



# **BURY COUNCIL – HOUSING SERVICES FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

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## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that we meet our obligations and outline our approach to fulfilling legal and regulatory fire safety requirements. It establishes a structured framework aimed to assure life safety of tenants, employees, contractors, members of the public, and emergency services in the event of a fire. Fire safety is a core landlord responsibility, and we will take all reasonably practicable steps to identify, assess and mitigate fire risks across our housing stock.

This policy outlines Bury Council Housing Services (BCHS) responsibilities to ensure the safety of all communal areas of buildings along with properties owned or managed by BCHS. The policy is designed to mitigate any risk associated with fire within these buildings.

The Regulator of Social Housing and Home Standard require Housing Providers to meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of tenants in their homes, including fire safety management.

The implementation of this Fire Safety Policy will be supported by a detailed Fire Management Plan (FMP). This will outline the 'how', including the operational approach to managing fire safety including any, remedial actions, and reducing overall fire risk.

*Note: The FMP is currently a work in progress due to restructure, new roles and responsibilities within the newly formed Compliance Team, and wider council. The intention is to outline the procedures on how to deliver the items recorded within this policy.*

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

Through this policy, Bury Council Housing Services aims to establish clear arrangements, procedures and responsibilities to ensure compliance with applicable legislation, standards and guidance relating to fire safety, whilst protecting the health, safety and welfare of tenants, leaseholders, employees, contractors, visitors and others who may be affected by fire safety within properties owned, managed or controlled by BCHS.

The policy seeks to ensure that fire safety risks are effectively identified, assessed, managed and monitored through a robust framework of inspection, testing, maintenance, remedial works, assurance and governance arrangements. It also aims to provide assurance to tenants and stakeholders that fire safety is being managed effectively and in accordance with statutory duties and recognised good practice.

Bury Council Housing Services is committed to implementing fire safety processes in an efficient and proportionate manner, ensuring the overall approach aligns with the BCHS Health and Safety Policy, Risk Management Policy, Procurement Policy, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

The policy further aims to establish clear accountability for fire safety management, defining key duty holders and responsibilities to ensure supporting procedures remain effective, compliant and fit for purpose.

Bury Council Housing Services will monitor performance against this policy and provide regular assurance reporting to senior management and governance structures regarding compliance, performance and identified risks.

### **3.0 SCOPE**

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.

The policy should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations listed below placed upon Bury Council Housing Services to maintain a safe environment for tenants, leaseholders, employees and members of the public within all buildings and other properties we own and/or manage. BCHS should take all reasonable steps to address foreseeable risk of fire within our managed buildings.

### **4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Bury Council Housing Services has taken account of the following legislation and regulatory requirements relating to fire safety, compliance and the management of fire safety.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO).
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Equality and Diversity Act 2010
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Housing Act 2004
- 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.

#### **4.1 Guidance**

The principal guidance documents applicable to this policy are. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- 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.
- Home Office: A guide to making your small block of flats safe from fire.

## **5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The roles and responsibilities below establish accountability for the management of fire safety across Bury Council Housing Services. All employees, contractors and relevant stakeholders have responsibilities for identifying, reporting and managing risks associated with fire installations and equipment.

For reference, the current Senior Leadership Structure is included to provide context regarding governance and reporting arrangements. Responsibilities detailed within this policy shall apply to the equivalent role or function where organisational structures change.

- Board: strategic oversight.
- Chief Executive: overall responsibility
- Executive Director: strategic delivery.
- Director of Housing Operations
- Head of Compliance: operational assurance.
- Compliance Manager Fire Asbestos & DMC: FRA programme and inspections.
- Housing Compliance Team/Specialists
- Asset teams: maintenance and repairs.
- Housing teams: tenant engagement.
- Contractors: compliance with safety rules.
- Employees: follow procedures and report risks.
- Tenants: maintain safe environments and follow guidance.

Governance arrangements ensure monitoring and reporting.

### **Executive Director – Strategy & Transformation**

#### **The Executive Director shall:**

- Hold overall executive accountability for ensuring effective governance arrangements exist for the management of fire safety.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient resources are available to enable compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure significant fire safety risks and areas of non-compliance are escalated appropriately.
- Ensure fire safety performance is subject to effective scrutiny through governance arrangements.
- Promote a positive safety culture and continuous improvement.

## **Director of Housing Operations**

### **The Director of Housing Operations shall:**

- Hold strategic responsibility for implementation of this policy.
- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place to achieve and maintain compliance with fire safety requirements across the housing portfolio.
- Ensure fire safety risks are monitored, managed, and reported.
- Review compliance performance and ensure appropriate corrective actions are implemented where required.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to support fire compliance programmes.

## **Head of Housing Compliance**

### **The Head of Housing Compliance shall:**

- Hold operational responsibility for implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.
- Ensure robust fire safety management systems and procedures are developed, maintained, and reviewed.
- Ensure inspection, testing, certification, and remedial programmes are established and maintained.
- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place for monitoring contractor competence and performance.
- Ensure risks, incidents and areas of non-compliance are investigated and managed appropriately.
- Ensure fire safety performance information is monitored and reported.
- Ensure policies remain current and reflect legislative and regulatory changes.
- Ensure effective communication with tenants and stakeholders regarding fire safety matters.

## **Compliance Manager**

### **The Compliance Manager shall:**

- Support implementation and ongoing management of this policy.
- Maintain oversight of fire inspection, testing, and remedial programmes.
- Monitor compliance against statutory requirements and organisational targets.
- Escalate overdue inspections, remedials, or compliance risks.
- Monitor contractor performance and quality assurance activities.
- Ensure compliance records, certification and associated documentation remain accurate and current.
- Deputise for the Head of Housing Compliance where required.

## **Repairs & Maintenance Team / Housing Compliance Team shall:**

- Monitor fire safety performance against agreed KPIs.
- Maintain compliance monitoring systems and records.

- Undertake audits and provide assurance regarding compliance performance.
- Review trends, incidents, and lessons learned.
- Prepare reports for senior management and governance groups.

## **Housing, Enforcement & Neighbourhood Services**

### **Housing Management Teams shall:**

- Support access arrangements for inspection, testing and remedial works and leading on escalating to legal, as per No Access Policy.
- Escalate tenancy management issues where access is refused.
- Support vulnerable tenants and identify barriers to access.
- Promote tenants' communication regarding fire safety.
- Escalate tenancy management issues, as per communal sterile areas policy or procedures.
- Support and provide suitable evidence such as photographs or statements where required.

## **Contractors and Competent Persons**

### **Contractors undertaking fire safety works shall:**

- Ensure all fire safety works are undertaken by competent people possessing suitable qualifications, training, experience, and accreditation.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, standards, policies, and safe systems of work.
- Ensure inspection, testing, certification, and remedial works are completed within required timescales & are of an electronic certificate PDF format.
- Report unsafe situations, incidents and defects immediately, included but not limited to known or suspected thefts.
- Participate in quality assurance and audit activities.
- Maintain competence and accreditation appropriate to duties undertaken.
- Ensure inspection, testing, certification, and remedial works are completed within required timescales & are of an electronic certificate PDF format documented within compliance assurance systems.

## **Planned/Reactive works investment, adaptations, Asset Management Team Teams & Contractors undertaking fire safety work shall:**

- Monitor fire safety performance against agreed KPIs.
- Maintain compliance monitoring systems and records.
- Undertake audits and provide assurance regarding compliance performance (within the in-house team)
- Review trends, incidents, and lessons learned.
- Prepare reports for senior management and governance groups.
- Approve training plans and CPD requirements

- Ensure inspection, testing, certification, and remedial works are completed within required timescales & are of an electronic certificate PDF format documented within compliance assurance systems.

## **All Employees**

### **All employees shall:**

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and associated procedures.
- Attend relevant training where required.
- Report on fire safety concerns, incidents, or unsafe conditions immediately.
- Cooperate with arrangements intended to maintain fire safety.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

## **6.0 TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Using the communication channels provided by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, information and guidance will be made available to support tenants in understanding fire safety and their responsibilities.

Tenants should report defects or concerns relating to landlord owned installations, equipment or systems as soon as they become aware of them.

Tenants must allow access to Bury Metropolitan Borough Council employees and appointed contractors to undertake fire safety inspection, testing, maintenance, remedial works and safety checks required to maintain statutory compliance and ensure fire installations remain safe.

Tenants must not knowingly use electrical installations or equipment that they suspect to be unsafe and should report concerns immediately. Tenants must adhere to any relevant supporting safety policies or requirements within their tenancy agreement.

Tenants must not undertake unauthorised alterations to their property or building within the must seek permission prior to carrying out any modifications or improvements that may impact fire safety. This includes any fire doors within the building or property.

Where approved fire safety works are undertaken by or on behalf of tenants, appropriate certification must be provided to Bury Council Housing Services following completion.

Responsibilities relating to fire safety within leasehold and shared ownership properties shall apply in accordance with lease agreements, repairing obligations and statutory duties.

## **7.0 OUTCOMES**

Risk to tenants, staff and others is minimised and statutory duties are met with regard to fire safety.

Bury Council Housing Services have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities regarding fire safety to meet both corporate and individual compliance in line with relevant legislation.

Effective management of fire safety including fire risk assessments where required. This will include all communal areas of residential buildings with an aim to reduce residual risk to low as reasonably practicable.

Effective management of actions outlined in fire risk assessments through reactive repairs and planned preventative programmes.

Servicing and maintenance in accordance with the relevant British Standards for fire safety equipment to be undertaken. This includes but is not limited to fire alarms; emergency lighting; fire extinguishers; fire doors; smoke vents; and sprinkler systems. These are to be maintained by competent persons; to remain in a fit and efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

A planned preventative maintenance programme linked to fire risk including upgrade and replacement programmes of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors within individual properties.

All staff, tenants, visitors and contractors are provided with clear and relevant information regarding fire risks and the measures taken to prevent fires occurring or to mitigate against the consequences of fire.

Bury Council Housing Services will monitor any new buildings within their stock to check they are designed in accordance with appropriate building regulations.

Staff are required to familiarise themselves with policy, procedures and arrangements for fire safety.

Staff are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training at regular intervals about fire safety.

## **8.0 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The main purpose of the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) process is to ensure that a methodical and structured approach is applied to assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the fire safety provisions within our housing stock and the fire hazards within these buildings.

Fire safety duties within Bury Council Housing Services buildings are governed by the following legislation:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)
- Fire Safety Act 2021

These laws collectively set out the responsibilities of Bury Council Housing Services buildings as the Responsible Person for the buildings it owns or manages.

### **8.1 Duty to Carry Out Fire Risk Assessments**

Bury Council Housing Services must ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is carried out for:

- all non-domestic areas, including offices, community spaces, plant rooms, and stores
- the common parts of all residential buildings (e.g., stairwells, corridors, lobbies)
- any building where Bury Council Housing Services has control of fire-safety measures

The assessment must identify fire hazards, evaluate risks to tenants, staff, and visitors, and determine the fire-safety measures required to keep people safe.

### **8.2 Scope of the Fire Risk Assessment**

In accordance with the Fire Safety Act 2021, the fire risk assessment must include:

- the structure of the building
- external walls, including cladding, insulation, balconies, and fixings
- flat entrance doors opening onto common areas
- all fire-safety systems and equipment
- means of escape and evacuation arrangements
- the needs of vulnerable tenants

### **8.3 Recording and Reviewing Assessments**

Bury Council Housing Services will:

- record the significant findings of each fire risk assessment
- maintain written records where the organisation employs five or more people or where licensing or regulatory requirements apply
- review the assessment regularly, and specifically when:
  - there is a material change to the building
  - occupancy or use changes
  - new information emerges about fire risks
  - a fire or near-miss incident occurs
- reviews must ensure that fire-safety measures remain appropriate and effective.

## **8.4 Competence**

Fire risk assessments must be completed by a competent person with appropriate training, experience, and understanding of the building type and associated fire risks.

Where necessary, Bury Council Housing Services will appoint external, independent, third-party fire specialists to ensure competence.

## **8.5 Responsibilities**

Bury Council Housing Services, as the Responsible Person, is accountable for:

- ensuring assessments are completed and kept up to date
- implementing the fire-safety measures identified
- maintaining fire-safety systems and equipment
- ensuring tenants receive relevant fire-safety information

Operational teams, contractors, and managing agents must support these duties in line with internal procedures.

## **9.0 FIRE PREVENTION**

Fire safety training and advice will be given to all staff on a regular basis including information on preventing fires. Regular testing of fire alarms and emergency lighting may be undertaken, internally in some circumstances. This may be demonstrated as part of toolbox talks or through role inductions and 'in house' training. All staff are required to complete mandatory e-learning Fire Safety Awareness module on a rotating cycle.

Fire safety advice and emergency procedures will be provided to tenants when they sign-up for a Bury Council Housing Services housing tenancy. This will be provided electronically or by paper copy.

Where more vulnerable tenants reside, i.e. extra care housing, Bury Council Housing Services will reinforce fire safety and prevention through regular resident engagement, and following any relevant fire safety incident or near miss.

### **9.1 Fire Safety in Communal Areas**

Communal areas must be kept sterile, i.e. nothing to be placed/kept/stored in communal areas including combustible materials and obstructions which could impede escape in an emergency. This may be supported by a communal sterile areas policy.

Any concerns regarding fire safety equipment or structure of the premises must be reported using the Bury Housing Enquiries contact centre on 0161 686 8000.

## **9.2 Electrical Safety**

Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) are scheduled to be carried out at least every 5 years to ensure that installations are safe and to reduce the risk of electrical fires.

Refer to the Electrical Safety Policy for more detailed information.

## **9.3 Gas Safety**

Annual gas safety checks and maintenance are carried out to Bury Council Housing Services gas appliances in accordance with Regulation (36) of the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998.

Refer to the Gas Safety Policy for more detailed information.

## **9.4 External Waste Containers & Refuse Bins**

External waste containers, refuse bins and industrial skips are a potential fire hazard to all buildings. We will therefore ensure that waste containers and refuse bins are suitably managed so far as is reasonably practicable in conjunction with waste services.

Internal waste chutes are also a potential fire risk and will be managed to ensure the risk posed from these is mitigated and managed so far as is reasonably practicable.

Whilst wilful fire raising cannot be fully preventable, actions can be taken to minimise the risk to the lowest practicable level.

Some of the issues that may increase the risk of wilful fire raising on Bury Council Housing Services premises include:

- premises that are unoccupied (either permanently or temporarily) or infrequently visited
- entrance security issues allowing easy access/egress to premises, e.g. communal doors being left open
- combustible materials within communal areas or stored/deposited next to buildings.

Basic security arrangements are in place where applicable, staff and tenants are advised to report any defects via the Bury Housing Enquiries contact centre on 0161 686 8000 or their neighbourhood officer.

## **9.5 Medical Oxygen**

Oxygen therapy means using an oxygen cylinder or a machine to breathe in air that contains more oxygen than normal. This can be a potential risk. Tenants are advised to inform Bury Council Housing Services, if they are using medical oxygen and a

Home Fire Safety Assessment can then be offered via Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

## **10.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM FIRE**

Fire evacuation procedures will be dependent on the construction and layout of the premises as well as the needs of the users within the premises. These are primarily either delayed evacuation (stay safe/put) or simultaneous evacuation (full evacuation) and will be based on recommendations in the Fire Risk Assessment for the premises.

A Person Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) may be used to assist in planning. PEEP's focus on individuals rather than buildings and consider the person at risk, potential ignition sources, potential for development of fire and the existing fire precautions.

## **11.0 FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

Fire safety equipment including fire alarms; emergency lighting; fire extinguishers; smoke vents; sprinkler systems and other equipment will be serviced and maintained in accordance with the relevant British Standards.

## **12.0 FIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE**

In all premises, standard fire safety signs will be displayed in the common escape routes, including fire action notices and no smoking notices. Where escape is possible in more than one direction, fire exit signs are typically provided to indicate the alternative escape routes. Fire Risk Assessments will provide recommendations on fire safety sign requirements and highlight any issues with current signage.

## **13.0 STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

The successful implementation of the policy and supporting procedures is dependent on the knowledge and skills of staff implementing it.

Regular training will be provided to relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach and ensure they carry out the roles and duties linked to the application of this policy.

## **14.0 MONITORING FIRE SAFETY**

The Housing Services Compliance Team will manage the process and outcomes relating to fire safety throughout all relevant properties owned and managed by Bury Council Housing Services.

## **15.0 EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS**

Bury Council Housing Services aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to the way we work and how we treat our tenants. We support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work as an employer and service provider.

Bury Council Housing Services will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors, suppliers or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010).

## **16.0 REVIEW**

This Fire Safety Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current, effective and reflects changes in legislation, regulation, standards, guidance, and organisational arrangements.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, organisational structure, following incidents, or where lessons learnt indicate a review is necessary.

Compliance with this policy and associated procedures will be monitored through performance reporting, internal and external audit activities, quality assurance processes, and governance arrangements.

The effectiveness of fire safety management arrangements, including training, competence and compliance performance, will be subject to ongoing review to support continual improvement.

Any significant changes to this policy will be subject to appropriate consultation and approval prior to implementation.

## **APPROVAL AND REVIEW**

|                                                      |                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Document owner</b>                                | <b>Head of Housing Compliance</b> |
| <b>Leadership Team Meeting – Director of Housing</b> | <b>Date approved 24/6/26</b>      |

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