

Purpose: Noted

Date 25 July 2017



**HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

GRENFELL TOWER FIRE: HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE RESPONSE

Report of Chief Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report has been produced to raise the Fire Authority's awareness on the actions that Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has taken since the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in London on the 14th June 2017.
2. HFRS has been heavily committed since the incident on 14th June to give practical reassurance to the occupants and owners of High Rise properties within Hampshire through prevention and emergency plan advice.
3. HFRS has been working closely with all Local Authorities and private landlords through the Local Resilience Forums (LRF) Response Working Group (RWG) and Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) to inspect all High Rise properties within Hampshire in a prioritised and targeted way, using guidance from Government.
4. This report will set out other additional work streams that have been handed over to HFRS from Government in respect to NHS buildings, student accommodation and educational establishments.
5. The main recommendation contained within this report is that the Fire Authority is asked to note the valuable work HFRS has completed to date and the ongoing work in practically reassuring Hampshire's communities and mitigating any identified risks in buildings, by working with the relevant Local Authority and landlords, to ensure Fire Safety compliance.

BACKGROUND

6. The Commissioner of London Fire Brigade has stated publicly several times that 'the nature of the fire (*at Grenfell*) was unprecedented and unparalleled'; so while there is comment and speculation from many quarters as to possible causes, the true findings can only emerge through the due process of fire investigation and Public Inquiry.
7. Professional experience and observation can lead us to conclude that the Grenfell Tower building did not behave in the way that was expected with regards to the fire's development.

8. It is important to remember that the design and construction of modern high rise buildings is such that people are protected and the risk of fire occurring is minimised. Our experience in Hampshire over recent years is that we have had several fires in these types of building and these fires have behaved as we would expect, with the fire remaining in the compartment it started in and not affecting other areas directly. The reason fires in these incidents have behaved as expected is attributable to several factors, but the overriding factors being that the building has been planned, designed, constructed and then maintained to keep the integrity of the fire engineering features.
9. There has been much public concern and comment voiced regarding potential flaws in the cladding that was used on the exterior of Grenfell Tower. DCLG concluded in their letter dated 18th June to Local Authorities and other providers of social housing, that additional tests should be undertaken with regard to cladding on buildings over 18 metres in height. This testing was designed to identify a particular type of cladding, Aluminium Composite Material (ACM).
10. A further letter from DCLG dated 22nd June set out actions to Local Authorities and private landlords that should be implemented following the identification of ACM on their buildings. The letter asked for the Fire and Rescue Service to carry out an urgent inspection alongside the building's "responsible person" to ensure that appropriate interim measures as set out within the letter are identified and implemented.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INSPECTION PROGRAMME

11. HFRS have implemented an inspection process that is tailored to the building in question. These have been developed as it was felt our standard audit process would not lend itself to what was being asked of us by DCLG. We also wanted to maximise the opportunity to give reassurance to the public and confidence to Local Authorities. The inspections developed encompass:
 - a. High Rise buildings where cladding is identified to DCLG as a concern;
 - b. High Rise Buildings with no cladding;
 - c. Health Care Inspection Plan where cladding is identified as a concern;
 - d. Educational Establishments where cladding is a concern
12. As inspections are completed, our normal systems for recording the inspections and findings are updated. All findings are shared with the "responsible person" so that action can be agreed with appropriate timescales. A formal return is then made to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) who are coordinating returns to feed into DCLG for government overview of the process.

INSPECTION FIGURES FOR HAMPSHIRE

13. High Rise Buildings as of 13th July 2017
 - a. No. of premises on HFRS High Rise inspection list - 237
 - b. No. of inspections completed within Hampshire - 111
 - c. No. of premises identified to DCLG with 'Aluminium Cladding' – 15

- d. No. of joint inspections with HFRS by Fire Engineer completed - 15
 - e. No. of inspections (cladding concerns non ACM) by a Fire Engineer – 25
14. NHS Buildings as of 13th July 2017
- a. Due to the sheer number of NHS Trusts it is a difficult picture to plan for. There are 42 NHS sites with the potential to have buildings that have cladding. These sites have been contacted by HFRS for further information relating to their building stock. There is no national guidance at this time.
 - b. No. of premises identified as having cladding – 6
 - c. No. of joint inspections with HFRS by Fire Engineer completed – 2
15. Education Buildings as of 13th July 2017
- a. Hampshire County Council have confirmed a stock of 706 schools. Work is underway to identify if buildings are clad with ACM and over 4 storeys. If any are identified, then a joint full inspection to confirm compliance will take place. There is no national guidance now.

PUBLIC REASSURANCE AND PREVENTION MESSAGES

- 16. Our teams have conducted several different engagement activities around the county to give advice on what people should do in the event of a fire, given the understandable fear and concern that many will have. Our core message for residents continues to be to follow the specific emergency procedures for their building as that is the safest way of allowing firefighters to assist them.
- 17. We utilised our social media channels and website to push out practical fire safety advice, our website received more than 7,000 hits on pages related to high rise (including Safe & Sound) in the three days immediately after the fire. Web hits nearly quadrupled overnight following the fire.
- 18. Our Facebook posts in the week following the fire reached more than 100,000 people in total and been shared more than 300 times so far, with our tweets reaching another 50,000 on Twitter. Engagement rates on some tweets (clicking on a link or video) have been 3-4 times higher than usual.
- 19. Chief Fire Officer Dave Curry gave interviews to every local media outlet (TV, radio, press) making the case for sprinklers in the week after the fire. The high-rise safety booklet produced by HFRS has been shared with several other FRS and NFCC. This is now being used around the country.
- 20. We are actively supporting council public meetings and have offered our stations as venues to encourage engagement. The response by residents of Millbrook Tower (who were the first to call a public meeting) has been very positive.
- 21. In direct response to providing a high level of community reassurance, stations in Portsmouth and Southampton have provided drop in sessions for concerned residents. Crews have been visible at all residential High Rise buildings,

offering reassurance around remaining safe in High Rise buildings and preventing fires from starting.

22. Safe and Well visits have been offered to any High Rise resident concerned and their request will come through as a priority for crews. Any visits will be adapted to meet the needs of the resident and property.

RESPONSE PLANS

23. The Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) for High Rise buildings as determined by HFRS is usually 6 fire appliances and an aerial appliance (ALP). Since the Grenfell Fire we have increased this to 8 fire appliances and an aerial appliance. The increase of 2 fire appliances is based on the possibility of more people self-evacuating regardless of the building's emergency plan. These additional resources will assist with this evacuation as required. The response plan is under continuous review.
24. Fire appliance access has been checked in line with legislation and crews continuously familiarise themselves with the buildings, including the access and locations of dry risers etc.
25. Our Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) are being reviewed during inspections. These will be updated as required to give the most up to date information on the building for our Firefighting crews.

SUPPORTING OUR SERVICE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

26. The work load for key teams in HFRS has been high and will remain this way for the foreseeable future. It is important to note that all aspects of our activity in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire is core business for HFRS. All activities that we are undertaking support our Service Plan 2015 - 2020 and associated priorities.

CONSULTATION AND PEER SUPPORT

27. Due to the challenging nature of this work we have consulted with our solicitors to ensure compliance with legislation, which provides clarity to our local authority partners.
28. Through the Local Resilience Forum, we have held twice weekly telephone conferences RWG so areas of concern can be raised and addressed enabling a very good working relationship between local partners based on trust and confidence.
29. We have used Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to share our plans and procedures so we can gain understanding from each other in our approaches to this work. This has been of great benefit for both services allowing us to flex approaches and maintain a consistent approach. NFCC has also assisted in creating clarity from Government in respect to expectations.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

30. Within HFRS a high priority was placed on this work. We have moved personnel with specific skills and qualifications temporarily to enable urgent inspections to take place. We are continuously reviewing our capacity to deliver this and our normal workloads.

31. Within Community Safety this has led to changes in responsibilities for Group Managers allowing for one person to have full oversight of the logistics or planning and recording such a high inspection demand on the service in a short period.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. All inspections are carried out using the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
33. The Local Government Associations *Fire Safety in purpose built blocks of flats* remains the most comprehensive guidance to ensuring fire safety in buildings for Local Authorities and private landlords to check their responsibilities.

PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

34. The proposals in this report have been considered compatible with the provisions of equality and human rights legislation.

CONCLUSION

35. The work on Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is considerable post Grenfell fire. We predict this work load to remain high for the foreseeable future. New work streams and priorities are coming out of Government daily.
36. HFRS must maintain the measured and targeted approach used so far which is based on risk. We will continue to use our professional capability to support Local Authorities, Health, Education, building owners and other organisations through a period of high demand and government requirements.
37. We must not lose focus on the people who live and occupy these buildings. We must maintain clarity by giving factual information in a timely and appropriate manner so they are reassured. HFRS must maintain the confidence of the people in Hampshire in their public services.

RECOMMENDATION

38. That the Fire Authority note Post the Grenfell Tower Fire, the valuable work HFRS has completed to date and the work which will continue in reassuring the communities in Hampshire, mitigating any identified risks in buildings by working with Local Authority and landlords, to ensure Fire Safety compliance.

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