




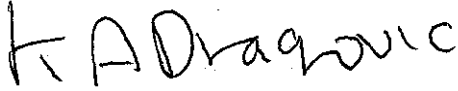
**St Albans District Council
Housing Services**

**Fire Safety Policy
Version 2.2**

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Document Approval

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Document Control

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2.1	Annual review	26 th October 2018	AI/FSG	Update to responsible officers
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Fire Safety Policy

1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all general needs blocks of flats, sheltered accommodation, mobile home sites and temporary accommodation managed by the Housing Department.
- 1.2 This policy applies to Introductory, Flexible tenancies, Secure and Non-Secure Tenants and leaseholders, Excluded and Non-Excluded Licences
- 1.3 This Policy does not apply to any corporate or commercial properties managed by Council Departments outside of the Housing Service.

1.4 2. Responsible Persons

The table below lists duties and responsibilities of current post-holders with regards to various aspects of fire safety within the department

Post	Post-holder Name	Responsibility
Head of Housing	Karen Dragovic	Overarching responsibility for fire safety
Asset Manager	Simon Smith	To ensure compliance, keep Asset Register up to date with relevant information and make sure budgetary provisions are available
Tenant Services and Performance Manager	Joanne Turner	Management of Estates and team managing estates
Estate Services Team Leader	Andrew Ilott	Named as "Responsible Person" under Regulatory Reform Order. To undertake regular inspections of communal areas assisted by the caretaking team. Responsible for making sure FRA's are carried out in due course. To liaise with colleagues to progress works that may arise.
Repairs Contract Manager	Gareth Heavey	Managing Repairs contractors, ensuring contractor compliance with regards to Fire Safety. Safety checks on contractors. Safety checks on void properties including looking for breaches in compartmentalisation

Senior Building Services Surveyor	Steve Todd	LGSR management. Servicing of Fire detection and firefighting equipment.
Electrical Surveyor	Mark Kibble	Landlord's electrical supply and emergency lighting inspections (annual). 5 year programme of cyclical electrical inspections.
Project Surveyor	Joaquin Lorente	Programing works arising from FRA working with ESTL to make sure actions programmed and completed
Housing Support Team leaders	Kate Padley/ Louise Wallis	Responsible for ensuring fire checks are carried out and regulations complied with in hostels, temp accom and sheltered housing
Housing Options Co-ordinator – Special Projects	Nicola Lee	Fire safety compliance – mobile home sites
All Staff	All staff	Report any concerns regarding Fire Safety to line manager

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 The Council aims to provide a safe environment in which the risk to our residents and their homes through damage caused by fires is minimised.
- 2.2 The Council will seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 2.3 The Council will promote awareness of Fire Safety to its residents making them aware of responsibilities that they have to safely maintain their tenancies for their own safety and that of other residents residing within a block, in such a manner that minimise the risks in relation for Fire Safety.
- 2.4 The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that staff understand their role in reducing the risk of fires and will also provide training to its staff to ensure that they are aware of their obligations.
- 2.5 The Council will work in partnership with other services to ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations and to ensure the ongoing safety of our residents. This includes Herts Fire and Rescue Services.
- 2.6 To meet our duties in relation to fire safety SADC will:
 - Carry out our Fire Risk Assessments in accordance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Undertake Fire Risk Audits with Herts Fire and Rescue Service where required.
 - Give Herts Fire and Rescue Service access to any properties as required in order to train and prepare for dealing with fires
 - Provide relevant employees with Fire Safety Training
 - Maintain and improve fire safety as required through the recommendations of the fire risk Assessments and the Fire Audits.
 - Carry out joint training exercises with Herts Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies as necessary to ensure readiness for an emergency.
 - Carry out all necessary servicing to ensure that fire prevention equipment is in full operation at all times
 - Consider Fire Safety in all improvement programmes and day to day repairs carried out by SADC

3 Management and review of Fire risk Assessments (FRA)

- 3.1 As part of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, The Council-must carry out a fire risk assessment on all residential blocks owned by the Housing Department and take reasonable steps to remove or reduce any risks that have been identified.
- 3.2 Where it is practical the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) report will be located within the premises. However where this is not practical the FRA report will be located in the Council Offices. They will be held centrally on the **H Drive**. All Housing staff will have read only access to these documents.
- 3.3 FRA's for High Rise blocks, Sheltered Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation Hostels will be carried out on an annual basis.
- 3.4 Other general needs blocks and mobile home sites will be carried out within 4 years of the date of the previous assessment, on a three year cyclical basis.
- 3.5 In addition to the planned programme, Fire Risk Assessments will be reviewed if they are either considered to be no longer valid, or there has been a significant change in the premises which may have affected the fire risk or the fire safety measures currently in place. Situations that may prompt this include but are not restricted to:
 - A significant change in the number of people present or in the characteristics of the occupants
 - Structural alterations to the building or new internal layouts.
 - Becoming aware of shortcomings in fire safety measures or potential improvements.
 - If a fire occurs
 - Updates in legislation
- 3.6 Fire Risk Assessments will be carried out by a competent person in line with the Regulatory Reform Order.
- 3.7 The Council will review all Fire Risk Assessments to establish what works are recommended to be undertaken.
- 3.8 The works will be prioritised based on the information received in the FRA report. The Council will work to reduce the fire risk on all our stock to a tolerable level, by programming these works based upon the information available in relation to the risk, the nature of the work involved and the buildings concerned.
- 3.9 Whilst all action points identified in an FRA report are considered necessary it must be recognised that everything cannot be done at once. It should be borne in mind that, although they appear less important than other higher

priority items that might take longer to complete, easily achieved improvements should not be unnecessarily delayed and dealt with in strict rotation. The remedial action plan will be kept on the H Drive and will be updated and reviewed regularly.

- 3.10 The Council has a capital sum within the Housing Investment Programme which will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process to ensure there are sufficient resources to carry out the fire safety work required. Minor works will be carried out within the responsive repairs revenue budget

4 Fire Risks

- 4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) places a duty on the Council as a Landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity. Examples of risk include but are not limited to:

- Arson
- Faulty electrical installations
- Accumulation of flammable rubbish
- Smoking
- Failures in construction (fire doors, lack of emergency lighting, etc.)

5 Fire Precaution, Prevention & Protection

- 5.1 In order to reduce the risks that the above present there are fire precautions that the Council will follow to protect people, property and assets against the loss of life, injury and damage caused by fire.
- 5.2 The Council will manage, undertake and maintain the following fire precautions, preventions and protections:

5.2.1 Clear landings policy

The Council operate a clear landings policy. This means that no items will be permitted to be kept in any common areas, including meter cupboards and bin stores. Items in communal areas will be removed and tenants will need to pay a fee in order to have the items returned.

One doormat per property may be kept in the communal areas providing that they are no bigger than 70cm x 40cm and they must be in good condition. The decision about the condition of the mat lies with the Council.

Corridors, walkways, landings, and exit routes must be kept clear of items No Rubbish should be left outside flat doors. All rubbish should be disposed of in the designated bin areas.

5.2.2 No smoking

Smoking in communal areas is forbidden. In accordance with the Health Act 2006 and the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006. This does not apply to tenants smoking in their own dwellings within a block. No smoking signs will be placed in communal blocks.

5.2.3 Fire stopping

Contractors working on any block either on behalf of the Council or any other persons or body should take care to avoid penetrating walls ceiling or floor slabs for passing through cable, pipes or conduits. Where this is unavoidable the contractor will ensure that the penetration is sealed and fire stopped adequately and where necessary with suitable methods agreed with the Council. This must be agreed with the Council before work commences and inspected directly upon completion.

5.2.4 Fire detection systems

It is noted that there is no general need for fire detection systems in general needs blocks, however where alarms and fire-fighting equipment are fitted these will be regularly tested and serviced. Alarms are tested on a weekly basis and fire-fighting equipment on a six monthly basis. Where premises have an alarm system, records of the alarm tests and evacuation practices will be kept in the premise information boxes.

5.2.5 Smoke Alarms.

All Council flats are fitted with hard-wired smoke detectors. Smoke alarms are tested on an annual basis at the same time as the annual gas safety check.

Smoke detectors within sheltered schemes are connected to the Careline who will alert Herts Fire Service if necessary.

5.2.6 Fire Exits

All Fire Exits must be kept free of all obstructions, both inside and out, and be available for use when required.

To ensure that security of the building is maintained, Fire Exits will not be left open, nor shall fire exits be used by the occupants of the building as a main entrance/exit to the building.

5.2.7 Fire Doors

Fire doors in communal blocks are provided to help prevent the spread of smoke and fire and must be kept closed. Fire doors are checked on a quarterly basis as part of our ongoing block inspections. A visual check is carried out on all doors including flat entrance doors looking for tampering, adaptations or damage. We will carry out further investigation if the visual check deems it necessary. We are unable to gain access to our flats on a regular basis to examine flat entrance doors but encourage staff to look at and report any issues when visiting flats for other reasons.

Positive close tests are carried out on all communal doors from both a 90 and 10 degree angle. We will also check intumescent strips, door furniture and glass undamaged on communal doors. Any issues found will be recorded and passed to the Asset Management Team for remedial works.

Fire Doors should NOT be propped open, tampered with or compromised in any way, i.e.; materials affixed to frame/door to prevent banging noises. Fire doors will be marked – keep shut.

The Council fits fire doors / entrance doors to tenant's flats and cupboards, where this has been identified as part of fire risk assessment. The Council also asks that Leaseholders comply with any recommendations in relation to such doors being installed, and offers their installation to all Leaseholders on a rechargeable basis. Where Leaseholders wish to fit their own fire door, they must provide certification in relation to the installation with regards to compliance. Where this is not undertaken the Council will write to the leaseholder explaining why the door needs to be replaced and setting out the fire safety issues. Ultimately the Council can seek an injunction for this work to be undertaken. However it is hoped that by discussion with the leaseholder and in setting out the facts clearly that arrangements will be made for the door to be replaced.

5.2.8 Dry Risers (Telford Court only)

Dry risers are positioned and secured on each floor within the block. The riser is located behind a secure door to prevent tampering or theft of the valve. They are inspected by the Fire Service and wet tests are carried out, risers are tested, maintained and serviced on a regular basis.

If the locks on the dry riser are changed for any reason, Herts Fire Service must be made aware and given a set of keys if necessary.

5.2.9 Emergency lighting

Where we have installed emergency lighting we will ensure that it is tested periodically, and that the records of these tests are kept on site and checked periodically.

The lighting will be tested on a monthly basis and an annual “drain down” will be performed annually by a competent professional.

5.2.10 Training

We will provide training for staff in fire safety and prevention measures. We will provide advice for residents in our newsletters and make sure our contractors are aware of fire safety issues. A fire safety leaflet will be issued to residents in each block and those in temporary accommodation. Training requirements will be reviewed annually by the Estate Services Team Leader

5.2.11 Signage

We will install, place and maintain clear safety signage where necessary to comply with British and European standards for safety signage.

5.2.12 Service and Electrical cupboards

Service and electrical cupboards within the communal areas must be kept locked at all times. Electrical and service cupboards must not be used for storage of any items. Any problems should be reported immediately to the Council.

5.2.13 Electrical Installations

The electrical installation to the communal parts within blocks of flats will be checked every 5 years in accordance with the guidance provided by the Institute of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations 18th Edition (as amended).

PAT testing will be carried out to Council supplied electrical equipment in sheltered blocks and temporary accommodation annually and a register of

Portable Appliances will be kept by the Council. The Asset Manager/Asset Manager Team Leader are responsible for ensuring this testing is carried out.

5.2.14 Gas Installations

In order to prevent a gas escape or combustible incident within blocks of flats, the buildings/individual heating systems are annually serviced by the Council to ensure compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

5.2.15 Evacuation routes

To ensure safe evacuation the Council has adopted a clear landing policy. To ensure safe evacuation the routes must be kept free of sources of ignition, flammable and combustible material and obstructions at all times.

5.2.16 Evacuation Plans

Providing the integrity of the front door to each individual flat is maintained and not compromised in any way, if there is a fire within a flat this will act as a sealed fire compartment. The flat should contain a fire for up to 30 minutes, with the fire doors and concrete walls resisting before spreading into the common parts of the block. In addition residents in other flats will have 1 hour protection when their own front door is taken into consideration.

Purpose built blocks of flats have a 'stay put policy' (Residents should leave their flat if it becomes affected by heat or smoke). Where a stay put policy is in place on the arrival of the Fire Service they will determine:

- When and if to commence a full evacuation.
- When to instigate a visual inspection.
- When residents can return to their premises.
- When to involve the Police.
- Any other steps appropriate to the circumstances

Where the fire is located within the resident's property then it is necessary to escape the building, this should be carried out in an orderly fashion, through the nearest Fire Exit. If possible and if it is safe to do so, all windows and doors should be closed to prevent fire spreading to other areas of the building.

5.2.17 Mobility Scooters

The Council do not allow mobility scooters to be stored or charged in communal areas unless a specific area has been allocated to do so.

5.2.18 Void inspections

Voids will be inspected for breaches in compartmentation. Any issues found will be brought to the attention of senior management so that it can be appropriately assessed and remedial carried out as required.

6.0 Policies and procedures

- 6.1 The Council commit to regularly review our fire policy (no less than bi-annually) and any supporting procedures and amended to ensure that it meets the needs of the Council and its tenants
- 6.2 The Council will carry out FRA's in accordance with our policy as set out in section 3 of this policy document.
- 6.3 The Council will carry out Fire Audits as necessary.
- 6.4 The Council will provide training to St Albans District staff.

7.0 Partnerships

- 7.1 We will work closely with Herts Fire & Rescue Service and our specialist Fire Risk Assessors.
- 7.2 We will carry out fire familiarisation exercises with Herts Fire Service when requested to ensure procedures are in place and that they are familiar with block layouts in the event of a real fire
- 7.3 We will work jointly producing relevant policies and procedures where applicable.
- 7.4 The Council will work with other organisations and partners to gain technical and expert advice to ensure we are meeting our obligations under the Regulatory Reform Act 2005.

8.0 Vulnerable people

- 8.1 Purpose built high rise and sheltered blocks – If the fire is not within the residents own property, it is a recommendation that all residents stay in their home until rescued by the fire service. If the fire is within the resident's home – they must escape safely from within their property, through a fire exit or a designated escape route. If possible and it is safe to do so, all windows and doors should be closed to prevent fire spread to other areas of the building.
- 8.2 All residents of Telford Court will be given an advice leaflet outlining these details. These will also be issued to new tenants as part of the sign up procedure.
- 8.3 Sheltered schemes - Information about vulnerable tenants or those with mobility problems will be recorded in the premise information boxes for the fire service in the event of an emergency.

9.0 Publicising the Policy

The Council will publicise the Housing Fire Safety Policy, and raise public awareness by:

- 9.1 Issuing a copy of this policy publicly on the Council website.
- 9.2 Regularly putting articles regarding fire safety into the Housing Times magazine sent to residents quarterly to remind them of their obligations, how to reduce the risk of fire and how to arrange a fire safety visit from Herts Fire Service.
- 9.3 Providing information leaflets for tenants in flats with communal areas and those in high rise blocks and to all tenants as part of the sign up process.
- 9.4 Providing Fire safety information in the tenants handbook and on the Council's website.
- 9.5 Arranging awareness campaigns for our residents.
- 9.6 Encouraging our residents to take up the offer of Herts Fire Service free home fire visits to current and new tenants as part of the sign up process.

