



EKAYA HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Fire Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

Ekaya recognises its legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, residents, contractors and visitors to property that it owns and manages. Ekaya will ensure its approach to fire safety meets all legal requirements and that fire safety is promoted positively and clearly to staff and residents.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. This policy sets out the Ekaya's approach to Fire Safety.
- 2.2. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 imposes several legal duties on Ekaya. The regulations clarify the approach to be taken with an onus on risk assessment and managing risks, rather than blanket fire precaution.
- 2.3. Ekaya's responsible persons are required to assess the risks posed by fire to the health and safety of employees and anyone else who might be affected. Fire risks need to be eliminated as far as is reasonably practical and must at least be reduced to a tolerable level.
- 2.4 Ekaya's Board and Senior Management Team recognise that a specific fire risk management procedure is required to enable the safe management of property and operations and are committed to making sure that key information is clearly understood by staff, residents, contractors and visitors.
- 2.5 Ekaya's Board and Chief Executive are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with all statutory fire safety requirements. This responsibility is shared and delegated with key staff members whose duties are outlined at **Section 5** of this policy.
- 2.6 This policy refers to fire safety for all property owned and managed by Ekaya.

3. Compliance

- 3.1. References to Fire Safety Standards and Management are contained in:
 - a) The Housing Act 2004
 - b) The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - c) The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - d) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - e) Building Regulations 2010: Part B: Fire Safety
 - f) Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
 - g) Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
 - h) Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
 - i) The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
 - j) The Safety Signs and Signal Regulations 1996

- k) Other guidance and good practice:
 - l) Fire Safety in purpose-built blocks of flats (CLG)
 - m) National Fire Safety protocol (LACORS)
 - n) Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings. Code of practice BS9991: 2015
 - o) Building Safety Act 2022
 - p) Fire Safety Act 2021
 - q) The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - r) Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
 - s) Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025.
 - t) The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

3.2. Ekaya acknowledges and accepts the responsibilities under the applicable regulations and legislation and further understands that failure to properly discharge these responsibilities may result in:

- a) Prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- b) Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- c) Prosecution under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

4. Aims and objectives

Our primary objective is to ensure that residents, contractors, staff, and visitors remain safe in our property. Failure to properly discharge our legal responsibilities may also result in:

- Prosecution under the Regulatory Fire Safety Order 2005, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, or Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.
- Regulatory intervention by the RSH or Ofsted.
- Reputational damage.
- Loss of confidence by stakeholders in the organisation.

4.1. The aims are to:

- a) To set out clearly, Ekaya's approach to fire safety
- b) To carry out, review and take action regarding Fire Risk Assessments

- c) To reduce the risk of fire to as low a level as is reasonably practical
- d) To ensure the safety from fire of all relevant persons living or working in Ekaya properties by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures
- e) To communicate clearly to residents the fire safety arrangements within their properties and to work with residents to help assist us with areas of noncompliance
- f) To train relevant staff on fire safety

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Ekaya is responsible for compliance with all statutory health and safety requirements regarding fire safety. The landlord responsibility cannot be delegated and rests with the responsible person and business, even where management of the property is being carried out by a third party. However, there may be lease or arrangements in the lease where the third party assumes the role by the nature of the services.
- 5.2. Under legislation, the legal person or entity that has control of the premises for the purposes of a business or undertaking (such as social housing) is ultimately responsible for fire safety. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 they are known as the Responsible Person.
- 5.3. At Ekaya, the duties of the responsible person are shared by the Board, Chief Executive, Director of Operations and Property Services & Asset Manager.
- 5.4. The duties on the Responsible Person(s), to the extent that they have control over premises, is to assess the risks posed by fire to the health and safety of their employees and to anyone else who may be affected by their activities and eliminate those risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, or to otherwise reduce those risks to a tolerable level.
- 5.5. It is therefore the role of the landlord, to proactively seek evidenced assurance that all legislation relating to fire is being complied with, that the risks associated with fire are identified and managed and that systems of control are in place.
- 5.6. Ekaya's Board and Chief Executive are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with all statutory fire safety requirements. This responsibility is shared and delegated with several key staff members whose duties are outlined below.

5.6.1. Board & Chief Executive

- a) The board is ultimately responsible for providing the resources and monitoring the results of safety and they will pass authority to the Chief Executive and Director of Operations for implementation of this policy

b) The board are specifically responsible and accountable for the provision of necessary resources as far as practicable to ensure the safety of tenant/residents from fire related issues arising from the provision of homes

c) The Chief Executive will ensure responsibility is assigned and undertaken at all levels within Ekaya and will take responsibility for ensuring SMT and managers undertake their roles to fulfil this policy. They will ensure allocation of resources for the provision of suitable measures to reduce fire incidents in our managed premises in line with legislation

5.6.2. Director of Operations

- a) Responsible for ensuring all standards in this policy are complied with, monitoring performance, addressing any shortfall and responding to any emerging risks
- b) Reporting on performance and compliance with Policy to the Board
- c) Promote Fire Safety to staff and residents
- d) Ensure that all staff and contractors employed to work on fire safety are suitably qualified or trained

5.6.3. Property Services & Asset Manager

- a) Setting standards for good fire management practice in the workplace and for maintaining safety standards in inspection, servicing and repairs required to fire systems
- b) Establishing and maintaining records for fire risk assessment and action closedown
- c) Ensuring all Contractors employed for Fire assessments or contracted works appropriately vetted and are competent to work on Ekaya properties
- d) Ensuring records of information and integrity of the FRA process
- e) Monitoring requirements and compliance with best practice for fire safety
- f) Reporting on serious incidents or data concerns relative to fire safety

5.6.4. Employees

- a) Housing Management staff need to ensure that possessions or rubbish are not placed or stored in communal areas and where this occurs take prompt action address the issue
- b) All staff irrespective of whether they are directly engaged in the Fire Assessment program or not should take responsibility to observe and report defects in fire safety

5.6.5. Residents

- a) At the point of sign up and upon occupation all residents will be provided with information relative to our requirements as a landlord and their roles in assisting us in fulfilling those duties and the penalties for restricting the landlord in statutory duty
- b) Residents are responsible through their agreement and must allow the landlord full access to the property for the purposes of relevant fire checks on self-closing mechanisms and for fire safety in communal areas
- c) Residents are responsible for their own safety inside their properties and Ekaya will act accordingly if there are reports of serious detriment and risk to the resident and or others by practices placing persons at risk

6. Policy Guidelines

6.1. Ekaya will:

- a) Assess the risk of fire within its premises regularly
- b) Complete Fire Risk Assessments annually in all supported housing schemes or schemes with shared facilities and Happy Nursery Days Day Nursery
- c) Complete Fire Risk Assessments for all properties with internal communal areas and its head office, at timescales that are appropriate for the level of risk associated with each building.
- d) Review Fire Risk Assessments if there is a change of use or substantial change to any building
- e) Complete or receive Fire Risk Assessments when Ekaya builds or acquires any property that requires one

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- f) Provide information to all key stakeholders including staff and residents of what to do in the event of a fire occurrence or alarm activation
 - g) Provide adequate means of escape in the event of a fire
 - h) Ensure measures are taken to reduce fire and smoke spread
 - i) Provide and maintain where necessary suitable fire systems
 - j) Provide a management plan for all properties with internal communal areas which is reviewed bi-annually or if there is a change of use or change of layout
 - k) Ensure all staff involved with managing fire safety are suitably trained and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy

6.2. Fire Risk Assessments must be reviewed no matter what the risk category, in the event of the following:

- a fire, a near miss or threat of arson;
- the introduction of any new work practices;
- works that affect the means of escape, fire alarm system or equipment in the building;
- structural alterations, material changes, or use of the building;
- changes in statutory fire or building legislation, including guidance;
- changes in fire strategy that may affect the building; or
- tenant related issues that have been identified by means of a person focused risk assessment which would be relevant to the building e.g. a tenant who is unable to self-evacuate due to their mobility and the escape strategy is evacuation.

6.3. We will be proactive in identifying people who may need assistance to escape in the event of a fire. Where recommended in the Fire Risk Assessment by the Fire Risk Assessor, we will provide equipment to aid evacuation which should only be used by appropriately qualified or trained persons e.g. Emergency Services.

6.4. Personal emergency evacuations plans ("PEEPS") will be undertaken to comply with our responsibilities under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Equality Act 2010.

6.5. All remedial actions arising from the Fire Risk Assessment or further investigations shall have clear completion targets stipulated by the Fire Risk Assessor. Any proposed changes to these completion targets will be agreed with the Fire Risk Assessor and must be documented on the Fire Risk Assessment. In all cases, remedial works will be carried out as required by the timescales prescribed in Awaab's Law (detailed further below).

- 6.5.1. All fire safety remedial work must be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations, relevant British Standards, approved code of practices and good practice guidance. Any contractors undertaking specialist fire safety remedial works should be competent and UKAS accredited.

6.6. Evacuation Strategy for Buildings

- 6.6.1. We will ensure that each building has an evacuation strategy that is clearly stated in the Fire Risk Assessment. The responsible person in conjunction with the Fire Risk Assessor will agree the evacuation strategy for the building being assessed.

6.7. Fire Drills

- 6.7.1. All new staff will be instructed on the fire evacuation procedure as part of their induction, and this will be recorded in their induction record.
- 6.7.2. Tenants will be provided with written advice as to the evacuation procedure applicable to their home. Tenants will be encouraged to read and understand their evacuation procedure as there may not be a member of staff on site to direct tenants when the alarm is activated.

6.8. Fire Plan for Buildings

- 6.8.1. Each building will be required to have and maintain a written emergency building plan. The purpose of the plan is to make sure that everybody knows what to do in the event of a fire or emergency.

6.9. Fire Instructions Notices

- 6.9.1. Appropriate printed fire instruction notices will be displayed prominently throughout the building, giving clear written guidance about what people should do if they find a fire or hear the fire alarm.
- 6.9.2. Notices will be positioned close to break glass alarm points, in the guest room(s), in the communal lounge(s) and next to all lift call buttons.

6.10. Evacuation Routes

- 6.10.1. Fire exits should open towards the place of safety and must be clearly marked by a sign above the door stating, "Fire Exit". Where the risk of obstruction exists, fire exits should be labelled externally with 'Fire Exit Keep Clear' signage.
- 6.10.2. The signs must be compliant with way finding and Health & Safety signage.
- 6.10.3. Fire exit routes must always remain free from obstruction.

6.10.4. External fire escape stairs should have slip resistant surface, suitable handrails, and emergency lighting.

6.11. Means of Escape

6.11.1. All means of escape routes will be checked monthly.

6.11.2. Any problems that cannot be rectified at the time of the inspection arising from the means of escape checks must be reported immediately to the responsible person.

6.12. Fire Doors in Common Parts

6.12.1. The area(s) around fire doors must always remain free from obstruction.

6.12.2. Fire doors must not under any circumstances be propped open.

6.12.3. Fire doors must be subject to regular opening and general maintenance.

6.12.4. Fire doors in properties under 11 meters (4 storey) high must be subject to an annual inspection and results recorded using a standard format.

6.13. Front Entrance Doors to Flats

6.13.1. Landlords with responsibility for residential buildings under 11 meters in height have a duty to put in place general fire precautions in these buildings, this duty includes making sure that all fire doors, including flat entrance doors, can provide adequate protection. Accordingly, flat front entrance doors leading onto internal common parts will be subject to an annual inspection which will be documented and recorded.

6.13.2. The Fire Safety Regulations 2022 do not replace the existing duty for a responsible person to put in place general fire precautions in any premises covered by The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, regardless of the building's height.

6.13.3. The Fire Safety Act 2021 has clarified that any residential building which contains two or more domestic properties falls within the scope of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

6.14. Emergency Lighting

6.14.1. All designated escape routes should always be adequately lit and have some form of emergency escape lighting installed where failure of the normal lighting could lead to danger.

6.14.2. Emergency lights will be tested in accordance with current regulations and be the subject of a Service and Maintenance Contract. Service records will be maintained.

6.15. Fire Alarm System

6.15.1. If applicable, the fire alarm system must:

- be capable of alerting building occupants;
- be subject to a regular test using a different break glass call point on each occasion and records maintained of the date of test and sequencing of call points;
- be checked monthly by staff who should record the outcome of the check; and
- be subject to regular maintenance and records be maintained.

6.15.2. In the case of false alarms, where no member of trained staff is present on site, we will notify the local Fire and Rescue Service. Once they have attended and visually checked the site, the respective service contractor will be instructed to attend and reset the fire alarm panel.

6.15.3. Contact details for the service contractors will be displayed on all fire panels so that they can be easily contracted out of hours. Records of checks completed within individual flats must be maintained and issues of non-access will be addressed with individual tenants.

6.16. Fire Extinguishers

6.16.1. If installed, fire extinguishers must:

- be tested and examined each year by service contractors and the outcome recorded;
- be visually checked on a regular basis by staff;
- be wall mounted on brackets or floor mounted in a position where they can be easily reached;
- be clearly visible from a distance with its use identifiable e.g. carbon dioxide, water, foam and with appropriate instruction notices next to them;
- always remain free of obstruction;

- not be used to prop open fire doors; and
- be correctly placed near exit points.

6.17. Smoke Vents

6.17.1. If installed, smoke vents must:

- always remain free from obstruction;
- be visually checked on a regular basis by scheme staff;
- be inspected / serviced annually by appropriately qualified contractors; and
- be maintained, serviced, and recorded in the fire logbook located in the fire alarm panel box.

6.18. Smoke / Heat Detectors (common areas and within flats)

6.18.1. Smoke and Heat Detectors must be inspected at the time of letting.

6.18.2. For General Needs Properties, Smoke and Heat Detectors will be button tested annually.

6.18.3. For Sheltered Schemes, Smoke and Heat Detectors will be button tested every six months.

6.18.4. Electronic records of all testing will be maintained.

6.19. Fire Blankets

6.19.1. Where fire blankets are provided in communal kitchens, if any, they will be visually inspected annually by a competent person / service contractor and the outcome recorded.

6.20. Lightning Conductor Protection Systems

6.20.1. Where installed, lightning conductor protection systems will be annually tested and inspected by a competent service contractor. An electronic record will be held.

6.21. Further Investigations

6.21.1. We will proactively undertake further investigations to the buildings for which we are responsible, where required. This may include but is not limited to investigations into external wall systems, balconies, compartmentation, etc.

Such investigations will be recommended by the competent person undertaking the Fire Risk Assessment, the fire and rescue service or initiated where we are not satisfied that we have appropriate assurance around the design, installation, or maintenance of a building component.

7. Testing and Maintenance of Fire Safety Equipment, Fire and Electrical Installations

- 7.1. All fire safety equipment within the scope of this policy will be tested and maintained in accordance with regulatory, statutory and manufacturer's requirements. This will include the completion of all essential remedial works identified during the testing/maintenance activity.
- 7.2. We shall ensure that all fire assets have a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

8. Repairs and Maintenance Activities

- 8.1. There is a risk that repairs and maintenance activities unwittingly impact on fire safety. Owing to the volume and nature of repairs works, it is not practicable to undertake specific risk assessments of all jobs. We will manage this risk by ensuring all contractors have a general awareness of fire safety when undertaking responsive repairs. Repairs will be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard, Approved Code of Practice, or good practice guidance.

8.2. Planned and Major Works

- 8.2.1. Planned maintenance programs commissioned by us to buildings that require a Fire Risk Assessment will be subject to a risk assessment by a competent person to consider their impact on fire safety. Work programmes are likely to fall into one of three categories:
- (i) works subject to planning permission and/or Building Regulations approval;
 - (ii) works not subject to Building Regulations, but where there is a foreseeable impact on fire safety; or
 - (iii) works not subject to the Building Regulations where there is no foreseeable impact on fire safety.
- 8.2.2. Works will only be in category 3 above if a Competent Person has reviewed the proposed works and formally agreed that there is no foreseeable impact on fire safety.
- 8.2.3. During the project and at its conclusion, we will make and document any changes to the Fire Risk Assessment, as and when these arise.

8.3. Tenant Improvement Works

- 8.3.1. We will maintain a consent process for tenant improvement works. In buildings that are subject to a Fire Risk Assessment, the proposed work will be evaluated by a competent person to consider if there is an impact on fire safety. Approval will not be unreasonably withheld although consent may be refused, or conditions imposed where appropriate to ensure fire safety is always maintained.
- 8.3.2. Where unauthorised work is discovered that impacts on fire safety, we will immediately take the appropriate action to remove or remedy this. The cost of doing so will be recovered from the tenant.

9. Awaab's Law

9.1. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 seeks a more effective regulation regime for social housing. This includes the implementation of the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (also known as 'Awaab's Law') on 27 October 2025. This policy is subject to change as full details or amendments are published. The requirements are as follows:

- From October 2025, social landlords have to address damp and mould hazards that are considered significant hazards within fixed timescales. "Significant hazard" means, in relation to a social home, a relevant hazard that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home. In 2026, requirements will extend to apply to a wider range of hazards where they present a significant risk of harm. These include excess cold and excess heat, falls associated with baths and surfaces including stairs, structural collapse and explosions, fire and electrical hazards, and domestic and personal hygiene.
- From October 2025, social landlords also have to address all hazards that are emergency hazards as soon as possible and within no longer than 24 hours. "Emergency hazard" means a relevant hazard that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home.

9.2. We will adhere to the proposed timescales set out within the new legislation.

9.3. The legislation requires that the following timescales will be adhered to where we determine there is a significant hazard:

- An investigation will be carried out within 10 working days. Where the investigation confirms an emergency hazard, we will follow the process for emergency hazards outlined below.
- Where an investigation confirms a significant hazard, we will:

- (i) Provide a written summary of the investigation to the resident within 3 working days of conclusion;
 - (ii) Complete relevant safety works and begin, or take steps to begin, any further works to prevent reoccurrence within 5 working days of concluding the investigation;
 - (iii) Where further supplementary works are required and it is not possible to begin them within 5 working days, we will start these as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 weeks of the investigation concluding
- If the property cannot be made safe, we will offer suitable alternative accommodation until the significant hazard is fully resolved.

9.4. The legislation requires that the following timescales will be adhered to where we determine there is an emergency hazard:

- An investigation will be carried out within 24 hours.
- Where an investigation confirms an emergency hazard, we will:
 - (i) Complete all relevant safety works and make the property safe within 24 hours;
 - (ii) If the property cannot be made safe within 24 hours, we will offer suitable alternative accommodation until the works are completed;
- Provide a written summary of the investigation within 3 working days of conclusion.

10. Communication and Information

10.1. We will encourage fire safety by means of the following actions:

- ensure tenants are fully aware of the evacuation procedure for their building;
- use the appropriate 'Fire Action' signage to communicate the action tenants need to take in the event of a fire; and
- inform residents of the importance of fire safety on a regular basis, through the provision of information via website, newsletter, leaflet, or at the start of a tenancy.

11. Monitoring and Reporting

- 11.1. The Property Services & Asset Manager will have day to day responsibility for monitoring compliance with this policy and the Fire Safety procedures ensuring specific tasks and reports are completed to the required standard and in good time.
- 11.2. The Director of Operations will provide regular reports to the Board and committees as required.
- 11.3. The Director of Operations and Property Services & Asset Manager will undertake audits of Fire Risk Assessments for quality and confirmation that recommendations are actioned.
- 11.4. The Property Services & Asset Manager will provide performance indicators information report to SMT, the Policy and Performance Committee and the Board

12. Review

- 12.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years or where there is any change in legislation or regulation that requires this policy to be updated.

13. Policy Approval

Approval Date:	15/07/2026
Approval By:	Policy & Performance Committee
Policy Owner:	Director of Operations
Next Review Date:	November 2029