

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Remedial work

Will residents have to pay for the remediation work?

We do not intend to pass on to leaseholders the cost to remediate construction defects at our properties at The Hamptons.

What progress has been made with the remediation works?

The external works to Crayton House and Shefford House are close to being completed. It is simply the benchmarking of the repointing of the brickwork on Crayton House and the fire remediation works to the ground floor of Shefford that are outstanding.

External works to Weare and Canton House are progressing well. We have been working on the upper floors to removing the Hardie Plank and fixing a new, fully fire stopped metal system to fix the Hardie Plank back to the external wall. Work has also been done to install fire barriers around all openings, such as windows. The erection of the scaffold to Drummond Court is advancing, which will allow us to undertake the necessary external work to the upper floors.

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 the intention that St James, as the original developer, will lead the remedial works, and MTVH will ensure it is overseen by appropriate independent experts to check that works are carried out correctly and safely. MTVH has a dedicated project team at The Hamptons which provides oversight and keeps MTVH residents informed of the latest activity in each block. All proposed remediation solutions will also be subject to comment and approval where required from the London Borough of Sutton's Building Control and a qualified fire engineer.

Due to the nature of the work, a significant number of residents will have to move out of their homes temporarily whilst works are undertaken. We are, therefore, requesting that residents agree to a temporary re-housing proposal, for the duration of the works to the block. MTVH will be providing temporary accommodation to residents within the local area and full details and support for the move will be provided by your dedicated Resident Liaison Officers (RLO) well ahead of time.

Why has it taken so long for the works to start?

Due to the complex nature of the works required, it has taken longer than envisaged to produce the appropriate detailed plans. We ensured that a comprehensive set of agreed architectural details were in place prior to commencing the external works for Canton House, Crayton House, Drummond Court, Shefford House, Weare House. We have agreed details now for 15 and 17 Lancaster Way as these are a different wall construction and house numbers 81-91 Sherbrooke Way (odd). All technical details for the remediation works, based on known conditions are now approved. Obviously, should we encounter any conditions which are new / specific to certain property types, then details for the rectification will need to be agreed.

We have had to ensure a full legal agreement is in place with St James for them to access properties and undertake the works. The legal agreement includes agreed inspection regimes, the proposed scope of

works, architectural details and product specifications. We expect internal works to the first phase of properties to begin imminently once the licence has been signed.

How long will the external works take?

The amount of time to complete the external works will vary building to building due to the build type. We anticipate that at each block external works will take around 3 to 4 months. To find the latest information on the works taking place at your building, visit the Remedial Work page on the dedicated web portal for MTVH residents.

Why have the external works not started at my building?

For the flats and houses on the rest of the estate, outside of Canton House, Crayton House, Drummond Court, Shefford House, Weare House and 15 and 17 Lancaster Way, we have now finalised remedial plans for your building. The construction works will be undertaken in a phased manner and MTVH has already been in touch indicating which tranche of works your property is likely to be included in.

Residents who will have to move out of their homes while work takes place have been able to take part in video meetings with members of the project team, in which we shared a high-level timeframe for when these works will take place.

If we have not yet been in contact, we are unable to say exactly when this work will start, but we will be in touch at least two months in advance of the works beginning. We would like to thank residents for their patience at this time.

What precautions are being taken to deal with Covid-19 infection risks?

The government has been very clear in issuing guidance that construction works can still continue as long as social distancing guidelines are adhered to. The industry has worked to develop Site Operating Procedures (SOP), which were published by the Construction Leadership Council. These align with the latest guidance from Public Health England. These guidelines now allow St James to work within occupied apartments under strict control measures, including distancing, detection and PPE. As this health guidance updates, the SOP will reflect any changes.

What measures will be put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 with people working inside my property?

We will be adhering to the 3rd party guidance as detailed above and in addition, there will be daily checking of operatives to ensure people do not bring Covid-19 to the workplace. St James will be limiting the number of operatives working within apartments and providing extensive washing facilities in the site cabins and on site. St James will have strict control of social distancing including staggered start, break and finish times. St James intends to complete a full anti-bacterial clean at the end of works to each property.

When will the communal works be taking place?

The timing of the communal works is likely to coincide with the internal works undertaken within the apartments. MTVH and St James are working closely together and with the expert team to agree the scope of the works and a set of details that will address the defects highlighted within the surveys.

How do residents keep up to date with remedial works?

Now that works are underway, we will be communicating with all residents regularly and providing information about the schedule of works on a block by block basis. To do this, we have built a web portal and each resident has their own log-in area with all information and updates relevant to their property, and we will also provide hard copies for those who aren't online. If you can't find your registration code please email TheHamptons.Residents@mtvh.co.uk or call 03330 151619.

Will the work to my home affect the décor?

Yes, it will affect the décor. The ceilings are being taken down, skirting boards and architraves will be removed, and plasterboard may have to be replaced. These won't be seen but obviously the decoration will be damaged during this process. We will return the décor to you as near as is reasonably possible to how you gave it to us, understanding that some items or products may not be possible to replace like for like. Where this happens, our contractor will liaise with you on reasonable alternatives.

Will this affect me if I am considering selling my home?

If you are considering selling your home during this period, please get in touch with MTVH directly to discuss the matter in further detail.

Fire safety measures at The Hamptons

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

We have worked with The Hamptons' original developer St James to install new communal fire alarm systems across the entire estate. We have now commissioned these systems in all of our blocks across The Hamptons.

The design and specification of these systems have been agreed with London Fire Brigade (LFB). They include heat and smoke detectors within flats and common areas which are linked to new central fire alarm panels in the common stairwells of blocks. This work has been signed off by LFB and has enabled the Waking Watch to be significantly reduced.

Can the temporary fire alarms be made permanent? If not, why?

The installation of new fire alarms across the estate is a temporary measure being put in place for the duration of remedial works and has enabled the presence of the Waking Watch to be wound down. Once this programme of work is complete, these fire alarms will no longer be required as a precautionary measure and will be removed. The LFB have been present at discussions with the MTVH remedial team and have stated they are satisfied with this approach. We will ensure that all remedial works are complete before removing the alarms.

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 have been 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 properties within a building are evacuated in the event of a fire. St James has taken the same action for the buildings that it owns on the site.

General FAQs

What is the London Fire Brigade's role?

The LFB have 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 initially said that MTVH have until 30 April 2021 to comply with the Enforcement Notices. However, due to delays arising from Covid-19 we applied to the LFB for an extension to the Enforcement Notices beyond the original deadline. The LFB has now approved these extensions and the new deadlines were communicated with residents in early 2021. We are now working hard to complete the required work to those new timescales.

Our Resident Liaison Officers are now working with those residents with the shortest extensions, with work on their homes expected to start in the spring. If you have any questions about your individual circumstances, please call **03330 151619** or email TheHamptons.Residents@mtvh.co.uk.

What's the latest on Richmond House?

On the 2nd September 2020 Sutton Council's Planning Committee granted planning permission for a like for like rebuild of Richmond House. MTVH will now continue to work with the dedicated Rebuild Steering Group, which includes residents of Richmond House, during the detailed design phase to ensure that their views are heard and incorporated into the rebuild. MTVH will oversee its construction and will ensure that it includes all the necessary fire safety measures.

What is the latest on the police investigation into the cause of the fire?

Sutton Police identified an individual in CCTV footage recovered from Richmond House, showing them near the building before the fire. Following this development, the Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade put out a joint press release on the 22nd of June 2020 to try to identify this person and have appealed for witnesses.

The press release has been made available on their Twitter channel - @MPSSutton. If you have any information that may be used to identify this person, please call 101 or CrimeStoppers if you wish to remain anonymous and quote Crime Reference 4010869/19.

Is there anywhere quiet I can access should the works be too loud?

Yes, we have two respite units on The Hamptons that can be booked for a two hour period at a time, however, if residents require them for longer this can be accommodated.

The units are equipped with cooking facilities, such as a cooker, microwave and fridge, living room furniture, a television and WiFi.

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 diverts directly to the dedicated Worcester Park Housing Team, 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?

Due to the situation regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), our Resident Support Centre will be temporarily closed. We ask residents to please use the contact details provided in the first instance, should you experience any issues.

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.

The residents web portal can also be used to contact a member of the MTVH team, if you can't find your registration code please call us on **03330 151619**.

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 their GP 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.

In addition, MTVH's Community Investment team, Empowering Futures, will be introducing themselves to Hamptons residents over the coming months. Their role is to listen to the needs of residents, and this will include Resident Connectors providing personal support to residents.