

High Rise Focus Group

23rd January 2026

Minutes of Meeting

Attendance:

Kevin Hazlewood – Director Property Services

Clare Williams – Building Safety Manager

Charisse Chukwurah – Resident Engagement Officer

Phoebe Baker – Resident Engagement Officer

Residents – BA - Resident (Barringtons) , AS - Resident (Blackdown), KC - Resident (Blackdown), IW - Resident (Chiltern)

		Action
1	<u>Welcome</u>	
	KH opened the resident-led focus group, which is open to all residents. He introduced himself, his role, and responsibilities. The focus group was created because living in a high-rise block presents unique experiences and risks, with specific building safety legislation applying to high-rise living. This legislation stems from the Grenfell and Lakanal House tragedies and aims to give high-rise residents a distinct voice, separate from the main resident engagement structure. Ground rules were set: the group will focus on building health and safety, explaining what is done, why it is done, and allowing residents to ask questions about legislation and safety measures. Safety topics include authorised access, antisocial behaviour, and the risks posed by unauthorised entry, such as increased arson risk. New door entry systems will be installed in all high-rise blocks over the next 12 months, with a brief explanation provided. Residents were encouraged not to raise or discuss individual case issues during the group, with Clare expected to take an active role in managing discussions. CW was introduced, with her role including keeping building safety information up to date to ensure required certificates are maintained.	
2	<u>Apologies</u>	
	There were no apologies	
3	<u>Terms of Reference</u>	
	CW read out the Terms of Reference, which will be shared with all participants. The purpose of the group is to bring together residents from high-rise blocks, including Resident Advisory Panel members and other interested residents. The group aims to equip residents with the skills and knowledge needed to review and challenge building safety policies and ensure their concerns are heard and addressed.	

	Residents will use this knowledge to help ensure S E H and SCC comply with building safety regulations. SCC is the Principal Accountable Person and building owner, while S E H is the Responsible Person. SCC holds responsibility for meeting legislation and the consequences of non-compliance. The group will also support S E H in understanding residents' needs and concerns, improving engagement across estates, encouraging attendance at meetings, shaping services, and providing a forum for raising safety concerns.	
4	PEEPS	
	CW explained Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), which will become a legal requirement from April 2026. Previous national records have sometimes been outdated, meaning residents who need support were not always identified. The legislation was delayed due to multiple rounds of public consultation and amendments. Originally based on workplace regulations, it had to be adapted for residential and high-rise living, recognising the added complexities. S E H will contact all high-rise residents to ask about PEEPs, ensure records are accurate, and make information available to emergency services. This includes identifying physical or sensory impairments and the type of support required. The information gathered will help S E H better understand residents' needs. Personal fire risk assessments can be completed by Graham Hart, and individual arrangements can be discussed, such as vibration smoke detectors for residents with hearing impairments. All high-rise residents will receive a letter in the coming days, followed by door-knocking to ensure obligations are met and the fire service has as much information as possible. Risk Assessments (RAs) will be shared with the fire brigade and reviewed annually. If residents move or circumstances change, a new RA will be required. The legislation places responsibility on the landlord, not the resident, to keep records up to date. Progress on how S E H is gathering information to meet the legislation can be shared within the focus group. Resident sign-up processes will also capture this information to ensure a PEEP is completed where necessary. Kevin raised a question about whether emergency services "red box" information is updated when new residents move in. KH confirmed this is updated.	
5	Certificates	
	Legislation requires landlords of buildings over 18 metres to produce a Building Safety Case and submit it to the regulator; this information is publicly listed online. S E H has submitted safety cases for half of the high-rise blocks requested by the regulator. One block, Cecil Court, received a compliance notice requesting further information. The regulator requested clearer evidence on resident engagement around building safety, including a dedicated resident engagement strategy for each individual block, rather than relying solely on general groups.	

	Further clarity was also required on building safety management systems and structural integrity. Although detailed surveys were carried out around 10 years ago, the regulator recommended they be repeated. As a result, new structural risk assessments will be completed for each block, including scenarios such as vehicle impact, alongside new detailed Type 4 fire risk assessments (last completed six years ago). The updated assessment for Cecil Court is due by June, after which S E H expects to be granted a Building Assessment Certificate confirming the blocks are structurally and fire safe. KH expressed confidence that all managed high-rise blocks are safe. CW explained that S E H adopted recommendations from the Lakanal House findings, including new stairwell and entrance doors, updated floor signage, improved access to fire safety education, and availability of evacuation plans for each property. While different residents may have varying interests in building safety topics, the key aim is to ensure information is accessible and understandable to all residents. KH noted that landlord responsibilities for high-rise buildings differ significantly from those for general needs properties. Major structural works at Balmoral were completed following previous assessments to ensure compliance. IW shared that, through the leasehold focus group, concerns were raised about service charge breakdowns; investigation found this was a legal requirement, and a previous leaseholder group attendee acknowledged that the law had been breached. CW outlined her role as a paralegal within building safety, focusing on legal requirements, interpretation of legislation, and ensuring organisational compliance. She highlighted that penalties for non-compliance are severe, including substantial fines and potential imprisonment. She also noted that the culture around building safety has shifted significantly in recent years, with much greater emphasis and seriousness placed on compliance and discussion.	
6	<u>Any other Business</u>	
	IW asked if legionella counts as part of building safety; KH confirmed it does. Ian suggested noise pollution should also be included, as it affects health, but KH noted it is not currently listed under building health and safety compliance. Other included areas are asbestos, gas, and electrical safety. IW and AS asked whether rubbish disposal counts toward building safety. KH confirmed it does, as rubbish can be a fire risk, and caretaking procedures are part of the building safety case. IW raised concerns about differences in rubbish disposal between high-rise and other general needs blocks. KH explained the group could review whether this poses a health and safety issue. KH noted that buildings with previous bin room fires have safety procedures to protect the rest of the building. Ian highlighted that lack of recycling materials could increase fire risks if residents improperly dispose of waste down chutes.	

7	<u>Date of next meeting</u>	
	How often do residents feel appropriate? BA mentioned bi-monthly and perhaps as a hybrid option to allow others opportunity to attend.	

Key Outcomes from Meeting (to be completed in meeting)

For Resident Engagement – You Said, We Did uploaded ☐