



7

Section 7 —

Fire safety and getting out safely

The main points

- ✓ **If there is a fire, get out and stay out.** This is the plan at every Harbour Light home.
- ✓ Do not stop to collect belongings. Do not go back inside.
- ✓ **If you need help to get out, you will have your own escape plan.** It says what help you need, and who will help you.
- ✓ If you think you might need help to get out, tell your support worker.
- ✓ Keep hallways, stairs and shared areas clear. Never leave anything in them.
- ✓ **Never keep or charge an e-bike or e-scooter in a hallway, stairway or shared area.** Their batteries can catch fire very quickly.

What to do if there is a fire

Get out and stay out.

This is the plan at every Harbour Light home. There is no Harbour Light home where you should stay inside and wait.

Do this:

1. Tell other people in the building.
2. Get out. Do not stop to collect belongings.
3. Close doors behind you if you can.
4. Telephone **999** and ask for the fire service.
5. Go to your meeting point and wait there. **Do not go back inside.**

Never use a lift if there is a fire.

Your meeting point is the place outside where everyone meets after leaving the building. Your support worker will show you where it is. It is also on your property information sheet, if you have one.

If you cannot get out, go into a room with a window, close the door, and telephone 999. Tell them exactly where you are in the building.

If you need help to get out

Some people need help to get out of a building. For example, because of a disability, a health condition, or medicine that makes them sleep very deeply.

If you need help to get out, you will have your own escape plan. Your support provider makes it with you.

Your escape plan does not change the main plan. The main plan is always to get out and stay out.

Your escape plan says **how** you will get out. It says what help you need, and who will help you.

Your support worker will go through your escape plan with you. Your escape plan is kept at your home. You can ask to look at it at any time.

If anything changes — for example if you find stairs harder than you used to, or if you are using new equipment — tell your support worker. Your escape plan can be changed at any time.

If you think you might need help to get out, tell your support worker. They will talk to you about an escape plan.

Keeping the ways out clear

The hallways, stairs and doorways are how everyone gets out.

Please do not leave anything in them. Not bags, not bicycles, not furniture, not bin bags, not boxes.

Something left in a hallway can:

- stop people getting out
- catch fire
- make it hard for firefighters to get in

If you need somewhere to keep something, ask us. We will help you find a safe place.

If things are left in hallways, stairs or doorways, we may need to move them to keep everyone safe. We will tell you first, unless there is an immediate danger.

Fire doors

Some doors in your home are fire doors. They are heavier than normal doors. They hold back fire and smoke to give you time to get out.

Please keep fire doors closed. Do not prop them open with anything.

If a fire door is damaged, or does not close by itself, tell us. This is important, so please tell us straight away.

E-bikes, e-scooters and mobility equipment

E-bikes, e-scooters and some mobility equipment use lithium-ion batteries.

If one of these batteries goes wrong, it can catch fire very fast. The fire is very hot and the smoke is poisonous.

You must never keep or charge an e-bike or e-scooter in a hallway, a stairway, or any shared area. If a battery catches fire there, it can block the only way out of the building.

If you have an e-bike or e-scooter, please talk to us. We will help you find a safe place to keep it and charge it.

If you use a mobility scooter or a powered wheelchair, talk to us. We know you need it close to you. We will work with you to find a safe place for it and for charging it. We will not leave you without your equipment.

To charge a battery more safely:

- Use only the charger that came with it.
- Do not charge it while you are asleep.
- Do not charge it where it would block your way out.
- Stop using it and tell us if the battery gets very hot, swells up, or smells strange.

Stopping fires from starting

Most fires in homes start in the kitchen.

- Do not leave cooking unattended. Stay in the kitchen while you cook.
- Keep tea towels and packaging away from the cooker.
- If a pan catches fire, **do not** throw water on it. Get out and telephone 999.

Other things that help:

- Do not overload plug sockets.

- Switch off and unplug things you are not using.
- If you smoke, use a proper ashtray, put cigarettes out fully, and never smoke in bed.
- Take care with candles and incense. Never leave them burning when you go out or go to sleep.

Your support worker can help you with any of this.

Fire alarms and fire equipment

Your support worker tests the alarms every week. We service the fire alarm system and fire equipment every year. Section 6 explains more.

If an alarm sounds and you do not know why, get out and stay out anyway. Do not wait to find out whether it is a real fire.

Every kitchen has a fire blanket. Some homes also have fire extinguishers, to help people get out.

Do not use a fire blanket or a fire extinguisher unless you have been shown how. Getting out is always more important than putting a fire out.

Getting help to understand this

If any of this is hard to understand, that is OK. Ask your support worker. You can also ask a relative, a friend or an advocate to help you.

You can ask us for this information on paper, in a bigger size, or in another format. Just ask us or ask your support worker.

More detail

This box is for tenants who want the legal detail, and for support staff, relatives, advocates and social workers. You do not need to read it to understand the section above.

Legal framework. Fire safety in the communal parts of Harbour Light's multi-occupied properties is governed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021. Harbour Light carries out fire risk assessments, provides and maintains means of escape and fire protection equipment, and arranges regular servicing (SLA clause 7.3 and Schedule 2(s) and (t)). Furniture provided by Harbour Light complies with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 as amended (Schedule 2(o)). In shared houses, the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 additionally require fire safety measures to be maintained and escape routes kept free from obstruction.

Building height — scope. Harbour Light's properties are low-rise. The tallest has four storeys, and no building exceeds 11 metres. The higher-risk building regime under the

Building Safety Act 2022 (18 metres or seven storeys) does **not** apply. The statutory duties in the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025, which are triggered at 18 metres or seven storeys, or above 11 metres where a simultaneous evacuation strategy is in place, and the duties in the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 that apply to buildings above 11 metres, do **not** apply to Harbour Light's stock. Person-centred evacuation planning is carried out as good practice, and is appropriate given the needs of Harbour Light's residents.

Evacuation strategy. All Harbour Light properties operate **simultaneous evacuation** — "get out and stay out". **No property operates a stay-put strategy.** Each property's fire risk assessment records the strategy consistently with this.

Personal emergency evacuation plans. Support providers prepare and maintain a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) for each tenant whose ability to evacuate unaided is compromised. The plan is held at the property. A PEEP records **how** an individual will evacuate — the assistance required, who provides it, and any equipment or route considerations. It does **not** vary the evacuation strategy, which is simultaneous evacuation at every property. Assembly points are set by the support provider. The main text states this distinction plainly, because a tenant who understood their personal plan to be an alternative to evacuating would be at risk.

Harbour Light's fire risk assessment for each property takes account of occupants who cannot evacuate unaided. Fire risk assessments are provided to support providers on request.

Daily checks. Support staff check daily that fire exits are free from obstruction, as Harbour Light's agent under SLA Schedule 3, Part 2. This does not discharge Harbour Light's own responsibility (SLA clause 2.7).

Lithium-ion batteries. Fire and rescue services have identified fires involving e-bike and e-scooter lithium-ion batteries as a growing risk. Such fires can develop extremely rapidly and produce toxic smoke, and are particularly hazardous where the item is stored or charged on an escape route. Storage and charging in communal hallways, stairways, lobbies and other escape routes is prohibited. Where a resident requires powered mobility equipment, Harbour Light will identify a safe storage and charging arrangement as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010, rather than applying a blanket prohibition that would deprive the resident of the use of that equipment.

Defective equipment. The support provider is required to report defective firefighting and fire protection equipment to Harbour Light promptly on becoming aware of it (SLA clause 7.1).