



Keeping our tenants safe in their homes

Our approach to building safety



A changing building safety operating environment

With the recent implementation of the Building and Fire Safety Acts, we've seen the biggest change in building safety legislation in a generation.

The Building Safety Act was introduced in 2022 following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. It sets out clear lines of responsibility for building owners, which are reinforced and overseen by the Building Safety Regulator. The Building Safety Act focuses primarily on high-rise residential buildings and lays out a review of building regulations and fire safety.

Key areas of focus:

- We continue to deliver strong compliance on Building Safety including 100% on related Regulatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
- 82.9% of tenants (Low Cost Rented Accommodation) in the first 6 months of 2024/25 said they were satisfied that their home was safe. This is up from 80.8% last year.
- We have 5 buildings that are over 18 metres in height. All 5 building case files are ready and type 4 intrusion inspections have been completed as needed with no significant findings, and actions are either completed or programmed.
- Over the last 3 years we spent £62m on building safety-related works.

- We have an established Primary Authority Partnership Agreement with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFRS), which has resulted in:
 - » Zero enforcement notices issued by local fire authorities across our portfolio.
 - » There are no overdue fire risk assessment actions.
 - » A partnership approach on Fire Safety concerns, such as external wall system inspections through joint visits, 100% fire door inspection programmes, installation of Premises Information Boxes, sharing of building plans, Way Finding signage and various processes.
 - » We have registered all high-rise residential buildings with the WMFRS, Leicestershire and Staffordshire Fire Rescue Services which enables us to report any life critical fire safety defects.
 - » We have developed in partnership our Tenant Engagement Strategies ensuring they are tailored to each high-rise building.
 - » A 5-year Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) programme has been completed, with smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors put in place.
 - » A competency framework is in place for colleagues and external contractors, ensuring that those undertaking works in our high-rise building are fully competent.



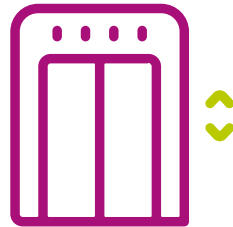
Tenant safety

Here's a snapshot of our compliance performance to March 2024:



Gas Safety checks

100% to 23,433 homes



Passenger Lift Servicing LOLER

100% to 143 lifts



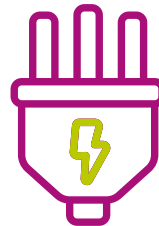
Water Hygiene Risk Assessments

100% to 230 buildings



Asbestos Inspections
in Communal Areas

**100% to 1,271
communal areas**



5-year Electrical
Safety Inspections

**99.99% to
30,382 homes**



Fire Risk Assessments
and actions

**100% to
1,480 blocks**

We keep our tenants safe by:

- » Completing fire door safety checks
- » Considering in Fire Risk Assessments External Wall Systems
- » Servicing and maintaining fire alarm and emergency lighting
- » Servicing and maintaining passenger lifts
- » Checking smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in tenant's homes
- » Keeping digital records of a building's history; known as the Property Digital Record (PDR)
- » Proactively ensuring future requirements are met
- » Overseeing our building safety activities through a Health and Safety Governance Group
- » Embedding plans to deal with emergencies; known as Emergency Response Plans (ERP)
- » Proactively engaging with tenants on building safety matters
- » Running various tenant communications campaigns – e.g. fire safety, smoke alarm testing and gas safety
- » Undertaking robust audit regimes to provide assurance on quality and compliance of key building components



Building Safety Competency Framework

To ensure all those responsible for the safety and maintenance of our buildings are competent in guaranteeing the health and safety of all those impacted by our work, we've developed two competency frameworks:

- Employee Competency Framework
- Contractor H&S Competency Framework

These frameworks cover a wide range of knowledge, expertise and minimum standards that we expect employees or contractors to meet when managing our buildings. Regular quality audits are undertaken to ensure these competencies are robustly followed.



Tenant engagement

Engaging with our tenants around the safety of our buildings is a vital part of our work and we do our best to ensure that where we need to make changes to our buildings, we involve tenants in the process.

It's important that we share important information and updates with tenants to work together to keep their homes and buildings safe. Over the last 6 months we have had several safety campaigns relating to building safety matters, including campaigns on fire safety, electrical safety and e-scooters.

Each year we carry out an annual building safety survey which is open to all tenants. This helps us understand how our tenants feel about the safety of their homes and buildings, and highlights any areas where we need to focus on for further improvements.

Our 23/24 Annual Building Safety Survey saw a variety of positive results and feedback, including:

- Perception and understanding of fire safety has improved. Knowledge of evacuation procedures has risen from 76% to 90%, and number of respondents feeling "very safe" has risen from 47% to 55%.
- Tenants' perception of electrical safety has seen a sharp rise, with 65% of respondents stating they feel "very safe" in 2024. In 2023 this figure was 52%.
- We have also seen a sharp rise in the perception of gas safety. In 2023, 46% of respondents claimed to feel "very safe", whilst in 2024 that figure was at 60%.
- Water safety is the only area where perception has remained static. 55% claimed to feel "very safe" in 2023, with 57% saying they felt this way in 2024.



Knowing our homes



Stock Condition Surveys



Energy Performance Certificate



Retrofit Assessments



Home Checker



Compliance Records



Repair Data



Tenancy Data

We make sure we understand our homes, by:

- Using HomeChecker when inspecting our homes during every officer visit, regardless of the reason for attendance, with over 90,000 forms already submitted.
- Undertaking stock condition surveys, with 100% already completed on the programme.
- Making sure all properties have a lodged EPC, with the current exception of only 4 homes.
- Having a proactive approach on silent tenants and our aim is to visit each home within 18 months.
- Utilising our extensive records on Building Safety in relation to installation, servicing and component lifecycles to prioritise component upgrades.

Our Property Digital Record (PDR)

In line with the requirements of the Building Safety Act we have created a PDR for each of our 5 high-rise buildings. Our PDR record-keeping system enables us to manage and store key information about our buildings. This includes:

- The health and safety file
- The building safety case report
- Our residents' engagement strategy
- Our mandatory occurrence reporting system process
- Information about refurbishments to the building during its life cycle
- Information about the building from previous owners (including any inspection reports and maintenance records)
- What standard the building was built to, for example, which building regulations were current at the time

Gathering and keeping this PDR information allows us to assess and manage building safety risks for the building, such as the spread of fire and structural failure.



Gaining Assurance

Key areas of assurance include:

Internally



Daily checks on our compliance programmes



Continuous auditing of samples each quarter



Monthly reconciliations of our compliance programmes to capture all new properties and those we have disposed



Annual triangulation exercise to ensure that our property portfolio and our compliance programmes align

Externally



Morgan Lambert
Gas, Electric



Cundall
LOLER



BDO
Auditors



ISHEM
Asbestos,
Water Hygiene



**West Midland
Fire & Rescue Service**
Fire (Primary authority partnership)

Our buildings above 18 metres

We have 5 high-rise buildings that are either 7 storeys in height or over 18 metres tall, which are registered with the Building Safety Regulator. All 5 have had suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessments carried out and we have developed comprehensive Building Safety Cases for each building.

These Building Safety Cases provide the overarching safety approach, including the spread of fire, structural integrity of the building, outlining the strategies for hazard identification, risk assessment and safety measures. This also includes other critical aspects such as detailed evidence and documentation of the safety assurance activities conducted at various stages of the building's life cycle and summarises the key information within the safety case file.

We have currently submitted a single application for the Building Assessment Certificate (BAC) for Crocodile Court Block Y and we are awaiting the invitation for the remaining 4.

Building Safety Manager (BSM) – Our Entity Group

Under the Building Safety Act building owners are to ensure a BSM is in place to effectively manage the safety of each high-rise building. We have implemented a BSM Entity Group to fulfil this role which is made up of a group of colleagues, each bringing specific expertise to meet the full requirements of the role.



Case Study 1

Tenant Support

Each year we attend our tenants' homes to undertake a number of safety inspections. It's important that in these visits we identify anything we can do to help keep our tenants warm, safe and secure.

This includes not just looking at our homes but also identifying anything we can do to support our tenants. During our safety checks we often identify tenants who may be struggling with the cost of living, leading to debt on their pre-payment meters and difficulties heating their homes.

In such cases we take the time to speak to the tenant to understand their situation and offer support through our Money Advice Team, who specialise in income maximisation and debt management.

Once the team receive a referral, they work with our tenants to fully understand their situation and then discuss all options available which could include advocacy, charity applications, issuing fuel vouchers and, where necessary, clearing the meter debt through our hardship fund.

In the first 6 months (April to September 2024) our Money Advice Team supported 79 tenants providing energy support totalling a value of

£5,000. We expect this to increase as we head into our winter season and, based upon last year's position, we anticipate the value to increase to approximately £25,000.

We've received positive feedback from our tenants regarding the support we provide, while undertaking our building safety activities:

“The (assistance) I got was very helpful.”

“The gas (support) was a good help considering I hadn't had it for so long, it was a blessing.”

“It was just (staff member) in general, he was very polite and made me feel at ease talking about my situation.”



Case Study 2

How we engage with tenants

Crocodile Court

Engaging with all tenants on building safety is extremely important, however there is an even greater emphasis on ensuring tenants in taller buildings have access to all the information they need about the safety of their home, and that they have a dedicated space to share any concerns about their building with us. Each of our in-scope buildings have their own bespoke engagement strategy based on the specific needs of tenants in that building.

Crocodile Court (Block Y) is 20.8m in height and consisting of 8 storeys, and 49 homes.

To ensure tenants can be kept updated we contacted everyone at Crocodile Court using a variety of methods (calls, emails, text and visits) to give them the opportunity to share their current perception of how safe their home was and to tell us how they would prefer us to engage and communicate with them when it comes to building safety. We combined this with the data we already know about our tenants at Crocodile Court.

We then created a dedicated space for all building safety matters for Crocodile Court, which you can view here: www.midlandheart.org.uk/crocodilecourt. Here tenants can view their safety case file, their resident engagement strategy and any other information about the safety of their building. They can also quickly report any changes to their vulnerability to us.

We know many tenants at Crocodile Court have a variety of communication needs so we also created a bespoke video that walks you through the building, and illustrates all the safety measures in place to protect tenants in case of a fire. This was shared with residents through leaflets, posters and QR codes. We continue to visit Crocodile Court each quarter to discuss any questions or concerns tenants may have about their safety.

Case Study 3

Our Retrofit Sprinkler Programme

An extra line of defence against fire

Although our buildings fully met the required safety standards, we found that some of our services would benefit from the additional protection offered by having a sprinkler system fitted.

We fitted 13 blocks of flats with sprinklers and the survey feedback showed that:

- 93% of tenants said they feel safer having this extra line of protection against fire spread
- 94% satisfaction with the sprinkler installation works

Here is some other feedback from our tenants who benefitted from the new sprinkler systems:

"I have been here for 13 and a half years, and always felt safe. However, these sprinkler systems have made a big difference. I would really recommend them to everybody."

- **Andrew's House resident**

"They're a lifesaver in apartment blocks, especially with the elderly. We're all getting old, we could set a fire, we don't know. But if I did, it's only going to be in my flat, it's not going to affect anybody else and it's only going to be in the one room."

- **Andrew's House resident**





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