

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: Fire & Building Safety Charter Annual Report	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel	DATE: 17 October 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report is about the Council’s Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments to working with residents to keep them safe in their Council homes, and the progress that has been made since the Charter was adopted in July 2021. The report explains how we have been doing and where we need help from residents to make improvements.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents were used in the preparation of this report which required to be listed.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Hannah Ashley-Fraser, Head of Property Asset Management Email: hannah.ashleyfraser@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>WHAT DECISIONS ARE BEING ASKED FOR?</p> <p>Panel members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. comment on our performance against the charter commitments ii. provide suggestions on how we can involve residents in increasing access for safety checks, and the kind of information that would help to achieve this. 	

Signed:



Gavin Haynes
 Director Property Management
 Date: 5th October 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is about the Council's Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments to working with residents to keep them safe in their Council homes, and the progress that has been made since the Charter was adopted in July 2021. The report explains how the Council has been performing and where it needs help from residents to make improvements.

2.0 THE FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY CHARTER

- 2.1 In July 2021 the Council made a series of commitments to residents (the Fire & Building Safety Charter) about making their Council homes safer with the objective that by 2025 everyone who lives in a Camden council home does so in safe, well-maintained building.
- 2.2 The Charter covers not just physical improvement to Camden Council homes but also working with residents and communities to make sure that everyone knows how to keep themselves and the people around them safe at home. Camden. The Charter sets out what the Council does to make sure that residents always have a voice in decisions made about safety in their homes and always have access to information about the safety of the building they live in.
- 2.3 Camden is asking residents to play their part in ensuring the safety of their buildings – safer homes are up to everyone. This Fire and Building Safety Charter explains the Council's safety commitments and what residents are asked to do to keep their homes safe. As set out elsewhere on the agenda, the Council is also finalising an action plan with the Regulator regarding its Notice of July 2023 which concerned fire risk assessment actions and smoke and CO detector installation.

Camden's Charter Commitments

- 2.4 There are five charter commitments, four setting out what the Council will do and a fifth asking residents to play their part in making sure their homes are safe. The five commitments are listed here, and section 3 of the report provides detail of practical measures, targets for measuring our performance and information about how we performed against those targets in 2022/23.
- We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe
 - We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home
 - We will be transparent
 - We will always listen to you about safety
 - Fire and building safety is up to everyone – play your part

3. HOW ARE WE DOING – CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

Commitment	Action	Performance in 2022/23
<p>We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe</p>	<p>We will carry out Fire Risk Assessments every 1, 2 or 3 years depending what type of building you live in. All Camden buildings will have a fire risk assessment at least every 3 years.</p> <p>Every year – FRAs to purpose-built blocks 10+ floors, hostels, and sheltered housing</p> <p>Every 2 years – FRAs to purpose-built blocks less than 10 floors</p> <p>Every 3 years – FRAs to street properties and TRA Halls (each street property also receiving a check of its communal areas each quarter)</p>	<p>Camden has 3,290 residential blocks and related assets (such as TRA halls) where fire risk assessments (FRAs) must be carried out every 1, 2 or 3 years.</p> <p>On the 1 April 2023 we had carried out FRAs to 3,219 buildings within their review dates. During the year there were 207 buildings where we had not been able to get in to carry out the FRA. Most of these were street properties and 17 were non-residential TRA halls.</p> <p>We are now implementing a suited-key and lock change programme to ensure we can gain access to blocks and buildings, where there has been no response to our requests for access. We will always try to gain access to communal areas by ringing residents' doorbells and knocking, but if there is no reply, we will open the communal door with a suited key or a locksmith's tool.</p> <p>The Council has closed over 40,000 fire risk assessment actions since 2020. On 1 April 2023 we had 9,000 overdue FRA actions and 400 of these were higher risk actions, for this reason we were issued a Notice by the Regulator of Social Housing in July 2023. All remaining actions are assigned to a team and we have a wide range of contracts in place to deliver them. We now have 76 high risk actions remaining and these will be completed by November 2023 subject to access.</p>
	<p>Gas Safety Checks – We will carry out annual CP12 Landlord Gas Safety checks to 13,306 individual properties each year.</p>	<p>Gas Safety: At the end of March 2023, we had carried out gas safety checks at 13,213 council homes, but there were 93 we hadn't been able to check. We follow a fair and flexible access process giving residents three opportunities to allow us access to undertake the check, we continue to explain that these checks are</p>

Electrical testing – We will carry out Domestic Electrical Inspections to all our tenanted housing stock every 5 years (c23,000 homes).

Water Safety – We will service 841 Water Tanks every 6 months as part of our water safety management process.

Asbestos Surveys – In line with Camden’s asbestos Management Plan we will be carrying out new consolidated surveys to ensure that all communal areas have been re-inspected within a 5-year period.

Lift Safety – We will carry out 554 six-monthly LOLER lift insurance inspections.

an important part of our work to keep Council homes safe. As a last resort we have taken legal action to enforce access.

Electrical Safety checks. During 2022/23 we carried out communal electrical checks at 612 of our blocks and will complete another 476 this year. **On 1st April 2023, 99.96% of blocks had a valid communal wiring certificate.**

Getting access for domestic / internal electrical checks continues to be a challenge particularly as we need to increase the number of checks we do every year to 4,642 to meet our commitment to check all tenanted homes every five years.

During 2022/23 we carried out internal electrical checks to 2,703 homes. At the end of 2022/23 we had 15,414 (69%) homes with a certificate issued in the last five years and 19,699 (88%) of homes with a certificate issued in the last five or ten years. In April 2023, we appointed an additional contractor called Savills to target the no access cases and keep our programme on track. The remaining 2,686 properties were allocated to the Savills no access progress and they have got into 1,704 already and aim to access the remainder by February 2024. They had hoped to reach all by December 2023 but they are experiencing about 30% no access rates.

Water safety (legionella) testing to Council homes has progressed well within residential properties. **Our overall compliance rate for water hygiene risk assessments was 98% on 31 March 2023.** We have had some access difficulties at TRA halls where we are not the key holder, therefore where possible we have installed suited keys. On 31 March 2023, there were 10 TRA halls linked to communal water supply systems where testing was overdue. There are also challenges with accessing water systems in street properties and as a result monthly performance on servicing ranged in 2022/23 between 78% and 65%. We have stepped up access

		<p>activity during the early part of 2023/24 and are aiming to secure 100% access rates and compliance by the end of 2023.</p>
		<p>For asbestos, in line with the regulations Camden has surveys for all non-domestic area (communal areas). We have an on-going programme of cyclical inspections to keep our building records up to date so we have carried out new inspections to 2,082 communal areas to date and we are working to completing the remaining 845 by March 2024.</p>
		<p>For lift safety checks, by the end of March 2023 our insurance company had inspected 549 of our 554 residential lifts (all lifts had been serviced by our contractors during that time). This is an improvement on last year's performance, achieved through an improvement plan with the insurance company who carry out the checks, this has been monitored closely so we can tackle issues quickly.</p>
	<p>Since 2017 we've spent over £66m on targeted fire safety works, this in addition to the Chalcots major works project. We have budgeted for a further £70m of expenditure in addition to the Chalcots and in 23/24 we are expecting to spend £16.3m and will report on progress each year.</p>	<p>The Council's spend for the year 2022/23 was £4.2m on targeted capital works (this in addition to the Chalcots major works project and Cromer Street façade replacement). During 2022/23 we mobilised contracts for hard-wired smoke detection, and we also inspected properties, confirmed specifications and tendered five large geographical packages for a wide range of fire safety works. These large packages were awarded and works mobilised in July 2023 and works will gather pace during 2023/24.</p>
<p>Commitment</p>	<p>Action</p>	
<p>We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home</p>	<p>We will communicate fire safety issues through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Housing News (tenants and leaseholders), the Homeowners News (leaseholders only) and rent statement inserts (tenants only) as required • Posters, signage and other physical communications on estates 	<p>We continued our programme of advice and information articles in our newsletters with articles on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fire safety in communal areas Winter Housing News 2022 - fire safety in communal areas Spring Homeowner News 2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mails to residents and TRAs • Information on the Council's website and social media channels about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General fire, kitchen and balcony safety ○ Understanding smoke alarms ○ London Fire Brigade home safety visits 	<p>- fire safety at home, and fire safety in TRA halls Summer Housing News 2023</p> <p>Invitations continue to TRAs to attend fire risk assessments sending out posters and emails to TRAs.</p> <p>In July 2023 we wrote to residents of all council homes setting out the importance of fire doors and knowing what to do in the event of a fire. We also wrote to all residents of council homes about the risks of e-scooter and e-bikes setting out advice and the dangers of leaving these on charge.</p> <p>The Council has worked with the London Fire Brigade Borough Commander to produce videos on various fire safety topics including the dangers of e-bikes/e-scooters, BBQs during the summer with further campaigns to follow. These are available on Camden's website and have been promoted on social media.</p> <p>The Fire Safety at Home page on our website provides a link to the London Fire Brigade website advice on planning your escape in the event of a fire and home fire safety advice. The website also provides information about the LFB Home Safety visit & smoke alarm service.</p>
<p>We will publish an annual report on our performance against our charter commitments</p>	<p>This is our second annual report</p>
<p>We will:</p> <p>Publish our plans for compliance with Fire and Building Safety regulations as it is enacted/published</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish a list of all blocks where a building safety case report will be required by the Building Safety Case Regulator and timescale for their submission. • We will share Building Safety Case reports with residents as they are produced 	<p>In November 2022 we published the list of the Council residential buildings that are 18+ metres or 7+ floors in height which must be registered with the Building Safety Regulator.</p> <p>We registered 150 high rise buildings by the end of September 2023 and the remaining 17 will be registered in October 2023.</p> <p>You will be able to find the list on the Council's Fire Safety at Home page at https://www.camden.gov.uk/safety-at-home</p> <p>Building Safety Cases reports (BSC) for these buildings must be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator from April 2024 onwards,</p>

		<p>the Regulator will inform individual landlords what the detailed timetable for submitting their BSCs will be.</p> <p>The Council has appointed a team of 10 Building Safety Managers who will work with residents on the BSCs through 2023/24.</p>
Commitment	Action	
We will be transparent	We invite your TRA to attend the Fire Risk assessment (FRA) for your building and will publish the results of all of our FRAs online and share them with your TRA	<p>We continue to send invitations to TRAs to attend fire risk assessments sending out posters and emails to TRAs.</p> <p>In 2022/23 we notified or invited TRAs Tenant Management Organisations, or where there is no TRA, Neighbourhood Officers, about the fire risk assessments for 184 blocks.</p>
	<p>After your fire risk assessment we will let you know about any safety work that we need to do, and how and when we will do it.</p>	<p>The larger FRA work items are carried out by the Capital Works team dedicated to fire safety works or included in Better Homes contracts. When fire safety and better works contracts are due to start, we write to residents to let them know what the timescale for the work to their block is, and to set up consultation about what we will be doing.</p> <p>During 2022/23 we wrote to residents of 12,967 council homes to let them know that we will be carrying out FRA works to their homes. This is a combination of work contracts that contain alarms and fire rated flat entrance doors.</p> <p>The team are in the process of delivering another 5 geographical contracts which contain fire safety actions related to alarms, flat entrance doors and compartmentation which will cover almost 7,000 properties. They are also completing the hard-wired smoke detector programme.</p> <p>Fire safety works are also being delivered through our Better Homes projects at locations such as Bourne Estate, Derby Lodge, Levita House, Weedington Estate and part of the Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate. The Capital Works team also started the procurement</p>

		<p>process for a standalone package of 4,000 doors which will commence in 2023/24.</p> <p>The Repairs Service carries out some of the smaller fire safety work items identified by Fire Risk Assessments such as the installation of evacuation signs, carpentry minor electrical works. Repairs staff also check the communal areas of street properties each quarter to test alarms and identify potential hazards.</p>
	<p>We will publish the arrangements for reporting a safety concern on our website and in our tenants guide</p>	<p>The Emergency and Fire Safety at Home pages on our website give the arrangements for reporting safety concerns and emergencies to the Council and Fire and Emergency Services. The pages also provide advice and information about reducing the risk of fire at home, how to contact your neighbourhood officer and sign up to receive fire and building safety updates.</p> <p>If you have general questions about fire safety in Camden or fire risk assessments, contact Camden's Fire Safety Advisors at fireadvisors@camden.gov.uk.</p> <p>You can find your fire risk assessment report on the Council's website at Camden Fire Risk Assessments Map Open Data Portal</p>
	<p>A repairs operative should be with you between 6 and 24 hours of you reporting a repair that affects your safety. We will publish an annual safety repairs performance report against this standard</p>	<p>Annual average repairs service performance for 2022/23 was good for emergency repairs with 99.5% of appointments met within priority timescales and 79% of repairs completed on the first day of appointment.</p>
Commitment	Action	
<p>We will always listen to you about safety</p>	<p>We will work with the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel, District Management Committees (DMCs) and other stakeholders to develop safety policies, procedures and programmes, training and information for residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-produce resident engagement strategies for their buildings with tenants and leaseholders when the Building Safety Bill requirements are published 	<p>We report regularly to the Fire Safety & Compliance and Advisory Panel (FSAP) and DMC's about building safety legislation and the Council's on-going resident safety programme. Between 2022 and June 2023 FSAP discussed 26 reports about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Risk Assessment • Fire & Building Safety Charter • Fire Safety Management policy • Fire & Building Safety legislation

- take regular reports on our work and progress made to the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel and to other bodies such as the DMCs and Housing Scrutiny Committee, this in dialogue with relevant chairs and with their permission

- Changes to Panel membership
- London Fire Brigade performance
- Servicing & Maintaining Fire Safety Equipment
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Communal Areas policy
- Fire Safety Communication with Residents
- Causes of Fires in Camden
- Safety Awareness for staff & residents
- Risk Management
- Fire Doors & Closure Mechanisms

In 2022/23 the five District Management Committees discussed service reports at 4 quarterly meetings including information about the capital works and fire safety programmes.

4.0 WHERE DO WE NEED TO IMPROVE

4.1 The report sets out the need to improve the rate of delivery on fire safety actions. In general, each FRA can generate around 10-12 follow up actions and at the end of March 2023 we had approximately 12,500 actions to deal with, of which 9,000 were overdue and 400 of these were high risk. As a result, the Regulator issued a Notice to the Council regarding this in July 2023.

4.2 All FRA actions are assigned to one of our teams and a wide range of contracts are in place to deliver the work. The number of higher risk actions outstanding had reduced to 76 by 30 September 2023 and the remainder will be addressed by November 2023. Access has been a challenge however on some of these high-risk actions and this is something we need to work with residents to address. The Council also needs support from residents to help keep communal areas clear of combustible items.

4.3 Access has also been a concern on our internal wiring tests and while Savills have made good progress they still encounter a no access rate of 30%. Similarly on our water hygiene servicing programme, access has been an issue for those systems in street properties and TRA halls. As a result we are:

- Trying new ways of working – e.g. posting letters on front doors where servicing is overdue
- Installing universal key systems in street properties and TRA halls
- Piloting new processes with legal services and neighbourhood housing officers so we can go to Court more promptly in future.

4.4 How Can Residents help?

- By letting us in to carry out safety checks
- Contacting us to rearrange an appointment if they are out when we call
- Keeping communal areas and safe and clear.

4.5 We know residents may need help to find alternative places to store their possessions and to understand why we need to keep communal areas clear, what they can keep in communal areas. Residents can contact their neighbourhood officers to discuss their storage issues and Camden's Fire Safety Advisers and the London Fire Brigade for advice about fire safety at home. Contact information is available at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/safety-at-home>.

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 We have sent every Council home a leaflet explaining the communal areas policy and providing contacts for residents who need help and advice about fire safety and storing their possessions, this information is also available on the Council's website.

5.2 During the Autumn we will be writing to all Council homes to let residents know how we are doing on our charter commitments, and we will provide information,

advice and support on fire and building safety in our new e-newsletter. Residents can sign up to receive the newsletter here camden.gov.uk/fire-and-building-safety-emails

- 5.3 Neighbourhood Housing Officers have begun a programme of home visits and over the next 12 months will contact to all Council homes to carry out routine tenancy checks, talk to residents about fire safety and check whether they would need help to evacuate their homes in the event of an emergency. They will refer on any fire safety or repair issues or help and support needs residents have to the repairs, fire safety and social care teams.
- 5.4 In January 2023 a new team of Building Safety Managers were recruited and they have begun work on building safety case reports for higher risk buildings and contacting residents to develop the resident engagement strategies that will sit alongside them.
- 5.5 The Council will be finalising its action plan for dealing with overdue fire risk assessments and ensuring that these do not recur, with the Regulator in October 2023 and will publish the plan once it is ready. In the meantime, all actions are assigned to teams and are being delivered through the programmes and policies in place.

6. **Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 There are no immediate environmental implications arising from the measures described in the report.

7.0 **LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 7.1 Legal Comments have been incorporated in the preparation of the report.

8.0 **FINANCE COMMENTS**

- 8.1 The contents of the report are noted. All the activities and actions taken are budgeted for under revenue or capital. The budgets are continually reviewed and at annual budget setting cycles, adjusted as appropriate.

ENDS