



Network Homes

Safety in your building

7 January 2022

Upton House, Hamella House, Aldermans House, Tan House, Humberton House, Kenworthy Road 14a-c, Ward Lane, Sadler Place, Kenworthy Place, Homerton, E9 5QQ

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

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

Dear residents,

Remediation work required – warranty applications being prepared

We let you know just before Christmas that we would be providing a full update by this date. Following investigations into your building's external wall system in October, our chartered fire engineer has issued their report to us. We're still waiting for a further report on the insulation used on the roofs above various plant and service rooms across the buildings.

The initial report concludes that there are a variety of recommended remediation measures required to fix issues we have identified and reduce the fire risk, which we have outlined below:

Removal and replacement of incorrectly fitted cavity barriers (designed to slow the spread of fire across the external wall) behind the expanded polystyrene system (EPS). This is a system with expanded polystyrene insulation and a waterproof 'render' finish.



A summary of this letter

Our fire engineer has recommended a number of issues at your buildings need to be remediated to reduce the fire risk.

We're preparing a warranty claim for the work required – we've already had a claim approved for the replacement of the blue fibreglass cladding.

The government currently does not offer funding support for buildings below 18 metres, but this could change, based on statements made by the new Housing Secretary.

We will pursue all other avenues first, but as a last resort, we may have to recover costs through the service charge. We have authorisation to offer interest free credit if that were to happen.

Once we know our project construction method and who will pay for the work, we will organise a resident webinar.

Removal and replacement of incorrectly fitted fire barriers behind the fibreglass cladding (this is the blue cladding on some buildings).



Removal and replacement of wooden 'Brise Soleil' sun screens on walkways and timber feature on external walls.



The report also looked at the timber decking on walkways and balconies, which our fire engineer has said does not need to be replaced. However, as part of the work, some of this will have to be temporarily removed so we can carry out remediation to other areas.

Additional safety measures not required

Our fire engineer has advised us that there is no need for any additional measures to be implemented at Kenworthy Road until the remediation is complete. This means we will not need to install fire wardens within your block and your fire strategy will remain as a **stay put fire strategy**, which means you should stay in your home in the event of a fire in the building unless you are directly affected by smoke, heat or fire.

Warranty claims

We have already received an approval for our warranty claim in relation to installing cavity barriers behind the blue fibreglass cladding. We have further lodged a claim for the additional issues identified and are currently waiting on feedback from the warranty provider. We expect the process of liaising with our warranty provider to take between three and six months as this has been our previous experience. We will do all that we can to resolve this sooner and will keep you keep you regularly updated of our progress.

What if the claim is denied?

While we are confident that we have a strong case, we are not able to guarantee that it will be successful. If the claim is denied, we will have to look at other possible avenues of funding the work. As your buildings measure below the 18-metre threshold, they are currently not eligible for support from the government's Building Safety Fund. However, there have been several statements made by the new Housing Secretary Michael Gove that indicate this could change:

- He will revoke January 2020 advice that brought low rise buildings into the building safety crisis 'by Christmas'
- He will 'pause' the plans for a leaseholder loan scheme to cover building safety costs
- He will seek a 'polluter pays' approach for covering cladding and other fire safety costs.

Given the current political climate dealing with new Omicron variant and other high profile political issues, no statements were made before Christmas and we expect them early this year. At this time, we don't want to speculate further on what the announcements might mean and how the sector will react. We'll keep you updated with any further developments that are made and tell you if/when the above is confirmed.

As you can see, this is still a live situation which is constantly changing and evolving. Here are a couple of articles which you may also wish to read to further understand the situation:

- [Fire safety advice for low-rise blocks to be withdrawn, Gove says – The Guardian](#)
- [Cladding: Why must flat owners pay the bills, asks Gove – BBC News.](#)

What if the government does not offer financial support to buildings below 18 metres?

If our further warranty claim is denied and government support is not available, we will then have to look at alternative methods of funding the remediation work required. Currently we don't think there are any available third parties we could pursue for funding and therefore we may have to recover costs through the service charge. However, this would be a last resort and would only be after we have exhausted all other available options.

Network Homes would be responsible for paying for the tenanted share of costs, and leaseholders/shared owners would be responsible for paying for their share of costs – in accordance with the lease. At the moment, we think the chances of this happening are quite small, however we want to be transparent and let you know what might happen if we are unsuccessful in other areas. We also have authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority to offer interest free credit to those who may be affected by building safety service charges¹.

We'll continue to keep you updated on our progress on the warranty claim and also if the government makes any important announcements on building safety which could affect you. Please be assured that we are working hard to resolve this on your behalf, and we are doing everything we can to progress this project as quickly as possible. I'd like to thank you for your patience and understanding while we wait for confirmation of what the approach will be.

¹ FCA consumer credit arrangements are regulated by the FCA and any complaints arising from these arrangements by the Financial Ombudsman Service; Network Homes Limited, reference number FRN 919890, is authorised to provide Limited Permission lending and debt counselling on a not for profit basis. Details of our FCA permissions can be found on the [Financial Services Register](#).

EWS1 forms

At the moment, lenders are asking for an EWS1 form (EWS - external wall system) before they will make an offer for a mortgage on an affected property. This form rates the fire risk at a building and it can be very difficult to sell, staircase (buy more shares in your home) or remortgage without a passing grade EWS1 form. Until the remediation work has been completed, we will not be able to get a signed EWS1 form from our fire engineer.

Mental health support

I know the above information may be distressing, so I also wanted to share some resources which could be of use to you. It has been widely reported that building safety issues can have a negative effect on mental health. We know these delays do not make your situation better, so please, if you feel like you are struggling or just need someone to talk to, there are a lot of organisations which may be able to help you. You can visit the resident-led End Our Cladding Scandal website, which list some useful organisations: <https://endourcladdingscandal.org/get-support/>. We have also listed some on our website: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingsafetyresources/>.

Resident webinar

Once the discussions with the warranty provider have been resolved and we have a clear plan of our method to remediate the building, we will organise a resident webinar. We'll go over the construction work required, information about the site set-up, funding and more, and you'll be able to ask us any questions you may have.

Further support

We work on a rolling three-month update basis, so you can expect to hear from us every three months or sooner if we have something confirmed which we need to tell you. If you need 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://www.networkhomes.org.uk/mybuildingdocuments/>
- 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)