



# St Anne's Quarter: Customer Meeting Minutes

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**Information from resident meetings. Here you'll find answers to the questions that you've been asking us at recent building safety meetings.**

**Meeting date: 10 January 2024**

## **Has the fire alarm sounding across all blocks been rectified?**

Works were completed by CCSS at the end of 2023 so that sounders only go off in the building(s) where detectors are triggered. Each block is connected to the car park. This means that you must evacuate the building or car park if you hear the alarm sounding. If the alarm isn't sounding in the building you're in, you can remain in your home. In the unlikely event that a fire breaks out and spreads to another building, the alarm in that building will activate and sound to alert those customers to leave.

The alarm system is still connected to an alarm receiving centre who will call the fire brigade. The fire brigade will let you know when it's safe to return to your home.

## **What's the role of CCSS (the fire alarm contractor) when they receive a call?**

- When alerted to an activation of the fire alarm panel, the alarm receiving centre will firstly call the fire service
- They will then phone CCSS directly to inform them of the alarm sounding
- CCSS will attend St Anne's Quarter within one hour but will only enter the building when the fire service confirms it's safe to do so.

CCSS's role is to:

- silence the alarm
- check the system
- replace any defective equipment
- reset the panel, leaving it in full working order

## **Do sounders still need to be fitted to each flat?**

For the safety of all customers at St Anne's Quarter, we're installing sounders linked to the main alarm signal so that you have early warning in the unlikely event of a fire within one of the communal spaces around where you live.



### **Does each home still need to be connected to the main fire alarm?**

Yes, each home still needs to be connected to the main fire alarm.

We're in the process of agreeing terms with a contractor to install the detection systems to each flat and this will be linked to the main alarm system. We'll update you when we have more information on this. Please be assured that although your home will be linked to the main alarm system, you will only hear sounders if an alarm is activated in your home or building.

Your safety is our priority and linking your home to the main fire alarm system means that an alarm would be triggered sooner in the event of an emergency, giving everyone more time to evacuate safely.

Please let us know immediately if you or any of your household would not be able to evacuate in an emergency. You can contact us on 0800 678 1221 or email

[SpecialProjectsTeam@orbit.org.uk](mailto:SpecialProjectsTeam@orbit.org.uk).

### **How often is the fire alarm panel checked?**

We carry out quarterly checks of the alarm system, including the fire alarm panel.

### **Will the value of homes at St. Anne's Quarter have dropped due to the current issues?**

There are many factors which impact on the value of property. We're not aware of any significant fluctuations with local property prices.

### **Is it true that some residents could not move in due to materials that had to be sent off for fire testing?**

We've seen documentation that shows some of the external wall material had been tested.

However, due to the subsequent checks we've conducted, we've discovered that the external walls had not been constructed correctly to meet the design briefs. We would not have known this without commissioning our own investigations as the building sign offs were provided to us.

### **Is the FRAew now available?**

We've reviewed the draft FRAew and didn't feel this provided the level of detail that was needed to give to the developer and to you. We've therefore gone back to the FRAew provider and asked for an updated final report. We'll share this with you when it's available.

The draft report suggests that the majority of issues are related to the cavity barriers (the fire-resistant material that's used to seal off the cavity/ enclosed space found within a wall to restrict the spread of fire).

Each individual building may have different issues with the cavity barriers as the wall types are different, so cavity barriers may need to be different or installed differently.

### **What if the developer won't pay or goes bankrupt?**

We will negotiate with the developer ISG for the remediation works. There's a legal process around this that we're following, and we'll keep you updated on next steps as discussions progress.



At the same time, we're exploring the availability of government funds that may be available to help fund the remedial works.

Please be assured that the alarm system upgrade and future remedial works to the external walls will be carried out at no cost to you.

**Are mortgage lenders now lender on these types of properties?**

The majority of high street lenders have confirmed they will lend if the freeholder confirms that no charges will be passed back to the owner. We've provided you with a letter to confirm that we will not be charging you for any remediation works.

**Will Orbit consider a buy back scheme if property prices fall or homes do not sell?**

This is not something we would implement ordinarily; but we'll consider this in further detail and provide feedback in future meetings.

**Will residents have to pay for the increase in insurance premiums due to the issues?**

We've made our building insurers aware of the fire safety issues and will pay the difference in premiums. We wouldn't pay any additional amounts for any insurances you may hold. If you have taken out your own contents insurance, it's important that make your insurer aware of the current issues, otherwise your insurance may be void if you go on to make a claim.

**Austin House was built later than the rest of the buildings, why does this have the same issues?**

Austin House was built at the same time as the other buildings so the external walls are of the same design and construction, however the internal fittings of the homes were not completed until a later date due to delays in 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid pandemic.

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