

## **SAFE SHARED SPACES FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

### **MONITORING INFORMATION:**

**POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:** SHARED SPACES FIRE SAFETY POLICY

**DATE APPROVED:** MAY 2026

**EXPIRY DATE:** MAY 2027

**OWNER:** HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGER

**APPROVAL ROUTE:** HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

# Shared Spaces Fire Safety Policy

## 1. Introduction

1.1. At Teign Housing, the safety and wellbeing of our residents, staff, and visitors is our top priority. This policy sets out how we manage fire safety in shared spaces also known as communal areas across our properties, ensuring these shared spaces remain safe, accessible, and welcoming for everyone.

## 2. Purpose

2.1. This policy aims to minimise fire risks in shared spaces, ensure safe and clear escape routes, promote shared responsibility for fire safety, and comply with all relevant fire safety legislation.

## 3. Where this policy applies

3.1. This policy covers all shared spaces in blocks of flats and other multi-occupancy buildings, including internal corridors, stairwells, landings, lobbies, external walkways, balconies, bin stores, meter cupboards, and shared entrances.

3.2. This policy does not apply to community rooms or dedicated Mobility Scooter Store Areas.

## 4. Legal Duties

4.1. We follow the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Building Safety Act 2022, the Fire Safety Act 2021, and guidance from the Fire Risk Assessment Code of Practice.

## **5. Our Approach: Managed Use**

- 5.1. We take a 'managed use' approach to shared spaces. This means we aim to balance fire safety with reasonable use of shared spaces, while keeping escape routes clear and reducing fire risks.
- 5.2. This approach supports Teign Housing's broader fire safety strategy and reflects our commitment to keeping residents safe in their homes, while also maintaining a welcoming and well-maintained environment. We apply clear, consistent rules that protect escape routes and reduce fire risks, without unnecessarily restricting reasonable use or undermining good customer service.

## **6. Absolutely Not Allowed**

- 6.1. To keep everyone safe, the following items must not be left or stored in shared spaces: upholstered furniture, mattresses, bedding, electrical appliances such as heaters and TVs, mobility scooters unless in designated areas, bicycles, prams, pushchairs, rubbish bags, recycling bins, loose carpets, barbecues, gas bottles, fuel containers, white goods such as fridges and washing machines, and festive decorations.
- 6.2. Charging of electrical items in shared spaces is strictly prohibited. This includes e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters, and any other battery-powered devices. Charging in communal areas presents a significant fire risk and is not permitted under any circumstances.
- 6.3. These items can block escape routes or increase fire risk. If found, they may be removed under the TORT Act 1977, and residents may be recharged for removal costs.

## **7. Flat Entrance Doors – Our Policy Explained**

- 7.1. Flat entrance doors are designed to act as fire doors. They help contain fire and smoke, protect escape routes, and give residents time to evacuate

safely. To work properly, these doors must remain free from any attachments or decorations.

7.2. For this reason, no items should be hung, stuck, or attached to flat entrance doors including seasonal decorations such as wreaths. While we understand the desire to personalise your home, even small decorations can:

- Interfere with the fire door's performance.
- Obstruct emergency access.
- Increase fire risk, especially if made from flammable materials.

7.3. This policy applies consistently across all our properties to ensure safety and fairness. We ask all residents to keep entrance doors clear at all times. If you are unsure whether something is permitted, please speak to your Housing Officer before placing it in a shared space.

## **8. What May Be Allowed – With Conditions**

8.1. We understand that residents may wish to personalise shared spaces. Some items may be allowed, but only where they do not pose a fire risk, block escape routes, or hinder emergency services.

8.2. Open shared balconies and walkways may accommodate a small number of low-risk items such as small plant pots, solid outdoor furniture like metal or wooden benches, and weatherproof decorations. These items must be placed neatly to avoid trip hazards, must not obstruct access for emergency services, and must be kept to a minimum and regularly maintained.

8.3. Internal shared spaces such as enclosed corridors, stairwells, and lobbies are more vulnerable to smoke and fire spread. For this reason, no personal items including furniture, or decorations should be placed in these areas.

8.4. No exceptions or approvals will be made; this policy is in place to ensure consistency and safety across all properties. Housing Officers will use this guidance to assess each situation and take appropriate action. Where there

is uncertainty, they should refer to this policy and escalate only if there is a safety concern outside its scope.

## **9. External Shared Spaces**

9.1. Barbecues are not allowed in shared (communal) garden areas unless prior written approval has been granted for a specific event. This is to ensure fire safety and prevent risks associated with open flames and fuel sources in shared outdoor spaces.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 10.1. Teign Housing staff carry out inspections, respond to concerns, and enforce this policy.
- 10.2. Housing Officers receive guidance and training to ensure consistent enforcement, supported by the Health & Safety Team with advice and updates.
- 10.3. Residents are expected to keep Share spaces clear, report hazards, and follow safety guidance.
- 10.4. Contractors must work safely and follow fire safety procedures when operating in shared spaces.

## **11. Communication and Support**

- 11.1. We will make this policy clear and accessible through signage in shared spaces, resident newsletters and updates, tenancy agreements, and welcome packs.
- 11.2. Housing Officers and Health & Safety Team are available to answer questions and provide support.

11.6. Our aim is to ensure residents understand the policy and feel confident in how it is applied, helping us to maintain safe and welcoming shared spaces.

## **12. Equality and Diversity**

12.1. Teign Housing will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

12.2. Teign Housing will carry out an equality assessment in line with our policy.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

13.1. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation changes or incidents occur.

13.2. Compliance is monitored through inspections, resident feedback and fire risk assessments carried out by Teign Housing staff and contractors as part of their routine duties.

13.3. Where reoccurring issues or safety concerns are identified we will update the policy to ensure it remains effective, proportionate, and aligned with our commitment to keeping residents safe in their homes.