

Inquest touching the death of Lorraine Karat

Response by Clarion Housing Group to the PFD report issued by HM Senior Coroner M.E.Hassell dated 29.10.2021

The Coroner's concerns:

- 1. No evidence provided at the inquest of a risk assessment having been undertaken on Ms Karat's flat, most especially including the window that opened over a metre high onto the balcony, thereby rendering the balcony accessible from within the flat.**

Response:

Where CHG become aware of specific risks arising in relation to its tenants then risk assessments of flats will be carried out following CHG's internal safeguarding process which may involve other stakeholders. If concerns are identified by or brought to the attention of CHG then appropriate steps would be taken on a risk-based approach basis.

- 2. The building manager did not know of unauthorised use of the balcony and did not enter the flat to check, nor was there evidence that Ms Karat had actually been told that use of the balcony was not authorised, still less been asked about this during her tenancy.**

Response:

Where Ms Karat lived the flats are the tenants' private property. There is no right for CHG to enter a flat on a random basis to check if tenants might be accessing a balcony and absent specific information reaching CHG there would be no reason to ask a tenant if they were accessing a flat roof.

To try and avoid the possibility of a similar situation arising at any other facility CHG are running a process to inform tenants that where there are flat roofs to which access might be possible this is neither authorised nor a safe activity.

CHG have developed the attached "*Flat roof Safety Plan*" which sets out the items in hand which seek to address the Coroner's concerns. This is a living document and will be reviewed and updated as information is received.

The attached "*Dangers of Flat Roofs – Guidance for our residents*" document which is now available in the tenants' customer facing website area –

<https://www.myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance/home-safety> and is to be

displayed in common parts in facilities where relevant flat roofs exist as well as tenants being provided this information.

This information will be conveyed to new tenants in relevant buildings as part of the tenancy agreement sign up procedure.

To ensure that staff are aware of the risks arising from unauthorised flat roof access CHG are issuing guidance to staff as shown in the attached "*Dangers of flat roofs - Guidance for staff*".

This document instructs staff across the CHG sites to identify any flat roofs where unauthorised access might occur and to engage with the CHG safety team to assess what steps need to be taken to prevent access being gained to the flat roof.

3. The balcony was not contained by a railing or other structure to make it safe to use.

Response:

CHG did not intend the flat roof to be accessed and used by anyone and were unaware that Ms Karat was accessing it. If it had been the intention of CHG that the tenant was allowed to access the flat roof, then appropriate measures would have been taken to provide railings in compliance with Building Regulations.

The two flats at the facility where Ms Karat was living are no longer occupied and will not now be used as the facility is in the process of being wound down for eventual closure.

4. There was no sign near the window warning the occupant not to go out onto the balcony and, most importantly, there were no bars on the window or window restrictors to prevent access to the balcony.

Response:

As noted in the action plan additional controls are now being deployed where flat roofs have been identified as posing a significant risk of access from a tenanted property.

Additional measures such as window locks and restrictors can be installed where a risk of unauthorised access to a flat roof has been identified and a risk assessment indicates that for a particular tenant that measure should be deployed.

5. I do not know whether this situation is replicated in other Clarion properties.

Response:

As noted in the Flat Roof action plan CHG are ensuring, by way of engaging Housing Teams and other key operational teams, that flat roofs with potential unauthorised access are identified and relevant action taken.