

27 October 2021

Home safety for all

Today marks the start of a joint project focused on mapping the number of individuals living in industrial housing in the greater Reykjavík area.

Following a tragic fire in Bræðraborgarstígur last year where three people died, the Minister of Social Affairs and Children asked to Icelandic Housing and Construction Authority (Húsnæðis- og mannvirkjastofnun, HMS) to form proposals on how to improve fire safety in places where people reside. A consultation forum established by HMS presented thirteen reform proposals, one of which was to map how many people reside in industrial buildings, as well as gathering information about the conditions of fire protection and the social circumstances of the individuals. This mapping will be conducted in the upcoming weeks. In the first stage, the greater Reykjavík area will be mapped. The methodology developed in this first stage can then be used in other regions of the country.

“At this stage, we want to know the scope and the number of individuals living in industrial housing. When we have mapped the current situation, we will be able to define which reforms are needed to create safer homes for the residents. This mapping effort will form a basis for the authorities to make the necessary reforms, in order to prevent more tragic events like the one that took place in Bræðraborgarstígur”, says Jón Viðar Matthíasson, Fire Chief at the Greater Reykjavík Fire and Rescue Service (Slökkvilið höfuðborgarsvæðisins, SHS).

SHS was asked to lead the project, in close collaboration with HMS, the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (Alþýðusamband Íslands, ASÍ) and the Capital Region municipalities. The mapping is estimated to take around three months. A group of inspectors will visit industrial buildings in the greater Reykjavík area and talk to the individuals living there about the fire protection conditions and their social circumstances. All information gathered will be non-personally identifiable.

A website dedicated to the project, www.homesafety.is, is now accessible with information in six languages.

For further information about the project, please contact:

Dagur B. Eggertsson, mayor of Reykjavík and chair of the board of SHS

Regína Valdimarsdóttir, head of the fire prevention team at HMS Tel: 694-3696

Drífa Snædal, president of ASÍ: Tel: 695-1757

Jón Viðar Matthíasson, Fire Chief, Tel: 894-5421