

Fire Safety in Flats With Communal Areas

I am writing to remind you of the requirements placed on residents to maintain all fire precautions that have been provided for their safety and for the safety of others in their building.

If there is a fire in a flat it is vital that everyone is able to leave the building as quickly and safely as possible, if necessary. The escape route from your flat is designed to remain free from smoke and fire for sufficient time to allow residents to pass safely along it to a place of safety.

It is essential that stairways and exits to the property are not obstructed at any time. Please consider that a fire could cause lighting to fail and people to trip on obstructions even if they know the escape route very well.

The Council's tenancy agreement puts responsibility onto tenants:

"To keep the common parts of flats in a clean and tidy condition and free from obstruction".

Communal areas must be kept clear of any obstruction or combustible materials. This includes rubbish, furniture, wheelie bins, carpets, curtains and any other items which could obstruct the escape route, or promote fire spread.

A single doormat is acceptable outside each flat entrance door provided it is specifically intended to be a doormat and is placed directly in front of your door.

To improve safety, the Council has an ongoing front door replacement programme to provide flats such as yours with a fire door with a self closing mechanism. The purpose of the fire door is to keep a fire contained should it break out behind the door. Please note that fire doors must not be propped open. Propping the door open may damage the self closing mechanism, compromise your safety and, should a fire occur in your flat, it would allow the fire to spread on to the escape route and endanger other occupiers of the building.

You are required to make sure that your fire door is working properly. If it is not, or if the self closing mechanism is missing from your door, you should report it as an urgent repair as soon as possible.

May I also remind you that in the interest of residents' safety, smoking is strictly prohibited in the communal areas and under no circumstances should any communal doors be propped open.

Further fire safety advice is available in your Tenants' Handbook. However, should you require any advice regarding the contents of this letter or further fire safety advice, please contact your local Housing office.