

Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework - *Delivering Safer Communities* 2021 – 2026

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1 PREVENTING & PROTECTING

2 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

3 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

4 PIONEERING PRODUCTS & SERVICES

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Approval body	<i>Group Board</i>
Date of approval	<i>26 April 2023</i>
Review Year	<i>2024</i>
Customer engagement required	<i>No</i>
Trade union engagement required	<i>Yes-/For information</i>
Equality Impact Assessment	<i>No</i>

Introduction and background

The Wheatley Group (The Group) is Scotland's leading housing, care and property management organisation. It comprises of six Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), one care organisation and two commercial organisations. In addition to the subsidiary organisations, the Group also entered into a joint venture in April 2017 with City Building Glasgow.

As the largest and most diverse landlord in Scotland, we recognise the crucially important role we have in ensuring our customers are safe in their homes. ***Your Home, Your Community, Your Future***, our 2021-26 five-year strategy, acknowledges that customers feeling safe and secure in their homes is of paramount importance and all RSLs commit to a shared vision and passion for improving the homes and lives of those in our communities.

As a Group we are nationally and internationally recognised for defining excellence and have an outstanding track record in delivering sector leading standards of service and innovating in all fields in which we operate.

We know that across the UK hundreds of preventable fire deaths and injuries occur every year in places where people should feel safe – their homes. We recognise the crucially important role we have in ensuring our homes are constructed, managed and maintained in a way which maximises fire safety for our customers.

Our first Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework is already regarded as sector leading and a fire prevention exemplar. It contributed to a 32% reduction in Group accidental dwelling fires between 2018 - 2021. Our Community Improvement Partnership broke new ground in close and effective working between Wheatley staff and the fire service. It has created strong results for tenants and communities across the Group. Not only does this facilitate joint working, the sharing of data across services means we can all provide more effective responses. The data also allows us to focus our work in communities which are particularly affected and to influence other partners to deliver services which may be required.

A fire safety “customer confidence cycle” approach has been developed by our Fire Safety Team. This recognises that by identifying vulnerable customers and providing ‘pioneering fire safety products and services’ to those customers that we can significantly mitigate the risk of an accidental dwelling fire occurring, keeping all our customers and communities safe.

Our new updated Framework will take these developments to the next level, further reducing accidental dwelling fires. We have set a challenging target that ***by 2026 we will have reduced accidental dwelling fires by a further 10% and 100% of applicable properties have a fire risk assessment.***

It will ensure that our approach to reducing accidental dwelling fires is underpinned by the key aspects of our Group strategy. It will also support many of the other key aims in the strategy. These include the increase in the number of homeless households we house – many of these are likely to be vulnerable or have suffered trauma so our approach will help ensure that these households settle while maintaining stable communities

Our strategy also sets out ambitious targets to deliver 4,000 new build homes across 5 years. Our expertise will help inform designers of opportunities to design out risks associated with accidental dwelling fires.

Customers will co-create our approaches and priorities using our new customer engagement framework “**Stronger voices, stronger communities**”. Our new operating model, developed to support our Group Strategy, is based on highly skilled staff who can empower customers to get the services and support they require. We will increasingly look to digital and easy access approaches so that people can quickly tell us what they want us to hear. In turn we can then respond effectively and quickly while ensuring that no-one is left out.

This updated Framework will embed our approach to fire safety and prevention across all areas of the Group. Our aim is that all our staff will have an understanding of fire safety measures and the skills to help customers stay safe in their homes. We will work with our customer facing staff to ensure that they have the training they need to deliver this aim. Training will apply across all services including the call centre, housing officers, concierges and care staff so that they can respond well to ‘at risk’ customers and can understand underlying issues which may be relevant.

Our approach is laid out within this Framework under four distinct themes. These are:

- Preventing and Protecting
- People & Communities
- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Pioneering Products & Services

We know that the right intervention at the right time is key – effective, early support will help address issues before they become major problems. We know that almost half of our customers who have experienced an accidental dwelling fire have an underlying vulnerability.

We will expand our use of shared data, information and expertise to identify customers who most need our support, addressing the root cause of their behaviour before it starts to affect their likelihood of having an accidental dwelling fire. Our approach will be based on the bedrock of staff – concierges, housing officers, care officers and anyone with customer contact - who understand the impacts of risky behaviours and who can help people make connections in the community. This approach can help to change lives, not just reduce the risk of an accidental dwelling fire.

Our expert fire safety team will be able to use this information alongside a trauma informed approach to work with individuals to improve their behaviour and to support families which are impacted. Our integrated approach to housing, care and to changing lives will mean our customers can access a wide range of specialist services from us, directed by them, to meet their needs.

However, many of our customers will require more specialist services, particularly in relation to substance abuse or mental health. We will use our strong partnerships to build better pathways to support these customers whether that is care, risk management assessments, enforcement or a mix of interventions.

Our partnership approach will also help to provide focused intervention from all agencies where there are major issues of fire safety. These interventions will be directed and influenced by the priorities identified by our communities where this is appropriate. Our staff and partners will be able to tap into wider Wheatley services to help people settle in a community, to gain employment skills and to gain confidence through volunteering in their neighbourhood.

Increasingly digital spaces will be an important form of contact and our Group strategy is committed to developing these for the benefit of neighbourhoods. Physical locations will also continue to create a sense of community with space for groups to meet.

The implementation of this Framework will ensure we build on our already outstanding locality planning approach and take a lead role in influencing other organisations and agencies in the interests of our customers. Importantly, it will also enable our customers and communities to have their voice heard and empower them to influence the design of services they need and want. A key building block to delivering on this ambition will be the continued development of our existing sector leading approach to establishing common objectives, sharing data and agreeing co-ordinated approaches and common indicators of success with our partners.

The Framework will be a key building block in achieving our strategic vision '***Customers having increased control over their services, their communities and their lives, with new opportunities for building skills and resilience***'. It will do this by building choice and control in the heart of communities, helping customers to make their own communities safer and stronger.

The key Group strategic target for this Framework is that we **further reduce accidental dwelling fires by a further 10%.**

Our Organisation

Wheatley Group has a unique integrated Group value proposition that gives our customers unrivalled access to expertise and resources across housing, homelessness, care, support, advice, training, volunteering and employment. Our Subsidiaries are:



Wheatley Homes Glasgow, Scotland's largest social landlord, has more than 43,000 affordable homes in Glasgow. GHA works closely with Scottish Fire & Rescue (Glasgow) and the Glasgow City Council Multi Agency Tasking & Coordinating Group. Wheatley Group are also represented on Glasgow's Strategic Community Planning and Safe Glasgow Groups.

Glasgow, as Scotland's largest city, has the highest proportion of accidental dwelling fires. The proportion of ADF incidents reported to us in GHA is broadly in line with its proportion of stock and accounts for almost 80% of incidents. This is often concentrated in areas of high deprivation – in 2022 nearly half of Glasgow's population lived in areas identified as amongst the 20% of most deprived communities in Scotland. Almost a quarter of the most deprived zones in Scotland are to be found in Glasgow.



Wheatley Homes East provides over 6,400 homes in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife. Wheatley Homes East works with Scottish Fire & Rescue across three local authority areas (Edinburgh City, Lothian & Borders & Fife Division). Edinburgh has just under 15% of its data zones in the most deprived 20%, while Fife has 20% and West Lothian 15%.



Wheatley Homes South (DGHP) joined Wheatley Group in December 2019 with 10,300 affordable homes spread from Dumfries to Stranraer. It provides the majority of the social rented stock in the area. Wheatley Homes South have well established links with their Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to ensure a joined up and effective approach is provided to preventing accidental dwelling fires. Outside Dumfries the area is largely rural with long distances between communities. One third of the population live in communities with less than 500 people. Approximately 10% of data zones in Dumfries and Galloway are amongst the 20% most deprived in Scotland. The nature of deprivation in such a rural area means that these areas tend to be highly concentrated and also suffer from poor connections – both physical and digital.



Loretto Housing Association has more than 2,500 affordable homes across the central belt and works closely with Scottish Fire & Rescue and a number of local authorities to prevent accidental dwelling fires. Our Loretto housing has a higher proportion of customers in supported or specialist accommodation where we work closely with care colleagues.



Wheatley Care provides care and support to approximately 3,000 customers each week. Wheatley Care's innovative Tenancy Support Service is integral to supporting vulnerable customers and works closely with Wheatley 360 resources to prevent, and respond effectively to, customers who hoard combustible materials. Our wider care services provide support to customers in a whole range of areas including homelessness, alcohol abuse and other vulnerabilities. Some of our vulnerable customers will receive support from Wheatley Care. While the majority will receive care from other providers our expertise means we work to ensure our customers receive the services they need.



Wheatley Foundation invests over £5 million annually on improving the life opportunities of disadvantaged people in Wheatley's communities which includes funding our Home Comforts and Eat Well services to customers experiencing poverty. It provides jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities to many of our customers. These opportunities have given customers with some of the most challenging histories opportunities, optimism and better life chances.



Wheatley 360 is our wraparound support division changing lives from every angle. Its role is at the heart of making our communities safer and helping people to settle in their homes. Concierges and neighbourhood environmental teams provide a local and visible service. They keep our communities clean, tidy and provide a friendly face. Our Think Yes approach allows them to do much more – helping our customers where they most need assistance. W360 also includes the homelessness and allocations teams which will create an important synergy as we help people to settle in resilient neighbourhoods.

Building on Our Success

Investing in our Futures, the Wheatley Group's first five-year strategy, delivered outstanding customer satisfaction and raised the bar in Scotland and beyond for performance results and business efficiency in housing, care and property management. Over the last five years we have worked with our customers and communities to ensure our neighbourhoods are places customer are proud to live.

Our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework was developed from a position of real strength. Our relentless focus on delivering excellent services that are highlighted as examples of best practice has ensured that our subsidiaries can access products and services that effectively support and promote fire safety across all our business areas and property types.

Detailed below are some examples of the initiatives and services that we have embedded across Group during the life time of the FPMF and are making a real contribution to saving lives and preventing fire related injuries. Importantly, all of these are rooted in our innovative fire safety operating model, with our housing officers kept close to our customers and their communities through small patch sizes. This means, they know their vulnerable customers – whose social and lifestyle factors place them at a higher risk - and are able to draw on products and services that meet their needs and help to keep customers safe.

Group Fire Safety Team

Over a number of years the Group have recruited seven Fire Safety Officers, all of whom are highly experienced and trained in the latest fire safety practices and policies

Fire Safety Operating Model

Our fire safety operating model was recognised as a fire prevention exemplar by the Scottish Governments Unintentional Harm Hub

Fire Safety Charter with SFRS

Our Group/SFRS fire safety charter (a first in Scotland) details eight joint commitments that we have agreed in partnership with SFRS to reduce accidental dwelling fires across Group.

Resident Engagement Award Winner

The Fire Safety Team won Resident Engagement award at the AICO Community Awards in Birmingham (May 2022) for their efforts in reducing accidental dwelling fires.

**Create a
programme of
Fire Risk
Assessments**

We have designed, developed and delivered a programme of Fire Risk Assessments across all of our Relevant and Non-Relevant Premise to incl MSF & Livingwell sites.

**Over 700
vulnerable
customer
visits**

Over the last year, our Fire Safety Team have visited over 700 vulnerable households and provided fire safety pioneering products and services.

**Further
reduction in
accidental
dwelling fires**

We have set ourselves the challenging target of reducing accidental dwelling fires by a further 10% between 2021-2026.

**Fire Safety
Working Group
& Executive
Meetings**

Our Fire Safety Working Group chaired by our Fire Safety Manager meets regularly to discuss fire safety issues and discuss ways to improve our operating model.

**Practical Fire
Safety
Guidance**

Wheatley Group senior staff were represented on the Scottish Government Ministerial Working Group and have implemented the Governments Practical Fire Safety Guidance for High Rise & Specialised Housing.

**Repairs &
Investment**

We have dedicated Repairs Teams (RICO) who work with Duty Holders, Fire Safety Team and onsite Environmental Teams to ensure our FRA recommendations are actioned timeously.

National and Group Context

New fire safety guidance for owners and residents of high-rise buildings in Scotland was published in December 2019 in an effort to highlight the risks and prevent a tragedy like Grenfell. The **Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Domestic High Rise Buildings** provides advice on preventing fires and reducing the risk of fire in high-rise blocks. The guidance document includes information on assessing risk and a reminder of the multiple laws on fire safety. The guidance, produced by the Scottish Government and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), is not in itself mandatory. All our residents in high-rise buildings were given separate leaflets on what to do if there is a fire and how to prevent them starting. The leaflet confirms the importance of the 'stay put' policy advocated by SFRS, actions to stop fires happening and keeping yourself and others safe from fire.

The guidance for residents is also available from our Group Fire Safety Team. The guidance has six specific chapters providing guidance on the following topics:

- Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings
- Assessing the Risk to Persons
- Fire Prevention
- Risk Management
- Ongoing Control
- The Law on Fire Safety

New guidance to reduce the risk from fire in specialised housing, such as sheltered and supported accommodation, was published in January 2020. The guidance – called **Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Specialised Housing and Similar Premises** – helps those responsible for the housing and those who provide care and support services in such properties to carry out fire safety risk assessments, taking into account the requirements of individual residents. It will also be useful for those receiving “care at home” services or support in “general needs” housing. The guidance is a recommendation of the Review of the Fire Safety Regime in Scotland, following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017.

The guide has 2 specific sections providing guidance on the following topics:

- Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment
- Premises Based Fire Risk Assessment

In response to the Guidance we created a programme of Fire Risk Assessments for our 136 MSF and 43 Livingwell sites. This 3-year programme was temporarily suspended during covid restrictions and was subsequently re mobilised in October 2020. The programme was reviewed and accelerated in September 2021 and by March 2022, 136 MSF and 32 Livingwell properties received a fire risk assessment, 12 months ahead of schedule. The next cycle of fire risk assessments for MSF and Living-well sites commenced in July 2022.

The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

SFRS continue to be fully committed to working with the Wheatley Group to:

- Plan and deliver targeted prevention approaches to keeping our customers safe;
- Share information more freely, increasing knowledge and understanding to meet the needs of our staff and customers; &
- Work with us to develop a Group approach to their future 'Safe & Well' model

Safe & Well

Preventing Fire, Protecting Well-Being

For more than ten years, SFRS have been carrying out interventions in people's homes to reduce their risk from fire and to provide advice on actions to take in the event of fire. Although other factors have no doubt also been involved, this approach has resulted in a reduction of risk and dramatic drop in demand for fire and rescue services, and consequent reductions in the number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires in the home.

From this successful fire prevention approach the concept of a 'Safe and Well' visit has evolved. It is envisaged that, through their interactions with people in their homes, and with the necessary additional awareness training, firefighters will be able to identify and act upon a significantly wider range of risks. Not only fire risks, but those that predispose people to a number of health issues that can significantly reduce life expectancy and/or quality of life.

The objectives of the Safe and Well project are:

- Looking to build on the current HFSV model and incorporate wider health and social care considerations
- Move to a person-centred intervention to enable people to maintain independence, improve personal resilience and quality of life
- Increase public value and support partners to deliver national and local outcomes
- A Safe and Well visit would be a free person-centred home visit which replaces and expands upon previous HFSVs.

Staff will continue to give fire safety advice but they will also consider the householder(s), their home environment and lifestyle factors in order to identify risks or needs and provide an effective response. SFRS want to target areas and households where they know there is a higher risk of fire, primarily the more vulnerable groups in the community. Visits will therefore be offered to individuals who meet standard criteria such as:

- Anyone in the household has a history, or may be a target, of fire related crime
- High levels of clutter / hoarding
- History of fire, including signs of burns/scorch marks on furniture or clothing
- Sensory impairment – Hearing Impairment / Visual Impairment Blind
- Use of medical oxygen, paraffin based emollients or medical airflow mattress
- Unable to evacuate the property in an emergency due to their age or medical condition
- Mental health issues including dementia / cognitive impairment
- Use medication that causes drowsiness, visual disturbance or dizziness
- Alcohol or drug issues
- Anyone in the household has shown an interest in starting fires
- Households with occupants over 65

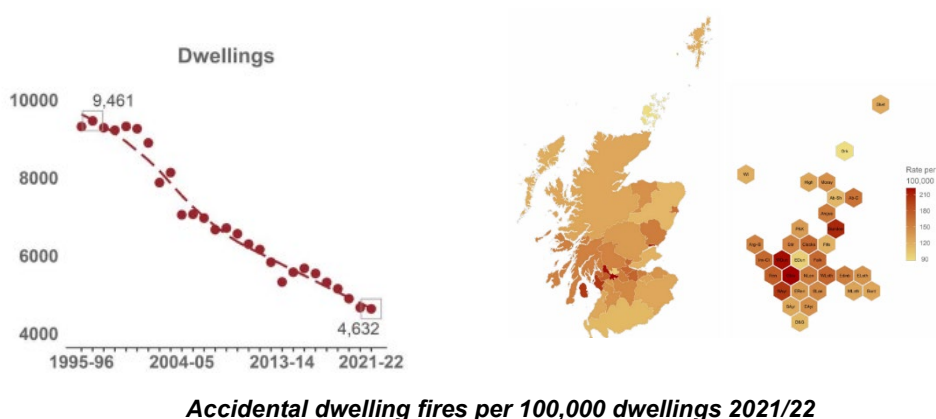
Person Centred Risk Assessment

The Fire Team are intending on widening the scope of their intervention visits to include aspects of the Safe & Well visits carried out by the Fire Service. The Fire Team will then produce a person-centred risk assessment with their findings which coincides with the risk assessment template in the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Specialised Housing and Similar Premises.

The Fire Team aim to carry out 600 person centred risk assessments each year of the strategy to impact the rate of accidental dwelling fire experienced.

Prevalence of Accidental Dwelling Fires

Dwelling fires in Scotland have been consistently reducing over the recent years. The number of accidental dwelling fires recorded by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service reduced by 0.6% between 2020 -2021 (4,662) and 2021 - 2022 (4,632).



Accidental Dwelling Fires - Local Authority Comparisons

The number of incidents and casualties vary considerably across the 32 Local Authority areas of Scotland. We use rates adjusted for population or the number of dwellings to more fairly compare these areas. There was an average of 156.8 accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 dwellings in Scotland. Glasgow City had the highest rate of 222.0, followed by West Dunbartonshire at 219.3 and Dundee City at 209.4. Orkney Islands had the lowest rate at 87.1.

Group Accidental Dwelling Fires

Fundamental to our fire safety operating model has been the recruitment of specialist Fire Safety Officers and the development of a bespoke vulnerable household visit process. An intervention visit ensures that our most vulnerable customers receive a personalised and premises fire risk assessment and where relevant are provided with our fire safety pioneering products. We believe that our unique approach to vulnerable household visits has significantly contributed to our reduction in accidental dwelling fires. The following chart details our year-on-year reduction in ADF's.

Our Vision and Aim

Strategic Vision: Our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework will make our homes and communities safer for all.

Our Aim: To build on our sector leading fire safety work through embedding a strong prevention led approach across all our services and to be recognised as sector leaders in the prevention of death and injury from fire incidents.

We will deliver this aim by successfully achieving four high level outcomes. The outcomes are noted below:

1 PREVENTING, PROTECTING & RESPONDING
We will continue to build on our existing excellent fire prevention services and continue to protect our assets while reducing fire related injuries and fatalities

2 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES
We will continue to empower our employees and communities to be the architects of solutions in the design and delivery of fire safety services

3 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION
We will continue to strengthen and build on our existing partnerships at a local and national level to deliver enhanced fire safety outcomes

4 PIONEERING PRODUCTS & SERVICES
We will continue to drive innovation and explore new technologies and ways of working that will prevent fires and protect our customers

AIM

To build on our sector leading fire safety work through embedding a strong prevention led approach across all our services and to be recognised as sector leaders in the prevention of death and injury from fire incidents.

This structured approach to fire safety and prevention focuses on ensuring that our customers will be empowered to make their own choices about the services they want, be properly equipped to do things for themselves and involved in the design of products and services from start to finish. It will support digital provision of services where these are appropriate, recognising that it is important that “no-one is left behind”. In particular, we recognise that those who are living in socially deprived communities may have particular challenges in gaining access to or using digital services.

Success will be dependent on staff and customers feeling confident to report issues and identify risk and vulnerability to us and our partners. Our ability to provide quality resolutions to issues and to respond to customer feedback will be vital to this.

Our fire safety “confidence cycle” will be an important element of this approach. We know that by identifying vulnerable customers and providing with them with the right products and services will help us further reduce accidental dwelling fires.



Fire Safety Customer Confidence Cycle

This Framework recognises that preventing accidental dwelling fires requires a partnership of many organisations. We will continue to support local Scottish Fire and Rescue Teams to carry out Home Fire Safety Visits eventually moving to Safe and Well visits identifying risk and vulnerability. Our people are supported and trained to think innovatively, to think yes together with their customers and to provide leadership in digital transformation. We will use this innovative style to help provide thinking which challenges and encourages a new approach to services. We will work with partners across the country to share innovation and best practice to deliver our aims.

Excellence is embedded in the Wheatley DNA, so we will build on the innovative approaches that we have used to date. We will continue to push towards outstanding service, challenging our performance and outcomes in each area. As part of our new relationship with customers, we will measure this in different and more stretching ways, looking to further improve the aspects of service which matter most to customers.

Our Strategic and Operational Response

Through our ground-breaking partnership approach to developing fire prevention services we have seen a dramatic reduction in the instances of fire and fire related injuries across our stock portfolio in recent years. Nonetheless we recognise that, irrespective of the interventions we put in place, there will always be a risk of fire within our properties, and that this has the potential to adversely affect our staff and customers' feeling of safety, the quality of the environment and their ability to peacefully enjoy their homes and working environments.

The Group's current approach to fire safety, and fire risk assessments, has already been recognised as an exemplar model that other organisations should consider adopting. Through our commitment to setting the standard in our sector, we will take this to another level and the development and implementation of this framework clearly highlights our ambition to define and set new standards for excellence around fire prevention and mitigation.

Key to our approach will be an even higher focus on fire safety through our investment and maintenance programmes. Using information, we gather from fire risk assessments on our MSFs, we have identified further improvements that can be made to our stock over the next five years to enhance fire safety even further

We have integrated these investment works into a larger scale change programme set out against four 'P's or Pillars': *Preventing and Protecting, People and Communities, Partnership and Collaboration and Pioneering Products and Services.*



Throughout the life of this 5-year framework we will continue to design and deliver our activities through these Pillars. Our themed approach to how we will deliver our strategic outcomes and high level success measures is summarised in the charts below. Each Pillar will be supported by a detailed implementation plan and will be led by Senior Managers within Group who will be responsible for ensuring that our objectives are met.

PREVENTING & PROTECTING

OUTCOMES

WORKSTREAMS

SUCCESS MEASURES

1

Risky behaviours identified & changed

- We will have reduced accidental dwelling fires Group wide by a further 10% by 2026
- We have provided advice & guidance on how to avoid risky behaviours (cooking methods) to our New Scots customers
- We are mitigating the impact that vulnerability, mental ill health and substance misuse has on causing accidental dwelling fires

Reduce accidental dwelling fires by a further 10% and our homes and our assets protected

Maintenance & Investment programmes updated to reflect fire safety priorities

- Constantly evolving processes and procedures to ensure that appropriate changes in fire safety best practice are adopted across Group.
- Well established investment programmes to undertake fire safety works within customers' homes (smoke and heat detectors) and within our MSF blocks (emergency lighting)
- Engagement with stakeholders from across the Group to ensure consistency of approach along with representation at all levels within the fire safety performance structure.

Our use of data Information & Intelligence reviewed & refreshed

- We use SFRS fire & special service incident data to inform our strategic planning, service delivery and resource allocation;
- We continually reshape our fire safety operating model to meet the challenges we face in both the physical and digital world
- Increased reporting of fire safety concerns by customers and staff to include regular referrals to our Fire Safety team.

PREVENTING & PROTECTING

Achieving Success

Changing & Influencing Behaviour

The best way to prevent fires is to change risky behaviours and staff across Wheatley, rooted in local communities, are amongst the best placed to influence our customers, particularly the most vulnerable. This is embedded through our operating model with our housing officers having an average patch size of 200 properties.

We will continue to develop our understanding of the issues that impact negatively on the safety and well-being of our customers and communities.

We will identify 'at risk' customers and work with our partners to ensure there are clear pathways to the most appropriate support.

Maintenance & Investment Programmes

We already have a robust approach to repairs, maintenance and investment. We will ensure that our comprehensive, up-to-date assessment of all stock types is held centrally. We will build on this to take our approach to the next level setting sector leading standards through for example:

- Installing emergency lighting in our MSF stairwells
- Upgraded bin store sprinklers across our MSF portfolio

LD2 smoke and heat detectors in all mainstream properties along with LD1 systems for vulnerable customers, who are identified via housing and fire safety colleagues

We will focus our investment and maintenance priorities onto our successful containment strategy. We will continue to act on the outcomes of the Grenfell enquiry and those of the Scottish Government working groups in relation to fire safety.

Data Information & Intelligence

We are working closely with our SFRS colleagues to design and deliver a new 'Safe & Well' approach, which will further reduce accidental dwelling fires and accidents in the home.

We will have developed an approach to predictive analytics that uses all our available data on customers, communities and fire incidents to provide actionable intelligence ensuring we intelligently deploy our resources whilst influencing those of our partners. If we can predict it, we can prevent it.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

OUTCOMES

WORKSTREAMS

SUCCESS MEASURES

2

Staff & Customers have the skills, knowledge and awareness of how to keep themselves and their communities safe

Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities

- Our customers are at the heart of decision making and are involved in directing service decisions
- Our local engagement model provides an opportunity for our customers to shape services and influence decisions. It is action and outcome focussed.
- We have a successful annual 'stay safe' campaign for customers which we promote on our digital and paper media platforms.
- We understand our communities and deliver the right mix of services to meet their needs.

Sector Leading Training & Awareness for our staff

- Our staff deliver sustained change for the better of all customers and communities. To achieve this, we equip them with the skills, knowledge and technology required to keep our customers safe in an ever changing world.
- We are working with our SFRS partners to deliver experiential fire safety training at the SFRS, HQ 'Safe House'

Demographic & Lifestyle Factors informing all our workstreams

- Our staff are empowered to develop, test and deliver, innovative and collaborative changes to best suit our customer's needs.
- We proactively share learning and best practice across the entire Group and with our partners ensuring we adapt and evolve.
- We will maintain a key role in supporting vulnerable customers across our communities, by working with partners, we will develop preventative approaches that focus on early intervention and diversion.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

Achieving Success

Consultation & Engagement

With the 'Voice of the Customer' we are taking engagement to a new level for all our customers. This Framework will put this into action particularly for those customers who may be vulnerable and susceptible to having an accidental dwelling fire. We recognise that our customers may have many issues in their lives and we will ensure that our engagement approach makes it as easy as possible for people to talk to us and to become involved in directing service decisions. Our partners particularly SFRS will also be working to engage with customers so we will work with them to ensure maximum joint benefit from each engagement.

Training & Awareness

We will continue to update our "Stay Safe" campaign across all mediums, ensuring our messages around fire safety are delivered in ways that reflect our diverse customer base, including materials and equipment available in different languages or for those with sight or hearing impairment.

In addition to mandatory Fire Safety training that staff are required to attend every 3 years, we also work with SFRS to promote Fire Safety training that focusses on good fire safety practice within the home environment.

Demographic & Lifestyle Factors informing all our work streams

We know that demographic and lifestyle factors can have an impact on fire risk. For example, during the period 2020/21, 40% of those customers experiencing an accidental dwelling fire had self-defined as vulnerable. We will improve our ability to identify and manage vulnerability as it relates to fire risks.

We better understand our customers and communities and deliver the right mix of services to meet their changing needs.

We are redefining the relationship we have with our partners to better support our vulnerable customers.

We continue to promote our fire safety services online and encourage our housing officers and frontline staff to identify customers that would benefit from a Fire Safety Team Intervention Visits.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

OUTCOMES

WORKSTREAMS

SUCCESS MEASURES

3

Ever Stronger partnerships in place at a local and national level that deliver enhanced fire safety for our customers & communities

Effective information & Intelligence Sharing

- Our Data Sharing Agreement with SFRS will be updated in 2024 to reflect SFRS new approach to Safe & Well visits. This will include the inclusion of additional information relating to vulnerable household data;
- We will develop approaches to predictive analytics to enhance our current real time trend analysis

Continuous Improvement in all fire safety programmes

- Introduce a Group definition of vulnerability as it relates to fire and work with our customers and staff to identify those customers who would self-identify as vulnerable
- We will build on our already established partnership with Scottish Fire & Rescue and Police Scotland with an increased focus on a public health approach to vulnerability
- Create a partnership agreement with SFRS that sets out our shared vision of further reducing ADF's and preventing accidents in the home

Shared Outcomes, Resources & Services agreed with partners

- We will work collaboratively with the Wheatley Foundation to support those most at risk of having an accidental dwelling fire;
- Update our existing Fire Prevention Charter to reflect the SFRS new approach to Safe & Well visits
- We will work with partners to share resources in order to maximise benefits, this will include joint customer visits with SFRS, Community Action Teams

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Achieving Success

Information Sharing

Our evidence based fire safety operating model is based on the sharing of information and intelligence with our customers and partners. By better understanding our performance and demand, we can focus our fire safety team where they will have the greatest impact. Improvements in data sharing, digital analysis and intelligence gathering will be critical to our success.

We will develop an updated Data Sharing Agreement with SFRS to reflect the introduction of the Safe & Well operating model.

Best Practice and Continuous Improvement

As an organisation we continually strive to improve. We will update our existing Fire Prevention Charter with SFRS to reflect their new Safe & Well approach to reducing ADF's and preventing accidents in the home. This charter will clearly set out our shared priorities for home and fire safety including, for example, how we engage communities and how we will identify and support vulnerable and hard to reach customers.

We are working with SFRS to embed the Safe & Well approach across our RSL network. We are developing joint staff training with our SFRS Prevent & Protect partners.

We work collaboratively internally across our subsidiaries, for example drawing down on Wheatley Cares Tenancy Support Service.

Shared Outcomes, Resources & Services

We work with our partners to make sure that customers receive the right response, at the right time from the most appropriate resource and service. To do this effectively, we will work with our customers and communities to determine where and how their needs are best met and how our service can adapt.

We proactively share learning and best practice across the Group and with partners ensuring we deliver the best possible outcomes for customers and communities.

PIONEERING PRODUCTS & SERVICES

OUTCOME

WORKSTREAMS

SUCCESS MEASURES

4

Cutting edge products, services and technology in place that prevent fires and protect our customers

Developing and Integrated package of products

High quality, effective services that underpin our product offerings

A Reviewed Operating Model that embeds best practice

- An updated integrated package of fire prevention products is available for staff and customers to draw down;
- The introduction of digital solutions for capturing, recording, managing and reporting on Group Fire Risk Assessments.
- The introduction of rapport messaging will facilitate secure two way digital communications with our customers and enable us to push out specific fire safety messages to particular communities.

- We are working in partnership with the SFRS to assist them with the development of 3D mapping of our MSF sites.
- We will have dedicated RICO's within City Building who have expertise in responding to fire safety issues and repairs.

- Our wider service model is reviewed annually to identify further opportunities to promote innovative ways to enhance fire safety;
- An internal assessment of our fire safety strategy took place in 2022/23 to ensure it remains relevant and challenges us to continually set the bar for the sector.

PIONEERING PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Achieving Success

Products

We always strive to drive innovation in all that we do. Throughout the life of this framework we will continue to identify new and innovative fire safety and prevention products that our customers can draw down. We have developed a digital solution to recording and managing fire risk assessments.

Services

Our Fire Safety Working Groups are our main platform for bringing members of staff across subsidiaries together to develop our services. We will continue to develop our response to fire safety with Senior Management in all Subsidiaries.

Operating Model

We have recruited seven fire safety officers and integrated them into a new Group Fire/Health & Safety Team. Our operating model reflects national guidance and will incorporate the new Safe & Well approach being developed by our SFRS partners. Our operating model will continue to be identified as a prevention exemplar and will set the standard for others to follow.

The Legal Framework

This Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework has been developed to ensure that we are not only meeting all the relevant legislation and guidance that is relevant to Fire safety but exceeding it and setting national best practice.

Registered Social Landlord Subsidiaries

Our Group's social landlords' legal responsibilities are set out in:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which places a duty upon us to ensure that our properties are in a good state of repair.
- We have a responsibility under sections 23 and 24 of the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006, to ensure that measures provided for *fire fighter safety* within the common areas of private dwellings are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) which place a duty upon us to ensure that the properties which we own are adequately maintained and fit for purpose. The elements below, highlight specific elements within the SHQS that a robust common area inspection regime would ensure compliance with:
 - **Element 48** – Safe lobbies, halls, passages.
 - **Element 49** – Safe common paths, paved areas, courts, laundry and drying areas.
 - **Element 50** – Safe refuse chutes/chambers.
 - **Element 51** – Safe bin stores.

The Health and Safety at Work 1974 (HSWA), places a “duty of care” upon us, for all who enter premises which we control. The most efficient way of us ensuring that our duties relating to HSWA are fulfilled is to follow guidelines set out within approved codes or practice.

As an employer we have responsibilities under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, to ensure that all of our staff have relevant training and are aware of emergency plans within the property they work. Further to this, we also have a responsibility to carry out inspections to our stock on a regular basis to ensure that the premises, any fire safety facilities, equipment and devices pertaining to fire detection or fighting are maintained in good order.

Care Premises

The legislation in respect of care homes is set out in Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, along with the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

This sets out our fire safety responsibilities and seeks to ensure the safety of persons (whether they are employees, residents, visitors or others) from harm caused by fire.

The responsibility for complying with the fire safety duties in a care home sits with the employer and other persons who operate or have control of the premises to any extent, including managers, owners and staff.

Private Rented Sector – The Repairing Standard

Our Lowther Homes subsidiary owns and manages our mid and full market rent portfolio. The portfolio is classed as private rented sector accommodation and as such is required to meet 'The Repairing Standard'.

Section 13(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 sets out the criteria that must be met if a house is to comply with the Repairing Standard. Most importantly, a house should have satisfactory provision for detecting fires and for giving warning in the event of fire or suspected fire.

Building regulations set out the essential standards to be met when building work or a conversion takes place. The building regulations do not apply retrospectively and as such private rented properties may not apply to the current building regulations requirements, but should always comply with guidance set out in other relevant legislation, specifically the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006-

Responsibilities

The Group Director of Assets & Repairs will have overall strategic responsibility and will oversee the successful implementation of the work plan.

Following agreement by the group board to this framework, each subsidiary will be responsible for developing their fire safety and mitigation approach, which reflects their customer base, stock profile, product portfolio and risk profile. They will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this including providing assurance to the group about the successful implementation.

Review and Consultation

This Framework will support the aspirations of our new Group Strategy and will be reviewed in 2024. Reviews will consider legislative, performance and good practice changes. More regular reviews may be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation / policy guidance or recommendations from Fatal Accident Inquiries.

We will also review our strategy in light of any new legislation or best practice requirements from the Scottish Government, to examine and oversee the review building and fire safety regulatory frameworks with an initial focus on high rise domestic buildings, following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in London.

In addition to scheduled reviews, we will report on progress to the Wheatley Group Board and Audit Committee.

We have developed this strategy in consultation with stakeholders. Similar consultation will take place for all proposed reviews.