

Legislation Committee No.1

Response to the consultation on the Proposed Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure

Wales and West Housing Association

Response from new build and repair/maintenance staff at Wales and West Housing Association

- Consensus of opinion is that there is no need for this proposed measure in new build other than specific cases of multi occupancy such as extra care schemes.
- If the proposal were to be implemented then our investigations show that it would add approximately 1-2% to the total build cost. If this is the case then should not ACG be increased by an equivalent amount to avoid further limiting factors affecting the number of units that can be built given the current shortage of affordable accommodation?
- Our understanding is that the most likely cause of death is smoke inhalation? This being the case then all new homes have mains connected alarms that should give a cost effective warning systems. A sprinkler system is normally activated by temperature and therefore we understand that in individual home units the occupants should have been warned and made their escape. The sprinkler system is then a means of saving property and not life?
- Given the stock of old existing properties the principle of installing sprinkler systems in new build does nothing to address the existing problems as retrofitting poses major challenges. New build properties [single units] are now built to a higher fire resistant standard and therefore would a more cost effective use of funding be to target the on going education of those residents in existing homes?
- The installation of sprinkler systems will require water storage [space requirements] and regular on going servicing, legionella treatment etc.
- These systems will be open to abuse by those residents who wish to either vandalise them or misuse them
- We understand that many domestic fires have the kitchen as their source and that chip pans are a major cause. Is it wise to use water in the these circumstances to fight the fire in this area.
- Are systems capable of being zoned or will single domestic units be water damaged throughout, could this be a malicious way of obtaining insurance monies etc?