



## Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

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<b>Equalities impact assessment required</b>	Yes
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Bridgewater Housing Association (BHA) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment within our properties for all customers, contractors, and employees. This commitment is formalised through our Health and Safety Policy.
- 1.2 Fire presents a significant risk to life and property, which requires regular assessment and management, and the Fire Safety Policy underpins BHA's Health and Safety Policy and sets out our approach to managing fire safety.

## **2. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The Objectives of the Policy are:

- to ensure that all persons are protected from harm caused by fire within the BHA's property,
- to ensure that BHA complies with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005(as amended) and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006,
- to ensure adequate physical fire measures are designed to prevent the occurrence of fire, and to detect fire should it occur, and to stop the spread of heat, fire and smoke throughout the property,
- to establish effective procedures and provide appropriate training and guidance to ensure implementation of fire safety procedures for our customers, employees, Board Members, and visitors to our property - the public and contractors,
- to ensure adequate provision, servicing, testing and maintenance of all fire safety equipment is carried out,
- to define management responsibilities and the structure established for assessing and managing fire risks.

2.2 The Association maintains and takes advice from a competent person who has the skills, knowledge, and experience to recognise fire-related hazards and assist the Association to put sensible controls in place to protect workers and others from harm.

2.3 The buildings to which this policy applies receive Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) are documented and saved on the Housing Management System.

2.4 In addition, BHA provides Factoring services to owners in blocks where the Factor is considered to have control of the premises and this policy will apply to those blocks.

### 3. LEGISLATION

3.1 Fire Safety legislation for Scotland is covered by The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, plus several other relevant fire safety sector specific guides.

3.2 The 2005 Act defined Fire Safety duties in relation to:

- Duties of employers to employees (Section 53)
- Duties in relation to relevant premises (Section 54)
- Duties of employees (Section 56)

3.3 The legislation also defines domestic premises as premises occupied as a private dwelling (including a stair, passage, garden, yard, garage, outhouse, or other appurtenance of such premises which is used in common by the occupants of more than one such dwelling); but does not include premises such as:

- a house or other premise that requires to be licensed under Part 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006,
- premises used for the provision of a care service (as defined in paragraph 2 of schedule 12 to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010,
- premises used for the provision of a school care accommodation service (as defined in paragraph 3 of schedule 12 to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 except where the service is provided as mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(c)(ii) of that paragraph,
- premises used for the provision of an independent health care service (as defined in section 10F (1) (a) - (d) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978]),
- premises used for the provision of a secure accommodation service (as defined in paragraph 6 of schedule 12 to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010]),
- premises which would fall within paragraph (a) but for there being in force in respect of them a management control order granted by virtue of section 74 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 8),
- premises used for the provision of a child-minding service (as defined in paragraph 12 of schedule 12 to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010).]

- 3.4 A specific fire safety criterion was also introduced via the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criteria) Order 2019. This standard required satisfactory equipment for detecting fire and giving warning in the event of a fire or suspect fire.
- 3.5 The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 requires occupiers to keep the common property free of:
- any combustible materials,
  - anything that might obstruct egress from and access to the property in the event of fire
- 3.6 The Association will also take into consideration the following key Scottish Government guides:
- Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Premises with sleeping accommodation
  - Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Domestic High Rise Domestic Buildings

#### **4. RESPONSIBLE AND COMPETENT PERSON**

- 4.1 BHA's Board of Management and Chief Executive have overall responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of adequate fire safety measures.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive has designated the Head of Property Services to exercise this responsibility on a day-to-day basis (Responsible Person). This role will be assisted and supported by the Property Services Manager and Head of Corporate Services
- 4.3 The Head of Property Services will ensure that adequate professional expertise is available to BHA either through a contracted-out service or by direct employment of qualified personnel.
- 4.4 All employees have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm. They are expected to co-operate with BHA in complying with fire safety procedures and other measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our customers, employees, Board Members, and visitors to our property.

#### **5. RESPONSIBLE AND COMPETENT PERSONS DUTIES**

- 5.1 BHA will ensure that arrangements are made for the Head of Property Services (or delegated competent persons) to be available to:
- organise, implement, co-ordinate and maintain full and efficient fire safety training throughout the organisation,
  - organize a programme of Fire Risk Assessments,

- inspect the premises regularly for the purposes of checking on the general standards of fire safety,
- maintain good liaison with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and to arrange familiarisation visits as and when required,
- advise on technical and legislative matters on fire safety according to the relevant codes of practice and statutory requirements,
- advise management on fire safety measures required in connection with new buildings, alterations to existing buildings etc.,
- investigate and prepare a report on all fire incidents to the Leadership Team and Housing, Land and Property Services sub-committee,
- liaise regarding the servicing, maintenance, and replacement of all fire safety equipment, and
- advise managers on fire safety measures within their own area/teams.

## **6. EMPLOYEE TRAINING**

- 6.1 Fire safety training is a statutory requirement for employees and is key to the management of the risk of fire within BHA property. The training provided to employees will ensure that they receive a basic knowledge of fire prevention and that they maintain their efficiency in the action to be taken in the event of a fire, along with specific training for designated Emergency Controller role and Fire Warden roles.
- 6.2 All new employees will receive guidance on fire safety procedures for their normal place of work. Two fire drills will be carried out annually at each facility. All training will be arranged in consultation with managers.
- 6.3 A record of all staff completing these sessions will be held by the Head of Corporate Services.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that their staff attend the induction and the refresher sessions, and that temporary employees and employees on short term contracts are given adequate instruction in fire safety and fire awareness.

## **7. DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES**

- 7.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Sections 7 and 8, and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 set out responsibilities of employees. These are stated in the Health and Safety Employee Handbook issued to all staff.
- 7.2 It is also the duty of employees to report any hazards or defective fire safety equipment in the first instance to the Maintenance Coordinator who will contact the approved maintenance contractor to make the necessary repairs.

- 7.3 The following objectives apply to every employee within BHA:
- to take adequate fire safety measures in all areas of work.
  - to acquaint themselves with the fire safety measures and procedures that are applicable to their working environment and to ensure that they attend fire training sessions arranged for them.
  - to refrain from any act or omission which could expose themselves, colleagues, visitors, or service users to any danger.
- 7.4 All employees are required to adhere to BHA's policy of using the "booking in/out" procedures that have been adopted within office premises. This will reduce the risk of persons not being accounted for in the event of an incident.
- 7.5 Any wilful damage or misuse of fire safety equipment will be viewed seriously and may lead to disciplinary action against the individual concerned.

## **8. CONTRACTORS**

- 8.1 BHA will ensure that tender documents, specifications etc. clearly set out the requirements regarding fire safety in our property.
- 8.2 Where external contractors are employed to work within our property, the manager responsible will ensure the contractor is advised of the fire safety measures and associated procedures to ensure BHA's fire safety standards are maintained.
- 8.3 Any manager instructing contractors will ensure that contractors use a suitable Hot Works procedure.
- 8.4 All contractors are required to adhere to BHA's policy of using the "booking in/out" procedures that have been adopted within office premises. This will reduce the risk of contractors not being accounted for in the event of an incident.

## **9. RESIDENTS**

- 9.1 BHA will ensure that relevant information is communicated to residents to raise awareness of fire safety within their homes, including specific Fire Risk Assessment outcomes, evacuation procedures and resident responsibilities.
- 9.2 BHA will ensure that advice is provided to new tenants at sign-up.

## **10. VISITORS**

- 10.1 BHA operates a range of non-domestic premises including offices, stores, and has a Workplace Visitors procedure which outlines the procedures for both visitors including disabled visitors and contractors.

## **11. PERSON-CENTERED FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 For any tenants within grouped amenity housing, a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out by the Housing Officer and will be regularly reviewed.

## **12. MANAGING SPECIFIC RISKS**

- 12.1 BHA recognises that specific fire safety risks are presented by goods and materials storage, refuse storage, electrical wiring and electrical equipment, and smoking.

- 12.2 Control measures are in place to manage these risks as follows:

- Goods and Materials - All managers will ensure that all goods purchased will conform to the current flammability standards. Any manager who carries stock of flammable goods must ensure that these are stored safely. Where necessary, external expert advice must be sought.
- Refuse Storage- Recording of regular estate management inspections to low rise buildings ensure that refuse is not stored in communal areas.
- Electrical Wiring and Electrical Equipment– All fixed & portable systems are tested in line with BHA's electrical safety policy.
- Smoking - BHA does not allow smoking within any BHA owned/managed non-domestic property and also within the communal areas of owned domestic buildings. Signage is used to delineate non-smoking areas.

## **13. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS (FRA's)**

- 13.1 BHA has a legal obligation to carry out an FRA at each workplace and relevant premises under its control to identify hazards and risks. Workspaces includes office buildings, buildings with specific office space, community buildings, stores, Relevant premises includes Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and grouped amenity housing. Although this legal definition of relevant premises does not include domestic properties, BHA has adopted its spirit in relation to fire risk management to the common areas.



13.2 BHA's stock includes a range of building types with varying degrees of associated risk. Our approach to the completion of FRAs will reflect an assessment of the risk level associated with each building type and the building use (including vulnerability of occupants/users). All FRAs will be completed by a competent person, either an external consultant or a suitably trained member of staff.

- High Risk (e.g., Extra Care/Office Buildings/HMO/Grouped Amenity) will have an annual full site inspection completed by competent external consultant
- Medium Risk (e.g., deck access and blocks less than 6 storeys) will have an annual desktop review and every second year a full site inspection completed by competent external consultant.

13.3 Records of inspections, reviews and actions taken as a result of the Fire Risk Assessments will be logged on BHA's housing management system.

#### **14. PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF FIRE PREVENTION / DETECTION / FIGHTING EQUIPMENT**

14.1 Each building was developed to meet the fire safety requirements of the Building Technical Standards at time of completion. As a result, the nature and extent of fire safety equipment provided varies from building to building.

14.2 BHA has a proactive approach to investment in our properties and will consider the recommendations of any FRA when carrying out investment works. In line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criteria) Order 2019, BHA has a legal responsibility to ensure, that every property, as a minimum, has an interlinked system, incorporating a smoke detector in the living room, hall & each circulation space on each storey, a heat detector in the kitchen and where applicable a carbon monoxide detector.

14.3 In accordance with the legal requirement to ensure that equipment and devices provided for the use by, or protection of fire-fighters are maintained in a good working order BHA will ensure appropriate cyclical programmes are in place for the regular servicing, testing/and maintenance of all fire safety equipment in line with the British Standards (current editions) including:

- Wet / Dry risers
- Communal fire detection and alarm systems
- Emergency lighting systems
- Automatic smoke ventilation systems
- Automatic sprinkler systems
- Portable firefighting equipment
- Self-closing fire doors

14.4 The Head of Property Services will be responsible for managing the cyclical servicing, testing and maintenance of all fire safety equipment.

## **15. PROCEDURES**

- 15.1 Each workplace and relevant premises will have its own procedure, incorporating evacuation procedure, tailored to the needs of the building and client group / user. The relevant procedure will be clearly communicated to building users.
- 15.2 The Association has identified a person responsible for reviewing, managing, and monitoring the procedure for each building.

## **16. MANAGING AND MONITORING THE POLICY**

- 16.1 The Head of Property Services will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

## **17. Equal Opportunities Statement**

- 17.1 BHA is committed to developing an organisational culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution that all individuals can make to that community.
- 17.2 This policy ensures through the FRA process that the needs of vulnerable individuals are considered (health issues, disability etc) and that appropriate measures are taken to address fire risk. Fire Safety communications are adjusted for those who do not read English by providing translation or appropriate pictorial signage.

## **18. REVIEW OF POLICY**

- 18.1 The effectiveness of is policy and related procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis and will be reviewed in three years (unless legislative changes or an occurrence within the buildings necessitate an earlier review).