

NORTH VIEW Housing Association

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North View is a registered Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963

POLICY

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

Passed:-

25th November 2020

Review Date:-

October 2025

All North View policies and publications can be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages.

For further details please contact us on 0141 634 0555 or email us at enquiries@nvha.org.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The two main aims of this policy are to i) define what events we consider to be a 'disaster', and ii) establish process/procedures to be followed should such an event occur.
- 1.2 We have had experience of dealing with 'disasters', and have coped reasonably well with each situation. Our experience has shaped the development of this Plan; it is practical, easy to follow, and 'fit for purpose'.
- 1.3 In the event of a disaster, we aim to act as quickly and decisively as we can. We aim to get an officer on site (as soon as practicably possible) who i) has the authority to take decisions, and ii) has access to the contact information for all relevant parties. The person most suited to this role is the Maintenance Manager.
- 1.4 Our response is reliant upon technology, meaning that Association personnel do not need to carry a Disaster Recovery 'manual' to site, or follow procedures set out therein, but rather adhere to the guidelines set out in sections 4.0, and 5.0 of this Policy.

2.0 DEFINITION OF 'DISASTER'

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, 'disaster' is an event that results in i) significant interruption to our business, and ii) one or more of our tenanted properties becoming uninhabitable.

Business interruption

- 2.2 This would arise if we were unable to access our Office, or if a significant amount of operational data was lost, corrupted, or subject to cyber-attack.

Tenanted properties becoming uninhabitable

- 2.3 Our experience is that a house fire is the most common cause of tenanted properties becoming uninhabitable. We have found that neighbouring properties are generally not affected to the extent that they become uninhabitable, only the property that was the source of the fire becomes uninhabitable. That said, we recognise the possibility that fire could cause several properties to become

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uninhabitable.

- 2.4 A gas explosion would also render properties uninhabitable. It is likely that a gas explosion would cause greater damage than a fire, thus increasing the likelihood of several properties becoming uninhabitable.
- 2.5 Other events could be a gas leak, or water leak/ingress, but we would not expect these to have major implications.

Experience has shown that water leaks from flats above (be it burst water pipes, or discharge from blocked drain pipes etc.) do not generally render properties uninhabitable.

3.0 RISK REDUCTION

- 3.1 Fire and gas explosion are the two main hazards that could cause a disaster within our properties; both of these, plus the corruption, loss, theft etc. of electronic data are the main hazards that affect our Office operations. In this section, we cover the steps taken to reduce the risk of them occurring.

Fire

- 3.2 All our properties have been refurbished (or built) from the late 1980's onwards. Fire doors have been fitted in all properties where such was a requirement of the Building Regulations, separating walls and floors have been designed to negate the spread of fire between neighbouring properties (in accordance with Building Regulations), all properties have been fitted with a smoke detector (which, via our Newsletter, we regularly advise tenants' to check that it is operable) and all our properties are currently being upgraded with smoke and heat detectors. We also implement a five yearly inspection of the electricians in all properties. The effect of these measures substantially increases the likelihood of early detection and containment, thereby substantially reducing the risk of fire causing a major disaster.
- 3.3 It is a similar case for our Office, which was designed to the building standards current in 2004. The self closing fire doors (for containment of fire), a fire detection system (linked to an off site monitoring centre), a fire alarm system, and basic fire fighting equipment also reduces the risk of fire causing a major disaster.

Gas

- 3.4 Our 'Gas Contractor' carries out an annual gas safety check of all our properties which have been fitted with gas appliances. Any problems identified through this process are then addressed. We also carry out an annual inspection of the gas appliances in the Office.

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- 3.5 Between inspections, tenants can report gas malfunctions, whereupon we will effect a repair. Tenants are also given instruction (via our Tenant's Handbook and Newsletter) on what to do in the event of there being a suspected gas leak.
- 3.6 The processes set out in items 3.4 and 3.5 help to significantly reduce the risk of a gas 'disaster'.

Electronic data

- 3.7 We have cyber security in place to protect our systems and electronic data against cyber-attack. Our computer systems are 'backed up' to an on-site server every two hours, and to two separate off site servers daily. An off-site server backed up daily buys us more time to react to attack i.e. it may have corrupted the latest two-hour back up, but, if caught quickly enough, it won't have corrupted the last daily back up, while having two off site servers protects us in the event of one failing (as both are unlikely to fail simultaneously). We periodically check the back-ups to ensure that the data has recorded 'properly'.
- 3.8 Our Housing Management software system is web based and all data is stored in the cloud. Our software supplier has taken appropriate measure to secure the data against cyber-attack.
- 3.9 All our computers and programmes are password protected, so the information on any laptop that is lost (or stolen) outwith the Office should be secure. Electronic data will only be stored on removable media (CD, DVD, USB memory stick) that is encrypted; such removable data will be stored securely at all times when not being used.
- 3.10 The Association is currently working towards 'Cyber Essentials' accreditation.

4.0 'DISASTERS' TO TENANTED PROPERTIES

- 4.1 In the event of any disaster, the Maintenance Manager will contact our Director, then visit site, assess the situation and notify our insurers as soon as is practicably possible.

The Maintenance Manager will then continue to liaise with our insurers (or the Loss Adjuster) for the duration of the event and subsequent 'making good' works.

Large scale disaster

- 4.2 In the event of a larger scale disaster (e.g. a fire or gas explosion affecting several properties), we would expect the emergency services (or statutory services like

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Building Control) to take control of the situation, and establish an emergency shelter etc. The Association's Maintenance Manager will make himself known to the emergency services and put our services at their disposal.

- 4.3 The Maintenance Manager will co-ordinate any Association staff present, under the guidance of the emergency/statutory services.

Other (smaller scale) disasters

- 4.4 The Maintenance Manager will 'call in' help from other staff members if required.

Temporary accommodation

- 4.5 It is likely that residents will need temporary accommodation as a result of a disaster. Officers will discuss options with the affected tenants and oversee arrangements once a decision has been made.

The options that the Association will offer for immediate temporary rehousing are:-

- **Staying with a relative or friend.** The Association will cover the cost of transporting residents to a property within 50miles or one hours travel by car.
- **Booking residents into a hotel or guest house within five miles of Castlemilk.** The Association will cover the cost of the stay as well as breakfast, lunch and dinner costs for up to three working days.

In the days immediately following a disaster, Housing Management staff will liaise with residents to arrange and secure suitable longer-term temporary accommodation.

The Housing Manager will liaise with our insurers regarding the provision of longer term temporary accommodation.

- 4.6 The Maintenance Manager will liaise with the Loss Adjuster (or our insurers) over the organising, and programming and of 'making good' works.

The Maintenance Manager will liaise with Finance and Loss Adjuster (or our insurers) regarding costs, payments, and payment process in relation to 'making good' works.

5.0 OFFICE CLOSURE

- 5.1 As with the scenarios described in section 4.0, the Maintenance Manager will be the key Officer at the time of the 'disaster'.

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In the event of the Office being closed, mail will be redirected to an appropriate address.

Initial response

- 5.2 The Maintenance Manager will visit site, liaise with the Director, assess the situation and notify our insurers as soon as is practicably possible.
- 5.3 The Association's Maintenance Manager will make himself known to any emergency services present and put our services at their disposal.

The Maintenance Manager will co-ordinate any Association staff present, under the guidance of the emergency services.

- 5.4 The Maintenance Manager will liaise with our insurers (or the Loss Adjuster) for the duration of the event and subsequent 'making good' works.

Reception Point

- 5.5 Our main aim will be to continue to provide services to our tenants and residents.

In the event of our Office having to be closed for a substantial period of time, our immediate priority will be to set up a Reception Point in the area, where tenants and residents can contact us. This will be a short term solution, until longer term temporary accommodation is established.

- 5.6 Our preference would be for the Reception Point to be located in the Birgidale Complex. If we cannot access the Complex, we will set up the Reception Point in one of our Stores in Ardmaleish Road.
- 5.7 We will arrange for our incoming landline telephone calls to be transferred to mobile phones for use at the Reception Point, or arrange for our out of hours call centre to receive all telephone calls.
- 5.8 The Maintenance Manager will co-ordinate activities in relation to establishing the Reception Point.
- 5.9 The Association will notify its tenants and residents of the Reception Point by emailing those that we have email addresses for, placing leaflets in the Birgidale Complex, and putting up posters (fixed to lampposts etc.) throughout the area. The Director shall co-ordinate this activity.
- 5.10 The Health & Safety Administrator will carry out relevant Risk Assessments in relation to establishing safe working conditions and practices for the Reception

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Point, and advise on relevant aspects of health and safety in relation to altering the building for this use.

Longer term temporary office accommodation

- 5.11 Being a community based housing association, it is important that we be accommodated in Windlaw, our area of operation. To achieve this, we will hire 'portakabin' type offices for siting in the area on land that we own.
- 5.12 We will provide a fully functioning office on this site and aim to have it operational within ten working days of the disaster, whereupon the Reception Point will be closed.
- 5.13 The Senior Staff team will oversee arrangements for the provision of the temporary Office, and will delegate the following tasks to help us achieve opening within the ten working days target timescale:-
- Liaise with the Loss Adjuster (or our insurers) regarding our plans, programmes, and costs for the temporary office.
 - Arrange hire, delivery, and siting of 'portakabin' type office units with reception area, interview room, meeting room, and welfare facilities, capable of accommodating 10 office based staff members (we would expect some employees to work from home).
 - Establish connection to the (existing) drainage network.
 - Establish electricity connection, or arrange for a generator to provide electrical power until electricity connection is operational.
 - Establish land line connection for telephone system, or mobile use until land line is installed.
 - Arrange for hire/purchase and installation of office equipment (desks, chairs, filing cabinets etc.).
 - Purchase and install ICT equipment (including computers, printers, scanners, photocopiers, and telephone system).
 - Liaise with the Planning Department and Building Control regarding relevant permissions for the temporary office.
- 5.14 The Senior Staff Team shall co-ordinate all activities. The Senior Staff Team will meet as required, but probably at least once a day in the initial phases of 'relocation' work.
- 5.15 It is likely that we will employ blended work arrangements (as described in item 6.3) whereby a number of employees will work from home, and some will work in the in the temporary office.
- 5.16 The Health & Safety Administrator will carry out relevant Risk Assessments in

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relation to establishing safe working conditions and practices in the temporary office.

6.0 PANDEMIC

- 6.1 We have responded well to the challenges that the coronavirus has posed and is continuing to pose.
- 6.2 We have developed flexible working practices which are readily responsive to the changing demands that a pandemic could place on us.
- 6.3 Robust digital connectivity has ensured that all Office based staff are able to work from home. If conditions allow, we can blend staff's working hours between home and the Office; we also have arrangements in place for Office based staff to support home workers by overseeing the delivery of notices, letters etc. to service users.
- 6.4 The number of staff based in the Office will be dependent upon Government advice and/or our risk assessments, but we would aim to have Office based staff in each of our three departments – housing management, maintenance, and finance (including administration).
- 6.5 Our digital connectivity arrangements enable the Management Committee to discharge their duties and facilitates the continuation of robust governance processes.
- 6.6 We will provide service users with as wide a range of services as we can, but we recognise that these may be restricted by Government guidance and/or health and safety requirements. We will put procedures in place to meet the Association's health and safety obligations for both employees and service users.

End of Policy

reviews and amendments

31/3/04	-	Policy established.
26/4/13	-	Policy reviewed.
25/11/2020	-	Policy reviewed.

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