



**GOSPORT**  
Borough Council

Property and Housing

## **Fire Safety Policy**

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<b>Version</b>	<b>Approved date</b>	<b>Reason for Issue</b>
1.0	23 June 2021	Initial consolidation and rewrite of Property Services policies
2.0	05 October 2023	Amend 4.3 Fire Risk Assessment paragraph 7

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## 1. Purpose and scope

This policy is approved as part of the consolidation and rewrite of all Gosport Borough Council Housing Property Services policy documents.

The policy applies to the repairs and maintenance service provided to the council's tenants and leaseholders. It defines rules to be applied, but stops short of giving detailed procedural guidance as this may change.

In addition, reference should be made to the relevant tenancy agreement or lease document.

## 2. Document context

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The relevant policy guideline document that outlines further detail when implementing a policy.
- The Asset Management Strategy that sets out a framework for the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties to make future decisions about its assets over the next 30 years.
- Where relevant there are links to legislation related to the policies as necessary, however be aware that some changes to the legislation published may be outstanding and legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

### 3. Arbitration and escalation

Front-line staff requiring help interpreting and implementing the policy should seek advice from their line manager in the first instance.

Where a decision requires arbitration or further escalation the following table outlines the escalation pathway.

Escalation	Job Title
First	Senior Surveyor
Second	Property Services Manager
Third	Head of Building Maintenance – PCC as part of shared management arrangement

In addition, a tenant or leaseholder can make a formal complaint using the council's complaints policy. In the first instance, they should contact the person or section dealing with their problem and ask to register a complaint.

## 4. Fire safety

### 4.1. Purpose

This policy outlines the council's approach to the management of fire safety and its obligations with regard to the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#), [Housing Act 2004](#), [Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) and their successors.

### 4.2. Scope

The policy covers all council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings including sheltered schemes, hostels, and the common parts of blocks of flats. It also includes all other HRA assets as appropriate, such as The Town Hall.

### 4.3. Fire risk assessment

The council will undertake Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) to all relevant properties under the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 implementing appropriate fire measures to all blocks of flats to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life in the event of a fire

For the purpose of FRA's the Responsible Person will be the Property Services Manager.

A Type 1 non-destructive survey to the common parts of blocks of flats including external structures using the PAS79-2:2020 Code of Practice for all FRA's undertaken.

A new FRA assessment will be undertaken every 9 years or when a planned maintenance evaluation is undertaken.

A review of an FRA will be undertaken whenever a significant change has occurred to a block of flats or asset, but will not exceed 3 years from the original FRA. A more frequent review will be carried out if deemed appropriate by the surveyor undertaking the original FRA.

No more than two reviews will be undertaken of an original FRA before undertaking a new FRA.

FRA's for higher risk assets such as sheltered blocks, hostels, or commercial properties, will be undertaken annually by appropriately experienced third party registered fire risk assessors.

FRA's for lower risk assets such as blocks of flats that are five storeys and below, will be undertaken by in-house building surveyors who have completed appropriate training to demonstrate their competence.

Those residents living in sheltered, supported or general needs housing that have been identified as being at higher risk of fire in their own accommodation, will have a person-centred fire risk assessment undertaken.

#### 4.4. Stay put policy

If a fire starts within a resident's flat, the occupants should alert others within the flat, make their way out of the building and contact the fire and rescue service.

If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas should make their way out of the building and contact the fire and rescue service.

All other residents within a block of flats not directly affected by the fire are expected to 'stay put' and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.

#### 4.5. Means of escape routes

Fire separation and compartmentalisation between the common parts and individual properties will be maintained and actions undertaken as appropriate.

Where property entrance doors open directly onto a single communal escape route then a minimum of a 'notional fire door' \* should be installed for low-rise blocks (up to two storeys). An 'upgraded fire door' + should be installed for medium rise blocks (three to five storeys)

In all circumstances a minimum 800mm walkway must be maintained at all times or the width defined in Part B of the fire safety building regulations, whichever is greater.

Mobility scooters should not be stored or charged in the internal communal area unless an area has already been specifically designed and set aside for this purpose. Any residents storing mobility scooters in the internal communal areas will be dealt with in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement, which states all communal areas must be kept free from obstructions

Emergency lighting will be installed to all means of escape routes as appropriate and will be regularly tested. A standard test will be undertaken monthly and a discharge test will be undertaken annually.

Decorated surfaces will be to class 'O' standard to prevent the spread of flame.

\*Notional fire doors' are doors that may have been in place for many years and met earlier standards of manufacture and legislation. However, this does not mean that they are not fit for purpose, providing they are still in good condition.

+ Upgraded doors are existing doors that have been upgraded and defined as a solid core door that has had intumescent fire and smoke seals fitted and a protected letterbox

#### 4.6. Firefighting Equipment

Fire extinguishers will be located as necessary to only assist building staff or contractors to exit a building and use an escape route; they will only be used by those that have received appropriate training. Fire extinguishers will be checked monthly and serviced annually



#### 4.7. Smoke detectors

All council dwellings, including those of leaseholders, will be fitted with at least one mains operated smoke detector with a battery back-up on each dwelling floor level as appropriate, which will be replaced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions by the expiry date. If on inspection, the smoke detector is within one year of the manufacturer's expiry date it will be replaced.

We will regularly test smoke detectors installed within our council dwellings. However, leaseholders will be responsible for testing smoke detectors within their own dwelling.

#### 4.8. Management of Communal Areas

In communal areas where the common walkways or stairwells form the means of escape routes and are enclosed, or the block is a hostel, a 'zero tolerance' approach will be enforced with regard to resident's possessions to ensure that the common parts are 'sterile' and free of combustible material, ignition sources and obstructions

The management of communal areas and residents possessions within the common parts of block of flats will be a 'managed use' approach where common walkways are external.

The 'managed use' permits residents to have the following items within the common areas providing they do not cause obstruction to the means of escape

- place pot plants and door mats outside their front doors
- have framed pictures and notice boards on walls
- store bicycles, and prams in places that are out of the way
- Small non-combustible (e.g. Ceramic) ornaments

The management of communal areas and residents possessions within the common parts of the block of flats that are sheltered blocks will be a 'managed use' approach.

The 'managed use' permits residents to have the following items within the common areas providing they do not cause obstruction to the means of escape and have been approved by the Scheme Manager

- place pot plants and door mats outside their front doors
- have framed pictures and notice boards on walls
- Small non-combustible (e.g. Ceramic) ornaments
- basic furniture and not upholstered seating

If a fire risk assessment or other block inspection identifies that the 'managed use' is not appropriate due to other risk factors such as assessment of the building fire escape routes and fire protection, anti-social behaviour, fire incidents or the approach not being adhered to appropriately by residents, then a decision will be made on whether any specific block of flats should have a 'zero tolerance' approach enforced.

This decision will be made jointly by the Head of Housing and the Property Services Manager.

#### 4.9. Private Balconies

The use of any barbeques, fire pits or patio heaters on any private balcony is prohibited. Any items stored or fixed to the private balcony must be non-combustible.

#### 4.10. Fire Safety Information

Fire Safety Log books will be located in any buildings where staff are located in offices, to assist site management teams so that they can record fire safety training, maintenance inspections and fire incidents. The log books will be retained on site for three years.

Premises Information boxes providing information regarding the building, active fire protection systems and vulnerable residents, will be accessible to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service when attending a fire incident in all sheltered schemes and Hostels.