

High-Rise Residential Buildings:

Resident Engagement Strategy



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1. INTRODUCTION

Building safety refers to the measures that are in place to protect residents in buildings. These measures reduce and mitigate risks, such as the spreading of a fire, structural failures, and gas and electric hazards. We want residents of high-rise buildings to be central to decision-making where they live. This strategy sets out **Barnet Homes' / Opendoor Homes'** commitment to building safety, following the guidance set by the Government.

The aims of this strategy are to ensure all residents:

- feel safe in the buildings in which they live;
- are aware of the systems and controls we have in place to keep the building safe;
- know how to easily report any problems with their home or any part of the building that may impact on their or their neighbours' safety;
- are aware of the ways they can get involved and influence building safety and the decisions we make;
- know what we are doing in response to their feedback;
- are effectively communicated with in a way that residents find accessible and easy to understand; and
- know how to make a complaint if they feel their concerns are not being listened to.

We will provide a copy of this Resident Engagement Strategy to each resident of the building (over the age of 16) and it can also be found on our website (www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/about-us/our-policies / www.opendoorhomes.org/about/our-policies-and-strategies). A summary version of the strategy is also available on our website, which outlines the key information about our strategy and our approach.

2. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTEXT

Barnet Homes is the Arms-Length Management Organisation for the London Borough of Barnet, and is responsible for managing all of the council's social housing in the borough. We manage 16 high rise blocks and three higher risk buildings.

Opendoor Homes is the landlord for three high rise blocks containing 249 homes. They are managed on its behalf by Barnet Homes.

The Building Safety Act 2022, Fire Safety Act 2021, and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 were introduced following the tragic failures in building safety that led to the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. They are designed to take forward a fundamental reform of the building safety system and address the issues identified by Dame Judith Hackitt DBE in her independent review, Building a Safer Future.

These changes highlight the importance of residents feeling safe in their home, and ensure their views and concerns are listened to and acted upon. The key areas of change include:

- the introduction of a 'golden thread' of information to support duty holders to understand a building and the steps needed to keep both the building and people safe, now and in the future;
- clear responsibilities for individuals and organisations managing high-rise buildings;
- a stronger voice and better information for residents;
- greater oversight by the new Building Safety Regulator to make sure landlords are accountable.

Building safety legislation has created two roles to oversee the operation of the new building safety regime: the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and the Accountable Person. They are intended to provide a clear line of responsibility for matters relating to building safety defects

and will provide tenants and leaseholders with a point of contact for information about the safety of their buildings.

The Government has named the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as the new BSR. It will regulate buildings with seven storeys or that are 18 metres or higher, and either:

- have at least two residential units.
- are hospitals or care homes (during design and construction).

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

The primary function of the BSR is to oversee the safety and standards of all buildings; help and encourage the built environment industry and building control professionals to improve their competence and lead the implementation of the new regulatory framework for higher-risk residential buildings (HRRB).

The Accountable Person and Principle Accountable Person

The Accountable Person (AP) is the duty holder for occupied buildings. Where there is more than one Accountable Person, a Principal Accountable Person (PAP) is the duty holder. This role is defined as the person who is in possession of the common parts of a building, for example corridors or lobbies, or has the relevant repairing obligation.

The purpose of the AP or PAP is to create a clear line of responsibility for the safety of a building. Their core duties concern the assessment and management of building safety risks in their higher-risk residential building

The PAP has a number of duties, including the need to prepare a safety case report containing an assessment of building safety risk carried out by the APs and steps they have taken to address those risks or reduce the severity of incidents arising from them, and prepare a resident engagement strategy setting out how residents will be involved in building safety decisions.

The AP's duties include:

- Put measures in place to prevent building safety risks happening and reduce the severity of any incident that does happen;
- Report certain fire and structural safety issues or incidents;
- Engage with residents about the building's safety and perform duties relating to the resident engagement strategy;
- Keep, update, and provide information about the building for the building's safety case.

We have developed this strategy in partnership with residents, taking a joint approach to engagement with residents living in Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes properties. **Over X residents** who live in high rise buildings took part in telephone surveys about building safety. We also held focus groups and we asked involved residents to review our draft strategy. They gave useful feedback including about how we can best communicate and share information about to make sure we meet residents' diverse needs.

**We thank all those residents who took part in our surveys and focus groups.
Your feedback has helped shape this strategy.**

3. OUR COMMITMENTS

3.1 Communication and information

a) How we will communicate

We will provide information about the management of the building and communications about building safety issues. We will identify appropriate opportunities to share information about and raise resident awareness of building safety matters, including events such as Fire and Building Safety Awareness Month. We will consider different communication needs so that we engage appropriately with residents and make sure our information is accessible, and we will use the information we hold about our residents to do so.

The way we communicate will depend upon the type of information we are looking to share. Our methods of communication include:

- At new tenancy sign ups / New tenant visits
- On our main website
- On our Building Safety website and portal
- Through our social media
 - Facebook: [facebook.com/barnethomes](https://www.facebook.com/barnethomes)
 - X (formerly known as Twitter): [@barnethomes](https://twitter.com/barnethomes) / [@opendoorhomes](https://twitter.com/opendoorhomes)
 - YouTube: www.youtube.com/@barnethomes1560
- Noticeboards or Digital Information Screens in our buildings, where available
- Newsletters and leaflets
- Phone
- Letters
- Via text messages and email
- Face to face
- Pop up sessions/Door knocking
- QR codes for residents to quickly access information online, and to signpost where more information can be accessed

b) Where to access information

We will share some information proactively through our main website or through our Building Safety website and portal:

- Main website: www.barnethomes.org / www.opendoorhomes.org
- Building Safety website and portal: www.thebarnetgroup.org/buildingsafety

Other information we will make available if residents request it; we aim to do so within 10 working days of receiving a request.

Residents will be able to make requests through the following channels:

- The Contact Us page on our website: www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us / www.opendoorhomes.org/contact
- The Contact Us page on our Building Safety website: www.thebarnetgroup.org/buildingsafety/contact-us
- Accessing QR codes published in our newsletters or on noticeboards or Digital Information Screens in our residential buildings (where available)
- By phone: [020 8080 6586](tel:02080806586) / [020 880 6587](tel:0208806587)
- By email: talk2us@barnethomes.org / customercontact@opendoorhomes.org

c) What information we will share

Our Building Safety website will provide residents with easy access to up-to-date information about any works, inspections or assessments being carried out.

The type of information that will be shared and available to residents routinely online are planned maintenance and repairs schedules for:

- Fire detection and alarm system;
- Sprinkler systems
- Emergency lighting
- Fire doors
- Fixed electrical installations
- Portable appliance test
- Fire smoke dampers
- Dry risers
- Firefighting lift

We will also use our newsletters and notice boards and digital information screens (where available in our residential buildings) to proactively notify residents of any fire and building safety information or incidents, so they are aware and understand the protections that are in place to keep them safe in the building. Similarly, residents will be informed of any incidents and what action we have taken to manage and resolve the situation. As standard practice we will provide:

- Information on how to reduce the risk of fire in their homes
- Measures we have in place to mitigate potential fire and building safety risks
- A process for reporting a fire risk or raising any building safety concerns
- Fire evacuation and emergency escape plans
- Key contact information, such as the PAP/AP, Building Safety Managers and Resident Engagement Manager.

Information that can be provided to residents on request includes:

- Full, current and historical fire risk assessments;
- Outcome of Building Safety inspection checks;
- How assets in the building are managed, e.g. lift maintenance
- Details of preventive measures, e.g. smoke alarms;
- Fire protection measures in place, e.g. sprinklers and fire extinguishers;
- Information on the maintenance of fire safety systems;
- Fire strategy for the building;
- Structural assessments;
- Planned and historical changes to the building

All of the information available above will be updated on a regular basis; depending on the information, this may be weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

Request a communication method.

We want to make sure this information is easily available to all residents.

You can request different formats and we will try to provide information in a more accessible way. Our Accessible Communications Policy provides more information about this.

If you need information on the website in a different format, such as easy read or Braille, please contact our Customer Contact Team on:

020 8080 6587

or email talk2us@barnethomes.org

020 8080 6586

or email customercare@opendoorhomes.org

If you need information in a different language, you can translate our webpages into different languages.

3.2 Consultation and involvement

We want to hear your views about how we can keep you safe in your building, and we will ask you questions and seek your feedback to help us make building safety decisions. We want to make sure we engage with you in a way that suits you best, so we will offer a range of options for getting involved.

We recognise that residents may not want to be asked for their views on every decision and would rather be asked about decisions that impact them. For example, where improvement works are planned to fire safety systems or other major repairs that will impact residents in their building, we will discuss these elements of work with residents. For smaller scale works, we may engage with residents on the best time to complete a repair.

Some of the ways we can engage with you about building safety include:

- Periodic or transactional surveys (by phone, email, letter, in person)
- Digital engagement e.g. polls
- Events and meetings including focus groups, workshops, coffee mornings, pop ups/ drop-in sessions, roadshows, and open days
- Campaigns e.g. communal area clearance/community waste day
- Formal involved resident groups, including our resident involvement groups and formal residents' associations.

More information about the options to participate in a way that suits your interests and circumstances, from low-level informal involvement to membership of the board, can be found on our website:

www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/community/involvement-opportunities/ /
www.opendoorhomes.org/your-neighbourhood/get-involvedwith-opendoor-homes/

When we consult you, we will:

- seek your feedback using one or more of the methods above.
- provide you with adequate time (usually at least 10 working days) to share your feedback.
- review and carefully consider your feedback.
- make any necessary amendments based on the responses.
- share the changes we have made based on the feedback. This may be in a “you said, we did” format.
- ensure any personal data we gather is handled in accordance with UK data protection law, including the UK-GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

We may collaborate with other organisations to help us engage effectively with residents and

build strong, involved, and integrated communities. In the event that we need to share any personal data with our partners, we will make sure we only do so where UK data protection legislation permits us to do so. The partners we may work with include, but are not limited to:

- London Fire Brigade
- Age UK
- AICO
- Red Cross
- Mediquip

3.3 Monitoring our commitments

We want to monitor our effectiveness and will review this Resident Engagement Strategy to make sure it works for both residents and staff. This will take place every two years, or sooner in the event of a mandatory occurrence report or completion of significant material alterations to a building.

We will measure and review resident participation and how residents' views have been acted upon, including by maintaining records of how many responses are received when we ask for feedback on building safety matters and attendance at events.

As part of our day-to-day monitoring of building safety performance, we monitor a number of performance indicators, some of which we will publish on our website. Other areas we will monitor include:

- The performance building safety tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) set by the Regulator of Social Housing. These cover checks including gas safety, fire safety, asbestos safety, water safety, and lift safety;
- Satisfaction levels of tenants that their home is safe (one of the satisfaction TSMs)
- Number of fire brigade call-outs (percentage change);
- Reduction in level of items in communal areas;
- Number of complaints; and
- Number of reports of building safety issues.

4. WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE

4.1 What to expect from us

It is important that residents living in our high-rise buildings trust us and feel safe in their home. We will ensure homes and high-rise blocks are safe by meeting all the correct regulations and standards. We will aim to identify engagement opportunities and work in partnership with residents to develop and improve building and fire safety services.

Barnet Homes' / Opendoor Homes' legal responsibilities include to:

- be the Principal Accountable Person who is ultimately responsible for the safety of a building and must take steps to prevent any building safety risks;
- prepare a resident engagement strategy, act in accordance with it, and keep it under review;
- provide the resident engagement strategy to residents;
- tell residents about building safety work and who will carry it out.

Our Board and our Executive Management Team are responsible for setting and supporting a culture of resident involvement and engagement. All of our staff are responsible for involving and engaging residents. We will identify engagement opportunities and make sure we work in partnership with residents to develop and improve building safety services.

4.2 How residents can help

Residents can help us to meet our obligations by living safely in their home and not doing anything that puts other residents at risk, for example:

- not making alterations to the flat entrance fire door without permission;
- smoking in a safe place and fully extinguishing cigarettes afterwards;
- never using BBQs and patio heaters inside buildings, on balconies, or near any flammable material;
- keeping any communal fire doors closed;
- being respectful of neighbours and keeping communal areas clear of items such as bikes, prams, and mobility scooters;
- knowing what to do in the event of a fire in their property or another part of the building ([Safety guides – The Barnet Group Building Safety](#));
- checking smoke detectors in their home are working at least once a month.
- contacting [\[Barnet Homes / Opendoor Homes\]](#) if any residents' living circumstances change meaning a resident may not be able to self-evacuate in the event of a fire.
- reporting any issues to [\[Barnet Homes / Opendoor Homes\]](#), particularly if a resident feels it is a fire safety concern ([Contact us – The Barnet Group Building Safety](#)).

5. COMPLAINTS

If a resident is dissatisfied with the standard of service we have provided or with our actions or lack of actions, they can make a complaint.

Our Complaints and Compliments Policy sets out how you can do this and how we will handle a complaint. You can read it, along with other information about our process, on the complaints page of our website:

www.thebarnetgroup.org/bh/contact-us/complaints
www.opendoorhomes.org/contact/complaints-and-compliments

In the event that a resident is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, it can be escalated to either the Housing Ombudsman or the Building Safety Regulator once our process has been exhausted, depending on the nature of the complaint. Information on how to do this will be shared with the complainant at the appropriate stage in the process.

6. CONTACT US

You can contact us using the following methods:

Email: talk2us@barnethomes.org / customercare@opendoorhomes.org

Building Safety Website: www.thebarnetgroup.org/buildingsafety/contact-us/

Phone: [020 8080 6587](tel:02080806587) / [020 8080 6586](tel:02080806586)

Write via post: [Barnet Homes / Opendoor Homes](#), Building Safety Team, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London, NW9 4EW