

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Assessment details	
Assessment area	Fire Safety Policy
Date of assessment	June 2024
Directorate and Service	Housing and Public Protection, Housing Services
Manager	Housing Maintenance Manager
Officer conducting assessment	Housing Policy & Performance Officer
Step 1: Scoping the assessment	
1. What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?	<p>The Fire Safety Policy sets out how the Council will manage fire safety risk in its buildings and communal areas, and aims to provide a clear and thorough process for undertaking fire risk assessments. The Policy also sets out the preventative measures that are in place, and what both the Council and residents can do to prevent the risk of fire. The Policy covers both general needs housing and sheltered housing.</p> <p>The key objectives of this Policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the process to ensure that fire risk assessments are completed for every property that meet the requirements of the regulations; • Maintain an up-to-date record of activity and findings from assessments, including any actions, repairs, changes or improvements; • Monitor the activity to ensure that any required actions are completed in a timely and appropriate manner; • Provide effective fire safety information, instruction, and training where appropriate; • Regularly consult and communicate with our residents and employees on fire safety matters; • Monitor and review our fire safety systems and prevention measures to ensure their effectiveness. <p>The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect our residents, visitors, guests, contractors and those near to our properties from the effects of fire.</p>
2. Who will be affected by the activity or proposal?	The Policy will affect tenants and leaseholders of Dartford Borough Council, as well as residents and visitors to the borough.
3. How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators?	<p>a) The Fire Safety Policy contributes to the Regulator of Social Housing tenant satisfaction measure BS02 – Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out. This was 93.9% for 2023-24.</p> <p>b) The Fire Safety Policy contributes to the Corporate Plan Housing ambitions in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to:</p>

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Step 1: Scoping the assessment	
b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that our homes are well maintained and empower tenants to shape and influence their own communities. • Provide a high quality and responsive housing service that’s built on respect for aspiring and existing tenants. We want to be practical, honest and straightforward in all the information and advice we give. • Strive for full compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s consumer standards in delivering good quality homes and services to the tenants that live in our homes.
4. Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?	<p>The Fire Safety Policy and its delivery is intended to be compatible with the following relevant legislation and regulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 • Fire Safety Act 2021 • Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 • Housing Act 2004 • The Building Regulations 2010 • Regulator of Social Housing’s Safety and Quality Standard
Step 2: Information collection	
5. What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? (i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership)	<p>Dartford population profile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender – There are slightly more female residents than male residents in Dartford where 51% are female and 49% are male, which is the same as the overall England ratio of females and males • Age – The median age in Dartford is 37 years, which is slightly lower than the overall England mean age of 40 years. 21.1% of Dartford’s population is aged 14 years or under. This is followed by residents aged 35 to 44 years (15.7%), 25 to 34 years (15.2%), 45 to 54 years (13.3%), 55 to 64 years (10.8%), 15 to 24 years (10.2%), 65 to 74 years (7.4%), and aged 75 years and over (6.4%) • Ethnicity – The largest ethnic group that people in Dartford identify with is White at 74.5%. This is followed by Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (10.50%), Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (9.90%), Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (3.10%), and Other ethnic groups (2.00%) • Disability – 15.9% of Dartford’s population are disabled. Of this, 6.6% of people’s activities are limited a lot and 9.3% of people’s activities are limited a little.

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Step 2: Information collection																																					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion – 48.1% of Dartford’s population connect or identify with the Christian religion, followed by 3.8% Hindu, 3.5% Muslim, 1.7% Hindu, 0.6 Buddhist, 0.1% Jewish, 0.4% other religion. 36.5% of Dartford’s population did not connect or identify with any religion and 5.3% did not answer this question in the Census. • Sexual orientation – 91.2% of Dartford’s population aged 16 years and over identified as straight or heterosexual. 1.5% described themselves as gay or lesbian. 0.91% described themselves as bisexual. 0.14% described themselves as pansexual; 0.03% described themselves as asexual; 0.00% described themselves as queer. 0.01% described themselves as ‘other sexual orientation’. 6.54% did not answer this question in the Census. (Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics) <p>Tenant profile The Council owns and manages a housing stock of 4,216 properties. Information in relation to profile of Council tenants (Tenant 1 data) is captured by the Council’s Housing Service, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="658 676 2107 1230"> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Sex</td> <td>Male</td> <td>33.85%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>66.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>0.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Age</td> <td>18-24</td> <td>1.59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-39</td> <td>20.41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-59</td> <td>38.22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60+</td> <td>39.78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="6">Race</td> <td>White</td> <td>67.72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian or Asian British</td> <td>1.45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black or Black British</td> <td>1.47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>2.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese or other ethnic group</td> <td>0.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown/ prefer not to say</td> <td>27.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>No disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>79.16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>20.84%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Leaseholder profile – There are currently 481 leasehold properties. The conveyancing process is managed by external bodies and legal transfers which do not collect personal data concerning the protected characteristics of new home owners. The Housing Service does not receive or hold any personal data regarding leaseholders other than name and address.</p>			Sex	Male	33.85%	Female	66.03%	Unknown	0.12%	Age	18-24	1.59%	25-39	20.41%	40-59	38.22%	60+	39.78%	Race	White	67.72%	Asian or Asian British	1.45%	Black or Black British	1.47%	Mixed	2.00%	Chinese or other ethnic group	0.24%	Unknown/ prefer not to say	27.12%	Disability/ vulnerability	No disability/ vulnerability	79.16%	Disability/ vulnerability	20.84%
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<p>6. What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings</p>	<p>Internal consultation on the draft Fire Safety Policy has been carried out with Council officers.</p> <p>The Council has been informed of tenants views on building safety through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey (TSM) carried out in 2023, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP05 – Satisfaction that the home is safe - 78.0%
<p>7. Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?</p>	<p>The Council is committed to ensuring the voice of its tenants is heard on matters that affect them. The Regulator of Social Housing places a requirement on social housing landlords to comply with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 2024, by ensuring that residents are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the formulation of their landlord’s housing-related policies and strategies. Consultation with Council tenants will be undertaken, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Council tenants will be invited to comment on the draft Fire Safety Policy. 2. The Dartford Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Forum (DTLF) will be invited to comment on the draft Fire Safety Policy. The DTLF aims to ensure that the services delivered by the Council are accessible to all. The Forum works as a group to ensure that the views and housing needs of residents are recognised and addressed by the Council, and that those needs and views are placed at the centre of housing services delivery. 3. The Housing Advisory Board (HAB) will be invited to comment on the draft Fire Safety Policy. The HAB considers reports on proposed policy, strategy and performance in relation to housing issues and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate. The HAB includes representation from Council officers, elected Members and DTLF members.

Step 3: Assessing the equality impact	
<p>8. Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <p>a) tackling unlawful discrimination b) promoting equality of opportunity c) promoting good relations</p>	<p><u>NOTES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration • For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each relevant protected group • For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each relevant protected group • If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the ‘No Impact’ box and explain why in question 9 • If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the ‘Unknown’ box and explain why in question 9

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
Age	<p>Personal centred risk assessment The Council will undertake a person centred risk assessment upon sign up for all tenants in sheltered housing blocks of flats. Where required, a personal emergency evacuation procedure (PEEP) will be created. This will record any support requirements to highlight those tenants that will require assistance when evacuating. The Council will also hold a RAG rated system, which will be held in the fire safety box, enabling immediate access for the fire rescue service. Any tenant using oxygen or with stored oxygen in their flat will also be flagged.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<p>Personal centred risk assessment The Council will undertake a person centred risk assessment upon sign up for all tenants in sheltered housing blocks of flats. Where required, a personal emergency evacuation procedure (PEEP) will be created. This will record any support requirements to highlight those tenants that will require assistance when evacuating. The Council will also hold a RAG rated system, which will be held in the fire safety box, enabling immediate access for the fire rescue service. Any tenant using oxygen or with stored oxygen in their flat will also be flagged.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	<p>Equipment for tenants with a visual or hearing impairment The Council will ensure tenants who have a visual and/or hearing impairment have equipment in place to alert them in the event of a fire. The Council supplies visual beacons and/or pillow pads which can provide audible and visual signals depending on the requirements of the tenant in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>Communication needs In accordance with the Council's Equality & Diversity Document Framework, the policy and information about fire safety can be provided in alternative formats, including: Braille, audio tape and large print versions of documents. British Sign Language interpreting services can also be provided upon request. Calls can also be received via Relay UK.</p>			
Sex			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<p>Alternative format and interpreting services In accordance with the Council's Equality & Diversity Document Framework, the policy and information about fire safety can be provided in alternative formats including documents translated into other languages. Telephone and face-to-face language interpreting services can also be provided upon request.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
Religion/Belief			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy/Maternity			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and Civil Partnership*	Not applicable as the Policy does not apply in the context of employment.	Not applicable as the Policy does not apply in the context of employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Regarding the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership – public bodies need to comply with the first aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty and only in the context of employment.

Step 3: Assessing the equality impact	
9. If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain	There are no known circumstances where the policy will have relevance to or a disproportionate equality impact on the protected characteristic groups of sex, gender reassignment, religion/belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy/maternity. The Council will ensure that older and disabled residents who have support needs will receive the assistance they require and have a personal evacuation plan in place in the event of an emergency.
10. If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups	The Council will work closely with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) who undertake audits of Sheltered Scheme blocks of flats, and review the Council's policies and procedures to check they are suitable and fit for purpose. The Council will also work with its contractors to ensure blocks of flats are safe, for example, by testing fire alarms and checking smoke and heat detectors are working.
11. Any other comments	No.

Step 4: Action plan
12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address: a) any gaps in information and consultation

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Step 4: Action plan

b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated

a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?

Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Views from all Council tenants and leaseholders	Invite comment and input on the draft policy from all Council tenants and leaseholders	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the policy	August 2024	Details of the consultation and amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Housing Policy & Performance Officer
Views from the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum on the draft policy	Invite comment and input on the draft policy from the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholder's Forum	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the policy	August 2024	Details of the consultation and amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Housing Policy & Performance Officer
Views from the Housing Advisory Board	Invite comment and input on the draft policy from the Housing Advisory Board	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the policy	October 2024	Details of the consultation and amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Housing Policy & Performance Officer

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b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?

Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer

Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring

13. Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?	Head of Legal Services and Director of Housing & Public Protection
14. Is the subject of the Customer Access Review going to committee? If yes, include your findings in the committee report and attach this assessment to the report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
15. How will you continue to monitor the activity or proposal on protected characteristic groups?	The Council is committed to mitigating the risk of fire across all of its properties, and carries out regular activity such as fire risk assessments to ensure residential blocks are as safe as possible. Any risks or issues found will be remedied and an up-to-date record of activity and findings will be kept. All activity will be monitored to ensure that any required actions are completed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that they keep residents from all protected characteristics safe. Extra precautions will be taken for residents living within our sheltered accommodation blocks, such as undertaking person centred risk assessments upon sign up for all tenants.
16. When will you review this Customer Access Review?	The Fire Safety Policy will be reviewed regularly to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues. New Customer Access Review assessments will be undertaken in conjunction with the review of the policy.

Step 6: Final steps

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| 17. Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Projects Officer |
| 18. Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded |

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Reviewed by Legal Services:  1/8/24

Reviewed by Director of Housing & Public Protection:



Peter Dosad. 18.7.2024