

Fire Safety in Lambeth

"The safety of our residents is one of Lambeth Living's key priorities which is why we have worked in partnership with London Fire Brigade (LFB) and Lambeth Council to create a robust programme of fire safety measures. Lambeth Council's housing stock is larger than most other London boroughs and by March 2010 all blocks of six storeys and over will have a valid Fire Risk Assessment."

- Lambeth Borough Council owns 181 blocks of homes of 6 storeys or higher.
- In total, Lambeth Living manages over 900 blocks of homes.
- On 2 July 2009, Lambeth Living met London Fire Brigade and presented the Lambeth Living proposals for the carrying out Fire Risk Assessments to all blocks of homes during a period June 2009 to March 2011. The proposals were approved by London Fire Brigade and Lambeth Council.
- Information relating to fire safety has been uploaded on to the Lambeth Living website, this included links to the London Fire Brigade fire safety advice web pages
- Copies of the LFB information leaflet "A Guide to Home Safety" are available in all council and Lambeth Living offices, and will be included in the next bulk mailing to all residents.
- Lambeth Living have successfully obtained government funding, working in partnership with the London Fire Brigade, to offer internal home fire safety advice directly to residents. This partnership is now in its third year. In addition to providing advice, smoke detectors have been fitted to approximately 15,000 Lambeth Living homes. LFB advise that the number of domestic accidental dwelling fires in Lambeth has progressively reduced, from 400 in 2007 to 321 in 2009.

Fire safety measures taken since the Lakanal House fire

Identification of buildings of a similar design to Lakanal House, Southwark

Living staff have reviewed all the blocks managed by Lambeth Living and tenant management organisations (TMOs). The Lambeth Living review has been completed based on stock survey information and the detailed local knowledge of both property and housing management staff. No blocks have been identified with similar design characteristics to Lakanal House.

We have recently received the initial report on the fire at Lakanal House and will fully consider the findings of the final report when released later this year.

Information to customers - Lambeth Living has now written to all tenants explaining what we are doing to address fire safety concerns and offering advice on what to do in a fire in the form of a London Fire Brigade leaflet. We have sent out the same letter to leaseholders. We are also arranging the publication and distribution of fire safety information for estate notice boards.

Routine inspections for communal areas – For all tower blocks we have inspections in place which now include identifying and tackling any fire safety issues that may arise. It consists of regular planned inspections and checks of fire safety equipment including: dry risers, fire safety doors and closers and all other fire prevention, warning or fire fighting equipment by contractors and Lambeth Living staff. We will also ensure any hazards in communal areas are removed.

Fire risk assessments – The Fire Risk Assessments of the communal areas of high-rise buildings or buildings of complex design, in accordance the obligations placed on social landlords under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, will be carried out by specialist consultants who are currently being commissioned.

The proposed programme of assessment has been accelerated following the Southwark fire and will be as follows:

- a) Complex, high rise blocks 10 storeys and over (41 blocks) to have a Fire Risk Assessment completed by 31 December 2009
- b) Complex, high rise blocks six storeys through to nine storeys (140 blocks) to have a Fire Risk Assessment completed by 31 March 2010
- c) Non complex, low rise blocks five storeys and under (approximately 400 blocks) to have a Fire Risk Assessment completed by 31 March 2010
- d) Complex, low rise blocks five storeys and under (approximately 350 blocks) to have a Fire Risk Assessment completed by 31 March 2011

The plan will cover over 900 complex high rise and low rise blocks in Lambeth and focuses on assessing the highest risk buildings first. A database will be set up and maintained to manage the results of the assessments. Following the completion of the assessments several strands of management action, both revenue and capital-funded, will follow. These will form part of the Lambeth Living Business Plan for 2010/11 and the revenue and capital commitments for that year. The plans remain subject to review and further discussion with the council.

Fire Risk Assessment Plan - The above proposals and timescale was agreed by the London Fire Brigade at a meeting held on 2 July 2009. This agreement was made prior to the fire at Lakanal House. As a result of the fire, existing processes to check for fire safety in blocks were strengthened and the timescales for completion of the fire risk assessments were brought forward. The Fire Brigade remain satisfied with Lambeth Living's assessment plans. An assessment will be subject to quality assurance.