

Thousands of council homes still waiting for smoke alarms

More than 4,000 council houses in Edinburgh are still waiting to be fitted with interlinked smoke alarms, four months after a law change which made them mandatory in all homes in Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh Council has faced problems getting permission to enter some addresses but said staff are doing their 'utmost' to have all properties upgraded 'by the Autumn'.

Any council tenants who have not yet had the new smoke detectors fitted are being urged to book an appointment "as soon as possible".

It was revealed in January that almost half of the capital's 20,131 council-owned properties were not ready for the new legislation, drawn up in response to the 2017 Grenfell Tower disaster and designed to improve fire safety for residents, which came into effect in February.

Since then, the devices have been installed in a further 4,162 homes, leaving 4,736 – or 23.53 per cent of the council's housing stock – still waiting to have them installed.

In properties fitted with an interlinked system, if one smoke alarm goes off, they all do. These must be fitted in

every living room and hallway with a heat alarm required in the kitchen under The Scottish Government's new law.

In addition, carbon monoxide detectors are now legally required in every room that has a carbon-fuelled appliance such as a wood stove.

In Scotland, people have faced difficulties sourcing the alarms due to supply issues and the Government has been criticised for not effectively informing people about the change.

As well as issues gaining permission to access some homes, the council blamed the previously-enforced Covid-19 restrictions and market supply issues for delays.

It said properties still waiting to be brought up to scratch "have at least one hard-wired smoke alarm" but urged tenants living in houses or flats that are not yet compliant to contact the council.

A council spokesperson said: "We've rolled out interlinked smoke alarms to 15,395 Council homes in Edinburgh. This is a substantial increase and means that more than three quarters (76 per cent) of Council managed properties have been upgraded to the LD2 standard. The remaining homes all have at least one hard-wired smoke alarm.

"We aim to have all homes fitted with the new system by the Autumn and we're really doing our utmost to complete this work. Like many Councils, we've faced delays due to market supply issues, the Covid restrictions which were in place and challenges gaining permissions from tenants to access their homes.

"We have been giving everyone an opportunity to book an appointment, at the most convenient time for them. Installations are quick and simple and we want to reassure tenants that we will make the process as simple as possible

and continue to follow all health and safety precautions in line with Covid. Please book now, if you haven't already."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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