Fire Safety Policy

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Sally Whittaker	**Policy review**	August 2023

Approval process for current version

Presented to	Date	Outcome
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1. Introduction

1.1. Poplar HARCA has a responsibility to ensure that from a fire safety perspective its buildings are safe, functional and maintained to a high standard.

1.2. Poplar HARCA is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of everybody living, working or visiting our buildings and to protecting our property.

1.3. This policy sets out the fire risk assessment and fire improvement standards for all assets including housing stock, offices, community centres and other buildings for which Poplar HARCA has responsibility (as defined by the lease).

2. Regulatory standards, legislation and codes of practice

2.1. Poplar HARCA's premises must comply with:

Regulator	• Regulatory framework and consumer standards (Home Standard) set out by the Regulator for Social Housing Building Safety Regulator (HSE)
Legislation	• Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) • Fire Safety Act 2021 • Building Safety Act 2022 • Fire Safety (England) Regulations, 2022
Codes of practice	• HHSRS Operating Guidance - Housing Act 2004: Guidance about inspections and assessment of hazards given under Section 9 • LACORS - Housing - Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing • LGA – Fire safety in purpose-built flats, May 2012
This policy also operates in the context of:	• Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 • Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (as amended) • Electricity at Work Regulations, 1989 • Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 • British Standard BS 7671 Requirements for Electrical Installations (also known as the IET Wiring Regulations) • Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 • The Building Regulations 2000: Approved Document B Fire Safety • Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 • Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 • The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 • The Workplace (Health Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 • The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 • The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 • Housing Act 2004

	• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 • Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

2.2. **Sanctions**

Failure to discharge these responsibilities in full could result in prosecution, unlimited fines, and/ or a serious detriment judgement from the Regulator for Social Housing and the Building Safety Regulator.

3. Requirements

3.1. Poplar HARCA is required to:

- conduct a fire risk assessment compliant with the requirements of PAS79 and PAS 9980, in order to identify the general fire precautions and other measures needed to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). In addition to evaluating the fire risk associated with the external wall of the building, the assessment will include a combination of type 1 and 2 communal area checks with type 3 and 4 checks in individual dwellings - see 5.4 below.
- implement all necessary general fire precautions and address any deficiencies or risks identified by fire risk assessment, implementing control measures that reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level, i.e., appropriate to the degree and nature of the risk.
- put in place a suitable system of maintenance with regard to items which impact upon fire safety, e.g., gas, electricity, fire detection/Automatic Opening Vents and fire doors and appoint competent persons to implement any procedures that have been adopted.
- periodically review fire risk assessments at intervals appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level as determined by the fire risk assessor or in the event of any material changes to premises (i.e. following refurbishment works that have involved internal structural alterations).

4. Delivery

4.1. The fire risk assessment programme for residential and non-residential buildings is delivered by the Association's Fire Risk Consultants (competent fire risk assessors). Both programmes are managed by the Association's Health, Safety and Fire Team.

4.2. Follow-on works associated with the buildings will be managed by the Association's Asset Management Team.

4.3. Other issues identified by the fire risk assessment process, e.g., communal housekeeping issues will be managed by the Association's Estate Services and Housing teams as appropriate.

4.4. In order to meet requirements and ensure safety Poplar HARCA will:

- ensure robust processes and controls are in place to manage the fire risk assessment programme and follow-up work, keeping accurate records.
- ensure that the cyclical maintenance which impacts upon fire safety is conducted in accordance with the Association's gas safety and electrical policies and that accurate records are kept.

- ensure compliance with current building regulations (which address fire precautions) for any new buildings or significant building alterations under its control.
- conduct fire checks in individual dwellings (over and above the requirements of the FSO) when properties are void or undergoing mutual exchange. Where possible, e.g., when carrying out significant refurbishment, this will include checks on fire stopping into the service riser shaft.
- provide residents with fire safety instructions and display these in the buildings.
- provide residents with information regarding the importance of fire doors as prescribed by regulation.
- work to address resident behaviour issues it becomes aware of that could impact upon fire safety, e.g., hoarding or the use of barbecues.
- prevent fire from occurring by ensuring that any gas or electrical installation or appliances under its control are well-maintained and tested as appropriate.
- prevent fire from occurring by removing any other sources of ignition or separating these from combustible materials.
- enforce the ban on smoking in its workplaces and community premises. N.B. Poplar HARCA staff found disobeying the smoking rules are subject to disciplinary procedures under Association H.R. Policy.
- provide adequate means of escape in case of fire in all its workplaces, community buildings and residential properties.
- maintain the above means of escape in case of fire, keeping them free from obstruction and available for safe use at all times (and with appropriate directional or wayfinding signage).
- ensure that the means of escape have adequate natural, artificial or emergency lighting and that any artificial or emergency lighting provided by the Association is maintained in efficient working order.
- provide its office and community premises with adequate means of detection and warning in the event of fire and maintain these systems in efficient working order.
- provide and maintain adequate means of fighting fire (fixed installations for use by London Fire Brigade personnel) in its residential premises, in particular high-rise residential premises (dry / wet rising mains, estate fire hydrants etc.).
- for buildings over 18m, provide Premises Information Boxes with floor and building plans.
- provide and maintain adequate means of fighting fire – fixed installations as appropriate and sufficient numbers of portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets in its workplaces and community premises and maintain these in efficient working order.
- implement effective fire evacuation procedures / fire emergency plans for each of the Association's workplaces and community buildings. These plans should take into consideration the nature of use of the building, for example, as it is not possible to instruct all users of community buildings in fire procedures, sufficient fire marshals should be allocated to assist with evacuation if required.
- consider any special needs that residents, personnel or visitors might have when considering fire precautions or formulating fire evacuation procedures / fire emergency plans, e.g., language difficulties, auditory or visual disabilities, mobility issues etc.
- inform and instruct all persons who regularly work in its workplaces and community premises on the action to take in the event of fire. This will be achieved by displaying fire evacuation

procedures / fire emergency plans for each building, through staff training and by organising regular evacuation drills.

- provide additional fire training in addition to the above for designated staff who have an active role in the implementation of fire precautions in Association workplaces and community buildings such as fire marshals and managers who have been appointed to manage fire safety.
- where Association buildings are rented or leased to another organisation, ensure that responsibilities for fire safety such as the provision and maintenance of detection and warning systems and means of fighting a fire are defined in the lease or rental agreement and that the Association meets its obligations.
- ensure that any contractors working in the Association's buildings assess and reduce any fire risks associated with their work, that their safety performance is monitored and that they are briefed regarding fire procedures when working in Association workplaces and community buildings.
- co-operate with the local fire authority regarding its buildings including residential property and with regard to general fire safety within the neighbourhood.
- instruct those individuals hiring out or using the Association's community premises in the fire procedures for the premises in question as a condition of booking.
- promote good fire safety practice within the community through its housing offices and neighbourhood centres, e.g., promoting London Fire Brigade's free fire safety checks and smoke detectors for homes and helping tenants to sign up for these.
- help to keep its neighbourhoods clean and tidy through work carried out by its Estates Services department.
- work co-operatively with the community police, LBTH and other community partners to tackle any antisocial behaviour that could encourage arson, increase fire risks or prevent escape, e.g. illegal dumping, damage to fire equipment or blocked fire exits.

5. Follow on works

5.1. Poplar HARCA will ensure that there is a robust process in place for managing any follow on works arising from the fire risk assessment programme and other cyclical programmes which impact upon fire safety, e.g., gas servicing and electrical installation testing.

5.2. Any appliances found to be in dangerous state will be decommissioned immediately and replacement items provided, e.g., smoke alarms.

6. Record keeping

6.1. Records outlining the fire risk assessment schedule and the completed fire risk assessments will be kept.

6.2. Orders for fire improvement works will be issued to contractors via the Orchard Housing Management System (core system).

6.3. Poplar HARCA will establish and maintain accurate asset registers for all domestic and non-domestic properties

7. Performance monitoring and reporting

7.1. There is a robust procedure in place for monitoring compliance and validating asset lists.

7.2. Key performance indicator (KPI) measures are in place, regularly reviewed and reported to senior management, other relevant staff, resident committees, and the Board.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Poplar Board	Overall governance responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is compliant with regulatory standards, legislation and codes of practice.
Chief Executive	Strategic responsibility for the management of fire safety and for ensuring that compliance is achieved and maintained.
Director of Technical Resources	Acts as the organisation's **responsible person** for fire safety. Responsible for the implementation of the RRFSO.
Assistant Director of Health, Safety and Fire	Assist the Director of Technical Resources with fire safety policy implementation (FRA programme).
Assistant Director of Asset Management	Assist the Director of Technical Resources with fire safety policy implementation (fire improvement work and servicing programmes).
Head of Asset Compliance	Assist with fire safety policy implementation (compliance monitoring).
Head of Repairs/Building Surveyors	Overseeing the day-to-day management of FRA follow-on works/Ordering, management and quality control of FRA follow-on work.
Association operational directors (CMT and ADs)	Implementing the requirements of the policy within the responsibilities of their directorates, e.g., building management, resident behaviour, waste removal.

9. Policy review

9.1. Policies are reviewed every 2 years or sooner if they no longer reflect best practice.

10. Appendix 1: Impact assessment

How does the policy/procedure/strategy contribute to Poplar HARCA's aims?	The policy is a statement of our intention to meet all statutory obligations associated with lift safety.

Which group(s) of people benefit from the policy/procedure/strategy? **If any group could be disadvantaged, what is the mitigation or justification?**	All groups benefit from this policy in terms of health & safety. It is also beneficial for residents, staff and the Board to be aware of Poplar HARCA's statutory obligations.
How have residents been involved in developing the policy/procedure/strategy? **If they have not been involved, why not?**	The policy is a statement of our intention to meet all statutory obligations associated with lift safety. There is no scope for resident involvement other than Board approval.
How will the policy/procedure/strategy be monitored and measured? (e.g. performance indicators?)	This policy is reported to and monitored by the Services Committee as well as the Audit & Risk Committee.
If any, what are the Value for Money implications?	The policy is a statement of our intention to meet all statutory obligations. Value for Money is not a consideration for this policy.
Will personal data be collected, stored, used or shared? **If yes, a privacy impact assessment must be carried out.**	Yes, personal information may be shared with contractors (e.g. name, address, contact details) in order to allow them to carry out required works.