

# Safety in Sheltered Accommodation

This leaflet contains information for residents living in sheltered accommodation about how to ensure your safety in your flat, in the communal areas of your block, as well as advice on what to do in the event of a fire.



# Communal Areas

As your landlord, Winchester City Council has statutory responsibilities for the dwelling in which you live, including making sure the structure of the building is safe and the communal areas meet fire safety requirements.

## Why do communal areas need to be kept clear?

The Council has a legal duty to ensure your communal areas are kept in a safe condition and to ensure:

- The risk of fire is minimised
- Fire exits are not obstructed
- Trip hazards are removed
- Staff & contractors can work safely and unhindered

## What are your responsibilities?

As a resident, you have a responsibility under the terms of your tenancy or leasehold agreement to keep the communal areas clear. This includes:

- Keeping the landing outside your home clear of items at all times
- Keeping your balcony free of flammable items, such as gas bottles
- Not storing items in electrical & meter cupboards
- Not leaving unwanted household items, such as furniture, appliances, carpets, in bin areas

Items such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters, rubbish bags, recycling, pot plants, furniture, pictures or ornaments should all be stored inside your flat to comply with your responsibilities. **Any items, such as these, in communal areas could make it difficult to get out in the event of an emergency and as such, landings and corridors must remain clear at all times.**

The communal areas provide access to your home; they do not form part of your home.

## What is the Council doing?

Housing staff regularly visit and carry out inspections of blocks of flats. If you are storing or leaving items in the communal areas or using electrical and meter cupboards for storage, you will be asked to remove the items immediately, to minimise the risk of fire and/or to ensure fire escape routes are unobstructed. If you don't, the Council will make arrangements to remove and dispose of the items. You may be charged for the cost of doing this if we determine the items belong to you.

The Council also carries out regular Fire Risk Assessments to assess whether the state of the communal areas meets the requirements of Fire Safety law.

## Who can I contact for further advice?

Contact the Sheltered Housing Team on **(01962) 855 335** or at **[shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk)** for advice on managing the communal areas.

## Fire Safety Advice

There are measures you can take in your home to keep you and your family safe in the event of a fire.

- Your home is fitted with a smoke alarm, which is connected to the Care line
- In the event of an emergency, the Care line will be aware and will summon the emergency services immediately.

Advice on fire safety within the home can be found at **[www.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.gov.uk/firekills)** which details National Fire Safety guidance for homes.

# Fire Advice

## If there is a fire

- If there is a fire in your home, use the alarm call box immediately. If you have a telephone dial 999 as a back up, but only if you can make the call without putting yourself at risk.
- Leave your flat, closing doors behind you as this will help compartmentalise the fire. If your scheme has a fire alarm system, alert your neighbours by breaking the call point glass.
- **Never** use a lift in a fire emergency.
- Some schemes have a Stay Put policy in place, (the fire notices in your scheme will indicate if your scheme is stay put). This means that the building is designed to minimise the spread of fire through self closing fire doors. In this case it is safer to remain in your home with the doors closed than to enter potentially smoke filled corridors and await instructions from the Fire & Rescue Service. **Please note if the fire is in your property you still need to leave and go to a place of safety.**

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## REMEMBER – GET OUT AND STAY OUT

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If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to receive information for example translation, interpreters, Braille, audio tape, large print, sign language – please contact the Customer Service Centre either by  
telephone **01962 840 222**  
or by email **customerservice@winchester.gov.uk**

telephone **01962 855 335**

email **shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk**

website **www.winchester.gov.uk**