

Committee(s): Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 26/05/2022
Subject: Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,9,10,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
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Summary

This report provides Members with an update on progress made by the Major Works Team, to ensure tenanted properties have adequate levels of smoke and carbon monoxide detection, to help protect residents and their visitors from the harmful, and devastating effects of fire, smoke and carbon monoxide poisoning.

The information contained within the report will explain what work has been done to date and the key benefits to both tenant, and landlord. Eddie Hughes (MP) has recently written on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on proposals to mandate smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in social homes. The City of London Corporation (the Corporation) has been installing detectors to the minimum standard for more than 5 years and, above the minimum standard for the last 4 years.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Corporation undertakes a five-year fixed wiring test to tenanted properties as part of its obligations to ensure social homes are safe to live in and, ensure compliance with the recommendations of Building Regulations, Part P (BS7671).

As part of this fixed wire test, and where smoke detectors are not present, contractors are asked to install new detectors to BS5839 LD2. Where a fixed combustion appliance is present, such as a gas boiler, a carbon monoxide detector is also installed. Any older detectors which are due to expire within the next five years, or are of the older type, are replaced with a modern equivalent to the same LD2 standard.

Current Position

2. All of the Corporation's social homes have some level of smoke detection installed to the minimum standard of BS5839, LD3. LD3 covers escape routes such as hallways and landings only.

Over 75% of the Corporation's housing stock now has the more modern style detectors with intelligent memory and technology that allows us to interact with the units for information. These are installed to LD2 standard which, in essence, protects escapes routes as well as those areas where there is a high risk of a fire starting. LD2 is above the industry standard set by many landlords across the UK.

Homes with a fixed combustion appliance installed, will also now have a carbon monoxide detector installed.

Additionally, as well as the fixed wire test and the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, we are also Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) the tenant's white goods in the properties. This will help identify the early failure of appliances before they become unsafe to use or, put homes at risk through their continued use.

Options

3. It is recommended that the Corporation continues to ensure that the latest technology in smoke and carbon monoxide detection is installed as part of the electrical fixed wire testing.

Key Data

4. The key benefits and features of the detection equipment are:

- The mains powered versions of the detectors cost less than £1 per year to run. They are backed up by a recharging lithium battery that can last up to six months (useful if the property is void and power is switched off).
- Technology has more recently allowed detectors to run on batteries for ten years, ensuring that there are no running costs for tenants.
- Hush switches can be installed to allow those less able, to silence alarms and identify which detector was triggered first.
- All the detectors are inter-linked so if one detector is triggered, all the alarms within that particular home, will sound.
- The smoke detectors can be interrogated by downloading data from the detector to a smart phone. You can identify the current status of the sensor, status of the battery, if the detector has been removed or triggered and, how many times it has been removed.
- Carbon monoxide detectors can also be interrogated to identify the same as smoke detectors but additionally inform if any carbon monoxide has been detected and to what level.
- The lifespan of a detector is ten years which works with every second electrical fixed wire test.
- Smoke detectors installed in escape routes are optical sensing to minimise false alarms.
- Smoke detectors installed in kitchens are multi-sensing, again, minimising false alarms.
- The detectors can also be linked to other safety equipment such as strobe lighting, vibrating pillows, gas isolation valves and 24-hour monitoring centres.

Conclusion

5. This report aims to reassure Members that the Corporation is committed to achieving high standards above the minimum requirements for fire safety within social homes across each of the estates we manage.

It compliments other high standards such as a commitment to installing 60-minute fire rated front entrance doors to homes, metal casement consumer units in high rise buildings and the soon to be introduced Arc Fault Detection Devices that can monitor electrical supplies for arcs that cause the fires in the first instance (they will disconnect the supply automatically).

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