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FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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Summary

This Policy sets out the Group's approach to managing the risks from fire in the buildings we own and manage.

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PART TWO

Policy

Intent

The Longhurst Group (the Group) is committed to protecting all customers including residents, service users, contractors, employees, visitors and all relevant persons and properties, whilst meeting statutory requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

This Policy presents a clearly defined system of control for the management and mitigation of the risks from fire.

Implementation of this Policy will ensure compliance with our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Principles

The Group will achieve and maintain effective management of the risk posed by fire, and will comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements as defined above.

In achieving compliance our aims are to:

- Provide safe dwellings and places to work; and
- Comply with statutory obligations

To comply with our legal duties, the Group will:

- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of all relevant properties to identify fire risks and implement measures to reduce or remove the risk of fire
- Make arrangements to provide safe and effective means of escape; firefighting facilities; and, detection and warning arrangements at all times
- Provide and maintain plant, equipment and work procedures that are safe according to statutory requirements or good practice
- Provide appropriate information relating to fire safety for all residents, contractors and employees
- Provide appropriate instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to work safely and carry out their duties and responsibilities under the policy
- Provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement the policy
- Appoint competent people, with sufficient authority and knowledge to take measures needed to comply with the law.

Scope

The Group are responsible for the management of fire safety in properties that are owned and managed and will proactively manage fire safety to ensure compliance with legal duties.

For shared properties leased to third parties, management responsibility will be specified in the management agreement, if the management agreement is not clear who is responsible, then the Group will assume responsibility for the completion of the FRA and enforce the Leasee responsibilities for any subsequent actions.

Where Longhurst Group is not the Responsible Person (as defined within the Fire Safety Order) but own a flat within a block then the Group will request a copy of the FRA from the organisation providing the management services.

Policy Details

Responsibility for Managing Fire Safety

This policy applies to all customers, including residents, service users, other customers, employees, contractors, visitors and all relevant persons and properties.

Training

The Group will implement, manage and monitor adequate fire safety training, instruction and awareness for all employees involved in the management of fire safety including:

- Fire Safety Awareness (online) – All non-care staff are to undertake this online session every 3 years as part of core training. Care staff are to undertake this training annually (as per the CQC requirements).
- Fire Warden (classroom) – Fire wardens for offices and schemes (scheme based staff who test fire alarm and may help coordinate an evacuation) are required to undertake this classroom session every 3 years.

Training needs will be identified as part of the role risk assessment process and will be monitored by Line Managers and the People Services Team.

Consultants and Contractors

Qualified and competent contractors will be appointed to provide services to meet the requirements of this Policy. The minimum requirements are, Fire Risk Assessments (IFE Approved Qualification BAFE SP205-1), Fire installations (BAFE SP203) and Fire Fighting Equipment (SP101).

Fire Safety Records

The Group will maintain up-to-date records (asset register) of all premises it owns or manages setting out whether premises require a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA).

Premises requiring an FRA will meet one or more of the criteria listed below:

- Group workplaces
- Internal shared hallways (not porches) serving three or more flats
- Internal shared stairways or corridors
- Shared balconies and fully or partially enclosed external access/egress routes serving 3 or more dwellings
- Shared lounges, laundries, activity rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and / or internal mobility scooter rooms

In addition, the Group will maintain up-to-date records ensuring that all fire protection equipment is maintained and a suitably qualified contractor appointed to undertake cyclical maintenance at least annually or in accordance with manufactures guidance or the fire risk assessment.

Fire Risk Assessments and Remedial Actions and Tasks

FRA's will be undertaken in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Unless there is reason to expect serious deficiencies in structural fire protection, such as inadequate compartmentalisation or poor fire stopping a Type 3 – Common parts and flats (non-destructive) inspection will be undertaken. A Type 3 survey will inspect a sample of flats and look for any deficiencies in the fire detection, fire doors and means of escape.

Where doubt exists or concerns are raised as part of the FRA process a full compartmentation survey by a suitably qualified contractor will be undertaken.

FRA's will be renewed on or before the date recommended by the Competent Persons undertaking the previous assessment. In any event, renewals of FRA's will be undertaken at frequencies not greater than those in the table below.

Risk Profile of Properties	Example of Property Type	New FRA
Low Risk	<p>Purpose built residential blocks on no more than 2 storeys above ground.</p> <p>Community rooms, scheme lounges or stores which do not have any associated sleeping accommodation.</p>	Every 3 years
Medium Risk	Purpose built residential blocks of between 3 and 5 storeys above ground	Every 2 years.
High Risk	<p>Sheltered and LSE schemes with sleeping accommodation / flats as part of or adjoining common parts</p> <p>Supported housing (with communal areas or shared accommodation)</p> <p>Care and extra care (with communal areas or shared accommodation)</p> <p>Home of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)</p> <p>Hostels and Foyers (with communal areas or shared accommodation)</p> <p>Converted premises (with communal areas or shared accommodation)</p> <p>Residential blocks greater than 5 stories</p> <p>Offices that are used as workplaces</p> <p>Residential blocks which also include underground parking or below ground storage, plant rooms or accommodation</p>	Annually

All FRA's will be reviewed if there is a significant change to a premises including:

- Structural or material changes to the building itself
- Change in the tenure classification of the property e.g. from General Needs to Sheltered accommodation (with internal communal areas)
- Fire, near miss or threat of arson

The outcome of the FRA will be an action plan that sets out a prioritised list of any physical and managerial measures (tasks) to ensure that the risk from fire is maintained at, or reduced to an acceptable level.

Tasks arising from FRA's will be given a defined target completion date recommended by the Competent Persons undertaking the FRA. The FRA task will be updated as the task progresses to completed with a full audit trail and appropriate evidence in place before the task is closed.

All high risk tasks are phoned through to the Property Compliance Team by the Assessor on site. This will trigger an immediate response to rectify the issue.

Task Risk Rating	Timeframe
High Risk	7 calendar days Steps should be made to make safe through temporary repair or through the introduction of interim control measures if task cannot be completed within the target timeframe
Medium Risk	90 calendar days
Low Risk	365 calendar days
Long Term Plan	Within a planned renewal process or refurbishment plan (whole scheme replacement and or upgrade). The date of the renewal will be updated on the task commentary and reviewed with the Planned and Assets Teams. This will be up to a maximum of 3 years

The Fire Risk Assessment will review the evacuation procedure for the building. Any changes to the evacuation procedure will be communicated to residents.

New Developments and Refurbishments

The Group will ensure that designs for new build and any refurbishment or alteration of properties it controls and / or manages, meets all current legislative and regulatory requirements in fire safety and reduce as far as possible the risks posed by fire. If additional specialist advice is required, for example due to the building design or use, consideration will be given to using a Fire Safety Consultant prior to, and during the build process or refurbishment to ensure the legislative and regulatory requirements are fully considered and met.

Completed developments and / or refurbishments requiring an FRA will be conducted within one calendar month of occupation or completion.

Acquisitions

For acquisitions, suitable checks will be conducted to ensure existing FRA's are suitable and related safety arrangements are in place as defined in the Fire Safety Procedure.

Communication

The Group will provide employees, visitors and all other interested parties that visit premises with comprehensive and relevant information in regard to fire safety via the display of appropriate located fire safety signage and notices. The evacuation procedure for the building will be displayed within communal areas.

The Group will provide fire safety information to customers via the tenant information pack as part of the sign up process.

Fire safety information will be provided to all employees at induction and as part of the mandatory training programme. Additional role specific training will be provided to staff as defined within the fire safety procedure.

Fire Safety Equipment

The Group will provide and manage suitable fire protection equipment such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, lighting, signage, fire exits and fire doors to ensure effective working order and maintain fire separating elements designed to prevent fire and smoke entering escape routes.

Where existing fire protection measures are identified in the FRA as a potential hazard or having been superseded through alternative measures or changes in legislation they may be removed.

In line with the requirements of British Standards, and the Fire Safety Order, regular tests will be carried out on all fire protection equipment. The frequency of tests will be as recommended by the installer or manufacturer and/or by risk assessment findings. In general the following guidelines will apply to communal areas:

- Weekly - testing of fire alarm systems, communal smoke detectors and automatic opening vents (AOV).
- Monthly – testing of emergency lighting systems.
- 6 monthly - servicing of fire alarm systems.
- Annually - servicing of emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, AOV's and dry/wet risers.

Where Group staff complete the weekly or monthly testing of systems they must provide copies of this information to the Property Compliance Team to record on the Asset Management System.

The Property Compliance Team will also monitor the testing and servicing of systems which a Fire Contractor completes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Legal responsibility for ensuring the management of fire safety across the Group is held jointly by:

- The Longhurst Group Board
- Group Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer
- Executive Director of Housing (General Needs Housing and Leasehold Services)
- Executive Director of Care and Business Partnerships (Care and Support Services)
- Executive Director of Growth and Development

Operational responsibility for the management of fire safety across the Group is held jointly by:

- Director of Assets and Property Services
- Head of Repairs
- Head of Planned Works
- Property Compliance Manager
- Director of Development and Sales
- Director of Housing
- Directors of Care and Support

Day-to-day responsibility for fire safety is held by:

- Staff responsible for managing fire safety risk assessments and remedial actions/works
- Staff responsible for managing and maintaining premises
- Every employee has a duty while at work to identify and report any fire safety concerns.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Group is committed to the health and safety of its tenants, staff and contractors and other building users, as such, monitors the following areas:

- Of all blocks & non-dwellings requiring a FRA, % with an assessment at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all blocks & non dwellings requiring a FRA, no. without an assessment at the end of the month
- Of all blocks & non-dwellings requiring a FRA, % with a Re-Inspection at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all blocks & non dwellings requiring FRA, number which fell overdue but were subsequently certified in the month
- Of all blocks (Including Sub-Blocks) & non dwellings requiring a FRA Reinspection, number overdue at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all blocks & non dwellings requiring a FRA, date of the longest overdue FRA at the end of the month
- Of all blocks & non dwellings, no. of outstanding FRA tasks at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all outstanding FRA HIGH risk tasks, no. overdue at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all outstanding FRA MED risk tasks, no. overdue at the end of the month
- Of all outstanding FRA LOW risk tasks, no. overdue at the end of the month
- Of all outstanding FRA HIGH risk tasks, no. overdue by 3+ months at the end of the month (Board)
- Of all outstanding FRA MED risk tasks, no. overdue by 3+ months at the end of the month
- Of all outstanding FRA LOW risk tasks, no. overdue by 3+ months at the end of the month
- Task Owners of Overdue Tasks
- Servicing and testing of fire protection equipment
- Date of last reconciliation

We will provide performance updates to the following:

- Longhurst Group Board
- Executive Team
- Directors Team
- Operational Teams
- Contractors

The Property Compliance Team will undertake a property reconciliation against the full property stock list held on our housing management system every 3 months to validate the accuracy of our asset register and data used within KPI monitoring and reporting.

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it complies with all relevant legislation and continues to promote good practice.

In addition, it will be reviewed:

- Following the introduction of new legislation or guidance,
- Following any significant organisational change
- Following a fire or significant fire-related event.

Audit

The Groups Fire Safety arrangements will be subjected to audits at planned intervals to assess the effectiveness of its implementation by:

- The Group Property Compliance Team will undertake the 1st line management of fire safety compliance, providing assurance that our policy and associated procedures are implemented.
- The Environmental, Health and Safety Teams, Fire Safety Assessor, Environment Health and Safety will undertake 2nd line assurance testing to review the quality of fire risk assessments and completed tasks.
- The Group will also have in place an audit plan which will be conducted by the Groups appointed Internal Auditor

The Fire and Rescue Service may also carry out inspections to assess the Groups standard and quality of our fire safety approach.

Equality and Diversity

The Group is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following protected characteristics; Age, Disability, Race, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity.

Summary of local variations

None

PART THREE

Appendices

- A. PM002 Fire Risk Assessment Process map
- B. Protocols and documentation
 - PM002-001 Process Map Control
 - PM002-002 Protocol
 - PM002-003 UH stock list
 - PM002-004 FRA Schedule
 - PM002-005 Lone working register
 - PM002-007 Glasscubes
- C. Policy Approval Control
- D. Policy Development Plan