FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT
THE BROW (No's 9-14)
ST PETERS ROAD
BYKER
TYNE & WEAR

AUGUST 2017

STORM TEMPEST
PROPERTY CONSULTANCY

Reference: MH – 3293–07–17
Prepared by:
Storm Tempest Ltd
3 Apollo Court
Koppers Way
Monkton Business Park South
Hebburn
Tyne and Wear
NE31 2ES

Version: 1
Prepared for:
Byker Community Trust
17 Raby Cross
Byker
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE6 2FF

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Client	Byker Community Trust.
Instruction	This Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken in accordance with an instruction received from Mr Ashley Gibson, Technical Services Manager, Byker Community Trust.
Responsible Person	Jill Haley, Chief Executive, Byker Community Trust.
The Property	9-14 The Brow, St Peters Road, Byker, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE6 2FL.
The Surveyor	The Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by Mark Harrison, BSc (Hons) and Simon Scurfield MRICS.
Survey Date	23rd August 2017
Scope and Purpose of the Pre-Occupation Fire Risk Assessment	The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [RR(FS)O] replaces the 40-year-old fire certification scheme. It is now the duty of the 'responsible person' for the premises to ensure the occupants are safe from the effects of fire as far as practicable. This does not imply a lesser responsibility for the safety of the occupant of the premises; it is almost certain that for premises which required a fire certificate prior to January 2006, similar measures will be required under the RR(FS)O. The RR(FS)O applies to all non-domestic premises, including any voluntary sector and self-employed people with premises separate from their homes. The RR(FS)O does not stipulate the required review period for a particular building, we recommend to review this type of building every year. A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises. The fire risk assessment procedure identifies the activities carried out at the premises and assesses the likelihood of a fire starting. The aim of a fire risk assessment is to: • Identify the hazards

- Reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
- Decide what physical fire precautions and management policies are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.

The fire risk assessment was carried out in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 'sleeping accommodation' guidance document.

Limitations of the Fire Risk Assessment

The RR(FS)O places a burden of responsibility firmly on the head of a 'responsible person' with regard to the fire safety of the occupants of the premises to which they have been assigned. The responsible person is required to co-ordinate all fire safety related issues including the carrying out of a fire risk assessment and production of associated documentation. The responsible person may nominate a 'competent person' to assist in the implementation of any measures deemed necessary to ensure the fire safety of the occupants of the premises.

There are many factors that impact upon what may constitute adequate measures to assess the fire safety of the occupants. Storm Tempest Ltd are not the responsible person and are unable to determine, on behalf of the organisation, the steps it should or must take to comply with its duties under the RR(FS)O. The fire risk assessment will cover all of the areas within the property. We will also comment upon the areas surrounding the building.

This report is for the use of the party to whom it is addressed and should be used within the context of instruction under which it has been prepared.

No opening up of any part of the structure was carried out nor were any operational electrical or mechanical systems tested. All comments and recommendations are based on visual inspection only. No access was gained to the service cupboard to the rear of the property, which is accessed directly from the rear garden area.

Prioritisation of Recommendations	To assist in the development of a strategy and action plan for addressing recommendations in the fire risk assessment report, a priority rating is attached to each recommendation. The following is an explanation of each rating: High Priority: Immediate action required to prevent risk to the health and safety of relevant persons. Medium Priority: Planned action to improve fire safety within the premises. Low Priority: Features that comply with current regulations but which the responsible person may consider upgrading.
Identified costs of Recommendations	The report will give a budget costing for recommendations covered in the fire risk assessment for alterations or improvements to physical features to assist the client in developing an Action Plan and improvement programme.

2.0 THE BUILDING

2.1 The Building

The Brow is a general needs housing scheme located within the Byker Estate. The building is within a larger housing block of adjoining properties, arranged in a 'U' shape, facing into a central courtyard area, which is accessed from St Peters Road to the north east of the site. The whole site is slopping from north to south, with Flats 9-14 being located to the bottom of the slope, to the south west of the site.

The building contains residential units arranged over 3-storeys. The building is of masonry cavity wall construction, with red brickwork outer leaf to the rear elevation, painted white timber cladding to the majority of the front elevation, with calcium silicate bricks exposed at low level to the front elevation and at high level to the exposed gable walls. The building has with a mono pitched roof with a concrete tile covering and pvcu rainwater goods. The building has softwood timber double glazed windows and glazed metal doors to front and rear entrances.

The scheme contains 6 one bedroom flats, each with their own facilities. All of the flats are accessed via the communal staircase. There is a service room located to the basement level of the property and is accessed directly from the rear. Each floor has a timber glazed partition to the landing, between the doors of the flats and the communal stairs. The first floor and second floor landings have built in timber bin stores against the front wall of the building.

3.0 FIRE HAZARDS

3.1 Sources of Fuel

The building and means of escape provision have been designed on the assumption that the escape routes and fire exits remain clear as to not impede or obstruct the escape route in an emergency evacuation.

The sources of fuel within the communal area of the property were assessed as follows:

- Combustible household items store on the landing of the communal stairs and within the bin stores and side boxes.

The means of escape route via the communal stairs within the property is good, however we did note a glass topped table and a roll of carpet stored on the first-floor landing, which may cause an obstruction in an emergency situation. The communal areas should remain a sterile environment to ensure the escape route remains clear. We recommend that the items are removed and that escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.

3.2 Sources of Ignition

The sources of ignition within the communal areas of the property were assessed as follows:

- Landlord's electrical supply – distribution boards.
- Electricity meter boxes adjacent flat entrance doors.
- Lighting within the communal staircase.
- Electric box within ground floor stairwell, which has burn marks to wall and ceiling above.

It was not possible to view the notice on the distribution board within the electric meter cupboard due to the cupboard being locked shut. We recommend that the electrical system inspection is reviewed and tested every 5 years to satisfy compliance of the Electricity at Work Act 1989.There were no gas appliances or portable electrical appliances in the property to inspect.

Byker Community Trust operate a no-smoking policy in the communal areas of the building, however there was no signage noted to the communal staircase.

3.3 Sources of Oxygen	Natural airflow through doors and windows etc. We did not identify any chemicals with oxidising agents within the property at the time of our survey. The Client should ensure the Fire and Rescue Service are informed, should the use and storage of medical oxygen be required by any resident in the future as an oxygen enriched environment is a potentially serious hazard to Firefighters in a fire situation.
3.4 People at Risk	The people at risk in this building are the residents, maintenance contractors and visitors to the building.

4.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE

4.1 Escape Routes

The communal area comprises only of the staircase and landings with a front and rear ground floor exit and is therefore not a complex layout for users who are not familiar with the building. All of the flats use the communal stairs as their emergency escape route from the property. At the ground floor of the communal stairs, there is an exit to the courtyard to the front of the building and an exit to the garden area to the rear of the building.

The building has one vertical means of escape via the communal stairwell. The staircase is of appropriate width and design and comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations. There are no contrasting colour nosing's to the staircases.

The escape routes were generally free from obstruction at the time of the inspection with exception to several items mentioned previously. The escape routes should remain free from combustible items to reduce the risk of a fire starting in the communal areas and to ensure a clear escape route. The travel distances were assessed as being compliant with the Building Regulations Approved Document B.

There is a tiled raised plinth, across the width of the first and second floor landings, approximately 450mm high. On top of this plinth is a timber framed and lined bin store cupboard. To the side of the bin store is a matching, all-be-it lower level, box. The purpose of the box was unclear, as access to it could only be gained via the inside of the bin store at low level. One of the boxes was found to contain a bag of rubbish. We recommend that the bin stores and box to the side are emptied of uncontrolled waste and are upgraded with fire resistant walls and new fire doors with smoke seals.

The window to the ground floor stairs mid-landing has a pane of glass missing. This could be used to throw flammable items through the window. We recommend that the glass is replaced.

There is an electrical box located to the rear door exit staircase of the ground floor landing, which at the time of the survey appeared

to be operating correctly. However, there was soot/burn marks to the wall and ceiling above the unit. This indicated that the unit has recently been faulty. We recommend an investigation is carried out to see what happened, why and what repairs were carried out to prevent it from happening again. We also recommend that the wall and ceiling are cleaned and redecorated where necessary to show if this happens again and to prevent residents from being concerned.

4.2 Fire Doors

The internal flat entrance doors are solid timber fire doors, with a mixture of integrated Perko type door closer and overhead door closers and all appear to be original to the building. The doors are generally in a poor condition, with no intumescent strips and smoke seals. It was not possible to determine whether the 1½ pairs of hinges were fire rated. The doors are fitted with a letter box flap, standard lever handle and separate latch lock at eye level. We recommend that the internal flat entrance doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks, hinges, letterbox and overhead door closer. The client may wish to consider replacing the flat entrance doors as part of a planned maintenance scheme.

The doors to the partition screens of the stair landings are half glazed timber fire doors in reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of hinges and integrated Perko type door closer device. The doors were noted to have a large gap between the door and the frame. Standard practice is for the gap between the door and frame to be no larger than 3mm around the side and top of the door. We recommend that the doors are replaced with a new FD30S doors, with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, fire rated glazing and overhead door closer, plus a “Fire Door Keep Shut” sign.

The final exit door to the front of the property has a magnetic locking system with push button to release the door to open. It was not possible to ascertain whether the magnetic lock would automatically release in the event of a fire or power failure. The rear door has a thumb turn quick release locking mechanisms to allow quick escape in the event of a fire situation and are of a good standard with no defects noted.

The external rear door to the service cupboard is a solid timber door. No access was gained to this door. Externally the door appears to be original to the building, but is in a reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of fire rated hinges.

4.3 Fire Compartmentation

The means of escape route to the building is protected by walls which provide the necessary 60-minute fire protection.

There are no loft hatches within the communal area of the building.

There are timber framed, half Georgian wired glazed partitions to each of the floors, between the landing area with the flat doors on and the communal staircase. These partitions are not required under current fire regulations, however as they are in place, we recommend that the doors to the screens are upgraded to FD30S doors with fire rated ironmongery, intumescent smoke seals and overhead door closers.

There is an electric meter box built in to the walls of the stair landings, adjacent to each flat front door. Gaps were noted behind the meter boxes, with no fire stopping. We recommend that the holes within the building structure around the meter boxes are blocked up with appropriate fire stopping material.

4.4 Fire Alarm and Detection System

There is no fire detection within the communal staircase. We inspected the detection within Flat 14 and noted that the fire detection system within the property is a category D alarm system. This comprises of interlinked mains powered smoke detectors and sounder to the hallway of each flat and a mains powered heat detectors and sounder within the kitchen of each flat. We assume that all flats have the same detection however it was not feasible to inspect all flats during the survey.

4.5 Emergency Lighting

The communal stairwell has maintained emergency light fittings with a battery backup. The lights have been appropriately positioned to the stairs and landings and final emergency exit points. The emergency lighting is required to be tested and maintained in accordance with BS5266 which requires monthly short duration tests and annual full discharge tests which should be

detailed in a Fire Log Book. There were no records of testing and servicing of the emergency lighting system on site.

4.6 Fire Fighting Equipment	Landlords are not required to provide such equipment in residential properties and some fire authorities discourage installing firefighting equipment as they would rather the residents leave the building than attempt to fight a fire with equipment they have not been trained to use. There is no portable firefighting equipment on site in the communal areas.
4.7 Signage	The property has no provision of fire escape signage to the communal areas of the building, including directional signage or fire action signage to instruct building users of the procedure to follow in an emergency situation. We recommend that a Fire Action sign is provided to the ground floor of the property. Byker Community Trust operates a no smoking policy within the communal parts of the building, however there was no 'No Smoking' signs within the premises. We recommend that a 'No Smoking' sign is provided to the ground floor of the property.
4.8 Disabled Persons Egress	At the time of the survey we were not made aware of any residents with limited mobility and further information on the residents is unknown. It is the Responsible Person's duty to ensure suitable provision is made for disabled persons within the property to ensure that they can escape in the event of a fire. Provision should be made for any hearing-impaired residents to ensure that they can be alerted in the event of the fire alarm being activated. The responsible person is required to ensure personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are put in place for disabled persons who may have difficulty in egressing the building in the event of a fire.
4.9 Arson	The risk of an arson attack is considered medium. The entrance doors were found to be locked at all times which prevents unauthorised access into the property, however the window to the

ground floor stairs mid-landing has a pane of glass missing. This could be used to throw flammable items through the window.

5.0 MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

5.1 Fire Evacuation Procedures	When residents are first inducted to the premises they are given a briefing on the fire evacuation within the building. As previously mentioned, there are no Fire Action Notices provided within the communal area to remind residents or visitors of the procedure to follow if they discover a fire. We recommend that the fire signage provision is reassessed and the minimum of a Fire Action Notice is provided.
5.2 Fire Log Book	There is no Fire Log Book held on site.
5.3 Training	There are no staff members located on site that would require fire training.

Surveyor Mark Harrison, BSc (Hons)

Signed 

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For Storm Tempest Ltd

Checked Simon Scurfield, BSc (Hons) MRICS

Signed 

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For Storm Tempest Ltd

APPENDIX 1
FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

		Potential consequences of fire		
		Slight Harm (1)	***Moderate harm (2)***	***Extreme harm (3)***
Liklihood of fire occuring	**Low *(1)***	**Trivial Risk**	**Tolerable Risk**	**Moderate Risk**
	Medium *(2)*	**Tolerable Risk**	**Moderate Risk**	**Substantial Risk**
	High (3)	**Moderate Risk**	**Substantial Risk**	**Intolerable Risk**

Taking into account the fire prevention measures observed at the time of this risk assessment, it is considered that the hazard from fire (likelihood of fire) at these premises is:

Low [x] **Medium** [ ] **High** [ ]

Low: Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium: Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High: Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in likelihood of fire.

Taking into account the nature of the premises and the occupants, as well as the fire protection and procedural arrangements observed at the time of this fire risk assessment, it is considered that the consequences for life safety in the event of fire would be:

Slight harm [ ] **Moderate harm** [x] **Extreme harm** [ ]

In this context, a definition of the above terms is as follows:

Slight harm: Outbreak of fire unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant (other than an occupant sleeping in a room in which a fire occurs).

Moderate harm: Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but it is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

Accordingly, it is considered that the risk to life from fire at these premises is:

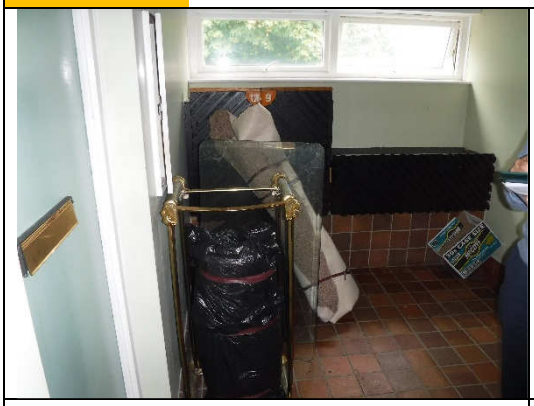
<u>Tolerable Risk</u>

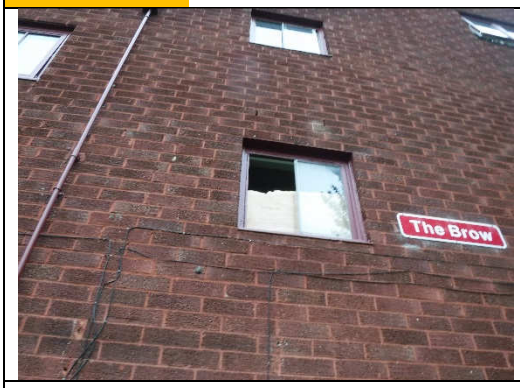
(Note that, although the purpose of this section is to place the fire risk in context, the above approach to fire risk assessment is subjective and for guidance only. All hazards and deficiencies identified in this report should be addressed by implementing all recommendations contained in the following action plan. The fire risk assessment should be reviewed regularly.)

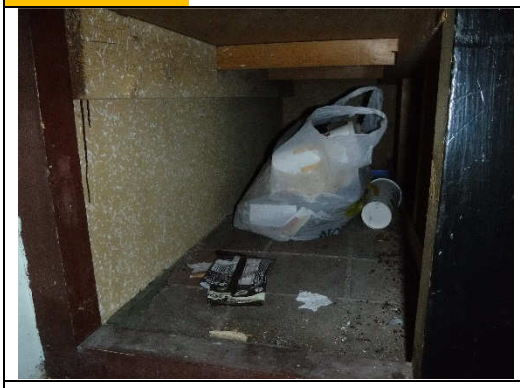
Risk level	Action and timescale
Trivial	No action is required and no detailed records need be kept.
Tolerable	No major additional fire precautions required. However, there might be a need or reasonably practicable improvements that involve minor or limited cost.
Moderate	It is essential that efforts are made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures, which should take cost into account, should be implemented within a defined time period. Where moderate risk is associated with consequences that constitute extreme harm, further assessment might be required to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the priority for improved control measures.
Substantial	Considerable resources might have to be allocated to reduce the risk. If the premises is unoccupied, it should not be occupied until the risk has been reduced. If the premises is occupied, urgent action should be taken.
Intolerable	Premises (or relevant area) should not be occupied until the risk is reduced.

APPENDIX 2
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

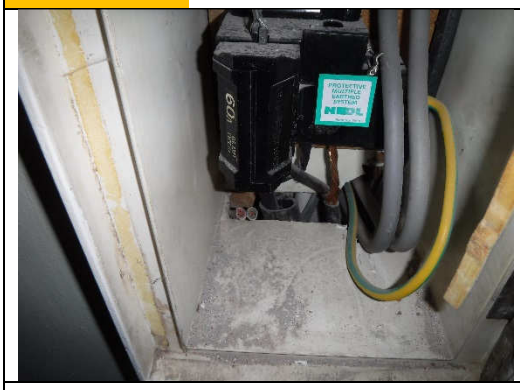
Fire Hazards

Medium	**1**
	**Assessors Observations:** The means of escape route via the communal stairs within the property is good, however we did note glass topped coffee table and a roll of carpet stored on the first-floor landing, which may cause an obstruction in an emergency situation. The communal areas should remain a sterile environment to ensure the escape route remains clear.
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017 Action by: 1 Month	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the items are removed that escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.
Action Actioned by: Date:	
Review: Reviewed by: Date:	

MEDIUM	**2**
	**Assessors Observations:** The window to the ground floor stairs mid-landing has a pane of glass missing. This could be used to throw flammable items through the window.
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017 Action by: 1 Month	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the glass is replaced.
Action Actioned by: Date:	
Review: Reviewed by: Date:	

MEDIUM	3
	**Assessors Observations:** To the side of the bin store is a matching, all-be-it lower level, box. The purpose of the box was unclear, as access to it could only be gained via the inside of the bin store at low level. One of the boxes was found to contain a bag of rubbish.
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017 Action by: 1 Month	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the bin stores and box to the side are emptied of uncontrolled waste.
Action Actioned by: Date:	
Review: Reviewed by: Date:	

Compartmentation

MEDIUM	4
	**Assessors Observations:** There is an electric meter box built in to the walls of the stair landings, adjacent to each flat front door. Gaps were noted behind the meter boxes, with no fire stopping.
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017 Action by: 6 Months	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the holes within the building structure around the meter boxes are blocked up with appropriate fire stopping material.
Action Actioned by: Date:	
Review: Reviewed by: Date:	

LOW	5	
		**Assessors Observations:** There are timber framed, half Georgian wired glazed partitions to each of the 3 floors, between the landing area with the flat doors on and the communal staircase.
Date of FRA:	23/08/2017	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the doors are replaced with a new FD30S doors, with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, and overhead door closer, plus a "Fire Door Keep Shut" sign.
Action by:	12 Months	
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		

Means of Escape

MEDIUM	5	
		**Assessors Observations:** There is a tiled raised plinth, across the width of the first and second floor landings, approximately 450mm high. On top of this plinth is a timber framed and lined bin store cupboard. To the side of the bin store is a matching, all-be-it lower level, box.
Date of FRA:	23/08/2017	**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the bin stores and box to the side are upgraded with fire resistant walls and new fire doors with smoke seals.
Action by:	6 Months	
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		

MEDIUM	6	
		**Assessors Observations:** Internal flat entrance doors are original to the building.
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017 Action by: 6 Months		**Recommended Action:** We recommend that the internal flat entrance doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks, hinges, letterbox and overhead door closer.
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		

MEDIUM	7	
		**Assessors Observations:** There is an electrical box located to the rear door exit staircase of the ground floor landing, which at the time of the survey appeared to be operating correctly. However, there was soot/burn marks to the wall and ceiling above the unit.
Date of FRA:	23/08/2017	**Recommended Action:** We recommend an investigation is carried out to see what happened, why and what repairs were carried out to prevent it from happening again. We also recommend that the wall and ceiling are cleaned and redecorated where necessary to show if this happens again and to prevent residents from being concerned.
Action by:	3 Months	
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		

APPENDIX 3
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Summary of Findings

No	Deficiency/Rectification	Priority	Timescale to be Rectified	Date Rectified	Estimated Costs £
Fire Hazards					
1	We recommend that the items are removed that escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.	Medium	1 Month		No Cost
2	We recommend that the missing glass to the stairwell is replaced.	Medium	1 Month		£150
3	We recommend that the bin stores and box to the side are emptied of uncontrolled waste.	Medium	1 Month		No Cost
Compartmentation					
4	We recommend that the holes within the building structure around the electric meter boxes are blocked up with appropriate fire stopping material.	Medium	6 Months		£150
5	We recommend that the doors to the partitions are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, and overhead door closer, plus a "Fire Door Keep Shut" sign.	Low	12 Months		£900
Means of Escape					
6	We recommend that the bin stores and box to the side are upgraded with fire resistant walls and new fire doors with smoke seals.	Medium	6 Months		£600
7	We recommend that the internal flat entrance doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks, hinges, letterbox and overhead door closer.	Medium	6 Months		£2100
8	We recommend an investigation is carried out to see what happened to the electrical box within the stairwell, why and what repairs were carried out to prevent it from happening again. We also recommend that the wall and	Medium	3 Months		£150

	ceiling are cleaned and redecorated where necessary to show if this happens again and to prevent residents from being concerned.				
				TOTAL:	**£4,050.00**