



PLAY AREAS & PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY POLICY



Play Areas and Play Equipment Safety Policy			
Last Reviewed	April 2026	Next Review	April 2027
Responsible Officer	Chief Operations Officer		

Policy Statement

Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) aims to demonstrate adherence to a safety-first culture, maintaining high standards of health and safety for residents who live in our homes or use our buildings, as well as employees and contractors who work for us. We strive constantly to achieve 100% compliance with all regulatory and statutory requirements. We will take all reasonably practicable steps to minimise risk and ensure compliance with the law.

Detailed procedures (Management Plans) are in place for each health and safety compliance function, including Play Areas and Play Equipment. The Play Areas and Play Equipment (Management Plan) is available separately to this policy.

We commit to continuously review changes in legislation and will ensure we continue to provide a full and appropriate response. This policy will be amended accordingly as changes occur.

We will ensure that only suitably qualified and competent individuals and contractors are employed to inspect, manage, develop and maintain the Play Areas and Play Equipment within its buildings and outside spaces to ensure they are safe, inclusive, legally compliant and supportive of children’s development.

Policy Detail

Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for Customer Safety lies with the Chief Executive and Leadership Team. Clear accountability should be defined for:

- Housing teams
- Maintenance teams
- External contractors

- Independent inspectors

Authority to amend can only be undertaken by the Policy owner with the relevant Delegated approvals.

For information on interpretations and instructions staff should contact the Subject Matter expert or Policy owner and consult the management plan. Under no circumstances should any deviation be permitted without prior approval as above.

When developing or upgrading play areas, considerations must include:

- Competent contractors must be used
- Location suitability
- Community needs
- Future maintenance costs
- Required permissions and surveys

Inspection & Maintenance Regime

Types of Inspections:

- Routine Visual Inspections – weekly (depending on use).
- Operational Inspections – Monthly.
- Annual Independent Inspection – By accredited inspector.
- Post Installation Inspections – For any new or upgraded equipment.

Maintenance

- Defects will be categorised by risk to determine the applicable response times. These will typically follow our standard 28 calendar day timeline for Routine Repairs.
- Unsafe equipment will be isolated or removed immediately on identification.

Resident Communication

- Where ever possible, appropriate signage will be used to inform users and local residents of the expected timescale for any maintenance or repair.

Managing Non-Standard or Domestic Type Equipment

In locations that may contain tenant installed or DIY items. Freebridge will:

- Assess risk even if equipment does not meet with legislation (EN 1176).
- Remove items posing unacceptable risk.
- Evaluate domestic items case by case using competent assessors.

Community Engagement – Freebridge will:

- Encourage resident involvement in play space development.
- Promote an understanding of shared responsibilities.

Incident & Accident Reporting

- All incidents must be recorded and reviewed

Performance Controls and Business Risk

Compliance with this policy is monitored by the Contracts Manager.

Performance in the delivery of the service is assessed by the Head of Repairs and Maintenance through a monthly review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are provided to Leadership Team to ensure strong governance and oversight.

A fundamental review of this policy will be carried out every three years, or sooner subject to legal and regulatory changes, or if internal changes require it.

Appendix 1

Related legislation and regulatory instruments.

(Please note that the below is not intended to be exhaustive)

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Definition of Disability under the Equality Act 2010
- RSH Consumer Standards - Homes: 1.1; 1.2; 2.2.1
- BS1176-7– Playground Equipment Standard
- BS14974 – Skate Park Safety Requirements and test methods
- BS EN 1177:2018 – Impact Attenuating Playground Surfacing
- BS EN 16899 – Sports and recreational equipment
- BS EN 15312 – Free Access to Multiple Sports Equipment
- BS 16630 – Permanently Installed Outdoor Fitness Equipment
- Occupiers Liability Act 1954 & 1984