

## All residents at Wellend Villas

### Building safety update number one

5 February 2021  
Wellend.phase1@shgroup.org.uk

Dear Resident

### UPDATE ON BUILDING SAFETY PROGRAMME INVESTIGATIONS AT WELLEND VILLAS

We wrote to you last week to share the news that we are planning to install an additional smoke detection system into your buildings. We appreciate that this has given rise to a number of questions from residents so we wanted to give some more information here and update you what we have been doing.



#### What steps have we taken at Wellend Villas?

##### 1. Preliminary investigations

Our experts have completed preliminary investigations into the building materials used at Wellend Villas and we have received the architect and engineer's draft preliminary report.

##### 2. Review the preliminary findings

We have reviewed the initial findings. These have unfortunately revealed that we need to carry out some remedial work to the buildings to ensure that they comply with the government's guidelines. The exact extent of these has yet to be determined.

##### 3. The need for more detailed investigations

The next step is to do more detailed investigations to establish how widespread the issues are, the scope of the work required, the likely timings and the estimated costs.

##### 4. The preliminary investigation showed that:

- We need to install some horizontal and vertical firebreaks behind areas of the cedarwood timber wall covering.

#### Our Building Safety Programme

Following government guidance on building safety our building safety programme is systematically checking all the buildings we own to ensure that they comply with the updated safety advice. More information is available on our website [here](#).

We have created a microsite specifically for Wellend Villas where we will post information and updates about the building safety work.

- We need to carry out remedial work to the cavity barriers around windows surrounded by the cedarwood because at least some of these have not been installed as recommended.
- The cedarwood timber and insulation beneath will likely need to be replaced but we need to do some more surveys to understand the extent of that work.

## In the meantime, what are we doing to ensure residents are safe?

While we carry out the more detailed investigations into the remedial work and get on with the work itself, we have taken advice from the fire brigade and our fire safety engineers to make sure that your homes have the right additional precautions in place to ensure your safety in the event of a need to evacuate the buildings.

### This advice is that:

1. We should install additional smoke detection and alarms to supplement the existing system.

This work is what we wrote to you about last week. We are sorry that we did not take the time to properly explain the context for that letter.

The installation is taking place next week and we will be communicating more details about that separately.

2. Changing the fire evacuation policy to simultaneously evacuate

Whilst we complete the remedial works, we have changed the evacuation policy from “stay put” to “evacuate” in the event of a fire. We have changed the signage in your buildings to reflect this – please read the updated information.

More information on fire safety is included on our website [here](#).

## What about the costs of the remedial work?

Your safety is our first priority. As a matter of principle, we want to assure you that questions about how building safety remedial work is funded never stand in the way of us getting that work done.

The approach we are taking to funding the costs of remedial work for all our buildings is:

1. Firstly, we will seek to recover what we can from any liable parties where there has been a failure of design or workmanship in the original building work.
2. Simultaneously we will seek input from any available government funds.
3. Finally, if we can't recover from those, we are obliged to seek recovery through the service charge provisions of leases. This is our last resort and we will do everything we can to avoid that option.

## I'm trying to sell or remortgage my home – how will this impact on that?

Wellend Villas is under 18m so although an EWS1 form is not appropriate or a requirement, the outcome of our building safety programme is that we will be providing equivalent assurance to residents and lenders for all our buildings under 18m. For any building that needs remedial works this will be available when those works are complete. This will be the case for Wellend Villas.

The fact that we now know that we need to carry out remedial works means that the sales of homes may be delayed. We appreciate that this will be unwelcome news for anyone trying to move or remortgage. We want to support you so if this is causing particular hardship please speak to us to see what support might be available for you in your individual circumstances.

### Why is this taking so long?

We appreciate that this process is taking a long time and that this is having a serious impact on people's lives and wellbeing. We are grateful to all residents for their continued patience while we fully investigate and ensure the building complies with current building safety guidelines.

We have had feedback that some residents are feeling frustrated with the pace of work, anxious because of the uncertainty and confused about a lack of full or conflicting answers to your questions. We understand that this is a stressful time for many residents and going forward we will be communicating more consistently and regularly. We will be engaging with the residents' association and looking at holding residents' meetings online.

### What happens next?

1. We will be installing the additional smoke and heat detection system over the course of next week.
2. We will be carrying out the necessary further detailed investigations into the remedial works required and producing a detailed programme of work for you to see.
3. When we have more information about costs we will share this with you.
4. We will be liaising with the Wellend residents' association and will be looking to set up online residents' meetings.
5. We will be communicating regularly about progress via the Wellend Villas microsite.

Yours sincerely



**Suzanne Horsley**

**Director of Building Safety**