

# Fire Safety Policy



**Our Assets**

Warrington Housing Association

## INTRODUCTION

Warrington Housing Association (WHA) is a community based not-for-profit organisation located in the borough of Warrington.

In October 2006, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) came in to force. This FSO places a duty on persons responsible for buildings to carry out risk assessments and implement adequate fire prevention measures to their buildings.

## SCOPE OF POLICY

WHA must establish a policy which meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), which came into force in October 2006. In addition to this, the policy must provide assurance to WHA that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with fire. We will also follow the requirements set out in the Housing Act 2004, Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 and Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.

WHA will report compliance with fire safety legislation to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Board.

The policy is relevant to all WHA employees, tenants, duty holders and other person's or other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services.

The policy should be used by all to ensure employees, duty -holders and consultants understand the obligation placed upon WHA to maintain a safe environment for tenants and employees within the homes of each tenant and within all communal areas of buildings.

## OBLIGATIONS

WHA have a duty under the appropriate fire safety legislation to carry out fire risk assessments as per FSO article 9 for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions and other measures needed to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). A fire risk assessment identifies possible hazards as well as actions you need to take.

The application of this policy will also ensure compliance with the Regulator for Social Housing's regulatory framework and consumer standards (Home Standard) for social housing in England.

In order to be compliant under these duties, Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) must be periodically reviewed in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale is determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the fire risk assessment.

Document Ref:	Version:	Approved Date:	Approved by:	Expire Date:	Number of Pages:
WHA 0619	3	07.12.2022	Board	07.12.2023	Page 2 of 7

WHA must implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other measures identified by a fire risk assessment and put in place a suitable system of maintaining and implementing procedures that have been identified.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

WHA acknowledge and accept its responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). The Fire Safety Act is now law from 18th May 2022 and the Building Safety Act has passed Royal Assent. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 will be enacted to support the FSA in January 2023. The FRAPT has been enacted by the HO as a risk assessment review tool for registered providers.

WHA will hold accurate records against each property it owns, or manages, identifying each property requiring a fire risk assessment has a fire risk assessment in place.

WHA will hold accurate records against each property it owns or manages setting out the requirements for servicing, maintenance and repair of fire prevention, detection and firefighting equipment. These include fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, smoke/heat detectors, hose reels, dry and wet risers, auto window/door openers, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, sprinkler systems and any other equipment relating to fire safety.

WHA will ensure the fire risk assessments are reviewed biannually and no later than the review date or earlier should there be a change in building use, a fire or change in working practises that may affect fire safety, following refurbishment works. A competent and suitably accredited fire risk assessor will be appointed to undertake a fire risk assessment.

WHA will regularly inspect all properties with a fire risk assessment in place and audit that all required management actions are taking place. These inspections will be taken at regular intervals and inspection records kept against each property.

WHA will ensure processes are in place to implement fire precaution measures identified by fire risk assessments, actions identified will be implemented either immediately or within a program of works to be completed within a reasonable timescale, undertaken on a risk-based approach.

WHA will ensure that robust processes are in place to implement all mandatory fire precaution measures identified by fire risk assessments. Actions will be classified and recorded as high, medium or low. High level actions identified will be implemented either immediately or within one-month, medium level actions will be implemented within three months and low-level actions will be within a programme of works to be completed within a reasonable time scale. Any variation to timescales will be agreed with the fire risk assessor.

Retirement living schemes with a fire risk assessment that receive additional support from the Independent Living Service will ensure that all residents in retirement living schemes whose ability to evacuate may be compromised have a Personal Emergency Evacuation

Document Ref:	Version:	Approved Date:	Approved by:	Expire Date:	Number of Pages:
WHA 0619	3	07.12.2022	Board	07.12.2023	Page 3 of 7

Plan (PEEP) and the PEEP will be reviewed annually. This will be kept in the Fire Safety Box held securely on site and made available to the fire service in the event of an evacuation.

WHA will refer tenants deemed to be at risk to the relevant Fire Service for a free home safety check and publicise this service to all customers via general information.

WHA will ensure that only suitably competent fire risk assessors and fire safety engineers are appropriately certified under BSA Section 156.

Communication is essential in the safe delivery of fire safety, WHA will make information available about fire safety and fire prevention measures to residents and building users via leaflets and information on the WHA website in a form that they can reasonably be expected to understand. WHA have acknowledged the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that dictate that at least one smoke alarm is installed on each storey of our properties where there is a room used as living accommodation, these will be a hard wired installation on all void properties.

## Follow up Work

WHA will ensure that robust processes are in place to implement all fire precaution measures identified in the quarterly property inspections.

WHA will ensure that robust processes and controls are in place to implement fire precaution measures identified by the fire risk assessment. Actions identified will be implemented either immediately or within a programme of works to be completed within a reasonable timescale.

WHA will ensure that robust processes and controls are in place to manage the completion of follow up works identified during servicing and inspection of fire detection, prevention and fire-fighting equipment.

WHA will ensure they install either hard wired smoke alarms or Lithium 10 year smoke alarms in all void properties prior to the property being re-let.

## Record Keeping

WHA will establish and maintain a core asset register of all properties that have an active fire safety risk assessment.

WHA will maintain accurate records of all completed fire risk assessments. In addition to records identifying all fire safety equipment, systems and installations within each building

WHA will establish and maintain accurate records of all completed servicing and maintenance checks on fire safety equipment, systems and installations and details of associated completed remedial works and keep these for a period of not less than 5 years.

Document Ref:	Version:	Approved Date:	Approved by:	Expire Date:	Number of Pages:
WHA 0619	3	07.12.2022	Board	07.12.2023	Page 4 of 7

WHA will maintain records of all fire safety related training undertaken by colleagues.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board has overall governance responsibility for health and safety and compliance and ensuring the organisation complies with all relevant legislation and regulation.

The Director of Operations will oversee the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy, with operational support from the Head of Assets.

The Property Services Officers will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the agreed fire risk assessments and re-assessment programmes, and the prioritisation and implementation of any works arising from the fire risk assessment, working with the Asset Compliance Officer. The Asset Compliance Officer is responsible for overseeing the delivery of service, maintenance and repair programmes to all fire detection, fire-fighting equipment and alarms.

## COMPETENT PERSONS

WHA will ensure that the officers responsible for operational delivery receive appropriate training to be able to manage the service.

Only suitably competent fire risk assessors certified and accredited with a recognised accreditation scheme will be procured and appointed to undertake fire safety risk assessments.

Only suitably competent engineers certified by a recognised accreditation scheme will be employed or appointed to undertake works to fire safety equipment systems and installations.

The Asset Compliance Officer will check the relevant accreditations for the work that contractors are carrying out. These checks will be undertaken on an annual basis and evidenced appropriately.

## TRAINING

Appropriate training will be provided to officers on fire safety awareness and this policy and the procedures. This will include team and contractor briefings, e- learning and access to external training.

Training will be provided to all WHA employees with specific duties, including Independent Living Co-ordinators regarding fire safety.

Document Ref:	Version:	Approved Date:	Approved by:	Expire Date:	Number of Pages:
WHA 0619	3	07.12.2022	Board	07.12.2023	Page 5 of 7

## PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Robust key performance indicator (KPI) measures will be established and maintained to ensure WHA is able to report on performance in relation to fire safety.

KPI measures will be provided at Senior Management Team and Board level and be produced on a quarterly basis.

WHA will appoint a third party independent auditor to undertake quality assurance audits on a sample of 5% fire risk assessments works in the field and a desk top sample of fire risk assessments.

## NON-COMPLIANCE

Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Head of Assets in the first instance.

The Head of Assets will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the operational team in order to address the non-compliance issue and report details of the same to the Executive Management Team (EMT).

EMT will ensure the Board are made aware of any non-compliance issue so they can consider the implications and take action as appropriate.

## DATA PROTECTION

When handling data sheets staff will come into contact with personal information. The handling and use of the data will be carried out under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will monitor and report on compliance performance and use this information to identify areas for improvement.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory or best practice.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In implementing this policy we aim to treat all customers fairly. An equality impact assessment has been carried out. Where customers require additional support, we will endeavour to provide a service that seeks to meet the needs of a particular individual or household.

Document Ref:	Version:	Approved Date:	Approved by:	Expire Date:	Number of Pages:
WHA 0619	3	07.12.2022	Board	07.12.2023	Page 6 of 7



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