



Network Homes

Safety in your building

9 December 2021

Grand Union Heights,
Northwick Road,
Alperton,
HA0

Dear residents,

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

www.networkhomes.org.uk
customerservice@
networkhomes.org.uk
0300 373 3000

Update on external wall remediation work and webinar on Wed 15 Dec, 6pm

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for sending out some information in the last letter that was incorrect – we've removed it from this version. We're aware you have had to put your trust in us to carry out this work on your behalf, and that something like this, while not related to the safety of your home, does not help you to have faith in us and our team. I can assure you, this won't happen again and I'd like to thank you for your understanding in this matter.

We wrote to you in October and explained then that Grand Union Heights has a complex external wall system and that we need to ensure the design works both structurally and has the correct fire protection. The latest action we have taken, guided by our design team, was to take samples of the existing external wall from Grand Union Heights in October, which are currently undergoing lab testing by Exova Warrington.

Why has it taken so long to get to this stage?

We are aware that we initially wrote to you about investigating your external wall system in December 2019 and have been working towards getting started "on-site" since then. Grand Union Heights has a complex design, including a timber frame, and so we have had to find and employ specialist engineers, who are in short supply, to ensure that any solution we come up with will work for this type of design.

In addition to appointing the engineers, we have also taken the decision to appoint a full design team (including an architect and building control consultant) to advise us on compliance with the building regulations. This is so that we can have a reasonable level of confidence that any solution will meet regulations.

What happens next?

The complex nature of the external wall system means we need to do an external wall system fire test. These are approved tests where we will construct a full-scale replica of the external wall system and carry out intensive fire testing. It will give our design team test data which will allow the design to be signed off by all parties concerned. If the system passes, we can get started; if the system fails we will need to understand the reasons why it failed to determine what actions we need to take next.

Who will pay for the work?

We have continued our dialogue with the Government in relation to our Building Safety Fund application. We meet monthly with them to discuss where we are with the design proposals, and they are fully aware of the complexity of Grand Union Heights.

At this stage we cannot guarantee that our leaseholder and shared owner residents will see no costs for the remedial work. This is because the Building Safety Fund will only cover the cost of the work to

A summary of this letter

We are in legal discussions with the original contractor

We're now organising a fire test to check the design solution offers adequate protection.

We're holding a resident webinar on **Wednesday 15 December** at 6pm to discuss the contents of this letter and answer your questions.

replace the external wall system. So, for example, any costs involved in remediating balconies will not be covered by the fund. We will write again on this point when the position is clearer.

Resident webinar – Wednesday 15 December at 6pm

We're holding a resident webinar so you can get to know the technical team working on Grand Union Heights. We will go over the information contained in this letter and will explain more of the technical details of the current external wall system, the proposed solution and what will happen at the test. The webinar will be held on **Wednesday 15 December from 6-7pm**, on Microsoft Teams – you'll need to download the app to watch on a mobile. You can submit questions beforehand (link in the box) or ask them during the webinar.

[Access the webinar link](#)
Visit this page for the link to join the webinar, joining instruction and submit a question before:
www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingsafetymeetings

What will we discuss at this meeting?

Previously we've not given too much technical information about Grand Union Heights, apart from the issues we have found within the external wall. We're going to use this webinar as an opportunity to give you an update on the project, but we will also be going into some technical detail to help you understand the complexity of the project. We will cover:

- Sector and Grand Union Heights timeline so far
- Interim safety measures.
- Current make-up of external wall system and its complexities
- Update on balconies
- Required fire tests
- Building Safety Fund application.

Not able to come?

We always send round a copy of the slides and FAQs within two weeks of the webinar, so we'll make sure it is available before Christmas. We will also include a link to watch a recording of the presentation at the beginning of the meeting for those who are not able to come to the webinar – the questions asked by residents at the end will form the typed-up FAQ document.

Further support

We work on a three-month update basis, so you can expect to hear from us every three months or sooner if we have something confirmed to tell you.

[A reminder](#)
Your building's fire strategy is **simultaneous evacuation**, which means you must evacuate if you hear the fire alarm, even if you think it is a false alarm.

If you need further support, you can:

- Go to the London Fire Brigade's website, which is offering a free online tool which guides you through a fire risk assessment of your home (home visits are available for more vulnerable residents): <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>
- Visit our website where we have a building safety section with lots of information and frequently asked questions: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingandfiresafety/>
- View resources which may help: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingsafetyresources/>
- Remind yourself of our top fire safety tips, including not using BBQs on balconies: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/fire-safety-top-tips/>
- Check our document library for your building's letters and documents – it takes a little while to load: <https://networkhomes.org.uk/guhbuildingsafety/>
- Get in touch with us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk if you have any questions.

Best wishes

Raj Gandecha
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)