

REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO: Yvonne Castle, Chief Executive Officer, Johnnie Johnson Housing, Astra House, Spinners Lane, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1GA.

CORONER

I am Chris Morris, Area Coroner for Manchester South.

CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS

I make this report under paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/25/schedule/5/paragraph/7>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1629/part/7/made>

INVESTIGATION and INQUEST

On 20th February 2019, an inquest was opened into the death of Christopher Carlton Hart who died on 11th February 2019 at Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport aged 33 years. The investigation concluded with an inquest which I heard on 1st August 2019 and which concluded with a conclusion of Accident.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH

Mr Hart had been a tenant of Johnnie Johnson housing since around 2016. On 13th January 2019, emergency services were called to reports of a fire at his rented flat in Shawcross Fold, Stockport.

Mr Hart was found collapsed in the flat by firefighters who extracted him from the building and administered cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. He was taken to Stepping Hill Hospital in Stockport where, despite intensive care and treatment, he died. A senior doctor at the hospital confirmed Mr Hart died as a consequence of complications of injuries sustained in the fire.

An investigation undertaken by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service concluded that the likely cause of the fire within Mr Hart's flat was a discarded cigarette igniting some bedding which had been placed on a sofa at the property.

CORONER'S CONCERNS

During the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances it is my statutory duty to report to you.

The **MATTERS OF CONCERN** are as follows. –

- 1) The court heard evidence that toxic fumes from furniture such as sofas which do not conform to relevant fire safety standards can quickly incapacitate someone who breathes them in. It is a matter of concern that Johnnie Johnson Housing imposes no conditions on its tenants as to the conformity of items of furniture with relevant fire safety standards;
- 2) The court also heard evidence that, had a sprinkler system been installed within the flat, the chances of Mr Hart surviving the fire would have been significantly increased. It is a matter of concern that, notwithstanding Mr Hart's death, Johnnie Johnson Housing is apparently yet to undertake any formal review as to the introduction of sprinklers into all or a proportion of its properties.

ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN

In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe you and your organisation have the power to take such action.

YOUR RESPONSE

You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by **9th October 2019**. I, the coroner, may extend the period.

Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.

COPIES and PUBLICATION

I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to Mr Paul Hart on behalf of Mr Hart's family.

I have also sent a copy to Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, and Louise Atkinson of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, who may find it useful or of interest.

I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.

The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.

Dated: 14th August 2019.

Signature: Chris Morris HM Area Coroner, Manchester South.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Morris', is written over the signature line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and 'M'.