BUILDING SAFETY

Resident Engagement Strategy



RUSSELL HOUSE

February 2026

www.**sandwell**.gov.uk

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Welcome to the Russell House Resident Engagement Strategy

This Resident Engagement Strategy explains how Sandwell Council works with you to keep the building safe, well managed, and a good place to live. It also sets out how you can be involved in decisions about building safety and day to day management.

Living in a high rise building means some safety arrangements are different from other types of homes. We want to make sure you understand what we do to keep you safe, what you can expect from us, and how you can raise concerns or share feedback.

Inside this document you will find information about:

- How we communicate with you and how you can get involved
- Fire safety and what to do in an emergency
- Damp, mould, and repairs
- Who is responsible for building safety at Russell House
- How to report concerns or make a complaint

We are committed to listening to residents and working with you. Your views help shape how services are delivered and how safety is managed in your building.

If you need this information in a different format or language, or if you have any questions, please contact us using the details at the back of this document.

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Why are we writing this strategy for Russell House?

The introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and wider changes across the housing sector have made it a legal requirement to have a clear and effective Resident Engagement Strategy in place for high-rise buildings like Russell House.

This strategy sets out how we will ensure that tenants and leaseholders have regular opportunities to influence decisions relating to building safety and day-to-day management. It reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and empowering residents to play an active role in shaping how their building is maintained and kept safe.

If you do not understand English very well, please let us know what language(s) you speak or read, and we will make every effort to assist you.



If you require a large print version of this document, please contact us on 0121 569 5254.

76
Flats

11
Floors

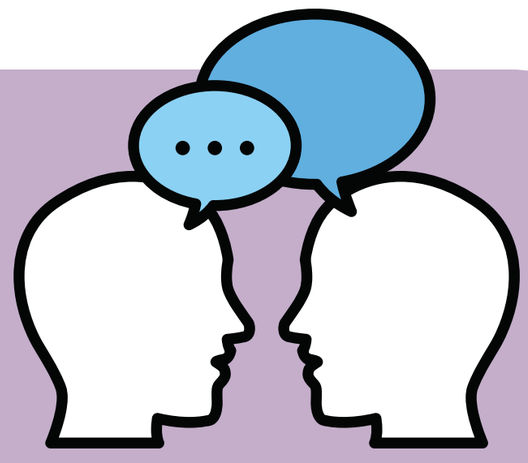
2
Lifts



1
Staircases

Automatic
Smoke
Ventilation

Living in Russell House & what you told us.



The Building Safety Team surveyed residents of Russell House during June 2025 and we visited every flat on Thursday 12 June 2025. Residents who were not available also had the option to complete the survey online or postal return.

- 34% (26) of households have given us their feedback. Of those responses:
- 85% (22) of households agreed that they feel safe in their own home
- 76% (19) of households agreed that they feel safe within the communal areas of the block
- 84% (21) of households who responded confirmed they are happy with how often the smoke alarms are checked by Sandwell Council.
- There have been no reported fires within Russell House in the last 12 months.
- An external wall survey was conducted by Firntec on behalf of Sandwell Council on Saturday 26 April 2025, the summary of the report showed that the overall risk of external fire spread is low and no further work is required.

Your feedback makes a difference

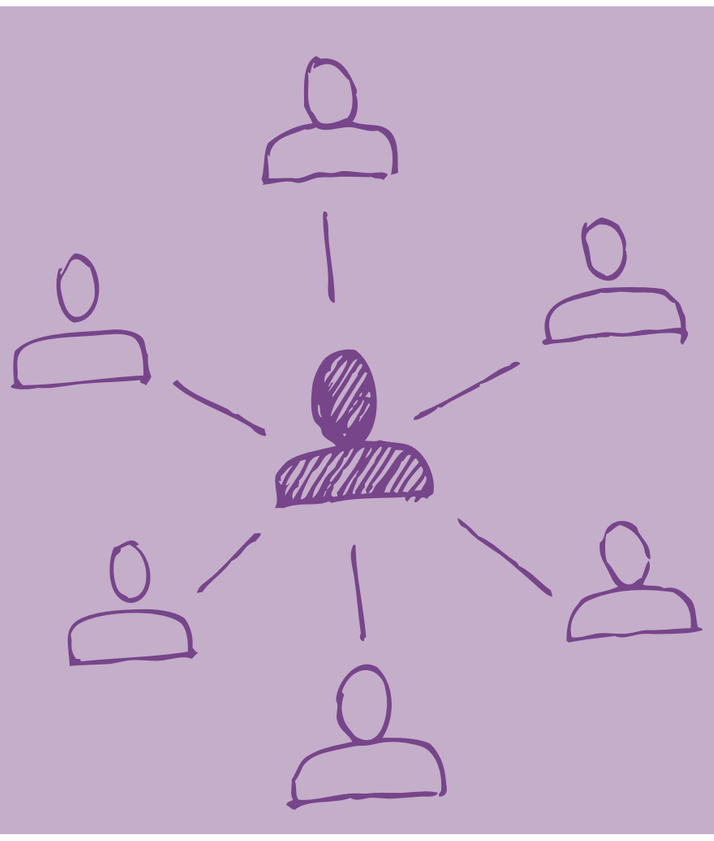
Feedback from residents living in our high-rise buildings has helped us draft this Resident Engagement Strategy for Russell House.

To ensure you feel safe we need to know what you are happy within the block but also if you have any building safety concerns.



How we will involve you

- Consult you about any significant plans for the improvement of building safety
- Update you about planned improvement works if they will affect you
- We will consult you if there is a need to make a change to the strategy. You will be given 3 weeks to respond
- Ensure feedback from residents forms part of the annual review of the strategy.
- Send you a building safety newsletter every year, in either digital or in paper form – whichever is preferred
- Publish and share regular safety information on the Sandwell Council website
- Hold face to face consultations to see how safe you feel in your home
- Check with you – how you would like us to send you information





How we communicate with residents

We will use a range of ways to communicate with the residents of Russell House about building safety. This may include:

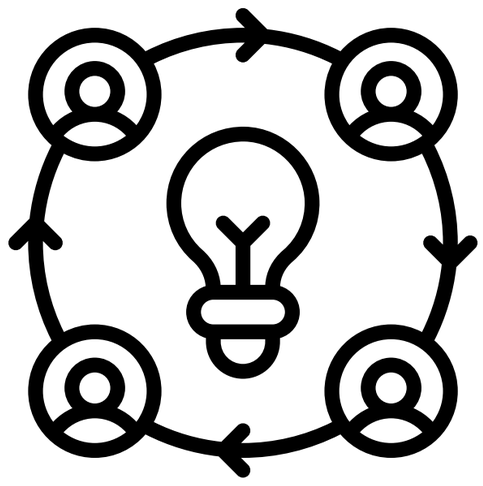
- At the start of a tenancy
- Homecheck visits
- A change in leaseholder
- Sandwell Council website
- MySandwell portal/APP
- Notice boards
- Text
- Email
- Letter
- Face to Face visits
- Pop-up sessions to talk about building safety Video
- Workshops



We will give timely notice and reasonable timescales for maintenance/repair works except in the case of emergency repairs.

How else can you get involved?

- Attend quarterly Resident Building Safety Forums
- Become a Block Rep
- Take part in surveys
- Set up a Tenant and Residents Group
- Take part in joint inspections to review safety features of the block



If you want to take part in any of the above, please get in touch with the Building Safety Team.

Following feedback from residents we will make sure when we send information to you:

- It will be easy to read and understand.
- Wherever possible, a minimum Font size of 14. Larger fonts to be provided on request
- Jargon is kept to a minimum
- Translation of documents will be made available on request
- We will include more graphics (visuals) and images

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

Fire safety advice

We are committed to ensuring your homes are safe places to live and take our responsibilities for doing so very seriously, but we also need your help. One of the ways you can help is by taking time to read and understand the advice below on the best way to respond in the unlikely event of a fire in your building.

What to do if a fire breaks out in your flat

1. Leave the room where the fire is and close the door.



2. Alert anyone else in the property that there is a fire and leave the flat, closing all doors behind you.



Do not stay to put out the fire.

3. Use the staircase to exit the building.

Do not use the lift.



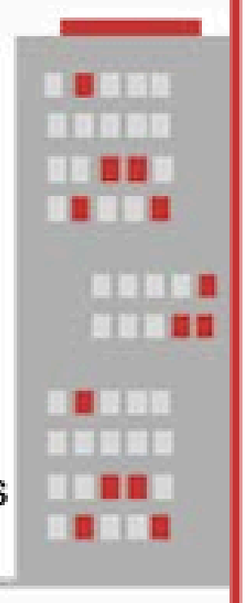
4. Dial 999 and wait for the fire service to arrive.



Do not re-enter the building.

What to do if you see or hear a fire in another flat or or part of the building

1. It will normally be safest for you to remain in your flat and **stay put** unless the heat or smoke from the fire is affecting you.



If your safety is compromised, then you should leave the building following the guidance as if the fire was in your flat.

2. 

If you are instructed to leave by a member of the emergency services, you should do so immediately.

3. In either case, use the staircase to exit the building.



Do not use the lift.

'Stay Put-Unless' is an evacuation strategy used in purpose-built blocks of flats. It is in place to keep people safe when they are not in an area directly affected by fire.

Contact us if you want to discuss this advice in more detail or if there are reasons you may not be able to follow the advice, for example because of medical conditions or disabilities so we can agree personal safety plans with you.

If you notice any doors within the building that are damaged or wedged open, or have any other concerns, please call us on 0121 569 6000.

We know a lot of residents question why we advise to Stay Put if the fire is not directly affecting you.

Did you know we continue to adopt this policy in line with advice from West Midlands Fire Service?

The measures we have in place to prevent fire and smoke spreading through the building means your home is safe.

To keep yourself safe and be a good neighbour:

- Be careful in your own flat around safety, keeping any escape routes clear and checking your smoke alarms regularly

- Allow access to your home for safety checks

- If you or a member of your household will need help getting out if there is a fire - let us know

- Let us know of any changes in your household

- Do not damage, remove or alter any fire safety item – If you plan to do any alterations to your property or communal area – please check with us first

- Ensure that front main entrance doors to the building are closed when not in use. Beware of others following you into the block

- When not in use all fire doors should be kept shut. Fire doors should not be tampered with, and any faults should be reported

- Ensure that any visitors you have, do not act in a way that is a risk to building safety or a nuisance to your neighbours

- Each resident is responsible for ensuring communal areas remain clean and tidy

- Ensure dogs are kept under control in public spaces for the safety of neighbours. Also, please be considerate and clean up any dog fouling in communal areas or lifts and dispose of it either at home or in a bin outside

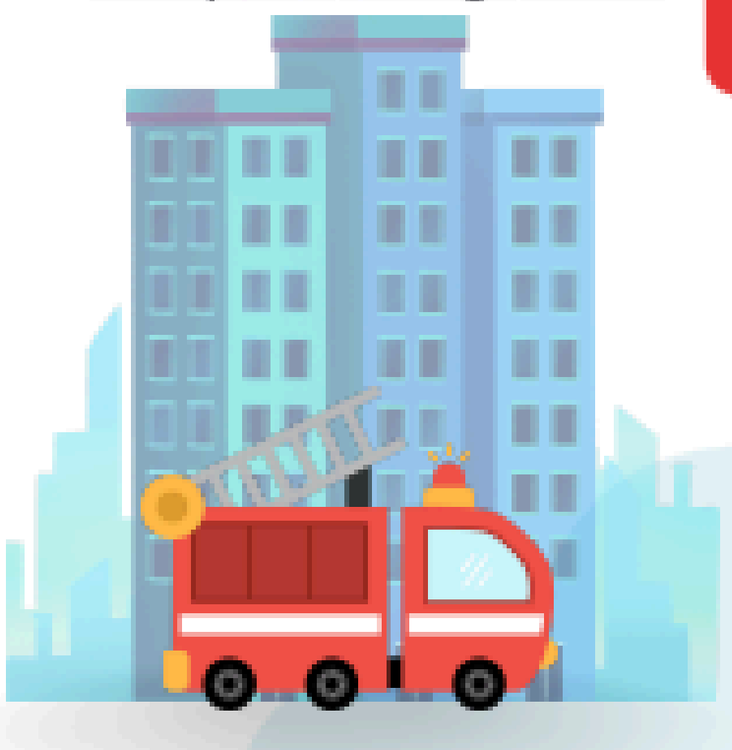
- Please do not feed pigeons and for advice on other ways to help keep pigeons away please see link https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/pigeons

- Please report any anti-social behaviour



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PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN (PEEP)



What Is a PEEP and do I need one?

A PEEP is a plan for residents who would have difficulty evacuating their flat in a high-rise block in the event of a fire without help.

How does this fit with 'Stay Put – Unless'?

Stay Put – Unless means that, if a fire is elsewhere in the building, it is usually safer to remain in your flat, as high-rise buildings are designed to contain fires.

However, if the fire is in your flat or you are told to evacuate, you must leave immediately, if able to do so.





What does the assessment involve?

Your Housing Services Officer will visit you to discuss your ability to get out, unaided, in the event of a fire.

They will create a plan that will help you if there were a fire.

How do I request a PEEP?

You can call 0121 368 1166
or email housing_hub@sandwell.gov.uk to request a visit from your Housing Services Officer.

West Midlands Fire Service



ARE YOU AT RISK OF A FIRE IN YOUR HOME?

COMPLETE YOUR FREE ONLINE HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECK NOW

To start your online home fire safety check go to **https://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/sandwell** or use the QR code

Dealing with and Managing Damp & Mould

Damp and mould in your home can often be reduced by managing moisture, even where outdoor space is limited. It can help to ventilate rooms regularly by opening windows when it feels safe to do so and by using extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.

If you notice condensation or early signs of mould, wiping it away and letting us know if the issue keeps coming back can help ensure any underlying causes are looked into. When drying clothes indoors, using a well ventilated room and keeping those clothes away from walls or radiators may reduce condensation. Keeping your heating at a steady, low level can also help prevent cold surfaces where moisture builds up.

Sandwell Council is committed to ensuring all tenants and leaseholders live in warm, dry, safe homes that are free from damp, mould, and condensation, recognising the serious impact these issues can have on health and wellbeing. In line with Awaab's Law and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Council takes full responsibility for investigating, preventing, and repairing damp and mould, prioritising serious hazards and keeping residents informed throughout the process.

The policy outlines responsibilities for the Council, tenants, and leaseholders, sets clear procedures for reporting, inspecting, and repairing damp and mould, and ensures services are fair, accessible, and tailored to residents with additional needs. Sandwell Council also focuses on proactive maintenance, compliance with legal standards, and engagement with residents to reduce future risks and maintain safe, healthy homes.

Please use the following link to view the policy in full:

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1244/damp-and-mould-policy

Measuring our Performance and Impact



As well as sharing performance information with you, we will report our performance through the Building Safety Board. We will also share information with the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group and other forums as appropriate.

We will share information more widely via our annual report.

• Share the findings, outcomes and recommendations arising from our engagement with residents of our high-rise buildings

• Show how the feedback has impacted on service delivery

• Provide regular opportunities for tenants to meet with Housing teams to discuss building safety issues

• Continue the development and support of the Building Safety Forum

• Obtain feedback from residents on what is working well in resident engagement and what we can do better

• Keep our measures of impact under regular review to make sure they measure the correct things

We will review resident engagement in building safety on a regular basis to ensure we continue to meet with Building Safety and Social Housing Regulations.



What Does the Council Do To Keep You, Your family and Your Neighbours Safe?

SAFETY FIRST

To keep you safe:

Daily

- Caretakers carry out fire safety checks of communal areas as part of their duties as well as doing minor communal repairs
- Emergency call out 24/7 365 days

Every Month

- Monthly service visits for each lift

Every 12 Weeks

- Communal Fire Doors are checked

Every 6 Months

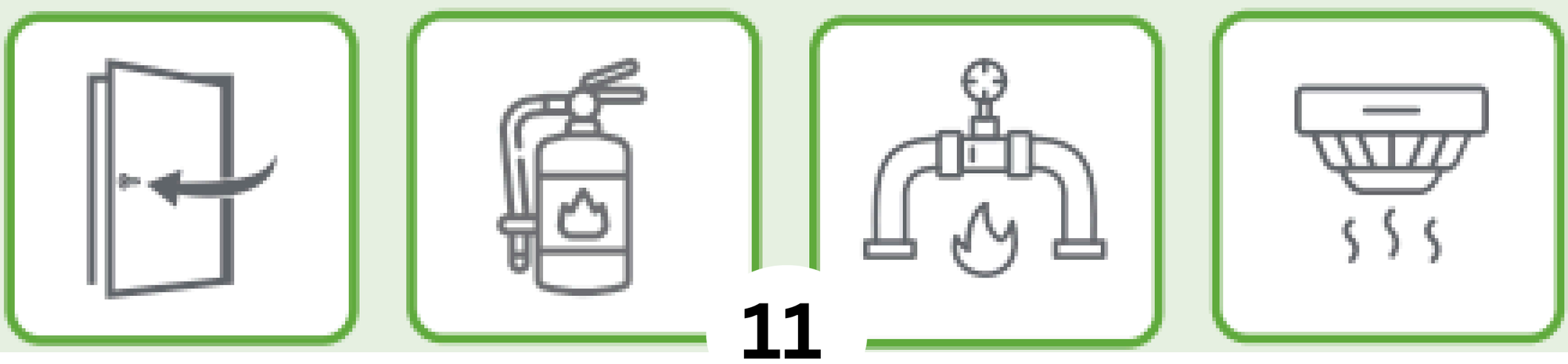
- Fire safety equipment is checked : Dry Risers and Bin Room sprinklers
- LOLOR report every 6 months for each lift. (Like its MOT)

Every Year

- Smoke and heat detectors are checked
- Carbon monoxide detectors checked
- Gas supply checked
- Flat entrance doors are checked
- Fire Risk Assessments

Every 5 years

- Electric checks
- Structural condition



YOUR BUILDING SAFETY MANAGER & RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

The Council has also dedicated a Building Safety Manager (BSM) & a Resident Engagement Officer (REO) to Russell House. This ensures the manager and officer responsible know the building and the residents in it. The purpose of having a dedicated BSM and REO also ensures the residents know them, building a relationship and rapport between them both. The BSM for Russell House is Adrian Jones & the REO is Ethan Somiya.

We can assist in providing specialist fire safety equipment for vulnerable residents, including vibrating pillows, flashing beacons, and enhanced smoke detection systems. These aids are designed to support residents who may have hearing impairments, mobility challenges, or other specific needs that require tailored fire safety measures. https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/adult-social-care/contactadult-social-care or call us on 0121 569 2266.

The most recent fire risk assessment for Russell House can be found below:
https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/HighRiseFireRiskAssessments

An Asbestos survey has been completed on the block. This survey means we know where any potential risks are in the building and can ensure that any works being carried out is done safely to protect the health of residents, staff and contractors The premise information box provides the fire service with important information on Russell House that they will need in an emergency.

Partnership working with West Midlands Fire Service ensures that your home and all our high-rise buildings are safe to live in. The fire service will also undertake Safe and Well checks on request



Building Safety Team Chart

Housing Services

The teams below are here to ensure activities that take place in your building are carried out in such a way as to not compromise it and your safety. They are also here to ensure your voice is heard for anything related to your building.
You can contact Housing Services on 0121 368 1166

Repairs	Caretaking & Cleaning Services	Tenancy Management	Housing Hub	Concierge Service	Building Safety
The repairs team ensure that your home is maintained to a good condition. You can report all repairs issues to us including damp and mould and condensation problems. When repairs are reported we will arrange for them to be completed by the correct trade operative. You can contact the council's Repairs Team on **0121 569 6000**	The Caretaking & Cleaning team ensure the building is maintained to a good standard keeping communal areas clear and clean. You can contact the council's Caretaking and Cleaning team on **0121 368 1166**	The Tenancy Management team manage all aspects of tenancy and estate management issues, anti-social behaviour, allocations and mutual exchanges. They also provide advice to residents who may need assistance evacuating in the event of an emergency. You can contact the council's Tenancy Management team on **0121 368 1166**	The Housing Hub can resolve the majority of Housing enquiries without you having to wait for a specialist team. Any complex enquiries that the Housing Hub cannot resolve will be handed over to a specialist team. You can contact the council's Housing Hub team on **0121 368 1166**	Concierge Service controls door entry, so that there is always 24 hour support in the event of an emergency situation across our high rise buildings. You can contact the council's Concierge team on **0121 368 1166**	This team is responsible for ensuring the following safety checks are complete: fire safety, lifts, gas, damp and mould, water and asbestos. 3 officers support resident engagement in building safety. Each block has a dedicated Building Safety Manager & Resident Engagement Officer. You can contact the council's Building Safety team on **0121 569 5254**

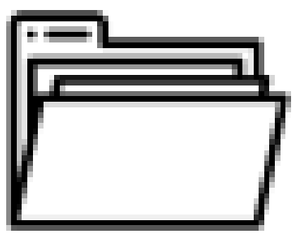
Customer Feedback Team

If you would like to make a complaint related to the safety of your building, or you are unhappy with the service you have received please contact us using one of the methods below. Please provide as much information as possible so that we can deal with your concern.

Online: Contact us online via **MySandwell**
Email: **customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk**
Phone: **0121 569 1166**
Write in: **Customer Feedback Team, Sandwell Council, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES**

GDPR

In line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, we will ensure all the information you provide is stored securely, following the seven key principles of GDPR:



Storage Limitations

Don't store personal data you do not need anymore



Lawfulness

Having a legal basis, being transparent and acting in the person's best interest



Confidentiality

Only people who are processing the data should have access to it



Accuracy

That "reasonable measures" to have the most accurate data possible



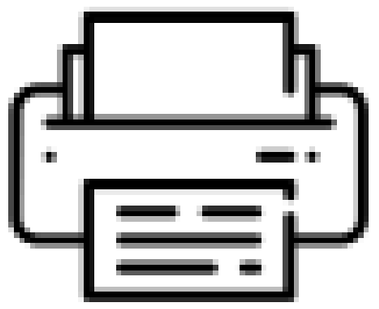
Purpose Limitations

Only process personal data for the purpose it was intended for



Accountability

Sandwell Council is responsible for complying with the GDPR



Data Minimisation

Only gather and keep the exact amount of data that is needed

Useful Contacts and Links

You can find useful information on Sandwell MBC services and report any issues via MySandwell

Building Safety Issues
For any issues or questions about building safety either in your block or in general please contact.
Telephone Number:
0121 569 6148
Email Address:
building_safety@sandwell.gov.uk

For information on Building Safety Regulations
www.hse.gov.uk/buildingsafety/resources.htm

If you have a complaint and you are not happy with the response from SMBC you can also contact the Housing Ombudsman

Condensation, Damp & Mould
www.sandwell.gov.uk/damp or contact the repairs team on
0121 569 6000

Fire Safety
www.sandwell.gov.uk/fire-safety

Building Safety Complaints
If you would like to make a complaint related to the safety of your building, or you are unhappy with the service you have received.
Online: Contact us online via **MySandwell**
Email: **customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk**
Phone:
0121 569 7867
Write in:
Customer Feedback Team, Sandwell Council, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES.
You can also contact the council on
0121 569 6000

To book a Safe and Well Visit -
West Midlands Fire Service Fire Safety Team or 03300 589 000.

If you are interested in setting up a tenant and residents group
please email
Comm_Partnerships@sandwell.gov.uk
or leave a message on 0121 569 2537

To report anti-social behaviour –
www.west-midlands.police.uk or
www.sandwell.gov.uk/ASB
or contact the Housing Hub on
0121 368 1166

Asbestos
www.sandwell.gov.uk/asbestos

Data Protection
www.sandwell.gov.uk/privacy

Building safety mandatory occurrence reporting

Mandatory Occurrence Notices and Reports (MOR) applies to high rise buildings of 7 storeys or at least 18 metres high. Where there are a potential for incidents or risks of structural failure, or the spread of fire then the Building Safety Regulator has to be notified.

Report any occurrences that may pose a risk to building safety or residents.

What to Report?

Structural Issues: Cracks, leaks, or any visible damage to building structure.
Fire Safety: Fire alarms, extinguishers, emergency exits, or smoke detectors not working properly.
Electrical Hazards: Exposed wires, sparking equipment, or malfunctioning electrical systems.
Plumbing Concerns: Water leaks, pipe bursts, or flooding.
Hazardous Materials: Spills, chemical leaks, or exposure to harmful substances.
Health & Safety Risks: Blocked emergency exits, slip/trip hazards, or poor lighting.
Vandalism/Break-ins: Damage to property or security-related incidents.

How to Report?

Phone: Call Customer Contact Centre **0121 569 6000**
Online: Visit **customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk**
In Person: **Report directly to your Building Safety Manager**
Contact Details – **refer to Building Safety Notice located in ground floor lift lobby.**

When to Report

Immediately: Any situation that presents an immediate threat to safety.
Within 24 Hours: Non-urgent hazards or malfunctions that should be addressed soon.

Why Reporting is Crucial

Ensures Quick Action: Allows for prompt resolution of safety risks.
Prevents Accidents: Reduces the risk of injury or property damage.
Legal Compliance: Helps comply with safety regulations and legal obligations.
Protects Everyone: Keeps residents, staff, and visitors safe.

Confidentiality

Reports will be handled confidentially and with care. Your identity will remain protected in accordance with privacy laws.

Remember: Safety is Everyone's Responsibility.
Together, we make the building a safer place!

www.**sandwell**.gov.uk