

# Camden Landlord & Managing Agent Forum

## Agenda

14:00	Welcome + service update	Darren Wilsher – Service Manager
14:15	Fire safety - general	Judith Harris - Principal EHO
14:45	Fire safety – fire doors + Q&A	Kevin Underwood, Technical Director, BWF (Fire Door Alliance)
15:15	News update for landlords	Osai Joseph, Regional Engagement Officer, NRLA
15:45	Q&A	

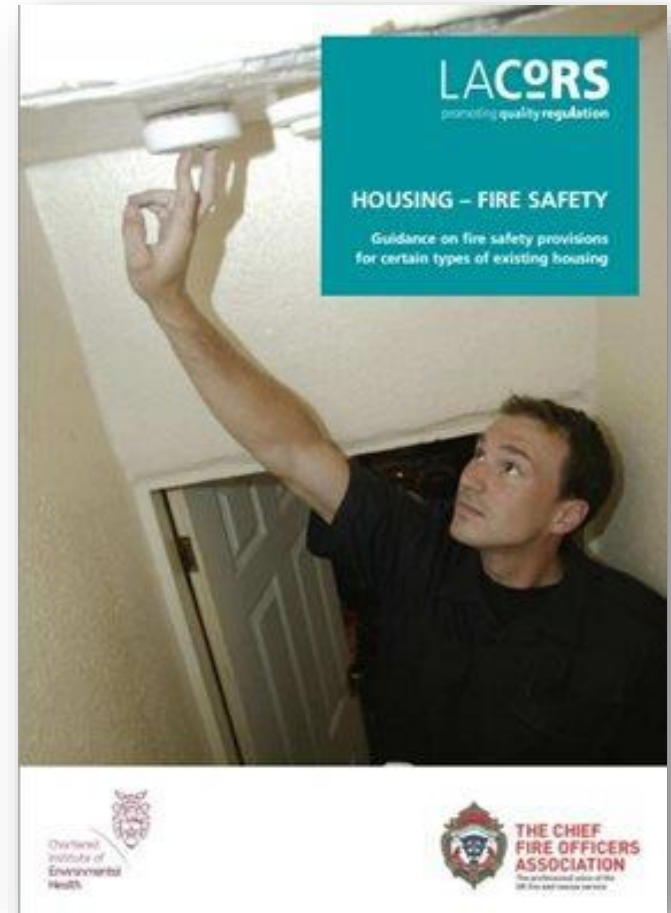
# Fire Safety



Judith Harris  
Principal EHO  
September 2024

# Context

- I am Judith Harris – Principal Environmental Health Officer in the Private Sector Housing Team
- I mostly carry out inspections with regard to HMO licensing
- Wide range of experience in enforcing fire safety
- This is a general overview of fire safety and what it says in LACORS fire safety guidance for residential properties. Fire safety measures depend on the type and use of the property.



# Principals of fire safety

- Safe escape route to place of safety



- Early warning of fire



# How is this achieved?

- Looking to protect the escape route from the building – construction and fire doors
- Correct Automatic Fire Alarm Systems (AFD)
- Emergency lighting
- Correct locks on doors
- Firefighting equipment (fire blankets)
- Avoiding obstructions or storage on escape route



# Building regulations and fire precautions

- The building regulations apply to new build properties and are not retrospective.
- Not many properties are built as HMO's therefore just because a building appears to comply with building regulations, if it is being used as an HMO, then a higher standard of fire precautions is needed because there is more than one household occupying.
- This is why we use the LACORS guidance

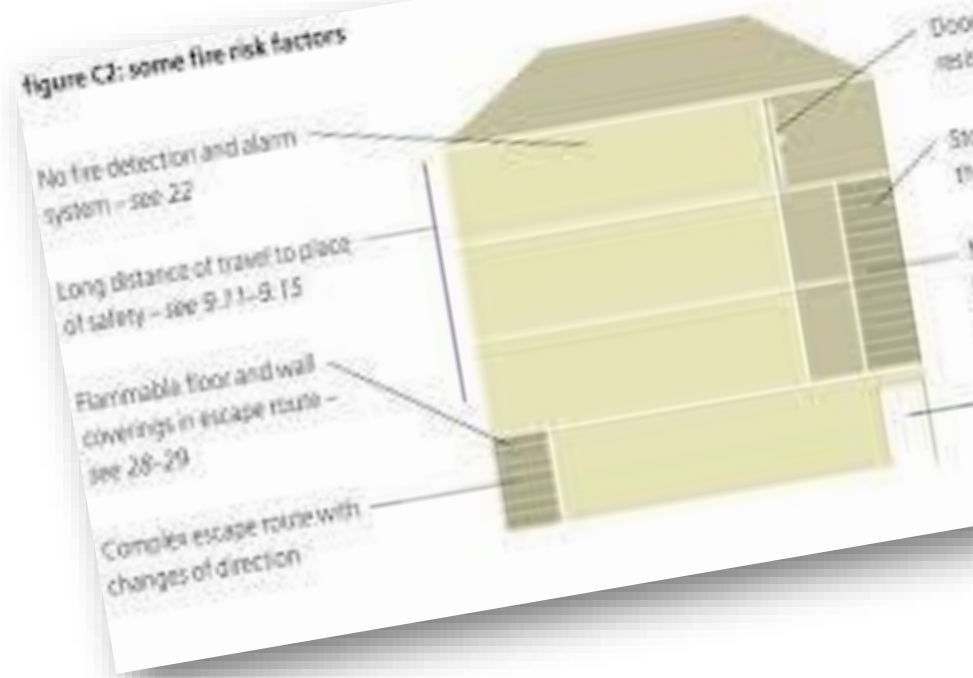
Figure C2: some fire risk factors

No fire detection and alarm system – see 22

Long distance of travel to place of safety – see 9.11–9.15

Flammable floor and wall coverings in escape route – see 28–29

Complex escape route with changes of direction



# Houses in multiple occupation

- Fire precautions necessary will depend on the use, size and layout of the property
- For section 254 HMO's the fire precautions needed will depend on how it is occupied
- Either room by room lets (bedsits) or occupied by a cohesive group (shared house or flat)
- Higher standard of precautions necessary for room by room lets as occupants will not know each other and not be looking out for each other.
- For section 257 HMOs (converted buildings) the requirements are normally the same

# Construction and fire doors

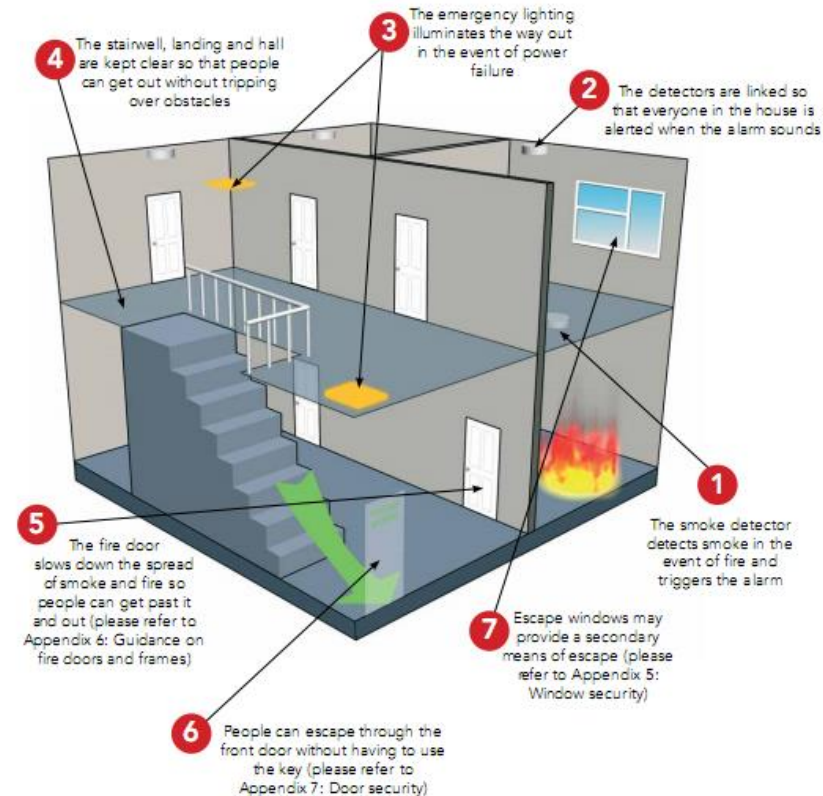
- Fire separation between let's must be of 30-minute fire resisting construction
- Includes transoms
- Separation from commercial premises should imperforate and be of 60 minutes fire resisting construction
- In Section 257 HMO's the entrance doors to the flats should be fire doors.
- **Fire doors – necessary in bedsit type HMO's** but in flats and houses of not more than 2 storeys, let as a shared flat on one tenancy, doors can be traditional well fitting solid doors.





# Automatic Fire Alarm Systems (1)

- Grade A LD2 system
- Used in common parts (and flats) in converted buildings and consists of :-
- Interlinked smoke detector at each level
- Interlinked heat detector behind the door of each flat
- Fire alarm control panel in hallway at bottom of stairs
- Call points on each landing
- In bedsit type HMO's, all of the above plus interlinked smoke detectors in each room and an interlinked smoke detector in the kitchen.



# Automatic Fire Alarm Systems (2)

- Grade D1 LD2 system
- Used in shared flats of 1 or 2 storeys and consists of:-
- Interlinked smoke detectors in the hallway of the flat/house (at each level) and any shared living room
- Interlinked heat detector in the kitchen



# Maintenance of SFD systems

- AFD systems should be checked and tested annually by a competent person and a certificate issued (6 monthly for Grade A systems).
- The system should be checked every month to ensure it is working.
- All tests should be documented.
  
- See recommendations in BS 5839 Part 6



# Emergency lighting

- If there is no borrowed light to the staircase/common parts, there should be emergency lighting provided.
- Emergency lighting systems require testing annually



# Locks on doors

- Should be no locks on doors which require the use of a key from the inside
- Front doors to common parts
- Front door to flats
- Any rooms within a property with a lock
- All need to be thumb turn type locks



# Fire fighting equipment

- We require a fire blanket to be provided in all kitchens
- Fire brigade now do not recommend the use of other firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers – problems with how to use them and maintenance.
- the advice is to get out of the premises – don't stop to fight the fire



# Escape routes

- No storage of furniture
- No trip hazards
- No cupboards with open storage
- Electrical fuse boxes not enclosed in fire resisting construction (Gas meters are OK)
- No washing machines or other white goods in common parts
- So called secondary means of escape routes across neighbouring properties or over roofs or using ladders are not acceptable.



# Open plan arrangements

- Inner rooms – Ideally all rooms should open onto a hallway, you should not have to pass through another room to get to the front door.
- Particularly bad if the room you have to pass through is a kitchen or living room.
- May be acceptable if there is a door in the inner room leading to the escape route, or if the room is situated on a floor not more than 4.5m above ground level (ground or first floor) and there is a suitable escape window. There should always be a suitable automatic fire detection system in place and the door between the inner and outer room should be a fire door.
- If this is not achievable, we would ask for a suppression system to be fitted – water misting or sprinklers – the BS says the suppression system to be fitted to all rooms in the flat, not just the outer room.



# Escape windows

- Only suitable if less than 4.5m above ground level
- Look out for basement wells or railings or conservatories
- Unobstructed openable area of 0.33m<sup>2</sup>
- Need to be minimum of 450mm x 450mm
- Bottom of window no more than 1.1m above floor level of room
- Window is openable from the inside without the use of a removable key
- Should lead to a place of safety – i.e. front of property – rear gardens not a place of safety unless there is a way out to the street, or the garden is at least as deep as the building is high. Roof terraces also not a place of safety.
- Ground below it should be level and free of obstructions
- Consider the persons using it – occupiers should be able bodied who could be reasonably expected to escape through the window

# Galleries

- High level beds or double level living areas – mostly in studios
- Distance of travel from the foot of the staircase to the door should not be more than 3m
- Cooking facilities within the room should be sited away from the exit door and the foot of the stairs
- Also look at the stairs themselves (not fire but falls) ladders are not acceptable



# Basements

- Habitable basements
- 30 minutes between floors
- Same precautions as everywhere else
- Look out for security bars to windows if escape windows are necessary

# Cladding and balconies

- Post Grenfell – more people aware of fire safety.
- If buildings are clad – question the type of cladding – has it been tested – is it ACM (aluminium) or HPL (high pressure laminate)
- Balconies – couple of balcony fires, one here in Camden and one in Barking recently – some decking to balconies is flammable



# Fire risk assessment

- Responsibility of person who has control of the building – landlord or managing agent
- Applies to common parts but takes into account individual dwellings
- Should be carried out by a competent person.



# Management

- Fire doors need to be checked regularly to make sure they have their strips and seals and that they are self-closing onto the stops
- Inspections of the common parts should be undertaken to ensure there are no obstructions and no stored items in the common parts.
- Emergency lighting should also be checked regularly
- Tenants should be advised to contact the landlord or managing agent immediately if there are faults showing on the control panel (and these should be rectified as soon as possible)
- **DO NOT WAIT FOR YOUR LICENCE INSPECTION TO IDENTIFY ISSUES WITH FIRE SAFETY, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

**Any questions?**

# Thank you for listening

## Contacts:

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