

PE1719/A

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations submission of the 5 July 2019

Who are we

The SFHA leads, represents and supports Scotland's housing associations and co-operatives. We want to see a thriving housing association and co-operative sector providing sustainable and affordable homes.

Executive summary

SFHA welcomes the opportunity to share with the Public Petitions Committee (the Committee) views of its members in relation Petition PE1719, in particular, the Committee sought:

- SFHA's views on the action called for in the petition; and
- SFHA's views on the extent to which the provision of fire-safety advice concerning multi-storey residential buildings is consistent across SFHA membership.

SFHA members have and will continue to follow the advice issued by Scottish Fire and Rescue and published in the Building Standards Technical Handbook but will be happy to engage in further discussions on how best to keep tenants safe.

SFHA notes that the proposals to install evacuation sounders on each floor will give people living in each flat notice of danger from fire if there is need to evacuate.

Main Report

The main purpose of this document is to share with the Committee, SFHA's views on PE1719, specifically SFHA's view on

- the action called for in the petition; and
- the extent to which the provision of fire-safety advice concerning multi-storey residential buildings is consistent across SFHA membership.

SFHA understands the sentiment of the petition, as the safety of tenants is of paramount concern to housing associations and co-operatives across Scotland.

SFHA followed with interest the work of the Review Panel on Building Standards (Fire Safety Scotland) ¹which reported in June 2018. This report found that the 'stay put' advice should remain as it has worked well.

This report also recommended that fire service activate evacuation sounders should be installed in each floor, so that people living in high-rise blocks can be advised to

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/report-review-panel-building-standards-fire-safety-scotland/pages/9/>

evacuate if the need arises. This recommendation is supported by SFHA and its members, as illustrated by this comment:

“The stay put policy has worked well in Scotland and I do agree that implementation of sounders in the stairwells to let residents know when to evacuate is one that we should support.”

Property Maintenance Manager

One SFHA member did indicate that they were seeking separate health and safety advice in relation to the ‘stay put’ policy, but were continuing to follow existing guidance in the meantime.

SFHA members have and will continue to follow the advice issued by Scottish Fire and Rescue and published in the Building Standards Technical Handbook but will be happy to engage in further discussions on how best to keep tenants safe.

SFHA notes that the installation of evacuation sounders on each floor will give people living in each flat notice of danger from fire if there is need to evacuate.