

Fire Safety Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Fire Safety Policy sets out how Connexus will manage fire safety in order to comply with Fire Safety legislation and guidance, in particular the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 1.2 Connexus' Fire Safety Policy has considered and works in conjunction with other Connexus health and safety and compliance policies and meets the requirements of Connexus' overarching Health and Safety Policy.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all buildings and associated structures either owned, leased, or managed by Connexus.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Connexus must also ensure that compliance with fire safety legislation is formally reported at SMT and Board level, including the details of any non-compliance and planned corrective actions.
- 2.2 The policy is relevant to all Connexus employees, customers, contractors and other persons or other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services.
- 2.3 It should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon Connexus to maintain a safe environment for customers and employees within the homes of each customer, and within all communal areas of buildings and 'other' properties owned and managed (offices, commercial shops, depots, etc.).
- 2.4 The fire safety policy is to be read in conjunction with Connexus Fire Safety Management Plan (FSMP).
- 2.5 Scope: The policy applies to the whole of the Group. This means Connexus Homes Limited, (ultimate parent) and all its subsidiaries.

3. Regulatory Standards and Legislation

- 3.1 The overall objective of this policy is to ensure our properties are safe so that customers, employees, members of the public and contractors are safe as part of a stay put or delayed evacuation strategy or evacuated safely from a building in the event of a fire.
- 3.2 The following Acts and Regulations (list not exhaustive) are applicable to this policy:
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Fire Safety Act 2021
 - Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - Building Safety Act 2022
 - Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Landlords and Customers Act 1985.
 - Building Regulations 2010
 - Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990
 - Housing Act Part 1 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System
 - Occupiers Liability Act 1984 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013
 - Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
 - Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
 - The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
 - Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
 - Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
 - HCA Regulatory Framework – Home Standard (meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes).

4. Obligations

- 4.1 Connexus will:
- undertake annual fire risk assessments for all relevant communal areas, and carry out corrective action where necessary to eliminate, reduce, or control the risk.
 - ensure the safety of fire fighters who may need to enter a building.
 - recognise our duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021 and other relevant legislation and guidance.
 - promote fire safety as a mutual objective for employees at all levels of the organisation so that they understand their duty to, so far as is reasonably practicable, identify fire hazards and implement measures to eliminate, reduce or control them.

- ensure that adequate resources are available to maintain standards of fire safety.
- ensure that fire related training is provided to enable employees to perform their duties safely and efficiently.
- ensure procedures and monitoring controls are in place to assess fire risk, frequency of inspection and prioritise/undertake required works.
- ensure fire related incidents are investigated in a timely manner to identify the root cause and undertake corrective action, as required, in order to eliminate, reduce or control the likelihood of an incident occurring in the future.
- ensure fire safety installations are tested and well maintained in order to ensure correct operation.
- ensure that any furnishings supplied to Connexus buildings comply with The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
- ensure fire safety information is available for customers.
- appoint a Primary Authority Partner, currently Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), to work together to improve the fire safety policies and procedures for Connexus to ensure safe working environments and safe homes. Joint working will also include sharing information, the fire service reviewing risk assessments and providing training to Connexus staff.

5. Fire Safety Management Plan

5.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Fire Safety Management Plan which sets out Connexus' processes and procedures in relation to Fire Safety including:

- **Planning arrangements** – Fire Risk Assessment process, process to ensure remedial works are carried out and work is prioritised and completed, risk control measures are in place and documented, performance standards, preventative measures to eliminate or reduce risks.
- **Organisational arrangements** – How information is communicated to colleagues, ensuring competence by having adequate information, instruction and training, Fire door inspections, Fire drills, emergency and evacuation plans, provision of fire safety information to customers and maintenance of fire equipment.
- **Control Measures** – Set out health, safety and fire safety roles and responsibilities, include specific and measurable standards to measure performance, ensure adequate management controls are in place and ensure regular management reporting is in place.

- **Monitoring** – Regular checks of fire safety equipment, investigations of causes of incidents and recording of relevant information, investigate all incidents to ensure lessons are learnt and procedures amended if necessary and ensure routine fire safety inspections are in place and maintained (Additional to FRA process).
- **Review** – Process in place to regularly review management systems.

6. Key Outcomes

- 6.1 The evacuation strategies in place across different Connexus property types will be implemented and followed as per the recommendations of the competent fire risk assessor. Therefore, the future fire safety strategy to be adopted will be confirmed on a building-by-building basis.
- 6.2 Connexus will use the government's Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool (FRAPT). The FRAPT is an online tool designed to assist responsible persons to develop a strategy to prioritise their buildings to review their fire risk assessments, to ensure they take into account the clarifications outlined in the Fire Safety Act. The tool is designed to help Landlords focus their resources on those buildings that are most at risk of fire.
- 6.3 Connexus will establish and maintain accurate records of all completed fire risk assessments, fire risk assessment reviews and associated completed remedial works from these reports and keep these as per the organisation's Data Retention Policy.
- 6.4 Connexus will hold accurate records against each property it owns or manages setting out the requirements for servicing, maintenance and repair of fire prevention, detection and fire-fighting equipment. These include fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, smoke/heat detectors, hose reels, dry and wet risers, auto window/door openers, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, sprinkler systems and any other equipment relating to fire safety.
- 6.5 Connexus will establish and manage programmes to deliver servicing and maintenance in accordance with all relevant British Standards and manufacturer's recommendations for all fire detection, prevention and fire-fighting systems and equipment within buildings owned or managed by the organisation.
- 6.6 Connexus will ensure that each property requiring an FRA has a fire risk assessment in place that is PAS79 compliant (Publicly Available Specification) from the British Standards Institute (BSI) that has been carried out by a competent fire risk assessor.
- 6.7 Connexus will ensure that all FRAs are reviewed no later than the review date set within the FRA, and that this review is carried out by a competent fire risk assessor.
- 6.8 Connexus will ensure that the FRA to a building is reviewed following a fire, change in building use, change in working practices that may affect fire safety, following refurbishment works to the building or if required following an independent fire safety audit, and that this review is carried out by a competent fire risk assessor.
- 6.9 Connexus will ensure that robust processes are in place to implement all mandatory fire precaution measures identified by FRAs.

- 6.10 Connexus will ensure that robust processes are in place to record and action any 'near miss' reports with regard to fire safety. A 'near miss' is an unplanned event which does not result in an injury but had the potential to do so.
- 6.11 Connexus will ensure that all customers having a disability and/or mobility issue and/or employees within office building, supported schemes and independent living schemes requiring a fire risk assessment will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and that this PEEP will be reviewed annually by a competent person. This will be kept in the Fire Safety Red Box held securely on site and made available to the fire service in the event of an evacuation.
- 6.12 Connexus will have robust processes and controls in place to ensure that consideration is made when letting properties to the suitability of the accommodation for the prospective customer with regards to fire safety.
- 6.13 Connexus will have a robust process in place to gain access should any customer or leaseholder refuse access to carry out essential fire safety related inspection and remediation works. Connexus will have a robust process in place to gain access to properties where customer vulnerability issues are known or identified, whilst ensuring they can gain timely access to any property in order to be compliant with this policy and safeguard the wellbeing of the customer.
- 6.14 Connexus considers good communication essential in the safe delivery of fire safety and will therefore ensure that information about fire safety and fire prevention measures is available to customers and building users via leaflets and information on the organisation's website.
- 6.15 Connexus will ensure that there is a robust process in place for the management of immediately dangerous situations identified during the fire safety programme.
- 6.16 Actions arising from Fire Risk Assessments will be categorised as follows:
- Emergency – High Risk immediate response.
 - 5 Days – High Risk
 - 60 Days – Medium Risk
 - 6 months – Low Risk
 - Long term – Low risk
- 6.17 Connexus will ensure there is a robust process in place for the management of any follow-up works required following the completion of servicing and maintenance checks to fire detection, prevention and fire-fighting systems and equipment.
- 6.18 Connexus will establish and maintain records of all fire safety related training undertaken by staff.

7. Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 Connexus' Board will have overall governance responsibility for ensuring the Fire Safety Policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with the regulatory standards, legislation and approved codes of practice. SMT will formally approve this policy and review

it every two years (or sooner if there is any change in regulation, legislation or codes of practice).

- 7.2 The Board will receive regular updates on the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy and fire safety performance along with notification of any non-compliance issue which is identified. This is so they have assurance that the policy is operating effectively in practice.
- 7.3 The Property Director has strategic responsibility for the management of fire safety and ensuring compliance is achieved and maintained. The Property Director will oversee the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.
- 7.4 The Compliance Manager will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the agreed fire risk assessment and re-assessment programmes, and the prioritisation and implementation of any works arising from the fire risk assessments. They are also responsible for overseeing the delivery of service, maintenance and repair programmes to all fire detection, alarms and firefighting equipment within property assets owned or managed by Connexus.
- 7.5 The Compliance Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the Fire Risk Assessment is undertaken by a Competent Person. Connexus Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken by Connexus Compliance Surveyors who are the Competent Person.
- 7.6 SMT will receive reports in respect of fire safety management performance and ensure compliance is being achieved. They will also be notified of any non-compliance issue identified.
- 7.7 The housing teams will provide key support in gaining access into properties where access is proving difficult and use standard methods to do so. They will also facilitate the legal process to gain access as necessary.
- 7.8 The Property Director will be responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed every two years, and will notify the Board, SMT and operational team responsible for the delivery of the compliance programme, of the upcoming review. The Property Director will ensure that this review process takes place before the policy expires.
- 7.9 The Property Director will ensure that this policy is saved on the organisation's shared drive and distributed to all relevant members of staff.

8. Training

- 8.1 Connexus will ensure that only suitably competent fire risk assessors, certified by a UKAS accredited certification scheme that meets the competency criteria established by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council, are procured and appointed to undertake fire risk assessments. Connexus Compliance Surveyors will be trained to NEBOSH Certificate in Fire Safety or equivalent and hold membership of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) or equivalent.

- 8.2 Connexus will ensure that only suitably competent contractors and engineers, certified by a UKAS accredited certification scheme, are procured and appointed to undertake works to fire safety equipment, systems and installations.
- 8.3 The operational team with responsibility for delivery will check the relevant accreditations for the work that they are carrying out. These checks will be undertaken as part of the procurement process and/or on an annual basis and evidenced appropriately.
- 8.4 Connexus will ensure that all operatives working for, or on behalf of the organisation, have the relevant training required for their role. This will be managed via periodic assessments of training needs and resulting programmes of internal and/or external training.

9. Performance Reporting

- 9.1 Robust key performance indicator (KPI) measures will be established and maintained to ensure Connexus is able to report on performance in relation to fire safety.
- 9.2 KPI measures will be produced and provided at SMT level monthly and at Board level on a quarterly basis. As a minimum, these KPI measures will include reporting on:
- 9.3 Data – the total number of:**
- Properties on the FRA programme.
 - Properties with a valid 'in date' FRA. This is the level of compliance expressed as a number and a %.
 - Properties where the FRA has expired and is 'out of date'. This is the level of non-compliance expressed as a number and a %.
 - Properties which are due for a new FRA within the next 90 days. This is the early warning system.
- 9.4 Narrative – an explanation of the:**
- Current position.
 - Corrective action required.
 - Anticipated impact of corrective action.
 - Progress with completion of follow-up works – number of high (Emergency and 5-day actions), medium (60-Day actions) and low risk (6 months and investment works) – 'completed', 'in time' and 'overdue'.
- 9.5 In addition:**
- Compliance with the fire safety equipment, systems and installation service and maintenance programme.
 - Recording and reporting on property fires to identify trends and target awareness campaigns.

10. Quality Assurance

- 10.1 Connexus will carry out an independent audit of fire safety at least once every two years. This audit will specifically test for compliance with the regulation, legislation and approved codes of practice and identify any non-compliance issues for correction.

- 10.2 Connexus will implement a programme of regular property inspections to all properties with a fire risk assessment in place to audit that all required management actions are taking place. These inspections will be carried out by our housing and supported services teams and be undertaken at regular intervals, with inspection records evidenced and kept against each property. In addition to this Connexus will ensure regular testing of all fire alarms and emergency lighting systems.

11. Non-Compliance/Escalation Process

- 11.1 Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Property Director in the first instance.
- 11.2 The Property Director will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the operational team in order to address the non-compliance issue and report details of the same to the SMT.
- 11.3 SMT will ensure the Board is made aware of any non-compliance issue so they can consider the implications and act as appropriate.
- 11.4 In cases of a serious non-compliance issue SMT and the Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing in the spirit of co-regulation, or any other relevant organisation such as the HSE, as part of the Regulatory Framework.

12. Document Control

Approved by SMT	30 October 2025
Approved by Committee/Board	N/A
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