

## **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

Report of the Chief Executive of Derby Homes

### **1. SUMMARY**

The introduction of a fire safety policy and strategy document for Derby Homes.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

To consider and approve the policy.

### **3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **3.1 Background**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires companies to allocate specific responsibilities for managing fire safety to named individuals. Recent audits by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) have highlighted that current Derby Homes' procedures do not clearly identify this. In addition, DFRS have strongly recommended that Derby Homes has an overall policy outlining its fire strategy for properties it manages. This new policy addresses the issues identified.

#### **3.2 Revisions**

This policy was reviewed at the Board Meeting held on 29 July 2010. The Board requested that responsibilities of the Board and staff training be incorporated into the policy. This version includes those revisions.

### **4. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS**

It is a legal requirement for a company to produce a fire safety policy under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This policy meets that requirement shown attached, Appendix 1.

### **5. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

The introduction of this policy is a legal requirement.

### **6. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS**

This is a key policy of Derby Homes and will be included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

**The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report**

- Consultation
- Financial and Business Plan
- Personnel
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Risk

**If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive, [phil.davies@derbyhomes.org](mailto:phil.davies@derbyhomes.org) - Tel 01332 711010**

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**Background Information:** None

**Supporting Information:** None.

## **DERBY HOMES**

### **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Derby Homes is committed to minimising the risks associated with fire in its properties in line with its duties as a landlord and recognises the fundamental importance of fire safety and the need to operate a clear Fire Safety Policy to ensure the safety and welfare of service users, visitors and staff.

This policy sets out our approach to mitigating the risks associated with fire. We will comply with all relevant legislation, principally:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Fire Safety Order)
- The Housing Act 2004 which introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **The Board**

The Board of Derby Homes has overall responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of all employees and anyone else who could be affected by our work activities. With respect to fire this includes:

- Ensuring an effective fire management policy is in place for work activities undertaken by Derby Homes.
- Ensuring an effective fire management policy is in place for properties managed by Derby Homes.
- Ensuring adequate resources are made available to meet Derby Homes' legal obligations with respect to fire and ensure as far as reasonable the safety of staff and residents.

##### **The Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive of Derby Homes is responsible for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and review of the Fire Safety Policy and has overall responsibility for fire safety with respect to:

- Domestic properties managed by Derby Homes
- Premises and offices occupied by Derby Homes
- Activities of Derby Homes and its employees.

The Chief Executive may delegate responsibility to a nominated staff member to fulfil the organisation's duties.

## **The Director of Investment & Regeneration**

The Director of Investment & Regeneration is responsible for the construction, maintenance, service and repair activities of Derby Homes. With regards to fire, they are responsible for the structural integrity of premises and the provision and maintenance, as appropriate, of:

- Means of escape
- Fire detection and alarm systems
- Fire fighting equipment
- Emergency lighting
- Passive fire protection incorporated into the design and construction of premises.

## **The Director of Housing & Customer Service**

With specific regard to fire precautions and prevention the Director of Housing & Customer Service is responsible for the:

- Day-to-day management of premises
- Management and enforcement of tenancy agreements
- Weekly testing of fire alarm systems
- Routine inspection and management of premises, buildings and common areas under the control of Derby Homes.

## **Senior Health & Safety Advisor**

The Senior Health & Safety Advisor is responsible for providing, or providing access to, competent assistance on fire safety matters in accordance with Article 18 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

## **Fire Marshals**

Fire Marshals are existing members of staff who have agreed to facilitate evacuation and compliance with the overall fire strategy in certain premises. This is currently limited to the fire and emergency evacuation plans for Cardinal Square.

## **All Staff**

All members of staff have a general duty of care to:

- Be alert to the potential of fire hazards and report such hazards accordingly.
- Take an active part in fire drills and bring to the attention of their manager or health and safety advisor any deficiencies or problems identified.
- Attend or undertake appropriate training as required.

## **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS**

A fire risk assessment is a means of identifying potential fire hazards and rating the likelihood and possible severity of the fire and enables Derby Homes to put adequate controls in place to minimise the risks.

Derby Homes has carried out and documented fire risk assessments for:

- Offices and business premises occupied and controlled by Derby Homes
- The communal areas of blocks of flats managed by Derby Homes
- Sheltered housing schemes with corridors and communal areas
- Common rooms.

For business premises leased from Derby City Council and managed by Derby Homes, we will ensure the tenant has carried out a fire risk assessment and provide information, advice and assistance as required.

### **Review**

Fire risk assessments are reviewed at least annually as part of the maintenance inspection process. They will also be reviewed:

- After any fire related incident at the premises
- After any modifications or alterations to the building.

## **DERBY HOMES PROPERTIES AND OFFICES**

### **Cardinal Square**

Derby Homes occupies three floors of the Cardinal Square office complex. Fire detection and alarm equipment within these floors is provided and maintained by Derby Homes. It is linked to, and forms part of, the main building alarm system. Derby Homes has carried out a fire risk assessment of the areas and activities at Cardinal Square under our control. The landlord is responsible for carrying out fire alarm testing and emergency evacuation drills within the building.

### **Local Housing Offices**

Derby Homes provides and maintains appropriate fire detection and fire fighting equipment in all offices under our control.

The office manager is responsible for the weekly testing of the fire alarm system and carrying out regular fire and emergency evacuation drills.

### **Shared Locations**

Where Derby Homes occupies areas in a building where another organisation also owns/manages we will liaise effectively to ensure that all requirements of appropriate legislation are satisfied.

## **General Housing**

Derby Homes is committed to minimising fire related risks in its properties in line with our duties as a landlord. In all properties we will:

- Provide, service and maintain smoke alarms and/or fire detection in the circulation areas
- Where a disability issue is identified provide appropriate additional equipment (e.g. vibrating pagers and pillow pads)
- Carry out annual gas servicing, maintenance and inspection of central heating and gas appliances provided by Derby Homes
- Carry out Periodic Inspection and Testing of the electrical installation
- Where portable appliances and white goods are provided, we will inspect, test and maintain them as appropriate.
- Where furnishings are provided as part of a furniture pack we will ensure they meet the appropriate fire retardant standards.

Derby Homes recognises that we have no control over the activities of tenants within their homes and the responsibility for safety in individual properties lies with the individual tenant. To support tenants we will:

- Publicise the importance of fire safety to all residents
- Require all new tenants to have a home fire risk assessment from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Enforce our Tenancy Conditions where activities are identified as a potential fire risk.
- Derby Homes is responsible for fire safety in supported and sheltered accommodation and communal areas in all tenures.

## **Flats**

To help ensure the safety of residents Derby Homes has implemented a “sterile area” fire management policy for blocks of flats. This requires the communal corridors, landings and stairwells of flats managed by Derby Homes to be designated a “clear zone” or sterile area free of all extraneous items. This aims to limit or remove:

- Sources of ignition and combustion
- Items that may help sustain or spread fire
- Items that may form an obstacle or trip hazard during emergency egress.

In addition, we will:

- Test service and maintain fire detection and alarm equipment where provided
- Test service and maintain fire extinguishers and fire fighting equipment where provided

- Actively manage and regularly inspect communal areas
- Ensure decorative coatings are specified and maintained to appropriate flame resistant standards.

## **Category 2 Schemes**

Kestrel House, Rebecca House and Whitecross House are supported living flats within a complex with corridors and communal facilities.

Within the individual flats we provide smoke detection linked to an emergency call system monitored by a 24 hour emergency call centre. This fire detection operates independently to the main building alarm system. The common and communal areas within the complex are covered by a monitored alarm system.

Derby Homes operates a “stay put” policy in its category 2 schemes. We recognise that the individual flats are the tenant’s home and we have no control over the activities of tenants within them. The responsibility for safety in individual properties lies with the individual tenant. The complexes are unmanned and there are no resident staff.

In the event of a fire not directly affecting a flat, risk assessment has identified that due to the profile of residents there is a potentially greater risk to them from attempting an unaided emergency evacuation than remaining within the protection of the flat and waiting for assistance. The flats are self contained fire resistant units and will offer protection to the resident from fire in another part of the complex until the emergency services respond.

## **TRAINING**

All members of staff, including temporary staff, must receive relevant information, instruction and training on fire prevention, protection and emergency evacuation procedures at the following intervals:

### **Initial Induction Training**

New staff (including Agency staff) at all workplaces must receive instruction on their first day at work when their immediate exits are shown to them and they are told what to do in case of a fire and what to do if the alarm sounds.

Further induction training in fire precautions, methods of prevention and the emergency fire plan for the premises, as it affects them. The level of training and method of delivery should be appropriate for the occupation and normal working location of the employee. Office based staff should receive interactive computer based training. Operatives working on site should receive practical fire training appropriate to the work activity. This should be conducted within **6 weeks** of their first day at work.

### **Refresher Training**

All staff will receive refresher training at least once in every 3 year period.

### **Specific Training**

Fire Wardens or others with significant responsibilities for fire prevention or evacuations will receive more in depth training at regular intervals.

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