

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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Policy approved by:	John Bowker
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EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Lead officer:	Jane Allen

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Fire Safety Policy is intended to ensure that regular fire and health and safety inspections are carried out in internal and external communal areas in blocks of flats, including sheltered and temporary accommodation. This is to ensure that any issues which could impact on the safety of residents (tenants and leaseholders) and visitors are identified and addressed promptly.

1.2 The Policy is to be used in conjunction with the Fire Safety procedures for Multi-storey, Low-rise and Sheltered schemes.

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 The Policy links to the following legislation:

- Health and safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999
- Housing Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2.2 The Policy links to the following Stockport Homes Limited (SHL) policies/procedures:

- Multi-storey Fire Safety procedure
- Low-rise Fire Safety procedure
- Sheltered Housing Fire Safety procedure
- Fire safety- storage of mobility scooters Policy
- Estate inspections and Customer walkabouts Policy
- Fire Safety referral form procedure
- Hoarding Policy
- Fire Damaged Properties Policy
- SHL Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement

2.3 The 'Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England' sets out that Registered Providers shall 'keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so'. This Policy ensures that by regularly undertaking block inspections, SHL will ensure that all communal areas are kept safe and free from obstruction, thereby keeping residents and its housing stock safe.

3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

3.1 SHL recognises the need and importance to:

- Ensure compliance with the relevant legislation as per 2.1 above.
- Communicate a clear policy for employees who have responsibilities for fire safety in communal areas and to ensure adherence to all relevant legislation in relation to fire safety.
- Ensure staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities in relation to fire safety in communal areas of SHL properties.
- Ensure all communal areas are as clear as possible and free of hazards.

4 KEY PRINCIPLES

4.1 Communal areas must be kept clear of any obstruction that could impede means of escape.

4.2 Furniture and furnishings may significantly contribute to the spread of fire in communal areas, stairways and corridors. They can also impede access and egress from the building. Therefore, no items of furniture or furnishings are permitted on the communal landings.

4.3 Any items of furniture located within communal lounges or foyers of high-rise accommodation are strictly monitored, must be supplied by SHL and must be fire retardant and comply with British Standard Safety Mark BS5852 and BS5287: 1988.

4.4 Residents must seek permission from their Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO), or the Independent Living Coordinator (ILC) before putting up Christmas trees in communal areas. Artificial Christmas trees are permitted in communal lounges, and in foyers of multi storeys (living trees are not allowed) as long as the tree and decorations are fire retardant. Lights must be either battery operated, or PAT tested annually, and must not cause a trip or other hazard or obstruct any means of escape.

4.5 Any carpets or floor coverings fitted in communal areas must be fire retardant meeting British standards BS5287:1988 and BS5852. The carpets must be correctly fitted so there is no trip hazard or obstruction to fire doors.

4.6 Individual door mats are not permitted at the entrance of flats.

4.7 Curtains, blinds and/or nets are not permitted in communal areas.

4.8 Electrical items are not permitted in communal areas.

4.9 Motorbikes and scooters are neither allowed anywhere within the building nor allowed to be parked close to the building. All motorbikes should be parked in designated parking areas.

4.10 Barbeques, patio heaters, burners, fire pits, and similar items, are not allowed in communal gardens without the written permission of SHL, who will conduct a risk assessment to establish the feasibility of the request. All items of this nature are not permitted to be stored near the building or inside properties.

- 4.11 Barbeques, patio heaters, burners, fire pits, and similar items, are not allowed on any balconies.
- 4.12 Children's pushchairs must not be stored in communal areas. Due to their collapsible nature they should be stored inside residents' properties.
- 4.13 Any doors to store rooms, electrical cupboards, plant rooms, bin stores must be kept locked.
- 4.14 All doors will be maintained to ensure they are opening and closing properly and that door closing mechanisms are in good working order.
- 4.15 Letter boxes must be in good condition and not damaged, leaving any openings through which smoke could spread.
- 4.16 Fire extinguishers where installed must be kept in good condition and tested annually by the Customer Safety Team.
- 4.17 Fire resistant walls, doors and glazing will be in good condition and free of damage.
- 4.18 Any vents (including automatic opening ones) will be in good condition and free of damage or tampering.
- 4.19 Where applicable fire exit signs and/or fire action notices will be in place and in good condition.
- 4.20 Fire panels in Sheltered Schemes will be inspected by ILCs and tested weekly. Fire panels in low rise and high rise are inspected by the Customer Safety Team.
- 4.21 Rising outlets doors will be in good condition and free from obstruction.
- 4.22 Lights will be visually inspected to ensure in full working order and manually checked by The Customer Safety Team.
- 4.23 Mobility scooters are not allowed to be stored or charged in any communal internal area unless a specific mobility storage room has been provided by SHL.
- 4.24 Mobility scooters in outside communal areas should only be charged using a specialist external charging point. Charging via any other means is not permitted, such as via an extension cable connected to an individual property mains supply.

5 CAGE ROOMS

- 5.1 Cage room access in multi storey blocks will be limited to residents with explicit consent, SHL staff, contractors and Your Pantry volunteers. Access will be managed by the Tenancy Services Team, the officer responsible for Your Local Pantry's and / or the Caretaking Team.

5.2 Cage rooms can be used for temporary storage of bulky items removed by Caretakers due to incorrect disposal by residents.

6 RESIDENTS

6.1 Residents identified as vulnerable and at an increased level of risk will be referred to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service for a Home Safety Check to reduce the risk of fire and the likelihood of accidental fires. The 'Fire Service Referral Form Procedure' sets out the process for making a referral.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An existing Equality Impact Assessment is in place and remains current as the review of the policy has not resulted in any substantive changes.

8 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1 The Policy is owned by the Operations Directorate and will be monitored by the Operations Management Team.

8.2 The Policy will be reviewed in line with the Policy Review Group and the Operations Management Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.