



Fire Safety Policy (Housing)

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Contents

1	Accessibility of Document	3
2	Introduction.....	3
3	What is the goal of the policy?.....	4
3	Legislation.....	4
4	Supporting Policies or Procedures	5
5	EDI Statement	5
6	Policy Statement	5
7	Which of the six goals in the Corporate Plan does the policy fall under?.....	6
8	What context about the policy does the customer need to know?	6
9	Roles and Responsibilities	6
9.1	<i>Specialised officers</i>	7
9.2	<i>Officers that need to monitor/review</i>	7
9.3	<i>Statutory officers</i>	7
10	Compliance.....	7
10.1	<i>Building Regulations and Equipment</i>	7
10.2	<i>Risk Assessments</i>	8
10.3	<i>Gas and Electricity Safety</i>	8
10.4	<i>Communal Areas and Lofts</i>	9
10.5	<i>Fire and Carbon Monoxide detection in dwellings</i>	10
10.6	<i>Staff Training</i>	10
10.7	<i>Liaison with Fire Services</i>	10

1 Accessibility of Document

Our aim is to make our services easy to use and accessible for everyone.

We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed for you to contact us, access our policies, or any requests to provide responses in other formats.

Depending on the individual's needs, these might include:

- Using larger print, or a specific colour contrast
- Giving more time than usual to provide information or comments on a complaint
- Using the telephone rather than written communication
- Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate
- Arranging a single point of contact
- Having an 'easy read' version of the document

If you would like to contact us about reasonable adjustments or alternative formats, please email edi@dacorum.gov.uk or call us on **01442 228000**

If you prefer to write to us, send your letter to:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team
Dacorum Borough Council, The Forum,
Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN

You can find information on Advocacy support here:

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/contact-us/advocacy-support>

2 Introduction

As a landlord, Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) sees the health and safety of people living, working in or visiting our properties as a priority.

Under the Housing Act 2004, Building Safety Act and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we have a responsibility to ensure certain safety standards are met and adhered to. This policy will outline our approach to managing fire safety in properties which are owned and managed by DBC's Housing Service.

DBC, as the Accountable Person for its housing stock, has appointed a Principal Accountable Person to provide focused and effective leadership in managing fire and structural safety risks across its high-rise residential buildings. The Principal Accountable Person plays a central role in ensuring compliance with legal duties, coordinating with accountable persons, and continuously improving building safety measures.

The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.

3 **What is the goal of the policy?**

The goal of this policy is to;

- Ensure the safety of all people living, working in or visiting properties owned by the housing service;
- Ensure alignment and adherence to current legislation and government policy on fire safety; and provide an overview of our approach to ensuring fire safety within our properties

3 **Legislation**

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 1985
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Building Regulations 2000 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 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (Consumer Standards)
- RSH Tenant Satisfaction Measures

4 Supporting Policies or Procedures

Procedures / Guidance / Impact Assessments	Dependent policies / strategies
DBC Tenancy Agreement	Delivering for Dacorum - Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025
DBC Tenants Handbook	Safety in Communal Areas Policy
	Gas Safety Policy
	Solid Fuel Policy
	Electrical Safety Policy
	Alterations & Improvement Policy
	Mobility Scooter Policy
	Building Safety Policy

The safety of residents living in our blocks of flats is important to us. We ensure that up to date fire safety guidance, which is tailored to the type of block residents live in, is readily available. These provide advice on how to act in the event of a fire if you live in:

- [A block of flats with a lift;](#)
- [A block of flats without a lift;](#)
- [A supported housing scheme;](#) or
- [A temporary accommodation property.](#)

Further information on Fire Safety in a purpose built block of flats can be found here - [Fire Safety in Blocks of Flats](#).

5 EDI Statement

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. The Council has procedures in place to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

6 Policy Statement

We ensure that all required properties undergo regular fire risk assessments, and our Safe Homes Team promptly addresses any identified issues raised during these assessments.

We have established comprehensive safety cases for our High Rise High Risk Buildings (HRRB). These safety cases aim to identify potential safety risks within the buildings and articulate the strategies in place to effectively manage and mitigate these risks. More information can be found within the building safety policy - [Building Safety Policy 2024](#).

To address fire safety in Council properties we will:

- Enforce a 'zero tolerance' approach in order to ensure fire safety in communal areas
- Carry out a phased programme of updates to fire detection equipment in our properties
- Ensure that staff are trained to the appropriate level to ensure competency in their role
- Provide guidance for tenants and leaseholders on all aspects of fire safety
- Liaise regularly with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure fire safety concerns are addressed effectively

7 Which of the six goals in the Corporate Plan does the policy fall under?

This policy supports the Council's corporate priorities which are set out in - 'Delivering for Dacorum - Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025':

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.

8 What context about the policy does the customer need to know?

Guidance regarding fire safety in the home is offered to tenants when they sign up to their new tenancy. This guidance is available on our [website](#). There is additional Government resource available [here](#).

There are also a number of [fire safety guidance](#) documents available on central government's website, covering numerous aspects of fire safety, including some specific guidance for vulnerable groups.

Fire safety concerns can be reported as a repair [online](#) or by phone **0800 018 6050**.

A repair reported that is considered to be causing a health and safety risk will be treated as an emergency and attendance will be within four hours of it being reported.

If a tenant or leaseholder is planning on carrying out an alteration or improvement to their home, they must [request permission](#) for this. This allows us to ensure that any work is being carried out appropriately and is keeping the health and safety of residents, neighbours and any visitors to the home in mind.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

Operational responsibility for DBC's Housing Service adherence to this fire safety policy lies with the Assistant Director for Property. Overall accountability lies with the Chief Executive of Dacorum Borough Council.

Responsibility for carrying out the programme of fire risk assessments and maintaining up to date records of this falls to the Compliance Lead Officer. The Head of Safe Homes oversees and holds accountability for this.

All employees of DBC have a responsibility to, where safe and possible to do so, reduce, remove and/or report hazards that present a risk of fire occurring.

9.1 Specialised officers

Ricky Lang – Head of Safe Homes

Toby Gilden – Safe Homes Manager

Ian Ellemore – Compliance Lead Officer – Fire Safety

9.2 Officers that need to monitor/review

Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director Property

Ricky Lang – Head of Safe Homes

9.3 Statutory officers

Darren Welsh – Strategic Director, Housing and Property Services

10 Compliance

10.1 Building Regulations and Equipment

We ensure that our properties are safe for anyone living, visiting or working in them. We will ensure that, to the extent appropriate, premises are equipped with fire detectors, alarms and sufficient firefighting equipment. Any equipment provided will be easily accessible, simple to use and indicated by clear signs. All equipment will undergo effective maintenance and remain in good condition to guarantee efficient operation. Servicing will adhere to regulatory requirements at a minimum.

In our residential buildings with storeys over 11 metres in height, we will undertake annual checks of flat entrance doors and quarterly checks of all fire doors in common parts.

A fire door plays a crucial role in managing the spread of fire and smoke within buildings, ensuring occupants can either stay in place or evacuate as directed. Additionally, it facilitates the fire service's access to combat the fire. Consequently, the proper functionality of fire doors and fire-resistant glazed panels is of utmost importance.

10.2 Risk Assessments

We ensure effective planning, control and monitoring of preventative and protective measures to address fire risk in DBC owned and managed properties. All communal blocks will receive an updated fire risk assessment as follows:

Priority Category 1 (E.g. high rise blocks of flats and large supported schemes)	Annually
Priority Category 2 (E.g. medium rise blocks of flats and dispersed supported schemes)	Once every 2 years (to fall in line with best practice)
Priority Category 3 (E.g. low rise blocks of flats)	Once every 5 years
Priority Category 4 (E.g. blocks of flats without internal communal areas)	As required (low risk)

The fire risk assessment will be reviewed earlier in the event of:

- An incident or 'near miss'; or
- Any works or new processes which impact the means of escape or alarm system.

We will ensure that once the assessment has been carried out or reviewed, the following information will be recorded:

- Significant findings of assessment or review;
- Measures which have been or will be taken to remove or reduce the risk from fire; and
- Any group of persons identified by the assessment as being specifically at risk.

This will be done as soon as is practicable after the assessment has been carried out.

Our buildings, where required, feature secure information boxes on site. These boxes contain important information for the fire service and are regularly updated, for example when there is a change in circumstances or occupancy.

To ensure the effective management of fire risks, we entrust the task of carrying out our Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) to competent, experienced, and qualified professionals.

10.3 Gas and Electricity Safety

DBC has a legal requirement to ensure that all properties we own with gas installations and appliances comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. We carry out annual servicing checks to all properties with gas installations and appliances.

As a landlord, we are legally obliged to check any gas installations and service appliances which fall under our responsibility on an annual basis. Tenants are required to meet their tenancy agreement by allowing us access to their home in order for these checks to be carried out.

We ensure that tenants have access to [information and guidance](#) around gas safety and what they should do if they suspect a gas leak. All relevant staff are encouraged to develop and promote safe working practices and attitudes towards gas safety. Leaseholders are responsible for making sure their own boiler and gas appliances are safe.

Whenever a property becomes vacant, we ensure that it has received an up-to-date electrical safety certificate before it is re-let. Wherever possible, all redundant wiring will also be safely removed. Any electrical installations in communal areas are inspected and tested on a 5-yearly basis. In line with the Electrical Safety Council's most recent guidance, we will also ensure that a qualified electrician carries out periodic inspections and electrical tests to domestic properties at least every 5 years.

10.4 Communal Areas and Lofts

A number of our properties come with shared use of communal areas. These may include:

- Entrance and communal landings;
- Lounges (in supported housing schemes);
- Stairways and balconies;
- Shared gardens and access paths.

We take a "zero tolerance" position when it comes to maintaining safety in internal communal areas; more information can be found within the Safety in Communal Areas Policy. We bear the responsibility of ensuring these spaces are secure and free of obstructions allowing residents to swiftly and safely evacuate during emergencies. Upholding this commitment requires our residents to keep communal areas entirely free of personal belongings or waste at all times.

Residents cannot store or charge any electrical appliance or vehicle (including mobility scooters and e-scooters) within communal areas or within 4 metres of the building

Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted in any internal communal areas, or within 10 metres of any doors or windows. Tenants and leaseholders must not use items to prop open communal fire doors.

Loft spaces within blocks of flats are not to be used for the storage of possessions. These should not be accessed by residents unless they have requested access and written permission has been given by the Housing Service. Entering any loft or roof space or storing things here may cause damage to the insulation, cause a fire risk or pose a hazard to staff carrying out repairs and maintenance in these areas.

10.5 Fire and Carbon Monoxide detection in dwellings

We understand that effective fire detection equipment is crucial to ensuring quick and safe escape from a property in the event of a fire. The following information describes the standards we meet in terms of fire detection equipment on properties owned and managed by DBC.

Houses and flats

- Every property will have fire detection installed to a minimum LD3 standard
- Properties will be upgraded to LD2 standard when they become empty or a rewire is required
- Every property will receive an upgrade to LD2 standard on a rolling planned improvement programme
- Every qualifying property is equipped with a Carbon Monoxide detector
- Every property undergoes annual testing conducted by our team of certified Gas Engineers.

Flats in high rise blocks and supported housing schemes

- All properties will be upgraded, at minimum, to an LD2 fire detection system (phased programme).

LD3 refers to smoke detection covering escape routes e.g. hallways and landings. LD2 refers to smoke detection covering escape routes and high risk areas e.g. hallways, landings, living room and kitchen.

Tenants must not tamper with or remove any fire or Carbon Monoxide detection equipment in their homes (e.g. smoke detectors, sprinklers etc.) and should carry out regular tests to ensure they are working. If you would like to know when your property is due for an upgrade on the planned improvement programme please email compliance@dacorum.gov.uk

10.6 Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training that is appropriate to their role, delivered by a competent person to a suitable and appropriate standard. This ensures that necessary tasks can be undertaken effectively and proficiently.

10.7 Liaison with Fire Services

As a local authority, we work closely and meet regularly with a number of public services e.g. the police and fire services as part of the Dacorum Community Safety Partnership. This is where local issues can be discussed and addressed, including fire-related crime.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service also offer free [‘safe and well’ visits](#) to your home, where they will check existing smoke detectors are correctly sited and working, as well as offer advice and guidance on all aspects of fire safety.