

Workshop 3E

Fire Safety Compliance Forum: Best Practice Insights

Speaker: Chris Graham, PML Group

Panel: Jeff Goodby, Curo Group
Richard Chitty, Frankham Consultancy
Damien Ward, Checkmate Fire

Chaired by: Andrew Burke

Room: E



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Who are the Fire Safety Compliance Forum?



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Compliance Forum
Thought Leadership Group

A group of Social Landlords, Consultants, Lawyers, Procurement Frameworks, Contractors and Specialists who all have a shared interest in improving the way in which our sector identifies, scopes, specifies, executes and records fire safety works.



Fire Safety Compliance Best Practice Insights

6 Themes, 20 Recommendations

1. The Importance of asset data in fire safety compliance.
2. Assessing fire risks, competencies and survey regimes.
3. Programming, prioritising and budgeting.
4. Procurement, Quality perceptions and QA.
5. Communications with residents.
6. Education & Spreading best practice



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1. The Importance of asset data in fire safety compliance



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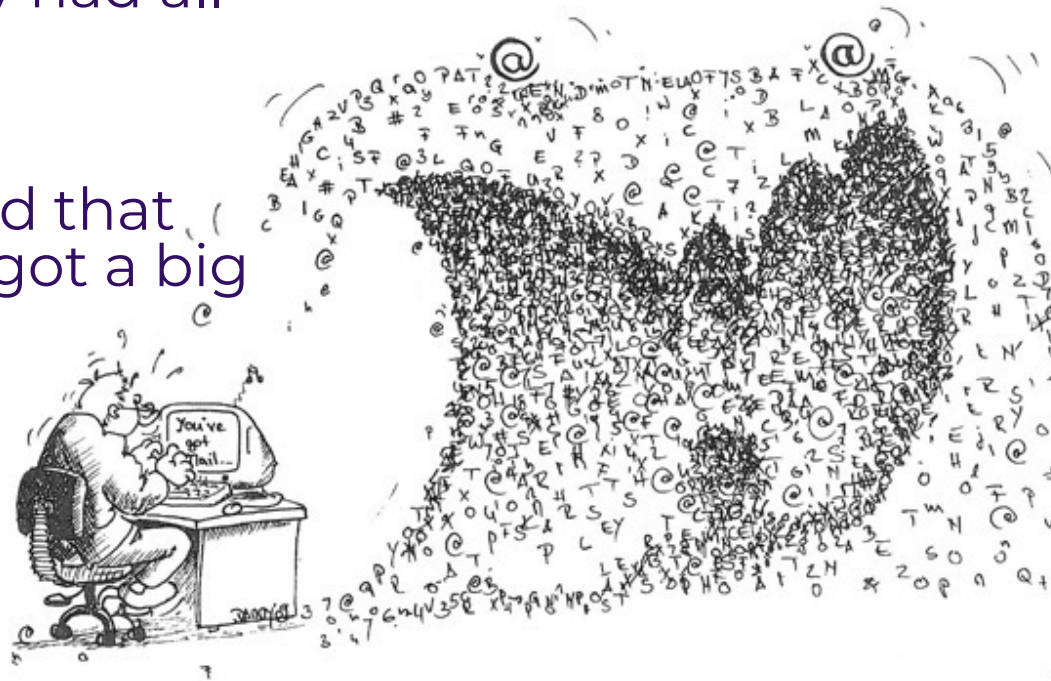
“When we think about it, there’s a huge amount of just blind trust that residents placed in their landlords, suppliers and contractors, assuming that they knew what they were doing with the building and that they had all the information and data.

“ In my experience, data management is one of the biggest problems that housing providers have”

Social Landlord

Now that it’s been exposed that that isn’t the truth, we’ve got a big trust problem today!”

Tpas



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1. The Importance of asset data in fire safety compliance



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Houston, we have a big problem!

- Systemic failure in collection and sharing of data
- Data storage and format inconsistencies
- Data absence creates waste and erodes trust



Recommendations

1. **Assess the accuracy and reliability of asset data.** Provide a “confidence level” associated with the data to flag any that may require verification.
2. **Invest time and resource in creating clear and transparent processes and systems** to comply fully with the letter and spirit of the new regulatory framework
3. Landlords should not wait until all the regulatory changes are in place but **start gathering reliable data now.**
4. **Work collaboratively with your service providers** to improve standardisation and consistency of data management.

2. Assessing fire risks, competencies and survey regimes



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“ I have seen what looks like cloning, which is probably a consequence of lowest price tendering. Detailed FRA’s take time to do properly, and those undertaking them should be afforded sufficient time.”

Contractor

“We discovered in a study that review of FRA’s had not happened in 50% of cases where the stock had been improved.”

Social Landlord



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2. Assessing fire risks, competencies and survey regimes



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Recommendations

5. Ensure that you **engage competent person(s)** to undertake appropriate FRA's in accordance with the Fire Sector Federation ACOP.
- 6 **Prioritised action lists** should identify potential risks and their priority and be issued simultaneously with the FRA.
- 7 **FRA's should be shared with affected residents** and the design should be a "pass / fail format like those on an MOT certificate for cars.. This would provide greater clarity of the work required and its relative priority.

3. Programming, prioritising and budgeting.



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“Landlords are getting better at estimating likely costs, based on known surveys and assumptions with a large dose of contingency. However, in terms of budgeting, they are still robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

Consultant



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4. Programming , prioritising and budgeting



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Better together



Recommendations

- 8 **Always adopt a risk-based approach** to deciding remedial works priorities from FRA's, whilst ensuring that any measures are reasonably practicable for the building concerned and its local context.
- 9 More efficient budgeting and programming of fire protection works can be achieved **with the involvement of the whole project team**; work collaboratively with Consultants, Contractors, Specialists and Residents to achieve this.
- 10 **Be clear about re-charging policies for leaseholders and your leaseholder engagement plan before embarking on detailed programming** and budgeting for the project.
Proactive leaseholder engagement provides enhanced predictability and risk management.

4. Procurement, Quality perceptions and QA



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“ There is a cultural issue across the sector, which can be described as a ‘race to the bottom’ caused either through ignorance, indifference, or because the system does not facilitate good practice. There is insufficient focus on delivering the best quality building possible, in order to ensure that residents are safe, and feel safe”

Dame Judith Hackett



4. Procurement, Quality perceptions and QA



Recommendations

11. Procuring **landlords must have a good idea of the cost of what they are buying** if they are to deter undeliverable tenders which perpetuate “a race to the bottom” mindset. **Procurement exercises should include scrutiny of the managers and operatives who will be doing the work**, including their qualifications, experience and competence (whether directly employed or subcontractors).
12. The nature of planned fire works makes precise scoping of works difficult and prone to variation. **Adoption of a two-stage or negotiated tender process is likely to result in greater transparency of risk and predictability** of outturn cost.
13. To enhance client assurance regarding quality of work, **landlords should insist on digital image recording of completed work, coupled with independent key stage site inspections**. Any contractor worth their salt will welcome this affirmation of their competent installation.



5. Communications with Residents



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“Why should we talk to you now? You never did anything last time we shared our concerns.”

Social Housing Resident



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5. Communications with Residents



Recommendations

14. All Parties involved in planned fire works must recognise the breach of resident trust that post Grenfell investigations, FRA's and fire component inspections have created. **A concerted effort for landlords to provide proactive communication with residents, transparency of information and genuine resident engagement** are all key in building trust relating to fire safety
15. **Persistent, clear and authoritative programmes of resident education will be required to restore resident faith in the safety of "stay-put" fire strategies.** Resident behaviour in the cases where a fire occurs could ultimately determine their life or death. All parties concerned with fire safety have a duty to reinforce the consistent message relating to the fire strategy for the building to result in lives being saved.
16. Boards of landlords must be aware, informed and **capable of holding their executives and managers to account** regarding the planning and implementation of all aspects of fire safety compliance. This may require them to undergo specific training in order to ensure that they comply with forthcoming legal obligations.



6. Education & Spreading best practice



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“ We need more consistency of training – everyone is doing their own thing”

Social Landlord

“ What is best practice? You could contact 5 different providers who would give you 5 different perspectives on what best practice is.”

Social Landlord



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6. Education & Spreading best practice



Recommendations

17 The Social Housing Regulator should require social landlords to give fire safety compliance the **same level of audit scrutiny afforded to other statutory compliance inspections**, such as gas safety and electrical safety. This should include what training has been provided relating to fire safety compliance throughout the organisation.

18 **The procurement principles and practice outlined in the Construction Playbook should be adopted by all social landlords** in their procurement of fire safety works to promote the high quality, collaborative approach necessary for efficient operations.

19 The creation of **an industry-wide forum where good practice**, challenges and mistakes can all be shared in a safe learning environment and where measurement of quality and performance through anonymised benchmarking will allow all participants to continually improve their performance by learning from others

20 A cross-sector, industry-wide group should co-create **a comprehensive competence matrix for all roles involved in fire safety compliance** (either directly or indirectly) . This should include not only technical competence and appropriate experience, but also “softer skills”, such as effective communication and empathy.



Our next project.....

Fire Safety resident journey & engagement guide



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What is it?

A practical guide for residential landlords and their service providers, articulating how to design and deliver successful customer experiences for residents receiving fire safety works to their homes.

The guide will also provide advice about the best way to engage with affected residents before, during and after the planning and undertaking fire safety works



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Thank you.

**Any Questions
for the Panel?**

If you want to know more about the work of the Fire Safety Compliance Forum please contact: Chris_graham@pmlgroup.com



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