



Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy 2024 – 2029



Introduction

The Strategy describes how we will include you (and all Wandsworth residents who live in a high-rise block) in fire and building safety decisions. A high-rise building contains 7 storeys or more (or at least 18 metres in height) and has at least two residential units.

We, as the owner and managing agent of our high-rise buildings, are responsible for ensuring they are maintained and all safety concerns addressed in a timely manner. Within the Council, there are a number of teams that share a responsibility for managing building safety and monitoring compliance.

In some instances, we may need to make decisions about the buildings we manage at short notice, particularly where the safety of residents may be otherwise compromised. However, in most cases we will have time to consult with you about proposed works or improvements.

This Strategy is informed by the Council's [Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy](#) which outlines how we aim to listen to feedback and give residents a say in their homes and community. Our overall approach to resident engagement will provide more opportunities for residents to be involved and inform our decision-making process on matters involving building safety.

Following the Grenfell tragedy, the Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced with a greater focus on the need to keep residents informed on matters relating to building safety and provide a voice to all residents. Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategies are a legal requirement and all landlords with high-rise blocks must provide one.

The key objectives of this strategy are:

- **Keeping residents informed:** We want you to feel assured that safety risks in your building are being effectively addressed. This will be done by



providing the relevant information so everyone understands the roles and responsibilities of those managing and living in our buildings.

- **Involving residents in decision-making:** As a resident living in a high-rise block, you should have various opportunities to participate in the management and decision making about your building. When a safety concern is made, this will be taken seriously.
- **Listening and acting on feedback:** We will listen to you and your neighbours. We will make it easier for you to report a concern or make a complaint and know what happens next.

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Keeping residents informed

Your safety is at the heart of our work and providing safe, high-quality homes is a top priority. We want you to be informed, empowered and involved in decision-making. We want all residents living in high-rise blocks to understand what is needed from them and the Council, as landlord, to keep their building free from hazards.

To do this, we will keep you informed on what general responsibilities we all share around building safety. We will keep you informed on proposed works to your building and, where a hazard has been identified, how you can keep safe and when it will be resolved. Any information that is shared, relevant to your block, will be easy to understand, free of jargon and accessible in other languages and formats, upon request. We will also provide contact details on all correspondence.

Providing Information on Building Safety

We will provide detailed and relevant information concerning the measures in place to keep your building safe. We will make building safety information available on a dedicated Building Safety page on the Council's website, in a way that can be easily found.

The Homesafe booklet contains all the relevant information about building and fire safety. This includes information on how to keep safe in the home and safety advice on gas, fire, windows, pipes and overflows and carbon monoxide. The booklet is [available online](#).

Other information provided to residents will include:

- Details on how residents can work collaboratively with the Council to minimise the risk of a fire starting within their home.
- Information on what to do in the event of a fire in the block and the evacuation procedure(s) to be followed.
- The ways in which a building safety risk can be reported to the Council.

- The importance of keeping communal areas and escape routes clear of personal items.
- The role front entrance and communal doors play in reducing fire and smoke spread.
- Information on planned works, such as repairs and maintenance and improvements.

We will make available on request more detailed building safety information, such as:

- Details of an annual block safety inspection, undertaken by the Council, which identifies how compliant your block is with building safety requirements.
- The measures we have put in place to mitigate fire and building safety issues within the block.
- Copies of the latest Fire Risk Assessment for your building and the plan of action to deal with any identified actions.
- Information about building maintenance, such as the frequency and outcome of checks of dry risers, lifts, gas servicing and communal and front entrance doors.
- Information about external wall assessments.
- Outcome or progress of building safety inspections and safety case reports (which will be shared once approved by the Building Safety Regulator).
- Historical information about upgrades and improvements made to the block.

Involving residents in decision-making

We are keen to increase resident participation across all sections of the community, including people from underrepresented groups, tailoring our engagement when it is necessary. Our local Resident Participation Officers will help and encourage resident engagement in our high-rise buildings. This will include providing support and advice on how to set up and maintain a Residents' Association for a particular block or estate. We are committed to encouraging more residents living in high-rise buildings to set-up Residents Associations.

We will also engage with residents serving on Area Housing Panels and the Borough Residents' Forum. For more information about these, or any other formal consultation processes that the Council uses, please see the [Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy](#).

Our approach to consultation is informed by a series of commitments to ensure that consultation is timely, relevant and effective. Those commitments are:

- Consultation will occur when any proposals are at an early stage.
- The reasons for any consultation will be clearly outlined.
- When we consult, any feedback shared will be considered before a decision is taken.
- There will be adequate time for residents to consider any proposals and provide a response.

Widening participation is a key objective of the Resident Engagement Strategy. If you would like to become involved in formal or informal participation structures but require extra support to do so, please contact your local Resident Participation Officer so that help can be provided.

How we will communicate

Clear and effective communications are essential for the successful delivery of this strategy. We will endeavour to cater to the needs of every household, including those with disabilities or where English is not the first language.

We will use the following methods to communicate with residents:

- The Homesafe booklet for all tenants and leaseholders
- The quarterly Homelife newsletter
- A dedicated building safety page on the Council's website
- Noticeboards in communal areas of our blocks
- Residents' meetings – such as the Area Housing Panels
- Text messages, emails and letters
- Neighbourhood and estate events
- Social Media
- Residents' Conference

Listening and acting on feedback

We want to give you a voice and listen to your views. To be able to do this, we will increase the ways that you can become involved, influence and scrutinise the decisions that we make.

We will consult through formal participation structures. The first level will be through Residents Associations, then Area Housing Panels and then the Borough Residents' Forum. Some estates have also formed Coops/Resident Management Organisations where residents are responsible for the management of their estates. More information on the Council's formal participation structures can be found on the Council's [website](#).

We will also use informal participation structures, so we can work flexibly to hear the views of residents. These will include:

Fire Safety Steering Group

We are establishing a consultative group with a specific focus on fire safety. The group will review and share feedback on information on building safety, such as webpages or easy to read Fire Risk Assessments. The group can also make recommendations which may be taken through the Council's formal decision-making process. Membership of the group will be open to residents living in high-rise buildings.

Housing Community Champions (HCCs)

The HCC scheme is a way of recognising the valuable work of residents in their neighbourhood. We want to ensure that those residents who demonstrate commitment to improving their local area are appreciated and encouraged to continue to do so. HCCs have access to a specific pot of money which can be used to support them to continue their work. We will encourage more residents living in high-rise buildings to become HCCs. If you would like to know more about HCCs, please contact your Resident Participation Manager.

How complaints and concerns are dealt with

Complaints

We will aim to ensure that where building safety issues are raised, a resolution is achieved by working with residents to agree what action is needed. There may however be occasions when a resident is not satisfied with the outcomes of a decision and wants to make a complaint via the Council's formal complaints process. More information on what is expected from the complaints process can be found [here](#).

Mandatory occurrences

Landlords of high-rise blocks have a legal requirement to report a mandatory occurrence. A mandatory occurrence is an issue that has, or is likely to cause, serious harm to a significant number of people. This would either be a structural failure of a building or the spread of fire or smoke in the building. Mandatory occurrence reporting has been developed and will be available via the Council's website. We will review each reported occurrence by contacting you, undertaking a follow-up visit to the building (if required) and providing a written response within ten days.

Making sure the Building Safety Engagement Strategy is working

A review of this strategy will take place every two years or as and when legislation changes. We will also review the strategy after a significant material change to the building. Residents will be kept informed of any changes made to this strategy and will be given the opportunity to provide feedback.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Our Building Safety Team can be contacted via the dedicated email below:

buildingsafety@wandsworth.gov.uk