

Housing Solutions Fire Safety Policy



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| Reference: | HS_POL_ASM_FIR_1.3 | Author: | Ben Lancaster |
| Scope: | Housing Solutions properties/staff and contractors | Approved by: | Executive Team |
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| | | Date of next review: | Jan 2022 |
| Legislation: | The regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Health and Safety and Work Act 1974 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 | | |
| Related Policies: | Health and Safety Policy Access Policy Repairs & Maintenance Policy Planned Maintenance investment Policy | | |

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Chief Executive, Directors and the Board of Housing Solutions acknowledge their moral and legal duty to ensure that all employees, tenants, and any other visitors to premises under Housing Solutions control, are adequately protected from all foreseeable fire risks that may arise. In order to achieve this, Housing Solutions will ensure that adequate resources are made available, suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments are conducted, and appropriate preventive and protective measures are identified and implemented in all premises under Housing Solutions control.
- 1.2 Housing Solutions aims to provide a safe environment in which our tenants (and other relevant persons) are assured that the risk of fire or fire safety related injury is minimised.
- 1.3 Housing Solutions will foster and maintain good working relationships with partner services to ensure the ongoing safety of our tenants, employees and customers; this includes the local fire and rescue service for the area.
- 1.4 Additionally, Housing Solutions is committed to ensuring ongoing compliance with all applicable fire safety legislation, in particular the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005. Housing Solutions are also committed to utilizing and following guidance provided by the National Fire Chief Council and other approved bodies.

- 1.5 Housing Solutions will take all reasonable steps to prevent and control the risk from fire in the properties that it owns.
- 1.6 Housing Solutions will maintain an open information policy and will work with customers, residents, staff groups, contractors and statutory bodies to agree and deliver solutions to fire safety issues.
- 1.7 Housing Solutions will implement its fire safety management strategy by empowering designated Operations staff with the appropriate training, skills and resources needed to safely manage fire safety.
- 1.8 Housing Solutions shall ensure that any properties that prompt remedial action shall be taken to safeguard persons in properties where there is a serious risk from fire.
- 1.9 This policy has been developed in conjunction with fire safety experts, Savills Consulting.
- 1.10 Housing Solutions acknowledge the Grenfell Tower Tragedy and any resulting actions for the sector following the enquiry. Housing Solutions are also committed to ensuring they provide the safest possible homes, with a commitment to increase fire and life safety measurements for our high risk buildings beyond the requirements of current regulations and legislation.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the fire safety arrangements in all workplaces, common areas of residential premises and any other premises managed and/or owned by Housing Solutions.

3. Definitions

RRFSO- Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005
AFD – automatic Fire detection
AOV- automatic opening vent
PFFE- portable fire fighting equipment

4. Legislation

The regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
Health and Safety and work act 1974
The management of Health and safety at work regulations 1999

5. Procedure

- 5.1 In order to help minimise the likelihood of fire occurring and the consequences in the event that a fire occurs, Housing Solutions will implement arrangements designed to ensure:
 - Suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 are undertaken (at appropriate intervals), the

significant findings recorded and necessary remedial work undertaken in a timely fashion

- Increased awareness for staff and residents alike through communication and appropriate fire safety management
- Adequate levels of basic fire safety awareness and staff competency through effective training programmes
- Adequate drills, servicing, maintenance and testing of fire safety equipment
- Effective liaison and co-operation with Local Fire & Rescue Services

The Housing Solutions Fire Safety Procedure is detailed in Appendix 1

6. Equality & Diversity

6.1 HS recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality and Diversity Policy, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Equalities Act 2010. HS works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. HS will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
- sensitive organisational information.

7.2 HS employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

8. Review

8.1 This Policy will be reviewed on an bi-annual basis (or subsequent change in legislation) by the Operations Director and the Property Service Manager (H&S and Compliance), and a report will be submitted to the Executive Team.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Fire Safety Procedure

Appendix 2 – Fire Safety Management Structure

Appendix 3 – Terms of Reference – Fire Safety Core Group

Appendix 1: Housing Solutions Fire Safety Procedure

1. Management & Hierarchy of Control

- 1.1 As an employer and landlord; and duty to the occupants of premises, Housing Solution must as far as is reasonably practicable take steps to reduce the risk from fire in Housing Solutions premises and make sure that everyone in, or nearby, can escape safely if there is a fire. See **Appendix 2**.
- 1.2 **The Board** should set the direction for effective fire safety and make sure that it is properly addressed. They should act as scrutinisers - ensuring the processes that aid the management and control of significant risks in particular are robust. They must be satisfied that good safety performance, as required in the policy statement, is being achieved.
- 1.3 7.2.3 **The Chief Executive** can give the clearest visibility of leadership and is the overall '**Responsible Person**' but all of the Executive Management Team should take the lead in ensuring the communication of fire duties and benefits throughout the organisation. The Chief Executive is responsible for;
 - Ensuring effective fire safety management for work activities undertaken by Housing Solutions.
 - Ensuring effective fire safety management of properties managed by Housing Solutions.
 - Ensuring adequate resources are made available to meet Housing Solution's legal fire safety obligations and ensure, as far as reasonable, the safety of staff and residents.
- 1.4 **The Fire Safety Core Group** must ensure the establishment of a fire policy that is much more than a document - it should be an integral part of the organisation's culture, of its values and performance standards. They must resource the fire safety programme as necessary and consider the safety implications of decisions they make.
- 1.5 Members of the Board instruct the **Executive Management Team** to:
 - Set the direction for effective fire safety management;
 - Scrutinise the management and control of significant fire safety risks;
 - At least annually, monitor the fire safety performance of the organisation;
 - Review fire safety failures and significant investigations;
 - Request that a fire safety review of new acquisitions/new ventures is carried out and checking that the fire safety programme is adequately resourced
- 1.6 All members of the **Fire Safety Core Group** are responsible for:
 - Ensuring that the fire safety policy is communicated to all employees in the business;
 - Implementing an appropriate fire safety management system, that is compliant with the Housing Solutions health and safety standards;

- Personally encouraging a positive fire safety culture, leading by example, and taking visible actions;
- Monitoring fire safety performance on a monthly basis;
- Carrying out an annual review of the fire safety management system;
- Ensuring a fire safety review of new acquisitions/new ventures is carried out;
- Ensuring that the fire safety programme is adequately resourced

1.7 The **Health and Safety and Compliance Manager** will:

- Implement fire strategy; delivering projects that impact across the business;
- Provide competent fire safety advice at all levels across the business;
- Develop and maintain an over-arching fire safety management framework;
- Devise policies and ensure soundly based governance processes are in place;
- Play a key governance role;
- Identify and develop best practice;
- Be proactive with stakeholders and support projects and approaches;
- Liaise with corporate groups such as asset management and specific projects groups on fire safety matters
- Establish and maintain a process to communicate key fire safety information to the stakeholders, including tenants;
- Establish and maintain appropriate consultation machinery;
- Provide key management information, analysis and insight;
- Aid in the investigation and management of adverse events

1.8 Identified Competent Persons will:

- Understand the relevant fire safety legislation;
- Have sufficient training, knowledge and experience to carry out their role
- Have an understanding of fire development and the behavior in fire;
- Understand the fire hazards, fire risks and relevant factors associated with occupants at special risk within the buildings of the type in question, and
- Have appropriate training and/or experience in carrying out fire risk assessments

1.9 Additionally, **all employees** have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety of themselves (and of other relevant persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work).

2. Responsibilities



3. Fire Risk Assessments

3.1 Property List

Housing Solutions will keep an up to date property list of all premises within their control which require fire risk assessments, the following information will be included:

- The full property address and UPRN
- The property designation: General needs, sheltered, supported, temporary accommodation etc
- Construction type: Purpose built or converted
- Whether the building is managed (and the extent of that onsite management)
- Where shared responsibilities occur (i.e. owned by Housing Solutions but managed externally)
- The 'Risk Profile' for the property
- The recommended evacuation strategy for the property
- The date of the last and the next due fire risk assessment

3.2 Fire Safety Asset Register

Housing Solutions will maintain a fire safety equipment asset register of all premises within their control which have 'maintainable' fire safety equipment. This list will detail the extent to which properties have:

- Common area automatic fire detection and alarm systems
- Common area emergency lighting systems
- Automatically opening smoke vents or smoke control systems
- Portable fire fighting equipment
- Dry or wet risers
- Sprinkler/mist systems
- Fire fighting lifts (or fireman lifts)

3.3 Frequency

The RRFSO is not prescriptive and does not define how often fire risk assessments should be reviewed. However, as a minimum, Housing Solutions will **review** all fire risk assessments **no matter what the risk category** is:

- following a fire, near miss or threat of arson
- following any residency changes which may impact upon fire risks (for example, a customer becomes disabled or a new disabled customer joins a scheme)
- following the introduction of new work practices
- following any works affecting the means of escape or alarm systems; and
- whenever there has been any structural or material changes to the building or its use

3.4 Any change to respective legislation

The above circumstances may prompt a new fire risk assessment not just a review. Housing Solutions will also aim to carry out renewals of fire risk assessments as outlined in the table overleaf.

| Property Type | Frequency |
|--|-------------------------|
| High Risk – Care Homes/Supported/Sheltered/HMO's/Offices/Mobile Home sites and any building over 6 storeys | Annually ⁽¹⁾ |
| Medium Risk – Any building between 2 – 5 storeys | Annually ⁽¹⁾ |
| Low Risk- General needs common areas and any building below 2 storeys | Annually ⁽¹⁾ |

Please note:

1. On following a significant change to the layout or use of the building, if there is reason to suspect that the original fire risk assessment may no longer be valid (e.g. a fire or renovation) a new Fire Risk assessment will be conducted.
2. Fire risk assessments will be carried out on all newly acquired properties and together with all recommendations will be received by Housing Solutions within 12 weeks of handover.
3. The effective date of the fire risk assessment is to be taken as the date of hand over to Housing Solutions (and not the date of the site visit). This date should be used for calculating the review date and also the recommended timescales for any associated remedial work. All completed risk assessments and recommendations will be received by Housing Solutions on the anniversary of the previous handover in line with the table above.
4. Any observations made by the assessor at the time of the assessment that are deemed an immediate risk will be notified to Housing Solutions at that time.

The above table relates to the frequency of fire risk assessments across the Housing Solutions portfolio. The suggested frequency levels are based on robust and regular management checks of common areas within premises in the intervening period between assessments.

The risk profile of a property may be altered depending on individual circumstances and the associated risk.

4. Competency of Fire Risk Assessors

- 4.1 Housing Solutions will ensure that any fire risk assessors undertaking fire risk assessments on their premises are competent to do so. External consultant fire risk assessors should be able to demonstrate competency individually via registration on a recognised national scheme such as the Institution of Fire Engineers Register of Fire Risk Assessors or the Warrington FRACS (Fire Risk Assessment Certification Scheme), or similar. Companies providing fire risk assessment services should be assessed and registered under BAFE SP205.
- 4.2 External fire risk assessment providers (whether individuals or companies) should be able to demonstrate reasonable experience of undertaking fire risk assessments

in the type of properties concerned. In selecting fire risk assessors Housing Solutions will make reference to the document 'A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor' by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council.

5. Remediation and Maintenance

5.1 Housing Solutions will maintain a current and up to date collated remedial list for the entire portfolio which will detail all work that has been recommended from the fire risk assessments. The collated regional remedial list will include:

- The full address and risk profile of the property to which each individual item of remediation relates
- The item of work that is required (specified in detail)
- The priority of the item of work and when it is to be completed by
- The person responsible for completing the item of work
- When the work was completed (as necessary) and who 'signed off' the item of work.

All fire safety remedial work should be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard, approved code of practice or associated best practice guidance.

6. Responsive Repairs

6.1 All responsive repairs must consider fire safety and should be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard, approved code of practice or associated best practice guidance. The adequacy of proposed 'temporary' repairs should be approved by the Asset Management team

7. Planned / Upgrade Works

7.1 Before commencing any planned maintenance or upgrade works a risk assessment must be undertaken by Housing Solutions or their contractor. Current reports/examinations/Fire Risk Assessments should be provided together with any historic works records, both responsive and planned. The collated remedial list should be referred to.

8. Testing and Maintenance (and Repair) of Fire Safety Equipment

8.1 Typical systems to be included in the fire safety equipment maintenance programme will include:

- AFD and alarm systems (and associated equipment such as hold open devices, door release mechanisms, fire curtains etc)
- Smoke control systems (such as automatically opening smoke vents)
- Emergency lighting systems
- Portable fire fighting equipment
- Rising (dry and wet) mains
- Fire fighting lifts
- Fire suppression systems such as sprinklers / mist systems
- Lightning protection systems
- Access control systems

9. Contractor Controls

- 9.1 All contractors used by Housing Solutions will be assessed as being suitably competent to undertake the work for which they are being considered. Contractors, where possible, should be third party accredited to a nationally recognised scheme, such as BAFE SP203 (relevant part) for fire alarm contractors, BAFE SP101 for fire fighting equipment and so on.
- 9.2 Housing Solutions will ensure there are appropriate fire safety conditions imposed on all outside contractors. This will be work specific but should ensure that contractors do not place themselves at risk or place any other relevant persons at greater risk from their acts (or omissions).
- 9.3 In addition, Housing Solutions will ensure satisfactory control over works carried out by both outside and in-house contractors, for example hot works permits. This will involve confirmation of competent contractors and controlling and monitoring safe working practices and procedures.
- 9.4 It is the responsibility of the contractor to conduct a risk assessment before carrying out any repairs. This risk assessment may:
 - demonstrate that no further action needs to be taken before works can proceed;
 - demonstrate that works can proceed but methods need to be adjusted to account for fire safety issues highlighted;
 - require the contractor not to proceed with works until they have looked at the fire risk assessment for the property; and
 - require the contractor to request a survey/testing to be undertaken.
- 9.5 Contractors must provide suitable Method Statements prior to work commencing and Housing Solutions require contractors to replace any fire stopping on completion of any works and interim and post work inspections will be carried out to ensure this is carried out.
- 9.6 If any responsive repair needs to be carried out to a related fire safety installation, the appointed contractor attending the address must review the examination reports on the compliance database and any other available related information.
- 9.7 For all works, it is expected that the Contractor will also subsequently take appropriate steps to safeguard his own and the occupant's safety prior to commencement of any works.

10. Post Project Fire Safety Checks

- 10.1 Where work being carried out by a contractor is likely to have had an impact on existing fire safety measures in a building Housing Solutions will ensure that a post project fire safety check will be completed by a competent person independent to the contractor. This check will provide confirmation that all existing fire safety measures remain in place and are fully functional.
- 10.2 As it is not unusual for fire compartmentation and firestopping to be disturbed or breached in the course of construction or services work, the post project fire safety check will include visual inspection of vulnerable locations such as roof voids and services risers etc.

11. General Fire Safety Principles

11.1 A strict no smoking policy will be maintained in all communal areas.

12. Liaison with other Responsible Persons

12.1 Housing Solutions will comply fully with Article 22 of the RRFSo, and ensure that where we are considered jointly responsible for a property or common area, we will share our fire risk assessment with other relevant parties, and co-operate with them so far as is necessary to ensure the safety of relevant persons.

13. Record Keeping

13.1 General fire safety maintenance records will be held in the log book which is kept on site (where applicable), and in all other instances be held electronically by the compliance Team with other Landlord Compliance records. These records must be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Typical records which are expected to be held are:

- Fixed electrical installation testing and maintenance
- Fixed heating installation testing and maintenance
- PAT testing
- Lightning protection inspection and testing
- AOV and smoke control systems testing and maintenance
- AFD and alarm testing and maintenance
- Emergency lighting testing and maintenance
- PFFE servicing records
- Rising mains inspection and testing
- Fire fighting lifts maintenance
- Automatic suppression systems testing and maintenance

14. Safety Testing of (Non Fire Safety Specific) Equipment

14.1 All residential properties will receive the following checks which contribute to reducing the risk of fire:

- an annual gas and heating installations safety check, thereby reducing the risk of fire from gas faults (see Gas Safety policy)
- a 5 yearly (or time frame deemed via the electrician) electrical safety test in general needs accommodation (dwellings) and five-yearly electrical safety tests in general needs common areas, sheltered and supported schemes, thereby reducing the risk of fire from faulty electrical systems (see Electrical Safety policy)
- an additional gas safety check and electrical safety test when a property is re-let(including mutual exchanges)
- regular checks and testing where portable electrical appliances (such as vacuum cleaners or toasters) are provided and owned by Housing Solutions, in line with the Portable Appliance Testing procedure located in the Electrical Safety policy

15. Furniture and Furnishings

- 15.1 In all residential properties where furniture is provided, whether in common areas or as part of a furnished tenancy, furniture will be fire retardant in compliance with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.

16. Changes of Use and Redesigns

- 16.1 Where there is a significant change in use proposed to an individual unit or block of dwellings Housing Solutions will ensure that all relevant building control legislation is complied with, in particular for fire safety.
- 16.2 Where a property is significantly redesigned or altered by Housing Solutions, it will be ensured that all relevant building control legislation is complied with, in particular for fire safety.
- 16.3 Once a change of use or redesign is completed, Housing Solutions will ensure that a building regulations completion certificate is obtained and that the premises are fire risk assessed prior to occupation.
- 16.4 Common Areas and Escape Routes
- 16.5 Goods left in communal areas by tenants, residents, leaseholders can be a source of ignition and support combustion, as well as potentially blocking escape routes. For this reason, storage of goods in communal areas is not allowed without our express permission and all tenancy agreements include a clause prohibiting the storage of goods in communal areas. Housing Solutions will take action to remove items that are left in communal areas. In particular, bicycles, motorbikes and mobility scooters can present a hazard by blocking important access and escape routes. The storage of bicycles, motorbikes and other customer goods will not be permitted in communal areas, except in designated storage areas.
- 16.6 In the case of mobility scooters, where no designated storage area exists, they must not be stored in access or escape routes. Under no circumstances should mobility scooters be charged in any communal areas other than specially equipped designated charging/storage rooms. All Scooters should be stored inline with the National Fire Chief Council's Guidance on Mobility scooters and powered Wheel chairs.
- 16.7 Where customers are storing goods in communal areas, if the owner is known Housing Solutions will contact them to request removal as outlined in our procedures. To deal with a general problem a range of approaches will be considered, including for example putting up signs, or carrying out a mailshot to all customers in the building.
- 16.8 Under no circumstances should flammable materials be stored in any communal areas other than designated storage rooms.

17. Managing Customer Influences on Fire Safety

- 17.1 Stored Oxygen
Where residents have stored medical oxygen in their properties, they are responsible for informing Housing Solutions so the Local Fire Service can be alerted to the presence of stored oxygen in the premises.

17.2 Security gates and grilles

Customers (including leaseholders) should not fit metal security gates to their homes without seeking permission from Housing Solutions first. Where customers have already fitted metal security gates and these have been identified as an unacceptable fire risk in the fire risk assessment, Housing Solutions will request for them to be removed.

18. Domestic Smoke Detection

- 18.1 Beyond the scope of the RRFSo, all dwellings owned across the Group (excluding leasehold and shared ownership) will have mains operated fire detection systems (BS 5839-6 2013 Grade D) installed as part of tailored planned improvement programmes, void improvement works or cyclical maintenance contracts such as electrical testing.
- 18.2 Maintenance of such systems will be carried out annually or in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. Smoke detection units will be checked as part of the annual heating servicing contract, or through other cyclical maintenance contracts. Where no annual visit is undertaken, customers will receive an annual reminder to test their smoke detectors. Where works are refused by the customer, Housing Solutions will treat the situation sensitively but will be clear that the work must be completed to ensure their health and safety and that of others in the property. (See Access policy.)
- 18.3 Residents of individual general needs, market rent, shared ownership and leasehold properties are responsible for their own fire safety within their private homes, including carrying out regular tests of their individual fire detection system.

19. Evacuation Policy

- 19.1 The evacuation strategy for each independent building must be stated clearly in the fire risk assessment.

A 'stay put' policy involves the following approach:

- When a fire occurs within a flat, the occupants alert others in the flat, make their way out of the building and summon the fire and rescue service.
 - If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas makes their way out of the building and summons the fire and rescue service.
 - All other residents not directly affected by the fire would be expected to stay put and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.
- 19.2 It is not implied that those not directly involved who wish to leave the building should be prevented from doing so. Nor does this preclude those evacuating a flat that is on fire from alerting their neighbours so that they can also escape if they feel threatened.
- 19.3 The alternative to a stay put policy is one involving 'simultaneous evacuation'. Simultaneous evacuation involves evacuating the residents of a number of flats together. It requires a means to alert all of these residents to the need to evacuate, i.e. a fire detection and alarm system. Simultaneous evacuation is generally

applicable to converted blocks of flats, but usually only where it has not been possible to confirm the level of compartmentation required for a 'stay put' policy. Where the recommended evacuation strategy for a block requires the simultaneous evacuation of all building occupants this is often referred to as 'total simultaneous evacuation' or 'total evacuation'.

Evacuation policies for each building will be specific to that building, however as a general premise:

Residential accommodation:

- Purpose built accommodation to have a '**stay put**' policy. Occupants have the option to stay in the building provided they feel it is safe to do so.
- Converted accommodation to have a 'simultaneous evacuation' policy. All occupants to self evacuate when directed or once the fire alarm sounds.

Commercial accommodation and community premises

- All premises to have a '**simultaneous evacuation**' policy. All occupants to self evacuate when directed or once the fire alarm sounds.

Note: Evacuation drills – Fire evacuation drills will be conducted twice annually in non-residential buildings. Residential premises with alarms will be assessed as to the appropriateness of regular fire drills on an individual basis. Performance will be monitored to ensure that buildings can be evacuated in a safe and timely manner. All persons new to the organisation will be instructed in the fire evacuation procedure on induction.

20. Equality and Diversity

20.1 Housing Solutions acknowledges its responsibilities to ensure that persons with disabilities are not put at increased risk in the event of a fire.

Assisted Evacuation

- In commercial and community premises Housing Solutions will be proactive in becoming aware of people who may need assistance to escape and develop specific Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP), as required. This may involve the assistance of staff in the evacuation.

For non-residential buildings it is the responsibility of each employee to inform their line manager of any physical or sensory impairment he/she may have, including temporary impairment, which may affect the speed in which they can safely evacuate the premises.

- In residential premises, where practicable and should assistance be requested, Housing Solutions will provide advice and guidance to assist residents in developing their own means of escape plan in general needs premises. This will not involve the assistance of staff in the evacuation (unless the building is

permanently staffed 24 hours a day). Liaison will take place with Local Fire and rescue service for the area on how best to record and store information on non-ambulant or disabled residents in residential blocks where higher dependency residents are expected (such as sheltered or extra care premises).

21. Communication

21.1 Fire Safety Core Group

A cross group team of employees will form the Fire Safety Core Group who will meet regularly to:

- ensure compliance with all aspects of fire safety legislation
- keep abreast of changes to legislation and associated guidance documents
- report to Executive Management Team on any and all appropriate matters in particular, progress against action plans, resource requirements and any matter that may require further consideration
- develop, monitor and review policies and procedures that reflect the role stated above.
- ensure consistency of approach to fire safety through effective communication.
- ensure fire safety training is adequate and up-to-date for all staff
- monitor, record and measure performance
- liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service and any other appropriate body
- report to the Board

See Appendix 3 for terms of reference of the Fire Safety Core Group

22. Communication with Staff

22.1 Through training, fire drills, appropriate signage and the intranet.

22.2 Additionally, the Property service manager (H&S and Compliance) shall ensure that an up-to-date copy of all fire risk assessments is available in all properties to which it relates. The Property Manager shall ensure that all staff shall be informed of the presence of the risk assessment and any measures which they need to take to comply with the RR(FS)O 2005.

23. Communication with Customers

23.1 Through appropriate 'Fire Action' signage in conjunction with other forms of communication provided on a regular basis such as web-site, newsletters, leaflets and home information packs.

23.2 General information about fire safety will be provided through customer newsletters and on our website at housingolutions.co.uk for general needs properties, along with our social media platforms.

23.3 The Scheme Manager/Housing officer shall ensure that all customers with special needs are identified and given appropriate information about the action to be taken in event of fire.

23.4 All customer complaints relating to Fire Safety will be logged as per the company's complaints policy and procedures.

24. Liaison with Local Fire and Rescue Service

24.1 Housing Solutions will engage in a regime of regular communication with the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure good lines of communication and operational familiarity of Housing Solutions buildings. This will include a review of Home Fire Safety Checks in residential properties where consent is given from the tenant (to include hoarders where identified).

25. Recording of Information

25.1 The Property Services Manager (H&S and Compliance) must keep up-to-date copies of fire safety related records, to include:

- documented fire risk assessments
- documented reviews or amendments of the fire risk assessment,
- evacuation plans
- fire precautions records (including regular checking of all fire precaution measures, the fire alarm system tests, the emergency lighting system tests, fixed systems (heating and electrical) and fire extinguishers service records),
- fire safety training records and fire drills,
- fire history records
- Miscellaneous correspondence relevant to fire precautions policies and measures.
- All customer complaints relating to Fire Safety

26. Training

26.1 Fire safety training for staff will cover a wide range of topics and be programmed on a regular basis and also at induction for new members of staff. This is will be categorised into 2 main areas:

- Task specific: training tailored to the specific fire safety related tasks that individuals may be required to undertake as part of their remit.
- Policy and General fire safety awareness: general training for all staff covering the main aspects of basic fire safety and any issues relating to Housing Solutions policy.

Training will be carried out at induction with refresher training at regular intervals (every two years), mainly, via our e-learning programme.

27. Monitoring and Review:

27.1 The Fire Safety Management procedures will be audited as per the following table:

| Audit Type | Frequency | Responsible Person |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|
| Property check* | Quarterly | Head of Asset Management |
| Internal audit by appointed H&S consultant | Annually | Operations Director |
| External audit carried out by external auditors | Bi-annually | Operations Director |

*To ensure that all properties that require a risk assessment are recorded on the master database with a date for re-inspection.

27.2 The Operations Director must record the findings of an audit. The system should be amended to incorporate the findings of an audit.

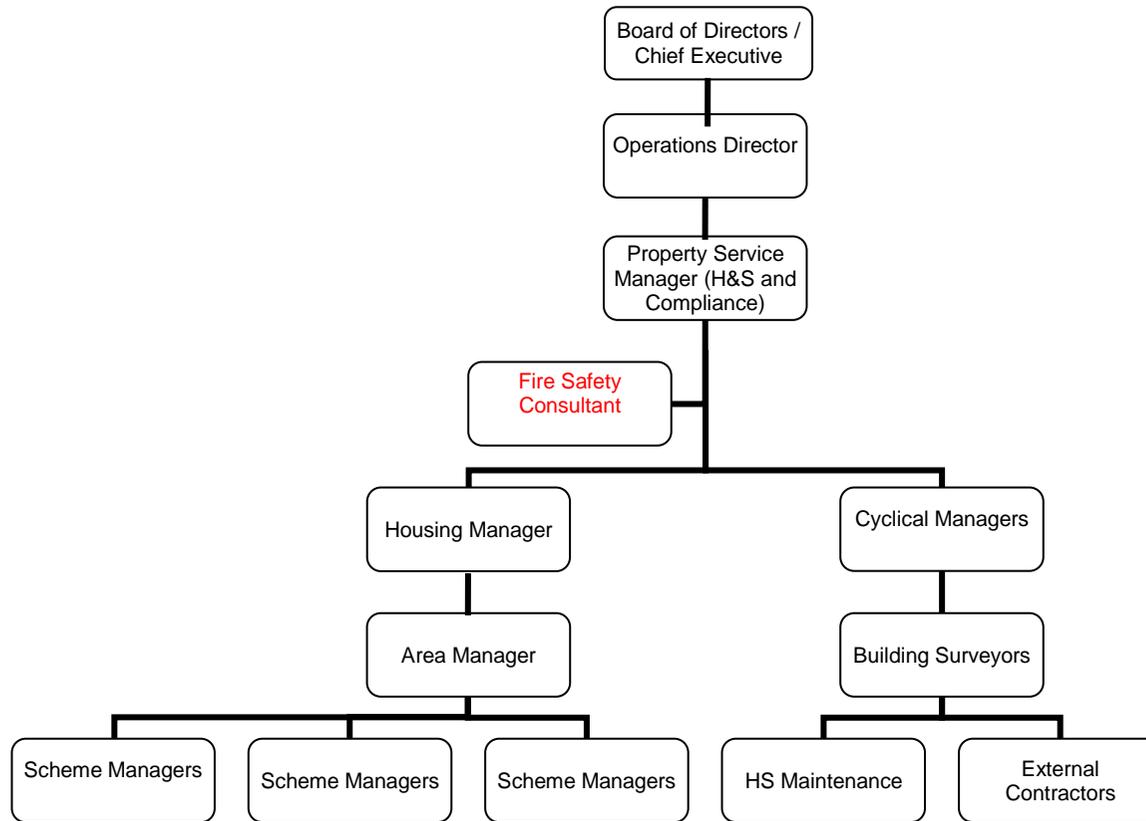
27.3 The Property Services Manager (H&S and Compliance) will be responsible for reporting the following key performance indicators through the Quarterly Directors Health and Safety Report.

- All relevant sites have a current risk assessment as per the policy - Target 100%
- All High, Medium and Low are within the recommendation time frame – Reported monthly to the executive team

28. Additional Information & Links

Department for communities and local government <http://www.communities.gov.uk/>

Appendix 2: Fire Safety Management Structure



Appendix 3: Terms of Reference of the Fire Safety Core Group

1. Role and Responsibilities:

The role and responsibilities of the Fire Safety Core Group is to ensure ongoing compliance with all relevant fire safety legislation. It will keep under review the effective management of fire safety across Housing Solutions with the object of promoting fire safety at all times.

2. Terms of Reference:

Duties of the Fire Safety Core Group will be:

- i. To ensure compliance with all aspects of fire safety legislation
- ii. To keep abreast of changes to legislation and associated guidance documents
- iii. To report to Senior Management and executive Team on any and all appropriate matters in particular, progress against action plans, resource requirements and any matter that may require further consideration
- iv. To develop, monitor and review policies and procedures that reflect the role stated above.
- v. To ensure consistency of approach to fire safety through effective communication.
- vi. To ensure fire safety training is adequate and up-to-date for all staff
- vii. To monitor, record and measure performance
- viii. To liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service and any other appropriate body
- ix. To report to the Board

3. Meetings:

The Chair of the Fire Safety Core Group is to be the Property Services Manager (H&S and Compliance) and Vice Chair Head of Asset Management. There must be a corium of 4 attendees for the meeting to take place and one must be either the Chair or Vice Chair.

Meetings are to take place once a month and are to be attended by:

Property Services Manager (H&S and Compliance)
Head of Operations
Head of Asset Management
Head of Development
Community Housing Manager
Housing Manager
Fire Safety Consultant (as necessary)
Compliance Coordinators

If an attendee is unable to make any given meeting then the responsibility will be delegated to a senior member of the department they represent, this will ensure the Core Group is given priority.

4. Authority:

The Fire Safety Core Group is authorised by the Chief Executive undertake any activity within its terms of reference and is governed by the Health and Safety Panel

5. Agenda:

The fire safety core group will discuss at every meeting;

- 1. Minutes of last meeting agreed**
- 2. Action Tracker update**
- 3. Property**
 - FRA update
 - Fire boxes update
 - Fire Safety Responsibility Matrix
 - Property prioritisation
 - Fire Safety Audits
 - Other initiatives
- 4. Management**
 - Zero tolerance
 - Inspections
 - Risk Mitigation
- 5. People**
 - Identifying fire safety vulnerabilities
 - Person centered Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)
 - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)
- 6. Resources**
 - Budget
- 7. Partnerships**
 - RBFS
 - Police
 - LA Partners
- 8. Communication**
 - General
- 9. Fire Incidents**
 - Attendance by FRS
 - Other fire incidents/near misses