

Review of the Scottish Fire Safety Regime for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings

Fairer Scotland Duty Summary

January 2021



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Title of Policy, Strategy, Programme etc	Review of the Scottish Fire Safety Regime for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings
Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy	<p>Following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, the Scottish Government established a Ministerial Working Group (MWG) to review building and fire safety regulatory frameworks. The Review of the Fire Safety Regime in Scotland for High Rise Domestic Property (the Review) was one of three MWG Reviews.</p> <p>This Review made five recommendations to strengthen fire safety, to reduce the number of fires and the impact of those that occur, for those who live in high rise domestic properties in Scotland</p> <p>The three key objectives to strengthen fire safety in high rise domestic buildings are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To develop Fire Safety Information for people in high rise domestic buildings to improve knowledge, understanding and responsibilities for fire safety and positively influence behaviour. This is not new information but will clarify, refresh and improve accessibility of existing information. ii. To provide a single source of “Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise Domestic Buildings”, incorporating fire risk assessment. This is practical fire safety advice to those responsible for fire safety in on how to prevent fires and reduce the risks from fires in high rise domestic buildings and assist the assessment of fire risk and the adequacy of existing fire safety measures. iii. To improve fire safety by supporting action to ensure common areas are kept clear of items that are a fire risk or can block access/egress to a building by providing a Framework for removal of materials left in common areas and a fire safety campaign in common areas. <p>The Review Team comprised the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Her Majesty’s Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) and Scottish Government Officials</p>

	<p>The Review of the Fire Safety Regime used a five stage approach: mapping, assessment, research, benchmarking and assessment. The assessment of research and benchmarking was also informed by an Advisory Group comprising the Housing sector, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The Review Team consulted with the high rise Tenants and Residents Panel.</p>
<p>Summary of evidence</p>	<p>There are inequalities in fire incidents and impact, with a higher proportion of fires and casualties from fire occurring in more deprived areas.</p> <p>The rate of dwelling fires is 4.2 times higher¹ and fire casualty rates are 4.9 times higher² in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived.</p> <p>Almost half (47%) of social housing properties are located in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland³. The majority of high rise domestic buildings is social housing so there is a high proportion in the most deprived areas. Therefore the actions to strengthening fire safety in high rise domestic buildings are directed to improve outcomes for people living in high rise domestic buildings including those in the most deprived areas.</p> <p>To ensure the fire safety information for residents was accessible, a hard copy leaflet using simple text and graphics was delivered to all homes in high rise. This recognised that overall there are more people with lower literacy skills and less access to ICT in areas of multiple deprivation⁴. The percentage of adults who do not use the internet is higher for those living in the 20% most deprived areas than for those in the 20% least deprived areas in Scotland. Internet use also increases with income. Furthermore, around a fifth (21%) of adults in social housing do not use the internet, a figure lower than for other tenures⁵.</p>
<p>Summary of assessment findings</p>	<p>All five Fire Safety Review recommendations are intended to strengthen fire safety for people living in high rise domestic building. A high proportion of these are the most deprived areas, the actions will improve outcomes for people in these areas.</p>

¹ Scottish Household Condition Survey data 2015-2017

² Rent Affordability in the Affordable Housing Sector: Literature Review, 17 June 2017

³ Scottish Household Survey, 2019

⁴ Scottish Household Survey report 2018

⁵ Scottish Household Survey, 2019

Sign off

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