

## Colchester Borough Homes

### Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

#### Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/ decision to be assessed: CBH Fire Safety Policy

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

The aim is to ensure that, if possible, outbreaks of fire do not occur and that, when outbreaks do occur, they are rapidly detected, effectively contained, and quickly extinguished. This means that overall fire safety will depend on physical factors such as building construction, design, and maintenance, together with equipment and furnishings and proper use and maintenance of detection and alarm systems, and on local policies and staff training for handling emergencies.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Updating the board and senior management of the current state of fire safety in all premises for which CBH is responsible
- Ensuring the effective upkeep of the fire safety policy established for all the premises Colchester Borough Homes have responsibility for.
- Preparing regular fire safety updates to the board as part of the health and safety report.
- Facilitating all staff to participate in fire safety training and fire drills/instruction in accordance with this policy. With enhanced training being given to nominated fire marshals and others on request of management
- Review reports and investigate all fire incidents.
- For advising on all matters concerning fire precautions and situations in premises which do not conform to recognised fire standards or requirements, and for preparing and delivering reports containing recommendations for improvements.
- For advising on fire precautions arrangements for new or altered existing premises.
- For liaising, with the Fire Authority and other relevant statutory bodies having advisory or mandatory consequences over fire precautions in premises.
- For ensuring that periodic visual inspections of premises under the control of CBH are carried out.

- For ensuring that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments are undertaken as outlined in this policy

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so what are they?

**Emergency response procedures**

Detailed guidance to explain the building evacuation strategy and how the decision is made for each building.

**Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS)**

PEEP guidance updated to reflect the requirements for when a PEEP is needed for employees, tenants, and visitors.

**Fire precautions and testing**

The RRFSO places duties to ensure Fire door inspections are completed, this process has now been detailed in the policy for each building type, and team responsible for the inspections.

**Emergency lighting**

Monthly emergency lighting checks (flick test) put back in place at sheltered schemes.

**Controlled access to restricted areas**

New access control programme implemented to allow CBH more control in specific areas.

**Compartmentation**

This section has been added to the policy detailing the requirements of compartmentation within our buildings, and the process of completing and signing off the works.

**Fire risk assessments**

The fire risk assessment process for sheltered schemes and general needs blocks sets out FRA requirements and assessment frequencies.

**Fire safety awareness communication**

To provide easy to understand fire safety information to CBH tenants.

**Incident reporting**

To ensure all fire incidents are documented and reported to senior management, The Board and Colchester council.

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- All employees
- Customers
- Public
- Contractors/sub-contractors
- Any other persons affected by CBH business

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

- To comply with fire legislation
- Safe working environments
- Clear understanding of all fire procedures detailed within the policy
- No fire incidents that could have been prevented due to lack of communication /understanding of the policy

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- Essex County Council
- Essex Fire & Rescue
- Colchester Borough Council

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff?

*If so provide details and include a link to the document or source where available.*

No

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'<sup>1</sup> and those who do not<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

(c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not<sup>3</sup>

Not all policies help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do.

*Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to meet the 'general duty':*

The policy helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation' in the following way(s):

- This policy helps us to ensure that we take in to account all individual needs and vulnerabilities by method of risk assessment and personal emergency evacuation plans.

The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):

- This policy helps us to ensure that we take proper account of individual needs and vulnerabilities. This can help us to advance equality of opportunity between, for example, people with a disability or other protected characteristics.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):

- This policy's aim is not in place to achieve the above.

9. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

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<sup>2</sup> This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

<sup>3</sup> This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	x	The CBH fire safety policy and its processes aim to benefit all groups, with special measures in place for the more vulnerable and those above 60.		
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)		None identified		None identified
Disability	Physical	X	The CBH fire safety policy and its related processes may particularly benefit more vulnerable groups including people with disabilities.		None identified
	Sensory	X	As above		None identified
	Learning	X	As above		None identified
	Mental health issues	X	As above		None identified
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity <sup>4</sup>	White		This policy does not disproportionately benefit any specific ethnic group.		None identified
	Black		As above		None identified
	Chinese		As above		None identified
	Mixed Ethnic Origin		As above		None identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers		As above		None identified
	Other – <i>please state</i>				
Language	English not first language		None identified	X	This policy is produced in English – see comments in section 10 below.

<sup>4</sup> National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	x	Women who are pregnant may be more vulnerable at work – the health and safety at work act and the regulatory reform fire safety order ensures all risks must be identified and controlled accordingly: pregnancy risk assessments and Personal emergency evacuation plans are in place to mitigate the risks.		None identified
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)		No disproportionate benefits have been identified to apply to any religious groups.		None identified
Sex	Men		No disproportionate benefits have been identified to apply specifically to men		None identified
	Women		No disproportionate benefits have been identified to apply specifically to women		None identified
Gender Reassignment <sup>5</sup>	Transgender/ Transsexual <sup>6</sup>		No disproportionate benefits have been identified to apply specifically to this group		None identified
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian		No disproportionate benefits have been identified to apply specifically to this group		None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership		None identified		None identified

<sup>5</sup> The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to.

<sup>6</sup> It is generally held that people who are *transgender* disguise their features or clothing to resemble their preferred sex, whereas people who are *transsexual* wish to change their body to completely resemble their preferred sex.

10. If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?

***People who do not have English as a first language; employees are able to assist any person to access suitable translation services***

11. Could the policy discriminate<sup>7</sup> against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly<sup>8</sup>? **No**

### **Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment**

12. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No negative impacts have been identified <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
<b>Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed X</b>	<b>Sign off screening and finish.</b>
Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

13. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- David Barthram – Health, Safety, Environmental & CDM Manager

14. Date of completion: February 2021

15. Date for update or review of this screening: February 2024 or when the policy is reviewed

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<sup>7</sup> The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.

<sup>8</sup> If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete this section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.