

FIRE SAFETY POLICY - PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

1. Policy

Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd, herein referred to as the Local Housing Companies (LHC), place a high degree of importance on the management of fire through risk reduction and fire prevention. It is essential to ensure that fires are unlikely to occur; that if they do occur they are likely to be controlled or contained quickly, effectively and safely; or that if a fire does occur and grow, everyone within the premises is able to escape to a place of total safety easily and quickly.

The purpose of this policy is to reference the legal duties relating to fire placed on LHC in respect of its properties along with the responsibilities of the companies' appointed management agent and to outline the arrangements in place for securing compliance with those duties and ensuring the safety of all persons.

The matter of fire safety in respect of LHC employees and their workplaces is covered in a separate policy document entitled 'Managing Employee Health and Safety'.

2. Responsibilities

The LHC Operations Manager is accountable for the implementation of this policy and for liaising with the companies' appointed management agent and maintenance contractor to ensure that compliance with fire safety requirements is both secured and consistently maintained.

3. The legal framework

The Housing Act 2004 regulates hazards and potential risks, including fire, within rented residential dwellings by way of assessments carried out by local authority inspectors in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places general duties on employers and other duty holders such as persons concerned with premises to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their undertakings are conducted in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of employees and others.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) places a duty on the responsible person to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of people within non-domestic premises and in the immediate vicinity. These provisions are enforced by the local fire and rescue authority.

In terms of its relevance to housing provision, the requirements of the FSO relate to fire safety in the common areas for example, shared hallways, staircases, landings and dining areas of houses in multiple occupation, flats, maisonettes and sheltered accommodation in which personal care

is not provided. The duties laid down in the FSO do not apply to the people's own homes i.e. individual flats, maisonettes, bedsits or the residential units themselves.

The FSO defines the responsible person as 'the person who has control of the premises in connection with the carrying on of a trade, business or other undertaking'. **In the context of LHC properties, the companies' appointed management agent has been designated as the responsible person under the FSO and will fulfil the requirements. The managing agent will be expected to take the lead role in ensuring on site operational teams such as care support providers activities meet their fire safety obligations and compliance.**

In order to comply with the duties imposed by the FSO, the responsible person must carry out a fire risk assessment to identify what fire hazards exist within the common parts of premises and to determine what measures have or will be taken to minimise the risk.

Other fire related legislation includes the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) which set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery but not, for example, carpets or curtains. The regulations apply to all persons who supply furniture and furnishings in connection with accommodation in the course of a business although their applicability in the context of housing provision is limited to where only the common parts of premises are concerned.

Electrical and gas installations and appliances are subject to regulations i.e. the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 which impose installation and maintenance requirements; compliance with these regulations will assist in reducing the risks presented by fire.

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 set out minimum fire warning installation standards for private sector landlords. Once in place, the landlord must make sure the alarms are in working order at the start of each new tenancy.

4. Fire risk assessment

A fire risk assessment is a systematic, methodical look at a premises, along with the activities undertaken there, and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify the fire hazards such as any sources of ignition together with the fuel and oxygen for fire to burn.
- To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as is reasonably practicable.
- To make an evaluation of risk by deciding what physical fire prevention, fire precaution and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises should a fire start.

Particular attention should be paid to those at special risk, for example, vulnerable persons such as the elderly, the disabled, those with special needs etc and must include consideration of any

dangerous substance liable to be on the premises. The fire risk assessment provides assistance in identifying the risks that can be removed or reduced and helps inform decision making with regard to the nature and extent of the general fire precautions that need to be taken.

The significant findings of a fire safety risk assessment should be recorded and should include details of the fire hazards identified, persons who may be at risk (particularly those especially at risk), the preventive and protective measures, the emergency plan for dealing with a fire situation, and the information, instruction and any training that people need and how it will be given.

Although designed to satisfy current building regulations including fire precautions, new buildings or significant building alterations will still require the completion of a fire risk assessment or review of an existing assessment, along with any action required to address the findings and secure compliance with the FSO.

All fire safety measures at the premises must then be subject to a proper system of maintenance by a competent person so as to be kept in effective working order and in good repair.

Fire risk assessments should remain under a constant monitor and be periodically reviewed in order to assess how effectively the risk is being controlled and to keep it up to date.

Should there be any reason to suspect that a fire risk assessment is no longer valid, for example, following a fire or due to a significant change in the premises that has affected the fire precautions, the assessment will need to be reviewed and revised if necessary.

5. Arrangements for fire safety management

The active management of fire safety in LHC premises will be undertaken by the companies' appointed management agent in accordance with the following arrangements:

- Conducted on a planned, regular basis and in line with the Home Office guide 'Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation', fire risk assessments will be undertaken in respect of the common parts of LHC premises by a competent and suitably qualified fire risk assessor. Fire hazards and persons at risk (with particular attention paid to vulnerable groups) will be identified within those assessments with the risks evaluated and measures described to eliminate, reduce or control them. Fire risk assessments will be kept up to date and reviewed annually, sooner if necessary.
- All significant findings within fire risk assessments will be recorded. Completed fire risk assessments and associated documents will be held and managed by LHC's management agent.
- The findings of fire risk assessments in respect of recommendations for action and additional controls to be prioritised for completion based on an agreed rating of risk.
- Only competent person(s) shall carry out any necessary fire prevention or protection works identified by the fire risk assessment, i.e. someone with enough training and experience, knowledge and other qualities to be able to install and implement the measures properly.

5. Arrangements for fire safety management (continued)

- Complying with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, the necessary signs and notices will be put in place to help people identify escape routes, locate firefighting equipment, emergency phones etc, to provide instructions on how to use any fire safety equipment, the actions to be taken in the event of fire and help for the fire and rescue service, for example, the location of sprinkler valves or electrical cut-off switches.
- The provision of an emergency plan for relevant buildings to be arranged to ensure that all people already within or who have to traverse the communal area(s) can escape safely in an emergency; periodic and appropriate tests of fire evacuation procedures to be operated in relevant housing, for example, sheltered schemes.
- Where appropriate, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be completed and kept up to date; this may require liaison with social care providers.
- Regular and planned inspections will be undertaken to ensure that the means of escape, fire safety installations, systems and equipment are in good order and that communal and shared spaces are free from fire risks and obstructions. Inspections will be recorded.
- Testing, servicing and maintenance of fire safety installations, systems and equipment to be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standards by competent and suitably qualified persons, to include emergency light installations, fire warning systems and firefighting equipment.
- A log book specific to the premises should be maintained and kept on site wherever possible. The fire related information and records contained within the log book should include the following:
 - General advice on fire safety matters.
 - An outline of the fire safety arrangements for the premises.
 - A plan drawing showing evacuation routes, fire doors etc.
 - An outline of the arrangements made for the testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems, emergency lighting systems and firefighting equipment, and smoke detection.
 - The type and location of firefighting equipment.
 - Testing and maintenance of fire warning systems, lighting systems, firefighting equipment etc.
 - The actions to take in the case of a fire.
 - Dates and times of completed fire evacuation drills and staff training where applicable.
 - Contact details of where competent fire safety advice can be obtained.
- A No Smoking policy to be implemented in all common areas of LHL premises.
- Residents to be provided (on taking up a tenancy, with periodic reminders) with adequate fire safety guidance in relation to the preventative action to take in relation to their home, as well as the overall building, to reduce the risk of a fire occurring, along with the response to be taken in the case of a fire or suspected fire.

5. Arrangements for fire safety management (continued)

- Residents to be made aware of the fire safety provisions in their home, as well as the scheme, and that they must do nothing to interfere with those provisions.
- Permit to work procedure should be operated to define in a clear and precise manner how the risk of fire will be controlled and be applied to work involving the production of heat or naked flames.
- To compile a register of all fire safety equipment that requires cyclical maintenance.
- To develop a system of monitoring and a combination of monitoring measures to ensure the effectiveness of the preventative and protective measures in place.
- Any activation of the fire alarm and all fires (no matter how small and even if extinguished) on LHC premises must be reported to the LHC Service & Compliance Officer without delay.
- To provide the LHC Service and Compliance officer with monthly performance reports demonstrating fire safety compliance.

6. Fire warning installations

The minimum fire warning installation standards our properties will adopt include smoke alarms within the hall and landing areas and a heat detector within the kitchen. In any areas where solid fuel is used carbon monoxide alarms will also be installed.

7. Fire training

Where on-site care and support is provided to residents, the provider will ensure that relevant staff are appropriately trained and the role of fire warden is adequately covered. Records of that training will be made and maintained by the relevant employer.

8. Policy monitoring

The Operations Manager will receive quarterly reports from LHC's appointed management agent to provide an oversight of compliance with the requirements of the FSO and enable monitoring of the above arrangements to a sufficient level.

For the purpose of assurance, the Operations Manager will present an annual summary of performance in relation to fire safety management to the LHC Boards for their review and consideration.

9. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in line with any regulatory or legislative changes or by the scheduled review date as per the information provided in document control, whichever is sooner.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Issue date	Approval date	Planned review date	Actual review date
April 2017	January 2018	June 2018	April 2019
		August 2020	August 2020
	December 2020	August 2021	

APPROVED