

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing

Building Safety Policy

Issue date: July 2025

Review date: July 2028



Cheshire West
and Chester

1. Management Information

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|---------------------------|--|
| Approval Date: | July 2025 |
| Next Review Date: | July 2028 |
| Policy Owner: | Janet Lawton, Head of Housing Delivery |
| Responsible Service Area: | Council Housing Management Service |
| Responsible Director: | Director of Economy and Housing |

Annual Checks

Policy owners should ensure that an annual check of hyperlinks, roles, and names is undertaken. These checks are in addition to formal review process. Please see Policy and Procedure framework guidance for further details.

2. Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to managing building safety within our housing stock, with a particular focus on high-rise and higher risk building. It explains how we will meet our legal duties under the Building Safety Act, ensure risks are effectively identified and managed and provide assurance that the health, safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, contractors and visitors remain the highest priority.

3. Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for the management of Building Safety, including assurance that measures are in place to identify, manage and mitigate the risks within our high-rise buildings.

This policy supports us in ensuring we meet all the requirements of The Building Safety Act which was introduced following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017. The aim of the act is to improve building safety, with particular emphasis on 'higher risk' buildings over 18m or 7 Storeys high.

The policy is relevant to all our staff, tenants, contractors and other persons or stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use our premises, or who may be affected by our activities or services.

When we use the terms 'we', 'our' and 'us' within this policy, we mean the Council.

The policy objectives are to:

- Provide clear lines of responsibility for the effective management of Building Safety to the three high-rise blocks at Joseph Groome Towers

- Specify individual responsibilities in the management of Building Safety working in conjunction with our Building Safety & Compliance teams across the six compliance areas.
- Effectively manage all risks identified and to ensure effective action plans are in place to reduce the risks as soon as reasonably practicable for all residents living in these buildings, employees who will work in and around these buildings and members of the public.
- Clarify the method of reviewing and monitoring.
- Meet our legal and moral obligations as a landlord and the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator.
- Ensure we effectively engage with all customers via a Customer Engagement Strategy, high-rise tenant's forum and ensure this engagement considers individual needs across all age groups and diversities which will be delivered in several ways (for example face to face, letters, website information).

4. Strategic context

This policy helps the Council to meet the following local and national strategic aims.

Social Housing Regulations Act 2023 – Consumer Standards

- Quality and Safety Standard
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Tenancy Standard

[CWAC Borough Plan 2024 – 2028](#) - sets out how the Council will work with all its residents to build a stronger future where the Council and residents all play their part in creating thriving, caring and sustainable communities.

The Borough Plan has six missions as follows:

- Starting well - The best start for the borough's children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Tackling hardship and poverty - More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.
- Opportunity in a fair local economy - Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
- Neighbourhood pride - Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- Greener communities - Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

[Together with Tenants Charter | Cheshire West and Chester Council Council-housing-asset-management-strategy-final Tenant Engagement Strategy 2025-30](#)

5. Definitions and legislation

Building safety refers to the integrated approach of ensuring the structural integrity, habitability, and resilience of buildings throughout their life cycle, focusing on protecting occupants and property from hazards.

Building Safety Act - The Building Safety Act was introduced following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017. The aim of the act is to improve building safety, with particular emphasis on 'higher risk' buildings over 18m or 7 Storeys high.

Legislation

The application of this policy will ensure compliance with the regulatory framework and the new consumer standards (safety and quality) for social housing in England, which was introduced on the 1st April 2024 and is now applied by the Regulator of Social Housing.

However, the principal legislation applicable to this policy is The Building Safety Act and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These place a duty on the landlord to take measures to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on their premises and in the immediate vicinity.

This policy also operates in the context of the following legislation:

- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Housing Act 2004
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Building Regulations 2010
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023)
- All other legislation as listed in all compliance policies

6. How the policy will be delivered

We will provide all our tenants, staff, contractors and visitors with clear advice on building safety and, where required, skills, training and resources to ensure that they remain safe. We will also provide a clear and transparent process for undertaking risk assessments and any works or actions that arise from these.

We are committed to keeping tenants, staff, contractors and visitors to our properties safe and meeting our obligations as a landlord under all current and relevant legislation, whilst also following industry best practices.

This Policy applies to all our high-rise blocks as defined in the Building Safety Act 2022 which currently defines high-rise (also referred to as high-risk) buildings as those of 18m+ in height, or 7 storeys and above. This includes all tenures including social affordable rent.

It is anticipated that in future years the buildings that are within the scope of the Building Safety Act may change (for example to include buildings over 11m+ in height) and this policy will be reviewed and updated should these changes fall within the scope of future changes to the Building Safety Act to ensure this policy remains fit for purpose.

Properties

This Policy applies to properties managed by the Council which includes:

- Joseph Groome Towers, 3 blocks.

The Council will meet building safety obligations and protect tenants, staff, contractors, and visitors from any building safety risks that may impact their health, safety and wellbeing by:

- Understanding and complying with legislative requirements and best practice.
- Produce Building Safety Case Reports for all blocks as required by the Regulators.
- Produce Tenant Engagement Strategies for each individual block.
- Establish a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting system.
- Ensure the Business Continuity plan supports any emergency evacuation procedures.
- Using competent, skilled and well-trained staff and contractors.
- Providing staff with training at a level appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- Briefing tenants, staff and contractors about building safety related policies and procedures.
- Knowing our properties and our activities and maintaining accurate asset information.
- Maintaining an operational risk management approach.
- Providing suitable, sufficient and risk proportionate measures and precautions.
- Conducting ongoing and continuous block and compliance checks.
- Addressing any actions resulting from checks within appropriate timescales.
- Maintaining and servicing all fire safety related equipment, systems and installations.
- Delivering remedial works and supplementary servicing, inspection and testing.
- Maintaining accurate records and data.
- Engaging openly and proactively with regulators and other stakeholders.

- Responding appropriately to the needs of tenants who inform us they may be at higher risk, for example, due to a physical, mental or sensory impairment.
- Ensuring all properties undergo appropriate gas and electrical safety checks, including the testing of portable electrical items and white goods provided for staff, tenant and public use.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council are the Principal Accountable Person under the Building Safety Act, and the Head of Landlord Service will be the main point of contact for the Building Safety Regulators. The Head of Landlord Service is responsible for the management of Building Safety and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained:

- Ensuring that any associated procedures are implemented and kept up to date.
- Ensuring that the Building Safety programme is monitored, measured and reviewed, and performance is reported to the Board.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of training and policy development.
- Ensuring that there is a programme in place to deliver all relevant standards, legislation and best practices.
- Ensuring staff under their management are trained and competent to a level appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring that there are formal embedded arrangements for reporting serious incidents related to Building Safety, as defined in relevant procedures.
- Operational implementation and delivery of this policy whilst ensuring that it is regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

The Head of Landlord Service will:

- Exercise overall control within their functional area of responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Ensure management of all buildings referred to in this policy.
- Provide Building Safety Case Reports - One of the key requirements in the Building Safety Act is that we must provide and maintain a Building Safety Case reports for each of the blocks referred to in this policy. The Safety Case will demonstrate how we will ensure our buildings are safe and will be required before the Regulator issues a Building Assessment Certificate to which deems the building safe to be occupied.
- Engage with tenants through various platforms and according to our Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy.
- Establish a High-Rise Tenants Forum across all blocks to enable tenants to support, promote and highlight any concerns or Building Safety issues.
- Promote the participation of staff, managers and customers in improving Building safety e.g. by facilitating discussion of keeping communal areas clear of debris.
- Establish and maintain a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System and ensure clear communication is maintained with the Building Safety Regulator.

The Compliance Manager will utilise IT systems and provide monthly updates on property lists across all systems ensuring stock lists match and reporting any discrepancies to the Head of Building and Fire Safety for further investigation.

Building Safety Coordinators will:

- Ensure block inspections and any remedial works are regularly carried out and reviewed.
- Ensure all relevant compliance checks are carried out in accordance with compliance procedures.
- Be held accountable for the Building Safety awareness of their staff and activities under their control and will ensure that the requirements of this policy are complied with.
- Take action to resolve any situations that may adversely affect the safety of staff or other persons and rectify any problems within their control or escalate to an appropriate manager, as soon as practicable.
- Give all staff under their control adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to carry out their duties safely and competently, paying particular attention to new/inexperienced staff and trainees.
- Seek competent advice, where necessary, and act appropriately on the advice and recommendations given.

Through the course of their work all staff and contractors will:

- Ensure that they comply with this policy to ensure that the aims, objectives and intent of the policy are achieved.
- Take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Report accidents, incidents and near misses with the potential for injury or damage to their line manager or supervisor.
- Co-operate with their managers, colleagues and other relevant persons in matters relating to this policy.
- Ensure the Building Safety Team are consulted and communicated with in relation to any changes to the structure, management or maintenance of any in scope buildings.

Other Relevant Roles and Responsibilities

The Council's Executive Cabinet has ultimate responsibility for Building Safety across all Council properties and will resource and allocate appropriately qualified and suitably experienced persons to assist in discharging our duty for Building Safety, and the implementation of this policy.

The Head of Landlord Service will ensure, through regular checks and audits, that compliance with this policy, and health and safety legislation in general, is maintained with respect to the implementation of this policy.

There are also other operational roles from our Neighbourhood team, Compliance and Governance. These roles shall support resident liaison in respect of Building Safety

and manage the response or completion of Fire Risk Assessment recommendations and actions relevant to the management of our properties or tenancies under their influence, where required.

Training and Competence

We will provide staff responsible for any aspects of Building Safety with suitable training to enable them to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.

This policy and any relevant procedures will be supported by a range of training across the organisation, which may include general information, on the job training, instructions, briefings and e-learning relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

Contractors and other stakeholders acting on our behalf or instructions, are required to be suitably qualified to carry out the roles and responsibilities placed on them and must undertake regular auditing and training to ensure this suitability continues. The operational team with responsibility for delivery will check the relevant competencies and, where relevant, any third-party accreditations for the work that they are carrying out.

We will ensure that only suitably competent contractors and engineers that are third-party accredited are procured and appointed to undertake works on any fire stopping works within any of our properties or communal areas.

Notifications and Advice - Tenants

We will encourage tenants to support Building Safety by:

- Establishing a Building Safety Tenants Forum group.
- Ensuring clear and accurate safety signage is positioned in the correct locations throughout our buildings visible to all tenants and visitors.
- Discussing concerns and queries via various formats putting the tenants contact preferences first and tailoring our service accordingly.
- Provide up to date information to tenants relaying key information that relates to Building Safety and their building in general.
- Ask tenants to support our roles by carrying out inspections of our blocks and feeding back.
- Compliance campaigns in relation to fire, electrics, legionella, gas and lifts.
- Give high-rise tenants direct access to a dedicated Tenant Liaison Building Safety Officer.
- Providing safety information during the sign-up process of new tenants and during a 4 week follow on visit.

Our Tenant/Leaseholder Engagement Strategy has been developed against the backdrop of the Building Safety Act to ensure we are complying with the regulatory requirements of the act. By taking account of feedback, lived experience and the changing aspirations of our tenants we can shape and improve our service Improving Building Safety and ensuring the tenants voice is heard. In addition, it supports the Council's Together with Tenants Charter, which provides a valuable framework to support collaboration and transparency.

Our tenants' health and safety remain our top priority. This strategy will strengthen our approach and support the principles set out in the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Legislation. We want to ensure our tenants are confident that their homes are safe and if they raise concerns their comments will be considered and acted upon. We also want to ensure our tenants have access to important Building Safety information through various means and channels such as our Building Safety Forum, tenant meetings, home visits and printed material. Safety issues will continue to be fast-tracked, and complaints dealt with in line with our complaints process.

Non-Compliance

Any serious cases of non-compliance with this policy that are identified at a functional level will be formally reported to the Council's Head of Landlord Service and the Director of Economy and Housing in the first instance.

They will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the relevant party to address. Where appropriate, the Council's Executive Cabinet and Council Housing Management Board will also be made aware of any non-compliance so they can consider the implications of this and act as appropriate.

In cases of serious non-compliance with this policy, the Council's Head of Landlord Service, Executive Cabinet and the Council Housing Management Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose such non-compliance with any relevant regulatory bodies.

Complaints

Our Complaints Policy details a specific section setting out how tenants and leaseholders can make a complaint about any building safety concerns. This comprises of offering and delivering a suitable remedy, recognising the impact made by the issue, providing reassurance that the issue will not happen again and, where appropriate, offering recompense to the complainant for any harm, cost, or inconvenience.

Coproduction

The policy is required to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022.

7. Equality and reasonable adjustment statement

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for customers and staff, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with our Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

8. Related Documents

The Council will ensure that the following documents are maintained

- Building Safety Procedure
- Tenant Engagement Strategies
- Mandatory Occurrence Reporting Procedure
- Emergency Evacuation Guide

This policy will be supported by and read in conjunction with:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Legionella Control & Water Hygiene Policy
- Lift Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Compliance Strategic Framework

9. Equality Analysis

| | |
|--|--|
| Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts | <p>Inform that this policy can be provided in alternative formats.</p> <p>Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training for staff in the delivery of this policy.</p> |
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10. Consultation and Business Intelligence

The policy was created in consultation with the Council's tenants, leaseholders and staff.

11. Monitoring and review

The Council Housing Management Board has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years starting from the date it is approached and adopted.

The Head of Landlord Service, or staff deputising in their absence, will put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that the systems and procedures outlined in this Policy are carried out. Where shortfalls in performance are found the necessary corrective action(s) will be taken at the appropriate management level.

If staff become aware of problems with the effective operation of this Policy or the associated Procedures, they should report this to the Policy Owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy and procedural review process.

Robust Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be established and maintained to ensure we are able to report and improve on.

The KPIs will be monitored and reviewed periodically, as a minimum, and will be reported to the Councils Management Board, Executive Cabinet and Council Housing Management Board on a monthly and quarterly basis. They will also be monitored in conjunction with Compliance KPIs and daily block inspections.

As part of this policy, we will maintain records of all:

| | Retention period |
|---|--------------------------|
| Daily Block inspections | 7 Years |
| Compliance inspections – Sprinklers, Emergency Lighting, Fire alarms | 10 years |
| Compliance inspections – fire doors, fire extinguishers, dry risers | 2 years |
| All associated compliance certification | As above |
| Building Safety Case files/reports | The life of the building |
| Completed Risk Assessments, Fire Risk Assessments, and reviews, along with any significant findings and actions | 2 years |
| Completed personal tenant fire risk assessments | Tenancy period only |
| Incidents relating to Building Safety | 10 years |
| Building safety complaints | 10 years |

These will be retained on approved electronic systems and shared network drives. We will also ensure robust processes and controls are in place to provide and maintain appropriate levels of security for all such related records and data.

The effectiveness of, and compliance against, this policy will be monitored through:

- Health & Safety Assurance System
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Internal Governance - Building Safety
- Council Housing Management Board
- Tenant Feedback
- Compliance Reports
- Management Reviews
- Building Safety Microsoft Power BI APP

12. Approval and Review History

The approval route for all policies and procedures is via the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning who has delegated powers for policy approval from the Council's Executive Cabinet.

| Date | Version | Approved by |
|--------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 30 July 2025 | V1 | Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning |
| 28/09/2025 | V1.2 | Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning |

13. Document Revision History

| Date amended | Version | Key Changes |
|---------------------|----------------|--|
| 24/09/2025 | V1.2 | Revised version to take into account the insourcing of the housing management service from ForHousing. |

