



# CASE STUDY

## ONWARD UPDATES FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR CONTINUED COMPLIANCE

Onward owns and manages over 35,000 high quality, affordable homes across the North West in the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire regions. The organisation is focused both on supporting vulnerable people facing a range of challenges and the creation of strong and vibrant communities that customers can be proud of.

### The Challenge

Onward wanted to update and replace existing active and passive fire protection systems within high risk properties such as Sheltered Schemes, Extra Care Schemes and general let properties with communal areas. Works were required in properties housing the elderly, vulnerable and less able tenants across the Greater Manchester and Cheshire East region as, following extensive surveys, it had been established that these systems had reached end of life and were non-compliant to the latest safety standards.

### The Solution

OpenView was awarded the contract to update Onward's active fire protection systems through a Fusion21 Framework. Following the results of a rigorous fire risk assessment programme, Openview surveyed all works to be undertaken to identify and provide guidance to Onward on any additional works that were necessary in order to achieve full compliance. The company worked closely with Onward and the Fire and Rescue Service to carefully plan and coordinate an immediate programme of works to undertake all recommended actions and achieve full compliance of the properties within the shortest possible timescales.

### Active Fire Detection

A highly experienced team was assigned to manage the installation process so that works were completed on time without causing any unnecessary disruption to residents whilst ensuring that they felt safe and considered



at all times. OpenView's project manager also managed existing legacy systems to ensure they continued to provide the required level of protection until the switchover to the new systems could be successfully made.

Where required, OpenView designed, supplied, installed and commissioned Category L2 systems in accordance with the requirements of BS5839:1- 2017 and the NFCC Specialised Housing Guide. To allow Onward Homes the flexibility and freedom for future service and maintenance, the company proposed the installation of Advanced MxPro panels with Apollo detection from two of the fire industry's leading open protocol manufacturers.

To ensure the highest level of early detection in the event of a fire to save lives and reduce structural damage, Openview installed Grade D1 LD1 and LD2 domestic detection systems into the

dwelling of each sheltered scheme. To provide earliest possible warning, these systems were fully integrated to the warden call systems already installed at each location. AICO 3000 optical, heat and multi-sensors were installed utilising AICO's MRF Smartlink wireless technology to minimise disruption for tenants.

### Lighting

Communal lighting systems, incorporating emergency lighting, were also upgraded across Onward's property portfolio. With lighting system reaching the end of their life cycle, the decision was taken to upgrade specific schemes. Working closely with LuxBright, OpenView designed and installed new energy efficient LED lighting systems, including emergency fittings, to comply with BS7671 and BS5266-1. Moving forward, Openview has recommended installing Luxbright's new SmartLED systems which are fully self-testing and self-diagnosing with reports delivered via email or an online portal. These smart systems can also be monitored in real time via IP connections, enabling Onward to achieve 100% compliance for emergency light testing.

### Passive Fire Solutions

OpenView's highly skilled FIRAS accredited team also undertook a series of works following compartmentation surveys and fire risk assessment recommendations. These works included fire door and frame installations, fire door replacements, fire door refurbishments including hinge upgrades, intumescent smoke seals and closers as well as upgrading vision panels. The critical nature of these works required OpenView to carefully manage lead times for delivery of the doors in order to complete each building. This was successfully achieved as a result of the company's close working relationships with key manufacturers.

As most schemes were operating a 'Stay Put' policy, the integrity of the compartmentation of the buildings was of paramount importance and integral to achieving full compliance. OpenView carried out wide-ranging works including cable penetrations and breaches of existing compartmentation above ceilings, attics, ceiling voids and corridor doors. All switch, boiler and lift rooms were also brought up to standard.

Ground works were also completed for communal escape routes. As well as ensuring that compliant illumination and hand rails were installed to take residents to safe muster points, it was necessary to install non-slip paving and external lighting in some locations.

As a trusted partner, OpenView is enabling Onward to ensure the highest level of safety for tenants throughout its extensive property portfolio and continues to work closely with the organisation on a wide range of additional projects.

According to Gaynor Whiteley, Capital Projects Manager at Onward: "We have worked with OpenView Security Solutions since August 2018 and have built a strong, ongoing client-contractor relationship based on good communications. All members of OpenView's delivery team are extremely helpful and go out of their way to keep residents up to date with progress as well as being very respectful of the fact that they are working in peoples' homes. OpenView has delivered a varied range of works, including fire alarm upgrades, emergency lighting replacements and passive works as well as carrying out compartmentation surveys as required.