



Network Homes

Safety in your building

23 March 2023

Avery Court,
Capitol Way,
Colindale,
NW9

Dear residents,

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

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

New "Stay Put" fire strategy and removal of waking watch on Thurs 30 March

We have now come to the end of the Internal remediation project at Capitol Way. External works are progressing well, and scaffold has started to be struck on the elevations of Avery Court, with the other elevations to follow. You will have noticed operatives working in the communal corridors at Avery Court carrying out remediation works to communal doors.

Fire engineer's advice

We have now been advised by fire engineer Arup that the fire strategy at Avery Court can revert back to its original stay put strategy, the temporary alarm system removed, and the waking watch are no longer required. Arup has concluded:

- **Internal works** – All issues with firestopping have now been remediated.
- **External works** – All façade materials that could allow the spread of fire over the external walls, that warranted the need for the interim fire strategy have now been removed. There is a small section at podium level beneath the terrace paving slabs that still needs to be removed, however this doesn't affect the fire strategy.

New fire strategy

Therefore, we are writing to confirm the **waking watch will end their patrols on Thursday 30 March at 7am and Avery Court will revert to a stay put fire strategy**. This means you should stay in your flat unless you are affected by a fire or smoke. We have notified the London Fire Brigade of the changes. In addition, the fire alarm system will be removed from this time. We will remove the sounders within flats in the period after. Further guidance is included below, particularly noting arrangements for removal of sounders and redecoration.

We still need to make sure escape routes are clear, so please ensure **no items are stored in communal areas**. We have a zero-tolerance approach and personal items left in the communal areas will be removed. Flammable items such as BBQs, gas bottles, cardboard and packaging should not be stored on balconies. These need to be removed immediately, as this is a breach of your tenancy/lease.

Got a question? Then get in touch on Customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk or **0300 373 3000**.

Kind regards

Raj Gandecha
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)

A summary of this letter

From Thursday 30 March 2023 at 7am, Avery Court's fire strategy will be 'Stay Put'.

The waking watch will also be stood down from that time, as well as the fire alarm system. Further information about the removal of sounders can be found in the attached guidance.

Stay put means:

You should stay in your home unless you are directly affected by smoke, heat or fire, or are told to evacuate by the fire brigade.



Capitol Way

Avery Court – Change in Fire Strategy

March 2023



Glossary of terms

- **Compartmentation** – The sub-division of a building into smaller areas or zones using fire resistant materials to control/slow the spread of fire or smoke.
- **Arup** – The Fire engineer responsible for developing the interim fire strategy, reviewing and assessing all firestopping remediation works in the internal and external areas.
- **Interim Fire Strategy** – The fire strategy that was endorsed by Arup in March 2017, on becoming aware of the firestopping defects. Avery and Bree’s interim fire strategy was a ‘Simultaneous Evacuation’ strategy meaning in the event of a fire residents should evacuate from the building.

Summary

This guide is to help you and your household understand the proposed changes to the fire strategy at Avery Court ahead of the reversion to a ‘Stay Put’ strategy on Thursday 30 March 2023.

Frequently asked questions:

Should you have any questions not answered below, Network Homes’ RLO team can be contacted on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk.

Fire strategy

1. What is my building’s fire strategy?

Between March 2017 and now, the building has been operating as a simultaneous evacuation strategy. **From 30 March 2023 at 7am**, the building will change back to its proposed design of a stay put strategy.

2. What is a stay put strategy?

The Capitol Way TNQ Development, similar to most purpose-built blocks of flats, was designed and constructed with a stay put strategy. As defined in the Government’s Document “Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats” a stay put policy involves the following approach:

- *When a fire occurs within a flat, the occupants alert others in the flat, make their way out of the building and summon the fire and rescue service.*
- *If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas makes their way out of the building and summons the fire and rescue service.*
- *All other residents not directly affected by the fire would be expected to ‘stay put’ and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.*

The Capitol Way Development had been operating as a stay put strategy prior to March 2017, when it was changed to a simultaneous evacuation fire strategy.

Further Guidance on stay put strategies can be accessed on the London Fire Brigade website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/escape-plan/escape-plan-blocks-of-flats/>.

3. Why was the fire strategy changed?

The fire strategy was changed on the advice and guidance from Arup, in March 2017, further to firestopping defects being identified in communal areas. Further investigations have identified firestopping defects in the external walls and also within residential apartments. Our fire engineer has

witnessed and identified that these non-compliances/ defects have been rectified and all materials on the façades that could allow the spread of fire have been removed.

4. Why will the fire strategy not remain as an evacuation strategy?

The Capitol Way development was designed to have a stay put or “Defend in Place” fire strategy. This policy is endorsed and supported by the London Fire Brigade and the National Fire Chief Council. The stay put policy is recommended by our Fire Risk Assessor and meets the design of Avery and Bree Courts.

5. Why is the waking watch and fire alarm system being removed?

Our fire engineer, Arup, has identified that the fire strategy can be reverted to a stay put strategy, as the levels of compartmentation or firestopping between flats and communal areas, is as per the requirements of the Building Design and Regulations. Arup has concluded:

- **Internal works** – All non-compliances to fire stopping identified have now been remediated.
- **External works** – All façade materials that could allow the spread of fire over the external walls that warrant the need for the interim fire strategy have now been removed. There is a small section at podium level beneath the terrace paving slabs that still needs to be removed however this doesn’t warrant retention of the interim simultaneous evacuation fire strategy.

The waking watch, sounders and manual call points were installed to support the interim fire strategy, when it was changed to a simultaneous evacuation strategy. Our fire engineer has stated they are no longer required.

In blocks of flats like Avery, where they have been designed to support a stay put strategy, it is unnecessary and undesirable for an alarm system to be connected into flats. A communal system with an alarm system may lead to false alarms, and this will impose a burden on the fire rescue service and lead to residents ignoring alarms.

Flats in Avery are installed with a standalone detection and alarm system. This means that devices are not connected into the communal alarm system, and a fire within a flat will not notify the wider estate. If a fire is detected within an individual apartment, it will only notify that flat.

Communal areas have a detection and alarm system, monitored by a concierge and a Redcare system

6. How does the communal system work under a stay put policy?

In the event of a fire in a communal corridor, there is a detection/alarm system within this area. Detectors are positioned along corridors and will activate the Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs), the lifts will ground, and cross corridor doors will shut. The block entrance doors will also open.

7. What happens in the event of a fire in the car park?

The car park forms part of a separate fire zone or “compartment” to Avery and is managed by TNQ. In the event of a fire within the car park, the lifts in Avery and Bree will ground and the cross-corridor doors will shut. No audible alarms will sound in either Avery or Bree. Residents will remain unaffected by any fire event in the car park and should remain in their flats.

If you are in the car park in the event of a fire, you should exit following the fire exit signage and call **999**.

8. When will the fire strategy change for Bree Court.

The Bree Court fire strategy has already reverted to a stay put. These changes took place in May 2022 when Bree Court had reached a similar position regarding internal and external works and on the agreement by Arup. The fire strategies have also reverted back to stay put in Cara and Dara.

Emergency procedures

9. What do I do in the event of a fire within my property?

If a fire breaks out in your home:

- Leave the room where the fire is immediately, then close the door. Do not stay to put the fire out
- Tell everyone in your home and get them to leave. Close the front door of your home behind you
- Call the fire service
- Leave the building by the stairs, do not use the lift. Walk outside, away from the building.

If you see or hear of a fire in another part of the building:

- Leave immediately if smoke or heat affects your home, or if you are told to by the fire service.
- If you are in any doubt, get out.

To call the Fire Service:

- Dial **999** and when the operator answers, give your telephone number and ask for the fire service
- When the fire service replies, give the address where the fire is.

Your property

10. What fire safety equipment is integrated into my flat?

Your home is fitted with a smoke detector located in your hallway. They are there for your safety. The smoke detector is wired to the main distribution board and is also fitted with a backup rechargeable battery, in case of power cuts. Test the operation of the smoke detector once every month by pressing the test button. If the unit is beeping intermittently, change/replace the battery as necessary; if this does not solve the problem consult the user manual. Refer to the instruction manual supplied at handover for details on battery change.

Your apartment is also fitted with a heat detector. The heat detector is also connected to the main distribution board with a battery back-up. Ensure you test this at least once per month.

You should speak to the members of your household now, so they know what to do in the event of an incident, including where the escape routes are.

11. How do I report a fault with the equipment in my property?

If you are a leaseholder or a shared owner, your property is now out of its defects period. We would suggest in the first instance checking the main distribution board within your property. If the detector is beeping intermittently then it is likely the battery needs replacing.

Leaseholders must carry out battery replacements in the event the devices are beeping intermittently. For any faults you should seek guidance from a registered electrician.

If you are a tenant, Network Homes will undertake inspections. If you have any concerns, please let us know by contacting us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk or **0300 373 3000**.

12. What precautions can I take to reduce the risk of causing or being injured in a fire?

- Make sure that the smoke alarms in your apartment are working and are regularly tested.
- Do not store anything in your hall or corridor, especially anything that will burn.
- Use the heating system within your apartment – do not use radiant heaters with a flame such as gas or paraffin, or electric bar heaters.
- Only use your rooms for their intended purposes, do not use them as storerooms or workshops.
- Avoid storing items in the cupboard that house the electrical consumer unit as doing so could cause an obstruction and potentially a fire.

13. What can I store and keep on my balcony?

In an attempt to manage this risk, our policy is that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies is strictly prohibited. We ask that you please:

- Remove any cooking equipment on balconies
- Remove any personal possessions including plastic plant pots
- Remove any combustible materials
- Remove any sheds, wooden or other type of storage structure, including their contents
- Always take care when disposing of smoking materials, ensuring they are fully extinguished
- Never leave lit smoking materials unattended and never use open flame candles on balconies.

The above is for guidance only, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of things you can do to keep you and your neighbours safe when using your balconies. We ask that you please follow the spirit of this guidance and do everything possible to ensure that the safety of your building is kept to a high standard.

Fire doors

14. Will fire doors be inspected?

As part of the works at Avery Court over the past year, fire doors within flats and communal areas have been checked and where necessary adjusted.

In line with the Fire Safety Act, Network Homes will be undertaking inspections of both flat entrance doors and communal doors. These surveys are being undertaken in 2023 by Savills. You will see a QR Code sticker on your door, which is used to record the condition on our system. Please do not remove this.

As part of your leases and tenancy agreements, residents are reminded not to remove the overhead closer, to ensure doors are closing within their frames and that the doors are not damaged. If you note damage to your flat entrance door you must contact our Fire Safety Team for further advice, who can be reached on FireSafety@networkhomes.org.uk.

Interim fire strategy equipment

15. When will the alarm equipment that was installed in 2017 be removed?

The contractor will remove the communal fire alarm equipment that was installed to support the interim strategy from 7am on March 30, 2023. It should be noted that this will not include any of the equipment linked to the communal detection and alarm system that will be retained to support the stay put strategy.

Within resident's apartments, the sounder will be removed at a later date. From the 30 March 2023, you may notice that the sounder will flash a different colour (either red or blue). This will mean that it is not operating and searching for a signal. Effectively, the sounders will no longer operate as the main panel and call points are not able to send a signal to the sounder.

16. When will the sounder within my flat be removed?

In the first instance we will carry out a door knocking exercise. An operative will remove the sounder(s) from your wall and decorate any affected areas. Operatives will commence knocking on doors on **Friday 31 March at 9am** and will continue during normal office working hours (9am-5pm). We appreciate your continued assistance to undertake these vital works. If you don't wish to be cold called and would like to agree a specific time, please contact Network Homes or CBRE to agree a suitable time:

- Petra Dando, Network Homes
07741 192 296 CWLiaison@networkhomes.org.uk
- Anish Vadher, CBRE
07917 371 990 info@tnq-london.com

Should you have any further queries relating to the external wall works or the change in fire strategy, please do not hesitate to contact your Resident Liaison Officer on the number above.