

# Fire Risk Assessment Policy

<b>1.0</b>	<b>SCOPE</b>
	<b>Purpose</b>
1.1	This document sets out our policy for keeping our customers and others safe by ensuring we meet our legal and regulatory obligations to carry out appropriate fire risk assessments (FRA). We will ensure that resulting actions are carried out within reasonable timescales.
1.2	These obligations apply to the common parts of multi-occupancy accommodation, external walls or other buildings owned by us where we have a legal obligation as the landlord to ensure fire safety and keep our customers, colleagues, contractors and visitors safe.
	<b>Legal and regulatory framework</b>
1.3	Our responsibilities in relation to FRA are set out in legislation. We must comply with the <u>Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005</u> (FSO) as amended by the <u>Fire Safety Act 2021</u> and the <u>Housing Act 2004</u> for purpose-built blocks of flats. Under FSO it is a requirement for landlords to ensure that a suitable and sufficient FRA is undertaken to all common areas in blocks of flats, maisonettes and the common areas of homes of multiple occupancy. These assessments must be undertaken by a competent person with the ‘training and experience or knowledge and other qualities’.
1.4	The <u>Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022</u> impose duties on you if you are the Responsible Person for any building which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains two or more sets of domestic premises</li> <li>• Contains common parts through which residents would need to evacuate in the case of an emergency</li> </ul>
1.5	Walsall Housing Group Limited is the ‘Responsible Person’ as defined by FSO. The Director of Assets – Building Safety acts as the person responsible for ensuring compliance with the FSO within whg.
1.6	The <u>Governance and Financial Viability Standard</u> of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) states that Registered Providers, like whg, shall ‘adhere to all relevant law’.
1.7	The <u>RSH’s Safety and Quality Standard</u> requires Registered Providers to meet all applicable statutory requirements for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes, including fire safety.
1.8	Registered Providers are subject to regulatory intervention and enforcement action if found to have not complied with the <u>Consumer Standards 2024</u> . The ‘Safety and Quality Standard’ specifically relates to this policy. It requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to customers.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>POLICY STATEMENT</b>
	<b>Systematic regime</b>

2.1	We will undertake a systematic regime carrying out FRA of common areas by suitably competent persons to all our multi-occupied buildings and any building defined by regulatory requirement to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable the fire risks and hazards are residual.
2.2	FRA are compiled following the principles of a risk assessment priority grading that is considered to present a suitable level of fire safety taking in account the complexity of the building, proposed occupancy levels and local conditions.
2.3	We will take prompt action to manage or remove any fire risks or hazards identified during a FRA. Actions are tracked to completion and evidenced where appropriate with a post completion certificate and photographs.
2.4	Any issues that may compromise fire safety within our blocks of flats identified by colleagues, customers, contractors and visitors will be reported, when noted, and acted upon in accordance with service area policy and procedures.
	<b>whg's responsibility</b>
2.5	Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the FSO rests with the accountable person and the Principal Accountable Person for Buildings over 18m. The Principal Accountable Person for these buildings is Walsall Housing Group Limited.
2.6	In all multi-occupied residential buildings with 2 or more sets of domestic premises, responsible persons are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant fire safety instructions to our customers, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what a customer must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.</li> <li>• Provide customers with information relating to the importance of fire doors in fire safety.</li> </ul>
2.7	In residential buildings with storeys over 11 metres in height, responsible persons are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake quarterly checks of all fire doors in the common parts</li> <li>• Undertake annual checks of all flat entrance doors that lead onto a building's common parts</li> </ul>
2.8	In high-rise residential buildings (18 metres or at least seven storeys), responsible persons are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building plans: provide their local Fire and Rescue Service with up-to-date electronic building floor plans and to place a hard copy of these plans, alongside a single page building plan which identifies key firefighting equipment, in a secure information box on site</li> <li>• External wall systems: provide to their local Fire and Rescue Service information about the design and materials of a high-rise building's external wall system and to inform the Fire and Rescue Service of any material changes to these walls.</li> <li>• Lifts and other key firefighting equipment: undertake monthly checks on the operation of lifts intended for use by firefighters, and evacuation lifts in their building and check the functionality of other key pieces of firefighting equipment.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information boxes: install and maintain a secure information box in their building. This box must contain the name and contact details of the Responsible Person and hard copies of the building floor plans.</li> <li>Wayfinding signage: install signage visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.</li> </ul>
2.9	The FRA will detail the composition of external walls, and a visual inspection of the external walls will be undertaken, taking action to mitigate any risk where applicable where further specialist assessment of the external wall make-up is required this should be requested as part of the FRA.
2.10	The FRA may identify the need to carry out a more detailed fire risk appraisal of the external wall system under PAS9980:2022 if, at the time of the FRA it is unclear of the make-up and material type of the external wall system with regard to promoting fire spread.
2.11	Where significant findings are identified an action plan(s) will be created following the FRA detailing what work is required, which service area is responsible and the timescales that any remedial works will be completed by.
2.12	We will work closely with all stakeholders affected by this policy particularly the Fire Service; West Midlands Fire Service are whg's Primary Authority Partner and can offer assured advice and guidance on how to ensure compliance with current fire safety standards. whg will also review and act up on any findings following inspections carried out by the Fire Service.
2.13	On completion of the FRA there will be a statement indicating what the overall risk to life is from a fire at the premises. The levels are outlined below as taken from BS 9792:2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trivial</li> <li>Tolerable</li> <li>Moderate</li> <li>Substantial</li> <li>Intolerable</li> </ul>
2.14	whg will only carry out FRA where there is an internal communal escape route and/or is a place of work
	<b>Customer engagement</b>
2.15	We will be proactive in providing general fire safety advice e.g. leaflets, sign up packs and website links to customers. This is to inform customers on what to do in the event of a fire in their block of flats and other fire safety issues including the importance of fire doors in fire safety.
2.16	We will provide a range of ways for customers to raise any fire or other safety concerns with us.
2.17	We will identify a responsible person (duty holder) who will have responsibility for the oversight of remedial actions that have been identified on FRA.
2.18	Customers are to take necessary fire precautions within their flat and keep up to date with our evacuation policy and fire safety guidance. Fire action notices are provided

	within the common escape routes and provide residents with actions they should take in the event of fire.
	<b>Balconies</b>
2.19	We adopt a zero-tolerance approach to the storage of all potential ignition sources and fuels on flat balcony areas (paper, wood, oils, gasoline, gas canisters, rubber, alcohol, acetone, methanol). Balconies are visually inspected where possible during the fire risk assessment and we will cyclically produce communications for customers in the form of posters, media posts, newsletters and leaflets outlining the use of these spaces.
	<b>Light electric vehicles (LEV)</b>
2.20	Internal corridors, hallways, landings and stairwells must be kept free of any obstruction including LEV. A zero-tolerance approach to fire safety is operated and any obstruction will be removed.
2.21	Where there is a potential breach of tenancy, we will work with customers to give them the opportunity to put the issue right before considering other responses. This will be in accordance with the Tenancy Management Policy.
	<b>Asset definition</b>
2.22	We have categorised the types of premises, inclusive of community rooms, against their associated level of fire risk. The three categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Category 1</b> – Multi storey blocks (4 floors or more), Offices, Community Rooms and Wellbeing Schemes with communal rooms</li> <li>• <b>Category 2</b> – Low Rise blocks</li> <li>• <b>Category 3</b> – Maisonettes with no internal communal areas</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>
	<b>Fire risk assessments</b>
3.1	The categories of buildings identified in section 2.1 have been risk rated as follows, for the appropriate risk assessment criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Category 1</b> - Period not exceeding 12 months from previous assessment.</li> <li>• <b>Category 2</b> - Period not exceeding 24 months from previous assessment.</li> <li>• <b>Category 3</b> - Period not exceeding 60 months from previous assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Assessment will be due on the last calendar day of the month it is due e.g. May assessments will be due on 31 May.</p>
	<b>Remedial works action plans</b>
3.2	Depending on the outcome of the FRA, where remedial actions are required, an action plan comprising the following business areas will be created: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Maintenance Services</li> <li>• Community Housing</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Services</li> <li>• Asset Investment</li> <li>• Building Safety</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> </ul>
3.3	We will regularly monitor, audit and report to the Building Safety Entity Group and the Health and Safety Committee, with our performance and risk management frameworks.
3.4	FRA actions are captured and monitored through current Power BI reporting. All outstanding assessments and actions are part of the Group Executive customer safety key performance indicator (KPI) suite.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>
4.1	FRA consider the general needs of occupants, and the passive and active fire safety measures are designed to ensure people are not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION</b>
5.1	Article 21 of the FSO requires an employer to ensure their employees are provided with adequate fire safety training.
5.2	FRA will be undertaken by a competent person with the ‘training and experience or knowledge and other qualities’. British Standard 8674 outlines the minimum required competencies for fire risk assessors, and whg will ensure compliance with these requirements.
5.3	Colleagues with responsibility for specifying and carrying out remedial works associated with FRA will receive additional bespoke training as necessary to ensure competence.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>MONITOR AND REVIEW</b>
6.1	This policy will be monitored by the Director of Assets – Building Safety and reviewed annually, by the Assets and Investment Panel to ensure the policy reflects any fundamental changes to the FSO, the Building Safety Act 2022 or the government guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>
7.1	Documents, policies and procedures associated with this policy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whg Repairs Policy</li> <li>• whg Tenancy Agreement</li> <li>• whg Tenancy Management Policy</li> <li>• whg Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• whg Building Safety Act Policy</li> <li>• whg Evacuation Policy</li> </ul>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Glossary</b>
8.1	The following terms and acronyms have been used within this policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FRA</b> – Fire Risk Assessment(s)</li> <li>• <b>FSO</b> – Fire Safety Order – The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005</li> <li>• <b>LEV</b> – Light electric vehicles</li> <li>• <b>RSH</b> – Regulator of Social Housing</li> </ul>

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