



**Network  
Homes**

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**Summary of Cumnor House, Helmi House and  
Lidcote House resident meeting held on 23  
September 2020**

October 2020

## Timeline of what's happened so far...

**June 2017** – Grenfell Tower fire.

**December 2019** – EWS1 form introduced as a way to reassure lenders.

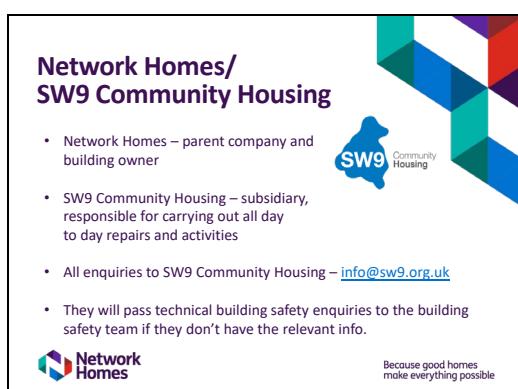
**January 2020** – previous government Advice Notes consolidated into one document that states that ACM cladding must be removed from residential buildings of any height. New external wall investigations are required for all tall building. Network Homes identify Helmi House, Cumnor House and Lidcote House as in need of investigation.

**February 2020** – investigations into the external wall systems take place. The findings of the investigation are being analysed by the independent fire engineer – this takes time as it is a complex situation.

**March 2020** – £1bn government building safety fund announced.

**August 2020** – we wrote to you to let you know that there were issues with your building and we needed to carry out some remediation work. The government's Building Safety Fund opened for applications.

## Presentation slides



## Health and safety

**Fire evacuation strategy**

- Cumnor, Lidcote and Helmi House are all a stay put strategy
- This means you should only evacuate the building if you are directly affected by fire or smoke.

Your safety is our top priority

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## External Wall Investigations

**2 types of external wall**

- Brick cavity walls
- Aluminium cladding



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## External Wall Investigations

**What have we found at your building?**

- Missing cavity fire barriers behind aluminium cladding and around windows
- Lack of fire stopping around extract ventilation
- Missing or incorrectly fitted insulation



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## External Wall Investigations

**What will we be doing?**

- We are working to protect residents interests
- In discussions with the original contractor about liabilities & remediations
- Will aim to start remediations by March 2021 if not before
- Expect works will take between 6-12 months to complete
- All works will be done from outside. We will try to minimise noise and other disruption
- EWS1 form (building safety certificate) will be available when work is complete.

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## Managing Costs

- We're working hard on your behalf to pursue other avenues of funding
- We're working with the original contractor on the cost of the project
- We're putting together an application to the government's £1bn Building Safety Fund
- We're looking at the building's NHBC warranty
- This doesn't guarantee leaseholders/shared owners won't see any costs for this project.

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## Q&A

- Any further questions, Please contact SW9: 0207 326 3700 or [Leasehold.Enquiries@Sw9.org.uk](mailto:Leasehold.Enquiries@Sw9.org.uk).
- Check the website for further info: Network Homes website – Building, fire safety and cladding
- Communications/FRAs etc available to view here: Network Homes website – My Building, FRAs, documents and newsletters

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## Construction work

### What are the timelines for the work?

We hope to start on site by March 2021 at the latest, and then expect the project to take between 6 and 12 months to complete. We've not yet appointed a contractor or got an agreed programme of work, but will share more information when we have anything confirmed.

**Another building took four months to have the scaffolding approved by Lambeth Council. What is the plan to avoid this delay?**

This building experienced a delay due to access rights on a public road. There is no such issue for this project and therefore we believe the scaffolding approval will go forward quickly and smoothly.

**Is the building work expected to take 6-12 months from the start in March?**

Yes, we hope to start on site at the latest in March, and then expect work to take between six and 12 months from March 2021.

**Are you expecting full scaffolding of the building? Will scaffolding go up in front of buildings?**

Until we have a full programme of work and have appointed a contractor to do the work, we're not able to state whether full scaffolding will be required. When we have a programme, we will be able to let you know the details of the construction project. We will do what we can to reduce any disruption to you during the work. Details of this will be released when we have a full programme.

**Are any works going to impact my interior and if so, what compensation are you providing for this?**

We don't expect internal work to be required for this project.

**When do you expect to know the actual start date for the works?**

We'll know the exact start date once we've appointed a contractor to carry out the work on-site. We'll work with them to produce a programme of work and then we'll be able to share an exact start date with you.

**Some private residents are looking to sell. Will you carry out works on private block first?**

Once we have appointed a contractor, we will put together a programme of work. This is something that will be decided at that stage.

**Have all the subcontractors provided the required detail of construction to enable a plan of action to be put into place?**

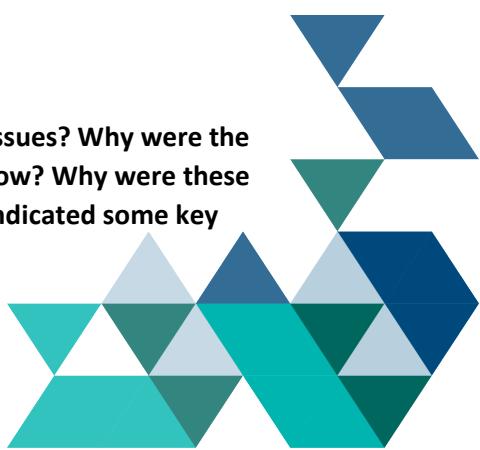
As we've not yet appointed a contractor for the project, we don't have a detailed plan of action yet.

**NH appointed Morgan Lambert to inspect Lidcote flats recently for gas, there is no gas. How can I trust you can organise these repairs when errors occur?**

The Building Safety team has a wealth of experience in dealing with remediation projects and the technical team is very experienced. We have a dedicated team which brings together representatives from all areas of the business, as Network Homes takes this very seriously. Your safety is our top priority, and as well as our experienced team, we are working with numerous external organisations who are very experienced in this type of work.

## Safety work

**Why were buildings signed off on completion with such glaring fire safety issues? Why were the issues which now need to be remediated not picked up at any point until now? Why were these issues not picked up at the point the building was completed? The survey indicated some key**



**issues with the original construction. What process was not followed at the time of Practical Completion (Fire cavity barriers)?**

When the buildings were constructed, there are a variety of checks in place. This is a national issue affecting thousands of buildings up and down the country. It has become apparent since Grenfell that there has been a failure of Building Control and regulation. Network Homes are now doing all we can to rectify this issue and to protect leaseholders from costs.

**The majority of issues are not related to Grenfell style cladding. Why has it taken 8 years since completion to identify these safety issues?**

While the Grenfell Tower fire spread rapidly because of the type of cladding on the walls, there was also a variety of other construction issues identified in the aftermath. The Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 has outlined how the fire behaved on the night and how the construction issues added to the spread of the fire. Issues included the insulation and problems with missing cavity barriers and poor installation of window systems. The government's guidance since then has not only focused on cladding, but also on other fire safety issues on buildings such as cavity barriers and insulation. While Grenfell has highlighted cladding as an issue, it also highlighted other issues that the industry needs to address.

**Am I correct in saying that there aren't any problems with the cladding on the building? Can this be put in writing please.**

The cladding on the building has been inspected as part of the external wall investigations and has been found to be of an acceptable standard. The project does not involve any work to replace the cladding. The main issue is the installation standard of cavity barriers.

**Who is Network Homes' fire engineer? Can you please provide the reports by Network Homes' fire engineer?**

Our fire engineer is International Fire Consultants (IFC), a renowned firm of independent fire engineers. They are extremely experienced and one of the top organisations in the country. We are very pleased to have them on board for this project and have been successfully working with them on other projects.

At the moment, we will not be releasing the reports – we've been advised by our legal team that we shouldn't release the documents until we have a formal agreement. This could undermine or even jeopardise our case against other parties. We have told you the findings of the reports.

**Can you provide details of the cladding installed including the aluminium panels, cavity barriers and insulation?**

The cladding is an aluminium cladding with a honeycomb core. The cladding product is called AME Proteus HR aluminium. This is different to the aluminium composite cladding with a combustible core or polyethylene.

The insulation behind the cladding is Kingspan K15 insulation board.

There are two different types of cavity barriers manufactured by Rockwool and Lamatherm.



**What have you been doing behind the scenes since the initial remediation work and today's call? Are you doing all you can here?**

We've been working with our fire engineer to determine a course of action going forward and have also been meeting with the original contractor to try and reach a resolution. Generally we have been active in lobbying the government to try and improve the landscape for leaseholders who are dealing with building safety issues.

## Costs

**Who will pay for the remedial works? What's steps are you taking to limit or negate any financial impact of this remediation work to leaseholders?**

We're meeting with the original contractor and feel positive about the potential for them to pay for the work. We're also submitting an application to the government's building safety fund which may help to protect you from costs. The buildings have an NHBC warranty and we're also looking at whether this is an option. We've been working on your behalf as leaseholders having to pay is a last resort and not something we want to happen.

If we're not able to get funding from these other avenues, then we would have to pass costs onto leaseholders as stated in the lease. This is a last resort and we're hopeful this won't happen, but we want to make you aware that it is a possibility, small as it may be.

**What are the expected costs for the remediation work?**

Until we have appointed a contractor, we won't know the exact cost of the project.

**We're just being given a list of options and we need to know who will be liable. If it will be the original contractor then we need to know when this will be confirmed. When roughly will we know costs?**

While it is not ideal, we are still only able to give you a list of the potential options for payment at this stage. We are hopeful that the original contractor will agree with us to cover some or all of the cost, but until we have a formal agreement, we aren't able to say either way. Once we do have a concrete decision from the original contractor, we will share that information with you.

**Has the main contractor that carried out the original works admitted liability for the defects i.e. missing cavity barriers and fire stopping? Is there a claim in progress for the costs of rectification work? Is there no legal ground against them?**

We're currently having positive discussions with the original contractor and would prefer not to have to go down a legal route. This would inevitably be expensive and time-consuming and could extend this project by months or even years. We're confident that we can reach a resolution without legal action.

**You say that 'all the signs are' that the original contractor will pay for remediation. Can you say more please about the discussions and why you are confident they will pay?**

The talks with the original contractor are progressing well and they are engaging with us on the issues at your blocks. We do not have a definitive decision yet but are hopeful that they will cover the cost. We will let you know if we reach a formal agreement with them.



**Since Network Homes own the building, appointed the contractor to build the property and this relationship failed, why should anything fall to the property owner to pay?**

Your lease states that you are responsible for any repair costs required at your building – building safety costs are included in this.

However, we are still working hard to reach a resolution with the original contractor as charging leaseholders is a last resort. We are also making an application to the government's £1bn Building Safety Fund.

**As there are defects to the build, what has been explored under the JCT / other contract to levy these through the supply chain to protect the leaseholder?**

We have a contract with the original contractor and there are liabilities under that contract. This is the basis of the meetings we are carrying out and we are hopeful that there will be a positive outcome.

**Are you or the original contractor holding any retention based on the contracts which could contribute to making good?**

The retention period has expired so there is no retention being held on the original contractor.

**Ample time has passed to discuss remedial works, program, method statements etc. What assurance can you provide there will be no delay until financially viable for NH?**

We've been working hard on this project and have experienced some delays because of the coronavirus crisis and lockdown. But now that things are easing up, we are in a good position and expect to be able to start on site by March 2021 latest. We are financially viable and do not need to wait for work to be carried out.

**If this will increase the cost of building insurance, what steps are being taken to recover that money from those that did defective work on the building? What commission % does Network Homes' insurance broker receive for the property owner's insurance placement?**

Network's building insurance is arranged on a portfolio basis. This means we have an insurance policy that covers our homes as a whole rather than on an individual building basis. We have been keeping our insurers advised and we are not expecting significant increases to insurance premiums as a result.

We deal directly with insurers ourselves and so there is no brokerage commission received by a broker.

**With the appointment of new contractors, what assurance can be provided that we shall not be charged inadvertently? Seville Developments have been appointed as new SW9 contractors for PPM related items. I want to make sure we are not paying for the remediation works unbeknown to us.**

This building safety work is considered separately than the planned maintenance work and would be charged separately.



## Lobbying government

**Is there anything we can do to push government to help by stepping in with mortgage lenders? We have already written to our MP.**

Writing to your MP is a great step towards this. You can also get involved with resident groups who have been working with the government to try and resolve building safety issues. UK Cladding Action Group (UKCAG) have become an influential group and are led by leaseholders from Bromley.

We also carry out a variety of media work to influence the government's position. If you'd be willing to speak to the media about the situation, please get in touch with [charlotte.blackburn@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.blackburn@networkhomes.org.uk).

## Communicating with you

**Rather than having to get in touch via SW9 Community Housing, why can't we just deal with Network Homes directly?**

SW9 Community Housing are employed to support residents on the Stockwell Park Estate. They will be able to support you in your queries and pass on anything that might require additional technical information.

**How often will we be given updates? And when is the next update?**

We'll let you know when there is a major update in the project – this could be if we reach an agreement with the original contractor or hear back from the government on our building safety fund application. We'll also write to you just to let you know of general progress if you haven't heard from us for three months.

Nearer the time when we have an agreed programme of work, we aim to hold another webinar so you can ask us more questions about the actual construction side of the project.

## EWS1 form and selling/staircasing

**What support are you giving to households whose family circumstances mean they cannot wait 1.5 years to move house?**

We have made changes to our subletting policy, where situations such as this now count as 'extenuating circumstances'. This means you will now be able to sublet your home if you need to move out for family reasons. Please get in touch with us on [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk) to find out more about subletting.

We are also working hard to get the remediation work carried out as safely and efficiently as possible, while also continuing to work on your behalf to reach a resolution with the original contractor.

**Will the EWS1 certificate be issued before full three blocks completed?**



The form can only be issued when remediation work is complete at your block. As we don't yet have a programme of work, it's not clear whether the project will be simultaneous on all three blocks or if each block will be done consecutively. Once we have an agreed programme, we will be able to be clearer on this point.

**What is being done to support those either looking to staircase or sell, in the absence of the EWS1? Have you had any examples or conversations around this thus far?**

We have relaxed our subletting policy and you are now able to sublet if you find yourself in a difficult position.

Due to the complex nature of this project, it will take time to get an EWS1 form for you. We're doing all we can to complete this project safely so that you will be able to progress with a sale or staircasing.

**In instances of Shared Ownership, will Network Homes buy back the shares of flats to enable leaseholders to move out?**

This is not something we would be able to do. The board has considered this as an option and has rejected it. This is not something the organisation has any discretion on.

**The building is "safe" given the lack of change in fire strategy. What can be provided to leaseholders and onward to lenders to give them confidence in lending to buyers? If we were able to say to lenders a clear timescale and that the liability for costs will go to original contractor then there would be some hope to lend.**

Our fire engineers have said that due to the nature of the issues at your building, there is no need to change the fire strategy. This does not however mean that there is no risk at these buildings which is why the remediation work does need to be carried out. In our experience, lenders will only accept the EWS1 form at the moment – information about timescales and cost liability will not affect that decision. We're working hard to lobby government and lenders on your behalf in the hopes that this changes, but until then only an EWS1 form will be accepted.

