

Document control information

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Document review and change log		
Version	Approved date	Reason for Issue
1.0	4 Nov 2014	Initial consolidation and rewrite of R&M policies
1.1	23 Nov 2016	Management review to reflect discussions with Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service
1.2	28 May 2019	Management review, update and approval by Fire Safety Group
1.3	26 Jan 2024	Management review to reflect the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, plus change to management of communal areas

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy was approved as part of a review of Portsmouth City Council housing repairs and maintenance policy documents.

The policy applies to the repairs and maintenance service provided to the council's tenants and leaseholders. It defines rules to be applied but stops short of giving detailed procedural guidance as this may change.

In addition, reference should be made to the relevant tenancy agreement or lease document.

2. Document context

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The relevant policy guideline document which outlines further detail when implementing a policy.
- The Repairs and Maintenance Scope of Service which outlines the purpose and value steps for each of the repairs and maintenance service lines. The document also summarises our principles of work, definitions of waste, decision making using PLANⁱ and our capability measures.
- The Asset Management Strategy which sets out a framework for the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties to make future decisions about its assets over the next 30 years.
- Where relevant there are links to legislation related to the policies as necessary, however be aware that some changes to the legislation published may be outstanding and legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

ⁱ PLAN - Proportionate, Legal, Accountable and Necessary

3. Arbitration and escalation

Front-line staff requiring help interpreting and implementing the policy should seek advice from their line manager in the first instance.

Where a decision requires arbitration or further escalation the following table outlines the escalation pathway.

Escalation	Job Title
First	Building service team manager ⁱⁱ
Second	Head of Building Maintenance
Third	Assistant Director of Building Services

In addition, a tenant or leaseholder can make a formal complaint using the council's complaints policy. In the first instance they should contact the person or section dealing with their problem and ask to register a complaint.

ⁱⁱ Building Repairs Manager or Building & Compliance Manager or Building Safety Manager or Building Projects Manager

4. Fire safety

4.1. Purpose

This policy outlines the council's approach to the management of fire safety and its obligations with regard to the [Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#), [Fire Safety Act 2021](#), [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#), [Housing Act 2004](#), [Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) and their successors.

4.2. Scope

The policy covers all council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings including the common parts, individual doors opening onto common parts of the building and external structure (including doors, windows, cladding and balconies) of blocks of flats, sheltered schemes and houses in multiple occupation.

It also includes all other HRA assets as appropriate such as offices.

4.3. Fire risk assessment

The council will undertake Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) to all relevant properties under the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 implementing appropriate fire measures to all blocks of flats to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life in the event of a fire.

For the purpose of FRAs the Responsible Person will be the Director Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services.

A Type 1 non-destructive survey to the non-dwellings using the PAS79-:2012 Code of Practice for all FRAs undertaken.

A new FRA assessment will be undertaken when the building has a change of use, there has been a material change to the building design or there has been a fire.

A review of an FRA will be undertaken whenever a significant change has occurred to a block of flats or asset but will not exceed 3 years from the original FRA. A more frequent review will be carried out if deemed appropriate by the fire risk assessor undertaking the original FRA.

No more than two reviews will be undertaken of an original FRA before undertaking a new FRA.

FRAs for higher risk assets such as blocks of flats that are seven storeys and above, sheltered blocks, houses in multiple occupation or offices, will be undertaken by appropriately competent third-party registered fire risk assessors. FRAs for lower risk assets such as blocks of flats that are six storeys and below, will be undertaken by in-house building surveyors who have

completed appropriate training and regular assessment to demonstrate their competence.

Residents in sheltered or supported housing or individual residents identified in general needs housing who are at a higher risk of fire in their own accommodation, a person-centred fire risk assessment will be undertaken that relates to the safety of the individual residents.

4.4. Stay put policy

All blocks have a stay put policy unless specifically identified as part of the fire risk assessment that it is not appropriate.

If a fire starts within residents flat, the occupants should alert others within the flat, make their way out of the building and contact the fire and rescue service.

If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas should make their way out of the building and contact the fire and rescue service.

All other residents within a block of flats not directly affected by the fire are expected to 'stay put' and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.

4.5. Means of escape routes

Fire separation and compartmentalisation between the common parts and individual properties (horizontally and vertically) will be maintained and actions undertaken as appropriate.

In all circumstances a minimum 800mm walkway must be maintained at all times or the width defined in Part B of the fire safety building regulations, whichever is greater.

Mobility scooters should not be stored or charged in the internal communal area unless an area has already been specifically designed and set aside for this purpose.

Emergency lighting will be installed to all means of escape routes as appropriate and will be regularly tested. A standard test will be undertaken monthly and a discharge test will be undertaken annually.

Decorated surfaces will be to class 'O' standard to prevent the spread of flame.

4.6. Fire Doors

Where property entrance doors open directly onto a communal escape route then a minimum of a 'notional fire door ' should be installed for low rise blocks (up to two storeys). An 'upgraded fire door' should be installed for medium rise blocks (three to five storeys) and 'replacement FD30s' for high rise blocks (six storeys and above).

All property entrance doors to properties that open directly onto a single communal escape route will be inspected annually to check that there is no visible damage to the door and that it closes correctly, any repairs identified will be raised as soon as possible.

Within blocks of flats that are 11m or higher and sheltered blocks of flats, the communal fire doors in the means of escape routes will be inspected every 3 months to check that there is no visible damage to the door and that it closes correctly, any repairs identified will be raised as soon as possible.

4.7. Firefighting equipment

Dry risers will be installed in all blocks of flats seven storeys and above unless no installation is agreed with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. Dry risers will be serviced annually.

Firefighting equipment will be inspected monthly to visually confirm that it has not been damaged.

Where any fault is identified the council will take steps to rectify the fault. Where a fault cannot be rectified within a 24-hour period, beginning with the time the fault is identified, as soon as reasonably practicable the council will report the fault to the local fire and rescue authority by electronic means and then report the rectification of the fault.

4.8. Smoke detectors

All council dwellings will be fitted with at least one mains operated smoke detector with a battery back-up on each dwelling floor level as appropriate which will be replaced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions by the expiry date. If on inspection the smoke detector is within one year of the manufacturer's expiry date it will be replaced.

We will regularly test smoke detectors installed within our council dwellings annually.

Leaseholders will be responsible for testing and maintaining smoke detectors within their own dwelling.

Within blocks of flats that are ten storeys or more high, the communal areas will have smoke detectors that are linked to Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs) as appropriate, these shall be tested every six months.

4.9. Management of Communal Areas

Communal areas where the common walkways or stairwells form the means of escape routes, a 'zero tolerance' approach will be enforced with regard to resident's possessions to ensure that the common parts are 'sterile' and free of combustible material, ignition sources and obstructions. No resident's items will be permitted within these common areas.

The exception is the management of communal areas and residents' possessions within the common parts of the block of flats that are sheltered block Cat 2 or Cat 2.5 will be a 'managed use' approach.

The 'managed use' permits residents to have the following items within the common areas providing they do not cause obstruction to the means of escape and have been approved by the Scheme Manager

- place pot plants and door mats outside their front doors
- have framed pictures and notice boards on walls
- Small non-combustible (e.g Ceramic) ornaments
- basic furniture and not upholstered seating

4.10. Private Balconies

The use of any barbeques, fire pits or patio heaters on any private balcony is prohibited. Any items stored or fixed to the private balcony must be non-combustible.

4.11. Fire Safety Information

Fire Safety Logbooks will be located in any buildings where staff are located in offices, to assist site management teams so that they can record fire safety training, maintenance inspections and fire incidents. The logbooks will be retained on site for three years.

Premises Information boxes providing information regarding the building, active fire protection systems and vulnerable residents unable to self-evacuate as per the NFCC code of practice, will be accessible to Hampshire Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service when attending a fire incident in all blocks of flats seven storeys and above and sheltered blocks (Cat 1, Cat 2 and Cat 2.5). The information will also be provided electronically.

The premises information boxes will be inspected monthly to ensure they are not damaged and validate the information is correct.

4.12. Assisted Evacuation

Any residents that have been identified that are unable to self-evacuate their property in the event of a fire, the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service will be informed that an assisted evacuation is required in the event of a fire and appropriate information will be recorded in the premises information box.

4.13. Gas Bottles

The storage of gas bottles is not permitted in the dwelling or communal storage areas in any Large Panel System (LPS) building seven storeys and above, the

Council will write to the residents to inform them annually that gas bottles are not permitted to be stored and posters will also be displayed within the communal areas.

4.14. Mobility Scooters

The Mobility Scooter Storage Policy for Local Authority Housing Stock provides specific guidance on the use and storage of mobility scooters to promote responsible scooter ownership.