

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: ALL</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Proposals for resident information about safety in the home and in communal areas	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Director of Property Management	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel	<b>DATE</b> 21 June 2023
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT:</b></p> <p>The report describes the what the Council is doing to provide the safety information residents need to play their part in ensuring the safety of their homes.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p><u>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</u></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Melissa Dillon: Resident Safety Engagement &amp; Governance Lead</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk">melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Tel. 0207 974 3100</p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <p>The Panel is asked to consider the proposed information plan and add any issues that they would like to be addressed.</p>	

Signed:



Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management

Date: 7 June 2023

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 extended the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to the exterior and structure of a building etc and the Building Safety Act 2022 introduced new rights to information about building safety for residents. The report describes what the Council is doing to provide the safety information residents need to play their part in ensuring the safety of their homes.

## 2. Context & Background

- 2.1 Residents are entitled (or will soon be entitled) to information about the fire risk assessment for their building, information about the safety checks and certificates carried out by their landlord and to receive specific information about the importance of fire doors and their automatic closure mechanisms. The Building Safety Regulator provides information for residents on their website about their rights and responsibilities and what they can expect from their landlords.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/residents.htm>

- 2.2 When the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill comes into force early in 2024 it will grant to the Regulator of Social Housing ('RSH') wider powers to introduce new consumer standards. The RSH has outlined these proposed new standards within its implementation plan dated January 2023, one of which focuses upon 'engagement and accountability': The RSH's implementation plan can be found here:

[Reshaping consumer regulation: Our implementation plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1144442/reshaping-consumer-regulation-our-implementation-plan.pdf)

- 2.3 When the Bill comes into force early in 2024 it will introduce a new consumer standard for Engagement and Accountability; the Social Housing Regulator will expect Landlords to consider how best to engage with their tenants and to really understand their feedback, so that tenants can influence decision making and meaningfully influence the services they receive. In this context the Council is appointing a dedicated team member to develop a resident information programme which has five aims which are to make sure residents understand:

1. **Why** they need to let Council officers and contractors into their homes to carry out safety checks and any safety installation and maintenance work that is required to keep them safe.
2. **How** to report any fire and building safety concerns they may have and get action to address them.
3. **That they should not** make changes to the layout of their homes, remove or change door or walls without the Council's permission.

4. **How** to use communal areas safely and not do anything that creates a significant risk of causing or spreading fire in their homes or buildings.
5. **Why** they should never damage or remove any of their building's fire safety measures, such as smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire doors, and fire extinguishers.

### 3. Information for Residents

3.1 The Council manages approximately 33,000 Council homes in many kinds of residential buildings; residents of Council homes can live in buildings built anywhere between the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the present day and the arrangements for keeping them will vary from building to building. The Council's plan is to provide more tailored information about the importance of fire doors, automatic closure mechanisms, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and communal area safety in these different building,

3.2 The Council will produce information leaflets specifically for:

**Street properties and blocks with simultaneous evacuation fire strategies.** Simultaneous evacuation means that it is safer for residents to leave the building immediately a fire alarm sounds even if the fire is not in their home.

**Purpose-built blocks with stay put fire evacuation strategies.** This means it is safer for residents to stay in their homes if an alarm goes off unless Fire and Emergency Services tell them to leave.

**'Unusual buildings'** for example those with more than one (a secondary) means of escape.

3.3 This information will be provided on an annual basis to all residents of each type of building and to new residents at tenancy sign up. The intention is to provide this information on the Council's website and annual updates and reminders to residents using social media, newsletters etc. This will be part of a wider ongoing cycle of information and communication with residents which will be developed by the new team member referred to in section 2 of the report.

3.4 An outline of the information programme is set out below and Panel members are invited to suggest issues for inclusion.

#### Proposed Resident Information Programme Cycle

Subject	Frequency	Format	Audience
Balcony Safety	Annually	Seasonal Newsletter Website  At all new lettings  Part of leasehold sales/ assignment pack	<i>All residents of Council homes</i>  <b>New Tenants</b>  <b>New Leaseholders</b>

Subject	Frequency	Format	Audience
<b>Communal Areas Policy</b>	<b>Annually</b>  <b>At all new lettings</b>	Leaflet Newsletter Website  <b>At all new lettings</b>  Part of Leasehold sales/assignment packs	All residents of Council homes  <b>New Tenants</b>  <b>New Leaseholders</b>
<b>Electrical Appliances</b>	Ongoing	Website LFB on-line Appliance checker (general advice for residents to check appliances before buying etc on LFB website)	All residents of Council homes
<b>Fire Doors</b>  Keeping them closed, not tampering with doors or self-closing devices, identifying & reporting faults or damage	<b>Annually</b>  <b>At all new lettings</b>	Newsletter/leaflet  Part of Leasehold sales/assignment packs	<b>All residents of Council homes</b>  <b>New Tenants</b>  <b>New Leaseholders</b>
Fire Safety Awareness including  FRA available on Camden's website or upon request.	Ongoing  At all new lettings	Website Newsletters Leaflets  Part of Leasehold sales/assignment packs	All residents of Council Homes
Fire Risk Assessment Training	Cyclical	External training provider  Face to Face On-line	TRA reps managing TRA halls  Resident Fire Safety Advisory Panel Members
Fire & Building Safety Charter Annual Report	<b>Annually</b>	Leaflets Newsletter Website	All residents of Council Homes
Gas Safety	<b>Annually</b>	Face to face checks Online Newsletters Part of Leasehold sales/assignment packs	All Residents of Council Homes
Kitchen Safety & Cooking	Ongoing At Tenancy Sign up	Website Newsletter	All residents of Council Homes

Subject	Frequency	Format	Audience
London Fire Brigade Services Including: LFB on-line Appliance checker (general advice for residents to check appliances before buying etc on LFB website	Ongoing	Website link to LFB TRA events	All residents of Council homes
Reporting Fire & Building Safety Concerns	<b>Quarterly</b>	Newsletters Website Tenancy Guide	All residents of Council homes
Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarms	<b>Quarterly</b>	Leaflet Website Newsletter	All residents of Council homes
Seasonal Home Safety	Summer Winter	Newsletter Website	All residents of Council homes
Storing Possessions Safety Including:  E scooters & mobility Buggies Dangers and numbers of fires they cause.	On-going	Face to face advice from Council staff & contractors Newsletter Website Tenancy Guide Link to LFB website	
Smoking	Ongoing At Tenancy sign up	Website	All residents of Council homes
Tenancy Guide	Ongoing	Website Hard copy at new lettings	Council tenants
Water Safety	Annually	Website Tenancy Guide Leaflet	All residents of Council homes

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The Council will review the outline information plan to consider comments and issues raised by the Panel and to make sure that it covers any proposals or requirements emerging from the Social Housing Regulation Bill which is the subject of a separate report on the agenda.
- 4.2 The Tenancy Guide has been revised to incorporate additional fire and building safety advice and guidance and Panel members are to consider a report on the proposed updates elsewhere on the agenda.
- 4.3 We also need to look at how use interactive on-line content and social media, and to work through community and voluntary groups to reach a wider group of residents.

#### **5. Legal Comments**

- 5.1 Various fire and building safety legislation has been introduced in recent years including the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and the Building Safety Act 2022.
- 5.2 Regulation 9 of Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 states that fire safety instructions must be provided to all residents annually as well as to new

residents once they move into their premises. Regulation 10 further states that information relating to fire doors must be given to the residents (i.e. that fire doors should be kept shut when not in use, the self-closing devices must not be tampered with and any faults or damage should be reported immediately).

- 5.3 In addition, subject to regulations to be issued by the Secretary of State, section 91 of the Building Safety Act 2022 places upon the Council a duty to prepare a residents' engagement strategy for participation in the making of building safety decision relating to 'higher risk buildings' (defined as buildings being over 18 metres or more in height or 7 or more storeys containing at least two flats).
- 5.4 The Building Safety Act 2022 also introduced article 21A of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (yet to come into force) which is applicable to any building containing two or more sets of domestic premises. The Council will be required to give to residents information about fire safety matters including but not limited to the risks identified and any preventative or protective measures (subject to regulations to be issued by the Secretary of State).
- 5.5 The distribution of information to residents is an important aspect of the new fire safety legislation which has been introduced and the proposals mentioned within this report will assist in meeting both the Council's current and future statutory obligations to its residents as outlined above.

## **7. Finance Comments**

- 7.1 The contents of the report are noted.

## **8. Environmental Implications**

- 8.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report, other than we will work to deliver the information in the most efficient way and carefully target the use of the printed material we produce.

**ENDS**