



Fire Safety Policy



Oxford City Council Property Services

- **Definition of Fire Safety**, Fire safety is a *group of equipment and/or behaviours designed to reduce the risk of a fire starting and reduce the risk of injury in the event of a fire.*

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the policy.....	3
2. Scope of the policy.....	3
3. Relevant legislation, regulation, and guidance	4
4. Sanctions	4
5. Strategic context	5
6. Objectives	5
7. Key roles and responsibilities.....	6
8. Approach to managing fire safety	10
9. New build and developments	12
10. Empty properties and changes of occupancy	12
11. Fire evacuation (communal buildings)	12
12. Managed use of communal areas.....	15
13. Identifying and removing potential hazards	15
14. Communal lounges and community centres	16
15. Smoking	16
16. Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide detection	17
17. Civic and commercial buildings.....	17
18. Equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability (including most at risk groups)	20
19. Communication of the policy	21
20. Resident communication.....	21
21. Resident engagement	22
22. Policy review	22
Version Control Table – Fire Safety Policy – Created 01/03/2025	23
Appx 1.1 Legislation & Regulations	26
Appx 1.2 OCC Guidance, Procedures and Policies.....	26
Appx 1.3. OCC Objectives	26

1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 The health and safety of tenants, leaseholders, residents, visitors, staff, and contractors is of paramount importance to Oxford City Council. The risk of fire presents a significant hazard to the safety of HRA buildings and their occupants, and statistics show that this risk increases considerably in social housing. It is imperative therefore, that there are robust management systems in place to reduce these risks.

1.2 This policy outlines the approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating the risks associated with fire in Oxford City Council housing properties, also known as HRA stock.

1.3 This policy aims to demonstrate that the Council has appropriate measures in place to comply with relevant legislation, regulation, and other relevant codes of practice, and good practice guidance.

1.4 There is an agreement between the council and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) which is intended to provide a framework to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the two organisations are effectively translated into practical working arrangements. The agreement lays out the partnership approach to making Oxford a safer place, in which to live, work, and visit. This policy underpins the agreement and aligns with the actions agreed within.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1 The policy covers housing assets. The policy does not apply to the management of fire risks within non-council-owned dwellings or other non-council housing assets such as schools, care homes, offices, or many commercial properties.

2.2 This policy does not apply directly to buildings and homes under private management. However, in these service areas, Oxford City Council Housing has a responsibility to ensure that the minimum standards set out in this policy are in place and are sufficiently robust across all council-managed homes.

2.3 All employees of the council, who are involved with the management and maintenance, including contractors or all persons visiting the buildings for the purpose of carrying out their work duties on behalf of the council, are required to adhere to the standards set out within this policy.

3. Relevant legislation, regulation, and guidance

3.1 The legislation, regulation, and guidance listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 2004

- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Building Regulations 2024 Approved Document B (Fire Safety)
- Housing Act 2004: Part 1
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Equalities Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2024
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2024
- Building Safety Act 2024
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2024 (Consumer Standards)
- RSH Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Social Housing Regulation Consumer Standards:
 - The Safety and Quality Homes Consumer Standard
 - The Transparency, Influence, and Accountability of Consumer Standard
 - The Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard
 - The Tenancy Consumer Standard
- The Decent Homes Standard
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

4. Sanctions

4.1 Oxford City Council accepts its responsibilities in accordance with the regulatory standards and legislation relating to fire safety.

4.2 Failure to comply with these statutory obligations may result in:

- Enforcement by the Building Safety Regulator
- Receipt of statutory Enforcement Notice from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS)
- Receipt of statutory Prohibition notice by OFRS
- Prosecution by OFRS
- Prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Receipt of regulatory notice from the Regulator of Social Housing
- Loss of confidence by stakeholders in the organisation

5. Strategic context

5.1 This policy supports the Oxford City Council's Corporate Strategy by providing good affordable homes, thriving communities as well as a strong and inclusive economy.

5.2 This policy also contributes to the key themes of the Asset Management Strategy and in particular:

- Improving housing quality
- Child and age-friendly housing
- Safe and strong communities
- Health and housing

5.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Oxford City Council's [Tenancy Agreement](#) - [Your tenancy agreement | Oxford City Council](#)

6. Objectives

6.1 As a landlord, we must meet the legal obligations that require us to deal with the risks associated with fire safety within the properties we own or manage.

6.2 This policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors.

6.3 Oxford City Council is committed to reducing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the foreseeable risks of fire, and the risk to the safety of residents and other building users through a series of measures which include:

- Ensuring compliance with legal and statutory requirements, including carrying out, updating, and regularly reviewing fire risk assessments of all relevant accommodations in line with the level of risk.
- Ensuring that all new build accommodation and refurbishment work meets the requirements of the Building Safety Regulations and other statutory requirements.
- Ensuring as far as is reasonably possible that the risk of fires igniting and spreading in properties is minimised.
- Working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that residents and staff know what to do when a fire does occur.
- Ensuring that an investigation is undertaken in the event of any fire or fire safety incident to review the causes and explore opportunities to implement improved control measures, to minimise any potential re-occurrence.
- Ensuring that all fire safety, electrical, and mechanical equipment on the council's estate is regularly maintained, and kept in a good state of repair, and that records are kept in line with legal and best practice requirements. This includes cyclical servicing and inspections of gas and electrical installations.
- Defining key fire safety roles and responsibilities within the Oxford City Council.
- Working collaboratively with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Maintaining accurate record keeping and sharing with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, as appropriate.

All staff receive training appropriate to their duties under the Fire Safety Order, and all those with delegated responsibility for fire safety complete specific training to assure and demonstrate competency to undertake their required duties.

7. Key roles and responsibilities

7.1 Corporate Fire Safety Manager is responsible for:

- Providing monthly Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and FRA Action statistics for the compliance report that is scrutinized by Property Service Manager, Director of Housing, followed by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- Ensuring the effective planning and management of fire safety across the council-owned portfolio which includes:
- Supporting the Property Services Manager, Director of Housing in setting the strategic direction and effective planning and management of fire safety activity within the council-owned portfolio.
- Ensuring that adequate resources are in place across the service to enable the effective delivery of these policy requirements.
- Ensuring that a culture of strong governance arrangements is in place concerning fire safety management, including reporting progress against key compliance activity and the escalation of significant risks to the directorate risk register.
- Encouraging a strong fire safety culture across Oxford City Council housing service, which includes good communication and engagement with residents, staff, and Trade Unions.
- Ensuring a strong and effective partnership is in place with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Developing and keeping this policy under review.
- Providing expert specialist fire safety support and advice regarding fire risk assessment, fire prevention and general fire safety management across the Housing Service.
- Ensuring that the service remains up to date with developments to fire safety legislation and that the Oxford City Council Corporate Leadership Team is appraised of change requirements.
- Ensuring sufficient information to ensure fire safety performance is shared with staff, contractors, and residents through an effective communications strategy.
- Ensuring that a program of training for staff with designated fire safety duties is adequate and kept up to date.
- Ensuring an effective resident engagement and communication strategy linked to fire safety, jointly with communication and housing managers.
- Ensuring up-to-date fire risk assessments are in place for all relevant assets and maintaining an up-to-date register of fire risk assessments and the remedial actions.

7.2 Senior Fire Risk Assessor is responsible for:

- Leading fire safety activity within the Oxford City Council housing portfolio, taking a lead role in delivering fire-related compliance activity which includes:
- Managing a team of Fire Risk Assessors to deliver the following:
- Ensuring the planning, and delivery of fire risk assessments for all relevant assets and monitoring the completion of significant findings and remediation works.
- Conducting audits to ensure that the provisions within the fire safety policy are being enforced to the standard required.
- Ensuring sufficient information, instruction, and training is carried out to demonstrate knowledgeable and competent teams.
- Ensuring that fire precautions are maintained effectively.
- Organising the investigation of fires and introducing controls to reduce the risk of such incidents recurring.
- Undertaking quality assurance checks of works to ensure standards are being achieved.
- Producing bespoke Fire Safety Management Strategies for all relevant buildings and blocks with clear evacuation plans and improvement plans.
- Developing and maintaining a fire risk register on all HRA buildings and blocks requiring fire risk assessments, recording, and reporting findings following fire safety legislation.
- Undertaking desktop reviews of fire risk assessments at planned intervals as per policy requirements.

7.3 Director of Property and Assets and Director of Housing have responsibility for:

- Appointing a designated Corporate Fire Safety Manager and Fire Safety Team to lead Fire Safety activity and day-to-day delivery across the Oxford City Council portfolio.
- Assuring effective governance and risk management, that the controls in this policy are working and that the approach complies with legislation.
- Ensuring an effective programme of activity is in place to meet the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2024, and Building Safety Act 2024.
- Working collaboratively with other Directors and Service Managers to ensure that adequate operational processes and procedures are in place to manage fire risk pertinent to their areas of service.
- Ensuring that an adequate capital improvement programme is in place to deliver fire safety improvements to the council's housing stock.
- Ensuring that works being undertaken are designed and constructed competently and safely.
- Ensuring that cyclical maintenance and servicing arrangements are in place, as well as an effective repairs service for responding to repair reports.
- Ensuring that fire safety is appropriately considered as part of all procurement and commissioning activity.

- Ensuring that emergency procedures are in place to respond to damage caused by fire to the council housing stock.

7.4 Service Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that actions from fire risk assessments for their service areas are completed within the timescale, and completions recorded in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the effective delivery and monitoring of fire safety-related activity within the service area, including the effective contract management of service providers.
- Ensuring the appointment of competent persons and organisations to complete design and construction works (inclusive of repairs, maintenance, service, and inspection).
- Ensuring that all staff complete fire safety training appropriate to their roles.
- Ensuring that risks relating to fire safety are appropriately recorded, managed, and escalated where appropriate.
- Ensuring that all activity within the service area is given due consideration to fire safety and contributes to a strong fire safety culture.
- Appraising the impact of changes to fire safety legislation on the service and developing business cases for change.
- Ensuring the effective contract management of service providers in relation to fire safety requirements.

7.5 Managers within the Housing Service are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective delivery of the detailed arrangements necessary to manage fire risk within their areas of control.
- Ensuring that staff under their control have adequate training and are kept aware of their responsibilities under the fire safety policy.
- Ensuring an effective resident engagement and communication strategy linked to fire safety.

7.6 All staff. All employees have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and Safety and that of others.
- Report immediately any concerns they may have relating to Fire Safety or other safety hazards.
- Complete fire safety training.
- Co-operate with managers to enable compliance with this policy and the legal duties to Oxford City Council.

7.7 Contractors and Oxford Direct Services (ODS)

Work to fire safety performance standards as set out in their respective agreements with the council.

- Ensuring that their staff and sub-contractors have received appropriate information, induction, and training.
- Employ competent, suitably qualified staff and sub-contractors, ensuring they are able to demonstrate their ability to meet all statutory requirements.
- Ensure that all works relating to fire safety are adequately monitored, controlled, and quality checked.
- Complete works in a timely manner in line with the urgency timescales agreed with the council.
- Maintain and make available records with the details of all completed fire safety works.
- Work collaboratively with Oxford City Council to identify fire safety risks and jointly agree solutions.

7.8. Tenants, leaseholders, residents, and visitors.

All residents must take responsibility for their own household's safety and ensure that they do not do anything that might cause a fire within their home, or shared areas, or impede or endanger the emergency services when tackling fires or carrying out rescues.

This responsibility extends to other householders and visitors of tenants and leaseholders. The Tenancy Agreement sets out specific terms and conditions which are in place to prevent potential fire risks and ensure that fire evacuation routes are not obstructed. Non-conformance with these conditions amounts to a breach of the tenancy agreement which will be dealt with through appropriate tenancy action:

- Bonfires. You can have a bonfire or barbecue at a reasonable time as long as you do not cause a nuisance with the smoke or the smell of the smoke and the frequency, only dry and suitable waste is burnt, and it does not cause any risk to the property, people or other buildings. Barbecues are not permitted on balconies. Any fireworks must be used safely and in line with manufacturer's instructions. Fire pits, barbecues, chimineas and braziers must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Flammable material. You or any member of your household or visitors are only permitted to keep bottled gas, paraffin, petrol, LPG, acid, or any other hazardous material in a contained, safe, and secure storage area that is dry, ventilated, away from direct sunlight and heat sources. You can only keep a limited amount of such material which is reasonable for domestic use. You must not keep such materials in any common areas.
- Gas and electricity safety. You or any member of your household or visitors must not tamper with gas or electricity supplies or with utility meters.
- You or any member of your household must allow access to your home for annual gas safety checks, fire door inspections and periodic electrical safety checks.

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. You are responsible for testing any battery-operated smoke detector and ensuring it is always in good working order. You must not tamper with or damage any detectors in your home.
- Emergency services access. You or any member of your household or visitors must not obstruct access to emergency service vehicles in any way in your property, common areas or the locality of your property. You must not park your car in any way that obstructs access for the emergency services, your vehicle may be removed if it is blocking such access.
- Fire safety in communal properties. You or any member of your household or visitors must cooperate with the council and your neighbours to keep any common areas clear, and the council may remove and dispose of any objects found in common areas. You may be required to pay for the cost of the removal and disposal of such items. You must not keep any lithium battery motor bikes/mobility scooters in the communal areas or fire exit routes. You must not charge any lithium batteries overnight or without supervision, as these could cause a catastrophic fire whilst being charged. Please do not obstruct any fire exit route with any lithium batteries due to their explosive nature.
- Due to the increased risk of fires starting caused by the charging of lithium-ion batteries, the council will not support residents to charge or store e-bikes or scooters in council blocks or within individual homes.

In addition, residents and their visitors must:

- Not keep or charge mobility aids such as mobility scooters or motorised wheelchairs, electric scooters, or electric bikes in any common area.
- Not interfere with security or safety equipment in any council property or communal area.
- Dispose of rubbish responsibly and not leave any rubbish in communal areas.
- Report repairs straight away and allow access for their completion.
- Not smoke or use e-cigarettes in the common areas of the building.

Leaseholders are also required to comply with the terms and conditions set by the council as stated in their Lease Agreement.

8. Approach to managing fire safety

8.1 A range of measures are in place to prevent the risk of fire and to ensure that any potential fire hazards are dealt with in a timely manner.

8.2 Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)

8.2.1 Fire Risk Assessments are regularly undertaken within buildings with communal areas to identify potential risks and implement measures to mitigate/remove them. However, Fire Risk Assessments are not undertaken within domestic homes, including flats with their own separate entrance, maisonettes, houses, or bungalows.

8.2.2 The fire risk assessments take into consideration the effect a fire may have on anyone in or around the premises, plus neighbouring property and are kept under regular review. The building fire risk assessment concentrates on the following areas:

- Elimination or reduction of risks (ignition sources).
- Suitable means of detecting and raising the alarm in the event of a fire.
- Adequate emergency escape routes and exits.
- Adequate fire compartmentation (fire and smoke spread and the protection of escape routes).
- The appropriate type, and sufficient number, of fire extinguishers.
- Correct type, and sufficient number, of fire signs and notices. A standard specification has been developed for safe condition signage which meets legislative requirements.
- Provisions for the correct maintenance of installed fire equipment.
- Suitable provisions for the protection of fire service personnel.
- Ensuring that occupants receive the appropriate instructions.

8.2.3 The fire risk assessments will assess for fire hazards, evaluate the risk of the hazards, and advise on action that should be taken to remove, reduce, or manage the risk. Each hazard identified will be categorised as follows:

- Low - work or action to be carried out within a reasonable time frame as soon as resources allow.
- Medium - maintenance action or new works required to be initiated as soon as reasonably practicable, depending upon budget and staff resources, within 3-6 months.
- High - items that should be resolved immediately, or work initiated within 7-14 days.

8.2.4 The assessor will task actions to relevant officers, and track and monitor progress to ensure completion within the required timescale.

8.2.5 The frequency and type of inspection depends upon the level of risk. Smaller blocks under 11 metres are considered as lower risk and will have an annual desktop review and a fire risk assessment in person in the block at least once every four years. Higher-risk blocks which are above 11 metres or have higher occupancy levels will have a fire risk assessment in person, in the block at least once every twelve months.

8.2.6 In addition, a physical inspection fire risk assessment will be undertaken no matter what the risk category is:

- Following a fire, near miss, or threat of arson.
- Whenever there has been any structural or material change to the building or its use.

8.2.7 Employees undertaking fire risk assessments will be confirmed by the Corporate Fire Safety Manager as being "competent" to do so and will be able to evidence they have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience as required for 3rd party accredited membership of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers.

9. New build and developments

9.1 Where a new asset is being developed by or on behalf of Oxford City Council, the responsible Service Manager or Business Lead will ensure that the requirements of the Fire Safety Order and Building Safety Act 2022 have been addressed within the design and that the building maintenance, health and safety file, and Regulation 38 (the Building Regulations) information is provided at handover of the building. This is achieved by commissioning approved, and suitably qualified consultants.

10. Empty properties and changes of occupancy

10.1 Gas and electricity services to empty homes will be isolated, and the premise will be made secure following an assessment made to determine the need to provide any additional security measures to the property whilst empty to prevent unlawful entry and occupation.

10.2 Prior to re-occupancy of empty homes, checks will be undertaken to ensure that homes meet minimum fire safety standards.

10.3 Where change of occupancy occurs, a check will be made before exchange to identify any fire safety defects. Conditional Approvals may be applied where defects and unauthorised alterations have been carried out which compromise fire safety.

10.4 Gas and Electric inspections or installations will be carried out before change of occupancy.

11. Fire evacuation (communal buildings)

11.1 Each residential building with a communal area has a defined evacuation procedure which has been determined by a fire risk assessment. If a fire occurs in a property, residents will follow the instructions as stated within the fire action notice as displayed in the communal areas of blocks.

11.2 All tenants will be notified on commencement of occupancy, and thereafter on a regular basis, of the fire safety guidance for their block, how to report a fire, a reminder of what the evacuation strategy is for that building. As well as any other instructions which are required to inform residents what they must do if a fire has occurred, based on the building's evacuation strategy.

11.3 We will regularly remind residents of the fire evacuation procedure for their block through letters to residents, newsletters, resident emails, and through our dedicated [Fire safety web page for council tenants](#) - [Fire safety for council housing tenants | Oxford City Council](#)

11.4 In our blocks of flats a fire action notice will also be displayed in communal areas (such as the building's lobby or any visible part of the building). These are already in place for the majority of blocks with the exception of our smallest low-rise blocks. We are currently working towards installing fire action notices in all our blocks of flats with communal areas. Additional information, such as contact details, for residents to raise concerns will be displayed on community notice boards.

11.5 Fire prevention measures are in place to prevent the spread of fire in-line with the fire risk assessment.

11.6 Regular checks are undertaken to maintain equipment that has been provided for the purpose of firefighting, and to ensure that the equipment is functioning correctly. The checks undertaken and frequency are as follows:

Fire prevention measure

Checks undertaken and frequency

Fire doors (in all council and leaseholder flats with a communal area)

If the top storey of the building is above 11 metres in height (typically, a building of more than four storeys) or has high occupancy levels, we will:

- inspect all flat entrance fire doors at least once every 12 months*; and
- inspect fire doors in communal areas at least once every 3 months.

For blocks under 11 metres high we will:

- inspect all flat entrance fire doors externally and a minimum of 10% of flats to the internal face at least once every 24 months.
- inspect fire doors in communal areas at least once every 24 months.

*We will inspect the external face of every flat entrance door, and we will make "Best Endeavours" to gain access to inspect the internal face of these doors.

Gas boilers, Carbon Monoxide alarms, and flues are inspected through the Landlord Gas Safety Register (LGSR) certification

Serviced and maintained annually.

Sprinkler systems and smoke detection systems.

Serviced and maintained annually.

Emergency escape lighting

Serviced and maintained monthly operational checks and annual 3 hour drain down.

Fire alarm systems - BS5839 Pt1

Serviced and maintained quarterly.

Firefighting equipment (Fire extinguishers, fire blankets, etc in the community centres) in communal areas.

Serviced and maintained annually.

Lifts (in high rise blocks and complexes only)

Serviced and maintained monthly with 6 monthly LOLER inspections.

Dry and wet risers

Serviced and maintained every six months and after operational use.

12. Managed use of communal areas

12.1 To minimise the potential fire safety risk, a 'managed use' approach is operated where residents are not permitted to personalise communal areas that may present a fire risk or cause an obstruction to the means of escape in the event of a fire or emergency.

12.2 Residents are informed regularly through posters and leaflets of the restrictions on storage within communal areas.

12.5 The following items are not permitted and where identified, residents will be provided with appropriate advice and the reasons for refusal, or requests to remove items:

- Rugs, door mats, carpets (potential tripping hazard and non-fire-retardant materials).
- Christmas decorations (potential fire risk).
- Bicycles, prams, and scooters in communal hallways (obstruction).
- Storing flammable items including gas, petrol, barbeques, and any electrical items (fire risk and obstruction).
- Disposing or storing refuse (fire risk, health risk, and obstruction).
- Charging electrical items from the landlord electric supply (Lithium Battery explosion, fire risk, and abuse of 'landlord only' facilities/installations).
- Leaving footwear outside the door (potential tripping hazard and obstruction).

13. Identifying and removing potential hazards

13.1 Proactive measures are in place to identify and remove any potential hazards which create a risk of starting a fire and impeding escape routes to communal areas. This approach includes carrying out:

- Stage 1 - Fire and Safety Checks undertaken by cleaning teams, such as ODS – carried out daily in High Rise blocks, twice weekly in Low Rise blocks, five times a week in Housing for older people complexes, and three times a week in Community Centres.
- Stage 2 - Fire and Safety Checks undertaken by Housing Officers/Area Improvement Officers – on a scheduled basis, the frequency which is determined by the housing manager's assessment of risk based on several risk factors, as stipulated within this policy.
- Stage 3 – High Rise Block Fire and Safety Checks in high-rise residential buildings with communal areas which are 18 metres tall or higher, or at least seven storeys, with two or more residential units. These are carried out quarterly during the fire risk assessment by the Fire Safety Team and the Building Safety Team.
- Annual Tenancy Check In (ATCI) visits allow hazards inside the home to be identified, as well as checks carried out that smoke detection is in place, and that any vulnerability factors that may increase the risk of fire starting, or impede an evacuation from the home, are identified and recorded, (PCFRA)
- 13.2 Housing Officers, Area Improvement Officers work with the estate officers, caretaking teams and cleaners, on an 'eyes and ears' basis, to identify and arrange immediate removal of any fire hazards identified within communal areas and around the general estate environment.

13.3 If a non-permitted item is left in a communal area, officers will attempt to identify the owner to notify them to remove it promptly. Dependent upon the level of risk, officers will

arrange removal or disposal if the owner cannot be located or is not able to remove the item within an acceptable timescale, depending on the level of risk that it poses.

13.4 Permission will not be given for the installation of security gates/grilles to the entrance doors of flats in blocks that have shared communal areas as these may prevent persons from evacuating, and/or impede the emergency services, in the event of a fire. Where other high-risk factors are present, then a suitable risk assessment must be undertaken to determine the highest risk.

13.5 Charging of mobility scooters and e-bikes/scooters within communal areas is not allowed. This practice is not in line with our policy to maintain clear communal areas as it increases the risk of an emergency evacuation route becoming blocked, can result in trailing wires causing trip hazards, and increases the risk of fire starting because of charging batteries. Where other safe alternatives exist, and this can be achieved, then we will work with residents to try and find safer alternatives for the storage and charging of mobility scooters.

14. Communal lounges

14.1 The majority of furniture and furnishings within communal lounges that are provided by the council will meet appropriate fire safety standards.

14.2 Residents may place items within the communal lounge, subject to them meeting the following requirements:

- All furnishing in communal areas and rooms should satisfy the flammability requirements for classification as Type B or C when tested in accordance with BS 5867: Part 2.
- All furniture should comply with the medium hazard resistance to ignition classification of BS 7176: 1995.
- Any soft furnishing such as carpets, mats, curtains, chairs, etc. will be manufactured to the above standard and have fire labels indicating as such.

15. Smoking

- 15.1 Smoking is not permitted in any communal areas, entrances, and refuse areas of HRA buildings. Signage is displayed informing residents and other building users.

16. Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide detection

16.1 Smoke detection is provided to individual homes to provide a means of alerting residents to the presence of fire and facilitating safe escape.

16.2 Interlinked smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors are installed in accordance with British Standard 5389 part 6 as part of electrical rewires and refurbishment work.

16.3 Where it is identified that there is no detection, temporary battery detection will be installed as a matter of urgency until mains detectors can be installed through upgrade.

16.4 The minimum standard for temporary smoke detection is one detector per storey level.

16.5 Residents are regularly reminded to test detection weekly and report any defects immediately.

16.6 As a landlord, we will test smoke detection before re-occupation of homes and also during annual gas safety checks and periodic electrical inspections. In high-rise properties, the Fire Safety team will test domestic smoke alarms whilst carrying out annual front door inspections inside the home.

17. Equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability (including most at risk groups)

17.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out to determine whether the policy would have an impact on any member of staff, tenants, or contractor workforce, which unfairly discriminates or disadvantages them in the context of the Equality Act 2010.

17.2 Whilst the EqIA has identified that there are no particular groups who will be unlawfully disadvantaged by this policy, it is identified that there are certain groups at increased risk from fire. These groups are:

- children
- adults with learning difficulties
- oxygen users
- people taking certain medication
- those suffering the effects of drugs and alcohol
- adults aged 65 and older
- people with disabilities who may not be able to quickly escape in the event of an emergency due to reduced mobility
- Individuals being supported by the Community Safety team and related support services

17.2 This policy aims to reduce the risks to these groups of people through proactively identifying these risk factors, raising awareness and education, agreeing evacuation plans, and making Safe and Well referrals to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service where appropriate. [Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

17.3 Fire safety advice will be made available in braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages upon request to Oxford City Council.

17.4 We will assess the needs of residents who inform us they have a disability such as a hearing impairment, visual impairment, and mobility issue, and will provide appropriate equipment or support to ensure that they are alerted in the event of a fire.

17.5 Where an individual is identified with a vulnerability issue that may put them at a higher risk of causing a fire within their home, a referral will be made to the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for an assessment for fire enhanced protection items such as fire- retardant night wear, blankets, and personal misting units. [Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

17.6 We recognise that residents with some protected characteristics are over-represented in certain blocks that are higher risk in terms of fire safety, for example older people or those with disability or long-term health conditions in retirement schemes. In these blocks we will ensure that the communal areas are appropriately equipped with fire protection equipment such as emergency lighting, fire doors, and safety signs, as advised by a fire risk assessment.

17.7 The Housing Officers will carry out A Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) with the support of the Fire Safety Team for any resident within the High-Rise blocks, older people housing, and who has been identified as having issues with fire risks within their homes (hoarding), or with self-evacuation. For instance, for a person with impaired mobility, to evacuate a building or reach a place of safety in the event of an emergency. Persons requiring PCFRA's will be updated and recorded on the QL following identification through tenancy contact.

17.8 Fire Risk Assessors will check the PCFRA before assessments of the building so that they may adjust the significant findings to take into consideration any issues identified within these PCFRA reports.

17.9 Information relating to residents who have a PCFRA is kept on a secured website so that this information can be shared with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in the event of an incident.

17.10 For older people housing, information regarding any person who has been identified as having issues with self-evacuation, a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) is kept within a secure on-site fire information box accessible by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and the Fire Safety Team.

17.11 Where staff and contractors identify fire safety concerns within residents' accommodation, they can, with the resident's permission, refer to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for a safe and well visit to be arranged by a fire brigade person where safety advice will be provided if any hazards are identified. [Keep safe and well | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

18. Communication of the policy

18.1 This policy will be communicated internally to Oxford City Council staff and key stakeholders.

19. Resident communication

19.1 We regularly share information with customers so that they understand their responsibilities in relation to fire safety, know what they can do to minimise fire risks, and know how to raise any fire safety concerns with us. This is done through our resident community strategy which includes sharing regular fire safety messages through resident emails, letters, leaflets, and social media.

19.2 Our dedicated [Fire safety for council housing tenants | Oxford City Council](#) contains important fire safety information.

19.3 Key content from this policy will be included in the [Oxford City Council Welcome Pack](#) and [Oxford City Council webpage](#).

19.4 A full copy of this policy will be made available upon request via the Oxford City Council [Fire Safety Team: firesafetyteam@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:firesafetyteam@oxford.gov.uk)

20. Resident engagement

20.1 Oxford City Council is committed to providing a high level of customer care and positive communication which is vital to effective fire safety. This will support residents in their understanding of fire safety and fire safety risks, advise them of how they can manage the risks within their properties, and encourage them to report any concerns about fire safety.

20.2 Further monitoring of feedback will take place through resident surveys and this intelligence will be used to inform future reviews of this policy.

20.3 Periodic engagement with residents will take place to ensure that this policy, along with other policies, remain customer facing.

20.4 Residents who are wanting to report a non-urgent safety concern can do so by using the link below: [Report a Building Safety Concern with council housing | Instructions – Oxford City Council](#)

20.5 All emergency and urgent fire safety reports should be made to 01865 249811.

21. Policy review

21.1 A full policy review will take place in response to any changes in legislation, significant events that may impact on the policy, or at periods not exceeding 2 years.

Fire Safety Policy

Appendix 1



Further related Legislation, Policies and Guidance



Oxford City Council Property Services

Appx 1.1 Legislation & Regulations

- Housing Act 2004 (Part 1 - HHSRS)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Decent Homes Standard
- Awaab's Law - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

The Legislation above can be found on the [.Gov website](#)

Appx 1.2 OCC Guidance, Procedures and Policies

- **Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy**
- **Oxford City Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the [OCC Strategy 2024-2028](#):

Appx 1.3. OCC Objectives

This Policy supports objectives detailed in the [OCC Corporate Strategy 2024-2028](#):

- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Meet the Housing Needs of Vulnerable Groups
- Support Sustainable Communities
- Good Quality Homes For All
- Thriving Communities Strategy