# RCH Group Fire Safety Policy:

| Policy Owner | Property Service Director |
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| Policy Manager | Technical Services Lead |
| Approval Body | RCH Group Board |
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## Contents

This policy can be made available in other languages, on request and in other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.

## 1. Scope

1.1     The Fire Safety Policy explains how River Clyde Homes Group (RCH Group) will manage the risk posed by fire at premises owned, managed, or controlled by RGH Group. This policy sets out how we will meet our duty of care to customers, staff, and stakeholders in relation to fire safety. This extends to taking all reasonable steps to mitigate any risks associated of fire in domestic and non-domestic properties.

1.2     This policy meets requirements of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. In addition to this, the Policy provides assurance to RCH Group that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with fire. As part of the policy, RCH Group will ensure compliance with fire safety legislation and formally report at Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and board level, including the details of any non-compliance and planned corrective actions.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To reduce the risk of a fire starting by building a robust fire safety management system across RCH Group.
- To promote fire safety in all buildings ensuring effective communication with all stakeholders and partner agencies.
- To define responsibilities of staff and regulatory compliance as a landlord in managing fire safety.
- To manage fire risk assessments (FRA) and fire safety equipment.
- The promotion of fire safety to customers, employees, volunteers, and contractors.
- To ensure every employee has the relevant Information, instruction, training, and supervision to reduce the risk of fire.
- To ensure effective record keeping in managing fire safety.
- To ensure RCH Group manage non-compliance Fire Safety Risk Management issues.
- To ensure RCH Group identifies and manages people who cannot self-evacuate in the event of fire.
- To ensure spending in relation to fire safety presents value for money for our customers.

1.3     The policy is relevant to all RCH Group employees, customers, volunteers and contractors and other persons or other stakeholders, who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services. It should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon RCH Group to maintain a safe environment for customers and employees within the home of each customer and within all communal areas of buildings (those parts of a block of flats or maisonettes used by occupants of more than one dwelling for access and egress).

## 2. Introduction

2.1      RCH Group acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under the Fire (Safety) Scotland Act 2005 and The Fire (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and other relevant legislation and guidance relating to fire safety. It is the objective of RCH Group to ensure that the promotion of fire safety is a mutual objective for employees at all levels of the organisation and that they understand their duty, within each role, to appropriately contribute to effective proactive management of fire safety.

2.2      RCH Group will follow a systematic approach to the management of fire safety to ensure it meets the requirements set out in the Fire (Scotland) Act as amended, The Fire (Scotland) Regulations 2006, Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 as amended, so far as they relate to existing and new premises requirements. In addition to the main statutory requirements all other guidance relating to domestic properties being let and factored by RCH Group including any non-domestic properties owned and or leased by the RCH Group

     Additional relevant guidance includes;
- Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings 2022,
- HM Fire Service Inspectorate, Arrangements for Firefighting in High Rise Buildings,
- Scottish Government Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises (2020),
- The Housing (Scotland) Act as amended 2023
- Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024

The Fire Safety Policy should also be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

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| Asbestos Policy | Health and Safety Strategy |
| Electrical Safety Policy | Value for Money Strategy |
| Customer Services Strategy | Procurement rules |
| Gas Safety Policy | Mobility Scooter Policy |
| Void Management Policy | RCH Group - Risk Assessment Procedure |
| Unlettable Deactivated Void Properties Policy | |

## 3. Policy Statement and Responsibilities

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable ensure, the following principles are achieved:

a) RCH Group holds accurate records against communal areas of each property it owns rents or manages, setting out the requirements for fire risk assessment and management.

b) RCH Group will provide evacuation procedures for buildings dependent on the construction, use and layout of the premises as well as the needs of the users within the premises. These are primarily either delayed evacuation (stay put) or simultaneous evacuation (full evacuation) and will be based on recommendations in the Fire Risk Assessment for the building.

c) In all buildings with common areas, standard fire safety signs will be displayed in the common escape routes, including fire action notices and no smoking notices.

d) RCH Group acknowledge that wilful fire raising cannot be fully preventable, actions will be taken to minimise the risk to the lowest practicable level.

e) Accurate records are held against each property with communal areas it owns rents or manages, setting out the requirements for servicing, maintenance and repair of fire prevention, detection, and firefighting equipment. This includes fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, smoke/heat detectors, dry and wet risers, fire extinguishers, suppression systems including sprinkler systems, mist activation systems, smoke extraction systems and any other equipment relating to fire safety.

f) RCH Group will ensure programs are in place to deliver servicing and maintenance in accordance with all relevant British Standards and manufacturer's recommendations for all fire detection, prevention and firefighting systems and equipment within buildings owned or managed by RCH Group.

g) RCH Group will periodically undertake an asset data review to ensure that fire safety data held against our property assets is accurate and up to date.

h) RCH Group will ensure all fire loss incidents and near misses are recorded, reported, and investigated; including information from the Out of Hours Reports (OOH) relating to customers, Fire Alarm activations and any damage sustained to properties/buildings to the Health and Safety Team E Mail Mailbox.

i) RCH Group will ensure that a competent person completes a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) for buildings managed owned or occupied by us. This methodical and structured approach will inform RCH Group of the suitability and effectiveness of the fire safety provisions applicable to a relevant premise. Once identified, Fire Hazards will inform on the most appropriate fire evacuation strategy for the building.

j) FRA Reviews will be conducted by a competent person annually with a full fire risk assessment being conducted based on the frequency identified by the fire risk assessor in the FRA.

k)    RCH Group will ensure that robust processes are in place to address all significant findings identified by fire risk assessments, where practicable will be within a programme of works completed within the time recommended by the FRA for each building.

l)    RCH Group will implement a programme of regular property inspections to all premises with a fire risk assessment in place to audit that all required management actions are taking place. These inspections will be undertaken at regular intervals and records will be kept against each premise. This will include the integrity of fire doors and ensuring common areas including means of escape are maintained & free from obstructions. RCH Group will further ensure that all flats accessed via a communal area have a working smoke alarm, heat detector and relevant door closer.

m)    Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) are conducted every 5 years or following a change in occupation to ensure that installations are safe and to reduce the risk of electrical fires. Portable Appliance Testing is also carried out on portable electrical appliances which also reduces the risk of fires. Refer to the Electrical Safety Policy for more detailed information.

n)    RCH Group will test fire detection equipment as part of the annual gas safety check, or the 5-yearly electrical inspection and testing programme. Defective alarms and detectors will be replaced where necessary. RCH Group will also impress upon customers, the need to ensure quick and effective reporting of defective protection equipment, ensuring replacement at the earliest opportunity.

o)    RCH Group will ensure that residents with a form of disability, have mobility issues or physical and or mental wellbeing needs within buildings requiring a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFSRA) will be reviewed by a competent person(s), every six months or if there is a change of circumstances. This will be kept in the Fire Safety Log held securely on site and made available to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in the event of an evacuation.

p)    RCH Group will ensure that only competent contractors are awarded contracts for any fire safety works which included, assessments, maintenance, installations, or remedial works. Contractors must be accredited in line with RCH Group procurement rules on quality standards.

q)    RCH Group have a robust process in place to gain access should any customers or leaseholder refuse access to conduct essential fire safety related inspection and remedial works or where customers vulnerability issues are known or identified to ensure compliance with this policy.

r)    RCH Group is committed to working with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to create safer places to live and work. Partnership working may include sharing of information, review of risk assessments and PCFSRA.

s) The Fire Safety Steering Group (FSSG) is in place to monitor our robust approach to fire safety including ensuring that a Fire Safety Risk Management Plan (FSRMP) is implemented, and actions are progressed by the respective leads. The FSSG will include Managers from Property Services, Customer Services, Health & Safety and HFS and where necessary procurement and IT.

t) RCH Group consider that effective communication is essential in delivering their fire safety policy and will therefore ensure that information relating to fire safety, fire prevention and fire protection will be made available to residents and building users via leaflets and information on our website.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 In order to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, and other relevant legislation relating to fire safety, RCH Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure suitable arrangements are in place and:

- Appoint a 'competent person' to lead the management of fire safety risk management and ensure compliance is achieved and maintained throughout RCH Group.
- Ensure a Fire Safety Risk Management Plan (FSRMP) is Implemented and updated.
- Commission competent persons to undertake fire risk assessments with the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions and other measures required to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.
- Implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other preventive and protective measures identified by a fire risk assessment.
- Periodically review fire risk assessments in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale will be determined by the fire risk assessor at the time of the assessment.
- Provide means of detection and giving warning in case of fire within all relevant properties in line with current legislation and guidance.
- Ensure maintenance, servicing, and testing programme to meet the minimum recommended standards of all fire detection, emergency lighting, hold open devices, smoke ventilation systems, fire extinguishers, dry risers and other firefighting equipment provided within RCH Group properties.
- Provide fire safety training to new and existing employees and refresh knowledge regularly as required.

4.2 RCH Group Board

RCH Group Board is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Fire Safety Policy on an annual basis. The Board will review and approve the Fire Safety Policy, and the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the fire safety measures as defined in the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended. RCH Group

Board will review fire safety performance and ensure that any issues of significant risk are actioned appropriately. The Board has a collective role for championing fire, safety standards. The Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive will sign off the Health & Policy Statement on an annual basis. The Policy Statement can be accessed here [RCH HS Policy combined Aug 2024.pdf](RCH HS Policy combined Aug 2024.pdf)

### 4.3 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for implementation of the Fire Safety Policy at all levels of RCH group ensuring the provision of adequate resources to meet Fire Safety Risk Management requirements.

The Chief Executive will:

- Ensure responsibility for implementation and compliance with the Fire Safety Policy is properly assigned and accepted by the ELT and other members of the RCH Group Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and throughout their wider teams.
- Appoint Executive Directors to lead on the Health & Safety Management Committee and to co-ordinate fire safety risk management within RCH Group.

### 4.4 ELT Directors and SLT Members

ELT Directors and SLT Members will:

- Appoint Managers across the RCH Group companies to be members of the Fire Safety Steering Group (FSSG). The FSSG membership will include the safety representatives from the recognised trade unions.
- Ensure that Managers within their departments are suitably trained, competent, and fully understand their fire safety obligations.
- Support managers and provide leadership by providing resources and advice to ensure proportionate and effective standards of fire safety is achieved.
- Support the Fire Safety Steering Group throughout RCH Group.
- Monitor the activities of their directorates and departments in relation to fire safety to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, policies, procedures, and good practice guidelines.
- Ensure RCH Group complies with all Scottish Housing Regulator requirements and adhere to the Notifiable Events Guidance in relation to this policy.

### 4.5 Managers/Supervisors

Managers within RCH Group will:

- Provide leadership, support and coaching to their team in relation to Fire Safety.
- Ensure any high-risk work including Hot Works for any premises managed, owned, or maintained by RCH Group is controlled within a Construction Phase Plan.

- Inform all their employees under their management of the Fire Safety Policy, ensuring an understanding of the aims of the policy and its content.
- Undertake hazard identification and related fire risk assessments for their areas of control and introduce and maintain suitable and sufficient control measures.
- Ensure that employees have received adequate training, instruction and information and that delegated responsibilities are clearly understood.
- Ensure all fire related accidents, incidents, near misses, and hazards are reported to the health and safety team as soon as is reasonably practicable, in particular, undertake investigations where appropriate and act upon the findings.
- Ensure all contractors (and subcontractors) appointed to conduct works on behalf of the RCH Group companies or operate on RCH Group property, are made aware of the fire safety policy, on site procedures and that they are notified of known hazards and conduct their work without risk to themselves or others.
- Prior to engaging with any contractor, they must ensure that they are adhering RCHG's procurement rules which are summarised within the Procurement Process Map." Procurement Process Map.pdf
- Ensure Fire Safety is an agenda item at every team meeting.

### 4.6 Health & Safety Manager

The Health & Safety Manager will:

- Keep the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Teams informed of fire safety related matters that present risk to RCH Group.
- Monitor, and continually strive to improve, fire safety performance and the fire risk management culture of the organisation by providing guidance at all levels of RCH Group.
- Assist line managers to promote high standards of fire safety by raising awareness of key issues as and when required.
- Regularly review and monitor the fire safety policy and any procedures to ensure they are relevant to, and inclusive of, the hazards facing the RCH Group companies.
- Monitor Compliance with Fire Safety legislation in Registers and Risk Registers.
- Maintain records of all reported fire related incidents, accidents and near misses to allow trends to be identified and necessary action to be taken to reduce or prevent recurrence.
- Provide the Health & Safety Management Committee with performance information on fire safety risk management.
- Assist in identifying, developing, and organising appropriate fire safety training in conjunction with line managers and as identified by Fire Risk Assessments.

4.7 Employees of the RCH Group

In addition to the duties outlined in the Health and Safety Policy Statement, all employees will:

- Familiarise themselves with this Fire Safety Policy and all fire and safety procedures, risk assessments and method statements relevant to their role and workplace.
- Attend mandatory fire safety training courses as and when necessary.
- Report all fire related accidents, incidents, near misses, and hazards to their line manager as soon as is practicably possible and forward to the health and safety e mail inbox.
- Contribute and co-operate with management on all matters of fire safety.
- Perform their duties using safe fire working practices, regarding themselves, their colleagues, customers, members of the public and contractors.
- Report any matters they consider to be a danger to the management of fire risk to their line manager as soon as is practicably possible. This includes any deficiencies or shortcomings they have identified within this Policy and/or with arrangements for the management of fire safety. Reporting should be via the health and safety email inbox.
- Only use any fire safety equipment and plant appropriate for the task and which they are trained to use and refrain from using and report to their line manager, any defective or damaged fire equipment and fire safety systems.
- Remove defective equipment from service immediately then record and report defect to manager.
- Use safe systems of work for tasks relating to fire safety risks from electricity, gas installations, handling of chemicals, and any other activities that could potentially present a significant risk to fire safety.

## 5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

5.1 The RCH Group will apply this policy fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other grounds. Our commitment to equality and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

## 6. Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed in its entirety annually, unless an earlier review is required due to changes in legal, regulatory, or best practice

requirements, or because monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.