



Fire Sector Federation

London Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 0RH

Her Honour Frances Kirkham CBE
Assistant Deputy Coroner
Inner Southern District Greater London
Coroner's Court
1 Tennis St
London SE1 1YD

Please ask for: Sally O'Connell
Tel: 01608 812 543
Mobile:
Email: soconnell@thefpa.co.uk;
Our Reference: Lakanal House Fire
Your Reference:
Date: 20th May 2013

Dear Justice Kirkham

Lakanal House Fire 3 July 2009

I refer to your letter to FSF Chairman, Brian Robinson CBE, of 30 March 2013 concerning the outcomes of your inquest into the tragic deaths of Catherine Hickman, Dayana Francisquini, Thais Francisquini, Felipe Francisquini Cervi, Helen Udoaka and Michelle Udoaka in the fire at Lakanal House on 3 July 2009.

In your letter you have drawn our attention to the recommendations made in the reports sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government and the London Borough of Southwark, regarding fire risk assessments to be undertaken pursuant to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. You particularly request if the Federation considers that it has a role in helping to clarify the scope and process of carrying out such fire risk assessments and whether we can help in providing guidance and training.

The Fire Sector Federation was deeply saddened by the deaths in the Lakanal House fire, and wishes to help prevent similar tragedies in the future. In positively responding to your request we confirm that we certainly intend to apply our influence at the national level in an attempt to address the recommendations you have made.

In the first instance we are focusing on the immediate questions of competency and effectiveness in carrying out fire risk assessments. Further work will gradually expand the area of Federation scrutiny to include other aspects of concern expressed in the narratives from the jury and the issues highlighted in your 'summing up'.

To date we have initiated the following actions:

1. Formation of a new work stream within the Federation to concentrate on relevant aspects of competency development, accreditation, education and training in fire safety. This will seek to build on the excellent foundations prepared by the National Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council and to extend that work into the wider aspects of professional competency in fire safety, on a principle basis.
2. A Federation member, the National Social Housing Fire Safety Group (in conjunction with the Fire Protection Association, Chief Fire Officers' Association, and Skills for Justice), is well advanced in the development of qualifications for fire risk assessors as a basis for the training of housing and estate management staff. These are based upon the national occupational standards in fire safety. We will also review this approach to see if it can be adapted and used as an exemplar and encourage its adoption in other parts of the fire safety sector.
3. We have formed a further additional work stream within the Federation to review, co-ordinate and oversee a further programme of actions which include any changes felt necessary to Building Regulations Approved Document B and the practical guidance given therein, in order to redress the ambiguity over Fire Resistance and Surface Spread of Flame classification "O" , and to improve the wider understanding of fire safety matters which the Federation feels is within its scope as the UK's representative sector body for fire safety. The workstream programme will include several elements; for example, consultation with DCLG to consider how we can provide support through appropriate practical sector guidance to suggest the changes felt necessary to the Approved Document, and to help those using it, especially those who need to know but are not fire safety specialists.
4. The Federation is rolling out an awareness and publicity programme seeking to raise the profile of fire safety, picking out important developments, elements of recommended best practice and highlighting issues for attention. We have a widespread membership across the fire safety sector including the Fire and Rescue Service, Fire and Rescue Authorities, various industry associations, companies and experienced individuals with a range of skills in various aspects of fire safety, all of which in combination provides an unparalleled network to allow us to campaign on behalf of fire safety.

Through that network we intend to raise awareness both across the sector itself, in depth, and outside our boundaries interacting, for example, with other sectors

such as the design, building materials, construction and refurbishment sectors. We have already incorporated increased awareness of the lessons from Lakanal House in the programmes and we will continue to highlight that aspect in our communications.

5. Through our good connections to the glass and glazing industry we have been in touch with the Glass and Glazing Federation regarding their Fenestration Self-Assessment Scheme (FENSA) to ensure that their members in the window replacement sector have a heightened realisation of the importance of checking and confirming applicable fire safety requirements when they carry out window improvements, particularly regarding Approved Document B, and especially in high rise residential blocks. FENSA is preparing a new technical bulletin covering fire safety obligations and will circulate that to all its registered members.

More generally the Federation continuously seeks to identify, anticipate and address key issues in fire safety, harnessing the combined knowledge and experience from the whole sector in forming policy and developing the latest expertise in considered best practice fire safety.

The Federation's awareness and education activities will focus on that intention, helping to draw together the necessary links that need to be securely made within the core concept of integrated fire safety. For example, the fitness of buildings for protection against fire and their fire safety management have a major influence on both firefighting operations and fire risk assessments under the Fire Safety Order 2005.

In all those respects we will seek to ensure that the findings from the Lakanal House inquest are recognised and absorbed by those who have a major influence on fire safety and your letter to the Federation is very helpful in encouraging us towards that requirement as a core objective.

Yours Sincerely



Paul M Fuller QFSM MSc BSc FIFireE MInstLM
Deputy Chairman