

## H. Health Impact Assessment

### Screening Record Sheet based on the [guidance](#) issued by Public Health Wales

Completed by: Building Safety Bill Team, Welsh Government

#### Building Safety (Wales) Bill – Aims and Objectives

The Bill will introduce a new building safety regime covering the occupation and ongoing management of multi-occupied residential buildings in Wales.

#### The Evidence Considered

Death and injury as a result of residential building safety incidents are extremely rare. Less than 0.1% of deaths in Wales are caused by residential fires<sup>1</sup>, compared to 0.3% caused by road traffic collisions<sup>2</sup>. The leading causes of death in England and Wales in 2023 were dementia and Alzheimer's disease (11.5% of deaths) and ischaemic heart disease (10% of deaths)<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, the impacts can be devastating when such events occur.

In order that the Bill represents the optimal, most workable, solutions to each of the issues identified, Welsh Government has worked extensively with stakeholders and delivery partners.

The [Safer Buildings in Wales White Paper](#) consultation opened in January 2021. It proposed a comprehensive reform of legislation, representing a significant overhaul of the existing system for building safety in Wales. It focused on legislative change across the lifecycle of multi-occupied buildings: from design, through to construction and into the occupation phase; as well as setting out aspirations for cultural change in the way that buildings are designed, built, and managed.

When it closed in April 2021, 91 responses had been received from a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, professional bodies, managing agents, freeholders and members of the public. These responses have informed policy thinking and development. The [Welsh Government published its response to the consultation](#) on 14 December 2021.

In addition to the white paper consultation, Welsh Government has engaged a wide range of stakeholders including leaseholders and tenants, groups representing

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<sup>1</sup> 14 fatal casualties in 2023-24 [Casualties by detailed location and financial year](#) of 36,054 deaths in Wales in 2023 [Death registration summary statistics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>2</sup> 98 killed in 2023 [Casualties by quarter, year and severity](#) of 36,054 deaths in Wales in 2023 [Death registration summary statistics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Death registration summary statistics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

people with particular protected characteristics, housing associations, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and the housing industry.

The Welsh Government also commissioned research including:

- unpublished research with minority ethnic leaseholders and disabled leaseholders;
- research among residents of all types and from all tenure groups, living in buildings defined as in scope of the new building safety regime<sup>4</sup>; and,
- an evidence review on human influences in dwelling fires, specifically in multi-occupied buildings<sup>5</sup>.

### **Population Groups Affected**

The legislation is intended to improve safety for people in or about buildings in-scope of the new regime. The greatest impact will be on residents of in-scope buildings. All kinds of people live in in-scope buildings but compared to households in all dwellings in Wales, households in in-scope buildings are:

- More likely to be single person households
- More likely to be single older person households
- Less likely to include 2 or more adults and a child/children
- More likely to be disabled
- More likely to be Black, Asian or minority ethnic
- Less likely to be in employment
- More likely to be economically inactive
- More likely to be in material deprivation

Further details are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment, Annex B.

All residents of in-scope buildings will benefit from improvements to building safety with the greatest benefit for those most at risk, including

- Older people
- Disabled people
- Those living in single parent households

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<sup>4</sup> [Fire safety in multi-occupied buildings: residents research](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Influences on Resident's Fire Safety Behaviours: An Evidence Review](#)

Screening				
Lifestyles	Positive	Negative	Vulnerable Group Affected	Rationale
No impact				
Social and Community Influences on Health – N/A	Positive	Negative	Vulnerable Group Affected	Rationale
	Moderate		All residents of in-scope buildings	The Bill aims to improve the safety of multi-occupied residential buildings. Therefore, those living in in-scope buildings are less likely to face the prospect of having to relocate from their community because of a building safety incident. Social support systems would be maintained.
Mental Wellbeing	Positive	Negative	Vulnerable Group Affected	Rationale
Mental Health	Moderate		All residents of in-scope buildings	The Bill aims to improved residents' wellbeing by providing reassurance to residents that risks to their safety and their homes have been reduced. This would mitigate negative mental health and wellbeing impacts arising from any existing uncertainty and concerns as to the safety of peoples' homes. Reduced risk/ perception of risk is expected to derive from the cumulative impact of:

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more frequent fire risk assessments and structural risk assessments,</li> <li>• the provision of information to residents to help develop more transparent and collaborative relationships over building safety,</li> <li>• a more effective system of handling complaints, whereby residents have an increased confidence that issues are raised and resolved faster, and</li> <li>• the introduction of building safety authorities, which will give further confidence to residents that dedicated action is being taken to ensure that the fire and structural safety risks in their households are minimised.</li> </ul> <p>Emerging research suggest that the community mental health impact of minor fires could be significant, but there is not yet enough of an evidence base to enable a reliable estimate of the monetised value of any reduction.</p>
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<b>Living and Environmental Conditions affecting health</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups Affected</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Physical environment - housing	Significant		<p>All kinds of people live in in-scope buildings. Those most at risk from building safety incidents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people</li> <li>• Disabled people</li> <li>• Those living in single parent households</li> </ul>	<p>The Bill aims to improve the safety of multi-occupied residential buildings for all residents. The new regulatory system will ensure that it is clear who is accountable for assessing and managing building safety risks in in-scope buildings. That person will also be responsible for actively engaging with residents on matters of building safety.</p> <p>The Bill aims to change the culture around complaints, encourage dialogue, communication and engagement, give residents a voice and enable a complaints system for residents to raise any safety concerns with the building safety authority. This should enable residents to be safer and to feel safer in their home.</p>
<b>Economic Conditions Affecting health</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups Affected</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
The new regime will bring costs for residents	Moderate	Moderate/minimal	The costs for residents are likely to have a greater impact on those at highest risk of poverty, including:	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>The new regime will bring costs for residents. The costs are expected to be greater for</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some older households, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people who rent their homes, privately or through the social sector</li> <li>Older Black and Asian people</li> <li>Older single women</li> </ul> </li> <li>Young households (16-24)</li> <li>Households with children, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single parent households</li> <li>Households with 3 or more children</li> <li>Black or Asian households</li> <li>Households living in rented homes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Disabled households, particularly those who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live in households with both disabled adults and children, or</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>residents of category 1 buildings (those 18m and over), than for residents of category 2 buildings (those under 18m).</p> <p>There may be additional costs for residents if they breach duties not to interfere with building safety devices.</p> <p>Further information about the costs for residents are included in the Regulatory Impact Assessment.</p> <p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>A benefit is that the new regime is expected to provide greater confidence to mortgage and insurance providers that in-scope buildings represent adequate collateral for loans. In particular for buildings 18m and over, the new regime is expected to improve confidence for lenders borrowing against flats that they are currently unable to. Thus increasing the availability and value of these products to leaseholders and residents.</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have long-term, limiting mental impairments</li> <li>• Black, Asian or minority ethnic households</li> <li>• Low-income households</li> </ul>	<p>Similarly, the new regime should help reduce the tendency for insurers to ask for higher premiums for building insurance because of the difficulties insurers face in differentiating between safe and unsafe buildings. Evidence on building insurance costs has however been mixed to date – whilst there is evidence that insurance rates have increased when risks are identified; also that the process of remediation work is seen as introducing additional short-term risks<sup>6</sup>, but evidence is less clear that upon remediation, rates reduce.</p>
<b>Access and quality of services</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups Affected</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
No impact				
<b>Macro-economic, Environmental and sustainability Factors</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups Affected</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
No impact				

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<sup>6</sup> [Report on insurance for multi-occupancy buildings](#)

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## **Summary of Potential Health Impacts Identified**

### Positive Impacts

The Bill is intended to improve the safety of multi-occupied residential buildings and reduce the risk of building safety incidents occurring. This will benefit all residents of in-scope buildings but particularly those at greatest risk from building safety incidents, including:

- Older people
- Disabled people
- Those living in single parent households

Resident engagement will be at the heart of the new regime. The regime will empower residents with enhanced rights, clear routes for raising concerns and complaints and a stronger voice in matters that affect their homes. This should help residents to be safer and feel safer.

### Negatives Impacts

The new regime will bring costs for residents and these will have the greatest impact on those at highest risk of poverty.

### Impacts on Vulnerable groups

Those most vulnerable to building safety incidents will potentially experience a more positive impact from improved building safety.

Those at greatest risk of poverty will potentially experience a more negative impact from the cost of the new regime.

### **Are the impacts that have been identified above enough to warrant a more comprehensive health impact assessment?**

We do not believe a more comprehensive health impact assessment is necessary.

### **Do any additional actions need to be taken as a result of this HIA process?**

No, we will keep the HIA under review and will consider the health impacts in the implementation of the regime and will carry out further HIA if required to accompany the development of secondary legislation and guidance.

### **Have there or will there be other impact assessments conducted?**

This HIA forms part of a full Integrated Impact Assessment for the Bill.