

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: Fire & Building Safety Charter Annual Report	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel	DATE: 12 th October 2022
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report is about the Council’s Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments to working with residents to keep them safe in their Council homes, and the progress that has been made since the Charter was adopted in July 2021. The report explains how we have been doing and where we need help from residents to make improvements</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents were used in the preparation of this report which required to be listed</p> <p>Contact Officer: Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety, Engagement & Governance Lead</p> <p>Tel: 0207 974 3100</p> <p>Email: Melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>WHAT DECISIONS ARE BEING ASKED FOR?</p> <p>Panel members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. comment on our performance against the charter commitments ii. provide suggestions on how we can involve residents in increasing access for safety checks, and the kind of information that would help to achieve this. 	

Signed: 

Gavin Haynes
 Director Property Management
 Date: 26th September 2022

1.0 WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?

- 1.1 This report is about the Council's Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments to working with residents to keep them safe in their Council homes, and the progress that has been made since the Charter was adopted in July 2021. The report explains how we have been doing and where we need help from residents to make improvements.

2.0 The Fire & Building Safety Charter

- 2.1 In July 2021 the Council made a series of commitments to residents (the Fire & Building Safety Charter) about making their Council homes safer with the object that by 2025 everyone who lives in a Camden council home does so in safe, well maintained building.
- 2.2 The Charter covers not just physical improvement to Camden Council homes but also working with residents and communities to make sure that everyone knows how to keep themselves and the people around them safe at home. Camden The Charter sets out what the Council does to make sure that residents always have a voice in decisions made about safety in their homes and always have access to information about the safety of the building they live in.
- 2.3 Camden is asking residents to play their part in ensuring the safety of their buildings – safer homes are up to everyone. This Fire and Building Safety Charter explains the Council's safety commitments and what residents are asked to do to keep their homes safe.

Camden's Charter Commitments

- 2.4 There are five charter commitments, four setting out what the Council will do and a fifth asking residents to play their part in making sure their homes are safe. The five commitments are listed here and section 3 of the report provides detail of practical measures, targets for measuring our performance and information about how we performed against those targets in 2021/22.
- **We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe**
 - **We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home**
 - **We will be transparent**
 - **We will always listen to you about Safety**
 - **Fire and building safety is up to everyone – play your part**

3. How are we doing - Fire and Building Safety Charter Delivery Plan 2021-2025

Commitment	Action	Performance in 2021/22
<p>We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe</p>	<p>We will carry out Fire Risk Assessments every 1, 2 or 3 years depending what type of building you live in:</p> <p>Every year – FRAs to purpose-built blocks 10+ floors, hostels and sheltered housing – 110 buildings</p> <p>Every 2 years – FRAs to purpose-built blocks less than 10 floors – 1,406 buildings</p> <p>Every 3 years – FRAs to street properties and TRA Halls (each street property also receiving a check of its communal areas each quarter) – 1,697 street properties & 69 TRA Halls</p> <p>Gas Safety Checks - We will carry out annual CP12 Landlord Gas Safety checks to 13,208 individual properties each year</p> <p>Electrical testing - We will carry out Domestic Electrical Inspections to all our tenanted housing stock every 5 years (c23,000 homes)</p> <p>Water Safety - We will service 908 Water Tanks every 6 months as part of our water safety management process Asbestos</p>	<p>Camden has 3,277 residential blocks where fire risk assessments (FRAs) must be carried out every 1, 2 or 3 years.</p> <p>On the 1st April 2022 we had carried out FRAs to 3,221 buildings within their review dates. Whilst there were 56 buildings where we had not been able to get in to carry out the FRA 35 of these were non-residential TRA halls.</p> <p>In April we appointed additional FRA consultants to expand the programme and catch up with standing FRAs. We are also implementing a suited-key and lock change programme to ensure we can gain access to blocks and buildings where there has been no response to our requests for access. We will always try to gain access to communal areas by ringing residents' doorbells and knocking, but if there is no reply we will open the communal door with a suited key or a locksmith's tool.</p> <p>Gas Safety: At the end on March 2022 we had carried out gas safety checks at 13,037 council homes, but there were 171 we hadn't been able to check. The Covid 19 Pandemic and safety measures meant that sometimes an inspector wasn't available to carry out inspections and residents were understandably unwilling to give our inspectors access to their homes. We have continued to explain that these checks are an important part of our work to keep Council homes safe, and to be flexible about appointment times. As a last resort we have taken legal</p>

<p>Surveys - We will carry out cyclical Asbestos surveys 3,852 blocks over the next 18 months</p> <p>Lift Safety – We will carry out 552 six-monthly LOLER lift insurance inspections.</p>	<p>action to enforce access so that we can check, this is a slow process as we wait for court dates.</p>
	<p>Electrical Safety checks. During 2021/22 we carried out communal electrical checks at 552 of our blocks and will complete another 125 this year.</p> <p>Getting access for domestic / internal electrical checks has been a challenge particularly as we need to increase the number of checks we do every year to 4,642 to meet our commitment to check all tenanted homes every five years.</p> <p>During 2021/22 we carried out internal electrical checks to 2,869 homes and we will have to do better to meet our target. The Council needs to work with residents and the Panel to agree which approaches might work best in future.</p>
	<p>Water safety (legionella) testing to Council homes has progressed well within residential properties. We have had some access difficulties at TRA halls where we are not the key holder and by the end of March 2022 testing was overdue at 30 TRA halls and 2 community centres linked to communal water supply systems. Our overall compliance rate was 96.7% and we are now installing suited keys to all TRA halls so access will not be a problem in the future.</p>
	<p>For asbestos, by the end of March 2022 we had completed inspections to all the communal areas of residential building know to need an asbestos survey. We have an on-going programme of cyclical inspections to keep our building records up to date so we have carried out new inspection at 1,578 communal areas to date and we are on target to reinspect the remaining 2,274 over the next 12 months.</p>
	<p>For lift safety checks, by the end of March 2022 our insurance company had inspected 501 of our 558 residential lifts (all lifts had been serviced by our</p>

		<p>contractors during that time). Last year, the ongoing impact of Covid 19 meant that external lift inspectors employed by Zurich the Council's insurers did not always have enough staff available to carry out inspections on time.</p> <p>We have put a performance improvement plan in place with the insurer to review their performance with them on a monthly basis, including the length of time they take to provide electronic copies of the inspection certificates so that we have confirmation the inspections have been carried out.</p>
	<p>Fire Safety Capital works 2021/22 -2025/26 over the next 5 years we will spend £59.5m on fire safety works. In 2021/22 we are expecting to spend £9.3m and will report on progress each year.</p>	<p>The Council's spend for the year 2021/22 was £5.9m not the £9.3m we had planned as we were carrying out detailed checks on the specifications and property lists. Work will now speed up from 2022/23 and we will deliver the remaining works, valued at £53m, as planned by 2025/26.</p>
<p>We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home</p>	<p>We will communicate fire safety issues through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Housing News (tenants and leaseholders), the Homeowners News (leaseholders only) and rent statement inserts (tenants only) as required • Posters, signage and other physical communications on estates • E-mails to residents and TRAs • Information on the Council's website and social media channels about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General fire, kitchen and balcony safety ○ Understanding smoke alarms ○ London Fire Brigade home safety visits 	<p>In Autumn 2021 Housing Newsletter we published an article introducing the Council's communal areas policy and delivered a leaflet explaining the policy to residents of all 33,000 council homes.</p> <p>The Spring 2022 Housing Newsletter included an article on smoke alarms and how to test them.</p> <p>In Autumn 2021 we resumed invitations to TRAs to attend fire risk assessments sending out posters and emails to TRAs.</p> <p>In Autumn 2021 there were 104 new resident subscriptions to safety emails, and we continued to send emails to the c17,000 residents who have given us permission to contact them in this way</p> <p>The Fire Safety at Home page on our website provides a link to the London Fire Brigade website advice on planning your escape in the event of a fire and home fire safety advice. The</p>

		website also provides information about the LFB Home Safety visit & smoke alarm service.
	We will publish an annual report on our performance against our charter commitments	This is our first annual report
	<p>We will:</p> <p>Publish our plans for compliance with Fire and Building Safety legislation as it enacted/published</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 2022 we will publish a list of all blocks where a building safety case report will be required by the Building Safety Case Regulator and timescale for their submission. • We will share Building Safety Case reports with residents as they are produced 	<p>In November 2022 we will publish the list of the Council residential buildings that are 18+ metres or 7+ floors in height which must be registered with the Building Safety Regulator. The registration will take place between April and October 2023.</p> <p>You will be able to find the list on the Council's Fire Safety at Home page at https://www.camden.gov.uk/safety-at-home</p> <p>Building Safety Cases reports (BSC) for these buildings will must be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator from April 2024 onwards, the Regulator will inform individual landlords what the detailed timetable for submitting their BSCs will be.</p> <p>The Council is appointing a Team of Building Safety Managers who will start to work with residents on the BSCs when they join the Council from January 2023.</p>
Commitment	Action	
We will be transparent	We invite your TRA to attend the Fire Risk assessment (FRA) for your building and will publish the results of all of our FRAs online and share them with your TRA	While Covid restrictions were in place we notified TRAs when their Fire Risk Assessments were due and continued to publish the FRA reports on our website as they were completed. In Autumn 2021 we resumed invitations to TRAs to attend fire risk assessments sending out posters and emails to TRAs.

		<p>In 2021/22 we notified or invited TRAs Tenant Management Organisations, or where there is no TRA, Neighbourhood Officers, about the fire risk assessments for 184 blocks.</p>
	<p>After your fire risk assessment we will let you know about any safety work that we need to do, and how and when we will do it.</p>	<p>The larger FRA work items are carried out by the Capital Works team dedicated to fire safety works or included in Better Homes contracts. When fire safety and better works contracts are due to start we write to residents to let them know what the timescale for the work to their block is, and to set up consultation about what we will be doing. Since July 2021 we have written to residents of 4,252 council homes to let them know that we will be carrying out FRA works to their homes.</p> <p>In September 2022 we wrote to another 3,538 council homes about fire safety works due to start during the Autumn and early in 2023 and to the residents of blocks where 7 additional fire safety works contracts will start by the end of 2022/23.</p> <p>Please note that the Repairs Service carries out some of the smaller fire safety work items identified by Fire Risk Assessments such as the installation of evacuation signs, carpentry minor electrical works. Repairs staff also check the communal areas of street properties each quarter to test alarms and identify potential hazards.</p>
	<p>We will publish the arrangements for reporting a safety concern on our website and in our tenants guide</p>	<p>The Emergency and Fire Safety at Home pages on our website give the arrangements for reporting safety concerns and emergencies to the Council and Fire and Emergency Services. The pages also provide advice and information about reducing the risk of fire at home, how to contact your neighbourhood officer and sign up to receive fire and building safety updates.</p>

		<p>If you have general questions about fire safety in Camden or fire risk assessments, contact Camden's Fire Safety Advisors at fireadvisors@camden.gov.uk.</p> <p>You can find your fire risk assessment report on the Council's website at Camden Fire Risk Assessments Map Open Data Portal</p>
	<p>A repairs operative should be with you between 6 and 24 hours of you reporting a repair that affects your safety. We will publish an annual safety repairs performance report against this standard</p>	<p>Housing Scrutiny Committee discussed annual repairs performance at their meeting on 5th September 2022. The repairs service performance was 97%-99% of appointments met within priority timescales and between 75% and 77% of repairs completed on the first day of appointment,</p>
<p>We will always listen to you about safety</p>	<p>We will work with the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel, District Management Committees (DMCs) and other stakeholders to develop safety policies, procedures and programmes, training and information for residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-produce resident engagement strategies for their buildings with tenants and leaseholders when the h Building Safety Bill requirements are published • take regular reports on our work and progress made to the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel and to other bodies such as the DMCs and Housing Scrutiny Committee, this in dialogue with relevant chairs and with their permission 	<p>We report regularly to the Fire Safety & Compliance and Advisory Panel (FSAP) and DMC's about building safety legislation and the Council's on-going resident safety programme. Between 2021 and June 2022 FSAP discussed 26 reports about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Risk Assessment • Fire & Building Safety Charter • Fire Safety Management policy • Fire & Building Safety legislation • Changes to Panel membership • London Fire Brigade performance • Servicing & Maintaining Fire Safety Equipment • Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans • Communal Areas policy • Fire Safety Communication with Residents • Causes of Fires in Camden • Safety Awareness for staff & residents • Risk Management • Fire Doors & Closure Mechanisms

In 2021/22 the five District Management Committees discussed service reports at 4 quarterly meetings including information about

June 2021 - The establishment of a Building Safety Regulator

Sept 2021 – The capital works & fire safety programmes, communal areas fire safety policy and fire & building safety charter

Nov 2021 – The Fire & Building Safety Acts and the costs of meeting new statutory requirements.

Feb 2022 – The changes to the Property Management staffing structure in response to Fire & Building Safety Acts , the costs of new statutory requirement for fire door checks, building safety records, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan consultation and building façade checks.

4.0 Where do we need to improve?

- 4.1 In March 2022 at the end of our first year of monitoring charter commitments we were doing reasonably well overall on our compliance inspection programme although there are some areas where we need to improve our performance and where we will need your help.
- 4.2 Nothing is more important to us than keeping residents safe in the gas homes and it is critical that they let us come in to carry out fire, gas and electrical checks. We also need residents to understand how to use communal areas safely, not to store flammable items and possessions there on their balconies. We particularly need their help in completing actions identified in fire risk assessments
- 4.3 Each FRA generates around 10-12 follow up actions and at the end of March 2022 we had 40,000 actions to deal with. By the end of June 2022 we had completed just over half of 22,000 actions and included work to complete another 6,142 FRA actions in our capital works projects. We are completing another 5,785 minor actions as repairs, usually things like new signage, carpentry and minor electrical works.
- 4.4 We are aiming to reduce the number of times we have to visit resident homes to carry out individual gas, water and electrical safety checks and to increase the number of checks we carry out on time. This is even more important as we complete the installation of new building safety equipment such as new flat fire doors and need to check that it is in good condition and keeping residents safe.
- 4.6 **How Can Residents help?**
- By letting us in to carry out safety checks
 - Contacting us to rearrange an appointment if they are out when we call
 - Keeping communal areas safe and clear.
- 4.7 One of our biggest challenges is to complete the 1,831 fire safety actions that involve removing property that residents are keeping in communal areas, and security gates fitted over front doors that are fire risks.
- 4.8 We know residents may need help to find alternative places to store their possessions and to understand why we need to keep communal areas clear, what they can keep in communal areas. Residents can contact their neighbourhood officers to discuss their storage issues and Camden's Fire Safety Advisers and the London Fire Brigade for advice about fire safety at home. Contact information is available at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/safety-at-home>
- ## **5.0 Next Steps**
- 5.1 We have sent every Council home a leaflet explaining the communal areas policy and providing contacts for residents who need help and advice about fire safety and storing their possessions, this information is also available on our

website. Our next step is to develop and extend the information and support we provide to residents, and to ask for your help in letting us into your building and your homes to carry out fire and other building safety checks.

- 5.2 During the Autumn we will be writing to all Council homes to let residents know how we are doing on our charter commitments, and we will provide information, advice and support on fire and building safety in our new e-newsletter. Residents can sign up to receive the newsletter here **camden.gov.uk/fire-and-building-safety-emails**
- 5.3 Neighbourhood Housing Officers have begun a programme of home visits and over the next 12 months will contact to all Council homes to carry out routine tenancy checks, talk to residents about fire safety and check whether they would need help to evacuate their homes in the event of an emergency. They will refer on any fire safety or repair issues or help and support needs residents have to the repairs, fire safety and social care teams.
- 5.4 From January 2023 we will have new Building Safety Managers in post and they will begin work on building safety case reports for higher risk buildings and contacting residents to develop the resident engagement strategies that will sit alongside them.

6. **Recommendations**

- 6.1 Panel members are asked to comment on our performance against the charter commitments and for any suggestions on how we can involve residents in increasing access for safety checks, and the kind of information that would help to achieve this.

7. **Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 There are no immediate environmental implications arising from the measures described in the report.

8.0 **LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 8.1 Legal Comments have been incorporated in the preparation of the report.

9.0 **FINANCE COMMENTS**

- 9.1 The contents of the report are noted. All the activities and actions taken are budgeted for under revenue or capital. The budgets are continually reviewed and at annual budget setting cycles, adjusted as appropriate.

ENDS