

17th March 2021



Dear residents,

Here is the latest fire safety update for your building.

Building Safety Fund

There is still no final decision from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as to whether our application to the Fund has been successful or not.

There have been some emails requests from the MHCLG asking our specialist consultant for pieces of information, but nothing yet to confirm secured funding. We will let you know once we have something from them.

Principal contractor

Newlon have had three meetings recently with the principal contractor. These have included specialist consultants from our side and from theirs, they have been productive in the sharing of information and identifying some of the detailed scope of works required.

The principal contractor has expressed an interest in making a financial settlement offer, while at the same time saying they would carry out the remediation project themselves. This doesn't necessarily mean they would offer 100% of the costs, or carry out all required works without charging anything to us, but this is a formal part of the legal process as part of which they must be shown to attempt to mitigate losses. Similarly, part of the agreement for the Building Safety Fund (BSF) funding means Newlon are required to explore avenues to recover expenditure for the project.

The principal contractor has said that they won't be able to begin on site by 31st March if their offer is accepted. No official offer has been received at this point and Newlon has given formal notice via our solicitors that any offer must be received by this Friday, 19th March or we must move ahead on the project without them. Financial recovery would then potentially be for all losses incurred and through legal means, rather than through discussion.

Project update

The project documents for both 1 and 3 Queensland Road were sent out to tender. We expect any interested contractors to have submitted their bids by the end of this Friday, 19th March. These will be assessed by our consultant and we will choose a contractor based on it.

This must of course be balanced against the potential formal offer from the principal contractor. If they do not make a formal offer, or make one which is unacceptable, then we will move forward with the winning bidder who will begin on site by the end of 31st March.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Symon Sentain".

Symon Sentain BA PG Dip. MA CIHCM FRSA AoU ACIOB

Property Services Director (acting)
Newlon Housing Trust

Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association and part of the Newlon Group
Registered Office: Newlon House, 4 Daneland Walk, Hale Village, London, N17 9FE
Residents' enquiries: 020 7613 8080 - all other enquiries: 020 7613 8000 - www.newlon.org.uk



Group Chief Executive: Mike Hinch, Chair: Aman Dalvi OBE
Community Benefit Society 18449R, registered with the Regulator of Social Housing no. L0006
HMRC charity reference no. EW91301, VAT registration no. GB778532683

FAQs

Why can I not get Hyperoptic cabling for my flat?

We are waiting for evidenced safety assurances from Hyperoptic before we can allow them access to install cabling at 1-3 Queensland Road. This specifically relates to fire stopping safety measures.

Section 20 notice for concierge and fire warden costs

The section 20 notice sent out in November regarding re-procurement for the concierge and estate inspection service has resulted in questions about whether we are planning to pass on costs for the fire warden service, which we have not done to date.

We want to make it clear that we were simply following the requirements of the section 20 procedure which require us to consult with you on the procurement of this contract.

As we currently source the fire wardens from the same company as the concierge and estate inspectors and it is likely that the overall contract will run for over a year we are required to consult you on the provision of the wardens as well as for the concierge and estate inspection service. The consultation in itself does not create a requirement to charge residents and it does not mean that we are planning to charge residents for the additional fire warden service required until remedial works are completed. The section 20 notice is to make you aware of how we are procuring this service and to give you the opportunity to provide comments and queries as set out in the section 20 information provided.

What is being done to correct any fire safety problems at 1 Queensland Road?

We are developing a detailed specification to address the fire safety issues, primarily related to the absence of the correct external fire stopping at your block. We will communicate with residents as soon as we are able to on the next steps of this programme.

What precautions have been put in place?

As an interim measure, we have taken a number of steps to mitigate any fire safety risks within the building, including putting in place a 24/7 fire warden patrol.

Has my building had a Fire Risk Assessment?

Yes, every Newlon building has an annual independent Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and all of our buildings have current FRAs.

Are there alarms?

There are alarms in individual flats and automatic fire detection systems in communal areas. Like most buildings there are no alarms in the communal areas - this is because there is a stay put policy in the event of a fire.

What remedial works are required?

We are waiting for the full specification to be completed but we know that the cladding, which is not in itself a concern, will need to be removed so that external fire stopping works can be carried out. We will also need to replace the insulation before the cladding can be replaced.

When will the works begin and how long will they go on for?

We are not in a position to provide a full timescale at this stage, but we are working to a programme of at least 12 months from the spring of 2021. If we are successful in our bid for Building Safety Fund funding we are required to be onsite by 31st March 2021.

Who will pay for the works?

We currently have no plans to recharge residents for remedial fire safety works nor have we service charged the ongoing cost of the fire warden service as we want to protect residents from the worst financial impact.

We hope to continue to keep the burden of the mitigating costs from our residents. However, at this stage it is difficult to say what the long-term position will be as the scale of the works and the costs are yet to be determined. We are also exploring all avenues available including applying to the Building Safety Fund to attempt to recover costs.

What if I cannot sell or re-mortgage my home?

We are aware that residents are struggling to sell their homes due to lenders' actions in response to the Government's advice notes on fire safety. However, this can vary from lender to lender and according to people's individual circumstances. Newlon has no control over the actions or decisions of lenders.

We have introduced a procedure to allow residents to sublet their flats if they cannot sell their home or if re-mortgaging proves difficult.

You do not need to be a 100% leaseholder in order to sublet your home.

Permission will be granted for one year at a time and once works are completed for a further six month extension. Residents should remember they are responsible for sub-tenants and that Airbnb is not permitted. Applications can be made via our website by filling in the form at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/home-owners/subletting.

If you are planning to sell, re-mortgage or staircase your home please contact resident.sales@newlon.org.uk before committing to any costs.

Would Newlon buy back my property if am unable to sell?

We are unable to offer buy-backs as this is a country wide issue and matters such as selling, staircasing and re-mortgaging are not in our control, although we will provide as much assistance to surveyors and lenders as we feasibly can.

Can I staircase?

If you want to apply to staircase, we will support you as far as are able to. We can provide form EWS1, which many lenders ask for, although as this shows that the building needs works we do not know how helpful it will be. We can also provide a covering letter from Newlon outlining the steps we are taking to comply with the Government's Advice Notes and ensure the ongoing fire safety of our housing, as well as our position on covering the costs of remedial works. However, please note that you will need to apply at your own risk and we will not be able to refund any fees if the process is unsuccessful.

What should I do in the event of a fire?

You should always follow the advice for your specific building, which for most developments will be to stay in your home unless the fire is within your flat or you are in immediate danger. It is usually safer for residents to stay put, call 999 and wait for the emergency services.

What can I do to promote fire safety?

Most of these steps are common sense that you are probably aware of and follow already.

- Ensure your smoke and heat alarms are working.
- Do not leave items in communal areas – this could block your escape.
- Do not prop open any fire doors.
- Do not keep combustible material on your balcony.
- Do not smoke in communal areas – including lifts.
- Do not have barbecues on balconies.

How are you going to keep us informed?

We will continue to provide a regular monthly update. We will also contact all residents when we are able to provide an update on the next phase of remedial works.

What if I still have questions?

We hope you will be reassured by this information but should you still have concerns or any specific queries relating to fire safety or remedial works please feel free to contact us.

You can email us at firesafety@newlon.org.uk or if you have any immediate concerns please call our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**.

If you have questions specifically relating to re-mortgaging, selling or staircasing please contact resident.sales@newlon.org.uk.