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Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2023-000271
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Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2023-000271 – Glasgow Caledonian University fire safety

I refer to your freedom of information request that we received on 01 August 2023:

I have been in correspondence with Glasgow Caledonian University's Fire Engineering Department over a report which they prepared for Health Facilities Scotland in 2018 and which concerned the outcome of a fire in one of the single bedrooms in the QEUH ward tower.

I had asked Scottish Fire and Rescue for a copy of the report when its existence was first revealed. They in turn pointed out that it is freely accessible on the GCU website. I duly downloaded a copy and upon reading it a number of issues of concern emerged. I put these concerns in the form of a series of questions to one of the report's authors, a Mr. Anthony Kilpatrick in the Department of Fire Engineering at GCU.

After repeated e-mails failed to elicit a response from him I eventually got agreement on 20th March this year that Mr. Kilpatrick would respond to the thirty or so questions I had asked about the report "as soon as reasonably practicable". However four months later I am no further forward. The Dean of the Faculty Professor Carl Schaschke has now said I need to contact HFS to get answers as you have ownership of the report.

I have pointed out that HFS is not really in a position to answer technical questions on a report it did not create and which was out-sourced due to the specialist nature of the subject matter. Nevertheless, I have attached a pdf of the questions to which I am seeking answers along with a copy of the report. I am now asking that the relevant person in HFS respond as suggested by Professor Schaschke. I do this from the perspective of somebody who has been involved in hospital fire safety over a number of years, hence my interest in this report.

For convenience, the questions which HFS can respond to directly are Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 25, and 27. Feel free to answer any of the other questions if you are in a position to do so.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.



Headquarters

Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, EDINBURGH EH12 9EB

Chairperson Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Mary Morgan

I can advise you that we have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information from your queries within the "Glasgow Caledonian queries (2)" PDF:

(6) CM1 - States that facade components require to be 'low risk' as per 2.7.1 in the Technical Standards. However the spandrel panels incorporate Celotex FR5000 which is a polyisocyanurate insulation with a reaction to fire classification of D-s2d0. This is a 'high risk' classification. On page 5 you state that "The construction of all of the external envelope elements under consideration, are deemed under the Building (Scotland) Regulations to be at least 'Low Risk'". The latter is a Reaction to Fire specification and is defined under Annex 2E in the Standards. It contains the following statement under 2.E.3 which was applicable at the time of construction (2009) :- "Materials or components should be tested to the European Harmonised Tests listed in column 3 of the table which are deemed to satisfy the level of risk set throughout this guidance document". 'Low risk' is defined as B-s3d2. Brookfield had stated that all elements of the facade would be built to this standard in their bid documentation.

Did HFS make you aware of this ?

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) were informed that the external wall construction was compliant with Building Regulations at the time of warrant, see GCU report P11 No 15.

The specific purpose of the GCU study, which was agreed with Health Facilities Scotland (HFS), was as follows; to evaluate the extent to which the combustible rain screen cladding systems would contribute to rapid external fire spread. Potential re-entry, at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUP) and the Royal Hospital for Children (RHC) in order to inform NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (GG&C) decision making regarding actions/protection measures that might be necessary to ensure the safety of all patients, staff and public in the event of a fire.

Under section 17 of the Freedom of Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold that information. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) does not hold that information as HFS were not asked to review the external wall cladding materials in relation to the applicable building standards technical handbook.

(7) CM1 - Did HFS provide you with a copy of Brookfield's Fire Strategy ?

It is our understanding that NHS GG&C provided GCU with the relevant documentation.

(8) CM1 - Were you made aware by HFS that polyisocyanurate was banned from use anywhere on the project under the contract (ITPD Vol.2 page 46) ? (This would make the Celotex FR5000 insulation non-compliant irrespective of the building regulations).

Neither HFS nor GCU had details of the contract, nor was the contract relevant to the review which had been commissioned – (see response to question 6)

(9) CM2 - Alucobond PE has a D-s2d2 rating which is 'high risk'. Therefore it does not meet the 'low risk' criterion. Kingspan Kooltherm K15 is stated in your table to be 'low risk'. But it has a C-s1d0 rating which is 'medium risk'. So neither meets the 'low risk' benchmark. Did you raise this with HFS or the relevant sub-contractors before passing judgement on their proposals ?

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(10) CM3 - The table to Appendix A states that Kingspan K15 is 'low risk' when it is in fact 'medium risk' and therefore non-compliant. The Trespa Meteor cladding has 'TBC' against it. But their website in 2018 stated that it has a rating of D-s2d0. This is again 'high risk' and therefore non-compliant.

Did you seek clarification from HFS or the relevant sub-contractors regarding the Trespa product ? I'm unclear why it should have had 'TBC' against it.

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(12) CM5 - Again uses Kingspan Kooltherm K15 insulation, but in a cavity. However it is not within two skins of masonry (which would be acceptable) as well as not being 'low risk'. So yet again noncompliant.

Did you query this with HFS or the relevant sub-contractors ?

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(13) CM7 - Rukki wall panels are specified but are described as polyisocyanurate panels, so once more not compliant with the contract.

Did HFS communicate this to you at any stage?

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(15) CM8 - States that Kingspan Kooltherm K15 is 'low risk' when it is not. So this specification is again non-compliant with 2.7.1.

Did you query this with HFS or the relevant sub-contractors ?

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(16) CM9 - One column states Reynobond cladding and another Alucobond cladding. Both have a rating of D-s2d2 which is 'high risk' so neither meets the 'low risk' requirement. Nor is either system compliant with Brookfield's assertion that all cladding elements would be to their B-s3d2 standard. Did HFS make you aware of these contractual requirements when you were consulted by them.

Please refer to the above answer to question 6.

(25) Did HFS make you aware of the 'stay put' philosophy when commissioning the research?

'Stay put' is not a philosophy within NHS Scotland firecode. There is a system of progressive horizontal evacuation and HFS are aware that the GCU report authors are familiar with it.

(27) Would it be possible to get a copy of your terms of reference as given by HFS when awarding you this contract - i.e what were they requesting you to do and what not to do?

GCU undertook the work on behalf of HFS and the terms of reference for the specific task was; to evaluate the extent to which the combustible rainscreen cladding systems would contribute to rapid external fire spread, and potential re-entry, at QUEH and the RHC in order to inform NHS GG&C decision making regarding actions/protection measures that might be necessary to ensure the safety of all patients, staff and public in the event of a fire.

I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request, you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the

Head of Information and Cyber Security
Digital and Security
NHS National Services Scotland
Headquarters
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

or at the email address nss.foi@nhs.scot within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their [online application form](#).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

