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Date: 06 September 2023

Dear Mr Longstaff

Inquest into the death of Paul Keating

Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

Thank you for your report dated 25 July 2023 in respect of concerns arising out of the inquest into the sad death of Mr Keating on 15 April 2023. I write to respond to that report on behalf of the Council.

I would firstly wish to say that I was very sad to hear of the fact and circumstances of Mr Keating's death and would wish to pass on my condolences to his family and all those affected by these events.

As your report recognises, since 2017 Leeds City Council has adopted a proactive approach to improving fire safety within its tower blocks, following the Grenfell tragedy. This included installing sprinkler systems in those tower blocks. These sprinklers are intended to cover not only the common parts of the buildings, which fall within the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021), but also individual flats within the blocks, which are outside the scope of the 2005 order.

Regrettably despite the Council's extensive efforts to obtain access for the installation of sprinklers into Mr Keating's flat, no such access was given, as your report outlines.

Because the works to install sprinklers would be deemed to be improvement works rather than repair or emergency works, and because sprinklers are not currently a legal requirement inside individual flats, the Council did not have legal powers to gain entry against Mr Keating's wishes to carry out these works. This is the main area of concern raised in your report.

The granting of additional legal powers to landlords, in order to permit them to carry out safety works without the tenant's consent, is a matter over which the Council has no control but falls to be considered by central government, and I note that the report was also addressed to the Home Office. I would however like to endorse your concerns as expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Matters of Concern.

A copy of this response will be provided to the Home Officer for their information.

I would like to thank you again for your report raising these concerns.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Officer - Housing