

## Fire Safety Policy

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>January 2024</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>January 2027</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	<b>H&amp;S Panel Partnership Board</b>	<b>Reviewed By</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>
<b>EIA</b>	<b>January 2024</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Head of Assets</b>
<b>DPIA</b>	<b>January 2024</b>	<b>Approval By</b>	<b>BCHG Board</b>

### 1. Purpose

Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) is committed to minimising the risk of fire and promoting fire safety in all premises under its control. The Group has a responsibility towards all Relevant Persons under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Building Safety Act 2022.

This policy sets out how the BCHG addresses fire safety in its offices, communal areas (including roof voids), care homes, retirement living schemes and supported housing schemes. The policy is to be read in conjunction with the fire risk assessment procedure.

### 2. Scope

This policy relates to all buildings where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and/or Fire Safety Act 2022 applies and BCHG is the appointed “Responsible Person” for fire safety. This includes commercial buildings such as offices, the common areas of blocks of flats or maisonettes and specialised housing such as retirement living, residential care and supported housing.

It does not apply to single family dwellings, which includes the habitable parts of a building such as a flat. Where properties are managed by third parties (e.g., Agency Managed Supported Schemes) the management of Fire Safety will fall under the scope of this policy so far as the BCHG responsibilities detailed in the terms of the management agreement.

BCHG will carry out FRAs to all buildings where the FSO applies and BCHG is the appointed “Responsible Person” for fire safety. This includes commercial buildings such as offices, houses of multiple occupation, the common areas of blocks of flats or maisonettes and specialised housing such as sheltered, residential care and supported housing. It does not apply to single family dwellings, which includes the habitable parts of a building such as a flat.

### 3. Definitions

**Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)** – a statutory instrument applicable in England and Wales. The Order places the responsibility on individuals within an

organisation to carry out risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire.

**Fire Safety Act 2021** –arose out of the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire and relates to fire safety in buildings in England and Wales with two or more domestic residences and is designed to supplement the RRFSO.

**Responsible Person** - a person (or organisation) that has control of a building, or a degree of control. In reference to fire, they are who is responsible for ensuring measures are in place to identify, manage, and mitigate risks associated with fire.

**Accountable Person** – a duty holder role introduced by the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure that all duties within the Act are complied with for higher risk high residential buildings. (two or more residential units with a height over 18m).

**Building Height** - For the avoidance of doubt all measurements within this policy reflect the height of the floor structure of the highest habitable floor in the building in line with the Building Safety Act 2022.

**Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)** - A building assessment that identifies any fire hazards, evaluates the risk of those hazards, and recommends action that should be taken to remove, reduce or manage the risk. There are different “Types” of FRAs that can be undertaken:

Type 1 – minimum legislative requirement. Considers the common areas only.

Type 2 – A Type 1 FRA with the addition of a destructive inspection in common areas.

Type 3 – Common areas with the addition of an inspection of a sample of flats.

Type 4 - A Type 3 FRA with the addition of a destructive inspection in common areas and flats

**Relevant Person** is any person lawfully on the Group’s premises or any person in the immediate vicinity of premises where a fire could occur.

#### **4. Related Policy / Procedure and other Documents**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Risk Assessment Procedure
- Fire Safety Procedure
- Fire Evacuation Procedures
- Motorised Scooter Policy
- Smoke Free Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Training and Development Policy

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

## 6. Policy Statement

*Short paragraph explaining our overall approach, which is detailed in this policy.*

*Include how and why (in general terms) personal data is used in the application of this policy.*

*Confirm that the processing of personal data included in this policy is included in both the appropriate BCHG Privacy Notice(s) and the BCHG Data Asset Register.*

## 7. Policy Details

The Group will:

- Comply with all aspects of the building safety legislation, specifically the Building Safety Act 2021 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Ensure that all fire safety issues including incidents and near misses are raised at the Health and Safety Panel and any actions identified are followed through to completion.
- Ensure that Fire Risk Assessments are reviewed based on the risk rating of the accommodation as defined within this policy and as influenced by government guidance on building safety risk assessments (within 1 month of anniversary) or where there is a significant change in risk by a competent trained person.
- FRAs will be conducted on the following schedule:

Every 1yr	All Care Environments All Retirement Living Environments All Buildings of four storeys or more All Buildings assessed as Low Risk (or higher) using Government Fire Risk Assessment Methodology
Every 2yrs	All other two or three storey communal buildings with a very low risk (or lower) using Government Fire Risk Assessment Methodology

- Ensure that all staff, customers, and other Relevant Persons are aware of the evacuation procedures and escape routes, through training, meetings, newsletters, inductions, tenancy sign-ups, correct signage and evacuation drills.
- Ensure that all Responsible Persons receive appropriate training and are made aware of their individual responsibilities.
- Ensure that all relevant fire safety records are kept up to date.
- Ensure that all fire protection and firefighting equipment (Fire Alarms, Emergency Lighting, Dry Risers, Sprinklers, Smoke vents, Extinguishers, Blankets etc.) are regularly serviced, tested and maintained in accordance with legislation and best practice.
- Ensure as far as possible that the Group's employees work in a safe manner that minimises the risk of fire.
- Consult a fire safety expert / consultant where specialist advice is required.
- Work in partnership with the Fire Service to keep up to date with relevant

legislation and best practice and seek specific advice from them relating to particular premises or issues of concern.

- Raise awareness of fire and gas safety through staff and customer meetings, SharePoint, BCHG Website, Customer Portal, training and other events.
- Promote fire home safety checks to all incoming tenants and ensure they are aware of basic fire safety arrangements in their new home including evacuation procedures.
- Complaints relating to fire and building safety are to be escalated immediately to the Accountable person and then investigated by the Building Safety Manager.
- Fire risk assessments and building safety cases will be displayed in communal areas for residents to read.
- Seek customer feedback on safety and security of their homes and communal areas through a programme of independent satisfaction surveys.
- All new developments with communal areas will comply with the Building Safety Act 2022 and also have fire control systems (typically sprinklers or mist systems) in all new blocks of flats with communal areas.

## **8 Data Processing**

*Personal Data:* Any personal data will be stored on the Housing Management system or securely on SharePoint. Data will be deleted in accordance with the Asset Data Retention and Disposal Policy.

*Data Protection:* BCHG will take extra measures to maintain confidence of information.

*Data Integrity:* genuine documentation and evidence for consideration will be obtained as proof.

## **9 Legal and Regulatory Considerations**

This Policy will be reviewed if there are any significant changes impacting on the Building Safety Act 2002, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or the Regulator for Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards.

## **10 Equality Diversity & Inclusion**

BCHG recognises that different people and communities may have specific needs which may require flexible approaches. We also appreciate that some groups or individuals may experience discrimination and disadvantage. This may be due to their protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, regardless of their characteristics.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy which will be updated in line with policy reviews to ensure there is no discrimination and opportunities to improve equality and access are maximised.

Properties with more vulnerable residents are prioritised within this policy for an enhanced approach to Fire Safety. BCHG will ensure that language is not a barrier to

the resident understanding the Fire Safety protocols within their home and neighbourhood.

## **11 Compliance, Monitoring & Reporting**

BCHG will monitor compliance with this Policy through risk event reporting to BCHG Board and scheduled reporting to H&S Panel, Executive Team, Group Audit Committee and BCHG Board.

Any non-compliance with legislative or regulatory requirements will also be normally reported to the RSH.