



## Lakanal House Working Group

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### High rise communications plan

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Author

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#### Introduction

This communications plan will be shared at the Lakanal working group, the high rise forum coordinated by the Brigade and with other audiences involved in this work as appropriate.

The plan sets out how London Fire Brigade can increase awareness of fire safety, particularly 'stay put' advice that is given to people living in high rise buildings. It seeks to reach people living in and those responsible for the safety of such buildings.

#### Objectives

- To raise public awareness of/clarify the different actions people should take if there is a fire inside their flat or maisonette and the actions they should take if there is a fire inside the same building, but outside their flat or maisonette (stay put advice).
- For people living in flats and maisonettes in high rise or purpose built blocks to know how to find fire safety information and who to find it from.
- To help those responsible for high rise buildings and purpose built blocks of flats or maisonettes understand their legal responsibilities.
- To work with those responsible for high rise buildings and purpose built blocks to ensure they are equipped and aware of their responsibilities to communicate fire safety guidance.

## Background

1. The Coroner of the 2013 Lakanal fire inquest made a number of recommendations to London Fire Brigade, Southwark Council and the Department for Communities and Local Government to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again.
2. Five recommendations were made to the Brigade, four of which related to operational practice, and one to public awareness of fire safety. Recognising this was an issue for housing providers the Coroner asked the Brigade to explore what more it could do to share fire safety information and made the following recommendation:

*"A number of former residents of Lakanal House gave evidence. There was little evidence of fire safety advice published by London Fire Brigade whether through leaflets, the website or home fire safety visits. Residents of high rise residential buildings need to be aware of the dangers associated with fires in such buildings and to have a clear understanding of what they should do in case of fire. Whilst this is a matter which concerns housing providers it is recommended that your Brigade also considers how to improve dissemination of fire safety information to achieve effective communication with residents of such buildings."*

3. Responding to the Coroner, the Brigade made a commitment to ensure that knowledge and awareness already being delivered is as effective as possible. Specifically, the Brigade response stated it would work with partners and other agencies to share a consistent fire safety message.
4. The Brigade proposed to:

*"Explore how the Brigade will work with partners to communicate a consistent fire safety message and deliver advice, including establishing a Fire Safety High Rise Forum with key partners such as London Councils, London boroughs, Housing Associations and care providers. The scope of the new Fire Safety Forum for high rise residential premises will cover both the private and public sector. This will enable the Brigade to clarify fire safety messages and procedures for evacuation in high rise blocks. Through this forum the Brigade would also encourage building owners/managers to put up fire safety information /boards/posters inside the doors of individual flats where practicable. The Brigade notes the recommendations made by the Coroner to other interested parties and feels that this Forum could also be used to explore the possibility of leading a marketing communications campaign, with key partners, aimed specifically at residents living in high rise buildings and purpose built flats. Review existing information and where necessary, develop a tailored set of publications aimed at high rise residential dwellers to clarify and reinforce the specific information concerning advice to 'stay in place' and its relationship with more generic 'get out, stay out' advice. The Brigade will work with the Department for Communities and Local Government to ensure consistency of this advice from both a local and national perspective."*

## Strategy

5. As the expert lead for fire safety and the enforcing authority of fire safety legislation, the Authority / Brigade will provide a strong, clear, reassuring and consistent message people will understand and remember about what they should do in the event of a fire if they live in a flat or maisonette in a high rise or purpose built block. By raising public awareness of this guidance through a campaign targeted specifically at people living in these buildings (see audience) and those responsible for their safety, we aim to eliminate doubt and confusion about what action people should take in light of the 2009 Lakanal fire.



6. In addition to generating public awareness we will work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including housing providers and representative bodies, to increase knowledge and understanding of legal responsibilities under the 2005 regulatory reform (fire safety) order. This will include their responsibility to communicate information to residents and provide guidance when requested.

## **Approach and Output**

7. We will firstly establish public awareness and understanding of the 'stay put' message by carrying out a YouGov poll ahead of the campaign. In addition to the comments made by the Coroner that those giving evidence during the inquest were unaware of fire safety advice, it is important to establish further understanding from a London wide sample of residents living in this type of property. The poll will be a short multiple choice questionnaire and will also seek to understand where people obtain fire safety information from.

8. Communications will focus on two key messages.

### **One: Know your fire plan**

The first will clarify and explain why professional guidance from the Brigade is for people to stay put if a fire is outside their home, but inside the building (and equally how they should get out if the fire is inside their home).

### **Two: Know who to ask for advice**

The second will focus on where to find information, who to find it from and how building owners/managers can be prepared to offer fire safety information.

9. Communications will seek to clarify any uncertainty about what to do during such fires and influence all partner agencies to use a consistent public guidance message. This will therefore include close liaison with the Department for Communities and Local Government.
10. The tone of communications will be developed to appeal to target audiences based on mosaic segmentation data.
11. The campaign style and presentation of messages (the look and feel) will be further developed to best achieve objectives.
12. Methods for reaching target audiences will be based on data held by the Brigade, data shared by partner agencies including the high rise forum, partner communication channels and the contact databases held and used by the Brigade for consultation or information sharing purposes e.g. communications issued relating to the LSP5 consultation and strike guidance.
13. Communications will use the full breadth of media, including traditional print and broadcast and social media, with online information made available to stakeholders via a website. Mosaic segmentation data will help to inform how communications are promoted.
14. An online toolkit will be produced offering guidance for both the public and those responsible for fire safety in high rise buildings, a checklist, information that can be downloaded and used, and further information on who to contact for fire safety guidance.

15. Throughout a period of twelve months communications will be issued in the form of:

- the high rise communications toolkit outlined above
- advertising (when cost effective)
- news releases and incident statements (using examples of incidents where people did not stay put or were successfully rescued)
- social media campaigns managed and delivered with the support of London boroughs
- news articles to generate media coverage and public debate (using trade publications, local authority publications and online channels)
- news or outcomes from the LFEPA working group and the High Rise Forum and;
- all other opportunities to raise awareness of fire safety in high rise properties e.g. the premises information plate pilot outcomes and the possible use of any further firefighter training exercises in high rise rescue.

16. Other methods of generating greater understanding of fire safety will include:

17. Approaching housing providers and managers (both private and public) in order to influence what information is provided at contract letting stage, seeking to encourage those responsible for safety to ensure new residents/tenants receive fire safety information, whilst also building a useful housing provider database to continue possible long standing communications.

18. We will consider, with input from the high rise forum, whether we are able to call for property managers/owners to nominate fire wardens for each estate or block to act as a point of contact for fire safety guidance and liaison between housing providers and residents.

19. We will conduct public affairs activity to raise awareness of the campaign and fire safety legislation responsibilities with the relevant scrutiny boards and panels (see audience group D). The aim of this activity will be to ensure such boards understand the importance of fire safety in high rise purpose built blocks and that they monitor how effectively organisations are delivering on their responsibilities. An important element of this public affairs activity will be a checklist for scrutiny boards and panels to use for scrutiny purposes, clearly explaining what housing providers or 'responsible persons' should do and how they should be communicating fire safety guidance to tenants.

20. Communications will be launched in January 2014. The aim is to launch with the full support and backing of partner agencies and with notification to the LFEPA working group, the high rise forum and London Councils.

## **Audience**

21. The following audiences will be targeted with the campaign messaging (using mosaic data).

### **A: High rise residents/ tenants**

- Low income groups/those living in social housing
- Young professionals
- Affluent families/individuals
- Groups who don't speak English as a first language



**B: Housing providers/associations**

- Local authorities including chief executives
- Housing associations/ private high rise property managers /homeowners
- Arms' length management organisations (ALMOs)
- Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)
- Corporate businesses and private development companies
- Tenants and resident/community groups
- Council for voluntary services

**D: Scrutiny boards / panels**

- Chief Fire Officers Association
- Communities and Local Government (local authority / local government)
- Council leaders / directly elected Mayors
- Community Safety committees
- London Assembly members
- Tenant and resident / community associations e.g. ARLA, AMA and NLS

**C: Key partners including:**

- LFEPA members/Lakanal group
- The High Rise Forum
- Brigade staff
- London Assembly members
- Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)
- London MPs
- Local Authority lead members for housing
- London Councils/housing directors

**Outcomes**

22. Guidance on what to do in a fire will be recognised more widely and adopted in London by all councils (including consistent online guidance) and nationally by Communities and Local Government.
23. Understanding of what happens when people don't follow 'stay put' guidance will be more widely understood, based upon a repeat poll conducted at the start of communications.
24. Publicity and public discussion will be generated to support the Brigade's aim to raise awareness of all target audiences.
25. Evidence will show that information is available and is being shared on a borough by borough basis (subject to audit, including online channels).
26. Housing providers and managers monitor the delivery of information and fire safety guidance within their organisations, and are held to account by the relevant scrutiny boards / panels.
27. Members of the Authority will receive a report evaluating the success and effectiveness of communications, as part of its monitoring that Lakanal inquest recommendations have been satisfactorily responded to.

## Evaluation

28. The aim of this communications campaign will be to eliminate doubt or confusion that people who live in high rise buildings may have about what action to take in the event of a fire.
29. We will explore the ability to audit feedback from fire reports/mobis messages that we receive from the scene of high rise fires. These often give details about how many people 'self-evacuate' a building and over time this information could give an indication of whether people are taking our advice on-board to stay put unless they are being directly affected by a fire.
30. We will consider, with the High Rise Forum, whether we should audit housing providers/building managers we are working with to establish how many have put up fire safety notices and distributed the communication materials.
31. We will consider, with the High Rise Forum, whether to audit the number of housing providers taking part in the scheme to nominate fire wardens.
32. All media will be analysed in relation to coverage content, tone and reach (including full online analysis of click through rates, public interaction with the campaign and impressions gained through social media placement).
33. Feedback from the LFEPA working group, High Rise Forum, London boroughs and general public feedback (customer complaints and compliments if any).
34. Adoption of Brigade messaging by the Department for Communities and Local Government, local councils and partners (formal notification and desk top research of websites).
35. The results of target audience polls.

## Action plan

36. A full action plan will follow (a detailed programme of all campaign timings based on a current predicted start of January 2013 for six to twelve months).
37. Key dates at this time:

13/09/2013	Presentation to London councils attended by head of media and internal communication and deputy commissioner.
04/10/2013	First meeting of the High Rise Forum attended by representatives from local authorities, housing representatives, the public affairs manager, assistant commissioner for fire safety regulation and deputy commissioner.
09/10/2013	First presentation by advertising agency to LFB communications.
22/10/2013	Provide an overview at the Brigade borough commanders meeting.
November	Resident polling on fire safety in high rise / report findings.
November	Pilot premises information plates launched
11/11/2013	Second high rise meeting.
14/11/2013	LFEPA member working group.
November / December	Final development of full campaign materials / timetable / toolkit.
January 2014	Campaign launch (expected to be end of January owing to LSP5 activity).

## Resourcing

38. The budget allocated for this campaign work is £60k as agreed by Strategy Committee.
39. Due to the size and scale of the target audience the most effective use of the budget will be to create the toolkit for the Brigade and other stakeholders (housing providers including London boroughs) to use to campaign messaging across London. This will include the artwork and messaging of the campaign, to be used on the Brigade (and other) website, social media channels and to support all media activity.
40. However, once the scope of the toolkit and final deliverables have been agreed, the opportunity will be taken to invest any remaining budget in media spend (advertising) by the Brigade to further actively campaign.

## Conclusion

41. This communications plan provides an overview of the objectives, strategy, methods of communication and expected outcomes, including the approach to evaluating the success of this work. Campaign materials and other outputs will be shared as they are developed with key stakeholders, including the Lakanal Working Group. Officers in the communications department will work to fully utilise the communication tools available working with partners, including London boroughs and housing associations to ensure message consistency with a shared audience and a joint approach to fire safety communications in high rise properties.

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