

Balaam House: Extra precautions being taken to ensure the safety of residents

Fire Safety Patrols

We will be introducing fire safety patrols who will undertake a 24 hour, seven day a week fire safety patrol at Balaam House.

Sprinkler System & Fire Alarms

We can confirm that we are commissioning the retrofitting of a fire suppression system (a sprinkler system or similar fire suppression system).

We can confirm that we are fitting fire alarm in areas in communal areas as advised by fire guidance.

We can confirm that we are commissioning a hard wired smoke detection system for every room in your flat and a hard wired heat detection system for each kitchen.

Assessments & Inspections

A fire risk assessment by an independent specialist was completed on the 20th June.

SHP has commissioned a comprehensive independent technical review of fire safety in Balaam House which is commencing this week and will report in five weeks time with clear recommendations on the future of the cladding and fire safety.

The London Fire Brigade are conducting regular inspections of Balaam House and will continue to make ad-hoc visits and inspections.

The Sutton and Merton Fire Brigades will be visiting Balaam House to familiarise themselves with the specific fire safety procedures and layout; and to offer enhanced fire brigade presence.

We are acting on all recommendations from these assessments and inspections as quickly as possible.

Some examples of actions taken from these include:

- We are inspecting all garages and pram sheds for fire safety in regards to contents and structure
- We have suspended parking in the (6) bays immediately under Balaam House to minimise the risk from a possible vehicle fire.

- We are installing fireproof letter boxes and “suited” locks for the shared lobby areas and issuing you with a new key. This will allow SHP staff access to these areas for fire safety procedures whilst maintaining security.

Fire Safety Procedure & Behaviour

To help ensure your safety we have introduced with immediate effect in Balaam House a zero tolerance approach to the storage of personal belongings in communal areas and will help you to meet this approach.

The Lobby areas shared between two flats will be inspected by staff in the coming days and we will provide further advice on what personal belongings can be stored there by residents.

Information and Communication

Senior managers will continue to visit Balaam House every day to offer advice and reassurance. We will listen and respond to any concerns you have about fire safety.

We are arranging drop in sessions with the local Fire Brigade and lead officers from SHP, so that you can ask us any questions you may have in person. Dates and times of the drop-in sessions will be made available shortly.

Your Personal Safety

SHP will be visiting each and every home to speak with you personally and provide and talk through the latest fire safety advice and your personal circumstances.

The Fire Brigade strongly recommend that you book Home Fire Safety visits with their fire officers and you can book this by calling SHP.

We will be encouraging all residents at Chaucer House to consider other measures to help prevent the risk of fire such as portable appliance testing and will give more guidance on this soon.

What Can Residents Do?

The following is an extract on advice from the Fire Brigade if you live in a purpose built flat.

Escape route:

- Have an escape plan, which you practice and make sure all members of your household know what it is
- Be aware of where your fire exits are
- The best route is normally the way in and out but have a plan b in case it is blocked
- Keep communal areas and balconies clear so that they don't block your escape
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

If your flat is affected by fire or smoke and your escape route is clear:

- Get everyone out, close the door and leave calmly
- Do not use the lift
- Call 999, give them your address details and let them know which floor the fire is on.

If your escape route is not clear:

- It may be safer to stay in your home until the Fire Brigade arrives
- Find a safe room, close the door and block any gaps with soft materials to stop the smoke
- Go to a window and shout "HELP FIRE" and call 999
- Be ready to explain where you are and the quickest way to reach you.

If there is a fire in another part of the building:

- Your home should give you some protection from fire – walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes
- You are usually safer staying in your home, call 999, tell the Fire Brigade where you are and the best way to reach you
- If you are in the communal parts of the building leave and call 999
- However if you feel unsure, unsafe, can see flames or smell smoke then leave your flat and exit the building.

Further information can be found on the London Fire Brigade's website:

<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/SafetyAtHome.asp>

And don't forget... Make sure you have a working smoke alarm and test it regularly. Please contact us if you don't have a smoke alarm.



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020 8915 2000 - Mon to Fri, 8:45am to 5pm
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