

28th June, 2017

Dear Colleagues

Re: The ANUK / Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for student accommodation managed and controlled by educational establishments

and

The National Code of Standards for Larger Developments for student accommodation NOT managed and controlled by educational establishments

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell high rise flats in London we are writing to members of both Codes to provide a framework for a reasonable response in the circumstances prevailing. Many of you will have already taken a number of measures but we felt it appropriate to write to you to ensure that the bases were covered for all members.

Housing suppliers should seek reassure students that their safety is an absolute priority and that they:

- have a robust fire risk assessment regime that is reviewed regularly
- ensure that buildings, policies and procedures comply with all existing regulations
- stress that student accommodation has automatic L (Life) type fire alarm systems meaning that all areas of the premises are covered with detection, including bedrooms, kitchens, plant rooms and communal areas
- staff are properly trained to undertake proactive and reactive fire safety management, which includes building inspections and routine fire alarm testing.

We would urge all members to make doubly certain that all fire risk assessments, fire inspections and equipment tests are fully up to date; that all necessary planned preventative maintenance of fire related equipment and fixtures are in place; and that all records are being properly maintained and that they are readily available for inspection by either occupiers or their representatives.

Where a high-rise building has external cladding then members should satisfy themselves that this does not contain Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) and, where it does (or if that assurance cannot be given), then members should take

advantage of the free testing service being made available through the Department for Communities and Local Government. Details of these arrangements can be found on the National Codes website at this address:
<http://www.nationalcode.org/Upload/File/170620MelanieDaweslettertoprivateresidentialbodies.pdf>

DCLG have also provided an email address for enquiries:
PRShousingchecks@communities.gsi.gov.uk

In respect of private suppliers, it would be useful if reassurance could be offered to your tenants on your website/s and that, where there is an arrangement with an educational institution, this reassurance be passed on to them too. Feel free to use any wording in this statement as part of that reassurance.

It would also be useful if members could review their Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) in the light of any concerns they may have whether or not such a review is scheduled, perhaps by increasing checks on buildings and raising awareness of fire safety issues to tenants.

We are sure that, following an analysis of the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, there will be changes made to regulatory processes and the Building Regulations and the National Codes will seek to incorporate those changes, when made, at the first opportunity.

Finally, as you will know, many local authority' owned tower blocks have been affected by this and, in some cases, tenants are being evacuated from buildings. It may be that you have capacity over the summer months to assist the relevant local authorities by providing temporary rehousing for those affected. Where this is a possibility, we would ask that you contact your local authority to inform them of this.

The National Codes have established a good reputation for recognising the high standards of supply and management of accommodation within the student sector and this letter seeks to help suppliers maintain the very highest standards of fire safety in their buildings.

The National Codes Consortium

Shelly Asquith
Vice President (Welfare)
National Union of Students

Martin Blakey
Chief Executive
Unipol Student Homes

Linda Cobb
Manager, DASH
on behalf of ANUK