

ADAIR & HAZLEWOOD TOWERS

Update on works to comply with the Enforcement Notices

Further to the fire at Adair Tower in October and following the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) investigation and post-fire audit of the block and their subsequent audit of Hazlewood Tower (identical design and construction) the TMO/Council was served with two Enforcement Notices – one in relation to each block.

The key matters raised in the Enforcement Notices relate to the installation of self-closing devices on all flat entrance doors and the requirement to review the protection to each communal staircase and ventilation to the lift lobbies to ensure that both staircases are not affected by smoke and are available for use by residents and attending fire crews. Progress with meeting these requirements is set out below -

1. Ensuring all flat entrance doors are self-closing

The TMO and RBKC agreed to ensure that all flat entrance doors in both blocks are sufficiently fire-rated and fitted with self-closing devices. Progress to date –

- In anticipation of persistent non-access from some residents and in consultation with RBKC Legal Services a clear procedure for obtaining access to carry out both the inspection and any subsequent work was produced. Adhering to this procedure and maintaining clear records of every attempt to gain access should enable us, in cases of persistent refusal, to achieve access through legal means.
- Contractors have been appointed to initially inspect every flat entrance door and confirm what works are required to ensure that each is sufficiently fire-rated and self-closing. Where upgrading works will not achieve the required fire standard a new self-closing flat entrance door compliant with current standards will be installed.
- An initial letter was sent to each resident advising of the LFB Enforcement Notice and the requirement for residents to provide access for the necessary inspections and any subsequent works under the terms of the tenancy and also the lease agreement. This letter gave an initial appointment date and time, provided contractors contact details to enable this appointment to be rescheduled and TMO contact details for anyone with queries. Where access was not achieved on the initial appointment, further attempts were made by letters, calling cards, additional cold calling etc.
- Of the 156 flats in these blocks (78 per block), to date, inspections have been completed on all but 41. These 41 residents (38 tenants and 3 leaseholders) have now been referred to our Neighbourhood Management and Home Ownership Teams for them to make further attempts to agree access and arrange appointments for inspection. At the conclusion of this exercise any remaining non-accessed addresses will be referred to Legal Services and will receive a "before action" letter
- The works arising from the inspections will involve either installation of a replacement door or fitting a self-closing device, new hinges, upgrading letterbox and any other necessary remedial works.
- These works were to have been completed by the company undertaking the inspections but unfortunately the contractor went in to administration on 25th April. Currently this work is being rescheduled to be managed in house with the works being subcontracted.

2. Review Protection and ventilation within staircases and lobbies

A specialist fire engineering consultancy, Exova, was appointed to undertake investigations and make recommendations for any necessary remedial action. Exova have -

- contacted the LFB to clarify the requirements of the Enforcement Notices
- Investigated the original building design criteria
- Inspected and surveyed both blocks
- Produced a report making recommendations to meet the LFB requirements

- Presented the report and its recommendations to the TMO Executive Team

Currently TMO Officers are working with Exova to prepare a specification with details of how the lobbies are to be fire separated from the accommodation staircase – materials, fixings, finish etc. Once this is finalised the recommendations from the Exova report and our detailed costed proposal for how these can be progressed will be presented to RBKC's Director of Housing for approval.

When the TMO and RBKC reach agreement on how the ventilation requirement of the Enforcement Notice is to be met this will be presented to the London Fire Brigade for approval.

The timescales on the Notices are 23rd June for Adair and 18th July for Hazlewood. The LFB have indicated that they will be sympathetic to a request for extension of time providing we are able to demonstrate that progress made to date and provide justification for our request. Further, this extension can be no longer than three months. Currently it seems that an extension will be required and I can confirm that we have entered into initial discussions with the LFB.

Janice Wray

3 May 2016