

Fire Safety Policy

Purpose	This policy sets out the approach to fire safety in Eastlight Community Homes' Assets
Owner	Head of Assets
Related documents	Health and Safety Policy, Decant Policy
Approved by	Shadow Board
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Author	Head of Assets

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Eastlight Community Homes Limited (hereafter 'Eastlight') is committed to meeting our obligations as a landlord and ensuring that fire safety is adequately managed, ensuring the safety of our residents and those visiting our properties.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Eastlight's residents and visitors can use Eastlight's buildings and facilities safely. This extends to taking all reasonable steps to mitigate any foreseeable risks associated with fire in domestic properties.
- 1.3 This policy complies with all relevant legislative requirements.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all of Eastlight's assets.

3. POLICY DETAILS

- 3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005 applies to all premises where there are communal areas. The order only applies to the communal areas and excludes private dwellings and residents' accommodation. Residents within their individual accommodation will be protected by the level of structural fire precautions implemented during the construction of the building or subsequent work.

4. Responsible Person

- 4.1 The responsible person under this policy and the Fire Safety Order is the Head of Assets.

5. Stay Put Approach

- 5.1 Eastlight operates a 'stay put' approach across all blocks apart from 1-5 Manors, Silver End where an evacuation policy applies due to the historic nature of the building and its construction.
- 5.2 The stay put policy takes into account recent reflections across the sector and is consistent with both statute and current best practice for housing of the type owned and managed by Eastlight
- 5.3 Eastlight's fire signage is clear on the responsibilities of the residents with regards to the stay put policy with the general principles being:
 - 5.3.1 If the fire is in your flat, you should close the door to the room affected and leave the flat immediately, closing the main entrance door and alerting the fire brigade immediately.
 - 5.3.2 If the fire is in another part of the building, you should stay put. You should only leave your flat if it is directly affected by smoke or heat, or if directed to do so by the fire brigade.
- 5.5 Eastlight has an evacuation process in place at 1-5 Manors, Silver End and complete evacuation tests every six months. These tests are recommended by the fire risk assessment. The tests are recorded in the schemes Fire log book.

6. PREVENTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 In order to protect all persons from the hazards of fire, Eastlight will make the following arrangements:
- 6.1.1 Perform fire risk assessments on all applicable blocks managed by Eastlight.
 - 6.1.2 Implement appropriate measures to eliminate, reduce or control the risk of fire and the spread of fire as recommended by the fire risk assessments.
 - 6.1.3 Provide and maintain appropriate means of escape in the event of fire.
 - 6.1.4 Provide appropriate training to relevant employees in fire precautions, emergency procedures and actions in the event of fire.
 - 6.1.5 Provide appropriate guidance and advice to all employees, residents and contractors on how to prevent fires.
 - 6.1.6 Provide and maintain all fire equipment and systems.
 - 6.1.7 Provide and maintain appropriate fire signage.
 - 6.1.8 Liaise with appropriate enforcing authorities as necessary.
 - 6.1.9 Regularly communicate key fire safety messages to all residents and staff members.
- 6.2 All fires, no matter how small and even if extinguished, must be reported and registered with Eastlights insurance advisor.

7. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 This policy has been written to take account of all statutory requirements and guidance including but not limited to:
- The Housing Act 2004
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
 - Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996
 - The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
 - Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS) guidance document, Housing – Fire Safety
 - Local Government Group guidance document, Fire Safety in Purpose-built blocks of flats

8. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 8.1 A fire risk assessment is a method of identifying fire hazards and assessing the likelihood and potential safety of fires, so that appropriate general fire precautions can be implemented to reduce the risk of fires starting.
- 8.2 Fire risk assessments are undertaken by a competent person, as defined by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council (FRACC), to all buildings that require one under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 at the following frequencies:
- All blocks with the exception of Housing for Older People & commercial buildings – Every 5 years,

- Housing for Older People blocks and commercial buildings - Annually
- 8.3 Fire risk assessments will be reviewed when any of the following occur:
- A full block refurbishment
 - Structural changes are proposed
 - Change of use or layout
 - New plant, equipment, processes or procedures are introduced which involve fire hazards
 - It is proposed to store any flammable substances
- 8.4 Eastlight will review fire risks assessment actions actively across the financial year ensuring actions are completed within the timeframes highlighted by the assessment.
- 8.5 Completed fire risk assessments are held centrally on the asset management database.
- 8.6 Fire Risk Assessments will be made available to residents on request and broader lessons will be communicated to residents. Opportunities will be taken to raise awareness and capture resident feedback.

9. GENERAL FIRE RISKS

- 9.1 To prevent the outbreak of fires in general needs communal areas, Eastlight prohibits the storage of any items in communal areas, whether combustible or non-combustible. Escape routes are to be kept clear at all times across all blocks. Neighbourhood Co-ordinators complete block inspections to ensure that this is adhered to.
- 9.2 It is considered the residents' responsibility for the use/storage of any flammable liquids at their home and they do so at their own risk.
- 9.3 Under the Eastlight tenancy agreement, it is prohibited for residents to store flammable liquids which pose a fire and/or explosion risk in communal storage areas of blocks.
- 9.4 Smoking is prohibited in any internal communal areas of blocks managed by Eastlight, including Greenfields House and Stores. Smoking is permitted in individual resident's flats or external communal areas.
- 9.5 To limit the risk of arson, staff should be aware of strangers and challenge them politely, especially if they are in restricted and/or isolated areas.
- 9.6 Residents and visiting staff should ensure the block is kept secure and all communal main entrance doors are closed when entering and leaving the blocks.

10. FIRE SYSTEMS AND FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

- 10.1 Eastlight will provide appropriate fire equipment and systems in line with regulations, guidance and recommendations from the fire risk assessments.
- 10.2 All of the equipment and systems will be serviced by Eastlight and/or replaced in line with statutory requirements.
- 10.3 All fire equipment and systems must consider the capabilities of the existing and potential residents.

- 10.4 Firefighting equipment, where provided, is not for use by residents or staff members unless specifically trained.

11. FIRE RELATED SIGNAGE

- 11.1 Eastlight will ensure fire escapes routes, fire doors, fire alarm call points and, where appropriate, firefighting equipment are all clearly marked.
- 11.2 Eastlight will ensure that the action to be taken on discovering a fire or fire alarm sounding is prominently displayed on Fire Action Notices; these notices are to comply with the UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) best practice guidance for clear and large print.

12. ESCAPE ROUTES

- 12.1 All buildings will conform to the building regulations in force at the time of construction.
- 12.2 Buildings undergoing alterations will conform to the Approved Document B (Fire Safety) in order to achieve and maintain the fire compartment integrity for the required time period.
- 12.3 Any openings or apertures, to existing buildings, between fire compartments such as door openings or letter boxes shall be smoke sealed, designed and constructed to maintain fire compartment integrity.
- 12.4 All corridors and staircase enclosures, to existing buildings, that are designated as escape routes will be protected routes. These routes should be unobstructed and should only contain the minimum of furniture/curtains and drapes and these should conform to the relevant fire safety standards.

13. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- 13.1 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) are not used due to Housing for Older People being provided as independent living and not residential care.
- 13.2 Greenfields House and Stores procedures are documented in Eastlight's Health and Safety policy.
- 13.3 If residents are affected by a fire and the property is deemed non-habitable, suitable temporary accommodation will be provided. Please refer to Eastlight's Decant policy for further advice.
- 13.4 Residents who require oxygen cylinders for temporary/permanent health issues are required to make Eastlight aware which is then notified to the local fire service.
- 13.5 Block fire and servicing information is managed and kept at Greenfields House. Blocks with centralised fire detection systems also have Gerda boxes on site holding information for testing, servicing and fire logs which record any information that may be required by the fire brigade when on site.

14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 14.1 An equality analysis has been completed for this policy. A positive impact has been identified on older residents living in Housing for Older People schemes, all residents living in blocks and staff as this policy applies specifically to office

buildings, General Needs and Housing for Older People schemes. This is justified as this is statutory as these areas are designated to be the most at risk due to living in blocks.

14.2 People raising concerns will be treated in a fair manner free from discrimination on any grounds.

15. Review

15.1 The policy holder will review this policy every 12 months, or as legislation, current thinking or best practice change.