

<b>Responsible Executive Director</b> Executive Team - Operations	<b>Building Safety Strategy</b>	
<b>Section</b> Property	Created: July 2023	

## 1 Introduction

The Building Safety Act 2022 has introduced several reforms, such as:

- The creation of a new Building Safety Regulator.
- Mandatory reporting of structural and fire safety issues.
- Greater obligations to ensure that fire and structural safety is considered at every stage of a building’s development.
- The creation of a new ‘Principal Accountable Person’ role and duties, to ensure that fire and structural safety is managed throughout the lifetime of a building.
- Unlimited fines and imprisonment for up to two years for breaches of the Act.

### Higher risk buildings and buildings

There are two categories of buildings recognised by the Act and secondary legislation – “**buildings**” and “**higher-risk buildings**”. Higher-risk buildings are defined by section 31 of the Act as a building in England that is at least 18 metres in height or has at least seven storeys and is of a description specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State.

Section 30 of the Act also defines “buildings” as “any permanent or temporary building in England except a building of a prescribed description” (i.e. prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, such as higher-risk buildings). Buildings that are not higher-risk buildings, or otherwise prescribed by the Secretary of State will not be subject to the provisions for higher-risk buildings set out in Parts 3 and 4 of the Act. At RHG we have no properties over 18 metres or at least seven storeys, we have 29 blocks that are four storeys and five blocks that are five storeys. It should be noted here however that the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 imposes duties on us for all buildings 11 metres in height and over (which we have) and are outline within the Fire Safety Policy presented to Executive Team in June 2023.

The following provisions of the Act will apply to **all buildings**, including:

- Regulatory oversight of the building safety and performance system that applies to all buildings (Part 2 generally, especially sections 3, 5, 6 and 8).
- Amendments to the Building Act in relation to the functions of building control authorities, obtaining keeping and giving information and documents (sections 32-33).
- Duty holder obligations in respect of prescribed works (section 34).
- Obligations in respect of competency (section 35).
- Requirements to comply with any compliance notice or stop notice issued by the Regulator (section 38).
- Requirements to comply with the decisions of registered building inspectors and building control approvers (whose powers are set out in Part 2A).
- Penalties for breaches of the Building Regulations (section 39 and 40).
- The new “developer levy” which the Secretary of State can implement through regulations on applicants for building control approval- the regulations can apply

the levy in respect of all new residential development of all sizes (previously the Bill restricted the levy to only higher-risk buildings) (section 58).

- Any requirements specified by the New Homes Ombudsman (who will be established pursuant to section 136).
- Requirements to comply with regulations on construction products set out by the new regulator (who will be established pursuant to section 146); and
- Requirements to comply with amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, where relevant to that building (section 156).

## **2 Aim**

This is Rooftop Housing Group's (RHG) first Building Safety Strategy that sets out our position against the Building Safety Act 2022 and, fundamentally, how we will work together with our customers. Our approach to customer engagement is our first step towards meaningful engagement about the safety of their homes.

The Group does not own any buildings classed as higher risk Residential Buildings however we want to demonstrate full transparency in interpretation of the Act and believe that working alongside our customers will ensure we prevent safety failures. This Strategy will be supplemented (where appropriate) by bespoke plans tailored to properties where there is deemed to be a need, setting out how the Strategy will work in practice for each building.

The Building Safety Strategy does not replace any of our Landlord compliance policies. It supports the work we do in terms of legal and regulatory obligations and works alongside our Health and Safety Strategy.

The key aims of this Strategy is to:

- Establish methods of improving our approach to engaging and consulting with customers in relation to the safety of their home.
- Identify the building safety information customers wish to be provided with and the way in which it will be provided.
- Ensure customers are empowered to have confidence their building is and continues to be safe.
- Set out ways in which customers can get involved in the benefits to them from participating in engagement on building safety.
- Engage colleagues with regards to the importance of customers' rights to have a say in relation to their homes.
- Clarify our responsibilities and customers' responsibilities to ensure that their homes remain safe.

## **3 Vision**

We provide good quality homes, reliable landlord services and support and advice.

## **4 Values**

We Work Together

We Make Things Better

We Do The Right Thing

## **5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Principles**

There is discriminatory effect on any customer because of the information contained and intention of this Strategy. It has a clear commitment to use a range of ways to communicate with customers to cater for, as much as possible, their diverse needs that includes when and how we communicate as well as opportunities for meaningful engagement for all.

## **6 Customer and/or Community Engagement/Involvement**

Co-creation of our Strategy has been a priority for us. The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with customers, demonstrating a culture of openness and transparency to ensure that it addresses their needs and requirements. It details what customers can expect in terms of communication and how they can get involved and raise concerns. Further work targeted within this strategy will provide opportunities for meaningful engagement in development of the Customer Communication Plan.

The objectives and priorities detailed below are as a direct result of feedback on what is important to our customers.

## **7 Our approach**

This Strategy details our approach to engaging and involving customers in relation to building safety across all our homes. It will be further supplemented by plans where there is deemed to be a need, setting out how the Strategy will work in practice for each building.

We will determine a category for all of our buildings this will be based on both the type of property and the people living in those buildings. Each property will be categorised, and this will determine what level of safety precautions are in place and what information customers will be given.

To clarify, there is a difference between building safety and building security. Issues around the security of a building may arise from the front door of the building being left open (for example). This may then impact the safety of the building. We recognise that feeling safe in your home for many customers may encompass several different issues and may well be more about building security and we will encourage customers to share with us what makes them feel safe and ~~we will~~ work with them to address all issues.

As a landlord we have a responsibility to carry out legal and regulatory responsibilities. These are detailed in other policies including:

- Health and Safety
- Fire Safety
- Asbestos
- Legionella
- Lift Safety
- Gas and Solid Fuel
- Electrical Safety
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Asset Investment.

The Building Safety Strategy does not replace these Policies, management plans or procedures but focuses more on clarity on compliance with the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure buildings are safe and remain so. It outlines how information will be shared with customers, how customer concerns about safety can be addressed and, fundamentally, how we will work in partnership on building safety.

## **6 Key Objectives**

There are six distinct areas of our Building Safety Strategy that focusses upon:

1. Customer communications on safety.
2. Meaningful engagement in building safety.
3. Clarity and accessibility of building safety information.
4. Supporting customers to understand both their and our responsibilities.

5. Approach to encouraging customers to keep their buildings safe.
6. Management of fire safety.

### **Customer communications on safety**

We will:

- Work in partnership with customers to ensure that they are involved in decisions about their building's safety and, where possible, provide them with reasonable information on works due to be carried out to their property enabling them to have an opportunity to consult with us.
- Use a range of ways to communicate with customers to cater for, as much as possible, their diverse needs, ensuring clarity and accessibility.
- Establish a Communications Management Plan.
- Ensure a fire action notice is installed within each building.

### **Meaningful engagement in building safety**

We will:

- Encourage customers to get involved in decision making relating to the safety of their building.
- Seek to work with customers to measure the success of this Strategy and the satisfaction of our customers relating to building safety.
- Ensure we consider communication needs for customers at our specific schemes such as Retirement Living and Housing with Care, including their relatives.

### **Clarity and accessibility of information**

We will:

- Provide all customers with the information that they need to help them understand the protections that are in place to keep their building safe.
- Ensure that information that is provided is sufficient, relevant and in a format that can be understood by customers.
- Implement a process for dealing with requests for information. We will aim to provide customers with documents that they request within one month.
- Develop a mechanism for reporting a fire risk and /or raising any other safety concerns.
- Provide information for customers detailing how they can reduce the risk of fire in individual dwellings for example, by not storing flammable materials.
- Ensure there are procedures to follow where a fire occurs in the building including for evacuation.

### **Customer and landlords' responsibilities**

We will:

- Ensure relevant information is provided to our customers such as fire action notices.
- Within our Older Persons Schemes we follow specialised housing guidance which involves undertaking people-centred risk assessments to evaluate the needs of individual customers.
- Work with the local fire service to electronically provide any information about the building they require.
- Use technology to help to keep our customers safe and we will monitor and investigate how we can implement systems and technology to support us with this.

## **Encourage customers to keep their buildings safe**

We will:

- Ensure that customers are empowered to play an effective role in making sure that their building is, and remains, safe.
- Make it easy for customers to identify and report hazards that may impact on the safety of the building and meeting their responsibilities to ensure their own safety and that of their neighbours.
- As a matter of priority, address any issue that suggests customers have not understood or remembered the building safety information.
- Provide helpful hints and tips on building and home safety.

## **Robust management of fire safety**

We will:

- Ensure that there is a building evacuation action plan for each scheme with specific details for the action customers should take in the event of a fire.
- Ensure that our customers understand 'stay put' and when it should be used including 'evacuation plans' with clear 'next place of safety'.
- Ensure that relevant and up-to-date information is contained on a Fire Action Notice which are displayed on the walls in every building.
- Establish a new Fire Safety Engagement Team to manage effective engagement on fire safety that includes bespoke building plans and decision making on fire risk assessment recommendations.

## **7 Measures of commitments and progress**

Objectives, targets, and milestones are set out in a three-year Action Plan (See Appendix 1) to ensure we can monitor progress and collect the data necessary to measure successes and assess the impact.

## **8 Delivery and reporting**

The Executive Director - Operations is responsible for the implementation and promotion of the Strategy with the support of the Board Representative, Service Improvement Project members and all other colleagues.

Operational delivery of the Action Plan is reported to the Executive Director – Operations, the Executive Team, and Cost Saving Group (CSG) Core Group.

## **9 Review**

This Strategy will be reviewed every three years unless there are major changes in legislation or good practice. A report to the Group Board on progress will be made annually.

## **10 Appendix – Strategy three year Action Plan**