

Fire safety information for Ekaya residents

Responsible person – Ekaya Housing Association

Accountable person – Ekaya Housing Association

Address - 145 Stockwell Rd, London SW9 9TN

For any questions about the content in this booklet please contact the team on repairs@ekaya.co.uk or by calling [020 7091 1800](tel:02070911800) and ask to speak to a member of the team about the Fire Risk Assessment.



Fire safety advice for residents.

We take the safety of our residents seriously, but fire safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you live in a converted house or purpose-built block of flats, it is important to be aware of fire safety.

This booklet will inform you about good practices you can adopt to keep everyone in your home and building safe. There are many simple measures you can take to help prevent a fire in your home.

Most of them cost nothing and following this advice can keep you and your family safe. The most common causes of domestic fires as reported by Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) are: cooking, smoking, faulty or misused electrics and electrical equipment, candles and open flames.

In this booklet you will find advice on how to safely manage these activities.

Please read and share this with members of your household.

Evacuation strategy

If you live in a residential block, you should know your building's evacuation strategy. This is what you do if a fire happens in your building. Everyone who lives in your home should know the evacuation strategy and your quickest, safest route out of the building.

There are two types of evacuation strategies: 'stay put' or 'simultaneous evacuation'. A sign by the front entrance of your block will explain which type of strategy is used in your building. This information is also shared when you move in.

The 'stay put' strategy

The 'stay put' strategy means that if there is a fire elsewhere in your building, you're usually safer staying in your flat with the doors and windows closed.

Important: if your flat is affected by fire or smoke, leave immediately, closing the door behind you. Once you're safely outside, phone 999 for the fire brigade.

The 'simultaneous evacuation' strategy

The 'simultaneous evacuation' strategy means if you hear a fire alarm in your flat and throughout the building - or you know there is a fire in the building - you should follow your evacuation strategy and leave by the quickest and safest route. Don't re-enter until you're told by the fire rescue service that it is safe to do so.

Fire Action Notices

Fire Action Notices are signs designed to tell building occupants what to do in the event of a fire. They give various instructions including how to raise the alarm, where the closest assembly point is and how to contact the Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade). It is recommended that Fire Action Notices are placed at prominent locations in a building.

Properties with communal areas:

A fire action notice (applicable to the evacuation strategy of the building) will be displayed at each entry and exit as a minimum.

FIRE PROTECTION IN PLACE WITHIN YOUR BLOCK

It is Important to understand the fire safety measures within your building and understand the steps Ekaya are taking to ensure your building is compliant and safe.

The primary objective is to restrict the movement of fire, smoke, and heat within a specific area, allowing occupants to evacuate safely or to know that residents are safe as part of a stay put policy, as well as providing adequate time for firefighting operations.

Compartmentation - The Concept of Compartmentation

The primary objective is to restrict the movement of fire, smoke, and heat within a specific area, to know that residents are safe to allow occupants to be evacuate safely or as well as providing adequate time for firefighting operations.

Fire Risk assessment (FRA)

We regularly **review any fire risks** and the procedures for preventing and reporting fires. This includes making sure that **fire risk assessments (FRAs)** are up to date.

Fire doors

Why is a Fire Door Important?

A fire door is an important safety device in the event of a fire. Fire doors delay the spread of smoke and fire, which can give the occupants of a property crucial time to get to safety should a fire break out and minimise damage to the building by containing smoke and fire for a specified period. Fire doors will not fulfil this function if damaged or propped open. **It is very important that your fire door is kept shut to function**

Communal fire detection and alarm system

The communal areas have appropriate smoke and heat detectors and other fire safety measures as well as checking and servicing gas and solid fuel appliances in annual safety checks and regular inspections of electrical systems.

Individual property

Ekaya provide smoke detectors within hallways and landings as required. Most of our properties have mains wired smoke and heat alarms. If you have a battery-operated alarm, we will upgrade this to hardwire.

Your alarms will detect the present of heat or smoke and will sound loudly to let you know that you need to evacuate your flat.

If at any stage there is a fault warning or beeping, please let Ekaya know immediately by calling [020 7091 1800](tel:02070911800) or email repairs@ekaya.co.uk

Signage

Where residential building comprising of two or more flats, where required Fire Action notices are clearly displayed providing instructions in both pictures and words to tenants of what to do in case of a fire in their flat or a fire elsewhere in the building.

All residents have also been sent fire safety information on how to keep safe in case of fire in the house or building.

Top causes of fire in homes

Cooking

More fires and fire injuries are caused by accidental activities in the kitchen than anywhere else in the home. Smoke and Heat alarms fitted in your home can detect the increase in temperature caused by a fire. A pot or pan overheats or splatters greases, can take seconds to cause a fire.

Always take extra care in the kitchen, when cooking please remember

- Never leave pans unattended
- Don't cook if you are tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that might make you drowsy.
- Keep the oven, hob, cooker hood, and grill clean and in good working order.
- Check toasters are clean and not placed under kitchen cabinets or close to anything that can catch fire.
- Always supervise children (and pets) in the kitchen. Put matches away and keep saucepan handles out of their reach
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking.
- Keep combustibles (e.g. oven mitts, dish towels, paper towels) away from heat sources.
- Never use barbeque (BBQ) indoors or on a balcony
- Consider having a fire blanket or suitable fire extinguisher available nearby to use in the event of a fire.

Candles and naked flames

Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) regularly attend fires caused by candles, incense, and oil burners. Although they create a gorgeous warm glow, candles need handling with care. The London Fire Brigade reported that significant number of in London were connected to candle use.

For your safety and that of others, please make sure:

- You put out any candles, incense, and oil burners when you leave the room and especially before going to bed
- These items are always to be held firmly in heat resistant holders and placed on a stable surface
- You keep them away from combustibles materials that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture, clothes.
- You keep candles and other naked flames out of reach of children and pets to avoid accidents.
- Never use fireworks on balconies



Smoking

The fires caused by smoking (including cigarettes, roll-ups, cigars, and pipe tobacco) result in more deaths than any other type of fire.

If you are a smoker, it is vital you ensure you adopt safe smoking practices.

How to prevent smoke related fires

- It is safer to smoke outside but make sure cigarettes are extinguished and disposed of safely.
- Never smoke in bed
- Don't smoke in an armchair or sofa if you think you may fall asleep.
- Take extra care when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you've been drinking alcohol.
- Use ashtrays that can't tip over and stub cigarettes out safely.
- Never balance cigars or cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray or anything else as they can fall and cause a fire.
- Don't leave lit pipes or cigarettes unattended.
- Empty ashtrays carefully
- Never leave E-cigarettes unattended while on charge and never overnight when householders are asleep.
- Never use e-cigarettes close to medical oxygen



Electric heaters and equipment

It is common for households to use heaters to dry clothes, particularly in the winter months but this poses a significant risk. Portable electric heaters are high-wattage appliances that have the potential to ignite nearby combustible materials like curtains, beds, sofas, paper, clothing, and flammable liquids.

When using heaters and electrical devices in your home please remember

- To sit at least one metre away from any heaters
- Never put a heater near curtains, furniture, or clothes. Keep heaters at least 1 meter away from flammables.
- Do not cover the heater vents.
- Turn off electrical equipment when not in use.

Extension Leads

An extension lead should not be used whenever it is possible to reach a wall socket with the equipment cable. However, the cable equipment should never be stretched as this may cause a tripping hazard.

Always check that:

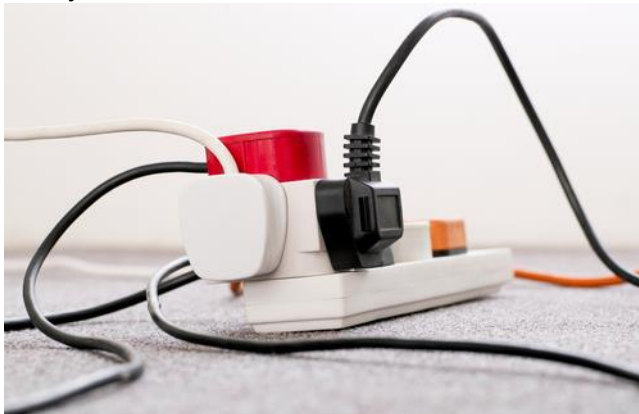
- Leads, plugs and sockets are undamaged.
- Lead plug contains a correctly rated fuse for the equipment to be used.
- When a cable drum extension lead is in use, only use CE marked or UKCA electrical marked products.
- Do not overload extension leads

Electrical appliances

- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water
- Do not leave appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers running overnight
- Hair straighteners get extremely hot. Always switch them off and let them to cool on a heatproof surface

Using an electric blanket

- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use
- Do not buy second-hand blankets and check regularly for wear and tear
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions



Battery and charging safely

Re-chargeable/lithium-ion batteries when used safely power millions of devices every day such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, mobility scooters, electric scooters, and bikes. However, batteries can present a fire risk when over-charged, short-circuited, submerged in water or if their cases are damaged. The majority of fires related to e-bikes and e-scooters happen in homes and are often caused when charging batteries.

Please follow these safety tips when charging your devices:

- Always use the original charger that came with your devices or a genuine replacement.
- Don't leave items continuously on charge (after the charge cycle is complete)
- Avoid storing, using, or charging batteries in extremes of high or low temperatures
- Do not charge batteries or electrical equipment overnight.
- Never block your escape route with e-bikes or e-scooters.

Faulty electrical goods can cause fires. If you are concerned about the safety of a product, stop using it and make your concern known to the retailer, manufacturer, or your local Trading Standards office.



Keeping safe / Your responsibilities

Alarms

Most of our properties have hardwired smoke and heat alarms. If you have a battery-operated alarm, we will upgrade this.

It's better to prevent a fire from happening, in your own part making sure your alarms work and so test regularly. It's as simple as pushing the button on the face of the alarm. Where alarms are fitted on a high ceiling, you can utilise a mop broom handle to push the test button

Please take note of the following:

- Change the battery if it starts to bleep on a regular basis
- Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarm if they go off by mistake
- Some alarms are fitted with 10 year or long-lasting sealed batteries. These should not be removed or replaced as doing so will damage the alarms beyond repair
- Make testing your smoke alarms part of your regular household routine, ideally you should test them weekly
- Report faulty alarm immediately to repairs on 0207 0911800 or email repairs@ekaya.co.uk



Specialist alarms

Where a person has restrictions that may prevent or delay their escape, specialist alarms can be fitted.

Strobe light and vibrating pad alarms are available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information contact: Royal National Institute for Deaf people (RNID) information line on 0808 808 0123 or text phone 07360268 988 or email at contact@rnid.otg.uk or your local Fire and Rescue Service.

Where a telecare monitoring system is fitted, this should be linked to all alarms and sensors in the property

Wherever possible, fit interlinked alarms throughout your property so that when one alarm detects a fire they all go off together. This will give everyone in your home the earliest warning of fire

Mains powered alarms, should be installed by a qualified electrician.

Carbon Monoxide / gas safety

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste and is produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels. A slow build-up of CO over a long period of time can also be deadly or lead to long term health issues.

What you can do:

- Avoid purchasing second-hand cookers.
- Always use Gas Safe engineers to install gas appliances.
- Provide access for annual gas safety check
- For homeowner and shared ownership – always carry out annual gas safety check of your property.

Balconies

If you have a balcony, don't forget that it's part of a block and what you do or keep on it affects your neighbours.

Don't use it to store combustible items, such as furniture or white goods, or put up screens or fencing.

Please remember that BBQs are not allowed on your balcony.

Smoking on your balcony can be dangerous. If you do smoke, you must put your cigarette out and dispose of it in an ashtray. Never throw it over the side



Communal areas

Corridors and stairwells are emergency exit routes in case of fire. Ekaya now operate a zero-tolerance approach to items in communal areas. It's vital we keep communal areas clear as it ensures you and other residents can escape safely in the event of an emergency. It also allows emergency services to safely and effectively do their jobs.

We routinely carry out estate inspection and fire risk assessments to buildings to check and identify any risks that items in communal areas may pose as risk.

Your communal areas must be kept clear of all items as this:

- Prevent residents escaping from the building including bicycles, prams/pushchairs, wheelchairs, e-bikes and scooters, furnitures, children's toys, white goods etc
- Stop the fire services carrying out their duties
- Give off toxic smoke and gas when burning
- Explode due to high temperatures (e.g. glass)
- Cause the fire to spread more quickly

Please note this is not an exhaustive list

If we find your items in communal areas, we will:

- Remove and dispose of the goods immediately without notice
- TORT notice already served on all communal blocks
 - No compensation or monies will be claimed from Ekaya as a pre-condition of the tort notice for the disposal of goods



Hoarding

Sometimes people like to collect and hoard things in their home, leading to an increased risk of fire. A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner. The items can be of little or no monetary value and usually result in unmanageable amounts of clutter.

Hoarded materials can easily catch alight if they come into contact with heat sources such as overloaded extension leads, the kitchen hob or naked flames like candles or cigarettes. Because of the amount of possessions, fires will also spread much faster.

If you hoard, you might:

- Feel the need to get more things, even if you have a lot already
- Have very strong positive feelings whenever you get more things
- Feel very upset or anxious at the thought of throwing or giving things away because of your emotional attachment to them
- Find it very hard to decide what to keep or get rid of
- Have lots of disagreements with the people close to you about your things
- Find it hard to pack for trips away, like a holiday

Fire safety suggestions

If you care for someone who lives in home that has become hoarded, you can help them live more safely by:

- Encouraging them not light candles or tea lights of any kind. A safer option is to use LED flameless candles.

- Ensuring they have appropriate heating so that they are not using portable heaters, candles or gas hobs to heat the home. If using portable heaters, ensuring that items aren't placed on top of, or too close to them.
- Suggest – or if you can, make sure – that they smoke outside if they are a smoker, never smoking in bed or where they could fall asleep, and that they use proper ashtrays.
- Contacting Ekaya or the Local Authority to discuss options for support to clear some of the clutter.
- Book a home fire safety visit – a free service offer by London Fire brigade



If you, or someone you know or suspect, may be struggling with hoarding, please report it to us in confidence on 0207 0911800 or email info@ekaya.co.uk

Fire Escape

In the event of a fire emergency, it is important to have a fire evacuation plan that all residents are aware of so they can get to safety.

Making an escape plan

- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home
- Wherever possible or available, plan a second route in case the first one is blocked
- Take a few minutes to practice it regularly
- Make sure everyone in your home, including visitors who spend the night, are aware of the escape plan
- Keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them
- Make sure security gates can be easily opened from the inside without complicated or several locks. **Please note:** If you have security gates/grilles fitted, in the event of a fire, these will increase the time that it takes for you to escape or for the fire service to enter your home, which could prove fatal. We strongly recommend that you remove all security gates and grilles for your own safety. If you are concerned about the security of your home, please contact your housing officer to discuss alternative security measures.
- If anyone in the home is slow to react or has mobility issues, adapt the plan to suit their needs.
- Mobility aids and any methods of calling for help should always be kept close to hand (e.g. mobile phone/link alarm or pendant)
- Make sure the way in and out of your home is kept clear of anything that may slow down or block your escape. This includes white goods such as freezers

- Review your plan if your circumstances change. If you need support or advice with this, contact your local Fire and Rescue Service.
- if you have mobility issues and live in a flat, let your housing officer/supported housing officer know and they may carry out a person-centred risk assessment if applicable.

Stay Put and Evacuation Strategies?

If you live in a purpose-built block the strategy in case of a fire will be either to evacuate or stay put. You should familiarise what these mean and what you should do in the unlikely event of a fire; to evacuate or to stay put.

- All our buildings, display a Fire Action Notice and/or fire leaflet explaining to residents and visitors what they need to do in the unlikely event of a fire.

Taking Notice of Fire Action Notice

Below are typical examples of Fire Action Notices, which are located in the entrance of each building, such as the communal notice board:



- If you're not sure what the strategy is for your building, you will find it on the Fire Action Notice on your block noticeboard.
- If in doubt, please contact Ekaya at repairs@ekaya.co.uk or on 0207 0911800.

In case of fire within your home:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | If you discover fire, alert other members of your household immediately and ensure that everyone is aware. |
|  | If you hear the fire alarm in your home, ensure that you and your family immediately start evacuating. |
|  | Close all doors within your home if it is safe to do so. |
|  | Evacuate your home, ensuring that your home entrance door is closed behind you. |
|  | When outside the building, dial 999 on a phone and ask for London Fire Brigade, giving the building address. |
|  | When London Fire Brigade arrive, meet them and tell them where the fire is. Do not re-enter the building until they have extinguished the fire and they have let you know that it is safe. |

Responsibility

Ekaya has a responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to ensure that our properties and residents are safe.

Residents irrespective of tenure also have certain responsibilities one of which is to ensure your flat entrance door is not deliberately damaged and is functioning correctly and effectively.

If you are a tenant, you are expected to report any damage/defect to your flat entrance door as soon as possible to report our repairs on 0207 0911800.

If you own part or all your home, you are responsible for any repairs/replacement needed to your flat entrance door. All communal Fire Doors is the responsibility of Ekaya and damages should also be reported to reports@ekaya.co.uk or 0207 0911800 as soon as possible.

Fire doors

Why is a Fire Door Important?

A fire door is an important safety device in the event of a fire. Fire doors delay the spread of smoke and fire, which can give the occupants of a property crucial time to get to safety should a fire break out and minimise damage to the building by containing smoke and fire for a specified period. Fire doors will not fulfil this function if damaged or propped open.

Important tips for residents:

- Don't wedge a fire door open.
- Ensure the self-closing device to your front door shuts the door fully.
- Seen a defective fire door? Report it to report to repairs at repairs@ekaya.co.uk or 0207 0911800 immediately.



Fire doors are a very important part of the building safety system. Together, we can keep each other safe by:

- 🔧 Keeping fire doors shut when not in use;
- 🔧 Not tampering with self-closing devices, and ensure your visitors do not either;
- 🔧 Reporting any fire door fault or damage immediately

Extra advice for purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats

If there is a fire or smoke inside your maisonette or flat and your escape route is clear

- Get everyone out, close the door and walk as calmly as possible out of the building
- Do not use the lift
- Call 999, give your address including the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

If there is a fire or smoke inside your maisonette or flat but your escape route is NOT clear

- It may be safer to stay in your maisonette or flat until the fire brigade arrives
- Close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke
- Go to a window and call for help
- Dial 999, give your address including the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

If there is a fire in another part of the building but not inside your maisonette or flat

Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors, and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes

If you are in your flat, you are usually safer staying there unless heat or smoke is affecting you. Stay safe and call 999. Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you

If you are within the communal areas of the building, leave and call 999.

What to consider as part of your escape plan

- Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home, on a ceiling, or high up on a wall, if the instructions state they are suitable for wall mounting. Make sure you include every room where a fire could start.
- Know the fire escape plan for your building. Talk to your housing officer/supported housing officer if you are unsure
- Make sure everyone you live with you, including visitors spending the night, are aware of your plan and know how to raise the alarm in the event of a fire
- Communal staircases, corridors and balconies must be kept clear of anything that may block your escape
- Household rubbish should always be taken to the refuse area immediately and not left in communal areas
- It is easy to get confused if it is dark or smoky so it's important to know your route out of the building using the exit stairs. Count the number of doors you need to go through or use familiar objects to guide you to help with your escape in the event of a fire
- Your home may be provided with an alternative escape route. Always make sure it is kept clear and you can access it at any time.

Rented accommodation

Ekaya's responsibilities

Ekaya has certain responsibilities, and we will tell you everything related to your building which may affect your safety.

- Install one smoke and carbon monoxide alarm (CO) in each property.
- Test each alarm at the beginning of the tenancy.

We will also

- Ensure all gas and electric appliances supplied are safe and in good working order
- Get gas appliances checked annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer
- Make sure that furniture and furnishings provided by us are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.

If you live in a maisonettes or flat of any height, we will also

- Carry out a fire risk assessment of your building and inform you about any risks identified. This will include fire procedures and evacuation information
- Provide you with fire-resisting and self-closing front doors, alarms inside your home (smoke, heat, and CO) and emergency lighting in the common parts where needed
- Ensure that escape routes are clearly signed so that anyone will be able to find the exit if there is a fire
- Place signage with clear instruction in and around lifts to explain what to do if there is a fire.
- Keep communal stairs, corridors, and landings free of any clutter
- Supply you with details of any changes to the fire evacuation plan when necessary.

Your responsibilities

- You should follow the advice in this booklet on how to prevent fires in your home
- You are personally responsible for making sure that any alarms within your property are working correctly by ensuring you test them regularly.

Fire safety inspections

It's really important that we keep residents safe from fire, and we take our fire safety responsibilities extremely seriously. We have an ongoing schedule of work in place to ensure we complete fire safety checks to your home and building. Our fire safety programme includes Fire Risk Assessments, fire sprinkler where applicable and fire door checks.

There are 3 parts to the inspection/test:

Fire risk Assessment - A routine Fire Risk Assessment is carried out by the competent person. It explains the potential risks and checks fire safety measures already in place. It will also give recommendations if more safety measures are needed to prevent, control, and reduce the effects of a fire. How regularly an FRA is done depends on the type of building and the level of risk associated with it.

Each FRA includes an overall assessment of fire risk within the building. Each Significant Finding and recommendation is assigned a Risk Rating, which is currently one of the following:

- Tolerable
- Moderate
- Substantial
- Intolerable

The Risk Rating is determined by the risk assessor considering the likelihood of the hazard causing an outbreak of fire and the potential for that outbreak to cause harm to persons, property, and business continuity.

Risks identified will be actioned in accordance to the significant finding classification.

Most common risks identified by Fire Risk Assessment

The most common type of risk that FRAs identify are:

- Obstructions of communal areas, hallways and fire doors.
- Items stored within the communal areas
- Fire doors wedged open
- Damaged fire door components or door
- Additional sources of ignition.
- Appropriate signage in place

Visual inspections- this is to ensure there are no items in the communal areas including exit doors, emergency lighting are not damaged, and communal doors are in working accordingly. If there are any problems identified during the inspection and will report back to us to agree what work is required to repair it.

Planned testing and maintenance

We also carry out planned testing and maintenance required either monthly, bi-yearly and annual inspection to communal areas i.e. in accordance with relevant legislation annual inspection to the Automatic opening vents (AOV) emergency lighting communal door fire inspection, lift servicing and testing and fire control panel where applicable

Bedtime checks

Before going to bed, you can help keep your family safe by checking your home for potential fire hazards. This will only take a few minutes, but it can help keep everyone safe while you sleep.

Follow these simple bedtime checks to help keep your home safe.

- Shut all internal doors when going to bed. A closed door can help to stop flames and smoke from spreading to other rooms giving you and your family more time to escape.
- Put candles, incense sticks and oil burners out and never leave them burning when you are asleep.
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on – like your fridge or freezer.
- Make sure cigarettes are completely out. It's best to wet them to be sure. Never smoke in bed
- Don't leave the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher switched on
- Escape routes should be kept clear of anything that may slow down your escape.
- Don't leave mobile phones, tablets or e-cigarettes, e-bike charging overnight.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them.
- Check your cooker is turned off. Turn heaters off, take out fires and put a fire guard in place (if applicable)
- Make sure the main door keys are to hand.

Home fire safety visits

The Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) carry out home fire safety or wellbeing visits to provide fire safety advice in the home. This includes information on prevention, detection and escape. Free smoke alarms and specialist alarms can also be fitted where needed.

If you need a home fire safety or wellbeing visit, please contact your local Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade)

London Fire Brigade <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/>