



Important Health and Safety information December 2023

Loft space

Loft spaces should always be kept clear and no personal items stored, as if work needs to be carried out, it is essential our Housing Repairs Team and contractors can access the space without restriction.

The key reasons for this are:

- Loft boards and flooring in the loft or roof space are not designed to hold or store items as they cannot take heavy weight.
- The horizontal rafter or ceiling joist timbers in your loft are there purely to hold up the ceiling below. Items stored in the loft could cause the ceiling to start to bow resulting in cracking which could potentially result in your ceiling failing and collapsing.
- If accessing the loft/roof space, there is a risk of falling through the ceiling. It is very easy when moving around in the loft to miss the ceiling joists resulting in standing on the actual ceiling (which will not take the weight of a person). The result would be a fall to the lower floor level of some eight feet or more, which could result in serious consequences.
- An untidy or cluttered loft could promote a pest infestation resulting in damage to your belongings and the fabric of the building.
- If there were to be a fire in your home then excessive items stored, in your loft such as especially old electronics, plastic toys and other combustible items could act as fuel and potentially allow the fire to spread more quickly and cause more damage.
- Items being stored can also have an impact on the insulation performance and consequently have an effect on your heating bills.

High Peak Borough Council are not liable for any items that are stored in the loft space of your home and any damage caused to the loft area could be rechargeable.

Do you have an escape plan? If not, we recommend that you put one in place...

- The best escape route is usually the normal way in and out of your home.
- Think of any difficulties you may have getting out to a place of safety.
- Keep all routes including stairs clear of obstructions, such as pushchairs, toys, or bikes.
- Do you know where your keys are?

Decide where the keys to doors and windows should be kept and always keep them there. Ideally, this should be close to the door or window (whilst keeping security in mind) not in a bag away from the door. Make sure everyone in your household knows where they are.

Plan for a second escape route, in case the first one is blocked, how else could you escape the building if you needed to quickly?

If you are not sure how to escape your property, then you can book an appointment for Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to attend and complete a home safety plan.

PEEPs for less Ambulant tenants

Escape plans for disabled, older or vulnerable people

What is a PEEP?

The purpose of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (also known as a PEEP) is to provide people who cannot get themselves out of a building on their own with an evacuation plan in an emergency.

Do you need a PEEP?

If you cannot leave your home unaided in an emergency, then you will need a PEEP.

A PEEP may be needed for someone with an impairment or disability such as:

- Mobility impairment
- Sight impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- You may be dependent on equipment like an oxygen tank which you would need help with
- A medical condition or injury which might cause them to need assistance to evacuate safely.

You should contact your local Housing Officer to discuss the implementation of a PEEP.

Additionally, you may require a PEEP on a temporary basis. If you have broken your leg for example, you may use a wheelchair or walking aid for a period of time until you recover.

Please make your Housing Officer aware of this or any other temporary mobility issues.

Why a PEEP is important?

Tenants details who are known to need additional support, within or Retirement Living Complexes and General Needs accommodation are held securely by the Housing Team and a de-personalised version is held within the (Premises Information 'Red Box'). These are where Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and or our staff can access the detail to identify the need for assistance in an emergency evacuation.

Depending on the overall level of support that you need, you may be eligible for further support following an assessment from High Peak Borough Council.

You can also request a home fire safety visit from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service who might also suggest extra help and offer support from other organisations.

Whose responsibility is a PEEP?

We take our obligations to fire safety extremely seriously. It is our responsibility to ensure the process for our tenants to self-identify that they may require a PEEP is accessible and then to implement the PEEP assessment.

How we use the information

Some of our tenants may have concerns about how this personal information is stored. It is intended use is solely to help in case of an emergency. We are bound by data protection law, so no personal data beyond the number of the property and number of affected persons will be kept in the Premises Information Boxes or held by HPBC without consent.

Additional guidance

The guidance below is designed to inform you of how we aim to keep you safe in your home. It focuses on a few key areas which we want to remind you about.

Please read this carefully and if you need any further advice or assistance, please contact your Housing Officer, for guidance on statutory servicing schedules please contact Alliance Norse on 0800 030 8666.

Fire Doors

To a certain extent all closed doors will hold back smoke, flames and heat from a fire should one occur. This will provide you with the time needed to escape from the premises. Fire doors, or more accurately fire-resisting or fire-rated doors, are specifically designed, manufactured, and tested to be able to withstand a fire for a certain amount of time – usually 30 minutes.

They should not be confused with **final exit doors**, which are the doors designed to allow you to exit from a building and which often are fitted with push bars or push pads.

Fire doors may be found in common areas, such as across corridors or on staircases, or as flat front doors.

They can be recognised as they:

- Will have a seal fitted round either the edge of the door or in the frame, and letter box where one is fitted
- Will be fitted with a self-closing device, unless it is a cupboard door etc.
- Will have at least three hinges and a positive latching mechanism, enabling the door to close to the rebate of the door frame
- If it is a cupboard door, will be fitted with a notice advising it must be kept locked shut
- If it has any glazing this will be fire resisting to BS6026

You can help us to keep you safe – never:

- Remove, disengage, or tamper with self-closing devices
- Prop or wedge fire doors open
- Damage fire doors or try to repair or fit them yourself
- Drill or cut into your flat entrance door or alter or repair it yourself

- Allow others, including visitors etc, to damage or tamper with fire doors

A flat fire door inspection and improvement programme, for retirement living complexes and general needs accommodation where two properties share a communal area, commenced during 2023, follow up inspections will take place annually.

Please allow our contractors access to carry out the inspections, replace doors, and please report any faulty or damaged fire doors or self-closing devices to Alliance Norse immediately on 0800 030 8666.

Cladding

In late 2018 the Government changed building regulations to ban the use of combustible materials in the external walls of buildings over 18m in height. They introduced a requirement that all materials in new high-rise buildings must achieve an A1 or A2 rating under European classifications.

High Peak Borough Council does not have any housing accommodation over 11 meters high and our Assets Team have confirmed our housing properties do not have any cladding of concern as part of their construction.

The Council is engaging specialist assessors to undertake what is termed a fire risk appraisal of the external wall construction and balconies in accordance with Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 9980.

External wall inspections will take place in year 1 and thereafter every three years unless there is a fire or change to the building. Such inspections will take place during late 2023-early 2024.

Retirement Living Complexes and Purpose-built General Needs accommodation

If you live in a Retirement Living Complex or purpose-built General Needs accommodation to reduce the risk of fire spreading the walls, doors and floors are all sturdily built and designed to stop fire and smoke spreading.

This is known as compartmentation and each dwelling becomes its own fire-resistant box.

Given the age of some of our properties, the Council is also planning to carry out intrusive compartmentation surveys to confirm compartmentation standards in the older general needs blocks, and in those general needs blocks that are not purpose-built flats. We will contact you once this programme of work is about to commence.

The Council undertake annual fire risk assessments and monthly fire safety checks of communal areas.

Electrical Safety

Portable electrical appliances in communal areas of General Needs Accommodation and Retirement Living Complexes are checked annually by a competent person.

Fixed electrical installation checks (the hard wiring) are carried out every 5 years, we have a legal responsibility to carry out an electrical inspection in your home to make sure your wiring is safe.

A qualified electrician will carry this out, and we will write to you in advance to let you know the date of the safety check. If this is unsuitable for you, you can arrange a more convenient time.

Help us to help you by giving us access when we need it to ensure that your wiring is safe.

Failure to allow us access to your home to carry out this check is a breach of your Tenancy

Agreement and may result in legal action being taken against you.

Passenger Lifts

There are lifts within some of our properties. To ensure that our lifts are kept in good working order, they are serviced twice a year to ensure that they are safe for you to use.

Help us to help you by using the lifts responsibly and reporting any lifts that aren't working. If the lift breaks down when you are in it, press the alarm button and you will be connected to a responder.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting is provided in the communal areas of Retirement Living Complexes, and General Needs accommodation. Emergency lighting enables the safe, prompt, and efficient evacuation of spaces and buildings, not only in cases of blackout caused by power outage but when mains lighting may still be available.

Emergency lighting is checked monthly by Housing staff, a 6 monthly 1 hour check, and annual 3 hour drop down test is carried out by Alliance Norse or their agent.

If you highlight any emergency lighting that is faulty then please report this to Alliance Norse on 0800 030 8666.

Fire and Smoke Alarms

We are currently upgrading the fire alarms in our Retirement Living Complexes.

In domestic properties we recommend that you test your alarms once a week, by pressing the button until the alarm sounds on all of the units. If there is no sound from any of your alarms, please contact Alliance Norse on 0800 030 8666.

Fire alarms are tested quarterly where there is a linked system connected to a fire panel. Annual for domestic smoke alarms are tested as part of the gas safety check. Servicing is carried out by Alliance Norse or their agent.

Please do not tamper with any fire or smoke detection. **Any tenants found tampering will be in breach of the tenancy agreement and will be recharged.**

Fire Proofing-Roof Voids

When High Peak Borough Council carries out major roofing works, (through our contractor Alliance Norse) we engage with contractors who are members of the 'Competent Roofing Scheme'. This

government licensed scheme allows roofing contractors to self-certify that their work meets the requirements of The Building Regulations.

This also includes checking to ensure the fire proofing in the roof voids is not compromised, and a guarantee for the work carried out is given.

Gas Safety

If you smell gas, you should immediately phone the Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

We have a legal requirement to carry out annual checks on appliances such as boilers, cookers, and gas fires in your property.

By law, only engineers registered with Gas Safe are qualified to carry out these checks. All of those carrying out the gas safety checks will have an ID card. You should always be satisfied that the person is who they say they are before letting them enter your home. If you have any concerns, do not let them in. and can contact us to check if they are a genuine caller, we will be able to verify their identity.

We will write to you to in advance to advise of the date of your annual safety check. If this date is unsuitable for you, you can arrange a more convenient time. If you do not provide us with access to your property, we will instruct our contractor to isolate the gas supply to prevent the use of potentially unsafe and un-serviced appliances. This may involve forcing entry to your property and you will be responsible for any costs that are incurred. Please help us to help you by giving us access when we require it to ensure that your appliances are safe.

It is a requirement of your Tenancy Agreement that you provide access for these inspections.

Please do not tamper with any gas appliance, and if you highlight any faults with your gas appliances then please report this to your Housing Officer.

Solid Fuel

Tenants are no longer permitted to install solid fuel fires within their properties.

Existing fires will receive a 6 monthly chimney sweep but it remains the tenant responsibility to arrange for a competent engineer to service the fire. Any repairs relating to the fire highlighted during the sweep or repair will be arranged and paid for by the tenant.

Please ensure the correct fuel is being burnt as per your smoke control area rules.

Ground Source Heating

Where provided, ground source heating is serviced annually through Alliance Norse.

Fire extinguishers and blankets

These are provided in communal areas of our Retirement Living Complexes and General Needs Housing accommodation. These must only be used by trained staff, labels endorsing this fact are attached to the fire extinguishers.

An annual service of fire extinguishers and check of fire blankets take place by external contractors.

Please do not tamper with any firefighting equipment, and if you highlight any damage or removal of these please report this to your Housing Officer.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

In your tenancy agreement there is information on your role in maintaining and reporting fire and structural safety issues.

This includes:

- not leaving obstructions in corridors, walkways, or an entrance/exit to a building, or in front of fire doors
- not blocking lifts or staircases
- removing rubbish promptly
- not putting flammable items in bin chutes or internal bin storage areas
- not keeping fire doors open
- not keeping or charging mobility scooters in common areas
- not placing furniture or electrical equipment in corridors and common areas
- not smoking in common areas
- knowing the fire evacuation arrangements for your property (General Needs/Retirement Living Complex)

Fire Risk Assessment programme and signage

Due to upcoming changes in legislation the Council has to complete fire safety assessments on a monthly basis at properties where there are communal areas. We will be installing new fire safety notices in the near future. If you require any further information regarding fire safety please contact the Neighbourhoods team or the Council's Health and Safety Manager.