

# Resident-led Organisations with Higher-Risk Buildings

Tim Cullis · 4 August 2025

## Some pointers if you are just starting out (part 1)

**Raise funds for Building Safety Act [BSA] expenditure:** You are going to need to get outside assistance for much of the work involved in complying with the legislation, and without funds at your disposal you won't be able to proceed. How much you need depends on your buildings and location, but if you are going to use consultants for most of the work you need to think in terms of £60,000 to £90,000 over the next couple of years. More on this in 'part 2' post.

The government recommends that Building Safety Compliance costs are shown as a separate expenditure heading on service charge demands and service charge accounts.

**Small steps build confidence:** For sure this is a complex area, but making a start, even a small one, will build your confidence. Think of the adage, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step', or 'The way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time'.

Start by using your managing agent [MA] for tasks they can help complete: Your MA—if you have one—will be going through the same learning curve as the rest of us when it comes to the BSA, but it's likely the MA already acts as the 'Responsible Person' when it comes to the duties under the Fire Safety Order 2005. These include organising and acting on your Fire Risk Assessment [FRA]. So go through all the FRA action points—with your MA if you have one—and either clear them, or, if you decide the remedial costs are out of proportion to the benefits, document that decision. If you can't clear them right away, document your planned schedule to action them.

You are required to review your FRA on an annual basis and record that fact. It is generally recommended (but not compulsory) that a new FRA be commissioned every 3 to 5 years.

**Collect resident information:** You need to show that your Resident Engagement Strategy [RES] is tailored to both your building and your residents—which also includes absentee owners. So draw up a survey form to collect the details of your residents (see example below). Don't be dejected if 30% of properties don't reply, some people just won't engage, but you will still have done your duty.

**Storing information:** I'll discuss data and paper storage in a later post (part 3), but all the data you hold needs to be in a digital format, so think about where you can initially safely store it.

**Your first document:** And then create your first document—the Resident Register using the information from the survey. A spreadsheet is a good way to work with this type of tabular data.

**Using Google Forms:** An alternative approach is to construct a survey using Google Forms. Residents can submit the information from their smartphone or computer which is automatically added to a Google Sheets spreadsheet, from where you can collect the data and use it to populate your Resident Register.

## Some pointers if you are just starting out (part 2)

In part 1, I suggested you might need to raise £60,000 to £90,000 (£50,000 to £75,000 plus VAT) in respect of Building Safety Act compliance costs; this post looks at the components that make up this sum. The quotes I use are for our development in SW London. This was constructed in the 1960s and comprises three 8-storey buildings with 108 flats and 165 residents. If your development is, for example, a single recently built 7-storey building in northern England with 28 flats and 50 residents, I would expect your costs to be less. Conversely a 24-storey building with 300 residents in central London would likely be more.

**The total of the items below is £68,600 to £98,300.** Our actual costs were less as we did do some of the work in-house but you need relevant skills including a forensic approach to research in order to do this is.

**Resident matters:** The lackadaisical reaction by Kensington Council to safety concerns raised by Grenfell residents before the fire was lambasted by the subsequent inquiry. As a consequence, the Resident Engagement Strategy [RES] together with its associated Building Safety Complaints System [BSCS] is one of the three documents you need to submit to the Building Safety Regulator as part of your application for a Building Assessment Certificate [BAC].

The RES needs to be tailored to your buildings and your residents (survey needed), you need to show you know who actually lives in your buildings (Resident Register), what their vulnerabilities are (Vulnerable Register) and you need ways to inform residents of current safety matters (Residents Handbook). We had quotes of £3,510 and £4,200 for the RES/BSCS. We chose to do the survey, registers and handbook in-house, but based on the long length of time it took, an outside company would have charged another £4,000 to £4,800. Likely total £7,500 to £9,000.

**Mandatory Occurrence Reporting [MOR]:** This is a system to report serious life-threatening events, and the fact the MOR is another of the three components you need to submit to the Regulator shows the importance of this document. Think in terms of £1,200 to £1,500.

**Emergency Response Pack [ERP]:** To meet the 2022 Fire Regulations, you need to provide a Premises Information Box [PIB] for the Fire and Rescue Service. London Fire Brigade insists on the Gerda PIB which is £1,200; fortunately I managed to persuade LFB that we only needed one box, not three.

Inside the box goes the ERP which amongst other things includes building plans drawn for firefighting purposes. Our buildings had four layout variations for different storeys, and we had various quotes for the plans ranging from £3,240 through £4,860 to £7,824. Other ERP components and liaison with LFB £1,200. There are other aspects of the 2022 Fire Regulations to comply with, which we did in-house but might add another £600. Likely total £5,000 to £7,000.

**Fire Safety:** We already had a Fire Risk Assessment [FRA] from 2023 but the Regulator asked for a Fire Strategy Report [FSR]. This was produced by the company that did the FRA at a cost of £6,756 but it wasn't at all acceptable and I will probably comment more about this in a future thread.

**Maintenance tracking:** The key component is a Mechanical/Electrical Asset Register [MEAR] that details the specification of all the equipment in the common area, who maintains it, the recommended maintenance frequency, the actual frequency, when last actioned, etc. To this is added the various checks and inspection logs for lift recall, emergency lighting, communal fire doors, flat front doors, extinguishers, dry risers, water tank temperatures, ladders, etc. We had quotes for the MEAR of £3,413 and £3,840. The checking and inspection logs were developed in-house and I would estimate another £1,200 to 1,500 if done by an outside company. Likely cost £3,600 to £5,300.

**Fire door inspections:** The quote we received to carry out quarterly inspections on our 101 communal fire doors and annual inspections of the 108 flat entrance doors was an eye-watering £8,694 which didn't include any remedial works. We had already sacked the previous company who never fixed doors properly and our caretaker is an excellent woodworker handyman, so we booked him on a recognised training course and are undertaking this in-house.

It will be almost certain that many fire doors will fail gap and threshold guidance and remedial costs can easily be £100 per door. We have 103 communal fire doors and 108 flat entrance doors and have set aside an interim remediation budget of £12,000.

**Structural matters:** In public guidance documents, the Regulator says a visual survey might suffice (ours cost £2,400) but in webinars their staff ask, *"has the PAP demonstrated that they understand how their building was constructed to the extent needed to prevent and mitigate the risks from structural failure?"* I suspect we will be asked to carry out an intrusive survey, and possibly even a compartmentation survey, which together might be another £5,000 to £7,000.

**Safety Case Report [SCR]:** The ideal way to prepare the SCR is to firstly build your depository of 'Golden Thread' information, then to take snapshot aspects of that data, together with risk identification, matrices of consequences, and moderation

strategies, to build the Building Safety Case [BSC]. Then to summarise the BSC in a short 30-40 page SCR. Our initial quote for the SCR was over £56,000, though that did include some of the tasks described above. The company we eventually used cost £18,000. Like all other companies working in the Safety Act area, they are also on a learning curve. I saw massive gaps in their report and far too much 'fillers'.

Faced with the likelihood that our BAC application would fail (and would incur extra Regulation assessment costs), I developed our own SCR which together with painstaking research took nearly 120 hours.

**Managing Agent fees:** Our MA worked with the SCR company to try to find historic information that, of course, was missing on a 60-year old building. Our MA looks after another 20 HRBs and we were their first client to be directed to apply for a BAC, so yes, they have been on a learning curve as well. The MA has been most supportive, appears to treat some of the work as education, and I estimate their charges over the 2.5 years will be about £5,000 (includes some software licences).

**IT system:** We implemented a comprehensive data depository more than ten years ago and are in the process of reorganising this into the structure of a Golden Thread depository (more of which in a later post) but in the meantime have purchased a new iMac, A3 printer/scanner, laminator and other bits for in-house use at a cost of about £2,500.

**Building Safety Regulator:** I admit to being rather naive in thinking the £300 fee for the BAC application covered the assessment costs. I was flabbergasted to learn the regulator charges £151 per hour to perform the assessments and the first six successful candidates were presented with bill of over £20,000 each. Our development is smaller than those six, but I suspect our charges will be £12,000 to £15,000.

**Note:** These costs don't include the ongoing Golden Thread maintenance or the time taken in our Safety Liaison Team meetings.