



This policy sets out the Group's approach to managing the risks from fire in the buildings we own and manage.

Fire Safety Policy

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Part 1

About this policy

Document management

Directorate	Finance
Policy sponsor	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer
Policy owner	Director of Responsive Repairs
Policy author	Head of Asset Compliance
Summary	This policy sets out the Group's approach to managing the risks from fire in the buildings we own and manage.
Target audience	All employees, contractors and customers.

Review process

Approval route	Customer Forum – Executive Leadership Team – Audit and Risk Committee
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Part 2

Overview

Intent

Longhurst Group (the Group) is committed to protecting all stakeholders including residents, service users, contractors, employees, visitors and all relevant persons and properties, whilst meeting statutory requirements.

This policy presents a clearly defined system of control for the management and mitigation of the risks from fire.

Implementation of this policy will ensure compliance with our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Policy statement

This policy supports the Group's values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by providing safe homes for our customers and workplaces for our colleagues.

The Group will achieve and maintain effective management of the risk posed by fire and will comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements as defined above.

In achieving compliance our aims are to:

- Provide safe dwellings and place to work; and
- Comply with statutory obligations.

To comply with our legal duties, the Group will:

- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of all relevant properties to identify fire risks and implement measures to reduce or remove the risk of fire.
- Make arrangements to provide safe and effective means of escape; firefighting facilities; and detection and warning arrangements at all times.
- Provide and maintain plant, equipment and work procedures that are safe according to statutory requirements or good practice.
- Provide appropriate information relating to fire safety for all residents, contractors, employees and all other visitors.
- Provide appropriate instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to work safely and carry out their duties and responsibilities under the policy.
- Provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement the policy.
- Appoint competent people, with sufficient authority and knowledge to take measures needed to comply with the law.

Scope

The terms 'Longhurst Group' and 'the Group' incorporate all member companies and subsidiaries.

This policy applies to all Longhurst Group colleagues, suppliers and contractors. It applies to all premises we own or manage, where we are responsible for fire safety.]

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and the policy may be amended at any time.

Part 3

Policy details

Responsibility for Managing Fire Safety

This policy applies to all stakeholders.

Under the Fire Safety Order, the Responsible Person for managing and reducing risk from Fire is the Head of Asset Compliance.

Training

The Group will implement, manage, and monitor adequate fire safety training, instruction and awareness for all employees involved in the management of fire safety including:

- Fire Safety Awareness (online) – All non-care staff are to undertake this online session every 3 years as part of core training. Care staff are to undertake this training annually (as per the CQC requirements).
- Fire Warden (classroom) – Fire wardens for offices and schemes (scheme-based staff who test fire alarm and may help coordinate an evacuation) are required to undertake this classroom session every 3 years.
- Level 2 Asset Compliance Awareness Training course for all asset compliance team.

Training needs will be identified as part of the role risk assessment process and will be monitored by Line Managers (scheme-based staff), the Environment, Health and Safety Team (for office fire wardens) and the People Services Team.

Consultants and Contractors

Qualified and competent contractors will be appointed to provide services to meet the requirements of this Policy. The minimum requirements are, Fire Risk Assessments (IFE Approved Qualification BAFE SP205-1), Fire installations (BAFE SP203) and Fire Fighting Equipment (SP101).

Fire Safety Records

The Group will maintain up-to-date records (asset register) of all premises it owns or manages setting out whether premises require an FRA.

Premises requiring an FRA will meet one of the criteria listed below:

- Longhurst Group workplaces and offices.
- Internal shared hallways (not porches) serving three or more flats.
- Internal shared stairways or corridors.
- Shared balconies and fully or partially enclosed external access/egress routes serving 3 or more dwellings.
- Shared lounges, laundries, activity rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and / or internal mobility scooter rooms.

In addition, the Group will maintain up-to-date records ensuring that all fire protection equipment is maintained, and a suitably qualified contractor is appointed to undertake cyclical maintenance at least annually or by manufacturers guidance or the fire risk assessment, whichever is most frequent.

As of the 23rd of January 2023, when the Fire Safety Act 2022 changes in relation to inspections of fire doors the Group will maintain up-to-date records ensuring that all fire doors in relevant buildings (Building over 11m) are inspected as per the below frequencies:

- Flat Entrance Fire Doors – Annually
- Communal Fire Doors / Riser Cupboard – Quarterly

Fire Risk Assessments and Remedial Actions and Tasks

FRA's will be undertaken in accordance with regulations.

Unless there is reason to expect serious deficiencies in structural fire protection, such as inadequate compartmentalisation or poor fire stopping a Type 3 – Common parts and flats (non-destructive) inspection will be undertaken. A Type 3 survey will inspect a sample of flats and look for any deficiencies in fire detection, fire doors and means of escape.

Where doubt exists or concerns are raised as part of the FRA process a full compartmentation survey by a suitably qualified contractor will be undertaken.

FRA's will be renewed on or before the date recommended by the Competent Persons undertaking the previous assessment. In any event, renewals of FRA's will be undertaken at frequencies not greater than those in the table below.

Risk Profile of Properties	Example of Property Type	New FRA
Low Risk	<p>Purpose-built residential blocks on no more than 2 storeys above ground.</p> <p>Community rooms, scheme lounges or stores which do not have any associated sleeping accommodation.</p>	Every 3 years.
Medium Risk	<p>Purpose-built residential block of between 3 and 5 storeys above ground.</p>	Every 2 years.
High Risk	<p>Sheltered and LSE schemes with sleeping accommodation/flats as part of or adjoining common parts.</p> <p>Support housing (with communal areas or shared accommodation).</p> <p>Care and extra care (with communal areas or shared accommodation).</p>	Annually

	<p>Home of Multiple Occupancy (HMO).</p> <p>Hostels and Foyers (with communal areas or shared accommodation).</p> <p>Converted premises (with communal areas or shared accommodation).</p> <p>Residential blocks greater than 5 storeys.</p> <p>Offices that are used as workplaces.</p> <p>Residential blocks which also include underground parking or below ground storage, plant rooms or accommodation.</p>	
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All FRA's will be reviewed annually or sooner if there is a significant change to a premise including:

- Structural or material changes to the building.
- Change in the tenure classification of the property e.g., a change from General Needs to Sheltered accommodation (with internal communal areas).
- Fire, near miss or threat of arson.

The outcome of the FRA will be an action plan that sets out a prioritised list of any physical and managerial measures (tasks) to ensure that the risk from fire is maintained at or reduced to an acceptable level.

Tasks arising from FRA's will be given a defined target completion date recommended by the Competent Persons undertaking the FRA. The FRA task will be updated as the task progresses to completion with a full audit trails and appropriate evidence in place before the task is closed.

All high-risk tasks are phoned through to the Asset Compliance Team by the Assessor from site. This will trigger an immediate response to rectify the issue.

Task Risk Rating	Timeframe
High Risk	<p>7 calendar days</p> <p>Steps should be made to reduce the risk through a temporary repair or through the introduction of interim control measures if task cannot be completed within the target timeframe.</p>

Medium Risk	90 calendar days
Low Risk	365 calendar days
Long Term Plan	Within a planned renewal process or refurbishment plan (whole scheme replacement and or upgrade). The date of the renewal will be updated on the task commentary and reviewed with the Planned and Assets Teams. This will be up to a maximum of 3 years.

The FRA will review the evacuation procedure for the building. Any changes to the evacuation procedure will be communicated to customers.

Fire Doors

The Group will ensure that all doors which lead onto a common space are fire-rated to ensure the escape routes are protected.

New Developments and Refurbishments

The Group will ensure that designs for new builds and any refurbishment or alteration of properties it controls and/or manages, meet all current legislative and regulatory requirements for fire safety and reduce, as far as possible, the risks posed by fire. If additional specialist advice is required, for example, due to the building design or use, consideration will be given to using a Fire Safety Consultant before, and during the build process or refurbishment to ensure the legislative and regulatory requirements are fully considered and met.

Completed developments and/or refurbishments requiring an FRA will be conducted within one calendar month of occupation or completion.

Acquisitions

For acquisitions, a new suitable FRA's will need to be carried out to ensure related safety arrangements are in place as part of the due diligence undertaken as part of the acquisition process.

Communication

The Group will provide employees, visitors and all other interested parties that visit premises with comprehensive and relevant information regarding fire safety via the display of appropriately located fire safety signage and notices. The evacuation procedure for the building will be displayed in the communal areas.

The Group will provide fire safety information to customers via the customer information pack and tenancy declaration as part of the sign-up process.

Fire safety information will be provided to all employees at induction and as part of the mandatory training programme.

Fire Safety Equipment Servicing and Testing

The Group will provide and manage suitable fire protection equipment such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, lighting, signage, fire exits and fire doors to ensure effective working order and maintain fire-separating elements for example smoke seals / vents etc. designed to prevent fire and smoke from entering escape routes.

Where existing fire protection measures are identified in the FRA as a potential hazard or have been superseded through alternative measures or changes in legislation they may be removed.

In line with the requirements of British Standards, and the Fire Safety Order, Longhurst Group will carry out regular tests on all communal and office fire protection equipment. The frequency of tests will be as recommended by the installer or manufacturer and/or by risk assessment findings. In general, the following guidelines will apply in communal areas:

- Weekly – testing of fire alarm systems, communal smoke detectors and automatic opening vents (AOV).
- Monthly – testing of emergency lighting systems.
- Monthly – portable fire equipment visual check.

In addition to the fire equipment testing Longhurst Group will instruct a suitably qualified contractor to undertake servicing of equipment. The frequency of servicing will be:

- 6 monthly – servicing of fire alarm systems.
- Annually – servicing of emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, AOV's and dry/wet risers.

Where the Group staff complete the weekly or monthly testing of systems, they must update the Smartsheet email form. The Asset Compliance Team will record the test date on the Asset Management System.

The Asset Compliance Team will also monitor the testing and servicing of systems which a Fire Contractor completes.

Fire Safety Equipment Repairs

If repairs are required to any fire safety equipment the Fire Contractor will respond within the following agreed timeframes:

Standard Callout	Callout Response Time	Completion Requirements
Standard callout	4 hours	Emergency call out service guarantees a response within 4 hours of a fault being reported by phone/email. This will either be in attendance, remote assistance or by scheduling an appointment for an agreed time.
Emergency Small Works Quote (SWQ)	24 hours	Emergency SWQ are defects or faults which put the health, safety or security of a customer at immediate risk or cause harm to the structure of

		the property. Emergency repairs will be attended to as soon as possible and prioritised depending on the nature of the emergency. All emergency repairs will be made safe within 24 hours.
Appointed Small Works Quote (SWQ)	28 Calendar Days	Appointed SWQ are defects or faults which do not put the health, safety or security of a customer at risk or cause harm, to the structure of the property and are repairs that tenants and leaseholders can reasonably live with for a period of time.

Small works quotes are issued to Longhurst Group by the Fire Contractor following the servicing or testing of fire equipment.

Callouts are where Longhurst Group contacts the Fire Contractor when a fault has been found with the fire safety equipment or a fire alarm is sounding and needs to be silenced and reset.

Part 4

Policy implications

Roles and responsibilities

All persons involved with the Group, whether Board Member, or employee have delegated responsibilities. The key roles and responsibilities are listed below.

Group Board

The Board is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective policy with controls in place, but delegation is the Management Team of the Group.

Executive Management Team

The Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors collectively are the officers responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Group's objectives in this policy.

Policy Sponsor – Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer

This person has strategic responsibility for the policy and how it relates to business plans, key strategies and other elements of the policy framework.

Policy Owner – Director of [Responsive Repairs]

Responsible for the policy's suitability; effective implementation; and commissioning new policy development and periodic policy review.

Policy Author – [Head of Asset Compliance]

Responsible for drafting a new policy and proposing any amendments to an existing policy.

Data Protection – Data Protection Officer

Responsible for identifying, assessing and mitigating privacy risks with data-processing activities that fall within the policy.

Customer Engagement Team

Responsible for leading on policy consultation with customers and the Customer Forum.

Data protection

All contractors who undertake fire safety works/ Assessments for the group have a contract in place with a data-sharing agreement in place, our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy all form part of these contracts. Customer Data is shared via a secure server within a CSV file, customer name/contact details are not sent within the same file of addresses.

Data retention is in line with other policies and statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

This policy follows the below safeguarding policies.

- Safeguarding Children Policy
 - Safeguarding Adult's Policy
-

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Longhurst Group is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity.

Complaints and feedback

Any feedback/complaint provided by any stakeholder will be reviewed for "You Said, We Did".

This policy will comply with our Complaints policy and procedures.

Risk analysis

The Risk Analysis section within the Policy Development Plan (PDP) identified the following risks and mitigating actions:

- Failure to follow the policy.
 - The policy isn't reviewed if/when regulation changes.
 - Incidents related to fire safety can tarnish an organisation's reputation.
 - Failure to adhere to fire safety policies increases the likelihood of accidents, serious injuries and death.
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Evaluation, review and performance reporting

This policy will be reviewed on a Triennial basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes for example changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified.

The Group Board will receive assurance in respect of compliance of fire safety every 6 months.

The Audit and Risk Committee will receive a report stating the Group's ongoing compliance every 6 months.

KPIs setting out compliance levels will be provided to Directors and Executive Teams every month. Any issues arising from performance will be escalated according to risk.

The Group is committed to the health and safety of its tenants, staff and contractors and other building users, as such, monitors the following areas:

- Of all blocks and non-dwellings requiring a FRA, % with an assessment/re-inspection at the end of the month.

The Asset Compliance Team will undertake an asset reconciliation against the full property stock list held on our housing management system every 3 months to validate the accuracy of our asset register and data used within KPI monitoring and reporting.

In addition, it will be reviewed:

- Following a fire or significant fire-related event.

Audit

The Groups Fire Safety arrangements will be subjected to audits at planned intervals to assess the effectiveness of its implementation by:

- The Group Asset Compliance Team will undertake the 1st line management of fire safety compliance providing assurance that our policy and associated processes are implemented.
- The Environmental, Health and Safety teams, Fire Safety Assessor, Environment Health and Safety will undertake 2nd line assurance testing to review the quality of fire risk assessments and completed tasks.
- The Group will also have in place an audit plan which will be conducted by the Groups appointed Internal Auditor. This will provide 3rd line assurance.
- Participation in the Primary Authority Scheme.

The Fire and Rescue Service may also carry out inspections to assess the Groups standard and quality of our fire safety approach.]

Summary of local variations

[No variations of this policy are required.]

Part 5

Compliance

Legal and regulatory compliance

This policy fully complies with the Group's legal and regulatory obligations.

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('the Fire Safety order')
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Constructions (Design and management) Regulations 2015
- Housing Act 2004
- The Building Act 1984
- All relevant British and European Standards
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulation 2022
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

This list is not exhaustive, and policy authors will undertake thorough research and/or seek professional advice to ensure the Group meets its obligations and complies with the current and relevant legislation and regulations.

Related policies

- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Heating Safety Policy

Part 6

Appendices

A. Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Legislation	The legal requirements that must be followed.
Policy	A statement of intent describing our approach towards a particular activity or area – usually comprising a set of rules or standards that must be followed.
Policy Development Plan (PDP)	The document used to support planning policy development and review.
Procedure	An agreed way of doing things that describes how a policy will be implemented. The specific steps and/or actions that must be taken to put policy into practice and ensure a consistent service.
Regulation	The rules or standards set by a governing body such as the Housing Ombudsman, Regulator of Social Housing and Financial Conduct Authority.

B. Associated documents

The following documents are associated with this policy:

- PM002 Fire Risk Assessment Process Map
- PM002-001 Process Map Control
- PM002-002 Protocol
- PM002-003 UH Stock Control
- PM002-004 FRA Schedule
- PM002-005 Lone working register
- PM002-007 Glasscubes
- Policy Approval Control
- Policy Development Plan