

Fire Risk Assessments in low risk blocks

Progress meeting 5th December 2011

Present:

Roger Keane
Janice Wray (JW)
Carl Stokes (CS)

General Needs housing Commissioner - RBKC
TMO Health, Safety & Facilities Manager
C S Stokes & Associates

1. Apologies

None.

JW summarised the history of this programme and the agreement that had been reached between the LFB Fire Safety Team, RBKC and the TMO. Specifically, that we had a 3 year period in which to complete all of our Fire Risk Assessments and a 5 year period in which to complete all red (statutory breach) and amber (breach of British Standards, guidance etc.) action plan items. The timescale for both started in July 2009. Additionally, that we would adopt a risk-based approach commencing with the high risk programme, then moving onto the medium and finally the low risk blocks. The LFB approved the approach that we adopted, met the consultant in advance of the original high risk assessment programme commencing, vetted the proforma checklist to be used and continue to meet with TMO and RBKC on a regular basis to ensure that progress with the assessments and the Action Plan items maintains the necessary momentum.

2. FRA Programme – progress to date

JW confirmed that, to date, just over one third of the properties on the low risk schedule had been completed. We are aiming for completion by late May 2012 (ahead of the LFB's July deadline) - but earlier if possible – and we are currently on target for this.

C Stokes agreed to update the position statement that he had provided in late November and provide a copy electronically to R Keane.

Action: C Stokes to provide

3. FRA – trends, concerns, recurring issues in low risk programme

C Stokes advised that despite the fact that the majority of the blocks on this schedule are small street properties this does not necessarily mean that they present substantially lower risk than tower blocks as breaches of compartmentation can occur. However, C Stokes confirmed that he has not been finding any significant risks. There are some recurring trends such as access problems where the caretaker does not have the key to the main entrance doors, storage of combustible items in the communal areas of a small number of blocks, light / emergency lights in need of maintenance / inspection etc.

4. Flat entrance door replacement programme

J Wray advised that one of the significant findings from many of the high risk and some of the medium risk action plans had been for us to confirm that the flat entrance doors met the required fire safety standard – 30 minute fire resisting, self-closing with cold smoke seal and intumescent strips. We incorporated the necessary inspections into the work of the stock condition surveyors who clarified that in the majority of cases highlighted the doors could not be upgraded as they did not meet the 30minute fire resistant standard. Therefore, capital monies were secured and a flat entrance door replacement programme is now on site. To date there are approximately 1200 doors in this programme (although more may be identified by the low risk assessments) and close to 700 of these have already been installed. The only issue that appears to have arisen is where some of the elderly and vulnerable residents have struggled with the weight of the new doors, however, we have now identified a closer that can be installed in these cases and this has been piloted and met with the approval of a number of elderly residents on the Cremorne estate.

5. Correspondence with the LFB, Deficiency Notices etc.

C Stokes explained that when the LFB carried out a post fire audit, a random audit or inspected one of our blocks in response to an issue raised by a resident if they had any fire safety concerns they would generally issue us with a Deficiency Notice outlining these failings. Although these documents do not have any legal status the TMO do take them seriously and endeavour to address anything that needs to be addressed asap. None have been received in recent months.

Enforcement Notices do have a legal status and whilst these have been threatened on a few occasions to date none have been served.

6. Invoicing

This now appears to be operating fine.

7. Health & Safety

C Stokes had no concerns to raise.

8. Any Other Business

Roger asked if different standards were applied to sheltered schemes. Carl confirmed that this was the case.

Distribution:

Those attending plus:

Adrian Bowman

Lornette Pemberton

Assistant Safety Adviser

Director of People & Organisational Development