



Fire Policy

November 2024

Housing Services

Stroud District Council

Ebley Mill

Stroud

GL5 4UB

Email: customer.services@stroud.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/>

Telephone: 01453 766321

Document Responsibility		
Name	Document title	Service
Jonathan McKinlay	Fire Policy	Housing Services

Document Version Control			
Date	Version	Issued by	Summary of changes
November 2024	1.0	Jonathan McKinlay	N/A

Policy Review			
Updating frequency	Review date	Person responsible	Service
Every 3 years or if there is a change in relevant legislation	November 2027	Safety, Health and Compliance Manager	Housing Services

Document Review and Approvals		
Name	Action	Date
Housing Committee	Consulted	26 November 2024

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope

- (a) Stroud District Council (SDC) are accountable for tenant fire safety as a registered landlord and provider for social housing and are responsible for fulfilling its responsibilities to manage tenant fire safety to ensure:
- Tenants feel safe in their homes.
 - The requirement of the Safety and Quality standard is discharged/met.
 - Relevant fire safety legislation is complied with.
- (b) This policy is applicable to all residential blocks and communal areas specifically under the management of SDC where SDC is the landlord. There is a separate Fire Safety Policy for workplaces and non-residential properties under the control of SDC.
- (c) Fire is a significant hazard to the safety of both buildings and their occupants. SDC is committed to ensuring fire safety is managed through the provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate fire precautions and management systems to enable the safe evacuation of employees, tenants, and visitors, to minimise fire damage, should a fire occur.
- (d) This Policy describes the fire precautions and management arrangements SDC has put in place to ensure that the risk of fire is effectively managed and delivers compliance with all applicable fire safety legislation and industry best practice.

2 REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING'S CONSUMER STANDARDS

- (a) The required outcomes and expectations of the Regulator are set out in the regulatory standards which were updated in 2024 following the passing of the Social Housing Regulation Act in 2023.
- (b) As the registered provider, SDC is accountable for overall tenant fire safety and are responsible for managing tenant fire safety to ensure tenants feel safe in their homes and the requirement of the Safety and Quality Standard duty is discharged/met.

3 STRATEGIC INTENTION

SDC takes its responsibility to manage the risk from fires within its managed housing stock very seriously and strive to reduce this risk through:

- (a) Defined roles and responsibilities for fire safety, including individual responsibilities.
- (b) Compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021 and any other relevant legislation.

- (c) Ensuring fire safety is included when designing and constructing new and/or refurbishment projects.
- (d) Ensuring that appropriate funding is allocated where deficiencies in fire safety measures are identified and for significant issues the Housing Improvement Group and Housing Committee are consulted.
- (e) A comprehensive programme of fire risk assessments, undertaken by competent person(s) biennial.
- (f) Ensuring suitable and sufficient fire precautions and management systems are in place.
- (g) A programme of regular safety inspections based on building and communal risk.
- (h) Providing regular fire safety awareness updates to residents and employees yearly, unless significant changes to fire safety have occurred sooner.
- (i) Making information on the specific fire safety arrangements in each residential building of two or more domestic properties readily available to:
- (j) Residents to ensure they are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fire is minimised.
- (k) Fostering and maintaining good working relationships with partner services and relevant stakeholders, including Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service.
- (l) Monitoring and oversight of fire safety risk by the governing body and senior housing managers, including monitoring progress on remedial actions arising from fire risk assessments.

4 SPECIFIC FIRE SAFETY OBJECTIVES

To ensure tenants feel safe in their homes and the risk from fires is effectively managed, SDC have identified a number of objectives for all its managed housing stock of domestic properties with communal areas:

- (a) SDC will ensure that fire risk assessments are undertaken by competent persons in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and current standards.
- (b) Fire safety measures are included in all new construction projects, existing building renovations and improvement programs undertaken on its building portfolio.
- (c) Fire safety risks posed by the structure and external walls (including cladding, balconies and windows and front doors) are assessed in line with current standards.
- (d) The ongoing suitability and effectiveness of current fire safety measures in buildings classed as 'High Risk' are reviewed at least annually or after a fire incident, as part of the overall fire risk assessment process.

- (e) The ongoing suitability and effectiveness of current fire safety measures in buildings classed as 'Low Risk' are reviewed biennial or after a fire incident, as part of the overall fire risk assessment process
- (f) Fire safety priorities, improvement areas and areas of non-compliance are identified, monitored, and actioned within target timescales.
- (g) All relevant residential buildings under its control will, when and where, have adequate fire warning systems, signs, means of escape and fire-fighting equipment.
- (h) All fire safety precautions are inspected, maintained, serviced, and tested to ensure they are always fully operational, in accordance with statutory requirements and manufacturer's instructions.
- (i) Regular inspections are undertaken of communal areas to ensure good housekeeping practices are in place to minimise the risk and spread of fire.
- (j) Gas and electrical safety inspections are undertaken in each residential property where SDC is the landlord to ensure that these do not present a fire risk to the tenant or building.
- (k) All fire incidents are reported using the health and safety system (My Compliance) form TS-Fire, logged, investigated, and discussed at management meetings.
- (l) Relevant employees are provided with the necessary skills and training to undertake their duties defined in this policy in relation to fire safety.
- (m) Suitable and sufficient records are kept and available to be audited at appropriate intervals.
- (n) It keeps up to date with changing legislation and fire mitigation measures.

5 CAPITAL PROJECTS

- (a) Any capital programmes and extensive renovation work undertaken will include fire safety measures in any design or proposed changes to an existing building. The fire risk assessment will need to be reviewed and revised.
- (b) Specific requirements have been introduced for high rise residential buildings that are yet to be built requiring fire statements as part of the planning process.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fire-safety-and-high-rise-residential-buildings-from-1-august-2021>

6 ASSET MANAGEMENT TEAM/ PROPERTY CARE

- (a) Any repair work will need to consider fire safety measures and not compromise escape routes or fire detection and alarm systems, either when being undertaken in-house or by contractors.
- (b) Certain repair work will need to meet fire safety standards where fire integrity may be affected.

7 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The following section explains the day-to-day arrangements that SDC have in place to minimise the risk of fire. SDC have a duty, as the registered housing provider, under fire safety legislation to carry out fire risk assessments of all communal area of residential properties comprising of two or more domestic flats.

The day-to-day arrangements to managing the risks of fire is underpinned by:

- (a) A programme of comprehensive fire risk assessments, including
- (b) Assessing the risk from fire, including a building's structure, the external walls (including doors or windows in those walls, anything attached to the exterior of those walls such as balconies) and any common parts, plus all doors between the domestic premises and common parts.
- (c) Evaluating the adequacy of existing fire protection measures and identifying additional measures that minimise the risk of fires starting and spreading.
- (d) Assessing compliance with all relevant legislation and relevant standards.
- (e) The provision and maintenance of appropriate fire detection, alarm systems, emergency lighting, fire-fighting equipment (where in place), evacuation signage, appropriate means of escape and protected escape routes in communal areas of residential properties.
- (f) The provision of essential training and fire safety information for all employees and more specifically residents.
- (g) Appropriate instruction for contractors and other visitors on the action to be taken in the event of a fire in any property they may be working in.
- (h) Reporting, reviewing and investigation of all fire related incidents and measures put in place to prevent a recurrence, where possible.
- (i) Zero-tolerance relating to the storing of items by residents in communal areas.
- (j) Strict enforcement of no-smoking in communal areas.

The following fire doors apply to buildings **over 11 metres in height**:

- (a) Check all fire doors in communal areas of the building at least every 3-months
- (b) Check every flat entrance door within the building annually.

8 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

The level and complexity of any fire risk assessment undertaken in residential buildings, comprising of a communal area with more than two flats, managed by SDC varies dependant on risk.

A schedule of fire risk assessments has been drawn up and these will be undertaken by competent persons or third parties every two years.

A fire risk assessment must:

- (a) Identify the fire hazards, including those posed by the structure of the walls, doors, and windows.
- (b) Identify people at risk.
- (c) Evaluate, remove, or reduce the risks.
- (d) Record findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training.
- (e) Be reviewed and as per schedule, in particular when something changes that could affect fire safety or where there is no longer valid e.g. a change in:
 - occupancy;
 - the building;
 - nature of contents or after

a fire. Fire risk assessments will include:

- (a) The structural ability of the building and individual flat to withstand fire, prevent fire spread and contain a fire in a single flat, where Stay Put fire evacuation policy is in place.
- (b) Emergency routes and exits.
- (c) Fire detection and warning systems.
- (d) Firefighting equipment.
- (e) The removal or safe storage of dangerous substances.
- (f) Details of the emergency fire evacuation strategy.
- (g) Details of any vulnerable residents, where known, with temporary or permanent disabilities, including mobility issues or sensory impairment(s).
- (h) Providing information to residents, employees, and other people on the premises.
- (i) Fire safety training for employees and Fire Wardens (where in place) for staffed residential properties

Actions arising from any fire risk assessment will be acted upon according to the priority stated in the FRA. Timescales for remedial actions must be within:

- (a) High Priority – 1 month
- (b) Medium Priority – 6 months
- (c) Low Priority – 1 year

9 REPORTING OF FIRE INCIDENTS

- (a) Any incidents of fire, regardless of how minor, must be reported. Incidents must be investigated, and lessons learnt to prevent a recurrence. This must be loaded onto the safety management system.
- (b) SDC will liaise with external emergency services, where required, to minimise the potential risks that could arise from activities where there is a reportable incident related to fire within properties that they manage.

10 MONITORING

The effectiveness and adherence of this policy will be monitored and reported on:

- (c) Day-to-day monitoring of progress by compliance team
- (d) Monthly reporting on FRA actions progress to senior officers.
- (e) Quarterly reporting to Council, senior leadership.

11 STAY PUT POLICY

- (a) SDC operate a 'Stay Put-Stay Safe' policy in its residential buildings containing self-contained flats and communal areas. This requires occupants not directly affected by any fire to stay in their flat unless they are in a communal area, then they should use the fire exit where appropriate. This is regularly reviewed as part of the biennial fire risk assessment review to ensure it is the safest strategy to employ. The 'Stay Put' policy may change during a major fire event and this decision will be managed by the Incident Commander from the fire service dealing with the emergency situation at the time.
- (b) Additionally, SDC have internal procedures in place for responding to a fire incident in any of its properties, including procedures for liaising with the fire service on arrival and notifying them of any special risks or vulnerable residents.

12 KEEPING RECORDS -FIRE LOGBOOK

- (a) SDC keep records of tests, maintenance and safety training relating to each residential building with a communal area of two or more flats. An effective way of demonstrating compliance is to keep records in a well-maintained fire logbook.
- (b) SDC keep records up to date and readily available for inspection by any visiting authority when required. Records that will be kept include:
 - Fire alarm system - record of testing, maintenance, and false alarms.
 - Emergency lighting – record of testing and maintenance.

- Portable fire-fighting equipment – a record of maintenance and checking (fire extinguishers, fire blankets etc.).
- A record of any visits by the Fire Service or other enforcing authorities.
- Dry/wet riser – 6th monthly visual inspection of all the elements of the dry riser and a detailed inspection and servicing done by a professional every year.
- Dry/wet riser - record of dry/wet riser test and inspection. All records of servicing by nominated contracted servicing companies will be retained and kept.

13 SMOKING

- (a) Smoking is not permitted in communal areas, doorways and refuse areas. Signage is displayed informing residents of this.

14 KEY LEGISLATION

- (a) **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO 2005)** brought together different pieces of fire legislation. It applies to all non-domestic premises, including communal areas of residential buildings with multiple homes. RRFSO 2005 designates those in control of premises as the responsible person for fire safety and they have a duty to undertake assessments and manage risks. RRFSO 2005 is enforced by the Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- (b) **The Fire Safety Act 2021** sets out to amend the RRFSO 2005 and is designed to **ensure that people “feel safe in their own homes and that a tragedy like the Grenfell Tower fire never happens again”** in England. The Act clarifies that for any building containing two or more sets of domestic premises the RRFSO 2005 applies to the building’s structure and external walls and any common parts, including the front doors of residential areas. It also clarifies that references to external walls in the RRFSO 2005 include “doors or windows in those walls” and “anything attached to the exterior of those walls (including balconies).” These amendments to the RRFSO 2005 aim to increase enforcement action in these areas, particularly where remediation of aluminium composite material cladding is not taking place.

In summary, the Duty Holder/building owner for multi-occupied, residential buildings must manage the risk of fire:

- (a) The structure and external walls of the building (e.g. cladding, balconies and windows)
- (b) Entrance doors to individual flats that open into communal areas.

15 DUTY HOLDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to ensure the Council adheres to its legal duties, it has appointed the Chief Executive as the Responsible Person who will ensure the following through delegating to other officers (also known as Responsible Persons):

- (a) The identification of buildings, components, installations and conditions that present a foreseeable risk.
- (b) As reasonably practicable as possible take steps to prevent and control the risk from fire in the properties that it owns.
- (c) As reasonably practicable as possible take steps to ensure that tenants, visitors and staff remain safe from the spread of smoke and fire and ensuring they can be evacuated safely from the building if required.
- (d) Ensure designated operational staff are empowered with the appropriate training, skills and resources needed to effectively manage fire safety.
- (e) Ensure that co-operation between the Council, its employees, contractors and consultants take place to ensure correct delivery of all policies and procedures.
- (f) Ensure there is communication with tenants for their responsibilities in relation to fire safety and provide advice on what they must do in the event of a fire.
- (g) Ensure records are kept of all testing, servicing and maintenance of equipment.
- (h) Ensure that Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken of all communal areas and public buildings (as appropriate) by a competent person (including periodic reviews) and implement recommendations to reduce risks.
- (i) Keep adequate records of risks and management actions.
- (j) Review this Policy when necessary, periodically or sooner if a significant fire incident occurs or change in regulations.

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Responsible Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall and final accountability for fire safety across the Council: • Implementation of this policy at all levels within the organisation and the provision of adequate resources to ensure requirements of this policy is met. • Ensuring that suitable levels of insurance are maintained.
Strategic Director of Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring fire safety arrangements are addressed in the Council's health and safety plans. • Ensuring that the installation, maintenance and assessment of fire safety precautions is suitably addressed in budgets submitted for full Council approval • Reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's fire safety policy and procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that statutory duties in relation to CDM 2015 are met by the Housing Team and that all refurbishment, planned or new build projects comply
Strategic Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of this policy within their Service • Monitoring the adherence of this policy and is required to report any non-compliance to the Corporate Management Team • Ensuring that all obligations of the Council with regard to Housing properties are met • Ensuring that the installation, maintenance and assessment of fire safety precautions is suitably addressed in budgets submitted for full Council approval • Ensuring all statutory reporting of compliance statistics is completed by the Housing Service • Ensure housing services have access to appropriate software to record and demonstrate compliance with relevant fire safety legislation
Head of Assets and Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation and adherence to this policy within their Team and reporting non-compliance to the Head of Service • To provide oversight of Health & Safety issues for the Housing Portfolio to ensure that this policy and associated procedures are robustly followed • Nominating a member of the team to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Council's Fire Safety Policy, and monthly performance reporting in relation to Housing properties • Ensuring that a programme of fire risk assessments and re-inspections are undertaken, and remedial works completed within allocated timescales. • Ensuring that all fire management and fire detection equipment is tested, serviced and maintained • Inputting into the management of the fire risk assessment and fire equipment maintenance contractors, attending the contract meetings as necessary • Monitoring best practice and innovation in order to ensure that fire safety arrangements remain current and up to date with developing technical standards
Housing and independent living officers (Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of this policy within their premises • Ensuring they carry out any actions attributed to the Appointed Person within the plan • Ensuring that any fire risks they become aware of are suitably reported • Reporting any concerns with the management of fire safety in the premises to their Head of Service. • 3 monthly audits on communal areas to ensure there is no unauthorised combustible materials (fly tipping) laying around.

<p>Managers, Surveyors, Inspectors, building maintenance workers, operatives and other contractors who work on the fabric of the building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure CDM 2015 regulations are adhered to and sufficient fire safety information is included within construction project Health & Safety files • Ensuring that replacement materials used in refurbishment works meet current fire safety standards • Ensuring that any major works or planned maintenance project takes into account fire safety risks and resultant measures required to mitigate risks • Reporting any concerns relating to the building to the appropriate Responsible Person or their council contact in the relevant property team • Ensure FRA actions are completed within identified timeframe in their area of responsibility • Adhering to/acting in accordance with this policy and associated procedures
<p>Safety Health and Compliance Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing and monitoring fire safety arrangements • Developing and maintaining the Council's Fire Safety Policy • Monitoring effectiveness of the Management Plan, Policy and Procedures • Advising the Council's Chief Executive, Directors and Managers on fire safety matters • Advising the Chief Executive of any shortcomings in the Council's fire safety arrangements and, where applicable, new mitigation measures that are required • Monitoring best practice and innovation in order to ensure that fire safety arrangements remain current and up to date with developing technical standards • Ensure CDM 2015 regulations are adhered to and sufficient fire safety information is included within construction project Health & Safety files • Ensuring that replacement materials used in refurbishment works meet current fire safety standards • Fire-related discussions with enforcement agencies and stakeholders • Developing and maintaining a fire risk assessment programme and database • Tracking and reporting implementation of the fire risk assessment programme, risk mitigation measures and adherence to fire safety arrangements • Developing, publishing and distributing fire safety guidance for residents • Assisting in periodic fire safety inspections and where applicable, contractor compliance audits in conjunction with service area managers. • Responsible for the annual budget for maintaining passive fire protection.

<p>Safety, Health and Compliance Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day management of fire equipment maintenance contractors to ensure compliance with policy and procedures • Ensuring delivery of annual fire risk assessment review programme and arranging resultant remedial measures • Deputising for the Compliance Manager by undertaking duties as appropriate and upon delegation • Management of annual budget for maintaining passive fire protection • Ensuring periodic inspection of fire doors are completed and recorded where required • Ensure periodic health and safety audits of senior living schemes in collaboration with the Independent Living Managers and Tennant Manager including Officers. • Work with community and officers to address issues identified through quarterly block inspections.
<p>Tenants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to SDC Officers or operatives of nominated contractors, to complete statutory inspections and servicing • Ensuring belongings are kept within their flat or assigned storage facility, keeping communal walkways clear • Reporting any repairs required to passive and active fire protection • Ensuring their actions don't damage any passive or active fire protection • Ensure they have familiarized themselves with the buildings fire safety arrangements and evacuation strategy, as provided to them at sign up or through annual communication. • They are to be advised that Gloucestershire Fire Service (GFRS) offer a home safety check and urged to accept the offer, which is free of charge.
<p>Leaseholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining their front door to a reasonable standard • Ensuring belongings are kept within their flat or assigned storage facility, keeping communal walkways clear • Reporting any repairs required to passive and active fire protection • Ensuring their actions don't damage any passive or active fire protection • Ensure they have familiarised themselves with the buildings fire safety arrangements and evacuation strategy • Ensuring evidence of a current annual gas service is provided to SDC • Where dwelling has been sub-let, providing evidence of a valid, satisfactory electrical testing to SDC, ensuring any C1 or C2 works have been addressed.

16 REFERENCES

SDC Gaining access Policy

SDC Leasehold Policy

The Fire Safety Act 2021

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order

2005 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act

1974

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

1999 The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations

[The Building Regulations Approved Document B](#)

Fire Safety Guidance Documents Fire Sector Federation ACOP

[A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency Fire Sector Federation](#)

[A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor](#)

[Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Means of Escape for Disabled](#)

[People HSE Fire Safety Webpages](#)

PAS 79-2:2020 Housing – British Standards BSI

PAS 9980:2022, Fire risk appraisal of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats Code of practice

BS991 Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings. Code of practice (under review)

[PIBS Guide 06-21_V2.pdf \(nationalfirechiefs.org.uk\)](#)