



Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service

Headquarters

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For the Attention of
Wrekin Housing Group Ltd
Colliers Way
Old Park
Telford
TF3 4AW

10 November 2020

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01743

FSE03726

Dear Sir

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Premises: Reynolds House, Seven Hills Place, Ketley, Telford

An audit of the above premises was carried out on 19 October 2020 to determine your compliance with the above legislation. Following the audit the Fire Authority is of the opinion that you are not fully complying with the requirements placed upon you by the legislation.

The areas of non-compliance are set out below. You should complete the work outlined in this letter as soon as possible, balancing the need for safety against the demands on your business or undertaking. I will visit again and will contact you in approximately two month(s) (from the date of this letter) to arrange my next visit.

Alternative Solutions

If you want to use a different solution to bring about safety from fire please contact me to discuss an action plan. An action plan might enable you to apply an equally appropriate safety solution to better meet your needs.

Consequence for Non-compliance

If you fail to do the work within the agreed timescales, the authority may serve an enforcement notice on you. An enforcement notice would legally bind you to do the work.



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Areas of Non-Compliance

Deficiency from Article 9 - Fire Risk Assessment

Fire Risk Assessment

Action Required

It is recommended that the fire risk assessment be reviewed and re-addressed.

Although a fire risk assessment has been carried out, the document would benefit from going into more depth and detail in parts. For example, it is recommended that you include reference to the design rationale for the building, including the ventilation provision, specification of the fire alarm system and assessment of the building cladding as part of the fire risk assessment. The areas of deficiency highlighted in this report are areas the fire risk assessment failed to identify and these should be included within the significant findings.

Signposting to the fire risk assessment and fire survey undertaken by 10Ability Fire Engineering Ltd and any other third-party assessments is suggested.

Deficiency from Article 10 - Principles of Prevention

Action Required

A long-term workable and effective strategy should be implemented to reduce the risk of a fire starting. You should consider:-

Arson

The new recycling bins to the rear of the building have been stored in close proximity to the building and should be relocated to the existing refuse area to manage the risk of arson in this area.

Gas Safety

A set of accurate plans of the building, ideally in A3 size and laminated should include details for the isolation of all services, including the new gas installation clearly marked. These plans should be kept in the Premises Information Box.

Deficiency from Article 13 - Fire Detection and Warning

Action Required

Recent work has been undertaken at Reynolds House to upgrade the fire protection to the building and ensure a satisfactory standard of compartmentation in order to maintain the original 'stay put' policy.

As this building was originally designed to support a 'stay put' evacuation strategy, it would have been considered unnecessary and undesirable for a fire alarm system to

be provided. A communal fire detection and alarm system does inevitable lead to a proliferation of false alarms and confusion for residents.

As the lack of lobby ventilation has been accepted as tolerable in your fire risk assessment, it is essential that residents do not leave their flat unnecessarily and potentially enter a smoke-filled lobby. It is vitally important that residents stay within the safety of their own flat until a point is reached when they have to leave.

The fire risk assessment and fire survey undertaken by 10Ability Fire Engineering Ltd on 24 July 2017 identified that residents should not be alerted by an alarm in the common areas. The only warning of fire would come from their own internal fire alarm if their flat was involved in fire. This report recommended that as a minimum the sounders in the common area should be disabled and all break glass call points should be removed.

We understand that the break glass call points have been removed but as the sounders are integrated with the detector heads, work to disable the sounders has not taken place.

There is a benefit to keeping the existing fire alarm system as it currently opens the staircase vents and alerts the fire and rescue service in the event of activation of the fire alarm system. However, the current configuration of the alarm sounding when activated could compromise the 'stay put' policy and you should look to remove this function from the fire alarm system.

Goodwill Advice – Evacuation Alert System

Should Wrekin Housing Group wish to retain a communication system that advises residents of flats to evacuate you should look to install an evacuation alert system to BS8629: 2019.

This type of system is not to be confused with fire detection and alarm systems, evacuation alert systems are for use by the fire and rescue service only, which may, in the course of managing a fire incident, want residents to evacuate individual floors, or the entire building. Using an evacuation alert system, residents can be directed to evacuate via alarms sounded in each flat.

Deficiency from Article 14 - Emergency Routes and Exits

Action Required

The balconies adjacent to the staircase and each floor lobby are a potential weakness in the fire strategy for the building. It was observed at the time of audit that these balconies are separated from the stair and floor lobby by Georgian wired glazing and boarding to offer a nominal 30 minutes fire resistance for integrity only.

Wrekin Housing Group operate a managed approach to the contents on balconies by permitting resident to have items that would normally be expected on a balcony, for example a small patio table and chairs. It was clear from our visit that resident's

understanding of what is normal for balcony use is interpreted in many different ways, some balconies are sterile, but many others are used for storage of all manner of items.

Currently there is potential for a balcony fire to break into the communal stair and adjacent floor lobby. This has the potential to significantly affect the means of escape from a fire floor and for any significant incident the entire building. Any balcony fire does also carry the risk of external fire spread, further necessitating tight controls of the contents of each balcony.

Wrekin Housing Group should investigate the options for improving this deficiency to the satisfaction of the Fire Authority.

Deficiency from Article 15 - Procedures for Serious and Imminent Danger and for Danger Areas

Action Required

There is a Premises Information Box (PIB) manufactured by Gerda installed at Reynolds House but much of the required information is either incomplete or missing.

To update the contents, you should contact Gerda directly and obtain a copy of their Emergency Response Guidance Pack, which will help to update the information within the PIB. <https://www.gerdasecurity.co.uk/productsandsolutions/premises-information-box-pib-systems.aspx>

For technical details and guidance you are advised to purchase the Fire Safety in Purpose Built Flats Guide (ISBN 9 781 85112 8174) which is also available free at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documentsfor-business>

Notwithstanding any consultation undertaken by the Fire Authority, before you make any alterations to the premises, you must apply for Local Authority Building Control Department/Approved Inspector approval (and/or the approval of any other bodies having a statutory interest in the workplace) if their permission is required for those alterations to be made.

If you are in any doubt as to your responsibilities under the legislation, please contact
@shropshirefire.gov.uk or
@shropshirefire.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

for **Chief Fire Officer**