

**Briefing note for Overview and Scrutiny Committee:  
Action being taken in response to fire risk for vulnerable residents  
October 2018**

## **Introduction**

Following the Grenfell fire, the Council sought assurances from its care and support providers that fire safety was reflected in their policies and practice and was of importance to them in their service delivery. This brief paper summarises the actions that were taken and the responses received.

## **Background**

Fire safety procedures were highlighted following the Grenfell fire, with a particular focus on arrangements relating to fire spread and evacuation in a tower block and or a building with cladding. However, wider issues about fire awareness and safety were also raised with providers during this time. This was in recognition of the fact that, locally, those most at risk of injury or death from fire are older people who continue to smoke in their own properties as they become more vulnerable.

Since the Grenfell fire, the focus on fire safety has remained strong and the Council continues to work with partners to reduce risks to residents.

## **Supported housing**

The Panel has already received evidence from Homes for Haringey about its actions in the aftermath of the Grenfell fire to ensure the safety of a range of tenants, including those in sheltered housing. The Council also commissions a range of providers to deliver supported housing and floating support in their own homes and following the Grenfell fire, a survey was carried out with all housing related support providers. These providers work across age ranges and care groups, often with vulnerable residents. The survey is attached for information. All providers responded and the results of the survey were risk rated, using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system. There were no providers who accommodated their service users in tower blocks or used cladding. Commissioning Officer now raise fire safety with all providers at regular contract monitoring meetings, covering not just the fabric of the building and evacuation procedures, but also wider issues of fire safety awareness amongst those staff directly providing support.

## **Care homes**

Following the Grenfell tower, the Council contacted all care home providers in Haringey and those out of borough supporting a Haringey resident, to raise awareness about fire safety issues. No care home provider operates from a fire block or in a building where cladding does not reach current standards. All providers have fire safety policies and certificates in place and regularly carry out fire evacuation drills with the input of the London Fire Brigade.

## **Home care**

For those Haringey residents receiving care in their own homes, the issues relate to the awareness of fire safety amongst front line care staff and their ability to raise concerns in a timely fashion where risks have been identified. Following the Grenfell fire, the Provider Forum, well attended by all providers operating in and on behalf of the borough, discussed fire issues a number of times. This has been reinforced through quality assurance and contract monitoring processes, particularly in relation to the need to ensure training has been taken up by all front line staff.

### **Current risks**

We have continued to work closely with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to reduce the risk of deaths from fire for vulnerable residents. There have been a number of individuals who have died due to fire over recent years, particularly where residents smoke. A summary document and person centred risk assessment checklist from the LFB, both attached here, were forwarded to all care providers over the summer highlighting the importance of identifying risks with regard to service users who may smoke and be bed bound and use equipment such as air mattresses or emollients to protect skin, all of which increase the risk of a fire spreading. In response, providers have identified staff training needs and been working with our Brokerage and Quality Assurance service to ensure that all the most recent information is incorporated in fire safety policies. Some providers have been working directly with the LFB to carry out audits of practice, to ensure full compliance.

Fire safety is a feature of inspections for those services regulated by the Care Quality Commission and each quality assurance and contract monitoring visit carried out by the Commissioning Unit also covers fire safety awareness as well as policy and procedure.

### **Safeguarding Adult Board**

Following the Grenfell fire, the Safeguarding Adult Board also took action to raise fire safety issues. Fire safety and compliance were identified both as a risk on the Board's Strategic Risk Register and as a priority on the Board's Strategic Plan, overseen by the Quality Assurance Sub-Group, comprising the Council and partners.

The Board has been the conduit for wider dissemination of fire safety measures, and has also circulated the LFB's information pack and person centred risk assessment checklist mentioned above to all Board members. In addition to the Council, these include (but are not limited to) the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Trusts, the Metropolitan Police, Homes for Haringey, the voluntary and community sector, the London Ambulance Service as well as the LFB themselves.

A collective Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) learning event was also held very recently, with partners and the LFB following the sad death of a local resident in a fire. This was a focused learning event to identify actions which could have been taken in response to this individual's needs. These include further training for all front line care workers led by the LFB and further consideration of the issues raised by the incident.

### **Conclusion**

## Appendix A

Whilst the focus on the specific issues arising from the Grenfell fire has remained strong, the wider focus on fire safety awareness continues to be reinforced through effective partnership working across the borough, with a particular view to preventing the incidence of fire particularly for vulnerable residents.