

Frequently Asked Questions

Circa 580 homes across the borough of Barnet which were built between the 1930s and 1960s with a timber framed facade have been found to be at increased risk of a serious fire spreading quickly. Exterior cladding on these two-storey homes will need to be replaced.

How did Barnet Council become aware of issues with the cladding on these homes?

Following a house fire in summer 2023, which spread fast to neighbouring homes in the terrace, Barnet Council undertook inspections of a sample of similar properties.

Why do these works need to take place?

Following the house fire, Barnet Council undertook inspections of a sample of similar properties. These properties were found to be at high risk of damage should a fire break out and with the chance of a fire spreading quickly to adjoining properties. To ensure the safety of residents living in the properties and neighbouring homes, works are required.

How many properties are affected?

Approximately 580 homes in the borough of Barnet - a combination of council owned properties and properties owned by Housing Associations and private homeowners.

Where are the properties?

The properties are across the borough of Barnet, with the majority in Burnt Oak.

When were the homes built?

The homes were built between the 1930s and 1960s.

When was the cladding installed to the homes?

Barnet Council is not aware of the exact date that the cladding was installed, but believe it was during the late 1980s.

Is it the same as the cladding material used at Grenfell?

No, it is not the same as the cladding material at Grenfell.

What construction methods were used to build the homes?

There are four different types of construction that all vary; however, they are all constructed using a solid masonry separating wall between houses. This is then supplemented with a front and rear elevation in timber with a cladding material affixed. This facade generally spans the terrace.

Why do private homeowners have to make changes to their properties?

Modern construction and regulations ensure that different dwellings are separated from each other with fire resistant materials to reduce the likelihood of fire spread. Fire can spread rapidly when fire separation is inadequate.

These essential fire safety works will ensure residents are safer in the event of fire. These homes were built in terraces, so works must take place to the entire terrace of homes to ensure adequate fire separation between properties, which includes both private homes and homes owned by Barnet Council.

Where properties are found to contain such a high risk from fire Barnet Council has a mandatory duty under the Housing Act 2004 to ensure that work is completed to make the property safe.

Is there any chance I will not need to undertake these works if my home is between two council-owned properties?

There is a possibility that some properties may not require completion of these works depending on their condition and location. This can be clarified following an inspection by the Council. To discuss this further please contact TimberFrameHomes@barnet.gov.uk or telephone 0208359 5348.

Is my building and contents insurance affected by this?

You are strongly advised to contact your insurance provider for advice.

Are these works covered by my building insurance?

You are advised to contact your building insurance provider to check.

Is my mortgage affected by this?

You are advised to contact your lender to check. Their consent may be needed.

How much is the work likely to cost?

Current estimates for the remediation work indicate it could cost up to £23,000 per property dependent upon surveys.

How do I organise completing the required works?

You can either:

Use your own contractor.

If you would like to appoint your own contractor, the work will need to be signed off and approved by Barnet Council. The works will need to be carried out to an approved specification and you will need to obtain the relevant Planning and Building Control permissions. The approved specification will shortly be listed on our website <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/fire-safety-timber-framed-homes>

Employ Barnet Council to organise the work.

Barnet Council has developed a package of works which will be managed by Barnet Homes to ensure your home meets the current standards, this includes:

- Property Survey
- Obtaining Planning Permission, Building Regulation and Party Wall approval
- Completion of remediation works – including cladding replacement.
- Option for a loan and repayment plan to help manage payment for the work subject to eligibility criteria.

This work would take approximately three weeks to complete.

The exact work and costings will be determined once surveys have been completed.

Please contact us for more details if you wish to take this option.

Email – TimberFrameHomes@barnet.gov.uk

Caring for people, our places and the planet

Telephone – 0208 359 5348.

What are the advantages of accepting the council contractor versus procuring my own contractor?

- **Specialist Contractor** - The works are specialist fire safety works and should only be carried out by a competent contractor. Works carried out by Barnet Homes on behalf of the council will be executed by an approved contractor that has been through a robust procurement exercise to ensure value for money and quality assurance.
- **Guarantee** - The contract with Barnet Council will provide a 12-year warranty, which will protect you in the event that there are latent defects in that period. The works will be supervised by chartered surveyors.
- **Statutory Approvals** - Works carried out by Barnet Homes on behalf of Barnet Council will include statutory approvals such as planning permission and building regulations approval. Any party wall works will also be included where necessary. Works organised by the homeowner will require a separate planning application and submission of building regulations approval. The homeowner will also need to employ an architect, surveyor and potentially a party wall surveyor to do this.
- **Efficiency and Cost** - If one contractor is used to complete the work to a complete terrace this will make work organisation more straightforward and may lead to a reduction in cost.

When will further information be available about the loan and repayment scheme?

Please contact us to register your interest in the loan and repayment scheme
email – TimberFrameHomes@barnet.gov.uk

Telephone –0208 359 5348.

This does not mean you have to commit to the loan and repayment scheme. Barnet Council will then contact you directly with all the relevant information.

I want to organise the works to be completed independently, can I still apply for the repayment scheme?

Unfortunately, Barnet Council will not be able to provide you with a repayment scheme in this case. You can approach independent loan companies or your mortgage provider.

Do private owners have to accept Barnet Council carrying out the works?

Homeowners must ensure that the works are carried out to reduce the risk in the event of a fire. This can be carried out by a private contractor; however, they must be vetted for competence and adhere to a specification of works that has been approved by Barnet Council Building Control. In addition, as the works are generally one facade, an element of the works would need to be a collaboration of different builders, which can prove difficult and more expensive.

If private homeowners do not allow changes to be made, what will happen?

If the works are not completed, then regrettably, Barnet Council will need to take the appropriate enforcement action to ensure that homes are made safe.

Is there any support to help pay for these works?

If a homeowner chooses for Barnet Homes to carry out the works, then a loan and repayment plan will be offered to eligible applicants.

The following organisations may also be able to help with money advice:

- [BOOST](https://boostbarnet.org/?page_id=261), Barnet's employment, training and benefits support service can also provide additional assistance and advice to affected residents. https://boostbarnet.org/?page_id=261
- or by calling 0208 359 2442
- Money advice is available from [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/) <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>

Are there any government schemes which can be used to cover the cost of the works?

Unfortunately government payments are only available for high and medium-rise buildings. Residents in these two-storey homes are not eligible for government assistance. More information can be found [here](#) or [Building Safety Fund guidance for new applications 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/building-safety-fund-guidance-for-new-applications-2022)

Will there be any disruption to residents while works take place?

If undertaken by Barnet Homes, most works will be to the exterior of properties, and access required to residents' homes will be minimal. Scaffolding will be erected around residents' homes so works can take place.

How long will the works take?

If undertaken by Barnet Homes, they will take approximately three weeks to complete once contractors are on site. Barnet Homes will contact you to arrange a specific date for works to begin.

I am selling/thinking of selling my property, what do I need to do?

If you are selling the property now or in the future, you will have an obligation to forward this information onto your solicitors and or buyers.

We may be able to buy your home, subject to certain criteria. If you are interested in exploring this option, please contact the Acquisitions Team at Barnet Homes on 020 8359 4724, or email Acquisitions@Barnethomes.org for further information.

Are there any other issues with the properties?

Some private homeowners have removed chimney breasts from their homes. In some cases, this will have caused structural instabilities to homes, which will need to be made safe.

How will residents be kept informed during the process?

Barnet Homes and Barnet Council will work closely with residents to ensure that works can take place as smoothly as possible. Residents will be kept informed through written and digital communication, and Barnet Council will host in-person sessions to discuss any questions or concerns residents may have. If you choose for Barnet Homes to complete the works, they will have a dedicated project manager who will be the first point of contact for residents.

Should I seek independent advice on this topic?

Barnet Council advise you to seek independent legal advice.

My smoke detector isn't working, what do I do?

We can provide smoke detectors affected residents. Please email TimberFrameHomes@barnet.gov.uk or telephone 0208 359 5348.

Who do I contact at Barnet Council?

We have a dedicated team who are available Monday to Friday during 9am to 5pm. They can be contacted by email or phone.

Email – TimberFrameHomes@barnet.gov.uk

Telephone – 0208 359 5348

Website - <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/fire-safety-timber-framed-homes>