



FACT SHEET - Higher Risk Buildings (HRBs)

Background

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government introduced the Building Safety Act 2022 and a raft of subsequent secondary legislation. The legislation allowed for the creation of a new body, the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to oversee building safety. Under the legislation all Higher Risk Buildings must be registered with the Building Safety Regulator. The legislation sets out the definitions for Higher Risk Buildings and this includes any buildings with at least two residential units which are at least 18 metres in height or have at least 7 storeys.

The regulations define that a 'Principal Accountable Person' who is directly employed by the Building Owner (which could be an individual, private company or a public body) needs to be identified as the person responsible for formally registering the building as an HRB.

The Act also changed the process for the approval of proposed building work to HRBs. Previously, Building Regulation applications could be processed in a number of ways (Local Authority Building Control, Approved Inspectors etc), but now the Building Safety Regulator is solely responsible for approving the design for all building works to HRBs. The level of information required is far greater than previously required, and must be made in a single submission, known as a Gateway 2 application. For a Gateway 2 application to be made a Principal Designer and Principal Contractor must be appointed and all design work must already be complete. The Gateway 2 application must be made (and formally approved) prior to any construction work starting on site.

Once the Gateway 2 application is made it should take a statutory eight weeks to process and determine the application, although at present applications are taking a minimum of six months due to the volume of enquiries/applications and insufficient resources within the BSR to handle the number of applications being submitted.

HRB registration

Turner and Townsend were already appointed by the City of London as fire risk assessors for its housing when they were asked to verify the status of the buildings on the Golden Lane Estate. Consequently, they have determined that all the buildings, apart from Cuthbert Harrowing House, are deemed to be HRBs. Although Crescent House and Stanley Cohen are below the height/storey threshold, they are currently classified as HRBs, because they share communal 'means of escape' staircases with buildings which do exceed the storey or height thresholds and are therefore considered part of the same structure.



In December 2024, formal HRB registration applications were submitted to the BSR for all the buildings on the Golden Lane Estate (excluding Cuthbert Harrowing which is not deemed to be an HRB and Great Arthur House, which was already registered).

In May/June 2025 it was confirmed that all blocks have been registered:

Name of Block	HRB Registration Number
Basterfield House	HRB17133V7J4
Bayer House	HRB17133V7J4
Bowater House	HRB17134S5Z5
Crescent House	HRB17131S1K1
Cullum Welch House	HRB17131S1K1
Hatfield House	HRB17131S1K1
Stanley Cohen House	HRB17133V7J4
Great Arthur House	HRB03198Q0N0

Advice for Homeowners

Do you need approval?

If you are planning any building work, you must first consider whether you will need to apply for building control approval from the Building Safety Regulator.

Some examples of building works that require approval are:

- Alterations to internal walls or the layout of your flat
- Installation of new kitchens or bathrooms involving plumbing
- Installation, replacement or modification of heating systems
- Replacement of fuse boxes or electrics near a bath or shower

Examples of works that are generally exempt:

- Most repairs, replacements and maintenance work (excluding heating systems, fuse boxes and glazing units)
- New power and lighting points (except in bathrooms or near showers)
- Like-for-like replacements of baths, toilets, basins and sinks

Link to government website: www.gov.uk/building-regulations-approval

If you are unsure whether your proposed works required approval, you must consult a competent contractor or other qualified building control professional.

Emergency Repairs

These are defined as repairs which are necessary to be carried out as a matter of urgency due to the risk to health, safety or welfare of persons in or about the building.

Where work consists of emergency repairs and it is not practicable to comply with the HRB approval process before starting the work:

- a) Notice needs to be given to the BSR describing the work and the reasons for the urgency as soon as reasonably practicable after the work has started.
- b) A copy of that notice needs to be sent to the responsible person as soon as reasonably practicable after the work has started.
- c) A regularisation certificate application should be submitted to the BSR in relation to the work as soon as reasonably practicable after the work has been carried out.

Some works may also require Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent.

Please refer to the Listed Building Management Guidelines to determine which works usually require consent. It is your responsibility to make the necessary applications where required.

Process

As stated in the opening 'Background' section, you will need to appoint a Principal Designer and Principal Contractor to prepare and submit your application to the Building Safety Regulator. This application must include detailed plans and comprehensive information on how the proposed works will comply with building regulations.

The application must be formally approved before any construction works can start.

Competent Person Scheme: Work carried out by members of the Competent Person Scheme may be exempt from certain Building Regulations requirements.

Guidance is provided here: www.gov.uk/guidance/preparing-information-for-a-building-control-approval-application#applying-for-building-control-approval

Please also refer to the City Corporation's Home Improvements Pack which outlines the essential rules and application forms for Long Lessees, Tenants and their contractors wishing to undertake alterations to their homes.

Other resources:

- Webinar and Q&A hosted by BSR Operational Policy Advisers, 4th March 2025. The webinar focuses on understanding duties around building work being carried out in individual apartments in occupied HRBs and give practical advice on how to ensure these duties are met. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3_3ytV4z4I

- HSE factsheet & FAQ Explainer on the Building Safety Regulator as the Building Control Authority, November 2024 https://buildingsafety.campaign.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2024/11/24_041-BCA-FAQ-Explainer-2024-Nov.pdf

Useful contacts

- Relevant CoL contacts
 - **Paul Barton, Head of Health and Fire Safety**
 - **Greg Wade, Head of Major Works**
 - **Beverley Andrews, Head of Repairs and Maintenance**
 - **Greg Nott, Estate Services Manager**

Although the City of London Corporation (“CoL”) has taken care over what is said in this HRB Fact Sheet, it has not attempted to give exhaustive statements of law or any opinions on specific legal issues or on any matter dealt within the pack.

This document does not provide nor offer legal or other professional advice, nor should it be treated as doing so. You should not rely on it as legal advice.

The CoL does not accept liability for any person who does seek to rely on information given in this pack as legal or other advice.

This document does not take precedence over, limit or waive in any way the terms of any long lease, tenancy agreement or other legal agreement relating in any way to the Housing Division.

The contents of this document are believed to be up to date at time of publication, but some of the information will be subject to change over time.