



Date 18 December 2023

Dear resident

Barton House residents' meeting update – Monday 18 December 2023

Thank you to those who were able to attend the meeting this afternoon at City Hall. For those who were not able to attend, the information below includes the key updates that were shared at the meeting. The most important of these is that early indications from our recent building surveys suggest it will be possible for you to return to live at Barton House once further work is completed to make it safe. Sadly, this is not possible before Christmas or the New Year.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your patience and resilience during the past month. I cannot express how grateful I and others at the council are for the time and space you have allowed us to carry out the essential survey work needed to fully understand the structure of your home, Barton House. I want to thank the residents who have provided us with permission to access their flats and allow this work to be carried out.

I understand you have already been through a lot and, especially at this time of year, home is where you want to be. I remain grateful for your patience with us as we do all we can to secure the safety of Barton House and get you back home as quickly as possible.

Please do ask us any questions you may have using the contact details near the end of this update.

We will be holding the next residents' meeting the week of 8 January 2024. More details about this meeting will be shared with you in the New Year.

Survey results – what we know so far

We have used the past four weeks to get our contractors into the building to carry out deep and detailed surveys of the structure, getting down into the concrete and steel frame that holds the block up. This work is now nearly complete, and the initial results have been shared by the surveyors.

Early indications from this detailed survey work are that the issues suggested from earlier surveys are not present throughout the whole building as we feared. The latest surveys - which went deeper and further across the building than previous investigations - indicate that the safety measures the building was designed with do appear to exist and are in the locations we would expect to see them.

Whilst this early information provides positive indications regarding the block's safety,

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there will be essential work required to make Barton House safe to return to. The full extent of the work required is yet to be determined and we continue to await a final report from surveyors and recommendations which sets out all measures that need putting in place to secure the high level of building safety you and we expect.

Whilst these additional works are carried out, I must ask you to continue to stay away from Barton House apart from brief visits to gather essential items or to provide access to contractors.

Fireproofing works

We're working with our contractors to establish what safety measures are needed and discussing with this with Avon Fire Service. The most likely option of work required will be to install a communal fire alarm system.

We estimate this system will take about two months to install once the work begins. There may be other protections needed such as extra fire proofing in some flats to protect the steel frames in the event of a fire, which could be done quite quickly if needed. We intend to start these essential works as soon as we have the final engineering reports and the fire service agree on the mitigations needed.

Testing for legionella

I wrote to you last week about the need to test for legionella. The water testing is precautionary, as many of the flats have been empty for a prolonged period, we do need to check for legionella bacteria. You will be hearing from Housing Officers soon about setting appointments to access your flat.

Posters have been put up across the block to remind you of the risk of legionella in the water systems. We ask that if you do visit your flat, please do not use the water as you may be putting yourself at risk. Please do not turn the taps on or run the shower or bath.

Remember, this testing is only being carried out in flats that have been unoccupied for the past month. If you are currently living in your flat in Barton House, this warning does not apply to you.

Contractors on site at Barton House

We will soon begin the preparations for the essential work required to help make the building safe. Around the clock security will remain at the block to provide an added layer of protection and help you gain access to gather essential items when needed.

Staying at the Holiday Inn

For those of you staying at the Holiday Inn, we and the hotel staff will make all necessary arrangements to make sure your stay is comfortable. More information on the arrangements over Christmas and beyond will be shared with you shortly as will details of any additional support that can be put in place.

Staying with friends and family

Payments to cover the additional costs of those living with friends and family will continue to be made. If you have not received any payments or if your circumstances have changed, please contact a Housing Officer, email us on

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barton.house@bristol.gov.uk or call 0800 694 0184 to let us know.

Moving back to Barton House

Unfortunately, we are not in a position to confirm a return date yet. Our number one priority is to ensure your safety. The fire service at this stage does not support a return, without some fire safety work being carried out.

Our timeline for carrying out the essential works required and complete all necessary testing will depend on being able to access flats as quickly as possible.

We will continue to provide you with updates by text and email. All essential information regarding the situation at Barton House and the support available to you is on our website - www.bristol.gov.uk/barton-house. Please also direct any questions or concerns to us by emailing barton.house@bristol.gov.uk, calling 0800 694 0184 or by speaking to a member of staff.

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.

- 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.
- If you need advice or have any concerns around any form of **domestic abuse**, please contact the Next Link Domestic Abuse Service on 0117 925 0680. For 24 hours a day, 7 days a week advice, as well as out of hours refuge options, call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247. In an emergency, please contact 999.
- **Family Hubs:** During the week, your local Family Hub can give information and support about anything relating to you and your family. This includes activity groups, health and wellbeing services as well as parenting support. The nearest Family Hub to Barton House is the Wellspring Settlement Hub, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX. Open Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm; Friday from 9am to 1pm. Call 0117 955 6971.

- **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 how to book a free taxi to the Holiday Inn when needed, can be found at 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

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