



Wythenshawe  
Community Housing Group

## Fire and Building Safety Management Policy

<b>Date of approval</b>	May 2023
<b>Responsible director</b>	Paul Butterworth - Executive Director of Assets
<b>Policy monitoring body</b>	Customer Experience Committee and GLT
<b>Resident input into policy</b>	Great Places Panel, High Rise Panel & CX Committee
<b>Date for policy review</b>	May 2025
<b>Linked strategies/policies</b>	Health and Safety Policy Asset Management Strategy Critical Incident Report and Escalation Procedure Fire Safety Advice in High & Low Rise Blocks Management of Mobility Scooters Procedure Stay Safe Policy Emergency Evacuation Procedure – Multi Story Blocks Generic Emergency Evacuation Procedure Tenant Alterations Procedure
<b>Statutory and Legal Framework</b>	Building Safety Act 2022 The Fire Safety Act 2021 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (“The RRO 2005”) The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 LGA Guidance Document Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats (2012) Fire Safety Risk Assessment HM Government Guidance ‘Offices & Shops’ (June 2006).
<b>Version/date</b>	Version 2 FINAL 22 May 2023

# WCHG Fire and Building Safety Management Policy

## 1. Background

- 1.1. Wythenshawe Community Housing Groups (WCHG) primary aim is to provide customers with good quality homes and communal areas that are safe, secure, comfortable and well maintained. We have the same commitment to all office and commercial premises that we own or manage.
- 1.2. There is an extensive and evolving statutory framework, including formal guidance/advice, related to fire management and building safety, that landlords must comply with alongside obligations set out in tenancy agreements, leases and licences.
- 1.3. This policy confirms our commitment to meeting all such requirements, including those under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, that defines WCHG as the Responsible Person for all properties and premises that we own or manage.
- 1.4. A range of roles and responsibilities are involved in the effective delivery of these policy commitments. They are outlined in **Appendix B** of this policy. This is underpinned by a proactive culture of fire prevention in the building management of homes and premises we are responsible for.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to the management of fire and building safety across all homes, domestic communal areas, offices, and commercial premises.
- 2.2. It extends to the role WCHG has as the Responsible Person under the RRO 2005, and the need to take all reasonable precautions to prevent tenants, leaseholders, employees and third parties working at or accessing our premises, being exposed to the risk of fire.
- 2.3. It also includes the additional duties WCHG has as the Accountable Person under the Building Safety Act 2022 relating to High Rise Residential Buildings, to ensure the management of such accommodation is effective and fully compliant.
- 2.4. A Fire Risk Assessment will be undertaken at all buildings with a communal area including offices, community centres, high rise tower blocks and low-rise multi-occupancy flat blocks to inform our improvement actions and provide assurance on safety compliance.

## 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. WCHG will ensure that all fire safety precautions, both passive and active, are rigorously managed and monitored and that all housing property is maintained to best practice standards to minimise the risk of fire.
- 3.2. We will ensure that the resources needed to invest in fire safety improvements across the asset base are annually reviewed and allocated in line with the Groups' Asset Management strategy planning and delivery programme.
- 3.3. We will maintain robust Fire Risk Assessments and action plans on all domestic (communal) and commercial properties, and maintain fire and building safety records to allow the monitoring and executive oversight of legislative activity and key performance indicators.

- 3.4. We will engage with the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in respect of fire safety improvements; and we will review fire prevention methods with Greater Manchester combined Registered Providers to ensure the sharing of best practice, partnership working and raising standards is considered and reflected in our approach.
- 3.5. We will ensure all employees are adequately briefed on Fire Safety Management and trained in accordance with the requirements of their role to minimise and prevent the risk of fire.
- 3.6. WCHG will ensure full compliance with the Building Safety Act 2021 and that 'in-scope buildings' are managed effectively. The duties are to include the registration of all the high-risk blocks with the Building Safety Regulator and the maintenance & updating of the information pertaining to each block in order to maintain the 'Golden Thread'. This will form part of our 'Safety Case' to satisfy the building safety regulator and ensure the safety of high-rise building residents.
- 3.7. In addition, WCHG will implement a range of actions through formal internal procedures & processes and the use of third parties to ensure the management of fire and building safety across our property portfolio is fully compliant. **Appendix A** provides more details of the approach that will be embedded to deliver this commitment.

#### **4. Customer Communication**

- 4.1. WCHG will communicate effectively with customers and other building users in order to promote building and fire safety including the provision of general safety advice to minimise the risk of fire at home.
- 4.2. We will provide customers who live-in a high-risk property with access to building and fire safety management records and information relating to their home.
- 4.3. We will ensure that customers are fully aware of their responsibilities under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement or Lease, and we will provide current fire safety advice on our website.
- 4.4. We will provide information in a range of formats and signage, about fire safety, prevention and protection measures, to residents and other building users, in low rise and high-rise blocks, Extra Care Schemes, and Sheltered Accommodation.
- 4.5. We will listen to customers and make reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs and preferences with regard to the management of building and fire safety, and meeting specific access requirements. Customers can request a reasonable adjustment at any point during the service delivery process.

#### **5. Fire Outbreaks and Evacuation**

- 5.1. WCHG will inform customers about the fire safety management procedures for their home and block.
- 5.2. WCHG has specific 'stay safe' policies for all high rise (over 18m) all other multi-occupancy premises (under 18m) and sheltered schemes. The specific detail for each location is provided to customers in the New Tenancy Pack and is available on request.

- 5.3. We will implement a specific action plan for each location in the event of a fire outbreak at any premises owned or managed by WCHG.
- 5.4. The process for the evacuation of multi storey blocks in case of a fire outbreak will be set out in the Emergency Evacuation Procedure – Multi Story Blocks.
- 5.5. WCHG will provide training for all colleagues on evacuation procedures and their responsibility in the case of a fire outbreak. This includes the need to adhere to the internal Critical Incident Reporting and Escalation Procedure and external RIDDOR requirements, in the case of a fire outbreak.

## **6. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans**


- 6.1. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be carried out for customers with a disability, mobility issues or physical and mental wellbeing needs who live in an Extra Care Scheme or Sheltered Accommodation.
- 6.2. Each PEEP will be tailored to the needs of the individual customer considering their ability to evacuate unaided, and their capacity to understand their responsibility in the event of an evacuation. It will be reviewed by on site staff and held centrally and made available to the Fire Service in the event of an evacuation, and reviewed on an annual basis or change of need/ resident leaving the property.
- 6.3. In addition, residents in General Needs high rise blocks are regularly consulted and asked to self-identify where they may be unable to evacuate unaided in the event of a fire or other emergency and the information will be stored in the Secure Information Box at each premise and reviewed annually or where there is a change of need or tenancy. Where tenants are unable to evacuate unaided then a rehousing assessment will be undertaken with the tenants to assess the option of a possible transfer to a more suitable home. All new applicants prior to offer of an apartment in a high rise block will be assessed for their suitability with regard to mobility and ability to self-evacuate.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**


- 7.1. WCHG acknowledges that specifying roles and responsibilities associated with the delivery of this policy is critical to the successful implementation of this policy. They are therefore listed in **Appendix B**. Due to the on-going emerging regulatory framework to Fire & Building management, appendix B is purposely detailed and will be updated as new guidance is published.

## **8. Review and Continuous Improvement**

- 8.1. WCHG will review this policy every two years to ensure our approach to fire and building safety management is compliant with all legislative and regulatory requirements, robust, and that all associated processes are effective. It will also be reviewed when key changes are made in the statutory/legal framework.
- 8.2. We will gather a range of data to measure and review the performance and compliance we achieve against the delivery of this policy and its associated processes, and reporting will be in line with the internal governance arrangements.

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- 8.3. We will enable customers to hold us accountable for the delivery of this policy by reporting performance achieved against it to our governance panels including High Rise panel, Great Places panel and Customer Experience Committee.

## **9. Equality Diversity and Inclusion**


- 9.1. WCHG recognises that colleagues of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly. We will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no-one is discriminated against directly or indirectly on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that some protected groups may be disproportionately impacted and will take additional steps in the application of this policy and make reasonable adjustments to ensure compliance with the Act.
- 9.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy in January 2023.
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## Appendix A – Approach to Compliance

The following section lists the actions WCHG will take to ensure the communal areas within all properties, or premises owned or managed by WCHG, and where WCHG is the Responsible Person for the purposes of the RRO 2005, are effectively managed:

- In the event of a fire or fire related incident, maintain records of each case and adhere to the RIDDOR guidelines and WCHG's Critical Incident Report and Escalation Procedure.
- Annually review and make available resources, to allow the timely implementation and delivery of all reasonable compliance recommendations identified in the findings of Fire Risk Assessments. These will be delivered to timescales outlined by the external Fire Safety risk assessor.
- Appoint external accredited, independent and suitably qualified Fire Risk Assessors competent of undertaking WCHG's Fire Risk Assessments in line with the RRO 2005 and relevant government guidance, specifically PAS 9980:2022 fire risk appraisal of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats.
- Undertake type 3 or type 4 Fire Risk Assessments, or as otherwise specified and required, determined in liaison with the Fire Risk Assessor.
- Ensure Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken:
  - at pre-determined timescales in line with the advice of our fire consultant,
  - if they are no longer valid, or
  - there has been a significant change to the building or safety systems and associated fire risks.
- Keep auditable records to evidence all identified compliance recommendations and the completion of associated Fire Risk Assessment remedial works.
- Maintain a Servicing and Maintenance Programme for fire safety prevention and protection equipment, and monitor and manage the performance of contractors through regular contract meetings.
- Undertake compliance audit every 2 months on a percentage of Contractor paperwork to:
  - Confirm the Maintenance Plan is being carried out in line with agreed timescales.
  - Update the Maintenance Plan in line with any changes in legislation.
  - Confirm that any identified works have been actioned or a reasonable timeframe for action has been set.
  - Confirm that the electronic system (Promaster) is being updated to reflect the completion of inspections/assessments/servicing.
- Ensure Contractors used by WCHG reinstate all fire stopping, including labelling and certification upon completion of repair, maintenance and improvement works.
- Commission & carry out annual compartmentation surveys to high rise buildings, extra care schemes, supported housing schemes and sheltered housing schemes for audit purposes and ensure appropriate remedial work labelling is in place.
- Undertake regular checks to ensure a sterile common area is adopted and enforced.
- Complete annual health and safety inspection and compliance checks of fire entrance doors to domestic properties and quarterly checks to communal areas. This will identify, record and raise with the individual customer any fire safety risks. Any necessary repairs will be completed within our repairs timescales.
- Robustly apply the "Management of Mobility Scooters Procedure" and adhere to the arrangements for reporting potential risks and agreed actions.

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- Ensure tenant and leaseholder alterations are approved under the 'Tenant Alterations Procedure' to ensure that any breach of compartmentation is addressed at post inspection, before work is approved.
  - Provide fire safety training to all colleagues – specifically all complete WorkRite e-learning fire safety awareness training, and any other specific fire safety training required by job role.

## **Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Board and Chief Executive and Executive Team**

The Board is responsible for the safety of all WCHG customers, employees and appointed contractors living or working in properties we own or manage.

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board for ensuring that WCHG operates safely and complies with all statutory, legislative and regulatory requirements.

Chief Executive and Executive Team will ensure compliance by:

- Reviewing and approving this Fire Management Policy
- Ensuring adequate resources and competent persons are nominated to oversee and manage preventative works associated with the management of fire safety in WCHG premises.
- Ensure adequate financial resources are available to enable effective delivery of this policy and its associated activity through the annual budgeting and approval process.

### **The Executive Director of Assets**

The Executive Director of Assets is designated as a 'Responsible Deputy' under the scope of this policy

The Senior Contract Manager (M&E & Facilities), supported by the Health and Safety Manager, will track the relevant regulations and incorporate any changes that may become necessary

### **The Senior Contract Manager (M&E & Facilities)**

The Senior Contract Manager (M&E & Facilities) will ensure that any internal colleague or third-party contractor or consultant undertaking Fire Risk Assessments are competent to undertake the role.

Specialist contractors or consultants must be UKAS accredited and able to provide evidence that any employee working on WCHG's behalf is competent.

The Senior Contract Managers (M&E & Facilities) is responsible for maintaining a register of these operatives and their competency.

### **The Facilities Manager**

The Facilities Manager will ensure that appropriate contracts are set up for all fire safety systems and equipment to be Inspected/Serviced to ensure they are operating effectively, within the timescales set out in the RRO 2005 and other relevant guidance.

The Facilities Manager will ensure that a robust system is in place to report, manage and monitor the FRA recommendations ensuring all reasonable FRA recommendations are allocated to the appropriate individual and addressed through to completion in a timely manner.

The Facilities Manager will ensure they have an oversight of all maintenance activity within communal areas and report compliance monthly

The Facilities Manager will complete an audit of Contractor Paperwork every 2 months.

### **The Facilities Team**

The Facilities team is responsible for the day to day management and system processing/monitoring of the fire safety prevention & protection equipment.

### **Building Safety Manager**

The Building Safety Manager will regularly review WCHG practices and procedures as well as policies and strategies to ensure full compliance of current Building and Fire safety legislation in High Risk Buildings, leading on 'safety case' development and maintenance.



The Building Safety Manager will ensure regular inspections of High-Risk Buildings and will liaise with the regulators, Fire Risk Assessors, Fire Departments and other legislative bodies with regard to High Risk Buildings.

They will regularly review building safety practices within the business for High Risk Buildings in line with the RRO, Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022 and document compliance.

### **Senior Contract Managers**

Senior Contract Managers are responsible for ensuring all trade colleagues and sub-contractors receive adequate information, instruction and training in relation to fire safety and that they maintain knowledge and skills.

Senior Contract Managers are responsible for monitoring the performance of their teams and Contractors against this policy and standard contractor terms and conditions of engagement.

### **The Property Surveyor Team Leader**

The Property Surveyor Team Leader will ensure any properties that suffer a significant fire in WCHG stock are surveyed and reported through our Risk and Assurance Manager/Building Safety Manager to support a culture of constant learning & development.

The Property Surveyor Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that all requests made by customers to carry out an alteration at their home is managed in line with the Tenants Alterations Procedure & process with due consideration to fire safety legislation.

### **Health and Safety Manager**

The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for managing the training, development and support for fire wardens, and maintaining training records for all colleagues with fire safety duties.

The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for the delivery, recording and reporting of fire safety training to new and existing colleagues.

The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for the management of Fire Evacuation Drills at our commercial buildings, including Community Centres/Rooms.

The Health and Safety Manager will advise on any changes in legislation that must be incorporated into Service and Maintenance Plans.


### **Heads of Living Well & Housing Services**

Heads of Housing Services & Living Well are responsible for the management and coordination of residents of multi-occupancy domestic buildings following an evacuation by the Emergency Services as a result of a fire.

Heads of Living Well & Housing Services are responsible for ensuring appropriate housing advice is provided to customers and that welfare checks are undertaken regularly to homes in multi occupancy domestic buildings in line with the WCHG Stay Safe Policy. The mobility and vulnerability of residents will be reviewed prior to letting and residents will be required to inform WCHG of any changes to their circumstances on an ongoing basis.

The Head of Living Well will ensure a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is put in place and reviewed annually for all customers that require one (Extra Care and Sheltered Accommodation) and the Building Safety Officer is notified of any changes or additions to PEEPS in order to ensure the Secure Information Box is updated. The Head of Housing Services will ensure new residents into High Risk Buildings will be asked to advise of any problems they may have with regard to evacuation and a Evacuation assessment carried out if required.

Heads of Housing Services are responsible for ensuring communal areas are managed effectively to ensure the risk of fire is removed enforcing the appropriate policies.



Heads of Housing Services in partnership with Senior Contract Managers are responsible for ensuring mobility scooters are managed in line with the WCHG Management of Mobility Scooters Procedure to minimise the risk of fire or cause of obstruction.

### **Development Managers**

Development managers will ensure all new build schemes, refurbishments and acquired stock, fully comply with regulatory and legislative requirements prior to formal handover or occupancy. This includes the provision of all appropriate documentation/certification at the point of handover. A fully compliant fire risk assessment, pre-occupancy survey and compartmentation certificate to blocks of multi-occupancy must be in place.

The Development Managers will ensure that architects designs and specifications take fire safety into account and ensure Fire Strategies, Compartmentation information and drawings and specifications for fire fighting equipment and materials are provided to the Building Safety Manager at handover.

### **Employees**

All employees have responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others, including members of the public, residents, visitors and Contractors in the event of a fire.

All employees must inform WCHG of any situations at work that may pose a fire risk.

All employees must report hazards that may present a serious risk of fire or compromise the integrity of an area of compartmentation.

All employees must complete mandatory health and safety training.

