

Address

Telephone: 0208 080 6587
Email: FireSafety@barnethomes.org
Date: 28.04.2021
Reference: Whitefields

Dear Resident,

Whitefields Estate – 1-44 Clare Point, 1-44 Norden Point and 1-44 Whychcote Point

Managing fire safety – removal of cladding

Your safety and peace of mind are our top priority, and we are writing to let you know how we are going to manage fire safety in the period leading up to the blocks being vacated in 2024 as part of Barnet Council's Brent Cross Estate Regeneration plans.

Post the Grenfell tragedy, the cladding systems on the Whitefields towers were investigated by 3rd party experts in 2017 and reassessed in 2019. The cladding panels themselves were tested in UKAS accredited laboratories and achieved an acceptable rating of Class B. In addition, a comprehensive package of fire safety improvements has been completed to each block. These works include:

- Replacement front entrance doors to FD30S performance
- Fire stopping to all communal ventilation and service ducts
- Installation of ventilation fans to bathrooms
- Upgrade smoke/heat/CO detection to LD1 standard
- Remedial electrical works including rewiring where necessary
- Replacement communal fire doors and other communal parts
- Redecorate communal walls and ceilings to Class 'O' standard
- Replacement signage and Fire Action Notices
- Supply of new external bin enclosures for oversize refuse

However, given the evolving nature of government guidance relating to high-rise building safety over the last couple of years and the delay in vacating the blocks, we considered it appropriate to engage a 3rd party expert fire consultant to undertake a reassessment of the cladding system and wider fire safety arrangements of the blocks.

Expert consultants, Urban Change recently undertook detailed intrusive on-site investigations and recommended that the cladding system should be removed to ensure additional safety for residents. We are therefore commissioning a specialist contractor D&B Facades, to undertake this work for us. Works will start to remove the cladding during the week commencing 10 May and complete in September 2021.

Temporary change in evacuation procedure

In consultation with the London Fire Brigade (LFB), it has been agreed that we will move from a 'Stay-Put' strategy to a 'Temporary Simultaneous Evacuation' strategy until the cladding has been removed. This will be managed by our 'Waking Watch' fire patrols, who currently patrol past each

flat on a regular basis 24/7 to ensure residents' safety. We will update our fire signage this week to reflect this temporary change.

How we will support you

We will endeavour to keep disruption to a minimum and will keep you informed of progress at every stage. For additional peace of mind, we will be increasing our 'Waking Watch' fire patrols with additional marshals on a 24/7 basis.

Should you have any queries at all in relation to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Contact Team on 0208 080 6587 or your dedicated Barnet Homes Liaison Officer David Pitman on FireSafety@barnethomes.org, who will be happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have.

We will also arrange a series of on-line meetings with opportunities for question and answer sessions over the next few weeks.

Leaseholders will not be charged for these additional safety measures and we will be in contact with leaseholders directly to ensure they have the information and support they need.

Due to the limited life-span of the blocks we do not intend to replace the cladding, however we will ensure that any remedial works are completed to the blocks as the cladding is removed. We also realise that without external cladding your fuel bills will likely increase, so we will undertake energy assessments to understand the impact of removing the cladding and ensure that additional energy costs are reimbursed to residents whilst the blocks remain occupied.

Thank you in advance for your understanding while we carry out these essential works to ensure your continued safety and peace of mind.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Bishop
Head of Property Services
Barnet Homes