

Draft Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy

Introduction

The safety and wellbeing of our residents is our absolute priority.

After the devastating Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, there has been a strong push for improved communication and engagement regarding safety with residents in buildings. The National Housing Federation highlights the importance of this:

“The Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety found that residents did not have a strong enough voice in the management of their buildings. The Building Safety Act requires that clear routes to resolve issues raised by residents about their safety are established, and residents have a chance to participate in decision making as well as have access to key building safety information.”

The Building Safety Act 2022 requires us to produce a Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy for all residents and homeowners living in high-rise residential buildings (HRRBs). This is our first version of our strategy. We'll update it as new regulations or guidance emerges.

Strategy requirements

This strategy aims to ensure all residents:

- Are informed about the building safety information we will provide.
- Understand what we may ask you about building safety and how you can contribute to it.
- Know how we will contact you and use your feedback to influence decisions.
- Understand how we will measure and review our engagement methods.
- Feel safe in your home.

Who is this strategy for?

- Everyone who lives in or owns a flat in a high-rise residential building.
- Colleagues and contractors working with us that play an important part in doing the things we say we'll do in this strategy.
- Other stakeholders who have a role and interest in the building and keeping residents safe – for example the fire service, local authorities and the building safety regulator.

Which buildings are defined as higher rise residential buildings?

We own six buildings that meet the Building Safety Act definition of higher rise - residential buildings because of their height. These are:

- Byker Wall (Dunn Terrace) - consisting of Tom Collins House, Wolseley House, Dunn Terrace, Graham House, Northumberland Terrace and

- Salisbury House
- Byker Wall (Grace Lee) - consisting of Felton Walk, Felton House, Long Headlam, Headlam House, Shipley Rise and Rabygate
 - Byker Wall (Shipley Street) - consisting of Shipley Walk, Brinkburn House, Kendal House, Dalton Crescent and Gordon House
 - Harlequin Lodge, St Oswalds Court, Felling
 - Mandarin Lodge, St Oswalds Court, Felling
 - Merganser Lodge, St Oswalds Court, Felling

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We're working hard to collect the data to help us make sure that this strategy is meaningful and effective for all residents, whatever their needs, backgrounds, or characteristics (for example ethnicity, sex, age, disability, religion, or belief).

We'll gather information about each building from various sources like surveys, in-person visits, lease agreements, and more. This helps us understand if there are any people or groups in these buildings who might be more vulnerable or may face difficulties if they don't receive information or help in other ways. Once we know this, we'll adjust our plans and actions to make sure we can help everyone according to their specific needs. Where individuals might need additional support to be safe, we will make referrals to our person-centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA) processes.

Efforts will also be made to gather information about all adults aged 16+ in each property. This is essential to fulfill legal obligations concerning the sharing of our strategy with everyone involved. All data collected will be processed and protected in accordance with data protection laws.

Where we know that an individual needs information in a different format, we will make sure that it is provided in a way that is understandable and accessible. We will review this information regularly through tenancy sign-ups, tenancy contact visits, surveys, and by acting on information we receive regularly.

Roles and responsibilities

We want residents to be safe. As the owner of the buildings and as the Principal Accountable Person (PAP), we have a responsibility to make sure that the building meets fire and structural safety requirements. Everyone has a role in keeping buildings safe, whether a resident or a leaseholder.

Every resident must:

- Follow all the rules in their tenancy agreement or lease.
- Avoid doing anything that might make the building unsafe.
- Not damage or tamper with safety equipment like fire alarms.
- Ensure that any waste is not left in communal areas at any time except for designated bin store areas only.
- Ensure that any bulky waste is not left in the communal areas of buildings and suitable arrangements are made for prompt removal and disposal.
- Provide access to your home for critical safety checks such as assessing fire doors.
- Avoid allowing non-residents or unwanted visitors to enter into their building

- via tailgating or otherwise.
- Provide household information that will enable us to identify where further support may be required and tell us if things change.
- If Karbon asks for information to keep the building safe, it must be provided.
- Promptly report any building safety concerns to Karbon.

Our approach

To ensure resident engagement and communications are well coordinated, we've outlined the groups below that will ensure this strategy:

- Remains fit for purpose for all residents, staff, and all other stakeholders.
- Encourages participation, empowerment and collaboration with residents and staff on all appropriate building safety matters, risk and decision making.
- Complies with and is aligned to the relevant regulations.
- Is regularly reviewed and improved where required.
- Clearly defines what residents should expect, what this means, and how we will deliver it.

Karbon Residents Committee

Responsible for reviewing any feedback posed by Karbon residents and leaseholders, including feedback and actions from the Karbon Scrutiny Bank.

Building Safety Panel

The Panel is made up of customer representatives from Byker and Felling who work alongside colleagues from our Building Safety and Customer Engagement teams. They are responsible for acting as a sounding board and allowing two-way conversations between residents and Karbon. They discuss building safety related issues and help Karbon in meeting certain requirements set out in the Building Safety Act.

Karbon Group Customer Committee

The Committee has responsibility for overseeing customer experience and engagement and ensuring that customers have their voice heard. They are also integral in ensuring the needs and safety of customers are at the heart of the Board's decision making; and that Karbon's performance is monitored to strive for excellence across its services. They will be responsible for reviewing any recommendations in relation to building safety.

Byker Customer Committee

The Committee includes a minimum of four customers. They are responsible for overseeing the quality of services delivered by Karbon and ensuring the Community Pledge is delivered. Committee Members give their time, skills and expertise to help BCT achieve its strategic objectives.

Measuring and monitoring

We commit to share this strategy with residents and homeowners in our high-rise residential buildings that are aged 16+ and in a format that is accessible, clear, and understandable. Progress on the strategy will be reported annually to all residents.

We will measure:

- Overall satisfaction that Karbon Homes keeps residents safe in their home.

- Number of reports of building safety issues reported.
- Number of complaints received about building safety.
- Proportion of residents who state that if there was a fire in their building, they would know what to do.
- Proportion of residents who state that if they had any building safety concerns about their building, they would know who to contact.
- Proportion of residents who state that they feel safe from fire in their home.
- Proportion of residents who state that they feel happy that any building safety issues reported to Karbon will be resolved.

This strategy will be reviewed:

- At least every two years.
- After every consultation of this strategy.
- After a mandatory occurrence report.
- After the completion of significant material alterations to the building.

Complaints

We're always listening and ready to work hard to resolve concerns straight away. If we are unable to resolve the problem there and then, we'll undertake a full investigation to understand the facts. Complaints can be reported via www.karbonhomes.co.uk/complaints

Under the Building Safety Act 2022 a "relevant complaint" about building safety may relate to:

- A building safety risk to a specific building.
- The performance of an Accountable Person in fulfilling its duties under the Building Safety Act.

If a resident remains unhappy with the outcome of a complaint, it can be referred to the Building Safety Regulator by either Karbon or the complainant.

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Glossary

Building Safety Act 2022

The Building Safety Act is a law that aims to make buildings safer for people to live or work in. It requires better communication between residents and building managers about safety concerns, and it gives residents a stronger voice in decisions about their building's safety. It also ensures that important safety information is easily accessible to residents.

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

BSR is part of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and was established under The Building Safety Act 2022 to regulate higher-risk buildings, raise safety standards of all buildings, help professionals in design, construction, and building control, to improve their competence.

HRRB (high rise residential building)

The Building Safety Act and this strategy applies to buildings with at least two homes that are at least 18 metres in height or have at least seven storeys. These are sometimes referred to as higher risk residential buildings or HRRBs.

PAP (principal accountable person)

This is Karbon Homes. Each of these buildings must have a principal accountable person (PAP) with overall responsibility for ensuring building safety risks are being managed appropriately and statutory obligations are met.

FRA (fire risk assessment)

Building owners and landlords, like Karbon Homes, are required by law to carry out regular fire risk assessments on residential buildings. These routine checks look for issues that affect the safety of the building and everyone who lives in, works in or visits them. If any actions are needed, these are listed and prioritised and the building owner must carry them out.

Mandatory occurrence report

A mandatory occurrence report for building safety is a document that must be filled out whenever there's a safety incident or concern in a building. It's required by law and helps keep track of potential safety issues.

PCFRA (person-centred fire risk assessment)

PCFRAs are carried out to find out whether any individual living in a building is at a greater risk from fire. This could be a disability that makes it harder for them to evacuate or notice a fire alarm, or it might be that their home or lifestyle puts them at a higher risk.

PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plan)

If a PCFRA finds that an individual needs support to safely evacuate in an emergency, a PEEP should be agreed with the resident and made available to the emergency services. The PEEP will set out any actions needed to make sure the individual can evacuate safely.

Building Safety Action Plan

Clear communication

- **Fire risk assessments**
Provide fire risk assessments (FRA) to residents on request.
- **Safety information**
Write to residents and homeowners annually to provide clear building safety information.
- **Noticeboards**
Ensure there are effective noticeboards in the entrance areas to all HRRBs. Monitor these noticeboards to keep them up to date with safety information and campaign materials, community event invitations, safety contact information and how to report concerns.
- **Safety campaigns**
 - Review all Karbon building safety literature and web content regularly, consulting with residents on content and format through Karbon's various engagement channels.
 - Publish regular safety information in the customer e-newsletter Take Five and customer magazine, At Home with Karbon.
 - Publish and share regular safety information on Karbon's website and customer facing social media channels (Facebook).
 - Work with local fire services to share their safety information and partner with them on national and regional campaigns.

Sharing and collecting information

- **Easy ways to report/comment/suggest**
 - Promote easy ways for residents to flag concerns, raise issues or make complaints about safety – anonymously if preferred – offering a range of methods (digital and traditional).
 - Promote the physical suggestion boxes across all HRRBs and checked regularly by Karbon.
 - Include information in annual fire safety leaflets with a clear request to tell us about any issues that might put someone

at a greater risk from fire, so we can work with the fire service to carry out a person-centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA). Our PCFRA process will flag any new customers who may need PCFRAs.

- **Colleague training**
 - Put in place processes and training to make sure any safety concerns that come into Karbon are identified, properly recorded, actioned, with our action reported back to residents.
- **Statutory consultations and notifications**

Write to residents with notifications and consultations about building works and any proposed changes to building management which will affect building safety.
- **Annual survey/questionnaire**
 - Create an annual survey will be sent to all HRRB residents asking about safety and asking for suggestions or safety concerns.
 - Measure and monitor how safe customers feel in their building, and how satisfied they are with the information they get via the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) data and resident surveys.
- **Stakeholders**

Maintain a list of relevant stakeholders for each HRRB to ensure we keep them informed and engaged.

Community engagement

- **Community events**

Carry out regular engagement activities/events for residents to participate in such as scheme walkabouts, building safety panel meetings, demonstrations of building and fire safety works (where suitable and possible) which all have a focus on building and fire safety and listening to residents.
- **Customer visits**

Continue to promote the importance of being in for our customer contact visits. These visits will also be used to discuss and understand any safety issues or suggestions with residents (reporting any feedback to the appropriate team at Karbon) and are an opportunity for customers to identify any information that may be helpful to us in keeping residents safe and well.

- **Things residents can do to stay safe**

We'll be clear about what residents need to do to help keep their home and building safe, and how to participate in building safety matters (e.g., through flagging/taking action on safety issues).

Working together

- **Fire service partnership**

Work with the fire service to invite them to scheme / building events and meetings.

- **Residents' building safety panel**

- Work with residents to strengthen the building safety panel and any other engagement opportunities linked to building and fire safety.
- Aim to attend scheme events regularly to listen, agree safety actions and report back on promises. We will encourage residents to have regular safety items on their associations' agenda.
- Encourage residents to join Karbon's resident scrutiny group and other engagement groups.
- Encourage residents to take a lead role in the building safety panel and as a building safety champion for their schemes.
- Support residents to undertake basic safety training where appropriate.