



Nottingham
City Council

Housing
Services

High-rise living

Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy

January 2022

Version 2.1: Minor amends were made to this document in August 2023 following the transition of Nottingham City Homes back into Nottingham City Council.

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Introduction

This strategy outlines the Nottingham City Council Housing Services (NCCHS) approach to resident engagement in building safety. The strategy focuses on high-risk residential buildings, in response to, and in preparation for the new regulatory regime that will apply to such buildings following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire.

In drafting this strategy, we consulted with and took on board the views of:

- Building Safety Residents' Forum
- residents living in all 13 high-rise blocks
- Building Safety Steering Group
- (former) ALMO Board – which included tenants, councillors and independent members.

This strategy was produced in advance of forthcoming building safety legislation being finalised and will be updated in line with any changes the legislation dictates.

Objectives

We will engage with residents with the objective of making sure that:

- **people feel safe in the buildings in which they live**
- **people know how to easily report problems in their flat or in communal areas which lead to safety concerns**
- **people know exactly what to do in the event of a serious incident in the block where they live.**

The strategy sets out our approach to meaningful resident engagement relating to the safety of their homes.

The strategy's three themed objectives are to:

- **Listen and communicate:** Communicate with our all our residents in high-risk properties in ways that meets their needs, keeping them up to date and well informed and making sure that our residents' voices are heard and acted upon.
- **Involve:** Involve residents and empower them to play a key role in helping keep their homes and building safe, as part of this we will make sure that residents are aware of their responsibilities.
- **Evaluate:** Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement opportunities and participation so that we can continue to maintain and strengthen our relationship with residents. The strategy will be reviewed in line with any changes to the legislation due to come into place, and in response to priorities identified by the building safety regulator¹ and NCCHS.

Context

Following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, critical questions were raised for everyone involved in social housing, including residents, landlords, developers, and local and national government. The government took immediate action, starting with an independent review of

building regulations and fire safety² to make recommendations that will ensure a robust regulatory system for the future, and that residents feel that the buildings they live in are safe. A public inquiry into the circumstances of the fire remains underway in 2021³.

The review concluded that the whole system of fire safety for tall buildings needed major reform and that residents' safety needed to be a greater priority through the entire life cycle of a building – from design and construction, through to when people are living in their homes.

The government accepted the review's recommendations and the Building Safety Bill⁴, is before Parliament that sets out proposals to provide the biggest changes to the building safety regime for nearly 40 years. The government states that this means:

“Residents in high-rise buildings will have more say in the management of their building. They will be able to raise building safety concerns directly to the owners and managers of buildings, who will have a duty to listen to them. And if residents feel concerns are being ignored, they can raise them with the Building Safety Regulator.”

Alongside the Building Safety Bill, the Government published a Social Housing White Paper in November 2020, 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents'⁵ which outlined plans for new regulation, a strengthened Housing Ombudsman to speed up complaints, and a commitment to a set of tenant satisfaction measures that all social landlords will have to report against.

These fundamental changes will improve building and fire safety, so that people will be, and will feel, safer in their homes. Alongside the government, we are committed to learning the lessons of the Grenfell tragedy and have already begun to take significant actions. We have:

- immediately set up a strategic building safety group to review the safety of all our high-rise buildings and carry out appropriate risk assessments
- reviewed our Fire Risk Assessments for all our 13 blocks and resolved any actions identified
- worked with other Nottingham City Council stakeholders and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to implement enhanced fire safety measures in all our high rises, including the fitting of sprinkler systems and other fire safety enhancements and holding training days within our high-rise buildings
- carried out training days with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and reassurance events across each of our high-risk buildings following the Grenfell fire
- as part of the development of our the NCH Group Corporate Plan 2021 – 2024 we introduced a Tenants' Charter, of which our number one priority is keeping residents safe in their homes
- established a Building Safety Team, with named Building Safety Officers for each high-rise
- created a building safety resident forum consisting of high-rise block champions and other involved residents to work with NCCHS to raise and action their concerns, issues and feedback in relation to the safety of their building

Background

Nottingham City Council is responsible for managing and maintaining 13 high-rise blocks of flats, providing a total number of 1,502. Three of the blocks are Independent Living Schemes (ILS), providing accommodation for older people. Several flats within the blocks are in leasehold ownership, where the city council is the freeholder, following their sale over the years under the Right to Buy scheme.

Block Name	Number of Flats	Number of Privately Owned Leasehold Flats⁷	Leasehold Flats believed rented in the private sector⁸	Ward
Colwick Woods Court	88	3	1	Dales
Southchurch Court	130	6	2	Clifton East
Oak View	93	3	0	Radford
Pine View	129	9	2	Radford
Willow View	32	4	1	Radford
Elm View	16	2	1	Radford
Ash View	105	3	0	Radford
Bentinck Court	90	2	0	Dales
Manvers Court	90	2	0	Dales
Kingston Court	90	0	0	Dales
Victoria Centre	464	41	21	St Ann's
Woodthorpe Court	90	0	0	Sherwood
Winchester Court	90	0	0	Sherwood

The blocks house a diverse range of residents, though the council's housing allocations policy means that flats are largely occupied by single people or couples without children. However, the makeup of household's changes over time, and we do not play a role in who lives in leasehold flats.

Across the blocks there are 1,427 tenancies and 75 leaseholders. Of the 75 leaseholder flats, 47 are believed to be owner occupied and 28 rented privately by private sector landlords, in some cases with the involvement of private sector managing agents (figures as at October 2021). This includes some leasehold flats that are known to be used as AirBnB style short stay furnished holiday type lettings.

High-rise blocks are in a variety of neighbourhoods across the city, including the Victoria Centre flats in the city centre, located above the busy Victoria Shopping Centre. This location creates added complexities given the large levels of public access to the shopping centre and associated car parking areas. The site has additional ownership arrangements given that the freehold of the flats is owned by the shopping centre owner, and the flats are leased to Nottingham City Council on a 99-year lease that commenced in 1968.

Each block has named Housing Patch Managers, Block Caretakers and Building Safety Officers. The three ILS high-rise blocks also have Independent Living Coordinators.

None of the blocks are clad in dangerous materials, and all have been recently fitted with sprinkler systems. Current Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) are in place. 31.8% of council rented flats (478) are provided with a gas supply and 100% of them hold a CP12 gas safety certificate.

We're not only committed to making our blocks safer, but also to improving the look and feel of the inside areas through our high-rise living programme of improvements – creating bright and modern spaces to welcome people into their blocks and all the way to their front doors. Improvements differ from block-to-block but include new plastering, decorating, new flooring, new ceilings and lighting improvements.



Our approach to resident engagement in building safety

Our Corporate Plan 2021-24 includes the delivery of the Tenants' Charter which makes the following commitments:

- To be safe in your home
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- To have a home you can afford
- To have your voice heard and to be treated with respect
- To know how we are performing
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

The Corporate Plan and Tenants' Charter detail our commitment to listening to and working with our residents to manage and maintain our homes and estates and reflects the Government's Social Housing White Paper to prioritise resident safety. New building safety and fire safety legislation will come into force during the life of this Strategy.

We will improve our services by listening to what our residents tell us, acting on their priorities and engaging them in the services we deliver. To best achieve this we will:

- fully comply with the building safety and fire safety legislation outlined in the Social Housing White Paper
- seek to meet obligations in advance of statutory requirements where possible and always promote a culture of safety
- produce Building Safety Cases and a Resident Engagement Plan for all high-risk buildings, as well as Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for residents who may not be able to evacuate safely without assistance
- engage and influence the Government's electrical safety consultation while achieving 100% compliance with our existing policy
- engage with the domestic smoke and carbon monoxide alarms consultation, completing hard wired smoke alarms in all our homes
- roll out our building safety approach to include multi-occupational buildings under 18 metres on a risk-based basis

- keep all fire risk assessments for multi-occupancy blocks up to date and publicly available including the introduction of intrusive surveys
- maintain 100% gas safety certification
- maintain building safety policies and procedures rigorously
- monitor and report on compliance with fire, gas, water, electric, asbestos and lifts, with periodic external audit
- prioritise any customer contact or complaints which may have a building safety implication.

Objective 1: Listen and communicate

Listening and acting on our resident's voice, communicating effectively with residents in the way that meets their needs, and keeping residents up to date and well informed.

The tenants' voice is heard at every level, with tenant representation, focusing on the delivery and improvement of services to tenants.

We use a range of appropriate and tailored communication methods and tools, adapted to our tenants needs to share key messages with them. Our communication tools include:

- direct mail, text message and email
- personal contact for vulnerable people where written material may not be appropriate
- the Housing Services website
- social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- NCH News and other site-specific newsletters
- annual building safety visits
- noticeboards and digital screens in high-rise buildings
- an annual building safety newsletter
- building intercom service
- communal area PA system
- High-rise Living events allowing for updates on improvement works to the building
- FRAS are promoted on website and available on request.

Our Every Contact Counts initiative with our residents and listening to customer's feedback is key to us working towards meeting their needs. In addition, we have a range of mechanisms through which residents provide feedback including:

- quarterly STAR satisfaction surveys
- Eyes Wide Open reporting
- individual block customer satisfaction surveys
- Building Safety Officer, Housing Patch Manager, Independent Living Coordinator, and Block Caretaker contact details in all blocks
- Comments, compliments and complaints scheme.

Customer feedback is regularly considered by the Building Safety Resident Forum and any actions that require escalation are passed to the Building Safety Steering group.

We will continue to:

- consult with residents to better understand their communication requirements and preferences, including what information they want to receive, in what way and how often. This information will be used to tailor our approach to our communications with our residents

- use all feedback mechanisms including Customer Complaints and satisfaction surveys to listen to the views of the residents, and make sure that we act and improve our services accordingly
- carry out annual high-rise tenancy visits focusing on building safety
- provide easy to understand, transparent and accessible information
- provide residents with safety information at tenancy sign up
- promote and enforce compliance with our Clear Communal Areas Policy
- build on our insight to better understand individual support needs and to deliver involvement opportunities that are open and accessible for everyone
- communicate all important updates and information with leaseholders and private tenants using all the same methods as council tenants
- keep Councillors and Members of Parliament informed of relevant matters concerning high-rise buildings within their wards / constituencies and respond to Councillor's enquiries promptly and in detail in line with our corporate approach
- empower and support the Building Safety Residents Forum with any specific training to better equip and prepare them to consult and engage on matters relating to safety in their homes
- share important updates and information with residents clearly and transparently, using the insight information gathered that includes any specific needs. The information will include:
 - the safety of the building
 - relevant maintenance and improvement updates
 - fire prevention – what to do in the event of a fire and how to report it
 - keeping communal areas clear and safe
- make sure that when undertaking major works in high-rise buildings that all relevant health and safety aspects are given the highest priority and that residents are aware of any safety issues that relate to the work concerned.

We will:

- improve the information residents receive about the management of high-risk buildings in line with feedback from the survey of residents (annual safety focussed information material, provided to each flat supported by electronic communications)
- review and improve the signage at the buildings
- develop a building safety communication plan
- publicise and promote everyone's roles and responsibilities in maintaining the safety of our buildings, including our organisation, staff, partners and residents and contractors
- give our tenants a voice with other agencies responsible for their safety such as Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)
- share important updates and information with residents in a timely way pertaining to:
 - how to keep your home safe
 - opportunities to help us improve the safety of the building by becoming more involved
- review how we collect and record tenants' views
- reinstate High-rise Living Events when Covid 19 allows us to do so
- use our Every Contact Counts and Eyes Wide Open initiatives to gather any information about fire and building safety and respond accordingly
- communicate with our tenants/residents to ascertain their ability to evacuate (High-Rise flats) in the event of an evacuation, holding this information and providing to the fire service when required
- make sure that where people have specific communication needs information is made available to them in appropriate formats.

Objective 2: Involve

Involve residents and empower them to play a key role in keeping their homes and building safe, as part of this we will make sure that residents are aware of their responsibilities.

This is part of our wider resident engagement approach, designed to foster a culture of involvement, supporting and encouraging residents to play an active part in their community, building on the sense of neighbourliness that so many of our residents regularly demonstrate.

We will continue to:

- develop, promote and recruit Block Champions across all high-rise buildings
- carry out meaningful consultation with residents on a regular basis to ensure residents involvement in all decisions in relation to building safety
- consult and engage with residents issues relating to building safety
- continue to work closely with residents' groups and Tenant and Residents Associations to develop new and inclusive opportunities for residents to make a difference in their community, acting as ambassadors for high-rise living in their local area
- continue to encourage residents to adhere to the Clear Corridor Policy which highlights items in communal areas
- analyse the monthly fire reports and continue to use the information to be proactive in reducing and eliminating further incidents prevention
- continue to work closely with residents and partners to tackle block security issues such as tailgating and rough sleepers.

We will:

- provide a robust mechanism for all residents to report repairs and issues (tailored to meet the individual needs of the residents, ensuring accessibility to all)
- make sure that residents' views are fed back to the Building Safety team, the Building Safety Group and relevant internal and external stakeholders to inform decision making around the safety of the building
- work with Block Champions to become ambassadors for high-rise building safety
- develop and deliver a training programme for all Building Safety Residents' Forum volunteers that will support them in their role, build confidence and empower them to take the lead
- encourage and support residents in monthly building safety inspections with the Building Safety Officers and Annual FRAs
- provide the Building Safety Residents Forum with a mechanism to more effectively report safety related issues and repairs using the trial of the Housemark App
- understand and use behavioural insight to continue to expand the number of residents engaging with us
- deliver a revitalised annual safety day for each high-rise building
- engage with residents when updating Fire Risk Assessments and implementing required actions
- involve resident representatives such as Block Champions via the Building Safety Residents Forum, and ward councillors in the updating of this strategy as required
- engage with leaseholders about fire doors maintenance and their annual gas certification.

Objective 3: Evaluate

Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement and participation so that we can continue to maintain and strengthen our relationship with high-rise residents

We will continue to:

- monitor and improve tenant satisfaction levels within high-rise buildings for the following key performance indicators:
 - General tenant satisfaction
 - Tenant satisfaction that their landlord listens to their views and takes notice of them
 - Tenant satisfaction with landlord's engagement with tenants
 - Tenant satisfaction with the health and safety of their home
 - Tenant overall satisfaction with the service their landlord provides
- record, monitor and evaluate resident engagement so that we can report our outcomes and our customers contributions towards building safety
- evaluate information received from resident comments, complaints and other feedback and use this to make sure safety related matters that emerge from these are investigated and addressed as a priority.

We will:

- update our measures when the Regulator of Social Housing finalises its tenant satisfaction measures
- survey residents' views on safety and safety related information
- monitor delivery of the Tenants' Charter relating to building safety: To be safe in your home and: To have your voice heard and to be treated with respect
- review the effectiveness of our engagement actions, making sure that we are enabling equal and fair engagement opportunities that are accessible for all high-rise residents and continue to make a positive contribution to keeping the building and our residents' safe.
- evaluate and publish the outcomes of resident involvement in building safety
- continuously review our strategic approach to make sure we are fully compliant with the statutory requirements of the Building Safety Regulator and Regulator of Social Housing
- work closely with internal and external stakeholders to monitor and report on our performance, providing a 'check and challenge' mechanism. These stakeholders include:
 - NCHRP board
 - NCC and ward councillors
 - The Building Safety Steering Group
 - Building Safety Residents' Forum
- work closely with our partners at TPAS to monitor our tenant participation and engagement in high-rise buildings, adopting new and emerging best practice and making sure that we positively contribute towards the TPAS accreditation requirements for building safety.
- We will continue to develop this strategy, including to take into account any emerging legislative requirement, as we look to the future. We will do this in line with our high-rise living programme and the related resident engagement work associated with that.

Appendices

Action Plan

To be completed following regulatory instruction and guidance on matters to be carried out.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment report

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Document Control

Control Details:

Title:	Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy
Author:	Lisa Dawkins
Director:	Steve Feast
Department:	Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement
Service Area:	Housing
Contact details:	Lisa.dawkins@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Strategic Budget EIA: Y/N (Does this EIA have an impact on the budget)	No- there is funding identified in the TLI budget should the delivery of the REIBS strategy remain in the TLI budget for 2022/23
Exempt from publication: Y/N (Exemption criteria is available on the EIA section on the Intranet)	No

2. Document Amendment Record:

Version	Author	Date	Approved

5. Summary

(Please provide a brief description of proposal / policy / service being assessed)

This is Nottingham City Council Housing Services strategic approach to Resident Engagement in Building Safety, which will be a key chapter within the next Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy to be launched in Spring 2022. The chapter focuses on high risk residential buildings, as following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower a new regulatory regime that will apply to such buildings is being introduced by central government.

The strategy sets out our approach to tenant involvement relating to building safety for new and existing buildings from 2020-2024 and should be considered a key step on the path towards meaningful engagement with residents about the safety of their homes. The chapters' three themed objectives are to:

- **Communicate:** Communicate with our all our high rise residents in way that meets their needs, keeping them up to date and well informed
- **Involve:** Involve residents and empower them to play a key role in helping keep their homes and building safety
- **Evaluate:** Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement and participation so that we can continue to maintain and strengthen our relationship with high rise residents

6. Information used to analyse the effects on equality:

(Please include information about how you have consulted/ have data from the impacted groups)

Data from impacted groups sourced from:

Letter sent to residents called 'High Rise Building Safety' asking for communication preferences.

'Keeping you safe in your home' survey.

High Rise Building Safety Residents Forum.

Tenant profile for High rise blocks

Complaints data for high rise blocks

Consultation undertaken:

Specific consultation work on communication preferences carried out as part of the preparation for the strategy – invitation to all tenants/residents/leaseholders living in high rise blocks. Invitations to participate sent to Building Safety Champions. Insight information on age, disability, sex, ethnicity and language taken from Northgate. Staff consultation also carried out via discussions at team meetings across NCCHS. Note that the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions prevented face to face consultation, and also meant certain groups were not meeting at the time, when they otherwise would have been.

7. Impacts and Actions:

	Could particularly benefit X	May adversely impact X
People from different ethnic groups.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled people or carers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy/ Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of different faiths/ beliefs and those with none.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Younger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (e.g. marriage/ civil partnership, looked after children, cohesion/ good relations, vulnerable children/ adults).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please underline the group(s) /issue more adversely affected or which benefits.</i>		

How different groups could be affected (Summary of impacts)	Details of actions to mitigate, remove or justify negative impact or increase positive impact (or why action isn't possible)

Provide details for impacts / benefits on people in different protected groups.

Note: the level of detail should be proportionate to the potential impact of the proposal / policy / service. Continue on separate sheet if needed (click and type to delete this note)

Like the population of Nottingham, our residents are a diverse group of people. In our high rise accommodation, we house people with disabilities and long term health conditions, elderly, families with children and young people who grow up in our homes. The aim of the strategy is to provide specific building safety information to a wide variety of people who live in our high rise accommodation.

29.8% of high rise residents are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, 2.9% declared 'other'. 24.9% of residents are 65 years of age or over and 15% are 24 years of age or younger. 78 residents have told us they are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

Registered blind/sight impaired = 1.5%

Unable to read or write = 1.1%

Dyslexia = 0.4%

Learning difficulties =3.8%

Dementia =0.2%

Included in our areas of focus over the lifetime of the strategy is a focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I)

We will support residents to be involved in becoming Building Safety Champions across the thirteen high rise blocks throughout the City, increasing the numbers and the diversity of those involved and make sure the diversity of our tenants and residents is considered at all times.

We will use customer insight as a vital tool in understanding the diversity of our residents, take people's varied needs into account and seek to make ensure that our resident engagement is reflective of the residents we serve, and able to identify and understand their diverse needs.

Our ED&I approach is supported by our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group, which includes tenant and Board member involvement, and our NCH Equality Forums. We will strengthen and focus the work of these forums to deliver our ED&I Strategy.

The overall aim is to strengthen existing guidance and best practice, making it more readily available and user friendly and result in those living in high rise domestic buildings being more informed on fire safety and being and feeling safer from fire.

The Resident Engagement in Building Safety Strategy will impact positively in strengthening fire safety, including for people with protected characteristics. We will specifically develop information for residents that is accessible in content and medium as general good practice and support effective communication with older and disabled people and people in areas of multiple deprivation.

<p>Deaf/hearing impaired =2.3%</p> <p>After analysing the complaints data for high rise tenants it was found that there were no Building Safety issues identified which could have potentially posed a risk to residents living in high rise blocks.</p> <p>Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy helps us deliver our services to this diverse group and after carrying out the assessment the conclusion is that the REIBS Strategy neither directly nor indirectly discriminatory on the basis of age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. No mitigating action is therefore required.</p> <p>We seek to provide high quality services to all our customers, and is committed to inclusivity and valuing the diversity of the city</p>	<p>Residents will be able to request information in different formats and languages and requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Any specific support covering individual needs would be referred to agencies identified on the Ask Lion database by Housing Patch Managers.</p> <p>Access support from Ask Lion in the first instance order to access help and assistance for our residents for issues such health and welfare support</p>
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8. Arrangements for future monitoring of equality impact of this proposal / policy / service:

The EIA will be reviewed in the future to reflect any changes and amendments made to this live strategy.

9. Outcome(s) of equality impact assessment:

X	No major change needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust the policy/proposal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse impact but continue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stop and remove the policy/proposal

10. Approved by (manager signature) and Date sent to equality team for publishing:

Approving Manager: The assessment must be approved by the manager responsible for the service/proposal. Include a contact tel & email to allow stakeholder feedback on proposals.	Date sent for advice: Send document or Link to: rebecca.dennis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Approving Manager Signature: Lisa Dawkins	Date of final approval: Signed off at EDISG 16.12.21 Rebecca Dennis

Before you send your EIA to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager for scrutiny, have you:

1. Read the guidance and good practice EIA's
2. Clearly summarised your proposal/ policy/ service to be assessed.
3. Hyperlinked to the appropriate documents.
4. Written in clear user-friendly language, free from all jargon (spelling out acronyms).
5. Included appropriate data.
6. Consulted the relevant groups or citizens or stated clearly, when this is going to happen.
7. Clearly cross-referenced your impacts with SMART actions.

PLEASE NOTE: FINAL VERSION MUST BE SENT TO THE EDI MANAGER OTHERWISE RECORDS WILL REMAIN INCOMPLETE.