



## Common Sense Approach to High Rise Health & Safety

*In 2013, when a property management company needed help to carry out Health & Safety Risk Assessments for the communal areas of the many blocks of flats they managed, they called upon Stepping Stones for Business. The common sense approach to the law for these specific aspects of the properties has enabled Common Ground to stay on the right side of the law and reassure both landlords and tenants of the buildings' safety.*

### Customer Background

Common Ground is a property management business managing over 500 units of property across 22 different estates. The business manages the communal areas of these properties including gardens, rooves, stairwells and corridors on behalf of the landlords.

The landlords can be private landlords and other property management companies that outsource the maintenance of specific aspects of the properties they manage.

Common Ground will repair, replace and maintain all aspects of these communal areas, to ensure they are safe for the tenants at all times.

### The Issue

Alan Draper, Managing Director of Common Ground was aware that the Government had included communal areas for buildings within the Health & Safety legislation. The issue was that, taken literally, the law requires communal areas to comply with legislation in the same way as any other building spaces used by people e.g. shopping precincts.

He needed to ensure that all communal areas complied with the law, without needing to take the 'letter of the law' to extremes, as this was simply not practical for the areas he was responsible for. The

other issue was that he needed to demonstrate to the landlords that the areas he managed and maintained were compliant, meaning they were not at personal risk and the tenants needed reassurance that their communal areas were safe and risk-free.

It seemed like a tough balance to achieve, one that a few Health and Safety consultants approached and which didn't seem to be able to provide the right solution to the problem. The situation was becoming critical and if the right approach and expertise wasn't found soon, Common Ground's untarnished reputation for excellent customer service was going to be at stake.

### Stepping Stones' Solution

Rebecca was introduced to Alan by his bookkeeper. After an initial conversation, Alan felt that finally Rebecca could be the answer to his problem, as she understood the issues he was having and the practicalities of trying to adhere to the law.

Following on from their meeting they visited one of Common Ground's properties. After the site visit, Rebecca provided a Fire and General Risk Assessment of the property, providing very clear High, Medium and Low risk issues, with an associated action plan. This Risk Assessment used photographs to clearly demonstrate what the risks were and provided the solutions to address them and make sure the

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communal areas were compliant to Health & Safety law. The full report also included a 3-page summary, which is invaluable to help Alan undertake the required actions to manage the properties appropriately.

*“Rebecca applies Health & Safety legislation to the problem in hand. She interprets the law and applies common sense to its appropriate application, specifically in our situation. Her reports are invaluable. They are clear, concise and they save me a huge amount of time, which enables me to manage the properties better, saving client’s money and keeping the properties up to par. Rebecca is not just an assessor, she’s an important resource that is a pleasure to work with. As a result of her approach she is now in the process of looking after the rest of our sites.”*

Alan Draper, Managing Director, Common Ground

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### About Stepping Stones for Business

Stepping Stones for Business (SSFB), led by principal consultant Rebecca Russell, is no ordinary quality and safety consultancy. With our head office based in rural Oxfordshire, we are a growing company with handpicked franchisees and associates setting up throughout the UK. SSFB offers a reassuring and comprehensive consultancy and support service to companies regionally. Our consultants are local. We get to know our clients, understand their culture and provide a personal, tailored service, supported by the comprehensive range of services that you would expect from a national company. That’s what sets us apart and makes us different from the rest.

