

# High Rise News

## Your Guide to Future Improvement Works

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### Dear Resident

**I'm writing to let you know about some important improvement and safety work that we have planned for your high rise building. This special newsletter for high rise residents explains what this will involve and the impact it will have on you.**

We are planning three projects that will bring your home into line with new regulations which are being introduced to prevent anything like the Grenfell Tower tragedy from happening again. The projects are the introduction of sprinklers across all our high rise buildings, work to the outside walls on some of our high rise buildings and work to the enclosed balconies on some of our high rise buildings.

These planned works are a major investment in your home, helping to keep you safe - and in the case of the work to the outside walls and enclosed balconies on some of the blocks, also - improving the thermal efficiency of your home.

This work is supported by Solihull Community Housing and Solihull Council and we have also worked closely with West Midlands Fire Service where necessary - for example on the sprinklers project.

Throughout this work we will be meeting with residents to discuss any concerns you may have, either virtually online, or in person where we can safely observe social distancing.

This work will begin during next year and we are looking for some residents to step forward and work with us as block advocates, and you can read more about what this involves in this newsletter. This will help ensure that your voices are listened to at all times.

Residents' wellbeing and safety is an absolute priority to us. Throughout these projects we will



keep you informed of progress and respond to your questions through future newsletters and on our website.

As we approach Christmas, can I also urge you to take extra care to dispose of rubbish in the correct way. We all have an important part to play in keeping our high rise buildings safe. We need your help and support to do this.

Please take time to read this newsletter as it contains important information that will affect you and if you have any further questions, please see the back page as to how you can get in touch.

Thank you

Fiona Hughes, SCH Chief Executive

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# Sprinkler system planned for SCH high rise blocks

**Your safety is our number one priority. We have been working harder than ever to keep you and your home safe, and for this reason the decision has been taken to install sprinklers across all 37 of our high rise buildings.**

This is great news as this investment in your home will provide an important extra layer of safety and bring your home in line with the latest safety guidance.

Sprinklers are the single most effective method of improving fire safety in high rise buildings. They save lives and protect homes. They will detect a fire, suppress a fire and raise the alarm.

Sprinklers also assist firefighters in carrying out search and rescue operations. Fire safety advisors, and technical and professional experts are unanimous in supporting the installation of sprinklers in high rises.

Sprinklers are especially important where there are vulnerable residents who would find it difficult to escape in the event of a fire, such as those with mobility problems.

This project will see sprinklers installed inside your flat. There will be some disruption, but we will work with you to make sure everything goes as smoothly as possible.



The main programme of work will begin in the Spring. When it is your block's turn to have this work carried out we will notify you in good time and have a customer liaison officer on site to support residents and answer any questions. We have also created a list of Frequently Asked Questions which are on our website.

We will be producing future newsletters to keep you fully informed of the latest developments.

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## Stay safe this Christmas



**Even though this year our festivities will be affected by Covid restrictions, Christmas is still a magical season, but it is also the time of year when accidents can happen.**

It is important that you enjoy the celebrations but also make sure you are keeping your loved ones and neighbours safe.

We have some useful tips to help you to stay safe this Christmas:

- Turn off your Christmas tree and decoration lights before bed
- Do not overload electrical plug sockets and unplug from the wall each night
- Never light candles near your Christmas tree or decorations

- Extinguish candles safely if you go out and before you go to bed
- Do not leave presents in full view of potential burglars
- Cooking should not be left unattended and must be out of reach of children

Your safety is very important to us, so please remember all of the above advice to keep you and your family safe this Christmas.



# External wall work to meet new regulations

**Next year some of our high rise buildings will be having work done to the outside wall to replace something called spandrel panels (see photo).**

Not all high rises have these and so this piece of work will not affect everyone and in those blocks affected, the work will affect different parts of the block.

In some blocks it will affect the enclosed balcony area and in some blocks it will affect the communal areas.

The spandrel panels will be replaced with new external walling to bring it up to the new regulation standard.

This work will improve the overall appearance of the high rises affected and in some cases also the thermal efficiency will be improved. Where the work affects the enclosed balconies, we will need access into flats to complete this important upgrade.

The blocks where the enclosed balcony is affected by this are in Kingshurst. They are:

- Kingshurst House
- Redwood House
- DeMontfort House
- Catesby House
- Digby House
- Wingfield House

The blocks where the communal areas are affected are:

- Avoncroft House
- Wedgewood House
- Dillington House
- Bangor House
- Fircroft House
- Westham House
- Cheshunt House
- Woodbrooke House
- Keele House
- Kingsgate House

This work will begin next summer but planning will begin earlier in the year and if you would like more information, please see our frequently asked questions on our website.

[www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk)



## Dispose of rubbish correctly



**Over the Christmas period it is very important that you dispose of your rubbish both safely and correctly.**

Rubbish such as black bags, bulky items or Christmas packaging must not be left in communal areas as this can create a serious fire hazard to you and your neighbours.

If you have large items to dispose of, please do not try and force them down the bin chute. The chute is only large enough for small items so try breaking up cardboard or split your rubbish into small-sized carrier bags.

The misuse of the rubbish chute will cause a blockage. This type of behaviour can be inconvenient and can also cause a serious safety and fire risk.

If you are recycling, please use the blue communal bin outside the block. Please make sure all items are loose as any recycling in a carrier bag will not be accepted by the Council.

This Christmas, please think about yours and your neighbours' safety by disposing of your rubbish the right way.





# We're looking for volunteer Building Safety Advocates!

**As you have read so far in this special newsletter, some very important safety and improvement works are going to be made to our high rise buildings, including the installation of sprinklers.**

We want to work with all our residents on these projects, keeping you informed every step of the way and listening to your thoughts and opinions.

We are working to make sure that nothing happens about you, without you. So to make sure this is the case, we are now looking for some residents to work with us as Building Safety Advocates.

This is a real opportunity for you to get involved with these key projects. It is a great way to have your say, and make sure that the voice of other residents is heard.

Our Building Safety Advocates will be involved with these projects from the very beginning, helping to make sure messages are delivered effectively to all our high rise residents.

We will be producing newsletter updates, such as this one, along with social media posts and website updates to keep residents informed. You can help us make sure this is done effectively and in a way that meets the needs of all residents.

By becoming a Building Safety Advocate, you will help us ensure that residents receive regular and relevant updates about our building safety projects, and:

- Help with newsletter updates
- Help with website content
- Attend drop-in Q&A sessions
- Become a point of contact for residents
- Join our Building Safety Advocates' WhatsApp group



By working with us you can help ensure that all our residents get the service and support they deserve while we make these safety improvements to your homes.

**Please visit our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page at [www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk) for further information about the projects highlighted in this newsletter. It includes details on how to become a Building Safety Advocate and how to get in touch if you have any questions after reading the FAQs, or you can phone our High Rise Works number on 0121 717 1599.**

**All work featured in this newsletter is subject to approval from SMBC's Planning Committee.**



🌐 [www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk)

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