



**Date** 27 November 2023

Dear resident,

### **Barton House – Monday update**

I am writing to update you with the latest information for Barton House residents.

**Accommodation and rent payments:** The events of the past two weeks have, and continue to be, difficult for many of you and we recognise the strain these arrangements are putting on households. Your safety and wellbeing are our priority and, where possible, we are taking steps to provide support so we can take away as much of that stress as possible and avoid any unforeseen impacts on you and your household.

For those who are staying in the Holiday Inn, we will continue to cover the costs of your accommodation and provide meals. In addition, for all of you who have been displaced by the temporary evacuation of Barton House, we will continue to cover taxi costs for those who need them and for transport to get your children to school.

For those of you who are currently staying with friends and family, we are also able to provide additional money to support you. This is to contribute to extra costs you may have, such as food or energy costs, up to a maximum of £50 a night, as follows:

- £35 a night for the head of the household
- £12 a night for each additional adult
- £10 a night for each child over one year old
- £10 a night for kennel or cattery

Following consideration of the impact on residents and with reference to our own policy and national guidance, tenants will continue to be charged rent to maintain our contractual relationship with you as a tenant. Also, if we were to stop charging rent, any tenant of Barton House in receipt of Universal Credit and/or Housing Benefit would see those benefits needing to be recalculated.

I understand that this does not apply to all residents of Barton House and I fully recognise that this decision will may cause concern for some. If you are having difficulty paying your rent, please speak to your Income Officer who can help you with relevant support and discuss your options. Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service (WRAMAS) can provide telephone advice relating to disability and carers' benefits and Universal Credit (0117 35 21888 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am –

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1pm) or please speak to independent advice agencies via [www.acfa.org.uk](http://www.acfa.org.uk).

**Tenant safety:** The decision to evacuate people from Barton House was made due to safety concerns with the structure of the building in the event of a fire, explosion, or other large impact. Until we have the results from the ongoing surveys, this position will remain the same. Residents are still allowed to access Barton House to gather essential items from their properties, water plants, or to feed pets, but visits should be kept short and we ask you not to return to your flats to live, cook meals, or sleep.

Housing Officers are committed to supporting you to move into alternative accommodation, either at the Holiday Inn or to live with friends or family.

**Reminder for text and email alerts:** We can provide you with updates by text and email if you are happy to share your contact details. You can give details to your Housing Officer, send them to [barton.house@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:barton.house@bristol.gov.uk), or call 0800 694 0184.

Many thanks for your continued patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



**John Smith, Interim Executive Director, Growth and Regeneration**

### Additional support

We appreciate that this is a stressful time for you and your families, and we are working to put in place the support you need. If you feel you need some mental health and emotional wellbeing support, there are services available to help you.

- Community Access Support Service can help you find organisations across Bristol for all groups of people and communities – [www.cassbristol.org](http://www.cassbristol.org)
- Samaritans offer support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – call 116 123 for free.
- Shout 85258 offers confidential text support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Text SHOUT to 85258.
- **Family Hubs:** during the week, your local Family Hub can give you information and support about anything relating to you and your family. This includes activity groups, health and wellbeing services and parenting support. The nearest Family Hub to Barton House is the Wellspring Settlement Hub, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX. It is open from Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm, and on Friday from 9am to 1pm. You can call them on 0117 955 6971.

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- **Support for parent/carers with babies and infants:** The Central Children's Centre will be running "stay and play" baby groups at the Holiday Inn. Details about these sessions, and also how to book a free taxi to the Holiday Inn when needed, can be found at [www.bristol.gov.uk/barton-house](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/barton-house)
- **Welcoming Spaces network:** Welcoming Spaces are still open across the city. These are free to use and open to anyone. You can use your local Welcoming Space to meet with other people, take part in activities or access support. Find your nearest on our website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/costofliving)

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