

safe homes
safe places



Safety in your block

Austin House

Residents' Engagement Strategy



About this guide

Your safety is our number one priority. This booklet explains how we keep you safe in your block, how and when we will engage with you and the role you play in keeping yourself and your neighbours safe.

It has been designed to enhance your involvement in building safety decisions, using your experience to inform our decision making and improve engagement.

The information within this booklet has been developed through consultation events, workshops, surveys and one to one discussions with residents.

The Building Safety Act defines a resident as anyone who is over the age of 16 who lives in or owns a property within a high rise building.



If you have any concerns or need to raise fire safety repairs in your block please contact us by calling:

0300 555 6666

In an emergency you should always call the emergency services on 999

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whg – www.whg.uk.com

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West Midlands Fire Service – www.wmfs.net

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Walsall Council – www.walsall.gov.uk

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Building Safety Regulator – www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/regulator.htm



Safety measures in Austin House



65 flats
Built in 1967



17 floors



1 stairwell



**2 lifts, stopping
at even/odd
floors**

The stairwell within your building is/are protected from the spread of fire and smoke from elsewhere through compartmentation of the floors, walls, doors and ceilings.

You must keep stairwells and corridors clear of obstructions that might stop the fire service from entering or you from evacuating.

Your flat has a fire door, along with fire doors on the access to the stairwell. These will keep a fire contained within the area where it starts.

Your flat is fitted with a smoke alarm. There are also detectors within the communal areas of the building that automatically alert the fire service if smoke is detected.



We carry out cyclical checks or reviews on the key safety systems, structural stability and documentation relating to your building. These include:

- Lightning protection
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Emergency lighting
- Communal fire doors
- Flat entrance fire doors
- Dry risers
- Smoke/heat detectors
- Safety case report



If you wish to request copies of these please contact
firesafety@whgrp.co.uk

The evacuation guidance for your building

Your block has a 'stay safe' approach in the event of a fire. This means in the event there is a fire elsewhere in the building you are able to stay in your home as long as you feel safe to do so.

If there is a fire in your flat, you should alert everyone in your flat and leave the building, closing all doors behind you. When safe to do so you should dial **999** and ask for the fire service.

If you smell smoke, see a fire, feel unsafe or are instructed by the fire service to leave, you should get out and stay out.

Who is responsible for safety in your building?



whg is responsible for:

- Ensuring each property is fitted with a smoke alarm
- Inspecting, maintaining and replacing fire doors
- Ensuring emergency lighting is present on escape routes at all times
- Testing safety systems
- Working with partner organisations like West Midlands Fire Service to keep you and your building safe



As residents of a high rise residential building, you play a critical role in upholding safety standards for yourself, your neighbours, and any visitors.

You are responsible for:

- Making sure your flat is kept safe and escape routes are clear
- Not damaging, removing or interfering with relevant safety items, such as fire doors, signage, or smoke alarms
- Using bins and bin chutes to safely dispose of rubbish
- Reporting any issues or concerns to whg

More fire safety information is available online at:
www.whg.uk.com



Who is responsible for safety in your building? (cont.)

Talking to you about building safety

For some building safety matters we'll need to find out more from you. This might mean consulting with you or asking you to take part in a survey.

We'll consult with you when:

1. Proposing changes to your building that could impact on you (such as sprinkler installation or compartmentation work)
2. Updating or amending building safety procedures (such as changes to evacuation strategy)
3. Carrying out safety refurbishment works to your building including fire door or bin chute replacement and emergency lighting upgrades.
4. Following a review of the building risks, management and making a building safety decision.

Depending on the type of building safety change and length of work, we will communicate to you through a variety of different channels including:

- Letters and noticeboards
- Face to face visits and workshops
- Text messaging and phone calls
- Social media

Where building safety work is needed we will provide you with information relating to:

- Why the work is required
- Estimate timescales for completion
- Areas of the building affected
- Who will carry out the work
- steps we will take to mitigate the disruption

We will also seek your views to ensure any disruption during the work are limited where appropriate.

This includes providing you with four weeks' notice of building safety work for us to collect, review and feedback on your views.

Information collected will be stored and handled in line with our GDPR. Our Privacy Policy can be viewed online at: whg.uk.com/privacy-policy/

There may be some circumstances when work is required to take place without consultation. This could include emergency repairs or where disruption may last for less than one day as it would not be practical to consult. This is to ensure your safety.

You can request copies of information in multi-formats including:

- Large print
- Different languages
- Braille

Feedback on proposed building safety changes and decisions will be collected by the relevant team overseeing works on the building; this will usually be the Customer Voice Team, Investment Team or Building Safety Team. We will provide feedback on any changes made following the customer engagement via letters, noticeboard updates and face to face visits.



As the owners of Austin House, whg are the Principle Accountable Person (PAP) under the Building Safety Act 2022. The PAP is responsible for ensuring that a resident engagement strategy is developed, that whg acts in accordance with the strategy and it is regularly kept under review. We have a number of teams who are involved in keeping your block safe:

Building Safety Team

- Carry out regular visits and review the safety systems within your building
- Carry out quarterly inspections of the communal fire doors
- Annual inspections of flat entrance doors
- Oversee the cyclical testing and maintenance of lifts, door entry, alarms and other key safety systems
- Replace damaged fire doors and undertake any compartmentation work
- Undertake electrical inspections of communal areas and flats
- Are the point of contact with West Midlands Fire Service for managing the safety of your block
- Investigate building safety issues and occurrence reports

Neighbourhood Services

- Manage the communal areas.
- Conduct daily inspections of your building during the week to ensure it is kept clean and safe
- Manage grounds maintenance and cleaning services.

Community Housing Officers

- Support customers with their tenancy
- Raise any concerns on behalf of customers regarding building safety

Home Maintenance Services

- Ensure your home is well-maintained and complete repairs we are responsible for in your home
- Repair any empty properties within your building ready for new customers

Asset Investment Team

- Arrange and oversee major works in your building that are undertaken by contractors, including communal decorating and full block kitchen, bathroom and bin chute replacements

Complaints Team

- Handle, investigate and manage customer complaints.

As a customer living in a high rise building you can also use this process to raise a 'relevant complaint' to whg about building safety which will be dealt with in accordance with our complaints procedure.

The building safety regulator defines this as a complaint relating to:

- Structural failure – Such as excessing cracking or failure of foundations
- Spread of fire – Such as compartmentation breaches or missing fire doors
- The performance of whg in managing either of the above issues



We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days, respond to you within 10 working days and aim to complete our review in 20 working days. If you are not satisfied with our response you can raise your concern to the building safety regulator. For full details of our complaints procedure please visit **www.whg.uk.com**. To raise a concern or make a relevant complaint about building safety contact us on **0300 555 6666**.

Vulnerable residents



We are reaching out to vulnerable and disabled residents to offer evacuation advice in case of a fire or emergency, for example, if you have limited mobility, sight or hearing loss. This is so that we can support you to be better prepared in an emergency.

If you, or someone you know, needs help to evacuate, please inform us and we will create a residential personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) for that person. This PEEP will outline the steps a customer should take in the event of an evacuation – this information will be made available to the fire service with your consent.

Did you know?

You can also complete a safe and well referral to West Midlands Fire Service for yourself or someone you care for
www.wmfs.net/our-services/safe-and-well/

How we manage safety in your building

Our Building Safety Team visit your building regularly to check on the safety systems and answer any questions you may have. We have independent third-party checks, such as those carried out on the alarm system and on lifts within your building, to ensure they are being managed safely and to identify any issues as soon as possible.

We regularly meet with and share information on the building with West Midlands Fire Service. We also work in partnership with other housing providers to identify and reduce building safety risks.

We are committed to providing you with regular information on building safety throughout the year on our website, our social media channels via our customer e-newsletter and in Round Your Way magazine.

We have a building safety customer focus group. If you would like to get involved please contact **customervoice@whgrp.co.uk**

We will review and record participation and engagement levels across building safety on an annual basis or after each resident consultation piece to ensure we are using measures to reach and engage with as wide a variety of residents as possible.

For more information on building safety, or to request access to any of the safety documents for where you live – like details of undertaken works, fire risk assessments or compliance testing records – please contact us on **0300 555 6666**.

A physical copy of this booklet will be shared with every customer in the building each time it is updated. It will also be made available on both the customer portal and whg's website where accessibility tools are available. New customers to the building will be provided with a copy of this booklet as part of their tenancy induction process.

How we manage safety in your building (cont.)

This strategy booklet will be reviewed at least every two years to ensure it remains effective. We will also review this booklet following a submission of any structural or fire safety incidents or after significant materials alteration to the building.

Each strategy consultation will last a minimum of four weeks for customers to provide feedback on the changes proposed.







This strategy booklet will be provided to the BSR when requested and as part of the process for obtaining the building assessment certificate

If you have any questions about anything in this guide, please get in touch

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0300 555 6666



Email:
enquiries@whgrp.co.uk



Website:
www.whg.uk.com

whg is the trading name of Walsall Housing Group comprising Walsall Housing Group Limited, company registration number 04015633, registered provider number L4389, registered charity number 1108779 and all its subsidiaries. The company and all its subsidiaries are registered in England and Wales at 100 Hatherton Street, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 1AB



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