

BUILDING SAFETY

Resident Engagement Strategy

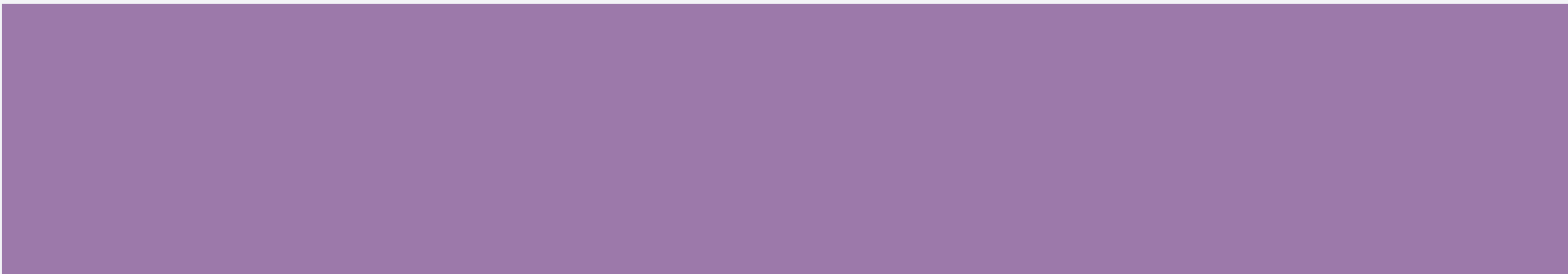


BOWWATER HOUSE

August 2026

www.sandwell.gov.uk

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Why are we writing this strategy for Bowwater House?

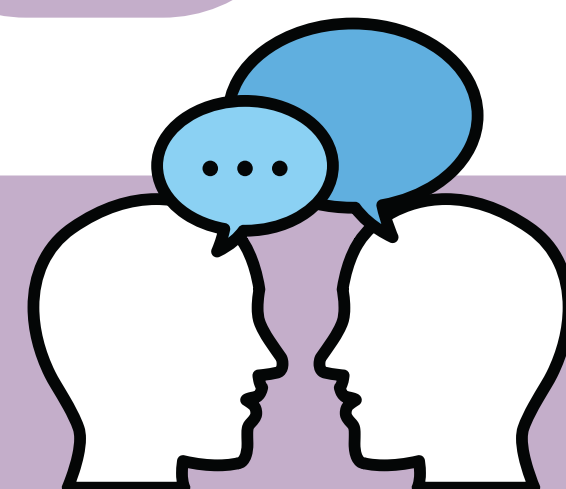
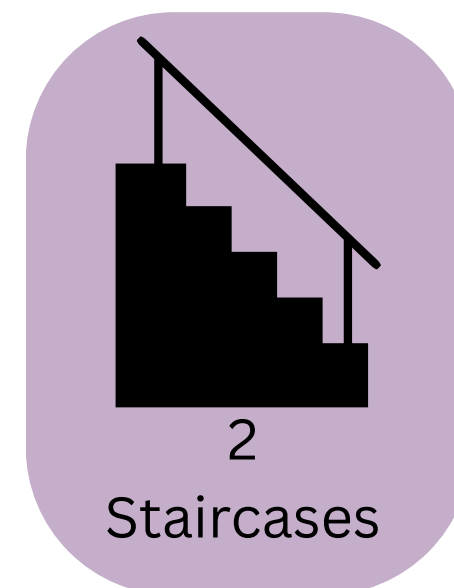
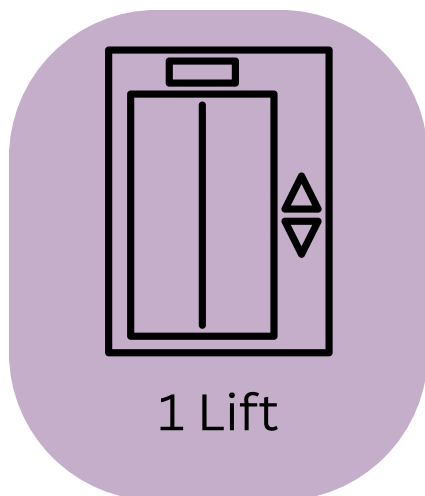
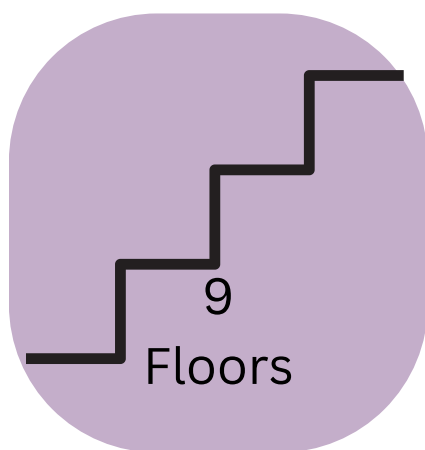
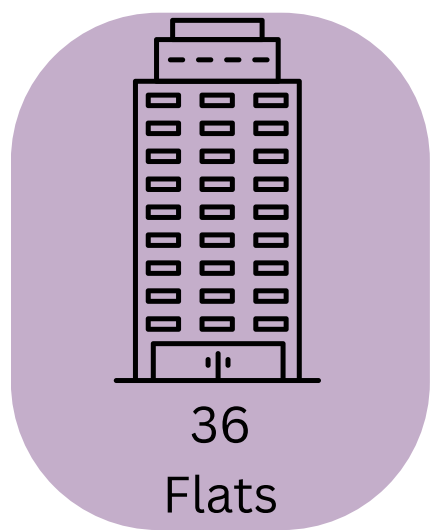
The introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and wider changes across the housing sector have made it a legal requirement to have a clear and effective Resident Engagement Strategy in place for high-rise buildings like Bowwater House.

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.





Living in Bowater House & what you told us.

The Building Safety Team surveyed Bowater House during October 2025, and we visited every flat on Wednesday 15 October 2025. Residents who were not available also had the option to complete the survey online or postal return.

- 27% (10) of households have given us their feedback. Of those responses:
- 60% (6) of households agreed that they feel safe in their own home.
- 60% (6) of households agreed that they feel safe within the communal areas of the block.
- 90% (9) 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 Bowater House in the last 12 months.
- An external wall survey was conducted by Firntec on behalf of Sandwell Council on Tuesday 3 March 2026, the summary of the report concluded that the overall building risk rating was high and further remedial work is recommended. The report also stated that a potential fire is unlikely to compromise the means of escape before residents can safely use them.
- In response to the report, to enhance the safety of residents: Sandwell Council have upgraded the smoke detection to all flats, installed a new communal fire alarm system and changed the evacuation strategy from Stay Put Unless to Simultaneous Evacuation.
- Sandwell Council have appointed a specialist contractor to find a satisfactory solution to the concerns outlined in the report.

Your feedback makes a difference

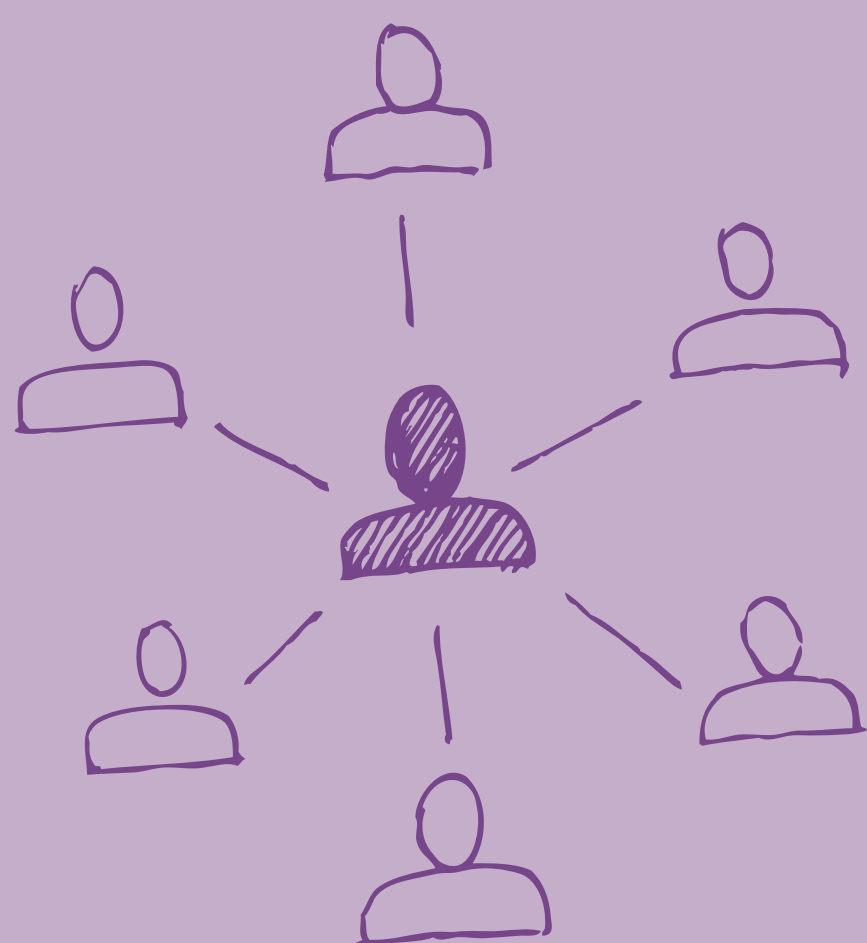
Feedback from residents living in our high-rise buildings has helped us draft this Resident Engagement Strategy for Bowater House.

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

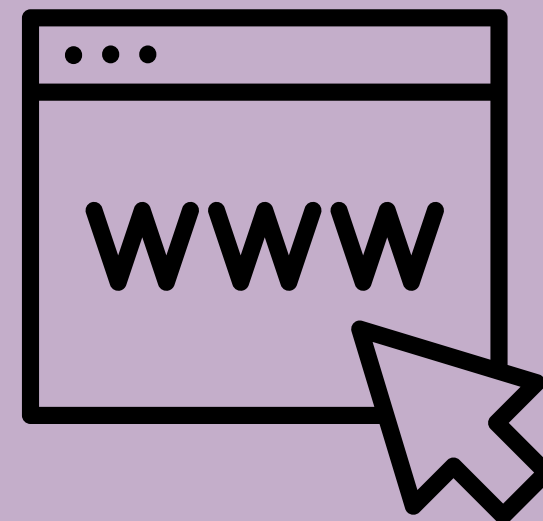
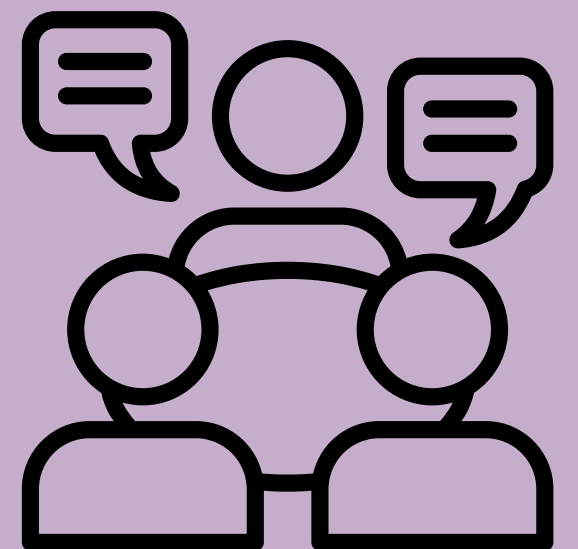
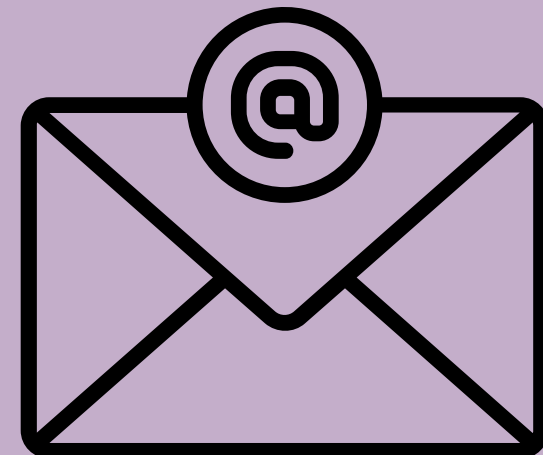
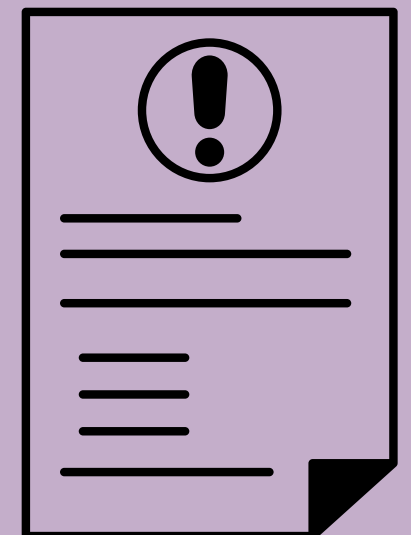
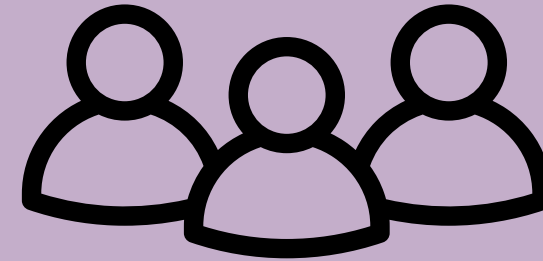
- Consult you about any significant plans for the improvement of building safety
- Update you about planned improvement works if they will affect you
- We will consult you if there is a need to make a change to the strategy. You will be given 3 weeks to respond
- Ensure feedback from residents forms 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 Bowater 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

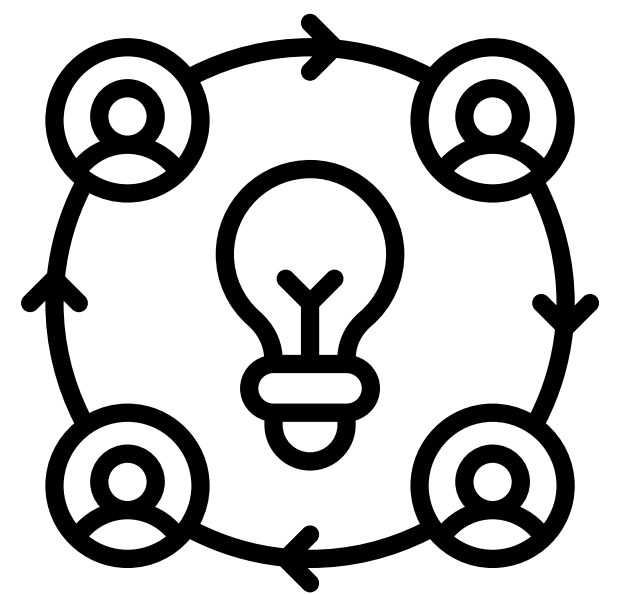


We will give timely notice and reasonable timescales for maintenance/repair works except in the case of emergency repairs.

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

Simultaneous Evacuation

The Evacuation Strategy for Bowater House has been updated, it is now a simultaneous evacuation. This means everyone leaves the building at the same time as soon as the alarm sounds. Please see the diagram below for full information.

! If you hear the building's communal fire alarm system or discover a fire anywhere in the building you should: !

1

You must immediately leave the building even if you are in your flat.



If other people are with you, instruct everyone to leave.



2

Do not use the lift.



**Close all doors behind you.
Leave the building via the stairs.**

3

When you are outside of the building.

- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service.
- Wait away from the building.



Do not go back into the building until you are told to do so by the emergency services.

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 7474**

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



Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (RPEEP)



What is an RPEEP and do I need one?

Some residents may need extra help to evacuate safely during an emergency. A Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (RPEEP) sets out the support a resident needs, the safest route to leave the building, and how the fire service can assist. If you feel you may benefit from a personalised plan, please contact us so we can put one in place.

How does this fit with 'simultaeneous evacuation'

Simultaeneous evacuation means that if you hear the communal alarm or if you discover a fire anywhere in the building you must exit the building through the safest staircase. If you have difficulty travelling the staircase, this will be discussed during the RPEEP.



What does the assessment involve?

A member of the Fire Safety Team 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 RPEEP?

You can call 0121 569 7474
or email building_safety@sandwell.gov.uk to request a visit.





WMFS

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](https://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/sandwell) or use the QR code



West Midlands
Fire Service

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

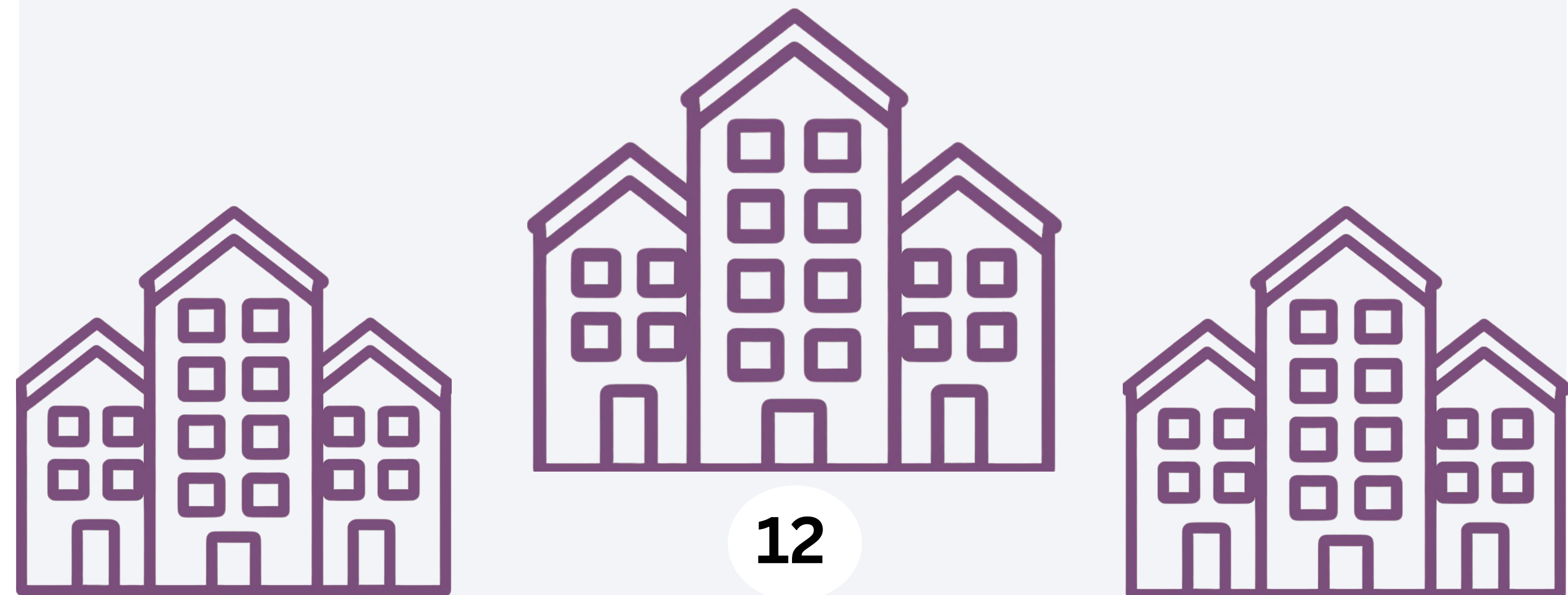
The Council has also dedicated a Building Safety Manager (BSM) & a Resident Engagement Officer (REO) to Bowater House. This ensures the manager and officer responsible know the building and the residents in it. The purpose of having a dedicated BSM and REO also ensures the residents know them, building a relationship and rapport between them both. The BSM for Bowater House is Carl Hill & the REO is Abdul Monim Khan.

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 7474.

The most recent fire risk assessment for Bowater 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 Bowater 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 569 7474

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 7474	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 569 7474	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 569 7474	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 569 7474	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 569 7474	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

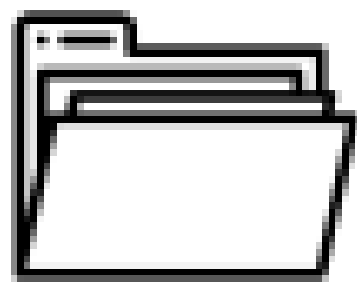
If you would like to make a complaint related to the safety of your building, or you are unhappy with the service you have received please contact us using one of the methods below. Please provide as much information as possible so that we can deal with your concern.

Online: Contact us online via **MySandwell**
Email: **customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk**
Phone: **0121 569 7474**

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:



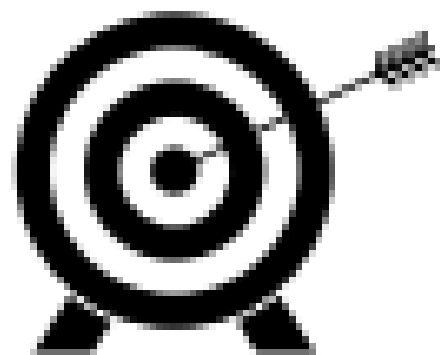
Storage Limitations
Don't store personal data you do not need anymore



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



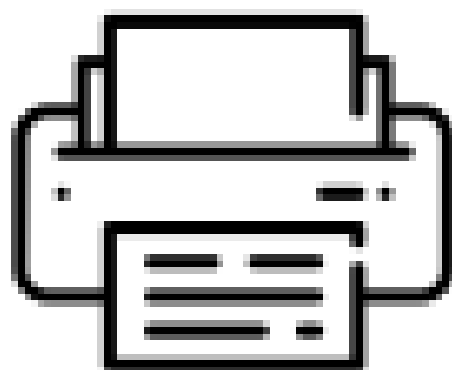
Accuracy
That "reasonable measures" to have the most accurate data possible



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 7474



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 7474

Write in:

Customer Feedback Team, Sandwell Council, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES.

You can also contact the council on

0121 569 7474

To book a Safe and Well Visit -

West Midlands Fire Service Fire Safety Team or call on 0800 389 5525

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 569 7474

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 7474**

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

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