

Marie Curie Information for Leaseholders - 26 May 2021

My Home

1. Will I have to move?

Yes, all residents will need to move because the works will be extensive and take about a year to complete. You can either choose to move temporarily and move back to your home when the works are complete or Southwark Council can buy back your home at the market value, as if the fire safety works were not required, so that you can move permanently to another property elsewhere.

2. When will I have to move?

We are currently proposing to carry out the works in two phases.

Phase one would include some works in communal areas, plus all external works requiring scaffold access – including the replacement of under window panels where access to homes would be required. These works will be carried out with you living in your home if you haven't moved by the time the work starts. Our aim, subject to completion of the detailed design of the works and consultation is to start the phase one works in January 2022 and finish by September 2022. The length of time these works will take is only based on the feasibility report and may be subject to change following detailed design.

Phase two involves the more disruptive works in your homes that include works that cannot be done with you living there. Our aim is to start this phase as soon as the block is empty. We currently expect this phase of the works to take approximately 52 working weeks to complete. This is based on the recommendations in the current feasibility report.

For technical reasons, the works cannot be carried out on a flat-by-flat basis or floor-by-floor due to the pipework and wiring that run from the top to the bottom of the block.

3. I want to move temporarily and return to my home after the works are completed, how will that happen?

We will talk to you to find out whether you want to move temporarily or want Southwark to buy back your property. If you want to move temporarily, we will seek to support you finding the right type of similar property for you with the same number of bedrooms.

If you chose to move to another temporary home elsewhere in the borough you will be given this on a licence to occupy it until your home at Marie Curie is ready for you to return to.

If you have a mortgage, you will still have to pay your mortgage for your home at Marie Curie but will not have to pay rent for your temporary accommodation.

4. I want to move permanently, how will that happen?

If you want to move on a permanent basis away from Marie Curie, Southwark Council can buy your home, if you choose, to enable you to purchase elsewhere.

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You will not be granted automatic council tenancy, but you can apply for assessment to see if you qualify, if you wish.

5. Will Southwark Council consider a lease swap?

No, we are not able to legally do this. Instead, we can support you to purchase a flat of equivalent size and quality within Southwark, which would also be at the equivalent value of your property at Marie Curie.

My Finances

6. I am a resident leaseholder, if I decide to move temporarily, will I get financial help when I move?

In recognition of the inconvenience, we will make you a lump sum payment of £6,500. The request for payment will be made once we have received the keys to your old home. This will be paid when you move into your temporary or permanent home whichever you choose.

You will also be reimbursed for the incidental costs of your move if you move temporarily. Upon the council being given the receipts for what you have paid, residents will be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to soft furnishings such as curtains and carpets and disconnection and connection of services such as phones, TV and the redirection of post, for example.

The professional removal company will be directly paid for by the council and they will also organise the disconnection of cookers, washing machines and dishwashers. These costs and services will be available for both a temporary or permanent move. If you move temporarily we will also arrange the move back in to your home.

7. I am a non-residential leaseholder, if I decide to take up the offer of a temporary property, will my tenant get financial help when I move?

If your tenant has been a tenant for at least 12 months at Marie Curie, they will be. You will also be reimbursed for the incidental costs of their move.

Upon the council being given the receipts for what your tenants have paid, they will be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to soft furnishings such as curtains and carpets and disconnection and connection of services such as phones, TV and the redirection of post, for example.

The professional removal company will be directly paid for by the council and they will also organise the disconnection of cookers, washing machines and dishwashers. These costs and services will be available for both a temporary or permanent move. If your tenants move temporarily we will also arrange the move back in to your home.

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8. If I decide to move temporarily, will I have to pay for the temporary property?

You will be given a licence to occupy the temporary property whilst the works are carried out to your property. You will not have to pay rent on that property, but you will have to pay the Service Charge and the Council Tax for that property. No Council Tax or Service Charge will need to be paid on your Marie Curie property whilst you are not living there.

You will still have to pay your mortgage for your home at Marie Curie but will not have to pay rent for your temporary accommodation.

9. I am a resident leaseholder what costs am I entitled to if I move permanently?

If you decide to move to somewhere else after selling your home to Southwark Council in recognition of the inconvenience, we will make you a lump sum payment of £6,500. The request for payment will be made once we have received the keys to your old home. You are also entitled to claim back:

- Removal costs
- Solicitor's fees
- Surveyor's fees
- Mortgage redemption fees
- Redirection of post
- Disconnection/ reconnection of services for example; telephone, internet etc.

10. I am a non-resident leaseholder what costs am I entitled to if I sell my property to Southwark Council?

If you decide to move to somewhere else after selling your home to Southwark Council you will be entitled to claim back:

- All valuation costs
- All reasonable legal expenses

11. If I decide to sell the property to Southwark Council how will the value of my property be agreed?

Southwark Council will employ an independent chartered surveyor to carry out a valuation of your property.

12. If I decide to sell the property to Southwark Council am I entitled to my own surveyor?

Homeowners are encouraged to obtain their own valuation completed by a chartered surveyor who will act for you. Southwark Council will pay for the surveyor, where costs are reasonable.

13. If I decide to sell the property to Southwark Council what happens if I cannot come to an agreement with Southwark Council?

If the valuations of the independent and council surveyors differ significantly and there is no prospect of reaching an agreement, then with the agreement of all owners of the property, and Southwark Council, the parties can seek to resolve the dispute through alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

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14. If I move temporarily, when I move back into Marie Curie will my service charge change after the works?

If you choose to move back to your home in Marie Curie after the works, there may be changes to service charges as a result of the works if new communal services are installed.

15. If I decide to stay and move temporarily, will I have to pay towards the costs of the works?

This is complex and we will be organising a separate meeting with leaseholders to discuss this and other leaseholder issues in detail.

The refurbishment works that are undertaken through the Quality Homes Investment Programme (QHIP) will be recharged to leaseholders, as this is worked that is already planned.

The charging for other, additional works is more complex. Soutwark Council will be looking at what costs should be charged to leaseholders and what should not. This may depend on individual circumstances and on the nature of the works themselves and we will keep leaseholders informed as we go along.

The works

16. What are the works required for Marie Curie that need me to move?

The work requires the removal of all the floors within your home and this means that the works cannot be done with you living in your home.

The floors need to be removed to carry out fire stopping where pipework and wiring have previously been laid and left gaps in between properties. This has to be done on both floors of your home. As all the floors will be replaced, the kitchens and bathrooms in all the properties will need to be renewed.

Copper pipes will also be replaced, alongside the other pipes within the building that carry water and waste as they are reaching the end of their serviceable lives. This means that they may start to fail and cause leaks as more modern fittings are attached to them, for example when kitchens and bathrooms are renewed.

There are also issues within the bathroom ducts / risers that will require the wall to be removed and as this backs on to a neighbouring property this will also be best undertaken when the properties are empty, although it could possibly be done in occupation.

17. Why can't I stay while the works are carried out?

The floors need to be removed and fire stopping undertaken beneath them. This requires an empty property.

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18. Does this mean that it is safe for me to live in Marie Curie?

It is safe for you to live in Marie Curie before the works begin. The changes the council has already made, alongside the fire brigade, mean that it is safe. This includes:

- Installing smoke alarm systems in your property
- The addition of the communal fire and detection system in the common areas
- The change from a Stay Put fire strategy to a Simultaneous Evacuation strategy
- The presence of fire wardens to assist with evacuation where necessary

19. Was there a fire risk assessment of Marie Curie and what happened to that?

In January 2020 a Fire Risk Assessment survey was undertaken which highlighted some issues with compartmentation, communal ventilation and the under window panels. The Fire Risk Assessment sets out timescales for the works to be undertaken, normally within 12 months of the survey. Repairs to two fire doors and some fire stopping works were undertaken in May 2020 as a result of the survey. In June 2020 it was confirmed that there was a programme of communal duct inspections in place, a communal compartmentation survey had also been undertaken and it was confirmed that the block was in a major works programme so that the panel replacement works would be carried out as part of that.

As part of the Quality Homes Investment Programme scheme for Marie Curie, as with all blocks, any fire stopping works identified as requiring surveying / inclusion and works required to fire doors which are highlighted in a Fire Risk Assessment would be included in the Major works scheme during the detailed design phase.

20. How did the council find out that these works were required?

In early November 2020 there was a report on the smell of smoke from a number of properties through the ducts in the bathroom. This led to a survey showing that there were in that area that backed on to the under stairs area of the neighbouring property.

A more substantial survey was undertaken by Southwark Council which identified a number of gaps but also highlighted the need for more detailed surveys to be undertaken.

The survey of the gaps and the existing Fire Risk Assessment survey was shared with the London Fire Brigade and as a result, on their recommendation, the fire wardens were introduced at Marie Curie. Along with this, a decision was made to bring forward the installation of a smoke alarm system in your homes as well as installing a communal fire and detection system to counter any risks to residents in advance of any major works being undertaken to address the gaps issues.

As a result of this further survey Southwark Council asked for Marie Curie to be taken out of the main Sceaux Gardens scheme and requested a full report on the newly found issues at Marie Curie (along with the works required under the Quality Homes Investment Programme brief). Any works required from there

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forward were to be carried out as a stand-alone scheme for the block. This was called a feasibility report. When it was issued and reviewed by the various teams within Southwark Council, and following discussions with the surveyors involved in the feasibility report, it became clear that the works to replace the timber floors within the properties was going to be necessary. There are also other fire stopping works required that became clear during the various surveys undertaken as part of the feasibility stage. Only on completion of these and reviewing the block as a whole, have we been in a position to advise on the extent of the proposed works.

21. Why did the council not know about this before hand?

There had been previous fire safety works undertaken on Marie Curie to address gaps issues from the properties to the communal areas back in 2009/10, which had been identified following the tragic fire at Lakanal.

Although the outcome of the investigation into the smell of smoke was deemed to require no further action, the council wanted to ensure that any possible risks were identified and for this reason an internal fire survey was instructed to be carried out on an empty property within Marie Curie. This highlighted the gaps issues, which need to be addressed.

Currently there is no legal requirement to undertake internal, detailed intrusive surveys which would involve removing panels, fixtures and fittings or cupboards for example. However, the council has now implemented a new process whereby internal, detailed intrusive surveys are required for new major refurbishment schemes, as long as the building can be empty do so.

22. Will the works include the removal of gas from the blocks?

As part of the works undertaken at Lakanal, a decision was made to remove the gas whilst the block was empty. There were no health and safety concerns in regard to retaining the gas at that time, but it eliminated a small risk. Because the building was empty, it was simple to do.

As Marie Curie will be undergoing major refurbishment, a proposal has been made to remove the gas there. Again, it eliminates a small risk and also has the benefit of helping to achieve energy efficiency measures in terms of working towards the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

23. I have a gas cooker, will you pay for a replacement electric cooker?

Yes, the council will pay for a replacement cooker and/or hob if you currently use a gas cooker.

24. Will the works include fire sprinklers being installed in the block?

This could be a possibility and depends on further surveys. This could be a sprinkler system or a mist system. Residents will be involved in the detailed design of the scheme where details on these systems will be discussed.

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25. If the homes have to have so much work done, will I be able to choose the finishes in the newly installed kitchens and bathrooms in my home if I return?

Yes. There are options for kitchens and bathrooms, which you will be consulted on.

Fire Safety

26. What fire safety checks do the council have to do?

The council has to undertake Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment surveys of all its blocks. Fire Risk Assessment surveys have to be carried out at least once a year on all high rise blocks that are 18 metres (59 feet) and above.

A Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment survey is non-destructive, which means that it does not require the surveyor to carry out intrusive surveys, which involves taking out panels or remove fixtures and fittings such as cupboards etc. It assesses all the common parts of a building but not individual dwellings. Its purpose is to ensure that common parts of a building have the arrangements that allow people to escape if there was to be a fire – such as clear signage pointing to entry and exit points. The results of this Fire Risk Assessment survey may reveal the requirement for further Fire Risk Assessment surveys. If this is the case, the Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment survey will list reasons why this would be required.

The council also has term contracts in place to carry out checks and maintenance on things like emergency lighting and communal fire and detection systems to ensure they remain in working order.

27. Is Lakanal the same as Marie Curie and will Lakanal residents also have to move out?

There is no reason at all to think that residents of Lakanal will need to move out. The works requiring Marie Curie residents to move out of their homes were done at Lakanal whilst it was empty, as part of the refurbishment scheme carried out in 2016/17.

The current Fire Risk Assessment survey has noted some issues within the communal areas, and as we are doing with all blocks in our current refurbishment programme (Quality Homes Investment Programme - QHIP) we are arranging for a Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment survey or detailed intrusive communal area survey to be undertaken. If there are any compartmentation issues they will be picked up as part of the refurbishment QHIP works. We are also going to take the opportunity to pilot a planned, preventative, maintenance programme on existing fire safety works undertaken internally to the block, as this will be a legal requirement going forward that we wish to begin implementing as soon as possible.

The Fire Risk Assessment survey also highlighted some issues with fire doors. These were all renewed to a satisfactory standard during the last refurbishment works and the certification provided was satisfactory at that time. However, there is now a far tougher requirement with regards to certification of fire doors which

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Southwark Council has implemented (in advance of any requirements as part of the new Building Safety law that the Government are planning to introduce) and this may mean that some upgrading or replacement works to the existing doors may be required. This is still under review.

The new Building Safety law will require a higher standard in terms of certification and documentation than previously required. Southwark Council wants to ensure that works achieve the highest standard and that all works are in line with at least the current Building Regulations or above if achievable. Whilst we are satisfied that the works undertaken at Lakanal were to a good standard and were compliant to all relevant Building Regulations at the time of completion, as a council we are committed to ensuring our buildings have the highest standards in safety. We therefore require buildings to be compliant with the latest and/or proposed Building Regulations, or indeed above that standard in certain circumstances.

We had already identified that the under window panels at Lakanal (although compliant at the time of installation) do not meet the current Building Regulations and although these Regulations are not retrospective we have already planned to get these panels replaced as part of the Sceaux Gardens refurbishment QHIP scheme to the current Building Regulation standards.

These works can all be done in occupation.

28. What was the Fire Risk Assessment survey risk level of Marie Curie and Lakanal at their last inspection?

Marie Curie had an overall risk level of 'Substantial' on the January 2020 Fire Risk Assessment survey. After the Fire Risk Assessment survey review for Marie Curie in May 2021, this risk has been reduced to a 'High Moderate' due to all the temporary measures that have been introduced until all the major works are completed. Lakanal has a 'High Moderate' risk rating.

29. When did the last FRA inspection happen?

A review of the Fire Risk Assessment survey for Marie Curie was undertaken on 11/12 May 2021. (A review of the Fire Risk Assessment survey for Lakanal was undertaken in January 2021).

30. What works have happened since the last Fire Risk Assessment survey and did they reduce the building's risk?

The Fire Risk Assessment survey review undertaken in May 2021 has seen the risk rating reduce to High Moderate due to the measures that have been introduced.

These measures include the change in evacuation strategy to a simultaneous evacuation, which has been achieved by bringing in the fire wardens and the installation of a communal fire alarm and detection system. The fire wardens responsibility has since changed to 'evacuation management' with the main role on assisting vulnerable residents in the block. The fire alarm and detection system is also remotely linked to an alarm receiving centre all of which further mitigate against current risks with the gaps and under window panels.

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31. How often are high-rise buildings checked for fire safety?

Southwark Council procedures require that high-rise blocks of over 18 metres, or 59ft, have to have annual fire risk assessments completed. The Fire Safety Order states there are circumstances the review may be more frequent, hence Marie Curie now being recommended for review every three months.

The fire risk assessment needs to be reviewed sooner when,

- There is a reason to suspect that the original fire risk assessment is no longer valid, e.g. after a fire that occurred within, or spread to, the common parts.
- There is a significant change in the matters that were taken into account as the risk assessment was carried out, e.g. change in the type of residents occupying the block.
- After completion of significant works to address shortcomings identified by the fire risk assessment.

Help or advice

32. Who do I contact in the council for help?

The Marie Curie team can be contacted on **020 7732 2757** or email **mariecurie@southwark.gov.uk**. The team will then ensure that your query is responded to by the correct person.

33. Is there Independent Advice.

Neal Purvis from Open Communities is the Independent Tenant and Homeowner Advisor. If you have any questions contact Neal on Freephone **0800 073 1051** or at **neal.purvis1@btinternet.com**.

34. What if I need an interpreter or translator?

We will arrange for an interpreter to talk with you and translate documents where necessary. Please contact the Marie Curie team to ask for this service.