
Fire Safety Policy



February 2026 | This policy relates to Elmbridge Borough Council Residential Properties



Elmbridge
Borough Council

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1. Introduction

We care about our tenants and want to ensure that everyone lives in a safe and healthy environment.

Our duty as a landlord is to ensure that our homes, buildings, and communal areas are safe, that tenants are informed and supported, and that we comply fully with all legal and regulatory requirements.

This policy explains how we manage fire safety, the standards we must meet, and how tenants can expect to be supported.

Most of the services you receive are delivered by a managing agent. This is currently Pinnacle, www.pinnaclegroup.co.uk. We provide planned maintenance and improvements to your home and are your landlord.

Where a service is not provided directly by us, we remain responsible for ensuring it meets all Regulatory and legal standards and provides the good level of service that our tenants want to receive.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all residential properties owned by Elmbridge Borough Council, including temporary accommodation and all communal areas, where we are deemed as either the 'responsible' as defined under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or 'accountable' person as defined under The Building Safety Act 2022.

If your building is owned or managed by someone else, they are responsible for carrying out regular fire safety checks to the communal areas, including Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs), and making sure any issues are dealt with. We will remind them of their responsibilities and share any risks we find. We will request a copy of the Fire Risk Assessment and keep this with our property data. We will also work closely with them to make sure our staff and contractors do not put anyone at risk, and we will help to ensure there is a clear emergency plan for your building.

3. Aims of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to prevent fire wherever possible, minimise the risk of fire spreading if one occurs, and ensure all tenants and building users can escape safely. We will achieve this through comprehensive Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs), robust safety measures, effective maintenance of fire safety equipment, tenant engagement, and ongoing monitoring and assurance.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- The Housing Act 2004
 - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Fire Safety Act 2021
 - Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - Building Safety Act 2022
 - The Fire Safety Regulations 2022
 - Building Regulations 2010
 - Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
 - Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
 - Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
 - Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
 - Regulator of Social Housing Safety and Quality Standard
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5. Understanding Fire Safety and Risk

Our approach is based on prevention, detection, containment, and escape. This means reducing the likelihood of fire starting, ensuring early detection and warning, preventing fire from spreading, and supporting safe evacuation where needed. Fire risk is influenced by building design, materials, maintenance, and resident behaviour, all of which are considered in our assessments.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Overall accountability for fire safety sits with Elmbridge Borough Council as the duty holder. The Department responsible for the monitoring and compliance of this policy falls within the Housing Department, under the care of the Housing Contracts and Compliance Manager
- Day-to-day management of fire safety, including delivery of FRAs and remedial works, rests with our managing agent, monitored by the Contracts and Compliance Manager.
- Our Managing Agent is responsible for maintaining fire safety systems and ensuring contractors carry out work safely and competently. Elmbridge Borough Council monitor the Managing agent to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Our managing agent delivers tenant engagement and ensures vulnerable tenants are supported in fire safety planning.
- Our Asset Management and Property Services Team monitors fire safety work carried out by our managing agent.

All staff are expected to follow fire safety procedures and report any concerns promptly.

7. Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)

FRAs are central to our fire safety management. They are carried out by competent and accredited fire risk assessor.

We commission Type 1 FRAs (non-intrusive common parts) for all relevant buildings owned by Elmbridge Borough Council, with more intrusive surveys (Type 2–4) undertaken where justified by risk or works.

Schedule of FRAs Table

FRA Type	Review Frequency	Applicable Building Types
Type 1	Annual	Mid-rise blocks (greater than 3 storeys) and complex buildings.

FRA Type	Review Frequency	Applicable Building Types
Type 2	Two Yearly	Purpose built general needs residential blocks of 3 storeys (ground + 2 upper floors).
Type 3	Three Yearly	Purpose built general needs residential blocks of no more than 2 storeys (ground + 1 upper floor)

We will undertake new FRAs following any of the events below:

- the introduction of new work practices
- any works affecting the means of escape or alarm systems
- structural or material changes to the building or its use
- widespread changes in the type of residents occupying the building
- a significant change in legislation or guidance (including updates under the Building Safety Act 2022).

In the event of a fire, near miss or threat of arson, the FRA for the building affected will be reviewed to ensure it is still fit for purpose. If necessary, a new FRA will be undertaken.

Each FRA includes an inspection of escape routes, fire doors, compartmentation, signage, emergency lighting, fire detection systems, and housekeeping risks such as storage of combustibles. They also consider the needs of vulnerable tenants and review fire stopping around service penetrations. FRAs provide a risk rating for each issue identified and set out recommended actions with target completion timescales.

Actions arising from FRAs are risk-rated and prioritised as follows:

FRA Action Categorisation Table

Risk Level	Definition	Target Completion	Example Actions
High	Immediate action required. Serious risk of harm or non-compliance with law.	Within 24 hours (temporary mitigation) and permanent solution for issues such as a faulty alarm, blocked escape routes, Emergency Lights out of order	Missing or defective fire doors, faulty fire alarm system, blocked escape routes.

Risk Level	Definition	Target Completion	Example Actions
		or AOV system within 7 days. If door replacement is required completion within 4 weeks to supply and install	
Medium	Significant risk if not addressed, but not immediate danger.	Within 1–3 months depending on severity.	Damaged intumescent strips, missing signage, minor compartmentation breaches.
Low	Minor risk, low likelihood of fire spread or harm.	Within 6–12 months or next planned programme.	Scuffed door closers, outdated signage, routine housekeeping issues.

Legislation and Regulations

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Building Safety Act 2022.
- Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022

8. Evacuation Strategies

Each communal building has an evacuation strategy monitored by the Managing agent based on its design and use. This may include a stay-put policy where buildings are designed for compartmentation, or simultaneous evacuation where required by the fire strategy. Strategies are reviewed with local Fire and Rescue Services. We maintain information on tenants who may need assistance to evacuate and support them with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) or alternative arrangements.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be developed for individuals with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or other impairments that could affect their ability to evacuate safely.

Each PEEP will be tailored to the tenant’s individual circumstances and created in consultation with the tenant. The plan will outline the method of evacuation, any assistance or equipment required, and the roles of staff or emergency services.

PEEPs will be reviewed annually or sooner if there is a change in the tenant's condition, building layout, or fire strategy. Records will be securely stored and made available to appropriate personnel and emergency responders.

Tenants will be actively engaged in the development and review of their PEEP to ensure clarity and understanding. All personal data collected for PEEP's will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and our privacy policies. This approach ensures that vulnerable tenants are supported effectively and safely in the event of a fire or other emergency.

9. Fire Safety Systems and Equipment

We install, maintain, and regularly test fire safety systems including fire alarms, smoke and heat detectors, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, fire doors, and sprinklers where present. Testing is carried out in line with British Standards and manufacturer guidance. Faults are rectified quickly, and all tests and remedial actions are recorded. For higher-risk buildings, additional checks and inspections are carried out more frequently in line with legislation.

10. Domestic Smoke and Heat Detection

All homes are fitted with smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detection to the current standard of BS 5839-6 LD2. This means smoke alarms are installed in circulation spaces such as hallways and landings, and in living rooms, with heat alarms in kitchens. Additional smoke alarms are installed in bedrooms where required by risk assessment. All alarms are hard-wired with battery back-up; battery-only detectors are not acceptable. Detectors are replaced every 10 years or sooner if defective.

11. Fire Doors and Compartmentation

Fire doors are critical in containing fire and smoke. We inspect and maintain flat entrance doors, communal doors, and other fire doors regularly. Low-rise buildings have annual inspections. Inspections are also carried out at a change of tenancy.

Checks cover self-closing devices, intumescent strips and smoke seals, glazing, and signage. Any defects are repaired or replaced promptly. We also monitor compartmentation, including fire stopping around service penetrations, and take corrective action if weaknesses are identified.

12. Works Management

All works, whether responsive repairs, planned investment, or major projects, are carried out with fire safety as a priority. Before intrusive works begin, fire safety risks are reviewed and, where necessary, additional FRAs are commissioned.

Our Managing Agent will arrange for contractors to complete any works. Contractors must follow safe systems of work and cannot compromise fire safety measures without reinstating them immediately. For major refurbishments fire safety is built into project design, reviewed during construction, and confirmed before occupation

13. Communal Areas

Communal areas must remain clear of combustibles and obstructions. We operate a 'managed approach' communal area policy, meaning that personal items such as prams, bikes, mobility scooters, or furniture must not be stored in escape routes.

Regular inspections are undertaken, and items left in communal areas are removed swiftly to maintain safety. Removal of items left in communal areas is permitted under legislation.

14. Communication and Engagement

Tenants are central to fire safety. We provide clear and accessible information about fire safety measures, evacuation strategies, and what to do in an emergency.

Information can be provided in alternative formats or languages on request, or where we know a tenants needs.

We engage tenants through newsletters, meetings, and consultation events, and we work with Fire and Rescue Services to share building information as required by law.

15. Monitoring, Assurance and KPIs

Fire safety performance is monitored using clear indicators. These include:

100% of FRAs completed on time.

100% of FRA actions completed within target dates.

Performance is monitored by the Housing Contracts and Compliance Manager and the Head of Housing. Performance is reported to Members every 6 months. Audits are undertaken to provide assurance, and non-compliance is escalated immediately with corrective action tracked until resolved.

16. Training and Competence

The Housing Contracts and Compliance Manager is responsible for ensuring that the managing agent staff receive training appropriate to their role. This includes induction training, refresher courses, and specialist training for those directly involved in fire safety. Contractors must demonstrate competence and provide evidence of relevant fire safety training for their workforce.

17. Equality, Accessibility and Vulnerabilities

We ensure that fire safety information and support are accessible to all tenants. This includes providing translations, large print, and easy-read formats where needed. We take account of vulnerabilities when planning fire safety measures and evacuation support, ensuring that safety arrangements meet individual needs.

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed three years, or sooner if laws, regulations, or best practice change. Tenants will be consulted where appropriate, and their feedback will help improve our fire safety management.