



## **Fire Safety Policy**

### **Approval/revision history**

**Date approved:** August 2022

**Next review date:** May 2028

<b>Review date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Amendments</b>
May 2025	Head of Property Services	Amendments following Review of Policy by Fire Risk Assessor

## **Purpose of the Policy**

The aim of this policy is to provide a robust fire safety management framework which can be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of staff, tenants, visitors, contractors and firefighters.

The procedures detailed within the Policy are intended to facilitate the effective management of fire safety, ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and all other relevant legislation.

**Section A** Outlines roles and responsibilities in relation to the Legal Duty Holder

**Section B** Outlines responsibilities in relation to properties owned and managed By Williamsburgh Housing Association.

**Section C** Outlines responsibilities in relation to Williamsburgh Offices, Ralston House, Paisley, PA1 1RW and any other non-domestic property.

## SECTION A - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Duty Holder

- 1.1 The **Duty Holder** with responsibility for the Management of Fire Safety Is the Chief Executive.
- 1.2 The Chief Executive delegates responsibility for the Management of Fire Safety to the Health and Safety Administrator (HSA). The HSA is the Head of Property Services.
- 1.3 Chief Executive/HSA responsibilities are supported by other members of the Leadership Team to develop and implement all Fire Safety Management measures:
  - Head of Housing and Communities
  - Head of Finance, IT and Corporate Services
  - Head of Development
- 1.4 Duty Holder/HSA responsibilities include:
  - Organisational arrangements in relation to Fire Safety
  - Development of Safe Systems of Work
  - Risk Management and Control (Fire Risk Assessment)
  - Ensure all processes are disseminated to Staff and adopted for operational practice
  - Emergency planning
  - Fire Safety planning – resources and control
  - Training strategies – Duty Manager and Fire Marshal duties
  - Specific and bespoke fire safety provision where required

## SECTION B - PROPERTIES MANAGED BY THE ASSOCIATION

### 1. Definitions

Common Area – *“A common area is a portion of a property that is shared and used by multiple residents. This would include areas such as the lobby, stairway and hallway.”*

Compartmentation – *“subdivision of a building by fire-resisting walls and/or floors for the purpose of limiting fire spread within the building.”*

Competent Person – *“person, suitably trained and qualified by knowledge and practical experience, and provided with the necessary instructions, to enable the required task(s) to be carried out correctly.”*

Dwelling – *“a house, flat, or other place of residence.”*

Emergency Lighting – *“lighting provided for use when the supply to normal lighting fails.”*

Fire Door – *“door or shutter provided for the passage of people, air or objects which, together with its frame and furniture as installed in a building, is intended (when closed) to resist the passage of fire and/or gaseous products of combustion, and is capable of meeting specified performance criteria to those ends.”*

Smoke Alarm – *“device containing, within one housing, all the components, necessary for detecting smoke and for giving an audible alarm.”*

Sprinkler System – *“a system comprising thermosensitive devices designed to react at a pre-determined temperature to automatically release a stream of water and distribute it in a specified pattern and quantity over a designated area.”*

HMO – *“a house, premises or a group of premises with shared amenities, occupied by three or more persons from three or more families as their only or main residence.”*

### 2. References and Legislation

- BS 5839-6:2019+A1:2020
- Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Domestic Technical Handbook (as revised)
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 LD2 Standards
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Scottish Government Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High-Rise Domestic Buildings

### **3. Fire and Smoke alarms**

3.1 The Association will provide in Tenanted properties:

- one functioning smoke alarm in the room which is frequently used by the occupants for general daytime living purposes
- one functioning smoke alarm in every circulation space, such as hallways and landings; and
- one heat alarm in every kitchen.

3.2 All alarms will be interlinked, either mains powered or using sealed battery alarms, and provided with an integral stand-by power supply (a minimum of class D).

3.3 The Association will ensure that fire and smoke alarms are in proper working order at the start of each tenancy.

3.4 The Association will ensure that all smoke alarms are installed in accordance with the recommendations contained in BS EN14604:2005 and heat alarms comply with BS 5446-2:2003.

*NB: All smoke alarms are required to meet the Fire (Scotland) Regulations, LD2 standard by February 2022.*

3.6 Specialised alarms will be given to tenants who have a disability, an impairment or special needs (e.g. smoke alarms with a vibrating pad, flashing light etc.). These will be installed in addition to smoke alarms, heat alarms or carbon monoxide detectors. Alarm specifications will be assessed with support from Occupational Health services.

3.7 Tenants will be advised to test alarms on a weekly basis.

3.8 Alarms will be tested during the Annual Gas Safety visit. Properties with electric heating will be visited annually to test alarms.

#### **4. Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

- 4.1 Carbon monoxide alarms will be installed in any room containing a fossil fuel burning appliance.
- 4.2 Carbon Monoxide alarms will comply with British Kitemark EN 50291-1.

#### **5. Emergency Lighting (Where Applicable)**

- 5.1 For blocks of flats and maisonettes, emergency lighting will be present in all communal areas and common escape routes. Where the emergency lighting provision is under the control of a third party (e.g. Service Provider), all reasonable steps will be taken to communicate with the third party in an attempt to ensure compliance with the procedures below.
- 5.2 The emergency lighting system will be designed to automatically illuminate upon the failure of the power supply.
- 5.3 The emergency lighting system will be tested on a 6-monthly basis as required by Legislation by a competent Contractor with a record of the test maintained for 3 years.
- 5.4 An annual discharge test will be performed by a competent person. This will involve simulating a power failure and conducting a test of the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g. 3 hours).

#### **6. Fire Doors and Compartmentation (Where Applicable)**

- 6.1 Buildings containing flats and maisonettes will be split into fire-resisting compartments by fire-resisting doors, walls and floors which will provide a physical barrier to fire.
- 6.2 Doors connecting shared parts of a multi-occupancy dwelling, such as the doors to individual flats or apartments will be rated fire doors.  
**Note** – The Association does not currently own any stock which is defined as a multi-occupancy dwelling.
- 6.3 For homes with an integral garage, the door that joins the garage to the main part of the house will be a fire door.

## **7. Emergency Exit Doors**

- 7.1 The Association will ensure all doors which are to be used in an emergency can be opened from the inside without the use of a key. This includes the rear close doors in common close areas.

## **8. Smoke Ventilation (Where Applicable)**

- 8.1 Communal areas will have adequate smoke ventilation either through natural means or by mechanical ventilation.
- 8.2 Any ventilation ducts supplying or removing air from a protected stairway or entrance hall will not serve any other areas.
- 8.3 All buildings will have adequate means for venting heat and smoke from a fire in the basement.
- 8.4 Smoke ventilation systems will be serviced on an annual basis.

## **9. Fire Equipment (Where applicable)**

- 9.1 Sprinklers will be installed where the Association is unable to reduce particular risks by other means. Properties found to be of 'high risk' will be assessed jointly with the Fire Service and appropriate means of mitigating any risks actioned where reasonably practicable.
- 9.2 Fire extinguishers will not be installed in dwellings as tenants will not be trained on the safe use of extinguishers. Accidents can occur if tenants try to use them in the event of a fire or if they are discharged through malice or horseplay.
- 9.3 To assist the Fire and Rescue Service:
- Dry risers will be installed in any building that is over 18 metres in height.
  - Wet risers will be installed in buildings over 50 metres in height.
  - Outlets will be present on each floor and located in a fire escape staircase or similar protected location.
- 9.4 Both dry and wet risers will be subject to a recorded visual inspection every 6 months.
- 9.5 Both dry and wet risers will be subject to a recorded pressure test every year by a competent person.

## **10. Furniture and Furnishings**

- 10.1 Where furniture and furnishings are provided, the Association will ensure they are fully compliant with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.

## **11. Evacuation Policy**

- 11.1 Fire evacuation procedures and fire assembly points (where applicable) will be clearly contained in tenancy handbooks or tenancy start-up packs which will be issued to all tenants at the start of a tenancy.
- 11.2 Alternative methods will be available for tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. an interpreter will be used, a copy will be in braille, an audio version will be available etc.).
- 11.3 The Association will be guided by Fire and Rescue Service advice and guidance In relation to evacuation advice for Tenanted properties.
- 11.4 Evacuation guidance, implementation and responsibility relating to properties Leased to third-party Housing Providers will be the responsibility of the third-party Housing provider to develop and implement.

## **12. Signage**

- 12.1 Fire action signs will be placed at entrance doors and common areas. Where fire safety signs are provided they will be in accordance with BS 5499 and the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

## **13. Maintenance and Repairs**

- 13.1 The Association will ensure premises, equipment and devices provided for fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance, are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- 13.2 All repairs will be carried out within the timescale set in the Association's repair policy by a competent person.



- 13.3 Clear records will be maintained of the processes in place and actions carried out.

## 14. Access and Facilities for the Fire Service

14.1 The Association will ensure:

- there is sufficient means of external access to enable fire appliances to be brought near to the building for effective use;
- there is sufficient means of access into, and within, the building for firefighting personnel to effect search and rescue and fight fire; and that
- the building is provided with sufficient internal fire mains **where required** and other facilities to assist firefighters in their tasks. Fire and Rescue Service log all sources of Mains outlets for Fire Fighting purposes.

## 15. Fire Risk Assessment

15.1 The legal requirements relating to Fire Risk Assessing are complex and are often taken to exclude domestic premises. However, the Association has a legal duty to risk assess all areas defined as 'workplaces', which will include plant rooms and other non-tenant-accessible areas. Furthermore, the fire regulations require common areas to be maintained in a certain condition suitable for the fire authority, which can often only be ensured by carrying out a risk assessment.

The following will be considered in developing the risk assessment strategy:

- High rise buildings pose a particular risk to tenants and often exhibit significant uncontrolled risks
- 'Workplaces' such as plant rooms come within the scope of the regulations so far as fire risk assessing is required
- Common areas of domestic premises require to be maintained in a certain condition and may benefit from a 'representative' risk assessing programme
- Particular risks may be posed by external wall systems, e.g. cladding (recognising that specialised intrusive inspection and fire performance testing may be required in some circumstances).

## 16. Tenant Responsibilities and Communication

- 16.1 The Association will include fire safety obligations within tenancy agreements and will issue regular fire safety information to remind tenants to:
- test smoke alarms on a weekly basis;
  - ensure all communal areas are not obstructed; and
  - ensure fire doors are not propped open or otherwise disabled.
- 16.2 Tenants will be provided with information on the fire detection system and evacuation procedures / assembly points where applicable.
- 16.3 Tenancy agreements will state that permission must be sought to carry out any alterations, for example, front doors cannot be changed without the express permission of the Association.
- 16.4 Communication methods will take account of tenants with language or learning difficulties (e.g. braille, audio, different language, etc.).
- 16.5 Tenants must ensure the safe and appropriate storage of any electrically powered items such as mobility scooters and electric scooters. Items are **NOT** to be stored within common areas such as common close areas due to the risk of blocking potential Fire Exit routes. **The Association may remove any items stored or situated in common areas creating a potential Fire Hazzard and store them at cost to the resident.**
- 16.6 Lithium-ion batteries and any other power sources used by residents for their own means must be stored appropriately in residents' homes. Tenants and residents are responsible for ensuring all power sources are safe, stored appropriately, used within the manufacturers instruction guidelines and are maintained to manufacturers standards. Any incidents involving the failure of power sources will be investigated by The Association and reasonable appropriate actions taken.

## 17. Contractors

- 17.1 Contractors engaged by The Association will be Procured in accordance with relevant Legislative and Regulatory Practice in relation to Fire Safety requirements.
- 17.2 Contractors will be required to provide Risk and Method Statements (RAMS), and other documentation relating to Safe Systems of Works

(SSOW) which will be reviewed by a competent person prior to works commencing.

- 17.3 All hot works to be undertaken by Contractors will require suitable RAMS and a 'Permit to work' Certificate for review.
- 17.4 Appropriate arrangements will be identified to ensure where the Contractor has breached compartment walls/floors, these are rectified as part of the works to reinstate the Fire resistance as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **SECTION C - WHA OFFICE RALSTON HOUSE**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1) To ensure that all persons are protected from harm caused by fire on the Association's premises or on adjoining premises.
- 2) To ensure that management and employees comply with the procedures within the adopted Fire Safety Policy.

### **2. References**

- 1) Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- 2) Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- 3) Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended
- 4) Fire safety – An Employers Guide ISBN 011 341 2290
- 5) Scottish Executive, Fire Safety Guidance Booklet: Are You Aware of Your Responsibilities, August 2006, ISBN 0 7559 4965 X.
- 6) Practical fire safety for existing specialised housing and similar premises: guidance. January 2020. ISBN: 978-1-83960-510-9 (Scottish Government)
- 7) Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High-Rise Domestic Buildings. December 2019. ISBN: 978-1-83960-358-7 (Scottish Government)

### **3. Fire Management Processes**

#### **3.1 Fire Certificates**

From the introduction of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety

(Scotland) Regulations 2006, Fire Certificates will no longer be valid. Instead, the employer is responsible for assessing fire safety risks and implementing adequate control measures through the process of Risk Assessment.

### **3.2 Fire Action**

The Association will develop a site-specific Fire Evacuation Process for each premise, following the assessment of fire safety risks. However, the following provides a sample generic plan upon which the site-specific actions will be based.

#### **1) On discovering a fire**

- Raise the alarm by operating the nearest Fire Alarm point.
- If a phone is close at hand DIAL 999
- If safe to do so, (a personal judgement), and only if trained in the use of fire extinguishers, tackle the outbreak with an appropriate extinguisher. Otherwise, leave the building and proceed to the designated Assembly Point.

#### **2) On hearing the fire alarm**

- Ensure all persons are alerted.
- Evacuate the building quickly, but safely, by the nearest EXIT point. Go to your Assembly Point.
- Do not delay by taking coats or personal belongings.
- Where possible, ensure that all toilets are empty.
- Close all windows and doors if this does not significantly delay departure. N.B. Fire doors must always be kept closed
- Check to ensure that someone has called the Fire Brigade:- DIAL 999
- Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances until told to do so by a Fire Officer or the most senior member of staff present.

#### **3) The Duty Manager/ Fire Marshal roles**

- For fire evacuation procedures, The Association will appoint a competent member of staff to act as the Duty Manager. A second member of staff will be identified as the Fire Marshal.
- On hearing the Fire Alarm, the Duty Manager and Fire Marshal will implement the Fire Evacuation Process which is contained in a separate document.

### **3.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

Duty Manager            Members of Leadership Team

Fire Marshal            Members of Office based Staff

A rota system will be implemented for working days and displayed in a prominent area of the Office.

## **4. Registers and checklists**

- 4.1 A current list of all staff members employed by W.H.A. is easily accessible via the Astrow PocketPIP App, available to all staff listed above.
- 4.2 The attendance registers for visitors, will be included on the Astrow PocketPIP, to assist the Duty Manager in the headcount at the Assembly Point.
- 4.3 Staff, who in the course of their work must leave the building, will ensure they use the Astrow fingerprint terminal to record their in/out status.
- 4.4 Premises will be occupied by a minimum of 2 Staff members at all times. All Staff will receive Training in fire Safety and the Fire Evacuation Process.

## **5. Risk Assessment**

- 5.1 The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended require a Risk Assessment to be carried out of the fire risks present in all premises in which staff are employed and whereby the employer / duty holder has a control of those premises. This duty extends to the undertaking of Risk Assessments in the common areas of housing stock and other Association-controlled premises that are legally defined as workspaces (e.g. commercial buildings for which the fire risk assessing duty has not been contractually passed to a tenant).
- 5.2 An assessment of the fire risks will be carried out by a competent person and filed in the Risk Assessment file by the competent person.
- 5.3 The assessment will identify possible ignition sources, combustible materials (such as piles of paper, storage of flammable materials etc.), working practices which give rise to fire risk (such as electric heaters being left on overnight), suitability of escape routes, fire detection/control

systems, personnel who may be affected by fire and training needs of staff.

- 5.4 Where necessary, the existing fire Policy and Procedures will be amended to reflect any improvements deemed necessary by the risk assessment.
- 5.5 The assessment will be reviewed in the event of any significant change to operating practices, plant or equipment, materials used etc. and in any case, on a regular basis.

## **6. Fire Training and Drills**

- 6.1 A clear notice will be exhibited in a prominent position to tell all staff and the public, including disabled people, what to do in the event of an emergency.
- 6.2 A complete evacuation of all employees will be carried out twice a year. The drill will be coordinated by the Duty Manager , or their deputy, in their absence. An evening drill will also be carried out annually for Committee members and staff attending evening meetings in the Association's office.
- 6.3 Staff will initially be told the day set aside for this drill but not the time. The date and time will both be unannounced when on the twice a year regime.
- 6.4 All staff will be advised of the office site plan showing the location of fire alarm points, fire extinguishers, etc. All new staff will be given this information as part of their induction training.  
The floor plan should be displayed at the entrance to the office premises.  
The Fire Service should be provided with a copy of the floor plan.
- 6.5 A record will be kept of any fire incidents and the fire drills carried out in the Association.

## **7. Equipment Testing and Inspection**

The following is the recommended periodicity for maintenance and inspection of fire safety measures and systems in accordance with British Standards and their Codes of Practice.

1) Weekly :

- Walk through premises and check escape routes to ensure they are clear of obstructions and combustible materials and that self-closing doors are not wedged open;
- Check any fire alarm control panel and indicating equipment to ensure the system is active and fully operational;
- Check emergency lighting for fault indications.

2) Weekly:

- Test fire alarm system by activating a manual call point (using a different call point for each successive weekly test), by inserting a dedicated test key. This will check that the control equipment can receive a signal and in turn, activating the warning alarms. Manual call points may be numbered to ensure they are sequentially tested. It is good practice to test the alarm at the same time each week, however, alternating the days will take place to address the need to ensure that staff working different days, are given the opportunity to hear the alarm. During a test, staff will be given advance notice and the alarm should not operate for too long so that there can be a ready distinction between a test and an unplanned actuation.
- Check that all safety signs and notices are legible;
- Check escape routes, and test exit locking mechanisms such as panic bars, push pads and electromagnetic locking devices;

3) Monthly:

- Functional tests of all emergency lighting systems should be at an appropriate time when, following the test, they will not be immediately required. However, some modern systems have self-testing facilities that reduce routine checks to a minimum. Depending on the type of installation certain routine checks and routine maintenance work may be able to be done in house. Test methods will vary. Further maintenance may need to be carried out by a service engineer;
- Carry out brief visual check of fire extinguishers and hose reels to ensure there are no obvious faults;

- Fire doors should be checked to ensure they are in good working order as follows:
  - Inspect doors for any warping or distortion that will prevent the door from closing flush into the frame;
  - Check any fire-resisting glazed panels are in good condition and secure in their frame; and Check that intumescent strips and smoke seals are in good condition.
- 4) Six monthly:
- A person with specialist knowledge of fire-warning and automatic detection systems should carry out six-monthly servicing and preventive maintenance on the fire alarm; Six-monthly checks and inspection of sprinkler system.
- 5) Annual:
- Maintenance of portable fire extinguishers and fire hoses;
  - Annual discharge test of emergency lighting;
  - Annual checks, inspection and test of sprinkler system.
  - Review Fire Risk Assessment and Policy & Procedures.
- 6) On completion all records should be annotated in the Fire Safety Log Book.

## **8. Disabled Persons**

- 8.1 The Association recognises the need to plan to assist disabled persons leave the building in event of an emergency situation developing. This will include both disabled members of staff and the general public who suffer from poor eye sight, a hearing impairment or who are physically disabled. The latter state could include those suffering a temporary physical problem.
- 8.2 For disabled members of staff, the actions to be taken will be documented in a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).
- 8.3 Where evacuation equipment, such as a chair or mat, is present, an adequate number of nominated persons will undergo suitable training.
- 8.4 The Association will ensure that all evacuation equipment is subject to periodic inspection and maintenance in accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations.



## **9. Visitors and Contractors**

### **9.1 Visitors/the public**

- It is part of the safety policy that visitors to any office of the Association will be accompanied at **ALL** times by an employee.
- It is not anticipated there will be a need for members of the public to proceed beyond the reception or interview rooms.
- In the event that the fire alarm is sounded, it is the responsibility of the employee escorting the visitor to ensure that their visitor is directed safely from the building to the Assembly Point at the corner of 18 Dunn Street.
- Visitors will be accompanied at all times and locate within the ground floor reception area. Assistance will be given to evacuate if required, however should this not be possible efforts will be taken to secure the visitor in an area protected by Fire doors and the Fire brigade advised of their presence in the building.

### **9.2 External contractors**

- The Duty Manager will give a short Safety Induction to all external contractors when they first visit the premises (see Section B Item 17). The fire safety element of the induction will at least cover:
  - i) the type of fire alarm (siren)
  - ii) the route to be followed to the nearest fire exit.
  - iii) the location of the nearest Assembly Point
  - iv) the location of any flammable materials and any other hazards in close proximity to the contractors place of work.
- At the time of letting a contract, the contractor will be informed of the standards of safety that will be acceptable to the Association.
- Information must be given, by the contractor, to the HSA of any anticipated fire or explosion risks, which could occur during work performed on the premises. Where significant risks are present, a 'Hot Work Permit' may be required and will be issued by the Maintenance Manager.

## **10. Floorplan of Offices**

10.1 Floor plan is displayed at the entrance to the Office premises.

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