



Bury Housing Services

Fire Safety Policy 2023/25

Contents

1.0	Introduction and Policy Objectives.....	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Regulatory Standards, Legislation and Guidance.....	2
4.0	Additional Legislation	3
5.0	Obligations	4
6.0	Statement of Intent	4
7.0	Inspection Programmes	6
8.0	Follow-up Work.....	6
9.0	Data and Record Keeping	7
10.0	Resident Involvement and Engagement	7
11.0	Key Roles and Responsibilities	7
12.0	Competent Persons	8
13.0	Training.....	8
14.0	Performance Reporting	9
15.0	Quality Assurance	9
16.0	Non-Compliance/ Escalation Process	10
17.0	Glossary	11

1.0 Introduction and Policy Objectives

- 1.1 The key objective of this policy is to document how we propose to comply with our legal and regulatory Fire safety obligations. This policy provides a practical framework within which to meet these obligations
- 1.2 The policy is to be used to implement the obligations placed upon Bury Housing Services to maintain a safe environment for Tenants, Leaseholders and employees, within the home and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties we own and/or manage.
- 1.3 This policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors (as detailed within our Health and Safety Policy). It will be saved on Natural HR ON our shared drive and available to all relevant members of staff.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is relevant to all our employees, tenants, leaseholders, contractors, stakeholders and other persons who may work on, occupy, visit, or use the premises we own or manage, or who may be affected by our activities or services.
- 2.2 The policy should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon Bury Housing Services to maintain a safe environment for Tenants, Leaseholders and employees, within the home of each Tenant, and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties we own and/or manage. Adherence to this policy is mandatory.

3.0 Regulatory Standards, Legislation and Guidance

- 3.1 **Regulatory Standards** - We must ensure we comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework and consumer standards for social housing in England; the Home Standard is the primary one applicable to this policy.
- 3.2 **Legislation** - The principal legislation applicable to this policy is:
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO).
 - The Fire Safety Act 2021
 - Fire Safety (England) Regulation 2022
- 3.3 **Guidance** - The principal guidance documents applicable to this policy are:
 - National Fire Chief Council's Guidance (NFCC) - Fire Safety in Specialist Housing - May 2017: Covers sheltered schemes, supported schemes and extra care schemes.
 - Local Government Association: Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.
- 3.4 **Sanctions** - Failure to discharge our responsibilities and obligations properly could lead to sanctions, including: prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (the HSE) under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007; prosecution by the Fire and Rescue Service under the FSO; and via a regulatory notice judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing.

4.0 Additional Legislation

- 4.1 This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:
 - Housing Act 2004
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
The Building Regulations 2010: Approved Document B Fire Safety Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

5.0 Obligations

- 5.1 **Six Town Housing** is the ‘responsible person’ for the purposes of the legislation, by virtue of the fact that we own and manage homes and buildings where Tenants and leaseholders live.
- 5.2 The responsible person (Bury Housing Services) must carry out a fire risk assessment (FRA) for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions and other measures needed to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO). Although under the FSO this requirement only applies to common parts of premises, in practice the responsible person will need to consider the entire premises, including units of residential accommodation.
- 5.3 The responsible person must implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other necessary measures identified by an FRA.
- 5.4 The responsible person must put in place a suitable system of maintenance and appoint competent persons to implement any procedures that have been adopted.
- 5.5 The responsible person must periodically review FRAs in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale is determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the FRA.

6.0 Statement of Intent

- 6.1 We acknowledge and accept our responsibilities under the FSO as outlined in Section 5.
- 6.2 Each property requiring an FRA will have one in place which has been carried out by a competent fire risk assessor, and which is compliant with the British Standards Institution’s PAS 79 specification.
- 6.3 Fire evacuation strategies will be determined on a building-by-building basis, in accordance with the recommendations of the competent fire risk assessor.
- 6.4 All FRAs will be reviewed no later than the review date set within the most recent FRA for that building.
- 6.5 The FRA for a building will be reviewed in the event of:
 - A fire;
 - Change in building use;
 - Change in working practices that may affect fire safety;
 - Following refurbishment works; or
 - If required following an independent fire safety audit.

- 6.6 We will operate robust processes to implement all mandatory fire precaution measures identified by FRAs.
- 6.7 We will test battery operated and/or hard-wired smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors as part of the annual gas safety check (or at void stage) - any requiring replacement will be raised as repairs for remediation. Any properties without a carbon monoxide detector will have one fitted at the time of the gas service.
- 6.8 We will ensure that all domestic properties have a hard-wired smoke alarm system fitted within five years of the approval of this policy.
- 6.9 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be carried out by a suitably trained person, reviewed annually, and made available to the Fire and Rescue Service in the event of an evacuation, as follows:
- For any disabled resident and/or employee within any sheltered or supported housing schemes); and
 - For any tenant within a building where we have a responsibility for carrying out an FRA, where we have been notified that they are storing oxygen in their home for medical use.
- 6.10 We are committed to working with the local Fire and Rescue Service to create safer places to live and work. This joint working may include sharing information, having FRAs reviewed, and staff training.
- 6.11 We will refer all new tenancies to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service for a free home fire safety check.
- 6.12 We will ensure appropriate evacuation policies are in place across our blocks which are in accordance with the recommendations of the competent fire risk assessor and any guidance from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.
- 6.13 We will operate processes to gain access should any tenant or leaseholder refuse access to carry out essential fire safety inspection and remediation works Reference should be made to our access policy
- 6.14 We will operate processes to gain access to properties where tenant or leaseholder vulnerability issues are known or identified (including hoarding), whilst ensuring we safeguard the wellbeing of the resident.
- 6.15 We will operate 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.
- 6.16 We will operate a process to manage immediately dangerous situations identified during fire safety programmes.
- 6.17 We will adopt a clear communal area approach in all internal communal areas, requiring tenants and leaseholders to remove combustible materials from corridors and fire escape routes. Reference should be made to our Sterile Environment Policy.
- 6.18 We will not permit the storage of mobility scooters within internal communal areas.
- 6.19 We will establish and maintain a risk assessment for fire safety management and operations, setting out the key fire safety risks and appropriate mitigations.
- 6.20 We will operate processes to record and action any fire safety related 'near misses'. A 'near miss' is an unplanned event which does not result in an injury but had the potential to do so.

- 6.21 We will ensure there is a process in place to investigate and manage all RIDDOR notifications made to the HSE in relation to fire safety.
- 6.22 Appendix 1 provides a list of general policy statements to support FRA process.

7.0 Inspection Programmes

- 7.1 **FRAs** - We will ensure all our communal blocks and other properties (supported schemes/offices/shops/depots), that we own or manage, have an FRA in place where we have the legal obligation to do so.
- 7.2 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 determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the FRA (between one and three years) with all sheltered and temporary accommodation on an annual programme.
- 7.3 All FRAs will be Type 3 surveys.
- 7.4 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, followed by a post-occupation FRA, a maximum of three months after the first tenant moves in.
- 7.5 **Properties managed by others** - We will obtain FRAs where our properties are managed by a third party. If the third party does not provide the FRA, we will carry out the FRA and re-charge them for the cost of this work.
- 7.6 **Fire door audits** - Six Town Housing are currently within the first year of a three-year fire-door replacement programme which will ensure all doors are fit-for-purpose and appropriately accredited. Following the completion of this programme (or sooner if required by law), we will undertake a six-monthly audit of all communal fire doors, and an annual audit of 25 per cent sample of flat entrance doors. This sample will increase if issues are found on the initial sample.
- 7.7 **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 or manage.
- 7.8 **Regular inspections** - We will carry out a programme of regular inspections to all blocks with a fire risk assessment in place to audit that all required management actions are taking place.

8.0 Follow-up Work

- 8.1 We will ensure processes are in place to implement all mandatory fire precaution measures identified by FRAs, in accordance with the following priorities and timescales (unless specified differently by the competent fire risk assessor):
 - Intolerable risk - within 24 hours.
 - High risk - within three months.
 - Medium risk - within six months.
 - Low risk - within 12 months or delivered as part of a planned programme within 12 months.
- 8.2 We will ensure there is a process in place to manage follow-up works arising from fire door audits, and servicing and maintenance checks to fire systems and equipment.

9.0 Data and Record Keeping

- 9.1 We will maintain a core asset register of all properties we own or manage, setting out which properties require an FRA. We will also set out which properties require fire safety servicing and maintenance regimes (for example, fire alarms, emergency lighting and smoke/heat detection).
- 9.2 We will operate a process to manage all changes to stock, including property acquisitions and disposals, to ensure that properties are not omitted from fire safety programmes and the programme remains up to date.
- 9.3 We will hold fire safety inspection dates, FRAs, FRA actions, and fire safety servicing records against all properties on each programme.
- 9.4 We will keep fire safety logbooks electronically (or securely on site where practical), for all properties on the FRA programme.
- 9.5 We will keep all records for at least five years and have processes and controls in place to maintain appropriate levels of security for all fire safety related data.

10.0 Resident Involvement and Engagement

- 10.1 We consider good communication essential in the effective delivery of fire safety programmes, therefore we will establish a tenant engagement strategy and communication programme. This will support tenants in their understanding of fire safety, advise them of how they can keep themselves and other residents safe, and encourage them to report any fire safety concerns.
- 10.2 We also aim to engage with vulnerable and hard to reach tenants. We will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to tenants via regular publications and information on our website.
- 10.3 A full version of the FRA will also be made available to tenants, and upon request.

11.0 Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 11.1 The Chief Executive has overall governance responsibility for ensuring this policy is fully implemented in order to ensure full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. The Chief Executive will recommend this policy to the Assets and Growth Committee for formal approval and adoption. This policy will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if there is a change in legislation or regulation).
- 11.2 For assurance that this policy is operating effectively in practice, the Assets and Growth Committee will receive regular updates on its implementation, fire safety performance and non-compliance.
- 11.3 The Director of Assets 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.
- 11.4 The Director of Assets has strategic responsibility for the management of fire safety, and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained. They will oversee the implementation of this policy.
- 11.5 The Business Manager Sustainability and Investment has operational responsibility for the management of fire safety within the housing stock and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of these programmes.
- 11.6 The Customer and Communities team will provide support where gaining access to properties is difficult as well as providing operational delivery of this policy within Sheltered and Extra Care schemes

- 11.7 All employees have the responsibility to cooperate and ensure that the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves and others at risk. This includes the buildings and homes we own and manage when carrying out day to day tasks and duties.

12.0 Competent Persons

- 12.1 The operational lead responsible for the delivery of fire safety will hold a relevant managerial qualification. Examples include the NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management or Level 4 VRQ Diploma in Asset and Building Management Compliance. If they do not have this already, they will obtain it within 12 months of the approval of this policy.
- 12.2 Only suitably competent contractors, fire risk assessors and fire engineers will undertake FRAs or works to fire safety equipment, systems and installations. These must be certified by BAFE and/or an IFSM member, and on a UKAS accredited certification scheme that meets the competency criteria established by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council.
- 12.3 Only suitably competent fire safety consultants and contractors will provide third party technical quality assurance checks.
- 12.4 All contractor checks will be undertaken during procurement and then on an annual basis and evidenced appropriately.

13.0 Training

- 13.1 We will deliver training on this policy and the procedures that support it, including: team briefings; basic fire safety awareness training; and 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.

14.0 Performance Reporting

- 14.1 We will report key performance indicator (KPI) measures for fire safety. These will be provided to Six Town Housing's Leadership Team on a monthly basis and to the Assets and Growth Committee on a quarterly basis. As a minimum, we will report:

Data - the total number of:

Properties - communal blocks and other properties; Properties on the FRA programme; Properties not on the FRA programme; Properties with a valid and in date FRA; Properties without a valid and in date FRA; Properties due a new FRA within the next 90 days; and Completed, in-time and overdue follow-up works/actions arising from the programme (split by priority).

Narrative - an explanation of the:

Current position.
Corrective action required.

Anticipated impact of corrective action; and
Progress with completion of follow-up works.

In addition:

Compliance with the fire safety equipment, systems and installations servicing and maintenance programme.

The number of RIDDOR notifications to the HSE with regards to fire safety.

Details of any enforcement notices from the Fire and Rescue Service or other enforcement bodies.

Recording and reporting on property fires to identify trends and target awareness campaigns.

15.0 Quality Assurance

- 15.1 We will commission a programme of third-party quality assurance audits of FRAs (field and desktop), on a five per cent sample basis.
- 15.2 We will carry out a programme of regular property inspections to all properties with an FRA to audit that all required management actions have been completed.
- 15.3 We will carry out an independent audit of fire safety at least once every two years, to specifically test for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and to identify any non-compliance issues for correction.

16.0 Non-Compliance/ Escalation Process

- 16.1 Our definition of non-compliance is: any incident which has the potential to result in a potential 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 becoming aware of it.
- 16.2 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Head of Asset Management in the first instance, who will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the Director of Assets and report details of the same to the Chief Executive.
- 16.3 In cases of serious non-compliance, the Chief Executive will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing as required by the regulatory framework, or any other relevant organisation such as the Health and Safety Executive.

17.0 Glossary

- 17.1 This glossary defines key terms used throughout this policy:

BAFE: Is the independent register of quality fire safety service providers, who are certified to ensure quality and competence to help meet fire safety obligations.

FRA: A fire risk assessment is an assessment involving the systematic evaluation of the factors that determine the hazard from fire, the likelihood that there will be a fire and the consequences if one were to occur.

FRA survey: The FSO states that an FRA is required, however, it does not prescribe how intrusive or destructive this should be. There are four types of FRA:

- Type 1 - common parts only (non-destructive), basic level to satisfy the FSO.
- Type 2 - common parts only (destructive), element of destruction on sample basis.
- Type 3 - common parts and flats (non-destructive), considers means of escape and fire detection within at least a sample of flats.
- Type 4 - common parts and flats (destructive).

IFSM: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers.

PAS79: A publicly available specification published by the British Standards Institution which focuses on making sure that all the required information that pertains to both an FRA and its findings are recorded.

PEEP: A personal emergency evacuation plan is a bespoke escape plan for individuals who may not be able to reach an ultimate place of safety unaided or within a satisfactory period in the event of any emergency.

UKAS: The National Accreditation Body for the United Kingdom, appointed by government to assess and accredit organisations that provide services including certification, testing, inspection and calibration.

Appendix 1 - General Policy Statements

Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments (PCFRA's)

Bury Council and Bury Housing Services are carrying out a programme of PCFRA for residents in all sheltered housing and Extra Care schemes and will attempt to deal with the range of issues that have been highlighted as a result of PCFRA's being completed.

Work on installing measures to reduce the risk to residents, such as providing vibrating pillows and arranging the installation of strobes, for example, is part of a package of remedial work will be considered.

For the most serious of cases, where residents cannot self-evacuate to outside of their flat or to a place of safety a detailed risk assessments and evacuation plan will be required indicating the risk-reduction measures to be carried out.

Until these issues are fully implemented, the risk level in these sheltered and extra care schemes will remain higher.

In addition, the FRA will consider the on-site support provided to the residents within each scheme over a 24-hour period in conjunction with the proposed fire strategy in the event of an alarm evacuation. Consideration must be given to the residents occupying the scheme and their ability to self-evacuate in conjunction with the support staff availability to assist with any such evacuation

Gas Servicing

Bury Housing Services has a Gas Service contract in place for all housing stock (except for leasehold properties, which are the responsibility of each individual leaseholder).

Fire Doors

All flat entrance doors should be a FD30s standard as prescribed in BS 8214, fitted with a positive self-closing device. Bury Housing Services will have a programme to inspected, audit and replace flat entrance doors to ensure compliance.

Smoke Detection

Bury Housing Services have a policy to install Grade D mains powered smoke detection.

The type of coverage to be installed is;

For general needs flats at least Grade D1 Category LD3

For general needs flats, where the flat layout requires tenants to pass the kitchen or lounge from the bedroom, at least Grade D1 Category LD2

For sheltered and Extra Care flats at least Grade D1 Category LD1

Grade D1: a system of one or more mains-powered smoke (or heat) alarms each with integral battery stand-by supply.

LD3 coverage: a system incorporating detectors in circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling only.

LD2 coverage: a system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling and, in all rooms, or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants i.e. risk rooms.

LD1 coverage: a system incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling and in all areas that a fire might start.

Bin Stores

Bury Housing Services will investigate the feasibility of relocating bin stores at least 4m from the building as part of future refurbishment projects.

Electric Testing

Bury Housing Services will carry out a Periodic Electrical Condition inspection on the entire system at least every 5 years in residential blocks.

Any Category 1 or Category 2 defects identified in the inspection will be resolved as soon as possible.

PAT Testing

Bury Housing Services will carry PAT testing in accordance with The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). This will cover Bury Housing Services owned appliances only. Bury Housing Services will not PAT test residents own appliances.

Oxygen

Where residents require the use of oxygen tanks, the flat will be suitably indicated and a record kept in the Premise Information Box for use by the emergency services. This information should also be held on the housing management system.

Mobility scooters and electric bikes

Mobility scooters and electrical bikes have batteries than can overheat and ignite especially when charging. Residents are to be informed of the need to store their scooters or bikes in a suitable location and provided with advice on safe charging of rechargeable batteries.

Records

Bury Housing Services hold the following records on their Compliance database

Description	How	Frequency
Means of escape checks to ensure that all exit doors are available for use, Escape routes are clear, Tenants balconies do not contain fire loading, Fire resisting doors are operating correctly and are without damage and that there are no obvious fire hazards.	Caretaker inspections	Monthly
Maintenance and test records for other building services, e.g., Gas safety checks.	Gas servicing programme	Annual
Emergency lighting (monthly tests and routine servicing).	Servicing	Every 6 months
Fire alarm (weekly test records and 6 monthly service records).	Test (sheltered housing)	Weekly
	Servicing	Every three months
AOVs and smoke vents.	Monthly test	Every three months
Dry risers.	TBC	
Firefighting lifts.	N/A	N/A
Fire shutter in bin store	N/A	N/A

Balconies

Bury Housing Services will write to all residents living in properties and inform them about the risks arising from the presence of combustible materials on balconies. We will make it clear that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies can increase that risk. Advice from fire and rescue authorities is clear that barbecues should not be used on balconies.

Contractors

All contractors working for Bury Housing Services owned or managed premises must submit RAMS which are reviewed and signed off by Bury Housing Services staff. This includes suitable controls regarding contractors, particularly those involving 'Hot Works' or any works affecting the passive or active fire safety systems. Whilst there are no portable fire extinguishers provided in the building, it is recommended that contractors provide their own firefighting equipment whilst they are working on site.

Engagement with Residents

Bury Housing Services will ensure tenants are provided with the following information;

- a) Measures to prevent fires in their own flat and the common parts,
- b) The importance of keeping their block secure and being vigilant for deliberate fire setting,

- c) The need to avoid the storage of petrol, bottled gas and other dangerous substances in their flat, balcony or in shared storage areas,
- d) Action to take in the event of a fire in their flat,
- e) The means of escape from the block,
- f) A clear explanation of what the 'Stay Put/Simultaneous' evacuation policy means, (as applicable)
- g) The responsibility of tenants to safeguard the communal escape routes,
- h) The policy of housekeeping in the common parts,
- i) The importance of not carrying out alterations to their flat that could be detrimental to fire safety,
- j) The importance of routine testing of fire alarms,
- k) The importance of not obstructing fire and rescue service access to the block,
- l) The means for reporting defects in fire safety measures within their flats and the common parts.

Staff Training

Bury Housing Services will ensure any staff who may work on site completes fire safety training at least once every two years, with this training covering the following points

- The action that should be taken on discovering a fire
- How to raise the alarm
- The action taken on hearing the alarm
- Assisted Evacuation training to help tenants/visitors requiring assistance
- The arrangements for calling the fire brigade
- The location of the assembly point at a safe place
- The location, and the use of fire-fighting equipment
- The importance of keeping fire doors closed
- How to isolate gas and electrical power
- The importance of general fire safety
- The significant findings from your fire risk assessment
- Details and dates of the training should be recorded.

Void Flats

Bury Housing Services will, when a top storey flat is void and access is possible, take the opportunity to fire stop the roof void compartment walls accessible from that flat, ensure any loft hatch is upgraded to a fire resisting standard and ensure that the flat's ceilings are not breached by light fittings, vents etc. without suitable protection.

Cladding

Where buildings have small areas of combustible (i.e., timber or UPVC) panelling on the external walls, at refurbishment Bury Housing Services will replace these with non-combustible materials. Where the Fire Risk Assessment highlights a particular issue with external panelling, this will be actioned appropriately.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Document owner: Paul Webb	Job title: Business Manager
Policy Number:	CWPO009
Business Review Meeting – Chief Executive	3 rd May 2023
Assets & Growth Committee	16 th May 2023
Review frequency	3 years
File path: High level documents e.g. Policies and Strategies need to be added to Natural HR under company documents.	
Status: Draft B May 2023	
Signatures required (add electronically after meeting)	
Chief Executive	
Chair of Board	