



Staying safe in the Ledbury Estate tower blocks

The Ledbury Estate tower blocks have a long and complex history. It is important that you, as a new tenant, are aware of the relevance of this, because it will help you to take steps to ensure the safety of your family and your neighbours whilst living in these blocks.

In 2017, investigations into the four Large Panel System tower blocks on the Ledbury Estate (Bromyard, Peterchurch, Sarnsfield and Skenfrith Houses) revealed some structural and fire safety deficiencies. Southwark Council decided to move the former tenants out of the blocks in order to investigate further. A decision was due to be made in 2020 on whether to strengthen and refurbish these blocks, or to demolish them and rebuild new homes.

Coronavirus has meant that those plans have had to be halted, and the blocks brought back into use as emergency temporary accommodation. Southwark Council have taken some steps to make the blocks safer by:

- Sealing gaps and cracks in walls to improve fire compartmentation between flats
- Employing 24-hour fire wardens for each block
- Installing a new integrated fire alarm system
- Removing the gas supply and installing a new electric heating and hot water system
- Setting up a dedicated staff office on site

It is vitally important that tenants also play their part in reducing the risks. You can do this by:

- **Familiarising yourself with the fire safety advice for your block.** If there is a fire, or if you hear the communal fire alarm going off - everyone in your household must leave the building immediately. Do not stop to gather personal belongings. Do not use the lifts. Make your way down the stairwell and exit the building and stay out until instructed by the fire brigade that it's safe to return. This is because the risk of internal fire spread is higher in this form of construction.
- **Ensuring you do not bring bottled gas into the building, under any circumstances.** This includes Calor gas canisters for cooking, and oxygen cylinders. This is because the blocks would not be able to withstand the force of a gas explosion. If you are told that you need to use oxygen at home, you must speak to Southwark Council straight away.

If you have any concerns, please get in touch with Southwark Council.

For more general information on Large Panel System tower blocks, please visit [TowerBlocksUK.com](https://www.towerblocksuk.com). Tower Blocks UK is a resource hub for those living in, or concerned about, tower blocks and their safety.