



# **Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy**

*First Draft 29 January 2024 KLC*

## Contents

1. Version details.....	1
2. Introduction and objectives.....	1
3. Internal and external context.....	2
4. Our approach.....	2
4.1. Information and understanding.....	3
4.2. Resident and landlords' responsibilities.....	5
4.3. Action to take in the event of fire.....	6

### 1. Version details

Document information	
Version	v.0.1
Sponsor	
Leaseholder	
Authors	Resident Engagement Team
Sign off	BCML Directors
Timescale	
Review date	

Version control	Amendment made	By	Date
v.0.1	New DRAFT document	KLC	29 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
v. 0.2	Changes to Section 2:: PAP name Changes to 4.2.and 4.3: Evacuation	KLC	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024
v.0.3	Re-numbering section 4 sub-paras	KLC	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2024

## 2 Introduction and objectives

The **Building Safety Act 2022**, known as the **Building Safety Bill**, introduced some new legal duties related to high-rise buildings and residents' safety.

As a result, it's now a legal duty for building owners to engage with residents and consider their views when making building safety decisions

But it's not enough for residents just to be safe. They should feel safe too. And this means they need to feel well informed and listened to.

### **Aims of Resident Engagement in the Building Safety Bill**

New legislation introduced by the Building Safety Act (BSA) aims to make buildings safer.

To achieve this, lawmakers have put residents at the heart of building safety to change the industry culture.

Previously, safety measures could have been viewed simply as building owners keeping the regulators satisfied. Now, residents' opinions, input and concerns around building safety must be properly considered. It's also essential for building owners to keep residents informed and establish accessible, clear complaint procedures.

After all, the residents' lives are at stake should something go wrong.

Increased 'resident engagement' around building safety should achieve two aims:

- Building owners consider residents when making safety decisions
- Residents feel their concerns are being addressed

Which should result in residents being safer and feeling safer in their homes.

This is Berwick Court Management Limited's ("BCML") first *Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy* document focusing on our development s a whole which is classified as High-Rise Residential Buildings / Higher-Risk Buildings("HRBs") This is largely based on the ease of evacuation. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower a new regulatory regime is being introduced in the UK for all HRBs.

The **strategy document** is a legal requirement for BCML to engage and communicate with all residents and leaseholders on safety information and on any safety decisions BCML need to take: our **Resident Engagement Strategy**. ("RES")

This document sets out our approach to give residents and leaseholders specific information and also to involve them in certain building safety decisions. It is our first step towards meaningful engagement with residents and leaseholders about the safety of their homes.

**Note:** in this document we use the terms "residents" and "leaseholders". In order to be less 'wordy' we will mostly use the term "residents" to cover both residents and leaseholders, unless the aspect of a building safety decision is specific to the 'leaseholders of residential units' when we will make that clear  
A leaseholder is the legal owner of the property.

The key aims of this strategy are to make sure all residents and leaseholders feel able to play a real part in ensuring their development is, and continues to be safe.

To achieve that we need to:

- **make clear the responsibilities** of BCML and the responsibilities of residents to ensure their homes remain safe.
- **make clear the benefits** to residents for them to engage in building safety
- identify **what** building safety information residents want to receive
- identify **in what format** they want to receive it
- consider **how often** we provide residents and leaseholders with building safety information and decisions
- regularly examine and set out what improvements we could make in **how we engage** with residents in relation to the safety of their home;

### What Are The Legal Duties?

The Building Safety Authority (“BSA”) created a new duty-holder role for high-rise buildings (HRBs): **the Accountable Person**.

The **Accountable Person (“AP”)** has to register the building as an HRB. The AP is the individual responsible for building safety and the repair of any common parts of the buildings.

*Common parts are those used by residents, such as:*

- *the structure and exterior of the building*
- *corridors*
- *lobbies*
- *staircases*

They must also **promote resident engagement** by:

- Preparing a Residents’ Engagement Strategy and related complaints procedure
- Reviewing and revising the Residents’ Engagement Strategy

The AP isn’t always the building owner; for some residential buildings, there might be more than one AP. Where multiple APs exist, there must be one designated the Principal Accountable Person (“PAP”). who will be the named main contact.

The directors of BCML as a whole are the ‘Accountable Person’ for our development the purposes of the legislation, *with Stephen Dominey, a director of BCML, as the named contact (“PAP”)*

## 3 Internal and external context

BCML has established an internal team to implement these recommendations. A

large emphasis has been placed on how leaseholders/ landlords engage with residents/tenants on building safety.

This Strategy outlines the approach BCML will take to engage with and involve residents in the safety of their homes.

The Grenfell Inquiry – Phase 1 Report was published on the 30 of October 2019 with 16 recommendations for either landlords or the London Fire Brigade to review.

BCML will establish a new Building Safety team and we will be reviewing these recommendations and overseeing what remedial work is required to our buildings.

## 4 Our approach

This Resident Engagement Strategy will detail our approach to engaging and involving leaseholders and residents about building safety across all of the development. We will add further plans tailored to buildings where there seems to be a particular need, explaining how the strategy will work in practice for each building.

It will be developed in conjunction with residents and leaseholders, with openness and transparency, to ensure it addresses needs and requirements. It details what residents can expect in terms of communication and how they can get involved and raise concerns.

### Difference between Building Security and Building Safety

The **security** of a building may arise, for example, the fire door at the front of the building has been propped open.

This may then impact on the **safety** of the building.

The following section outlines our intended approach to engaging with residents around building safety. There are three main strands:

- 4.1 Information and understanding;
- 4.2 Resident and /leaseholders/landlords' responsibilities;
- 4.3 Action to take in the event of a fire;

### 4.1 Information and understanding

As the Accountable Person, BCML has a duty to

- provide the latest version of the Strategy to residents and leaseholders within the development.
- tell residents and leaseholders about any building safety work
- tell residents and leaseholders about who will carry out the work

#### **4.1.1 Communication and engagement**

We will use a range of ways to communicate with residents so we cater as much as possible for the diverse needs of residents. We will endeavour to make adequate provisions for any residents, for example, who have a physical or visual impairment, have other disabilities or who do not speak English ( on request.)

Examples of the way in which we can communicate with residents may include, but is not limited to:

1. Email
2. Website
3. WhatsApp groups
4. Text
5. Notice boards
6. Letter
7. Pop-in sessions to talk about building safety
8. Online meetings, e.g. Zoom, Facetime

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We will also ensure we cater for residents who may prefer face-to-face meetings to discuss the strategy and the specific action plan for their building.

- Following all meetings information provided will be made accessible to each resident and leaseholder.
- If there are any significant changes to the strategy or action plan, we will update residents on an annual basis (or more frequently if required).
- Where we have identified a serious issue with a building affecting the safety of all residents, we will keep residents updated on a monthly basis in relation to any interim safety measures necessary, remedial works and further investigations that are required. These updates may be in the form of monthly meetings and/or updates on our website and/or monthly newsletters, etc
- **A fire action notice is installed within each building.**

### **Get Involved in the safety of your building**

We will encourage residents and leaseholders to get involved in decision-making relating to the safety of their building.

If you would like to get involved, the Resident Engagement Team welcome your input. You can contact them directly at [get-involved-RET@berwickcourt.co.uk](mailto:get-involved-RET@berwickcourt.co.uk).

Building safety is the responsibility of all residents, as well as of BCML as the day-to-day-managing body.

All BCML directors are/have been leaseholders; many are on-site residents. Each director of BCML offers his/her services on a completely voluntary basis

While we will make every effort to ensure that all residents are aware of key building safety messages it is important that this is reinforced by residents. Where residents see neighbours acting in a way that suggests they have not known about, understood or remembered building safety information they should remind them of it as a matter of priority, and, if necessary, let the RE Team know as well if the neighbour has not yet been included in the engagement process.

We will aim to consult with residents to identify a workable process that allows us to measure how successful our strategy is and how satisfied the residents are with it. We will commit to reviewing feedback from residents so that we are continually improving the service they receive from us.

#### **4.1.2 Clarity and accessibility of information**

We will proactively provide all residents with the information they need to help them understand the protections that are in place to keep their building safe.

We will ensure that the information provided is sufficient, relevant and in a format

that can be understood. As a standard practice we will provide:

- a. what measures we have in place to prevent potential fire and building safety risks to residents, e.g. fire precautions;
- b. information for residents explaining how they can reduce the risk of fire in individual flats e.g. by not storing flammable materials;
- c. a process for reporting a fire risk and/or raising any other safety concerns;
- d. procedures to follow where a fire occurs in the building, including evacuation;
- e. the different roles and responsibilities of the Accountable Person, Building Safety Team and residents;
- f. key information such as the contact details of the Accountable Person and Building Safety Team.

Residents will also be entitled to obtain further and more detailed information about the safety measures in their building if they wish and such information may include (but is not limited to):

- a. full, current and historical fire risk assessments;
- b. planned maintenance and repairs schedules;
- c. outcome of building safety inspection checks;
- d. how assets in the building are managed, e.g. frequency of lift maintenance;
- e. details of preventive measures, e.g. smoke alarms; fire protection measures in place, e.g. fire extinguishers;
- f. information on the maintenance of fire safety systems;
- g. the fire strategy for the building;
- h. structural assessments;
- i. planned and historical changes to the building.

We will put in place a process for dealing with information requests.

We will aim to provide residents with the documents they request within one month.

This process will also provide guidelines to enable vulnerable residents to nominate an advocate, care-giver or representative who can request more detailed information on their behalf. We will not release draft reports, which by their nature are likely to be subject to change but will aim to release information as swiftly as possible.

Residents who have a concern about building safety can contact our directors, who will then follow our repairs procedures and arrange for a relevant contractor to attend. Any resident who is not happy with the outcome and wishes to escalate the issue can submit a complaint. We will be looking to introduce a new role of Building Safety Manager, as outlined in the Hackitt report, who would / could deal with these issues.

#### **4.1.3 How safety information should be provided at the start of the tenancy**

When a new tenant or new leaseholder moves into the development we will ensure that a Fire Action Notice is available, along with details of our Resident Engagement Strategy document.

Within six weeks of a new occupancy starting we will contact residents to discuss building safety and will answer any queries they may have at that point.

## 4.2 Resident and landlords' responsibilities

Residents have an obligation to work with us to keep their building safe and to let us know of any safety concerns they have identified following the process outlined in this strategy.

Residents are expected to provide reasonable access by allowing us to carry out fire safety inspections, and carry out any necessary works for several types of safety inspections (such as fitting fire alarms) or undertaking fire and structural safety-related maintenance. Where information or access is required, we will always aim to provide the resident with reasonable notice. Where access is not provided, we will try several measures to gain access to the property with the final measure being legal action and forced entry. We will look to recover the costs of such legal action directly from the resident or leaseholder.

We have a 'zero-tolerance' policy for possessions left in communal areas.

Any items stored or left in communal areas may be removed and disposed without further notification to the residents concerned.

### Vulnerable Residents

As a Higher-Risk Building, we establish specific vulnerabilities for residents using a combination of data held on internal systems and questionnaires completed by each flat. We will produce a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) for any resident requiring it. The PEEP is held on site in a "Premises' Information Box which the fire brigade have access to in case of an emergency.

We will work with the local fire service to electronically provide any information they require about the building.

### GDPR ??

In line with our process for reporting safety concerns, any legitimate concerns will be treated seriously, and remedial action will be taken to rectify the issue.

### 4.2.1 Encouraging residents to keep their buildings safe

We will ensure that residents are empowered to play an effective role in making sure that their building is, and remains, safe. This includes identifying and reporting hazards that may impact on the safety of the building, and meeting their responsibilities to ensure their own safety and that of their neighbours.

Leaseholders are encouraged to assess the needs of their property's residents, especially those who may be vulnerable (such as young children or someone with a disability). We will encourage them to make sure they understand the action plan for their building so they know what they should do in the event of an emergency.

Upon advice from fire brigades we do not provide fire safety equipment (such as fire

blankets and fire extinguishers) within residents' flats or in corridors. The Fire Service advise that unless individuals have the relevant training on the use of fire safety equipment then they are encouraged not to attempt to fight the fire but to close all fire doors to contain the fire and follow the action plan for their building.

Residents are also encouraged to consider the wellbeing of their neighbours in the building and recognise that their own actions may put the lives of others at risk.

For example, residents should ensure they do not prop open any communal fire doors and they do not store items in the communal corridors or on landings which may impede an escape route in the event of an emergency.

Residents with balconies should not clutter them with too many items or plants. Bear in mind that your balcony may be used as a means of escape from a fire.

Residents must seek permission if they wish to make any changes to their fire doors.

Residents who smoke should ensure they do so in a safe place and fully extinguish their cigarettes afterwards. Barbecues and patio heaters should never be used inside buildings, on balconies or in close proximity to any flammable material.

BCML also do not allow barbecues of any kind in the communal outside areas, or in car parks.

If residents see any neighbours acting in a way that suggests they have not been made aware of, understood or remembered building safety information they should remind them of it as a matter of priority. An example of this could be neighbours who are storing items in the communal hallway or neighbours who may be considered vulnerable. If residents are not comfortable discussing this themselves with their neighbours, they should report it as a building safety concern to the Building Safety Team.

#### **4.2.2 Improving communications on safety (i.e reporting safety concerns; works to the property)**

We will work in partnership with residents to ensure that they are involved in decisions about their building's safety. Where possible BCML will provide them with reasonable information on any works due to be carried out to their property or elsewhere in the development which might affect their property so they will have an opportunity to discuss with us.

If any resident feels their concerns have not been addressed, they can follow our formal complaints process to escalate the issue.

### **4.3 Action to take in the event of fire**

There is an action plan for each block with specific details for the action residents should take in the event of a fire. This information is contained on a Fire Action Notice which are on the walls in every building.

All of our buildings are designed to keep residents safe. Buildings are compartmented which means that they are built in such a way to contain a fire within a single room or multiple rooms. This limits the spread of fire, smoke and flue gases. One of the key safety measures to aid compartmentation is fire doors. It is important that you do not make alterations to fire doors within your home and also keep them free of obstruction which may prevent them from closing.

Fire Brigade advise it is best for our residents to keep fire doors closed to contain a fire rather risking injury trying to fight a fire themselves.

### **Automatic Opening Vents**

One of the windows on every landing has Automatic Opening Vents. These windows will open automatically across every floor of the block if smoke is detected. This is to clear the area of smoke which reduces ability to see the escape routes. The AOVs are tested every month. It is very important that you do not attempt to open these AOV windows manually as the mechanism could be damaged.

Most tall buildings are designed to contain fire, smoke and heat within individual homes for a long enough period of time to enable the Fire Brigade to extinguish the fire. In such buildings where it is safe for residents to vacate their home, we have a 'Get Out' policy. For any flat or block where this is not possible we will advise of evacuation plans based on our fire risk assessments.

#### **4.3.1 Understanding a building evacuation plan**

A building evacuation plan means that all residents must leave the building and go to the assembly point for the building in the case of an emergency.

We have a 'get out' policy in place. You may hear this referred to as a Full or Temporary Simultaneous Evacuation (TSE).

#### **4.3.2 Understanding what "Next place of safety" means do we have one?**

Any residents required to evacuate their homes should go to the "next place of safety". This means you should move away from the building to a place of safety from a fire or any falling debris.

#### **4.3.3 Evacuating a building safely**

If you need to vacate your building :

- Leave your flat and close the doors behind you. Where possible, you should close any fire doors behind you.
- Move as quickly but as safely as you can, and don't stop to investigate or pick up valuables.
- Use the stairs to make your way out of the building – **Do not use the lift.**
- Call 999 or 112 as soon as you are safe to do so – don't assume someone else has made the call.
- Once outside the building, residents must move away from the building and go to the nearest safest place.

The front of the building may be where the fire fighters and fire trucks will be operating. Residents must move away from the building and must not obstruct their access to the building.

If there is an incident occurring on the upper floors and glass is being blown out of the windows, the area below is the hazard zone where serious personal will happen. Residents must not remain in or near this area.

Once residents have left the building they must not re-enter until they are told to do so by the fire brigade.

#### **4.3.4 Responding to fire alarms and contacting the fire brigade**

If the fire or smoke alarm in your home sounds, call 999, ask for the fire service and follow their advice. If you hear the fire or smoke alarm sound in any communal area or a neighbour's home, call 999, ask for the fire service and follow the plan for your block.

#### **Fire Alarm Tests and Evacuation Test ?**

## APPENDICES

### **Glossary of terms used**

**High-Rise Residential Buildings / Higher-Risk Buildings (“HRBs”)** High Rise Buildings are defined as buildings with at least two residential units which are at least 18 metres in height or have at least 7 storeys. A Higher-Risk Residential Building is a building where the impact of a fire can be catastrophic

### **Business Safety Decision. (“BSD”)**

A Business Safety Decision is any decision made by an accountable person about the management of the building; the management of building safety risks or any other decision connected with the duties of an accountable person

### **Accountable Person (“AP/”) Principal Accountable Person (“PAP”)**

The Act calls a Principal Accountable Person (PAP) which it is recommended should be a Company, but they also ask that a specified person should be a point of contact for any queries that the Safety Regulator may have.

BCML is our PAP with Stephen Dominey, director, the nominated contact

*An Accountable Person is an organisation or individual who owns or has a legal obligation to repair any common parts of a building. In this case BCML (i.e. the directors) is the Accountable Person.*

### **PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)**

The purpose of a PEEP is to explain the method of evacuation to be used by a disabled or impaired person in each building. The PEEP will also record the safety plan, e.g. routes (corridors, stairs or refuges etc.)



## Personal Information Box (“PIB”\*)

### 5. Emergency Response Pack (ERP)

5.1 The PIB is a facility for fire-fighters and the content should be restricted to information relevant for the FRS during an incident. Unnecessary and unclear information could delay the FRS response.

Building plans should be A3 size and be encapsulated or placed inside plastic wallets so that they can stand up to the rigors of use.

There should be two sets of all plans.

The **Emergency Response Pack** contains information that is required for the purpose of operational firefighting and rescue.

Accordingly, the contents need to be “tailor made” for the building and residents in question, but should always comprise, **as a minimum** :

- a **log book** for the purpose of recording events that occur in respect of the PIB system including emergency use, system updates etc; •
- an **Off The Run’** notice containing details of any fire-fighting fixed installations not available for use and/or unresolved fire safety issues; •
- a **Summary of information** useful to the Fire & Rescue Service on arrival at an incident; •
- an **Orientation plan**, showing the location of the building in relation to surrounding buildings and other reference points (e.g. roads) and also water supplies; •
- a **building layout plan** showing the internal layout, including up to date floor plans; • a simple layout plan (if not provided in the Orientation plan) showing water supplies for firefighting including hydrants, emergency water supplies, wet riser supplies etc.; •
- **simple layout plans** showing facilities of particular relevance to operational firefighting and rescue including relevant information regarding any lift(s) intended for use by the FRS;
- **information on residents with any mobility impairment**, cognitive or sensory impairment(s); • significant fire safety issues – any compartmentation, external wall system or other fire safety issues which may affect fire behaviour in the premises; •
- a description of the **current evacuation strategy**, e.g., Stay Put, or Get Out (“ simultaneous evacuation”). The detail and examples of plans which cover the above components of the ERP is contained in the Appendices of this guide