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Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy

1. Background

The Building Safety Act 2022 introduces a set of new requirements for the management of building safety in "higher risk buildings", defined as buildings of 18 metres or more in height or seven or more storeys and containing at least two homes. Building Owners are required to put into effect measures to enable residents to have a say in the management of their building and have the opportunity to raise concerns directly to the Accountable Person in relation to the safety of their home and building.

Our Resident Engagement Strategy meets the requirements of the Higher-Risk Buildings (Management of Safety Risks etc) (England) Regulations 2023.

One of the new requirements is to produce a resident engagement strategy for all higher risk buildings. This is to ensure that residents aged 16 and over (and non-resident owners) have the opportunity and are encouraged to be involved in the decision making in relation to the safety of their homes. The statutory requirement states that the Strategy should set out:

- what information will be provided to residents
- what decisions they will be consulted on
- how residents' views will be taken into account
- annual review of the level of engagement of the consultation

This Strategy outlines the key principles of PRHA's resident engagement service offer. It aims to provide opportunities for residents to scrutinise, influence, shape and hold PRHA to account through a co-regulation approach, as outlined in the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Localism Act 2011.

This Strategy is influenced by the National Federation of Housing's guidance, 'Building a Safer Future' charter commitments and government consultations.

2. Objectives

Our engagement activities are intended to support residents to shape and improve their service delivery, achieve our building safety aims and maximise outcomes.

Our ultimate goal is to improve how we deliver building safety services for residents, no matter where they live, and to be more transparent around how we keep them safe.

We will achieve this goal through the following objectives:

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- Develop effective engagement approaches, suited to residents' needs and expectations, using appropriate channels to improve access to information and empower residents to easily provide feedback on our services.
- Work with the staff teams to recruit engaged residents for task and finish groups and panels, understand their needs and expectations and provide the support they need to influence, scrutinise and co-design our services.
- Use the information we gather through engagement activities to gain insight into what our residents expect and prefer, and to influence our services.
- Regularly plan, monitor and review our approach, working with residents to evaluate changes introduced as a result of engagement activities, and feed these back to residents and partners.

3. Consultation on the Engagement Strategy

PRHA will consult with residents

- When the Residents' Engagement Strategy has first been prepared
- New high-risk buildings - where a majority of relevant persons are able to participate
- When there are proposed revisions to the Residents' Engagement Strategy

We will consult with all relevant persons and prescribed persons including any accountable persons and we will take any representations made on the consultation into account when next reviewing the Strategy;

We will:

- Include appropriate and reasonable methodologies which may include digital, postal or in-person events.
- Involve the taking of reasonable steps to ensure that any relevant person likely to be affected by the matter to which the consultation relates is aware of the consultation.
- Be for a reasonable period, and in the case of a consultation on the residents' engagement strategy, for a period of no less than 3 weeks.

Review of the Strategy

We will review the strategy at prescribed times and revise where necessary/appropriate.

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- At least every two years, and in any event within a reasonable period following any consultation.
- Within a reasonable period after a mandatory occurrence report
- Within a reasonable period after the completion of significant material alterations to the building
- Alterations to the height or width building, number of storeys, number of residential units, number of, or width of, the staircases, work to the external wall, changes the internal layout

Who will we provide the Strategy to:

- Each resident over the age of 16 and residing in a residential unit for which the Accountable Person is responsible
- Each owner of a residential unit

4. Information to residents

We aim to adopt a culture of openness by ensuring all relevant safety information about a building is available to residents (with some exceptions).

There are two core principles to our proposed approach for sharing building safety information:

- We are responsible for providing residents with the information they need to understand the processes, mechanisms and features in place to keep their building safe
- Residents may wish to access more detailed information, to better understand the safety features of their building. This information should empower residents to better understand the level of risk in their buildings, to change behaviour (if necessary) and hold us to account

Emergency communications

When a major incident occurs, we will liaise with frontline teams and the CEO to co-ordinate resident and stakeholder communications, including drafting media statements and updates for regulators or local MPs and Councillors.

Resident communications

If the information is mandatory and safety-related (and all residents must see it and take action): Information should be delivered to residents in hard-copy format, in

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order to reach everyone within a defined timeframe. This can also be confirmed by email, where we have email addresses for residents.

If the information is for reference, or an update on general progress: Information will be issued by email and on communal noticeboards, where available. We would also encourage all residents to provide us with an email address to enable us to provide proactive updates for queries and feedback.

Proactive information

Residents should understand the condition of and safety measures in place in the building they live in and feel safe there as a result. Moreover, residents should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for preventing incidents and keeping their homes and buildings safe. This will be a key principle in how we regularly report on the condition of buildings and how we share information with residents.

Building Safety information will be proactively provided at property sign up and at relevant contact points throughout their tenancy (or equivalent agreement for other resident types).

We'll use noticeboards to issue proactive updates on safety works underway, inspections and advice on what to do in the event of an emergency. The PRHA website will also provide general safety advice for specific risk areas.

Residents can also request more detailed information via the Property Services or housing management teams.

As a minimum, the following information should be available to residents in a clear and accessible way:

- Details of the measures in place to mitigate potential building safety risks, eg: fire precautions
- Advice on how to reduce the risk of fire in individual dwellings eg: by not storing flammable materials
- The process for reporting a fire risk and/or raising any other safety concerns
- What to do in the event of a fire in the building and a clear explanation of the building's evacuation strategy
- Clear explanations of the roles and responsibilities of PRHA and residents
- Details of building safety inspections and planned compliance programmes taking place throughout the year
- Advice on how to test safety systems around the home, eg: smoke alarms
- For Fidelis house the contact details of the Accountable Person.
- Outcomes of building safety inspection checks, including Fire Risk Assessment of External Walls and EWS1 forms

In addition, the following Fire safety information will be shared with residents in accordance with Fire Safety Information (S156 Building Safety Act 2022):

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- **Risk Identification:** Tenants will be informed about any specific risks identified in our fire risk assessment, ensuring they are aware of potential hazards.
- **Prevention and Protective Measures:** Details about prevention and protective fire safety measures provided for the safety of any or all occupants (such as the means of escape, the measures to restrict the spread of fire and what people should do in the event of a fire) will be communicated, empowering tenants to actively contribute to fire safety.
- **Responsible Person's Identity:** Tenants have the right to know the name and address of the responsible person overseeing fire safety on the premises.
- **Reported Risks:** Any risks reported to the responsible person will be communicated to tenants, promoting transparency.

Building Safety newsletters will be produced on a quarterly basis and include seasonal safety campaigns. These will be proactively promoted to residents living in a building of more than one home through direct email, where provided, social media channels and other platforms, including the quarterly service update and the website. A working group of relevant colleagues and representatives from other business areas will champion resident engagement, drive activity and priorities, and manage proactive campaigns.

Providing detailed information on request

The process of requesting more detailed information on building safety should be clear and accessible to residents. It should empower them to understand the safety features present in their building, and to challenge us on how we deliver on our promises.

It should also enable vulnerable residents to nominate an advocate, care-giver or representative who can request more detailed information on their behalf.

The following information can be provided upon request:

- Current and historic fire risk assessments;
- Planned maintenance and repairs schedules
- How we manage assets in the building, e.g. lift maintenance
- Details of safety measures in place, e.g. smoke alarms
- Fire protection measures in place, e.g. sprinklers, fire extinguishers
- Information on the maintenance of safety systems
- Planned and historical changes to the building.
- Confirmation of the registration of the building with the Building Safety regulator
- Building Safety case report (when available)

Confidential information

Building Safety information should be open and accessible to residents, but some information will not be provided in circumstances where doing so would compromise the safety of the building and its residents, resident privacy or intellectual property rights.

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5. Decisions we will consult on

We recognise that residents will wish to be consulted on decisions that are relevant to their safety and that of their homes.

We will target our engagement consultation to achieve this and ensure that residents living in our high rise and complex buildings are engaging with us. We are committed to increasing engagement with residents to hear and understand the lived experience of our building safety delivery and to ensure representation is authentic and relevant.

Residents will be given opportunity to feedback at every phase of our decision-making processes on building safety services and to do this we will seek feedback at every stage of the customer journey. We will:

- Implement more transactional surveys on building safety inspections
- Conduct more frequent consultations with residents on building safety communications and contractor appointments
- Feedback surveys after any major works to improve service delivery and communications

Local level meetings will take place regularly for our tall buildings whenever major building safety work is underway, to ensure residents have the opportunity to raise concerns directly with us.

Building Safety meetings will also be held at any building where building safety work has either been undertaken in the past year or is proposed in the coming year.

A key principle of how this activity works will be that, where we can, we'll ask for residents' views and give them options, but sometimes we may have to make the final decision if it's a time /business-critical issue.

6. Informing residents of our Building Safety Decision

Decision making is risk based, PRHA will be transparent and explain how stakeholders', and especially residents, owners or occupants', voices were considered. We will ensure the outcome of important decisions affecting occupants with particular focus on residents is communicated in a suitable way to occupants.

PRHA will inform residents when:

- Works resulting from a building safety decision will be carried out, and the purpose of the works
- Where works last more than one day which will limit access to any part of a building, or cause a nuisance to residents (unless emergency works)

The information that will be provided to residents about decisions relating to the management of the building will include:

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- The aspects of those decisions that residents will be consulted about
- The arrangements for obtaining and taking account of the view of the residents
- How the appropriateness of methods for promoting participation will be measured and kept under review.

7. How residents views will be heard

PRHA's culture of resident engagement will ensure that residents are empowered to play an effective role in making sure that their building is, and remains, safe. This includes delivering on their responsibilities to keep themselves, their home and their neighbours safe.

We will work in partnership with residents to ensure that they are involved in decisions about their building's safety, providing opportunities to influence appropriate strategy, policy, safety standards, approaches, performance targets and safety procedures.

We will do this through a number of approaches as set out in the Resident Engagement and Customer Involvement Strategies:

- Local engagement - Provide opportunities to engage with residents through local forums, community events and focus groups
- Proactively seek feedback from residents through satisfaction surveys and complaints processes
- Formal engagement - involving engaged residents, including Resident Advisory Panel, and Task & Finish Groups in bespoke consultation activities

Scrutiny & Service Improvement

Improving how we engage with residents will also enable us to improve on the services we provide, scrutinise our own performance and learn lessons when things go wrong. To improve resident engagement, we aim to:

- Improve transparency around our performance, including monitoring and evaluation
- Increasing and improving the safety information and advice provided online, and in our 6 monthly newsletters to residents
- Information and improving performance through effective challenge

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- Empower residents to scrutinise our service and recommend improvements

Complaints and raising concerns

Raising a safety concern

Failure to act to address an urgent safety concern could lead to injury or loss of life.

Where residents raise concerns (an initial report of a potential safety issue), a documented internal escalation process is vital to ensuring their concerns are listened to and addressed, and that lessons are learnt.

We operate a service-led approach to raising safety concerns - our resident facing teams have the specialist knowledge needed to resolve queries quickly and effectively.

A safety concern can be raised verbally to a member of staff (in person or over the telephone), submitted via the website, or in writing (letter, email).

PRHA – [\(insert website link to complaints page\)](#)

Or (insert email address)

All safety concerns will be recorded within our complaints database and where appropriate

- An order issued to a contractor to attend site to complete a repair or safety check
- A member of the property services team will contact the resident and/or visit the site to assess the risk.

The officer who will deal with the concern (the Investigating Officer) will aim to contact the reportee by telephone by 5pm on the next working day after receipt of safety concern.

The timescale for resolution will depend on the risk, we will take a risk-based approach to resolution we will respond within a maximum 5 days.

All residents, regardless of tenure or building, will still be able to raise safety concerns directly to the relevant enforcement bodies (such as their local Fire and Rescue Service or their Local Authority) via existing routes.

Raising a complaint

If our handling of your safety concern is not to expectation and you want to make a complaint (a service failure), you are able to raise in the same way as a safety concern, as above; verbally to a member of staff (in person or over the telephone), submitted via the website or one of our verified social media accounts, or in writing (letter, email).

All complaints will be recorded within our complaints database.

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It would then be dealt with using the escalation process outlined below, if it cannot be resolved at each previous stage.

Our formal complaints process can be accessed via (give email details)

Escalation process

Residents must be able to escalate safety issues quickly to the Accountable Person, so that they can be investigated and addressed. Where this does not happen, residents then need a clear escalation route to direct their concerns to the right place for action and resolution.

PRHA's internal process for raising safety concerns should include:

- How we handle building safety concerns with an understanding of the specific risks
- How to raise a concern, including what information to provide and who to contact
- Timescales for an initial response, investigations and a final resolution of concerns, recognising the potentially urgent nature of some concerns
- Details of how this process and decisions within it will be communicated to residents and handled in a transparent way
- How to escalate concerns internally and then to the Building Safety Regulator where they have not been resolved by internal process for raising safety concerns.

Residents can also now use the provisions in the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, which gives residents the power to seek redress through the courts if their property is not fit for human habitation.

8. How we will measure the appropriateness of our consultation

We will ask residents for satisfaction feedback through survey every two years.

Residents will be asked:

1. How satisfied they are overall with the safety of their building
2. If they know how to raise a safety concern and/or complaint
3. Are aware of what to do in the event of a fire and/or emergency in their building
4. Have they received suitable information on the safety of their building
5. Do you feel sufficiently engaged and consulted with?

If the survey results do not meet the agreed targets, we will work with residents to improve the service, where applicable, as per section 7 of the Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy.

In addition, the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard requires all registered providers of social housing to collect and report annually on their performance on a core set of defined measures to provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance. One of the measures relates to 'maintaining building

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safety' and seeks to measure, via a tenant perception survey, the tenant satisfactions that the Tenant Satisfaction Measure TP05 (safe home) and TP10 (communal areas clean and well maintained).

9. Empowering residents – roles and responsibilities

Our responsibilities

There are a range of obligations and responsibilities relating to building safety that landlords must comply with in the social and private rented sector. These include:

- Keeping properties safe and free from health hazards
- Responsibility for most repairs and maintaining the structure and exterior of properties
- The right to enter a property to carry out inspections and repairs, only after giving the resident reasonable notice in writing before entering the premises. This balances the right of a resident to live in peace in their home while ensuring landlords can carry out the necessary works to maintain the property's safety infrastructure.

Residents' & Owners Responsibilities

Residents have an important role to play in helping to support and, where needed, hold us to account on the fire and structural safety of their home and building.

We need to ensure residents understand the crucial role they have to play in ensuring that they, their neighbours and their building remain safe, and the importance of complying with their responsibilities.

There are existing 'obligations' placed on residents and landlords defined in tenancy, lease or other contractual arrangements, which set out the roles and responsibilities of residents and the individual(s) that are party to this contract, including health and safety related provisions.

Residents living in high rise blocks have additional responsibilities under the Building Safety Act, any resident who is aged 16 or over or an owner of a residential unit is required to:

- Provide access to your home upon written request giving 48 hours' notice
- Not act in a way that creates a significant risk of a building safety risk materialising;
- Not interfere with a relevant safety item;
- Comply with a request, made by the appropriate accountable person, for information reasonably required to assess the building safety risks as regards the part of the building for which they are responsible.
- Preventing a building safety risk materialising
- Reducing the severity of any incident resulting from such a risk materialising.

Residents should also look after the property, report any repair issues to the landlord and always seek the landlord's permission before attempting repairs or decorating.

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We will set out proposals for how we can support residents to play their part in keeping their building safe, as well as a clear and quick escalation route for residents with building safety concerns.

Residents are required to co-operate with PRHA in discharging our duty to keep the building safe. We propose to introduce a new requirement for residents to co-operate directly with the Accountable Person and/or Building Safety Manager, to provide access if required and other actions relevant to the ability of accountable persons or their agents to fulfil their duties, as part of keeping the building safe.

For example, one of the requirements would involve residents providing reasonable information on works carried out to their property and providing access to their home to allow the Accountable Person or Building Safety Manager to inspect the property and, if required, carry out necessary works (such as fitting fire alarms or undertaking fire and structural safety-related maintenance).

Where information or access is required, the Accountable Person or the Building Safety Manager will provide the resident with reasonable notice.

We will also be clear on the action we will take when residents don't do what we ask of them, and therefore put other residents at risk. Managing expectations and providing clarity on what we will do should be a key principle of our engagement plan.

Leaseholder responsibilities

Freeholders are obliged to ensure the leaseholder has quiet enjoyment of their property and are usually responsible for maintaining and repairing the exterior and structure of the building.

Leaseholders usually have a contractual obligation to not make structural alterations to their home without obtaining relevant permissions from PRHA. They are also subject to conditions restricting the use of the property, such as not using it as commercial premises, or preventing multiple occupation or overcrowding.

PRHA need to ensure make sure that a fire cannot spread from a leasehold unit to the to the rest of the building and if a fire starts in a common part make sure it will not spread into the unit. In order to achieve this, we need to:

- prevent risk in the unit that could impact common parts and other units
- protect the unit from risk in the parts of the building they are responsible for

Residents/Owners failure to meet their responsibilities

Where a resident or owner has contravened or is contravening a duty, we will issue a contravention notice which will include:

- The alleged contravention
- Any steps we consider the resident/owner should take in order to remedy the contravention, and a reasonable time for the taking of those steps;

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- Anything we consider the resident/owner should refrain from doing, to avoid further contraventions of the duty;
- An explanation of the steps that we may take if the notice is not complied with.

The contravention notice may require the resident/owner to pay a cost to repair or replace a safety item. We may apply to the county court to make an order.

Lead Director	Karen Stuart Director of Operations / Deputy Chief Executive
Next Review Date	June 2026
Associated Documents	Resident Engagement Strategy C62

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