



FIRE SAFETY POLICY

2026 - 2029

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▪ T3 – Minor Operational Risk		
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Homes in Somerset – Fire Safety Policy

1 Introduction

Homes in Somerset (HiS) is committed to ensuring the safety of all residents, staff, contractors, and visitors by effectively identifying, managing, and mitigating fire risks within all properties it manages on behalf of Somerset Council (SC).

HiS manages a variety of property types including domestic dwellings, communal blocks, sheltered and extra care schemes, and non-domestic premises. This policy sets out HiS' approach to:

- Maintaining safe buildings and reducing the risk of fire.
- Meeting legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring that Fire Safety systems, installations, and components are serviced, inspected, maintained, and tested in line with statutory and industry standards.
- Providing a robust Fire Safety Management framework.
- Communication with customers and other stakeholders.
- Maintenance of good working relationships with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Fire Safety Management Plan and supporting procedures.

2 Policy Statement

HiS will:

- Comply with all legal and regulatory duties relating to Fire Safety, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021, and relevant sections of the Building Safety Act 2022.
- Maintain a Fire Safety Management Plan detailing procedures, processes, and responsibilities.
- Ensure all Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) are undertaken by competent, accredited professionals.
- Complete all remedial actions within the timescales recommended by the Competent Person.
- Ensure the safety and functionality of all fire safety systems and equipment including fire alarms, emergency lighting, smoke control systems, fire doors, risers, extinguishers, fire-fighting lifts, and sprinkler/misting systems.
- Provide tenants and staff with clear information, guidance, and communication on Fire Safety.
- Work collaboratively with the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue

Service (DSFRS).

3 Legal Requirements

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and standards:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Housing Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Building Regulations 2010 (as amended)
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022 (incl. Section 156 amendments)
- Regulator of Social Housing – Safety & Quality Standard (2023)
- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (Awaab's Law)
- British Standards relevant to Fire Safety systems and equipment

These place duties on SC as landlord and HiS as managing agent to ensure buildings are safe and fire risks are effectively controlled.

4 Scope

This policy applies to all premises managed by HiS on behalf of SC, including:

- Domestic dwellings and houses.
- Communal blocks of flats (including higher-risk / high-rise where applicable).
- Sheltered and extra care schemes.
- Non-domestic premises under HiS management responsibility.

It covers:

- Fire risk assessment and action management.
- Building fire precautions and systems.
- Fire door, compartmentation and means of escape protections.
- Resident information and engagement.
- Repairs, planned works, major projects and temporary impairments to systems.
- Contractor competence and assurance.
- Incident learning and reporting.

5 Fire safety management arrangements

HiS considers the following compliance measures are required to meet statutory duties:

Requirement 1 – Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)

HiS will:

- Ensure FRAs are completed and reviewed by competent, appropriately accredited professionals.
- Maintain a risk-based programme of FRA reviews and re-assessments based on building type, complexity, occupancy and risk.
- Record FRA findings in full and maintain evidence of fire safety arrangements and the identity of persons undertaking/reviewing FRAs, as required.

Requirement 2 – Action management, timescales and escalation

HiS will:

- Allocate each FRA action a risk priority and target completion date.
- Complete actions within agreed timescales; where this is not possible, HiS will implement interim mitigation, escalate through management governance, and document rationale and revised plan.
- Maintain auditable records of action progress, exceptions, mitigations and closures.

Requirement 3 – Building information and statutory information sharing (Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022)

- Resident information: provide relevant fire safety instructions and information about fire doors and evacuation strategy.
- Buildings over 11m: undertake required checks of communal fire doors and flat entrance doors in line with regulations/guidance.
- High-rise: maintain an up-to-date Building Safety Case. Provide fire and rescue service with information on external wall systems and electronic copies of floor/building plans; maintain hard copies in a secure information box; install wayfinding signage; undertake checks on firefighting lifts/essential equipment and report outages over 24 hours where required.

Requirement 4 – Resident evacuation planning (Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans PEEPs)

Where buildings and residents fall within scope of current regulations and guidance, HiS will:

- Identify residents who may have difficulty self-evacuating.
- Ask residents to alert HiS to the presence of stored oxygen so that it can alert the Fire and Rescue Service of its presence.

- Undertake person-centred fire risk assessments and produce emergency evacuation statements and information sharing in accordance with the Regulations, ensuring consent and data protection requirements are met.
- Review and update person-centred assessments and statements in line with regulatory expectations.

HiS will keep its approach under review in line with emerging national policy on residential PEEPs.

Requirement 5 – Systems inspection, testing and maintenance

HiS will:

- Ensure all fire safety systems and equipment are subject to planned inspection/testing/maintenance by competent contractors at appropriate frequencies (defined in the Fire Safety Management Plan).
- Maintain records sufficient for audit, enforcement, and assurance reporting (including certificates, test logs and defect rectification evidence).

Requirement 6 - Communal area management and housekeeping

HiS will:

- Prohibit storage of items in communal areas and escape routes without express permission.
- Maintain a no-smoking policy in communal areas.
- Undertake risk-based periodic inspections to enforce compliance and address hazards.
- Ensure furniture provided in communal areas is compliant with relevant fire safety requirements.
- Balance individual residents' rights with timely action where resident behaviours increase risk to others.

Requirement 7 - Temporary impairments (critical safety controls)

Where fire safety systems or measures must be isolated, bypassed, removed or rendered ineffective (e.g., alarm zones, smoke control, sprinklers, firefighting lift), HiS will:

- Operate an impairment control process (authorisation, duration limits, interim measures, resident/DSFRS notifications where appropriate, and restoration/verification).
- Record impairments and compensatory measures for audit and learning.

Requirement 8 - Third-party occupation and commercial leases

HiS will:

- Maintain assurance that external agencies / commercial leaseholders occupying HiS-managed premises have adequate fire safety arrangements and co-operate on shared risks.

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Responsibilities

The following posts hold responsibility for Fire Safety:

Somerset Council (SC)

- Acts as landlord and oversees compliance through quarterly performance reporting and regular Partnership meetings.

HiS Board

- Ensures a Fire Safety Policy and Management Plan are in place and effective.
- Scrutinises performance and compliance.

Chief Executive

- Duty Holder for Fire Safety.
- Responsible for ensuring compliance and reporting any breaches to the Regulator of Social Housing.

Director of Asset Management, Safety & Development

- Supports the Duty Holder and ensures a robust management framework and oversight of fire safety performance.

Head of Compliance & Building Safety

- Develops and reviews policy.
- Ensures implementation, staff competence, and contractor oversight.

Compliance & Building Safety Specialist

- Operational fire safety lead acting on behalf of the Responsible Person(s).
- Manages FRAs, actions, DSFRS liaison, and compliance monitoring.

All HiS Colleagues

All staff must:

- Ensure communal areas are safe and free from obstructions.
- Report fire safety hazards immediately.
- Support residents with fire safety awareness.

Residents

Residents are responsible for:

- Fire safety within their homes, including regular testing of smoke detectors.
- Avoiding the storage of combustible items in communal areas.
- Informing HiS where oxygen or other high-risk equipment is present.

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Equality & Diversity

HiS is committed to delivering Fire Safety services in a way that is fair, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of all residents, colleagues, and stakeholders. In line with our organisational Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments, HiS will:

- Identify and support vulnerable residents by proactively considering medical, social, cultural, and disability-related needs when planning access, communication, and Fire Safety interventions.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure no individual is disadvantaged when receiving Fire Safety services. This may include extended appointments, alternative communication methods, assisted visits, or coordination with carers/advocates.
- Communicate in accessible formats, offering information in large print, Easy Read, audio, Braille, and translated materials on request. Digital formats will also meet recognised accessibility standards.
- Respect cultural and religious needs, ensuring colleagues and contractors act sensitively and maintain professional standards when working in residents' homes.
- Prioritise resident safety where vulnerabilities increase risk, ensuring that Fire Risk Assessments, PEEPs, and remedial actions consider individual circumstances.
- Train colleagues and contractors to recognise equality needs, unconscious bias, safeguarding cues, and the importance of inclusive customer service within Fire Safety roles.
- Monitor equality impacts, using data and feedback to identify trends, remove barriers, and improve service delivery for groups with protected characteristics.
- Work collaboratively with partners, including social care, health professionals and advocacy organisations, where additional support is needed to keep residents safe.

HiS will ensure that equality considerations are embedded throughout all Fire Safety processes—from resident engagement and access management to FRA actions, remedial works, and emergency planning.

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Performance

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will include:

- % of properties with valid FRAs.
- % of FRA actions completed within required timescales.
- % of fire safety systems maintained and in date.
- Number of notices from DSFRS and resolution times.
- Number and outcome of fire-related incidents.

Performance will be reviewed monthly by the Board, Executive Team, and Somerset Council.

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Repairs & Maintenance Activity

Responsive Repairs

HiS will manage this risk by ensuring that all contractors and directly managed operatives must obtain prior permission before working on any of its properties, and that repairs and maintenance (R&M) contractors have a general awareness of Fire Safety in order to undertake a Dynamic Risk Assessment when undertaking Responsive Repairs that may have an impact on Fire Safety. Repairs will be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard, Approved Code of Practice or associated Good Practice Guidance and by Third Party Accredited contractors where required.

Certain buildings may be assigned as Permit to Work areas to manage the work to an element, area, or of a certain type. HiS will review the need for the operation of a Permit to Work Scheme for a specific property on a scheme-by-scheme basis.

Planned & Major Works

Planned Maintenance or Upgrade Programmes commissioned by HiS to Buildings that require a FRA will be subject to a Risk Assessment by a Competent Person to consider their impact on Fire Safety. Works Programmes are likely to fall into one of three categories:

1. Works subject to Planning Permission and/or Building Regulations approval.
2. Works not subject to the Building Regulations (including those covered by the Building Regulations but delivered by/under a Competent Person scheme) but where there is a foreseeable impact on Fire Safety.
3. Works not subject to the Building Regulations where there is no foreseeable impact on Fire Safety.

Works will only be in Category 3 if a Competent Person has reviewed the

proposed Works and formally agreed that there is no foreseeable impact on Fire Safety.

For all other Works, HiS will ensure that prior to Works commencing a Competent Person will:

- Review the proposed Work against the Fire Risk Assessment and any Building Safety Case.
- Ensure anyone appointed to undertake Design or Construction activities can demonstrate the necessary competence to discharge their responsibilities relating to Fire Safety. This will include Duty Holders identified in the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (the Client, the Principal Designer, the Principal Contractor, Designers and Contractors).
- Request reasonable assurance that Duty Holders have demonstrated that resident safety can be assured during the Works or that a suitable Decanting Strategy is in place.
- Engage with residents on Fire Safety matters that affect them.
- Ensure that any PEEPS are fully considered and any impact on being able to discharge the requirement laid down in any PEEP are not compromised or if they are alternative agreed measures put in place, which may require the temporary decanting of an occupier/s.
- Request reasonable assurance that Duty Holders have complied with the Building Regulations in relation to Fire Safety where required.
- Undertake reviews to any FRA where there are any unplanned delays to a project or of notified incidents.
- Request reasonable assurance that there is an appropriate Site Inspection and Sign-Off Programme in place for all the stages of the Work.

During the Project and at its conclusion, HiS will make any updates to the FRA, Building Safety Case, or other key Fire Safety information as required.

For certain Projects on Buildings, there will be additional requirements in relation to notification and consent from the Building Safety Regulator.

10 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Formally every three years.
- Following legislative changes, incidents, audits, or other significant triggers.

The Chief Executive, with the Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, and Health & Safety Forum, will recommend the policy for Board approval.

11 Related Policies and Documents

- Fire Safety Management Plan (2026)
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy (2025–2028)
- Heating Safety Policy (2026–2029)
- Health and Safety Policy (2026–2027)
- Contractor Management Policy (2024-2027)