

Evacuation Policy

1.0	SCOPE
	Purpose
1.1.	This Policy sets out whg's approach to determining the evacuation strategy within our multi- storey, multi-occupied buildings and sets out how this will be communicated. This is to ensure the safety of our customers, occupants and visitors to our multi-storey, multi-occupied buildings.
	Legal and regulatory framework
1.2.	Our responsibilities in relation to customer safety are set out in legislation and the key regulatory frameworks in which we need to be compliant with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Building Safety Act – the overarching legislative framework for building safety; • The Fire Safety Act – the regulatory requirement to manage and maintain safe buildings for occupants; and • The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 • The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
1.3.	Under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 whg has a responsibility to inform customers and remind them on an annual basis of the evacuation strategy for their building.
1.4.	The Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Assets is the 'responsible person' at whg for ensuring compliance with the above. The Director of Energy and Programme Management is the responsible person for building safety
1.5.	The Governance and Financial Viability Standard of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) states that Registered Providers, like whg, shall 'adhere to all relevant law'. The RSH's Home Standard requires Registered Providers to meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes, including fire safety. The Health and Safety Executive are the Building Safety Regulator who are responsible for ensuring conformity to the Building Safety Act and additional building safety regulations.
2.0	POLICY STATEMENT

	Introduction
2.1.	whg must identify and communicate the evacuation strategy for buildings to all occupants on an annual basis. In determining the evacuation strategy for each building whg should consider the design, construction, the external wall system, and the safety systems of the building; such as the detection systems and compartmentation. There are a number of recognised evacuation strategies that could be utilised depending on the nature of the building, the appetite of the organisation and engagement from customers; these include, Stay Put, Stay Safe and Simultaneous Evacuation.
2.1.1.	In the event of a change of circumstance within a building that requires the evacuation strategy to be amended whether permanently or temporarily this will be agreed by the building safety team and the 'Responsible Person'. A communication will be sent as soon as reasonably practicable notifying both the fire service and occupants of this change.
2.1.2.	Fire safety in homes owned or managed by whg is of the highest priority and we are committed to ensuring that colleagues, customers and other persons are protected. whg work in partnership with West Midlands Fire Service to ensure the safety of our customers, colleagues and other persons in the event of a fire. whg are committed to educating our customers about building safety and their responsibilities to reduce the risk of fire occurring in their homes or communal areas.
	Communications
2.2.	whg will be proactive in providing regular building safety advice such as leaflets, newsletters, posters and website information highlighting what customers should do in the event of a fire, their responsibilities to support building safety and how to contact us to raise a safety concern.
2.2.1.	Under the Building Safety Act each building over 18 metres must have a Resident Engagement Strategy developed which is a bespoke communication covering the safety systems and evacuation strategy within that building from October 2023.
3.0	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
3.1.	The Building Safety Group will regularly monitor and review issues relating to building safety which could impact upon a building's evacuation strategy, this group reporting into the Health and Safety Committee
3.2.	Teams and contractors across the business undertake routine checks of buildings to ensure they remain fit for purpose to support their evacuation

	strategy. These include Neighbourhood Impact Officer visits, Building Safety Team inspections and Fire Risk Assessments. These are supported by third party inspections by the Fire Service.
4.0	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
4.1	Individual evacuation plans consider the needs of all occupants and passive and active fire safety measures are designed to ensure people are not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics. We are able to make amendments to the detection infrastructure within the buildings such as increasing audible alarms and visual alarms in the event of an activation if required. All residents of flats are required to self-evacuate in the event of a full evacuate of the building being ordered, and in some circumstances, it may be necessary for the fire service to assist the resident to evacuate the building. We have completed an EIA assessment for the policy and identified the requirement to ensure there is an option for customers to request the availability of building safety information in alternative formats.
5.0	TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION
5.1.	All relevant colleagues from service areas will require appropriate training as required to demonstrate competence in building safety and application of the regulatory requirements. The design of the training will be co-ordinated with the Learning and Development Team which will include general fire and building safety information relevant for colleagues.
6.0	MONITOR AND REVIEW
6.1	This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Energy and Programme Management and reviewed every three years by the Building Safety Team and Responsible Person. It will be approved by Policy Group and provides assurance to the Health and Safety Committee and the Customer Experience Committee.
7.0	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
7.1	Documents, policies and procedures associated with this Policy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whg Fire Risk Assessment Policy • whg Health and Safety policy • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 • The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 • Whg Tenancy Agreement • Tenancy Management Policy • Building Safety Act 2022 • Fire Safety (England) Regulation 2022

Document author	Alex Smedley, Business Continuity Manager
Document owner	Paul Baker, Director of Energy and Programme Management
Legal advice	None
Consultation	Building Safety Team Responsible Person for Building Safety
Approved by	Policy Group June 2023
Review Date	June 2026
Corporate Plan aim	Deliver a strong business, fit for today and prepared for tomorrow
Equality Assessment	Completed 16/06/2023
Key changes made	Name of the document has changed to reflect the consideration that the previous 'Stay Safe' terminology may not be suitable in all circumstances for each building, as a result it is now an 'Evacuation Policy' will allows whg to amend permanently or temporally on a bespoke basis for each building. Document has also been updated in line with colleague and regulatory changes, including the introduction of the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Regulations.



Equality impact assessment (EIA) template

1. Title of the work and whg directorate (corporate level) that owns the work:

Business Strategy and Assets

2. Person completing the EIA:

Alex Smedley

3. EIA start date:

12/06/2023

4. Briefly describe the nature of the work, keeping the scope to the areas that are going to be assessed through this process:

As part of the Building Safety Act whg must ensure we engage with customers in high rise buildings and ensure they understand their responsibilities as responsible persons for minimising risk to the building and occupants.

5. Use this section to analyse the evidence collected and describe the likely impact the work will have on each protected characteristic group.

Where an impact is identified, explain the actions that will be taken to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunities;
- foster good relations.

Use the additional columns to highlight which groups will be positively or negatively impacted because of this work.

Protected characteristic group	Comment on the likely impact and actions taken in relation to this	Positive impact	Negative impact
Age	We will make use of existing equipment and infrastructure such as digital screens and social media to cascade building safety messages through communications, where print materials are used to convey building safety message we include an option for customers to contact whg to request the information in an alternative format such as large print. Digitally inclusive users will be able to access these via social media.	Y	N
Disability (physical and mental health)	<p>Individuals identified with sensory impairments are supported in being referred to or provided through a 3rd party with adaptations which would support them being notified in the event of a smoke detector being activated e.g. flashing beacons for deaf customers.</p> <p>Customers with other vulnerabilities such as using guide dogs would be asked to undertake familiarisation training with their assistance animal to ensure they know where an alternative place of relative safety is and are able to access it.</p> <p>Individuals with mobility, cognitive or sensory impairments who are unable to self-evacuate using the stairs in the event of a full evacuation of a high rise building are provided with information on what to do in the event of a fire, and alternative place of relative safety.</p>	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Material used in communications and information refers to generic terms such as customer, resident, occupant. The information utilised or required in the execution of the evacuation policy does not impede on gender reassignment	Y	N
Race	Terminology used in communications in kept in simplistic terms to allow those whose English is limited or speak an alternatively language to be able to understand it. Where groups or individuals are	Y	N

	identified the team will endeavour to provide information in the individuals preferred language or provide a mechanism to request this to be provided in an alternative format.		
Religion and belief	No implications of religion or belief in the delivery of the policy have been identified	Y	N
Sex (and gender)	Language used in communications is generic to occupants, residents, and customer. Information provided or requested does not capture or require information on sex/gender.	Y	N
Sexual orientation	Language used in communications is kept generically to terms such as customer, occupant and resident	Y	N
Pregnancy & maternity (parental leave)	Individual with a permanent or temporary change of circumstance that impedes their ability to self-evacuate can request a temporary change or a new vulnerability to be included in the resident profile that is available to the Fire Services under the Building Safety Act.	Y	N
Marriage & civil partnership	Terminology and language used in kept generic such as customer, occupant and resident. Information shared or captured does not require or refer to marriage or civil partnerships.	Y	N
Socio-economic (poverty) disadvantage (not a protected characteristic)	Information and communications that are required will be sent in multiple formats including printed newsletter, letters, delivered electronically through social media and on digital screens in high rise buildings.	Y	N

6. After considering the impact on protected groups, how should the work continue?

Option 1	Continue with work with no changes required.	The EIA demonstrates the work is robust and any possible negative outcomes have already been dealt with. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have already been taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Option 2	Continue with work but only after taking steps to prevent negative impacts.	The EIA identifies potentially adverse or disproportionately negative impacts or missed opportunities to promote equality. Before continuing, adjust the work or introduce mitigating actions to remove barriers or better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3	Continue with work although possible negative impact identified. (Provide additional detail in section 9)	The EIA identifies the potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. The decision may be made to continue despite potential adverse impact or evidence that it does not advance equality of opportunity because of other relevant factors. While continuing the work, all possible steps must be taken to mitigate impact. Record the justifications for continuing the work and update actions as they are completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Option 4	Stop the work and seek legal advice. (Provide additional detail in section 9)	The work may potentially cause unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped and removed or changed to address the identified issues. (Consultation with Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead required.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please describe the evidence gathering and consultation that has taken place to support this assessment. Please also describe how the potential impact will be monitored going forward.

Data capture on MIS against individuals within buildings where existing information has been captured by teams elsewhere in the business

We are currently consulting as part of the resident engagement strategy for high rise buildings to review with the resident engagement team to identify the preferred methods customers have of receiving and accessing information and communications.

Currently awaiting the decision for Government for further guidance and legislative implications on the potential requirement to undertake annual vulnerability data captures and development of evacuation plans for each occupant of high rise buildings.

8. Please highlight the actions that need to be taken to reduce the impact of any discrimination and to enhance the opportunities for equality, including when these actions will be carried out.

Action needed	Person completing the action	Target date	Completion date
Whilst this is not a currently requirement with the resident engagement strategy due by October and does not impact upon current work it could impact customer if their understanding is not clear within the communications available. Therefore, we will ensure customers have a	Alex Smedley	October 2023	

section within future building safety communications to request the information in alternative formats			

9. Provide rationale for continuation or stoppage - (ONLY COMPLETE IF OPTION 3/4 IS TICKED IN SECTION 6, otherwise mark N/A)

Whg has a legal requirement to provide information to customers on at least an annual basis, capture resident profile for the Building Safety Act and cascade to the Fire Service under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

10. Once sections 1–9 are complete, the work lead can sign this assessment. This will indicate that the EIA has complied with legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The EIA should remain ‘live’ and unsigned until the associated work is complete.

Name of work lead	Alex Smedley
Signature of work lead	A Smedley
Date completed	12/06/2023
Expected review date	30/10/2023

Annex 1 – Narrative

Annex 2 – Relevant attachments

Use this section to store attachments, links and other evidence that is related to the assessment and future monitoring.

EIA Review (to be completed at the agreed review date in section 10)

Review 1

Please explain how the work has been reviewed against the Public Sector Equality Duty obligations:

The full EIA predicted how the work would impact on people with protected characteristics. The review needs to ensure that the predictions made were accurate and that suitable steps have been put in place to ensure any negative outcomes have been mitigated and positive outcomes maximised.

Name of reviewer	
Signature	
Date review completed	
Date of next review	

Review 2

Please explain how the work has been reviewed against the public sector Equality Duty obligations:

The full EIA predicted how the work would impact on people with protected characteristics. The review needs to ensure that the predictions made were accurate and that suitable steps have been put in place to ensure any negative outcomes have been mitigated and positive outcomes maximised.

Name of reviewer	
Signature	
Date review completed	
Date of next review	

