

Safety in your building

31 March 2023

**20-22 Sidney Road,
Stockwell,
SW9**

Dear residents,

External wall investigations - progress on medium priority buildings

I'm pleased to confirm that we are scheduling the first investigations into the external wall construction in our medium priority buildings that are between 11 and 18m tall. Your building is included in this group and **will be investigated by the end of March 2024**.

We will write to you again before any investigation starts on your building and we will let you know the outcome of the inspections as soon as we know the position.

If you wish to move home whilst the inspections are underway, we have relaxed the rules for our shared owners allowing them to let their property. If this is something you wish to do, please contact us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk.

At this point we are not able to confirm who will pay if any remedial works are required. Much will depend on what we discover in the inspections, the responsibility of the contractor and warranty provider and the availability of government funding.

Several residents have recently submitted questions regarding your building remediation issues so we thought it best to share the questions and answers with everyone at Sidney Road.

1. Although the building was built in one phase, it seems that Network are looking at the building as two buildings – presumably due to the different heights involved. Please can clarity be provided on this as residents consider the building to be one building and not two and feel Network are using this to avoid completing works and costs.

When we originally wrote to residents, we wrote to different street addresses which are different heights with one above and one below 11 metres. In building safety guidance, 11 metres is an important threshold for funding and safety equipment. However, we have since grouped the two buildings together and any work towards the building will be done on the schedule of the taller building. If it comes down to making an application for government funding, we will make the case to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that this is one building, as there is no government funding available for buildings below 11 metres.

2. A promise was made for regular updates. It seems that updates have slowed and in some cases some residents are not getting updates. This needs to improve as communication is key to understand where we are in the process and help those worrying about what the future looks like.



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A summary of this letter

Your building is in our first group for external wall investigations and will be investigated by March 2024.

Our next update will be in September 2023, unless we write to you about your investigation date earlier.

*If there are some residents who are not receiving texts from us, they should contact our customer service team to check that we have the correct phone number. This can be done on **0300 373 3000** or customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk. To ensure everyone can make sure they're getting the latest, we've also set up a dedicated page on the website where all updates will appear at www.networkhomes.org.uk/SidneyBuildingSafety. We normally only do this when a building is on-site with remediation, but hopefully this will help to ensure everyone can access updates. We'll put a QR code poster in the buildings as well so you can scan quickly if you're not sure you're getting updates.*

3. There is no timeframe. No plan. Just sit and wait at the cost of residents looking to sell. Anyone looking to sell has to take a figure less than market price due to not being able to get their EWS1 form. More information is needed on what is being done to get EWS1 forms to residents asap.

EWS1 forms can only come after an investigation – there is no way to issue one without having carried out an investigation. We have detailed in the section below the steps we have taken which bring you closer to having an EWS1 form.

4. A desktop assessment was completed, and residents informed of their priority status, but nothing has happened since then – nearly a year ago. Why?

I've also brought up the last two questions to include here as I believe they all ask similar questions about nothing happening for a year, so it's best to answer together.

5. Why won't we just get on with getting the works known as needed completed as soon as possible, so everyone involved can have their EWS1 forms. We are holding residents to ransom. What is the delay, nobody will explain what's going on and why everything has effectively stopped for a year. Comms over this has been very poor.
6. A letter dated Jan 22 was sent out that finalised NH approach, but nothing has happened since, and it seems the "approach" has completely changed but residents have not been updated properly. Why? Over a year later and no action.

I believe we've shared information before on the steps taken since the desktop assessment – I've updated this to include what has happened since we last shared the list:

- *Carried out a desktop assessment of your building (and all other buildings that were mentioned in our letter)*
- *Carried out a visual survey of your building (and all other buildings that were mentioned in our letter)*
- *Put together a case study of your building to issue to fire engineers (and all other buildings that were mentioned in our letter)*
- *Invited organisations on our external wall framework to tender for work on medium priority buildings*
- *Closed the tender process (procedurally must be open for at least 28 days – tenderers asked for the process to be open for longer than the minimum due to the high number of applications they are making and the complex nature of applications)*
- *Assessed the applications we have received from the tender process*
- *Appointed fire engineers, façade engineers and contractors to investigate the first few buildings in this priority category*
- *Scheduled the first building investigations in this priority category*
- *Investigated the first buildings in this priority category.*

The next steps are:

- *Scheduling further investigations*
- *Informing residents of the outcome of investigations*
- *Issuing EWS1 forms where applicable*
- *Issuing section 20 notices where applicable.*

7. Resident has asked to see the desktop review findings, and this has been refused. Why? Will we release this to those who would like to view it.

We will not be disclosing any information pack that has been prepared to date. The information pack is information taken from the as built drawings, for use by the Fire Engineer undertaking External Wall Assessments in line with PAS9980. The Fire Engineer will be carrying out their own desktop assessment and review of as built literature as part of their external wall assessment. Once the Fire engineer has undertaken a PAS9980 assessment this will be fed into the Type 1 Fire Risk Assessments which is shared with residents.

8. Residents would like to understand exactly what work is required, costs, timeframes, liabilities per LH etc.

Until we have carried out an investigation, we don't know if any work is required. As such, we also don't know what costs may be involved, how long it will take to resolve and what leaseholders may have to contribute – if anything. Once we have carried out the investigation, we will share the outcome with you. This will hopefully be that no remediation is required, and you'll get an EWS1 form a few weeks later when issued by the fire engineer.

9. Two residents indicated that unless they get their EWS1 forms by October they will have to sell their family homes as they cannot afford the variable rate it will switch to once their fixed mortgage rate finishes. (Properties being rented out).

This is a very difficult situation for these residents, and we sympathise with them. We would always recommend speaking to lenders and/or brokers to determine what the best solution may be to see if affordable payments can be maintained. Residents may be able to get a product transfer, which means transferring to a different mortgage at the same lender – further information is here: <https://censeo-financial.com/product-transfer/>.

10. Residents questioned if it was possible to prioritise them over other works in the same priority category, so they get their EWS1 forms quicker. They said they understand why buildings with higher risk would be a priority over their buildings. In any event further feedback is needed over the risk to each building and how it sits within the bigger picture and risks.

Sidney Road is in the highest priority category for our next programme of work – we have already prioritised this building into the next category. There are, however, buildings within this group that have a higher risk than Sidney Road and so will need to be investigated first. We investigate all building's risk factors and then prioritise accordingly.

We are also not able to share that information with you – there is important information detailing what the current risks are, and we must protect residents living in those buildings from specific risk information being available to everyone. The worst-case scenario could be that information about specific fire risks falls into the wrong hands, affecting the safety of those residents.

We'll write to you again before the inspections start or in **September 2023**.

If you need further support, you can:

- Check our document library for your building's letters and documents:
<https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/mybuildingdocuments/>
- Get in touch with us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk if you have any questions.

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