

Farnol House – Returning Home

We're really pleased you're able to return home and expect you are too. We'll continue supporting you as you settle back in and understand you may have some concerns or questions. We've tried to anticipate some of these and provide answers below:

What do I do about insurance?

If you want to get in touch with your insurer now, the Fire Service incident number you'll need to quote is **020721-13042025**.

Sadly, incidents like this can make you a target for some unscrupulous operators. Please be mindful of potential scammers, who may offer unsolicited help or claim to work with your insurer. If you are approached by a person or organisation you don't know or aren't sure about, please make appropriate checks to verify their identity and motives.

If you don't already have contents insurance but would now like to get a policy for future protection, you'll find some useful information on our website here -

<https://www.stonewater.org/customers/get-support/money-matters/home-contents-insurance/>

Will I have to pay full rent & service charges?

Once you return home, the Disturbance payments you've been receiving will stop and you should continue to pay your rent as normal. In terms of your service charges, these will be reduced to reflect the fact that some services can't be fully delivered while work is on-going. You'll receive a separate letter detailing the reductions and we'll continue to review things as work moves towards completion.

I don't feel safe here anymore. Can I move?

We understand that being home may bring back distressing memories or fears around another fire. Please be assured that all the necessary fire safety measures and compliance checks needed before resident's return are 100% complete.

Specialist support is still available from Kaleidoscope Plus Group, recognising the experience you've been through. You can reach out directly at any time on 0121 565 5605 or email: counselling@kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk or visit:

www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk

There is an acute shortage of social housing in the local area and Stonewater has very limited alternatives so it's unlikely we'll be able to move people simply based on personal preference. There are some circumstances where customers may qualify for what we term a 'management move.' We're happy to explain more about this and other housing options if that's something you'd like to look into.

Is the building safe?

We've thoroughly checked that the building is structurally safe and that it would be safe in the event of a fire before starting to return customers to their homes.

This has included testing systems like the door entry system, fire alarms and warden call system, all of which are working.

There are still works required, such as fitting new motors to the windows on the upper floors, at the end of each corridor, which means these windows are locked open until the new motors are fitted. With these windows locked open, it's safe for you to return.

Alongside our checks, we've asked our independent fire safety consultants to assess the building, and update our risk assessment.

My mobility is bad and I'd not be able to get out in the event of another fire.

We offer all customers a "Person centred fire risk assessment" (PCFRA) during which we will assess the risk to you of a fire in your home or elsewhere in the building and discuss with you actions that could be taken to ensure your safety. This may include speaking with partner agencies regarding additional support, or agreeing with you a bespoke plan for you to follow in the event of a fire or other building emergency.

If you haven't already had a PCFRA completed please speak to your dedicated support colleague who can arrange this for you.

I'm worried about living in a building site.

It's a case of balancing the need to get people home as quickly as possible with completing all the work required. So yes, some work may still be going on when you return but these areas will largely be boarded off and confined to the second floor. Our contractors will follow a code of conduct and only work during certain hours, generally between 8am and 5pm, to keep disruption to a minimum.

Can I get help with redecoration?

If we've had to do repairs inside your home then we will make good/redecorate those areas. If it's more a case of you wanting to freshen things up then that would be down to you.

What about communal areas?

We will redecorate communal areas, using specialist paint to comply with Building Regulation requirements.

We also aim to replace carpets and furnishings where possible, and at the very least they will be thoroughly cleaned.

What about replacing damaged personal items?

If personal items have been damaged as a result of the fire then your contents insurer should be your first port of call. Stonewater advises all customers when they start a tenancy of the importance of arranging insurance but it is, of course, a personal choice. Where people have chosen not to take out insurance, it's not Stonewater's responsibility to replace items, nor would it be fair on those customers who have arranged and paid for insurance. As a social landlord, we have an obligation to use our income wisely, for the benefit of all our customers.

That said, our independent charity arm, the Longleigh Foundation, are offering financial support of up to £500 (on a needs basis). Lucy, your scheme manager, can give you more information if this is something you'd be interested in.

How do I replace important documents?

The British Red Cross website has a useful list of contacts you might need to replace documents like passports, medical cards or vehicle papers:

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/after-house-fire>

Will things in my home still be safe to use?

We have tested the electrical mains in each flat and the communal areas to ensure they are safe. Please check any electrical items before you turn them in case they've been damaged. Check cables for damage or fraying, and check plugs to ensure the cable hasn't come loose. You should also check for signs like melted or discoloured plastic which may indicate the plug is overheating.

If your fridge or freezer has been off, please dispose of any food or medication, as these will have spoiled. Likewise, anything that's gone out of date while you've been away.

When will the work be finished?

Most of the remaining work is concentrated around the second floor, where fire and water damage is most extensive. There's still a lot of work to do there, which we anticipate may take several months. We'll continue to keep you informed as things progress.

Please remember that we're still here to support you as you settle back into your home.

If you have any concerns, please make sure your first ports of call are your scheme manager, Lucy, your assigned support colleague or, alternatively, contact our Customer Service Centre on 01202 319119 or via email at customers@stonewater.org.

We can only help with issues if we know about them and this is the quickest way to ensure we're able to resolve things wherever possible.