

1. Background and objectives

- 1.1. Alliance Homes must establish a policy which meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and the Fire Safety Act 2021. In addition to this, the policy must provide assurance to Alliance Homes that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with fire.
- 1.2. Alliance Homes must also ensure that compliance with fire safety legislation is formally reported at Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Board level, including the details of any non-compliance, and planned corrective actions.
- 1.3. This policy is relevant to all Alliance Homes colleagues, customers, contractors and other persons or other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services.
- 1.4. It should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon Alliance Homes to maintain a safe environment for customers and employees within the homes of each customer, and within all communal areas of buildings and 'other' properties owned and managed by Alliance Homes.
- 1.5. The application of this policy will ensure compliance with the regulatory framework and the Safety and Quality Standard for social housing in England, which was introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in April 2024.
- 1.6. The principal legislation and regulation applicable to this policy are;
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO)
 - The Fire Safety Act 2021.
 - The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - The Building Safety Act 2022

These regulations place a duty on Alliance Homes to take general fire precaution measures to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on their premises and in the immediate vicinity. Alliance Homes is the 'responsible person' for the purposes of the legislation by virtue of the fact that they own and manage homes and buildings housing tenants/leaseholders through the tenancy agreement and lease obligations.

2. Policy detail

2.1 Obligations

2.1.1 Alliance Homes acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities in accordance with the regulatory standards, legislation and approved codes of practice. Alliance Homes acknowledges that failure to discharge these responsibilities properly could lead to a range of sanctions including prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive. The responsible person (Alliance Homes) must carry out a fire risk assessment (FRA) for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions and other measures needed to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

2.1.2 As the responsible person, Alliance Homes must

- implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other measures identified by a fire risk assessment.
- put in place a suitable system of maintenance and appoint competent persons to implement any procedures that have been adopted.
- periodically review fire risk assessments in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale is determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the fire risk assessment.

2.1.3 Alliance Homes has a Fire Risk Assessment Policy – approved by Board February 2024 which should be considered in conjunction with this Policy.

2.2 Obligations for High Rise Residential Buildings

2.2.1 The Government has introduced regulations under article 24 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These regulations make it a requirement in law for Alliance Homes to provide information to Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response to high-rise blocks of flats.

2.2.2 The regulations require Alliance Homes to provide additional safety measures in multi-occupied residential buildings which are high-rise buildings as defined in the Regulations as a building at least 18 metres in height or at least seven storeys, as well as those above 11 metres in height.

2.2.3 In all multi-occupied residential buildings, the regulations require Alliance Homes to provide residents with fire safety instructions and information on the importance of fire doors. The regulations apply to existing buildings, requirements for new buildings may be different.

2.2.4 For buildings over 11m in height Alliance Homes will conduct quarterly checks of all fire doors in the common parts, and annual checks of flat front doors. Alliance acknowledges that checks of flat front doors may be hampered by access issues, which will be addressed on a best endeavours basis.

2.2.5 General fire precautions for residential buildings below 11 metres in height, includes the duty to make sure that all fire doors, including flat entrance doors, are capable of providing adequate protection.

2.2.6 For residential building of more than 18m in height Alliance Homes will.

- Provide the local Fire and Rescue Service with up-to-date electronic building floor plans and to place a hard copy of these plans, alongside a single page building plan which identifies key firefighting equipment, in a secure information box on site.
- Provide the local Fire and Rescue Service information about the design and materials of a high-rise building's external wall system and to inform the Fire and Rescue Service of any material changes to these walls.
- Provide information in relation to the level of risk that the design and materials of the external wall structure gives rise to and any mitigating steps taken.
- Undertake monthly checks on the operation of lifts intended for use by firefighters, and evacuation lifts in their building and check the functionality of other key pieces of firefighting equipment such as dry and wet risers. Alliance Homes will report any defective lifts or equipment to their local Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible after detection if the fault cannot be fixed within 24 hours, and to record the outcome of checks and make them available to residents.
- Install and maintain a secure information box in their building. This box must contain the name and contact details of the Responsible Person (Fire Safety Manager) and hard copies of the building floor plans.
- Install signage visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.

2.3 Statement of Intent

2.3.1 Alliance Homes will hold accurate records against each property it owns or manages setting out the requirements for servicing, maintenance and repair of fire prevention, detection, and fire-fighting equipment. These include:-

- fire alarm systems,
- emergency lighting,
- smoke/heat detectors,
- hose reels,
- dry and wet risers,
- automatic window/door openers,
- fire extinguishers,
- fire blankets,
- sprinkler systems and
- any other equipment relating to fire safety.

- 2.3.2 Alliance Homes will establish and manage programmes to deliver servicing and maintenance in accordance with all relevant British Standards and manufacturer's recommendations for all fire detection, prevention and fire-fighting systems and equipment within buildings owned or managed by the organisation.
- 2.3.3 Alliance Homes will periodically undertake an asset data review to ensure adequate assurance is provided that fire safety data held against the organisations' property assets is accurate and up to date.
- 2.3.4 Alliance Homes will ensure that robust processes are in place to record and action any 'near misses' reports regarding fire safety. A 'near misses' is an unplanned event which does not result in an injury but had the potential to do so.
- 2.3.5 When a "Fire related incident" has occurred in one of our properties, a meeting is to be convened as soon as is practicable with relevant parties from across Alliance Homes to establish the circumstance of the fire and in addition to ensuring the immediate health safety and welfare of the customer, to take any learning opportunities for us to improve systems and or policies and processes with regard to fire safety.
- 2.3.6 Alliance Homes will ensure that each property requiring a fire risk assessment has a fire risk assessment in place that is PAS79 compliant (Publicly Available Specification) from the British Standards Institute (BSI) and that has been carried out by a competent fire risk assessor.
- 2.3.7 Alliance Homes will test all hard-wired smoke alarms and CO alarms in domestic dwellings on an annual basis (or at empty home stage) and replace any broken alarms as required.
- 2.3.8 Alliance Homes will ensure that, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be completed and reviewed annually by a competent person. where required, for all disabled residents and/or employees within buildings requiring a fire risk assessment.
- 2.3.9 Although our properties have a 'stay put' strategy in the event of a fire, Alliance Homes is required to ensure that all the means of escape and the route to a place of relative safety be clearly identified. This route needs to be clearly indicated with various fire exit and directional signage.
- 2.3.10 Our customers are not trained in the use of fire extinguishers. To prevent exposing our customers to unnecessary risk they have largely been removed in line with guidance from our Fire Risk assessor and Avon Fire and Rescue Service. It will only be in our specialist accommodation where the paid staff caring for residents, and our commercial properties where fire extinguishers will remain. Fire blankets are provided in communal kitchen in a block or within our specialist and commercial blocks. Where fire extinguishers and fire blankets are required, there is a programme of service and maintenance.

- 2.3.11 Alliance Homes considers effective communication is essential in the safe delivery of fire safety and will therefore ensure that information about fire safety and fire prevention measures is available to customers and building users via appropriate channels (e.g., hard copy, website, etc.).
- 2.3.12 Alliance Homes is committed to working with relevant Fire Services to create safer places to live and work. Joint working may include sharing information, the fire service reviewing risk assessments and providing training to Alliance colleagues.
- 2.3.13 Alliance Homes will carry out fire drills in its (utilised) offices on an annual basis.
- 2.3.14 Alliance Homes will have in place a system for recording, monitoring and actioning all fire remedial actions arising from fire risk assessments, other observations, or works.

2.4 Communal Area Managed Approach

- 2.4.1 A “managed use approach” has been adopted for customers to use communal areas providing ‘use’ is within defined boundaries and is proportionate to the risk associated with fire. (Alliance Homes recognises that the safest approach is zero tolerance but for reasons of balance, practicality and cost, a managed use approach will be implemented.) Items which are combustible and/or could be a hazard to anyone escaping a fire or a hazard to the emergency services when responding to a fire will not be permitted to be kept or stored in the communal areas.
- 2.4.2 Alliance Homes will make it clear that no customer has a right to store anything in a communal area, other than those noted in 2.4.4 below. Alliance Homes will however consider requests to allow other items, such as buggies, prams and bicycles, to be stored in the communal area.
- 2.4.3 Prams, buggies and push bikes should be kept in a storage shed, pram store, the home or garage. If these storage options are not available, they may be stored under communal staircases, providing the staircase or alcove is made of a non-combustible material, such as concrete, and items are stored in a way that prevents them falling over and no part of the stored item protrudes into the communal area. Such storage should be reviewed on an individual basis and permission granted by the Fire Safety Manager. Where it is allowed, a sign should be displayed, informing tenants that the area will be cleared if items protrude into the fire escape.
- 2.4.4 Personalising communal areas by adorning them with door mats, plants and framed pictures, makes communal areas less bland, from a customer perspective by giving a

more homely feel. Pictures are permitted provided they are mounted in a non-combustible picture frame, and have a glass front, and are securely fixed to a wall.

A small plant in a ceramic pot is permitted in the direct vicinity of the customer front door and/or on a windowsill if no obstruction is caused to passers-by.

Door mats will be acceptable so long as they are:

- Specifically intended to be a door mat
- With a non-slip backing material (rubber)
- In a good condition and free from curling edges
- Located directly outside a front door
- Not oversized (max width of the door)
- Not located at the top of stairs (tripping hazard)

2.4.5 Items that are not permitted in communal areas are;

- Customer furniture will not be acceptable under any circumstances, including chairs, tables, cupboards, screens etc.
- Soft furnishings or any type of combustible material (including festive decorations), even if treated with fire retardant. They will release toxic smoke if involved in a fire.
- Artificial plants must not be placed in shared areas, for the same reason as above.
- Storage of rubbish, electric mobility scooters, plastic containers, vegetable racks, tenant shoes or other articles in communal areas.
- Recycling receptacles, rubbish bins etc are not permitted.
- Nothing should be suspended or hung from communal walls ceilings, handrails or handrail infill boards; this includes laundry drying lines, bicycles or plant containers.
- Any vehicle parts, including fuels, must kept in the customers' homes/allocated shed and not be stored in any communal corridors or stairwells. Rugs, runners and carpet tiles are not acceptable.
- Any other object or item that obstructs or creates trip hazards in any walkway, stair or corridor is not acceptable. Any other object or item that presents a significant fire hazard or additional fire loading is not acceptable.
- Mobility scooters have been identified as a potential fire hazard when stored in communal areas and/or escape routes. Alliance Homes therefore has a duty to ensure that mobility scooters for customers of flats are being stored safely. Electric mobility scooters must be stored internally in the flat or outside in a shed or purpose storage container away from any entrance or exit to the property No Mobility Scooter can be stored or charged in an internal communal area unless an area has already been specifically designed and set aside for this purpose. Where designated internal areas have been provided or permission granted to store within a communal area, customers must comply with any Health and Safety conditions in place. Charging should be undertaken

inside a customer's home and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Under no circumstances may mobility scooters be charged on a communal landing.

2.4.6 It is in everyone's interest to be safe from fire. If storage standards become unacceptable it is usually a result of misunderstanding. For this reason, Alliance Homes will approach individual customers when the owners can be identified, so that a solution can be reached quickly, and items relocated.

2.5 Competence

2.5.1 Alliance Homes will ensure that the Fire Safety Manager, who has lead responsibility for operational delivery, holds the NEBOSH (National Examination Board of Occupational Safety and Health) National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management (or an equivalent qualification). If not held on appointment, it will be attained within 12 months of appointment.

2.5.2 Alliance Homes will ensure that only suitably competent fire risk assessors, certified by BAFE and on a UKAS accredited certification scheme that meets the competency criteria established by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council, are procured and appointed to undertake future fire risk assessments.

2.5.3 The operational team with lead responsibility for delivery will check the relevant accreditations for the work that they are carrying out. These checks will be undertaken as part of the procurement process and/or on an annual basis thereafter, and evidenced appropriately.

2.5.4 Alliance Homes will ensure that only suitably competent contractors and engineers (including Alliance Homes in-house colleagues), certified by a UKAS accredited certification scheme, are procured and appointed (or utilised) to undertake works to fire safety equipment, systems and installations. The operational team with responsibility for delivery will check the relevant accreditations for the work they are carrying out. These checks will be undertaken as part of the procurement process and/or on an annual basis, and evidenced appropriately.

2.6 Training

2.6.1 This policy and the procedures that support it will be subject to a range of training across Alliance Homes and will involve all relevant stakeholders. The training will be tailored to the individual stakeholders and refresher training will be provided as appropriate.

- 2.6.2 Training will include team briefings for those colleagues who need to have a basic understanding and awareness of fire safety, but who may not be actively involved in the delivery of this policy. This will be basic fire safety awareness training.
- 2.6.3 On the job training will be provided to those colleagues who will be responsible, as part of their role, for implementing the Fire Safety Policy, FRA reviews and programmes of servicing and maintenance to fire safety equipment, systems and installations
- 2.6.4 Relevant training will be provided to all colleagues with specific duties regarding fire safety.
- 2.6.5 Regular fire safety toolbox talks will be given to operational maintenance colleagues. Alliance contractor partners will be required to do this for their employees and provide evidence that it has been done.

3. Monitoring, consultation, and review

3.1 Record Keeping

- 3.1.1 Alliance Homes will establish and maintain a core asset register of the communal blocks and 'other' properties that require a fire risk assessment in an appropriate system. This register should also identify all fire safety equipment, systems and installations within each block.
- 3.1.2 Alliance Homes will establish and maintain accurate records of all completed fire risk assessments, fire reviews and associated remedial works from these reports and keep these records for at least 10 years.
- 3.1.3 Alliance homes will establish and maintain accurate records of all completed servicing and maintenance checks on fire safety equipment, systems and installations and details of associated completed remedial works and keep these for at least 5 years.
- 3.1.4 Alliance homes will establish and maintain records of all fire safety related training undertaken by colleagues.

3.2 Responsibility

- 3.2.1 Alliance Homes Board will have overall responsibility for ensuring the Fire Safety Policy is fully implemented to ensure compliance with regulatory standards, legislation and approved codes of practice.

3.2.2 The Group Chief Executive has strategic responsibility for the management of fire safety and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained

3.2.3 The Service Director – Property Operations is responsible for the implementation of this policy

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Board will receive regular updates on the implementation of this policy and fire safety performance along with notification of any non-compliance issues which is identified.

3.3.2 The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) will receive reports (from relevant forums) in respect of fire safety management performance and ensure compliance is being achieved. They will also be notified of any non-compliance issue identified.

3.3.3 Robust Key Performance Indicator (KPI) measures will be established and maintained to ensure Alliance is able to report on performance in relation to fire safety.

3.3.4 KPI measures will be produced and presented to relevant forums on a monthly basis and Board level on a quarterly basis. As a minimum these KPI measures will include reporting on;

- The property type relevant to the programme being reported (i.e., dwelling, block)
- Number of properties on the FRA programme
- Number of properties not on the FRA programme
- Properties that are 'in date' with the specific requirements of the FRA programme expressed as a number and percentage
- A narrative explanation of the current position, any required corrective action, any impact of corrective actions, plan to achieve full compliance
- Any enforcement actions or notices pertaining to fire safety

3.3.5 Alliance homes will carry out an independent audit of fire safety at least once every 2 years. This audit will specifically test for compliance with all relevant regulation, legislation and codes of practice to identify non-compliance and areas for improvement.

3.3.6 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Service Director – Property Services, in the first instance.

3.3.7 The Service Director – Property Services will agree an appropriate course of corrective action and report details to SLT.

3.3.8 The Director of Business Services and the relevant oversight forums will provide 'independent' oversight of the programmes delivered by the Home Repairs Service.

3.3.9 SLT will ensure the Board is made aware of any non-compliance issue so they can consider the implications and take action as appropriate.

3.3.10 In cases of a serious non-compliance issue, SLT and Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing in the spirit of co-regulation as part of the Regulatory Framework.

3.4 This policy will be reviewed within 3 years of its approval date.

4. Equality and diversity

4.1 This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

4.2 The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy regarding the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Single Equality Scheme. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.

4.3 The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.

4.4 This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

5. Complaints (remove if not external)

5.1 If you would like to raise a complaint in relation to this policy, you can do this by calling us on **03000 120 120** or emailing us at **act@alliancehomes.org.uk**.

5.2 All complaints will be handled in line with the latest Alliance Homes Complaint Handling Policy.

6. Associated documents

6.1 Codes of Practice / Other Guidance

6.1.1 LACORS – Housing – Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing.

6.1.2 HHSRS Operating Guidance – Housing Act 2004: Guidance about inspections and assessment of hazards

6.1.3 Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities: Update on Interim Mitigation Measures Requiring Pending Remediation of Cladding (29.09.2017)

6.1.2 National Fire Chief Council's Guidance (NFCC) - Fire Safety in Specialist Housing – April 2017: Covers sheltered schemes, supported schemes and extra care schemes

6.1.3 Building a Safer Future - Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety – Final Report – May 2018: Hackitt review

6.2 Additional Legislation

6.1.4 Housing Act 2004

6.1.5 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

6.1.6 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

6.1.7 Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006

6.1.8 Licencing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006

6.1.9 Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

6.1.10 The Furniture and Furnishing (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988

6.1.11 The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996

6.1.12 The Building Regulations 2000: Approved Document B – Fire Safety

6.1.13 Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016

6.1.14 Smoke and Carbon monoxide Alarm Regulations 2022

6.1.15 Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015

6.1.16 Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

6.1.17 Data Protection Act 2018

6.1.18 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

6.1.19 The Dangerous Substance and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

7 Version control and approval dates

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	23/04/2025
EIA reviewed by Equality & Diversity Manager	24/04/2025
SLT review / approval	23/07/2025
Board approval	31/08/2025
Next review date	31/08/2027

8 Appendices

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be conducted alongside the review of an existing policy or the creation of a new one.

1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function (SPPF) being assessed and name of author.

Fire Safety Policy – Tim Kent

2. Aims of the SPPF being assessed.

- Whose need is it designed to meet?
- Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?

To define the organisations approach to fire safety

3. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?

- *Make reference or links to consultation/evidence documents*

The Fire Safety Manager and the Service Director – Property Services

4. Does the SPPF promote equality of opportunity?

The policy has limited impact on the protected characteristics as shown below (possible negative impact regarding disability) but it aims to ensure that the Alliance approach to fire safety is an equitable and fair one.

5. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups” by considering the following questions (the list is not exhaustive but an indication of the sort of questions assessors should think about):

- *Might some groups find it harder to access the service?*
- *Do some groups have particular needs that are not well met by the current SPPF?*
- *What evidence do you have for your judgement (e.g. monitoring data, information from consultation/research/feedback)?*
- *Have staff/residents raised concerns/complaints?*
- *Is there local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?*

Protected Characteristic	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Information source/s **	Comments/evidence
Race	X				
Disability		X			There could be a potential negative impact here if this policy is strictly applied when someone is dependant on a mobility scooter related to a disability. A

					reasonable adjustment may have to be considered.
Gender	X				
Transgender	X				
Sexual orientation	X				
Religion or belief	X				
Age	X				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	X				
Pregnancy and Maternity	X				
Rural issue	X				
Social mobility	X				

Was there a negative impact identified in question 5? If yes go to question 6. if not go to question 7.

6. If “negative impact” identified in table (4) above is it?

Legal -

What is the level of impact? -

YES	NO
HIGH	LOW

If it is not legal and/or high impact – (i.e.: if you have highlighted **NO** to legal and **HIGH** to impact, then the document should be referred to Head of HR)

7. If positive impact has been identified in table 4 above, how can it be improved upon or maximised, either in this SPPF or others?

N/A

8. Full EIA (or if you decide full EIA is not necessary but some changes should be considered)

- *Are there changes you could introduce which would make this SPPF work better for this group of people?*
- *Is further research or consultation required?*

9. Does this proposal have any potential Human Rights implications?

If yes, please describe (if necessary, please refer to the Alliance Homes Group Human Rights Policy)

No