

# Adur District Council

## Fire Safety Policy (Housing)

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Adur & Worthing Councils' Fire Safety Management Plan Policy and Guidance.
- 1.2. This policy applies to the following properties where Adur District Council is the landlord:
  - blocks of flats and maisonettes;
  - sheltered housing schemes; and
  - communal parts of converted properties.
- 1.3. The main objectives of this policy are to ensure the council has adequate measures in place:
  - to safeguard all relevant persons from death or injury in the event of fire;
  - to minimise the risk of fire and to limit fire spread; and
  - to ensure the Council is compliant with all relevant legislation.

# 2. Policy Statement and Service Standards

- 2.1. Adur District Council will comply with the requirements of all relevant legislation and regulation in respect of where Adur District Council is the landlord in order to:
  - provide a safe environment for all residents, visitors, employees and contractors that minimises the risk of injury or damage to homes;
  - minimise and manage the risks of fire to blocks of flats, maisonettes and sheltered housing; and
  - provide tenants and leaseholders with advice and information about fire safety through the following means:
    - Newsletters, leaflets and posters
    - The tenant's handbook
    - Online
    - At tenancy visits.
- 2.2. It will address these requirements by:
  - developing policies and procedures to minimise the risks associated with fire;
  - engaging a suitably qualified person to carry out, update and periodically review fire risk assessments of all accommodation where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies;
  - taking appropriate measures to minimise the risk to life and property from fire;
  - maintaining a record of periodic testing of fire alarm, emergency lighting, smoke detectors, vents and fire protection equipment;

- ensuring contractors are managed and supervised to prevent inadvertent or unexpected breaches of fire safety or increased risk of fire;
- providing appropriate fire safety training to staff, applicable to their role;
- maintaining documentation and records in respect of fire safety management;
- liaising with the Fire and Rescue Service to promote fire awareness; and
- if fires occur, investigating the causes, identifying lessons and remedying deficiencies.

### 3. Regulatory Framework

- 3.1. **Housing Act 2004:** This Act brought in a new system of regulation for fire safety in existing residential premises through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System which uses a risk assessment approach to look at the condition of all properties. In the section relating to fire it states that there should be "sufficient, properly designed and appropriately sited smoke and/or heat detectors with alarms in every dwelling"
- 3.2. **The Building Regulations 2006 Approved Document B (Fire safety) – Volume 1:** These Regulations cover fire safety related matters within and around dwellings. This includes the satisfactory means of giving warning and means of escape in case of fire; stopping the spread of fire over internal and external linings; ensuring the stability of buildings in the event of a fire; and to ensure satisfactory access for fire appliances to buildings and facilities within dwellings.
- 3.3. **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** This Order applies to the common parts of multi-occupied residential housing, and requires landlords or housing owners to carry out a fire Risk Assessment and implement appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of fire in the common parts
- 3.4. **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):** This Act requires organisations to ensure that all people, including the disabled, can safely leave the building in the event of a fire.
- 3.5. **The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988:** These Regulations cover the levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture and furnishings. It includes minimum standards, including the requirement for labeling furniture. These Regulations will mainly apply to Sheltered schemes with communal lounges.
- 3.6. **The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR):** These Regulations require employers to assess the risk of fires and explosions arising from work activities involving dangerous substances, and to eliminate or reduce these risks.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. The Chief Executive of Adur & Worthing Councils is the Responsible Person, as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and has a duty to ensure that Adur District Council has a clearly defined and effective management system incorporating, planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures. He delegates actions to other responsible staff as set out below.
- 4.2. The Head of Housing is delegated the following duties to ensure the safety of residents, employees, contractors and visitors. he/she will do this by ensuring that:

- A competent person carries out a periodic Fire Risk Assessment for each premises covered by this policy.
  - Significant findings of Fire Risk Assessments are recorded and, where deficiencies are noted, they are acted upon in a planned and organised manner.
  - Everyone on the premises or nearby, as far as is reasonably practicable, can escape safely if there is a fire.
  - A written Fire Action Notice is prepared for each building and displayed on the premises.
  - The golden thread of fire safety runs through all aspects of maintenance, refurbishment and capital works programmes.
- 4.3. The Operations Manager, assisted by the Fire Safety Manager, is responsible for the operational management of fire safety within the properties covered by this policy, reporting to the Head of Housing. These responsibilities include:
- Formulating and revising the Housing Fire Safety policy and action plan.
  - Conducting audits to ensure that the provisions within the fire safety policy are being enforced to the standard required.
  - Planning and delivering fire safety improvements.
  - Ensuring suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out for staff and contractors.
  - Ensuring that fire precautions are tested and maintained effectively.
  - Ensuring the investigations regarding fires and near miss incidents are carried out and controls are introduced to reduce the risk of such incidents recurring.
  - Ensuring staff delivering services to properties where Adur District Council is the landlord stay up to date with current fire safety legislation and guidance.

## 5. Fire Safety Training

- 5.1. Fire safety training will be delivered to all staff who enter properties where Adur District Council is the landlord, particularly tenants homes, to enable the monitoring of fire safety provisions in the building.
- 5.2. Staff will be given adequate information, instruction and training in order to identify and report any potential risks. A review of staff training needs will be undertaken in order to develop competence with regard to fire safety and to ensure staff are trained to a suitable standard.
- 5.3. Staff with specific duties or areas of work, especially in relation to emergency response, will be trained to undertake these tasks effectively and competently.

## 6. Fire Risk Assessments

- 6.1. **Blocks of Flats:** Adur District Council has a duty to ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the risks to the occupants and all other relevant persons who would be regarded as lawfully on the premises. The risk assessment is limited to the communal areas of the building up to and including the front door of the flat/maisonette. These common areas must

adequately protect escape routes (including compartmentation and where necessary, fire related signage and lighting), have adequate means for the testing and maintenance of all fire systems and adequate information to tenants/leaseholders to comply with the Fire Safety Order 2005. Additionally, the individual flat/maisonette should comply with the duty mentioned above for an “individual dwelling” under the Housing Act 2004.

- 6.2. **Sheltered Housing:** Adur District Council has a duty to ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been undertaken for the common parts of the building to evaluate the risks to the occupants and all other relevant persons who would be regarded as lawfully on the premises. The fire risk assessment will consider all the communal areas, including, but not limited to, communal lounges, kitchens and guest rooms, to ensure that the building has adequate general fire precautions; adequate protected escape routes (including fire related signage and lighting), adequate means for the testing and maintenance of all fire systems and adequate information to residents in order to comply with the Fire Safety Order 2005 and the NFCC “Fire Safety in Specialised Housing” Guidance. Additionally, the individual flat should comply with the duty mentioned above for an “individual dwelling” under the Housing Act 2004.
- 6.3. Fire Risk Assessments will take into consideration everyone who may come onto the premises, whether they are residents, employees, contractors or members of the public. Particular attention will be paid to people who may have a disability or anyone with special needs.
- 6.4. A review of the Fire Risk Assessment will be conducted:
  - Annually for Sheltered accommodation and high rise blocks
  - Every three years for General Needs blocks of flats
  - Immediately following a significant fire or following any significant changes.

## 7. Emergency Response Plan

- 7.1. A generic emergency response plan shall be prepared for all sheltered and general needs buildings. The plan shall consist of the following elements:
  - Procedures for ADC response in the event of an emergency including emergency accommodation, refuge centres, staff attendance.
  - Procedures to assist and liaise with the fire brigade

## 8. Equipment and Fire Protection

- 8.1. All fire safety equipment will be serviced by a competent person and the service periods will be scheduled in accordance with the recommendations of relevant British Standards and manufacturers’ instructions.
- 8.2. The risk of fire spreading through the building will be controlled by the provision of fire/smoke resisting doors and other structural fire protection measures.
- 8.3. A means of alerting people in the event of a fire will be provided within individual dwellings and where necessary an appropriate fire detection and alarm system will be provided to the building. The type and extent of the alarm system provided will be based on the findings of the risk assessment. Alarm systems will be tested regularly.

- 8.4. Emergency lighting will be provided for escape routes where applicable. The location and type will be determined by the findings of the risk assessment.
- 8.5. It is not considered appropriate to provide fire extinguishers within the individual dwellings or the communal areas (corridors and staircases) of blocks of flats. Fire fighting equipment should be provided for use by nominated staff in resident's common facilities and other risk rooms within sheltered accommodation as determined by the fire risk assessment.
- 8.6. Adur District Council will put procedures in place to maintain high standards of fire safety, by ensuring:
  - Emergency escape routes are established and kept free from obstruction at all times. Adur District Council will take a zero tolerance approach to items left in protected escape routes and action will be taken to remove unacceptable items.
  - Fire exit doors are kept in good working order and can be easily opened from the inside without the use of a key at all times.
  - Appropriate signs and notices are displayed, giving appropriate instructions to residents and others in the event of a fire.
  - Where necessary signs are provided to indicate the position of fire extinguishers, fire alarm call points and emergency exit routes.

## 9. Communication

- 9.1. Adur District Council will ensure that all persons employed either as direct employees or contractors are provided with all relevant information related to fire safety. Managers will advise employees on all relevant matters of fire safety policy and arrangements and will ensure residents are kept informed of any changes that are made to the fire safety procedures.
- 9.2. Fire Action Notices will be clearly displayed at various locations about the premises for all visitors to see.
- 9.3. Tenant and Leaseholder fire safety awareness will generally take the form of:
  - Fire Action Notices in all communal areas of flats and maisonettes
  - Leaflet information (on new tenancy and random leaflet drops)
  - Tenant forum meetings
  - Newsletters

## 10. Review

- 10.1. The Fire Safety Policy will be reviewed in the event of a fire, annually, or if there are any significant changes to current legislation, regulations or codes of practice or guidance.

# 11. Governance and Assurance

11.1. Adur District Council will record the findings of its periodic tests and checks and will keep the following records:

- Records of Fire Risk Assessments and subsequent reviews
- Records of all fire alarm testing.
- Records of periodic tests of emergency lighting.
- Records of all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems.
- Records of all fire safety equipment testing.
- Records of inspection and maintenance of workplace and electrical equipment, storage of hazardous substances and other hazards identified with fire safety (where appropriate).