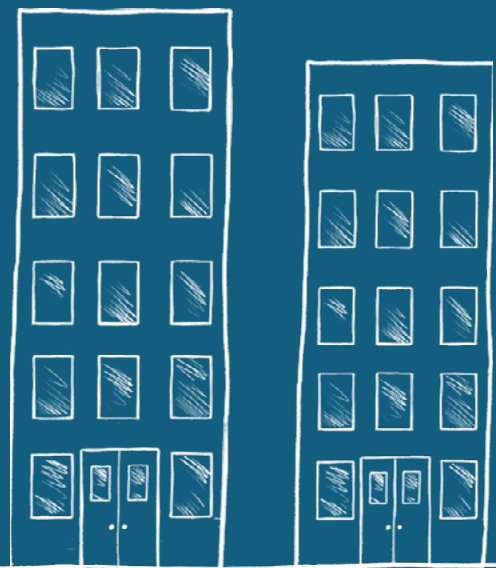




Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy



A message from our CEO

At Salix Homes, the health, safety and wellbeing of our customers and your homes really matters to us, and we work hard to ensure that all our properties are safe and great places to live.

We have 20 high rise buildings across Salford, and we want all our high rise customers to feel safe in your homes. That's why we're pleased to launch our new **Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy**, which puts you, our customers, firmly at the centre of our approach to building safety.

It's important to us that we consider customers' insight and lived experiences, so we've developed this strategy alongside you, consulting with you and listening to what you have to say.

During February 2024, we held a High Rise Month of Action, where we met with customers across all our high rise blocks, and the comments, insight and feedback you gave us, has fed directly into this strategy. Our aim is for you to feel informed about building safety and empowered to challenge decisions and get involved in discussions.

At Salix Homes, we take building safety seriously. Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, back in 2017, we've been at the forefront of building safety - raising safety standards within our own properties, advising government bodies on future recommendations and piloting and implementing the reforms in the new Building Safety Act.

We were also one of the very first housing associations to achieve Building a Safer Future Charter Champion Status, which is a national benchmark, awarded in recognition of our commitment to building safety and culture change.

However, we also recognise that building safety is continuous journey, and with the Building Safety Regulator now established, and new duties, laws and safety standards now in place, we're committed to continuing to work closely with the wider housing sector, our housing partners across Greater Manchester, the Government, safety experts, and of course you, our customers, to ensure all our buildings are safe places to live, both now and in the future.

We hope that this new strategy will provide some reassurance that, as your landlord, we're doing everything we can to maintain the highest standards of safety in your home.

Thank you for your continued support,

Sue Sutton, Chief Executive at Salix Homes



Introducing our Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy

What is the purpose of this strategy?

This strategy sets out how we will work together with our customers to communicate and engage with you on all matters relating to building safety.

The key aims of this strategy are:

- Ensure you are empowered to get involved and influence building safety decisions in your home.
- Ensure you are aware of key building safety messages and decisions.
- Ensure you know how to raise any building safety concerns with us.
- Ensure you are aware of and know how to access key building safety information about your home.
- Provide you with a clear understanding of our responsibilities as a landlord, and your responsibilities as a Salix Homes customer to ensure your home remains safe.
- Ensure you are effectively communicated with in a way that is accessible and easy to understand.
- Ensure you know what to do in the event of a fire or emergency in your building.
- Ensure you know how to make a complaint if you feel your concerns are not being listened to.

Have your say

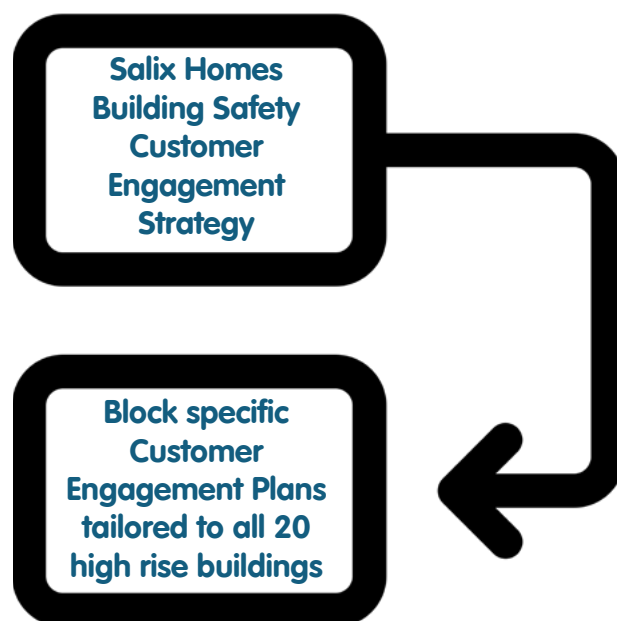
We will continue to work openly and transparently with our customers and partners and invite feedback on this **Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy**, which will be used to further develop and update the strategy.

We will monitor the effectiveness of this strategy and will review it regularly to ensure it continues to meet everyone's needs. We are committed to reviewing this strategy every two years or as changes to building safety legislation are introduced.

In addition to this overarching strategy, we are also working closely with our customers to create tailored **Customer Engagement Plans**, specific to each of our 20 high rise blocks and the people who live there. These plans will be shared with customers and they will be reviewed and consulted on every two years.

Both the **Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy** and the **Customer Engagement Plans** will also be reviewed in the event of:

- The completion of improvement or remediation work, which has involved significant alterations to the material of the building.
- A Mandatory Occurrence Report is submitted relating to a safety issue at the building. You can find out more about what this means on Page 5 where we explain some of the key terms.
- Within 90 days of residents moving into any new high rise building that we might build.



Sharing the strategy

We will ensure that final copies of the both the **Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy** and the building specific **Customer Engagement Plans** are available to:

- Every resident living in our buildings who is aged 16 or over.
- Every leaseholder or homeowner in our high rise buildings.
- Any other prescribed person as outlined in the Building Safety Regulations.

You can email your comments and feedback to firesafety@salixhomes.co.uk

What is Building Safety?

When we talk about building safety in our high rise blocks, we are referring to managing and controlling any risks that may result in the spread of fire, may affect the stability of the building, and that may pose a threat to people's lives.

Building safety covers these key areas:

- **Fire safety:** Ensuring the building is designed and equipped to prevent or minimise the spread of fire.
- **Structural integrity:** Making sure the building's structure is sound and secure.
- **Maintenance:** Regularly inspecting and maintaining the building to identify and address any potential issues before they become serious problems.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Providing clear instructions on what residents should do in case of emergencies, such as fires or evacuations.
- **Communication:** Establishing effective communication channels so information about safety measures and any updates can be shared promptly with customers in a way that is accessible and easy to understand.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensuring that the building complies with all relevant safety regulations and standards set by authorities.

Overall, building safety is about creating a safe, secure and well-maintained living environment where our customers can feel confident that your homes are designed and managed with your safety in mind.

Building Safety Act 2022 - the legal bit explained

When it comes to building safety, there is a lot of new laws and regulation outlined in the **Building Safety Act 2022**. To make it as easy as possible to understand, we have summarised the key legal bits for you, to help make it clearer about what our responsibilities as your landlord are.

Mandatory Occurrence Report: This is the process for reporting a building safety concern or issue to us. Anyone can report a building safety concern, whether it's a customer, a Salix Homes employee or one of our contractors. You can find out more about how to report a safety concern on Page 15.

Principle Accountable Person: As part of the new Building Safety laws, every high rise building must have a Principle Accountable Person. This is the person or body responsible for managing the fire and structural safety risks of a high-rise building. It could be an individual or an organisation. In our case, **Salix Homes is the Principle Accountable Person.**

Building Safety Decisions and Duties: Building Safety decisions are decisions made by an Accountable Person which relate to the fire safety or structural management of a building. They can also be decisions made relating to the performance of our duty under 'Part 4', of the Building Safety Act.

These Part 4 duties include:

- Identifying and assessing building safety risks through surveys and checks, or through concerns raised by customers or anyone else.
- Managing building safety risks.
- Providing building safety related information to the Building Safety Regulator, customers or other interested parties.
- Engaging with customers, including implementing a Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy.
- Managing complaints relating to building safety.

If we carry out any improvements or remediation work to your home or building, we must consider the building safety implications. This includes things like:

- Changes to staircases, escape routes or floors.
- Changes to the number of flats in a building.
- Changes to the building material, such as the external wall system.
- Changes to the layout of the building.
- Changes that require planning permission or Building Control approval.
- Changes to the building's evacuation strategy.

Our Building Safety Team

We have a dedicated Building Safety Team, including Property Safety Officers, whose role is to help keep our customers and our buildings safe.

If you live in a high rise block, our Property Safety Officers will be familiar faces around your home. They aim to provide additional reassurance and answer any questions or safety concerns you may have.

They carry out regular safety inspections in communal areas, arrange fire alarm testing and deal with any potential safety hazards or fire risks, as well as ensure the general fire safety of the block is being maintained. They will speak to you about fire safety and ensure everyone knows what to do if an emergency arises.



Tenancy Audits

We carry out safety checks with individual customers living in all 20 of our high rise blocks to make sure all the possible safety precautions are in place in your home and that they work for you.

The building safety element of these Tenancy Audits include:

- Testing smoke and heat detectors.
- Checking your windows and front door.
- Checking any ventilation systems and that they are clean.
- A visual inspection of electrical sockets and switches.

If anything needs attention or a repair, we will make arrangements with you to put it right.

While we are visiting, we will also:

- Make sure the contact details we have for you are up-to-date.
- Check the details of who is living in your property are correct.
- Check everyone in your home is able to evacuate the building in an emergency.
- Make sure you understand the evacuation procedure for your building.
- Give you general fire safety information specific to your home.
- Give you the chance to ask any questions or raise any issues.

Communication and Engagement

We are committed to ensuring all our customers are fully informed about building safety matters and empowered to get involved in discussions about building safety where you live.

Throughout your tenancy with Salix Homes, we will provide you with key building safety information at the following points:

Sign-up: This is when you first start your journey as a Salix Homes customer. You will be given a Welcome Pack, which includes the following building safety-related information:

- A Home Safety Guide.
- Tenancy Agreement.
- A Home User Guide (for new-build homes), including user instructions for appliances in your home.
- Information about how to contact us.
- Information about how to access our complaints process.
- Information about our Building Safety Team.
- Information about your Housing Officer.
- Information about ways to get involved to influence and improve our services.
- A Getting to Know You survey, where we will ask for information about everyone living in your home, including any medical conditions that may prevent you from being able to evacuate your home in an emergency.

Moving-in: When you move into your home, our officers will speak to you about building and fire safety, explaining what to do in the event of a fire, and ensuring you are aware of the evacuation procedure for your block, along with other safety measures you need to know about.

Living in your home: During your time as a Salix Homes customer, we will keep you informed about building-safety related activity taking place in and around your home.

This includes, repeat communications outlined on this page where necessary, plus:

- Planned investment or remediation work.
- Maintenance and repairs schedules.
- Any work that involves a significant disturbance to residents, for example restrictions around use of the car park or communal facilities.
- Details about fire safety measures, or changes to those measures, in and around your home.
- Details about any building safety risk identified at your home or building.
- Details of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) or outcomes of other safety-related surveys and checks.
- Details of Tenancy Audits, including safety compliance checks or surveys.
- Details of fire safety precautions you should take.

We will always inform customers if work needs to be carried out due to a building safety decision. If that work is expected to last longer than one day, limits access to a part of the building, or causes inconvenience to customers, we will consult with customers on:

- The dates and duration of work taking place
- Measures to mitigate disruption to customers

Major Works

For any major work planned for your building which will involve significant material alterations to the building, such as external wall remediation, structural strengthening or a roof replacement, we will consult residents at the following stages outlined in the table below:

Consultation Stage	What does this mean?	What information will be provided and why?
Alerting residents of any building safety risks or issues identified	A safety issue or risk has been identified at your building and we need to rectify it.	<p>We will tell customers what the safety risk is that has been identified and explain what needs to be done to rectify it.</p> <p>We will summarise any reports or surveys that have been carried out which identified the issue, and we will ensure our communication with you is clear and concise and avoids technical jargon.</p>
Procurement	A suitable contractor needs to be identified and appointed to carry out the remediation work.	<p>We will explain the reasons for the work being carried out and the scope of the work. We will provide details about the contractors carrying out the work, the duration of work and any disruption anticipated.</p> <p>Salix Homes has a dedicated customer Procurement Panel, and we will consult with them to ensure value for money and the suitability of contractors.</p> <p>If you're a leaseholder and the work is rechargeable, you will be consulted on the costs and scope of work.</p>
Design	The design stage is when we review plans and any proposed changes to the building's specification.	<p>Consultation will be delivered in partnership with the appointed contractor and customers will be consulted on design solutions and proposed site activities, particularly if the plans involve significant disturbance or restrictions around the use of car parks or communal spaces.</p> <p>We will share the proposed design plans and delivery programme with you, including key milestones and engagement activities.</p> <p>Customers will be able to raise concerns or ask questions about the proposals.</p>
Building work	This will be the start of work on site.	<p>We will have a dedicated Customer Liaison Officer for both Salix Homes and the appointed contractor who will be your point of contact for any questions or issues you'd like to raise during the duration of the work.</p> <p>We will keep you informed of progress updates and any changes to the work schedules or dates.</p>
Completion	This is after 'hand over' which means the contractor has completed all the work and it has been approved by Salix Homes and any other relevant bodies.	<p>We are committed to listening to customer feedback and experiences so we can identify any lessons learnt for future work programmes.</p> <p>We will keep you informed if there are any ongoing issues or any other follow-up work that needs to be carried out.</p>

Methods of communication

We are developing individual **Customer Engagement Plans** for all our high rise blocks, which are tailored to the requirements of a building and who lives there, taking into account things like languages spoken.

You will be able to refer to this plan for specific details relating to how we will communicate with you about building safety matters, however, we will use some of the following methods of communication:

- Letters
- Emails
- Text messages
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face conversations with Salix Homes officers and contractors
- Newsletters
- Salix Homes website
- MySalix customer portal
- Salix Homes social media channels
- Building safety related videos
- Notice boards in communal areas
- Drop-in sessions and surgeries

Accessibility of information

We will proactively provide all our customers with the information you need to understand building safety matters, that is in your preferred language or format. Customers who require building safety information in a different language or format, can contact us to request this.

We also have the **Recite Me accessibility tool** available on our website where you can translate into your preferred language and use other accessibility tools including large text, screen reader and audio files.

Customer Voice

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do at Salix Homes. We are passionate about ensuring your voices are heard and providing opportunities for you to help shape and improve our services. Getting involved can be anything from completing a short survey, to joining a dedicated customer group or committee.

We have an established **Apartment Living Forum** for customers living in our high rise blocks. Anyone living in one of our high rise blocks is welcome to join the Apartment Living Forum, which is empowered to influence building safety matters and decisions. The forum supports us to continually improve safety measures at our high-rise buildings and adapt to any new laws and regulation that is introduced with regards to building safety. Contact us to find out more about ways to get involved, or visit our website.

When won't we consult with customers about building safety decisions?

The safety of our customers and your homes is our priority, and we will always act in the interest of customers' safety.

There may be occasions when we won't consult with residents about building safety decisions. This could be for a number of reasons including:

Emergency works: We might need to carry out emergency work quickly if a significant building safety risk or risk to life has been identified. We will inform you if emergency work has to be carried out, including the scope and duration of the work, and any disruption, but we might not consult with you about this first.

Change to fire evacuation strategy: The fire evacuation strategy advises the steps customers should follow in the event of a fire or emergency. The strategy in all our high rise buildings is currently 'Stay Safe', which is also known as a 'Stay Put' policy.

If a fire engineer recommends we change this policy after identifying a building safety risk, then we will always follow their expert advice and won't consult with customers about the change. However, we will ensure customers are clear about the new strategy and make sure everyone receives clear and accessible communications about what to do in the event of an emergency.

We will also discuss with customers whether you, or anyone living in your home, is able to self-evacuate or if you have any disabilities or additional needs, and may need support to help you evacuate safely in an emergency.

Sharing key building safety information

It is now a legal requirement, as part of the Building Safety Act 2022, that all housing associations, like Salix Homes, share key safety and building information about your home with customers.

We also share this information with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), which is a government body that oversees and ensures that buildings are safe for people to live in.

The information we share with the Regulator is known as a 'Building Safety Case Report'. This is a very detailed and technical document, so we will summarise all the key bits of information for you to make it as easy as possible for you to access and understand.

We've created a dedicated area on our website, where you'll be able to access the individual Building Safety Case information for your block at www.salixhomes.co.uk. This includes:

Building information: Key facts about your block such as what material it's made of, the year it was built, and how many flats it contains.

Safety checks: Regular safety checks and surveys are carried out in your building to ensure all the fire safety measures and systems we have in place are in working order, in case of a fire or emergency. Some of these checks are carried out by our team of Property Safety Officers.

Fire Risk Assessments: A Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is a report on the fire hazards within the communal areas of a building, as well the external walls and materials used.

It's carried out by an independent fire safety expert. It explains the key safety measures in place and identifies any potential fire safety risks.

It also gives recommendations for Salix Homes if more safety measures are needed to prevent, control, and reduce the effects of a fire.

Our FRAs are made available to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service should they be required.

An FRA is a very technical document, so we will summarise all the key bits of information for you, including any recommendations that have been made and where we are up to with making any changes or improvements.

Investment Work: We carry out a regular programme of investment and improvement work to ensure all our homes and communities are safe and pleasant places to live. We also ensure they meet the Government's 'Decent Homes' standard, as well as our own 'Salix Standard'.

We will let you know about all upcoming programmes of work that is planned. We are developing a dedicated area on our website, where you will be able to find out more about investment work at your home.

Retaining and requesting further building safety information

We will retain information relating to building safety for as long as it remains relevant to help us to continually identify, assess and manage building safety risks. Information will also be retained in an accessible format for our customers, colleagues and any other interested parties.

If you would like to know about any building safety-related information in more detail, you can request it from us. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests can be made to our Building Safety Team, and you can email them at firesafety@salixhomes.co.uk

We aim to respond to all requests for further building safety information within 28 days.

Please refer to the tables on the next pages for the types of information we will and won't share.

We will share (available either on our website or upon request)	We will consider sharing (can be requested)	We won't share
Statutory Buildings Assessments This includes, but is not limited to: Fire Risk Assessments, Building Safety Risk Assessments, other types of assessments.	Surveys and inspection reports This includes, but is not limited to: Type 4 Risk Assessments and Structural Surveys. We will decide on a case-by-case basis if the report can be shared in full or if a summary of findings can be provided.	Personal Assessments Personal Centric Fire Risk Assessments (PCFRAs) for individual customers or properties won't be shared unless requested by the Building Safety Regulator or required for judicial purposes.
Statutory Certificates and Safety Checks This includes, but is not limited to: Regular checks of firefighting equipment, fire safety measures and equipment, fire alarms and systems, lift checks, fire doors and compartmentation.	Procurement and Contractor information This includes, but is not limited to: Scope of works, quotations, costs, competencies and accreditations, selection evaluation criteria.	Building development contracts and building plans
Additional Fire safety Information Fire safety information, instructions and advice, including fire safety measures in place and evacuation plans.	Legal Advice We will only share legal documentation if it doesn't breach privilege or compromise a prospective claim. A redacted version of documentation may be provided.	Residents Deeds of Certificate Information will not be shared outside Salix Homes unless requested by the Building Safety Regulator or required for judicial purposes.

Table continues on next page...

We will share (available either on our website or upon request)	We will consider sharing (can be requested)	We won't share
<p>Mandatory Occurrence Reporting Performance We will share our targets and performance relating to dealing with reports of building safety concerns.</p>	<p>EWS1 Reports An EWS1 Report, or External Wall System Form 1, is a document that assesses the fire safety of the external walls of a building and is part of the overall fire risk assessment for your building.</p> <p>The EWS1 Report helps identify potential fire risks, particularly related to cladding, to ensure it meets safety standards.</p> <p>As part of the assessment process, buildings are given a safety rating.</p>	<p>Personal information about Salix Homes colleagues and contractors</p>
<p>Building Safety Complaints record This will only be shared if it is relevant to the building you live in.</p>		<p>Residents' survey responses All survey submissions are anonymous, unless otherwise stated, and won't be shared outside Salix Homes.</p>
<p>Landlord Certificate and prescribed supporting documentation. This will only be shared if it is relevant to the building you live in.</p>		
<p>Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy and building specific Customer Engagement Plans.</p>		

Knowing what to do in the event of a fire or emergency

Fire safety notices, including details of fire assembly points and information about what to do in the event of a fire are displayed in the lobby areas of all high rise buildings. We would urge customers to familiarise yourself with these.

You will also find more information in your **Home Safety Guide**, which are also available in the lobby area of your building, and on our website.

This **Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy** will be supplemented with a **Customer Engagement Plan** for every high rise building.

This will set out individuals plans and actions for each building, taking into account the needs and requirements of who lives in the building, and we would encourage you to familiarise yourself with your block-specific plan.



Stay Safe

The evacuation strategy for all our high rise buildings is 'Stay Safe'.

You may also hear this called a 'Stay Put' policy. This means that if there is a fire in your flat you should leave the flat and the building.

If there is a fire somewhere else in the building, you can remain in your flat and do not need to leave the building. This is because the fire safety measures at your building are designed to ensure the fire does not spread from a different part of the building.

When firefighters tackle a fire anywhere in the building, it is likely that some smoke will spread into the corridors and sometimes into the staircase - if you choose to leave the building you may expose yourself to smoke in these areas before it is cleared. If at any stage your flat is affected by heat or smoke, or you feel unsafe, then you should get out if you can and call 999 and ask for 'fire'.

And remember, you should always evacuate if asked to do so by firefighters.

If we change the evacuation strategy for any our buildings, this would be done on the advice of the fire service or other fire safety experts, and we would not necessarily consult with customers about this first.

We would however ensure customers are informed and understand any changes to the evacuation strategy through clear and accessible communications and discussions.

Your commitment to building safety

Building safety is everyone's responsibility, and as a Salix Homes customer, you must live and behave in a way that does not increase the risk of fire or damage to your home or building.

Making alterations to your home

We expect customers not to make any unauthorised changes to your home, without speaking to us first to gain permission.

This includes anything that might affect the building's structural safety, or fire safety measures, such as removing or tampering with smoke and heat detectors, fire alarms or sprinklers, or drilling holes in walls or doors.

All our tower blocks and communal buildings have fire doors, this includes the front door to your home, and they are designed to help stop the spread of fire.

It is really important that you don't prop fire doors open, or make any alterations to them that could affect the protection they offer in the event of a fire. This includes things like drilling or knocking nails into your door to attach any signs or decoration.

All our fire doors are self-closing, so in the event of a fire they will automatically close behind you and help stop the fire from spreading.

Please don't remove or tamper with the self-closing devices on your door. If you notice a fault or damage to any fire door, please report it to us as soon as possible.

If you are planning any home improvements, we will also need to check our records first to see if your home is likely to contain asbestos.

Remember, this is an important part of your Tenancy Agreement and if you don't let us know about your DIY plans, you will be in breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

Communal areas

Salix Homes will maintain communal areas to ensure we achieve the highest levels of safety, and we carry out regular safety audits on communal spaces. However, customers have a responsibility to keep communal areas clear.

Please do not put or store anything in communal areas that could block an escape route or cause an obstruction in an emergency.

Fire doors are fitted throughout communal areas - it is really important that these are not propped open or tampered with. If you do notice a fault or damage to a communal door, please report it to us as soon as possible.

Let us in, let us keep you safe

We will carry out regular checks, safety inspections and repairs in all our properties, some of which are a legal requirement. These checks are vital in helping to keep you and your home safe, so it is really important that customers understand the significance of these inspections and allow us access to your homes when required.

We will aim to give you **48 hours' notice** if we need to access your home for any building safety-related issues.

If you don't let us in after **three attempts**, we may have to take legal action. You will be in breach of your Tenancy Agreement, which could put you at risk of eviction from your home.

However, if there is an emergency situation and a significant building safety risk or risk to life has been identified, we may need to access your home without notice.



Reporting Building Safety concerns

If you see or uncover a building safety concern, whether it is something that isn't working how it should, or an individual acting irresponsibly, please help us by reporting it. This is known as a Mandatory Occurrence Report.

A building safety concern could be:

- Poor installation or poor workmanship
- Customers undertaking their own DIY or causing damage to the block
- A safety feature is damaged or not working as it should

You will find Building Safety letter boxes in the foyer of your building where you can post your safety concern. You can also report it via:

Tel: 0800 218 2000

Email: firesafety@salixhomes.co.uk

Website: www.salixhomes.co.uk/fire-safety

Complaints process

As part of the new laws in the Building Safety Act, a complaint about building safety may relate to:

- A building safety risk to a specific building
- The performance of an Accountable Person (in our case Salix Homes) fulfilling our duties under the Building Safety Act. *(These duties are outlined on Page 5)*

All building safety-related complaints can be submitted through our formal complaints process, and we will make sure all customers know how to raise a complaint with us.

Customers can view our complaints process on our website by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.salixhomes.co.uk



If you are not happy with our response to your complaint or don't feel that Salix Homes has dealt with the issue, you can raise the complaint to the Building Safety Regulator by visiting:

www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-building-safety-regulator

You can also appeal to the Housing Ombudsman Service, which is a free, independent complaint resolution service, by visiting:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/



Do you need help reading this?

Follow the QR code to link to our **Recite Me** tool.
You can translate into your preferred language and use other accessibility tools, including large text, screen reader and audio file.



Alternatively, call us on **0800 218 2000**.

Contact Us

Call: 0800 218 2000

Email: enquiries@salixhomes.co.uk

Website: www.salixhomes.co.uk

