

# Tenant Scrutiny Report: Fire Safety



**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## 1. Acknowledgments

Chesterfield Borough Council would like to thank the tenants from the Tenant Challenge Panel (hereafter referred to as the TCP) for their hard work in gathering their findings through reviewing and analysing information and gathering evidence for this report.

Their commitment in working towards improving the council's housing services for the benefit of all tenants and the various council housing teams is valued and much appreciated.

TCP members who took part in the housing 'Fire Safety' review are:

Karen Francis  
Marion Gerard  
Tony Hedley  
Trevor Johnson  
Elizabeth Roberts  
Philip Simpson  
Rita Stanley  
Tracy Greaves

## 2. Purpose of the report

Part of the Regulator of Social Housing 2017 consumer framework for Social Housing in England says that tenants should be supported to scrutinise housing services as part of a co-regulation approach. Housing services have created the opportunity for tenants to join the Tenant Challenge Panel where it is the TCP's role to scrutinise housing services and make recommendations for change.

TCP decided to scrutinise and assess fire safety predominantly around blocks of flats but also did a light touch review of what the council's responsibilities are in tenants' homes.

The findings of the review will be reported to Chesterfield Borough Council's Housing Leadership Team with recommendations for improvement before they are considered for implementation by the Business Planning and Strategy Team.

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### 3. Introduction

The TCP looked at various aspects of housing services when deciding what to scrutinise next. There had been a lot of new information around the new legislation going through parliament, the social housing regulation bill, where six compliance issues had been included. These had been discussed at a TCP meeting and the panel had shown an interest in addressing one of those health and safety compliance issues. As a panel, they decided on fire safety.

The review began in April 2023 and was completed by the end of August 2023. It started with Nicola Fletcher, Asset Management Co-ordinator who is responsible for commissioning the fire safety works required in communal areas and tenant's homes, attending an in-person TCP meeting to give an overview of the service and a presentation of the council's responsibilities around fire safety for housing services.

The panel found Nicola's overview of fire safety very useful and gave them a better understanding of what the service offered, legal responsibilities and how the council implements those services and responsibilities.

Nicola explained that many fire safety responsibilities were part of programmed works costing around £1.8 million and were being delivered between the councils in house teams and outside contractors. She stated that the services around fire safety in communal areas was assessed by an outside contractor Savills to ensure compliance and good practice as an extra safeguard for both the council and tenants.

TCP decided on the issues they wanted to scrutinise, and scoped the review to include:

- Performance/service standards
- Benchmarking
- Value for money
- Complaints
- Legal compliance/regulatory framework
- Risk assessments
- Policy and procedure
- Best practice
- TCP to inspect in person

TCP members divided up the tasks amongst themselves and tenant engagement officers were assigned to each panel member to be their mentor throughout the review to help them access information to complete their findings and analyse

information, so they were able to make recommendations for improving the service.

## 4. Findings

Through the panels investigations their findings are as follows:

### 4.1 Performance indicators/ service standards

The Housing Service has two reported performance indicators around fire safety:

- Smoke alarms upgraded within due date
- Actions to be completed following fire risk assessments

In addition, further information can be reported on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors if requested:

- Properties without an in-date smoke alarm
- Carbon monoxide alarms upgraded within due date
- Properties without an in-date carbon monoxide alarm

In addition, further information can be reported on fire risk assessments completed and actions outstanding:

- Level 1 fire risk overdue actions
- Level 2 fire risk overdue actions
- Level 3 fire risk overdue action

Two TCP members met with Georgina Mason, Housing Officer – Insights and Performance, who explained the performance indicators and figures collected around fire safety. It was also noted that it is the 'process' that the council has used that shows whether it is compliant with or not. The council is process compliant at 100% for all the performance indicators collected for the above-mentioned indicators. The performance indicators are then reported to the Strategic Housing Board.

TCP members also noted that tenants can refuse to have a smoke or carbon monoxide detector in their property and the council is unable to enforce this, but these refusals are not considered in the process compliance indicators, only those that exist at council properties are taken into account. TCP accept that the council can only encourage and educate tenants to accept fire safety detectors. The number of refusals of having detectors across council properties for smoke detectors is 52 properties which makes up 0.6% and for carbon monoxide detectors is 63 properties which makes up 0.7% of council housing stock.

## Recommendations

- 1. When producing any education information/materials for tenants, that it includes the importance and safety benefits of having smoke and carbon monoxide detectors with the aim to have all council housing properties with fire safety detectors.*
- 2. That those who have refused smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are specifically targeted with persuasive letters and education materials encouraging them to accept the devices for their own and neighbours' safety.*

## 4.2 Benchmarking

It was also explained to two TCP members that the performance indicators are too difficult to benchmark accurately as each organisation can have slightly different criteria of collecting information and is not like for like. The overall headline performance indicator will be standardised across the country with the social housing regulator going forward as part of the new suite of [tenant satisfaction measures](#) (see below for ones relating to fire safety).

TP05 – Satisfaction that the home is safe (Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe)

BS02 – Fire Safety checks (Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.)

## 4.3 Policy and procedures

A TCP member interviewed Nicola Fletcher, Asset Management Coordinator, about policies and procedures regarding fire safety and Nicola explained that all the 'big 6' compliance policies are being rewritten. The new policy will say what and how the council are going to do fire safety, to have a management plan, set standards, and responsibilities. Procedures or management plans will then give details of what is needed to happen.

Currently there are lots of workshops to help rewrite new policies and procedures with those attending being council staff, contractors (e.g., Savills, etc). At present half of the staff team have been reshaped which has impacted on policy, as job roles may have changed and therefore some responsibilities. Draft policies and procedures have been completed and are awaiting finalising and resourcing. When asked if the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 would affect fire safety within service delivery to tenants' homes, Nicola explained that fire reform legislation requires more changes that need to be adhered to. The new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 is likely to ask for

different ways of reporting about fire safety and any changes in legislation will be absorbed into the policy.

Checks currently required around fire safety in tenant's homes are the 5-year electrical hard wiring, smoke detectors, heat detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, annual gas servicing, coal and solid fuel, etc. Nicola stated that their biggest difficulty is around gaining access to tenants' properties to carry out checks. However, court orders are used to gain access for gas servicing as 100% compliance is required and therefore checks on detectors benefit from this. Nicola said the service is investigating the potential use of fire detecting equipment that is linked to a computer and can automatically detect faults and send information directly to the council which could potentially reduce visits in the future. Nicola also feels that an improvement to fire safety at properties would be to have a programme over the next few years to update bin stores where needed. Nicola also believes that there should be some education for tenants around fire safety issues such as fire door safety, excessive litter/dumping/storing in communal areas, security and access, why it is important.

Nicola explained they are providing a service above what is regulatory required. John Herbison, a consultant working for Savills and who does work for central government is quoted as saying about the council's fire safety processes that 'they take fire safety seriously, invest where needed and are head and shoulders above other social landlords.' He has said that the council are doing 'a great job, take on advice and do what needs to be done to keep tenants safe'.

#### Recommendation

3. *To complete the fire safety policies and procedures to ensure good practice and service to tenants around fire safety.*
4. *To set out a timetable to put policies and procedures in place in a timely manner.*
5. *To investigate and assess whether it is worth the council investing in the use of fire detecting equipment that will automatically report back to the council any faults.*
6. *To look at ways to educate tenants around fire safety issues so they understand implications of behaviour that might impact on those e.g. leaflets, booklets, videos, etc. and have an ongoing programme of keeping the message going.*
7. *To develop a programme to update bin / metro stores that require it.*

## 4.4 Complaints



A TCP member investigated complaints from tenants regarding fire safety. Since the new complaints system was introduced around a year ago, there were no complaints logged about fire safety. The old complaints system was then investigated and there were no recent complaints. Over a 5-year period, there were only 3 complaints around fire safety but none of them in the last few years. The complaints were not of a serious concern and did not show any trends. The TCP member was reassured that there were so few complaints about fire safety issues and reflects well on the service being provided.

The TCP member questioned whether tenants understood what might consist of a complaint around fire safety as there were examples of complaints about main entrance doors to blocks of flats being left/propped open regarding security to the building, or a repair issue which undermines the fire safety of the door. It might be beneficial to educate tenants and staff further that when reporting an issue with a main door to a block of flats, that it is also a fire safety door and should be given some priority in categorising it to be addressed.

#### Recommendations

8. *To inform staff that take repair reports or issues about main entrance doors on blocks of flats, that they are a fire door and therefore should have priority for the repair or other issues such as security, to be addressed quickly.*
9. *To add to the information around educating tenants around fire safety issues referred to elsewhere in this report, to add that when reporting a repair or other fire issues to the council, they state it is a fire door and therefore should be allowed some higher priority.*

#### **4.5 Legislation/regulatory framework**

Two TCP members looked at fire safety regulation and had a further presentation and information provided by Nicola Fletcher to help them understand the landlord's responsibilities. In the information provided, there was A Guide to Fire Safety Regulations for UK Landlords [A Guide to Fire Safety Regulations for UK Landlords - Landlord insider \(landlordvision.co.uk\)](#). In that guide it highlighted 5 areas of why it is important for landlords to apply legislation. They are:

- the risk to tenants
- prosecution
- protect the property
- incur expenses,
- landlord reputation.

There are many laws that are applicable to fire safety which include:

- The Housing Act 2004
- The furniture and furnishing (fire safety) Regulations 1988
- The Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2004
- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector (England) Regulations 2022
- The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (fire safety compliance)

There are also laws around electric and gas that need considering for fire safety in tenants' homes which include various periodic testing. The new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 has fire safety as one of its compliance areas and when the act is enacted from April 2024, the council will have to provide various statistics and information to the new Housing Regulator.

Generally, there are some fundamental fire safety responsibilities that apply to landlords of private rented housing. These will eventually apply to social landlords. It is good practice for landlords to:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on each storey of the building. According to [government stats](#), you are around 8 times more likely to die in a fire in a home where there are no working smoke alarms.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm in every room that contains a solid fuel or gas burning -burning appliance.
- Check there is clear access to escape routes.
- Ensure any furniture and furnishings are fire-resistant and meet safety regulations.
- Perform regular fire risk assessments and review according to risk. .

When TCP members discussed legislation issues, they showed concern about tenants taking responsibility for fire safety too. During the same fire safety guide, there is a list of responsibilities for tenants of Housing of Multiple Occupation and although CBC do not have this type of property, they feel the information could still be given to tenants in blocks of flats with communal areas to reduce the risk of a fire in the property. The information is:

Fire safety advice that landlords should give to their tenants for them to understand their responsibilities to keep their properties safe includes:

- Always keep fire escape routes and exits clear.
- Test the smoke alarm each month to check that it is still working.
- Don't overload plug sockets.
- Never try to dry clothes on electric heaters.
- Contact the landlord immediately if you have any concerns about any of the gas or electric appliances in the property.
- Don't smoke cigarettes indoors.
- Keep door and window keys somewhere easy for everyone to access.

- Details of the emergency fire escape route.
- Keep fire doors closed.
- How to respond safely if a fire does break out at the property.
- Information about how to safely use all appliances provided.

TCP feel this type of information could be provided to tenants in a variety of formats such as being added to the tenant handbook, posters, leaflets, letters, accessible formats such as videos, pictorial communications, which could help reduce the risk of fire in all homes but especially emphasised in blocks of flats with shared communal areas. This will support the education of tenants around fire safety issues.

During the first presentation by Nicola Fletcher, she mentioned that balconies were going to be added to the compliance issues coming through from the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, for properties above a certain height. Although the council do not have properties above that height, TCP had an interest looking into issues around balconies. They investigated fire safety issues around this and found some useful information on the internet by Avon Fire and Rescue Services who recommend the following information to tenants.

### **Balcony safety tips to keep you and you neighbours safe:**

#### **Don't**

- Fix fairy lights to the balcony
- Use the balcony as a fire pit.
- Never barbecue on your balcony. Embers could carry and set light to your or your neighbours balcony and possessions.
- It's better not to smoke at all, but if you do always ensure your cigarette is properly put out and never throw it over the side. It could catch light to possessions on a balcony below or next to yours.
- Never store or set off fireworks on your balcony.
- Fix additional timber or combustible screening or flooring to the balcony (this includes artificial grass or similar).

#### **Be mindful of**

Any type of naked flame and how you dispose of hot materials, either within your apartment or on a balcony.

#### **Do**

- Limit the amount of storage kept on balconies and do not store waste items such as old mattresses and cardboard recycling on the balcony.
- Report any defects, cracks, damage or other loose materials to management.

TCP felt that the council understood their responsibilities around fire safety in terms of legislation and the regulatory framework and are working within the guidance provided.

## Recommendations

10. *To add the list of fire safety tenant responsibilities to the tenant handbook.*
11. *To produce other forms of accessible communications as part of educating tenants around how they can contribute to their own fire safety.*
12. *To ensure the council will be in a position to comply with the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 – compliance for fire safety when it is finally enacted.*
13. *Although not required through legislation due to height criteria, TCP feel that educating tenants who have balconies on a similar theme to Avon Fire and Rescue would reduce potential risk of a fire that might spread upwards.*

## 4.6 Risk assessments

Some TCP members met to discuss and look through an example of a risk assessment for the communal area to a block of flats 1 – 5 Willow Garth Road (appendix 1). It was explained that all blocks of flats communal areas had a fire risk assessment carried out by an external contractor, Savills. By using an external contractor, the council ensure that there is a specialist provider to carry out fire risks of the communal areas in the blocks of flats, and also as they are independent of the council they can provide an impartial view.

Overall, Savills have indicated that the council are excellent at providing fire safety services and products to their tenants. In a letter from Savills to the council on 14 October 2022, Savills stated:

*“Based on the information detailed in this letter, our view is that Chesterfield Borough Council has managed fire safety well to date.”*

and

*“Our view is that Chesterfield Borough Council would sit within the top quartile of all our current clients.” (appendix 2)*

TCP commend the council services for providing such a good service around fire risk assessments and fire safety to their tenants.

The individual risk assessments of blocks of flats have picked up on some issues that the council seem to have addressed very quickly which was also referred to in the Savills letter. However, one issue is that regular cleaning of outside communal areas is required to prevent a build-up of combustible items. The council provides a cleaning service for the internal and some

external communal areas, but not for all external communal areas in blocks of flats. Areas around bin stores have been identified in the service specification for cleaners to sweep but not all external areas. Savills identified this in the risk assessment, and it stated the following:

*“Arrangements should be put in place to ensure the common area is regularly cleaned to prevent the build up of combustible items.” (appendix 1)*

The cleaning service has provided the following specification regarding the external cleaning of blocks of flats:

- *Clean external door inside and out to remove dirt, graffiti, and stains through wiping and/or scrubbing.*
- *Sweep out the entrance porch and balconies where they are found. Mop to remove dirt, smells and stains as required.*
- *Remove cobwebs and where necessary use a high-level brush.*
- *Litter pick. Clear and dispose of accumulated rubbish in designated bins for each block of flats leaving them in a tidy condition.*
- *External surfaces of glazing to be cleaned every 6 months and noted on round sheet.*

Only areas around bins are on the specification to be addressed by the cleaning service, therefore there is a gap in service for other external areas around flats to clean up any build-up of combustible items. TCP had noticed during various visits and litter pick events that it is not unusual for there to be a build up of litter and combustible items in external areas around blocks of flats and would like to see the gap in service addressed as identified by the risk assessment.

#### Recommendation

14. *To address the gap in service around the cleaning of external areas at blocks of flats so all external areas are free of combustible items to reduce the risk as identified in the risk assessment completed by Savills.*

#### **4.7 Value for Money**

To understand whether fire safety was value for money, a TCP member looked at the cost of the fire safety service versus the benefits to both the council and tenants. To comprehend this further, the TCP member interviewed Nicola Fletcher, Asset Management Coordinator, to gather information and establish the facts regarding value for money and benefits. After asking Nicola a series of questions (appendix 3), the TCP member established that:

- The council spend around £1.8 million over a period of 1 year to cover fire safety work e.g. compartmentation, fire doors, electric meter and store cupboards, metro stores/bin stores, glazing, fire alarm systems in

- sheltered with sprinklers system, minor joinery works, signage, fire extinguishers sheltered, door closures, door strips, risk assessment, etc.
- Different properties have various levels of risks attached to them than others and the council's responsibility can be statutory required through various legislation. All properties, approx. 8840 have smoke alarms however in blocks of flats, the council is responsible for communal areas and therefore there are a larger number of responsibilities for those e.g. monthly fire checks, emergency lighting, fire doors to stop fires spreading, fire risk assessments, etc. There are no properties above 13 metres which reduces the council's responsibility around the outside of the properties.
  - When procuring companies, Nicola looks for reputable companies. They use a framework portal which has already approved suppliers needing proper qualifications, H&S and method statements, procedures, etc. and companies listed on there would have had to go through rigorous criteria to get onto the framework portal. It therefore offers a range of suppliers that meet the council's requirements. Nicola stated that where fire safety is concerned, monetary consideration is not the highest consideration, more those who have reputation for good quality work, which is a safer for tenants. For example, the council use Savill's for some works e.g. fire risk assessments, they are a large and well known national company and specialists in this area. The council could do this work in house but choose to have the third party to have another or outside specialist view of the council's fire safety which ensures impartiality. She also stated that the council have good buying power when done on mass which contributes towards value for money. Money saving processes are in place such as testing the smoke alarms annually by the gas servicing engineer, so they are done at the same visit, therefore saving money for a separate visit. TCP find this to be good practice.
  - When asked what the benefits are for the council and its housing tenants, Nicola responded to ensure that money is spent responsibly. The benefit to tenant is safety first but also making sure the pot of money is allocated in the right way. Money can be used in other ways to help a property be free from hazard and make it a nice place to live in. Legislation is always changing which brings in more to achieve and therefore extra spending is required e.g. cladding, putting pressure on how best to spend the pot of money. Meeting legislation requirements is a priority for the service spends. TCP understand that statutory requirements are a priority and feel that the council work hard to achieve value for money by using tendering processes to help manage costs as well as taking into account quality and benefits to tenants.
  - Nicola explained that there is a new policy being written, which will lead to quarterly meetings with tenants to discuss fire safety. Fire safety is now a question in the tenant satisfaction measures around risk

assessment on communal areas and there are currently 363 blocks that have communal areas.

- The service often relies on posting out to tenants as part of their communications and Nicola feels there could be savings made by using other methods such as SMS texting if the council were set up to receive back responses too.

### Recommendations

- 15. To establish meeting with tenants on a regular basis e.g. quarterly or half yearly to consult on services about fire safety maybe along with other compliance issues where value for money is one of the considerations. (Tenant Engagement Officers can offer support in finding tenants for such a group).*
- 16. To investigate options to communicate with tenants that doesn't cost the price of stamps, envelopes, excessive staff time e.g. SMS texting.*

## 4.8 Best practice

TCP looked at several practices and were very interested in how mobility scooters are stored in blocks of flats. Many TCP members were aware that the storage of scooter in the communal areas of blocks of flats at the council has raised fire safety concerns and they are not allowed to be stored in communal areas at all. Tenants are informed that they can store scooters in their own flats, however, many do not have space to do this, therefore the storage of scooters is an issue for tenants living in flats. Housing Officer (Environmental) carry out regular monthly checks which include fire safety issues and would address concerns directly with the tenant if they store a scooter incorrectly.

The council do not provide storage or charging points for tenants for scooters and do not always have space externally where permission might be granted in some instances. There seems to be a lack of consistency around who might or might not get permission to put storage and a charging point where there are external communal areas. Furthermore, there is no policy to guide staff with decision making when dealing with the storage of scooters where there are communal areas. The only guidance to staff and tenants is that scooters cannot be stored in internal communal areas as part of fire safety procedures. The tenancy agreements ask tenants to gain permission from the council before purchasing or leasing a scooter. Staff and tenants need clearer guidance around the storage of scooters and a policy should be developed to resolve this and the council's stance around responsibility, liability, and whether the council is prepared to invest in the storage and charging points of scooters or not. Also, the next time the tenancy agreement is reviewed and updated, storage of scooters could be strengthened to be clearer and possible consequences

explained such as the tenant being recharged for the removal of a scooter if they are in breach of the tenancy agreement.

Some TCP members met and discussed a range of issues that could impact on fire safety. They included issues that they believe the council could investigate further in terms of fire safety. They are:

- Consideration of smoke alarms for communal areas in flats
- Consider distance of exits from flats to bin locations to reduce build-up of rubbish in internal areas – motivation and convenience
- Consider if risks from rubbish chutes could be further reduced
- Explore how contact a Housing Officers (Environmental) or they be more visible to tenants regarding fire safety e.g. details shared on notice boards, online, etc
- Explore how we can engage more effectively with tenants about inspections regarding fire safety

#### Recommendations

*17. The council to look at developing a policy around the storage, charging points, responsibilities, and liability of scooters so tenants and staff are clear how to act on the matter.*

*18. That at the next tenancy agreement review, look to strengthen up issues around mobility scooters.*

*19. For the council to investigate and consider the list that TCP have raised on page 14 around fire safety issues in this section.*

#### **4.9 TCP in person inspection**

On 22 June 2023, the tenant challenge panel inspected the communal areas of a flat at Darley Close, Staveley. The housing officer (environment) also attended and carried out his monthly fire inspection for the TCP to observe. Also, during a presentation by Nicola Fletcher to TCP, a discussion occurred around balconies and that they were now considered part of the externals of the building and the council were now responsible for their fire safety, and TCP wanted to view a property with a balcony to understand the issues.

The flat chosen for viewing was a 1<sup>st</sup> floor flat with a concrete balcony. The TCP considered the contents of the balconies around them that they could see in terms of what was stored on there and noted that there was a barbeque on one balcony that could potentially be a fire hazard, and also a large plant pot on a top floor (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) that was placed on the edge of the balcony and could easily fall or accidentally be knocked off the ledge and cause a serious accident to someone or something below.



In terms of content on the balcony, TCP would like tenants to be able to use their balconies in good weather and feel that the council needs to produce some guidance or instructions (dependant on legislative requirements) for tenants around the use of balconies so that everyone is safe, but tenants are not unnecessarily restricted. Also, an external visual check at blocks with balconies to be added to the monthly checks carried out where possible, by the housing officers (environment).

Some members of TCP observed the housing officer (environmental) carrying out his H&S inspection of the communal areas in the block and felt that it was an appropriate and detailed check list covering a number of fire safety issues and signage, other than adding a visual check of the balconies for anything perched on the ledges or anything flammable such as a barbeque or a chiminea, etc.

TCP noted that there was no fire detecting equipment in the communal areas and felt that it would be safer for tenants to have that facility.

The TCP noted that the communal areas looked run down in terms of their décor and flooring and feel that tenants are more likely to look after their surroundings and comply with fire safety directives, if their surroundings were of a reasonable presentable quality making them a more desirable place to live.

#### Recommendations

- 20. To add onto the monthly checks, an external visual check of balconies for anything propped on the ledge which can be a fall hazard and for highly flammable items such as barbeques, chimineas, etc.*
- 21. To consider having fire detection equipment in communal spaces in blocks of flats.*
- 22. For the council to consider that internal communal areas to have a rolling programme to decorate hallways and stairwells so they don't look run down and undesirable as a place to live.*

## 5. Summary

The TCP took a comprehensive look at the council's fire safety responsibilities, compliance, and other fire safety issues, and generally thought that the council provided a good service to tenants around fire safety compliance.

There are processes in place to ensure that proper procurement and the quality of fire safety services are serious considerations. It is clear that money is not the most important issue when ensuring that the council meets its

responsibilities and compliance duties regarding fire safety, and that quality and tenant safety is a priority factor.

There was a common theme that was raised over and over again around educating tenants on fire safety issues through a variety of means such as updating the tenant handbook, up to date and accessible literature/leaflets/booklets/posters/videos, etc. TCP felt more work needs to be done to ensure that tenants understand the importance of their responsibilities around fire safety.

Another strong issue to come out of this review is that the council need clearer guidance and policy to make decisions around the storage of mobility scooters. There seems to be an inconsistency around how this issue is addressed with limited guidance to help officers to make decisions.

Legislatively, although the council need to ensure that they are compliant with the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 due to be enacted in April 2024, they are in a strong position by being compliant with other legislation mentioned in this report, have external specialists advising them, and seem to be working positively in ensuring a good service for tenants in fire safety in their homes.

The service is working towards producing new policies and procedures using working groups made up of a variety of staff to inform them and this will be a benefit when completed.

TCP feel that by implementing the recommendations, it will further improve and make an excellent service.

## 6. Recommendations

	Recommendation	Page Ref
	<b>Performance Indicators / Service Standards</b>	
1.	<i>When producing any education information/materials for tenants, that it includes the importance and safety benefits of having smoke and carbon monoxide detectors with the aim to have all council housing properties with fire safety detectors.</i>	5
2.	<i>That those who have refused smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are specifically targeted with persuasive letters and education materials encouraging them to accept the devices for their own and neighbours' safety.</i>	6
	<b>Policy and Procedure</b>	
3.	<i>To complete the fire safety policies and procedures to ensure good practice and service to tenants around fire safety.</i>	7
4.	<i>To set out a timetable to put policies and procedures in place in a timely manner.</i>	7
5.	<i>To investigate and assess whether it is worth the council investing in the use of fire detecting equipment that will automatically report back to the council any faults.</i>	7
6.	<i>To look at ways to educate tenants around fire safety issues so they understand implications of behaviour that might impact on those e.g. leaflets, booklets, videos, etc. and have an ongoing programme of keeping the message going.</i>	7
7.	<i>To develop a programme to update bin / metro stores that require it.</i>	7
	<b>Complaints</b>	
8.	<i>To inform staff that take repair reports or issues about main entrance doors on blocks of flats, that they are a fire door and therefore should have priority for the repair or other issues such as security, to be addressed quickly.</i>	8
9.	<i>To add to the information around educating tenants around fire safety issues referred to elsewhere in this report, to add that when reporting a repair or other fire issues to the council, they</i>	8

	<i>state it is a fire door and therefore should be allowed some higher priority.</i>	
	<b>Legislation/regulatory framework</b>	
10.	<i>To add the list of fire safety tenant responsibilities to the tenant handbook.</i>	10
11.	<i>To produce other forms of accessible communications as part of educating tenants around how they can contribute to their own fire safety.</i>	10
12.	<i>To ensure the council will be in a position to comply with the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 – compliance for fire safety when it is finally enacted.</i>	11
13.	<i>Although not required through legislation due to height criteria, TCP feel that educating tenants who have balconies on a similar theme to Avon Fire and Rescue would reduce potential risk of a fire that might spread upwards.</i>	11
	<b>Risk assessment</b>	
14.	<i>To address the gap in service around the cleaning of external areas at blocks of flats so all external areas are free of combustible items to reduce the risk as identified in the risk assessment completed by Savills.</i>	12
	<b>Value for money</b>	
15.	<i>To establish meeting with tenants on a regular basis e.g. quarterly or half yearly to consult on services about fire safety maybe along with other compliance issues where value for money is one of the considerations. (Tenant Engagement Officers can offer support in finding tenants for such a group).</i>	14
16.	<i>To investigate options to communicate with tenants that doesn't cost the price of stamps, envelopes, excessive staff time e.g. SMS texting.</i>	14
	<b>Best practice</b>	
17.	<i>The council to look at developing a policy around the storage, charging points, responsibilities, and liability of scooters so tenants and staff are clear how to act on the matter.</i>	15

18.	<i>That at the next tenancy agreement review, look to strengthen up issues around mobility scooters.</i>	15
19.	<i>For the council to investigate and consider the list that TCP have raised on page 14 around fire safety issues in this section.</i>	15
	<b>TCP inspect in person</b>	
20.	<i>To add onto the monthly checks, an external visual check of balconies for anything propped on the ledge which can be a fall hazard and for highly flammable items such as barbeques, chimineas, etc.</i>	16
21.	<i>To consider having fire detection equipment in communal spaces in blocks of flats.</i>	16
22.	<i>For the council to consider that internal communal areas to have a rolling programme to decorate hallways and stairwells so they don't look run down and undesirable as a place to live.</i>	16