

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

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. All properties under the Group's control must therefore have one or more Responsible Persons with clearly defined responsibilities including carrying out and reviewing fire risk assessments and ensuring best practice and legal requirements are followed at all times.

2. Scope

This policy sets out how the Group addresses fire safety in its offices, communal areas and supported housing schemes. The policy is to be read in conjunction with the fire risk assessment procedure.

3. Definition

A **Responsible Person** is anyone who has control of premises or a degree of control over certain areas or systems. Although the Responsible Person in the Group for overseeing health and safety is the Deputy Chief Executive, responsibilities are shared with other Responsible Persons including Asset Management staff in the Operations Team, the Operations Team, and Service Managers, Scheme Managers. **See section 7 for written summary of responsibilities.**

A **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.

A **Fire Risk Assessment** is an organised and methodical assessment at a premise, the activities carried out there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. It takes account as far as is reasonable the needs of all Relevant Persons.

The Fire Risk Assessment should:

- a) Identify the fire hazards
- b) Identify the people at risk
- c) Remove and reduce the risk as low as reasonably possible.
- d) Determine what physical precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of Relevant Persons if a fire does start.
- e) Review date

4. Related documents

- Fire Risk Assessment Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Motorised Scooter Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Scheme fire evacuation Procedure
- Fire Evacuation Procedures (Care and Support)
- Good Housekeeping Policy

5. Fire Safety Procedures

The Group will:

- Ensure that all fire safety issues including incidents and near misses are raised at the Health and Safety Panel
- Ensure that Fire Risk Assessments are reviewed annually (plus or minus 1 month) or where there is a significant change in risk by a competent trained person.
- Ensure that all staff, customers and other Relevant People 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 fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced 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, the Extranet, newsletters, 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.
- Ensure fire control systems (typically sprinklers) are installed in all new blocks of flats developed after March 2019.

6. Inspection Procedures

In addition to fire risk assessments, all premises including communal areas should be subject to regular inspections by Customer Relations Managers include the following:

- Checking that adequate signage is in place including fire exits, safety procedures, assembly points and warning notices, information for emergency services where required.
- Ensuring adequate internal and external lighting is in place and in working order including emergency lighting where required.
- Ensuring fire exits are free from obstruction and able to be opened easily in an emergency
- Checking that no inappropriate items are stored in communal areas, under stairwells etc. This includes items such as mobility scooters, bikes, prams and any flammable materials. A common sense approach should be taken on items such as pictures and mats in corridors. For example, a small single non-slip mat would normally be acceptable but a loose piece of carpet that forms a tripping hazard would not be. Plants in ceramic pots may be acceptable provided they do not cause an obstruction. Artificial plants and flowers or plastic pots which are both flammable are not normally acceptable. Communicate this from time to time as required using social media or other methods.
- Ensure access to refuse stores is restricted to prevent the risk of arson. No gas bottles and other flammable items should be stored in refuse or other communal areas.
- Check for tripping hazards in communal areas.
- Check that service books for fire safety equipment are in place and kept up to date and information for emergency services is accessible and up to date.
- Check fire doors are fit for purpose.
- Regularly check for any concerns with electrical items and that meter doors are kept locked.
- Ensure 'No Smoking' signs are in place and No Smoking Policy is being adhered to.
- Keep inspection records and maintain for the appropriate period of time.
- Ensure actions required are recorded, highlighted and addressed in an appropriate manner.

7. Written Summary of responsibilities.

Training

Administering the Organisation's training matrix and ensuring that training is provided to responsible persons is the primary responsibility of the HR team, in co-operation with Heads of Service.- *Electronic HR system*

Fire risk assessments

Compliance Manager (CM). For Independent Living Schemes that responsibility is shared with the Independent Living Manager (ILM) to take the lead on those risk assessments. For agency managed schemes the responsibility is with the leaseholder. Please refer to the fire risk assessment procedure for further information about how this is managed. - *Hard copies displayed on site by the responsible person, electronic copy and tracker in corporate H&S folder.*

Servicing and maintenance of fire equipment

The responsibility lies with the CM assisted by the Compliance Officer. - *Certificates filed on documotive against properties for statutory servicing.*

Weekly Fire Alarm Testing, Monthly Emergency Lighting function test. Visual Checks Including (estate inspection) of held open fire doors, visual check of extinguishers, fire doors.

For General needs this is the responsibility of the Customer Relations Managers (CRM).It is the responsibility of the Contracts Manager to ensure that testing of the Fire panel/emergency lighting is included within the cleaning contract. – *Site Noticeboards/log book for cleaners', documotive for estate inspections*

For Independent Living/ Care Homes this is the responsibility of Scheme Managers (SM's), Home Managers (HM's), Supported Living Manager (SLM). - *Checklists kept in onsite folders*

For agency Managed sites this is the responsibility of the leaseholder.

For offices this is the responsibilities of Fire Marshalls, who are appointed by the Health and Safety Panel. For the Savoy Centre the responsibility lies with the Facilities Manager. - *Fire log books.*

Evacuation Drills / Evacuation Policy

For general stock needs this is the shared responsibility of the CM and CRM's - *Electronic fire tracker /Documotive*

For Independent Living/ Care Homes this is the responsibility of SM's, HM's,SLM - *Checklists kept in onsite folders*

For agency managed sites this is the responsibility of the leaseholder.

For offices this is the responsibilities of Fire Marshalls, who are appointed by the Health and Safety Panel. For the Savoy Centre the responsibility lies with the Facilities Manager. – *Fire Log books kept on site*

Hazard Spotting, Behavioural issues, housekeeping, monitoring contractors, upkeeping noticeboards

For general stock needs this is the CRM's

For Independent Living/ Care Homes this is the responsibility of SM's, HM's, SLM.
- *On site contractor monitoring forms*

For agency Managed sites this is the responsibility of the leaseholder.

For offices this is the responsibilities of Fire Marshalls, who are appointed by the Health and Safety Panel, and the shared responsibility of all staff. – *Health & safety Panel minutes, verbal and electronic communications*

Promotion of Safety checks for vulnerable customers (general needs) and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) for our staff and residents of schemes and homes with disabilities.

Offices/Staff – Line Managers, CM supported by Fire Marshals.

General needs – CRM's

Other sites – SM's supported by the ILM,SLM,HM's.

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