

## Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy

REIBSS03

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Housing Services sits within the Growth and City Development directorate of Nottingham City Council, following the move back in-house of Nottingham's social housing function in 2023. Since 2005, council homes had been managed by Nottingham City Homes (NCH), a wholly owned subsidiary of the council, which was established for the purpose of managing the stock. Work is on-going to integrate the services and establish a positive culture for the Housing Service. NCH has retained a small number of properties purchased or built under its own ownership and management, which deliver some services for the council including temporary accommodation.
- 1.2 Any reference in this policy to 'the Council', 'organisation', 'we', 'our' and 'us' refers to Nottingham City Council, unless otherwise stated.
- 1.3 This Resident Engagement in Building Safety (REIBSS) Strategy applies to Nottingham City Council. We operate from our head office at Loxley House, Nottingham, as well as other premises across the city.
- 1.4 The safety and well-being of residents living in our high-rise buildings are of the utmost concern for Nottingham City Council Housing Services. Since the tragedy of the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, attention has rightly been focused on improvements to safety in high rises buildings.
- 1.5 Regulatory changes were introduced with the Building Safety Act 2022, the Social Housing (Regulatory) Act 2023 and guidance notes from previously published Green and White Papers. In April 2024, the new Consumer Standards came into force along with a Code of Practice to support housing authorities, including criteria with which they need to be compliant.
- 1.6 There is now a strengthened Housing Ombudsman to review adherence to safety and a commitment to a set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures against which all social landlords must report on.
- 1.7 This strategy will outline how we will address resident concerns effectively; by listening and acting to ensure safety is always maintained and by improving communication to ensure all our residents feel and are safe in their homes.

## 2.0 Scope

2.1 We will engage with residents with the objective of making sure that:

- people feel safe in the buildings in which they live
- people have access to as much information as necessary to support their knowledge of building safety matters
- people know how to report problems in their flat or in communal areas which lead to safety concerns
- people are aware of different ways to engage with us
- people know exactly what to do in the event of a serious incident in the block where they live.

2.2 The strategy sets out our approach to meaningful resident engagement relating to the safety of their homes. The strategy's three themed objectives are to:

- **Communicate and Listen** – Facilitating meaningful and transparent dialogue between our residents and ourselves so concerns and priorities raised are addressed.

- **Involve** – Empowering residents to actively participate in decisions regarding their accommodation so that all residents feel safe and are safe in their homes.
- **Evaluate** – Making sure partnerships between all parties that support residents in high-rise buildings are strong and all work together towards achieving a safety-first approach.

2.3 The Nottingham City Council Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy applies in conjunction with the following documents:

- Nottingham’s Housing Strategy 2024 – 2028
- Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2024 - 2027
- NCCHS Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement (TLI) Strategy and Action Plan 2024
- Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2025
- New charter for social housing tenants, NCH and white paper
- Nottingham City Homes Corporate Plan 2021 - 2024
- Building Safety Compliance Policy
- Housing Allocations Policy 2020

2.4 This policy is developed alongside other Council policies and strategies, and is aligned with the Strategic Council Plan, the Housing Services Divisional Business Plan, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The policy will be subject to refresh in 2027, or sooner if any changes in legislation or financial arrangements make earlier reviewal necessary.

### 3.0 Corporate Context

3.1 The Strategic Council Plan 2024 – 2027’s section on ‘Better Housing’ includes a commitment to “Ensure council tenants receive an improved service now that Nottingham City Homes has been brought back in-house”. There are also specific commitments relating to the safety of housing, namely:

- Proactively tackle damp and mould cases within council properties.
- Work with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to encourage every Nottingham home to have a smoke alarm.

3.2 The Council’s new Housing Strategy (2024 – 2028 – currently being consulted on) also commits to both improving the condition and safety of homes, as well as improved resident engagement, with a range of measures including the following:

- Plan our route to achieve a better performance in the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
- Make sure the Council’s new governance structure gives residents a key role in service design and scrutiny of service performance.
- Ensure learning from customers makes a difference to how services are delivered.
- Continue to give advice and support to tenants to develop their understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and expectations, empowering them to act where necessary.

3.3 Nottingham City Council Housing Services (NCCHS) is a social landlord with 13 buildings higher than 18 meters (high-rise) and 11 buildings over 11 meters high but less than 18 meters (mid-rise). We are committed to improving our services by listening to what our residents tell us, supporting action where needed and transparently working with residents’ priorities in the services we deliver.

- 3.4 We will ensure that all existing and new buildings are safe for residents and that every single person who lives in a higher rise building in our city has a home which is decent, safe and secure. Our high-rise buildings currently have the following flats:

<b>Block - High Rise</b>	<b>NCC Stock</b>	<b>Leasehold</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ward</b>
Ash View	100	5	105	Radford
Bentinck Court	87	3	90	Dales
Colwick Woods Court	86	4	90	Dales
Elm View	14	2	16	Radford
Kingston Court	90	0	90	Dales
Manvers Court	88	2	90	Dales
Oak View	89	4	93	Radford
Pine View	119	10	129	Radford
Southchurch Court	123	7	130	Clifton East
Victoria Centre	423	41	464	St Ann's
Willow View	28	4	32	Radford
Winchester Court	90	0	90	Sherwood
Woodthorpe Court	90	0	90	Sherwood
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1,509</b>	

- 3.5 Our high-rise blocks are a combination of general needs and older independent living accommodation. We have an allocation policy which allocates flats to single people, couples, or those with access to children. However, the makeup of households will change over time, and we do not play a role in who lives in leasehold flats, some of which we are aware are run as Airbnb's.
- 3.6 Our high-rise blocks are in a variety of neighbourhoods across the City, Sneinton, Radford, Clifton, Sherwood and the City Centre.
- 3.7 We have three high-rise Independent Living Schemes, for over 60's (or over 55 and on certain benefits) which have allocated Independent Living Co-ordinators (ILCs). Within the general needs high-rises our Housing Patch Managers (HPMs) support the management of tenancies.
- 3.8 All high-rise blocks have:
- 3.8.1 Addressable fire detection systems, Fire Alarm.
  - 3.8.2 Automatic sprinkler systems, both inside homes and in the communal areas.
  - 3.8.3 Fire resisting doors in communal areas and escape routes
  - 3.8.4 Dry risers
  - 3.8.5 AOVs or natural ventilation
  - 3.8.6 Public address system, both within the flats and communal areas
  - 3.8.7 Emergency lighting in all escape routes

None of these blocks have ACM or similar dangerous cladding.

## 4.0 Legislative Basis

- 4.1 This Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy and the way in which services are delivered comply with the requirements of the following standards and legislation:
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including secondary legislation regarding "Awaab's Law"

- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) as amended 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- Equalities Act 2010
- Renter's Reform Bill
- Localism Act 2011

4.2 According to the Building Safety Act 2022, the Council must:

- prepare a Resident Engagement Strategy
- act by the strategy
- review and revise the strategy and keep a record of the reviews
- provide the latest version to each accountable person (AP)
- when necessary, consult residents, owners of residential units, and accountable persons about the strategy and take their opinions into account
- distribute the strategy to all residents over the age of 16 and owners of units in the parts of the building that they are responsible for
- provide copies of the strategy in a way that considers the needs of the residents. For example, some may prefer a paper copy and others may prefer email
- take all reasonable steps to know who lives in their part of the building and understand their needs. This can include accessibility needs and communication needs, such as considering the language spoken or written.

## 5.0 Policy

5.1 We are committed to improving the building safety of our buildings and making visual and environmental improvements to our blocks, both inside and out. There is a programme of re-design being rolled out which includes modernisation features such as relaying flooring, lighting and decoration improvements, and creating bright and modern spaces to welcome people into their blocks and all the way to their front doors.

5.2 In addition to people living in high-rise blocks, we also need to ensure our other properties are safe, secure and fit for habitation, and that tenants' views are collected and help to shape our policies and procedures as appropriate. As of 2023, Nottingham City Council provided 24,557 social housing properties including high-rise accommodation, with a further 10,450 provided by other Registered Providers (RPs).

5.3 Our approach to resident engagement is directed by the following principles:

- **Empowerment** – Empowering residents by providing them with knowledge and support and removing any barriers to accessing information and engaging in various ways to enable residents' voices to be heard.
- **Accountability** – Holding ourselves accountable to our residents by seeking feedback in many ways to ensure we can hear what is being said by the many not just the few.
- **Transparency** – Communicating openly, honestly, and clearly with residents regarding safety features and specifics relevant to their own blocks.
- **Inclusivity** – Making sure that all sectors of society have equitable and equal opportunities to participate in involvement opportunities.

## Objective 1: Communicate and Listen

5.4 Our engagement strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Using tailored and generic information which is emailed, phoned, texted, or posted out.
- Social media and webpages with discussions and advice being provided.
- Engaging in community events or meetings with residents and community groups.
- Placing noticeboards and digital screens in blocks.
- Internal and external partners to be involved with surgeries, events, or drop-in meetings at all high-rises.
- Formal and informal meetings held at various locations, including near resident homes.
- Training with the Tenant Academy being available face-to-face and online.
- Undertaking surveys, conversations, and polls to find out resident's views.

5.5 We will:

- Co-develop and publicise an annual building and fire safety communication plan.
- Ensure we hold accurate and up to date information about tenants and leaseholders that reside in our high-rise blocks and what their needs are.
- Communicate with and provide information for residents in a way that meets their needs. Ensure that every resident living in our high-rise blocks have access to information they can understand.
- Ensure new tenants or leaseholders are given/directed to information, on building safety, that can be easily understood.
- Ensure all high-rise residents are aware of how to report safety concerns, including those found in communal areas.
- Ensure signage put up in our buildings, considers the needs of all residents residing there, ensuring more pictorial signs are put up to support communication, and aid understanding.
- Make sure that information regarding the building and its safety is published in various ways to ensure residents understand what they need to know.
- Engage with residents to better understand communication requirements and preferences, and how safe residents feel, living in their home.
- Better understand individual support needs to ensure access to involvement opportunities for all.
- Improve information residents receive about the management of high-risk buildings in line with feedback from ongoing legal and management updates and annual updates to residents.
- Publicise and promote everyone's roles and responsibilities in maintaining the safety of our buildings, including our organisation, staff, partners, residents, and contractors, plus ways to contact them.

## Objective 2: Involve

5.6 We will make information accessible and transparent. Produce clearly written, non-jargoned communication to all residents, support with various needs such as translation or large print, to ensure information has been received and is understood.

5.7 Training and Information will be offered to residents in various formats; from our Tenant Academy courses, to online meetings, getting involved with an inspection or a task and finish group, we want to involve as many people as possible in ways that support their needs.

5.8 We will:

- Work with community groups and Tenant and Residents Associations to develop new, specific, and inclusive opportunities for residents to be able to make a difference in their community and locality.
- Promote the role of Neighbourhood Representatives, supporting with knowledge to report and signpost concerns.
- Provide training and capacity building opportunities for all residents, to enhance their capabilities in building safety, advocacy, and emergency responses.
- Ensure concerns are reported appropriately when there are ASB issues in the blocks so they can be dealt with.
- Ensure that when major works are considered and ongoing at a high-rise block, regular communication is given at each stage to ensure residents are aware of what is happening, health and safety is prioritised, and residents can have a strong voice in communicating resident concerns or queries.
- Continue to work collaboratively with TPAS and external stakeholders such as NFRS, police, ambulance services, contractors, and others to improve knowledge and look to adopt any new or emerging best practice.
- Make sure that the resident's voice is heard at every level, with representation from both tenants and leaseholders holding our services to account. This includes the setting up of a Housing Assurance Board which will be accountable to the highest level of governance.
- Develop 'task and finish' style meetings to discuss and debate fire and building safety matters, be updated with current information and legislation, and promote initiatives and campaigns in building safety, including involving key partners.
- Advise residents on the importance of reducing the risk of fires and what actions can be taken to mitigate fire spread and structural failure. This includes explaining fire escape routes and any evacuation procedures, fire prevention – what to do in the event of a fire and how to report it, keeping communal areas clear and well maintained, and tackling block security issues such as tailgating and rough sleepers.
- Publish key information that shows the progress of building safety-related communal repairs, information on fire, gas, water, electricity, asbestos, and lifts to all residents, clearly and transparently. Encourage residents to use all reporting methods available and use a mandatory reporting system to identify repairs.
- Publicise and promote everyone's roles and responsibilities in maintaining the safety of our buildings, including our organisation, staff, partners, residents and contractors, plus ways to contact them.
- Encourage participation of all involved residents of high-rises, inviting them to attend our building safety online and in-person events and meetings, communicating the strength we place on the importance of resident involvement.

### Objective 3: Evaluate

- 5.9 Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement efforts in building safety, identify and respond to matters as necessary and identify areas for improvement.
- 5.10 We will analyse results from Tenant Satisfaction Measures, questionnaires, meetings, task and finish consultations and discussions, complaints, and feedback from other stakeholders to ensure that we have looked at service improvements that could be made.
- 5.11 We develop a Housing Assurance Board which will be tenant-led, so that policies and services are scrutinised, and our organisation is held to account.
- 5.12 We will:



- Analyse TSM open comments made, reviewing improvements which can be made. Monitor and improve tenant satisfaction levels within high-rise buildings for the following key performance indicators:
  - Overall tenant satisfaction
  - Tenant has a safe home
  - Keeps tenants informed
  - Treats tenants fairly and with respect
  - Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them.
- Regularly check we are achieving against new consumer standards and legislation specified by the regulator.
- Evaluation our fair and equitable engagement opportunities, and how these support residents to have a voice in decision making and service provision.
- Ensure that when our task and finish groups, make decisions these are fed back to service areas, the Building Safety Steering Group and any relevant internal or external stakeholder to inform decision making around the safety of the building.
- Evaluate information received from resident comments, complaints, satisfaction surveys and other primary feedback to make sure we listen to the views of residents, address safety-related matters that emerge from these as a priority and improve services accordingly.
- Ensure emergency situations are supported by an action plan and a review to support improvements.
- Analyse all fire reports and incidents and use the information to be proactive in reducing and eliminating further incidents.
- Monitor and evaluate resident engagement, so that we can record and report outcomes and contributions, setting up systems to feed back to residents.
- Review and deliver high rise building safety events, encouraging partnership working internally and externally, and maximising their impact for residents.
- Regularly evaluate how we make sure we have up-to-date information about all the residents that live in our high-rise properties, considering improving touch points of communication at every opportunity.

5.13 Nottingham City Council Housing Services' Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy will be made available to our residents, including all residents of high-rise blocks, through our web pages, links from social media, noticeboards, and newsletters.

5.14 This strategy enables our residents to feel confident that we are making sure safety is not something taken for granted, rather that it is a combination of joint engagement that will work to achieve its safety-first approach.

5.15 We have a dedicated Building Safety Team which carries out a programme of continuous checks on our blocks. We have a monthly strategy meeting group to ensure we are achieving on all key indicators for building safety.

5.16 We work with other stakeholders to enable residents to see our commitment to safety communication and training, holding regular meetings to ensure understanding among those living in a high-rise flat.

## 6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 Tenants are responsible for making sure they abide by their tenancy agreements and that there are no fire hazards in the home, by storing flammable items or by blocking exits. Making sure awareness of fire escape routes from your flat to the exit, testing the smoke alarm once a month by pressing and reporting to us if it does not work. Report damaged fire doors to us if you notice them.

6.2 The landlord must look after:

- The exterior of the dwelling and structural elements of the dwelling and
- The inside facilities which are part of the dwelling.

these include:

- **Water, Gas and Electricity** these items must have whatever is needed for their proper use. All equipment necessary to supply these utilities must be fully, safely and correctly installed. Any removable equipment or appliances which use gas or electricity are not counted as “installations” unless these are provided by the landlord.
- **Personal Hygiene** covers installations such as proper wash hand basins, showers and/or baths.
- **Sanitation and drainage** cover lavatories, WC basins, drains, waste pipes, rainwater goods, inlet gullies and inspection chambers.
- **Food safety** covers sinks, draining boards, work tops, cooking facilities (or cooker points and space for cooking facilities), cupboards and/or shelves for storing cooking and eating utensils and equipment. It also includes food storage facilities (which these days are usually just electricity sockets and refrigerator space).
- **Ventilation** covers elements such as airbricks, trickle vents, opening lights to windows and mechanical and non-mechanical ventilation equipment.
- **Space and water** heating installations covers any kind of fitted space heating appliance(s) or central heating system. Moveable heaters provided by the occupier are not included. Installations for heating water cover any kind of fitted water system for providing the instant or stored heated water. Kettles and other appliances of that kind are not included.
- **Fire Safety devices** sprinklers, smoke alarms, window restrictors, intercom are all maintained by us.

6.3 A Delivery Plan sits alongside this strategy, where Objectives will be assigned to owners and reviewed regularly. When appropriate these will be marked complete and new actions will be considered periodically.

## 7.0 Consultation and Feedback

7.1 In drafting this strategy, we will consult with and take on board the views of:

- Your Voice Your Choice residents’ database
- High Rise Blocks City Council tenants and leaseholders
- Building Safety Tenant and Leaseholder Group
- Building Safety Steering Group
- Heads of Service within Nottingham City Council Housing Services
- External partners such as Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

7.2 We will ensure we communicate out to as many people as possible; those that live in one of our high rises and those that do not, to enable feedback to be given on this strategy.

7.3 We intend to consider all thoughts raised and will consult in a number of ways, by email, text and post and through face-to-face meetings, at accessible locations.

## 8.0 Procedures

To be added following resident feedback...

## 9.0 Monitoring and Review

- 9.1. This strategy will be reviewed to comply with any changes to legislation or good practice which are relevant, and no less than every three years.
- 9.2. There is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) attached to this strategy.

## 10.0 Definitions / Glossary

- NCCHS – Nottingham City Council Housing Services
- NFRS – Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- QR codes – Quick-response code, which can be scanned on a smart device to access a specific webpage
- TFT –Thin Film Transistor screen
- TPAS – Tenant Participation Advisory Service
- TSMs –Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (more information on these is available here: [Tenant Satisfaction Measures - Summary of RSH requirements \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-satisfaction-measures-summary-of-rsh-requirements))
- FAN – Fire Action Notices
- EWO – Eyes Wide Open
- EIA – Equality Impact Assessment
- **Accountable person (AP)** – an organisation or individual who owns or has a legal obligation to repair any common parts of the building.
- **Principal accountable person (PAP)** – each building must have one clearly identifiable accountable person, known as the principal accountable person. The principal accountable person is usually an organisation, like a commonhold association, local authority or social housing provider. The principal accountable person owns or is legally responsible for the repair of the exterior and structure of the building.
- **Building safety decision** – a decision made by an accountable person about the management of the building, the management of building safety risks or any other decision connected to the duties of an accountable person.
- **‘Stay put’ strategy** – means the building is safe for residents to remain in their home whilst a fire is being investigated. Residents can choose to leave their flat if they feel unsafe or see fire and smoke
- **‘Phased evacuation’ strategy** – is the organised process of evacuating a building in stages during an emergency. This method prioritises the safety of individuals, ensuring that those in the most immediate danger have the opportunity to escape first.
- **‘Full evacuation’ strategy** – requires residents to leave their flats immediately in the event of a fire and go to an assembly point.
- **Mandatory occurrence report (MOR)** – will occur when a mandatory occurrence is reported, and the accountable person or principal accountable person must submit a mandatory occurrence notice which will identify the details of the incident and is published for residents to see.
- **High Risk Building** – a high-rise building includes any building which:
  - a. is at least 18 metres in height or has at least 7 storeys, and
  - b. contains at least 2 residential units.

## 11.0 Appendices

1. Appendix One: Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

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