

Safety in your building

28 March 2024

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Dear residents,

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Your building's external wall investigation – expected to be after April 2025

You'll know from previous letters that we need to investigate your building's external wall system. The external wall system is anything that makes up the external wall of your building – this includes things like cladding, tiles, insulation, fire barriers and render systems. This letter includes an update on the situation at your building, a reminder of what has already happened, why we need to investigate your building and what might happen next.

Investigation dates

All of our buildings that require investigation have been given a priority rating, based on several risk factors. I'm pleased to say that as expected, in March 2024 we completed the investigations for the priority group we're currently working on. We will now be investigating the next group this year and will begin your building's priority group in **April 2025**. We'll write again in March 2025 with an update on how the investigations are progressing.

Increasing the number of fire engineers we work with

Although we managed to complete all the investigations we expected in the last year, we have experienced difficulties with confirming an investigation date with our fire engineers. We've told you before that there is a large shortage of qualified professionals in the UK who can carry out these sorts of external wall investigations. This is still an issue and so we have appointed some more fire engineers to our framework. We hope this will mean we are able to carry out investigations within our above expected timeline.

Why are investigations taking place?

As a reminder, after the Grenfell Tower fire the government told owners of tall buildings over 18 metres to investigate their buildings and determine if the correct materials had been used, and the construction method/workmanship was appropriate. SNG (then Network Homes) has nearly 100 tall buildings and so it took us some time to be able to investigate all of them, as professionals with the necessary skills are in very high demand, due to the number of tall buildings in the UK and London particularly.

What happens after the investigation?

While some buildings will still not be investigated for some months, we also thought it would be a useful reminder to talk you through what could happen after your investigation, so you are aware:

- Our fire engineer will let us know that no remediation is required to your building's external wall system. They'll then issue an EWS1 form (EWS - external wall system) which certifies the fire risk at your property and can be a requirement of lenders to sell or remortgage.

or

A summary of this letter

After April 2025, we expect to be investigating your building's external wall system.

We need to do this to follow the government's guidance brought in since the fire at Grenfell Tower.

We'll write again in March 2025 with a progress update.

We've hired more fire engineer contractors to support us to carry out these investigations, as they are high demand and we've struggled to get dates confirmed.

- Our fire engineer will let us know that remediation is required. We will then work to put together a remediation plan, appoint a contractor, determine a course of funding and keep you updated along the way. After the remediation is complete, our fire engineer will then be able to issue an EWS1 form.
- If remediation is needed, we will see if we can make an application to the government's Cladding Safety Scheme, which can help to fund some type of remediation work.
- Once a plan for the works has been agreed, start dates are confirmed and a funding plan is in place, we will be able to issue a 'lender letter' containing the information. This can sometimes mean you can sell your home before work has finished and you've received an EWS1 form.

Further support

I'd like to thank you all for your patience as you have waited some time for us to get to this point where we are investigating your building's priority group. If you need further support, you can:

- Go to the London Fire Brigade's website, which is offering a free online tool which guides you through a fire risk assessment of your home (home visits are available for more vulnerable residents): <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>
- Remind yourself of our top fire safety tips, including not using BBQs on balconies: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/fire-safety-top-tips/>
- Check our document library for your building's letters and documents – it takes a little while to load: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/mybuildingdocuments/>
- Get in touch with us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Raj Gandecha
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)