

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Balcony Safety Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) that have a balcony.

1.2 This policy outlines the safe use of balconies.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure;

- Safe use of balconies
- Fire risk management on balconies
- Balcony inspection regime

2.2 This policy provides a framework for how balconies will be managed and what is expected of residents.

3. Scope, definitions and legislation

3.1 The legislation that applies to this policy are;

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Housing Act 2004
- Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014

4. Tenants' Obligations

4.1 In line with the Tenancy Agreement tenants must keep their home, including its fixture and fittings, clean and in good condition. To ensure balcony safety tenants are obliged to regularly check the surfaces, flooring, glass, and railings of their balcony, to make sure they are safe and not in need of repair.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to report any defects so they can be repaired within a timescale relative to any Health and Safety considerations.

4.2 When letting a property with a balcony the door to the balcony will be lockable and two keys will be provided. A restrictor will be installed to the window if it is not present as part of the design. It is the responsibility of the tenant to ensure that the door is locked or a window restrictor is engaged if there are small children in the property.

4.3 It is important to keep balcony decking clean to remove algae or dead leaves which could make the balcony surface slippery.

4.4 If the balcony also serves as a fire escape for other flats, items must not be stored on the balcony, which would prohibit escape in the event of a fire.

4.5 Tenants may not do the following

- Store items on their balcony – **permissible items are: Fire resistant table or chairs.**
- Try to clean the outer face of the balcony's window glass by reaching over

- Fix additional timber or combustible screening or flooring on the balcony (includes artificial grass or similar)
- Fix anything to the external elements of the building/balcony
- Allow anyone to climb or lean over the balcony or leave children unattended on the balcony
- Force anything in-between or connect anything to the railings
- Use the balcony as a barbecue area or use any other appliance that emits a naked flame or intense heat
- Allow pets to foul on the balcony

5. Fire Risk Management

5.1 Balcony fires can happen any time however, they are more common during the summer months. There are steps that can be taken to minimise the risk.

5.2 Tenants must keep their balcony clear at all times of flammable and dangerous items including:

- Gas canisters, barbecues, and patio heaters
- Glass bottles or mirrors
- Paints, oils, or paint thinners
- Upholstered furniture, wood, plastic, or combustible materials
- Balcony covers including artificial grass

5.3 Smoking is not allowed on a balcony.

6. The Council's Responsibilities

6.1 The Council is responsible for repairing and maintain the structure and outsides of its properties. The Council will inspect balconies annually to ensure they are safe to use.

6.2 If any items that shouldn't be stored on the balcony are seen at any time, the Council will provide written notice to the owner(s) of the item(s) to allow them to be removed. If items are not removed within the required timescale the council will remove them and recharge the tenant.

7. Consultation, communication and training

7.1 RBC will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

7.2 All residents with a private balcony will be consulted on this policy. The majority of people who responded to the consultation were non-smokers who were in favour of a smoking ban as smoking on balconies causes a nuisance to non-smokers using nearby balconies.

8. Monitoring and performance management

8.1 We aim to review this policy in three years to ensure it reflects current legislation and the latest examples of best practices.

8.2 Overall monitoring and review of this policy will be undertaken in consultation with staff, the Runnymede Council Residents Association, Surrey County Council ASC, Runnymede Community Services team and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 In producing this document an Equality Impact Assessment Screening (EIA) has been carried out.

9.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups. This is used to assess whether, in making the decision, the Council has complied with its public sector equality duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) to eliminate discrimination and any other conduct that is prohibited under this act and to advance equality between those who share a protected characteristic.

9.3 The screening found that a full impact assessment is not required

9. Related strategies/Documents

Tenancy Agreement

10. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	March 22	First draft created		Maggie Ward	