



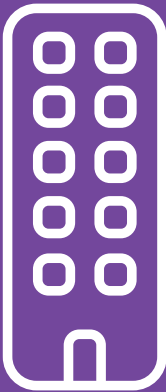
watford
community
housing

Making your home safer

Our strategy for building safety
High-rise residential buildings

At Watford Community Housing, residents' safety is our top priority.

This document sets out our commitment to managing building safety, in line with the guidance set by the Building Safety Regulator and wider government, which ensures that all social housing providers have an active resident engagement strategy in place for their buildings.



The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all residents:

- feel safe in the building they live in
- know how to easily report any problems about their home or any part of the building which may impact their safety
- know what to do in the event of an incident in their block
- have a clear understanding of our responsibilities as a landlord, and their responsibilities to ensure their home remains safe
- are aware of the ways in which they can get involved and influence building safety, as well the services we provide
- know what we are doing in response to their feedback
- are effectively communicated with in a way that is accessible and easy to understand
- know how to make a complaint if they feel that their concerns are not being listened to





Keeping your building safe

High-rise buildings are kept safe through a planned regime of maintenance, servicing, repairs, and replacement of assets and components within them.

Some of the key fire safety-related assets include sprinklers, fire doors, smoke detection systems, firefighting equipment, emergency lighting and smoke ventilation windows.

Other assets that have routine checks and inspections are lifts, communal door entry systems, electrical systems and various plant, storage,

and communal areas.

Walls, floors, ceilings, and doors are passive fire measures. Together they form compartments that limit the spread of fire and smoke. They are designed to contain fire and smoke at their source for a long enough period to allow the fire service to extinguish the fire.

It is this design that means residents are safe to remain in their home so long as it is not affected by fire, smoke, or heat, or unless otherwise instructed by the fire service.

Here are some of the features that help keep your building safe.

EMERGENCY LIGHTS

Emergency lighting is in place to ensure access ways are lit in the event of a loss of power in your building. The lights are tested monthly and are serviced annually.

DRY RISER

A dry riser helps the fire service to get water up to your floor quickly in an emergency. Dry risers are checked and maintained every six months.

SPRINKLER SYSTEM

Your flat contains a sprinkler system which runs a monthly test, with an overall annual service. The system will activate in two stages. When a temperature of 57°C is detected the cover plate will remove itself and, if the temperature increases further to 65°C, the system will activate.

SECURE INFORMATION BOX

This is the red box stored on the ground floor of your building and contains information to assist Herts Fire and Rescue Service should they need to attend in an emergency.

FIRE DOORS

Fire doors are in place at the entrance to your property and in communal areas throughout the building. Each door provides 30 minutes of protection against fire and smoke whilst closed. The doors have an automatic closer installed which should not be tampered with.

COMPARTMENTATION

Your building has been designed so that each flat is its own fire resistant 'compartment', which delays the spread of fire throughout the building. Compartmentation in communal areas is inspected annually.

VENTS

Vents are located in the stairwell of each block and help to clear smoke in the event of an emergency.

Communication

We regularly engage with customers on building safety matters, using various different means. We will tailor our communication methods to customers' needs and make sure they are accessible.

A variety of methods will be used to communicate important building safety messages when necessary and we will provide residents an annual fire safety advice leaflet, which will also be shared with any new tenants at the start of their tenancy.

The methods used to communicate include:

- newsletters, letter and emails.
- regular, planned drop-in sessions
- safety sessions
- targeted building safety workshops
- digital notice board messages
- our website
- joint visits with partners such as Herts Fire and Rescue Service

We will give practical advice and support to raise awareness of building safety by continuing to:

- provide residents with a fire safety booklet at the start of their tenancy – with a 'refresher' copy sent out annually
- carry out tenancy visits. All tenants are visited at least every three years – with some residents visited annually based on individual circumstances
- prepare Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for all high-rise residents that request them



- display Fire Action Notices throughout all buildings
- communicate with residents in a variety of ways to ensure support and access for flat entrance door inspections
- promote key messages about safety, waste removal, repairs, and who to contact, in block noticeboards
- make sure that, when undertaking any major works, all relevant health and safety aspects are prioritised and that residents are aware of any safety issues
- provide fire safety advice on our website
- make referrals for vulnerable tenants to Herts Fire and Rescue Service for home safety checks

How you can help us

Customers who live in high-rise residential buildings also play a key role in keeping their homes safe. At the start of a new tenancy, all new customers are provided with a guide called 'Help us to keep your home safe', which is a practical guide that sets out the responsibilities of both residents and leaseholders and provides guidance on how to remain safe in your home.

This guide is then re-sent to all customers annually as a reminder of the importance of helping us to keep homes safe.

We will support customers to stay safe, but they must:

- avoid behaviour that could risk the safety of the building or other residents
- not make alterations to flat entrance doors without permission
- not tamper with safety features in their flat or communal areas
- refrain from storing items in communal areas
- know what information they must provide us with so we can assess or manage building safety risks
- allow us access to their home so that we can complete our legally required duties when needed. This includes fire alarm and sprinkler maintenance, annual fire door inspections and electrical safety checks





How you can have your say

We will provide opportunities for you to have your say on decisions relating to building safety.

This may include:

- checking if you have a preferred time for appointments about safety checks or works
- asking how we can reduce disruption when carrying out safety works
- getting your opinion on improving fire or building safety - for example, upgrading fire doors
- involving you in the design of any major upgrade works in the building

It might not always be possible or appropriate to consult on changes to the way we manage or maintain the building, for example if there is a new legal

requirement to carry out work. In this case we will always provide written notice in a timely manner.

We also understand that not all decisions about the building will affect all customers, therefore, we will only consult with you if you will be directly affected by the proposed works or changes.

Building safety complaints

You have the right to raise a complaint if you feel a report or work carried out has not been handled satisfactorily.

Any building safety complaints should be reported to us directly by calling us on **0800 218 2247**, completing the feedback form found on our website at wcht.org.uk/feedback, or by emailing us at feedback@wcht.org.uk.

We will then investigate as appropriate and aim to resolve the complaint within 10 days, in line with our complaints procedure.

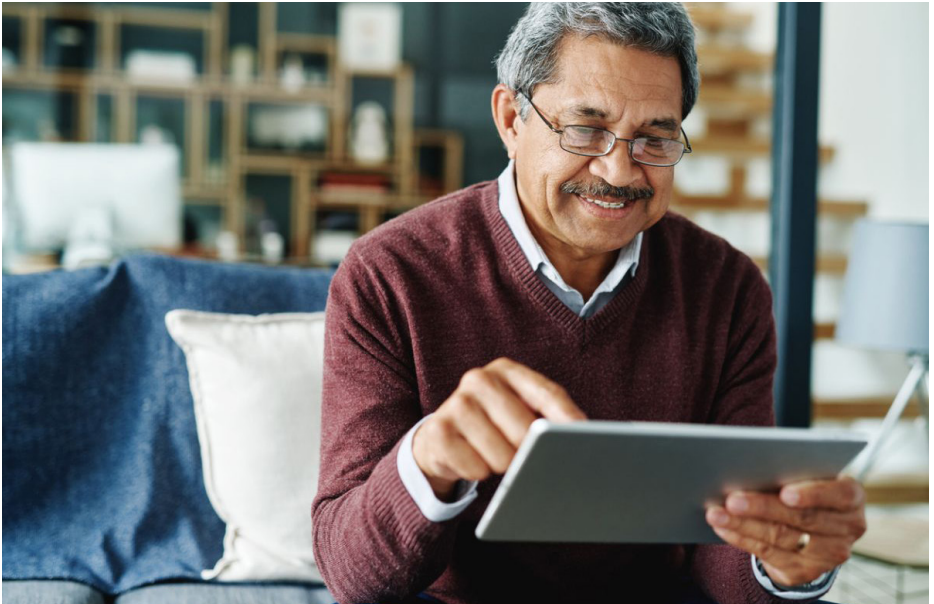
Following a complaint, we will provide a written response including details of the investigation which has taken place, the outcomes and any follow-up actions.



Keeping our strategy up to date

To ensure this strategy remains current and effective, it will be reviewed:

- annually
- following any incident which affects the building
- following any significant alteration to a high-rise building



Get in touch

Watford Community Housing
Gateway House
59 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1LA

0800 218 2247
wcht.org.uk



The named contact is:

Warren Bennett
Watford Community Housing
Gateway House
59 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1LA

Need help reading this?

Get in touch if you need this letter translated into a different language. Call **0800 218 2247** or email enquiries@wcht.org.uk





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