

Fire Safety Management Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy sets out the principles that Platform Housing Group (the Group) applies to ensure the risk of fire is mitigated and that it complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Within the scope of this policy are the risk assessment of hazards and control measures used to:

- prevent potential fires from starting.
- provide adequate precautions and resources to minimise the risk of fire.
- carry out fire risk assessments.
- ensure evacuation strategies are in place and followed.
- provide training, instruction and information to employees and relevant persons, and
- engage with, and provide adequate information to customers, employees, visitors, and contractors on the risk of fire.

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the Group.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Group recognises its legal and moral duty to ensure the health and safety of employees, customers, visitors and members of the public it comes into contact with, and the devastating impact fire can have on lives. The Group will therefore ensure fire risks associated with our activities, and the properties we provide are minimised as far as reasonably practicable.
- 1.2 The Group follows a systematic approach to the management of fire safety to meet the above requirements and to ensure the safety of customers, employees, contractors, visitors, and members of the public.
- 1.3 In particular, the Group:
 - Ensures that adequate resources are provided to maintain acceptable standards in fire safety across all owned or managed asset groups.
 - Carries out fire risk assessments where they are required.
 - Ensures actions identified from fire risk assessments are actioned and completed in accordance with recommendations made by competent persons.
 - Ensures fire safety performance is reported to board and committees with a responsibility for fire safety.
 - Provides training, instruction, and information to employees for them to perform their duties safely and efficiently.

- Sets minimum standards of fire safety performance expected from contractors and other service providers.
- Implements strategies to reduce the risk of fire and unwanted alarm signals (false alarms) in our properties, and
- Actively reinforces employees' responsibility to:
 - work safely and take reasonable care of themselves and others by adhering to the Group's fire safety policy and procedures.
 - report any incidents that have led or could lead to a fire.
 - not to interfere with anything that is provided in the interest of fire safety.
 - inform and educate customers of fire safety in their property, where applicable.

2. Context

- 2.1 This policy is set within the context of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and other relevant legal and regulatory requirements. The policy forms part of a suite of building safety policies and is underpinned by operational procedures.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- Comply with FSO, Housing Act 2004 and supporting regulations and applicable guidance.
- Comply with the Fire Safety Act 2021, Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, the Building Safety Act 2022 and applicable guidance.
- Ensure the risk of fires starting and spreading is minimised.
- Ensure employees, customers, contractors and visitors are safe when occupying or visiting the Group properties.
- Ensure contractors are competent and certified to carry out fire safety works.
- Ensure employees and customers are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding fire safety.
- Ensure adequate resources and financial expenditure is provided to maintain fire safety.
- Ensure all machinery, plant and equipment is maintained in a safe condition.
- Ensure maintenance, test, and inspection records etc. for the various systems, plant and equipment are held securely by the Group to provide evidence of compliance.
- Ensure the Group carry out suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments and actions identified are reviewed and prioritised for completion with agreed time scales relative to the level of risk.
- Ensure that in the event of a fire or fire safety incident, an investigation is undertaken, procedures reviewed/amended as necessary and control measures are implemented which minimise any potential reoccurrence to foster a system of continuous improvement.

- Provide training, instruction, information, and supervision to enable employees to perform their duties safely, competently, and efficiently.
- Ensure the Group's Executive Team (ET) and Board have adequate oversight of the compliance status of fire safety across the Group.

4. Policy Outline

4.1 This policy applies to all premises that fall within the remit of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that the Group own or have a defined responsibility to manage/control.

4.2 Responsibilities for fire safety are allocated across the Group in accordance with the '*PHG Fire Safety Responsibilities*' matrix and as follows:

See **Appendix 1** for details of our Roles and Responsibilities.

4.3 All employees play a valuable role in fire safety and are responsible for:

- Undertaking their role safely to ensure fire safety arrangements are maintained.
- Reporting any fire incidents and remove or report any fire hazards identified in a timely manner.
- Co-operating fully with any control measures that are implemented to ensure fire safety and legal compliance.
- Highlighting any concerns to the management team in relation to fire safety.
- Attending fire safety training as and when required.
- Promoting and encouraging colleagues, customers, contractors and visitors to be fire aware.

4.4 The Group acknowledges that robust professional and competent advice is essential to ensure the Group are assessing risk adequately and implementing adequate mitigation measures. The Group will therefore employ suitably qualified and experienced competent advisors and partners in all matters relating to fire risk assessments, fire mitigation measures or fire safety related works.

4.5 The Group will regularly report to Board on the status of fire safety using the following key performance indicators:

- % of valid FRAs (Fire Risk Assessments) held
- number of overdue high-risk actions

5. Contractors and Visitors

5.1 Whenever contractors are on site it will be the duty of the appointed person with the responsibility for the works undertaken by them, to ensure the appropriate level of fire safety provision is incorporated within any work schedule, contract agreement or

risk assessment. Where such works are likely to impact on the existing fire safety provision, notification must be communicated to the relevant senior personnel for consideration.

- 5.2 Contractors will also require to be made aware of the fire management plan relevant to the area they are working in or are likely to attend. Where any work is likely to involve the application of a naked flame or mechanically induced heat source a 'Hot Work Permit' must be acquired and agreed prior to the commencement of such works.
- 5.3 Members of the public or other visitors are required to be advised of the evacuation plans for any relevant premises they access.

6. Common Areas

- 6.1 Common areas are defined as Internal Communal or Decked Access areas that are used to access dwelling units.
- 6.2 To reduce 'fire loading' in common areas and to ensure emergency exit routes for access and egress are kept clear and free of hazards at all times the Group will operate a 'zero tolerance' approach, although The Group recognises the need and benefits of a 'managed use' approach in some of its properties, such as in its specialist housing schemes where a more flexible approach can be effectively managed.
- 6.3 Both approaches are explained in our '*Fire Safety in Communal Areas*' document (see **Appendix 2**).
- 6.4 No unauthorised use of electrical supplies in common areas is permitted.
- 6.5 To reduce the spread of fire, fire doors (including flat front doors) are not to be replaced, tampered with, or altered in any way by unauthorised persons.
- 6.6 Where applicable, emergency evacuation procedures will be tested in accordance with the building's fire risk assessment. All fire safety briefings and practice fire drills must be recorded.
- 6.7 Where appropriate, each workplace building will have a nominated Fire Marshal to support safe and efficient evacuation.

7. Customers' Information and Advice

- 7.1 The Group will endeavour to house customers in appropriate buildings by matching the building fire safety strategy to the customer's capabilities when initially offering accommodation.
- 7.2 Customers are advised to contact us if they feel at risk and need assistance to complete a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). In schemes with more

vulnerable customers, such as specialist housing, the Group will ensure a PEEP is created for all customers at the beginning of their tenancy and will be regularly reviewed with the co-operation of the customer.

- 7.3 Those identified at risk will have a person-centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA) carried out to produce an action plan and confirm that all fire safety provisions are suitable. We will endeavour to provide support measures that are reasonable and proportional.
- 7.4 We appreciate that, with time, customer capabilities and needs may also change. If these changes or capabilities are to the extent that the customer will be unable to meet the requirements of the fire safety strategy, and if the customer informs us of their change in circumstances, we will re-assess the suitability of the accommodation and if required help customers seek more appropriate accommodation or mitigate the risk where practical to do so.
- 7.5 We will ensure that appropriate fire signage is posted in communal areas. In addition to the initial fire safety advice given to customers at the start of their tenancies, we will update customers on fire safety matters and information to comply with the latest fire safety requirements through a variety of means.
- 7.6 Customers can also request a scheme or personal visit should they have any queries or concerns about fire safety in their home.

8. Fire Prevention and Control

- 8.1 To protect the safety of our employees, customers and the integrity of our buildings, we will implement and maintain appropriate fire prevention and control measures.
- 8.2 We will ensure that buildings fire safety equipment and systems are serviced and maintained to recognised standards.

9. Building Design Considerations

- 9.1 We will ensure buildings are designed and maintained in a manner that prevents and reduces the risk of fires by following our 'New Builds with Communal Areas – Fire Safety Procedure' which, in general terms, ensures:
- Fire safety is considered at the design stage of all new builds and the client group and the proposed fire strategy upon occupation of the new buildings are explicitly understood by the building designers.
 - There are procedures in place to effectively manage work during construction to ensure the integrity of compartment walls, floors, ceilings, fire doors and fire protection systems.
 - There is documented certified evidence and Regulation 38 (of The Building Regulations 2010 (as amended)) information at the handover of new buildings.

10. Fire Risk Assessment

- 10.1 The Group acknowledge the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) requires those who oversee or manage buildings should undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of fire risk and implement appropriate safety measures to minimise the risk of fire.
- 10.2 We will undertake Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) of all properties required by the FSO. Only competent and British Approvals of Fire Excellence (BAFE) accredited organisations will be instructed to act on behalf of the Group to undertake FRAs.
- 10.3 FRAs will assess the fire risk of the required buildings and will provide the Group with:
- (i) a risk rating for each assessed building in line with the following risk rating definitions:
 - Substantial – resources might have to be allocated to reduce the risk; urgent action should be taken.
 - Moderate – look at risk reduction measures, which should take cost into account and should be implemented within a defined period. Priority for improving control measures should be given to risks with greater consequences than those with greater likelihood.
 - Tolerable – no major additional precautions required. However, there might be a need for reasonably practicable improvements that involve minor or limited cost.
 - Trivial – no action is required, and no detailed records need to be kept.
 - (ii) a mitigation plan of prioritised and costed recommendations for each FRA to ensure each property can achieve the lowest practical risk rating.
- 10.4 FRA frequencies are determined by the Property Classification level of the building (high, medium, or low) which is determined by the Property Designation, number of storeys and number of flats in the block:

Property Designation	Number of Storeys	Number of Flats	Property Classification	Frequency
Specialist Housing	Any	Any	Level 1 (High risk)	Annually
Office	1 to 2	N/A	Level 2 (Medium risk)	2 Years
General Needs	6 and over	Any	Level 1 (High risk)	Annually
General Needs	3 to 5	11 and over	Level 2 (Medium risk)	2 Years

General Needs	3 to 5	1 to 10	Level 3 (Low risk)	3 Years
General Needs	1 to 2	Any	Level 3 (Low risk)	3 Years

10.5 If the proposed FRA frequency is longer than 1 year, a mid-term Fire Risk Review will be carried out if:

- There have been any structural alterations to the building since the last FRA was carried out.
- There have been any layout alterations to the building since the last FRA was carried out.
- There have been any significant changes to how the property is being used or managed since the last FRA was carried out (i.e., a change in the type of residents that occupy the property).
- A fire has occurred in, or spread to, the common parts of the premises since the last FRA was carried out, and/or a new FRA will be undertaken when any of the above is confirmed to have taken place.
- The correct servicing/testing has not been undertaken since the last FRA.

11. Emergency Arrangements

11.1 The Group operates a 'Stay Put' strategy in the majority of its buildings. However, an 'Evacuation' strategy will be implemented where a building's construction, design, or recommendation from the fire risk assessment dictate.

12. Record Keeping

12.1 The Group will ensure that all records (electronic or paper) are kept in relation to fire safety arrangements. These include:

- Fire Risk Assessments
- remedial actions (including evidence)
- repairs records
- certification
- inspection records
- logbooks – (to include fire drills & briefings and false alarms)
- PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) and PCFRAs (Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment) where applicable
- action plans
- performance records
- training records
- fire service audit letters
- Regulation 38 documents

13. Guidance and Training

13.1 The Group will ensure employees have the competency to undertake their activities and understand the principles of fire safety and prevention. The training will include but is not limited to:

- at the induction stage for new employees
- on an employee being exposed to new or increased risks as a result of being transferred or given a change of responsibilities
- the introduction of innovative technology or fire safety equipment
- the introduction of a new or revised system of work
- periodic refresher training
- if employees are issued with firefighting equipment, we will ensure training in the safe use firefighting equipment is provided
- Fire Wardens will receive appropriate training

14. Equality and Diversity

14.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

14.2 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of this policy and which identified no negative impacts on any person/group with a protected characteristic as a result of this policy.

15. Complaints

15.1 The Group aims to meet the needs of its customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to the Group's Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

16. Monitoring and Review

16.1 Members of the Group will monitor the effectiveness of this policy. Relevant performance information will be reported through the relevant Boards, Group Audit Committee, Group Executive Team, and appropriate Customer Panels.

16.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidelines, whichever is the sooner.

16.3 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

17. Associated Documents

17.1 This policy forms part of the Safety Management System Framework and supports the fire risk assessments and evacuation procedures.

17.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Group Health and Safety Policy
- Group Fire Safety Management Procedure
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Group policy and procedures for Estates Inspections and removal of unauthorised customers' effects
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Mobility Vehicle Policy
- Group 'Fire Safety in Communal Areas'
- Group 'New Builds with Communal Areas – Fire Safety Procedure'
- Housing Act 2004

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Appendix 1

Fire Safety Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Building Safety Team	<p>Responsible for implementing and maintaining the Fire Safety Management Policy within the organisation.</p> <p>All employees, customers, contractors and visitors are to be made aware of the details contained within this policy at induction and via e-learning where appropriate.</p>
All Employees	<p>Our employees play a valuable role in fire safety and are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking their role safely to ensure fire safety arrangements are maintained • reporting any fire incidents and remove or report any fire hazards identified in a timely manner • co-operating fully with any control measures that are implemented to ensure fire safety and legal compliance • highlighting any concerns to the management team in relation to fire safety • attending fire safety training as and when required, and • promoting and encouraging colleagues, customers, contractors and visitors to be fire aware
Operational Leaders	<p>Planning and organisation of adequate fire safety arrangements and are responsible for ensuring full implementation of the Fire Safety Management Policy. Operational Leaders are specifically responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading by example and encouraging employees to be fire aware

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take the lead on fire safety in their area of responsibility • ensuring all properties under their control have been adequately risk assessed for fire • ensuring there are adequate resources deployed that this policy and associated procedures are executed fully • escalating any significant safety issues to the relevant Director/Head of Service • ensuring fire safety training is provided and records are kept • ensuring all records relating to fire safety are recorded and kept up to date, and • reviewing and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with this policy
<p>Executive and Functional Directors</p>	<p>Strategic responsibility is delegated to Executive Directors who will act as the named responsible person for their respective directorates and monitor compliance with this policy. Functional Directors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead by example and encourage employees to be fire safety aware • ensure sufficient resources are available to support and deliver full implementation of this policy • ensure that operational leads are assigned within their directorates to assist with the implementation of fire risk management • ensure that the Group’s governing body receives regular reports on fire safety performance and risks, and • ensure that fire safety actions arising from fire risk assessments are completed in agreed timescales
<p>Group Chief Executive (GCE)</p>	<p>Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the provision of resources across the organisation sits with the GCE.</p>

Fire Safety in Communal Areas

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Platform Housing Group has a legal obligation to ensure our communal areas are safe from key hazards, including fire.
- 1.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires us to:
- carry out and adhere to fire risk assessments, which includes reviewing and maintaining escape routes in communal areas
 - make sure that the structure of our buildings and the communal areas within them meet fire and safety regulations
 - work closely with the fire and rescue service to make sure risks to customers and other occupants of the building are minimised.
- 1.3 A communal area is recognised as any area that is not within the confines of the customers' property. For example, entrance halls, corridors, stairways, landings, balconies, communal cupboards, meter and service intake cupboards, plant and boiler rooms, lifts and lift motor rooms, lofts, decked access, bin stores, bike stores, drying areas, garages, parking areas and any external gardens and paths on site are all classed as communal areas.
- 1.4 It is important that communal areas are kept clear of items so that if there was a fire, there is nothing that could:
- cause the fire to spread more quickly
 - give off toxic smoke and gases when burning
 - explode due to high temperatures (e.g. batteries)
 - prevent people from escaping from the building
 - stop the fire service from carrying out their duties
 - cause injuries from trips and falls.
- 1.5 Good housekeeping and controlling the presence of combustible materials and ignition sources in the communal areas is fundamental in reducing the risk of fire, which may be caused accidentally or deliberately. Customers must use the bins in the designated bin area to dispose of any rubbish and other unwanted items.
- 1.6 Inappropriate actions of customers may not only result in them potentially putting their own lives at risk but also endanger the lives of other occupants of the building. This includes exposing anyone who is managing the communal parts of the building to be liable under fire safety legislation.
- 1.7 Platform Housing Group has a default approach of **zero-tolerance** for items being left in communal areas. However, the majority of specialist housing locations have a **managed-use** approach.

2. Zero-Tolerance

- 2.1 A zero-tolerance approach is one in which customers are not permitted to use the communal areas to store or dispose any items, either permanently or temporarily.
- 2.2 There is no ambiguity with this approach regarding what is allowed or not. The customers know exactly where they stand – no storage, no disposals, no rubbish, and no exceptions.
- 2.3 This approach ensures our communal areas are effectively sterile from combustible materials, ignition sources and any obstructions. Examples of items include, but are not limited to:
- soft furnishings
 - carpets or door mats
 - pushchairs and prams
 - bicycles or scooters (manual or electric)
 - mobility vehicles
 - wheelchairs and walking aids
 - children's toys
 - electrical items
 - items of furniture, e.g. chairs / tables / bookcases / shoe racks
 - decorative items, e.g. pictures / plants / wreaths / air fresheners
 - shoes or other footwear / clothing / or any other combustible materials
 - cleaning equipment
 - any kind of rubbish, e.g. bin bags / discarded boxes / cardboard etc.
 - any items that contain fuel, even if empty.
- 2.4 As well as meeting our legal obligation this approach is also supported by the fire service and our fire risk assessors.

3. Managed-Use

- 3.1 Managed-use offers a more flexible approach to items in communal areas and is operated in the majority of our specialist housing properties.
- 3.2 A managed-use approach is only implemented when the following conditions are met:
- the main elements of the building structure are made of concrete, brick and other non-combustible material
 - the fire risk assessment and specialist housing team support this approach
 - there are suitable standards of fire protection, e.g. fire alarm, smoke detection, monitored response
 - the building has effective security, e.g. access control
 - there is a frequent presence of colleagues on site who can regularly monitor the communal areas.

3.3 This approach requires restrictions on what can be located in the communal areas. The items must be provided or approved and installed by Platform Housing Group. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- furniture that complies with the fire resistance standards in BS 7176:2007 for medium hazard and is supplied by Platform Housing Group
- curtains or drapes that comply with BS 5867-2 Type B and are supplied by Platform Housing Group
- pictures and other wall ornaments that are provided (or approved by) and installed by Platform Housing Group
- plants (including plastic flowers), pots or ornaments that are provided by Platform Housing Group
- garden furniture supplied by Platform Housing group that does not block external escape routes and is kept a safe distance away from the building.

4. Removal of items process

4.1 Any high-risk items found in the communal areas will be removed immediately, this applies to zero-tolerance and managed-use properties.

4.2 Examples of high-risk items include, but are not limited to:

- motorbikes / mopeds / quadbikes
- electric bicycles / scooters
- mobility vehicles
- vehicle batteries
- petrol lawnmowers / strimmers / hedge cutters / chainsaws
- petrol or diesel cannisters (even if empty)
- gas bottles (even if empty)
- barbeques / firepits / patio heaters
- large build-up of combustibles, i.e. paper / cardboard / wood
- large furniture items blocking escape routes, e.g. sofas / dining tables / wardrobes / beds / mattresses
- large household appliances blocking escape routes, e.g. fridges / freezers / cookers / washing machines / dryers.

4.3 All non-high-risk items found in the communal area, including any unauthorised items in managed use buildings, will be served with a torts notice (see appendix 1) – this applies to zero-tolerance and managed-use properties. The notice is attached to the items and photographs are taken.

4.4 A torts notice is a legal document issued in accordance with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977. It gives notice to the owner that the items must be removed from the communal area within 7-days.

- 4.5 Where possible, colleagues will identify the owner and ask for items to be removed immediately from the communal area.
- 4.6 If the owner refuses to co-operate, colleagues will explain our zero-tolerance policy and make them aware that a torts notice has been served on the items.
- 4.7 If the owner cannot be identified, a '*Keeping our communal areas safe – items must be removed*' leaflet (see appendix 2) will be posted through all relevant letterboxes in the block.
- 4.8 After the 7-day period has expired, during their next routine visit to the block colleagues will check to see if the items have been removed.
- 4.9 If the items are still present anywhere in the communal area, a job will be raised for the items to be removed. No further notice will be given to the owner.
- 4.10 Removed items will be permanently disposed of, irrespective of their value. Once the items have been disposed of they cannot be returned to the owner.

5. Information for colleagues and customers

- 5.1 A noticeboard is located in all general needs blocks containing important fire and building safety information for colleagues and customers (see appendix 3).
- 5.2 A section of the noticeboard has information for customers which explains Platform Housing Group's zero tolerance policy and removal of items process.
- 5.3 Process maps are created for colleagues to follow detailing the removal of items process in the Severn, Tame and Witham localities (see appendixes 4 and 5).

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

7. Complaints

- 7.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.
- 7.2 Customers who believe the tort's process has not been followed correctly should be directed to the Estate Services team (estateenquires@platformhg.com).

8. Monitoring and Review


- 8.1 The next document review is scheduled for 2028 and then every three years thereafter, or sooner as required by changes in relevant legislation.
- 8.2 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until an updated version is available.

9. Associated Documents

- 9.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Group 'Fire Safety Management Policy'
- Group 'Mobility Vehicles Policy'
- Group 'New Builds with Communal Areas – Fire Safety Procedure'
- Group 'Smoke Free Policy'
- Home Office 'Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats'
- Home Office 'A guide to making your small block of flats safe from fire'
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

Appendix 1 – Tort’s notice ‘Notice for removal of items left in communal area’



Notice for removal of items left in communal area at:

Date:

Today we found the following items left in this communal area:


Any items left in the communal area are a **fire safety risk** and **must be removed immediately**.

A photograph has been taken of the items identified with a sticker. We will return after 7 days to check the items have been removed (7 days are from when the items were first issued with a notice for removal).

If the items have not been removed, **WE WILL REMOVE AND DISPOSE** of them without further notice and in line with the Tort (Interference with Goods) Act 1977.

Disposed items cannot be returned.

Always remember to **keep your escape routes and communal areas clear**. Refer to the noticeboard for further information.



Appendix 2 – leaflet ‘Keeping our communal areas safe – items must be removed’



Keeping Our Communal Areas Safe – Items Must Be Removed

Communal areas include all communal hallways and walkways, shared staircases, balconies, service intake cupboards, bin storage areas, access paths, communal gardens, drying areas, and car parking spaces.

We have a legal obligation to ensure these areas remain free of items that might cause or contribute to a fire and can be subject to arson. These items could present a trip hazard or obstruct your means of escape as well as block access for emergency services in the event of fire.

We regularly inspect the communal areas in your block. During our visit **we have found items being stored or left in the communal areas**, which may belong to you. These items must be removed immediately.

Our teams are responsible for ensuring these areas are cleared in line with our zero-tolerance policy in order to keep all residents safe. A photograph has been taken of the items identified with a sticker. We will return after 7 days to check the items have been removed (7 days are from when the items were first issued with a notice for removal). Any items that are deemed an immediate high risk will be removed as a matter of emergency within 24 hours.

If the items have not been removed, **WE WILL REMOVE AND DISPOSE** of them in line with the Tort (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 without further notice. Please note once items have been disposed of **they cannot be returned**.

We do understand that storage space is limited, especially for residents in small flats. However for everyone's safety, it is very important that any personal possessions are kept inside your home.

Further **Fire safety information** can be found on the noticeboard in your block.



Appendix 3 – poster ‘Important fire and building safety information’

You can **contact us** on
 Tel: **0333 200 7304** one number for ALL your needs
 Email: info@platformhg.com Web: www.platformhg.com
 Follow us on social media
 All our materials are available in other formats. If you need this information in easy read format, Braille or you need an interpreter please contact diversity@platformhg.com

platform
housing group

Important fire and building safety information

Fire Action Notice

This building is designed to **contain a fire** in the area where it starts. In the event of a fire:

Stay Put

Remain in your flat and close all your doors and windows. **Leave immediately** if your flat becomes affected by smoke or heat or if you are instructed to leave by the Fire Service.

If fire breaks out **in your flat** or if you are in a **communal area** and you hear a fire alarm or have been made aware of a fire:

Evacuate

If you are in your flat tell everyone to leave immediately. **Do not stop** to collect personal belongings. If you are in the communal area do not return to your flat. **Leave the building** by the nearest exit and make your way to the assembly point. If it is not possible for you to leave the building you must get yourself to a place of safety e.g. behind at least two fire doors. Call the Fire Service **999** and inform a member of staff.

Your assembly point is:

Do not attempt to tackle the fire.
Do not use lifts, if provided in this building
Do not return to the building for any reason until instructed to do so by the Fire Service.

No smoking anywhere in the communal areas

Fire Safety in Communal Areas

We take fire safety very seriously and you should too.

In communal areas we have a legal responsibility to make sure you and your neighbours are safe from key hazards, including fire.

We must ensure communal areas are free from flammable materials, ignition sources, obstructions, trip hazards, or any other fire risks.

If items are found in communal areas we will try to identify owners and ask for your co-operation to remove items immediately.

Where we are not able to identify the owner of the item or if you are not willing to co-operate with us, in line with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 we will:

- **IMMEDIATELY** remove high-risk items, such as flammables or items obstructing escape routes.
- Sticker other items advising that they must be removed by you within 7 days.
- Record and photograph items to be removed.
- Return after 7 days to check items have been removed. If they have not been removed, then **WE WILL REMOVE** them without further notice.
- Permanently **DISPOSE** of items irrespective of their value.
- Not be able to return disposed items.

This Communal Area is Zero Tolerance

This Means... **No Storage, No Disposals, No Rubbish, No Exceptions.**

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan

If you require assistance in developing your means of escape plan, or further explanation of the **Fire Action Notice** and how it affects you, please contact Platform Housing Group.

The importance of fire doors in this building

Fire doors play an essential part in reducing fire risk and saving lives. Fire doors keep fire or smoke in the room or ‘compartment’ in which it started. They stop it from spreading to other areas of the building and are an integral part of the building’s passive fire protection system.

To ensure fire doors prevent the spread of fire for a specified time, you must:

- Keep fire doors closed
- Ensure doors, accessories, and self-closing devices are not tampered with
- Report any faults or damage to the doors immediately.

For everyone’s safety keep your escape routes clear at all times

Ground Maintenance, Cleaning & Caretaking Services

Keeping communal grounds and areas well maintained, clean and tidy

Grounds maintenance, and the cleaning and caretaking of communal areas in our buildings is the responsibility of our Platform Property Care Estate Services team and is delivered by directly employed colleagues and external contractors.

Our grounds maintenance service

Grazing

In a new, greener approach, the team will be cutting and mulching grass. Mulching is where grass cuttings are recycled and returned to the turf in the form of tiny fragments of grass. These recycled fragments then act as protective ‘mulch’ and help to conserve soil moisture, prevent weed growth and moderate soil temperature.

Grazing

All grass edges to lawns, beds and borders, along with areas around trees and buildings will be trimmed and edged to the same height as the mowed grass.

Hedges and shrubs

All hedges and shrubs will be kept tidy, pruned or cut to maintain a neat line and definition and to remove any health and safety obstruction. Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, we are unable to cut hedges between March and July or beyond that time if there is visible evidence of nesting birds.

Weed control

All hard standing areas and planted beds will be inspected and spot treatments applied where required.

Litter picking

All hard surfaces, beds and borders will be inspected and any litter removed.

Our work schedule across the year

Month	Grass cutting and edging	Hedges and shrubs	Weed control	Litter picking
January	✖	✖	✖	✖
February	✖	✖	✖	✖
March	✔	✖	✖	✖
April	✔	✖	✖	✖
May	✔	✖	✖	✖
June	✔	✖	✖	✖
July	✔	✖	✖	✖
August	✔	✔	✖	✖
September	✔	✔	✖	✖
October	✔	✔	✖	✖
November	✔	✔	✖	✖
December	✔	✔	✖	✖

✔ Subject to requirements
✖ Subject to weather

Communal spaces are areas outside of your home which you share with others and can include:

- Staircases, corridors and landings
- Kitchens, laundries and drying rooms
- Halls and electrical cupboards

The team has set out a clear service standard for the cleaning tasks they regularly carry out and when to that you know what to expect.

Our Cleaning Service

The table below outlines the areas that are cleaned, along with the tasks that will be completed, during **weekly fortnightly or monthly** cleaning visits.

Communal Areas

- Staircases, corridors and landings
- Landings and meeting rooms
- Kitchens
- Laundries and drying rooms
- Building entrances, porches and post boxes
- Electrical cupboard:
- Toilets
- Lifts
- Internal balconies
- Internal mobility scooters, buggy and bike stores.

What will be cleaned

- Hard and soft flooring
- Skirting boards, baseboards, handrails, woodwork, metalwork, ledges and windowsills
- Walls including radiators and wall heaters
- Doors and frames (including entry doors)
- Balconies and pads including external door entry panels
- Internal communal windows
- Communal appliance hangers, powder downers and filters on all machines
- Communal any tables and chairs, including legs, tins, capboard tops and all other surfaces
- Communal kitchen work surfaces, cupboard/drawer fronts and handles, stove tops and oven doors, appliance frontages, urns and splash backs
- Communal toilet pan, seat and cistern, wash, hand basin, hand towels, toilet roll and soap replenished as required

Window cleaning of all external communal windows will take place on an agreed frequency either bi-monthly, quarterly or 6 monthly.

If you wish your personal windows to be cleaned, you will need to make a separate private arrangement.

Bin stores & bin chute rooms

- All floors will be disinfected and free from litter and debris
- Switches and pads wiped clean from marks and smears
- High level removal of cobwebs and dirt
- Litter removed

Low level repairs

- Drips, leaks and non-complex repairs in communal areas will be completed

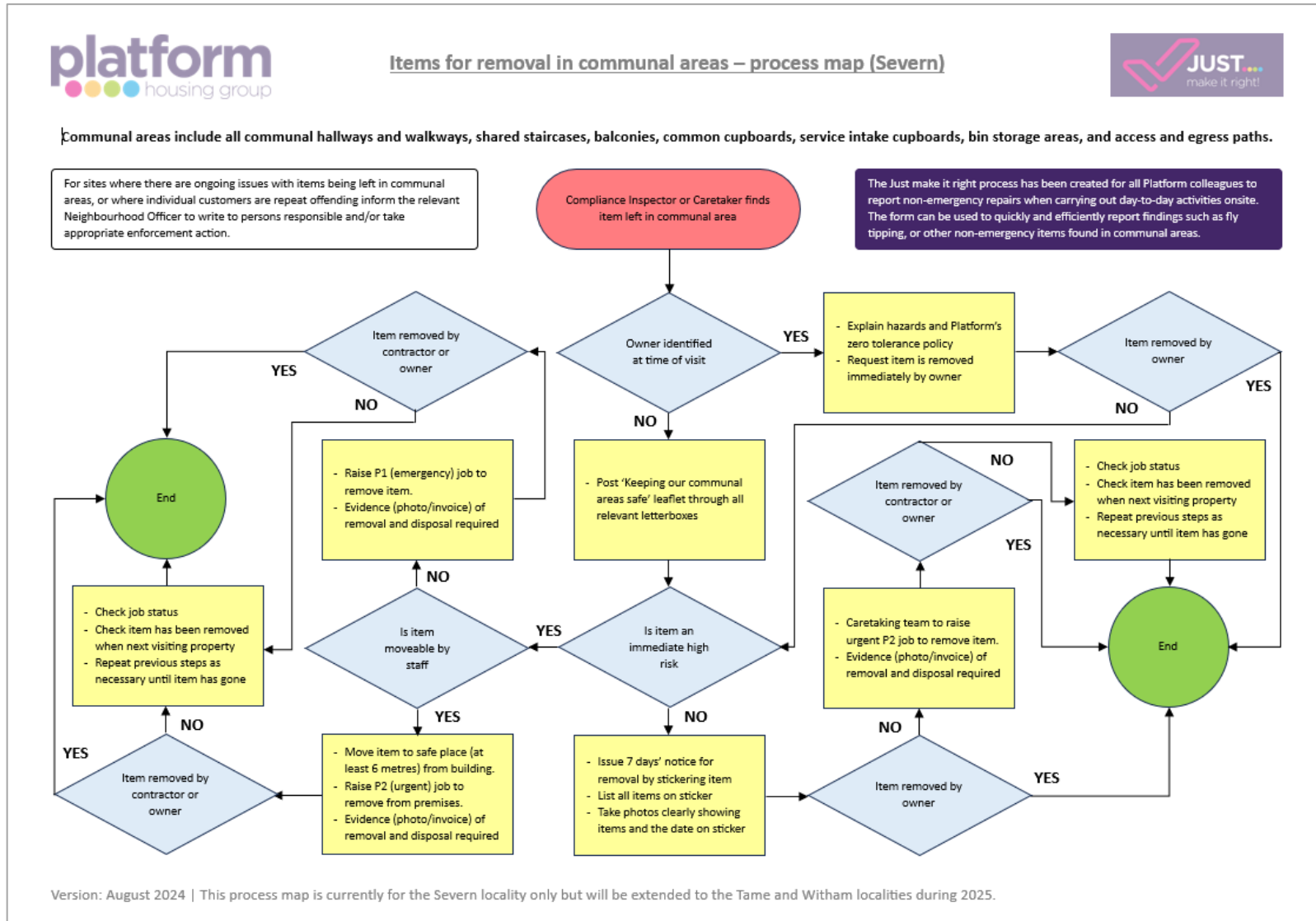
Getting in touch

If you have any further questions or concerns about our communal cleaning & caretaking service, please don't hesitate to contact our Customer Help on **0333 200 7304** or visit www.platformhg.com/estate-services to find out more.

Want to help us to improve your communal areas?

Our Estate Inspectors are a team of volunteer customers who act as our eyes and ears on the ground and let us know about any issues so that we can work together to put them right. You can find out more about our Estate Inspector role and how to get involved on our website: www.platformhg.com/estate-inspectors

Appendix 4 – Items for removal in communal areas – process map (Severn)



Appendix 5 – Items for removal in communal area – process map (Tame and Witham)

