

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This is the latest set of FAQs as of Friday 6th December. It includes updates provided at the meeting which took place on Wednesday 4^h December 2019 for Richmond House residents.

Intrusive surveys

What's the latest on the intrusive surveys being carried out?

The independent surveyors appointed by our solicitors have completed the planned programme of intrusive survey work on the properties we own at the Hamptons. On Wednesday 27th November, we delivered a letter to all of our residents on The Hamptons, alongside surveyors' reports for each building type. This report contains the results of that in-depth survey and the remedial work that is now required.

It is anticipated that St James, as the original developer, will lead these remedial works, and MVTH will ensure it is overseen by appropriate independent experts to check that works are carried out correctly and safely. All proposed remediation solutions will also be subject to comment and approval where required from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the London Borough of Sutton's Building Control.

Will London Fire Brigade be looking at the results of the surveys?

The LFB has been present at discussions with the remedial teams for both MTVH and St James, and have reviewed the survey works findings of both sets of experts. They have issued Enforcement Notices setting out the remedial works required to the MTVH Properties. The works required will all be covered within the remedial solution. In particular, the LFB have provided that:

1. Defects to the compartmentation within flats must be rectified.
2. Consideration is to be given to identification and removal of fire hazards, and measures to mitigate the spread of fire and smoke including measures that should be in place in the structure, cavities and voids.
3. Fire Risk Assessments must be informed by a full structural survey of the adequacy of the fire precautions that would be expected to be in place in consequence of the functional requirements of the Building Regulations applicable at the time of construction, as set out in Approved Document B.

The LFB has confirmed that MTVH have until 30 April 2021 to comply with the Enforcement Notices. The remedial works programme will be designed around this date, however we will aim to complete the works as soon as possible and in a way that causes the minimum disruption to residents that is necessary.

What was the scope of the surveys?

The surveys allow us to fully consider the fabric of the building and the underlying construction details. They enable us to understand if there are any issues that can't be seen from a basic visual inspection. The outcome of these surveys will identify and prioritise any work that may need to be carried out.

Once outcomes are shared with residents, how disruptive could remediation work be?

Our aim is to complete the works that are necessary quickly, with as little disruption as possible. It is anticipated that St James, as the original developer, will lead remedial works, and MVTH will ensure it is overseen by appropriate independent experts to check that works are carried out correctly and safely. All proposed remediation solutions will also be subject to comment and approval where required from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the London Borough of Sutton's Building Control.

Fire safety measures

What's the latest on the new fire alarm system being installed?

We are working with The Hamptons' original developer St James to install new communal fire alarm systems across the entire estate. The design and specification of these systems have been agreed with London Fire Brigade (LFB). They will include heat and smoke detectors within flats and common areas which will be linked to new central fire alarm panels in the common stairwells of blocks. This work will be signed off by LFB and will enable the Waking Watch to be reduced.

We began our programme of installation work on Monday, 21st October and this has continued since then. We have written to households where access will be required, and our appointed contractor, Allied Protection Limited (APL), will directly contact residents in advance to make the necessary arrangements.

If this work has not yet been completed in your home, please urgently contact Charlotte Rooney (charlotte.rooney@lightside.co.uk, 0207 607 5640) for residents of houses, or Jeanette Devlin (jeanette.devlin@alliedprotection.co.uk, 07823 320 123) for residents of flats.

What other reassurance can you provide to residents in neighbouring blocks not affected directly by the fire, who are concerned about their safety in the event of a fire?

MTVH has been continually liaising with the LFB since the fire. While these investigations have been taking place, and in coordination with the LFB, a 24-hour Waking Watch has been put in place at the properties we manage, as a safety precaution. New communal fire alarm systems are being installed across the entire estate, and the design and specification of these systems have been agreed with the LFB. On the advice of LFB, we have changed the evacuation policy for the blocks from a "Stay Put" policy to a "Simultaneous Evacuation", this now means that all buildings are evacuated in the event of a fire. St James has taken the same action for the buildings that it owns on the site.

LFB has stated that they are satisfied with this arrangement and that the remedial works must be completed by 30 April 2021.

What is the latest on the inspection of fire doors?

We wrote to residents living in blocks of flats this week to advise that we have started a programme of fire door inspections in their buildings. This is part of the wider fire safety work we are carrying out at The Hamptons.

Richmond House

What's the latest on Richmond House?

A demolition contractor has now been appointed for Richmond House. We will be working with residents over the coming weeks to ensure that as many of their retrievable possessions as possible

are recovered. The demolition of Richmond House is due to take place in the New Year after the retrieval of possessions has been completed.

Crayton House

What's the latest on Crayton House?

The majority of Crayton House residents have now returned to their homes with the support of our housing team. Working with the London Fire Brigade, we've carried out a range of work at Crayton House in advance of the residents returning to their homes:

- A new communal fire alarm system has been installed at the block
- We've replaced entrance doors to flats
- We've completed electrical inspections at each property and ensured that gas safety inspections are fully up to date for every home at Crayton House
- Fire risk assessments have been completed at the building
- The Waking Watch remains in place, alongside additional security at the Richmond House site

We continue to work with residents who don't want to return on alternative options.

Ongoing communication

What support is being provided to the residents who are directly affected by the fire?

Richmond House and Crayton House residents are being supported by the MTVH housing team through designated caseworkers. Additionally, there is a dedicated phone number (0203 846 0123), which residents can call from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Residents can also send email enquiries to Richmond.house@mtvh.co.uk or Crayton.house@mtvh.co.uk.

What are the opening times of the Residents Support Centre?

Our Resident Support Centre has moved from Maple Lodge to the cabins at the top of the hill near Richmond House. We will continue to maintain a consistent presence onsite at The Hamptons. Our telephone contact details, and office hours will remain the same: 10am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Beyond visiting or calling our temporary office directly, how do residents speak to someone at Metropolitan Thames Valley?

For more general enquiries residents can contact us on 0300 456 2929 between 8.30 and 5.30 Monday to Friday or email the dedicated team inbox thehamptons.residents@mtvh.co.uk. Our switchboard also has a number for out of hours emergencies.

Emotional and mental health support

If residents are feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious, and would like access to mental health support from the NHS, we encourage them to speak to a member of the MTVH team for a priority referral to Sutton Uplift – a health and wellbeing service available to borough residents. They can also contact the service directly on 0800 032 1411 or find out more about what support is available at www.suttonuplift.co.uk. Following priority referrals made by the MTVH team, Sutton Uplift will aim to arrange an assessment within a week.

If residents are worried about the effect of the fire on their children, we encourage them to speak to their school in the first instance for support. Every school has an appointed 'SENDCo' member of staff, who can talk to parents about any additional support available and can call on the expertise of the Educational Psychology Service if needed. Any residents who need support in approaching their child's school can ask a member of the MTVH team for help.

We'd like to extend our thanks to the Red Cross for their support so far. As a voluntary emergency response service, the Red Cross has informed us that they will no longer be able to attend resident meetings at The Hamptons.