

NHMF Best Practice Guidance: Fire safety case study

Anchor Trust and London Fire Brigade Primary Authority

Learn how Anchor improved fire safety in its care homes and other specialist housing, while reducing its compliance costs through its Primary Authority Partnership with London Fire Brigade (LFB).

Cost savings

Estimated to be at least £1,200,000 over the next three years, without including additional VAT savings.

Operational benefits

- Improved safety for residents through better trained staff (now trained in-house) to ensure effective fire safety audits
- simplified personal emergency evacuation plan policy introduced to assist in significantly reducing vulnerable persons' evacuation times

How they did it

Through its partnership (2-way dialogue) with LFB, Anchor was able to review and improve its fire safety management procedures to address deficiencies and improve standards. A new National Health and Safety Manager (NH&SM) was appointed. It was decided to carry out the training and fire risk assessments in-house to equip staff and reduce expenditure on external consultants. Specific actions included:

- A new training programme, including an approved fire risk assessment course, for staff conducting fire safety audits to ensure audits carried out to an appropriate standard
- Simplified personal emergency evacuation plan policy introduced to assist in significantly reducing for vulnerable persons
- 3rd party care providers now train their staff in the fire evacuation strategy for the specific premises where they work
- Electronic reporting system for building deficiencies made more transparent and key stakeholders given access, with all outstanding actions now managed by the property department. Progress is monitored by the National Health and Safety Manager
- Comprehensive fire log book introduced to improve visibility on fire tests and inspections (many now undertaken in-house).

Future improvements

Going forward, this Partnership between Anchor and LFB will contribute to an-ongoing and regularly reviewed continuous improvement process.

Lessons for other landlords and care home organisations

Specialised housing presents a high risk, with incidents and fatalities increasing contrary to national trends but Primary Authority Partnerships with Fire and Rescue Authorities provide an effective way to manage and reduce these risks. The actions taken by Anchor with LFB's support demonstrate how fire risk assessments, fire safety audits and staff training can be undertaken by landlords and care home organisations to reduce compliance costs and improve resident safety in the event of a fire.