



Housing Fire Safety policy for Social Housing

Sheffield City Council
Housing Services



March 2025



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1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

- 1.1 As a landlord Sheffield City Council (SCC) is responsible for carrying out fire risk assessments and taking action to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with fire within common areas, the overall structure and external walls of the buildings that we own and manage.
- 1.2 We have a duty to take general fire precaution measures to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on our premises and in the immediate vicinity.
- 1.3 The key objective of this policy is to ensure that our committees, senior leadership team, employees, partners, tenants and leaseholders are clear on our legal and regulatory fire safety obligations.
- 1.4 We acknowledge and accept our responsibilities under all relevant legislation. Please see these listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 The Fire Safety Order has a broad scope and applies to most premises. This excludes single residential dwellings. For example, in either multiple-occupied houses or blocks of flats it applies to the common parts, building structure and external walls.
- 1.6 It was amended by the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure residents are provided with fire safety information they can understand; that co-operation between those responsible for fire safety is improved and that record keeping throughout a building's lifespan is continually held.
- 1.7 In order to comply with the higher risk buildings that fall within the scope of the Building Safety Act 2022 we will apply the principles that are set out in the Accountable Persons duties; Higher risk buildings are our buildings of 18 metres and above, Sheltered and Interim accommodation buildings. We will develop and adopt a fire management plan for these buildings within twelve months of approval of this policy. As the Council's asset register is updated, due to Housing Stock changes. Buildings defined as HRBs shall be reviewed and identified annually. The Fire Management Plan will be reviewed annually in line with this.
- 1.8 In addition to the legislation already mentioned above, The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 make additional requirement for fire safety measures in blocks of flats including a requirement to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient' fire risk assessment. A record of this must be kept.
- 1.9 SCC will review all our Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) to ensure they meet the requirements set out in the Fire Safety Act 2021.
- 1.10 All multi-occupies houses and blocks of flats will have a suitable and sufficient FRA in place and the FRA will be carried out by a competent fire risk assessor



- 1.11 All FRAs will be undertaken as specified within the FRA programme or where there is a significant change.
- 1.12 We will operate robust processes to implement all general fire precaution measures identified by FRAs.
- 1.13 Fire evacuation strategies will be determined on a building-by-building basis, in accordance with the recommendations of the competent fire risk assessor and with guidance from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service as applicable. Where we have buildings that are on a full evacuation strategy, we will implement plans to address the underlying risk factors which require the full evacuation and will aim to move to an alternative evacuation strategy as soon as possible. The two strategies SCC currently deploy are a stay put requirement and a full evacuation of the premises.
- Stay put – Residents are required to stay put as long as the fire is not in their own individual flat. However, if a fire should occur in their own individual flat or common areas of a building, they would be advised to evacuate.
 - Simultaneous Evacuation – Will see everybody exit building in reaction to the alarm signal given when a fire erupts in a calm and collected way. And meet at the relevant fire assembly point.
- 1.14 We are committed to working with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to create safer places to live, work and visit.
- 1.15 Premises Information Boxes are installed within all High Risk Building's. The contents of the PIB have been produced for the Code of Practice for the Provision of Premises Information Boxes in Residential Buildings which has been made collaboratively between National Fire Chiefs Council and the Fire Industry Association.
- 1.16 We will operate robust processes to implement all general fire precaution measures identified by FRAs.
- 1.17 We will operate effective contract management arrangements with the contractors responsible for delivering the service, including ensuring contracts/service level agreements are in place, conducting client-led performance meetings, and ensuring that contractors' employee and public liability insurances are up to date on an annual basis.
- 1.18 We will operate processes to record and action any fire safety related incidents and near misses. (A near miss is an unplanned event which does not result in an injury but had the potential to do so).
- 1.19 We will ensure all operations are completed within the scope of relevant policies and procedures to maintain compliance, and we will engage with residents and other stakeholders within reasonable timescales.



1.20 This policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a positive health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- The housing assets which are owned by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and any which are leased by the Council and rented and managed as social housing stock. This includes:
- Domestic properties
- Communal areas of any blocks containing such properties
- Sheltered and temporary housing schemes
- Meeting Rooms within Tenant and Resident Associations Properties
- Meeting Rooms located within housing stock
- Welfare facilities.

2.2 The policy is relevant to all our employees, tenants, leaseholders, contractors, stakeholders and other persons who may work in, occupy, visit, or use our premises, or who may be affected by our activities or services.

2.3 The policy should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations places upon SCC to maintain a safe environment for tenants and visitors within the home of each resident, and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties we own and manage.

3. Legislation, and Regulatory Standards

3.1 **Legislation** – A complete list of all relevant legislation is included in Appendix 1. The principle legislation applicable to this policy is as follows:

3.1.1 **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)**

3.1.2 **The Fire Safety Act 2021**

3.1.3 **The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022**

3.1.4 **The Building Safety Act 2022.**

3.2 This Housing Fire Safety Policy operates within the context of additional legislation, industry guidance and government policy direction. See [Appendix 1](#).

3.3 **Regulatory Standards** – SCC will work to ensure we comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework and consumer standards for social housing in England; the homes standard is the primary one applicable to this policy.

3.4 Failure to discharge our responsibilities and obligations properly could lead to prosecution.

4. Programmes

4.1 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) - We ensure all our communal blocks and other properties with common areas, that we own and manage, have an FRA in place where we have the legal obligation to do so. As set out in 'Scope 2.1'.

Thereafter, we will maintain a programme of FRA reviews, in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale will be in accordance with the maximum timescales we have set out, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The timescale for each individual FRA will also be determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the FRA where they identify specific risks or other factors.

This means the FRA is required sooner than our maximum timescale for the type of building and will be between one and three years; FRAs for our higher risk buildings will be reviewed annually.

FRA Frequencies

Property Designation	Property Classification	Frequency
Specialist Housing	Level 1 (High risk)	Annually
General Needs	Level 1 (High risk)	Annually
Non-Domestic (Offices and TARAs)	Level 2 (Medium risk)	2 Years
General Needs	Level 3 (Low risk)	3 Years

All buildings will have at the minimum, a Type 1 FRA (non-destructive assessment of common parts). However, we will undertake a more comprehensive FRA that covers dwellings as well as common parts and/or destructive sampling if there has been works that may have compromised compartmentation. A more comprehensive FRA will be commissioned if recommended by the Fire Risk Assessor or the Fire Service or if there is any other reason to conclude that one is required to maintain assurance.

We will ensure that a pre-occupation FRA is carried out on all new build schemes or new acquisitions where we have an obligation to do so. This will be followed by a post-occupation FRA, in line with the FRA programme.



- 4.2 **Properties managed by others** – Where our properties are managed by third parties (i.e. are commercial lets), we will require them to provide copies of the FRAs to us, with evidence that any required follow up actions and works have been completed, to demonstrate that the buildings are safe. If the third party does not provide the FRA and the evidence, we will carry out the FRA and may re-charge them for the cost of this, and require them to complete any actions identified.
- 4.3 **Fire door checks** – Under all relevant pieces of legislation, we will undertake quarterly checks of communal fire doors and annual checks of flat entrance doors to all such buildings over 11 metres in height. We will operate a risk-based approach to carrying out fire door checks in all other buildings.
- 4.4 **Servicing** - We will carry out a programme of servicing, maintenance and testing, in accordance with all relevant British Standards and manufacturer's recommendations, to all fire detection, prevention and firefighting systems and equipment within buildings we own and manage.
- 4.5 **Regular inspections** – We carry out a programme of inspections to all buildings with a fire risk assessment in place, to audit that all required management actions are taking place. The frequency of the inspections is determined by the overall risk associated with the building.

5. Follow-up Works

- 5.1 We will ensure processes are in place to implement all general fire precaution measures identified by FRAs, in accordance with the following priorities:
- 5.1.1 High risk
 - 5.1.2 Medium risk
 - 5.1.3 Low risk
- 5.2 We will ensure there is a process in place to manage follow-up works arising from fire door audits, and servicing & maintenance checks to fire systems and equipment.

6. Data and Records

- 6.1 We will maintain a core asset register of all residential buildings we own or manage.
- 6.2 We will set out which properties require fire safety servicing and maintenance regimes (for example, fire alarms, emergency lighting and smoke/heat detection).



- 6.3 SCC will operate a process to manage all changes to our assets, including property acquisitions and disposals, to ensure that properties are not excluded from fire safety programmes and the programme remains up to date.
- 6.4 We will hold fire safety inspection dates, FRAs, FRA actions, and fire safety servicing records against all properties on each programme.
- 6.5 We will implement an electronic storage system, to house fire safety logbooks for high-risk properties on the FRA programme. We will hold them securely on site and will still do so where required by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

7. Resident Engagement

- 7.1 SCC consider good communication essential in the effective delivery of fire safety programmes. Therefore, we will establish a resident engagement strategy that will form the basis of engagement for each fire safety activity.
- 7.2 SCC will support tenants in their understanding of fire safety, advise them of how they can keep themselves and other tenants safe, and encourage them to report any fire safety concerns. This will include reference to other appropriate SCC policies, industry best practice and reiterate key tenancy terms, expectations and SCC's approach to matters such as enforcement.
- 7.3 SCC are committed to providing a high level of customer service and positive communication is vital to the effective management of fire safety. This will support residents in their understanding of fire safety and fire safety risks, advise them of how they can manage the risks within their homes/properties, and to encourage them to report any concerns about fire safety via appropriate channels.
- 7.4 Resident engagement will inform service delivery and SCC Policy.
- 7.5 As part of the Resident Engagement Strategy, SCC residents will be provided with fire safety instructions at the time of the tenancy sign up and there on after residents and leaseholders will be provided with an annual update regarding this. Tenants will receive tenancy visits from their neighbourhood officer, who will also confirm residents understanding of fire safety within their building.
- 7.6 Residents are required by law to allow access to their home or building and work jointly with SCC to address any fire safety concerns or risk. These could include:

7.6.1 Reporting concerns



- 7.6.2 Reporting repairs
- 7.6.3 Allowing access to for vital works to be completed
- 7.6.4 Adhere to all terms of tenancy agreements
- 7.6.5 Follow all relevant guidance and policy documents

Failure to the comply with the above, may lead to legal enforcement action being taken against the resident.

- 7.7 The Housing and Neighbourhood will review annually the fire safety service wide Equality Impact Assessment. This is to ensure it services and remains accessible.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 SCC is the “Responsible Person” for the purpose of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 because we own and manage homes and buildings where tenants and leaseholders live.
- 8.2 SCC, through the Housing Policy Committee, has overall governance responsibility for ensuring this policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. The Housing Policy Committee will formally approve this policy and review it every five years or following significant change in legislation.
- 8.3 The Housing Repairs Improvement Board will receive monthly performance reports in respect of fire safety and ensure compliance is being achieved. They will also be notified of any non-compliance issue identified.
- 8.4 The Director of Housing has the operational responsibility for the management of fire safety and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of all fire safety related programmes.

9. Competent Persons

- 9.1 Only suitably competent contractors, Fire Risk Assessors and Fire Engineers will undertake FRAs or works to fire safety equipment, systems and installations. Those carrying out FRAs must have skills, knowledge and experience as set out in the Fire Sector Federation’s guidance on choosing a competent Fire Risk Assessor.
- 9.2 Only suitably competent fire safety consultants and contractors will provide third party technical quality assurance checks.
- 9.3 We will ensure that SCC only uses competent contractors to undertake improvement works. This will be completed during the procurement process.



Contractors will be asked to provide a statement of competency to act as validation for SCC.

10. Competencies

10.1 All employees, working on behalf of SCC will be provided with the following training:

- Team Briefings
- Basic fire safety awareness training for all staff who deliver property compliance activity
- On the job training for those delivering the programme of FRAs and other fire safety programmes, planned maintenance and repairs works as part of their daily job.

All training undertaken by staff will be formally recorded, where applicable all relevant training materials will be shared with stakeholders i.e. Tenant and Resident Associations.

11. Quality Assurance and Continual Improvement

11.1 SCC will operate relevant inspection regimes and implement relevant frameworks to provide the organisation with the assurance that fire safety risks are being monitored and mitigated appropriately. All inspection regimes can be supplied upon request.

12. Non-Compliance and Escalation

12.1 Our definition of non-compliance is any incident which has the potential to result in a material breach of legislation or regulatory standard, or which causes a risk to health or safety. All non-compliance issues will be reported and escalated as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the incident occurred or of an SCC employee becoming aware of it.



Appendix 1: Legislation

This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- The Building Safety Act 2022.
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
- The Defective Premises Act 1972
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Building Regulations 2010: Approved Document B Fire Safety
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

Guidance – The principal guidance documents applicable to this policy are:

1. Housing - Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services), August 2008.
2. Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats (hosted by the Home Office and to be read alongside the National Fire Chiefs Council's guidance on simultaneous evacuation), 2011. [note this guidance should be viewed as no longer comprehensive; the Home Office is currently working on a revised version but in the interim, it is continued to be made available as it contains relevant and useful information for purpose-built blocks of flats]
3. Fire Safety in Specialised Housing (National Fire Chiefs Council), May 2017. This guidance covers sheltered schemes, supported schemes and extra care schemes.
4. Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance: Housing Act 2004 Guidance about inspections and assessment of hazards given under Section 9 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government), February 2006.



5. Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance: Addendum for the profile for the hazard of fire and in relation to cladding systems on high rise residential buildings (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government), November 2018.
6. Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government), January 2020.
7. Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance: Guidance to support a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy in purpose-built blocks of flats (National Fire Chiefs Council), October 2020.

Additional Guidance and Policy Direction – The following documents set out clear direction for landlords in respect to fire safety, and whilst not statutory guidance or approved legislation, there are certain recommendations or proposals which are applicable to this policy:

- Fire Sector Federation – Approved Code of Practice: A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency (November 2020).
- Fire Sector Federation – A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor (Version 3, October 2020).
- Setting the Bar: A new competence regime for building a safer future (October 2020).
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: Call for Evidence (July 2019), and summary of responses (March 2020).
- Building a Safer Future - Proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system: A consultation (June 2019).
- Grenfell Tower Inquiry: phase 1 report. Volume 1 – 4 (October 2019).
- Grenfell Tower Inquiry: phase 2 report. (September 2024).
- Building a Safer Future - Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Final Report (May 2018).