



# **COUNCIL HOUSING**

## **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

**JULY 2025**

**Policy:** COUNCIL HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY

**Date adopted:** 24/07/2025

**Next review date:** 24/07/2026

**Version control:**

Version Number	Purpose / Change	Author	Date
1.0	First issued	Steve Colk	01/08/2025

**Links to Council Corporate Plan 2025-28:**

Council ambition	Linked?
<b>Working for a prosperous future</b> <i>We want to ensure the best possible local economy, with opportunities for our residents to succeed and achieve</i>	Yes
<b>Healthier, safer communities</b> <i>Residents should feel safe in our Borough and supported to be more active in order to improve their health and wellbeing</i>	Yes
<b>A greener and cleaner environment</b> <i>It's important to everyone that we look after our environment</i>	No
<b>Restoring the Council to good health</b> <i>We will place our Council on a sound financial footing and ensure resilience – delivering the service our residents deserve and expect</i>	Yes
<b>We ♥ Castle Point</b> <i>We will help create and maintain the best possible place to live in, work in and visit</i>	Yes

**Lead Officer responsible for owning the Policy and internal approval body (meeting / board where the Policy is approved for adoption or approved for referral to PFH or Committee for adoption)**

Name: DAMIEN GHELA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOUSING, HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS

Approved by: IAN BUTT, DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

**Lead Member and Committee responsible for approving Policy:**

Name: COUNCILLOR ROB LILLIS, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING AND HOUSING

**Equality Impact Assessment undertaken?**

Yes

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Scope.....	4
3. Definitions .....	5
4. Aims and Objectives of the Policy .....	5
5. Policy Statement.....	6
6. Legislation, Regulation and Guidance.....	7
7. Statement of intent.....	8
8. Fire Risk Assessment Programme.....	10
9. Fire Door Inspection and Remedial Programme .....	11
10. Fire Safety Assets – Servicing and Inspection Programme.....	11
11. Block Inspection Programme .....	12
12. Remedial Actions.....	12
13. Tenant and Leaseholder Responsibilities .....	13
14. The Council Responsibilities.....	13
15. Contractor Responsibilities .....	14
16. Monitoring and Continual Improvement.....	14
17. Data and Records .....	15
18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.....	16
19. Communication.....	16
20. Review of Policy.....	17
21. Consultation.....	17
22. Training.....	17
23. Significant Non-Compliance and Escalation .....	17
24. Governance .....	18
25. Associated Policies and Procedures .....	18
26. Appendices.....	18

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As a responsible social housing landlord, Castle Point Borough Council ("the Council") is committed to keeping safe the people that live in the homes it owns and manages. The purpose of this document is to describe how the Council manages its legal and statutory obligations in relation to fire safety in its homes and communal areas. The Policy demonstrates how the Council complies with current legislation and approved codes of practice.
- 1.2 The Council has a duty to take general fire precaution measures to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on its premises and in the immediate vicinity.
- 1.3 The Council is responsible for carrying out Fire Risk Assessments ("FRA"s), and taking action to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with fire within the homes and common areas of the buildings it owns and manages.
- 1.4 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Housing Service Fire Safety Procedure which details the processes and procedures for the operational management of fire risk in its housing stock.
- 1.5 This Policy forms part of the wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst tenants, leaseholders, Council employees and contractors (as detailed within the Council's Health and Safety Policy).

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to Council housing only. This Policy relates to tenants and leaseholders, where the Council is responsible for fire safety in communal areas and on the exterior of blocks of flats. This Policy includes any fire safety equipment in the tenant's home and those the Council manage such as the homes in the private sector leased portfolio (dependent upon the lease agreement) but excludes any fire safety equipment in a leaseholder's home. All tenants and leaseholders, employees, contractors, stakeholders, and other persons who reside, work on, visit, or use Council owned premises, must adhere to this Policy.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to protecting all relevant persons from the risk of harm from fire in all the homes and communal areas it owns and manages. In this Policy, the phrase 'relevant persons' has the meaning assigned in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is any person who is or may be lawfully on the premises, and any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who is at risk from a fire on the premises.
- 2.3 The Policy should be used by all Council employees to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon the Council to maintain a safe environment for tenants, leaseholders and Council employees, within the home of each tenant, and within all common areas of buildings and other properties it owns and manages.
- 2.4 All references to the Council within this document refer to the Council's function as a landlord of a home.

### 3. Definitions

The Council	Castle Point Borough Council
Dry Risers	A system of pipes and valves that provides a reliable water supply for firefighters to combat fires.
ECFRS	Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
FRA(s)	Fire Risk Assessment(s)
FSO	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (see also RRFSO)
FSR	Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
IFE	Institution of Fire Engineers
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
PAS 79	A publicly available specification (PAS) published by the British Standards Institution as a methodology for carrying out and reporting FRA
PCFRA	A Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment. A detailed assessment of a person's living conditions and behaviours to assess their personal risk from fire and identify reasonable mitigating measures.
PEEP	A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is a detailed plan for escape in the event of an emergency (e.g. fire) that requires an individual to evacuate the building they are in.
PIB	Premises Information Box (see also SIB)
RRFSO	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (see also FSO)
SIB	Secure Information Box (see also PIB)
Type 1 FRA Survey	The most basic FRA that inspects common parts, including a visual inspection of compartmentation between flats and common parts, and inspects a sample of flat entrance doors.
Type 2 FRA Survey	An FRA that includes all the things in a Type 1 FRA and includes opening construction in the common parts to check compartmentation.
Type 3 FRA Survey	Includes all those things in a Type 1 FRA and considers means of escape and fire detection within at least a sample of flats.
Type 4 FRA Survey	The most comprehensive FRA that includes all those things in a Type 2 and Type 3 FRA and opens construction in a sample of dwellings to check compartmentation.
UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service

### 4. Aims and Objectives of the Policy

- 4.1 The aims of this Policy are to ensure the tenants, leaseholders (and their visitors) that live in the Council's homes are safe. The Council will do this by fulfilling its legal obligations and duty of care to ensure its legal and regulatory requirements in respect of fire safety are met.

- 4.2 The key objective of this Policy is to ensure that tenants and leaseholders, the Council, Senior Leadership Team, Council employees, and partners are clear on its legal and regulatory fire safety obligations. This Policy provides the framework for Council employees, contractors and stakeholders to follow to help it meet these obligations.

## **5. Policy Statement**

- 5.1 The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that its tenants, leaseholders, their visitors, Council employees, and contractors are properly protected from the risks relating to fire safety in the homes and communal areas it owns and manages, including taking fire prevention measures where necessary.
- 5.2 The Council takes its responsibility to manage the risk from fire in the homes it owns and manages very seriously, and aims to reduce the risk by:
- a) Ensuring that its activity is risk-driven and that the measures implemented are proportionate to the identified risk and focused on improving safety.
  - b) Complying with all applicable legislation relevant to fire safety of the homes it owns and manages.
  - c) Undertaking a comprehensive programme of FRAs working with suitably competent fire risk assessors and reviewing those FRAs regularly.
  - d) Carrying out regular FRAs in all blocks in scope of the RRFSo (normally those with 2 or more dwellings and shared escape routes) and in line with the timescales set out in section 8.2
  - e) Dealing with any hazards or lack of suitable fire management controls found in FRAs, by completing remedial actions to correct any identified within the FRAs.
  - f) Tracking and recording all FRA remedial actions recording the due date to complete the action in line with the timescales agreed by the Council.
  - g) Ensuring suitable evidence is logged to validate the closing of all FRA remedial actions.
  - h) Reviewing and undertaking any remedial work from all ECFRS reports.
  - i) Ensuring that adequate fire safety precautions are in place in all its residential buildings, including individual dwellings.
  - j) Implementing and maintaining a process of regular periodic fire safety inspections based on its knowledge of the risks in each building.
  - k) Working hard to maintain strong and productive working relationships with ECFRS and any other stakeholders who can assist with or have an interest in the fire safety of its tenants and leaseholders.
  - l) Ensuring that the Council has a robust system of maintenance in place so that it can quickly identify and resolve all issues that might prevent its fire precautions working reliably.
  - m) Clearly defining individual roles and responsibilities for fire safety.
  - n) Putting in place processes and procedures to ensure that those tasked with responsibility for fire safety have what is required to be successful in that role.

- o) Ensuring that appropriate funding is allocated so that day-to-day fire safety activities are readily implemented and that effective processes exist to get approval for more substantial investment.
- p) Ensuring that fire safety is considered from design of new residential buildings and that the Council carefully monitors construction so that what is agreed at the design stage is delivered for its tenants and leaseholders.
- q) Giving fire prevention information to its tenants and leaseholders to reduce the risk of fire in their home, including their responsibilities under the tenancy or leasehold agreement, how they can access additional relevant fire safety information, and understand their personal risk from fire.
- r) Giving clear instructions to its tenants and leaseholders on what to do if a fire should occur in their home or building, and providing specific information about the fire safety risks in their building in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- s) Ensuring all staff and external contractors are given sufficient information, training, and instruction that they can work safely without compromising fire safety.
- t) Regularly reviewing this Policy to ensure that its actions match its intention, as stated in this document, that it is still in line with current legislation and government issued guidance, and that it is still fit for purpose.

## **6. Legislation, Regulation and Guidance**

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that tenants' homes and tenants' and leaseholders' communal areas remain safe and fit for purpose. In achieving this, the Council complies with relevant legislation and regulations. The following list sets out the key legislation, regulation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
- Housing Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses
- (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
- Housing – Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions in certain types of housing, Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS) 2008
- The Approved Documents – practical guidance approved by the Secretary of State for meeting the requirements of the Building Regulations 2010
- Building Regulations 2010 Approved Documents B, M & Q

- Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, LGA 2012
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Fire safety in Specialised Housing, NFCC 2017
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Approved Code of Practice: A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency, Fire Sector Federation 2020
- Setting the Bar – a new competence regime for building a safer future 2020
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Relevant British Standards
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards 2024 Safety and Quality Standard
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards 2024 Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenancy Agreement
- Lease Agreement
- The TSM measures under the Safety and Quality Standard relevant to this Policy include:
  - TP02 – Satisfaction with repairs
  - TP04 – Satisfaction that the home is well maintained
  - TP05 – Satisfaction that the home is safe
  - BS02 - Fire safety checks

## **7. Statement of Intent**

- 7.1 The Council acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under the FSO (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021), the Fire Safety (England) Regulations and The Building Safety Act as outlined in Section 6. Where legislation has not yet come into force, the Council will monitor this regularly and update this Policy accordingly.
- 7.2 All FRAs will be reviewed by a competent person to ensure they meet the requirements set out in the Fire Safety Act 2021.
- 7.3 Each property requiring an FRA will have one in place which has been carried out by a competent fire risk assessor, and which is compliant with the British Standards Institution's PAS 79-1:2020 and PAS 79-2:2020 specifications for non-residential and residential buildings respectively. Blocks outside the scope of the FSO must have an Exemption Report confirming why the FSO does not apply.
- 7.4 All FRAs will be reviewed no later than the review date set within the most recent FRAs and in the event of:
  - a) A fire, fire safety incident or near miss
  - b) Change in building use
  - c) Change in working practices that may affect fire safety



- d) Following refurbishment works
  - e) Change in applicable legislation
  - f) If required following an independent audit of fire safety.
- 7.5 The Council will implement all fire precaution measures and remedial actions identified in FRAs in line with the statutory and regulatory timescales. Furthermore, following any identified fire risks, the Council will apply learning across all stock of a similar nature.
- 7.6 Fire evacuation strategies will be determined on a building-by-building basis, in accordance with the recommendations of the competent fire risk assessor and with any guidance from ECFRS.
- 7.7 To comply with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022, which came into force on 1 October 2022, the Council will install, test, and replace (as required) battery operated and/or hard-wired smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms as part of the annual gas safety check or other servicing visit as required and/or when the home is empty (void), prior to re-letting.
- 7.8 If the Council is made aware that a tenant or leaseholder has an issue with mobility or a cognitive impairment, a PCFRA will be completed following a review of the NFCC appropriate checklist.
- 7.9 For any tenant or leaseholder, where the Council has completed a PCFRA and this states that a tenant or leaseholder could have issues with their ability to self-evacuate the Council will develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) by a competent person, reviewed at least annually, and a summary of the information including vulnerability included in the PIB to which ECFRS will have access.
- 7.10 When letting homes, the Council will consider the suitability of the accommodation for the prospective tenant in respect of fire safety.
- 7.11 The Council is committed to working collaboratively with ECFRS to create safer places to live and work. This joint working may include sharing information, having FRAs reviewed and staff training.
- 7.12 The Council will arrange for all new tenants to have a free home fire safety check, provided by ECFRS.
- 7.13 In instances where access to carry out essential fire safety inspection and remediation work has been denied, or where the Council is aware that there is a known tenant or leaseholder vulnerability (including hoarding) the Council will apply to the court for an injunction, whilst safeguarding the wellbeing of the tenant or leaseholder.
- 7.14 The Council will operate effective contract management arrangements with the contractors responsible for delivering all fire safety services, including ensuring contracts/service level agreements are in place, conducting client-led performance meetings, and ensuring that contractors' employee public liability, evidence of individual and corporate competence and professional indemnity insurances are up to date on an annual basis.
- 7.15 The Council will effectively manage any immediately dangerous situations identified during fire safety programmes.

- 7.16 The Council will keep all corridors and fire escape routes clear of combustible materials, in line with its management of communal areas which is found in the Neighbourhood Management Policy.
- 7.17 The Council will not permit the storage of mobility scooters anywhere other than a dedicated and suitably compartmented storage area. Tenants and leaseholders must not store or charge e-scooters, e-bikes or any other lithium battery operated vehicles in any communal area of its buildings. Tenants and leaseholders must request permission from the Council before installing an EV charging point.
- 7.18 The Council will establish and maintain a risk assessment for fire safety management and operations, setting out its key fire safety risks and appropriate mitigations.
- 7.19 To comply with the requirements of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002, the Council will consider the safety of its workplaces and plant/boiler rooms of its residential blocks.
- 7.20 The Council will operate a robust procedure that records and actions any property fires and fire safety related near misses. A near miss is an unplanned event which does not result in an injury but had the potential to do so. All such incidents will be reported by the Interim Head of Housing Technical Services and to the Assistant Director, Housing, Health and Partnerships. These near misses will be captured on the Housing Assurance Database.
- 7.21 The Council will ensure there is a robust procedure in place to investigate and manage all RIDDOR notifications made to the HSE in relation to fire safety and will take action to address any issues identified and lessons it has learned, to prevent a similar incident occurring again.

## **8. Fire Risk Assessment Programme**

- 8.1 The Council will manage an FRA survey programme to all communal parts of blocks of flats and shared premises, including individual front doors to homes that it owns and manages, where they fall within the scope of the Fire Safety Order. Buildings that are found (following survey) to fall outside of the scope of the Fire Safety Order, will be removed from the programme, once an exemption report has been supplied by its Fire Risk Assessors, confirming why the Fire Safety Order does not apply to those premises.
- 8.2 Thereafter, the Council will maintain a programme of FRAs, as identified below:

<b>Type of housing</b>	<b>Frequency of FRA</b>
Sheltered housing schemes	Annually
Hostels	Annually
Temporary accommodation	Annually
Other high-risk buildings (as they are identified)	Annually
General needs blocks of flats	Once every two years

A further review of an FRA and or commissioning of a new FRA will be carried out based on the following criteria:

- a) A fire, fire safety incident or near miss
- b) Change in building use
- c) Change in working practices that may affect fire safety
- d) Prior to and following the completion of major works that may breach compartmentation lines
- e) Change in applicable legislation
- f) As required following a fire safety audit

- 8.3 The Council will develop and implement an FRA Programme, based on carrying out Type 3 surveys. Where it is determined appropriate, the Council may instruct a Type 2, or Type 4 survey. Type 4 surveys may be commissioned at the time of a void.
- 8.4 The Council will ensure a pre-occupation FRA is carried out on all new build schemes or new acquisitions where it has an obligation to do so, followed by a post-occupation FRA, a maximum of three months after the first tenant moves in.

## **9. Fire Door Inspection and Remedial Programme**

- 9.1 The Fire Safety Act (2021) mandates that the Council inspect all Fire Doors between the domestic premises and the common parts, for example, entrance doors to individual flats, which open onto common parts.
- 9.2 To achieve this the Council will: -
- a) Appoint a suitably competent third-party accredited consultant to carry out Fire Door Inspection.
  - b) Carry out six monthly inspections to all communal Fire Doors.
  - c) Carry out annual inspections to all Flat Entrance Doors in blocks where the FSO applies.

The outputs of these inspections, will identify the status of each door:

- a) Notional Door – Requires no further action
- b) Certified Door – Requires no further action
- c) Repair / Upgrade Door – Door requires remedial work to achieve Notional status
- d) Replace Door – Door is beyond repair, either damaged or the cost of repairs exceeds agreed level

## **10. Fire Safety Assets – Servicing and Inspection Programme**

- 10.1 **Emergency Light Testing** - In all blocks that have Emergency Escape Lighting installed, the Council will appoint a competent person to carry out monthly “flick” tests and an annual 3-hour discharge test, in accordance with BS 5266-1. A copy of the test certificate / report will be stored on corporate systems to provide evidence that tests have been completed.

Where luminaries are found to not be working, they will be replaced with a suitable new luminaire.

- 10.2 **Smoke / Heat / CO Detection** - To comply with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022. The Council will install, test

and replace (as required) battery operated and / or hard-wired smoke and heat detectors and carbon monoxide alarms as part of the annual gas safety check or other servicing visit as required. A review of the condition and date of expiry of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors and alarms will always be carried out at void stage.

- 10.3 **Dry Riser Testing & Inspection** - The Council will ensure that all Dry Risers across the portfolio are inspected every six months and fully tested annually in accordance with BS9990 (2015)
- 10.4 **Automatic Opening Vents** - The Council will ensure that Automatic Opening Vents where they are installed, will be tested in accordance BS9991. The Council will carry out a weekly test to ensure that they operate effectively. The Council will appoint a competent contractor to carry out a service and inspection every six months.
- 10.5 **Fire Alarm Testing** - The Council will ensure that all Fire Alarm Systems, in common parts or that extend into more than one domestic dwelling are tested on a weekly basis, in accordance with BS5839. Any fault or remedial action identified at the time of testing will be reported and prompt remedial action undertaken by the Council's appointed servicing contractor.
- 10.6 **Fire Fighting Equipment** - The Council will ensure that all Fire Fighting Equipment is suitable for the location that it is installed, complying with BS5306-8. The Council will install portable Fire Fighting Equipment in workplaces, (e.g. the communal areas of sheltered schemes) and other areas as recommended by the FRA and will ensure Council employees are trained to use them. A monthly visual inspection of all Fire Fighting Equipment, and an annual service by a competent contractor will be undertaken. Evidence of our inspection regime and the annual check will be stored on our compliance system.

## 11. Block Inspection Programme

- 11.1 The Council will carry out a programme of quarterly inspections to all blocks of flats (that fall within the scope of the FSO) and require a periodic FRA to audit that all required management actions are taking place.

## 12. Remedial Actions

- 12.1 The Council will develop a series of programmes to ensure that all identified risks and associated remedial actions are carried out in line with the timescales indicated below:

Risk Rating	Definitions	Response Time
<b>Intolerable Risk</b>	Immediate risk to life (e.g. blocked fire escape)	Within 24 Hours
<b>High Risk</b>	Urgent action required (e.g. damaged fire door)	Within one month
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Improvement required to reduce risk (e.g. inadequate testing regime)	Within six months

<b>Low Risk</b>	Minor improvements needed (e.g. installing an assembly point sign at a sheltered scheme)	Within 12 months or delivered as part of a planned programme.
-----------------	--	---

- 12.2 Any "Intolerable" risk identified during a FRA will be reported from site by the assessor to the Fire Safety Manager or the Housing Compliance Manager. The Council will undertake to resolve or remove any issues causing the "Intolerable Risk" within 24 hours implementing temporary mitigating controls if necessary. All intolerable risks will be reviewed immediately afterwards to:
- confirm that the intolerable risk process worked
  - identify the causes
  - ensure the learning reduces the likelihood of the risk reoccurring
- 12.3 The Council will use the date the FRA is received from its fire risk assessors, as its timeframe to start completing FRA remedial actions.
- 12.4 Before all FRA remedial actions are completed, a detailed record of all evidence to support the closure of that record will be stored and reviewed by a suitably qualified Council manager.
- 12.5 The Council will ensure there is a robust procedure in place to manage follow-up works arising from fire door audits, and servicing and maintenance checks to fire systems and equipment.

### **13. Tenant and Leaseholder Responsibilities**

- 13.1 The Council will encourage tenants and leaseholders, through the provision of publicity information, to allow access to carry out fire safety checks and inspections in their homes and communal areas. It is the tenant's and leaseholder's responsibility to provide access to their home to enable the Council to fulfil its duties. The Council will use the legal remedies available within the terms of the tenancy and lease agreements should any tenant or leaseholder refuse access.
- 13.2 Tenants and leaseholders are responsible for reporting any concerns they may have regarding fire safety to their Housing Management Officer.
- 13.3 Tenants and leaseholders are asked to notify any faults in a timely manner.
- 13.4 Tenants and leaseholders are to always keep all escape routes clear and free from obstruction or clutter.
- 13.5 Tenants and leaseholders are not to do anything that may jeopardise the safety of other people.
- 13.6 Tenants and leaseholders in blocks of flats are not to store Liquid Gas cylinders including gas barbeques within their flats, communal areas or balconies.

### **14. The Council's Responsibilities**

- 14.1 It is the Council's responsibility to keep homes it owns safe and free from health hazards. The Interim Head of Housing Technical Services will appoint suitably qualified persons to oversee the implementation of this Policy.
- 14.2 The associated Fire Safety Procedure identifies the roles and responsibilities of those who will undertake the day-to-day tasks for fire safety.

- 14.3 The Council will check that its contractors hold the relevant qualifications and accreditations when procured, and thereafter on an annual basis; the Council will evidence these checks and each contractor's certification appropriately, along with details of contractors' employers' liability, public liability and professional indemnity insurances are up to date on an annual basis. All evidence will be stored in the contract file, for the duration of the contract.
- 14.4 The operational lead will hold the NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management (or equivalent), or Level 4 VRQ Diploma in Asset and Building Management. If they do not have this already, they will agree to work toward obtaining this qualification. The Responsible Officer is the Housing Compliance Manager and the Deputy Responsible Officer is the Fire Safety Manager.
- 14.5 The Council is responsible for taking tenancy or lease enforcement action where there are fire safety breaches, to protect the safety of all tenants and leaseholders.

## **15. Contractor Responsibilities**

- 15.1 The Council has a responsibility to ensure that contractors are competent.
- 15.2 Contractors and others working in Council owned properties are required to demonstrate that their representatives understand how the work they undertake may impact on fire safety. No works can begin until the method statement for the activity, has been approved by the Council. Contractors are required to immediately report any risks or concerns to their manager and the Council's Housing Compliance Manager, and to stop ongoing works if the concern is significant or warrants immediate action. The contractor undertakes work in accordance with the specific requirements set out in the contract.
- 15.3 The contractors will provide evidence to the Council prior to contracting and as part of managing the contract that they have the appropriate insurance in place as specified in the terms and conditions of the contract.

## **16. Monitoring and Continual Improvement**

- 16.1 The management actions necessary to ensure the safety of tenants regarding fire safety are monitored, using a set of Key Performance Indicators by the Interim Head of Housing Technical Services.
- 16.2 The Council will report Key Performance Indicator (KPI) measures for fire safety that follow the requirements set out in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which came into force April 2023. Performance must be reported to the Regulator of Social Housing on an annual basis; however, the Council will report internally monthly to its Senior Leadership Team.
- 16.3 The Interim Head of Housing Technical Services will also report quarterly to the Cabinet and monthly to the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Housing. The relevant TSM for Fire Safety is defined in **BS02 – Fire safety checks**: Proportion of dwellings for which all required Fire Risk Assessments have been completed.
- 16.4 The Council will also report the following:  
**Data – The total number of:**

- Properties – Communal Blocks, where the fire safety order applies
- Properties on the FRA Programme
- Properties with a valid and in date FRA
- Properties without a valid and in date FRA
- Properties due a new FRA within the next 60 days
- Completed in time and overdue follow-up works / actions (split by priority)

**Narrative – An explanation of:**

- The current position
- Corrective action required
- Anticipated impact of the corrective action
- Progress with completion of follow-up works

**In addition:**

- Details of any Formal Notices received from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service or other enforcement bodies.
- Recording and reporting on property fires to identify trends and target awareness campaigns.
- The number of RIDDOR notifications to the HSE regarding fire safety.

16.5 Performance information will be published on the Council's website and in its Tenants' Newsletter as part of the annual report to tenants against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, particularly BS02 Fire Safety.

16.6 The Council will ensure there is a programme of external third-party quality assurance audits of FRAs (using in the field and desktop methods), on a ten per cent sample basis of each individual Fire Risk Assessor.

16.7 The Council will undertake technical quality assurance audits on 10 per cent of remedial works carried out by appointed contractors.

16.8 Audits and reviews provide data reflecting the effectiveness of this Policy and identify opportunities to achieve continual improvement in the management of fire safety at the Council. The Council will commission an independent audit of fire safety at least once every two years, to specifically test for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and to identify any non-compliance issues. An action plan will be developed for any issues identified during the audit, with appropriate timescales agreed for corrective actions to be carried out. Other checks and reviews may be undertaken periodically, as required.

## **17. Data and Records**

17.1 The Council will maintain a core asset register of all properties it owns or manages, setting out which properties require an FRA. The Council will also set out which properties require fire safety servicing and maintenance regimes (for example, fire alarms, emergency lighting and smoke/heat detection).

17.2 For all sheltered housing buildings, the Council will store relevant information including floors plans, list of vulnerable tenants and other key information within SIBs on site. These will only be accessible to the Council and ECFRS authorised staff.

17.3 The Council will operate a robust procedure to manage all changes to stock, including property acquisitions and disposals, to ensure that properties are not omitted from fire safety programmes and the programme remains up to date.



- 17.4 The Council will hold fire safety inspection dates in its housing asset system and FRAs, FRA actions, and fire safety servicing records in a dedicated compliance system.
- 17.5 The Council will keep fire safety logbooks electronically (or securely on site where practical), for all properties on the FRA programme.
- 17.6 The Council will keep all records and data in line with its Document Retention Policy and will have robust processes and controls in place to maintain appropriate levels of security for all fire safety related data, including how it will share sensitive information with its contractors and ECFRS.

## **18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- 18.1 The safety of the Council's tenants, leaseholders and workforce is of the utmost importance. This Policy has been written to protect all concerned, considering all protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Specifically, people with disabilities or impairments, those with young children who rely on using pushchairs and prams who are more likely to be affected by this Policy than any other protected characteristics.
- 18.2 The Council will ensure that relevant information is communicated in an accessible and understandable way with the aim of keeping people safe. This may include clear signage, instruction, and in some cases liaising with those giving support to a tenant, in accordance with Data Protection law.
- 18.3 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. See Appendix 1.

## **19. Communication**

- 19.1 Once the Policy is approved, a summary document "a policy on a page" will be placed on the Council's website with a link to the full Policy. An approved version of this Policy will be published internally and accessible to Council employees.
- 19.2 The Council recognises good communication is essential in the effective delivery of fire safety programmes, therefore it will implement a tenant and leaseholder engagement strategy and communication programme. This will support tenants and leaseholders in their understanding of fire safety, advise them of how they can keep themselves and other residents safe, and encourage them to report any fire safety concerns.
- 19.3 The Council will also aim to successfully engage with vulnerable and hard to reach tenants and leaseholders. The Council will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to tenants and leaseholders via regular publications and information on its website.
- 19.4 The Council uses a leaflet on fire safety produced by ECFRS, that it shares with tenants and leaseholders.
- 19.4 The Council will comply with Article 21A of the RR(FS)O (2005) and provide to tenants and leaseholders comprehensible and relevant information about relevant fire safety matters.
- 19.5 ECFRS work closely with the Council and provide awareness sessions for all sheltered housing schemes on a regular basis.



## **20. Review of Policy**

- 20.1 This Policy will be reviewed initially after a period of 12 months and then every two years, unless new legislation or good practice, or in the event of a relevant major incident means it needs to be reviewed sooner.

## **21. Consultation**

- 21.1 The Council is committed to meaningful tenant and leaseholder engagement and involvement. This Policy has not yet involved tenant or leaseholder consultation.
- 21.2 The Council intends to consult with tenants and leaseholders on this Policy, once its structure for tenant and leaseholder engagement is in place following the work the Council is doing with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (Tpas).

## **22. Training**

- 22.1 Fire safety training is a mandatory requirement for all Council employees.
- 22.2 The Council will maintain a skills/training matrix to ensure that all Council employees undertaking key roles within the scope of this Policy have appropriate training.
- 22.3 The Council will operate a detailed competency framework including regular appraisals as part of the Fire Safety Procedure.
- 22.4 The Council will deliver training on this Policy and the procedures that support it, including team briefings; basic fire awareness training; and more detailed training for those delivering the fire safety programme, planned maintenance and repair work as part of their daily job, to ensure all Council employees understand their responsibilities for fire safety.
- 22.5 Training records will be maintained for all courses attended.

## **23. Significant Non-Compliance and Escalation**

- 23.1 The Council's definition of significant non-compliance is any incident which has the potential to result in a breach of legislation or regulatory standard, or which causes a risk to health or safety. All non-compliance issues will be reported and escalated as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the incident occurred or of a Council employee being made aware.
- 23.2 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Housing Compliance Manager in the first instance, who will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the relevant Assistant Director and Interim Head of Housing Technical Services. The Assistant Director will report details of the same to a member of the Senior Leadership Team which includes the Chief Executive, Director, Corporate and Customer, Director, Commercial and Assets and Director, Place and Communities and Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director, Finance & Procurement and Section 151 Officer.
- 23.3 In cases of a serious non-compliance the Chief Executive will notify the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Housing.

- 23.4 In cases of serious non-compliance, the Chief Executive will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing as required by the regulatory framework, or any other relevant organisation such as the Health and Safety Executive.

## **24. Governance**

- 24.1 The Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that this Policy is implemented to ensure compliance with the law.
- 24.2 The Chief Executive reports to Cabinet to demonstrate accountability for corporate health and safety across the Council and is accountable for ensuring that health and safety compliance management duties in its landlord function are properly controlled and managed to keep its tenants and leaseholders safe. Under Section 26 of the Constitution (the Officer Scheme of Delegation) the Chief Executive is authorised to delegate duties to the Directors who are then responsible to take decisions for the effective sub delegation of duties within their service areas of responsibility; this is to ensure the Council's statutory duties and functions are effectively discharged.
- 24.3 The day-to-day responsibility for managing fire safety for the Council's housing stock is implemented in line with this Policy has been delegated, via the Chief Executive, to the Director, Place and Communities. In addition, the Assistant Director, Housing, Health and Partnerships is responsible for providing health and safety leadership across the Housing Service. The Fire Safety Procedure also identifies the roles and responsibilities of those who will undertake the day-to-day tasks on behalf of the Director, Place and Communities.
- 24.4 The Director, Place and Communities has delegated their duty holder responsibility to the Interim Head of Housing Technical Services who has professional and technical responsibility for the homes and communal areas the Council owns.

## **25. Associated Policies and Procedures**

Castle Point Borough Council Health and Safety Policy  
Council Housing Allocations and Lettings Policy  
Council Housing Electrical Safety Policy  
Council Housing Estate Management Policy  
Council Housing Fire Safety Procedure  
Council Housing Gas Safety Policy  
Council Housing Mobility Scooter Policy  
Council Housing Neighbourhood Management Policy  
Council Housing Maintenance and Repairs Policy

## **26. Appendices**

Equality Impact Assessment for Fire Safety  
Process Map for Fire Safety