



Fire Safety Network Notes

Friday 7th July 2017

CMC @ Loudon, Cardiff

Attendance

Organisation	Name
1. Aelwyd HA	Bill Meiklejohn
2. Anglesey County Council	Gill Roberts
3. Bro Myrddin HA	Paul Edwards
4. Bron Afon	Chris Weeks
5. Bron Afon	Neville Brown
6. Bron Afon	Nigel Sherry
7. Cadwyn HA	Martin Ford
8. Cartrefi Conwy	Owain Roberts
9. Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd	Daniel Parry
10. Celtic Horizons	Adrian Bright
11. Coastal Housing Group	Kevin David
12. Coastal Housing Group	Gary Morgan
13. Community Housing Cymru	Will Atkinson
14. Community Housing Cymru	Stuart Ropke
15. First Choice HA	Phillip Green
16. Grwp Cynefin	Ian Roberts
17. Grwp Cynefin	Dewi Evans
18. Hafod Resources	Leon Clifford
19. Hafan Cymru	Rhodri Walters
20. Linc Cymru	Adrian Brain
21. Merthyr Tydfil HA	Richard Jones
22. Monmouthshire HA	Sue Kidd
23. M&WW Fire & Rescue Service	Byron Jones
24. Monmouthshire HA	Peter Griffiths Jones
25. Newport City Homes	Emma Pearson
26. Newydd HA	Dave Perry
27. NPT Homes	Gareth Evans
28. NPT Homes	Phil Owen
29. Pembrokeshire Housing	Seamus Doyle
30. Pobl Group	Ryan Lloyd-Davies
31. Pobl Group	Brett Gilbert



32. Rhondda HA	Luke Takeuchi
33. South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Michael Gray
34. South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Matthew Bradford
35. South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Anthony Burridge
36. South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Chris Hadfield
37. Swansea Council	Peter Williams
38. Taff Housing	Pamela Evans
39. Taff Housing	Jonathon Jones
40. Trivallis	Richard Evans
41. Vale of Glamorgan Council	Mark Harvey
42. Vale of Glamorgan Council	David Porter
43. Valleys to Coast	Sue Jones
44. Wales and West Housing	Sarah Roberts
45. Welsh Government	John Howells
46. Welsh Government	Colin Blick
47. Welsh Local Government Association	Jim McKirdle

Apologies

1. Merthyr Valley Homes	Merthyr Valley Homes
2. Rhondda Housing	Lisa Lloyd

1. Welcome

Sarah Roberts (Chair) welcomed attendees to this extraordinary meeting. It was explained that this meeting brought together housing associations, local authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association, fire & rescue services and Welsh Government together to share knowledge and expertise to ensure that a disaster such as that which occurred at Grenfell Tower never happens in Wales.

A collection was taken at the meeting for the British Red Cross Grenfell Tower Disaster Relief Fund. £126 was raised. Thank you to all who donated.



2. Update from CHC

Will Atkinson (Policy Officer, CHC) presented on the fire safety situation in social housing high-rise buildings in Wales, the reaction from UK and Welsh Governments and the steps undertaken by CHC and members to issues raised by the Grenfell Tower fire. (Further information available in the attached presentation).

3. Update from South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Chris Hadfield, Head of Business Fire Safety, updated the Network on actions undertaken by SWFRS. Chris informed the Network that SWFRS was taking a risk based holistic approach to ensuring fire safety in high rise residential buildings in South Wales. There are 130 residential premises in South Wales in the social and private sector. SWFRS is taking a supportative approach and is assessing buildings holistically. The focus is on buildings where there is a 'sleeping risk'. SWFRS are working with landlords on a case by case basis to assess the risk posed by cladding systems on buildings. Cladding, if it was not before, should now be flagged as a known fire risk in fire risk assessments.

SWFRS are awaiting interim findings from Grenfell to inform further action.

4. Update from National Social Housing Fire Strategy Group

Seamus Doyle (Vice Chair) updated the group on the latest meeting of the NSHFSG. The CHC Fire Safety Network acts a sub-group of the NSHFSG and is represented at its meetings.

Regulation 38 was discussed, more information can be found here:

<https://www.bre.co.uk/page.jsp?id=3184>

The issue of leaseholders and fire safety was discussed. Guidance issued by City West Homes with regard to leaseholders and fire doors accompanies these notes.

A discussion was held on issues relating to leaseholders and fire safety in Wales. Members raised their experiences working with leaseholders to install fire doors and sprinkler systems. Additionally, leaseholders who let their properties need to be managed to ensure that any vulnerable tenants are identified.



5. Welsh Government Update

John Howells (Director of Housing and Regeneration) and Colin Blick (Building Standards Technical Manager) provided an update to the Network on Welsh Government's recent work on fire safety.

The information shared in the attached presentation was reiterated and members were thanked for their cooperation during the period of data gathering.

6. Primary Fire Authority

Sarah Roberts detailed the benefits of a Primary Fire Authority for members in Wales. More information on PFAs can be found here: <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/19612>

Members were urged to discuss PFA with their management teams and CHC/Sarah will be in touch with further information on progress towards developing a PFA through a co-ordinating body.

7. Fire Safety Advisory Group

Stuart Ropke, CHC, updated the Network on the Welsh Government Fire Safety Advisory Group established in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire.

The Group's membership is currently as follows but is subject to additional members as necessary:

Des Tidbury	Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser for Wales
Huw Jakeway	Chief Fire Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Steve Thomas	Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association
Ruth Marks	Chief Executive, Welsh Council for Voluntary Action
David Wilton	Chief Executive, TPAS Cymru
Stuart Ropke	Chief Executive, Community Housing Cymru



The Group's terms of reference are to be finalised shortly but the group will be looking at the following broad areas:

- Learn immediate lessons as they emerge from Grenfell Tower incident and their application in Wales.
- Consider the immediate implications for residents of high rise housing affected by the response to Grenfell.
- Consider how prepared we are in Wales for such an incident from an emergency response perspective and local emergency planning.
- Review the outcome of decisions by the UK Expert Group on materials testing and their implications for Wales.
- Consider the current Welsh regulatory and inspection arrangements for high rise residential buildings.
- Review all current related guidance and its appropriateness.

- Consider the implications, on a risk basis, of fire safety across wider residential properties and public buildings.

CHC will keep the Network updated with actions and updates from the Advisory Group.

8. Assembly Inquiry

Network attendees were informed of the one-day inquiry to be held into fire safety in tower blocks in Wales by the Welsh Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on 13th July.

The Inquiry will cover the following broad areas:

- What fire safety requirements and measures are currently in place in Welsh high rise blocks?
- Are there any obvious gaps or weaknesses in the current system of regulation in Wales of fire safety in high rise blocks?
- Is guidance to residents of high rise blocks in Wales, in the event of a fire, appropriate?
- How are residents in Wales being informed about recent developments and being reassured about fire safety measures in their block?



- To what extent are residents' views about fire safety being listened to and addressed?

Members will be represented to the inquiry by CHC, Merthyr Valley Homes, Bron Afon, Newport City Homes and Pobl Group.

Network attendees discussed the sector response to the inquiry and suggested issues that should be brought to the committee's attention. Notes on this section are available as a separate document.

Actions (CHC):

- Arrange a further Network meeting to discuss further issues relating to Grenfell Tower and the Specialised Housing Guide. This is likely to be held in early September.
- Call for volunteers for technical sub-group to support CHC's representation on the Wales Fire Safety Advisory Group.
- Update Network on the progress towards establishing a primary fire authority
- Keep Network updated with the work of the Welsh Government Fire Safety Advisory Group and the Assembly Inquiry into Safety in Tower Blocks.