



# LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### HIGH-RISE BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

In the wake of the large-scale fire at Grenfell Tower in West London today, our thoughts go out to those affected and involved in the tragedy, including our colleagues in London Fire Brigade who continue to work tirelessly at the incident.

It would be inappropriate to speculate about the cause of the incident at this time as a full investigation has yet to be undertaken by the appropriate authorities.

Incidents of this type are very unusual, as high-rise buildings are designed to resist and stop the spread of fire and smoke. However, we understand that residents living and working in high-rise buildings in our communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland may now have concerns regarding fire safety in such premises. As such, we would like to provide reassurance and advice to our communities.

We already have regularly tested procedures in place to deal with any incidents involving high-rise buildings and undertake regular training to practise these procedures and implement any learning outcomes.

We have an extensive knowledge of all the high-rise buildings (five floors and above) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and continuously work with our partners (landlords, local authorities etc.) to embed fire safety prevention and protection work.

However, it is vital that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire so that they can protect themselves and their families:

- Make sure you have working smoke and/or heat detectors in your flat
- Make an escape plan so that you and your family are fully prepared if there's a fire in your flat.
- Tell everyone in your home what the escape plan is and practise it.
- Make sure exits are kept clear of obstructions
- If it is too dangerous to follow your escape route because stairs and hallways are filled with smoke, ring 999 and stay inside the safest

room. Keep the door closed and use towels or bedding at the bottom of the door to prevent any smoke entering the room.

- If you're trapped, go to a balcony/window to shout for help and wait for the fire and rescue service – DO NOT attempt to jump.
- When leaving the building in the event of a fire, use the stairs and not the lift.
- If there's a fire in another flat elsewhere in the building, you are normally safest in your own flat, UNLESS you are affected by heat or smoke in any way.
- In the event of a fire, never assume that someone else has called the fire and rescue service. Make sure your neighbours know about the fire. Bang on their doors on your way out and once outside, call 999.

The tragedy in London today has specifically raised concerns by members of the public asking what is meant by a "stay put" evacuation procedure/policy.

As a Service, we use the Government's national guidance on the "stay put" policy when inspecting high rise buildings and making any recommendations to building owners/responsible persons (landlords etc.)

The guiding principles of this policy are:

- When a fire occurs in a flat, the occupants alert others inside that flat, make their way out of the building and call the fire and rescue service
- If a fire starts in any of the shared areas (staircase, corridors etc.) anyone in these areas should make their way out of the building and call the fire and rescue service
- All other residents NOT directly affected by the fire would be expected to "stay put" and remain in their flat unless:
  - Smoke or heat affects their flat or
  - They are told to leave by the fire and rescue service
- It is NOT implied that those who wish to leave the building should be prevented from doing so. Nor does this preclude those evacuating a flat that is on fire, from alerting their neighbours so that they can also escape if they feel threatened.

Our advice is if you are in any doubt, GET OUT, STAY OUT and DIAL 999.

You can find further information and advice on fire safety in high-rise properties on our website: [www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/](http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/)

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:** Paul Weston, Area Manager for Community Risk will be available for interviews regarding fire safety in high-rise properties.

### **About the Service**

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester,

Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire related incidents have reduced by 46 percent.

During 2015/16, the Service attended 666 road traffic collisions, of which 174 were extrications freeing 208 people trapped inside their vehicles and completed 5086 home fire safety checks, fitting almost 4481 smoke alarms. Staff organised or supported almost 1431 events aimed at promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, whilst also visiting 332 schools to deliver fire and road safety education to pupils.

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