



Building Safety Policy

Version	Responsible Officer	Publish date	Review due date
1.0	Ryan Collymore <i>Head of Property Services</i> Kate Daine <i>Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods</i>	May 2024	May 2025

Introduction and purpose

Following the Grenfell Tower Fire tragedy in 2017 the government commissioned an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. This review led to the development of *The Building Safety Act 2022*, which became law in April 2022.

The Act also introduced secondary legislation which came into law over a two-year transitional period.

The Building Safety Act has introduced several reforms and regulations that transform the way that residential blocks classed as 'High Risk Buildings' are designed, constructed, and managed. The Act was introduced to improve housing and safety standards for residents, giving them more protections and more of a say in their building's safety.

Compliance with these new reforms and regulations will be managed by three newly created regulatory bodies:

- The Building Safety Regulator
- The National Regulator of Construction Products
- The New Homes Ombudsman

This policy sets out how Brent Council's Housing Management Service will ensure that all its buildings are safe, and meet our obligations set out in the Building Safety Act 2022. This policy will outline how we will:

- Meet our commitments.
- Engage with residents on their building's safety and share information with them as part of a resident engagement strategy.
- Work with regulators to ensure they can access the information they need from us.

This policy should be read alongside secondary policies and procedures which support the Housing Management Service's overarching Building Safety Policy. A list of these is supplied in Appendix A.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all officers within the Housing Management Service and their contractors who have shared obligations to ensure our buildings and residents are safe.

The policy applies to all 'High Risk Buildings' as defined in the Building Safety Act. The Act defines a building as 'High Risk' if it is over 18m in height, or 7 storeys and above. All tenure types within the Housing Management Service's stock are included.

The Housing Management Service currently has 41 High Risk Buildings in scope of the policy, based on the definition within the act. A list of these buildings is supplied in Appendix B.

Main requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety Regulations 2022

The Fire Safety Regulations 2022 have a number of main requirements that the Council must comply with:

- Providing information to residents
- Fire door checks
- Registering Buildings on the London Fire Brigade portal
- Updating secure information boxes
- Providing wayfinding signage
- Ensuring lifts and essential firefighting equipment are in good working order.

The Building Safety Act's 2022 main requirements are:

- Registering in scope buildings with the Building Safety Regulator
- Adding structural and safety information to registered buildings
- Evidence good quality and comprehensive records on the design, construction, repair and maintenance of higher risk buildings.
- Preparing building safety cases
- Informing residents
- Providing a Golden Thread of Information for each High Risk Building
- Evidencing good record keeping on relevant IT systems to demonstrate compliance with regulations.

Key Definitions

The Accountable Person and Principle Accountable Person

The Accountable Person (AP) has an ongoing duty to assess current building safety risks within a High-Risk Building and produce a Building 'Safety Case Report' that highlights how risks in the building are being identified, mitigated and managed on an ongoing basis. The AP must also demonstrate how they ensure that residents are safe. The London Borough of Brent and (RC/SR/PG) is the AP for all High-Risk Buildings in scope of this policy.

The Principal Accountable Person (PAP) is an individual entity that is responsible for Building Safety when a building's ownership structure is complex, and more than one AP is required.

The Building Safety Regulator

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) is responsible for overseeing the safety and performance of all buildings. They have powers to enforce the rules of the act when they are not complied with. The maximum penalty for a breach of building regulations under section

35 of the Building Act 1984 is an unlimited fine and/or two years in prison. The regulator has three main functions:

1. To oversee the safety and performance system for all buildings
2. To encourage increased competence within the industry and establish competence requirements
3. Lead the implementation of new regulations for High Risk Buildings

Golden Thread of Information

The golden thread of information ensure that duty holders retain information on a building's safety risks through its lifecycle. The golden thread involves keeping a digital record of building information from the design phase and throughout the building's lifecycle. To ensure building information is reflective of a 'golden thread' information must be:

- Kept digitally
- Kept securely
- A building's single source of truth
- Available to people who need information to do a job
- Available when the person needs the information
- Presented in a way that can be easily used

The golden thread will need to be specific and bespoke to the building and its group of residents.

Building Safety Cases

Building safety cases are one aspect of building information within a building's Golden Thread of Information. The Housing Management Service is required to submit building safety case reports to the regulator every 5 years for each High Risk Building to demonstrate how it is safe to be occupied.

Duty Holder

The statutory duty holder is accountable for the health and safety standards of the building and are responsible for the planning, management and monitoring of building regulations. The statutory duty holder responsibility is held by the Council's Chief Executive, but associated duties and actions are delegated via the Director of Housing and Head of Property Services.

Responsible person

The Responsible Person is responsible for the implementation of fire safety policies within the Council, and monitoring how it is adhered to across the organisation. Their role is outlined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 but extended through the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022. The responsible person plays a critical role in ensuring safety of occupants within a building and undertakes a number of duties to ensure risks associated with Fires are mitigated through regular assessment and planning.

At Brent Council, the Strategic Compliance Manager, Building Safety Manager and the Contract and Compliance Manager for Fire and Asbestos are the organisations responsible person(s).

How Brent Council's Housing Management Service will comply with Fire Safety Regulations and the Building Safety Act

Registering High Risk Buildings on the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) Portal

The Housing Management Service is required to register all of its High-Risk Buildings on the LFB portal, including construction information, building orientation plans, floor layouts, the locations of lifts, electrical intakes, premises information boxes, fire hydrants and other important details.

Compliance and Contract Managers within the Service are responsible for updating the portal with any faults that cannot be corrected within 24 hours.

Registering High Risk Buildings with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

The Building Safety act requires the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to publish a register of High Risk Buildings that have been registered. The information provided to the Building Safety Regulator will allow it to confirm the location of the building and that it complies with the Building Safety Act. Therefore, all of the Housing Management Service's High Risk Buildings, including their structural, safety and compliance data will be registered with the Building Safety Regulator. The Housing Management Service is also embedding the registration of any new High Risk Building's into the new council homes programme's handover process.

Fire Door Checks

The responsible person is required to use best endeavours to conduct checks of individual domestic flat entrance fire doors in buildings above 11 metres that contain more than 2 domestic premises every 12 months. This means that the Housing Management Service must use best endeavours to conduct fire door checks at every individual flat in scope's entrance fire door, every 12 months.

The responsible person must also check the communal fire doors of buildings over 11m in height, with more than two domestic premises every 3 months.

The responsible person must keep a record of its attempts to comply with its obligations, including cases where access to an individual's flat was not obtained. The Housing Management Service is working with residents, and colleagues in the Council's legal service to gain access and keep residents safe.

Keeping Secure Information Boxes Up to Date

There are secure information boxes installed in every High Risk Building managed by Brent Council's Housing Management Service, these boxes contain important information, including the floor layout and a list of vulnerable residents who would need assistance to evacuate their building in the event of a fire. This list contains details of their flat number,

floor number and vulnerability to ensure the London Fire Brigade can provide timely assistance for safe evacuation.

The Housing Management Service will capture tenant's vulnerabilities at the point of sign-up to High-Risk Buildings and will also conduct a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment audit across its stock of High-Risk Buildings every 12 months to ensure that tenants and leaseholders who develop permanent or temporary vulnerabilities have their information stored in their building's secure information box. This process is conducted by the tenancy team and Housing Officers are responsible for ensuring secure information boxes contain up to date information.

Providing Information to Residents

The Housing Management Service is required to display fire safety instructions in a conspicuous part of any building that contains two or more domestic premises and contains communal areas that residents would need to evacuate in case of emergency. Fire safety instructions must be understandable and include: the building's evacuation strategy, how to report a fire to the fire service, and any other information to tell residents what to do in a fire.

All High Risk Buildings managed by the Housing Management Service have signs displaying its evacuation strategy. Housing officers also discuss evacuation strategies of blocks during settlement visits during a tenant's introductory tenancy at 3,6, and 9 months. Tenants are also provided with a tenancy guide at the point of sign up which details the actions they must take in the event of a fire in their home, and in their block. A fire safety leaflet is also provided within the sign-up pack to all new tenants.

Providing Wayfinding Signage

All blocks managed by Brent Council's Housing Management Service have way-finding signage to guide residents to exits in cases of emergency. The service has communicated the importance of this signage to its staff and contractors and is taking a proactive approach to reporting damaged or missing signage, so issues are addressed outside of the yearly Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) process.

Fire Evacuation information is conspicuously displayed in all communal areas of our blocks and includes the details of the fire strategy for the block.

Maintaining Lifts and Essential firefighting equipment

All lifts and firefighting equipment in blocks managed by Brent Council's Housing Management Service are inspected monthly. Maintenance and service records are held on the service's compliance data system portal, True Compliance. The Service also monitors these checks through our centralised compliance system, True Compliance. The service's Contract and Compliance Manager must report any lift breakdown that will render the lift out-of-service for 24 hours or more to the London Fire Brigade. A more detailed Lift Safety policy is detailed with the service's other compliance policies in Appendix A.

Compliance with FLAGE Requirements

As a Housing Provider the Housing Management Service is required to ensure all of its homes are safe, as part of this the service has a dedicated compliance team who monitor

and manage areas of statutory building compliance across our housing stock. These areas include Fire, Legionella and Water Safety, Asbestos, Gas, Electrical and Lifts, often referred to as FLAGE requirements.

Data on the Housing Management Service's compliance with FLAGE requirements is stored on True Compliance, a central database that allows compliance data to be easily accessible to staff and readily reportable to the Building Safety Regulator.

A list of the Housing Management Service's compliance policies is supplied in Appendix A.

Clear Landings

The Housing Management Service is obligated to ensure that it keeps its buildings safe. Keeping communal landings clear of obstructions, fuel and ignition sources are a key aspect of ensuring that residents can live safely and that risks associated with fire are minimised.

The Housing Management Service has a zero-tolerance policy to residents' possessions being stored in the communal areas of residential buildings, including shared corridors, walkways and landings. Further information on our approach to keeping communal areas clear is set out in the Clear Landings policy in Appendix C.

Resident Engagement

The Building Safety Act sets out provisions to ensure that tenants have a stronger and more clearly defined voice in the management of their building. As part of the Act, the Housing Management Service as the Principal Accountable Person will prepare an overarching residents engagement strategy for promoting residents' participation in the making of building safety decisions. The Housing Management Service will review the strategy at prescribed times and if necessary, revise it so it reflects best practice.

The current resident engagement strategy involves the Housing Management Service holding annual meetings with residents of High Risk Buildings to provide safety information for their building and their new rights in relation to decision making about their building. This meeting will be an opportunity to share information on safety checks that have been carried out, findings from inspections and action taken and any upcoming repairs or refurbishment where consultation will be held. This meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss the contents of the Building Safety Case report.

The Housing Management Service will also involve relevant persons (i.e., residents of High-Risk Buildings) in decisions about their building and ensure their representations are considered. The following decisions will be consulted on:

- Any major works planned for the communal areas both interior and exterior including materials being used, specification of works and the impact on building safety.
- The outcome of any Fire Risk Assessment or building safety inspections / surveys being carried out on the block including the timescales assigned to address actions found.
- Any policies that impact building safety.

- The bespoke engagement plan that will be prepared for each block.

Maintaining a 'Golden Thread' of Information on our buildings

The Housing Management Service as the Accountable Person must maintain and coordinate a 'Golden Thread of Information' to ensure that duty holders identify, understand, manage, and mitigate building safety risks throughout a building's lifecycle.

A 'Golden Thread' requires the Housing Management Service to hold easily accessible, reliable and up to date accurate information to ensure that safety in our High Risk Buildings are managed effectively. Practically the 'Golden Thread' involves keeping a digital record of crucial information through the building's life cycle.

To ensure that the Housing Management Service effectively maintain a 'Golden Thread of Information' there will be an agreed system to hold the 'Golden Thread of Information' for our High Risk Buildings. There will also be a standardisation of how information should be formatted by contractors involved in the handover of new schemes under the New Council Homes Programme.

Change Management Process for Building Safety

The Compliance Team will be responsible for leading changes that impact Building Safety. They will oversee the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all safety related changes in all High-Risk Buildings and ensure compliance with building codes and regulations.

Any changes that have the potential to impact building safety will be actively accessed, managed, and communicated to all stakeholders. This includes structural changes, renovations, equipment upgrades and any other modifications that will affect the safety of occupants and visitors.

If any change requires interim measures to ensure the safety of building occupants, the Housing Management Service will work with relevant stakeholders to implement and monitor these measures. A clear plan will be developed to address any potential risks during the transition period until the permanent changes are completed.

Regular communication will be maintained with the PAP and with other stakeholders throughout the change management process. Updates on proposed changes, progress reports, and any safety concerns will be shared to ensure transparency and collaboration. Meetings, emails, and progress reports will be used to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged in the decision-making process.

Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR)

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standardised process for reporting and documenting any occurrences that pose a risk to building safety, security, or the well-being of occupants and visitors.

The MOR policy will aim to promote transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in maintaining a safe environment. The Brent Council's approach is underpinned by the MOR process as required by the Building Safety Act 2022. See Appendix D.

This policy applies to all residents, in the building as well employees, contractors, and stakeholders involved in the operation and maintenance of the building. It covers occurrences related to structural issues, equipment malfunctions, safety hazards, security breaches, and any other incidents that may impact building safety.

Reporting Process:

- Any individual who witnesses or becomes aware of an occurrence that poses a risk to building safety must immediately report it to the Housing Management Service.
- The report should include details such as the nature of the occurrence, location, date, time, potential impact, and any immediate actions taken to address the issue.
- The Housing Management Service will investigate the reported occurrence, assess the severity of the risk, and determine appropriate mitigation measures.
- If necessary, interim measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of occupants and visitors while a permanent solution is being executed.
- A detailed report documenting the occurrence, investigation findings, actions taken, and recommendations for prevention will be compiled and shared with relevant stakeholders.
- Investigations will be conducted using a systematic and thorough approach, including gathering evidence, interviewing relevant individuals, and analysing relevant documentation.
- Once the investigation is complete, a detailed report will be prepared, including a summary of what occurred, the root causes, and any identified learning outcomes.
- The report will be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator within 10 days of the reported occurrence, as specified by the Building Safety Act 2022.
- The MOR team will also ensure that the relevant stakeholders, including residents, contractors, and staff, are provided with a summary of the investigation findings and any actions taken to address the identified issues.

Submitting Building Safety Cases to the Building Safety Regulator

The Principal Accountable Person (Brent Council) must prepare Building Safety Cases that demonstrate they are taking robust action to identify, manage and mitigate fire and structural risks within a High-Risk Building. The Building Safety Case should also outline what is being done to address risks. The Building Safety Case must provide an overview of general information about the building, an overview of the building's resident engagement strategy, details of residents, a building safety risk assessment, and an action plan for issues that need to be addressed.

The Building's Safety Case will form part of its 'Golden Thread' of information.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there are significant legislative or regulatory changes or where opportunities for best practice are identified. Any changes will be communicated to affected residents and stakeholders.

Legal Framework

The main pieces of legislation or regulation that underpin this policy are:

- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Housing Act 2004

Appendix A – Supporting Policies:

- **Housing Asbestos Policy**
- **Electrical Safety Policy**
- **Fire Evacuation Policy**
- **Fire Prevention Policy**
- **Gas Safety Procedure**
- **Lift Safety Policy**
- **Strategy for Legionella Control**
- **Water Procedure and Legionella Procedure**
- **Communal Landings Policy**
- **Mobility Scooter Policy**