

# Fire Safety Strategy

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## Fire Safety Strategy

### 1. Background

This Fire Safety Management Strategy details Legal and General Affordable Homes (LGAH) arrangements for achieving compliance with the requirements of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and, where applicable, the Housing Act 2004.

LGAH recognises its role as “the responsible person” as defined by the FSO. It is LGAH’s ultimate aim to take such general fire precautions that will, so far as is reasonably practicable, preserve and protect life in the event of a fire and take reasonable measures to prevent fires from occurring.

As part of this ongoing commitment to fire safety, the following document sets out the organisation’s strategy for addressing the hazards and risks associated with fire and provides a clear, structured approach to achieving the highest levels of safety across all of its properties

### 2. Assessing Risk

Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) need to be undertaken within a manageable programme with a work schedule tied in, following behind the assessment programme and dealing with the necessary issues identified. Issues identified in the FRAs need to be assessed, filtered and prioritised before entering into the work programme to avoid unnecessary expenditure.

All properties with common or shared parts need to have FRAs and the programme should reflect the risk factor of the building and its occupants, with the schedules for the assessments and work programmes dealing with the highest risk first.

FRAs will be carried out by competent, qualified fire safety professionals using specialist, external contractors. Fire Risk Assessments undertaken by persons not possessing the required training, experience, knowledge and expertise are not acceptable as this could expose individuals and the business to unacceptable risks.

Where specific issues involve interpretation of regulations or several solutions to a problem are available, a course of action will be decided by The Head of Compliance and Investment, taking into account the risk factors, cost implications (long and short term) and practicability.

### 3. Prioritising work

Predictable work arising includes but is not limited to:

Fire doors – Replace where necessary and upgrade with intumescent strips, cold smoke seals, third hinge, closer and intumescent letter box (in flat front doors)

Fire stopping – Ensuring that all penetrations to walls and floors are appropriately stopped with fire resistant materials, using certified fire stopping contractors

Emergency lighting – Replace/install emergency lighting to provide enough illumination to escape routes and all changes of level

Signage – Replace/install signage to escape routes and fire doors (where required)

Other predictable issues to affect all building types will be managerial, i.e.; keeping corridors/staircases clear of tenants' belongings and refuse, ensuring that flat front doors are maintained (i.e. not changed for non-fire doors); ensuring tenants have enough information regarding fire safety, etc.

#### **4. Timescales**

Risk Assessments/Works arising

In order to ensure compliance with current legislation, manage the risk of fire occurring, protect the safety of residents and avoid potential prosecution, it is important to set realistic timescales for the implementation of the fire safety strategy.

As the LGAH stock is newly built it will ensure all buildings are handed over with the correct standard of fire risk assessment and fire safety documentation in place. Each building will be inspected in line with the LGAH Fire Safety Policy.

As the risk assessment programme begins to provide the necessary information as to required actions, the schedule of work arising will follow the assessment programme, ensuring effective response to issues raised in line with the timescales laid down in our Repairs Policy.

#### **5. Training**

LGAH recognises the importance of training to ensure the effectiveness of fire safety systems and processes.

All staff will receive a general fire safety awareness and where required specific fire safety training for their job role.

Other training will be provided by a combination of internal staff and appropriately sourced contractors, organised as needed or required on an ongoing basis.

#### **6. Maintenance/Testing**

Maintenance and testing of fire safety systems should be managed in-house wherever possible, or via LGAHs network of Housing Providers.

With the provision of some simple training, on site staff can be utilised for weekly/monthly testing of emergency lighting and alarms and maintaining on site fire log books, reducing the need for external contractors and reducing costs without compromising safety. With appropriate training, usually from the alarm installation/maintenance company, staff can also carry out simple fault investigations and alarm resets, reducing the need for expensive, unnecessary call outs.

Scheduled maintenance recommended by relevant British Standards on all fire safety systems, must be carried out by qualified specialist contractors. Through provision of appropriate training, testing of emergency lighting and alarms, and maintaining on site fire log books can be conducted by non specialist employees or sub contractors.

#### **7. Inspections**

In addition to the regular review of fire risk assessments, interim inspections should be carried out in all properties with common parts. All staff involved in regular visits to LGAH properties

should be trained to perform simple, visual inspections of fire safety precautions in relevant premises and record the findings on the appropriate system.

## 8. Emergency Evacuation Plans

Emergency evacuation plans (EEPs) should be developed for all relevant properties within the LGAH portfolio. This would be achieved by developing two generic EEPs; one for properties where a 'stay put' policy is possible (e.g. modern/good condition flat blocks with good standards of compartmentation) and one where full evacuation is necessary (e.g. converted street properties where the likelihood of fire spread is higher). These generic plans would then be adapted to suit the specifics of the building to which they are being applied.

## 9. Recording/Monitoring

It is vital that all information relating to fire safety is recorded and collated in order to ensure that the company is managing its statutory requirements and to simplify the monitoring of fire safety management. This will enable the company to easily identify negative trends or issues and react quickly and effectively.

## 10. Information/Communication

A programme should be established to communicate fire safety issues to residents. This will include a variety of methods including leaflets, posters and awareness campaigns. Close working and involvement on these issues will help to raise awareness and strengthen the messages being conveyed. This programme will also include provisions for raising awareness of fire safety issues with staff.

Accountable Director	Shaun Holdcroft
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