



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

██████████
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

North East Group Service Delivery Point
Colchester Fire Station
Cowdray Avenue
Colchester
CO1 1XT

██
northeastgroupspd@essex-fire.gov.uk

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Eastlight Community Homes
Eastlight House
Charter Way
Braintree
Essex
CM77 8FG

Our Ref: 80758
Your Ref:

Date: 21 October 2021

Dear Sir

THE REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005
Premises: Flats 75-95 St James Place, De Grey Road, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5TZ

LETTER OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Further to the recent visit carried out on 7th October 2021 the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority is of the opinion that you are not fully complying with the above legislation. The Order requires fire safety issues at the above premises to be effectively managed. You are required to continuously monitor and review where necessary the effectiveness of your Fire Risk Assessment.

The visit was not a comprehensive audit of all fire safety matters but looked into a variety of aspects from which our findings are drawn. Failure to address the items specified in the report could result in enforcement action being taken. This letter and attached schedule are issued without prejudice to any legal action which may subsequently be taken regarding failures to comply with the legislation.

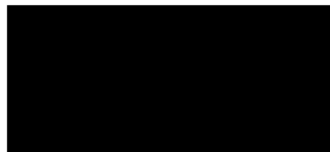
The part(s) of the legislation with which you are not complying are set out in the attached report; these matters are such that they require urgent attention.

A further visit will be made on or after the 10th January 2022 to ensure that the requirements of the schedule have been carried out.

For technical detail and guidance you are strongly advised to purchase the guidance document from the list attached to this letter. Alternatively, these can be viewed online at <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-safety-advice-documents>. When purchasing or installing equipment, compliance with the relevant British Standard is normally taken as being adequate. Should the issues set out in this report require major changes or costs then you are advised to take professional advice before proceeding.

If you have any further queries, then please contact the above Officer quoting our reference number.

Yours faithfully



Watch Manager

Protection

cc:

REPORT

Premises **Flats 75-95 St James Place De Grey Road, Colchester CO4 5TZ**

Premises UPRN. **10095445606**

The following issues were noted as requiring attention during the audit/visit.

Duty to take General Fire Precautions

Failure

To take such general fire precautions as will ensure the safety of relevant persons who are not employees.

Legislation Applicable

Article 8 (1) (b) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 supported by Article 4, which determines what is meant by general fire precautions.

General fire precautions in relation to premises means:-

- (a) Measures to reduce the risk of fire on the premises and the risk of the spread of fire on the premises;
- (b) Measures in relation to the means of escape from the premises;
- (c) Measures for securing that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used;
- (d) Measures in relation to the means for fighting fires on the premises;
- (e) Measures in relation to the means for detecting fire on the premises and giving warning in case of fire on the premises; and
- (f) Measures in relation to the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises, including—
 - (i) Measures relating to the instruction and training of employees; and
 - (ii) Measures to mitigate the effects of the fire.

The inspection revealed the findings and recommendations identified by the specialist report completed by [REDACTED] in June 2021 have not yet been actioned. The report has identified a potential risk to occupants due to the presence of High Pressure Laminate (HPL) cladding panels, concerns that cavity barriers may not be adequate and combustible decking on balconies.

Suggested action to remedy failure

The Responsible Person should review the specialist report and implement the actions recommended.

Action should include further investigation into the presence of fire stopping elements and compartmentation along the top floor of the premises due to the risk of fire spread between properties and into the roof void. (Noted in Section 1)

Where the specialist report has identified the potential for fire spread along the external wall system, on the top floor of the building, due to the presence of the HPL Cladding system (D-s2.d0 rating) (Page-33) NOT of limited combustibility, action is required to remediate this. The removal and replacement of the panels will be necessary. This is recommended within the MHCLG guidance - Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings (January 2020).

It is also recommended that timber decking on balconies is removed and replaced with materials achieving Euroclass A2 or better and confirmation of the existing products used for the Juliet balconies. Subject to the information obtained regarding the balconies replacement may be necessary.

A review of the evacuation strategy is also recommended for those apartments affected by the non-compliant cladding products.

Risk Assessment

Failure

The Fire Safety Risk Assessment has not been reviewed on a regular basis

Legislation Applicable

Article 9 (3) (a) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The responsible person should constantly monitor and review the fire risk assessment, to assess how effectively the risk is being controlled.

Part 1 • Fire risk assessment

If you have any reason to suspect that your fire risk assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in your premises that has affected your fire precautions, you will need to review your assessment and if necessary revise it.

Reasons for review could include:

- changes to work activities or the way that you organise them, including the introduction of new equipment;
- alterations to the building, including the internal layout;
- substantial changes to furniture and fixings;
- the introduction, change of use or increase in the storage of hazardous substances;
- the failure of fire precautions, e.g. fire-detection systems and alarm systems, life safety sprinklers or ventilation systems;
- significant changes to type and quantities and/or method of storage of goods;
- a significant increase in the number of people present; and
- the presence of people with some form of disability.

You should consider the potential risk of any significant change before it is introduced.

The inspection revealed:

- (1) The fire risk assessment does not refer to the External Wall Survey (EWS) and has not been reviewed in light of the EWS report carried out in June 2021 by [REDACTED].
- (2) The fire risk assessment does not fully take account the fire protection systems such as automatic detection within the communal areas and how this could affect the fire strategy for the building.

Suggested action to remedy failure

The responsible person should:

- (1) The fire risk assessment should be reviewed and take account of the remediation works highlighted within the external façade survey. The responsible person should ensure that the fire risk assessment is subject to continuous review and updates as progress is made in the remediation of risks identified. The complexity of information contained in assessments of external wall systems means that wherever possible information about the external wall system and an updated fire risk assessment should be obtained in advance of undertaking a physical inspection of the premises. Following the receipt of a report from a Fire Engineer the responsible person should ensure that the fire risk assessment for the building should be holistically reviewed to consider both the risk of external fire spread and existing active and passive fire safety features in the building.

- (2) The presence of the fire safety systems and facilities within the premises should be reflected in the fire risk assessment, and account should be taken of their contribution (if any) to the safety of relevant persons.

Fire Safety Arrangements

Failure

A fire safety policy document has not been prepared

Legislation Applicable

Article 11 (1) & (2) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

In order to develop and maintain the safety of the building and that of employees and other relevant persons, the building management team should have formulated and documented a fire safety strategy. This strategy may include a fire safety manual in which technical specifications for all aspects of the workplace are included i.e. :-

- A fire safety policy statement appropriate to the building configuration, location, occupation and use. The fire safety policy statement should include general safety issues related to the use of the building and the aims and objectives of the proposed management system and its methodology.
- Fire safety specification for the premises including plans where appropriate.
- Safety management structure.
- Continuing controls and audit procedures.
- Actions to be taken in a fire emergency.
- Fire drills.
- Housekeeping.
- Planned maintenance procedures.
- Staff training.
- Security.
- Record keeping.

The inspection revealed:

- (1) The preventative and protective measures had not been planned, organized, monitored or reviewed where required. It was found that the weekly testing of the fire alarm system had not been planned, organized and monitored.
- (2) Monthly testing of the Mechanical Opening Vents had not been planned, organized, monitored or reviewed.
- (3) The build up of combustible storage within the common areas was noted.

Suggested action to remedy failure

The responsible person should implement a system of planning, organising, controlling, monitoring and reviewing fire safety arrangements.

Emergency Routes and Exits

Failure

The escape routes and exits could not be used as quickly and as safely as possible

Legislation Applicable

Article 14 (2) (b) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

In the event of a fire, it is important that persons can evacuate safely and as quickly as possible.

The inspection revealed:

- (1) On testing the mechanical opening vent at the head of the stair by use of the manual call point, it failed to open.
- (2) It was found that electrical heaters were stored within the means of escape.

Suggested action to remedy failure

- (1) The responsible person should ensure adequate emergency routes and exits, for use by relevant persons in the premises, are available and can be safely and effectively used at all relevant times. This can be achieved by reviewing the arrangements to ensure that adequate smoke ventilation is available to allow the use of the exit route in the event of a fire.
- (2) Sources of ignition should not be found within the means of escape. Electrical heaters stored within the means of escape should be removed. It is essential that escape routes are managed and maintained to ensure that they remain usable and available at all times when the premises are occupied.

Procedures for Serious and Imminent Danger and for Danger Areas

Failure

Insufficient information was made available to persons in the event of serious and/or imminent danger

Legislation Applicable

Article 15 (2) (a) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

You must provide information concerning any significant risks to staff and other relevant persons that have been identified in your fire risk assessment or any similar assessment carried out by another user and responsible person in the building.

The inspection revealed that the premises fire action notices inform persons to 'Stay Put' however, there are communal fire detectors sited within the communal areas of the premises. If a detector was to activate this could lead to confusion.

Suggested action to remedy failure

The responsible person should have adequate, established procedures for serious and imminent danger and for danger areas. This can be achieved by reviewing the fire strategy for the premises and the fire action notices throughout the premises and reflect the fire strategy.

Maintenance

Failure

The mechanical opening vent is inadequately maintained

Legislation Applicable

Article 17 (1) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Fixed installations must be maintained, tested and serviced to the standards recommended in the appropriate BS. The outcome of the service should be recorded.

The inspection revealed that the mechanical opening vent at the head of the stair was not opening when tested.

Suggested action to remedy failure

The responsible person should arrange initial and on-going maintenance to ensure fire safety measures are kept in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

Please be advised that matters detailed under the "Suggested actions to remedy failure" heading(s) are only one method of achieving compliance.

You may wish to seek further specialist advice for another means of achieving this compliance.

**Guides in the Series available from the CLG
(Communities and Local Government)**

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-safety-advice-documents>

1	Offices & Shops ISBN-13:978 1 851 12 851 0	Offices and retail premises (including individual units within larger premises, e.g. shopping centres)
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12	Animal Premises and Stables ISBN-13: 978 1 85112 844 6	Animal premises, stables, livery yards and stables within zoos, large animal sanctuaries or farm parks
13	<i>Supplementary Guide</i> Means of Escape for Disabled People ISBN – 13: 978 1 85112 873 7	This guide is a supplement to be read alongside other guides in this series. It provides additional information on accessibility and means of escape