

Report to: Management Committee – 10 December 2020

Prepared by: Grant Kennedy – Housing Services Manager
Stewart Pattison: Compliance Manager

Subject: Report on Fire Safety at 46 Overnewton Street

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 1 December 2020 the Association's Housing Services Manager was notified by a contractor working at Overnewton Court that the Fire Alarm there was sounding. He went to Overnewton Court and the Fire Service arrived as he reached the building.
- 1.2 During the Housing Services Manager's time on-site, while the Fire Service were undertaking their procedures, the Fire Officer raised some concerns.

2. Fire Service concerns

- 2.1 The Fire Officer in attendance advised that he was not happy with:
- Tenants not evacuating upon hearing the fire alarm;
 - Tenants not behaving properly during the fire service's call-out procedures. That is, a couple of tenants were hanging around in the complex common areas and when asked to leave they didn't. And, as the fire brigade were going into the bin chute rooms to open the windows, a tenant tried to go in to put rubbish down the chute;
 - The fire not being called in properly.

2.2 The Fire Office requested that the Housing Services Manager action these points.

3. Action taken - Fire Service call-out on 1 December 2020.

3.1 The Housing Services Manager wrote to all residents on 1 December 2020 noting concerns and reiterating the fire evacuation procedures (See appendix 1).

3.2 The Fire Officer spoke to the contractor directly on-site and advised him of the protocol he should have followed when the alarm was sounding.

4. Previous incident

4.1 Following a call-out of the fire service on 27 March 2020 the Fire Service expressed some concerns. These concerns were taken on board and a response was provided to the Fire Service regarding the issues they raised at that time (see appendix 2).

5. Further action

5.1 Despite reminding residents of the procedures when the fire alarm sounds, the fire evacuation process is not being followed.

5.2 In order to mitigate risk the Association will:

- Instruct the tenancy services assistant to speak to all residents individually and reiterate the fire evacuation procedure;
- Timeline follow-up calls/visits to individual residents to remind them of the procedures;
- Liaise with the Fire Service and take any advice on how the procedures can be improved.

6. Moving forward

- 6.1 Ideally a meeting with all residents to discuss the procedures would be arranged, but at this time, due to social distancing, this would be problematic. However, as soon as this can be done safely a meeting will be held.
- 6.2 Consideration will also be given to undertaking fire drills. Although logistically challenging, this may be a desirable initiative and this can be discussed with the fire service.
- 6.3 The Housing Services Manager will contact the Fire Service and advise them of the action the Association has taken and discuss with them proposals for fire drills and the possibility of any joint initiative that can improve the situation.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 It is recommended that Management Committee note the action taken to date and approve this report.

Appendix 1

01/12/2020

46 Overnewton Street

Glasgow G3 8RX

RECENT FIRE IN BIN STORE

On 1st December 2020 the Association was made aware of a fire in the bin store area of the complex. The fire alarm system activated appropriately and the fire brigade attended to extinguish the fire. Upon attendance at the incident I witnessed residents congregating in the common areas. I would remind all residents that they should quickly and safely evacuate from the complex upon hearing an alarm. If you are in your home you can remain there until directed to leave by the fire brigade. Under no circumstances should tenants wait in the common areas as this may hinder the emergency services from investigating or tackling any fire. I also witnessed residents attempting to use the fire panel to silence the fire alarms. I would remind all residents that the fire panel should not be used by anyone except Yorkhill Housing Association staff or contractors, and the emergency services. Alarms will only be silenced upon instruction from Scottish Fire and Rescue. I would also remind residents that the lift should not be used in the event of a fire alarm sounding. The lift will automatically return to the ground floor and the doors will open to allow anyone in the lift to exit safely. This is normal, and in line with fire evacuation procedures. Finally, I would also remind tenants that cigarettes, matches, or anything flammable, should not be disposed of using the bin chutes. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely,

G. Kennedy Grant Kennedy

Housing Services Manager

Appendix 2

Mr D Philip
Watch Manger
Amber Watch
Yorkhill Fire Station
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Glasgow

16/04/2020

Dear Mr Philip

Fire Service Attendance 46 Overnewton Court 27/03/2020

Thank you for your email of 3 April, 2020 in which you note “A few issues of concern emerging during the attendance”.

You note that, despite the ‘Stay Put’ policy for 46 Overnewton Court, most residents evacuated from their flats when the alarm was activated.

I can confirm that all residents have been made aware of the ‘Stay Put’ procedure. We do remind them of this; and we also ask them to sign forms for our records that show that the procedure has been read and understood.

You suggest in your correspondence that we will remind residents of the ‘Stay Put’ procedure. As noted above residents are made aware, and we take

measure to ensure this. However we will take this opportunity to remind them again and letters will be sent to all residents.

You say in your email “if residents have an actual fire in their flat they can obviously evacuate but please encourage them to provide a back-up phone call to fire service (999) . . . so that we know we are mobilised to a confirmed fire”. We will include for this in our letters to residents.

You also say in your correspondence, that it was of concern to you that when you were mobilised to the address, the alarm company did not inform Yorkhill Housing Staff immediately to attend these premises.

I have been in touch with Cordia Housing Alarms who look after the call service for 46 Overnewton Street. They have confirmed they have the number of our emergency contractor who will re-set the alarm when safe to do so. They also have the emergency contact number for Yorkhill Housing Association.

On 9 April 2020 I sent instructions to Cordia advising them that when the alarm is activated, immediately after the Fire Service has been contacted, they will call the Association's emergency contractor. The contractor will respond as an emergency call-out and reset that alarm once the Fire Service has given the all clear.

Because 46 Overnewton Street does not have an on-site staff presence, it can take a bit of time for the alarm to be reset. But, as noted above, the call-handling contractor has been given specific instructions on how they should respond to a fire alarm activation and; the Association's emergency contractor has been notified of the situation and process in place.

I thank you again for your correspondence and the points you have raised.

The Association are keen to work along with the Fire Service. I have met with some of your colleagues on-site in the past; and the Association has taken on recommendations that they have made at particular times. An example of that is the 'Fire Brigade Box' the Association installed at the request of the Fire Service. The box contains records specifically asked for by the Fire Service.

I hope that the action taken, and the clarification of the processes in place, addresses any concerns you have. And as noted, the Association is keen to work along with the Fire Service, so please get in touch with us at any time if there's anything you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Pattison

Compliance Manager