

CASE STUDY: dealing with cladding



City View LONDON

The site

City View is located in West London, with easy access to train lines into central London. The block contains 100 apartments.

The cladding issue

Fire safety has become increasingly important for high-rise buildings with external cladding. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) reviewed whether the building regulations in force were fit for purpose with regard to combustible materials and the construction of external wall systems (EWS). As a result of these findings, government advisories were issued which meant that all such cladding systems would be banned for use on new high-rise buildings and it was further advised to review cladding in use in existing buildings.

The construction of this block is complex, with a mixture of copper and timber cladding, both above and below 18m. Our Cladding Programme is aimed at identifying any properties that may be 'at risk' of being unsafe due to combustible materials being used in the construction.

We instructed a survey of all cladding systems to be carried out to determine whether they complied with the legislative guidelines set out by the MHCLG.

The building is still under an NHBC warranty, so we also had to determine whether the warranty would cover any costs relating to the survey and any future remedial works that may be required.

What we did

As well as continuing to provide all of the day to day services expected from a managing agent, it was necessary to keep all residents informed of the cladding situation, what we were doing in terms of getting the building surveyed, and next steps.

We organised several meetings with their Resident Management Company (RMC), who had agreed for the survey to be carried out, to inform them that we suggested that they obtained legal advice regarding the NHBC warranty. The legal advice provided reassurance to the RMC that a claim could be made against the NHBC warranty to cover costs of remedial work which was a great relief.

Next steps

Meeting with the residents is an essential part of our 'open communication' process. Given the uncertain nature of this type of situation, the emotional and potentially financial stress these homeowners face can be enormously impactful, and we see it as our role to facilitate in a professional and informed way.

Prior to arranging any meetings we ensure that we have consulted with relevant organisations, in this case the Fire Service to ensure that we have the latest information to provide.

The whole process will undoubtedly take a period of time (possibly years) and we will support the RMC throughout the entire process, as their trusted property managers.