



South Region Virtual Open Forum: Question and Answers

Date: Wednesday 10 September 2020

Staff in attendance:

- Debbie Smith, Regional Head of Housing for the South Region (DS)
- David Mclean, Contract Operations Manager Assets South Region (DM)
- Tom Walker, Acting Leasehold Manager South Region (TW)
- Gail Newton, Interim Head of Assets - Fire Safety Programme Management (GN)
- Justin Pearce Neudorf, Brand and Creative Services Manager (JPN)
- Ollie Levy, Resident Involvement Manager (OL)
- Peter Bagley, Resident Involvement Officer (PB)

Video Link - <https://youtu.be/MkZOsKHE2Vo>

Fire safety information: Please visit <https://www.nhg.org.uk/residents/repairs-and-maintenance/safety-in-your-home/fire-faqs/> for the latest information with regards to fire safety. Leaseholders are being sent quarterly briefings on fire safety. The next one should be circulated by your PMO in November. If you do not receive this briefing, please contact your PMO.

Questions and Answers

	Questions	NHG Response
1	I am a shared homeownership leaseholder and live in a converted house (3 flats). I have been told that I have to pay towards fire doors for the other two flats but will not be getting a fire door for my flat. Furthermore, I am not permitted to get comparison quotes for the works. Can I get a copy of the fire risk assessment (FRA) report?	Fire Safety - Gail Newton You are able to get a summary of the FRA. You can request this through the NHG website or ask your PMO who can make the request to the fire team on your behalf.
2	What is the definition of a resident?	Debbie Smith A resident is anyone who resides in one of our homes, whether they are a tenant or leaseholder
3	Are EWS1 Surveys being carried out for housing stock under 18 metres? Several residents on The Meadows/Windmill Park are having issues selling/buying because the banks are requiring it to be done. I've had problems raising issues with my PMO, emails and phone calls mostly go unanswered, and My	Fire Safety Team - Andy Mackay We have a large number of surveys to be undertaken and we are having to take a risk-based approach to undertaking testing to try and get the EWS1 forms issued. Due to this, our initial focus is on buildings over 18m. We will be undertaking testing as quickly as we can but the process is likely to take a number of years both because of the numbers involved

	Account keeps crashing.	and the lack of qualified people able to undertake the works required.
4	<p>I have been a leaseholder for two and a half years and during this period we changed Property Management Officers four times. I met the current Property Management Officer two weeks ago. He told me he is a temp and he does not have access to the email correspondence I had with previous officers, so problems I have described in the past, which are still existing, are completely new to him and he has no record to build evidence. How do you respond to that?</p> <p>During lockdown the caretaker of our building went in self-isolation because he was on the most vulnerable list. This was not picked up by the Property Management Officer and the communal areas of the building were not cleaned for weeks; the same happened when the same caretaker was on holiday, so no replacement was arranged, and the building again was left uncleaned. We complained and complained until emergency cleaning was arranged, after we had been in filth over several days. Who will be held responsible for these inefficiencies?</p>	<p>Leasehold – Tom Walker</p> <p>I discussed these issues at length with the resident concerned and apologised for the service failures that she has experienced over the past two years.</p> <p>I confirmed that we would review the Mirlees court Service charge over the affected period in order to extract any costs (particularly cleaning) that would not be reasonable considering the services that residents had actually received, and asked the PMO to arrange urgent and regular cleaning.</p> <p>The PMO is also following up to arrange for the water pressure issue to be investigated.</p>
5	<p>My question relates to the EWS1 fire safety check. How much are NHG working with solicitors and mortgage lenders in pushing back when lenders are demanding an EWS1 form on buildings that are under 18m and where there is no ACM cladding?</p> <p>This is a point of much stress and anxiety, especially with those residents who are seeking to move.</p>	<p>Fire Safety Team - Andy Mackay</p> <p>We appreciate the uncertainty and frustration that exists currently given the requests from lenders for EWS 1 forms even on blocks under 18m. Housing Associations (and private landlords) across the country are working to try and find ways of achieving progress. We are lobbying government to try and help unblock things, but with little success to date. We would suggest that people being asked for this information living in buildings lower than 18m push back and ask whether there are specific reasons for requesting the EWS 1.</p> <p>At this time the push from both sides and lobbying has yet to lead to a satisfactory resolution.</p>
6	Another question about the EWS1	Fire Safety Team - Andy Mackay

	form please - Printworks SE5 are waiting to hear about remediation works (what, when). When can we expect a detailed plan of action?	The works required are still being developed and will need to be finalised. This will be clearer by Christmas.
7	My kids are now young adults and I am looking to add their names to the housing agreement. How do I go about doing this and are there any particular requirements for eligibility?	<p>Housing - Debbie Smith</p> <p>Your children should be included within your tenancy agreement as "household members". We would not add them to the agreement as tenants.</p> <p>Dependant on the type of tenancy, there is a right to succession on the death of the tenant. This would apply to eligible members of the household.</p> <p>Your Housing Officer is available to provide advice on this should you wish to discuss this further.</p>
8	The EWS1 issue is impacting on lots of residents preventing them from being able to sell and move. Did NHG apply to the Buildings Safety Fund to pay for any remediation work that might be required? This has been a very useful session - thank you	<p>Fire Safety - Andy Mackay</p> <p>Where buildings are eligible, we are applying to the Building Safety Fund, which has a closing date of 31 December.</p>
9	I understand from talking to my PMO that he only talks to leaseholders and a separate person talks to tenants even if in the same building. So, I and other leaseholders report problems to a PMO and tenants report possibly the same problems to somebody else. My PMO says that he never speaks to the person looking after the tenants' complaints, he doesn't even know their name. Is this how it actually works? Is this the most efficient way to do things?	<p>Leasehold - Tom Walker</p> <p>I confirmed during the call that there is a separate Housing Officer for social tenants but that the PMO should be working closely with the HO to address any issues that affect the whole estate. I have also clarified this with the PMO.</p>
10	On the EWS1 form, thanks for addressing the previous questions. It seems that what might help is knowing whether our building (I happen to be in Singer Mews) is over or under 18m. Are you sending out formal technical information that may help in discussions with our mortgage lenders as I have not received anything on this and neither have other people in my building that I have spoken to?	<p>Leasehold - Tom Walker on the night</p> <p>It is under 18M. If you contact me on tom.walker@nhg.org.uk and let me know which block it is I will try to provide you the 'As built' drawings which include heights.</p> <p>What was the outcome of this? Resident is Liaising directly with the PMO</p>
11	I want to discuss a problem we are having at Corfe House and Lulworth	Housing - Debbie Smith

	<p>House. There is an ongoing problem with a group of people gathering at the corner between Dorset Road and Kibworth Road every day, all day long. Two of them, one man and one woman, are clearly with mental problems and they are shouting, swearing and blaspheming for hours at the time. Now to make things worst someone is bringing a stereo so there is loud music and radio all day long. Basically there is a lot of noise and it is impossible to leave the windows open without being constantly disturbed. It is difficult to concentrate especially when there are people stuck at home or working from home. It is really annoying and I am wondering if there is anything we can do about it as residents or if NHG will help us to sort this out?</p>	<p>We are aware of an increased level of Anti-Social Behaviour that has occurred on the Bolney Meadow Estate through the period of the initial lockdown.</p> <p>We have been working closely with the police during this time to address some of the issues that have occurred.</p> <p>It is harder for us to take action where the nuisance is caused by non-residents, but the police do have powers to move individuals on.</p> <p>You can report incidence of Anti-Social Behaviour to your Housing Officer.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>An engineer lady came and was adamant we need watertight flooring in the bathroom because we have a child with autism. We've also been told three times we'd have a fresh kitchen. This one has been here for 15 years. And then when Notting Hill goes to look for these reports, they can't seem to find them. So, who do we go to for accountability?</p>	<p>Housing - Debbie Smith</p> <p>Contact your HO who will be able to find out where your property is on the cyclical works list.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Are you making these live forum events available after the event?</p>	<p>Resident Involvement Ollie Levy</p> <p>Yes. We want to publish questions and answers raised on the night. Some questions will be addressing similar themes – where this has happened, we might use one question to address multiple queries</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>We have never had any resident's involvement meetings, no physical presence of any representative from NHG. Not aware of inspection scheduled at Centrillion Point with NHG.</p>	<p>Housing - Debbie Smith</p> <p>Centrillion Point is managed by a managing agent on behalf of the freeholder as NHG only own a portion of the building. We work together with the managing agent and have historically conducted joint inspections. We have also previously held regular surgeries within the block where the Housing Officer has been available to meet with residents.</p> <p>We are not currently able to offer drop-in surgeries at any of our properties/estates. Our Housing Officers remain available to discuss individual issues with residents. Please provide your contact details and I will ask</p>

		you Housing Officer to contact you.
15	Mirlees Court resident - communal fire extinguishers are locked away with no accesses to any keys. What happens if a fire breaks out in those areas?	Leasehold - Tom Walker Please contact me directly at tom.walker@nhg.org.uk or your PMO Leon Bruff at Leon.bruff@nhg.org.uk to discuss this issue directly so we can resolve it.
16	How have you been managing ASB issues during the lockdown period and since the easing down? I have had a number of issues with noise nuisance for my block, but very little actions seem to be taken. What can residents do, especially for incidents of repeat offending?	Housing - Debbie Smith We have continued to handle reports of Anti-Social Behaviour throughout the period of lockdown and the easing of restrictions. You should continue to report incidents to your Housing officer.
17	Can my kids as household members buy a property from Notting Hill? Particularly if they are first time buyers?	NHG offers shared ownership schemes which would be available to your children should they wish to apply. There are eligibility criteria they would need to meet in terms of affordability etc. More information can be found on our website .
18	Is there any hold on ASB legal actions under the current situation or are cases still going to court?	Housing Debbie Smith There has been a cessation in the activities of the courts and bailiff appointments for evictions have been cancelled. We have however been able to obtain injunctions in some cases of serious anti-social behaviour.
19	"I use the online My Account Dashboard regularly to report repairs. The pre-filed list of repairs available to leaseholders is quite limited so I revert to log things as requests. I have received a notification for logging a repair/request but no notification if the matter is being dealt with. How do you if your requests are being dealt with?"	MyAccount Team Response The list of items available to leaseholders can be reviewed based on feedback from the leasehold team, so if resident users are finding gaps in the provision and contacting their PMO instead, the PMO should feedback on additions required within the repair selector. Where a repair is raised by a resident through self-service, the resident should be able to see the progress of the repair – e.g. when a contractor is assigned and then when the repair is completed. If there are issues around repairs not being progressed, then it would be good to report it to the Leasehold Operations Managers so they can look into this further.
20	Not sure if this question has been asked but I am wondering whether there are any warranties on newly built buildings? I am asking as at the Meadows/Windmill park development there are a lot of residents with	Leasehold Tom Walker All new developments are covered by NHBC certificate which is valid for 10 years. There is also an initial one-year defects period.

	<p>plumbing issues which seem to stem from inferior materials being used and shoddy workmanship during the building phase. These issues (e.g. leaky toilets) are coming to light less than 10 years after the compound was built. Are NHG able to hold the builders to account for that? And if so is there any possibility of getting these issues fixed compound-wide by NHG?</p>	<p>Where we identify estate wide failure of component parts we are able to work with colleagues in our Assets team to address these, and if necessary pursue the original developer.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>Hardy Court is only 3 storeys, unsure if it is over 18m; however it does have timber on the exterior. I think this will increase the need for a EWS1. Can you confirm when an intrusive survey will be done, and if a visual survey will be completed as a first pass?</p>	<p>Fire Safety Team - Andy Mackay</p> <p>We are undertaking visual surveys to understand the risk of different buildings. These reviews will help to influence the timing of intrusive surveys, but no date has yet been set for an intrusive survey on Hardy Court</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>I am currently in the early stages of resale and I am still worried about the consequences of the EWS1 process with its various delays and problems.</p> <p>Has NHG had any success when they've pushed back against a request from a lender who has requested a form for a building that is under 18m and has no ACM cladding?</p>	<p>Fire Safety Team - Andy Mackay</p> <p>See response as question 5</p>