



Fire Safety in Tall Buildings

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Sub-Group

Members update:

- Role of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum
- Principal requirements on fire safety
- Fire safety in high rise buildings
- Managing the current situation
- Working with local communities



Tower Hamlets Housing Form (THHF)

- The Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) is a strategic partnership between the Council and principal local Registered Providers in the Borough
- The Forum has a range of sub groups delivering an annual work plan
- The Asset Management sub group leads on fire safety

Asset Management Sub Group

- Develops good practice and continuous improvement
- Tracks regulatory and legislative changes
- Recognises different business and operational approaches
- Shares best practice and explores opportunities for engagement and joint working
- Considers all aspects of work in relation to core Asset Management activities, including responsive repairs, major works, fire risks, asbestos and management, delivery of local offers and occupational therapy work.

Asset Management Sub Group

Fire safety activity

- In 2014 developed an approach in partnership with the Borough and the Fire Service
- Set out 31 best practice recommendations for housing providers to consider and take forward within their respective organisations to inform corporate and operational arrangements.

Asset Management Sub Group

- Mapped the number and location of all high rise schemes in the Borough
- Supported a presentation on the Penfold fire exercise conducted by Barking & Dagenham to help inform organisational incident response plans.
- Supported a presentation on the LFB/ Poplar HARCA joint working initiative highlighting best practice to reduce incidents of fire linked to ASB.

Asset Management Sub Group

- Identified vulnerability categories and high risk groups used by the LFB when targeting home visits and/or tackling fires.
- Considered Fire Risk Assessments and the Building Regulations for new build schemes.
- Reviewed fire safety and leasehold homes
- Supported and monitored trials of LFB Strathclyde information plates which have now moved to a digital platform.

Legal duties on landlords

- Requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks for Flats Guidance 2011
- RRO applies to the common spaces of flats and maisonettes, houses in multiple occupation and common spaces of sheltered accommodation
- Principal objective - To provide a minimum fire safety standard in all premises

Legal duties on landlords

- Requirement for organisations to identify a Designated Responsible Person (RP)
- Required to carry out certain fire safety duties which include ensuring the general fire precautions are satisfactory and conducting a Fire Risk Assessment
- Fire safety design in new blocks of flats is governed by the Building Regulations 2010

Managing the current situation

- Offered help and support to Kensington and Chelsea – vacant homes/ staff
- Review of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and actions required
- Produced and issued fire safety advice for residents
- Supported front line teams with guidance and enforcement advice concerning items stored in communal areas
- Data return to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on all Tall Buildings. Data also provided at Borough.

Managing the current situation

- Web sites updated with information for residents, stakeholders and staff
- Identified blocks where cladding, in particular Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) may be a feature
- Joint meeting between Council and housing providers to review arrangements and understand how landlords were responding
- Common Housing Register review of voids to support decants if required
- Contacted Managing Agents for the position on blocks not directly managed

Fire safety in high rise buildings – position as at 30th June 2017

Current status:

- 540 tall buildings (over 6 storeys or 18 metres)
- 410 owned by RPs
- 130 owned by Council
- Department for Communities and Local Government required all ACM cladding to be tested
- 11 blocks owned by RPs not passed Building Research Establishment (BRE) cladding tests. Further results awaited.

Response by RPs following cladding tests

- Detailed communication and advice for residents in blocks affected
- Review and implementation of recommendations from the Department for Communities and Local Government
- London Fire Service joint working
- Development of individual strategies to take issue forward
- Ongoing changing picture

Going forward

- Continue to work closely with Borough's Fire Service
- Ongoing review of fire safety advice to customers if the position changes
- Partnership working to review good practice in fire risk assessment
- Consider early and long term findings from Grenfell Tower inquiry and impact on building and fire regulations
- Robust housing management – communal areas and balconies
- Asset Management group to create separate Fire Safety work stream.



Questions