



Safety in your building

10 March 2022

Houblon Apartments,
6 Tyne Street,
Whitechapel,
E1 7AN

Dear residents,

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

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customerservice@
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0300 373 3000

Additional update following the fire on Monday evening

I hope you are all well after the distressing fire on Monday evening. In our letter dated 8 March, we said we would follow up with you whenever we had further information to provide. We've also been asked to update you by your MP Rushanara Ali after meeting with her yesterday, so have included some information on concerns you have raised with her as well.

Ventilation and smell of smoke

Some of you are concerned about the smell of smoke in your block, especially the communal areas. I appreciate there is currently a strong smell in the building - the fire brigade has deemed the building is safe to return to.

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) is still carrying out their investigation into the cause of the fire. As part of standard procedure, they had not been able to turn on the ventilation system because they need to download all the activity from the ventilation panel to support the investigation. The ventilation system was temporarily switched on yesterday afternoon after instruction from the LFB, but then switched off overnight, also as advised by the LFB. It has been switched on again this morning and this should help significantly with the smell of smoke.

Reducing the smell in your home

To help reduce any lingering smoke smell in your home, we've included some things you can consider to improve the smell in your home. You may be doing some of these already, so we have included them as a reminder for everyone:

- Keep doors and windows open as much as possible when you are home
- Consider leaving windows slightly open when you aren't home if safe to do so
- Use ventilation fans in the bathroom and kitchen to help improve airflow
- Wash your soft furnishings as smoke particles can stick to fabric
- Sprinkle baking soda onto carpets or rugs for a couple of hours (or overnight) and vacuum
- Wipe down as many surfaces and items in your home as you can, again as smoke particles can stick to them and cause the smell to linger.

ACM cladding on plant room on the roof

There is a small plant room on the roof of the building which is covered in ACM cladding (Aluminium Composite Material). The ACM on the roof has a core made of mineral wool, which is significantly lower risk than the polyethylene core ACM cladding which was present on Grenfell Tower. A qualified independent fire engineer has investigated this area before the incident on Monday and did not recommend that it needed to be removed.

A summary of this letter

While we understand the smell of smoke is unpleasant, it does not pose a health risk. The ventilation system is not able to be switched on until the fire brigade has completed the investigation into the cause of the fire.

ACM cladding on the plant room on the roof is not the same type as used on Grenfell Tower and an independent fire engineer has not recommended it be removed.

We're waiting for clarity on several other items and will update you when we know more:

- Building insurance policy
- Cause of the fire
- Fire Risk Assessment outstanding actions
- Date of resident meeting
- Balcony remediation.

Damage and insurance claims

We believe we've now spoken to all residents whose properties have been damaged and have now made safe any areas of concern. We're now waiting for details from the insurance provider of two of the damaged properties, then we'll be able to get started with carrying out the other repairs. If you have some damage to your home/items you believe was caused by the incident and you haven't spoken to us yet, please email us at customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk. Please also document all of the damage for your insurance provider.

We do not hold insurance for the building as we do not have the legal authority to engage an insurance provider. Building insurance is organised by the Freeholder/Managing Agent and we have been engaging with them to determine what the terms of their policy are.

Issues with lifts

We know one of the lifts is out of order and have also received reports that the other lift is unreliable. We've got parts on order and are experiencing some delays in obtaining these parts. We hope to have these parts delivered within 5-7 days. We've also had lift engineers out to site to inspect the other lift for issues.

Balcony safety

Please ensure you are not storing any flammable items on your balcony. Barbeques are not permitted on balconies and should not be stored there either – please ensure you remove barbeques if you have one. This is not an exhaustive list, but things to look out for include patio heaters, gas/fuel, plastic toys, cardboard boxes or anything that could cause a spark/flame.

Further updates to come

We've committed to providing further updates to you on several other areas following the fire. We've not yet been able to finalise the position yet, but are including a short list so you know what we're still working on and will update you when we have it:

- **Cause of the fire** – LFB investigation ongoing
- **Fire Risk Assessment outstanding actions** – to be discussed when we meet with the Freeholder/Managing Agent
- **Date of resident meeting** – to be discussed when we meet with the Freeholder/Managing Agent
- **Update on balcony remediation project** – to be discussed when we meet with the Freeholder/Managing Agent
- **Update on insurance** – as above.

We have requested to meet with the Freeholder and Managing Agent next week.

If you have any questions, you can get in touch with us at customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk.

Best wishes



Gerry Doherty
Executive Director of Customer Service