

Clare House Frequently Asked Questions:

Updated 22 October 2021

Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى تنسيقات بديلة أو نسخ مترجمة من هذا الكتيب، فيرجى الاتصال بنا على الرقم 0300 500 8000

Hindi

यदि आपको इस पुस्तिका के वैकल्पिक प्रारूपों या अनुवादित संस्करणों की ज़रूरत है, तो कृपया हमसे 0300 500 8000 पर संपर्क करें

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس کتابچہ کے متبادل فارمیٹس یا ترجمہ شدہ ورژنز درکار ہوں تو براہ کرم 0300 500 8000 پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں

Simplified Chinese

如果您需要本手册的其他格式或翻译版本，请致电 0300 500 8000 与我们联系

Bengali

আপনার যদি এই পুস্তিকাটির বৈকল্পিক কোনো ফরম্যাট বা অনুবাদিত সংস্করণের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে 0300 500 8000 নম্বরে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

This booklet contains frequently asked questions about the Clare House project. Many of these questions have been raised by residents both at the resident meetings and in person during the moving process.

Contact details:

Clare House email address: **ClareHouse@clarionhg.com**. We will aim to respond to your email within 24 hours.

There are four phone numbers you can use to contact us about Clare House. Each number will be answered by a member of staff from the project team:

- Housing / Regeneration queries **07842 320110**
- Housing / Regeneration queries **07842320101**
- Accommodation queries **07824 320096**
- Accommodation queries **07842 201102**

You can also still use the phone line dedicated to the project which is: **0300 456 0616**.

Contact number opening times:

Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 8pm

Sat and Sunday: 9am - 5pm

If you need to contact us outside of these times please call **0300 500 8000** and your call will be directed to our Out of Hours service.

If these opening times change we will let residents know.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why am I having to move?

We have undertaken a series of inspections at Clare House as part of our national building safety programme that have concluded significant remedial work is required to bring the building up to the latest required government standards for Large Panel System (LPS) buildings. We have also been undertaking investigations to the external wall system and discovered the external wall insulation does not meet the government advice for combustibility.

When the combined risks of both the LPS structure and the external wall insulation have been considered by our experts, they have advised us all the occupants should be relocated to alternative accommodation as soon as possible and without delay. We have acted in line with this advice.

2. If it is urgent, why didn't Clarion move us out straightaway?

We are moving people out as quickly as we can and to reduce the risks to as low a level as reasonably practicable. We have prioritised those households on the highest floors first, along with those households who are most vulnerable.

As of 20th October 112 households have left the building from a possible 120. Discussions are ongoing with the remaining 8 households.

3. If Clarion has known there are issues, why are they only acting now?

In October 2020 we started installing some interim fire safety measures including the waking watch, and communicated this to residents as soon as the issues were discovered. We have only very recently (September) completed the review of our structural investigations and have now had the advice to act immediately.

4. I have lived here for a long time, why has it suddenly become unsafe to stay?

A number of the safety measures should have been completed shortly after the building was built. There have been opportunities over the years to fix this again. It is only our extensive and thorough investigations that have brought to light the underlying weaknesses in the structure, combined with the fire risks from the external wall insulation. The risks to the building have been there since the building was constructed and the External Wall Insulation was installed.

5. How often are you in touch with the London Fire Brigade?

We are liaising with London Fire Brigade Borough Commander regularly. We are discussing technical information and risks, the progress on emptying Clare House and the way the building is being managed now. They continue to monitor the situation carefully. The Waking Watch team in Clare House itself are also in contact with the London Fire Brigade.

6. Why didn't Clarion share any of the findings from earlier surveys with residents?

Information has been shared previously. The fire safety works were discussed at a residents meeting in March 2021 as well as updates in a number of letters. It has been a lengthy process and the structural investigations were only completed in September, when we received the advice to empty the building as quickly as possible.

7. What is EWI and what sort of system does Clare House have installed?

EWI stands for External Wall Insulation. This is a form of insulation that is fitted to Clare House with the aim of keeping the flats warmer.

8. The building was non-compliant with advice / regulations issued in 1968 and subsequently reissued in 1985 and 2012. Please can you confirm what the actual name of this advice/regulation is?

The initial advice from 1968 was a circular from the Ministry of Housing called circular 62/68. The subsequent advice was issued through reports from the Building Research Establishment. The advice from 2012 is called, 'Handbook for the structural assessment of large panel system (LPS) dwelling blocks for accidental loading'

9. Will you be sharing your findings with government and the wider public to contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding safety in social housing?

We will be sharing our experience with the rest of the housing sector and are already in contact with a number of other housing associations and the government to do this.

10. When will you make a decision about demolishing or rebuilding? Can residents be included in all conversations about the future of the building?

It will be a number of months before a decision is made about the future of Clare House. In these past few weeks we have concentrated on ensuring the safety of residents and the building. There is a lot of work involved in understanding what options there might be for the future of the building, including what can actually physically be done to bring the building up to a modern standard. This work is now underway, with initial findings expected back in November.

Once we have an initial picture we will be contacting you to explore options and engage with residents and Tower Hamlets Council. A Clare House residents group is currently being set up, which will help with this process.

Resident engagement is a core element in any Clarion refurbishment or regeneration project. You can find out more about this here: <https://www.myclarionhousing.com/my-community/regeneration-projects>

11. My contents insurance might be invalidated once I move out, how will Clarion cover any damage?

We are aware that by moving out of your home at Clare House there may be implications for your home contents insurance. We are taking appropriate measures to protect the

belongings of everyone who lives in Clare House, including carrying out a photographic inventory with you before you leave. We are not changing your locks and will be leaving the keys to your flat with you. Please see also Question 18 below. There will continue to be 24/7 security in the building which has been increased to five security guards now that people are moving out.

In the unlikely event that any belongings are damaged or stolen and your insurance company refuses to cover your claim, Clarion will cover any reasonable costs of replacement.

Depending on the nature of your claim, we may ask you to provide confirmation that your insurers have refused to cover your claim and why. We may also ask you for receipts and/or photographs of the items and a police crime reference number.

12. In order to access legal cover attached to contents insurance, we need to provide evidence to the underwriter of what the issue is that has prompted the evacuation, otherwise they will not process a claim. Please can Clarion provide this?

A report containing information from the studies we have carried out into the safety of Clare House has been made available.

13. Can Clarion arrange storage for my belongings?

Yes. Clarion will arrange for your belongings to be moved into storage until you move into your new permanent home and will pay for reasonable storage costs. When we have rehoused you in a temporary home, a member of Clarion staff will contact you to confirm the arrangements to have your belongings packed up and safely removed and stored. This process will begin in the next few weeks.

If you have arranged your own storage already please contact the Clare House email address or one of the staff members on site.

14. Can I get help with packing up my belongings for storage?

Yes. We can arrange for help with packing. Please contact us on the details above.

15. If you're only insuring our belongings up until they go into storage how will they be covered whilst they're in storage?

Insurance will be provided by the storage company if it is arranged by Clarion. If you have arranged your own storage you will need to check that you have suitable insurance for your belongings.

16. Can I return to Clare House for my belongings?

Yes. We have measures in place to ensure your safety and the security of your belongings. We need to ensure the ongoing safety of the building, so we need to know how many people are in the building at any one time, and that the building is empty at the end of each day. Therefore, we have disabled the fob entry system at the main entrance and put in place a checking in and out process with security. You will also be required to show proof of

identification, to ensure the building is not inappropriately accessed and to help keep your belongings safe. If you would like someone to access your home on your behalf please notify us via the contact details above.

The security on the building is 24/7, so you can access your flat at any time, but because of the safety concerns surrounding Clare House you cannot stay overnight.

17. Can I keep my keys or will Clarion be changing the locks?

You can keep your keys, Clarion will not be changing the locks.

18. What security have you arranged for the building?

We have five security guards on site 24 hours a day every day. They will stay in place until the building is emptied and all your belongings safely stored. The scaffolding around the building is being removed. The windows on the lower floors are being sealed to help keep the building secure. CCTV is being introduced.

19. Are we being evicted?

No one is being evicted. Your tenancy is unaffected by this change. We have had to move everyone out for their own safety.

20. Do I still have to pay service charges and Council Tax after I have left?

No. All service charges have been suspended for Clare House from 1st October. Where there has been overpayment, usually as a result of automatic payment arrangements, this money will be refunded. Tower Hamlets Council have agreed no Council Tax will be charged after the 1st October for those residents who have left the building.

21. Will I keep the same tenancy rights?

Yes. Your tenancy will not change. You will keep the same tenancy rights that you have now. For example, if you have the Right to Buy now, you will keep that right in your new home.

22. Will my rent be calculated in the same way?

Your rent will stay the same whilst you are in temporary accommodation.

23. Will I need to continue to pay my rent while I am in temporary accommodation?

Yes, you should continue to pay your rent in the usual way while you are in temporary accommodation, even if this is staying with friends or family. You will not be expected to increase the rent you pay to cover the cost of the temporary accommodation. If you are claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, we will assist with any issues that you may have for the period where you are in temporary accommodation

24. If I do not want to go to a hotel before moving into temporary accommodation will I be declared homeless?

We will not be making anyone homeless. We are trying to help people move as soon as possible to temporary accommodation which is why people are being moved into hotels

until the temporary accommodation is ready. Currently there is just one household in a hotel, and arrangements are underway to rehouse them in a serviced apartment.

25. Will each resident have an assigned named member of staff who they can speak to about their individual circumstances?

Yes, you will have details for a named officer who will be your first point of contact at Clarion. They will be calling all residents to introduce themselves, get up to speed on your personal circumstances, provide any assistance or signpost you to a particular service that you may need. You will be provided with a direct line to them, so you know who to contact if you need anything.

That process has begun but will take a little while to complete – there are many households and families to be contacted and their needs are often complex. So please bear with us but we will be in contact in the next few days if we have not already spoken to you. In the meantime if you have any issues please contact us on the numbers at the start of this document.

26. You talked about moving some people to more long-term temporary accommodation, what does that mean?

Due to the safety concerns we have had to move you out into available units in the hotel and service apartments sector. Many are in areas some distance away from your networks and support structures and don't meet your long term needs. We have placed a time frame on this accommodation of 3 to 6 months whilst we source alternative longer term solutions. We want you to feel settled in a home that can accommodate your family and personal possessions. We also want to limit the amount of times you may need to move depending on the availability of your current serviced accommodation.

In the background we have been preparing as many currently void (empty) properties as we can in the local area. We have been busy getting these properties ready for occupation and will begin the process of offering these units and moving households in. These will be matched to your accommodation end date, housing need, will be the right size for your family and suitable for those with medical, health or mobility issues. The property will give you longer-term security whilst we source and prepare your new permanent home.

We will be contacting all Clarion tenants to complete a Housing Allocations form, in readiness for these offers.

27. What compensation will I receive (Home Loss and Disturbance payments)?

If you are a Clarion tenant you will be entitled to a Home Loss Payment. This is currently £7,100 per home. This is compensation for the loss of your home.

We will give you this payment once you move to your permanent home. We are legally required to make this payment and the amount is set by Government. If you owe rent or other money to Clarion Housing, this will be deducted from your Home Loss payment.

If you are a homeowner, the Home Loss Payment is made in the form of a 10% uplift on the agreed market value of your home if you are a resident homeowner, and a 7.5% uplift for non-resident homeowners.

We will also offer you a Disturbance Payment of £3,000. This not compensation but is designed to cover some of the reasonable costs you may incur in your temporary accommodation and new living arrangements. Each individual household's requirements will be different, but the payment should be used to cover items such as:

- redirecting mail
- altering or replacing carpets and curtains
- disconnecting and reconnecting appliances
- the early termination of contracts e.g. broadband, Sky, etc. or any related reconnection costs
- any initial costs in setting up home in your new property e.g. takeaway food for the first few nights

Most residents will have received their Disturbance Payment by now, but if you have not please contact us as soon as you can. We can pay this money directly into your bank account.

Residents do not have to show receipts for this money. A flat rate £3,000 will be paid to all households, including private renting households.

You do not need to use your Disturbance Payment for removals or storage. These are paid directly by Clarion. Taxi fares to take your children to school are also paid by Clarion. Similarly, where we have agreed to pay parking costs at your temporary accommodation or congestion charges, these are paid in addition to the Disturbance Payment.

28. I am renting privately from a leaseholder at Clare House, what compensation will I receive?

You will be entitled to a £3,000 Disturbance Payment per household for private renters but not the Home Loss payment. If you are in a flat share the payment will be divided equally.

29. When will I receive this money?

We are arranging for the Disturbance Payment to be paid as soon as possible after you have moved out of Clare House. The £3,000 will be paid directly into your bank account. Please make sure the Clarion team have your bank details to avoid any delay.

If you are a Clarion tenant you will receive your £7,100 Home Loss payment when you move into your permanent accommodation. If you are a leaseholder you'll receive your Home Loss as an uplift on the agreed sale price of your home.

30. What sort of accommodation will I be staying in?

Where possible we will place you in an apartment. This will most likely be a serviced apartment and so it will be cleaned and linen provided. Apartments usually come with a kitchenette and small living space. Where an apartment is not possible we will place you in a

hotel. If you are placed in a hotel we will try to ensure this will be for one month only, while we source an apartment for you.

31. Will the accommodation be local to Clare House?

We will try our best to keep you in the same area. Priority will be given to families with children at nursery or school in the area, and those who need care packages or have other additional requirements. It may be necessary to relocate you, in which case we will pay for taxi fares to schools, regular health appointments, etc.

32. Can I choose to stay with family while you find me a permanent home?

You are welcome to stay with family while we work with you to identify a suitable alternative home. While you are staying with them, you can still contact us at any time if your circumstances change and you would like us to arrange temporary accommodation for you. Please see contact details above.

33. How will I get to my temporary accommodation?

We will organise taxis and pay the costs.

34. What other costs will you cover while I am in temporary accommodation?

If you are staying with family, you will receive an allowance of £30 per day per household.

If the family or friends you are staying with are not in the local area, we will also consider paying reasonable travel costs for you to stay with them in addition to the daily allowance.

We will reimburse up to £15 for each adult and £10 for each child, per day for households who have to stay in a hotel and do not have access to cooking facilities, or have a meal included with the accommodation provided.

35. How will I get my post?

The disturbance payment we provide you is to help cover costs such as this. You will need to arrange to have your post redirected to your temporary home. In the meantime, the Post Office is still delivering mail to Clare House, where it can be collected from reception.

36. How will I wash my clothes?

We will reimburse laundry costs of up to £10 per week, where you have no access to laundry facilities.

37. How will I get my children to school while I am in temporary accommodation?

We will cover the costs of a taxi to drop off and collect your children from school while you are in temporary accommodation. We can arrange for block booking to be made for the period you are in temporary accommodation.

38. I need to take time off work to move to my temporary accommodation, what can be done to cover my wages?

At our discretion, we will reimburse you for loss of wages or income where time off is unavoidable due to displacement. We will require written confirmation from your employer of any loss of wages. Where you are self-employed, we will discuss how best to capture your lost income.

39. If I pay upfront for any of the services outlined here that Clarion have said they will cover, can I get reimbursed?

Yes. Please contact us on the details above with receipts and details of what you have paid for. Once we have your bank details we will be able to pay directly into your bank account.

40. When will payment be made by Clarion for these services while I am in temporary accommodation?

We are aiming to set up payments weekly and where possible in advance.

41. How will I get my medication?

Please let staff know if you have medication delivered to your home, or pick up from a nearby pharmacy. We will work with you to make sure it is redirected to your temporary accommodation or that it can be collected from another pharmacy.

42. How will my carers/support workers know where to find me?

Please let staff know if you have carers or support workers. We will work with you to make sure your accommodation is suitable and will meet your needs.

43. What about my pets?

Where possible we will try to place you in pet friendly accommodation. If this is not possible, we will work with you to find suitable boarding arrangements for your pets and we will pay the costs.

44. Will I be able to access the internet at my temporary accommodation?

We will cover reasonable costs for internet access if it is not provided at your hotel or apartment.

45. What if I don't like my temporary accommodation or it is unsuitable?

Please notify Clarion right away if there is a major issue with your temporary accommodation and we will contact you directly to understand your circumstances.

46. How long do you anticipate people will stay in temporary accommodation?

We anticipate Clarion tenants will be staying in temporary accommodation for between 3-6 months. We are working hard to try to shorten this time by identifying empty homes that we own, working with the council and other Housing Associations to identify suitable homes.

For people privately renting from leaseholders we will be covering temporary accommodation for an initial 4-week period from when they move. Where this 4-week

window is causing hardship, we will consider a limited extension. Please contact us to discuss your circumstances.

47. How will you decide what kind of home I need?

Everyone will be rehoused according to their housing need. So if you are currently overcrowded, we will rehouse you in a more suitable sized property. If you have mobility or health issues which mean you need an adapted or a ground floor property, we will take that into account, including arranging for an independent Occupational Therapy assessment.

48. Will I be able to choose where I move to?

We will, of course, do our best to match you with the area you prefer, though that will depend upon stock availability. Our staff will work closely with you to find the best outcome.

We will offer you a home that has been assessed as suitable for you and your household. You will have a maximum of three formal offers of a permanent homes to choose from. Any allocation of permanent moves will be made with the agreement of the resident and will follow Tower Hamlets Council's Common Housing Register process.

49. What wellbeing support are Clarion offering to residents?

We have a team of staff on site dedicated to working with vulnerable residents to help them move. If you have particular health or wellbeing issues whilst in your temporary accommodation please get in touch and we will be happy to signpost you to help and advice. We have a number of support options in place. These include the independent charity Communities First. Their details are as follows:

- The Communities First advisers are **Ian Simpson, Peter Daley & Maharun Hussein**.
- They can talk or visit at times that suit you, including evenings and weekends. They can arrange interpreters, signers etc.
- Their office Freephone number is: **0300 365 7150**.
- Their general email is: **enquiries@communitiesfirst.uk.com**
- Ian's mobile number is **07740 611817** and **ian_simpson_uk@yahoo.co.uk**

We are also working with the Tower Hamlets branch of the mental health charity MIND. They have been retained to offer advice and support to any resident facing mental health or anxiety issues as a result of this disruption.

Age UK have been retained to help us support some of our more vulnerable households and individuals.

Clarion Futures, our charitable arm, will be supporting households with money advice, help with utilities disconnections and other support needs.

We will be issuing contact details for all these services in the next few days.

50. What legal support is available for residents?

Communities First are an independent charity and they can refer residents to legal support. We know many of you have developed a positive relationship with Community First and their advisors will, when required, make referrals for legal advice on your behalf. If your case is more complex and advice is required at a solicitor level we have arranged a referral partnership with the Tower Hamlets Voluntary Sector partnership which includes the Law Centre and CAB.

51. What translation and interpretation services are available?

Please contact a member of staff on site if you have translation or interpretation needs. We have staff on site who can speak: Bengali, Hindi and Urdu. We are also able to offer translation services so if you would like any of this information in another language please let us know. Communities First also offer free translation and interpretation services.

52. Can residents get support to shut down their utility services?

Yes. Please contact the Clare House email address or phone numbers or speak to a member of staff who can refer you to the Clarion Futures team that can help residents with this. On the day you leave your property you will need to let your utility providers and Thames Water know that you are leaving the property and will not be returning. You will be able to provide the Clare House email address - **ClareHouse@clarionhg.com**.

The utilities company can then email us and we will take on payment of the utilities.

53. What about ongoing support?

We will stay in close contact with you when you are in your temporary accommodation. A named member of Clarion staff will contact you regularly to ensure you have settled in well, deal with any payments you are entitled to, and prepare you for your move to your permanent home. You will have their direct phone and email contact details, so you can report any concerns or ask any questions.

54. How will parking work at Clare House?

During the moving out process all parking restrictions have been suspended. The suspension will be in place for one month. After this we will review the approach to parking.

55. Will Clarion provide a plant sitting service for plants that people leave behind?

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer this and would recommend either taking plants with you to your temporary accommodation or using the disturbance payment to purchase new plants.

56. Will I still have to pay council tax for Clare House?

No. Clarion will be responsible for any council tax payment. We have already informed Tower Hamlets Council on this.

57. Will I be able to return to Clare House in the future?

The future of Clare House has not yet been decided. If the building is refurbished existing tenants will be the first to be offered the opportunity to return.

If the building is demolished and replaced, subject to the availability of suitable homes in the new building, former Clare House tenants will be the first to be offered the new homes

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