

KEEPING COMMUNAL AREAS CLEAR AND SAFE



Keeping communal areas clear and safe |
Fire safety in your home | Birmingham City Council

 **RESET**

 **RESHAPE**

 **RESTART**

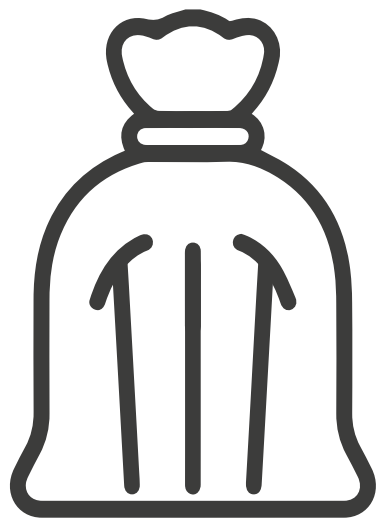
KEEPING COMMUNAL AREAS CLEAR AND SAFE

This leaflet gives you important information about safety in communal areas in your home/premises and what you need to do to help keep your home safe.

What are communal areas?

Communal areas are the areas that everyone can access including:

- entrance halls & lobbies
- landings
- corridors
- staircases
- meter cupboards
- service and telecoms cupboards
- lifts
- shared walkway access balconies
- bin chute rooms



Why do communal areas need to be kept clear?

We have a legal obligation to ensure our premises and communal areas meet fire and general safety standards. We have to make sure effective fire evacuation arrangements are in place. It is important that communal areas are kept clear of items so that if there is a fire, there is nothing that could:

- prevent people escaping from the building
- stop the fire and rescue services carrying out their duties
- give off toxic smoke and gas when burning
- explode due to high temperatures (e.g. batteries)
- cause the fire to spread more quickly

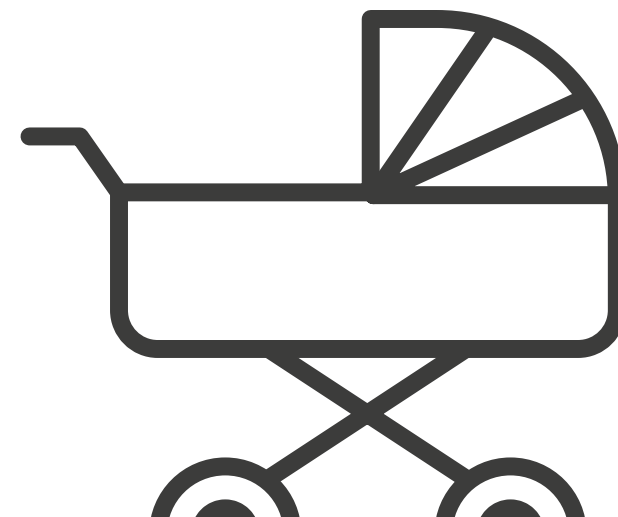
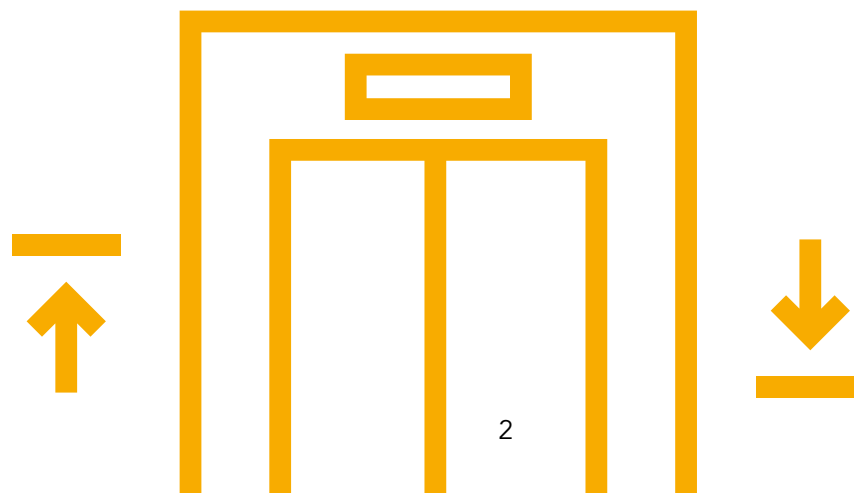
Using the communal areas - what you need to know

Part of our duties and responsibilities is to prevent problems before they become a danger to residents. To help us keep you and other residents as safe as we can please follow these requirements.

In the communal areas:

- do not store your possessions or items
- do not leave rubbish, boxes or unwanted items
- do not place furniture or display decorative items such as pictures

These measures have been developed to help minimise the risks to our Residents in the event of a fire.



What is not permitted in communal areas?

- any kind of rubbish or discarded boxes/ cardboard
- soft furnishings
- carpets
- pushchairs & prams
- bicycles or scooters, manual or electric
- mobility scooters or wheelchairs
- children's toys
- any electrical items
- any item of furniture or decorative items e.g. bookcases/pictures
- shoes, other footwear, shoe racks, clothing or other combustible materials
- wheelchairs
- any items that contain fuel, even if empty

What will happen to items left in the communal area?

Both officers of the Council and other parties will inspect the communal areas regularly to check that no personal items are being stored there. They will leave a notice on any items left in the communal area asking the owner to remove it by a specified date. If the owner does not remove the item, **we will remove the item and dispose of it. If the items is of value we will store for 28 days and a charge applied for storage and/or retrieval.**

Why are we taking action now?

Recent changes in fire safety legislation have placed extra responsibilities on us as your landlord. These measures help minimise the risks to you and help us meet our legal obligations. If there was a fire in your flat and you had to evacuate using the communal areas, we must make sure that there is nothing in the communal areas to stop people getting out safely or prevents the fire service from doing its job. For example: some items left in communal areas could fuel a fire, give off toxic smoke that could affect you or cause you to trip up and hinder your safe escape.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 says we must:

- carry out risk assessments which includes reviewing escape routes such as communal areas
- make sure that the structure of our buildings and the communal areas within them meet fire and safety regulations
- work closely with the fire and rescue service to make sure risks to residents in flatted accommodation are minimised



Additional safety advice – what you can do:

Individual flat entrance doors (Q Mark Doors) and internal wooden communal fire doors - No alterations or replacement of doors, door frames, door furniture should be made. Please DO NOT interfere with or remove any door closer that is provided on a door. Also please DO NOT prop open any doors. It is not permitted to fit anything requiring penetration through or into the door or frame including the fitting of ring style doorbells or any other device. Where items are fitted to the door these will be removed and the costs for repair and recertification of the fire door may be passed back to you.

Smoking - It is against the law to smoke in any communal area. In addition, we operate a strict NO SMOKING Policy in all communal areas which MUST be adhered to. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.

Balconies - Present a high level of risk. If you have a balcony, any stored items must be non-combustible. BBQ's, fuel containers and gas bottles are prohibited.

Rubbish - Please note that it is a breach of your tenancy, lease or licence to dump rubbish. You must make use of the refuse chutes available to you. If rubbish is proven to have been left by you or your visitor, you will be charged for its removal.

E-bikes, E-scooters and Mobility

Scooters - We do not allow mobility scooters, e-bikes, or similar devices to be stored or charged in communal areas of any building we manage. This is unless a facility has been provided and you have our permission to use it. If we do not give our approval, you are not authorised to store or charge outside of your property.

If you have a mobility scooter that cannot be safely stored and charged inside your flat, please contact your Housing Officer to discuss suitable storage away from the communal area.

