

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS ALL
REPORT TITLE: Fire and Building Safety Charter Annual Report 23/24	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel	DATE: 22 October 2024
<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 in the 23/24 financial year. 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 that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sinéad Burke, Head of Property Asset Management, sinead.burke@camden.gov.uk Tel: 020 7974 1274</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>Panel members are asked to:</p> <ol 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:



Date: 10th October 2024

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 in the 23/24 financial year. The report explains how the Council has been performing and where it needs help from residents to make improvements
- 1.2 In particular the report covers some new areas of work including the first Building Safety Case Files, and the significant progress against the Regulatory Notice in respect of fire safety actions.

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. 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.
- 2.4 The Council has made significant progress against an action plan established last year in response to the Regulatory 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

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

Commitment	Action	Performance in 23/24
1		
<p>We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe</p>	<p>Fire Safety Checks 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. Every year – FRAs to purpose-built blocks 10+ floors, hostels, and sheltered housing Every 2 years – FRAs to purpose-built blocks less than 10 floors 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 3,233 residential blocks and related assets (such as TRA halls) where fire risk assessments (FRAs) must be carried out every 1, 2 or 3 years. On the 1 April 2024 we had carried out FRAs to 3,229 buildings within their review dates, representing 99.88% of FRAs. The access problems to street properties, which affected results in last year’s report are now almost entirely resolved. The Social Housing Regulator has introduced new Tenant Satisfaction Measures which include a metric on Fire Safety Checks. This requires Camden to also report on the completion of FRAs in buildings where Camden has a social home but is not the responsible party for completing the FRA. There are only 72 such homes. The Council is contacting all such freeholders to ensure FRAs are in place. The Council has closed over 50,000 fire risk assessment actions since 2020, and over 10,000 in the 23/24 year. On 1 April 2024 we had over 8,000 overdue FRA actions of which 5 were higher risk actions (we reached 0 high risk actions soon after). This is a reduction from 400 high risk actions in 1 April 2023. In July 2023 the Regulator of Social Housing issued a Notice in respect of outstanding fire actions and fire detection. An action plan is in place to address all issues raised, all FRA actions are assigned to teams, and council officers meet regularly with the Regulator to provide updates</p>
	<p>Gas Safety Checks We will carry out annual CP12 Landlord Gas Safety checks to 13,306 individual properties each year.</p>	<p>Dwelling Gas Checks All homes with an individual gas boiler require an annual gas check. The council has 13,231 such homes and in 23/24, 99.2% of them had a gas check completed. The remaining homes were ones where no access was provided; the council makes multiple attempts to book appointments to ensure that we offer flexibility. As a last resort the council will progress to legal action to secure access. At any one time the council has a small number of properties which are void. It is necessary to ensure that gas checks are continued in these also; a review</p>

		<p>undertaken at year end showed that for some of these properties the gas check documentation was not available; a full review is taking place to ensure that these properties are also subject to full gas compliance rules, even though they are not currently lived in.</p> <p>Communal Gas Checks</p> <p>The council operates 157 communal gas boilers and all had safety checks completed in 23/24. These serve over 9,000 homes.</p>
	<p>Electrical testing</p> <p>We will carry out Domestic Electrical Inspections to all our tenanted housing stock every 5 years (c23,000 homes).</p>	<p>Dwelling Electrical Tests</p> <p>Camden has established a 5-yearly internal wiring testing programme, and the 23/24 financial year was the fourth year of the first cycle. The % homes with a compliant EICR was 87% at year end, up from 67% in April 2023.</p> <p>We have made great strides in testing 19,535 homes and have 2,887 to go in reaching our target of all homes having a valid certificate in the last 5 years. Thereafter the programme will become a rolling inspection programme.</p> <p>Communal Electrical Tests</p> <p>The communal electrical supplies in buildings are also subject to a 5-yearly testing programme. Compliance at April 2024 was 98.5% which is slightly lower than last year. Securing access to street properties has been the key challenge, and out of hours appointments are being set up to target these homes.</p>
	<p>Water Safety</p> <p>We will service 841 Water Tanks every 6 months as part of our water safety management process.</p>	<p>Water Risk Assessments</p> <p>98.5% of homes have had a water risk assessment undertaken. In line with the TSM methodology on water risk assessments, this includes a risk assessment for domestic and communal water systems.</p> <p>Water Servicing</p> <p>86.7% of the 841 communal tanks had servicing within the last 6 months; this is an increase from last year where compliance ranged between 65% and 78%. Most homes with overdue services are street properties.</p>
	<p>Asbestos</p> <p>In line with Camden's asbestos Management Plan we will be carrying out new consolidated surveys to ensure that</p>	<p>100% of homes have an asbestos survey to the communal areas. The council has also an on-going survey programme to ensure that that these surveys are kept up to date. Over 90% of blocks with communal areas had an updated survey within the past 12 months.</p>

	all communal areas have been reinspected within a 5-year period.	
	<p>Lift Safety Checks We will carry out six-monthly LOLER lift insurance inspections to all lifts.</p>	<p>Lift Servicing 99.6% of lifts had servicing up to date at year end.</p> <p>LOLER Inspections While all lifts had an inspection attempted within the past 6 months, in a number of cases the insurance company who carry out the checks, were unable to gain access. A common reason is that if there are two lifts in a block and one is out of service, the insurer company can't inspect that lift, and they won't take the second lift out of use for residents to carry out the inspection. Another common reason was environmental mess. At year end 85% of lifts had a LOLER inspection completed within the past 6 months.</p>
Commitment 2 Action		Performance in 23/24
We will be transparent	We will publish information about our performance.	<p>In 23/24, in line with the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act, we have published the results of Tenant Satisfaction Metrics. These are metrics which all social housing providers must report against. There are six metrics related to safety; five of these are based on inspection programmes, and one is a survey of residents' satisfaction that they feel safe in their homes and 71.2% of tenants are satisfied that their home is safe.</p> <p>Our performance against the safety metrics are below. Detailed analysis of these results were presented to the Housing Safety and Advisory Panel in July. The Council has put in place an action plan to ensure that performance is improved in 23/24. There is also specific commentary on these safety checks in the section on 'Commitment 1: We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe'.</p> <p>The TSM metrics are calculated slightly differently to the council's internal metrics. Typically, the council has reported on the number of assets with a compliant certificate (e.g. % of lifts) whereas the TSMs consider the number of homes with a compliant asset (e.g. % of homes where all lifts have safety checks completed). This means that there can be quite significant differences between the % of checks completed, and the % of homes with a completed check.</p>

		TSM	Year End Figure
		BS01: Gas Safety Checks	98.96%
		BS02: Fire Safety Checks	99.57%
		BS03: Asbestos Safety Checks	96.36%
		BS04: Water Safety Checks	95.83%
		BS05: Lift Safety Checks	75.67%
	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 2023/24 we notified or invited TRAs Tenant Management Organisations, or where there is no TRA, Neighbourhood Officers, about the fire risk assessments for 188 blocks.</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>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>During 23/24 there has been a large programme of work to ensure that all homes have the appropriate CO and Smoke Detection. We have contacted all residents who require this, and at 1 April 2024, 99.9% of homes requiring a CO alarm have one, and 93% have smoke detection. We are continuing to contact the remaining residents to ensure these essential alarms are completed.</p> <p>The larger FRA work items are carried out by the Capital Works team. During 23/24 the team have completed 1,871 FRA actions, and work has commenced on several hundred more. Capital Works has a team of Project Managers dedicated to fire safety works. In some cases where there are other works taking place to properties such as maintenance then there is the opportunity to incorporate the fire safety works into those contracts.</p> <p>When works are required to a property , we write to residents to inform them of the scope of works, likely timescale for the work to their property, and provide them with the opportunity to talk to the team. Each project has a dedicated Project Manager</p>	

		<p>that the residents can contact to discuss the works. The Project Manager would introduce a contractor to the residents in an introductory letter and there is ongoing engagement throughout the project.</p> <p>The team have delivered works to address thousands of actions in the recent years. The works vary in scale and complexity. In some cases where the works are straightforward then they can be mobilised quickly such as the work to provide residents with alarms. But there are a number of projects that have design considerations that need to be taken into account which require input from specialists in fire or building safety therefore the works entail detailed design work and can take longer to mobilise. The team work with a variety of contractors to deliver on the FRA actions assigned to them most of which are specialist in their fields.</p> <p>The workload of the team is high therefore support has been provided from other areas in the Capital Works team to ensure that the FRA actions are being progressed. The team have also employed a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer to support residents that may require additional support especially where there are residents with vulnerabilities who may require more support to understand the changes and during the works.</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. You can find your fire risk assessment report on the Council's website at Camden Fire Risk Assessments Map Open Data Portal</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 • 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>Throughout 2023-24, we continued our programme of advice and information articles on fire safety in communal areas in the Housing News and Homeowners’ News.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaflets delivered to 33,000 homes on what residents can keep in shared areas - Building safety charter report for 2021/22 delivered to 33,000 council homes - High rise building safety strategy and survey consultation to high-rise residents - Over the year Housing News featured information on key fire safety issues including safely charging and storing e-bikes and e-scooters, Communal electricity meter cupboards safety, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS), Building Safety Managers for high-rise buildings.
	<p>We will publish an annual report on our performance against our charter commitments</p>	<p>This is our third annual report</p>
	<p>We will: 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 	<p>In September and October 2023 all the council’s buildings which are 18+ metres or 7+ floors in height were registered with the Building Safety Regulator. Based on the regulator’s requirements for registration, we registered a total of 188 buildings.</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>Regulator and timescale for their submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will share Building Safety Case reports with residents as they are produced 	<p>From April 2024, Building Safety Cases Files (BSC) for these buildings must be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator. It is expected these will be required over a 5 year period, and that the Regulator will start with the highest buildings.</p> <p>The council has made extensive preparations to ensure these can be submitted as required.</p> <p>The Building Safety Case Files set out a comprehensive view on how safety is maintained to the block. These will be available to residents once produced.</p>
Commitment 4 Action		Performance in 23/24
We will always listen to you about safety	<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 • 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. 	<p>We report regularly to the Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel (HFSAP) and District Management Committees about building safety legislation and the Council’s on-going resident safety programme. The panel is co-chaired by a Camden Council tenant and we have recruited 12 residents to make sure your voices are heard. The HFSAP discussed 34 reports between 2022 and March 2024 – you can read the reports discussed at these meetings at camden.gov.uk/fsap.</p> <p>These meetings are open to the public and anyone can attend. Visit camden.gov.uk/democracy and click on ‘Calendar’ to see when the next one will be held.</p>

4.0 WHERE DO WE NEED TO IMPROVE

- 4.1 In 24/25, completing the overdue fire safety actions will continue to be a top priority; the council has budgeted a further £50m for the completion of this work. As at 1 April 2024 there were over 8,000 actions remaining, and the council has agreed a target with the Regulator to have no overdue actions by December 2025. As noted elsewhere in the agenda, strong progress continues to be made on the delivery of fire actions. Full completion of the programme will be complicated however by the need to access homes and new processes such as the Gateway approval for works on tall buildings.
- 4.2 The council has published the first set of results against the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures required by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. These operate a slightly different metric to previous internal reporting on safety and reviews of the data have identified a few areas of weakness which we need to improve on. These include gas checks on voids, and lift inspections.
- 4.3 Access to homes, particularly, street properties, remains an ongoing challenge. We will make every effort to work with residents to ensure flexible appointments are offered, that universal keys are available to the council for the main entrance doors to street properties, and working closely with neighbourhood housing officers to understand particular resident needs. However, as a last resort, due to the importance of safety checks, we will take appropriate legal action where necessary.
- 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 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-andbuilding-safety-emails](https://www.camden.gov.uk/fire-andbuilding-safety-emails)
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 In 24/25, the council will begin to prepare Building Safety Case Files to the Building Safety Regulator on some High Rise Buildings. We will produce these on request of the Regulator, though the council has extensive preparations in place to ensure this can be

done quickly. We expect 30-40 may be requested in 24/25. This is a new process and we expect there will be significant careful work in ensuring we comply with it correctly. We may also identify new actions necessary to improve the safety of these buildings.

- 5.4 The council has published its performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures on its website. These have been reported to the Social Housing Regulator who will publish benchmarking data and analysis later this year.
- 5.5 Nationally a new process for building regulation approvals has been implemented for major works to high rise buildings. This requires us to present detailed proposals to the Building Safety Regulator on how the works will be carried out in such a way that they either maintain or improve the safety of the building. This new process is called a 'Gateway' process, and once works are complete we will have to demonstrate that we carried out the works in accordance with these proposals. We expect the first capital projects to require this Gateway approval in the 24/25 year.
- 5.6 The Council will continue to work to implement the agreed action plan in respect of the Regulator Notice on overdue fire risk actions. This action plan includes both a programme to complete the actions, and some wider improvements to processes which will ensure the council maintains high performance in completing fire risk actions in the future.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7.0 LEGAL COMMENTS

The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add

8.0 FINANCE COMMENTS

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.

REPORT ENDS