

Determining the impact and effectiveness of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings and the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises

Progressive Partnership

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Executive summary

Introduction

Policy context

A Scottish Government Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety (MWG) was set-up in June following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017, to ensure that Scottish buildings were safe. The MWG's established a fire safety regime review for high-rise domestic buildings (those over 18m) in Scotland. In line with the MWG's recommendations the guidance document [Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings](#) was produced in December 2019 to provide practical fire safety advice on how to prevent fires and reduce the risks from fires. This did not introduce any new statutory requirements but brought together best practice in a single guidance document.

In addition, to ensure that fire safety guidance for those responsible for managing specialised housing and similar premises was easily accessible, [Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Simliar Premises](#) was published in January 2020. This guidance aims to strengthen fire safety for people who receive care or support by providing advice on how to prevent fires and reduce the risk from fires. The guidance is designed to support owners, managers and staff in sheltered housing, extra care housing, supported housing and small care homes to minimise fire risk. The guidance may also be of interest to individuals who provide care to people in 'general needs' housing, such as friends, families and in-home carers.

Research aims and objectives

The Scottish Government commissioned an independent evaluation of this fire safety guidance in 2021, to determine whether the guidance in its current form is used by those it is intended for; is helpful; and what may be needed to strengthen it. The key objectives of the research were to:

measure awareness of the guidance and establish the extent to which it is being used;

explore how the guidance is being used, and its effectiveness in supporting implementation of fire safety measures/procedures; and

determine improvements that could be made to the guidance, in terms of format, delivery, content and more generally to strengthen the effectiveness of the fire safety support it provides.

Approach

A mixed method approach was used to collect the evaluation data: depth interviews were conducted and an online survey was undertaken.

Qualitative research: A total of 23 depth interviews were carried out in January to April 2021. These were undertaken online using Zoom/Teams and each lasted up to 90 minutes. The interviews were carried out with a range of housing providers and care providers across Scotland, as well as with representative organisations. A

number of the depth interviews were also undertaken with unpaid carers to assess views on the Existing Specialised Housing guidance amongst this secondary audience. The sample of housing and care providers was designed to produce a mix of tenure (local authority, housing association and private sector), provider size (including some of the larger housing providers), and type of housing (high rise housing, specialised).

In addition to the interviews, the research took account of the findings and recommendations from the Housing Support Enabling Unit's fire safety roundtable event held on 10th March 2021. This event hosted delegates from a broad range of organisations from across the country and the discussion focussed on the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing.

Quantitative research: An online survey with housing providers and care providers was conducted during March 2021. The questionnaire was designed to address the research objectives and was informed by the ongoing programme of qualitative research. The survey length was estimated at around 15 minutes. A total of 24 responses were received to the survey, a response rate of 24%.

Limitations of the research: The overall samples achieved were smaller than anticipated. This was in part a consequence of the sampling frame being considerably smaller than expected as it contained a large number of duplicates (this reduced the number of high rise contacts from 280 to 70), and in part because a substantial proportion of the contacts were unnamed/generic, which made it difficult to access the right person, especially as during the pandemic people were less likely to have been office-based. Because the base size in the quantitative stage was low, the research findings cannot be extrapolated to the wider population. However, the findings across the study were highly consistent and a clear picture did emerge. The research therefore does facilitate valid and valuable insights and understanding.

Research findings

High rise buildings: fire safety guidance

Awareness: The high rise research participants were almost all aware of the guidance, typically finding out about it from their manager, or from publicity produced by other organisations, such as the Scottish Government, professional organisations and trade bodies. Some senior staff were aware as a consequence of participation in the development of the guidance. This high level of awareness may not be the norm across the housing sector: one research participant said they had not heard of the guidance prior to the research, another was unaware it had been launched.

Use of the guidance: Most of the high rise research participants were using the guidance. It was mainly being used to ensure a satisfactory standard of fire safety, to update policies and procedures, when undertaking fire safety risk assessments and when undertaking actions in response to fire safety risk assessments. It was

also being used to support development of new policies and procedures and to train staff. It was especially valued as a reference resource for staff, as it contained all the key information they need to refer to. For example, some participants said the guidance document plays a useful role during discussions with owners and tenants about the actions required by the fire safety risk assessment, as they are able to easily reference the relevant sections should any query be raised.

Guidance not used: Very few of the high rise research participants had not used the guidance; and those that had not generally expected to use the guidance in the future. The main reasons for not having used the guidance to date were lack of staff resources, lack of awareness, and a concern that the guidance was not relevant to the organisation.

Fire safety risk assessments – approach: All the high rise research participants had a current fire safety risk assessment (FSRA) for at least some of their properties. Indeed, most organisations had been carrying out FSRAs prior to the publication of the Guidance in 2019. The main reasons for carrying out fire safety risk assessments across their high rise properties were: it is good practice in building management/health and safety; to comply with fire reduction strategy/performance indicator; and in response to publication of the Scottish Government guidance.

On the whole, high rise research participants commissioned contractors to undertake all or most of the FSRAs on their behalf. They were especially likely to buy-in specialists skills in assessing complex buildings, such as large multi-storeys, and to draw on consultants when they are short-handed. Those carrying out the assessments were either 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body.

Fire safety risk assessments – template: High rise research participants generally found the FSRA template provided in the guidance to be helpful. While few had adopted the template – they currently used either a PAS 79 template or their consultants' template – they either had or intended to review their own templates to ensure they cover everything contained within the guidance template.

Some minor modifications to the guidance template were suggested: for example, to include photographs of where action is required, so it is clear where and what the issue is; and provision to undertake the risk assessments floor by floor in multi-storey blocks.

Assessment of the guidance: Most of the high rise research participants considered the guidance for high rise domestic properties and the template for fire safety risk assessments to be valuable. The research participants who had used the guidance considered it to be clear and concise. The aspects of the guidance they were most likely to rate as very good were the guidance having comprehensive coverage of relevant aspects of fire safety, clarity as to which organisations and buildings the guidance applies, and provision of tools to support the guidance. They were less likely to rate guidance on who should complete the risk assessments, and on how to complete the risk assessments as very good.

Barriers to using the guidance: Few barriers to using or implementing the guidance were reported. Where barriers were encountered, they included implementing the guidance during the pandemic; lack of time; lack of staff resources; securing funding for any major works identified by the risk assessments for social landlords; and securing buy-in from private owners/landlords for works in mixed/private sector blocks.

Improvements to the guidance: Generally high rise research participants stressed that the guidance was valuable and helpful; suggested changes were intended to make the guidance more useful. Suggested improvements included increased communication of the guidance and updates to social landlords and building managers/factors; an information leaflet for residents about the guidance and residents' responsibilities; and a fully searchable version of the guidance, e.g. an app or a version that would work on an iPad.

Specialised housing and similar properties: fire safety guidance

Awareness: The specialised housing participants were almost all aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises, typically finding out through formal channels at work or from a Scottish Government communication.

Use of the guidance: Most of the specialised housing participants had used the guidance. It was mainly being used to ensure a satisfactory standard of fire safety, to update policies and procedures, when conducting fire safety risk assessments, and when conducting person-centred risk assessments. It was also being used when undertaking actions in response to fire safety risk assessments, to support development of new policies and procedures, and to train staff.

Guidance not used: A small proportion of the specialised housing participants were aware of the guidance but were not using it. Most did expect to use it at some point in the future. The main reasons for not having implemented the guidance were largely time-related: lack of time to read the guidance and being focused on dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Some also mentioned that their existing fire safety measures are robust, and some that the guidance was not sufficiently clear as to who should be conducting the person-centred FSRA.

Fire safety risk assessments: The specialised housing guidance contains two risk assessments: a premises-based fire safety risk assessment and a person-centred fire safety risk assessment.

Premises-based fire safety risk assessments – approach: All the specialised housing research participants had a current fire safety risk assessment (FSRA) for at least some of their relevant properties. Almost all had been carrying out FSRAs prior to the publication of the guidance in 2020. The main reasons for carrying out fire safety risk assessments across their properties were: it is good practice in building management/health and safety; to comply with fire reduction

strategy/performance indicator; and in response to publication of the Scottish Government guidance.

The premises-based FSRAs were carried out by external consultants and in-house staff. The depth interviews suggest that in-house health and safety teams play an important role in ensuring risks are assessed robustly, required actions are identified and recorded clearly, and follow-through activities are monitored. Consultants may be brought in to undertake risk assessments to supplement in-house resources and skills, to audit key developments, and/or to provide external validation.

Premises-based fire safety risk assessments – template: Almost all the specialised housing research participants had reviewed the premises-based risk assessment template provided in the guidance. A small number were using it, in whole or in part, to conduct their risk assessments. The others continued to use other approaches, typically a PAS 79 template or their consultant’s template.

Person-centred fire safety risk assessments – approach: Around half of the specialised housing research participants currently carry out person-centred FSRAs. However, it is appreciated that the guidance was published just a few weeks before Scotland went into lockdown, and most housing and care providers have not operated normally since that time.

The person-centred FSRAs were generally carried out in-house, either by a welfare officer or by a housing officer. In some teams, the health and safety officer was also involved. No-one mentioned risk assessments being undertaken by informal carers or by friends and family who provide care and support.

Person-centred fire safety risk assessments – template: Many of the specialised housing research participants had reviewed the person-centred FSRA template provided in the guidance. A few had already adopted it for their risk assessments, while others used a different approach, either their own templates or personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs).

Barriers to implementing the person-centred FSRAs: A number of issues were raised in relation to the person-centred FSRA. Some specialised housing research participants were concerned about resourcing the risk assessments, especially in large organisations, both in terms of staff to undertake the assessments and funding resultant actions; while some raised concerns about how organisations will collate the information if the assessments were (increasingly) undertaken by different people/agencies. The main concerns related to the process for determining where responsibility lies for undertaking the assessment (and implementing actions) when multiple agencies are involved; and how to resolve cases when agencies have no right of access to a vulnerable person’s home to undertake an assessment.

Assessment of the guidance: Most of the specialised housing research participants considered the guidance for existing specialised housing and the

templates for the risk assessments to be valuable. The key aspects of the guidance that research participants were most likely to rate as very good were the clarity of the buildings and organisations to which the guidance applies; the provision of practical tools to support the guidance; comprehensive coverage of relevant aspects of fire safety; and the guidance being user-friendly. Almost none of the respondents rated guidance on who should complete the risk assessments as very good.

Barriers to using the guidance: Only a few of the specialised housing research participants mentioned they were not experiencing barriers to using or implementing the guidance. Issues encountered related to implementing the guidance during the pandemic; lack of staff resources to undertake the person-centred risk assessments; and issues around authority/legitimacy of carrying out person-centred risk assessments for people living in low dependency housing.

Improvements to the guidance: General improvements to the guidance suggested included more training and workshops, provision of a training template so that organisations have a clearer idea of what is required, and an external audit of the completed template to provide reassurance to organisations that they are following good practice.

Around half of the specialised housing respondents thought that further support was required to implement the person-centred FSRA. This could include clearer guidance on who is responsible for completing the assessment, and more tools for completing the template – such as FAQs and sample templates.

Unpaid carers: fire safety guidance for existing specialised housing and similar properties:

As well as research with housing and care providers and representative bodies, the research assembled the views of a small sample of unpaid carers.

Awareness: None of the unpaid carers interviewed had been aware of the fire safety guidance for existing specialised housing and similar properties before being contacted for the interview.

Person-centred FSRA – guidance: All found the guidance extremely interesting and informative. Some mentioned that, while they were already alert to potential fire risks, the guidance had either reminded them to check these more thoroughly and/or had identified other risks that they should consider. Such additional issues included risks from emollient creams and the need for evacuation plans. However, many of the unpaid carers did not find the guidance document user-friendly or concise. They concluded – correctly – it was aimed at professionals rather than laypeople.

Person-centred FSRA – template: Most of the unpaid carers interviewed said they felt able to undertake the risk assessment for the person they care for. While they felt the guidance document was a little wordy, the template itself was

straightforward and made sense. They considered they would be able to work through most of the sections in the template fairly quickly, as most of the risk factors would not apply to their relative – in each case, only two or three of the sections appeared relevant (these sections differed between respondents).

Some carers raised the issue of who should be responsible for undertaking the assessment for people who do not have a carer. One unpaid carer, whose father lives in sheltered housing, was concerned that his father could be at risk from fire in neighbouring properties.

Legislative requirement

In England and Wales a duty holder is legally required to carry out a premises-based fire safety risk assessment of communal areas in domestic premises, such as common stairs and passageways. New legislation is expected to clarify that flat front doors, building structure and external walls should form part of this. Scotland has different fire safety and housing legislation. It is considered good practice to undertake a fire safety risk assessment at present, but there is no legal requirement.

Almost all the study research participants supported further consideration of a move towards making it a legal requirement to carry out premises-based fire safety risk assessments in common areas, as is the case in England and Wales. Research participants considered this would serve to prioritise fire safety; require housing providers to adopt high standards of fire safety within their buildings; and empower landlords/factors to take action in response to risk assessments.

Some concerns were raised around the cost of carrying out the FSRAs, the cost of implementing the actions identified through the FSRAs, and obtaining permission to carry out work/recovering costs from private owners.

Conclusions

Overall, research participants were very welcoming of the both the high rise and the specialised housing guidance. Housing and care providers considered both to be helpful, clear and user-friendly; and found the supporting materials comprehensive and extremely useful. Suggestions for change that were made, especially those relating to premises-based risk assessments, tended to be minor and designed to improve rather than correct.

Unpaid carers also welcomed the guidance, although they recognised it was aimed at professionals rather than lay-people. They found the content relevant and informative, if rather inaccessible; and the template extremely useful.

Recommendations:

Promote the high rise guidance and the specialised housing guidance across social housing, housing management, care and health sectors and unpaid carers, drawing

on opportunities to work with/through key partners, and to take part in conferences/seminars

Scottish Government to progress planned work designed to improve fire safety in common areas. Scottish Government to consider if new fire safety legislation for common areas is required. Include further guidance on managing works in common areas in mixed tenure/private sector blocks within the guidance documents

Consider a review of the person-centred fire safety risk assessment materials, including providing information on who could be responsible (for assessment/ actions/ monitoring), good practice on determining responsibilities, and consideration of whether arrangements for imposing/ arbitrating responsibility are required

Consider developing a pack of key worked example templates

1. Introduction

Progressive Partnership was commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake research to understand the impact and effectiveness of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings and the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises. The research approach included qualitative research in the form of depth interviews with housing providers, care providers, representative organisations and unpaid carers; and an online survey targeted at housing and care providers. The remainder of this chapter describes the background and context to the research (section 1.1), outlines the research aims and objectives (section 1.2) and explains how the report is structured (section 1.3).

1.1 Background and policy context

Following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017, the Scottish Government acted quickly to ensure that Scottish buildings were safe. To this end, a Scottish Government Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety (MWG) was established in June 2017 to oversee a review of building and fire safety regulatory frameworks.

The MWG's review established a fire safety regime for high-rise buildings (those over 18m) in Scotland. One of the review recommendations was a single source for fire safety guidance and the [Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings](#) was published in 2019. It provides practical fire safety advice on how to prevent fires and reduce the risks from fires. It does not introduce any new statutory requirements but brings together best practice in a single guidance document.

The guidance is for those responsible for fire safety in high rise domestic buildings. This includes owners, managers, property factors, property advisors and landlords, managing agents, enforcing authorities and those assessing fire risk in high rise domestic buildings. The guidance is not specifically for residents, although it may be of interest, and Fire Safety Law does not generally apply to their individual dwellings. The aim of the guidance is to reduce the risk to life from fire: the focus is therefore on life safety rather than the protection of property, in line with fire safety law.

The review also recommended that limited, easily accessible, informative, fire safety guidance aimed at those responsible for managing specialised housing and similar premises was available. It highlighted that such guidance was needed, given a disproportionate number of fire deaths and injuries involve older people or others with recognisable "contributory factors", including physical, cognitive and mental health issues. As this falls outwith the high-rise remit, separate [Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing](#) to address these matters was produced.

This guidance aims to strengthen fire safety for people who receive care or support by providing advice on how to prevent fires and reduce the risk from fires. This

guidance applies to a broad range of parties, including housing and care providers; commissioners of care; building owners and factors; and family and friends. The guidance helps them to manage fire safety effectively and to undertake fire safety risk assessments; not only of the premises, but also person-centred assessments of individuals who are at greater risk from fire. Some will have well established and effective systems in place to manage fire safety but this may not be the case across the whole sector. This guidance is concerned, therefore, with both person-centred fire risk assessment and premises-based fire risk assessment.

1.2 Research aims and objectives

The overall aim of the research was to determine whether the Guidance in its current form is used by those it is intended for; is helpful; and what may be needed to strengthen it.

High Rise Buildings

There are 774 high-rise domestic buildings in Scotland that are covered by the new fire safety guidance. These buildings are owned and managed by local authorities, registered social landlords and private owners. The guidance targets those responsible for safety in high rise domestic buildings and asks them to take a stronger greater, voluntary role in ensuring the fire safety of the buildings than is currently required under fire safety legislation.

The key objectives of this stage of the research were to:
measure awareness of the guidance and establish the extent to which it is being used;
explore how the guidance is being used, and its effectiveness in supporting implementation of fire safety measures/procedures; and
determine improvements that could be made to the guidance, in terms of format, delivery, content and more generally to strengthen the effectiveness of the fire safety support it provides.

Specialised housing

This guidance was developed because older people and those with physical, sensory or mental support needs are at increased risk from injury or death from fire. The guidance is designed to support owners, managers and staff in sheltered housing, extra care housing, supported housing and small care homes (akin to supported housing) to minimise fire risk. The guidance is also aimed at individuals who provide care to people in 'general needs' housing, such as friends, families and in-home carers.

The key objectives of this stage of the research were to:
measure awareness of the guidance and establish the extent to which it is being used;
explore how the guidance is being used, and its effectiveness in supporting implementation of fire safety measures/procedures; and
determine improvements that could be made to the guidance, in terms of format, delivery, content and more generally to strengthen the effectiveness of the fire safety support it provides.

1.3 Structure of this report

This research report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 outlines the method adopted in the research project, including a summary description of the qualitative and quantitative elements

Chapters 3 to 6 report on the main research findings from the evaluation of the guidance for existing high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing, including an overview of key points from each chapter

Chapter 7 details the conclusions

Appendices contain a note of the detailed issues that were raised with respect to the guidance on specialised housing; and the research instruments used for the research: case studies of the unpaid carers who participated in the research; the topic guides used for depth discussions and the online survey questionnaire.

2. Approach to the research

2.1 Approach

The research comprised two elements: (i) qualitative depth interviews; and (ii) a quantitative online survey. Interviews were carried out with housing and care providers across Scotland (see section 2.2). Interviews were also carried out with a number of other relevant informants:

Representative organisations within the housing sector, including the Scottish Federation of Housing Association (the SFHA) and the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO)

Unpaid carers: eight interviews with a carers across Scotland providing support and care for relatives and friends in their own homes

All interviews were conducted between 20 January and 8 April 2021. The interviews lasted up to 90 minutes. Unpaid carers each received £40 as a thank you for participating; the other respondents did not receive a monetary incentive for participating. A copy of the topic guides used for the discussions are included in Appendix C. This element of the research was used to both inform the questionnaire development for the quantitative research (online survey) and to contextualise the quantitative results.

The quantitative survey was conducted online. The questionnaire was developed to cover both the evaluation of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings and the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing, with automated routing taking respondents to the relevant sections of the survey. This approach ensured that feedback was gathered from organisations that owned or managed both high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing. The fieldwork took place between 11 March and the 6 April 2019. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

2.2 Sample

The first stage in the research process was to develop the sampling frame, which was used for both the qualitative and quantitative stages. This work was undertaken in collaboration with the Scottish Government policy team. The Scottish Government policy team provided an initial set of sample information, covering local authorities, private organisations and other stakeholders. The detail available for each 'contact' varied, with fields provided including some or, in a few cases, all of the following: property address, tenure, local authority area, generic contact details (for example info@ email, the organisation switchboard phone number, the chief executive's name); or specific contact details (named contact, direct dial, direct email address of the personnel responsible for fire safety in high-rise buildings, job role, telephone number and email address).

A small team within Progressive worked through the list:
Contacting the listed organisations to update/refine the information to include contact details of personnel responsible for fire safety
Identifying additional organisations to be included in the sample frame
Removing organisations which did not wish to be included in the research. Notably, several private sector management companies requested they be excluded from the research, either during this stage or later when they were approached to take part in the qualitative interviews or the online survey. Generally these organisations wished to be excluded because resources were, at the time, too stretched to participate in the qualitative/quantitative research.

There are around 774 high rise properties in Scotland. These were grouped on the Scottish Government contact database: under 15 local authorities, 15-20 housing associations and a list of around 250 mainly privately owned blocks. On review, it was established that a relatively small number of property management companies/factors were responsible for the listed properties. Once this list was cleaned, and all duplicates removed, there were some 70 high rise contacts covering local authorities, housing associations and management companies/factors.

Contacts were also provided for specialised housing, mainly social housing providers and relevant stakeholders. Once the contact list was cleaned, there were 32 contacts.

The list also included a number of umbrella organisations. These organisations were approached and three agreed to publicise the survey and circulate the survey link to their membership. These organisations covered local authority housing, social rented housing and care providers.

2.3 Qualitative research

A target of 12 depth interviews was set for the high rise consultation phase of the research, split between local authorities, social landlords, private owners/managers and stakeholders. This target proved challenging (see section 2.7 below). In total 8 interviews were conducted with relevant organisations: 6 housing providers and 2 representative organisations (4 of these were also consulted on the specialised housing guidance). While the target was not achieved, the organisations interviewed included several very large organisations, and achieved a spread across local authority, housing association and property management organisations.

The users of the specialised housing guidance are a diverse group, potentially encompassing primarily housing providers, but also care providers and friends and family. A target of 10 interviews with housing and care providers was therefore set for the specialised housing phase of the research. A total of 11 interviews were conducted with relevant staff from organisations: 10 from housing and care providers and one from a representative organisation (as noted above, 4 of these were also consulted on the high rise guidance).

A further target of 8 depth interviews with unpaid carers (people who care for friends/family in their own homes) was also set. Eight interviews were conducted with unpaid carers.

Table 2.1: Profile of depth interview participants

	Depth interviews
High rise only ¹	4
High rise and Specialised housing ²	4
Specialised housing only	7
Unpaid carers	8
Total	23

Notes:

1 – includes 1 stakeholder organisation

2 – includes 1 stakeholder organisation

Participants were recruited from the sampling frame by Progressive’s team of experienced recruiters. Typically an introductory email was sent to the named contact/organisation, and followed up by a telephone call. The recruiter would often require several calls to identify the correct person within the organisation. A follow-up email with additional information about the project would be provided where requested. Given the nature of this research, we did not offer incentives to respondents from organisations to participate. Unpaid carers were each given £40 as a thank you for their time.

The aim was to interview the member of staff with strategic oversight for fire safety for the organisation; someone who would have a clear understanding of the policy, strategy and investment within the organisation.

Topic guides were developed to cover all research objectives: one each for high rise housing staff, specialised housing staff, other stakeholders and unpaid carers. These were provided to the Scottish Government for review and sign off.

To maximise opportunities to take part in the research process, all respondents were offered the choice of being interviewed by telephone or online. All opted for online (either Teams or Zoom depending on preference) and each interview lasted around 45 minutes to an hour. Staff (housing and care providers, and representative bodies) were provided with a link to the guidance (High Rise and/or Specialised Housing) prior the interview, so they had an opportunity to review it before the discussion. Unpaid carers were emailed an extract from the Specialised Housing guidance, containing Part 1: Person-centred fire safety risk assessment and Annexes 3-5. Paper copies of this extract were made available as required.

Interviews were recorded with participants' permission and transcribed to ensure the appropriate level of detail was captured in the analysis¹.

2.4 HSEU consultation

The Housing Support Enabling Unit (HSEU) hosted a fire safety roundtable event on 10 March 2021. There were delegates from organisations at the event covering a wide geography across the country and a broad range of stock sizes, support and building types. HSEU produced a report from the discussion, which was made available to Scottish Government, and which is now available from the SFHA and the Housing Support Enabling Unit. The findings and recommendations from this roundtable discussion are taken into account in chapter 4 below.

2.5 Quantitative research

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was designed to be administered as an online survey. The questionnaire covered all of the questions outlined in the research brief and was informed by the ongoing programme of qualitative research. It was piloted internally for timing and sense. The survey length was estimated at around 15 minutes.

The final questionnaire was scripted using SNAP software and the survey link thoroughly checked by Progressive to ensure it was accurate and all routing was in place. Review and approval from the Scottish Government policy team was also sought at all stages of design and script testing.

Distribution

The survey was launched online on 11 March 2021. It was accompanied by an introductory email which explained why the research was being conducted and how the data will be used. The email was sent directly from Progressive to all contacts on the database with a unique survey link for every respondent.

In addition, umbrella organisations who had said they would be willing assist by publicising and/or distributing the survey link were contacted and provided with information about the survey and unique links. Scottish Government was also provided with a link in case anyone asked them for a survey link.

In order to maximise the response:

The survey length was kept short, and was indicated on the covering email

A clear description of the survey purpose and relevance to the organisation was provided

Two reminder emails were sent to those on the contact database who had not responded.

The survey deadline was extended to enable more people to respond

¹ One participant withheld permission, so notes were made; the recorder failed in one case, so notes again have been used.

Towards the end of fieldwork Progressive telephone interviewers telephoned non-responders and asked them to complete the survey. It was also hoped this would pick up any instances where the original email had been missed or been swept into a 'junk' folder.

Ethical issues relating to the survey being conducted online, such as access to online facilities, were not considered an issue, due to this being a business to business survey. It was considered that business respondents would not experience any barriers to responding to an online survey. We did not include a prize draw as we considered that most respondents would be within the social sector, and would be uncomfortable/unable to accept this inducement.

Survey response

A total of 24 responses were achieved. This was a response rate of around 24%, somewhat below our target of 35%. However, given many of the contacts available on the database were not named or had a generic email address, this was considered reasonable response from the sample frame. Table 2.2 below provides a profile of those responding.

Six of the survey respondents also took part in the qualitative depth interviews. This means that responses have been received from 33 organisations in total across both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the evaluation.

Table 2.2: Profile of the response

SQ1. Firstly, what description best fits your organisation or business

	Total Sample	High rise	Specialised	Both High rise and Specialised
Housing association	13	2	7	4
Local authority	6	3	1	2
Building management company	2	2	-	-
Care provider	2	-	2	-
Other	1	-	1	-
Base: All	24	7	11	6

2.6 Limitations to the research

Qualitative research

The overall sample of achieved depth interviews was smaller than anticipated. Recruiting the participants was challenging because of the smaller contact list, fewer direct contacts within the list, and difficulties encountered contacting those organisations without direct contacts. However, those interviews that were achieved

included representation of organisations with significant high rise and specialised stock within Scotland, and covered a range of tenures.

The one aspect of the research that was not so well reflected within the qualitative research was there was only limited representation of organisations who were unaware/less aware of the guidance. Of the 15 participants representing organisations, one would be categorised as 'less aware' and one 'not aware' prior to their interaction with Progressive. While it seems likely that most in the social housing sector will have some awareness, it is less clear cut that those in the wider care sector and the private housing sector will do so.

Quantitative research

Our expectation for the research was that the online survey would provide robust quantitative data as a key element of the evaluation. Information provided during the tendering process indicated that there were around 280 separate high rise contacts covering 15 local authorities, 15 to 20 housing associations and around 250 from mainly privately owned blocks.

However, early analysis revealed that the 250 privately-owned blocks were not individual cases, but under various group management arrangements; meaning the total number of high rise contacts would be significantly lower than anticipated.

The sampling frame for specialised housing and care providers was to be compiled from umbrella organisations, housing associations, charities, regulators and local government. The likely number of possible contacts was not known at the outset of the evaluation.

Once the all duplicates removed, there were just over 100 contacts: high rise (70 contacts) and specialised housing (32 contacts). In addition to those contacts included on the lists, the survey link was sent to key stakeholders/umbrella bodies who agreed to send it on to their members, principally social housing providers and care providers.

The limited contact list sample frame impacted on the quantitative response: a total of 24 responses was received. While this equates to a 25% response rate, the actual number is small, and does not permit detailed quantitative analysis. We would make the following observations.

We would expect the contact list to provide a reasonable reflection of the high rise stock. Indeed, the organisations who took part in the research are responsible for c.34% of the high rise stock in Scotland.

The contact list itself could have been more precise – as noted above, in many cases, it contained only general contact details despite several attempts to track down the appropriate person within the organisation. Home-working and reduced staffing levels were undoubtedly limiting factors within the organisations contacted. The specialised housing list was less complete. We would expect more than 32 organisations across Scotland to provide specialised housing and care.

Development of a more complete contact list – both to underpin further research and dissemination of guidance, would be indicated.

Interviews held at the end of the fieldwork period suggested there may have been merit in extending the scope of the survey and/or depth interviews, to include a wider range of informants, such as residential lettings, surveyors, architects; as well as involving professional bodies such as the Property Managers Association Scotland

To reflect the limitations in the quantitative sample, an adjustment has been made to the reporting approach. The report focuses on the qualitative (depth interview) research, the survey data are reported as absolutes (not percentages) and no sub-group analysis is provided.

3. Research findings: Existing high rise domestic buildings

This chapter addresses the objectives of the evaluation of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings: to establish the level of awareness and use of fire safety guidance; the benefits of the guidance for effective fire safety; and any gaps or weaknesses in it and potential areas for improvement. It draws both on the qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter 3 – Key points

Research participants were almost all aware of the guidance, typically from their manager, or from publicity produced by other organisations, such as the Scottish Government, professional organisations and trade bodies. Some senior staff were aware as a consequence of participation in the development of the guidance.

Most had carried out fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the guidance. However, the guidance has prompted a number of organisations to start conducting fire safety risk assessments.

The template provided in the guidance is helpful. Typically respondents use the PAS 79 template or their consultants' template. However, most either have, or intend to, review these in light of the guidance.

Some minor modifications to the templates were suggested, for example, including the ability to add photographs to aid identification and assist prioritisation, and provision to undertake the risk assessment floor by floor.

There was a high level of support for the guidance. Users found it clear and concise, and described it as a valuable reference document.

Potential barriers to using the guidance were securing funding for major works identified as being needed by the risk assessments for social landlords; and securing buy-in from private owners/landlords for works in mixed/private sector blocks.

3.1 Awareness

The research participants were, on the whole, aware of the guidance for existing high rise domestic buildings.

All of those responding to the survey were aware of the guidance, and all but one had read at least some of it. However, we might expect those that responded have had greater interest and awareness in the subject, than the general population.

Table 3.1: Awareness of the guidance

Q1. Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance For Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings?

	Total
Aware of and read it (some, most or all)	12
Aware of, but not read it	1
Not aware of it	-
Base: All high rise respondents	13

Most survey respondents became aware of the guidance through formal channels at work, with other sources of awareness including fire risk assessment consultants, colleagues, industry bodies, trade press, and Scottish Government. Around half of the survey respondents had attended a workshop, meeting or seminar about the guidance. These were organised by the respondent's organisation, industry bodies and by Scottish Government.

Table 3.2: How respondents became aware of the guidance

Q2. How did you become aware of the Fire Safety Guidance For High Rise Domestic Buildings? Please select all that apply

	Mentions
Through formal channels at work:	9
From the consultant or fire officer (SFRS) who inspects our buildings:	4
Told about it by a colleague	3
From an industry body	3
In the media, trade press:	3
From a Scottish Government communication	3
Someone in my organisation who was involved in the development of the guidance	3
I was involved in the development of the guidance	1
Searching Scottish Government website	1
Base: All high rise respondents	13

The depth interviews provided more detail. The largest housing providers and umbrella organisations were aware that the guidance was being prepared, either through involvement with the Ministerial Working Group (participation in or

providing evidence to) or responding to the consultation on the draft of the guidance. The Grenfell tragedy had raised awareness of fire safety issues, and actioning fire safety in high rise buildings was a live issue across the sector.

“One of our Fire Safety team was on the Ministerial Working Group, so we had quite close contact during the development of the guidance. We provided quite a lot of evidence through the Ministerial Working Group on our operating model.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Consultants engaged to undertake fire risk assessments raised their clients’ awareness of how the emerging English guidance was already being used to inform fire risk assessment methodology, and discussed the possibility/timescale for the publication of Scottish guidance.

“We had been waiting for it. We had had a fire risk assessment done by an English consultant in the summer of 2019 who had mentioned that there wasn’t anything specific to Scotland, but it was coming. His risk assessment was done on the basis of the English guidance, which I think was more prescriptive than the Scottish guidance. So when the Scottish guidance came out we’d obviously been watching out for this coming.” - Depth interview, High Rise

The other key source of information and advice was networking and professional bodies; circulars from organisations such as Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS), and the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM).

However, this level of awareness may not have been the norm across the housing sector. One participant, a building manager, had not heard of the guidance, nor had his manager:

“I became aware of it [the guidance] when I was approached by you guys to take part in the research. I took it to my manager... She’s the operations manager for Scotland, very experienced in factoring and she didn’t know about this either. The message hasn’t got out.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Another participant, despite being engaged during the development of the guidance, including responding to the consultation, only found out that the guidance had been launched ‘by chance’.

“I stumbled across it on Twitter, there was no formal presentation that I was aware of.” - Depth interview, High Rise

As will be discussed more fully below (Section 3.6) several participants suggested that increased communications and publicity of the guidance would enhance its profile among housing sector professionals and among residents living in high rise buildings.

3.2 Use of the guidance

Most (9) of the high rise survey respondents had used the guidance. The main uses were to ensure a satisfactory standard of fire safety, to update policies and procedures, when undertaking fire safety risk assessments and when undertaking actions in response to fire safety risk assessments. It was also being used to support development of new policies and procedures and to train staff.

Table 3.3: Use of the guidance

Q5. Have you or are you currently using the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings in any way? For example, this could be to review current procedures and policies, training of staff, implementing new procedures, or to undertake risk assessments.

	Total
Yes	9
No	2
Unsure	2
Base: All high rise respondents	13

Table 3.4: Use being made of the guidance

Q6. How are you using the guidance? Please select all that apply

	Mentions
To ensure we achieve a satisfactory standard of fire safety	9
To update policies and procedures	7
When undertaking action in response to risk assessments	7
When conducting fire safety risk assessments on our buildings	6
To create new policies or procedures	5
To train staff and make staff aware of fire safety issues	5
Planning servicing & maintenance activities and upgrade works	1
To support engagement with residents	1
Base: All using high rise guidance	9

The depth interviews allow us to see how this works in practice. For example, some of the organisations had taken the launch of the guidance as an opportunity to review of policies and practice, to ensure they were in line with the best practice set out in the guidance, and make best use of the resource contained within the guidance.

“One of the first things I had been asked to do was to review that documentation for the multi-storeys. And look at what impact that [the guidance] had, and what changes we needed to put in place. So I put together a report for that. I ran through that at one of our housing management team meetings.” - Depth interview, High Rise

“I think it’s really just been an evolution of working together with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The higher overview of anything that’s come out of that, then going on to the health and safety action plan and being addressed from there.”
- Depth interview, High Rise

One participant was a full member of the Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) group of housing associations. One of EVH’s members’ services is the landlord health and safety control manual, which covers fire safety, gas safety, electrical, etc. Their usual practice is to review this from the local perspective. They have undertaken a further review following the publication of the guidance:

“We take the view that although the manual is written, it’s generic, so we have to look at it and make it relevant to us. We review all our key health and safety policies annually, even if it’s just having a quick glance over and making sure we’re comfortable with them. When we have been reviewing the policy within the manual this time, we’ve used the guidance documents to make sure that we’re doing what we should be doing.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Others were reasonably comfortable with the approach that is in place within their organisation. They had reviewed the guidance and were using it to support their existing policy, and operational and investment approaches.

“We have not used it very much. Our fire risk assessments have been in place for several years now. Each time we do them again, it’s a case of picking up a few new things that may have changed, or been missed, or where the legislation has changed. The guidance can be really helpful for supporting us to make these changes.” - Depth interview, High Rise

The main benefits of the guidance for participants were:

A reference tool for staff: The guidance stores the key documentation they will need to refer to, both on a daily basis and on an *ad hoc* basis, in a single document.

Information to support investment decisions and funding bids: Generally, the guidance provided the rationale for investment proposals. It also supported the case for proposals when taken to management committees or funders.

“There’s nothing better for us than being able to reflect the Scottish Government guidance to reports to the management board. They talk about a blue light journey; a fire engine costs £3000 every time it leaves the station to come to a fire. Here we can almost look at a cost-benefit analysis of reducing accidental dwelling fires, cheaper insurance. It’s good when we’re trying to encourage partners or investment vehicles to provide funding if we can show that we adhere to and exceed government guidance and the outcome of that is reduced accidental dwelling fires, reduced fatalities, reduced near misses and reduced accidents.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Information to support housing management: Some participants stressed the useful role the guidance plays in supporting the actions required by the fire safety risk assessment; in particular, being able to easily reference the guidance pre-emptively in discussions with residents or owners. Issues mentioned most often

were combustible materials in common areas and obstructions in common areas (ranging from bookcases and plant pots, to bikes and rubbish). For example, for one organisation the guidance is providing a really useful reference when reviewing the fire risk assessments, and when explaining processes or decisions to staff or residents:

“It will help with owner occupiers if it’s something they are reluctant to change – or they need to spend money on – having the guidance to demonstrate why it needs to be done is really helpful. The same with tenants, if a behaviour needs to change, having the guidance to back us up when we are explaining why, for instance, they can’t park their bikes in the hallway, even if there is no room in their flat.” - Depth interview, High Rise

3.3 Guidance not used

Very few of the organisations in the research had not used the guidance; only two of those surveyed online had not used it yet. Both said they expected to use the guidance in the future (that they ‘possibly would’). The reasons given for not having used the guidance thus far were that they did not have the staff resource to put the guidance into place and the guidance is not relevant to the organisation.

One of the organisations interviewed for the qualitative phase of the research had not used the guidance yet. This was the organisation unaware of the guidance until contacted for interview. It would be fair to say the participant was an enthusiastic convert to the guidance. They felt it sets out exactly why the fire safety risk assessments are undertaken and why residents should comply with the actions.

“I would love to send this to all my high-rise owners and tenants. And I probably will - to say this is what we’re working for, this is why we’re doing a health and safety review. I’m giving that [the guidance] to each individual, or quoting some of these elements and giving them the webpage, so I can say I’d like to draw your attention to this, this, this...” - Depth interview, High Rise

3.4 Fire Safety Risk Assessment - approach

All survey respondents had Fire Safety Risk Assessments (FSRAs) in place for at least some of their relevant properties, and most had FSRAs in place for all relevant properties.

Almost all (11) of the survey respondents had been carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2019. Just two respondents started carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments following the publication of the Scottish Government guidance.

Table 3.5: Fire Safety Risk Assessments

Q9. Do you have current Fire Safety Risk Assessments which have been undertaken or reviewed in the last year for your high rise properties?

	Total
For all properties	10
For the majority of properties	-
For some properties	3
For no properties	-
Base: All high rise respondents	13

The main reasons that survey respondents gave for carrying out fire safety risk assessments across their high rise properties were:

Good practice in building management/H&S : 10 mentions
 Fire reduction strategy/performance indicator : 5 mentions
 Publication of the Scottish Government guidance : 2 mentions
 Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 : 1 mention
 Grenfell Tower fire : 1 mention

The depth interviews support these findings, with participants generally having been undertaking regular fire safety risk assessments in their high rise stock prior to the introduction of the guidance.

“We do our fire risk assessments for the high rise blocks annually, and we do refer back to it because there are a number of actions come out of that fire risk assessment each year.” - Depth interview, High Rise

“We have been carrying out FSRAs across our properties for several years.”
 - Depth interview, High Rise

“Within a month of Grenfell back in June 17, we effectively created our first fire prevention mitigation framework, which was in the process of being renewed, so it was an initial three-year document. It worked on four different areas - it looked at partnerships, it looked at prevention, it looked at products and services and performance....We adopt PAS 79 in terms of a methodology for fire risk assessment....And we’ve got something called a fire precaution logbook as well. So, within the guidance where you’ve got recommendations for daily checks, testing of your risers and alarm systems, we put that into a logbook, a fire safety logbook. So, all our premises have what we call a fire precaution logbook. So, daily

checks, weekly checks, testing of alarms, the maintenance from contractors, all of that is recorded in the fire precaution logbook.” - Depth interview, High Rise

One participant, who worked in a management company, which was a subsidiary of a large RSL, commented they had only recently been providing fire safety risk assessments across the stock. Previously, the RSL had undertaken the risk assessments in-house, however, in order to improve the quality and standard of service, a specialist division had been established to be responsible for all health and safety work, including fire safety risk assessments.

Who carries out the FSRA?

Typically the FSRA's are carried out by external consultants. Survey respondents indicated that external consultants were responsible for conducting all the FSRA's in seven organisations, and undertook some of the assessments in a further four organisations. Just two organisations said they were fully responsible for conducting all the FSRA's.

Table 3.6: Who carries out the FSRA?

Q12. Who carries out the Fire Safety Risk Assessment in your high rise properties?

	Total
External consultant	7
Mix of in-house and external consultants	4
In-house	2
Base: All high rise respondents	13

In all but one case (where the respondent indicated they were unsure) external assessors engaged in undertaking FSRA's are either 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body.

This was supported by the depth interviews. Almost all used external consultants to undertake the fire safety risk assessments. This enables them to buy in skills from a range of specialists, such as ex-fire officers and architects, to undertake the assessments on their different types of properties – for example, mid-rise, multi-storey and specialist housing. Even organisations that are competent to undertake some/most of the risk assessments themselves by having the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours in-house, may consider there are some building types where they require the services of consultants.

“The consultants we use include an ex-fire officer who undertakes the risk assessment in the high rise buildings as he is familiar with issues related to stairwells, smoke corridors, ladder access, and so on.” - Depth interview, High Rise

“Risk assessments are carried out under contract by a licenced contractor, with required actions passed to the technical team/investment team for action. The approach draws on best practice within the industry across the UK.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Two of the large organisations we spoke with had the resources to establish (as well as the estate to warrant) an in-house specialist team to conduct the fire safety

risk assessments. The staff within these teams were typically ex-fire officers, who were trained in line with current guidance and legislation (English and Scottish).

“By and large, the majority of risk assessments are done by our own staff who are trained to PAS 79 standard. So, they use the PAS 79 methodology, which is a recognised standard certainly among Scottish Fire and Rescue colleagues and some of the enforcement teams within Scottish Fire and Rescue. There may be occasions when we may use consultants just because of capacity issues.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Fire safety risk assessment - template

Almost all of the survey respondents had looked at the risk assessment template within the guidance, and two had used the template to adapt or update their existing in-house/consultant’s risk assessment approach. Others used a different approach, typically PAS 79 or say they do not use a template-based approach at all.

This was supported by the depth interviews. Participants have been content to use their consultant’s reporting template for the risk assessment; these have provided a clear reporting framework, and have identified items requiring action and investment. There was a general view that the templates in use are fairly similar to the one contained in the guidance. However, there was often an intention to review the templates being used to ensure they do cover everything that is contained within the guidance template.

“We don't have a risk assessment template. We’ve had an external company in to do our risk assessments. So they have a template that they utilise and they fill in. Their template is very similar (to the guidance template). But that’s one of the things on my action plan. To review the template and see how that compares with what we’ve done in the past to see if there’s anything that we’re missing.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Table 3.7: The FSRA template

Q14. Have you read through the fire safety risk assessment template in the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings?

Read the template	Total
Yes	11
No	1
Base: All aware of high rise guidance	12

Q15. Have you used the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings in any way within your organisation?

Used the template	
No – we currently use PAS 79 instead	4
No – we use a different template (not PAS 79 or SG)	2
No – we do not currently use a template	2
Yes - we have used the template to adapt or update our existing in-house/consultant’s risk assessment approach	2
Unsure	1
Base: All who have read the high rise template	11

In some cases the participants used PAS 79 (either in-house or through their consultants). This was considered similar to the template provided in the guidance, but has the benefit of being a recognised standard, which is well known to Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) enforcement officers.

“We would recognise the template as been very close to PAS 79 but it doesn’t come out and say that. The timescales and risk ratings and things like that are pretty much the same.” - Depth interview, High Rise

While the basic structure and elements covered in local templates were broadly the same, there were a few points of difference.

Several of the participants included the use of photographs where action/investment is required in their templates, and felt these would be a helpful addition to the guidance template. These are especially valuable in large organisations, as an aid to identify which building is being referred to, and in supplementing the description of the fault/issue.

“Photographs, our consultant includes photographs, which are quite helpful to try and identify, or to actually see visually what he’s talking about. And also sometimes given the size of the building, just to narrow down where specifically he’s looking at. And I think it’s also quite good to have the before and after pictures if you like as well.” - Depth interview, High Rise

Some participants also noted their templates don’t simply note the presence of records/items on the template – for example if testing and maintenance records are complete – they record evidence that this is so (for example, date and reference of certificates which can be checked).

Some participants noted that their approach involved risk assessment floor by floor within the multi storey blocks. This provided more detailed, systematic information from across the stock.

“Our risk assessment feels more structured, if you like. That the risk assessor is going floor by floor and probably answering these questions on each floor that he’s looking at in order to be able to report back on specific issues or areas of concern, because I think looking at that it’s asking questions which seem general, which if you were to take a 20 storey block, you might have a lot of actions coming out of that. And you might lose actions possibly in the mix of a fairly loose, freehand question.” - Depth interview, High Rise

One participant noticed that the guidance template records ‘history of fire’ within the building. This is not included on the template used by their organisation, and could be extremely relevant.

“I have that situation in one block, which has commercial properties underneath it, including a delivery-only restaurant. It’s a purpose-built facility, so it will have been fire rated. But that’s quite interesting. Has there been any history of fire? I didn’t even think about things like that. That’s not a question that’s on our health and

safety form. There's no column that says has there ever been a fire in this building? That's quite cool." - Depth interview, High Rise

Actions

All the participants sought to prioritise the actions identified in the risk assessment, and were familiar with the approach set out in the guidance. In many cases, the actions that can be addressed in-house by staff or management are normally taken almost immediately, whereas those requiring significant investment, especially when this involves private owners, can take some time to programme through. While risk assessments are undertaken on a property-by-property basis, prioritisation decisions are typically taken across the whole stock or within budget heads (for example for all factored stock/for all specialised housing).

Some participants mentioned that photographs of the issues identified can be helpful in determining relative priorities, as they enabled staff to have a clearer understanding of the nature and scale of the different issues which need to be resolved across the organisation.

Participants stressed the risk assessment is a snapshot of the situation on the day – things can be different the next day.

"Everything can be fine when the assessment is done, the next day there could be a mattress dumped by the bins!" - Depth interview, High Rise

"So reinforcing that whole structure there is a daily inspection regime from environmental staff. They'll check things like fire door self-closes are working, or bin chutes are operational. External contracts, checking lifts, emergency lighting... there are quarterly checks, annual checks. The fire risk assessment process will be three-yearly. So there are all sorts of safeguards in there." - Depth interview, High Rise

Further guidance or support

None of the survey respondents or the depth interviewees thought that there was anything more that the Scottish Government could do to support them to use the fire safety risk assessment template.

3.5 Assessment of the guidance

Overall views on the guidance

Overall the majority of the survey respondents considered the guidance for high rise domestic properties housing and the template for fire safety risk assessments to be valuable, with the larger proportion considering these to be very valuable.

Survey respondents were also asked to rate key aspects of the guidance. Almost all of the survey respondents who had read the guidance rated each of these aspects good or very good. As the table shows, the aspects of the guidance most

often considered very good were the comprehensive coverage, clarity as to which buildings the guidance applies, and provision of tools to support the guidance. Fewer respondents rated the guidance on who should complete the risk assessments, and on how to complete the risk assessments, as very good.

Table 3.8: Overall assessment

Q22. Thinking now about the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings, how valuable would you say the risk assessment template and the guidance has been or will be for your organisation?

	FSRA Template	Guidance
Very valuable	5	8
Quite valuable	4	3
Not very valuable	1	-
Not at all valuable	1	-
Unsure	1	1
Base: all aware of the high rise guidance	12	12

Table 3.9: Assessment of aspects of the guidance

Q7. How would you rate the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings on the following aspects?

	Very good	Total good
Comprehensive coverage of the relevant aspects of fire safety	9	10
Clarity of the organisations and buildings to which the guidance applies	8	10
Provision of practical tools to improve fire safety (e.g. checklists, templates)	8	10
Being user-friendly – the language and layout are easy to follow	7	10
Signposting to further sources of information and advice	6	10
Advice on how to use/implement the guidance	5	10
Guidance on how to complete risk assessments	4	9
Guidance on who should complete risk assessments	3	9

These findings were supported by the depth interviews. Participants said they found the guidance helpful, clear and concise; and it usefully brings everything together in one place. Furthermore, it is badged as coming from Scottish Government which gives it authority.

“This is very clear. It’s like a one-stop shop. Anything that you need to know about that is all found in one place.” - Depth interview, High rise

One stakeholder noted that their membership had not raised any issues with them about the guidance over the last year; which can be interpreted positively:

“I’ve had no traffic on it since it launched, and that I guess is probably a mark of confidence - it’s landed and people have taken account of it and got on with it as best they can, particularly given what the last year has been like.” - Depth interview, Stakeholder

Barriers to using the guidance

Around half of the survey respondents who were using the guidance commented that they were not experiencing any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing it. Of the others, the main issues that people had encountered were the challenges of implementing the guidance while responding to the pandemic, and a lack of staff resources.

Table 3.10: Barriers to using the guidance

Q19. Have you experienced any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing the fire safety guidance for high rise buildings? Please select all that apply?

	Mentions
Not experiencing any barriers or problems	5
Organisational focus has been on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	3
Finding time to put the guidance into practice	3
Finding the staff resource to review or put the guidance into practice	2
Finding time to read it	1
Difficult to obtain residents’ cooperation for risk assessments or implementing actions	1
Unsure	1
Base: All using the high rise guidance	9

The depth interview participants also reported few barriers to implementing the guidance. The main issue mentioned was resourcing actions identified; either within their own organisations when major programmes of work were identified (for

example the replacement of all doors across the stock) or securing owner approval to undertake works required by risk assessments (for example when the cost of the works exceed the authorised 'factoring limit' or where missives require the agreement of a majority of owners).

"It was going to be more than what the factoring agreement said we were able to do. But it was essentially emergency work because it had been highlighted in the safety report when they'd done the annual inspection. So we had no choice but to go ahead and do it. But then the kickback we get back from that from the owners - I had seven of them on the phone complaining. And it's like, you either want your building to comply or you don't. And unfortunately to have it comply you're going to have to pay your share. That is a challenge." - Depth interview, High rise

Generally, however, participants stressed that the guidance has been supportive and helpful.

"I think the guidance has been very helpful. Sometimes it has been helpful from the point of view that it reinforces or gives us the confidence that we were on the right track or we continue to be on the right track. From that perspective, no barriers." - Depth interview, High rise

"Yeah it takes time to go through and to deal with, but it has been helpful. Trying to bring all the different strands together and work out what that actually means for us. I think it's been extremely helpful." - Depth interview, High rise

3.6 Improvements to the guidance

Survey respondents and interview participants made a small number of suggestions for improving the guidance. Participants stressed these were 'tweaks' intended to make the guidance more useful, as opposed to substantive changes.

Two of the survey respondents thought that the Scottish Government could do more to support them to implement the Guidance. Only one of these respondents commented on the type of support that would be helpful:

"The guidance does not say a lot in relation to buildings over 60m - additional information for these buildings would be helpful." – Survey respondent

Two respondents made suggestions that related to particular challenges faced by managers of mixed tenure buildings:

"A subsection on the responsibilities / obligations of mix-tenure private owners to comply with direction / recommendations given by property managers and to promote enhancement to fire safety." – Survey respondent

"More recognition of high rise buildings that have properties with mixed ownerships - we have a number of privately owned properties within our high rise blocks and

it's unclear how we can engage fully with some of the requirements as a result of this." – Survey respondent

Finally, one survey respondent specifically asked for more technical information on cladding and fire barriers.

"Specific technical detail on cladding systems, fire barriers, etc." – Survey respondent

The depth interviews support these findings, with most agreeing that overall the guidance is about the right length, and is clear and concise.

The key area for improvement mentioned was better communication of the availability of the guidance and any further updates that are that issued. The audience for the guidance was fairly wide-ranging, including housing providers within the social sector, property managers/factoring companies, SFRS, consultants providing risk assessment services, architects and surveyors, lettings agents, and so on. It was appreciated that the guidance will have been disseminated when launched, but the events of last year had served to shift the focus.

It was suggested that a leaflet for residents and owners be produced (similar to the one produced previously for high rise residents) which would contain some information about the guidance on existing high rise properties, including residents' responsibilities.

"I think it should be advertised. Every factor in Scotland is registered so there's no excuse why the Scottish Government haven't contacted the head operatives of the regional offices of the factors registered in Scotland to say this guidance exists and can you let us know how many staff you've got and how many people have seen it? Why am I only finding out now? I'm not someone who goes onto the government's website to see what's kicking around. Maybe I should. There may be other things out there that I don't know about, but I don't think there's any excuse... Factoring within Scotland is legislated. We've got to follow a code of conduct, so all of our businesses are registered and it wouldn't be difficult for the Scottish Government to contact those offices and say guys, we've got a guideline for high-rise and you may not have one but this is relevant to any factoring because you might get a high-rise or might have a building." - Depth interview, High rise

Some participants also suggested a searchable online version, such as an app or something they could use easily on the iPad when they are out and about, would be extremely useful. This fits with the way most of the participants are using the guidance, as a reference document, that they refer to (or refer others to). Being able to navigate the document easily and quickly would add to its utility.

"One thing for me, would be a searchable facility. With a lot of electronic documents now you can put in compartmentation and it will take you to the specific part of the document. I think that would be really helpful for a range of people that we work

with. You've got an electric version, you've got it on your iPad and you suddenly want to know about self-closing doors in common areas, you can type that in, and it takes you there. So, you don't have to spend time and read through the document. It would save time. It's difficult to find lots of comments to make it better than it already is, but that would be one. - Depth interview, High rise

Participants raised issues about the scope of the FSRA, and the implications for resources. Several mentioned the cost of conducting the risk assessment: in the region of £800 - £1,000 per building, which clearly becomes significant for landlords with several buildings and/or who wish to repeat the risk assessment at frequent intervals.

Some landlords questioned whether the risk assessment, and subsequent regular safety checks, should cover flat doors. If so, this would present both resourcing and practical challenges: checking individual dwelling doors to make sure that they are in a good state of repair and fit correctly, they are closing properly, and that the smoke seals are intact and fitted correctly. Critically, checking that each door conforms to safety standards, and has not been replaced by the owner for an alternative.

4. Research findings: Existing specialised housing and similar premises

The guidance is primarily for those who are responsible for specialised housing and similar premises and for those who provide care and support services in such premises. It may also be useful for people living in general needs housing who receive a “care at home” service and for anyone involved with their care and well-being.

This chapter addresses the objectives of the evaluation of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises: to establish the level of awareness and use of fire safety guidance; the benefits of the guidance for effective fire safety; and any gaps or weaknesses in it and potential areas for improvement. It draws on the qualitative interviews conducted with housing providers, care providers and representative bodies; and the survey undertaken with housing and care providers; as well as the recommendations from the Housing Support Enabling Unit fire safety roundtable event.

Chapter 4 – Key points

Research participants were almost all aware of the guidance, typically survey respondents became aware of the guidance through formal channels at work or from a Scottish Government communication.

Most had used the guidance, mainly to ensure a satisfactory standard of fire safety, update policies and procedures, and when conducting fire safety risk assessments. Several participants noted that the national lockdown, which had occurred just a few weeks after the guidance launch, interrupted their progress on rolling out the person-centred fire safety risk assessments.

Almost all of the survey respondents had been carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020. For most, these are carried out by in-house staff or a mix of in-house staff and external consultants. Almost all have reviewed the risk assessment template provided in the guidance, and some have adopted it in full or in part for their own organisation. Most continue to use either the PAS 79 template or their consultants' template.

Almost all use personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), and it was suggested that reference to the PEEPs should be included more prominently in the guidance and added to the checklist in Appendix 6.

Chapter 4 – Key points (cont)

Around half of the survey respondents currently carry out a person-centred FSRA for at least some of their residents. Typically the person-centred FSRA are carried out in-house, either by a welfare officer, a housing officer, or in some cases an external care provider.

Concerns were raised by participants as to how the responsibility for undertaking each of the risk assessments would be determined; how the information from a range of organisations could be collated and kept updated; and how the actions would be resourced.

There was a high level of support for the guidance. Users found it clear and comprehensive, and the supporting tools user-friendly. More information on how the person-centred FSRA should be used would be welcomed.

Potential barriers to using the guidance were largely around the person-centred FSRA, in terms of having the resources to undertake the risk assessments, limited relationships with residents (which impacts on identifying potentially high risk residents), and the need to obtain consent prior to carrying out an assessment.

4.1 Awareness

The research participants were, on the whole, aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises.

All of those responding to the survey were aware of the guidance, and all but two had read at least some of it. As was the case with the guidance for high rise buildings, we might expect those that responded to have had greater interest and awareness in the subject, than the total population of providers/stakeholders in this sector.

Most survey respondents became aware of the guidance through formal channels at work or from a Scottish

Table 4.1: Awareness of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises

Q27, Q28. Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance For Specialised Housing?

	Total
Aware of and read it (some, most or all)	15
Aware of, but not read it	2
Not aware of it	-
Base: All specialised providers*	17

* Providers comprise 15 housing providers and 2 care providers

Government communication. Other sources of awareness included colleagues, trade press, fire officers and industry bodies. Only 5 of the 17 survey respondents had attended a workshop, meeting or seminar about the guidance. Two were in-house sessions and 3 were roundtable sessions organised by SFHA / Scottish Government.

Table 4.2: How respondents became aware of the guidance for specialised housing

Q29. How did you become aware of the Fire Safety Guidance for Specialised Housing?

	Mentions
Through formal channels at work:	10
From a Scottish Government communication	8
Told about it by a colleague	4
In the media or trade press	4
On the advice of a fire officer (SFRS)	3
From an industry body	3
Base: All specialised providers	17

The depth interviews supported these quantitative findings. All participants had been aware of the guidance before the interview. Some were aware that the guidance was being prepared, either through involvement with the Scottish Government policy team, or by responding to the consultation on the draft of the guidance. Those with a mix of high rise and specialised stock were especially alert to forthcoming guidance, given the measures being put in place in response to the Grenfell tragedy. But those with a focus on specialised stock were also aware: information was circulated by in-house health and safety teams, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and professional and trade bodies.

“I first saw it through the media. I’m part of a number of groups of health and safety advisers, and we meet regularly, and we discuss all things fire related.” – Depth interview, Specialised provider

“I worked closely with this guy, who is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Fire Enforcement Officer. He has been absolutely brilliant, keeping us up to date with any of the new legislation going through.” – Depth interview, Specialised provider

This high level of awareness among housing providers was in part be due to Scottish Government working in partnership with key representative organisations. One such body was interviewed for the evaluation. This organisation made information available to a wide range of specialised housing bodies, including sheltered housing providers, providers of supported housing more generally, and

care providers. They noted that good engagement was achieved with housing associations, but less so with care providers.

“It was more challenging, it’s fair to say, to get engagement with care providers who perhaps didn’t see fire safety as such a key part of their role because they’ll be working with landlords rather than being the landlord. However, they obviously have a role to play, via safety guidance. The role of care providers is really helpfully highlighted and all of that co-ordination between landlords, care providers and other professionals working with individuals is very much key to it.” – Depth interview, Specialised provider

4.2 Use of the guidance

Most (11) of the specialised housing survey respondents had used the guidance. The main uses were to ensure a satisfactory standard of fire safety, to update policies and procedures, when conducting fire safety risk assessments, and when conducting person-centred risk assessments. It was also being used when undertaking actions in response to fire safety risk assessments, to support development of new policies and procedures, and to train staff.

Table 4.3: Use of the specialised guidance

Q32. Have you or are you currently using the fire safety guidance for specialised housing in any way? This may be simply using it to review current procedures and policies, training of staff, implementing new procedures, to undertake risk assessments, etc.

	Total
Yes	11
No	5
Unsure	1
Base: All specialised providers	17

Table 4.4: Use being made of the guidance

Q33. How are you using the guidance? Please select all that apply

	Mentions
To ensure we achieve a satisfactory standard of fire safety	8
To update policies and procedures	7
When conducting fire safety risk assessments on our buildings	6
To conduct person-centred risk assessments for our residents	6
When undertaking action in response to risk assessments	5
To create new policies or procedures	5
To train staff and make staff aware of fire safety issues	5
Base: All using all specialised guidance	11

The depth interviews provide a more nuanced picture of how organisations are using the guidance on the ground. For some, who already have established effective policies and procedures in place, the guidance is being used as a reference resource. For example, it is being reviewed to ensure local policies and procedures meet the standards and best practice set out in the guidance, and to provide a robust justification for actioning risk assessments. This can range from wholesale review to minor tweaks.

“When it first came in we sat down and read through it and then we discussed it with some of our health and safety reps and especially the housing and highlighted areas where we thought we need improvement, and then it’s an ongoing point. I will be reading it again in March, if we’re coming out of the lockdown, because we’ll then be doing the fire risk assessments again.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

“We have not used it very much. Our fire risk assessments have been in place for several years now. Each time we do them again, it’s a case of picking up a few new things that may have changed, or been missed, or where the legislation has changed. The guidance can be really helpful for supporting us to make these changes.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Some organisations have had less time to make substantive changes. They have read the guidance, and have set targets to incorporate revisions to current policies and procedures as required when risk assessments are due to be updated. One organisation, which has both high rise and specialised housing, commented that implementing the high rise guidance had taken precedence, given competing resource pressures during the pandemic year.

“We focused on our high rises as that was the priority after Grenfell. Perhaps it’s a slightly naïve view, given that in the specialised housing it’s elderly and vulnerable tenants, but I think we’re confident that our specialised housing schemes are actually okay in terms of fire safety...They’re quite small [low rise flats and houses], so we don’t have the same height issues there. And we have on-site staff, albeit that they’re not sheltered housing wardens...” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

4.3 Guidance not used

A small proportion of the survey respondents were aware of the guidance for specialised housing but had not yet used it; five of those surveyed online². Four of these said they expected to use the guidance at some time in the future, while the other was unsure. The main reasons for not having implemented the guidance were largely time-related: lack of time to read the guidance (2 mentions), being focused on dealing with the coronavirus pandemic (2), lack of time to implement guidance, (1) and lack of staff resources to conduct the person-centred risk assessments (1). Two organisations mentioned already having robust fire safety measures in place,

² See Q51 and Q52

and two mentioned the guidance was not clear who is responsible for carrying out the person-centred risk assessment.

One of the organisations interviewed for the qualitative phase of the research had not used the guidance. This organisation currently uses the PAS 79 document for care home fire safety risk assessments, and considered this similar to the healthy working lives template but much more detailed.

4.4 Premises-based Fire Safety Risk Assessment

The specialised housing guidance contains two risk assessments: a premises-based fire safety risk assessment and a person-centred fire safety risk assessment.

All survey respondents had premises-based fire safety risk assessments (FSRAs) in place for at least some of their relevant properties, although only around half had FSRAs for most of their properties.

Almost all (14) of the survey respondents had been carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020. Just one of the respondents started carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments following the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020.

The main reasons that survey respondents gave for carrying out fire safety risk assessments across their specialised properties were:

- Good practice in building management/H&S: 12 mentions
- Fire reduction strategy/performance indicator: 5 mentions
- Publication of the Scottish Government guidance: 4 mentions

The findings from the depth interviews supported these findings, with participants generally having been undertaking regular fire safety risk assessments in their specialised housing prior to the introduction of the guidance.

“The health and safety team carry out the risk assessments in our established properties.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

“We have been carrying out FSRAs across our properties for several years.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Table 4.5: Fire Safety Risk Assessments

Q36. Do you have current Fire Safety Risk Assessments which have been undertaken or reviewed in the last year for your specialised housing or similar properties?

	Total
For all properties	6
For the majority of properties	1
For some properties	8
For no properties	-
Base: All specialised housing providers	15

Some organisations that currently, or previously, managed care homes had found the care homes fire safety guidance³ helpful in managing their specialised housing. “We used to have care homes. So we were doing fire risk assessments back in 2008 when the first guidance came out for care homes. Sadly we closed our care homes in 2018. And once we had finished with care homes, I went back to the board and said could we just continue for sheltered housing and very sheltered housing developments? And it was actually a very progressive board who just said, ‘Yes, let’s go for it. Whether it’s a legal requirement or not, we’ll go ahead and we’ll do it’.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Who carries out the premises-based FSRA?

The FSRAs in specialised housing are carried out by a mix of external consultants and in-house staff. Four of the organisations undertook the FSRAs using their own staff, while five employed consultants, and the remaining six used a mix of their own staff and external consultants.

In all but one case (where the respondent indicated they were unsure) external assessors engaged in undertaking FSRAs were either 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body.

This was supported by the depth interviews. In-house health and safety teams play an important role in ensuring risks are assessed robustly, required actions are identified and recorded clearly, and follow-through activities are monitored. Consultants may be brought in to undertake risk assessments, to supplement in-house resources and skills, to audit key developments, and/or to provide external validation.

“Mainly done in-house although we will bring in an external assessor for new properties or properties they’ve taken over as it will involve intrusive inspections e.g. going into loft spaces. Usually only for the initial inspection.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

For those using external contractors, the cost of undertaking regular premises-based risk assessments may be considerable. One large housing association commented that the cost of moving to three-yearly assessments would eat into the budget available to implement actions identified.

Table 4.6: Who carries out the FSRA?

Q39. Who carries out the Fire Safety Risk Assessment in your specialised housing or similar properties?

	Total
External consultant	5
In-house	4
Mix of in-house and external consultants	6
Base: All specialised housing providers	15

³ [Fire safety guidance for care homes - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot), 2014

“It states in the guidance it’s every three years for a full risk assessment. So that’s a cost that you’re going to have to continue to build in in the future. Because let’s say it’s £700, £800... Even if you’re doing 100 a year, it’s quite a cost. That would come outwith the £3,000 budget that we have. So then that reduces the amount of money we have to implement actions... They’re probably better, actually, trying to get [the consultant] and try to employ him, but I think he probably makes a lot more money through being self-employed!” Depth interview, Specialised provider

Premises-based FSRA template

Almost all of the survey respondents had looked at the risk assessment template within the guidance. One was using the template from the guidance to conduct risk assessments, and 2 others had adapted it to create templates that better suited their organisation. Others used a different approach, typically PAS 79 or their consultants’ template.

Table 4.7: The premises-based FSRA template

Q41. Have you read through the fire safety risk assessment template in the fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

Read the premises-based FSRA template	Total
Yes	12
No	1
Unsure	1
Base: Specialised housing providers aware of guidance	14

Q42. Have you used the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings in any way within your organisation?

Used the premises-based FSRA template	
No – we currently use PAS 79 instead	3
No – we use a different template (not PAS 79 or SG)	3
Yes – we have used the template from the guidance to conduct risk assessments	1
Yes - we have used the template as a basis to create a risk assessment approach for our organisation	1
Yes – Other (blended it with PAS 79)	1
Unsure	2
No – we do not currently use a template	1
Base: All read the template	12

This was supported by the depth interviews. Participants had been drawing on advice from consultants and from the SFRS. In-house risk assessment templates, checklists and procedures had been established by management teams and Health and Safety teams. These provided clear and reliable reporting frameworks, and identified items requiring action and investment. As with the high rise guidance, there was a general view that the templates in use are fairly similar to that provided in the guidance.

“If we’d started from nothing, yes the template would have been useful, but most of it was already there, we had it before... we were basing our own template on the fire brigade’s...” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Actions

As with the high rise guidance, the participants sought to prioritise the actions identified in the risk assessment, and were familiar with the approach set out in the guidance. The guidance was considered systematic and helpful.

“I think it’s really good. I think it’s really clear, very useful for people who don’t really understand the fire risk assessment procedure. It’s a great check list to start with..”
- Depth interview, Specialised provider

One small amendment was suggested: that referencing is included so that it is clear who has responsibility for addressing each action.

4.5 Person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment

As noted above (section 4.4), the fire safety guidance for specialised housing and similar premises also includes guidance for person-centred fire safety risk assessments. This FSRA is designed to protect people at high risk from fire due to specific vulnerabilities, and aims to identify whether additional fire safety measures may be required to reduce risk. Unlike the premises-based FSRA, the person-centred FSRA can be carried out by a ‘lay person’, typically someone who engages frequently with the vulnerable person, such as a sheltered housing scheme manager, a care provider or an informal care provider such as a family member.

The survey showed that approximately half of the organisations (8 out of 17) currently carry out person-centred FSRAs, with 3 saying they carry out them out for all residents regardless of perceived risk; 1 reporting conducting person-centred FSRAs for all residents at increased risk; and 4 carrying them out for just some residents at increased risk.

However, it is appreciated that the guidance was published just a few weeks before Scotland went into lockdown last year, and most housing and care providers have not operated normally since that time. As one of the depth interviewees said:

“[Before the guidance came out I had] concentrated on the person-centred approach and what we would have to do. Who’s going to do it? When’s it going to

get done? Unfortunately when the document come out I had a meeting with the team in February 2020, and three weeks later we were in lockdown which was really annoying!” - Depth interview, Specialist provider

Table 4.8: Person-centred FSRAs

Q44. Does your organisation currently carry out person-centred fire safety risk assessments for residents in specialised housing or similar premises?

	Total
Yes - for all residents regardless of perceived risk	3
Yes – for all residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	1
Yes – for the majority of residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	-
Yes – for some residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	4
No – for none of the residents in specialised housing	4
Unsure	5
Base: All specialised providers	17

Who carries out the Person-centred FSRA?

Typically the person-centred FSRAs are carried out in-house, either by a welfare officer or a housing officer. In some organisations, the health and safety team are involved as well. Two respondents mentioned external care providers undertaking the assessment. No-one mentioned risk assessments being undertaken by informal carers or by friends and family who provide care and support.

This was supported by the depth interviews. Almost all of the person-centred FSRAs were undertaken by in-house staff.

Table 4.9: Who carries out the person-centred FSRA?

Q47. Who carries out the Person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessments?

	Total
A welfare officer, carer (or similar) employed by my organisation	4
A housing officer (or similar) employed by my organisation	3
External care provider who delivers the care package to the resident	2
An external assessor who is 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body appointed by my organisation	1
Relatives or friends of the residents	-
Other (in-house H&S, team leader)	3
Base: All carrying out person-centred FSRAs	8

Two broad questions were raised with respect to the person-centred FSRA in the qualitative depth interviews: how should the risk assessments be resourced, especially in large organisations; and how should the organisation collate the

information if the assessments were (increasingly) undertaken by different people/agencies.

Resources: Undertaking risk assessments for a large number of residents may be daunting for some organisations, especially large, specialist organisations. The resource implications of funding any actions identified as a consequence of undertaking the assessment was raised as a further concern.

“If you have 7,000 tenants, even if you come up that 50 percent were vulnerable, you’re talking 3,500 people that will have to be assessed. And again, who’s doing the actions? If you actually look at their fire blankets, people who are smoking and burning their settee, who’s providing those? Large ash trays?... Because some of these people don’t actually have family. I shouldn’t go on too much about the person-centred assessments, because I’ll just come back to the same thing. It is going to be so difficult to implement.” - Depth interview, specialised provider

Different assessors: Some participants commented that they would face challenges collating risk assessments that had been completed by a number of different of different agencies/people; and that they had no mechanism for identifying when a risk assessment had been completed on one of their residents, for systematically obtaining copies of said assessments, or for inputting the information from assessments into their database. One participant further commented that it would be difficult to develop to a consistent assessment of risk if a large number of people had been involved. Some participants noted that, given they have the resources to carry out the assessments in-house, they will do so, as this enables them to bypass many of the logistical and quality issues highlighted.

“The challenge is having a consistent approach to assigning a risk level across staff and housing complexes. It’s important to try and get it as standard, because if you’ve got a housing officer in one complex puts somebody as a high level and then the next complex you would get exactly the same results and believe they’re a medium level, it sort of undermines what we’re actually trying to achieve.” - Depth interview, specialised provider

Person-centred FSRA template

Many of the survey respondents had looked at the person-centred FSRA template provided in the guidance. Two were using the template from the guidance to conduct risk assessments, and two others had adapted it to create templates that better suited their organisation. Others used a different approach, either their own templates or PEEPs.

The depth interviews confirmed that organisations are aware of the template, and are generally comfortable with this approach to collecting information about their residents'/clients' risks and requirements.

“Housing associations do risk assessments across so many issues. So, I think they're pretty confident about carrying out risk assessments and I think they're always really pleased to see a new template and to look at it like, 'does that enhance what we're already doing?' And they're very keen to introduce things to their own processes, like that. Certainly, from thinking about managing the COVID pandemic, there's been a great willingness to share good practices about risk assessments around infection, prevention and control. These networks really do assist organisations to reflect on their own practice generally, in terms of risk assessments and share good ideas and stuff. I'm sure it's the same with the fire risk assessments, fire safety.” - Depth interview, specialist providers

However, the depth interviews also indicated that the person-centred FSRA was not a straightforward issue. Some organisations currently collect similar information as part of care plans/personal support plans – detailed, active plans that are maintained by staff providing support and care for vulnerable residents/clients.

Table 4.10 Person-centred FSRA template

Q48. Have you read through the person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment template in the Fire Safety Guidance for Specialised Housing?

Read the template	Total
Yes	9
No	5
Unsure	1
Base: Specialised housing providers aware of guidance	15

Q49. Have you used the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings in any way within your organisation?

Used the template	
Yes - we have used the person-centred fire safety risk assessment template provided in the Guidance to conduct risk assessments	2
Yes - we have used the template as a basis to create a risk assessment approach for our organisation	1
Yes – the H&S team support local teams	1
No – we use a different template	2
No – but we do have PEEPs in place	1
No – we do not have PEEPs or use a person-centred fire safety risk assessment template	1
Unsure	1
Base: All who have read the person-centred FSRA template	9

Some others noted they had previously collected this information but no longer did so, because either staffing resources had been reduced or the profile of housing had changed – typically care homes, very sheltered housing and sheltered housing had been replaced with retirement housing.

A number of issues were raised about determining who to risk assess. Some participants commented that the guidance implied they should be risk assessing people at risk of fires in mainstream tenancies in their general needs stock should they become aware of increased risk. There was some ambiguity as to whether or not this was the intention of the guidance. One participant noted their familiarity and knowledge of residents has deteriorated substantially over the last year as a consequence of pandemic restrictions, and they doubted their capacity to identify which residents required a risk assessment. Some participants commented that they did not have any 'right' to undertake a full risk assessment: given they had no right of access to the residents' homes. This case was most often made with respect to residents in private sector accommodation, but equally applies to those social rented housing.

"I got the impression that it puts on landlords more of a requirement than should be there, if that's the right word. We wouldn't do this for a normal tenant in one of our houses unless we've identified that there was an issue with them. We teach our housing officers to look out for domestic fires when they're in a property - they look to see if there are cigarette burn marks on the carpet? Is there evidence that they've had minor fires in the kitchen? Things like that. And that's when we might involve this." - Depth interview, specialised provider

"Up until this point in our sheltered housing complexes they were more like part of the family. Now with what's happened with COVID and how we're having to step back our services... there is a possibility that a gap will widen in our knowledge." - Depth interview, specialised provider

"When it's in domestic premises that are in mainstream housing, somebody who, whilst they might have some degree of vulnerability, might live quite independently. To what extent do your responsibilities extend as opposed to a sheltered premise or an ex-sheltered premise and a supported living accommodation. It's trying to find the balance in terms of your priority there." - Depth interview, specialised provider

Most of the participants had personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), which they considered key to assisting the speedy safe evacuation of premises in the event of fire. It was suggested that reference to the PEEPs should be included more prominently in the guidance, and added to the checklist in Appendix 6⁴.

⁴ The Guidance does refer to PEEPs at para 48 (in relation to evacuation plans for supported housing and small care homes), at para 133 in relation to premises-based FSRA, and in para 148 which provides a methodology for assessing fire risk, and includes PEEPs as an information source.

Actions

As with the premises-based risk assessment, the depth interview participants were familiar with the approach to prioritisation of actions set out in the guidance. Some commented they were more used to a RAG classification, rather than the red, orange and yellow classification in the guidance, but presumed it would be the same in practice.

A small number of specific points were raised:

Consistency of interpretation when a number of different people are involved in conducting the assessment (see above)

Resourcing the actions, especially in cases when the funding required is substantial and/or the residents are in the private sector/are privately funded (see above)

The need for a multi-agency approach to address risks for very vulnerable residents

“If someone is in medium to high risk, then we would certainly quickly have a team approach, and we would look at how we mitigate that risk. But it’s not just an in-house discussion. It would involve anybody else as required, and that would allow us to have a plan of action to mitigate the risk as far as possible.” - Depth interview, specialised provider

“Over the last five years, we’ve visited over 1,000 vulnerable customers. We will go and assess a customer in their own home and provide everything from fire retardant bedding to metal ash trays, metal buckets with lids that would suppress fires and dropped cigarettes. Air fryers, replacing open chip pans which are still the cause of a lot of accidental fires.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

4.6 Assessment of the guidance for Specialised housing

Overall views on the guidance

Overall all, or almost all, of the survey respondents considered the guidance for Specialised housing and the templates for fire safety risk assessments to be valuable, with around a third considering these to be very valuable.

Survey respondents were also asked to rate key aspects of the guidance. Most rated each of these good (that is either quite or very good), with between 3 and 5 respondents out of 15 rating each of the aspects very good.

As the table below shows, the aspects of the guidance most often considered very good were clarity of the buildings and

organisations to which the guidance applies, comprehensive coverage, provision of tools to support the guidance and being user-friendly.

Table 4.11: Overall assessment of guidance for specialised housing

Q58. Thinking now about the fire safety guidance for specialised housing, how valuable would you say each of these aspects has been for your organisation?

	Premises-based FSRA Template	Person-centred FSRA Template	Guidance
Very valuable	5	5	5
Quite valuable	10	8	9
Not very valuable	-	1	-
Not at all valuable	-	-	-
Unsure	-	1	1
Base: All aware of the Specialised guidance	15		

Table 4.12: Assessment of aspects of the guidance

Q34. How would you rate the fire safety guidance for specialised housing on the following aspects?

	Very good	Total good
Clarity of the organisations and buildings to which the guidance applies	5	12
Provision of practical tools to improve fire safety (e.g. checklists, risk assessment templates)	4	13
Comprehensive coverage of relevant aspects of fire safety	4	12
Being user-friendly – the language and layout are easy to follow	4	12
Signposting to further sources of information and advice	3	13
Guidance on how to complete risk assessments	3	13
Advice on how to use/implement the guidance	3	11
Guidance on who should complete risk assessments	1	9
Base: All aware of the specialised guidance		15

These findings were supported by the depth interviews. Participants said they found the guidance helpful, clear and concise; and it usefully brings everything together in one place.

“I think it has helped bring a structure to what we do well outside our team’s influence. It will probably be really helpful when dealing with customers.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

“I thought it was quite accessible. The first half is excellent, and it does mirror a lot of our thoughts. The sections... I’d need to look, but the later sections (Ch5) which become very technical on the building environment and the safety in the building environment, they’re very accurate, and they’re very relevant, but I think they’d be a hard read for a lot of people.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

“I’d say pretty helpful, maybe eight out of ten, if I was giving it a score like that. All of it’s in one place. Because it’s also applicable to normal housing, it’s a useful guide. It’s not just for specialised housing. We don’t now have any shelter housing, we don’t call them that anymore, they’re all just normal tenancies, and the guidance was quite clear that it doesn’t matter what you call it, you still have responsibilities.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Just one survey respondent rated the guidance as very good on ‘who should complete the risk assessments’. This lack of enthusiasm was echoed in the depth interviews, indeed one participant commented that the guidance was unhelpful in this regard:

“The main thing is you’ve got numerous parties involved, and then you’re saying someone should take the lead. The practicality of that is that nobody will take the lead.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Barriers to using the guidance

Just 3 of the survey respondents who were using the guidance commented that they were not experiencing any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing it. Of the others, the main issues that people had encountered were the challenges of implementing the guidance while responding to the pandemic, finding staff resources to undertake the person-centred risk assessments, and issues around authority/legitimacy of carrying out person-centred risk assessments for people living in low dependency housing.

Table 4.13: Barriers to using the guidance for specialised housing

Q53. Have you experienced any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing the fire safety guidance for specialised housing? Please select all that apply?

	Mentions
Organisational focus has been on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	6
Finding the staff resources to undertake the person-centred risk assessments	5
For low dependency housing: do not have the authority to enter people homes to conduct the risk assessments/ unclear who is responsible for conducting the risk assessments	5
Do not have the authority to purchase items/make changes to people homes in response to the risk assessments	2
Finding time to put the guidance into practice	2
Do not have the financial resources to implement actions that might be identified from the risk assessments	2
The guidance is not clear or easy to follow	1
Senior management don't see person-centred fire-risk assessment as a priority at the current time – they are just good practice	1
Finding time to read it	-
Not experienced any barriers or problems	3
Base: All using the specialised housing guidance	11

The depth interview participants expanded on these issues. Some commented that the timing of the launch, just a few weeks before the pandemic restrictions were introduced, meant that they were unable to put in place new/revised systems in response to the guidance. This especially impacted on their capacity to introduce systems to undertake the person-centred FSRAs.

“We’ve already started with the premises fire risk assessments, but because of Covid, that type of work’s [person-centred risk assessments] had to be suspended.”
- Depth interview, Specialised provider

Funding of any actions within the specialised sector has the potential to be complex. People who are responsible for funding their own care may not be able to/wish to pay for actions themselves. For vulnerable residents, eligible for financial support, first identifying the appropriate budget, then gaining approval may be fraught with difficulties.

“I think it’s about looking at responsibilities in terms of HSCPs, landlord/care providers, and at individuals themselves. Where is it fair to apportion that financial responsibility? What do you do when there isn’t that agreement between parties? Or an HSCP perhaps thinks that their contract with a care provider covers

adaptations to some extent? Or a care provider feels that their landlord, in a situation, is leaving the care provider to have to pick up those costs? ... There might be scope for saying a bit more about where the responsibility for financing some of these things should lie.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

As noted above, a number of social housing providers have shifted away from providing care homes and very/sheltered housing over recent years, and towards housing such as retirement housing, which accommodates less vulnerable tenants. As a consequence, they may no longer routinely produce care plans/housing support plans for residents. Therefore, they may not know which tenants require a person-centred FSRA. They may also lack the staff resources to conduct the risk assessments in-house.

“The housing association changed the terminology of its buildings about seven years ago. So we don’t actually provide sheltered housing, we actually provide retirement housing. We’re deregistered by the care inspectorate, so we don’t actually do any housing support plans, which will be problematic doing the person-centred fire risk assessment approach.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

One association commented that there have been government reductions in finance for welfare officers, which means that associations are no longer resourced to produce individual care plans for each tenant, including an assessment of their fire safety risk. Their welfare officers have been replaced by staff who are effectively providing a janitorial role. They don’t have time to undertake the risk assessment, nor are they well placed to undertake one, as they don’t have the ‘authority’ or a reason to enter the resident’s home.

“When we asked who should be undertaking the risk assessment it was suggested that carers or district nurses could do it as part of their role. Which is just not feasible, they don’t have time; it’s not something they would think of to do.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

4.7 Improvements to the guidance

Six of the survey respondents said they thought the Scottish Government could provide greater support or guidance around the specialised housing guidance. Suggested actions included more training and workshops, provision of a training template so that organisations have a clearer idea of what is required, and external audit of the completed template to provide reassurance to organisations that they are following good practice.

Table 4.14: Additional support

Q54. Is there anything the Scottish Government could do to support you implement the guidance?

	Yes
Specialised housing guidance	6
Premises-based FSRA	4
Person-centred FSRA	8
Base: All aware of Specialised guidance	17

Four survey respondents said they thought the Scottish Government could provide greater support or guidance on the premises-based FSRA. One organisation commented that a training programme to support the implementation of this guidance would be helpful. Staff would be especially motivated to participate if such a programme were accredited and/or recognised for personal development. It was also suggested external funding be made available to support this training.

Eight survey respondents said they thought the Scottish Government could provide greater support or guidance on the person-centred FSRA. Suggestions for further support included:

Clear guidance on who is responsible for completing the templates (5 mentions), with respondents requesting greater clarity on the role of social work teams, and how they should be dealing with vulnerable people who do not have care/support, who live in owner occupied housing, etc. One respondent commented: *“It needs to be really clear who should be responsible for doing them (person-centred FSRAs). Saying that several people/organisations may have responsibility and then ask them to work together to complete the template or for one of them to take the lead, just will not happen.”* - Survey respondent, Specialised housing
Greater clarity on what is required (2 mentions) for example by way of FAQs or a sample completed template

Survey respondents made a small number of suggestions for improving the guidance.

One respondent suggested that the premises-based FSRA become mandatory. “I would like this to be mandatory as this removes the option to comply or not. Formal reporting or validation of the templates would provide reassurance to Boards and tenants alike.” – Survey respondent (This issue is discussed in more detail in section 5 below)

One respondent suggested that there could be more detail on the types of premises to which the guidance applied.

One respondent suggested there could be clearer definitions throughout the guidance.

“... e.g. better reference on understanding how individuals with dementia/ autism/ cognitive problems can be affected and be at greater risk; and is a care home defined as small because of the number of occupants or physical size of the property.” – Survey respondent⁵

One asked for further guidance on how to complete the person-centred risk assessments.

The depth interview respondents reflected these findings. Participants found the guidance helpful, and did not think substantive changes were required. Where

⁵ The Guidance says that a small care home is considered to be: a premises similar to supported housing in which a “care home service” is provided, as defined by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 in which only a small number of residents are accommodated (typically no more than 6).

improvements were suggested, they related to the person-centred risk assessment, which many of the participants did anticipate presenting some challenges.

“I don’t think there’s any need for improvement in there. The templates are pretty well structured, and the relevant information that you need to put in ... I think everything’s relevant. I wouldn’t see any further need for improvement in there.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

General improvements

Length: Most thought the guidance for specialised housing was about the right length, and certainly none could think of anything that could be lost from the document. Participants had typically read through it to get a feel for the contents, and expected in future they would use it as a reference document. However, one respondent commented that the length of guidance was “*quite daunting*”, although the content was all relevant and useful. They suggested that it could perhaps be broken down into clearer sections, with greater use made of hyperlinks in the templates, to guide users to the relevant section of the guidance.

Training: Training for staff and for residents/carers, so everyone understands what the guidance is for, and how the actions affect them.

“Quite a lot of our residential managers that I deal with think that fire safety doesn’t really belong to them, while in actual fact, fire safety does belong to them. So, they don’t know that they’re actually in charge of that side. And, I think, some sort of training, when these documents come out, should be included for residential managers, to make them aware of changes.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Integrating the allocations process: One respondent commented that it may be worth starting the person-centred FSRA during the housing application stage, with a view to increasing the suitability of the housing allocation from a fire safety perspective.

Guidance for person-centred risk assessment

The main suggestion made by participants was to improve the clarity of the guidance, in terms of who is responsible for conducting them, the scope of the assessment and the method used for the assessment. More detail on each of these potential areas of improvement is provided below.

Responsibility: Greater clarity is required around who is responsible for undertaking the assessments, and who is then responsible for implementing/funding any resulting actions. The HSEU roundtable report notes this was one of the main issues of discussion, and requests a mechanism for clarifying who is responsible for carrying out the assessment to remove the ambiguity that currently exists. It also suggests that a mechanism for identifying lead funding and implementation agencies should also be included, to ensure actions are progressed.

The HSEU further suggests that it may be helpful to appoint an ‘independent neutral voice’ to provide the final decision in cases where different agencies have

conflicting views of risk priorities. They suggest that the SFRS may be the appropriate organisation to take on this role.

Scope: Some respondents were looking for more clarity on who the guidance applies to. For example, they asked if the person-centred FRSA's were aimed at all/some people within specialised housing, at people receiving care in general needs housing, at other vulnerable people living in general needs housing?

“You could interpret it that everybody that’s receiving care in general needs housing should have a personalised or property fire risk assessment, I personally think it's a bit vague.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

“For example we have a customer with addiction issues within our high rise block who just within the last week or two has set off smoke alarms 3 times. They’re not falling within specialised housing, so we haven’t done a person-centred fire safety risk assessment with that person, however it’s quite clear that that’s the sort of person that probably needs that level of risk assessment.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

Method: Premises-based risk assessments for each provider tend to be undertaken by a small number of (or even a single) accredited or properly qualified assessors. Conversely, the person-centred risk assessments are likely to be undertaken by several people for each provider. In some cases these staff – housing managers, welfare officers, residential managers and supervisors, etc. – may be trained in the organisation’s risk assessment approach and template. In other cases, a number of organisations may be involved in the risk assessment, and there may be several different variations of the template in use. Participants suggested that given this, clearer direction on the completion of the template was required, to provide consistency of completion, and to standardise the quality of the risk assessment.

“We have a health and safety section, and we’ve got a health and safety officer. She will liaise with support staff and support managers to work through fire risk assessments, fire evacuation plans, and personal emergency evacuation plans ... But what we cannot really do is ask other the agencies providing support to someone in our properties what they’re doing about fire safety. They may ask us for our generic risk assessment for the building, which they will incorporate into their risk assessments. But they do not provide us with that, and it’s not really practical for us to ask, because we would need to ask for updates every change that occurred.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

The HSEU report includes a series of recommendations designed to support practitioners deliver high quality person-centred risk assessments. These include:
Fire safety training to cover the person-centred risk assessment
Package of best practice templates, set out on a step by step basis for common scenarios, such as a resident with an oxygen tank, or a high level of emollient creams being stored on the premises. This could include a checklist of tasks where appropriate.

Additional information on the level and content of monitoring data required, together with clarity on who is responsible for maintaining these records.

Specific issues

Evacuation policies: Some participants, including those from specialist organisations, commented that the term 'stay put' may be inappropriate for people with cognitive difficulties. They tend to use much clearer, and less dogmatic terminology, which will not cause problems should the person need to leave their property.

"Stay put doesn't work for people with cognitive difficulties who are less able to use their judgement - to them it may reinforce they should stay put in bed when in fact the building is on fire and they should be leaving." - Depth interview, Specialised provider

The HSEU report also raised the issue of evacuation policies. It was appreciated that the document provides guidance on how evacuation strategies should be responsive to the structure of the premises. Roundtable delegates stressed that the capacity of residents must also be taken into account, noting that residents may have fluctuating ability, depending on support, and/or may have low levels of mobility. It was suggested that this area would benefit from some best practice around frequently found scenarios, or there may be a need for specific evacuation planning training or advice.

Appendix A provides a note of additional specific issues raised.

5. Research findings: Existing specialised housing and similar premises – Unpaid carers

As noted in Section 4, the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing and Similar Premises, while primarily for those who are responsible for specialised housing and similar premises, may also be useful for people living in general needs housing who receive a “care at home” service and for anyone involved with their care and well-being. It also contains a hyperlink to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s “Carers’ Guide”, which provides succinct advice in an easy to read form for vulnerable people and their families and carers.

This chapter summarises the views of the unpaid carers interviewed for the research, considering level of awareness, views on the usefulness of the fire safety guidance; and any gaps or weaknesses in it and potential areas for improvement. Participants were given a copy of the chapter on the person-centred risk assessment and the related appendices prior to the interview.

Appendix B contains a set of case studies drawn from the interviews that reflect the range of views and experience of the unpaid carers interviewed.

Chapter 5: Key points

The unpaid carer participants were all unaware of the guidance prior to taking part in the research.

On reading the extract provided (person-centred FSRA and related annexes) all thought it extremely interesting and relevant to their situation.

Participants considered the document very professional and highly informative. However, they generally found it too long, technical and not aimed at the layperson.

All found the template fairly easy to understand, and felt that completing it with (or for) their relative would be a worthwhile exercise.

None of the carers interviewed had been aware of the fire safety guidance for person-centred FSRA before being contacted for the interview.

All found the guidance extremely interesting and informative. Some mentioned that, while they were already alert to potential fire risks, the guidance had either reminded them to check these more thoroughly and/or had identified other risks that they should consider. Such additional issues included risks from emollient creams and the need for evacuation plans.

“Right, what does happen in the event of a fire? How is my dad getting out of this building? I hadn’t really thought of it before, I hadn’t thought of it really until I read this [the guidance] yesterday. That’s obviously something I’m going to take up with them [sheltered housing staff]” – Depth interview, Unpaid carer

However, it would be fair to say, the unpaid carers impressions of the guidance were that it was a document intended for professionals not laypeople. This was a reasonable conclusion, as the guidance is primarily intended for housing and care providers.

“This is aimed more at professionals: you had to get through quite a few pages of text before it became clear that this also included me. If you’re not an intuitive reader then you’d be turned off by it I would say. If you’re just a home carer, as opposed to a paid professional.” – Depth interview, Unpaid carer

That said, most felt they would be able to undertake the risk assessment for the person they care for: while the guidance document was a little wordy, the template itself was straightforward and made sense. They tended to feel they would be able to work through most of the sections fairly quickly, as most of the risk factors would not apply. But in some cases, these sections would be helpful in working out strategies for dealing with smoking indoors, overloaded adaptors, electric blankets, and emollient creams.

Most were bemused by the concept of developing an overall risk assessment or producing an action plan. Once the assessment had been completed, they would typically make a list of what they needed to do, and ‘just do it’. One carer thought an action plan would be helpful, as it would provide a focus for all the family to work around in supporting their relative.

“Well that table couldn’t be any simpler, could it? So, in that respect it’s very good and it gives me the opportunity to engage other family members. Put a score in a box, so that you’re sharing the burden of addressing the risk.” - Depth interview, Unpaid carer

“I think that would be quite difficult [to assign a score] because someone’s idea of it being a high risk is maybe totally different to someone else’s idea of it being a high risk. If I was to say to my gran that is a really high risk, she would say oh no, I’m fine, it’s not a risk.” - Depth interview, Unpaid carer

Some did raise the issue of who should bear the responsibility of undertaking the assessment for people who do not have a carer. One carer, whose father lives in

sheltered housing, was concerned that his father is at risk from fire in neighbouring properties.

“Well, myself, but I think it must also be aimed at people that take responsibility for running these types of sheltered housing, or the council. I think everyone’s got to a play a part, because there’s no use in my dad’s house being safe if the person next door is going to set the whole place alight and my dad’s not going to get out of the place.” – Depth interview, Unpaid carer

Case studies from the Unpaid carer interviews are contained in Appendix B

6. Research findings: Legislative requirement

This chapter considers moving towards a mandatory approach to aspects of fire safety risk assessment.

Chapter 6: Key points

Almost all research participants supported further consideration of a move towards making it a legal requirement to carry out premises-based fire safety risk assessments in common areas.

Some concerns were raised around the cost of carrying out the FSRAs, enforcement of actions, and the cost of compliance.

In England and Wales a duty holder is legally required to carry out a premises-based fire safety risk assessment of communal areas in domestic premises, such as common stairs and passageways. New legislation is expected to clarify that flat front doors, building structure and external walls should form part of this. Scotland has different fire safety and housing legislation. Although considered good practice, there is no legal requirement to undertake a fire safety risk assessment at present. Occupiers have a legal duty to keep common areas clear of obstructions and combustible items. Common areas and any firefighting facilities provided must be maintained in an “efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair”.

Survey respondents were asked whether Scotland should also make it a legal requirement to carry out a fire safety risk assessment and act on its findings. Almost all (19) were in favour of this approach. None of those opposed were from high rise housing.

Supportive comments were around the importance and value of prioritising fire safety; requiring housing providers to adopt high standards of fire safety within their buildings; and empowering landlords/factors to take action in response to risk assessments.

Table 5.1: Legislative requirement

Q64 Do you think it should be a legal requirement in Scotland to carry out a premises-based fire safety risk assessment in domestic premises and to act on its findings, as is the case in England and Wales?

	Total
Strongly in favour	11
Somewhat in favour	8
Neutral	2
Somewhat opposed	2
Don't know	1
Base: All (high rise and specialised)	24

One respondent noted: “As a factor we advise owners to keep landings, stairs and communal areas clear as part of fire prevention/safety, however, owners do not always heed our requests. We also advise that front doors (apartment doors) must

remain fire doors and can only be changed to fire safety standard, again owners do not always heed our requests.” – Survey respondent, Specialised housing

Where there were concerns about moving to a mandatory approach, these related to the cost of carrying out the FSRAs, enforcement of actions (especially where the properties in question were in the private sector), and the cost of compliance (again especially where the properties were in the private sector and even more so if the owner was an elderly and/or vulnerable owner).

“It is unclear in our organisation whose responsibility this would become. We have private owners in some of our blocks; it may be that some of the front doors to these properties are non-compliant and the private owner does not have the resources to install a new compliant door - who instructs this; who pays for it?” – Survey respondent, Specialised housing

Generally participants were supportive of retaining the guidance approach for managing social rented stock. There was a view that organisations have structures and systems in place to manage their stock. Further, there were some concerns around officers potentially being subject to legal action for non-compliance outwith their control – for example, failures on the part of their employers; actions (or lack thereof) of tenants; and/or risk assessment actions not being adopted through lack of resources.

“I’m in two minds about this. The English system has a bit more bite. But the Scottish prevent and educate system works well – we have a very good relationship with our colleagues in the Fire and Rescue Service. We email them every couple of days just now so they know where the Covid and suspected Covid cases are. They asked us to do that. We work closely with them. If anything goes wrong here, we would learn the lessons and move on. In England, I could go to prison. I don’t like the idea that I could go to prison.” – Depth interview, high rise

One respondent commented that there is now a great deal of legislation to ensure that fire safety measures are included within buildings, for example, dry risers across the social rented sector, necessary fire equipment, smoke alarms in communal areas, and now smoke alarms within the apartments as well. However, he was of the opinion that building managers’ powers to respond, should owners fail to comply, were limited.

There was fairly widespread support from participants for measures that would give participants greater authority in their dealings with residents around keeping common areas clear, although not all felt that legislation was the answer.

“When it comes to walkways, fire equipment and maintenance, I think it should be law. If you’ve got a communal area and it’s a fire route, it should be kept clear at all times. No ifs or buts. If you get the police, they can say you’ve had a notice on that for three weeks now and you’ve still not moved it. It’s a fire risk. Therefore you’re getting a fine and it’s getting taken away or something like that. Because people don’t care. You can go to their door and say ‘you need to move that’. And they’ll say

‘what are you going to do about it?’. But as factors we can’t do anything.” – Depth interview, high rise

One participant commented, unprompted, that it should be a requirement that relevant staff, such as building managers, should have to demonstrate, as a requirement of their registration, that they are up-to-date with relevant legislation and Scottish Government guidance.

“So the industry needs to be more aware of its existence and like I say in Scotland we’re regulated so it should be mandatory to be aware of something like that, the bare minimum that we expect our industry to maintain.” - Depth interview, high rise

Controlling mobility scooters was a fraught issue in specialised housing. For some participants, the guidance was helpful in that provided back-up in their discussions with residents – they felt they had clear evidence that it was a requirement the scooters should not be stored or charged in common areas. However, for those encountering resistance from residents, they did not feel the guidance goes far enough, and considered a mandatory approach would be more appropriate.

“I do think for things like waste and storing things in communal areas we would be better with legislation where we’ve got enforcement where we can make and do ourselves. At the moment we can’t. If somebody decides to charge his mobility scooter in the corridors we can’t stop them doing it and we can’t remove it without going into a long process... sometimes having to take it to court.” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

One participant suggested that the Housing Regulator might consider including an indicator in the Annual Return on the Charter (the ARC) to audit social housing landlords’ performance on undertaking fire safety risk assessments.

“If you give this leeway of best practice, some providers might just say that they’re not doing it as it’s just best practice. Now whether in the future the Housing Regulator on the ARC return starts asking for a percentage of premises fire risk assessments and for person-centred risk assessments?” - Depth interview, Specialised provider

One participant noted that this approach is already best practice within their organisation, with two fire safety KPIs in the association’s strategic KPIs: reducing the number of domestic fires (by a specified percentage) and ensuring that every high rise building and all specialised housing are covered by an up-to-date fire safety risk assessment.

7. Conclusions

High rise buildings and Specialised housing: General

Overall, research participants were very welcoming of the both sets of guidance. They considered it helpful, clear and user-friendly; and found the supporting materials comprehensive and extremely useful.

Some had been using English guidance with respect to fire safety in high rise buildings, and welcomed the brevity and clarity of the Scottish document; some had been using the draft guidance in anticipation, and were grateful for formal publication. While the high rise guidance does not, in itself, provide added powers, it is felt to provide clear guidance on good practice, and is consequently a very valuable reference resource.

Suggestions for change that are made across both sets of guidance, and especially those relating to premises-based risk assessments, tend to be minor and designed to clarify and improve rather than correct.

High rise buildings and Specialised housing: Timing

The guidance documents were published at the turn of the year 2019/2020, around three months before the national pandemic restrictions were imposed. These restrictions had significant implications for the implementation for some parts of the guidance.

Premises-based fire safety risk assessments for both high-rise and specialised housing draw on a core of trained, competent staff to undertake the inspections, working with housing and property managers to ensure actions are followed through. Most organisations appear to have fairly well established processes for undertaking these risk assessments, while others were prompted by the launch of the guidance to set them up. There were some interruptions as a result of the Covid restrictions, initially as organisations adapted to new working arrangements and responded to new priorities, and there were some examples of fire-safety work being wrongly classed as non-essential work. However, on the whole, fire safety risk assessment and, especially management of actions, has continued over the course of the last year.

Person-centred fire safety risk assessment (part of the specialised housing guidance) tended to be have been incorporated into care planning. As the profile of social housing specialised housing stock has shifted to lower dependency housing (for example away from care homes and very sheltered housing, and towards retirement housing), the need for/resourcing for such activities is reduced. Many organisations were therefore looking to introduce person-centred risk assessments afresh, without an existing system to continue or adapt. Work had often started to build teams to undertake the risk assessments, when the Covid restrictions hit, and other priorities took over. These organisations are typically only starting now to think again about progressing person-centred risk assessments.

High rise buildings and Specialised housing: Awareness

Almost all those responding to the online survey and depth interviews were aware of the relevant guidance (high rise and/or specialised housing). However, it is important to bear in mind the response to the survey element of the research was disappointing, despite support from the key umbrella organisations working with social housing and care providers. We certainly know that one of the high rise property managers who participated in the research, had not been aware of the guidance before our call; and we were also informed that umbrella groups have been generally struggling to engage care providers.

More work may be required to further improve awareness of both sets of guidance across the industry, both within the social housing sector, and with partners in private housing management (factors/property managers), health and care.

Recommendation: To further improve awareness and use, promote the guidance across social housing, housing management, and care and health sectors, drawing on opportunities to work with/through key partners, and to take part in conferences/seminars.

High rise housing: barriers to carrying out the FSRA

A number of barriers were identified to conducting the risk assessments in high rise properties: the cost of conducting the risk assessments, the cost of carrying out the actions and compliance from owner/private landlords in private/mixed tenure blocks.

The guidance provides a useful resource for social landlords, assisting in specifying actions required and the timeframe for implementation; and provides the policy framework where required for budget/investment proposals to senior management. It also provides a resource and back-up for discussions with owners and landlords in private/mixed tenure blocks who may be reluctant to comply with actions (for example to get agreement from owners to remove items from common areas or to fund actions). However, some research participants were concerned that some grey areas remain, especially around implementing actions when owners refuse, and progressing investment in common areas when there are sufficient missing/non-compliant owners that a majority approval for works cannot be secured.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to progress planned work designed to improve fire safety in common areas. Scottish Government to consider if new fire safety legislation for common areas is required. Include further guidance on managing works on common areas in mixed tenure/private sector blocks within the document.

Specialised housing: barriers to carrying out the premises based FSRA

A number of barriers were identified to conducting the premises-based risk assessments in specialised housing, which were largely similar to those identified for high rise domestic properties. The key barriers, therefore, were the cost of conducting the risk assessments on what could be a large number of premises, the cost of carrying out the actions and securing compliance from owners in private/mixed tenure blocks.

As was the case for high rise properties, the guidance provides a useful resource for landlords. It also provides resource and back-up for discussions with owners and landlords in private/mixed tenure blocks who may be reluctant to comply with actions (for example to get agreement from owners to remove items such as mobility scooters from common areas, or to fund actions).

Recommendation: As above, Scottish Government to progress work on improving fire safety in common areas in mixed/private sector blocks. Include further guidance on managing works on common areas in mixed tenure/private sector blocks within the document

Specialised housing: Person-centred risk assessment

A person-centered fire safety risk assessment, for high risk individuals is critically important. However, a number of key features are not included which could improve the effectiveness of the risk assessment in practice.

It identifies who may be able to carry out person-centred risk assessments but does not specify who is responsible for carrying out the assessment. This reflects the flexibility required to respond the variety of housing/care provision models.

However, it also means that in some cases, no-one will be identified as being responsible.

It does not identify who is responsible for ensuring the consequent actions are implemented and monitored, but does advise that the housing provider take the lead role.

There is no process for reporting/collating completed risk assessments at the premises/organisation level, so that organisations are aware of any relevant risks, and can action as appropriate

The guidance is designed for professionals; a more concise and easy to read version would be useful for unpaid carers⁶.

Recommendation: Consider a review of the person-centred fire safety risk assessment materials, including providing information on who could be responsible (for assessment/actions/monitoring), good practice on determining responsibilities, and consideration of whether arrangements for imposing/arbitrating responsibility are required.

⁶ The SFRS produce a carer's guide to fire safety in the home, which is short (12 pages) and easy to read. [Carers Guide Fire Safety leaflet.pdf \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/files/Carers_Guide_Fire_Safety_leaflet.pdf). This is referenced in the guidance for specialised housing (para 40).

Specialised housing: training and resources:

Several organisations raised concerns about managing the quality and consistency of approach when person-centred risk assessments are being undertaken by a variety of organisations and people. Further guidance and support to complete the templates would go a considerable way to addressing some of these concerns. In particular, inclusion of some worked examples based on frequently encountered scenarios would be very useful. This would show people how to complete the template, the types of issues to look out for, the types of actions that can be taken, and how risks are assessed.

Recommendation: Consider developing a pack of key worked example templates

Unpaid carers:

Unpaid carers also welcomed the guidance, although they recognised it was aimed at professionals rather than lay-people. They found the content relevant and informative, if rather inaccessible; and the template extremely useful.

Appendix A: Additional detailed issues raised: Guidance for specialised housing

As noted at the end of section 4.7, specialised housing research participants raised a small number of detailed comments in relation to the guidance for existing specialised housing and similar properties, where participants considered the guidance was not sufficiently clear. These are noted below.

Definitions:

Small care home: Clearer definition of a smaller care home and how this relates to the 2014 Care Homes Guidance. As noted in section 4.7, the Guidance does provide a description of small care homes. Nonetheless, there did appear to be some confusion as to the distinction between small care homes and care homes.

Others: A definition was also requested for retirement housing.

Other issues:

Para 26: Clarity sought on what the following sentence means: “Schedule gas safety checks and inspections of electrical installations can provide opportunities”

Para 57: Include evidence of drug use, as well as evidence of alcohol misuse, as indicator that person could be at risk of having a fire in their home

Para 59: Include nightwear, as well as bedding, sheets, pillowcases, etc.⁷.
Bean bags should be included as a potential fire risk (polystyrene pellets)

Para 67: Also should mention 'daisy chaining', i.e. plugging an extension board into an existing extension board

Para 62: Add note to state that fire retardant upholstery only works if there are no rips in it. Mention checking for rips/tears.

Paras 71 and 72: Housekeeping to extend outside a building. Items dumped outside may be prone to vandalism.

Para 82: Unclear whether last para is referring to the alarm system remote monitoring or water systems.

Para 97: View that the number of staff available to help evacuate is not always dictated by the fire risk assessment. It may be dictated by the funding received from the local authorities.

⁷ It is noted that the guidance does mention clothing at para 59, but does not mention nightclothes specifically.

Action plans p104/114: Clarity on who is responsible for actions identified: need to clearly link the action and person responsible to the issue identified in the initial check list.

Checklist in Appendix 6 (Matrix of Responsibilities) should also include personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)

Appendix B: Case Studies - Unpaid Carers

This appendix contains three case studies of unpaid carers. These reflect the range of experiences from across the interviews.

ANNA

Anna is student who helps to look after her gran, keeping her company, tidying up and helping with shopping. Her gran lives independently in sheltered housing, has early onset dementia, and is a hoarder.

Current approach: Anna has not looked for any information on fire risks and the family have not assessed her gran's fire risks. However, they are aware of a number of specific issues they have taken action about. For example, she has been careless with her cooker in the past. So they have bought a microwave and keep her stocked up with microwave meals that she can cook safely.

First impressions: Long, aimed professionals, but the information it contains is relevant to her as a carer and to her gran's situation.

I feel when they are trying to get information out to the public, they give you short sharp bursts of information rather than long, loads of pages.

The guidance and template: The guidance is very wordy but the template is easier to follow. All the risks she'd associate with her gran were covered.

Assessing risk: Not confident assessing the overall level of risk: there is no formula (for example, like you might find in quizzes) to calculate overall risk, to reach an objective measure.

I think that would be quite difficult because someone's idea of it being a high risk is maybe totally different to someone else's idea of it being a high risk. If I was to say to my gran that is a really high risk, she would say oh no, I'm fine, it's not a risk.

Actions: Doesn't think she will use the template to draw up an 'action plan', but would use it to identify what needs done. Barriers to implementing the actions included the potential cost of any repairs required. Would not feel confident dealing with electrical issues herself.

Changes:

- A more concise version aimed at non-professionals
- Would be really helpful to have information on who to contact to assist with different actions.

[Before I read the guidance] I didn't know who to contact if something needed changing, for example the fire alarm, I still don't know. I think it should have something like that in it, such as this is what you would need to do.

JAMES

James runs a library service and has been his mum's carer for five years, visiting every day to check on her, cook for her, etc. His mum lives independently, has diabetes, reduced mobility, and some cognitive decline.

Current approach: Has not looked for any information on fire risks, but has previously had advice from the fire service on smoke alarms. First port of call would be the internet and the fire service. Has not carried out a risk assessment, but is aware that his mum has a few risky behaviors: she smokes in the house, is inclined to overload adaptors and uses an electric blanket. He is trying to reduce these risks.

I've definitely ticked her off about overloading the adapters. I always encourage her to smoke less and to smoke by the window, or at the back door rather than in the living room.... Her house is a new build, so it has a good smoke detection system which does give some peace of mind.

First impressions: Comprehensive and coherent. It seems aimed at professionals; you have to get through quite a few pages before you realise it is also relevant to unpaid carers.

It's not something that you would expect the average person to digest because it's a bit dull, isn't it? Risk assessments don't make for great reading... I'm not saying it's not a good document, it's actually very good. It's very detailed and it does trigger a lot of points that you might not have considered or at least remind you of the dangers that are there.

The guidance and template: The guidance is written clearly, but it is very long. The template is straightforward. He would feel confident working through the template, he's used similar assessments at work.

Assessing risk: The risk assessment is also straightforward and intuitive. Not concerned that the overall risk assessment is subjective.

You might have to go away and research and then come back. You might have to go and speak to the person or the patient or whoever, in my case it's my mother obviously, and try and find out what her habits are. There might be a bit of work to do before you come to a conclusion about how much risk is present in the environment.

Actions: The table is simple, and using it means that all the family members can be engaged in implementing the actions so you are sharing the burden of dealing with the risks.

Changes:

- A concise, user-friendly, version, for non-professionals, with graphics

An element of graphic design would be important so that people were not turned off by an excess amount of text... But you're going to want to make it look reasonably formal, for your benefit and from the government. It's something you have to take seriously.

KIRSTY

Kirsty is a nurse in the NHS, who cares for her mum. Her mum lives independently in her own home, she has COPD and early cognitive changes.

Current approach: Not looked for any information or advice on fire safety, but assumes she would go to the internet. Her mum is obsessive about switching things off at night and doesn't smoke. She does very little cooking, as Kirsty makes all her meals for her. Had never thought about fire prevention in the home before.

First impressions: Aimed mainly at professionals. Refers to shared housing a lot, so doesn't seem immediately applicable to her mum who lives in her own home. However, the sections on fire protection in particular could be relevant, and she will discuss with her mum.

The guidance and template: Easy to follow. Critically, she learned some things hadn't been aware of – in particular that emollient cream, which her mum uses, can be a fire risk.

If someone hadn't thought about fire safety it's good you can go right through everything to tick it off. So yeah, I think it'll definitely be helpful especially for people in their own home who don't have legislations, guidelines and all that to follow normally.

Actions: Likes the action plan approach, and would certainly make a note of all the things that need to change as a result of doing the risk assessment. Confident identifying risks and taking action on them.

Well, she did have candles before. We did actually have a bit of a confrontation about it because we weren't happy with her having candles in case she went to bed and forgot about them. But we've managed to reach a compromise... we've got her to plug-in oil burners, so they're electric and on a timer.

Changes:

- Information on who to go to for support

I suppose a wee bit more information to tell you who to go to, if you're needing help, who to ask about more support. I suppose especially for people that are carers in their own home. You don't have the back-up that companies or small nursing homes, or whatever, would have.

Appendix C: Depth interview topic guides

Topic Guide: High Rise housing providers

**Discussion Guide
Scottish Government
Assessment of the
Guidance for High Domestic Rise Buildings
18.1.21 - Final**

Introduction

- Welcome to the session
- Introduction by moderator and explanation of Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Describe background to research: The Scottish Government issued Guidance on Fire Safety in High Rise Domestic Buildings just over a year ago (December 2019). The production of the guidance was a recommendation from the Ministerial Working Group which was set up in response to the Grenfell tragedy in 2017. The overarching aim of this research is to get your views on the guidance, understand how the guidance is being used on the ground, the impact it has had and whether there are any obstacles to its implementation. It would also be helpful to determine if improvements need to be made to the guidance.
- Zoom: The discussion will be recorded – so I don't have to take notes. It will only be used for the purposes of this research project. Check permissions for this.
- Confidential – nothing you say will be attributed to you or your organisation.
- Reiterate GDPR rules if required: Withdraw at any time, only share what you are comfortable with

Background warm up

- Description of organisation
 - Tenure of stock (private, local authority, housing association, mixed - specify)
 - Number of and dwellings in management
 - Type of dwellings in management – maisonettes, self-contained, HMOs...
- Respondent
 - Job title
 - Role
 - Responsibility for building management and fire safety
- How is fire safety managed within the organisation?
 - Overseen by committee/board
 - Dedicated team member
 - Part of team member's role – probe on how much of the role
 - Tenant involvement/responsibility

Review of the Guidance

Awareness

- When did you become aware of the Practical Guidance for Fire Safety in High Rise Domestic Buildings?
- How did you become aware of the Fire Safety Guidance?
- Initial impressions? *Spontaneous then prompt on*
 - the content, coverage, accessibility, distribution/promotion

Use

- Are you using the Guidance – if not what do you use?
- What were you using before the single source of Guidance was published?
- Talk me through how are you using the Fire Safety Guidance in your organisation?
- *Prompt and explore each of:*
 - Dissemination within the organisation
 - How are you ensuring the right people are made aware of the guidance?
 - Review and updating policies and procedures
 - Responsibility/support
 - Priorities
 - Which policies and procedures?
 - Engaging with tenants and residents on fire safety
 - Undertaking risk assessments and acting on findings
 - Responsibility/support
 - Priorities
 - Which policies and procedures?
 - Developing action plans
 - Implementing action plans

The Fire Safety Risk Assessment

Let's focus on the Fire Safety Risk Assessment section of the Guidance now (appendix 2).

- Before we set up our discussion today, were you aware of the Fire Safety Risk Assessment template within the guidance? [CHECK – this may have answered above]
- Did you carry out fire safety risk assessments prior to the guidance being published?
- Has the guidance prompted you to review your existing risk assessments?
- If you did not carry out assessments previously, has the Guidance prompted you to do so now?
- If you had done a fire safety risk assessment before, how did you go about it?
 - Undertaken the assessment yourself
 - Worked with a fellow team member
 - Allocated a member of your team to undertake an assessment
 - Commissioned an external assessor to undertake an assessment
 - If you used an external assessor, did you use one who is 3rd party certificated or registered with a professional body?

Overall views on the Fire Risk Assessment template

- Overall, how helpful would you say the Fire Safety Risk Assessment template is?
- Are there any aspects of the Risk Assessment as a whole that you feel could be improved?
- Overall, how robust do you feel the approach to Fire Safety Risk Assessment set out within the Guidance is? Why do you say that?

Impact of the Guidance

- Overall, how helpful would you say the Fire Safety Guidance is?
- Is there anything in the guidance that is unhelpful?
- Have you experienced any barriers to using the guidance and/or implementing changes based on it?
- What sort of impact has the guidance had on the management of fire safety more generally for your organisation?
- Has the guidance helped you to develop a fire safety policy if you didn't already have one in place?
- Have you used the guidance to resolve any particular fire safety issues?
- Are there any aspects of the Fire Safety Guidance as a whole that you feel could be improved? *Spontaneous, then prompt and explore each of*
 - Awareness raising about the Guidance and its contents, including the risk assessment
 - Clarity /understandability of the requirements – In general? Specific topics, sections?
 - Additional information - Which sections/topics would benefit from further explanation?
 - Training – has the guidance prompted you to reconsider your organisations fire safety training requirements?
 - Support and tools
 - Layout /format
 - Length
- What would be the benefit/disbenefit of moving towards mandatory guidance or legislation, following the approach adopted in England? (where risk assessments of common areas are required by law)
- Is this something that you feel is needed? Why / why not?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- To sum up, how valuable has the Guidance been to you, since its introduction at the end of last year/ will it be to you over coming months?
- Is there anything you think the Scottish Government should consider modifying about the Guidance which would make it more useful to you?

Thank and close

Topic guide: Stakeholders

Discussion Guide Scottish Government Assessment of the Guidance for High Domestic Rise Buildings and Guidance for Specialised Housing Stakeholders Interviews 02.02.21 Final

Introduction

- Welcome to the session
- Introduction by moderator and explanation of Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Describe background to research: The Scottish Government issued Guidance on Fire Safety around a year ago: this covered High Rise Domestic Buildings (published December 2019) and Existing Specialised Housing (published January 2020). The production of the guidance was a recommendation from the Ministerial Working Group which was set up in response to the Grenfell tragedy in 2017. Progressive Partnership has been appointed by the Scottish Government to undertake an evaluation of the guidance, now that it has been in place for a year. The overarching aim of this research is collate views on the Guidance, understand how it is being used on the ground, understand the impact it has had, whether there are any obstacles to its implementation; and determine if any improvements need to be made to the guidance.
- Zoom: The discussion will be recorded – so I don't have to take notes. It will only be used for the purposes of this research project. Check permissions for this.
- Confidential – nothing you say will be attributed to you or your organisation.
- Reiterate GDPR rules if required: Withdraw at any time, only share what you are comfortable with.

Background to fire safety policy/ position statements/ regulation within the organisation/ etc.

- Description of organisation
 - Representative/membership: profile of members, number of members, and so on
 - Regulatory body: who is regulated
- Respondent
 - Job title
 - Role
 - Responsibility for: policy (health, wellbeing and fire safety?) / operational issues/ related matters

Once the organisation's/respondent's roles have been established the questions can be tailored appropriately. Role is likely to be concerned with: policy development on behalf of membership; responding to Government consultations on behalf of membership; advising/consulting/lobbying government/the Parliament on policy/strategy; providing training and other types of support to members in response to new legislation and guidance; auditing/regulating providers. For brevity, this is referred to as "policy development" from this point on in the discussion guide.

Policy development within the organisation

- How is the responsibility for policy development managed within the organisation?
 - Responsibility of the respondent
 - Part of broader role/only role - clarify
 - Committee/board oversight
 - Explore mechanism for this
 - Members' determine/input to policy
 - Explore mechanism for this
 - Other
 - Explore

Role in development of the Guidance

- Were you involved in the Scottish Government Ministerial Working Group (MWG) on Building and Fire Safety?
IF YES. Could you describe the role you played in that working group? PROBE on
 - Which aspects of the Review involved with?
 - Contribution made to the MWG's work?
- ALL: Did you/your organisation consult your membership on the Draft Guidance for High Rise Domestic Buildings and/ or Existing Specialised Housing?
IF YES - Which? PROBE on
 - Level, profile of and nature of responses received
 - Did anything within the responses surprise you? In terms of what was said, the strength of feeling...
IF NO - Why was that?

Awareness

THOSE WHO SAID NO TO BOTH THE ABOVE

- When did you become aware of the Practical Guidance for Fire Safety in High Rise Domestic Buildings?
- And the Practical Guidance for Fire Safety in specialised housing?

ALL

- And when the Fire Safety Guidance was launched, how did you become aware it was available?
- And what about your members – do you have a feel for how they became aware of the Guidance?
For both – spontaneous, then explore channels and events such as
 - Emails from Scottish Government
 - Launch events
 - Trade press
 - Social media
 - Professional associations
 - Representative organisations (including details of any actions undertaken the respondent's organisation)
- How effective has this dissemination been - for yourself and your membership?
 - What worked well?
 - What could be improved?
 - Barriers?

Views on the Guidance

- Let's have a wee chat about your impressions of the published Guidance. Let's start with the Guidance on High Rise Domestic Buildings (published December 2019). *Spontaneous then PROMPT on*
 - The content, coverage, accessibility, distribution/promotion
 - Were there any obvious additions /changes /omissions that especially pleased or concerned you?
- Has there been any feedback from your members about the Guidance on High Rise Domestic Buildings: positive, neutral, negative?
 - PROBE on issues being raised
- And what were your initial thoughts on the Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing (published January 2020). *Spontaneous then PROMPT on*
 - The content, coverage, accessibility, distribution/promotion
 - Were there any obvious additions /changes /omissions that especially pleased or concerned you?
- Was there any initial feedback from your members about the Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing: positive, neutral, negative?
 - PROBE on issues being raised

Overall views on the Fire Risk Assessment template

Thinking specifically about the Risk Assessments within the Guidance for a moment. Thinking first about the Premises-based Fire-Safety Risk Assessment.

- Overall, how helpful would you say the Fire Safety Risk Assessment template is?
- Are there any aspects of the Risk Assessment as a whole that you feel could be improved?
- Overall, how robust do you feel the approach to Fire Safety Risk Assessment set out within the Guidance is? Why do you say that?

And turning to the Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment.

- Overall, how helpful would you say the Person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment template is?
- Are there any aspects of the Risk Assessment as a whole that you feel could be improved?
- Overall, how robust do you feel the approach to Person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment set out within the Guidance is? Why do you say that?

Use made of the Guidance

- Are you using the Guidance on High Rise Domestic Buildings within your organisation for any purpose?
IF YES – Could you explain how you are using the Guidance within the organisation? PROBE
 - Development of training modules
 - Support tools
 - Consultation services to members/others
 - Regulation and audit
 - In discussion/lobbying/etc. of government
 - Other

- Are you using the Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing within your organisation for any purpose?
IF YES – Could you explain how you are using the Guidance within the organisation? PROBE
 - Development of training modules
 - Support tools
 - Consultation services to members/others
 - Regulation and audit
 - In discussion/lobbying/etc. of government
 - Other

Impact of the Guidance

- Pulling all of this together, overall, how helpful would you say the Fire Safety Guidance is?
- Is there anything in the guidance that is unhelpful?
- Do you think (or have you had any feedback from members) that there may be barriers to using the guidance and/or implementing changes based on it?
- What sort of impact would you expect the guidance to have on the management of fire safety within organisations providing housing and care?
- Do you think the guidance documents will support organisations to develop a fire safety policy if they don't already have one in place?
- Are there any aspects of the Fire Safety Guidance as a whole that you feel could be improved? *Spontaneous, then prompt and explore each of*
 - Awareness raising about the Guidance and its contents, including the risk assessment
 - Clarity /understandability of the requirements – In general? Specific topics, sections?
 - Additional information - Which sections/topics would benefit from further explanation?
 - Training – has the guidance prompted you to reconsider your organisations fire safety training requirements?
 - Support and tools
 - Layout /format
 - Length
- What would be the benefit/disbenefit of moving towards mandatory guidance or legislation, following the approach adopted in England? (where risk assessments of common areas are required by law)
- Is this something that you feel is needed? Why / why not?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- Is there anything you think the Scottish Government should consider modifying about the Guidance which would make it more useful to you?

Thank and close

Topic Guide: Specialised housing providers

Discussion Guide - Organisations Scottish Government Assessment of the Guidance for Specialised Housing 25th January 2021 - Final

Introduction

- Welcome to the session
- Introduction by moderator and explanation of Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Describe background to research: The Scottish Government issued Guidance on Fire Safety for Existing Specialised Housing a year ago (January 2020). The production of the guidance was a recommendation from the Ministerial Working Group which was set up in response to the Grenfell tragedy in 2017. The overarching aim of this research is to get your views on the guidance, understand how the guidance is being used on the ground, the impact it has had and whether there are any obstacles to its implementation. It would also be helpful to determine if improvements need to be made to the guidance.
- Zoom: The discussion will be recorded – so I don't have to take notes. It will only be used for the purposes of this research project. Check permissions for this.
- Confidential – nothing you say will be attributed to you or your organisation.
- Reiterate GDPR rules if required: withdraw at any time, only share what you are comfortable with

Background warm up

- Description of organisation
 - Tenure of stock (private, local authority, housing association, mixed - specify)
 - Number of dwellings in management
 - Type of dwellings in management – maisonettes, self-contained, HMOs.
 - Type and level of care/support service provided
- Respondent
 - Job title
 - Role
 - Responsibility for building management/care provision and fire safety
- How is fire safety managed within the organisation?
 - Overseen by committee/board
 - Dedicated team member
 - Part of team member's role – probe on how much of the role
 - Resident involvement/responsibility
 - If housing and care services are delivered by different organisations, is there good cooperation and coordination on fire safety

Review of the Guidance

Awareness

- When did you become aware of the Practical Guidance for Fire Safety in specialised housing?

- How did you become aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance?
- Initial impressions? *Spontaneous then prompt on*
 - the content, coverage, accessibility, distribution/promotion

Use

- Are you using the Guidance – if not what do you use?
- What were you using before the single source of Guidance was published?
- Talk me through how you are using the Practical Fire Safety Guidance in your organisation?
- *Prompt and explore each of:*
 - Dissemination within the organisation
 - How are you ensuring the right people are made aware of the guidance?
 - Review and updating policies and procedures
 - Responsibility/support
 - Priorities
 - Which policies and procedures?
 - Engaging with residents on fire safety
 - Do you use the matrix of responsibilities to help clarify roles and responsibilities in your fire safety policy? (Annex 6)
 - Undertaking risk assessments and acting on findings
 - Responsibility/support
 - Priorities
 - Developing action plans
 - Implementing action plans

The Fire Safety Risk Assessments

Let's focus on the Risk Assessment content of the Guidance now.

- Before we set up our discussion today, were you aware of the Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment and the Premises Based Fire Safety Risk Assessment [CHECK – this may have answered above]
- Did you carry out premises-based risk assessments prior to the Guidance being published?
- Did you carry out person-centred risk assessments prior to the Guidance being published?
- Has the guidance prompted you to review your existing risk assessments (if so, which ones)?
- If you did not carry out assessments previously, has the Guidance prompted you to do so now?
- If you had done either type of risk assessment before, how did you go about it (must be clear on which type of assessment is being discussed)?
 - Undertake the assessment yourself
 - Work with a fellow team member
 - Allocate a member of your team to undertake an assessment
 - Commission an external assessor to undertake an assessment (premises based)

- If you used an external assessor, did you use one who is 3rd party certificated or registered with a professional body? (premises based)
- Overall, how helpful would you say the Fire Safety Risk Assessment templates are (Annex 3 and 5)?
- Are there any aspects of the Risk Assessment guidance or templates that you feel could be improved?
- Overall, how robust do you feel the approach to Fire Safety Risk Assessment set out within the Guidance is? Why do you say that?

Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment

- Do you use the template supplied or a different template?
- If you use the template supplied, is the structure of the template helpful? Why do you say that?
- Is the supporting guidance sufficient to help you to undertake the person-centred risk assessment? Why do you say that? *Spontaneous then prompt for*
 - Hazard factors included
 - Individual circumstances identified
 - Risk levels and actions
- Do you feel you have sufficient knowledge of individual residents to complete the person-centred FSRA? Why do you say that?
- At the end of the assessment, you are asked to select an overall 'risk level'. How easy or difficult do you think it would be to determine the risk level, based on using the guidance and the template?
- How well placed do you feel to produce an action plan to address any issues that might be identified in the risk assessment?

Premises-based Fire Safety Risk Assessment

- Do you use the template supplied or a different template?
- If you use the template supplied, is the structure of the template helpful? Why do you say that?
- Is the supporting guidance sufficient to help you to undertake the premises-based risk assessment? Why do you say that? *Spontaneous then prompt for*
 - Potential causes of fire
 - Evaluation of risk and adequacy of existing fire safety measures
 - Formulating an Improvement Plan
- Do feel you have sufficient knowledge of the building, occupancy and management arrangements to complete the premises-centred risk assessment? Why do you say that?
- How well placed do you feel to produce an improvement plan to address any issues that might be identified in the premises-based risk assessment or would you rely on an external risk assessor to do this?

Impact of the Guidance

- Overall, how helpful would you say the Practical Fire Safety Guidance is?
- Is there anything in the guidance that is unhelpful?

- Have you experienced any barriers to using the guidance and/or implementing changes based on it?
- What sort of impact has the guidance had on the management of fire safety more generally for your organisation?
- Has the guidance helped you to develop a fire safety policy if you didn't already have one in place?
- Have you used the guidance to resolve any particular fire safety issues in your premises?
- Are there any aspects of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance as a whole that you feel could be improved? *Spontaneous, then prompt and explore each of*
 - Awareness raising about the Guidance and its contents, including the risk assessments
 - Clarity /understandability of the requirements – In general? Specific topics, sections?
 - Additional information - Which sections/topics would benefit from further explanation?
 - Training – has the guidance prompted you to reconsider your organisations fire safety training requirements?
 - Support and tools
 - Layout /format
 - Length
- What would be the benefit/disbenefit of moving towards mandatory guidance or legislation, following the approach adopted in England? (where premises based risk assessments of common areas are required by law)
 - Is this something that you feel is needed? Why / why not?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- To sum up, how valuable has the Guidance been to you, since its introduction last year/ will it be to you over coming months?
- Is there anything you think the Scottish Government should consider modifying about the Guidance which would make it more useful to you?

Thank and close

Topic Guide: Informal/unpaid carers

Discussion Guide – General Public/Carers Scottish Government Assessment of the Guidance For specialised Housing

18.1.21 Final – Revised 20.1.21

Introduction

- Welcome to the session
- Introduction by moderator and explanation of Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Describe background to research: The Scottish Government issued Guidance on Fire Safety for Existing Specialised Housing around a year ago (January 2020). This was in response to the Grenfell tragedy in 2017. The overarching aim of this research is to get your views on the relevant sections of the Guidance – particularly the person-centred risk assessment. The guidance is aimed primarily at organisations which provide specialised housing and care/support and much of the content is, by necessity, technical. However, some parts, particularly the guidance on person-centred risk assessment (Part 1), will be of interest to friends, family or volunteers who provide care or support for people in general needs housing. We would be interested to know if you find any of the guidance useful.
- Zoom: The discussion will be recorded – so I don't have to take notes. It will only be used for the purposes of this research project. Check permissions for this.
- Confidential – nothing you say will be attributed to you.
- Reiterate GDPR rules if required: withdraw at any time, only share what you are comfortable with

Background warm up

- Tell me a little bit about yourself – where you live? Do you work? Family?
- And can you tell me a bit about the person you care for – relationship, type of care requirements, sole carer/ paid carer as well, do they live with you or in their own home? Do they live alone?
- Housing – where do they live - type of accommodation (house/flat, tenure), nearby

Previous awareness / actions in relation to fire safety

- Have you previously given consideration to fire safety for the person you care for?
- If yes, what have you done? E.g. conducted a risk assessment, had a professional risk assessment (e.g. from a housing or professional care provider), arranged a home fire safety visit from SFRS, installed fire safety devices such as smoke alarms, made changes to property to reduce risk, etc.
- Have you talked to the person you care for about fire safety?
- Are you aware of any sources of information on fire safety/prevention? What are these? Are you aware of any specifically for people providing care to a vulnerable person?
- Where would you look for this type of information? Who would you expect to provide it?
- What are your views on the availability of information on fire safety/prevention?

Review of the Guidance

- Before taking part in this research, were you aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Specialised Housing (and similar premises) and that it would be useful to people providing care?
 - If so, when did you become aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance?
 - How did you become aware of the Practical Fire Safety Guidance?
- If previously aware of the fire safety guidance – did you read and/or use it?
 - If no – why not?
 - If yes – how did you use it?
- If previously read guidance - What were your initial impressions? *Spontaneous then prompt on content, coverage, accessibility (easy to read)*
- If not previously read guidance - What were your initial impressions of the guidance that we sent you? *Spontaneous then prompt on content, coverage, accessibility (easy to read)*

The Fire Safety Risk Assessments

Let's focus on the Person-Centred Risk Assessment section of the Guidance now (Annexe 3).

- Before we set up our discussion today, were you aware of a Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment? [CHECK – this may have answered above]
- And had you used it at all – in whole or in part?

I'd like to now chat through the Person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment and Part 1 of the guidance that explains this risk assessment.

Show Screen with Part 1 and risk assessment

Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment

- Having read Part 1 of the guidance, in general, who do think this part of the guidance is aimed at – professionals or unpaid carers. Why do you say that?
- Would you say that the guidance applies to you in your current role?
- Do you consider that the person you care for is/or may potentially be at high risk of fire in their home – why do you say that?
- Do you consider yourself a 'suitable person' to carry out a person-centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment? Why/why not? If not, who should carry out the assessment?

Let's now look at the risk assessment itself.

- Have you ever completed anything like this before? If yes, what? How did you find it?
- Is the guidance helpful/easy to follow? Why do you say that?
- Is the structure of the template helpful/easy to follow? Why do you say that?
- Let's look at a few of the hazards listed here. For each there is a range of circumstances that might apply. How clear are you which would apply to the person you care for? Why?
- It asks for details of existing control measures – what does that mean?
- The assessment process requires you to take action if something is an outstanding risk – do you feel well-placed to do that? What might prevent you from taking action?

- At the end, it asks for an overall 'risk level'. How easy or difficult to you think it would be to come up with that assessment, based on using the guidance and the template?
- How well placed to do feel to produce an action plan to address any issues that might be identified in the risk assessment?
- Are there any aspects of the person-centred risk assessment guidance that you feel could be improved? *Spontaneous, then prompt and explore each of*
 - Raising awareness of the Guidance and its contents, including person centred risk assessment
 - Clarity /understandability of the requirements – In general? Specific topics, sections?
 - Support and tools
 - Layout /format
 - Length

Impact of the Guidance

- Overall, how helpful would you say the guidance for a Person-Centred Fire Safety Risk Assessment is?
- What would be the main factors that might put you off or stop you from doing a person-centred risk assessment? Is there anything that you think might prevent other people from doing it?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- To sum up, how valuable do you think guidance like this is to people who care for someone in their home?
- Is there anything you think the Scottish Government should consider modifying about the Guidance which would make it more useful to you?

Thank and close

Appendix D: Online survey questionnaire

Scottish Government Evaluation of Fire Safety Guidance Online Questionnaire FINAL Revised 8.3.21

INTRODUCTION

Hello, welcome to this online survey about the fire safety guidance issued by the Scottish Government approximately one year ago. It will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Even if you are not aware of or have not read this guidance we would be very grateful if you could take part in the survey. An important objective of the evaluation is to measure levels of awareness and engagement with the guidance so widespread participation in the survey is critical to achieving this.

Thank you in advance for taking part.

The survey is completely confidential, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. The answers you give in the survey will be combined with answers from other people who have taken part to give overall survey findings. No one will be able to identify you individually from the data. Progressive guarantees that all your answers will remain strictly anonymous. Click [here](#) for Progressive's privacy policy.

If you are happy to continue with the survey, please click 'Next' below.

NEXT

For this survey we will refer to high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing. The definitions of these terms are detailed below.

- High rise domestic buildings are those over 18 metres high (generally more than 6 floors).
- Specialised housing is defined as including:
 - Sheltered, very sheltered and extra care housing - mainly (but not exclusively) for older people living at home with different levels of care or support.
 - Supported housing - for people with physical, sensory, mental health or cognitive impairments.
- The Specialised Housing and Similar Premises Guidance also applies to small care homes. These are constructed as domestic dwellings and accommodate only a few residents, e.g. older people; children and young people; people with learning disabilities; people with drug and alcohol problems; people with mental health problems; and people with physical and sensory impairment. The Guidance may also be useful for people living in owned or rented dwellings who receive a "care at home" service (referred to as "general needs" housing).

SQ1 Firstly, what description best fits your organisation or business?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Local authority	1
Housing association	2
Private landlord/building owner	3
Building management company/factoring company/agent	4
Care provider	5
Other (please specify)	6

SQ2 Which of the following types of housing are directly managed by your organisation?

SINGLE CODE	Code
High rise domestic buildings	1
Specialised housing (e.g. sheltered, extra care, supported housing and small care homes)	2
Both high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing	3
Neither high rise domestic buildings nor specialised housing	4

Ask if SQ2 = 3 (both)

SQ2a Are you able to answer questions about fire safety for high rise buildings, specialised housing or both?

SINGLE CODE	Code
High rise domestic buildings	1
Specialised housing	2
Both high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing	3
Neither high rise domestic buildings nor specialised housing	4

Not Asked if SQ2a=4

SQ3 Does your organisation provide care or support services in any of the following ways?

MULTI-CODE	Code
Yes – care and/or support services provided in our own specialised accommodation [MASK – only show if SQ2 = (2,3)]	1
Yes - care and/or support services delivered in third party specialised accommodation	2
Yes – care/support services in our own and in third party specialised accommodation [MASK – only show if SQ2 = (2,3)]	3
Yes – care/support services in general needs housing	4
None of the above – do not provide care/support services [EXCLUSIVE]	5

Ask if SQ2=(1,3)

FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR HIGH RISE DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

AWARENESS AND USE OF THE FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

Add note if respondent responsible for both high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing –SQ2a = 3

We would firstly like to ask you some questions about the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings.

Ask if SQ2 = 1 or SQ2a = (1,3)

Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware of the practical fire safety guidance for existing high rise domestic buildings?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes, aware of it and read it (that is, read some, most or all of it)	1
Yes, aware of it but not read it	2
Not aware of it	3

Ask if Q1 = (1,2)

How did you become aware of the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings?
Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Through formal channels at work, e.g. from my manager or at a Health and Safety training session	1
Told about it by a colleague	2
From an industry body	3
In the media, trade press	4
From a communication sent to me by the Scottish Government	5
I was involved in the development of the guidance	6
Someone in my organisation was involved in the development of the guidance	7
From the consultant or fire officer (SFRS) who inspects our buildings	8
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	9
Unsure [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	10

Ask if Q1=(1,2)

Have you attended any workshops, meetings or seminars about the guidance?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q3=1

Who delivered this workshop, meeting or seminar about the guidance? *Please tick all that apply*

MULTI-CODE	Code
My organisation	1
Industry body (please specify)	2
Other (please specify)	3
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	4

Ask if Q1= (1,2)

Have you or are you currently using the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings in any way? For example, this could be to review current procedures and policies, training of staff, implementing new procedures, or to undertake risk assessments.

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q5=1

How are you using the guidance? *Please tick all that apply*

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
To update policies and procedures	1
To create new policies or procedures	2
To train staff and make staff aware of fire safety issues	3
When conducting fire safety risk assessments on our buildings	4
When undertaking action in response to risk assessments	5
To ensure we achieve a satisfactory standard of fire safety	6
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	7
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	8

Ask if Q1=1

How would you rate the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings on the following aspects?

INVERT SCALE; RANDOMISE STATEMENTS	Very good	Quite good	Neither good nor poor	Quite poor	Very poor	Unsure
Comprehensive coverage of the relevant aspects of fire safety	1	2	3	4	5	6

Being user-friendly – the language and layout are easy to follow	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clarity of the organisations and buildings to which the guidance applies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Advice on how to use/implement the guidance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Signposting to further sources of information and advice	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provision of practical tools to improve fire safety (e.g. checklists, risk assessment templates)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guidance on who should complete risk assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guidance on how to complete risk assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6

Ask if quite poor or poor to each statement.

You have rated [statement from Q7] as poor. Why do you say that?

HIGH RISE BUILDINGS: FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Ask if SQ2 = 1 or SQ2a = (1,3) – all responsible for high rise domestic buildings

Do you have current Fire Safety Risk Assessments which have been undertaken or reviewed in the last year for your high rise properties?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes – for all properties	1
Yes – for the majority of properties	2
Yes – for some properties	3
No – for none	4
Unsure	5

Ask if Q9=(1,2,3)

Which of the following statements best describes your organisation's practice on undertaking premises based fire safety risk assessments. Did your organisation carry out premises-based fire safety risk assessments before or after the new guidance was published?

SINGLE CODE	Code
We started carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	1

We started carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments following the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q9=(1,2,3)

Which of the following statements best describes what prompted your organisation to carry out fire safety risk assessments across your high rise properties? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Good practice in building management/H&S	1
Prompted by the publication of the Scottish Government guidance	2
Prompted by a fire within the building	3
Fire reduction strategy/performance indicator	4
Other reason (please specify) [FIXED]	5
Unsure [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	6

Ask if Q9 = (1,2,3)

Who carries out the Fire Safety Risk Assessment in your high rise properties?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Employee of your organisation (could be yourself)	1
External consultant	2
Mix of in-house and external consultant	3
Other (please specify)	4
Unsure	5

Ask if Q12 = (2,3)

Are your fire safety risk assessments carried out by an external assessor who is 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q1=1

Have you read through the fire safety risk assessment template in the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q14=1

Have you used the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings in any way within your organisation? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE	Code
Yes - we have used the fire safety risk assessment template provided in the Guidance to conduct risk assessments	1
Yes - we have used the template to adapt or update our existing in-house/consultant's risk assessment approach	2
Yes - we have used the template as a basis to create a risk assessment approach for our organisation	3
Yes - used in another way (please specify)	4
No – we currently use PAS 79 instead	5
No – we use a different template (not PAS 79 or SG)	6
No – we do not currently use a template	7
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	8

Ask if Q15 = (1~4)

Overall, how useful has the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings been to your organisation?

	Code
Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Unsure	5

FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR HIGH RISE BUILDINGS**Ask if Q5=2 (those not using guidance)**

What are the reasons that you have not used the guidance for high rise buildings so far? Please select all that apply.

MULTI CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Have not had time to read it yet	1
Not had time to put the guidance into practice yet	2
Do not have the staff resource available to review or put the guidance into practice yet	3
Do not have financial resources to commission an external consultant to undertake the risk assessment	4
We already have robust fire safety measures, procedures and policies in place	5
We have been focussed on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	6
The guidance is not relevant to my organisation	7
The guidance is not clear or easy to follow	8

Senior management don't see it as a priority at the current time	9
Do not have the financial resource to implement actions/major actions potentially identified by a fire safety risk assessment	10
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	11
Unsure [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	12
Not experienced any barriers or problems [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	13

Ask if Q5=2 (those not using guidance)

Do you intend to use the guidance for high rise buildings in the future?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, possibly	2
No	3
Unsure	4

Ask if Q18 = 3

Q18a. Why do you not intend to use the fire safety guidance for high rise buildings?

Ask if Q5 = 1 (those using the guidance)

Have you experienced any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing the fire safety guidance for high rise buildings? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Finding time to read it	1
Finding time to put the guidance into practice	2
Finding the staff resource to review or put the guidance into practice	3
Lack of financial resource to commission an external consultant to undertake the risk assessment	4
Organisational focus on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	5
The guidance itself is not clear or easy to follow	6
Senior management do not see fire safety risk assessment or implementing actions as a priority	7
Lack of financial resource to implement any actions identified by a fire safety risk assessment	8
Difficult to obtain the cooperation of residents for risk assessments or implementing actions	9
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	10
Unsure [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	11
Not experiencing any barriers or problems [FIXED / EXCLUSIVE]	12

Ask if Q1 = (1,2) and not Q18 = 3 (all aware of guidance, excluding those not using or intending to use it)

Is there anything more that the Scottish Government could do to support you to use the fire safety risk assessment template in particular or to implement the Guidance overall?

	Fire Safety Risk Assessment Template	Guidance for high rise buildings
Yes	1	1
No	2	2
Unsure	3	3

Ask if Q20a = 1

What further support to implement the risk assessment template would be helpful?

Ask if Q20b = 1

21b. What further support to implement the guidance would be helpful?

Ask if Q1 = 1 (read guidance) and not Q18 = 3

Thinking now about the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings, how valuable would you say the risk assessment template and the guidance has been or will be for your organisation?

	Fire Safety Risk Assessment Template	Guidance for high rise buildings
Very valuable	1	1
Quite valuable	2	2
Not very valuable	3	3
Not at all valuable	4	4
Unsure	5	5

Ask if Q1=1 (read guidance) and not Q18 = 3

Are there any aspects of the fire safety guidance for high rise domestic buildings that you would like to see improved?

	Fire Safety Risk Assessment Template	Guidance for high rise buildings
Yes	1	1
No	2	2

Ask if Q23a=1

What would you like to see improved in the fire safety risk assessment template for high rise buildings?

Ask if Q23b=1

What would you like to see improved in the fire safety guidance for high rise buildings?

Ask if Q1=1,2 (aware of the guidance)

Do you have any other comments you wish to make on the fire safety guidance for high rise buildings?

Ask if SQ2 = 2 or SQ2a = (2,3)

FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR SPECIALISED HOUSING

AWARENESS AND USE OF THE FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR SPECIALISED HOUSING

Add note if respondent responsible for both high rise domestic buildings and specialised housing –SQ2a = 3

We would now like to ask you some questions about the fire safety guidance for specialised housing.

Ask if SQ2 = 2 or SQ2a = (2,3)

Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware of the practical fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes, aware of it and read it (that is, read some, most or all of it)	1
Yes, aware of it but not read it	2
Not aware of it	3

Ask if (SQ2 = 4 or SQ2a = 4) and SQ3= (2,4)

Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware of the practical fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes, aware of it and read it (that is, read some, most or all of it)	1

Yes, aware of it but not read it	2
Not aware of it	3

Ask if Q27= (1,2) or Q28 =(1,2)

How did you become aware of the fire safety guidance for specialised housing? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Through formal channels at work, e.g. from my manager or at a Health and Safety training session	1
Told about it by a colleague	2
From an industry body	3
In the media, trade press	4
From a communication sent to me by the Scottish Government	5
I was involved in the development of the guidance	6
Someone in my organisation was involved in the development of the guidance	7
From a consultant who has inspected our buildings	8
On the advice of a fire officer (SFRS)	9
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	10
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	11

Ask if Q27= (1,2) or Q28 =(1,2)

Have you attended any workshops, meetings or seminars about the guidance for specialised housing?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q30 = 1

Who delivered this workshop, meeting or seminar about the guidance?

MULTI-CODE	Code
My organisation	1
Industry body (please specify)	2
Other (please specify)	3
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	4

Ask if Q27= (1,2) or Q28 =(1,2)

Have you or are you currently using the fire safety guidance for specialised housing in any way? This may be simply using it to review current procedures and policies, training of staff, implementing new procedures, to undertake risk assessments, etc.

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q32 = 1

How are you using the guidance? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
To update policies and procedures	1
To create new policies or procedures	2
To train staff and make staff aware of fire safety issues	3
To conduct a fire safety risk assessment on our buildings	4
When undertaking action in response to risk assessments	5
To conduct person centred fire safety risk assessments for our residents	6
To ensure we achieve a satisfactory standard of fire safety	7
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	8
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	9

Ask if Q27 = 1 or Q28 = 1

How would you rate the fire safety guidance for specialised housing on the following aspects?

INVERT SCALE; RANDOMISE STATEMENTS	Very good	Quite good	Neither good nor poor	Quite poor	Very poor	Unsure
Comprehensive coverage of relevant aspects of fire safety	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being user-friendly – the language and layout are easy to follow	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clarity of the organisations and buildings to which the guidance applies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Advice on how to use/implement the guidance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Signposting to further sources of information and advice	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provision of practical tools to improve fire safety (e.g. checklists, risk assessment templates)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Guidance on who should complete risk assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6

Guidance on how to complete risk assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Ask if quite poor or poor to each statement.

You have rated [statement from Q34] as poor. Why do you say that?

Ask if SQ2 = 2 or SQ2a = (2,3)

PREMISES-BASED FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

We would now like to ask you some questions about the premises-based fire safety risk assessment – that is the risk assessment for **buildings** rather than the person-centred risk assessment.

Ask if SQ2 = 2 or SQ2a = (2,3)

Do you have current premises-based Fire Safety Risk Assessments which have been undertaken or reviewed in the last year for your specialised housing or similar properties?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes – for all properties	1
Yes – for the majority of properties	2
Yes – for some properties	3
No – for none	4
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	5

Ask if Q36=(1,2,3)

Which of the following statements best describes your organisation’s practice on undertaking premises-based fire safety risk assessments. Did your organisation carry out premises-based fire safety risk assessments before or after the new guidance was published?

SINGLE CODE	Code
We started carrying out premises-based fire safety risk assessments prior the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	1
We started carrying out premises based fire safety risk assessments following the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q36=(1,2,3)

Which of the following statements best describes what has prompted your organisation to carry out fire safety risk assessments in specialised housing or similar premises? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Good practice in building management/H&S	1
Prompted by the publication of the Scottish Government guidance	2
Prompted by a fire within the building	3
Fire reduction strategy/performance indicator	4
Other reason (please specify) [FIXED]	5
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	6

Ask if Q36 = (1,2,3)

Who carries out the Fire Safety Risk Assessment in your specialised housing or similar properties?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Employee of your organisation (could be yourself)	1
External consultant	2
Mix of in-house and external consultant	3
Unsure	4

Ask if Q39 = (2,3)

Are your fire safety risk assessments carried out by an external assessor who is 3rd party certified or registered with a professional body?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q27 = 1

Have you read through the premises-based fire safety risk assessment template for specialised housing fire safety guidance?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q41= 1

Have you used the premises-based fire safety risk assessment template in any way within your organisation? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE	Code
Yes - we have used the premises-based fire safety risk assessment template provided in the Guidance to conduct risk assessments	1
Yes - we have used the template to adapt or update our existing in-house/consultant's risk assessment approach	2

Yes - we have used the template as a basis to create a risk assessment approach for our organisation	3
Yes - used in another way (please specify)	4
No – we currently use PAS 79 instead	5
No – we use a different template (not PAS79 or SG)	6
No – we do not currently use a template	7
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	8

Ask if Q42 = (1~4)

Overall, how useful has the premises-based fire safety risk assessment been to your organisation?

	Code
Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Unsure	5

Ask if SQ2a = (2,3) or ((SQ2=4 or SQ2a=4) or SQ3=(2,4))

SPECIALISED HOUSING: PERSON-CENTRED RISK ASSESSMENT

We would now like to ask you some questions about the **person-centred** fire safety risk assessment – that is the risk assessment for people/residents rather than the premises-based risk assessment.

Ask if SQ2=2 or SQ2a=(2,3) or (SQ2=4 and SQ3=(2,4))

Does your organisation currently carry out person-centred fire safety risk assessments for residents in specialised housing or similar premises?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes – for all residents regardless of perceived risk	1
Yes – for all residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	2
Yes – for the majority of residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	3
Yes – for some residents identified as being at increased risk in specialised housing	4
No – for none of the residents in specialised housing	5
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	6

Ask if Q44 = (1,2,3,4)

Which of the following statements best describes your organisation’s practice on undertaking person-centred fire safety risk assessments. Did your organisation carry out person-centred fire safety risk assessments before or after the new guidance was published?

SINGLE CODE	Code
We started carrying out person-centred fire safety risk assessments prior to the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	1
We started carrying out person-centred fire safety risk assessments following the publication of the Scottish Government guidance in 2020	2
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	3

Ask if Q44 = (1,2,3,4)

Which of the following statements best describes what prompted you/ your organisation to carry out person-centred fire safety risk assessments? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Carried out as part of care plans, welfare assessments	1
Prompted by the publication of the Scottish Government guidance	2
Prompted by a fire within one of our buildings	3
On the advice of the SFRS	4
Other reason (please specify) [FIXED]	5
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	6

Ask if Q44 = (1,2,3,4)

Who carries out the person-centred fire safety risk assessments? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
An external assessor who is 3 rd party certified or registered with a professional body appointed by my organisation	1
A welfare officer, carer (or similar) employed by my organisation	2
A housing officer (or similar) employed by my organisation	3
External care provider who delivers the care package to the resident	4
Relatives or friends of the residents	5
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	6
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	7

Ask if Q27=1 or Q28=1

Have you read through the person-centred risk assessment template in the fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask if Q48 = 1

Have you used the person-centred risk assessment template in any way within your organisation?

MULTI-CODE	Code
Yes - we have used the person-centred fire safety risk assessment template provided in the Guidance to conduct risk assessments	1
Yes - we have used the template to adapt or update our existing risk assessment / care plan approach	2
Yes - we have used the template as a basis to create a risk assessment approach for our organisation	3
Yes - used in another way (please specify)	4
No – we use a different template	5
No – but we do have PEEPs in place	6
No – we do not have PEEPs or use a person-centred fire safety risk assessment template	7
Unsure [EXCLUSIVE]	8

Ask if Q49 = (1~4)

Overall, how useful has the person-centred fire safety risk assessment template been to your organisation?

	Code
Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Unsure	5

SPECIALISED HOUSING: GUIDANCE**Ask if Q32 = 2 (not used the guidance)**

What are the reasons that you have not used the guidance so far? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Have not had time to read it yet	1
Not had time to put the guidance into practice yet	2
Do not have the staff resource available to undertake the person-centred risk assessments	3
We already have robust fire safety measures, procedures and policies in place	4
We have been focussed on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	5
The guidance is not relevant to my organisation	6
The guidance is not clear or easy to follow	7

Senior management don't see it as a priority at the current time	8
Do not have the financial resources to implement actions that might be identified from the risk assessments	9
Unclear who is responsible for conducting person-centred risk assessments in low dependency housing (such as retirement housing)	10
Other (please specify)	11
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	12
Not experienced any barriers or problems [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	13

Ask if Q32 = 2 (those not using guidance)

Do you intend to use the fire safety guidance for specialised housing in the future?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, possibly	2
No	3
Unsure	4

Ask if Q52 = 3

Q52a. Why do you not intend to use the fire safety guidance for specialised housing in the future?

Ask if Q32 = 1

Have you experienced any difficulties or barriers in using or implementing the fire safety guidance for specialised housing? Please select all that apply.

MULTI-CODE / RANDOMISE	Code
Finding time to read it	1
Finding time to put the guidance into practice	2
Finding the staff resources to undertake the person-centred risk assessments	3
Organisational focus has been on dealing with coronavirus pandemic for the last year	4
The guidance is not clear or easy to follow	5
Senior management don't see person-centred fire-risk assessment as a priority at the current time – they are just good practice	6
Do not have the financial resources to implement actions that might be identified from the risk assessments	7

Do not have the authority to purchase items/make changes to people homes in response to the risk assessments	8
For low dependency housing: do not have the authority to enter people homes to conduct the risk assessments/ unclear who is responsible for conducting the risk assessments	9
Other (please specify) [FIXED]	10
Unsure [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	11
Not experienced any barriers or problems [FIXED/EXCLUSIVE]	12

Ask if Q27 = (1,2) or Q28 =(1,2) (all aware of guidance) – exclude Q52 = 3 (not using / not intending to use)

Is there anything more that the Scottish Government could do to support you to implement the guidance?

	Premises-based fire safety risk assessment	Person-centred fire safety risk assessment	Specialised Housing Guidance
Yes	1	1	1
No	2	2	2
Unsure	3	3	3

Ask if Q54a = 1

What further support to implement the premises-based fire safety risk assessment template would be helpful?

Ask if Q54b = 1

What further support to implement the person-centred fire safety risk assessment template would be helpful?

Ask if Q54c = 1

What further support to implement the guidance would be helpful?

Ask if Q27 = 1 or Q28=1 (read guidance), exclude Q52 = 3

Thinking now about the fire safety guidance for specialised housing, how valuable has each of these aspects been or will be for your organisation?

RANDOMISE STATEMENTS / INVERT SCALE	Very valuable	Quite valuable	Not very valuable	Not at all valuable	Unsure
Premises-based fire safety risk assessment template	1	2	3	4	5
Person-centred fire safety risk assessment template	1	2	3	4	5
Specialised Housing Guidance	1	2	3	4	5

Ask if Q27 = 1 or Q28=1 (read guidance)

Are there any aspects of the fire safety guidance for specialised housing that you would like to see improved?

	Yes	No
Premises-based fire safety risk assessment template	1	2
Person-centred fire safety risk assessment template	1	2
Specialised Housing Guidance	1	2

Ask if Q59a = 1

What would you like to see improved in the premises-based fire safety risk assessment template for specialised housing?

Ask if Q59b = 1

What would you like to see improved in the person-centred fire safety risk assessment template for specialised housing?

Ask if Q59c = 1

What would you like to see improved in the fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

Ask if Q27 = 1 or Q28=1

Do you have any final comments about the fire safety guidance for specialised housing?

Ask all

In England and Wales, a dutyholder is legally required to carry out a premises-based fire safety risk assessment of communal areas in domestic premises, such as common stairs and passageways. New legislation is expected to clarify that flat front doors, building structure and external walls should form part of this. Scotland has different fire safety and

housing legislation. Although considered good practice, there is no legal requirement to undertake a fire safety risk assessment at present. Occupiers have a legal duty to keep common areas clear of obstructions and combustible items. Common areas and any firefighting facilities provided in them must be maintained in an “efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair”.

Do you think it should be a legal requirement in Scotland to carry out a premises-based fire safety risk assessment in domestic premises and to act on its findings, as is the case in England and Wales?

INVERT	Code
Strongly in favour	1
Somewhat in favour	2
Neutral	3
Somewhat oppose	4
Strongly oppose	5
Don't know	6

Why do you say that?

CLASSIFICATION

The final questions are to allow us to classify your organisation for analysis purposes. Your responses to these questions will be combined with responses from other organisations and will not be used to identify any organisation individually. Your responses to this survey are completely confidential.

Ask all

How many full time equivalent employees does your organisation have, including yourself?

	Code
Less than 10 employees	1
11 to 50 employees	2
51 to 100 employees	3
101 to 250 employees	4
251 to 500 employees	5
501 to 1000 employees	6
>1000 employees	7
Unsure	8

Ask if not a local authority

In which local authority is your organisation's main location or head office?

	Code
Aberdeen City	1
Aberdeenshire	2
Angus	3

Argyll & Bute	4
Clackmannanshire	5
Dumfries & Galloway	6
Dundee City	7
East Ayrshire	8
East Dunbartonshire	9
East Lothian	10
East Renfrewshire	11
Edinburgh City	12
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	13
Falkirk	14
Fife	15
Glasgow City	16
Highland	17
Inverclyde	18
Midlothian	19
Moray	20
North Ayrshire	21
North Lanarkshire	22
Orkney Islands	23
Perth & Kinross	24
Renfrewshire	25
Scottish Borders	26
Shetland Islands	27
South Ayrshire	28
South Lanarkshire	29
Stirling	30
West Dunbartonshire	31
West Lothian	32
Unsure	33

Ask all

We would like to conduct some further telephone/Zoom interviews to explore in more detail how people are using the guidance, what the barriers to using it are, and how it could be improved. Would you be willing to take part in further research on the guidance?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2

Ask if Q70 = 1

Thank you. Please leave your name and the best contact email and telephone number below so that we can get in touch to arrange a suitable time. Please note that we may not be able to contact everyone who expresses an interest in further research.

Name:	
Email address:	
Telephone number:	

GDPR OUTRO

Thank you for taking part in this research survey.

You have the right to access the information you have provided in this survey, and to withdraw consent to process this information after taking part. We will only hold your personal details for a limited time, until May 2021. Click here [\[ADD LINK\]](#) for details of how to withdraw consent.

Please now press the **Submit** button to register your responses.

PLEASE UPDATE OR DELETE THIS PAGE AS REQUIRED
This version ISBN 00123456789XX is current as at 01-03-2015

REVISIONS TABLE

	Date	Changes
First Published 1.0	01/01/2012	Update 1.0
Revision 1.1	15/08/2012	Update 1.1
Revision 1.2	01/12/2012	Update 1.2
Revision 2.0	18/05/2013	Update 1.3
2 nd Edition 2.0	03/03/2015	Update 2.0

UPDATES PAGE

Update 1.0	01/01/2012	First Published 1.0
Update 1.1	15/08/2012	Revision 1.1
Update 1.2	01/12/2012	Revision 1.2
Update 1.3	18/05/2013	Revision 1.3
Update 2.0	03/03/2015	2 nd Edition 2.0

Revisions Detail:

Appendix 1.0

First Published 01/01/2012

Update 1.1

Revision 1.1 15/08/2012

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Update 1.2

Revision 1.2 01/12/2012

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Update 2.0

A new edition was published on 03/03/2015 ISBN 00123456789XX

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this <statistical bulletin / social research publication>:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route <specify or delete this text>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact <email address> for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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