

fire management policy

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1. Policy Statement

believe housing is committed to providing a safe environment for its employees, customers, visitors and contractors. Part of this safety responsibility is in the provision and management of fire safety systems and procedures, which demonstrates believe housings' dedication to improving fire safety and mitigating the risk of fire to people and property. In line with the government and regulatory requirements, believe housing will work closely with our customers in relation to giving fire safety advice and will act upon any reported concerns from our customers.

2. Policy Aims

Fire is a potential hazard to all believe housing assets, and therefore, the aim of this policy is to provide a robust fire safety framework which will enable mitigation, as far as possible, to the major threat of fire.

We recognise our legal and moral fire safety obligations, and will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the risk of fire will be managed in accordance with legislation and guidance including but not limited to:

- Fire Safety Act 2021/Regulatory Reform Order 2005
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Building Regulations (Approved Document B) 2000
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Housing Act 2004
- BS9999: Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings
- BS5839 – Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings
- BS9991 – Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings
- BS5499-4 – Safety signs. Code of practice for escape route signing
- BS5266-1 – Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises
- BS6266 – Fire protection for electronic installations

The key objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- The responsibilities of believe housing to our customers, employees, visitors and contractors.
- Provision of sufficient and suitable resources to suitably manage fire safety.
- Sufficient and suitable governance arrangements are in place to manage all fire safety matters.
- Fire risk assessments are completed as required for all buildings covered under legislative scope and the management of actions raised.

- Fire risk assessments are reviewed annually or following a fire incident, changes in working practices or changes in building use.
- The allocation of responsibilities and duties for fire risk assessment and fire management which must incorporate the principles of prevention, active and passive protection and emergency response.
- Competent persons are managing fire safety provisions.
- Suitable and sufficient fire safety training is provided.
- Management of servicing regimes to ensure fire protection systems are maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and British standards.
- Effective fire safety management record keeping.
- Identification of emergency plans, including evacuation strategies.
- Engagement with customers to promote fire safety advice.

3. Scope

This fire safety management policy applies to all believe housing employees, customers and contractors who may work in, occupy or use the premises within believe housings' stock, typically detailed as:

- Housing plus units
- General needs low-rise blocks
- Offices
- Community centres
- Commercial premises

The documents also cover work within areas demanding fire management protocols, such as:

- New build properties
- Ancillary rooms (High-risk service cupboards/lift plant rooms etc)
- Refurbishment projects
- Contractor health & safety

We will also support any customer who may be vulnerable and ensure the risk of fire is lowered so far as reasonably practicable with assistance from internal departments and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Fire Safety Act 2021/Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) requires identification of a 'responsible person' for ensuring that fire risk assessments are undertaken, and the necessary precautions and non-conformances identified from those assessments and actioned.

The Chief Executive is the responsible person under Fire Safety Act 2021/Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and delegates the day to day management of these duties through line management and identified roles, with the following having responsibility in those areas:

Roles	Responsibilities
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge and monitor internal fire safety control procedures and performances
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure fire safety risks are assessed, and control measures identified and implemented. Ensure the management of fire safety is appropriately resourced for compliance under The Fire Safety Act 2021/Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
Executive Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report fire safety performance and updates to Board Ensure fire safety risks are managed in accordance with policy and procedures, assessed, and control measures implemented.
The Director of Assets and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness of this fire safety policy and procedures across the company Report fire safety performance and updates to, Directors and other leadership teams on an agreed consistent basis. Provide sound fire management safety communication between all teams through the company
The Director of Neighbourhoods and Customer Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure customers are aware of the fire related obligations in their tenancy agreement Monthly checks of communal areas in residential buildings are undertaken and that any defects are actioned and where appropriate are communicated to the Compliance Team to ensure that any interim precautions can be implemented.
The Director of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all new build properties that are commissioned by the organisation or purchased under Section 106 are compliant with the relevant fire legislation for residential properties and provide resource and budget to ensure that they are compliant before being occupied.
The Strategic Assets Business Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness of the fire safety policy and procedures across the company Reporting of fire safety performances and updates to the Directors on an agreed consistent basis.

The Compliance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fire risk assessments are completed within the set timescales • Ensure fire risk assessment actions are closed off in a timely and efficient manner, being addressed within the timescales quoted on the fire risk assessment • Liaise with responsible managers and other employees of believe housing to ensure fire risk assessment actions are brought to their attention, including requesting actions to be remedied. • Overseeing the management of fire safety procedures, ensuring compliance with legislation • Overseeing the management of fire safety contractors • Liaising with stakeholders, including County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies / bodies • Ensuring relevant fire safety data is recorded and monitored
The Compliance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fire risk assessments are completed within the set timescales • Ensure Fire risk assessment actions are completed in a timely and efficient manner, being addressed within the timescales quoted on the fire risk assessment • Liaise with responsible managers and other employees of believe housing to ensure fire risk assessment actions are brought to their attention, including requesting actions to be remedied. • Manage appointed contractors performing fire safety related duties • Promote fire safety awareness with our customers • Liaising with departments to advise on fire safety matters. • Promote compliance with relevant fire safety legislation • Develop internal control procedures through training and revising guidance • Ensure any faults, defects or deficiencies relating to a buildings structure and its systems, including active and passive fire protection systems are rectified in a timely manner

The Health & Safety Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide competent health & safety advice as stipulated in regulation 7 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 • Liaise with the Compliance Team to ensure this policy and associated procedures are audited effectively by the health and safety team
Group Governance and Assurance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accidents involving fires are Investigated with a view to highlighting opportunities for improvement
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make their teams aware of fire safety management policies and procedures. • Include fire safety management procedures on-site or within contractor inductions • Immediately report any fire safety issues to the Compliance Team and Health & Safety Team
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any fire related incidents or near misses to their line manager • Whistleblowing for any fire safety issues • Ensure that they recognise where assembly points and the location of all fire exits are within believe housing offices • Cooperate with fire evacuation procedures in the event of a fire alarm sounding in a believe housing office • Complete believe housings' dedicated fire safety training when required • In the event of a fire check all areas of the building if safe to do so and encourage and assist persons to leave a building
Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report any faults/defects in and around their home • To report any fire safety concerns to believe housing • Tell us of a change in circumstances where their ability to evacuate is impeded.

5. Communication with our Customers

believe housing will:

- Regularly promote fire safety awareness with our customers.
- Act upon any fire safety concerns reported by our customers.
- Keep customers updated on any fire remedial works taking place in residential buildings.
- Consider any suggestions made by our customers that could improve their fire safety.
- Liaise with our customers regularly to discuss local fire safety precautions and other compliance matters.

6. Monitoring and review

As part of this policy, we will formally report to executive, audit committee and the board details of legislative non-compliance and planned corrective actions.

The Compliance Team will report key fire related figures to the audit committee on a quarterly basis and continually monitor and audit compliance procedures.

The policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a significant fire incident, important change in business or legislation, which would warrant a review being carried out at an earlier date.

7. Links to other policies and procedures

The policy should also be read and reviewed in conjunction with:

- The Health and Safety Policy Statement
- The Fire Safety Management Procedure Flat Block Inspection procedure
- Gas, Solid Fuel and Electrical Safety Policy Statement
- Assured (shorthold) Tenancy Agreement
- Premises Logbook - local procedures for fire and testing regimes
- believe housing's CDM Procedure