

# Building Safety – Collaboration with the SYFRS

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# Today...

- The Sheffield experience
- Working together with the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) on managing buildings and devising enforcement strategies
- The successes, challenges and opportunities
- The benefits of collaboration



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# Fire Safety Bill progress

- The Bill continued its progress through Parliament as the House of Commons debated amendments made in the Lords relating to:
  - Risk-based guidance on discharge of duties under the Fire Safety Order
  - Duties of an owner and manager
  - Public register of fire risk assessments
  - Prohibiting the costs of remediation being passed on to leaseholders
- The recommendations made by the independent task group that the Bill comes into force on a single date for all buildings and ensures that risk-based guidance supports this commencement of the Bill have been accepted
- The other amendments were rejected by MPs and the Bill will now return to the House of Lords for further debate in the next couple of weeks



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# Sheffield in 2017...

- Good relations with regulatory services
- Limited data sharing
- Over-reliance on de-regulated building inspector sign-off
- Limited contact with private management companies, owners and leaseholders
- Up to date information and knowledge of high-rise had gaps



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# Sheffield 2017-2020

- Established regulatory Council Fire Board with clarity of purpose, governance and membership –driving city Fire Strategy and Work Programme
- Senior leaders in attendance from SY Fire Service, Housing, Planning, Building Control, Repairs, Corporate Asset Teams, Health & Safety and Housing
- Comprehensive stocktake of buildings over 18m
- Review of planning and building regulation data
- Sharing of Council/ Fire Service enforcement information
- Established data base, single source/ list
- Tenant and resident engagement to reassure residents of Council's involvement
- Regular reporting to MHCLG
- Now working on buildings over 11m



# Sheffield 2021

- Increase in planning and building applications in system
- 24 of these Council-owned, rest in private sector
- Resources targeted on most 'at risk' ACM blocks
- SCC and SYFRS working together and sharing resources and joint visit information
- New High Rise Forum established for residents
- Public action plan and web page to increase resident engagement
- Waking Watch Fund to support building with cladding and poor fire protection and website (including other help available)
- Close working arrangements with MHCLG/national working groups, sharing information and funding available to private sector support remediation costs
- Working closely with leaseholders, elected members and MP's



# Sheffield 2021 continued...

- As of January 2021:
  - 25 of our high-rise buildings don't have ACM
  - 21 have ACM, 3 have HPL
  - 62 did not respond with technical details (annual data collection) and enforcement underway
- Programme of joint inspections commenced/planned based on:
  - Building risk
  - Resident profile
  - Developer
  - Inspector risk
  - Information sharing from Fire Service
  - Mapping data at building and city wide level
  - Mapping customer cohorts living in high rise /how buildings are being used and associated commercial activity
  - Regular updates at Council and Public Meetings

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# Regulating high-rise in the City

- **SYFRS – The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

Fire safety in non-domestic premises, but extends to common areas, including hallways, in high rise

- **Private Housing Standards – Housing Act 2004**

Enforcement in domestic dwellings of 29 hazards, which includes fire, and common areas in shared properties

- **SCC Planning – Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

This shared legislative responsibility has promoted joint working between SCC and SYFRS to ensure enforcement action is taken.



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# Council Regulation - high-rise

- **SCC Planning and Building Control** – responsible for the regulation of residential buildings and commercial assets, planning and building control, enforcement
- **Council Housing Asset Management** - responsible for supporting tenants, leaseholders and addressing any landlord issues
- **Neighbourhood Management Teams, Corporate Services** - responsible for interface with residents, management companies, day to day resident support and access to universal support services
- Again, joint-working essential to join the dots



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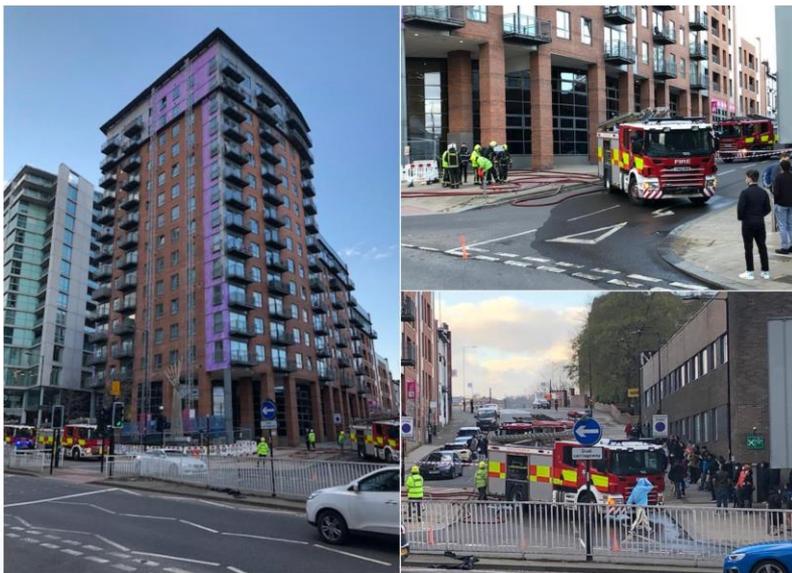
# High-rise in the private sector

## High rise block of flats evacuated as firefighters tackle blaze in Sheffield city centre

A high rise block of flats in Sheffield city centre was evacuated while firefighters tackled a kitchen blaze.

By Claire Lewis

Friday, 26th February 2021, 11:05 am



## Sheffield flats evacuated over fire safety failure

12 December 2020



Grenfell Tower fire

Paul Wood, from Sheffield City Council, said: "We are appalled that despite advice this building has fire safety issues that puts at risk residents and we are working closely with SYFRS."

# Sheffield leaseholders paying the price...hopefully to be addressed in new legislation

Housing



**Robert Booth** *Social affairs correspondent*

Wed 24 Feb 2021 18.54 GMT

## Commons defeat leaves flat owners facing huge bills to fix cladding

Amendment to fire safety bill could have spared leaseholders costs of up to £100,000 to make their homes safe



A screenshot of a tweet from Hallam FM News (@hallamfmnews) dated 8:00 AM on Feb 1, 2021. The tweet contains the following text: "Every single week we don't know if the money will run out and we'll all be turfed out on the street." Jenni was told to leave her #Sheffield building because of fire safety problems just before Christmas. Leaseholders are back now but face a long wait to get it sorted... Below the text is a video player showing a man and a woman in a studio setting. The video player has a play button icon in the center. At the bottom of the tweet, there are icons for likes (61), replies (30), and a share button labeled "Share this Tweet".

## Leaseholders in Sheffield block made to pay £2,000-a-day waking watch bill after evacuation

NEWS 15.12.20 12:15 PM BY JACK SIMPSON

Leaseholders living in a block in Sheffield that was partially evacuated on Friday because of fire safety issues have been told they must pay £2,000 every day to maintain a waking watch service and prevent the rest of the block from being evacuated.



# Council Approach

- Enforcement role – shared with SYFR
- Need to continue to share information
- Early case conferences to ensure SYFR and SCC take appropriate steps not just with regard to enforcement
- Duty of care to leaseholders / resident
- Addressing poor management practice
- Working with building managers / owners to signpost to potential funding streams to reduce bills
- Periodic joint inspections – need to inspect the whole building and identify all potential hazards that require remediation
- Impact on City and residents when buildings are not safe to occupy – where do residents go (fire safety, disrepair)?
- Pulling together and advising on the new regulatory changes, MHCLG funding and working with building owners and managers

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# Not just property...

- Duty to leaseholders / residents across the city
- Financial impact of enforcement and making buildings safe
- Support with legal redress / guidance
- Support to identify funding to alleviate financial pressures on leaseholders
- Access to support services for leaseholders



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# Case study 1- Riverside

- Recently built, five storey block consisting of 127 apartments
- October 2019 complaint about fire detector control panel faults
- SYFR investigation on site led to SCC being informed as other issues as well including intermittent electrical power to the apartment block.
- SCC visit site to work but repairs could not be completed on same day, safety could not be ensured, so SCC Prohibition Order served
- Assumed student block so worked closely with University and Homeless Services to work together to identify alternative accommodation
- Upon inspection discovered building used to house families / professionals and Air BnB – provided access



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# What we learned...

- Importance of establishing use, student blocks not always occupied by students!
- Ability of LA to ensure support is in place to find accommodation for those impacted
- Early discussions between SYFR and SCC could have enabled joint inspection to take holistic view of issues in this block
- Collaboration enabled SCC to better organise response with regard to alternative accommodation for those impacted – non student use would have been identified earlier
- LA to ensure that occupation of blocks is recorded to improve knowledge in private sector
- Council contact details provided to residents and students if they are worried about returning home



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# Another example – Wicker Riverside

- SYFR identified a range of serious fire safety concerns within a large high-rise block including;
  - Compartmentalisation issues
  - Flammable material in the external wall systems
  - Excessive travel distances (in dead-end conditions)
  - Smoke vents disconnected
- SYFR took decision to prohibit part of building but allowed main part of the building to remain with Waking Watch in place
- Council provided support for SYFRS to evacuate and provide support for residents, access to accommodation, addressed other building (not fire related) issues with buildings
- Council emergency response teams provided on site emergency support



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# And what we learned...

- Collaboration and joint working worked well, more planning could have helped enabled SYFR to speak to LA to have dealt with evacuation earlier in the day
- This enabled LA to explore options for accommodation for those affected.
- Shared information on action taken support LA ability to work with Government on financial support need in private sector buildings (and introduction commenced on Waking Watch Fund)
- Joint inspection during COVID would have helped to address all hazards in this block – fire safety is key but chance to fully assess building in one inspection when conducted jointly



# Social Housing Building Safety Engagement Best Practice Group

- October 2018 MHCLG announced pilot with social landlords to establish best practice working with tenants on building safety
- Sheffield partnered with Optivo to trial different Fire Service communication tools
- Sheffield hosted a best practice event in September with the Minister. Visited Hanover tower block and feedback from the TARA was very valuable on the day
- Completed project informed Building a Safer Future



# Benefits of collaboration

- Clarity of information and standards
- Risk Management
- Communication
  - early case conference when potential issues are identified would help LA to prepare necessary support
  - Referrals made during inspections cause delays in ability to respond
- Assisting with comms with building owners / managers and occupants.
- Avoids duplicated visits



# Further benefits...

- Holistic approach
  - Getting back to joint inspections to ensure buildings are assessed fully at first visit – fire safety and other potential regulatory and resident issues
  - Continuing to map who is living in high rise, ownership and management arrangements and single source of data information that can be shared on Council website and SYFRS websites to make it easier for tenants and residents and professional help available from universal and support services
- Ability to support Leaseholders who are affected by any required works – financially and by signposting to support services
- Ongoing support to building owners / managers to ensure compliance



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