



notes

Social Housing Fire Safety Strategy Group
Wednesday 9th July 2014
Media Resource Centre
Llandrindod Wells, LD1 6AH

Attendance

Bill Meiklejohn Aelwyd HA	Les James Carmarthenshire County Council	Kristy Tilman Carmarthenshire County Council	Rachel Davies Carmarthenshire County Council
Bryan Griffiths Cartefi Cymunedol Gwynedd	Darren Whetton City and County of Swansea	Kevin Bateman Hendre	Ailsa Leach Hendre
Dewi Evans Grwp Cynefin	Keith Morris Pennaf Housing Group	Barry Davies Pembrokeshire Housing	Ian Hall Melin
Sue Jones Valleys to Coast	Paul Watson Tai Cantref	Richard Lewis Tai Cantref	Kate Davies Grwp Gwalia
Richard Grant Mid Wales Housing Association	Nigel Sinnett Pembrokeshire Housing Association	Vaughan Williams Wales and West Housing Association	Wayne Williams Tai Ceredigion
Adrian Brain Linc Cymru	Richard Davies Mid and West Wales Fire service	Ceri Thomas Family Housing Association	Rob Jones Tai Calon
Kevin Thomas Tai Calon	Sarah Roberts Merthyr Valley Homes	Tomos Davies Community Housing Cymru	David Phillips Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Leighton Williams Tower Fire Group	Peter Greenslade Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Paul Jenkinson North Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Andy Gwatkin South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Neil Davies NPT Homes	Phil Owen NPT Homes	Phillip Green First Choice	

Feedback from the National Fire Safety Group

The notes from the last National Fire safety Group is imminent. Community Housing Cymru will send the notes in the coming weeks.

Community Housing Cymru is delivering a Level 3 Award for Reporting Fire Risk in Residential Properties on the 15th September 2014.

Further details about the course and booking options can be found [here](#).

Wales and West are also hosting a week long fire risk course.

The next Fire and Safety group is held on the 8th September 2014 at Community Housing Cymru's office in Cardiff Bay.

BSI recently published its draft British Standard BS9251 – Domestic Fire sprinkler systems - Draft Review. BS 9251 gives guidance for the design, installation, components, water supplies and back flow protection, commissioning, maintenance and testing of fire sprinkler systems installed for life safety purposes with additional benefits for property protection in residential and domestic occupancies.

CFOA update

Paul Jenkinson from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service gave a CFOA update to the group. He highlighted the work being done into the charging and storage of mobility scooters and signage and developing a fire safety pamphlet.

Fire safety in care schemes/social housing and enforcement notices. An update and any lessons learnt including Q&A

Kristy Tilman from Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC), David Phillips from Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Les James from CCC updated the group on CCC's Fire Safety in Care Scheme.

David Phillips gave an overview of the original enforcement notice served on CCC in 2011 and the main issues and failures around for example, procedures not in place for tenants to evacuate.

Kristy Tillman and Les James provided an overview of constraints impacting fire risk assessments, for example was a flat domestic premise or a communal premise, staff arrangements in the event of a fire and evacuation procedures, all this was unclear.

Kristy Tillman highlighted published guidance by the Department for Communities and Local Government that has been developed to assist with the Fire Safety Risk Assessment process:

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide: Sleeping Accommodation
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide: Residential Care
- Fire safety in purpose-built flats

Kristy and Les gave an overview of the measures CCC met to lift the enforcement measure. Measures implemented to promote fire safety included:

- Setting procedures for vulnerable tenants
 - Revising the Allocation Policy
 - Assessing tenant ability to live in properties through Support Assessments (Status 1 -4)
 - Developing and revising Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Developing and revising new information & instruction for staff
 - Defined Procedures
 - Clear Roles & Responsibilities
 - Training of staff
 - Sheltered Scheme Handbook (presently version 9)
- Developing and improving its maintenance programme

The impact of new procedures on the delivery of Sheltered Housing included:

- Inability of council to allocate due to tenant unsuitability – increased empty properties
- Referrals of tenants from social services etc helps determine whether tenant is still suitable for sheltered or other accommodation.
- Fire Services now aware of where vulnerable people are housed.
- Tenants who lived in unsuitable properties but wished to remain – CCC set up procedures and options – next of kin notified.
- Evacuation policy - confusion for tenants – stay put etc.
- WG determination
- Which Guidance should CCC be using?

The panel then answered questions from members.

CCC's presentation is available on the CHC [Fire Safety Group](#) website.

Home Fire Safety Audits

Richard Davies and Peter Greenslade from Mid Wales Fire and Rescue gave an overview of the Home Fire Safety Response Level Questionnaire they are delivering in partnership with Coastal Housing Group.

Coastal Housing Officers and other staff fill out these forms for new and or vulnerable tenants/households. Fire and Rescue Services then meet with tenant to explain fire procedures to those deemed vulnerable.

The scheme was started in October 2013 and so far, there have been 133 referrals to the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Coastal in participating save money as tenant is as a result of advice less likely to have fire, helps identify vulnerable tenants and helps Coastal meet their corporate responsibility.

Some members stated that such referrals were patchy in other areas in Wales. Members agreed that a questionnaire agreement with other fire services would be welcome and would welcome contacts for universal referrals.

A copy of the Fire Safety Audit is available on the CHC [Fire Safety Group](#) website.

Action: The group would welcome contacts for regional referrals.

Primary Authority Scheme

David Phillips from Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service gave an overview of the Primary Authority Scheme.

Primary Authority is a statutory scheme, established by the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (the RES Act). It allows an eligible business to form a legally recognised partnership with a single local authority in relation to regulatory compliance. This local authority is then known as its 'primary authority'.

The primary authority provides advice and guidance which is assured through a statutory mechanism. The primary authority can guide local checks on the business, for example by publishing an inspection plan. The primary authority shares information and intelligence, guiding consistent and proportionate regulation, which cannot be challenged in principle. A primary authority is entitled to recover its costs from a partner business.

As a primary authority, an organisation such as a local authority fire service could set up a partnership with a supermarket, for example Tesco's and provide fire safety advice to all shops across the UK. This in principle saves Tesco money and on bureaucracy.

A business may have a direct partnership with its primary authority, or may be one of a group of businesses that has their partnerships co-ordinated by a third party, such as a trade association or franchisor. In theory, an organisation such as Community Housing Cymru could become a coordinator, coordinating on behalf of HA members on housing related areas such as fire safety.

The Primary Authority scheme is delivered by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO). BRDO operates the secure Primary Authority IT System which will allow organisations such as a fire service to check whether an organisation is with a primary authority before it does a fire check.

David Phillips' presentation on the Primary Authority Scheme is available on the CHC [Fire Safety Group](#) website

More information on Primary Authority can be found on the BRDO website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/better-regulation-delivery-office>

Action: CHC to assess the feasibility of becoming a coordinator.

P50 service free fire extinguisher

Leighton Williams, Tower Fire Group Managing Director did a presentation on the P50 service free fire extinguisher.

The P50 he explained was a new low maintenance fire extinguisher developed by Britannia and distributed by Tower Fire Group. The P50 requires minimum maintenance and has a 10 year guarantee.

Leighton Williams' presentation on the P50 fire extinguisher is available on the CHC [Fire Safety Group](#) website

For more information, please visit Tower Group's P50 website:
<http://www.towerfire.co.uk/service-free-fire-extinguisher/>

Debate on Fire Sprinklers

Tomos Davies gave an update on the Welsh Government's Fire Sprinkler Pilot.

The Fire Sprinkler pilot includes in total 16 separate pilot projects, covering 10 Housing Associations in Wales and around 230 housing units combining a mix of development, type and geography. The pilots have been funded from £1 million Social Housing Grant approved by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

BRE have been appointed to monitor the fire sprinkler pilot. The monitoring will consider:

The learning and experience relating to issues, solutions to issues, and the process concerning:

- The design and installation of a fire sprinkler system for social housing;
- Cost and cost savings
- Water supply and;
- The application of guidance in the Approved Document.
- Experience of Building Control Body;

The Welsh Government will publish a full monitoring report in autumn 2015, to inform the full introduction of sprinklers in new houses and flats from January 2016.

The monitoring report will lead into the Welsh Government guidance which will be consulted on with HAs and housing providers.

Agreeing actions and outcomes/discussion topics for the next meeting

- CPD Seminar with Neil Ashdown, Fire Door Inspection Scheme, including Q&A.
- Primary Authority with David Phillips.

AOB

Sarah Roberts discussed escape routes. She mentioned that there was a conflict in the definition of escape routes between Healthy Home Rating System (HHRS) and Environment Health officer's (EHOs)

Date and venue of the next meeting

The next Social Housing Fire Safety Strategy Group will be held on Thursday the 16th October 2014.