

Tall Building Resident Engagement Strategy

2024 - 2026

Plymouth
Community Homes





Introduction

This document sets out our commitment to building safety following the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and guidance from the Building Safety Regulator to ensure all housing providers have a Resident Engagement Strategy in place for building safety in tall buildings.








Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) wants all residents (including leasehold owners, sublet tenants and our own tenants) living in all of its high-rise buildings to be safe in their homes, and have the option to be involved in decision making about their buildings.

Building safety documents will be made accessible to all residents by:

- Using plain language (no jargon) and images / photos to ensure information is easy to understand.
- Sharing with residents through a wide variety of communication methods to make sure residents receive essential information in a way that suits them.
- Being available in accessible formats on request and through the customers preferred form of communication.

Our aim

This strategy aims to ensure that residents:

-  Know who they can speak to about building safety and reach us in the way they choose if they have any concerns or issues.
-  Are aware PCH will provide residents with clear information on the role that they can play in maintaining safe buildings.
-  Understand PCH's responsibilities as their landlord and feel confident holding PCH accountable for meeting its legal responsibilities.
-  Have a variety of opportunities and forums to speak to staff about any concerns or issues.
-  Have a wide variety of opportunities available to them to get involved in shaping the future of their homes and the blocks they live in.
-  Feel confident in holding PCH to account for meeting its legal responsibilities and ensure they remain regularly updated with communications relating to building safety.
-  Remain regularly updated about building safety.

Resident voice

PCH will involve all residents over the age of 16 in relevant aspects of Building Safety as this is everyone's responsibility. We will consult, discuss, and evaluate the impact of any works and building safety matters with all residents.

Regulatory context/ the why

After the tragic fire at Grenfell in 2017, Dame Judith Hackitt was commissioned to review building regulations and fire safety nationally. She put forward 53 recommendations for change. Her report was titled “Building a Safer Future” and has prompted new statutory requirements to be met by all housing providers, which are:

- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper

These changes highlight the importance of residents feeling safe in their home and ensure that residents’ views and concerns are listened to and acted upon by landlords.

PCH wants to ensure that residents living in our high-rise buildings feel safe where they live, with the organisation committed to meet and where possible exceed expectations around regulatory requirements.

The key areas of change are:

- Clearer responsibilities for individuals and organisations managing tall buildings.
- A stronger voice and better information for residents.
- Tougher enforcement for when things go wrong.
- Greater oversight by the Regulator for Social Housing to ensure landlords are accountable to residents in an open and transparent way.

PCH has the safety and wellbeing of our residents at the centre of its approach to property management. The organisation has a proven record of investment in fire and building safety measures within its homes, and a clear, proactive approach to managing building safety in its tall buildings.

Communal areas of multi-occupied buildings have a Fire Risk Assessment conducted at regular intervals and fire doors are regularly inspected to ensure they are installed and working correctly.



Strategic context / our business view

PCH's Strategic Business Plan focuses on residents, assets, and development, the need to meet new regulations and further progress our approach to environmental sustainability and decarbonisation.

Five top priorities have been identified for initial focus:



Know and listen to our residents



Grow our housing stock



Deliver outstanding services to residents



Value our people



Maintain our homes and buildings

Our core values run through every aspect of our business and delivery, we remain committed to listening, caring, respecting, doing the right thing, and keeping residents at the heart of our decision-making processes.

The safety and well-being of our residents are at the centre of our approach to maintaining our homes and buildings. We pride ourselves on continually adopting a transparent and initiative-taking approach to managing building safety and investing in fire and building safety measures.

What are PCH's responsibilities as a landlord, and how can we encourage residents to be confident in holding PCH accountable for its responsibilities?

By law as the principal accountable person, PCH must:

1. Have a resident engagement strategy.
2. Act in accordance with the strategy.
 - » Review and revise the strategy and keep a record of the reviews.
 - » Provide the latest version to residents.
 - » When necessary, consult residents, owners of residential units, and accountable persons about the strategy and take their opinions into account.

Accountable persons, for the parts of the building that they are responsible for, must:

- Provide the latest version of the strategy to residents and owners of residential units.
- Tell residents about building safety work.
- Tell them who will conduct the work.

We encourage residents to hold us accountable by being responsible, and by keeping an open line of communication to tell us their views.

The Building Safety Team at PCH is a cross departmental team created as part of PCH's continued commitment to building safety.

The team's roles include overseeing and routinely monitoring the safety measures in all six tall buildings managed by PCH.



This is managed through:

- Home visits conducted specifically for building and fire safety.
- Routine inspections conducted of buildings and fire safety assets.
- Sharing information through channels including the PCH website, resident newsletters, leaflets and social media.
- Providing specific building information in booklets for residents and in new tenant sign up packs.
- Sharing letters and tailored information with residents.
- Posting information on notice boards in each building.
- Close partnership working with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS).
- Close partnership working with Plymouth City Council Tall Buildings Team.

Residents are encouraged to keep themselves safe, particularly if they have any impairment or issue which may affect their ability to evacuate the building on their own. New residents are visited within three months by their Housing Officer and given the option for us to complete a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) which assesses any specific vulnerabilities which may warrant the need for assistance by DSFRS (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service) and CFRS (Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service) in event of a fire emergency.

By law, the Accountable Person (PCH) has the following responsibilities:

- Register the HRBs (high rise buildings) and apply for a building assessment certificate.
- Assess fire and structural safety risks and keep under review.
- Prepare the safety case report.
- Comply with mandatory occurrence reporting requirements.
- Prepare a Resident's Engagement Strategy and keep under review.
- Keep and update prescribed information about the buildings.

How will residents know who they can speak to about building safety and how to contact us if they have any concerns or issues?

We have building specific handbooks for each block that will be available to all current occupants and given to any new resident who chooses one of these tall buildings as their home.

The handbook contains:

- Important safety information for the block.
- Local information such as where the nearest shop and bus stop are.
- Contact details for the Building Safety Manager and Tall Building Housing Management Team

How can residents get involved in shaping the future of their homes and the blocks they live in?

To make sure we are keeping residents up to date with information about the safety of their building, we have created a Tall Buildings Residents Panel with regular meetings held involving residents and staff.

These meetings will give residents:

- Information on any changes to safety measures within their building.
- Clear two-way communication with the PCH Building Safety Manager and Tall Building Tenancy Management Team.
- An opportunity for residents to tell us what matters to them about their building's safety.
- An opportunity for residents to tell us how we can best communicate with them to ensure everyone understands the general safety information. We have a variety of communication methods available, but we are keen to explore anything residents suggest or recommend in addition to these.
- Information about upcoming DSFRS and CFRS familiarisation sessions with residents.
- Opportunities for residents to join estate walkabouts to support building management work.

Information will be shared with residents with accessibility tools offered for any residents whose first language is

not English, who have literacy issues and/or learning difficulties, or other requirements.

We will also:

- Arrange meetings if we think this is the best way of discussing things
- Send surveys to collate feedback
- Hold events in these communities
- Encourage volunteer opportunities and promote training and education opportunities available to PCH residents

Residents can opt out of optional communications (newsletters, surveys) but must receive building safety communications or notice of necessary appointments for building safety works e.g. gas safety checks.

Residents can access a range of training provided by the Resident Involvement Team and attend [Learn for Free](#) sessions.

How do we use feedback?



We will track how many residents respond to questions about safety decisions.



Use surveys and group discussions to gather feedback.



Arrange meetings and visits for direct communication.



Review results regularly and make changes if needed.



Share how you influenced a change to our standards, policies, process, procedures, and the resident engagement strategy.

Resident Insight - Home Safety Winter 2023/24

We wanted to understand how safe you feel in your home and block, and if there is anything we can do to improve. We also wanted your views on the best ways to keep you updated on how we keep you and your community safe.

In January 2024 we sent out surveys to all PCH residents who live in our six tallest buildings. We contacted residents by post, SMS text and email, and created posters with QR links. We also visited some community sessions in person.

We received 99 responses. Residents who took part told us:

- Residents reported 80% satisfaction with home safety but there were some elements of the 'Stay Put' policy that may need clarification, as well as more information on how sprinkler systems worked in each building.
- Residents reported 73% satisfaction with block safety but wanted more information on rubbish disposal, parking restrictions and how to report communal problems e.g. rubbish and fire hazards.
- Residents reported that ASB and block security were constant issues.
- Residents requested that safety information be delivered via a mix of email, SMS text and post. They also requested that noticeboards be updated more regularly.

All residents over the age of 16 have been invited to share their views on how they would like PCH to communicate with them about building safety, which has supported the production of this strategy.



Keeping your home and building safe

Building safety in our tall buildings is managed through a planned regime of maintenance, servicing, repairs, and replacement works for fire safety measures in place.

Some of the key fire safety measures include sprinklers, fire doors, smoke detection systems, firefighting equipment, emergency lighting and smoke ventilation windows.

Other measures which are routinely checked and inspected are lifts, communal door entry systems, electrical systems and various plant, storage, and communal areas.

When measures such as fire doors or smoke detection systems are not performing as they were designed to then this results in a repair or a replacement, and if a repair is being required too often, a replacement is planned in. Walls, floors, ceilings, and doors are also fire measures, known as 'passive fire measures,' because together they form compartments which can limit the spread of fire and smoke for a long enough period to allow the fire service to extinguish the fire.

This design means residents are safe to remain in their home so long as it is not affected by fire, smoke, or heat, or unless otherwise instructed by the fire service.

Residents are encouraged to ask their landlord for information about the safety measures in their building.

Competency of staff and contractors

All PCH staff and contractors within our tall buildings are required to demonstrate competency through sufficient training and relevant accreditation, experience, or knowledge to properly carry out their tasks. The level of competence required will depend on the complexity of the task being carried out.



Residents' roles and responsibilities

As a responsible landlord, PCH has a requirement to ensure its homes and tall buildings are safe, and to meet the correct regulations and standards.

Residents are also asked to support PCH in ensuring their buildings are safe by:

- Managing their home responsibly and not putting other residents at risk; for example, not making unauthorised alterations to property or painting over sprinkler heads.
- Making sure they know what to do in the event of a fire in their property or in another part of the building.
- Contacting the Building Safety Manager or Tall Building Tenancy Management Team if their living circumstances change, meaning they may need help to evacuate in the event of a fire.
- Checking smoke detectors in their home are working at least once a month.
- Being respectful of neighbours and keeping the space outside the flat clear.
- Using the bin chutes safely to dispose of rubbish and contacting the caretaking team if help is needed to dispose of bulky items.
- Reporting any issues to PCH, particularly if it is a fire safety concern.

Monitoring performance

To ensure we meet the aims set out in this strategy, we will:

- Monitor and report on our progress every year to the PCH Board, and twice a year to the Customer Focus Committee.
- Regularly publish information about building safety in PCH's resident newsletters, directly to residents in letters, and through online channels.
- Review building safety regularly, including feedback we have received about our service and our progress, collaborating with residents.
- Review the strategy:
 - » at least every 2 years
 - » after every consultation of the strategy
 - » after a mandatory occurrence report
 - » after the completion of significant material alterations to the building
- Record each review and whether there are changes to the strategy.

PCH will consult with residents on this strategy following any change to it.

PCH will consult all:

- Residents over the age of 16 and anyone who owns a residential unit.
- Accountable persons for the building.

Each consultation period will be a minimum of 3 weeks.



Complaints

PCH will review and consider any feedback we receive about this strategy. PCH is not required to change the strategy if we do not think it is appropriate.

Residents can make a complaint about the strategy to PCH directly. If residents are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, residents can escalate the complaint to the Building Safety Regulator.

How can I make a building safety complaint?



Fill out an enquiry form on our website.



Send us a message on social media.



Through your MyPCH account.



In person at our Head Office



Call us on 0808 230 6500.



Write to us at Plymouth Community Homes, Plumer House, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth, PL6 5DH.

Residents can refer a complaint to the Building Safety Regulator when they are:

- Not satisfied with the final response from PCH.
- Have not received a response.
- Have unresolved issues.

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) can be contacted through: www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-building-safety-regulator

When a resident raises an issue to the Building Safety Regulator, they will decide if the complaint is relevant to investigate, or they will suggest that the resident contact another regulator or organisation. Where possible, they will give contact details.



Customer Complaints and Comments Policy

Our Customer Complaints and Comments Policy sets out how we deal with resident feedback, how it will be used to understand residents' expectations, experiences and how it will improve service delivery.

In line with the **Building Safety Regulator Complaint Handling Code**, complaints or comments relating to:

- Structural failure and the spread of fire in a building (building safety risks)
- The performance of an accountable person (AP)

will be escalated to the Building Safety Regulator if a suitable and acceptable conclusion cannot be reached.

Housing Ombudsman

PCH is expected to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and publish a self-assessment form, which demonstrates compliance with the code.

The Housing Ombudsman expects landlords to conduct regular self-assessment against the Code and take appropriate action to ensure their complaint handling is in line with the Code. This published assessment is the first to be completed.

Conclusion

This Resident Engagement Strategy has been developed based on resident feedback and the Building Safety Regulators requirements. The document will remain under review to ensure PCH remains fully compliant with all relevant acts, regulations, and legislation, and that the information meets the needs of customers.

The Resident Engagement Strategy and the corresponding Resident Handbook explain how residents can approach their landlord for information, advice, and support to help keep their homes safe.

Glossary

A glossary has been created to help readers understand some of the technical phrases used.

Fire safety measures – Anything that fulfils a purpose for building safety, such as fire doors, sprinkler systems and emergency lighting.

Compartment – One or more rooms, spaces or storeys within a building that are constructed to prevent the spread of fire to or from another part of the same building.

Tall residential building – A building consisting of two or more dwellings with a height of 18 metres or more, or at least seven storeys (whichever is reached first).

Partnership agreement – There are agreements between PCH, DSFRS and CFRS setting out obligations each party will commit to in the interest of keeping residents and fire fighters safe.

The Regulator – A body within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who will oversee the safety of people in and around buildings and improve building standards by imposing new standards to be met.

GDPR Statement

For all our residents, privacy is always protected, and personal data is only used in accordance with data protection law, GDPR. PCH has a Privacy Notice which explains how we will process resident data. Use link below to find out more: [Easy Read Privacy Notice](#)



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