NHS
The Dudley Group
NHS Foundation Trust

June 2017

Freedom of Information request 013541 – Fire safety

Cladding

Following the Grenfell tragedy and the concern and questions that have been raised in regards to the use of cladding and fire safety in public buildings, the Trust and its PFI Partners would like to offer assurance to all its patients, staff, visitors and others who use our services.

The Trust and its PFI Partner have carried out investigations into the types of cladding used to envelope the Russell's Hall Hospital, these investigations have identified that there is no concern with the type of cladding used and how it has been installed onto the building.

The Russell's Hall Hospital building is enveloped in cladding; there are three types of cladding on the building due to the different stages of build.

There is a GRC (Glass Reinforced Concrete) cladding on "B Block" this is from the original build, this is recorded as conforming to the requirements of Class O defined by the British Building Regulations.

This is over clad with a non-combustible Korrugal metal Rainscreen which has no insulation or internal lining.

The North block area of the Hospital is clad with Kingspan Architectural Wall Panel KS600 FL which has been confirmed as a Class O specification in compliance with Building Regulations when tested to BS 476 Part 6 2009 and Part 7 1997.

The A and C Blocks of the Hospital are clad with CGL cometec Rainscreen Cladding; this has an inert rock fibre slab, non-combustible to ISO 1182 and Aluminium FF2 metalwork. Cladding does not contain polyethylene or polystyrene. This is certified as BS476, Class 'O' non-combustible.

The above information has been checked by the Trust and its PFI Partners, however as further assurance for the Trust and its service users, the Trusts PFI Partner has commissioned an Independent Fire Safety Specialist Company to complete a full review of the physical cladding along with the drawings and specifications to further confirm that there are no concerns with the exterior envelope.

The specialist team attended site on Wednesday 28th June 2017 to physically review the cladding and associated information. A full report is awaited.

As further details of the Grenfell tragedy are released, as with all other Organisations, the Trust will review the findings and apply the learning to our own processes where any improvements can be made.

Fire Safety in general

In respect to the Fire Safety measures below is an overview of the structural and procedural measures in place along with additional information in regards to the cladding.

The Trust has an L1 fire alarm system installed across its site; this is in accordance with British Standard BS5839 Fire alarm system category guide. This is a life protection system that includes automatic fire detection in all rooms, on all escape routes and in all voids over 800mm.

The system operates a three stage fire alarm, stage one sounds as a continuous alert in the area in which the signal has activated, secondly an intermittent alert in all zones adjacent to the incident. A third alarm sounds for 45 seconds across the Trust to alert staff to an incident occurring on site.

Each week a separate zone within the hospital is tested, this includes a fire alarm test to ensure that the sounders are working. In addition to the alarm sounders other aspects of the fire alarm system are tested within the zone, this includes the fire door activations, and fire panels.

Currently the Trust is testing one zone per week, following a review that has been carried out there is a proposal to move to testing five zones per week , this will enable every zone on the site to be tested on an annual basis.

There is a planned preventative maintenance schedule in place to ensure that all the systems connected to the evacuation strategy are in good working order and are fit for purpose when required.

The schedule covers all systems incorporating the fire alarm panels, risers, hydrants, fire doors extinguishers and dampers etc. Inspections are carried out on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually.

An audit is being undertaken to gain assurance that the testing being carried out within the PPM schedule is in line with the requirements of British Standard (BS) 5839 as noted within Hospital Technical Memorandum (HTM) Fire Code Series.

A full site review was carried out in 2016 to ensure that the fire compartmentation within the Hospital buildings was up to the required standard, of which the Trust has received confirmation.

To maintain assurance that the compartmentation remains at the correct standard, an annual review is undertaken by the PFI Partners as part of the planned preventative maintenance schedule.

In addition to the structural elements of fire safety the Trust undertakes regular fire risk assessments for all areas in which staff and patients occupy. The findings of these assessments are raised directly with the Local Ward or Department Manager for action. The assessments are reviewed on an annual and biennial basis, dependant on work environment.

All Trust and PFI Partners staff are trained in fire safety procedures on an annual basis as part of Mandatory Training. Additional training is given to the groups of staff that have a specific role in an evacuation.

The process in Hospitals for evacuation is classed as progressive horizontal evacuation; this is so as to enable continuous care to the patients whilst moving them from one compartment to another horizontally across the Hospital away from the fire.

The Trust do not carry out regular evacuation drills in areas where patients are receiving care so as not to disturb the care being given, however there are areas of the Trust in which evacuation drills can be held with little to no impact on the operation of the Hospital.

The Trust are currently putting together a schedule of evacuation drills that can be carried out on a regular basis, this will include ward scenarios for clinical staff, to ensure the information and training that is provided is sufficiently understood and retained by staff.