



Wigan♥
Council



High Rise Building Safety Engagement Strategy



High Rise Building Safety Engagement Strategy

Together we're Empowered And Making a difference

Note:

The High-Rise Building Safety Engagement Strategy should be read in conjunction with our Tenant Engagement Strategy and the Building Safety Guidance booklet. These provide further details on how we will engage, consult, and communicate with our residents. This strategy is purely to address the building safety requirements for the High-rise buildings.

Contents:

- Background
- Introduction & Objectives
- Our Approach
 - Communication – Information & Understanding
 - Involve & Consultation
 - Evaluate – Do our communication methods work?
- Responsibilities
- Building Safety Guidance

1. Background

We have recently experienced exceptional changes in building safety. The Levelling Up Committee, Health and Safety Executive, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and various government departments are driving a charter to ensure the building's you live in are safe and that you as a resident feel safe.

Following the Grenfell Tragedy in June 2017, the government commissioned an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. The review was published in May 2018 and the following December the government agreed to all 53 recommendations. The independent review by Dame Judith Hackett delivered content which was adopted in the Building Safety Act which became law in January 2023.

The Grenfell fire tragedy has exposed areas of weakness where we as a nation need to improve immediately. This includes various types of work in your building and the way we communicate with you. This Strategy document will offer information on how we will improve your building, our legal responsibility and our charter to delivery safer homes.

It is important you join us on this journey to improve safety, we ask for your support in ensuring we meet the highest of standards. We are now

governed by the Health and Safety Executive and the Building Safety Regulator. In addition, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services have a mandate to ensure Wigan Council are delivering buildings that meet the new standards.

The law offers you as a resident the opportunity to request information on your building safety and we actively encourage you to join our engagement opportunities, so your voice is heard and listened to.

Bill Benbow

Building Safety Manager

2. Introduction & Objectives

This is Wigan Council's first dedicated High Rise building safety engagement strategy following the review of the building safety act (2022). The Act sets out clear requirements for engaging with tenants on building safety.

On drafting this strategy, we consulted and listened to the views of:

- Residents living across the 7 High Rise blocks
- High Rise panel members
- Housing Advisory Panel – which includes tenants, elected members & Council Officers
- Wider tenant engagement survey

We promise to continue to listen to your views and will update our engagement strategy as changes occur or every 5 years.

At Wigan Council we want to ensure that our residents feel safe in the buildings in which they live, they know how and what they need to report and what actions to take in case of an incident.

The strategy will set out:

- What information will be provided to residents – how we provide, in what formats etc
- What topics we will communicate or consult with our residents on
- How resident's views can be delivered to us and how your views can influence decisions
- What and who has responsibility for building safety
- Building safety guidance – the processes to follow

The Fire Safety act sets out the below requirements for high-rise residential buildings, the responsible person(s) is required to:

- **Building plans:** provide their local Fire and Rescue Service with up-to-date electronic building floor plans and to place a hard copy of these plans, alongside a single page building plan which identifies key firefighting equipment, in a secure information box on site.
- **External wall systems:** provide to their local Fire and Rescue Service information about the design and materials of a high-rise building's external wall system and to inform the Fire and Rescue Service of any material changes to these walls.
- **Lifts and other key firefighting equipment:** undertake monthly checks on the operation of lifts intended for use by firefighters, and evacuation lifts in their building and check the functionality of other key pieces of firefighting equipment. They will also be required to report any defective lifts or equipment to their local Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible after detection if the fault cannot be fixed within 24 hours, and to record the outcome of checks and make them available to residents.
- **Information boxes:** install and maintain a secure information box in their building. This box must contain the name and contact details of the Responsible Person and hard copies of the building floor plans.
- **Wayfinding signage:** to install signage visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.
- **Fire doors:** undertake annual checks of flat entrance doors and quarterly checks of all fire doors in the common parts & provide residents with information relating to the importance of fire doors in fire safety.
- **Fire safety instructions:** provide relevant fire safety instructions to their residents, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what a resident must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.

3. Our Approach

3.1 Communication – Information & Understanding

Communication is important in ensuring everyone knows their personal responsibilities to Fire and building safety, and for our residents to understand and feel confident on what to do in case of an emergency.

We will endeavour to keep residents informed of any changes in regulation and to consult on significant changes that will impact our residents.

We will use a variety of ways to communicate with our residents and will also consult with our residents to understand their preferred methods of communication and any additional requirements they may need i.e., large print, different languages.

Below is some of the methods we will use to ensure everyone is kept informed of the safety requirements of your building:

- Information provided in the new tenant sign up pack.
- How to guides/information leaflets.
- Newsletter
- Wigan Council website
- Digital Noticeboards to be installed in all blocks
- Noticeboards in all entrance lobbies
- Written communication – Emails, Texts, or letters
- Any in person meetings, pop up events, coffee mornings.
- Tenant & Resident Groups
- Ensure simple lines of communication for residents to contact us

We will ensure that any literature will be audited and approved by our readers panel to make sure that the information is in plain English, jargon free, relevant and easy to understand.

If you require the information in a different format, please contact the Tenant Voice & Engagement Team on 01942 486645 or TVAET@wigan.gov.uk

3.2 Involve & Consultation

At Wigan Council we pride ourselves on working with our tenants to make sure we co-produce/consult on our services to ensure our tenants receive the best service in a way that suits their needs.

We encourage our tenants to get more involved and to help shape our services. We currently have several opportunities specifically for our high-rise tenants and further opportunities to look at wider services (see our Tenant Engagement Strategy).

Tenants can get involved with us on any level, ways to get involved can be from surveys, consultations, face to face meetings to attending forums and joining volunteer panels. We endeavour to make getting involved a simple process and will try to accommodate any individual needs.

To ensure your voice is heard, we will provide the following:

- Access to the Tenant Housing Advisory Panel member (Dedicated to the High-Rise Blocks)

- Consultation – face to face, surveys & meetings to discuss significant changes that may affect you as a tenant
- Contact details for your Neighbourhood Tenant Officer
- Contact details for your Tenant Voice & Engagement Officer
- We will develop, promote & recruit High Rise Champions (individual tenant representative in each block)
- We will support & promote any High Rise Tenant & Resident associations
- We will develop, support and recruit a dedicated High-Rise reader's panel
- We will work with our tenants to support any other forms of engagement they feel would develop the relationships between tenants, wider community and the council

We understand that not everyone wishes to get involved but that everyone should have their voice heard, if you would like to discuss anything on a 1:1 basis, please get in touch.

If you would like more information on any of the above or to get more involved in decision making, please contact the Tenant Voice and Engagement Team on TVAET@wigan.gov.uk

3.2 Evaluate – Do our communication methods work?

We promise to continually evaluate how we communicate, involve and consult with our tenants to ensure we maintain and build our relationships and that you feel listened to and able to influence the services you receive.

We will do this in several ways:

- By listening to your feedback through consultations, surveys and complaints
- Through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey
- Surveys – your views on building safety and feeling safe in your home
- Review the effectiveness of our engagement opportunities.
- 'You said, we did' information – to show how your recommendations have been acted upon
- To continue to work together to develop this strategy, ensuring all residents are able to have their voice heard, and that residents are kept informed of any changes to legislation

4. Responsibilities

Wigan Council have promised to adopt the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) safer homes charter, as a council we will have responsibility to keep your building safe and well maintained, we will

appoint a dedicated accountable person for each building that will ensure they comply with all fire and safety regulations.

The safer homes charter sets out our promises in delivering homes where our residents are safe and feel safe. We understand that building safety is a continuous journey and that ensuring the safety of our residents remains the highest priority during any design, construction, refurbishment, management, and occupation of your homes.

The Charter sets out these clear priorities:

As a council we promise to:

- Create and maintain safe buildings for the benefit of all residents, their visitors and our contractors
- Create and maintain a culture of resident-centred building safety
- Involves, listen and communicate with residents
- Have overall responsibility for the delivery of works to our buildings
- Recognise landlords have an important part to play in the success of investment and development projects by being an informed client
- Dedicate sufficient and effective resources to support appropriate and competent supervision across design, procurement, construction and supply chains
- Work collaboratively with contractors
- Review work done on our buildings to ensure it meets regulation and acknowledge our responsibilities for the legacy of safety once the work is completed
- Always comply with regulation and legislation

We also promise to ensure that our contractors promise to:

- Work in line with the current building and fire safety legislation and building regulations
- Treat residents and their homes with respect
- Create safe work environments and work safely
- Evidence and demonstrate good workmanship by having relevant competence, experience, skills and accreditations for the work they are doing
- Supervise all works for both direct labour operatives and sub-contractors
- Work collaboratively with the Council
- Provide certification for the quality of both the installation and materials used
- Report any potential safeguarding issues as and when they arise.

- Sign up to the council's building and fire safety standards prior to contract award and evidence compliance as part of the contract management process

As a resident you will also have an important part to play, we ask that you:

- Don't do anything that creates a significant risk to your building's structural safety
- Don't do anything that creates a significant risk of causing or spreading fire in your building
- Don't damage or remove any of your building's fire safety measures, such as smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire doors, and fire extinguishers
- Please report any damage or safety issues immediately to the Contact Centre 01942 489005
- Inform us of any personal vulnerabilities that require assistance or consideration in case of evacuation or during building works to your building
- Don't store or leave any items in the corridors or communal spaces
- Allow us access to carry out any fire safety checks/works to your property

5. High Rise Building Safety Guidance

The Wigan Council High Rise Building Safety Guidance Booklet offers clear guidance on how you can stay safe and feel safe in your home.

The Building Safety Guidance booklet includes the following:

1. Details of your stay put and evacuation policy
2. The process for reporting fire risk or to raise concerns
3. Procedures to follow if a fire or emergency occurs
4. Key information of the accountable person and how to contact them
5. Measures we have in place to prevent fire & building safety issues
6. Access to your building fire risk assessment (FRA) and details of the recent building safety upgrades

7. Testing of your smoke detectors, fire doors
8. Advice on e-bikes, balcony safety etc
9. Key contact details

All properties will receive a copy of the safety booklet, please read to find the latest safety information and store in a safe place. More information can be found on Wigan Council website ([add Link](#)).

Residents can request additional information about the fire safety measure in their building, these need to be requested through the accountable person. We will also deliver periodic notices and guidance issued by 3rd parties such as Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service or the HSE.

If you would like more information on Building safety:

[Fire Safety Act 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/legislation/fire-safety-act-2021)