

Introduction

Homes for Reading Ltd (HfR) was set up in the spring of 2016 as an important part of Reading Borough Council's housing strategy.

Wholly owned and funded by Reading Borough Council, Homes for Reading is a professional and responsible private residential landlord, looking to purchase and let c500 properties during its first five years and structured to enable it to develop new housing in the future, both for rent and sale.

The company 'housing offer' is completely separate and different to that of the Council; it is simply funded by the Council.

HfR is an ethical company and the surplus funds generated from their operations go towards improving housing and public services in Reading. By operating in a fair, professional, ethical and responsible manner HfR will help to drive improvements in the local Private Rented Sector.

Homes for Reading has a dedicated management and maintenance team which offers a 24 hour a day / 365 days a year emergency repairs service.

Service Level Agreements with Reading Borough Council

Service Level Agreements have been established and are in place with Reading Borough Council for a range of services, including; Valuations, Legal (conveyancing), surveying, housing management, repairs and maintenance, finance/accounting.

Homes for Reading are also commissioning surveys, valuations and conveyancing externally as needed and procedures are in place for such functions

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Health & Safety Policy Statement

Homes for Reading Limited is committed to managing health and safety in all aspects of its work and to implementing reasonably practicable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of any persons that may be affected by its activities.

So far as is reasonably practicable, Homes for Reading Limited will:

- Provide adequate control of Health & Safety risks arising from our work activities;
- Ensure that adequate resources and training are available to maintain standards;
- Ensure incidents are investigated thoroughly and promptly to identify immediate, root and underlying causes and, where possible, to ensure measures are implemented to reduce or eliminate recurrence;
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken for hazardous work activities and reviewed regularly;
- Provide adequate information, instruction, and supervision for employees;
- Ensure all employees are competent to do their job, and provide suitable training;
- Seek to prevent accidents and cases of work related ill-health;
- Ensure the safe use, handling, storage and transport goods and materials;
- Ensure that contractors (and sub-contractors) and suppliers are committed to achieving and adhering high standards of health and safety;
- Continually identify and comply with legal requirements and other requirements
- Establish and review health and safety objectives twice yearly

Signed:

Person	Role	Signature	Date
Mark Green	Managing Director		13/12/2018
Sarah Hacker	Chair		13/12/2018

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Organisation, Responsibility and Accountability

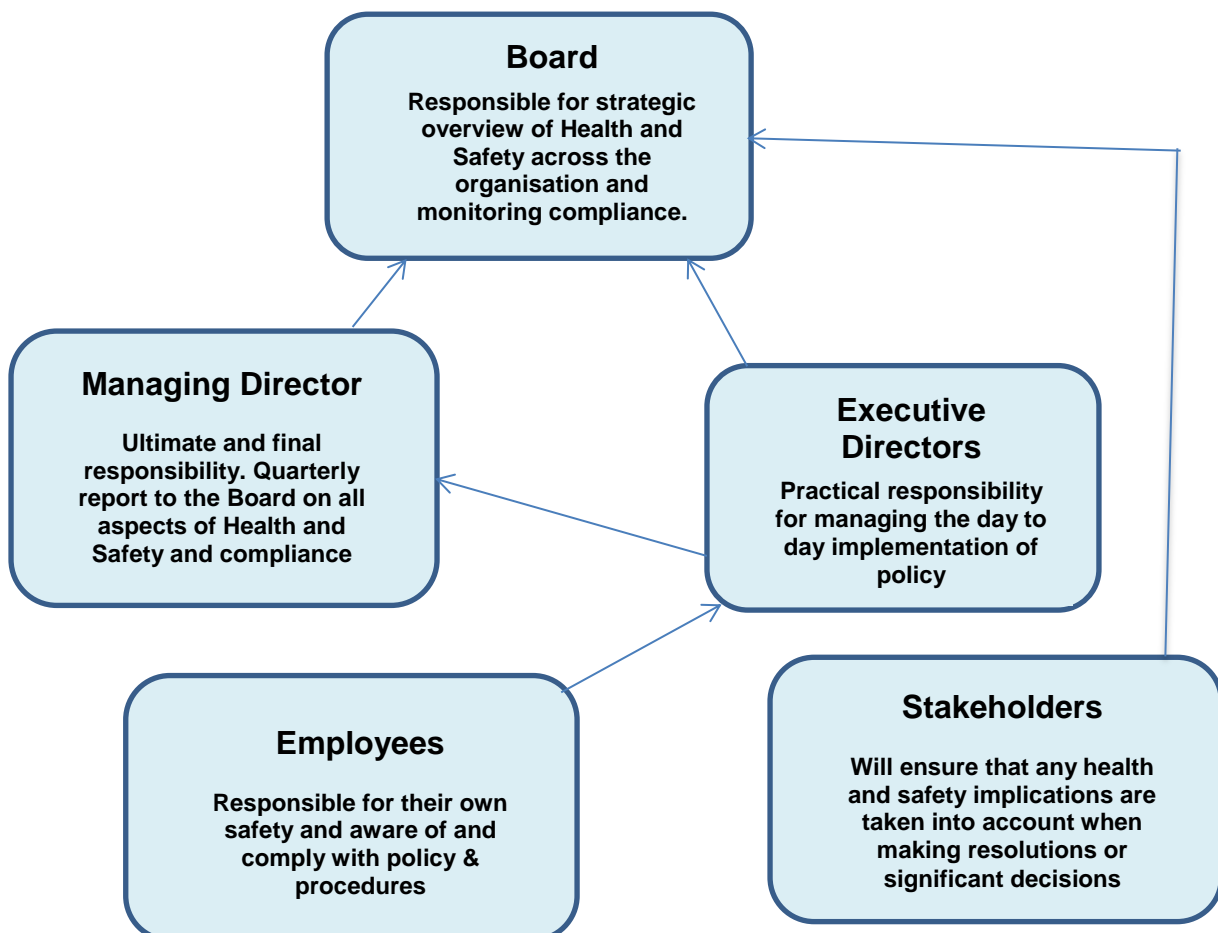
As a company wholly owned by the Council it is imperative that an appropriate governance structure is in place to ensure the sound and robust management of the company alongside protection of the Council's financial and reputational investment in the company.

The Shareholder function of the Council is primarily executed through Policy Committee, and the Directors of the Board have been appointed at the Council AGM. The Board of Directors will be responsible for strategic direction and oversight of performance, financial and operational management of the Company within the parameters agreed with the Shareholder.

Homes for Reading is committed to providing strong visible leadership and will actively encourage the engagement and cooperation of its workforce and operational partners in developing, promoting and continually improving its overall health and safety performance.

The requirements of the Health and Safety Policy will be effectively communicated to operational partners and others relevant stakeholders

Responsibilities Chart



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Board of Management (The Board)

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of performance, financial and operational management of the Company within the parameters agreed with the Shareholder, As well as monitoring compliance, providing leadership and championing health & safety, the Board will receive information regarding the health & safety performance of Homes for Reading Ltd and, as a Wholly Owned Subsidiary, will report such performance to the Council policy committee.

The Board will review and approve this Policy on an annual basis, review health and safety performance on a quarterly basis and ensure that any issues of significant risk are actioned appropriately. Consultation on any new policy or amendments of existing policies will be brought to the Board as Regulations and work activity requires.

The Board comprises of;

- four councillors;
- the Managing Director
- two senior officers of the Council
- two independent non-executive directors

The Board will report health and safety performance to the RBC Policy Committee at least on an annual basis.

Managing Director

The Managing Director is responsible for the control and implementation of this Policy and the provision of adequate resources to meet health and safety requirements. The Managing Director will:

- Provide leadership to all stakeholders to be safety conscious at all times;
- Place the health & safety of employees, residents and others who are affected by our undertaking above all other considerations
- Ensure that this Policy is clearly communicated and implemented by all stakeholders, contractors and others under their control.
- Ensure all relevant properties are managed and let with appropriate contractual and monitoring arrangements in place with regard to health and safety;
- Bring to the attention of the Homes for Reading Board any significant health and safety issues of concern.
- Ensure that the health & safety performance of projects, contracts and contractors is effectively monitored, and where necessary, the CDM Client's authority is invoked to achieve improvements.

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Finance

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring finances are available to ensure

- Effective implementation of the Health & Safety Policy;
- The effective management of health and safety
- Responsible staff are competent through appropriate training;
- The workplace is and remains a safe place to work;
- Safe office equipment and tools are available for employees to use;
- Office equipment and tools are regularly maintained/serviced;
- PPE is available for company employees to wear

Executive Directors

- Will ensure that they fully understand their health and safety obligations;
- Will ensure that high standards of health and safety are achieved;
- Will monitor the activities within the area of their responsibility in relation to the health and safety to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, good practice, policies and procedures.
- Will ensure that any incidents that occur within the area of their responsibility are investigated with corrective action being implemented to prevent a reoccurrence.

Employees

- Must act in a manner to protect and promote their own health and safety and that of colleagues, members of the public and others.
- Must co-operate with the efforts of management to ensure effective health and safety.
- Must attend training provided, read documentation provided and put into practice all instruction intended to ensure effective safety.
- Must report all accidents/incidents, near misses and hazards immediately to their line manager.
- Must respect and make proper use of all equipment provided.
- Must wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been provided.
- Must refer any health and safety issues they feel they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.
- Must carry out any specific health and safety duties that have been allocated to them as part of the normal work activity. Where for any reason those duties cannot be carried out, they must report these issues to their line manager immediately.

Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers

- Must implement a sufficiently robust Health and Safety policy that safeguards the activities and services being provided, their employees and that of colleagues, members of the public and others.

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- Must refer any health and safety issues they feel they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.
- Must carry out any specific health and safety duties that have been allocated to them as part of the normal work activity. Where for any reason those duties cannot be carried out, they must report these issues to Homes for Reading Limited Ltd.

Shareholders

The shareholders acknowledge that their decisions may have an impact on health and safety and as such will ensure that any health and safety implications are taken into account when making resolutions or significant decisions.

Co-operation & Communication

Health and Safety will be discussed at Board Meetings, Executive Team Meetings, team meetings, one to ones and appraisals and Homes for Reading Limited will consult with staff as the business grows.

Leadership in Health and Safety will be led by the Managing Director who will actively encourage this across the organisation. Staff will be informed regularly of the company's Health and Safety policies and face to face discussion will be carried at one to ones, appraisals & team meetings.

LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

As the majority of Homes for Reading Limited's staff are employed by Reading Borough Council the requirement is that they conform to the levels of responsibility laid down by the Council. For those non-executive Directors employed directly by Homes for Reading, they will also be required to conform to the levels of responsibility laid down by the Council;

As a minimum all staff:

- Must act in a manner to protect and promote their own health and safety and that of colleagues, members of the public and others.
- Must co-operate with the efforts of management to ensure effective health and safety.

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- Must attend training provided, read documentation provided and put into practice all instruction intended to ensure effective safety.
- Must report all accidents/incidents, near misses and hazards immediately to their line manager.
- Must respect and make proper use of all equipment provided.
- Must wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been provided.
- Must refer any health and safety issues they feel they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.
- Must carry out any specific health and safety duties that have been allocated to them as part of the normal work activity. Where for any reason those duties cannot be carried out, they must report these issues to their line manager immediately.

ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure this Policy is effective, Homes for Reading Limited will implement the following arrangements:

Health & Safety Risks

- The Managing Director is to co-ordinate the undertaking of Risk Assessments.
- Findings of Risk Assessments and actions required to effect control measures will be undertaken by the Managing Director and the Executive Directors.
- Review the Risk Assessments every year and when significant changes are made to health and safety legislation, guidance, related policies and procedures or the work activity within the organisation;
- Present the Health and Safety Policy to the Board for annual approval, informing the Board of any changes;

Information, Instruction & Supervision

- Communicate, inform and consult with employees, contractors, stakeholders, service providers and others to ensure that known risks are effectively managed;
- Allocate roles and responsibilities, provide training, communicate, consult and have processes for document control to ensure plans are implemented across the business;
- When selecting contractors, sub-contractors or other providers of services, make an assessment of their health and safety capabilities through the procurement process in

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place including reviewing their history of health and safety performance in compliance with the relevant regulations.

Competency for Tasks & Training

- Training Induction for Health & Safety purposes will be provided by:
 - **Reading Borough Council** – for workplace Health & Safety.
- Provide training to employees to ensure they can carry out their duties safely and fulfil their legal obligations to themselves and others
- Training and development records will be maintained.
- Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by:
 - Executive Management Team
 - Reading Borough Council

Codes of Practice

- Reading Borough Council has developed a series of health and safety documents that detail safe working practices and procedures; this includes Codes of Practice which cover the main safety risks faced by staff, visitors, contractors and members of the public arising from the Councils' work activities; Homes for Reading (HfR) will adopt the Reading Borough Council Codes of Practice and adhere to their requirements.
- The responsibility for putting the Codes of Practice into practice resides with the Executive Directors at Homes for Reading Ltd.

Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments relevant to employees of Reading Borough Council are already available and, as Homes for Reading Ltd staff are predominantly employees of the Council they will follow the relevant assessments already in place.
- A specific risk assessment will be developed by Homes for Reading Ltd for the non-executive directors and any specific tasks / roles that will be undertaken by them will be included.
- Any improvement / refurbishment works on the properties owned by Homes for Reading Ltd will be undertaken, via Service Level Agreement by Reading Borough Council. HfR will ensure that risk assessments are in place prior to work starting on its premises.
- HfR will ensure that all risk assessments that it produces are reviewed annually or whenever there has been a significant change.

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Accidents, First Aid & Work-Related Ill Health

- The Executive Management Team will ensure the provisions of first aid are notified to employees.
- All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the Homes for Reading accident book.
- The Managing Director is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the relevant authority.
- A Director of Homes for Reading Limited will investigate all accidents/incidents and near misses to establish whether additional procedures are needed to prevent the likelihood of recurrence. Risk assessments, training, instruction or levels of supervision may need to be reviewed following the investigation.
- Periodically, Directors will review the accidents and incidents that have occurred to try and identify any trends. Where a trend has been identified, remedial action shall be instigated.
- Accident/Incident statistics will be reviewed at the Board of Directors meetings.

Landlord Duties

The Executive Management Team has developed a Service Level Agreement with Reading Borough Council which will ensure that the specific requirements of landlords in terms of safety compliance will be delivered by them.

This agreement will be reviewed every 6 months to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice in relation to its 'Housing Management and Maintenance Service Providers' who will fulfil and are responsible for providing:

- Inspections and records relating to fire safety to include:
 - Ensuring the Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken and implemented annually.
 - Checking escape routes as identified within the risk assessment
 - Checking Fire extinguishers are annually maintained.
 - Checking the fire alarms are tested in accordance with prevailing regulations, best practice and system manufacture recommendations.
 - That emergency lighting, automatic fire systems and any other fire safety equipment is periodically inspected and tested.
- All statutory and manufacturers' recommended inspections and records are reviewed periodically and in place and for:
 - Asbestos management;
 - Legionella control;

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- Carbon monoxide control;
 - Electric and gas installations;
 - Portable appliance tests;
 - Lifts and lifting equipment;
 - Powered gates;
 - Local exhaust ventilation;
 - Work equipment and vehicles.
- All accidents and incidents within their service area are thoroughly investigated and any remedial actions carried out.
 - Health and safety information is effectively communicated within their service area
 - Their staff to receive adequate and appropriate training and supervision.
 - Relevant Codes of Practice are followed and that Local Safety Practices are prepared and put in place as required.
 - Suitable health and safety monitoring is carried out during projects and contracts.

Control of Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers

Homes for Reading Limited expects that all Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers appointed to work for them shall not put themselves, HfR or Reading BC staff or members of the public at risk.

Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers at work will be checked regularly for safe working and Homes for Reading Limited reserve the right to stop the work if any contractor is found to be operating in an unsafe manner.

Health and Safety Inspections

Directors of Homes for Reading Limited will commission safety inspections of the company's area of activity, and at appropriate intervals (frequency will be dependent on the level of risk but should as a minimum occur annually). This includes that any relevant land, internal/external communal areas and all areas within their curtilage including playgrounds.

Action plans will be prepared to rectify any shortfall. Where the risk identified by the safety inspection is deemed to be sufficiently serious and it cannot be easily resolved, a report shall be made to the Managing Director and Board of Directors.

Health and Safety Self-Audit

A health and safety self-audit system has been established by Homes for Reading Ltd in the form of a questionnaire and guide to inform employees, Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers undertaking work on behalf of Homes for Reading Limited of the company's expectations and processes relating to its business activity.

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This self-audit system will be externally audited on an annual basis to ensure that the process is compliant and all risks are covered adequately.

Homes for Reading Limited will carry out a self-audit of;

- each service area managed internally
- externally placed contracts

Action plans shall be prepared to rectify any shortfall. Where the self-audit identifies that providers of out sourced contracts have actions to complete, progress with those actions will be monitored by the Executive Directors. A reasonable time will be provided by Homes for Reading Limited to allow the third party to remedy the action and a further review will be undertaken within 3 months of the original self-audit to assess progress.

Health & Safety Performance & Monitoring

A range of performance indicators will be used to monitor safety performance by Homes for Reading Limited, who will develop their own specific targets to be included in their own Health and Safety Action Plans. Progress with declared targets is monitored via the HfR Board of Directors and the Executive Management Team.

- The Executive Management Team will establish objectives, policies and procedures and, where required and as the business grows, risk assessments and safe systems of work for employees and relevant persons and processes
- Monitor and review performance, evaluate compliance with legislation, carry out audits and inspections and investigate incidents;
- Implement corrective and preventative actions in response to any areas of non-compliance identified to ensure high health & safety standards.
- Seek regular updates on training records of all contractors, sub-contractors or other providers of services

Specialist help will be sought from competent person(s) when Homes for Reading Limited have hazardous or complex processes (Fire, Asbestos, legionella, lifts, Construction Design & Management CDM etc.); specialist competences will be checked and confirmed by the Managing Director.

Documentation

Homes for Reading Ltd will develop an audit process for checking that relevant documentation is place for statutory service inspections and records in relation to the Landlord Duties identified above.

Additionally, Homes for Reading Limited will develop its own policies as appropriate for any activity undertaken directly and where services are provided directly by Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers to Homes for Reading Ltd.

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Record Keeping

Adequate, accurate and consistent health and safety records shall be maintained by Homes for Reading Limited covering activity undertaken directly and by Contractors, Sub-Contractors and other Service Providers undertaken work on the company's behalf. The relevant Senior Manager of a third party is responsible for ensuring that there are suitable and sufficient records of their team's activities. Records may be kept on computer or in hard copy, but must be readily available and secure. The following records are required:

- All relevant and appropriate risk assessments.
- Statutory and manufacturers' recommended inspection records and assessments for fire safety, asbestos management, Legionella control, electric and gas installations, portable appliance tests, lifts and lifting equipment, powered gates, local exhaust ventilation, work equipment and vehicles.
- Records identifying the health and safety training received by each employee with dates and details. These should include acknowledgement by each staff member that he or she has seen and understood the relevant risk assessments, Codes of Practices.
- As Homes for Reading Limited Limited's staff are directly employed by Reading Borough Council, Training courses arranged through the Learning & Development Team will be recorded centrally.
- Copies of all self-audit, external Audits and inspections carried out.
- Records of all accidents and incidents reported together with investigation findings and records of remedial actions undertaken.
- Copies of any correspondence with the HSE or other enforcement authority relevant to the service.

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