



## Housing Landlord Services

Fire Safety Policy 2017-2020

Version 1 (071017)

### **Notice to staff using a paper copy of this policy or guidance**

The policies and procedure database holds the most recent and approved version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.

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## 1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all of the Councils own stock managed by Housing Landlord Services only. This policy does not relate to any corporate buildings managed by Fixed Assets.

The policy applies to Secure and Non-Secure Tenants and non- housing stock.

This policy also applies to tenants living in and around the Councils 11 sheltered schemes,

## 2 Policy Statement

- 2.1. Tamworth aims to provide a safe environment in which our residents are reassured that the risk of injury or damages to their homes caused by fires is minimised.
- 2.2. The Council will comply with the regulatory HOME standard with particular regard to 1.2(b) that it will “meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes”.
- 2.3. In aiming to deliver this environment, Tamworth Borough Council, as a general principle, will seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Housing Act 2004. Paying particular attention to the latest legislation and current regulations and guidance in force.
- 2.4. To encourage the assurance and confidence of our residents, regular fire safety awareness information will be made available. This will include ensuring residents are aware of their own obligations to comply with their tenancy agreement and thereby minimise the risk to themselves and other occupants of the flatted blocks or sheltered accommodation in which they reside.
- 2.5. Tamworth will continue to develop the highly regarded professional relationships it has with its partners; particularly Staffordshire Fire & rescue Services (SFARS)

to deliver high quality services aimed at fulfilling its strategic priorities to live a quality life in Tamworth; grow stronger together and deliver quality services.



## 2.6. In discharging our obligations to fire safety, Tamworth will:

- Have regard for all current and relevant legislation; regulations and guidance, as at October 2017 includes:-
  1. The Housing Act 2004
  2. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Carry our Fire Risk Assessments in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Undertake Fire risk Audits in conjunction with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (SFARs) and ensure all fire risk assessments are independently

produced; monitored and associated actions tracked by a third party accredited supplier.

- Provide relevant employees with Fire Safety training in conjunction with Corporate health & safety staff under the shared service arrangements;
- Maintain and improve fire safety as required through the recommendations of the Fire Risk Assessments and the Fire Audits;
- Carry out joint training exercises with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service and other agencies as necessary to ensure readiness for emergencies;
- Carry out all necessary servicing to ensure that fire prevention equipment is in full operation at all times;
- Carry out all necessary servicing to ensure that firefighting equipment i.e. fire extinguishers, are in full working order at all times;
- Consider Fire Safety in all improvement programmes carried out by Tamworth Borough Council.

### 3 Fire Risk Assessments

#### **3.1 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

3.1.1 Under the fire legislation, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) 2005, as the responsible person (landlord) we must carry out a fire risk assessment and take reasonable steps to remove or reduce any risks that have been identified.

3.1.2 Tamworth will ensure that all residential communal blocks and non-housing stock under it's ownership have a fire risk assessment carried out.

3.1.3 Where practical Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) will be located within the premises. On some sites this may not be practical and in this event the FRA will

be located centrally and accessed via the portal on the councils housing management systems.

### **3.2 Management and review of Fire risk Assessments (FRA)**

3.2.1 The fire risk assessment is carried out annually, but will be reviewed monthly via routine health and safety meetings. Situations which might prompt a review include:

- A change in the number of people present or the characteristics of the occupants including the presence of people with some form of disability.
- Introduction of new equipment, structural alterations to the building, including the internal layout, significant changes
- Alterations to building such as replacement entrance doors or internal decoration to communal areas
- The introduction or increase in the storage of hazardous substances; or
- If fire occurs.
- Updates in legislation.

#### 3.2.2 Tamworths approach to Fire Inspections

Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) across all blocks will be done at least annually. Inspections to fire safety measures in place i.e. fire doors and support robust FRA be categorized based on risk:-

<b>Categorisation of stock</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>How often inspected</b>
High Rise	Red	Block Daily and Fire Doors 6-monthly
Eringden	Amber	Block Daily and Fire Doors 6-monthly
Sheltered	Red	Daily and Fire Doors 6-monthly
Low Rise	Green	6-monthly
Single Communal Areas (maisonette type stock)	Green	6-monthly

## 4. Fire Risks

- 4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) places a duty on Tamworth, as Landlord, to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity.

Therefore, the main fire risks identified in communal areas are;

- Arson
- Faulty electrical installations
- Accumulation of flammable rubbish
- Smoking
- Failures in construction (fire doors, lack of emergency lighting and smoke ventilation etc)

## 5. Fire Precautions

- 5.1 Fire precautions are designed to protect people, property and assets against the loss of life, injury and damage caused by fire.

- 5.2 Tamworth will undertake and maintain the following fire precautions:

### 5.2.1 Fire Prevention Measures (expanded in item 6)

- Good housekeeping e.g. removal of rubbish in communal areas, fire stopping etc.,
- Program of inspections to ensure fire doors, signage and compartmentalisation are in good repair

- Adequate security measures, (e.g maintenance of secure entries, CCTV camera where it exists),
- Maintenance, inspection and testing of electrical installations and equipment,
- Prohibition of smoking in communal areas including lobby areas and lifts.
- Control of contractor's operations on our premises (i.e. method statement, risk assessment, permit to works)

### **5.2.2 Fire Protection Measures**

- Retrofit Sprinkler Suppression systems to its high rise and high risk blocks to provide complimentary fire protection to its residents
- Install smoke detection systems – where necessary
- Install and maintain fire alarms – where necessary
- Install and service Fire Fighting Equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers, dry risers – where necessary
- Maintain compartmentation and fire doors
- Maintain and communicate evacuation plan
- Maintain Fire exits
- Install and maintain emergency lighting
- Install and maintain smoke ventilation where possible

### **5.2.3 Pre-Planning**

- Carry out fire drills – where blocks have a central alarm system
- Train, educate and inform (residents, staff and contractors)
- Formulate and maintain fire policy and procedures
- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments and Fire Audits as necessary
- Co-operation and co-ordination with other premises users
- Place and maintain clear safety signage



6.1 Housekeeping – in order to prevent possible sources of fire and to minimise the risk to our residents the following principles will be applied:

- No dumping of rubbish is permitted in chute areas
- Rubbish should not be left outside of flat doors and should be disposed of in the designated bin chute or taken to the bin outside
- No rubbish should be left in communal areas especially flammable material
- Keep clear all corridors, walkway, landings and exit routes (means of escape) • Electrical and Service cupboards must not be used for storage of any material

6.2 Fire stopping – to maintain the integrity of communal areas and prevent the spread of fire the following principles will be applied:

- High Rise blocks will be inspected periodically to check for fire stopping breaches where services pass through floors and walls, and where necessary filled with an appropriate material to prevent fire and flame spread
- Contractors working on any block should take care to avoid penetrating walls ceiling or floor slabs for passing through cable, pipes or conduits, where this is unavoidable the contractor will ensure that the penetration is sealed and fire stopped adequately and where necessary with intumescent fillers. This must be agreed with Tamworth before work commences and inspected directly upon completion
- Service and electrical cupboards within the communal areas must be kept locked at all times.

6.3 Electricity –the electrical installation to the communal parts of the building will be checked every years, with all domestic and individual council properties checked every 5 years in accordance with the guidance provided by the Institute of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations 17th Edition (as amended). Five yearly checks will ensure fixed installations are safe and does not extend to tenants

own appliances. Portable Appliance Testing (Pat) will be carried out to Council supplied electrical equipment in sheltered and communal areas within blocks.

- 6.4 Gas Installation – in order to prevent a gas escape or combustible incident with blocks of flats, the building/individual heating systems are annually serviced to ensure compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- 6.5 Smoking – to prevent the likelihood of a fire starting, Tamworth operates a no smoking policy in all communal areas of a building. In accordance with the Health Act 2006 and the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006.
- 6.6 Regular testing of Lightning Protection systems for high rises.

This applies to all communal areas and work areas under Housing Landlord control, and therefore affects sheltered housing as well as high and low rise blocks of flats, including the lifts. It does not apply to residents smoking in their own dwellings within a block.

## 7. Fire Protection

- 7.1 In order to minimise the risk from any fire that may occur within the blocks and to ensure safe evacuation, the following control measures have been implemented:

- 7.1.1 Evacuation Routes

To ensure safe evacuation the routes must be kept free of sources of ignition, flammable and combustible material and obstructions at all times. In High Rise blocks of flats daily inspections will be carried out to identify and deal with such issues.

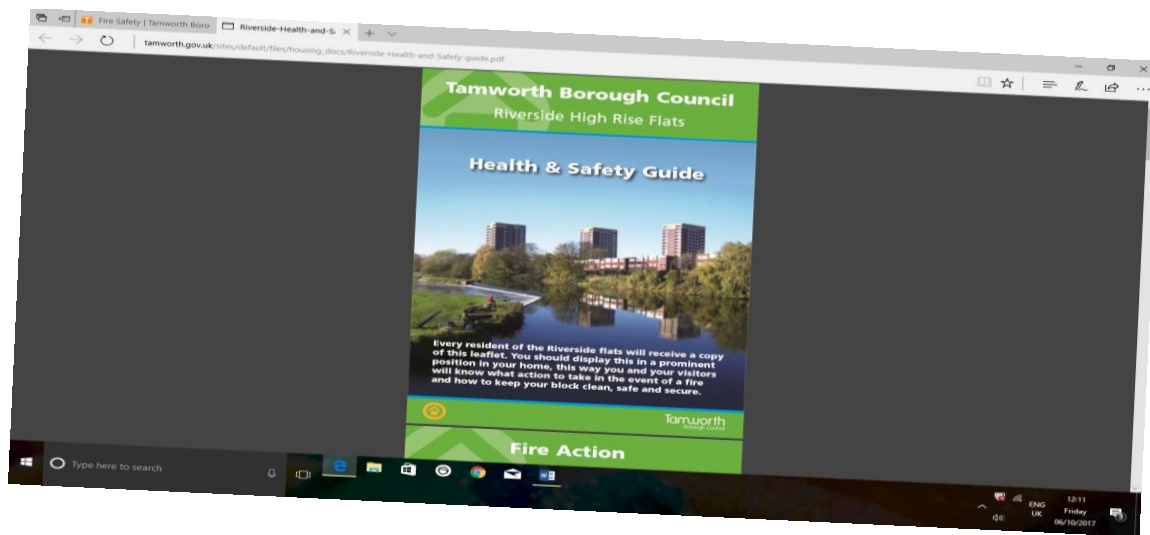
- 7.1.2 Evacuation Plan

The following applies to all High Rise and Sheltered blocks:

Providing that the integrity of the front door, to each individual flat, is maintained and not compromised in any way, in a potential fire an individual flat will act as a sealed fire compartment. The flat should contain a fire for up to 30 minutes, with the fire doors and concrete walls resisting before spreading into the common parts of the block. In addition residents in other flats will have 1 hour protection when their own front door is taken into consideration.

Staffordshire Fire & rescue have a delayed evacuation policy which is detailed in the guidance shown on the Councils website and by clicking the link here.

[http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing\\_docs/Riverside-Health-and-Safety-guide.pdf](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_docs/Riverside-Health-and-Safety-guide.pdf)



### 7.1.3 Fire Exits

All fire exits must be kept free of all obstructions, both inside and out, and be available for use when required. Fire exits will not be left open to ensure that security of the building is maintained, nor shall fire exits be used by the occupants of the building as a main entrance/exit to the building. In High Rise blocks of flats daily inspections will be carried out to identify and deal with such issues.

#### 7.1.4 Fire Doors – common areas

Fire doors are provided to help prevent the spread of smoke and fire and must be kept closed. Fire doors are checked regularly to ensure they are operating correctly and are not damaged. Fire doors', including entrance

doors to tenant's flats and cupboards, should NOT be propped open, tampered with or compromised in any way, i.e.; materials affixed to frame/door to prevent banging noises. Any problems should be reported immediately to Tamworth.

#### 7.1.5 Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are positioned in boiler / lift rooms, kitchens and communal areas and are not for use by the residents or the public. They should not be removed from their designated location.

Fire extinguishers are maintained and tested annually.

#### 7.1.6 Dry Risers – High rise flats only

Dry risers are positioned and secured on each floor within the block. The riser is located within an internal duct and outlets in secure cupboard to prevent theft of the valve, using an FB17 padlock (Fire Brigade approved). They are inspected by the Fire Service and wet tests are carried out, risers are tested, maintained and serviced on a regular basis.

#### 7.1.7 Signage

Appropriate fire safety signage (including low level signage) is displayed throughout communal areas of the building, indicating the fire exit/s and action notice information. Fire doors are marked to keep shut and no smoking signs are affixed inside the block.

### 7.1.8 Smoke Alarms

All flats are fitted with hard-wired smoke detectors.

Smoke detectors are not installed in communal areas, where fire risk assessments have determined a low level of risk (i.e no combustible material or ignition sources should be found in communal areas). In addition there is a high probability of vandalism in communal areas. If smoke detectors are fitted, it introduces a further risk in that tenants will be relying on smoke detectors which are likely to be damaged through vandalism

Sheltered housing blocks with have their own fire alarm systems. Smoke detectors within each property are connected to the community alarm services and part of the infrastructure testing and maintenance for door entry; life lines and fire detection.

Gas servicing engineers will carry out an annual check on the Smoke Detectors as part of the gas servicing programme; a separate programme will pick up properties that do not have individual gas boilers.

## 8. Partnerships

8.1 Tamworth work closely with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service and independently accredited specialist Fire Risk Assessor on the following aspects:-

- To carry out an annual audit of the housing and non-housing stock. The purpose of this inspection is to identify immediate risks and to ensure that actions from the previous inspection have been implemented.
- Regular training exercises with the Fire Service to ensure procedures are in place and that they are familiar with block layouts in the event of a real fire
- Jointly producing relevant policies and procedures

- Training to Tamworth staff
- Awareness campaigns for our residents
- Specialist support on retrofitting and planned investment works to flatted estates, in particular the sprinkler suppression systems

## 9. Customer Profiling

- 9.1 For designated blocks; including high rise; sheltered schemes and Eringden a comprehensive customer profiling exercise has been undertaken to ensure where necessary personal evacuation plans are in place and that business continuity arrangements exist in the event of a fire for civil contingency purposes.
- 9.2 Mobility Scooters - the policy is being reviewed for storing scooters within blocks especially in the Sheltered Blocks, which covers the associated risks. As a general rule Tamworth will impose size and weight restrictions on its use where there is lift and/or single staircase access. This part of the policy is currently under review.

## 10. Publicising the Policy

- 10.1 Tamworth will market and publicise its policies and procedures on Tenancy Rights and Obligations to residents and staff in a number of ways:-
- Tenant Handbook
  - Factsheets
  - Housing Matters
  - Tamworths Website
  - Staff Briefings and
  - Training

## 11. Review of the Policy

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the needs of the Council and its tenants and adopts latest legislative and regulatory changes with regard to fire safety
- 11.2 The relevant Council scrutiny committee will receive an annual update in order to support the research and policy development in this area.

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