

20 March 2024

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Dear residents,

Your building's external wall investigation – expected to take place by March 2025

You'll know from previous letters that we need to investigate your building's external wall system. The external wall system is anything that makes up the external wall of your building – this includes things like cladding, tiles, insulation, fire barriers and render systems. This letter includes an update on the situation at your building, a reminder of what has already happened, why we need to investigate your building and what might happen next.

Investigation dates

All of our buildings that require investigation have been given a priority rating, based on several risk factors. I'm pleased to say that as expected, in March 2024 we completed the investigations for the priority group above yours. We will now be investigating your building's priority group beginning in **April 2024** and hope to have completed them by **March 2025**.

Your group has eight schemes made up of 16 buildings and so we do expect to be investigating some buildings towards the end of the above timeframe. Once we have your building's investigation date confirmed, we will write to tell you. Your next update will be September at the latest:

- We will write in September to let you know how we are progressing in investigating the buildings in your priority group
- or
- We will write before September with the date of your building's investigation.

Increasing the number of fire engineers we work with

Although we managed to complete all the investigations we expected in the last year, we have experienced difficulties with confirming an investigation date with our fire engineers. We've told you before that there is a large shortage of qualified professionals in the UK who can carry out these sorts of external wall investigations. This is still an issue and so we have appointed some more fire engineers to our framework. We hope this will mean we are able to carry out investigations within our above expected timeline.

Why are investigations taking place?

As a reminder, after the Grenfell Tower fire the government told owners of tall buildings over 18 metres to investigate their buildings and determine if the correct materials had been used, and the construction method/workmanship was appropriate. SNG (then Network Homes) has nearly 100 tall buildings and so it took us some time to be able to investigate all of them, as professionals with the necessary skills are in very high demand, due to the number of tall buildings in the UK and London particularly.

A summary of this letter

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we expect to be investigating your building's external wall system.

We need to do this to follow the government's guidance brought in since the fire at Grenfell Tower.

We'll either write with a progress update in September, or will write beforehand with your building's investigation date.

We've hired more fire engineer contractors to support us to carry out these investigations, as they are high demand and we've struggled to get dates confirmed.

We've investigated our tall buildings, and the next priority group down, which means we're now able to start looking at buildings in your priority group.

What happens in the investigation?

We'll use a raised platform to look at the external wall system in multiple areas around your building. We may need to cut some holes in the outer layer to see what's behind it, but we will always put things right before we leave. Investigations tend to take between 1-2 days, but we'll let you know when we write to you.

What happens after the investigation?

While some buildings will still not be investigated for some months, we also thought it would be a useful reminder to talk you through what could happen after your investigation, so you are aware:

- Our fire engineer will let us know that no remediation is required to your building's external wall system. They'll then issue an EWS1 form (EWS - external wall system) which certifies the fire risk at your property and can be a requirement of lenders to sell or remortgage.
- **or**
- Our fire engineer will let us know that remediation is required. We will then work to put together a remediation plan, appoint a contractor, determine a course of funding and keep you updated along the way. After the remediation is complete, our fire engineer will then be able to issue an EWS1 form.
- If remediation is needed, we will see if we can make an application to the government's Cladding Safety Scheme, which can help to fund some type of remediation work.
- Once a plan for the works has been agreed, start dates are confirmed and a funding plan is in place, we will be able to issue a 'lender letter' containing the information. This can sometimes mean you can sell your home before work has finished and you've received an EWS1 form.

Further support

I'd like to thank you all for your patience as you have waited some time for us to get to this point where we are investigating your building's priority group. If you need further support, you can:

- Go to the London Fire Brigade's website, which is offering a free online tool which guides you through a fire risk assessment of your home (home visits are available for more vulnerable residents): <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>
- Remind yourself of our top fire safety tips, including not using BBQs on balconies: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/fire-safety-top-tips/>
- Check our document library for your building's letters and documents – it takes a little while to load: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/mybuildingdocuments/>
- Get in touch with us on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Raj Gandecha
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)