

Southampton City Council

Building Safety

Resident Engagement Strategy



SOUTHAMPTON
CITY COUNCIL

**Southampton City Council
Housing Service
Building Safety - Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2026**

Contents

Introduction..... 2

Aims 2

Scope..... 2

Our commitments 3

Information we will share 3

Consultation 4

How we will listen and learn 5

How we will measure participation..... 6

Governance 7

Appendix 1- Legislative context and other documents 8

Appendix 2- Definitions 9

Building Safety - Resident Engagement Strategy			
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Introduction

Southampton City Council manages building safety in Council-owned residential buildings. Building safety refers to the measures that are in place to protect tenants in buildings and what we are doing to improve the safety of the building. Building safety measures reduce and mitigate risks, such as the spreading of a fire, structural failures and gas and electric hazards. The building safety measures aim to reduce the seriousness of an incident if one occurs.

As residents, shared owners, and leaseholders in Council-owned buildings, you have a say in building safety decisions. This strategy sets out how we will involve you in building safety decisions.

Aims

The strategy aims to make sure you:

- are informed about the building safety information we will provide
- understand what we may ask you about building safety
- know how we will contact you and use your feedback to influence decisions
- understand how we will measure and review our engagement methods
- feel safe in your own home.

Scope

This strategy is for you if you are a resident, shared owner or leaseholder of our Council-owned residential flat or maisonette.

Under the Building Safety Act 2022, there is a requirement for the Council to prepare a resident engagement strategy for residents and leaseholders in high-rise buildings. The scope of this strategy has been expanded to include all residents, shared owners and leaseholders in all our Council-owned residential flats and maisonettes.

Our commitments

Information we will share

We will make sure to provide key information that you need to know about building safety.

We will continue to:

- Provide a notice on the back of every residential front door in tower blocks. The notice explains what steps to take in the event of a fire
- Provide fire safety information to residents in tower blocks at the start of every tenancy. This includes “Fire Safety” “dos & don’ts” and information on sprinklers. See link for information: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/information-for-new-council-tenants/>
- Share information on building safety in the Tenants Handbook on the Council’s website: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/your-tenancy/tenants-handbook/>
- Provide information about vulnerable tenants¹ in high-rise buildings to the fire service to ensure they are supported during a building safety incident. Please inform the Council if you have a vulnerability so we can make sure to provide you with the right support². Publish key information about building safety on our website, social media and Tenants Link. Tenants Link is our e-magazine which provides important information to tenants, shared owners and leaseholders. You can subscribe to Tenants Link and receive a monthly e-news bulletin with all the latest news on housing to your inbox. You can find more information here: [Tenants' Link](#).
- Send letters or emails to inform you about building safety measures, and ways to reduce risks
- Set out a process for reporting a fire risk and/or raising any other safety concerns. More information can be found in the “Raising a concern” section below.
- Update you regularly if a serious issue with a building has been identified. We will inform you about any interim safety measures put in place, remedial works and further investigations that are required
- Provide direct delivery of letters regarding all urgent matters. While making all reasonable efforts to contact affected vulnerable residents either face to face or by telephone. This is with a view to completing impact assessments and putting in place appropriate mitigations
- Hold meetings and focus groups with you to share important information.
- Share information discussed at meetings with each resident. This may be shared via web pages, email, or letters
- Update you if there are any significant changes to the strategy
- Answer any queries you may have during the settling-in visit

More Information can be requested. This includes:

- Full, current, and historical fire risk assessments.

¹ See excerpt from Grenfell Tower report on vulnerable people below in Appendix 2: Definition.

² See paragraph 113.79 and 113.81 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report on vulnerable people: [GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY: Volume 7](#)

- Outcome of building safety inspection checks where available
- How assets in the building are managed, e.g., frequency of lift maintenance
- Details of preventive measures, e.g., smoke alarms
- Fire protection measures in place, e.g., sprinklers
- Information available on the maintenance of fire safety systems
- The fire strategy for the building
- Structural assessments, where available

Request a communication method

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and accessibility for all our residents. The Council will consider requests to make information available in different formats. Our Accessibility statement is available [online](#). You can also contact our building safety team via email:

Building safety: buildingsafety@southampton.gov.uk

Consultation

We want to hear your views about how we can keep you safe in your building. We will do so before we make significant building safety decisions. We will contact you using a range of methods as described below in the 'How we will listen and learn' section of this strategy

We will ensure that where your preferred options are possible, we will consider them in decision making. Decisions we will ask for opinions on may include:

- Who may be disrupted by the works?
- When would be the best time to undertake works within your property?
- How could disruption be kept to a minimum?
- Best way to distribute information.
- Further opportunities for building communication methods
- Changes to the engagement strategy
- Specific safety information about your block when changes are needed.

The strategy for any consultation on choices will be determined on a case-by-case basis, utilising the preferred communication methods for each block as well as the complexity of the decision. For example, if work is needed to repair a faulty fire door, asking you about the work may not be necessary. However, we may ask those that are disrupted by the work when would be the best time to do the repair, and how else disruption could be kept to a minimum.

The council will inform but not necessarily consult under the following conditions:

- Where legislation dictates, we must take emergency actions to keep you safe
- Where life safety emergency repairs need to be undertaken such as the fire doors, alarm systems and sprinklers.
- Where the present evacuation strategy needs to change due to the findings of a safety investigation

- Where structural issues have been noted in your property or surrounding areas

How we will listen and learn

We want to make sure we engage with you about building safety decisions in a way that suits you best. During consultations on building safety, we will use a range of methods to ensure we hear the views of affected residents, shared owners and leaseholders.

Some of the ways we can engage with you about building safety is:

- Letters or surveys by post
- Online surveys
- Southampton City Councils consultation website.
- Targeted email
- Social media posts
- Tenant & Leaseholder Meetings or events
- Building Safety Tenants Group
- Other ad hoc focus groups
- Block notice boards.
- Engagement with officers of the Council.
- Building safety newsletter.

As noted above in “Request a communication method” section, you can request communication in different ways which includes but not limited to large print or translation service.

Contact us:

Give us your feedback on building safety engagement by contacting the Tenant Engagement Team directly either by:

Email: tenant.engagement@southampton.gov.uk;
Phone: 023 8083 3185

Raising a concern

- For a concern about building safety issues, such as obstructions in communal areas you can contact the Local Housing Office via this website: [Housing - Contact your local housing office | Southampton City Council](#). This will bring you to a form where you can raise your specific concerns.
- You can report a safety concern about one of our high rise buildings, using [our online form](#). This form is for our high-rise residential properties which are 18 metres or seven floors. For concerns with a flat entrance door or a fire door in a communal area, you can report this to the Council's Repair department here: [Report a repair \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#)
- For general fire safety queries, you can email the fire safety team at: [Fire safety \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#)
- If you are not satisfied with how a concern or an issue has been dealt with, you can escalate the issue by [submitting a complaint](#).

How we will measure participation

We will regularly monitor and review how we engage with you about building safety decisions. We may ask you about our engagement methods during engagement sessions, events or in a survey. If there is a lack of satisfaction and participation, we will re-evaluate our engagement methods.

Some of the ways we will measure our engagement methods is by recording and monitoring:

- the number of consultation responses to the resident engagement strategy;
- whether you feel safe in your building;
- whether you feel that you can easily share your views on how to improve the safety in your building;
- the effectiveness of our engagement methods by asking you questions in a survey;
- the number of social media posts we make and the number of views on our social media posts regarding the building safety;
- the number of issues raised by residents regarding the safety of their building.
- The number of people reading Tenant Link articles on Building Safety.

We will review this data to understand our successes and what we need to improve to engage effectively with you. We will report the progress of our engagement to the Resident's Building Safety Group at least every two years.

Governance

We will implement, monitor and update this strategy. We will:

- consult on the strategy the first time it is issued and when there is any significant change to it;
- consult all residents over the age of 16, anyone who owns a residential unit and accountable persons for the building;
- hold a public consultation to hear from residents, for a period of at least 3 weeks;
- carefully consider any feedback and, if necessary, update our strategy;
- Make the latest version of the strategy available to each accountable person, resident, and owner of residential unit;
- review the strategy:
 - at least every two years or otherwise informed by legislation;
 - after every consultation on the strategy;
 - after a mandatory occurrence report;
 - after the completion of significant material alterations to the building.
- After the consultation, all feedback must be considered. The strategy does not need to be reconsidered if major changes occur because of the consultation.

Amending this strategy: consultation process

When we amend or renew this resident engagement strategy, we will consult with you.

During this process, we will:

- produce a consultation questionnaire (online and paper version). This may be shared with you on our website, social media or in focus groups;
- provide you with adequate time (at least 3 weeks) to share your feedback;
- review and carefully consider your feedback;
- make any necessary amendments based on the responses;
- share the changes we have made based on the feedback. This may be in a “Your Voice Matters”
- ensure that any personal data we gather is handled in accordance with the data protection principles, such as the Data Protection Act 2018, and meets our contractual, statutory, and administrative obligations;
- include a standard privacy statement for Council consultations in the questionnaire, explaining how we will use the information we collect about respondents.

Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a European regulation which came into force on 25 May 2018, and replaces the Data Protection Act 1998 with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

We are committed to using your personal data fairly and keeping it safe. This will not change under the new regulations. Information about its information governance can be found on our website. [The Data Protection Act 2018 \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/the-data-protection-act-2018)

Appendices

Appendix 1- Legislative context and other documents

Building Safety Act 2022

An accountable person is an organisation or individual who owns or has a legal obligation to repair any common parts of the building (i.e. structure, staircases, corridors). Each high-rise building has an identifiable accountable person, known as the principal accountable person. Southampton City Council is the principal accountable person for Council-owned high-rise buildings. 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;
- 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 language spoken.

Mandatory Occurrence Reporting – residents in high-rise buildings

As a result of the Building Safety Act 2022, Southampton City Council must report certain fire and structural safety issues to the Building Safety Regulator. This is called mandatory occurrence reporting. The things we report includes but not conclusive to, flammable cladding on the outside of the building or failure of the building's structure such as parts of the building collapsing or issues that may increase the risk of fire spreading.

Mandatory occurrence reporting only relates to high-risk buildings. This is included in our strategy because we want our residents and leaseholders help us in keeping you and our building safe. So, if you feel that there are fire and/or structural building issues relating to the block you live in, please complete our online form on: We will investigate it and where appropriate we will report this to the Building Safety Regulator.

See link: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/your-tenancy/housing-complaints/safety-concerns-about-a-council-high-rise-building/>

Other documents

The strategy links to other Southampton City Council's items, including:

- [Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement - Code of Conduct \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/your-tenancy/housing-complaints/safety-concerns-about-a-council-high-rise-building/)

Appendix 2- Definitions

Accountable person	<p>An accountable person is an organisation or individual who owns or has a legal obligation to repair any common parts of the building.</p> <p>The principal person is Southampton City Council.</p>
Principal accountable person	<p>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.</p> <p>The principal accountable person is Southampton City Council.</p>
Building safety decision	<p>Any 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.</p>
'Stay put unless' strategy	<p>The 'Stay Put' policy remains the best one in case of a fire in your building— if the fire is in your own, or an immediate neighbour's flat, get out, shut your front door and phone the fire service. If the fire is in another flat then stay put, close your windows and doors; if you need to leave the building, then the emergency services will tell you what you have to do.</p>
Full Evacuation strategy	<p>An evacuation strategy requires residents to leave their flats immediately in the event of a fire and go to an assembly point.</p>
Mandatory occurrence report	<p>An accountable person or principal accountable person must submit a mandatory occurrence notice as soon as you can when a safety occurrence is identified. They must then submit a report identifying the safety occurrence.</p>
High-risk building	<p>A higher-risk building has at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 storeys or at least 18 metres high• 2 residential units or is a hospital or a care home

<p>Vulnerable people</p>	<p>There is no one single definition for vulnerable or vulnerability. However, the definition provided is based on the findings in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report and the excerpt for which we have taken:</p> <p>'Residents whose ability to evacuate the building without assistance may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or impaired cognition).'</p>
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[END]