

WESTFIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Fire Safety Policy (Communal Flats/Minto Centre)

1.0 Policy Statement

Westfield Housing Association have a duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant legislation and guidance in the management of its properties, including but not limited to the Fire Safety Bill 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and any subsequent amendments or future legislation relating to fire safety. Westfield Housing Association recognises its role as the “Responsible Person” under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2.0 Purpose

The overall aim of the Fire Safety Policy is to minimise the risk of fires starting and spreading in properties that are managed by Westfield and to ensure the safety of customers, employee and contractors who reside, visit or work in these properties. The specific objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure that a clear and consistent approach is set out in respect of fire risk assessments and inspections of internal communal areas and the Minto Centre;
- To ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to the removal of belongings in communal areas;
- To set out the maintenance and servicing regime for fire equipment at the Minto Centre;
- To ensure that customers have a clear message about fire evacuation procedures for their building;
- Identifying those particularly vulnerable customers who may require a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) which will be in addition to the Fire Risk Assessments;
- To ensure compliance with existing legislation, not limited to that set out above, and to review in line with any incoming legislation in the future.
- To promote a culture of fire safety awareness across the organisation and ensure employee receive appropriate training and guidance.
- To ensure robust record-keeping and audit trails are maintained for all fire safety activities.

3.0 Definitions

- FRA – Fire Risk Assessment
- SDM – Westfield Housing’s IT Housing System

- CO – Carbon Monoxide alarm
- Responsible Person – The duty holder under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Westfield Housing Association).

4.0 Responsibilities

Westfield Board will have overall governance responsibility for ensuring the Fire Safety Policy & Procedure is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with the regulatory standards, legislation and approved codes of practice. The Chief Executive Officer will formally approve this policy.

The Operations Director will ensure that it is reviewed every two years (or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation or codes of practice). The Property Service's Officer is the Policy lead and will carry out each review.

The Operations Director has strategic responsibility for the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained and must satisfy themselves that arrangements for Fire Safety management are appropriate, robust and regularly reviewed.

This includes ensuring risk assessments have been carried out and the recommendations implemented. To ensure members of the organisation are aware of their responsibilities and duties in relation to fire safety. Ensure all persons involved are trained and competent to carry out their tasks. Reporting any reportable cases to HSE and ensuring that employees or their representatives are consulted on the identified risks of fire safety and actions taken to control the risks and ensuring performance information is reported to the Board.

The Property Services Officer and Technical Services Officer together are responsible for identifying any systems that do not comply with the HSE guidance, review all risk assessments and amend as required. Maintain adequate records such as water temperature monitoring reports. They will also ensure that FRA actions are monitored, completed within required timescales, and evidenced appropriately.

Our qualified Contractors will carry out fire safety maintenance and repairs as required. They will ensure all employee falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training to enable them to comply with this policy and the Association's emergency arrangements. Westfield Housing Code of Conduct should be always followed. Any queries should be directed to the Maintenance Team immediately. Contractors must report any defects, hazards or non-compliance immediately and cooperate fully with audit and assurance processes.

All Westfield Housing employees and Contractors have a responsibility to be familiar with the Association's Policies & Procedures. To advise tenants/customers accordingly and where appropriate direct queries to the Maintenance Team. All employees must report fire safety concerns promptly and support the safe management of communal areas and evacuation procedures.

5.0 Risk & Reporting

The Board and Chief Executive/Operations Director will receive regular updates on the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy along with notification of any non-compliance / concerns identified. This is so they have assurance that the policy is operating effectively in practice.

The Chief Executive and Operations Director will receive reports containing compliance statistics relating to fire safety performance and ensure compliance is being achieved. They will also be notified of any non-compliance issue identified.

Robust Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are produced and provided at operational level on a monthly basis. Regulatory KPIs are reported to the Board quarterly.

Bi-monthly meetings with Contractors will cover performance against our full suite of KPI's on health and safety and responsive repairs. Safeguarding, changes in legislation and regulations will also be covered.

One to One meetings between Employee will also look at KPI's and general performance and actions put in place where issues are identified.

A Compliance tracker will be held to record all relevant fire safety compliance activities, servicing, inspections and FRA actions and updated accordingly and reports saved as required.

Internal audits and periodic external audits of fire safety compliance will be undertaken to provide assurance and identify areas for improvement.

6.0 Legal Framework/References

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Housing Act 2004
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Any future legislation, statutory guidance or approved codes of practice relating to fire safety.

7.0 Linked Documents

- Fire Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Policy
- Domestic Heating Policy

- Electrical Safety Policy
- Communal Area Maintenance Policy

To be completed by Corporate Services Officer

Document Control

Business Owner (name & job title)	Helen Timney, Property Services Officer
Policy Author (name & job title)	Helen Timney, Property Services Officer
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Reviewed By	Helen Timney, Property Services Officer
Next Review Due	January 2027
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Document History

Date	Version Number	Author	Description of Update
January 2026	1.5	H Timney	Minor changes following External Audit
July 2024	1.4	HE	Minor updates to responsibilities of contractors.
September 2023	1.3	D Fox	Minor changes following review by compliance solicitor to ensure policy covers existing & incoming legislation.
July 2023	1.2	HR	Minor changes which include compliance follow up works and record keeping.
August 2022	1.1	HR	New Fire Safety Policy including Minto Centre & Communal Flats.