

## **Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy – Derwent**

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### **1. Introduction and Purpose**

The Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) places an obligation on the Principal Accountable Person (PAP) to produce a Resident Engagement Strategy for residential buildings 18m or above, or have seven storeys or more, whichever threshold is met first. The strategy promotes the participation of residents in the decision-making process about the building's safety risks. All residents over the age of 16 are expected to be aware of the strategy.

#### **Purpose**

This strategy sets out our approach to resident engagement relating to building safety. We will encourage our residents to have an input in and to influence decisions relating to the management and the safety of Derwent. We will engage with them with the vision of ensuring Derwent is, and continues to be, a safe place to live. We aim to do this through;

- Identifying the specific safety information that we should share with our residents, and the best most accessible way for them to receive this information.
- Establishing a way of connecting with our residents through ResLife's programme: ResLife Student Assistants (RSAs) support the development of a sense of community and belonging within the village; providing residents opportunity to voice their concerns, ideas and questions through in person/virtual events and social media
- Utilising resident feedback provided on a regular basis to help improve our safety standards.
- Monitoring levels of engagement from our residents in relation to the safety of their home, and developing methods of improving our approach if participation is low.
- Offering support services: Including but not limited to Student Health and Wellbeing, mentoring, and academic support, to help them with their academic and personal needs.

By implementing these strategies, we can develop a successful residents engagement strategy for high-rise buildings like Derwent, in compliance with the Building Safety Act

## **2. Legal Responsibilities**

We must prepare a resident engagement strategy and act in accordance with the strategy. Review and revise the strategy regularly or in response to change, whilst keeping a record of the reviews. When necessary, consult residents about the strategy and take their opinions into account. Provide the latest version to residents.

## **3. Building and Resident Profile**

To embed a residential strategy specific to our accommodation building, a greater understanding of the profile of students is required. We have access to information that tells us the total number, ages, genders, disabilities and nationalities of our residents. *Note; Students residing within our high-rise accommodations sign contracts for only their first academic year. Thus, student demographics would need updated annually.*

<b>Demographics (2025-26 academic year as of 30/09/2025)</b>
289 students in total
Ages 18-22
157 females, 131 males
1 residents with a PEEP who may need assistance in the event of an evacuation
282 UK students, 7 from EU countries

\*All residents of Derwent have a level of English advanced enough to enable them to study a course taught in English at Newcastle University

## 4. Our Approach

### 4.1 Information and Method of Communication

Multiple methods of communication must be adopted to suit the residents, and ensure delivery of key information. The information communicated must be accessible. We will communicate and consult with our residents on the following:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>What we are communicating about</u>	<u>Method of communication</u>
<b>Building Safety Decisions</b>	<p>Residents are notified in advance of any statutory works that need to be completed as part of fire safety. This includes dates and times works are carried out. We may ask residents the most convenient time to carry out planned works to avoid disruption.</p> <p>We consult with the residents if the works results in a change that affects fire or structural safety in the building (e.g changing the evacuation policy, taking an evac lift out of service for essential works or altering the fire detection in the building). We also advise of the reason for these works in relation to maintaining/improving building safety.</p> <p>We also encourage residents to keep their building safe by reporting hazards or potential safety issues to the site team.</p>	<p>Communication is via email with suitable time given for queries or concerns prior to action taking place where appropriate.</p> <p>Consultation is via email with an invitation to respond, and social media posts to reach a wider audience.</p> <p>A change request form is completed by a member of the site team each time such a change is proposed, to be evaluated and authorised by the appropriate person e.g. H&amp;S manager.</p>
<b>Training</b>	<p>All residents moving into Derwent must undergo online induction training which incorporate induction talks and fire safety. Between training and educational curriculum content, residents are aware of expectations to ensuring fire prevention methods are not disturbed or altered in a way that affects performance.</p> <p>We conduct annual fire alarm drills and provide feedback to residents. Reminders are given of the actions they must take should they hear the fire alarm at any time, how to follow procedure and where the assembly point is. Our residents are made aware of our stay put/evac policy on hearing a fire alarm.</p>	<p>Canvas online module. Includes watching videos on fire safety.</p> <p>Online resident handbook outlines Health &amp; Safety features adjoined with Building Safety Act. Non-compliant students relating to evacuation protocols are passed to Disciplinary team as per information below.</p>
<b>Repairs</b>	<p>All residents affected by repair work must be notified, with information including date, time, timescale, and how to mitigate disruption.</p>	<p>Email (if repair is inside resident's home we provide at least 8 days' notice unless emergency).</p>

	<p>Reporting defects sits as part of the Residents' Handbook, so residents are aware of the process on how to file a report. If residents residing in Derwent have a fault or damage within their accommodation, they can report it to the university team through a variety of methods.</p> <p>Newcastle has a dedicated maintenance team and a network of approved contractors ready to fix the problem as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Residents can inform their accommodation's designated reception point during operating hours, email reception, call security, or submit repair request form for their respective village.</p>
<b>ResLife's Educational Curriculum</b>	<p>Educational Framework is at the core of the curriculum development. It ensures the induction and transition of students regarding personal skills required for safe living practices, as well as the development of academic study skills, and establishing a sense of belonging and community.</p> <p>We make our residents aware of their responsibilities relating to safe practice in their accommodation throughout their tenancy. This may be the importance of keeping fire doors closed, hallways unobstructed, smoke heads uncovered etc. This is reinforcement of information as we have already raised this in the induction.</p> <p>Between training and educational curriculum content, residents are aware of expectations to ensuring fire prevention methods remain unobstructed.</p>	<p>Social media including TikTok and Instagram. Video content with educational features encompassing Building Safety e.g., responding to alarm activations, etc. Promoted as "ResHacks". Memes and TikToks to capture significant information in reduced quantities to increase engagement.</p> <p>Existing communication methods of social media and email will continue to be our primary sources of contact, with information such as how to report repairs.</p> <p>ResHack of the week in weekly email communications.</p> <p>Coupling educational content online with in-person events such as competitions and giveaways encourages student socialisation and interaction.</p>
<b>Student Behaviour</b>	<p>Residents seen to not be engaging or complying with the safety standards and policies are passed onto the Student Behaviour Team.</p> <p>Residents receive ample opportunity during this process to receive re-education on fire safety from the ResLife team. The more serious the offence, or the exhibition of reoffending, the greater the discipline which</p>	<p>ResLife team offer ReConnect sessions to educate on a light-touch basis, or ReThinks, via pre-recorded video, when a formal disciplinary has taken place, and a student is seeking re-education for financial reductions to their fine.</p> <p>Evacuation procedure reminders take place via face</p>

	includes fines, and/or liaising with Student Progress Services.	to face or virtual meetings, as well as letters
<b>Access to Policies and Guidance</b>	Information on how to live independently, and how to comply with University guidance and procedures.  Hard copies of fire safety information is provided within residences.	Webpages <a href="#">Policies   Accommodation   Newcastle University (ncl.ac.uk)</a>  At hand in accommodation spaces.
<b>Complaints</b>	Procedure highlighted both online, and under “Collecting, Using and Storing Data” in this document.  Residents are informed throughout the year to report any behaviours that could jeopardise fire safety and security by fellow residents.	Email, webpage or in-person with Customer Services based at Reception or out of hour security.  Via the ResLife team in 1-1s, ReConnect drop-ins or email.

#### 4.2 Collecting, Sharing and Using Opinions

We collect opinions through social media surveys, face to face conversations during flat visits, and we encourage queries at any time via email to our CS team. Feedback/changes made are typically communicated via the same channels as well as update emails and information in print around the site. Any information is held in accordance with GDPR for the appropriate amount of time, and only when relevant and useful.

Information is shared via a variety of channels to encourage inclusivity. Currently this is primarily via advance notice in emails and social media channels as well as verbally via on-site staff and print in the form of fire action notices and safety posters. Accessibility - we try to use formats that easily drop in to translation software, and other methods such as large text can be provided on request. We request information on this via PEEPs in advance of our residents living with us.

#### 4.3 Measuring and Reviewing Participation

Participation is measured in various ways.

Our ResLife team regularly review participation rates of ‘ResHack’ engagements on social media through monthly revisions. We also engage with residents via Instagram stories, to ensure students’ termly ResHack schedule encompasses the information they need to hack safe independent living in Derwent accommodation.

Participation is also reviewed in fortnightly meetings with the Student Behaviour Team, who sit underneath the Student Experience Manager. We have developed close working relationships with

the security team so the Student Behaviour Team and ResLife can become responsive to ongoing concerns of students within our accommodation, even outside of normal working hours.

Our residences team also measure success in part by monitoring the number of incidents we deal with regarding poor building safety e.g. how many socks we remove from smoke heads, how many false fire alarms are triggered; we aim for a reduction in incidents throughout our residents' time with us. Should we feel there is a lack of participation/satisfaction with our current methods, we will look to review our strategy.

## **5. Complaints**

### **5.1 How to Make a Comment or Complaint about Building Safety**

- The easiest way to raise a complaint is through accommodation's [Accommodation Services - Complaints Form](#), or talking to Customer Services the next time you call into reception. Complaints and comments in relation to building safety should be made as soon as possible after an event, and will be followed up as soon as possible.
- All complaints will be dealt with confidentially, though enquiries may have to be made with third parties to investigate the complaint fully. For this reason anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
- The webpage outlines what is a complaint, and what is not considered a complaint [here](#).

### **5.2 How We Will Handle Your Complaint**

1. The team will acknowledge your complaint within two working days. We will undertake a thorough investigation and provide a full written response within 10 working days. If unable to meet this deadline, we will keep you informed of the progress. If unsatisfied with the response received at stage one, the resident has the right to progress to stage two, within 10 working days of receiving the stage one decision.
2. A nominated manager will review the stage 2 complaint within 10 working days and will keep you informed if this is not possible. If you are still unhappy with the response received at stage two, then you can move on to stage three, within 10 working days of receiving the stage two decision.
3. If you remain dissatisfied with our response, you may wish to refer your complaint through the University's Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure, managed by Student Progress who will also provide information for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education - OIAHE. The OIAHE is an independent body set up to review student complaints and offers a free service to students.

## **6. Sharing Our Strategy**

### **6.1 Distribution**

- Newcastle University must provide a copy of the strategy to all residents over the age of 16. -We will provide copies of the strategy in a way that considers the needs of the residents. It can be accessed on our website through the 'Policies' page, and key information must be read and accepted as part of new residents' induction process. Hard copies are also available from Reception at request.
- Newcastle University are fully aware of who lives in the Derwent building and understand the needs of the residents. This includes accessibility needs and communication needs, such as language spoken.
- Newcastle University must provide a new version of the strategy each time it is updated.

### **6.2 Consultation**

- We will seek consultation after the first issue with relevant stakeholders. All residents will be consulted on the strategy the first time it is issued, and following any major changes.
- We will hold a consultation period of 4 weeks to provide our residents with adequate time to review the information and share any feedback.

### **6.3 Review**

- Must be reviewed on an annual basis prior to new resident intake in September.
- Must be reviewed after every consultation of the strategy.
- Should any components of the strategy be disputed by residents, the policy must be reviewed and considered. It is not required that changes must be made to the strategy if not deemed appropriate.
- Any changes made following feedback will be shared. This may be in a 'you said, we did' format.

### Document Information

<u>Approver</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Date</u>
Amy McCarthy	Student Experience Manager	26/03/2024
Charlotte Campbell	Asst. Head of Residences	08/01/2025
Helen Davies	Head of Accommodation Services	26/03/2024
Alex Byrne	Health & Safety Manager	26/03/2024

<u>Version</u>	<u>Amendments</u>	<u>Date</u>
v.01	New document	26/03/2024
v.02	Demographic updated	08/01/2025
v.03	Demographics and links updated, data checked	30/09/2025