our Estate Assistants also carry out monthly cleaning checks - where every landing and communal area is checked and issues are reported to the cleaning contractor.



Concierge

CCTV control room is manned 24/7. Concierge staff allow visitors into the building via a password if they cannot gain access by calling individual flats. All cameras are checked 6 times every 24 hours - this means each camera will move to view its surrounding area.



Maintaining Communal Areas

Cleaners visit each high rise block five days a week, Monday to Friday. A further team (2 people) visit each high rise 6 days per week to check and remove any discarded bags of rubbish from communal areas.





SCAN ME
TO VISIT
OUR
WEBSITE

Frontline Staff

When a frontline member of staff are conducting a visit to a flat in a high rise block, they will raise anything they see as being a concern. You can also raise concerns with any member of SCH staff.



Building Safety staff

The Building Safety Team, including Building Safety managers, will ensure that any activities or works carried out in your block do not compromise the building or your safety. They are there to ensure your voice is heard and any concerns you have are listened to and resolved.



Customer Engagement

The Customer Engagement team carry out activities in and around your block, as well as online, to support you and ensure your voice is heard and reflected in the way we manage your building and the decisions we make.



The name of our accountable person is Solihull Council's Director of Economy and Infrastructure, Mary Morrissey.

8. How and where we will share information with you

Communicating with you

Based on your feedback, you would prefer us to:

- **Provide you with regular updates at least every 3 months.**

We will provide you with general updates on a 3-month basis. However, if there is important information to share about your block we will do this as soon as possible in writing, via email and on noticeboards.

- **Provide information in written print such as newsletters or posters via the noticeboards. Many of you also told us that you would be happy to receive information by email.**

We will send you a paper copy of our high rise newsletter at least 4 times a year. Any important information relating to your block will be provided via letter and it will also be available on noticeboards.

- **Have a place where you can access more detailed information in one place online.**

All safety documents and information on your block are available on our website. Just scan the QR code below and choose your block from the list.

If you are unable to access our online information, please call us and we will happily provide you with this information.



SCAN ME

Safety information will also be shared across our social media channels, in all our tenant newsletters and on our website.

9. How will you be involved?

Through partnership working and consulting with you, we can make a difference to where you live.

There are a number of ways we will engage with you to ensure your voice is heard, this includes:

Events at your block

Engagement events will be carried out at least once a year. They will provide you with an opportunity to talk to SCH staff, learn more about your block and its safety, raise any issues you have and provide you with an opportunity to voice your concerns around specific issues and projects in your block.

They will also be carried out before any large-scale maintenance or improvement work takes place on your block. This is to make sure you are aware of the project and can have a say on how it is delivered. It is also an opportunity to raise any concerns you have around the safety of your block.

We will arrange additional pop ups/drop-ins when needed throughout the year to talk about issues that may arise.



Specifically developed or existing groups we currently work with are:

- Building Safety Advocates
- Complaints Advocates
- Empty Home Inspectors

We will send a selection of tenants a short survey every quarter or after you have received an essential service from us. This is our way of finding out a bit more around how safe you feel in your home and if we could be doing anything better. We will use this feedback to make improvements to services and tackle specific issues raised.

The results of these surveys can be found on our website.

Just visit www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk/about-us/performance or scan the QR code.



Resident representation

Building Safety Advocates – a small number of engaged customers who would love to get involved are trained up to understand building safety so they can represent your views at a higher level.

Regular newsletter articles and social media presence

We will make sure that all high rise customers are kept up to date on any projects or changes in your block through regular newsletters and social media updates.



See the back page for all social media account details.

10. Reporting issues and concerns

It is very important that we work together to identify issues and concerns in your block and rectify them as soon as possible. This will ensure that we keep your block safe.

If you notice something that concerns you, no matter how small (for instance something that is broken or not working properly, something that looks dangerous or objects in communal areas) please report it!

YOU CAN REPORT THIS BY USING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:



Complete our online reporting form. (For emergency repairs, please call us immediately)



Call the Contact Centre or our out of hours service on **0121 717 1515**



Tell a member of SCH staff. All staff are trained to ensure reports are acted upon.

All building safety concerns will be acknowledged within one working day. We aim to resolve issues in the following timeframes:



Emergencies within 24 hours



Urgent issues within 7 days



Routine issues within 28 days

All building safety concerns are taken very seriously. If you are not happy about the way your concern has been dealt with, please tell us by using our Complaints process. You can do this by calling us on **0121 717 1515** or by visiting our website and completing the online form found under Contact Us then Complaints and Compliments.

If you would like to escalate a building safety concern outside of SCH please contact **The Housing Ombudsman**. Details on how to do this can be found on page 19.

11. Measuring how we are doing

At least once a year we will provide you with information on how we are performing and the overall safety of your block. This will include:

- How safe residents feel living in the building.
- Number of residents that access online information.
- Number of residents consulted and the actions taken.
- Reports of building safety issues and how many we responded to in the timeframe.
- Number of fire brigade call outs and building safety incidents.

We will use this information and your continual feedback to assess our approach. These agreements will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are significant changes to your building or the people living there.

12. Available support and advice

How to contact your Building Safety Team

You can contact our Building Safety Team by calling us on **0121 717 1515**.



Additional support and advice services:

Bulky item removals, costs and contacts

If you have furniture or other large items that you want to dispose of we can help. We have a bulky waste removal service and currently charge £15 to collect one item, £22.50 for up

to five items and £30 for up to 10 items. If you live in a high rise you will have to put the items outside your door on the day of collection. If you have particular vulnerabilities we can help with removal. For more information and up to date charges, call us on 0121 717 1515 or visit our website at www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Local Fire & Rescue Services

We work closely with West Midlands Fire Service. They carry out regular visits with our staff to inspect our high rise buildings to look at what we are doing and familiarise themselves with our buildings.

If you are worried about fire safety in your home, West Midlands Fire Service will visit you and carry out a safe and well check where they will advise on anything they feel is unsafe or is needed. You can arrange this by calling us on **0121 717 1515**.

Health & Safety Executive

The HSE are responsible for regulation and enforcement of health and safety. They provide guidance, carry out targeted inspections and investigations.

There is a lot of information on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk where you can ask a question or report an incident online. You can also call them on **0300 003 1647**.

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

The BSR oversees the safety and standards of all buildings. To find out more visit www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/regulator.

Housing Ombudsman

All housing associations and local authorities (Councils) must be a member of this scheme. The Ombudsman Service encourages residents to contact their landlord as soon as they identify a problem.

If you have made a complaint and you feel we are not responding or you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been dealt with you can contact them for advice.

Call:
0300 111 3000

Email:
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Write to:
Housing Ombudsman Service,
PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

For more information visit:
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Tenant Engagement organisations

We are members of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

TPAS are dedicated to improving tenant engagement standards across the country by offering a wide range of services, bringing together tenants, landlords and contractors and giving them the skills and knowledge to work together. If you are interested in learning more about TPAS please contact our Engagement Team on **0121 717 1515**.

Citizens Advice Solihull Borough

The Citizens Advice provides free, confidential, impartial advice and information to Solihull residents. Contact them on **0808 278 7976** or visit them at 176 Bosworth Drive, Fordbridge B37 5DZ.



Get in Touch

Join us on social media:

 facebook.com/solihullcommunityhousing

 [@solihullhousing](https://twitter.com/solihullhousing)

 [solihullcommunityhousing](https://instagram.com/solihullcommunityhousing)

 [Solihull Community Housing](https://www.youtube.com/SolihullCommunityHousing)

Freepost RLSS-UEBA-RTUZ

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www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
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