

Policy Name: Fire Safety

1. Policy Summary...

- 1.1 Our Fire Safety Policy is committed to effectively managing fire risks to protect our staff, tenants, visitors, contractors, and communities from fire hazards.

The purpose of this document is to outline Midland Hearts (MH) fire safety procedures and fire precautions in Midland Heart premises, assist staff in the implementation of fire safety measures and to comply with Fire Safety and Health & Safety law & regulations.

2. Policy Principles

- 2.1. We are committed in so far as reasonably practicable to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of persons in our buildings and homes by undertaking a robust Fire Risk Assessment programme.

- 2.2. This policy applies to the following locations:

- Independent Living, Retirement Living, and the Specialist Accommodation property portfolio including registered providers, scheme-based support services and sheltered schemes (including communal areas);
- Offices including any onsite storage facilities;
- Leasehold and mutual schemes where we retain responsibility for the Fire safety;
- General Need's properties
- Agency Managed and Leased Properties where Midland Heart retain responsibility for fire safety

- 2.3. We will meet our statutory duty and ensure fire precautions are provided in all buildings and sites. We will:

- Safeguard people & properties from the effects of fire.
- Prevent accidents and near misses occurring.

- 2.4. Accept responsibility when things go wrong.

- 2.5. Put things right quickly.

3. It applies to

- 3.1. The policy applies to all Midland Heart tenants, contractors and staff. A tenant or resident is anyone who receives or requests a service from us or who is affected by our Fire Safety activities.

- 3.2. This includes employees, members of the public and contractors working on our behalf within our buildings and homes.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Duty Holder:** refers to an individual or organisation that has specific legal obligations to ensure safety, compliance, or adherence to standards within a defined area of responsibility.
- 4.2. **Named Responsible Person/ Responsible Person(s):** Any employee that manages a building and / or site e.g. operation managers, scheme/project managers, team leaders and facilities managers. A person who manages or controls a property as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 4.3. **Means of escape:** A route, walkway, path, lobby, or corridor that provides a safe route for persons to evacuate from any point in the building and leads them to a place of ultimate safety without outside assistance.
- 4.4. **Competent:** Being capable, through an appropriate mixture of knowledge and experience, to complete the task in hand in a safe and effective manner.
- 4.5. **Best endeavors:** Where 3 attempts have been made to inspect a fire door, where on each attempt, written communication has been left asking the resident to arrange an appointment for their front Fire door to be checked by a Midland Heart staff member.
- 4.6. **Communal areas:** Any area internal or external that is not directly controlled, owned, or managed by any individual customer / resident e.g.: walkways, corridors, laundries, guest rooms, car parks, communal kitchens, lounges, drives, gardens, and conservatories.
- 4.7. **Domestic Dwelling:** A flat, apartment, house or room that is rented or leased by any Midland Heart customer for residential purposes as a private dwelling and where a tenancy agreement or leasehold agreement exists.
- 4.8. **Housekeeping Checks:** Weekly checks undertaken by Retirement and Supported Living Scheme Staff that covers a range of checks that includes in part some questions on Fire Safety.
- 4.9. **HRRB:** Higher risk residential building.

5. Accessibility and Awareness

- 5.1. Concerns and complaints regarding our Fire Safety activities can be received through any of our communication channels. This includes to any member of staff, via phone, email and social media. Where concerns are received through social media to maintain privacy and confidentiality, we will respond via private message.
- 5.2. Concerns can be received on behalf of tenants or residents through other agencies e.g. advocates or support agencies. In these cases, we will need written consent from the tenant

or resident to discuss the complaint with their representative in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedure and our GDPR 2018 requirements.

- 5.3. Where a Councillor or MP makes an enquiry on behalf of a tenant or resident, they will not be required to provide written consent as they are elected representatives. These will be treated as MP or Councillor enquiries and the usual complaints process will apply.
- 5.4. We will promote the ways in which a concern or complaint can be made through all of our main communication channels, this includes our website, social media, posters, leaflets, letters, and phone calls.

6. Reasonable Adjustment and Support

- 6.1. We communicate with our tenants and residents advising when we need to gain access to their homes to carry out important Fire Safety activities. As our Fire Risk Assessment covers our communal areas written correspondence of our attendance is not usually required, however should we need to access to a home, preferred methods will be utilised.
- 6.2. We understand that some tenants and residents may have difficulty allowing access during working hours for us to undertake our fire safety activities in their homes. As such we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments, to ensure our Fire Risk Surveyors are flexible in their working patterns to facilitate your availability.
- 6.3. In the absence of known reasonable adjustments being required we will discuss the requirements with the person concerned and seek to reach agreement on what may be reasonable in the circumstances.
- 6.4. In the majority of cases, we will be able to agree and deliver the required reasonable adjustment with a minimum of delay. In some cases, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the difficulty or seek advice from expert organisations that can assist with signposting and other forms of support.
- 6.5. There may be occasions where there is good reason to apply discretion when decision making. We will always consider the individual circumstances of the individual involved when making our decisions.

7. Fire Performance Standards

- 7.1. Responsible Person(s) will ensure the following performance standards are met:
 - Suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) are carried out for all buildings required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) (as amended)
 - Provide information to All Residents within properties with 2 or more domestic dwellings with common areas with Fire Safety Instructions and their Fire Door check requirements
 - Complete Fire Door checks on all 11m+ premises annually and communal Fire Doors quarterly

- Suitable fire precaution measures will be instigated at buildings and sites.
- Regular testing of all fire precaution equipment will be undertaken as required and recorded
- Suitable mandatory training for all relevant staff will be provided, maintained and recorded
- Housekeeping will be undertaken and recorded to ensure appropriate control measures are maintained
- Ensure mitigation action plans, where required, are recorded, updated and reviewed at regular intervals

7.2. For Higher Risk Residential Building (HRRB) (18m+ or 7 storeys or more),

- Register the building with the Building Safety Regulator
- Obtain a 'Building Assessment Certificate' (BAC) and display it in a conspicuous place within the relevant building
- Provide a 'Secure Information Box' (SIB)
- Consider the design and materials of the external walls during the Fire Risk Assessment and comment.
- Provide Floor Plans and building plans
- maintain Firefighters lifts and firefighting equipment
- Provide Wayfinding signage

7.3. Duty Holder and Responsible Persons:

Area	Responsible Person
General Needs	Head of Housing Management
Retirement Living/Specialist Accommodation	Head of Retirement Living
Independent Living	Head of Lettings and Tenancy Sustainment
Head Offices	Head of Safety and Facilities
Home Options/Mutuals/ Commercial Properties	Head of Mutuals
New Build Developments	Director of Development/Head of Construction and Quality

8. Related Law & Regulations....

Legislation/Regulation	Relevance to This Policy
Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	This is 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	An act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which 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, making changes to the Regulatory Reform Order 2005. It was sponsored by the Home Office.
Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022	This Act was introduced as an important step towards implementing the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. The Regulations are being introduced under Article 24 of the Fire Safety Order and came into force on 23 January 2023.
Building Safety Act 2022	This is the primary legislation which establishes in law a framework for building safety both during design and construction and in occupation.
Building Regulations- Approved Document B	Covers fire safety matters within and around buildings.
British Standards (Fire safety related)	There are various British Standards relating to fire safety. These are national standards set by the BSI Group to ensure all parties conform to the same requirements.

9. This policy links to the following internal literature:

- Weekly Reporting Template
- Monthly reporting Template
- FRA Process Map 1
- FRA Process Map 2
- Key principles of a MH FRA
- Setting MH Building FRA Periods
- Risk rating of FRA actions
- Re-assigning FRA actions

- Fire Risk Action Extension Request
- Guidance on completing a Fire Safety Check
- Full Evacuation Notice
- Stay Put Evacuation Notice
- Building ERP Template
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Questionnaire
- Fire and false Alarm Form
- PEEP Template
- New development Fire Safety Inspection and Handover Form
- Fire Alarm Matrix
- Weekly Fire Door Report

Policy Document Control

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