

Title:	Fire Safety Policy
Issue Date:	January 2024
Effective Date:	Immediate
Document Owner:	Kemal Hulusi
Post of Document Owner:	Head of Compliance, Contracts & Property
Date Approved by EMT:	14 August 2023
Date Approved by Committee:	16 January 2024
Version number	1
Date of Next Review	January 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Health & Safety is at the front and centre of our work in connection with our Corporate Objectives – Our Homes & Our Services.
- 1.2 Women’s Pioneer Housing (WPH) acknowledges that it has a duty of care to all residents, visitors, staff and contractors living or working within its buildings. This policy outlines our approach to Fire safety within the buildings that WPH owns and manages, together with those owned by Women’s Pioneer Homes.
- 1.3 This policy compliments the WPH Compliance Policy.
- 1.4 Where there is any statutory obligation, WPH will comply with all the requirements
- 1.5 This policy contributes to Our Homes & Our Services element of the corporate plan.
- 1.6 This document is supported by the Design Standards for Automatic Fire Detection and Alarm systems, the Emergency Lighting Standards and the Standards for Passive Fire Protection.

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1 In preparing this document, the following legislation and guidance has been referred to:
 - Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005
 - Fire Safety Act 2021
 - Housing Act 2004 (Part 1)

- LACORS Housing Fire Safety guide (2009)
- Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks (2011)
- Fire Safety: Fire Risk Assessments Sleeping accommodation Guide
- Fire safety in Specialized housing (2017)
- The Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard
- The Building Safety Act 2022

3. The Responsible Person

3.1 The Fire Safety Order (FSO) suggests that in workplaces, the responsible person is the employer. In other premises, the responsible person is the person who has control of the premises. In WPH it is considered to be the Chief Executive together with the Executive Directors (collectively referred to as SMT). It is the responsibility of SMT to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance and to nominate other persons on their behalf to discharge their responsibilities.

3.2 Hierarchy of Control

The Council recognises its responsibility to implement its duties in respect of the fire safety of its properties and to ensure that all its employees understand their role regarding fire prevention and fire safety management.

Chief Executive - Overall responsibility for all Health & Safety Matters

Head of Contracts, Compliance and Property Services - will act as a deputy to the Chief Executive and ensure:

- The Fire Safety Policy is implemented.
- The nominated persons in those buildings to carry out the statutory fire safety checks/tests and record actions in WPH systems QL and C365
- That nominated persons undertake any training deemed necessary to ensure they are competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- Nominated Persons implement and monitor the fire safety management system including the Fire Risk Assessments and Fire Action Plans.
- The appointment of duty holders and nominated persons in each building and to ensure that staff know and understand their duties in relation to fire safety.

Health Safety and Compliance Manager – Accountable Person for FRA and FRA Actions and will:

- Ensure that all FRA and FRA Actions are completed within in a timely manner
- Implement the fire safety management system and ensure its effectiveness.
- Ensure that notices and advice issued by the Fire Brigade are responded to in a timely manner.
- Ensure that staff under their control are adequately trained and competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- Co-ordinate such work with the Scheme Managers/ECOs or other authorised person to Liaise with the Fire Brigade on repair and maintenance matters relevant to fire safety.
- Seek advice from the Specialist Fire Risk Assessor or other competent persons.
- Receive reports from contractors and consultants and report the significant findings of such to relevant persons.

- Advise on the implementation of fire safety legislation and other guidance relevant to premises and building maintenance issues.

It will be the responsibility of the Compliance Officer (ECO) to:

- Monitor the communal areas for fire safety issues and inform the Housing Manager of any arising issues.
- Carry out periodic fire safety checks on all communal areas. Ensure that all fire safety devices and equipment is in place and is fully operational, carry out statutory tests within the communal areas and record information in QL, C365 and logbook.
- Report faults with fire safety equipment and cases of non-compliance to the Health Safety and Compliance Manager.

4. Fire Risk Assessments

4.1 There are 4 types of Fire risk assessments

- Type 1 – Common parts (non-destructive)
- Type 2 – Common Parts (destructive)
- Type 3 – Common Parts and flats (non-destructive)
- Type 4 – Common parts and flats (destructive).

4.2 A type 3 fire risk assessment (FRA) will be carried out by a suitably qualified consultant. This type of fire risk assessment is a non-destructive assessment of the communal areas together with a sample of flats. This exceeds the minimum requirements of the FSO as it looks at the active fire safety standards within flats as well as general fire safety issues.

4.3 In general needs buildings this will be on a 3 year cycle.

In older women's housing and any buildings approximately 18m or higher, the FRA's will be carried out on an annual basis. There are currently no properties in the WPH stock that apply to this height.

4.4 When major works are being carried out or there has been a significant change in the risk profile due to changes of tenancies, a new FRA will be carried out.

4.5 The Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out by a suitably qualified person.

4.6 An annual review of the FRA will be carried out by suitably trained WPH employees. This review will include a site visit and inspection of each building together with a brief inspection within flats.

4.7 All actions identified within the FRA will be recorded on the fire actions tracker and works completed within the required timescales.

4.8 The FRA's will be stored on the WPH document storage system (INVU) and the date recorded on QL and in-house compliance system C365.

5. Fire Safety Procedure

5.1 With the exception of a very few blocks and recent extensions, WPH properties were built or converted prior to the 1991 Building Regulations. They were not originally constructed as flats and as such the most appropriate guidance in relation to fire safety is the LACORS guide.

- 5.2 Consequently, in line with the guide, all of our properties have an evacuation strategy in place. We will ensure we have adequate active fire safety systems installed to support this approach.
- 5.3 In addition, in line with the Building Safety Act, we will introduce a process of checking all flat entry and communal doors at least annually in general needs buildings and quarterly in sheltered schemes and any properties over 18 metres.

6. Communication

- 6.1 A fire action plan will be provided to all new tenants and leaseholders as part of their sign up pack. All existing tenants and leaseholders will be provided with a fire action plan as part of the annual review.
- 6.2 A Fire Action Notice will be displayed adjacent to all fire alarm call points within the communal areas to advise contractors and visitors of the action that they should take in the event of a fire.
- 6.3 We will identify those tenants who may struggle to understand written English and arrange for fire action instructions to be translated into their language.
- 6.4 All contractors will be provided with a Contractors Code of Conduct that outlines additional requirements.
- 6.5 Articles will be included within Pioneer Press reminding residents of the risks from fire and how to mitigate them.

7. Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments (PCFRA)

- 7.1 A Person Centred Fire Risk assessment will be carried out on all older women's housing tenants and any other tenants considered to be vulnerable. For the purposes of this procedure, by 'vulnerable' we mean having reduced ability to comply with fire safety and evacuation procedures, either due to physical or mental ill-health.
- 7.2 This risk assessment will review any fire risks within the dwelling as well as tenant lifestyle. A record of the PCFRA will be kept on INVU, QL or C365 and any actions arising recorded.

8. Resident Engagement

- 8.1 We actively engage with residents when fire safety works are planned. Any residents who have concerns about the fire safety measures within their building or flat, are encouraged to raise these concerns with WPH.

9. Finance

- 9.1 Where actions are required as a result of the FRA, finance will be made available to carry out the works within the required timescales. An annual budget will be agreed by the Board and any significant over-spend will be reported in accordance with the Financial procedures.

10. Training

- 10.1 Appropriate fire safety training will be provided to all employees. This will be provided initially as part of the induction for new employees and on being exposed to new or increased risks as a result of a change of role; new legislation or the introduction of new technology etc.
- 10.2 For employees directly involved with fire safety in both offices and housing premises, additional training will be provided suitable for the role and responsibilities. The training will be repeated periodically where appropriate.

11. Maintenance

11.1 All maintenance carried out in the active fire protection systems will be carried out by suitably qualified contractors. The frequency of servicing will be as follows:

- Communal Fire detection and alarm systems – quarterly (plus a weekly alarm test in sheltered schemes and offices.).
- Individual domestic alarms – annually.
- Emergency lighting – quarterly.
- Fire extinguishers – annually.
- Dry Risers – six monthly.
- Automatic opening vents – six monthly.

11.2 Records will be kept of visits on QL and the data will be interrogated and reported on periodically.

12. Fire Drills

12.1 Fire drills will be carried out every six months in sheltered schemes and offices. These will be recorded within a fire safety logbook.

13. Equality and Diversity

13.1 WPH will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action or make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

14. Contact

14.1 For any queries related to this policy, please contact:

Kathleen Henriques-Brown
Health Safety and Compliance Manager
Email: Kathleen.Henriques-Brown@womenspioneer.co.uk