

Fire Safety approach by Harrow Council for housing owned and managed properties

1. Introduction

Harrow Council recognises its responsibility as a social landlord towards a safety of its residents, staff, contractors and visitors. This document outlines the Council's continuous commitment to fire safety, ensuring that its approach to passive fire safety works and any other works relating to the fire assets is of a high standard and quality of fire safety workmanship, underpinning the council's overall approach to fire risk management.

Since the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in 2017 and the subsequent Hackitt review into building regulations and fire safety in 2018/19, social landlords have focused on reviewing safety measures in their buildings and ensuring appropriate and necessary fire safety works and fire safety recommendations are implemented.

2. Scope

This document covers the organisational approach to all the social housing owned and/or managed by the council, including both, rented and leased tenancies.

3. Context

This approach helps the organisation to meet the Housing Services Smarter Housing Plan whereby the priority actions are to ensure the health and safety and the security of our customers, staff and contractors are of paramount importance in all the council does, by embedding awareness and compliance with all property related health and safety legislations and standards across the Housing Services.

4. Aims and objectives

- To comply with relevant fire safety legislation, regulatory, statutory, legislative standards, guidance and good practices
- To ensure that residents, staff, contractors, visitors and all Harrow Council residential properties are informed about the fire safety and fire evacuation strategies in our buildings in event of fire
- To prevent and minimize the risk of fires starting and spreading in residential properties, owned and managed by Harrow Council, including both rented and leasehold tenancies.

5. Regulation and legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force on 1st October 2006 and imposes a number of duties on the duty holder.

The **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** (officially listed as *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 S.I. 2005 No. 1541*) is a [statutory instrument](#), applicable only in [England](#) and [Wales](#). The Order places the responsibility on individuals within an organization to carry out risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire.

As the Landlord & 'Responsible Person', Harrow Council has a duty to ensure that it is compliant and it meets the obligations outlined in this legislation.

The Housing Act 2004 also specifies that sufficient properly designed and appropriately sited smoke & heat detectors are provided with an alarm in each dwelling.

6. Our Approach and Standards

a) Fire alarm detection systems

Harrow Council Standard

Harrow Council will install new D1 LD2 fire alarm systems within all General Needs housing stock.

Following current guidance on domestic fire alarm systems, Harrow Council has decided to install category Grade D1 LD2 fire alarm systems in all properties, which will provide a higher level of life safety for all occupants than the previous standard of Grade D LD3.

As per revised edition of The Building Regulations 2019 and the LGA Fire Safety in Purpose - Built Blocks of Flats, London Fire Brigade recommends that detection should now be provided in all risk rooms, including halls, landings, lounges and kitchens. The new British Standard 5839-6 2019 also recommends that all new build and existing materially changed dwellings are also provided with this standard of fire safety.

The Housing Act 2004 also specifies that sufficient properly designed and appropriately sited smoke & heat detectors are provided with an alarm in each dwelling.

b) Fire doors

Harrow Council Standard

Harrow Council will replace all existing 'notional' fire doors with replacement FD30s self-closing Secure by Design door-sets.

Following the Internal Fire Risk Assessments of all General Needs purpose built blocks it was evident that the majority of all 'notional' existing flat entrance doors were not fitted with compliant positive self-closing devices, but were provided with two rising butt hinges that are no longer considered suitable because they are unreliable in the effective closing of the doors.

Subsequently the fitting of new self-closing devices, in the short term, has been as a matter of priority. The new self-closing device must be capable of closing the door into its frame from any angle and overcoming the resistance of any latch.

Following consultation within various housing departments, it was decided that rather than carrying out short term fixes to the doors and frames, which in some instances, were found to be 35-40 years old, damaged and non-compliant, the Council will undertake a phased programme of replacement of the door-sets.

The door-sets will be fully certificated compliant unglazed FD30 doors, fitted with integral intumescent strips, cold smoke seals and positive door closers. The doors are tested on both sides to BS 476-22 & BSEN 1634-1.

The doors are also Secure by Design with multi locking systems. The doors will also be provided with spy viewers. Letterboxes will not be provided as this will compromise the fire rating of the door if damaged / vandalised. Secure lockable letter boxes will be provided internally where possible.

All flats are constructed as compartments and by ensuring that the flat door is fully self-closing. It will provide a minimum of 30 minutes of fire resistance. Any fire in that flat will be contained after evacuation and until intervention by the Fire Authority.

Any UPVC or door with glazing that does not comply with the original specification i.e. 'notional fire door' with Georgian wired fanlight where applicable will have to be changed to a flat entrance door (FED) that complies with current regulations unless clear fire door certification can be produced as evidence.

c) Emergency escape lighting

Harrow Council Standard

Harrow Council will supply and fit Emergency Escape Lighting in all 3 & 4 storey buildings.

Following Fire Risk Assessment surveys in all 3 & 4 storey General Needs blocks of purpose built blocks of flats it was noted that there was no emergency illumination within the stairways / means of escape.

It is not necessary to provide escape lighting in small blocks of flats of no more than two storeys unless need is identified following a Fire Risk Assessment. Therefore, the installation of the emergency lighting might not be undertaken to all 2 storey blocks owned and/or managed by the Council.

Emergency escape lighting should be provided in accordance with BS 5266- 2016 & BSEN 1838:2013 within all common escape routes including, where necessary, external stairways, balconies and roof level escape routes.

Due to the volume of works, the installation of emergency escape lighting is usually undertaken as part of phased programme or following the general refurbishment.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Housing Regeneration team provides strategic fire safety guidance and support across all housing departments, undertakes the Fire Risk Assessments and that the organisation meets its statutory, regulatory and legislative obligations and it is fire safety compliant.

Firesafety@harrow.gov.uk

The Asset Management team is responsible for the procurement and delivery of any planned major works. LBH aims to ensure that the most suitable contractor is selected for each project.

A weighted system between quality and price is used when evaluating tender submissions in order to identify the tenderer with the best performance record in terms of time, cost and value for money.

Homesafe@harrow.gov.uk

The Leasehold Team is responsible for issuing service charge invoices to leaseholders. Once the project manager has agreed the final account for the work with the contractor, it is passed to the Leasehold Team for invoicing to each leaseholder in accordance with the service charge provisions contained within their Lease.

Leasehold&RTBServices@harrow.gov.uk

Full payment of the invoice is due within 28 days. However the Council can discuss spreading payments over a longer time period, for leaseholders who are experiencing financial difficulty. Where this applies the leaseholder should contact their property officer immediately on receipt of the invoice to discuss the payment options available to them.

8. Monitoring and review

The Asset Management Team Project Managers and Clerk of Works will manage all the projects. Duties will include monitoring the progress and quality of works and will produce weekly reports to ensure that project targets and standards are met. All projects will be subject to financial reviews and contractor progress reports are submitted on a monthly basis. All projects are run in accordance with the JCT contract suite and subject to a 12 month defects liability period.

References

LGA Purpose Built Blocks of Flats> Building Regulations 2019 Part B Revised Edition.

HM Government Sleeping Accommodation> HM Government Fire Safety in the Home

Lacors (Single Household Property)> BS 5839-6 2019 LFB Guidance

Housing Act 2004 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005