

## Safety in your building

20 January 2025

Flats 1-12  
63 Gowers Walk,  
Whitechapel,  
E1 8GL

Dear residents,

### Fire strategy now simultaneous evacuation, plus fire wardens from Tuesday 2pm

From **Tuesday 21 January at 2pm**, the fire strategy at your building will be changing from stay put to simultaneous evacuation. We will be installing a 'waking watch', this is essentially a warden who will patrol the building every 15 minutes to look for signs of heat, smoke or flames, and provide an early warning to all residents. The warden will carry an air horn. **If you hear the air horn or are told to evacuate you must leave the building immediately.**

In the next few months, we will install a building wide fire alarm system. After the fire alarm has been installed, the waking watch patrols will no longer be required.

We're implementing these changes due to issues we have found within the building's external wall system. We've included below further fire safety information, plus background information on why this has happened, and what the next steps are. Please take the time to read this letter as it contains important safety information.

#### Fire strategy for Gowers Walk

We are taking the following steps to support the simultaneous evacuation policy:

- Implementing a waking watch.
- Procuring a fire alarm.
- Notifying the Fire Brigade of the change in strategy.
- Changing fire notices in the communal areas.
- Gathering information on residents who may need help to evacuate.

Due to the above measures we are taking, **it is safe for you and your family to remain in your home.**

#### What should you do if there is a fire, an alarm or evacuation?

If there is a fire in your flat or the fire wardens raise an alarm by sounding an air horn, you should:

- Evacuate immediately closing all doors behind you as you leave your flat.
- Leave the building using the nearest staircase shown on the fire signage within your block. Do not use the lift.
- Call 999.
- If the fire is in your flat, alert the fire wardens so they can raise an alarm.
- If you are responding to an alarm raised by the fire wardens, you should follow any instructions they give you.
- Tell the fire warden and fire brigade if any members of your household need to be rescued.

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[customerservice@  
networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)  
0300 373 3000

#### **A summary of this letter**

From Tues 21 January at 2pm, your building will have fire wardens (waking watch) patrolling the building.

#### **Safety information**

Your fire strategy will also change to simultaneous evacuation – you must leave the building immediately if you hear an alarm/airhorn or are directed to by a warden.

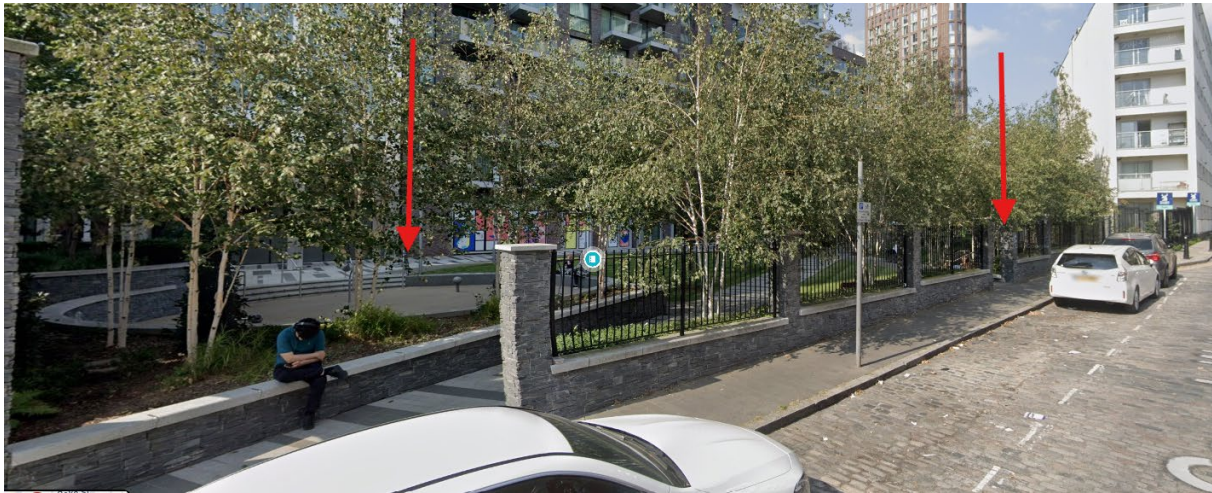
Please fill out the form on our website if you believe someone in your home would need to be rescued in the event of an evacuation:  
[networkhomes.org.uk/  
building-safety-  
vulnerability/](http://networkhomes.org.uk/building-safety-vulnerability/)

You should familiarise yourself and your household members with the nearest fire exit.

#### **Future updates**

All future updates will be texted out and can be found on this dedicated webpage:  
[networkhomes.org.uk/  
GowersBuildingSafety](http://networkhomes.org.uk/GowersBuildingSafety)

- Gather at the assembly point, which is located at the front of Kingswood House, entering through the public gates on Gower's Walk. Wait at the assembly point until you are told by the lead fire warden/fire brigade to return to your home. The location of the assembly point - entrance points highlighted by the arrows.



### Need to be rescued?

It's important we know if anyone in your household will need to be rescued in an emergency. Please let us know by visiting: [www.networkhomes.org.uk/building-safety-vulnerability/](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/building-safety-vulnerability/).

Someone may need to be rescued if they have:

- Mobility issues
- Visual/Hearing impairment
- Large family unit
- Elderly relatives
- Young children.

We will collect this information so that we can ensure you and/or the members of your household can be evacuated safely in case of an emergency. This information will also be shared with the London Fire Brigade and the fire warden. We will keep this information for the duration of your tenancy/lease.

### General fire safety information

It's really important that everyone in the building is vigilant in preventing a fire incident. We have included some top tips, plus some links to more information which you may find useful:

- Talk to all members of your household, including children, about how to get out of the building in an emergency – look up the appropriate exit as soon as possible.
- Ensure no items are stored in communal areas and escape routes are clear – we've seen some bikes located in corridors and this is a safety hazard in the event of an emergency.
- Go to the London Fire Brigade website, which has 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/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/>
- View resources which may help: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingsafetyresources/>
- Remind yourself of our top fire safety tips: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/fire-safety-top-tips/>

- We understand building safety works can be frustrating and take time to resolve, however we ask that you still treat our staff with respect as they are trying to get the issues at your building fixed. You can read more about how we want to respect each other in our service charter: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/your-home/service-charter/>.

### **Next steps**

We may be eligible to receive support from the government's Cladding Safety Scheme, which can pay for some external wall remediation issues in buildings below 18 metres. Your building measures below 18 metres. We have received funding from other government funds before for other buildings, but will need to see if we are eligible for this building as each one is different. Alongside pursuing government funding, we all also pursue all avenues against parties that built the building.

We will now be putting together a project team who will work on designing a solution to fix the issues we have found in your external wall system. As a reminder, we wrote to you in December letting you know that:

*'Having gone through the findings, regrettably the fire engineer has identified that removal of the current EPS system and replacing it with a new system that utilises non-combustible mineral wool insulation is required at Gowers Walk. This work will include stripping off all the external façade of the building and replacing it with a new system.'*

We will write to you again in the coming weeks where we will share a detailed explanation of the steps we must take to fix the issues in your building. These projects are complex and take months or even a year in the planning stage and so we want to set your expectations early on how quickly we can resolve this.

### **Keeping up to date with the latest information**

We text out updates to residents – if you don't receive text messages from SNG or don't think your contact details are up to date, get in touch with us at [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk).

Around your building we will place QR code posters, which will lead to a dedicated webpage which will include all the latest updates regarding your building. We work on a three-month update basis, so you can expect to hear from us every three months or sooner if we have something confirmed which we need to tell you. You can visit at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/GowersBuildingSafety](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/GowersBuildingSafety).

I'd like to thank you all for your patience in this matter, as it has taken some time to get to this point. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us on [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk).

Kind regards

Raj Gandecha  
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)