

<b>Meeting:</b>	Operations Committee
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Subject of Report:</b>	Fire Safety Policy and Procedure
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	
<b>Action Required:</b>	For Committee to approve
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<b>Purpose of the Report</b>
This policy and procedure are to ensure Nehemiah Housing, its employees and schemes are compliant with the statutory requirements. We have forwarded this report to our insurers who have advised us on certain areas as highlighted in red as being adjusted.
<b>Background Narrative and Context (including Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Assessment)</b>
This policy has undergone an equality impact assessment.
<b>Recommendations &amp; Decision Required</b>
For the committee to approve.
<b>Links to Nehemiah's Strategic Objectives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver excellent customer services with respect</li> <li>• Investing in our homes</li> </ul>
<b>Key Risks and/or Financial Implications</b>
<p><u>Key Risks</u> Ensuring all our homes are complaint</p> <p><u>Financial Implications</u> Effective management of our repairs and maintenance stock and taking account of any H&amp;S issues is essential in achieving key aspects of our KPI and is fundamental in maintaining our financial ability.</p>
<b>Assurance Levels (1st Line Defence – Department, 2nd Line of Defence – Oversight and 3rd Line Defence - Independent Assurance)</b>
First and second line of defence provided, with 3rd line applied in line with internal audit strategy in their review of our processes and systems against specific policies periodically.
<b>Cost Implications (including use of cash, time, and other resources, where will funds come from? Including VFM Considerations)</b>
All relevant costs are fully budgeted.
<b>Parties Consulted Prior to Meeting (inc. Officers, Committees and/or Legal Advice)</b>

None
<b>Appendices (list)</b>

Policy No.	KF60
Policy Title	Fire Safety Policy & Procedure
Review date	January 2021
Date of next review	January 2022
Department	Property Services

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## FIRE SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURE

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### Version Control

Version No:	Nature of Change	Issue Date	Ratified by	Date Ratified
1	First Issue; changing all previous Fire Safety policies	Feb 2018	Operations Committee	Feb 2018
2.	Change of company name from Nehemiah UCHA to Nehemiah Housing & Additional property added Shanti Niketan	Feb 2020	Operations Committee	06/02/2020
3.	Section 6.4 changes made to recommendations from Internal Audit.	Feb 2021	Operations Committee	
4.	Section 8.8 change to smoke alarms checked at every electrical inspection	Feb 2021	Operations Committee	
5.	Section 9.7 Stay put policy revised to make clearer	Feb 2021	Operations Committee	
6.	Section 19.7 new tenant to be provided with a fire safety leaflets	Feb 2021	Operations Committee	
7.	Section 21.3 FRA to be carried out by external consultant and not staff members	Feb 2021	Operations Committee	
8.	Section 6.2 (b) Fire Risk Assessment undertaken by a competent person	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	

9.	Section 6.4 Fire risk assessment will be the main driver for all fire safety measures.	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	
10.	6.4.4 FRA Tracker is a central point	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	
11.	10.00 Emergency lighting to include reference to the policy procedures governing frequency of testing.	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	
12.	12.00 Dangerous Substances replace competent person to a risk assessment in line with the Dangerous Substances and explosive atmospheres 2002	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	
13.	13. Escape routes communal areas reference to be made to the procedure to govern situations where tenants/ shared owners & Leaseholders doors to the common area or exterior parts may not be or are not suitable fire doors.	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	
14.	19. Provision of information the policy to make reference how critical information for each block is stored and maintained.	August 2021	Insurance Risk Management team	

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 **Rationale** - The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure Nehemiah HOUSING and its employees and schemes are compliant with the statutory requirements and guidance documents as listed below:

- a) The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- b) Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996;
- c) Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996;
- d) The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015;
- e) The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- f) The smoke and carbon monoxide (alarm) Regulations 2015

Additionally, the Nehemiah HOUSING wishes to reduce the incidence of fires within tenants' homes, even where there is no statutory responsibility placed upon the Nehemiah HOUSING. We set out the measures in place to achieve this, within this policy and procedure.

1.2 **Scope** - This policy and procedure is produced by Nehemiah Housing Association and forms an integral part of the overall fire safety initiative for all properties owned and managed by it.

1.3 A central part of this document is the adoption and use of all formal guidance documents produced by HM Government and the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS) which deal directly with fire safety issues.

1.4 **Fire Safety Principles of the Policy** - A high degree of importance is placed on minimising the risk of fire and ensuring processes are in place to deal with fire when it occurs, so that all persons who come into contact with Nehemiah Housing Association are safe from injury.

1.5 This document outlines the fire safety processes that will be taken into account and applied to the communal areas serving the residential flats and the other communal areas managed by the Association, including;

- Sheltered Housing schemes -
- Properties owned and managed by the Trust -
- Properties owned by the Trust and managed by partners –
- Communal areas to residential flats –
- It also identifies the major roles of people within the management and organisational structure and identifies individual responsibilities were necessary.

- 1.6 The application of this policy and procedure will be in accordance with, and driven by, the result of the fire risk assessments.
- 1.7 All fire safety matters contained in this policy and procedure will conform to current legislation, guides, codes of practice, standards etc. relevant to the provision of the various types and uses of Housing and related activities.
- 1.8 policy - in order to protect all persons from the hazards of fire, Nehemiah Housing association will make the following arrangements:
  - a) Implement measures to reduce the risk of fire and the spread of fire.
  - b) Implement a system of fire risk assessments for all relevant premises and activities.
  - c) Implement appropriate measures to eliminate, reduce or control the risks identified (see section 6).
  - d) Provide and maintain appropriate means of escape in the event of fire.
  - e) Provide appropriate training to employees in the emergency procedures and actions in the event of fire.
  - f) Provide appropriate guidance/advice to all employees, residents and contractors on how to prevent fires.
  - g) Provide appropriate training to employees in fire precautions.
  - h) Provide and maintain fire alarm/emergency lighting systems where present
  - i) Provide and maintain fire-fighting equipment where present.
  - j) Provide and maintain appropriate fire signage.
  - k) develop a system of monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the preventative and protective measures.
  - l) Liaise with appropriate enforcing authorities as necessary.
  - m) Regularly communicate key fire safety messages to all of our tenants
  - n) Promote home fire risk assessment appointments to tenants, in partnership with west midlands fire authority

## **2.0 Policy Statement**

2.1 Fires have the potential to cause loss of life, major injury and damage to our assets, as well as affecting our service delivery.

2.2 Nehemiah HOUSING is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its employees, residents, visitors and contractors.

2.3 In order to achieve this goal, it is the policy of Nehemiah Housing Association to avoid fires from starting by the introduction of appropriate risk management arrangements, including:

- o Identification of fire hazards.
- o Assessment of fire risks.
- o Provision and maintenance of appropriate preventative and protective measures.
- o Training of staff.
- o Monitoring and reviewing these arrangements to ensure their effectiveness.



### **3.0 Fire Safety Legislation**

- 3.1 The Housing Act 2004 regulates fire safety in existing residential premises by way of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This is the principle legislation designed to assess and regulate fire safety standards within dwellings. Guidance for fire safety within these types of residential properties is given by Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS) in its publication '**Housing – Fire Safety**' and also Government guidance document on fire risk assessments in sleeping accommodation.
- 3.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) came into effect on the 1st October 2006. The RRFSO applies to all premises. Within flats, apartments, maisonettes and sheltered accommodation that do not provide personal care, the RRFSO only applies to the common/communal areas and excludes 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.
- 3.3 Within the communal areas, the RRFSO requires the provision of 'General fire precautions' that are appropriate to the risks as determined by a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. At the forefront of these precautions is an organisational culture that focuses on the prevention of fires whilst ensuring that where they occur their impact is minimised. Part of the fire risk assessment will be the provision of an emergency plan to ensure that all people already within, or who have to traverse the communal area(s), can escape safely in an emergency.
- 3.4 Through its fire safety policy and procedure, Nehemiah HOUSING has identified the 'responsible person' under the RRFSO and also nominated competent people within and outside the organisation, to ensure its responsibilities under the legislation are met with regard to all properties that they own.

### **4.0 Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The Role of the Chief Executive Officer (Responsible Person) - Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 'The Chief Executive Officer' is the 'Responsible Person' and consequently has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of the fire safety policy and related fire safety matters. These include assigning adequate resources and ensuring their responsibilities are properly assigned and delegated as defined below.
- 4.2 The Role of the Operations Director - is responsible for ensuring the compliance and

implementation of statutory requirements and relevant guidance in all premises.

- 4.3 The Role of the Managers / Scheme managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the general fire precautions provided at each premises.
- 4.4 The flow chart at Appendix A shows how Fire Safety is managed within Nehemiah HOUSING
- 4.5 Duties of the Director of Operations is responsible for:
- a) Ensuring an up-to-date fire risk assessment has been carried out
  - b) Maintaining and monitoring fire safety arrangements, e.g. checking of general fire precautions, outlining the action to be taken on discovering a fire, arranging for staff to carry out weekly visual checks of fire-fighting equipment
  - c) Liaising with the Property Services Manager to ensure any faults discovered are appropriately rectified and details of fault and remedial action/s are recorded
  - d) Ensuring Fire Safety Logbooks are kept up to date
  - e) Appoint a competent maintenance team
- 4.6 Duties of the Property Services Manager - is responsible for:
- a) Ensuring that all staff are aware of and understand the fire safety arrangements within their workplace
  - b) Arranging and ensuring all staff attend appropriate fire safety training sessions, including fire drills
  - c) Identifying staff to act as Fire Warden for the Association sheltered schemes and managed properties.
  - d) Identifying staff to act as Team Officers in respect of fire related matters for communal areas to dwellings
  - e) Liaising with the scheme Managers on any matters relevant to fire safety.
- 4.7 Duties relating to Communal Areas at the Schemes. The Scheme Managers and any officers of the Housing team - Scheme Managers and Officers are members of staff who have agreed to undertake additional duties within their respective workplace.

Their duties are:

- a) Scheme Managers to undertake periodic inspections of communal areas to ensure fire exits and fire escape routes are free from obstructions (incl. external exits and escape routes)
- b) Property Services Officers to undertake a bi-monthly inspection of each communal area to confirm the presence of potential fire risks and if present report these to the Scheme Managers
- d) Scheme Managers to liaise with the Property Services Manager on any fire safety matters

4.8 Duties relating to Appointed Fire Wardens for the Associations sheltered schemes. A Fire Warden is a member of staff who has agreed to undertake additional duties within their respective workplace. The Property Services Manager will maintain an up-to-date list of Fire Marshalls. Their duties are:

- a) In the event of the fire alarm sounding, carry out a check of the area for which they are responsible, to ensure all persons have evacuated the building; particular attention being paid to toilets and restrooms
- b) Carry out a roll call at the assembly point and advise the Officer of Scheme Manager Services if all persons are accounted for
- c) If requested, carry out the weekly fire alarm tests and record these in the Fire Safety Logbook
- d) Assist the Team Managers in arranging and carrying out fire drills
- e) To undertake a periodic inspection of the building to ensure fire exits and fire escape routes are free from obstructions (incl. external exits and escape routes)
- f) To undertake a weekly inspection of the premises to confirm the presence of potential fire risks and if present report these to the Scheme Manager.

4.9 Role of Property Services Manager - Property Services is responsible for ensuring:

- a) A system of planned preventative maintenance of fire alarm systems, emergency lighting systems and firefighting equipment is implemented and that appropriate records are kept
- b) That contractors appointed to work in the premises:
  - have access to a copy of this policy;
  - shall comply as appropriate with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996;

- have carried out a fire risk assessment for their work activity, with particular reference to how their work may affect the safety of staff, residents and visitors;
  - are made aware of local fire safety arrangements/procedures;
  - work in accordance with their fire risk assessment;
- c) Fire risks have been adequately considered prior to any new build, structural change or alterations to buildings
- d) Assist with the preparation of fire risk assessments and ensure any issues resultant of the risk assessment findings and relating to structural integrity or maintenance are actioned

#### 4.10 Duties of All Staff

All members of staff have a general duty of care. They must:

- a) Prevent fires by being alert to potential fire hazards and reporting such hazards accordingly.
- b) Ensure they are aware of and understand the general fire safety arrangements within the workplace and any arrangements which are specific to their particular work activity or place of work.
- c) Maintain fire exits, escape routes, fire door, fire-fighting and fire alarm equipment's are clear of obstruction
- d) Be aware of the action to take in the event of discovering a fire or on hearing the fire alarm
- e) Take an active part in fire drills
- f) Attend appropriate training sessions as instructed
- g) Co-operate with their employer in regards to complying with fire law as required.

### 5.0 Development and Consultation Process

- 5.1 Any future changes to the fire safety procedures will always be the subject of written consultation with the Operations Director and Chief Executive Officer.
- 5.2 This is to ensure that Nehemiah Housing Association is able to comply with current and future legislation and guidance documents to the satisfaction of enforcing authorities.

### 6.0 Fire Risk Assessments

- 6.1 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.

6.2 The Director of Operations Services will ensure that:

- a) Fire risk assessments are undertaken to all properties referred to in this policy
- b) Fire risk assessments will be undertaken by a competent person Nehemiah Housing will consider membership in the following trade bodies / possession of the following qualifications suitable evidence of competence:
  - Membership of Institution of Fire Engineers TIFireE
  - Fire Risk Assessors: FPA C06, FPA C05,
  - NEBOSH Fire Certificate
  - Complex Building Fire Risk Assessment: IFE level 3
- c) A programme to quarterly review fire risk assessments is developed.
- d) Fire risk assessments are reviewed when any of the following occur:
  - upon completion of any remedial works identified in the Fire Risk Assessment action plan
  - change of circumstances (goods stored, disabled employees);
  - following a fire;
  - structural changes are proposed;
  - changes of use or layout;
  - new plant, equipment, processes or procedures are introduced which involve, or are likely to involve, fire hazards;
  - it is proposed to store any flammable substances (following approval in writing by Property Services Manager);
  - it is proposed to employ a young person (under age of 18)
- e) Completed fire risk assessments are held centrally within the offices of Nehemiah HOUSING and at the Schemes.

6.3 The provision of general fire precaution measures and maintenance procedures will be carried out via action plans established following completion of the fire risk assessments. Nehemiah HOUSING are committed to completing all remedial works recommended by the fire risk assessment and detailed within the action plan for each property.

6.4 Fire risk assessments will be the main drivers for all fire safety measures. Once in place, they will be reviewed by the Scheme Managers and Property Services officer, or other suitably qualified staff, at a minimum annually or at such times that Nehemiah HOUSING considers necessary,

it is recommended that specific criteria be added here to cover the likely circumstances where the FSO 2005 would expect a review of the fire risk assessment and that the trigger mechanism for review be outlined (usually when

at or before sign off of the works).

“at a minimum annually, when one of the following criteria are met:

- Any Addition, movement or replacement of fire doors or interior walls.
- Any major works to the building
- Any addition, movement or replacement of fire alarm or fighting equipment or appliances.
- Any addition, movement or replacement of heating or electrical systems.
- Any disabled adaptations
- Any change of use

Or at such times that Nehemiah HOUSING considers necessary

- 6.4.1 Property Service officers will implement a consistent checklist for all our sites including the main head office
  - 6.4.2 Property service officers and scheme managers will apply signatures to sign off inspections which have been carried out.
  - 6.4.3 If the property service officers' reports identifies any issues whilst on site, they will go to scheme managers, senior supported housing officer and property services manager.
  - 6.4.4 FRA tracker will be enhanced to include sections to highlight when jobs are raised, due and completed in line with required timescales. This will be monitored on a monthly basis within the executive report, on quartley basis within Nehemiah Health & Safety Risk meetings, and also quarterly by the operations committee meetings.
- 6.4 (b) “Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) are undertaken by a competent person  
Nehemiah Housing will appoint a competent business to undertake the FRA the individual appointed will have experience and training relevant to the type of premises in question.

6.5 Nehemiah HOUSING is committed to fire safety management through this its Fire Safety policy and procedure document. It will engage, when necessary, the appropriate expertise in this field to ensure the full safety of residents, staff, contractors and members of the public.

6.6 Where third party agencies manage properties owned by Nehemiah HOUSING, the latter will ensure that a fire risk assessment is carried out.

## **7.0 General Fire Risks and Preventative Measures**

7.1 To prevent the outbreak of fires in common areas Nehemiah HOUSING will actively discourage the storage of household refuse for recycling in corridors and stairways used as escape routes. The use of display material, furnishings and decorations on escape routes will be covered by individual fire risk assessments. The storage of bicycles, prams, mobility scooters and other household effects will be similarly addressed in fire risk assessments for each property.

## 8.0 Fire Detection and Warning Systems

- 8.1 All our schemes and the main head offices are the only properties covered by the scope of this policy which have fire alarm installations.
- 8.2 The Property Services Manager is responsible for the installation, commissioning and planned preventative maintenance of fire alarm systems and smoke detection.
- 8.3 The Fire Warden will ensure that the fire alarm systems for these properties are tested weekly. The Fire Safety Logbook for each premises will outline when fire alarms will be tested and by whom (Fire Warden). A record of this test will be kept.
- 8.4 The Property Services Manager will make arrangements to ensure the fire alarm systems are tested annually and a record of these tests will be kept. The Fire Safety Logbook will outline who will undertake these tests.
- 8.5 All fire warning and detection systems will comply with BS 5839.
- 8.6 **Communal Areas to Dwellings** - Within all individual dwellings where the RRFSO does not apply, there still needs to be adequate fire precautions within these units. Nehemiah HOUSING will apply the guidance for fire safety within these types of residential properties by using the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS) in its publication 'Housing – Fire Safety' including the additional guidance issued by LACoRS on the use of domestic single point battery operated smoke detectors where considered appropriate.
- 8.7 The findings of the fire risk assessment deem the block communal areas do not require a fire alarm system, however, are required to have a hard wired or battery operated smoke detection installed within each residential flat.
- 8.8 Nehemiah HOUSING is committed to the installation of smoke alarms with 10 year battery life in all domestic properties unless a hard wired system already exists. All smoke alarms in situ will be tested at every electrical inspection, or if the property becomes void a test will be carried out. Tenants are advised by officers that they hold a responsibility to regular check their own smoke alarms. These reminders are also in the Nehemiah's newsletter.
- 8.9 **New Technology** - In order to take account of new and emerging technology, Nehemiah HOUSING recognises the need to continually monitor new technological developments alongside the performance of existing systems in all of its building stock.



8.10 **Design, Installation and Maintenance** - The design, installation and maintenance of any fire alarm and detection system will only be undertaken by competent persons or organisation's that achieve industry and British standards BS 5839 -6

8.11 The maintenance of systems comprising domestic smoke alarms conforming to BS 5839-6 is relatively straightforward requiring only:

- Weekly operation of the test button (which can usually be done by the occupier);
- Where necessary, periodic replacement of the battery or the whole unit following the manufacturer's instructions (this may require someone with electrical competence where the smoke alarms has a mains supply).

## **9.0 Fire Fighting Equipment**

9.1 Nehemiah HOUSING residents and staff, with the exception of those trained, are not expected to use fire-fighting equipment. However, Nehemiah HOUSING will meet or exceed the standard required for fire-fighting equipment suitable to the risk as recommended in the fire risk assessment for that building.

9.2 The premises of sheltered schemes, will be provided with appropriate fire-fighting equipment, which will either be:

- a) Water
- b) Foam
- c) Carbon Dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>)
- d) Dry Powder
- e) Fire Blankets

9.3 The Emergency Plan and fire safety drawing (see Fire Safety Logbook) will identify the type and location of fire-fighting equipment for the building.

9.4 Property Services are responsible for purchasing and planned preventative maintenance of all fire-fighting equipment.

9.5 The Scheme Managers are responsible for ensuring weekly visual checks of fire-fighting equipment are carried out to identify any defects. A record of these checks will be recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook.

9.6 Property Services will make arrangements to ensure all fire-fighting equipment is annually inspected and tested. A record of these inspections and tests will be recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook. The date of the test will also be labelled on the fire extinguisher.

9.7 **Communal Areas to Dwellings** – Fire-fighting equipment is provided to communal areas of dwellings, as identified from the fire risk assessment carried out for that block. In buildings purpose built flats and apartments, residents not directly impacted by the fire should stay inside their flat with doors and windows shut.

9.8 Contractors working on site will provide their own extinguishers suitable to the size and nature of the work undertaken. Where necessary, hazardous work will be subject to a 'Permit to Work' system (see section 14).

### **10.0 Emergency Lighting**

This will be in conjunction with Nehemiah Housing, Electrical safety policy which sets out how Nehemiah will manage and ensure the safety of fixed electrical installations, and the testing carried out by a competent person.,

10.1 All communal areas to schemes and residential dwellings have emergency lighting systems in situ. As identified from the fire risk assessments. If any further blocks are purchased we will continue to ensure that emergency lighting is included.

10.2 All emergency lighting systems will comply with BS 5266: emergency lighting - Fire Industry Association

### **11.0 Fire Related Signage**

11.1 Property Services will ensure fire escapes routes, fire doors, fire alarm call points and, where appropriate, fire-fighting equipment are all clearly marked in liaison with the escape route requirements,.

11.2 Property Services will also ensure that the action to be taken on discovering a fire or fire alarm call sounding is prominently displayed and Fire Evacuation Notices in liaison with the requirements.

### **12.0 Dangerous Substances**

12.1 The Highly Flammable Liquids and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Regulations 1972 define highly flammable liquids as those having a flash point of less than 30°C.

12.2 A variety of adhesives, polishes, paints, thinners, petrol and other fuels fall within this definition. Prior to commencing to use and/or store flammable liquids in the workplace, With "A risk assessment in line with The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 will be carried out by a competent person"

12.3 Flammable liquids pose a fire and/or explosion risk and **must not be stored** on the premises unless approved in writing by the Property Services Manager and a suitable fire risk assessment has been undertaken.

## 13.0 Escape Routes

13.1 All buildings will conform to the minimum of current standards existing at the time of construction and, in addition, the following should be adhered to:-

- 1) All new buildings/dwellings shall be constructed to the current Building Regulations in force at the time including, where appropriate Regulation 16 b and Approved Document B (Fire Safety) in order to achieve and maintain the fire compartment integrity for the required time period.
- 2) Buildings undergoing alterations should conform to the current Building Regulations in force at the time including Approved Document B (Fire Safety) in order to achieve and maintain the fire compartment integrity for the required time period.
- 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.
- 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.
- 5) Consider the capabilities of the existing and potential residents when considering the movement of smoke and consequent smoke control methods.
- 6) Consider the design of escape routes from communal areas and provision of furniture in these areas.
- 7) Front entrance doors to flats need to be fire-resistant and self-closing. The required standard is a door which provides 30 minute fire resistance with fire-retardant strips, smoke seals and with a self-closing mechanism.

If a front entrance door to individual flats are leaseholders or shared ownership they are responsible for ensuring they have a fire door fitted. If the fire risk assessment flags up that the front entrance door is not fire compliant, according to their lease.

As leaseholders & shared ownership are responsible for the doors, the landlord has no immediate legal right to change those doors. However, Nehemiah Housing will notify the leaseholder and shared owner within 5 working days of the issued identified, that their door may be in breach of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order RR (FS) O 2005 and may be subject to future enforcement should it not be addressed.

## **14.0 General Procedures and Evacuation Arrangements**

- 14.1 Permits to Work - Certain types of 'hot work' involve the use of oxyacetylene/oxypropane cutting equipment, arc welding equipment, blowlamps, bitumen boilers, and any other equipment producing heat or having naked flames, involve significant fire hazards. If these fire hazards are not adequately controlled the risk of fires starting can be significant.
- 14.2 A permit to work procedure will be applied by Property Services to ensure that such processes are tightly controlled. The permit to work is an instrument to implement a safe system of work for routine and non-routine processes with a high degree of foreseeable risk. It provides an opportunity to define in a clear and precise manner the way in which the risks arising from activities will be controlled and signed off by an appropriate person. An outline of the permit to work procedure is contained within the Fire Safety Logbook. Permits will clearly outline:
- a) Exact location of work, day, date and duration of permit.
  - b) The process(es) to be carried out.

- c) Who is to supervise and who is to carry out the work.
  - d) Types of tools/equipment and PPE (if applicable) required.
  - e) Any special or specific precautions e.g. type of fire extinguisher required.
  - f) Authorised signatories.
- 14.3 Contractor Process - Only contractors approved by Nehemiah Housing will be allowed onto any site to carry out work. Part of the approval will be the submission of a risk assessment and method statement prior to any work starting. This work method statement will contain the contractors own fire safety risk assessment which will take account of the fire risk assessment carried out by Nehemiah Housing for that site. CDM Regulations will apply where required.
- 14.4 If any designated fire precautions are ignored, or any breach made of the fire risk assessment, contractors will be stopped or instructed to leave site immediately.
- 14.5 **New Build Schemes** - Nehemiah Housing will put in place a procedure to ensure that the fire safety strategy and measures for each new scheme is agreed, reviewed and implemented thoroughly. This may involve taking advice other than the building control body, conducting a desktop assessment and independent site inspection. The “as built” fire safety plan in accordance with Part B will form part of the health and safety file. After practical completion, handover and substantial occupancy, a fire risk assessment will be conducted and Nehemiah Housing will put in place fire safety record (log book) and maintenance checks, testing and servicing procedures.
- 14.6 Fire drills at sheltered schemes, are an important part of fire safety to test fire evacuation procedures in order to ensure staff, visitors and residents know how to react in the event of discovering a fire or hearing the alarm.
- 14.7 All members of staff must take part in a least one fire evacuation drill per year.
- 14.8 The Corporate Services manager will be responsible for arranging fire drills in conjunction with the nominated Fire Warden, and recording these within the Fire Log book.
- 14.9 Staff should not be told that a fire drill has been arranged, however it will be necessary to advise the staff who are nominated to call the Fire and Rescue Service and, where appropriate, a nominated Fire Warden will contact the relevant external monitoring agency so as to avoid inadvertently calling the Fire & Rescue Service.
- 14.10 The names of all staff involved in the fire drill should be recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook.

- 14.11 The nominated Fire Warden for the building should produce a report on the drill, which is forwarded to the Co-operate Services Manager.
- 14.12 Any problem arising from the drill should be addressed by the Co-operate Services Manager and all staff formally advised of the issue and resultant action in writing.
- 14.13 Fire Action and Evacuation Plans Including Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) - Every Nehemiah HOUSING building will have a fire action plan produced in conjunction with, and as a result of, the findings of the fire safety risk assessment for that building. The emergency plan will also contain the evacuation strategy for that building or group of buildings in relation to the communal areas to dwellings.
- 14.14 Fire safety within specialised accommodation can be improved through the introduction of PEEPs. This approach is adopted by all the schemes, and allows for a systematic assessment of individual tenant and visitor needs and their abilities in a fire emergency situation within the building. This will also take into account relevant control measures and fire prevention education where necessary by the Fire Warden and/or the local Fire and Rescue Service Community Fire Safety Department.
- 14.15 Those persons who find themselves within the communal areas of the sheltered schemes, when the fire alarm sounds will evacuate to the designated assembly points. Where the Fire Warden is on duty, he/she will supervise this evacuation.
- 14.16 Nehemiah HOUSING evacuation strategy for all communal areas to dwellings will be a 'get out, stay out, call the fire service out' policy, unless otherwise advised further to consultation with the fire and rescue service.
- 14.17 **Unwanted Fire Calls** - False alarms can create considerable disruption to the day-to-day functioning of any premises. They also create a drain on the resources of the emergency services. In order to try and keep false alarms to a minimum regular and scheduled inspection of the premises will be undertaken by the Scheme Managers.
- 14.18 Any activation of the fire alarm (including those instances where the fire service does not attend but excluding instances where the fire alarm is being tested) must be reported in writing to the Director.

## **15.0 Equality and Diversity**

- 15.1 Nehemiah Housing will take into consideration all fire safety related matters referred to in this policy at the issuing of new conditions of tenancy for any new or existing tenant in relation to a tenant's specific individual needs. If and where required, i.e. an existing fire safety arrangement referred to in this document is not suitable; Nehemiah HOUSING will implement the necessary fire safety arrangements required for such a tenant and amend this policy to include any specific arrangements, for an individual or group of individuals accordingly. Nehemiah HOUSING when advised by a tenant, will apply the same procedure whenever an existing tenant's needs change during the course of any tenancy agreement.

## **16.0 Smoking**

- 16.1 Smoking and/or carelessly discarded smoking materials are a well-known cause of fire. Nehemiah HOUSING adopt a strict policy of no smoking within all their managed properties referred to in this Fire Safety Policy which is enforced by the presence of signage and within the documentation as part of any tenancy agreement. Consequently there are no specific requirements for the control of smoking such as designating smoking areas and providing receptacles for example.

## **17.0 Arson**

- 17.1 An effective defence against the arsonist is the alertness of staff. Staff should be aware of strangers and challenge them politely, especially if they are in restricted and/or isolated areas. They must also be aware of any residents who have a history of starting fires. Anything untoward should always be reported immediately to the Police.

## **18.0 Maintenance**

- 18.1 All fire safety related equipment including fire detection and warning systems (including smoke detection), emergency lighting and firefighting equipment is to be maintained and tested by a competent duly appointed contractor by way of Property Services and in accordance with the relevant benchmark standards.
- 18.2 In addition to the maintenance of direct fire safety equipment Nehemiah HOUSING will ensure that all fixed electrical wiring is subject to a Periodic Inspection Report for an Electrical Installation, by a competent contractor, in order to establish if the installation is of a 'Satisfactory' condition. Where an inspection deems the installation to be 'Unsatisfactory' the Nehemiah HOUSING will ensure the necessary remedial works are undertaken.
- 18.3 Nehemiah HOUSING will ensure that all gas appliances are subject to an annual gas safety and service visit in accordance with the Gas Servicing Policy.

- 18.4 The Scheme Managers, in relation to the sheltered schemes, to communal areas to dwellings, will undertake a monthly inspection of each property and report to the property services department
- 18.5 For property owned by the Association but managed by a third party – responsibility for fire safety is identified in the lease. The Association will undertake periodic audit of these fire safety arrangements.

## **19.0 Provision of Information**

It is acknowledged that the nature and the circumstances relating to safety events varies and that a degree of professional judgment is required to determine when, how, and to whom, it is appropriate to disseminate safety critical information in an urgent manner.

The communication of safety critical information is primarily by the distribution of 'red' safety critical information bulletins. Consideration will be given to reinforcing this method of communication by, e-mail, and telephone calls this is particularly important where information needs to be transmitted without delay.

- 19.1 Nehemiah Housing will ensure that residents are made aware of the fire safety provisions in their home as well as the scheme, and that they must do nothing to interfere directly with those provisions. Nehemiah Housing will ensure each site has a FRA available on site stored in a fire proof cabinet. An additional copy will be available on the housing management system. Nehemiah Housing management system will keep a record of any repair works carried out to the block. The information within the fire safety box is updated on a daily basis as when required.
- 19.2 Nehemiah Housing will compile and distribute leaflets on fire safety procedures for all residents and any leaseholders.
- 19.3 Nehemiah Housing will maintain good fire safety practice, by arranging (where possible) visits by the local Fire and Rescue Service Community Fire Safety departments at schemes to talk to residents.
- 19.4 Nehemiah Housing will remind residents of their responsibilities at the issuing of new conditions of tenancy.
- 19.5 This policy for Nehemiah Housing will be circulated to all employees as well as relevant approved contractors by way of Property Services.
- 19.6 Employees will also be consulted over the relevant findings and contents of the fire risk assessments that have been carried out on all Nehemiah HOUSING
- 19.7 The Association will use a range of different communication measures to increase awareness of fire safety within the home, including;



- Articles in Nehemiah stories on fire safety
- Providing a copy of “Fire Safety in the Home” to every new tenant upon sign up
- Specific fire safety information on our website
- Use of digital media to promote fire safety
- Partnership working with community advocates for fire safety themed events (e.g. targeted campaigns around Bonfire Night)

## **20.0 Recording of Information**

- 20.1 The Fire Safety Logbook outlines the fire safety arrangements made for the relevant premises and provides advice and guidance to relevant personnel on their roles and responsibilities. In respect of all our sheltered schemes, there are individual Fire Safety Logbooks and in respect of the communal areas to dwellings there is only one Fire Safety Logbook which covers all.
- 20.2 The designated person will be responsible for ensuring the logbook is maintained. The following will be contained/recorded within the logbook:-
- a) General advice on fire safety matters
  - b) An outline of the fire safety arrangements for the premise/s
  - c) A plan drawing identifying the General Fire Precautions (fire safety drawing)
  - d) An outline of the arrangements made for the testing and maintenance of fire alarm systems, emergency lighting systems and fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection
  - e) Type and location of fire-fighting equipment (FFE)
  - f) Dates and times of completed fire evacuation drills and staff training where applicable
  - g) Correspondence from Local Authority Fire Safety Officers and/or the Building Control Authority etc. where applicable.
  - h) Contact names where fire safety advice can be obtained from a competent person

## **21.0 Training**

- 21.1 The Operations Director of in conjunction with all the managers will make arrangements to ensure that all staff undertake annual fire safety training and a record of this training is kept.
- 21.2 Nehemiah HOUSING will ensure that all staff are trained to the appropriate level in fire safety matters.

## **22.0 Liaison with Local Fire and Rescue Services**

22.1 Nehemiah Housing will liaise with local Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that the best service is being delivered by both parties

22.2 Nehemiah HOUSING is committed to assisting in the formation of national policy, guidelines etc and wishes to be associated with these initiatives.

## **23.0 Classification of Housing and Property**

23.1 Nehemiah Housing and property falls in the following broad categories:-

1. General needs accommodation – No statutory duty
2. General needs accommodation with communal areas – Statutory duty in regard to communal areas.
  - two storey, purpose built blocks consisting of 2, 3 and 4 flats per block and one communal enclosed staircase area.
  - 1 and 2 bedroom flats, set off a communal area
3. Sheltered accommodation schemes – Statutory duty in regard to communal fire risk.

## **24.0 Monitoring and Review of Preventative and Protective Measures**

24.1 The Director of Operations Services will ensure that there are effective preventative and protective measures provided and maintained by a combination of monitoring measures.

24.2 The Director of Operations Services should ensure periodic checks of the properties are undertaken. The Fire Safety Logbook provides guidance on the types of checks that should be carried out, by whom and how often.

24.3 All fires, no matter how small and even if extinguished, must be reported in writing to the Director of Operations.

24.4 Review of Fire Risk Assessments - Fire Risk Assessments for all premises will be reviewed by Nehemiah HOUSING in accordance with section 6 of this policy document.

24.5 Review of Fire Safety Policy and Procedure - This Fire Safety Policy and Procedure will be reviewed by Nehemiah HOUSING regularly and at a minimum annually.

## **25.0 Equality Impact Assessment**

25.1 Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required? Yes

25.2 When was EIA conducted and by who?

The EIA conducted by Corporate Services Manager on the 28 January 2021.

# Appendix 1





