Fire Safety - background

- Several recent fatal fires in Waltham Forest
- Small houses occupied by a single family
- Fire risk assessments in complex properties carried out by a suitably qualified professional
- Guide to landlords to carry out simple risk assessments in houses occupied by a single family
2 stage assessment:

- Are there any factors that would increase the risk of a fire occurring that would result in harm?
- If a fire did break out, any factors that would mean that the occupants were at greater risk of death or serious injury?
Risk assessment – Fire risks

- Absence of smoke detector means more likely that a serious fire will develop
- A reliance on portable room heaters or solid fuel open fires makes fire more likely
Risk Assessment – Fire Risks [2]

• Electrical installation – old, damaged or overloaded sockets
• Poorly sited cooker, close to flammable materials
• Presence of Fire Blanket in kitchen means that fires can be put out before developing
Factors that increase risk of fire are important.
However, 80% of all fires are related to occupier behaviour.
Risk assessment process – irrespective of increased fire risks – assess building to see if any building characteristics likely to increase harm.
Risk assessment – harm outcomes [2]

- Smoke detectors – early warning to occupiers
- Building height
- Means of escape from windows – openable area and absence of metal grilles
Risk assessment – harm outcomes [3]

- Escape route from upper rooms
- Remote rooms
• No door to kitchen – 65% fires originate
• Flimsy partitioning
• Polystyrene tiles – kitchen & circulation space
Risk assessment – conclusion

• Overall risk assessment has regard to any increased fire risk of fire occurring plus building factors
• Improvements should aim to eliminate any defects giving rise to increased fire risk and mitigate against any building factors
• Impractical to remove all risk in some cases – aim should be to reduce as far as possible
Possible improvement measures

- Smoke detectors [licence condition] – one per floor as a minimum. *Preference* for Mains wired over battery operated, mains-wired *required* in some circumstances
- Provision of whole house heating system, most commonly gas fired central heating
- Replace obsolete wiring, ensure sufficient power outlets, professional to carry out periodic checks [licence condition]
Possible Improvement measures [2]

• Ensure cooker is secure, stable and appropriately sited away from flammable materials
• Provide fire blanket to kitchen
• Ensure kitchen provided with door
• Ensure fire escape windows on upper floors [450 x 650mm minimum opening]
• Remove bars/grilles from windows
• Additional fire precaution measures for houses with compromised escape route from bedrooms – e.g. fire door separation, additional detectors
• Remote rooms not used as bedrooms or provide corridor access
• Remove Polystyrene tiles from key areas and make good
Fire Risk Assessments - summary

- Fire Risk assessment pro-forma available under ‘Further Information’ tab on Council’s Private Property Licensing webpage
- Additional requirements for HMOs and flats in buildings
- Advice available from Council or Fire Brigade – use the Lacors Fire Safety Guide
Details about the home fire safety visit can be found at [http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp) or alternately call 0800 028 44 28.