

# Resident Engagement : A Commitment to Building Safety Strategy



## Introduction

To ensure residents feel safe in their homes, and to ensure we meet regulations set out in the Building Safety Act 2022, we will communicate, inform and engage with residents about building safety matters. We will ensure residents are fully informed where concerns are raised, works are needed and other matters.

Great Places Housing Group want residents of our High-Rise Buildings (HRBs as set out and covered within the Building Safety Act) to be at the heart of decision making about where they live. This document sets out Great Places' commitment to building safety following legislation and guidance set out by the Government to ensure all housing providers have an Overarching Resident Engagement Strategy for buildings covered by Building Safety Act legislation. It aims to ensure that residents:

- Know who they can speak to about their safety and sets out the responsibilities between the landlord (Great Places) and residents.
- Have a variety of opportunities to speak to staff about any concerns or issues.
- Feel confident to hold Great Places to account and to understand any communications sent to them relating to building safety matters.

This strategy is for residents and colleagues, and explains our responsibilities for communication and engagement with residents. This is in addition to the approach set out in our Customer Experience Strategy. When we refer to "our" or "Great Places" we are including Great Places Housing Group, Great Places Housing Association, Plumlife Property Management and Cube Homes (whether we own the buildings or manage them on behalf of another organisation).

## National Context

After the tragic fire at Grenfell in 2017, Dame Judith Hackitt was commissioned to review building regulations and fire safety and put forward 53 recommendations for change. Her report was titled "Building a Safer Future" and has prompted new statutory requirements to be met, 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 their views and concerns are listened to and acted upon in a trusting, open and honest way.

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The key areas of change are:

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

## Local Context

To comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO), Great Places carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) to communal areas of multi-occupied buildings at regular intervals. To ensure residents feel safe in their homes, and to ensure we meet regulations set out in the Building Safety Act 2022, we will communicate, inform and engage with residents about building safety. We will ensure residents are fully informed where concerns are raised, or works are needed.

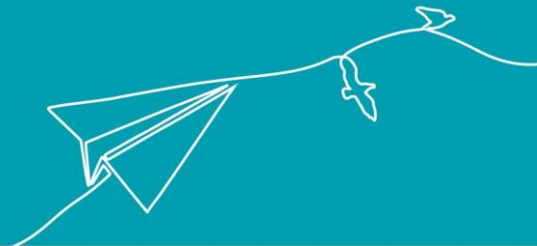
Our '**SAFETY**' promise:

- **Safety:** we will work in partnership with residents to keep their homes safe
- **Action:** we will do what we say we will, when we say we will
- **Forming relationships:** we will strengthen existing relationships with residents to ensure they trust us to keep them safe
- **Enforcement:** where necessary, we will take legal action against any customer deliberately putting others at risk
- **Together:** we will work in partnership with residents to make decisions, oversee and scrutinise how well we are doing
- **Your home:** we will ensure residents feel safe in their homes; Great Places aims to be proud of what we manage and how we manage our homes.

For each High Rise building there will be a local resident engagement strategy, which must be reviewed:

- at least every 2 years
- after a mandatory occurrence report to the Regulator, for example, a fire incident involving the fire service
- after the completion of significant material alterations to the building

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Each strategy review will be recorded, regardless of whether any changes are made to the strategy.

Management colleagues e.g. Neighbourhood Services, Property Management and Lettings teams, will support and encourage all residents to engage in drafting Resident Engagement Strategies and in meeting the promises made in these. They will be supported by the Building Safety Team, and Customer Involvement Team as required and may draw on support from other teams to informally share messages i.e. Caretakers, Building Managers, Property Managers etc.

All Great Places colleagues are responsible for ensuring that any building safety issues identified, by Great Places or by residents, are dealt with and/or reported for further investigation and action. Depending on the issue raised, colleagues may be asked to take a role in keeping residents informed of progress.

## **Accountable Persons, their role and responsibilities**

Accountable Persons are legally responsible for repairing or maintaining common parts of a building for example, the exterior and structure, corridors or lobbies. If a building has more than one Accountable Person (AP), the AP who owns the building, or is legally responsible for the structure and exterior of the building will be the Principal Accountable Person (PAP).

In relation to resident engagement, it is the responsibility of the PAP to:

- prepare a overarching Resident Engagement Strategy
- review and revise the strategy and keep a record of the reviews
- provide the latest version of the strategy to 'Accountable Persons'

It is then the responsibility of APs to deliver that resident engagement strategy to their local residents on an individual scheme level and provide residents with a real and meaningful say on how the safety of their homes are managed. For high-rise buildings owned by Great Places we are the PAP and responsible for all AP duties. In some cases, Great Places will act as an AP because the building is owned by someone else who is the PAP. In that case Great Places must deliver the PAP's Resident Engagement Strategy.

## **Great Places Building Safety Team – Roles and Responsibilities**

The team's role is to oversee and routinely check the safety measures across all High Rise buildings (HRBs) currently owned or managed by Great Places. The team achieve this using the following methods:

- Routine inspections of blocks and fire safety assets
- Block specific information booklets for residents

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- Sharing information on Great Places website
- Including information in new tenant information
- Identifying and reacting to changing customer needs
- Articles in resident newsletters
- Dedicated letters and tailored information to residents
- Where feasible to provide information on electronic notice boards
- Partnership working with Fire & Rescue Services

The team play a significant role in how the blocks are managed by liaising with all teams at Great Places to ensure the wider activities of the organisation do not compromise the overall safety of the building. Any improvement, maintenance or management activities within the buildings take place in partnership with the Building Safety Team. These standards have been created based on customer feedback and will be monitored by the Building Safety Resident's Panel and the Building Safety Team.

Where needed, residents are supported to help keep themselves safe, particularly if they have a disability or reason that may affect their ability to self-evacuate. In these circumstances, with residents' agreement, this information is shared with Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in the form of a simple colour coded chart of the building. This allows the FRS to easily and quickly determine the location of residents who cannot self-evacuate and assist them where required.

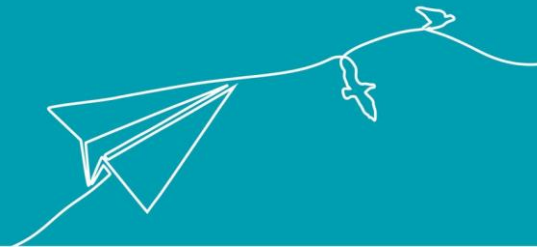
The team will regularly be in touch with these residents to assess whether their situation has changed and update the fire service accordingly. A Great Places team member will attend (subject to resources) within the first six weeks of the tenancy starting, to double check that the new tenant has received and understand their fire safety procedures and obligations.

## **Keeping your home and building safe**

High Rise buildings are kept safe through a planned regime of maintenance, servicing, repairs and replacement of assets and components within them. Some of the key fire safety related assets include sprinklers, fire doors, smoke detection, firefighting equipment, emergency lighting and smoke ventilation windows. Other assets that have routine checks and inspections are lifts, communal door entry systems, electrical systems and various plant, storage, and communal areas.

When assets such as fire doors or smoke detection are not performing as they were designed then this normally results in a repair or replacement. Where repairs are becoming too frequent on the same asset, they cannot be repaired or there are several in need of replacement, then they may be included within Great Places' Capital Programme. More extensive work would be budgeted and planned for and be

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delivered as a project by Great Places Asset Team. Walls, floors, ceilings, and doors are passive fire measures, their characteristics mean that together they form compartments that limit the spread of fire and smoke. They are designed to contain fire and smoke at their source for a long enough period to allow the fire service to extinguish the fire. It is this design that means residents in buildings with 'stay safe' fire plans can 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 request information about the safety measures in their building. Great Places website holds a variety of information about living in a High Rise building including:

- What to do in the event of a fire.
- What are Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and works emanating from these
- Servicing and Testing / Maintenance cycles and performance
- Planned improvement works

Residents can request a safety related walkabout where they live and can inspect and comment on building safety and other related works. Residents will also be asked if they are satisfied that their home is safe on a visit from their Neighbourhood Manager or Building Safety Officer

## **Staff and Contractors**

All Great Places colleagues and contractors must demonstrate their competency to fulfil their roles when working in a High Rise building through a variety of training and accreditation processes. The Building Safety Team will continue to work in partnership with the local FRS to maintain information knowledge as part of the Partnership Agreement.

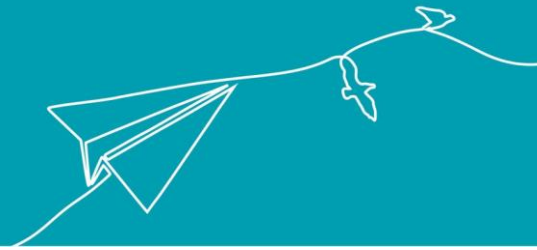
## **Residents Roles and Responsibilities**

Changes to building safety legislation means that there is an emphasis on ensuring residents of High Rise buildings trust their landlord and feel safe in their home. As a landlord, Great Place will ensure homes and High Rise buildings are safe by meeting all the required regulations and standards.

Residents are required to support Great Places in meeting their obligations by:

- Living safely in their flat and not doing anything that puts other residents at risk, for example, not making alterations to the flat entrance fire door without permission.
- Knowing what to do in the event of a fire in their property or another part of the building.
- Contacting the Building Safety Team if residents' living circumstances change meaning a resident may not be able to self-evacuate in the event of a fire.

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- 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 Great Places, particularly if a resident feels it is a fire safety concern.

Further information on residents' responsibilities is detailed in the Resident Building Safety Booklet.

## **Resident Engagement, Communication and Accessibility**

Great Places has consulted with residents living in High Rise blocks about how they wanted to get involved in building safety matters. Resident's feedback has been used to develop individual Resident Engagement Strategies for each of these building.

Residents were clear about their preferred methods of communication, particularly when important safety related information needs to be communicated. Great Places has used residents' feedback to develop service standards for communicating building safety information to residents. These are detailed in the Resident's Building Safety booklet. Residents will receive an updated Resident Building Safety Booklet through their door once a year.

Building Safety Information for Residents will:

- Use clear language (no jargon) and images / photos to ensure information is easy to understand.
- Be shared with residents using a wide variety of communication methods to make sure residents receive important information in a way that suits them.
- Be in line with the Fire Service's safety communications.
- Be available in accessible formats on request and use the residents preferred form of communication

## **Building Safety Residents Panel**

Great Places intend to introduce a Building Safety Resident's Panel. This aims to be a digital group made up of resident representatives from our High Rise buildings, with the panel managed via our digital platform, Our Voice. The aim of the Panel is to review building safety information and resident feedback on a quarterly basis. Panel members will examine safety related performance information and residents will feedback to ensure standards are being met.

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The Panel will aim to have a good understanding of any planned work that can impact on the safety of the buildings. The Panel will link into the Great Places governance structure and report their findings, recommendations, and concerns to the Customer Committee (CC) of the Board annually, with opportunities for a panel member to join the CC. The Panel will have the remit to challenge Great Places and raise any concerns about the safety of residents living in high rise buildings.

The Building Safety Residents Panel meeting minutes will be published on the Great Places website twice a year

## **Training and support for residents to be involved**

Residents who want to apply to be part of the Building Safety Residents Panel will be asked to attend two mandatory training courses. This will ensure they have a basic knowledge of building safety information and an understanding of working on a panel. Further training will be identified and provided once any skills gaps are identified. Residents who apply to be on the Panel can be loaned appropriate IT equipment to be able to attend meetings and access information. Residents who are not digital will be sent information in a format which suits their needs.

## **Customer Complaints**

If a customer is not satisfied with the service being provided in their building, they should first bring this to the attention of the service concerned. This can be done by contacting our customer Hub. There are a number of ways you can do this, please visit [www.greatplaces.org.uk](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk) for details. These details are also included in your Resident's Building Safety Booklet.

## **How to make a complaint**

Great Places uses the Housing Ombudsman service definition 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Landlord, its own staff or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.' Residents can make a complaint to any Great Places colleague using the standard complaints process.

## **Timescales**

Great Places aims to acknowledge any complaint within 5 working days. The Customer Feedback team will undertake an investigation and aim to respond within 10 working days. If they require longer, they will speak with you and keep you updated. Hopefully we can resolve your complaint if you feel we have not then you can ask us to take the complaint to stage 2. A senior manager would then review the complaint, outcomes and provide you with a response within 20 working days. For more details, please visit our website [www.greatplaces.org.uk](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk)



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If after stage 2 residents remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service ,details below.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service by:

**Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Phone:** [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000)

Phonelines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. **Lines will be closed for staff training every Thursday from 3.30pm to 5pm.**

## **Write to:**

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484  
Unit D  
Preston  
PR2 0ET  
**Fax:** 020 7831 1942

## **Monitoring Performance**

As a business we monitor performance to show levels of understanding and satisfaction. This gives an opportunity to identify areas of success or improvement. We monitor this in various ways and some of them are listed below:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) scores
- Report on Resident Engagement successes and gaps
- Report on HRB activity such as building safety incidents and works upgrades

We intend to feedback to residents about our performance locally and through whole business communications.

## **Conclusion**

This document is the first version of the commitment to Building Safety between Great Places and High Rise residents. It has been developed based on advice from the Building Safety Regulator, customer information and feedback. The content of the document will remain under review to ensure that Great Places is fully compliant with the Regulator and that the information contained meets the needs of residents. The Commitment to Building Safety and the corresponding Resident's Building Safety Booklet detail clearly how residents can approach their landlord for information, advice, and support to help keep their homes, and where they live safe.



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## Glossary of Terms

**Assets** – Anything that fulfils a purpose and/or has a financial value, examples of assets in respect of building safety are fire doors, sprinkler systems and emergency lighting.

**Capital Programme (Investment)** – A list of budgets allocated to capital investment projects that are intended to build, improve, maintain or develop an asset.

**Compartments** – 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.

**High Rise 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** – An agreement between Great Places and a named Fire & Rescue Service setting out obligations each party will commit to in the interest of supporting each other in keeping residents safe.

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

<b>Strategy Approval Date:</b>	15/05/2025
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Reducing Carbon Impact Assessment Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Safeguarding impact:</b>	N/A
<b>Strategy Review Date:</b>	15/05/2027
<b>Lead Team:</b>	Building and Fire Safety team
<b>Level of Authorisation Required:</b>	Directors