

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Version Number	V4
Date of Current Version	August 2022
Approved by / Date	J McGrail / September 2022
Annual Review Date	August 2023*
Full Review Date	August 2023*

Executive Summary:
<p>We will ensure that homes and premises are safe and well-maintained, reducing the risk of fire. A named 'Responsible Person' will lead the management of fire safety and ensure compliance is achieved and maintained. The Responsible Person will develop the fire safety planned programme and accurate records will be held for each property owned and managed that is covered by the regulations. The records will include the requirements for fire risk assessments and all servicing, maintenance, inspections, and repair of active and passive fire safety measures that are in place - such as fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, and any other equipment relating to fire safety. Actions arising out of fire risk assessments will be addressed in line with the recommended timescales given and carried out by accredited, competent persons. We will periodically undertake an asset data review to ensure that fire safety data held against each property asset is accurate.</p>

Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)	Growth	
Author Name / Job Title	Wendy Stewart / Scott Lawson	
EIA Completed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Publication	Intranet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Notes:	<p>*This policy is currently undergoing a full review with an expected completion of March 2024.</p> <p>This policy will remain in place until the review is complete.</p>	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Rochdale Boroughwide Housings (RBH) approach to Fire Safety across the Society. The Policy details how RBH meets the fire safety requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and also the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (amended 2021), which came into effect in October 2006, hereafter referred to as the RR(FS)O 2005.
- 1.2 In addition to this, the Policy provides assurance that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with fire. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Fire Safety Procedures.

2 Context

- 2.1 This policy has been developed to ensure that RBH is compliant with all relevant fire safety legislation.
- 2.2 It has also been developed considering the final report following the independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety led by Dame Judith Hackitt.

3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 The promotion of fire safety should be a mutual objective for RBH employees, tenants, contractors and any other person or stakeholder who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services. The policy is to be used to ensure everyone understands the obligations placed on RBH to maintain a safe environment for all.
- 3.2 RBH will follow a systematic approach to the management of fire safety to ensure it meets the requirements set out in the RR(FS)O 2005 and other relevant legislation relating to fire safety. This is to ensure the safety of tenants, employees, and members of the public.
- 3.3 The key objectives are:
 - Understand the duties in managing fire safety
 - Fire safety management procedures and resources
 - Management, production and recording of 'suitable and sufficient' fire risk assessments (FRA)
 - The promotion of fire safety to tenants, employees and contractors
 - Training
 - The development and use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and the use of Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)
- 3.4 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Responsibility - We take responsibility where possible meeting the needs of people ensuring that all relevant properties are risk assessed and that we have a formal process in place to deliver any requirements identified in the fire risk assessment.

Equity - This policy will help ensure a fair application to all those who may be affected.

Democracy - The approach has been developed in partnership with members through the consultation with Repairs, Asset Management and Health and Safety and has been approved by EMT.

Pioneering - The policy supports a forward thinking approach to working with the relevant Enforcing Authorities and other partners to ensure we deliver the highest standard of both fire protection and fire prevention possible.

Responsibility - Through the policy we will explain clearly to any relevant party our fire safety approach. We will carry out a fire risk assessment at all relevant properties and if work is required ensure that this is prioritised in line with the action plan contained within the risk assessment. We will share information and respond proactively to any issues and deal with them as efficiently as we can.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Duties as an employer and landlord in managing fire safety

4.1.1 We will provide safe, well maintained homes and premises reducing the risk of a fire occurring.

4.1.2 A 'responsible person' will lead the management of fire safety and ensure compliance is achieved and maintained. They will develop the planned programme for fire safety.

4.1.3 Accurate records will be held for each property owned and managed that is covered by the RR(FS)O 2005. The records will detail the requirements for having a fire risk assessment and all servicing, maintenance, inspections and repair of active and passive fire safety measures that are (or are required to be) in place i.e. fire alarm systems, emergency lighting and any other equipment relating to fire safety.

4.1.4 Actions arising out of fire risk assessments will be addressed in line with the recommended timescales given and will be carried out by accredited, competent persons.

4.1.5 We will periodically undertake an asset data review to ensure that fire safety data held against each property assets is accurate and up to date.

4.2 Duties of employees in managing fire safety

We will ensure that they fully understand the obligations placed on them to ensure their own and others safety is maintained. All employees should ensure they have read the Fire Safety Policy and associated Procedures.

4.3 Fire safety management procedures and resources

4.3.1 A Fire Safety Group (FSG) is in place to monitor our robust approach to fire safety. The FSG report to the Home Safety Assurance Group (HSAG), ELT members attend this group.

4.3.2 Effective communication is essential in delivering the fire safety policy and we will therefore ensure that information relating to fire safety, fire prevention and fire protection will be made available to residents and building users via leaflets

and information on our website. We will publish FRA action plans for our high rise blocks on our website.

- 4.3.4 RBH is committed to working with the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service (GMFRS) to create safer places to live and work. Partnership working may include sharing of building information, including Fire risk assessments regular meetings and liaison with fire prevention officers, providing an easy referral process to RBH Residents for GMFRS Home safety Fire Safety Assessments and provision of building access for the development, training and practice of GMFRS staff.
- 4.3.5 RBH have robust processes and controls in place to ensure that consideration is made when letting homes or other premises to the suitability of the accommodation for the prospective tenant with regards to fire safety.
- 4.3.6 RBH have a robust process in place to gain access should any tenant or leaseholder refuse access to carry out essential fire safety related inspection and remedial works or where tenant vulnerability issues are known or identified to ensure compliance with this policy.

4.4 **Competent persons**

RBH will ensure that only suitably competent Contractors, Consultants and Engineers, certified by a UKAS accredited certification scheme or similarly recognised approved, are procured, and appointed to undertake works to passive and active fire safety systems. This process will support the Society's robust approach to ensuring The Golden Thread is maintained for audit purposes.

4.5 **Management, production and recording of 'suitable and sufficient' fire risk assessments (FRA)**

- 4.5.1 RBH will commission competent persons (In-House resource or external consultants depending on complexity of the scheme) to undertake suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments (FRA) with the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions.
- 4.5.2 We will ensure that each FRA completed has been through a robust quality assurance process whether carried out in house or via external consultants.
- 4.5.3 We will procure a UKAS accredited consultant to carry out 3rd party auditing of all fire safety activity.
- 4.5.4 We will ensure that all fire risk assessments are reviewed within their recommended review period, and that the type and frequency of an FRA carried out is appropriate to the building, but as a minimum, for all high-risk buildings we will complete an annual assessment and for all others we will carry out an FRA every 3 years, unless required sooner.
- 4.5.5 We will implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other preventive and protective measures identified by a fire risk assessment.
- 4.5.6 The fire risk assessment of a building will be reviewed following a fire, change in building use, changes to working practices that may affect fire safety, following refurbishment works to a building, or as and when required.

4.5.7 Robust processes are in place to address all significant findings identified by fire risk assessments, where practicable. Items will be within a programme of works to be completed within a reasonable time scale. These timescales will be detailed within the fire risk assessments held for each property. Each action will not be signed off until the evidence is received i.e photographic or certification, etc.

4.5.8 Implement a programme of regular property inspections to all premises with a fire risk assessment in place to audit that all required management actions are taking place. These inspections will be undertaken at regular intervals and records will be kept against each premises. This will include the integrity of compartmentation, including fire doors, ensuring common areas, including means of escape, are maintained free from obstructions. RBH will further ensure that all flats accessed via a common area have a working mains operated, interconnected smoke alarm and relevant door closer.

4.6 **The management and provision of fire safety equipment**

Programs in place for design, installation, commissioning, repair and maintenance of passive and active fire safety systems will be in accordance with all relevant British Standards and manufacturer's recommendations within buildings owned or managed.

4.7 **The promotion of fire safety to tenants, employees and contractors**

4.7.1 Information about fire safety, including prevention and protection measures is available to residents and building users via leaflets and signage. Up to date information on fire safety will be available on our website.

4.7.2 We will promote fire safety awareness to and engage with residents to ensure they are aware of the fire safety management procedures for their home and block.

4.7.3 We will ensure employees, contractors and other relevant parties are aware of our management approach in respect of fire safety.

4.7.4 Appropriate method statements will be agreed with contractors to ensure all relevant parties are fully aware of the extent to which works are being undertaken, access controlled and secured, so as not to endanger the safety of residents.

4.7.5 RBH will fully inspect, upon completion, all works on or near to fire protective measures to ensure works have not impacted or compromised the fire protection in place for the premises. Specific attention will be afforded to (but not limited to) breaches in compartmentation, fire stopping, service risers, means of escape, firefighting equipment and facilities.

4.8 **Hoarding**

4.8.1 Hoarding is a recognised mental health problem, which affects 2-5% of the population. RBH aims to identify all tenants who display signs of hoarding as part of our safeguarding process.

4.8.2 Hoarding will be identified using the "Clutter Image Rating Scale". The issue carries a number of fire risks, including impeding access by Fire and Rescue

services, contributing to the increased spread and severity of a fire and the increased likelihood of risk to adjoining properties.

4.8.3 Where hoarding is identified as an issue, procedures are in place to manage it. In terms of GMFRS Home Fire Safety Assessment which can be initiated by RBH staff, residents or their carers or family.

4.9 **Training**

4.9.1 We will ensure that we identify and provide employees managing this area of compliance suitable training to enable them to carry out their duties concerning fire safety. We will assess those in-house roles across the Society which require fire safety training. The training will be provided by a suitably accredited training provider.

4.9.2 We will also ensure that there are sufficient fire marshalls present at any relevant sites, the fire marshalls will be suitably trained and remunerated.

4.9.3 Training will include team briefings for those employees who need to have a basic understanding and awareness of fire safety but who may not be actively involved in the delivery of the fire safety policy. This will be basic fire safety awareness training.

4.9.4 On the job training will be provided to those employees who will be responsible for managing the programme of FRAs, FRA reviews, programmes of servicing and maintenance to passive and active fire safety systems and in maintaining the means of escape, as part of their job role.

4.9.5 Toolbox presentations will be delivered to RBH operatives and contractor partners in the form of appropriate fire safety training.

4.10 **How RBH manage non-compliance**

4.10.1 Any non-compliance issues identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Head of Asset Performance & Investment and the Director of Growth?

4.10.2 Director of Customer & Communities in the first instance.

4.10.3 The Director of Growth will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the operational team in order to address the non-compliance issue and report details of the same to the Executive Leadership Team.

4.10.4 The Executive Leadership Team will ensure the relevant Committee and Board are made aware of any non-compliance issues, so they can consider the implications and take action as appropriate.

4.10.5 In cases of a serious non-compliance issue the Executive Leadership Team and Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator.

4.11 **The development and use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**

Where appropriate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be carried out for customers or employees where their physical or mental health may

present a barrier to their timely escape from a building requiring a fire risk assessment. This PEEP will be reviewed as required by a competent person.

4.12 The development and use of Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)

- 4.12.1 Where appropriate Person-Centered Fire Risk Assessments (PCFRA) will be used to identify customers who are at higher risk from fire in their own accommodation – whether this is due to their behaviours or their ability to respond and escape from a fire. The risk assessment will include an action plan that specifies what steps will be taken to improve the safety of the vulnerable tenant.
- 4.12.2 The PCFRA will consider individuals on a case by case basis and take into account a person's ability to evacuate or understand their responsibility and their capacity.

4.13 Accountability and responsibility

- 4.13.1 As defined in the RR(FS)O 2005. *'the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control'*; is deemed the responsible person; the employer is represented by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive of RBH is therefore the overall 'Responsible Person' for ensuring that all fire safety matters are implemented.
- 4.13.2 The Director of Growth is responsible for the implementation of this policy and associated procedure and is responsible for reporting performance to the Board.
- 4.13.3 The CDM and Fire Risk Manager is responsible for developing and implementing the programme of passive and active fire safety work.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 All fire safety work is monitored in the Fire Safety System, reports are issued to the Fire Safety Group. Key performance data is submitted monthly to ELT. Homes Safety Meetings are held every 6 weeks to discuss Fire Safety. In turn, reports are submitted to the H&S Committee, Risk and Compliance, Audit Committee and finally Board.

6 Review

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Succeeding Together
- Sustainable Growth Delivery Plan
- Health & Safety Framework
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Fire Safety Procedures