ALTITUDE POINT

Comfort Cooling Technical Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

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Introduction

This document has been prepared to provide leaseholders and managing agents with a comprehensive explanation of the current engineering strategy for the communal comfort cooling system at Altitude Point.

Over recent years, the building has experienced an increasing number of refrigerant leaks originating from the original fan coil coils installed within individual apartments. In response, FirstPort has worked closely with West Mercia Air Conditioning to investigate these recurring failures and determine the most appropriate long-term engineering solution.

These investigations were supported by an independent metallurgical assessment of the original fan coil coils. Together with West Mercia's experience across the development, the findings have led to a revised engineering strategy that places greater emphasis on the proactive replacement of ageing components rather than repeated reactive repairs.

This document explains that strategy, clarifies the respective responsibilities of leaseholders and the managing agent, and answers the questions most frequently raised by residents.

It should be read alongside previous comfort cooling communications issued by FirstPort. The guidance reflects the engineering recommendations available at the date of publication and will be reviewed periodically as the remediation programme progresses.

Purpose of this Guidance

This document aims to:

- explain why the engineering strategy has changed;
- provide clear and consistent information to leaseholders;
- distinguish between the communal comfort cooling infrastructure and leaseholder-owned equipment;
- explain the separate workstreams relating to original coil replacement and Toshiba controller upgrades;
- provide practical guidance on the options available to leaseholders; and
- answer the questions most frequently raised by residents in a single reference document.

Terminology

For the purposes of this guidance:

Original coils – The fan coil coils originally installed within individual apartments.

Toshiba controller upgrade – Replacement of the original Syxth Sense controller together with Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing and commissioning.

Communal comfort cooling system – The shared comfort cooling infrastructure serving the building, excluding equipment forming part of an individual leaseholder's demised property.

Engineering Guidance

This document explains the current engineering strategy adopted at Altitude Point, based on the independent metallurgical assessment, engineering investigations and the recommendations of West Mercia Air Conditioning available at the date of publication.

It is intended as general guidance and should not be interpreted as an engineering assessment of any individual apartment. Each reported fault will continue to be assessed on its own circumstances.

Contents

SECTION A

Understanding the Engineering Strategy

Why the strategy has changed and why proactive replacement is now recommended.

1. Why has FirstPort introduced a new engineering strategy?

2. Over recent years, the communal comfort cooling system at Altitude Point has experienced an increasing number of refrigerant leaks originating from the original coils installed within individual apartments.

To better understand the underlying cause of these failures, FirstPort worked closely with West Mercia Air Conditioning to undertake extensive engineering investigations across the development, supported by an independent metallurgical assessment of the original coils.

The findings demonstrate that these failures are not isolated defects affecting individual apartments but are consistent with the progressive deterioration of the original coils throughout the building.

As a result, FirstPort has adopted a revised engineering strategy that places greater emphasis on the proactive replacement of ageing components rather than repeated reactive repairs. The objective is to reduce future refrigerant leaks, minimise unnecessary engineering attendance, improve long-term system reliability and reduce disruption to leaseholders.

Although the original coils generally form part of each leaseholder's demised property, failures within individual apartments can directly affect the communal comfort cooling system serving neighbouring properties. FirstPort has therefore coordinated these investigations to assist leaseholders in making informed decisions whilst protecting the long-term operation of the communal system.

2. Why is FirstPort strongly recommending the proactive replacement of the original coils?

FirstPort strongly recommends the proactive replacement of the original coils because the available engineering evidence indicates that many have reached, or are approaching, the end of their serviceable life.

Refrigerant leaks have now been identified across every residential floor within the development, demonstrating that deterioration is widespread rather than confined to isolated apartments.

Apartments currently operating normally should not therefore be assumed to be free from future failure.

FirstPort strongly recommends replacing the original coils before failure occurs wherever practicable. This approach is intended to reduce future refrigerant leaks, minimise repeated engineering attendance, reduce disruption to leaseholders and improve the long-term reliability of the communal comfort cooling system.

3. My comfort cooling is currently working. Should I still consider replacing my original coils?

The fact that your comfort cooling system is currently operating normally does not necessarily indicate that the original coils remain in satisfactory long-term condition.

Engineering evidence indicates that deterioration occurs progressively over time and may not become apparent until a refrigerant leak develops.

For this reason, FirstPort strongly recommends the proactive replacement of the original coils, even where they are currently operating normally, as the most appropriate long-term engineering solution.

4. Why is replacing the original coils important even if only one apartment develops a refrigerant leak?

The communal comfort cooling system operates on a floor-by-floor basis. A refrigerant leak within a single apartment can affect the operation of the communal system serving neighbouring apartments connected to the same circuit.

As a result, the consequences of a refrigerant leak are often experienced by multiple leaseholders rather than only the apartment where the fault originates.

FirstPort strongly recommends the proactive replacement of the original coils because doing so not only benefits the individual apartment but also improves the long-term reliability of the communal comfort cooling system serving the entire floor.

5. What are the financial benefits of replacing the original coils proactively?

Where refrigerant leaks are identified during planned investigations involving multiple apartments, engineering attendance and recommissioning costs can generally be shared across all participating leaseholders.

By contrast, if an individual apartment develops a refrigerant leak after the planned programme has been completed, the subsequent investigation, recommissioning and associated engineering costs are likely to be shared between significantly fewer leaseholders, increasing the potential cost to those involved.

For this reason, FirstPort strongly recommends participation in the planned remediation programme wherever practicable, as it is expected to provide the most cost-effective long-term solution.

6. Can FirstPort require me to replace my original coils?

The original coils generally form part of each leaseholder's demised property. Accordingly, the decision whether to replace them ultimately rests with the individual leaseholder in accordance with the terms of their lease.

However, FirstPort strongly recommends that all original coils are replaced proactively in accordance with the current engineering strategy.

Leaseholders should carefully consider that retaining the original coils increases the likelihood of future refrigerant leaks, repeated engineering attendance, disruption to neighbouring apartments and potentially higher costs should failures occur in the future.

Section B – Original Coils and Replacement Programme

Understanding the original coils, the replacement process and your responsibilities as a leaseholder.

7. What are the original coils?

The original coils are heat exchanger components installed within the fan coil units serving individual apartments.

They transfer heat between the circulating refrigerant and the air within the apartment, enabling the comfort cooling system to operate effectively.

Engineering investigations have identified these original coils as the most significant known source of refrigerant leaks affecting the communal comfort cooling system at Altitude Point.

8. Why are the original coils failing?

The independent metallurgical assessment concluded that the failures are consistent with the progressive deterioration of the original coils over time.

Engineering investigations undertaken across the development support these findings, with refrigerant leaks now identified on every residential floor.

Although the condition of any individual coil can only be confirmed through investigation, the available engineering evidence indicates that the original coils become increasingly susceptible to failure as they continue to age.

9. Can I replace only one original coil?

Whilst replacing only the failed original coil is technically possible, FirstPort strongly recommends replacing all remaining original coils within the apartment wherever practicable.

Experience across the development has demonstrated that additional original coils frequently fail after the initial repair, resulting in further engineering attendance, additional disruption and increased overall cost.

Replacing all original coils at the same time is considered the most appropriate long-term engineering solution.

10. If I choose not to replace my original coils, what are the implications?

The decision whether to replace the original coils remains entirely with the individual leaseholder.

However, FirstPort strongly recommends their proactive replacement.

Leaseholders choosing not to proceed should recognise that retaining the original coils increases the likelihood of future refrigerant leaks, repeated engineering attendance and additional disruption should failures occur at a later date.

Where a refrigerant leak subsequently develops, the leaseholder will remain responsible for arranging the necessary remedial works to equipment forming part of their demised property.

11. Will replacing my original coils guarantee that I will never experience another fault?

No.

Replacing the original coils significantly reduces the risk of refrigerant leaks associated with ageing equipment by removing what is currently considered to be the most significant known source of refrigerant leakage within individual apartments.

However, no mechanical or electrical system can be guaranteed to remain fault-free throughout its operational life. Other components within the apartment or the communal comfort cooling system may still require maintenance, adjustment or repair.

12. Who is responsible for maintaining the comfort cooling equipment inside my apartment?

The fan coil units, original coils, associated refrigerant pipework, valves, wall-mounted controllers and related equipment serving an individual apartment generally form part of the leaseholder's demised property.

Leaseholders are therefore responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing these components in accordance with the terms of their lease.

The communal comfort cooling infrastructure serving the building is managed separately by FirstPort.

13. What happens if my apartment develops a refrigerant leak?

Where a refrigerant leak is suspected, the apartment should be inspected by a suitably qualified comfort cooling specialist to determine the source of the fault.

If the leak originates from equipment forming part of the leaseholder's demised property, the leaseholder will be responsible for arranging the necessary remedial works.

If the investigation establishes that the leak originates from the communal comfort cooling infrastructure, the matter will be progressed under the relevant communal maintenance arrangements.

14. My apartment has a water leak. Does this mean the comfort cooling system has failed?

Not necessarily.

The communal comfort cooling system and the fan coil units within individual apartments circulate refrigerant gas, not water. Consequently, a refrigerant leak will not normally present as a visible water leak.

Where water is observed around a fan coil unit, the most common cause is condensate overflowing from the drip tray. This may occur if condensate cannot drain correctly, particularly where the fan coil unit has been isolated at the local electrical distribution board for a prolonged period before being returned to service.

In some cases, water may originate from an entirely separate source, such as plumbing or drainage within another apartment. Due to the location of the comfort cooling access hatch, water travelling from an apartment above may emerge around the fan coil unit and be mistaken for a comfort cooling fault.

For these reasons, the presence of water does not automatically indicate a refrigerant leak or a fault with the communal comfort cooling system. Each report should therefore be investigated individually to establish the source, cause and responsibility before any remedial works are instructed.

15. Why am I being asked to approve investigation costs before an engineer attends?

Many reported faults are ultimately found to originate from equipment forming part of the leaseholder's demised property.

To ensure investigation costs are not incorrectly recovered through the service charge, engineering attendance is generally arranged on the basis that the leaseholder accepts responsibility for the investigation unless it is subsequently established that the fault originates from the communal comfort cooling infrastructure.

Should the communal system be confirmed as the source of the fault, the position will be reviewed accordingly.

16. How do I obtain a quotation for replacing my original coils?

West Mercia Air Conditioning has been appointed to provide quotations for the replacement of original coils.

Where engineering investigations indicate that replacement is recommended, a quotation will normally be issued directly to the leaseholder or their managing agent.

Leaseholders wishing to proceed proactively before a fault develops are encouraged to contact the Development Manager to request a quotation. Quotations may also be requested directly from West Mercia Air Conditioning.

Section C – Remediation Programme and Next Steps

Understanding how the remediation programme will operate and what leaseholders can expect.

17. Can I appoint my own contractor to replace the original coils?

Yes.

Leaseholders remain free to appoint a suitably qualified specialist contractor to replace the original coils within their apartment.

However, because the apartment forms part of a communal comfort cooling system, FirstPort's appointed contractor, West Mercia Air Conditioning, will still be required to undertake the final inspection, pressure testing, refrigerant charging (where required), recommissioning and reinstatement of the communal comfort cooling system serving the apartment.

These recommissioning works are necessary to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the communal installation, and the associated costs will remain the responsibility of the leaseholder.

Leaseholders considering this option are encouraged to discuss their proposals with FirstPort before instructing an alternative contractor so that the recommissioning requirements and associated costs are fully understood.

18. Why is it more beneficial to replace the original coils during the coordinated remediation programme?

The coordinated remediation programme has been designed to undertake engineering investigations; replacement works and recommissioning across multiple apartments at the same time. This approach improves efficiency, helps minimise disruption and enables engineering resources to be used more effectively.

Where works are completed as part of the coordinated programme, the costs associated with engineering attendance, refrigerant recovery and recharging, pressure testing and recommissioning of the communal comfort cooling system can generally be shared across a larger number of participating leaseholders.

If a refrigerant leak develops after the coordinated programme has concluded, the same engineering attendance and recommissioning activities are still likely to be required. However, because only a small number of apartments are likely to be involved, those leaseholders may need to share the full cost of these communal engineering activities between significantly fewer participants. **As a result, the overall cost to each participating leaseholder could be substantially higher than if the works had been undertaken as part of the coordinated floor programme.**

As at the date of publication, the indicative cost quoted by West Mercia Air Conditioning for replacing two original fan coil coils is approximately £4,770 plus VAT. This figure is provided for guidance only, and individual quotations may vary depending on the configuration of each apartment and the scope of works required.

FirstPort is also exploring whether preferential pricing can be secured where a significant number of leaseholders participate in the programme. Should an agreement be reached, further details will be communicated before any works are instructed.

For these reasons, FirstPort strongly recommends participation in the coordinated remediation programme wherever practicable, as it is expected to provide the most efficient and cost-effective long-term solution.

19. Will a payment option be available?

To assist leaseholders who wish to proceed with the recommended remedial works, FirstPort may, at its discretion, offer a flexible repayment arrangement through the individual service charge account.

Leaseholders wishing to explore this option are encouraged to contact the Development Manager before instructing the works.

Any repayment arrangement will remain subject to FirstPort's approval and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

20. What warranty will I receive following replacement of the original coils?

Replacement coils supplied and installed by West Mercia Air Conditioning are provided with a **five-year manufacturer's warranty**.

This warranty applies to the replacement coils and provides reassurance regarding the reliability of the newly installed equipment.

Leaseholders choosing to appoint an alternative contractor should satisfy themselves regarding both the manufacturer's warranty for the equipment supplied and any workmanship warranty provided for the installation.

21. Will replacing the original coils guarantee that my comfort cooling system will operate correctly?

No.

Replacing the original coils significantly reduces the risk of refrigerant leaks associated with ageing equipment and removes what is currently considered to be the most significant known source of refrigerant leakage within individual apartments.

However, satisfactory operation of the comfort cooling system also depends upon a number of other factors, including:

- the condition of apartment equipment;
- Building Management System (BMS) communication;
- commissioning and system configuration;
- the condition of apartment controls; and

- the operational status of the communal comfort cooling system.

Where applicable, FirstPort strongly recommends upgrading to a Toshiba controller together with Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing and commissioning as part of the long-term engineering strategy.

22. What happens if I decide not to participate in the remediation programme?

Participation in the remediation programme remains entirely a matter for each individual leaseholder.

However, FirstPort strongly recommends participation wherever practicable in accordance with the current engineering strategy.

Leaseholders choosing not to participate should recognise that, if a refrigerant leak subsequently develops within their apartment, they will remain responsible for arranging the necessary investigations and remedial works to equipment forming part of their demised property.

Recommissioning of the communal comfort cooling system following those works may also require attendance by FirstPort's appointed contractor, with the associated costs being borne by the leaseholders involved.

23. How will leaseholders be kept informed of progress?

FirstPort is committed to providing regular communications throughout the remediation programme.

A **Comfort Cooling Progress Tracker** will be maintained to provide leaseholders with visibility of engineering progress, completed works and key programme milestones.

The tracker will be reviewed and updated periodically as further information becomes available.

24. Will individual apartments be identified within the Comfort Cooling Progress Tracker?

The Progress Tracker is intended to improve transparency whilst respecting the privacy of individual leaseholders.

Leaseholders who request that details relating to their apartment are not published will not be identified within the published tracker.

This approach seeks to balance openness regarding the progress of the remediation programme with the reasonable privacy expectations of individual leaseholders.

Section D – Controllers and Building Management System (BMS)

Understanding the different control systems installed at Altitude Point.

25. What is the difference between replacing the original coils and upgrading to a Toshiba controller?

These are two separate engineering works that address different components of the comfort cooling system.

Replacing the original coils addresses what is currently considered to be the most significant known source of refrigerant leaks within individual apartments.

Upgrading to a Toshiba controller replaces the original Syxth Sense controller and includes Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing and commissioning to ensure reliable communication between the apartment and the communal comfort cooling system.

Depending on the configuration of an individual apartment, one or both of these works may be required.

Where applicable, FirstPort strongly recommends both proactive coil replacement and upgrading to a Toshiba controller as part of the long-term engineering strategy.

26. My apartment still has the original Syxth Sense controller. Can I continue using my comfort cooling?

Some apartments retaining the original Syxth Sense controller continue to operate normally.

However, the Syxth Sense controller is no longer considered the preferred control solution for the communal comfort cooling system and may not communicate reliably with the Building Management System (BMS).

To improve long-term reliability, FirstPort strongly recommends upgrading to a Toshiba controller together with BMS re-addressing and commissioning.

Although some existing controllers continue to function correctly, upgrading provides the most appropriate long-term engineering solution currently available.

27. My apartment already has a Toshiba controller, but the comfort cooling still does not work. Why?

The Toshiba controller is only one component of the overall comfort cooling system.

A lack of cooling may result from a number of factors, including:

- refrigerant leaks from equipment within the apartment;
- Building Management System (BMS) communication issues;
- commissioning or addressing faults;
- incorrectly configured controls;
- mechanical or electrical faults within the apartment; or

- the communal comfort cooling system remaining isolated pending completion of remedial works.

For this reason, the installation of a Toshiba controller does not, by itself, guarantee satisfactory operation. Each apartment must be assessed individually before the cause of the fault can be established.

28. Can I arrange for my own contractor to install a Toshiba controller?

The installation of a Toshiba controller involves more than simply replacing the wall-mounted controller.

Correct operation also requires specialist commissioning and Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing to ensure reliable communication with the communal comfort cooling system.

FirstPort is currently in the process of appointing a suitably qualified contractor to undertake these specialist works following the withdrawal of the previous provider.

Leaseholders wishing to upgrade their controller are encouraged to register their interest with the Development Manager. Further information regarding the appointed contractor, programme and associated costs will be issued once the appointment process has been completed.

29. My apartment is controlled by the Legrand home automation system. Does this guidance still apply?

Yes, although only in part.

The penthouse apartments at Altitude Point are controlled through the Legrand home automation system rather than the Syxth Sense or Toshiba wall-mounted controllers installed within the majority of apartments.

Accordingly, the guidance relating to Toshiba controller upgrades and Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing does **not** apply to apartments served by the Legrand system.

However, the recommendations relating to the original coils remain fully applicable.

Where original coils remain installed, FirstPort strongly recommends their proactive replacement as the most appropriate long-term engineering solution.

In addition, FirstPort strongly recommends that the Legrand home automation system is professionally inspected and serviced at least annually by a suitably qualified specialist familiar with Legrand systems. Regular servicing will help maintain the reliable operation of both the comfort cooling controls and the wider home automation system.

30. How do I register my interest in upgrading to a Toshiba controller?

Leaseholders wishing to replace their original Syxth Sense controller with a Toshiba controller should contact the Development Manager to register their interest.

Expressions of interest should be sent by email to:

igor.karpov@firstport.co.uk

FirstPort is maintaining a register of interested leaseholders to assist with planning the controller upgrade programme.

Once a suitably qualified contractor has been appointed to undertake Toshiba controller commissioning and Building Management System (BMS) re-addressing, further information regarding costs, programming and installation arrangements will be issued directly to those who have registered their interest.

Section E – General Information and Future Updates

Further information, ongoing communications and where to obtain assistance.

31. Why has FirstPort produced this guidance?

This guidance has been prepared to provide leaseholders and managing agents with clear, consistent and evidence-based information regarding the communal comfort cooling system at Altitude Point.

It brings together the findings of the independent metallurgical assessment, engineering investigations undertaken by West Mercia Air Conditioning and the current engineering strategy adopted by FirstPort into a single reference document.

Its purpose is to help leaseholders understand the issues affecting the comfort cooling system, clarify the respective responsibilities of FirstPort and leaseholders, and support informed decisions regarding equipment forming part of their demised property.

32. Why has FirstPort taken such an active role if the original coils form part of the leaseholder's demised property?

Although the original coils generally form part of each leaseholder's demised property, failures within individual apartments can directly affect the reliable operation of the communal comfort cooling system serving neighbouring properties.

For this reason, FirstPort has coordinated extensive engineering investigations, commissioned an independent metallurgical assessment and worked closely with West Mercia Air Conditioning to develop the current engineering strategy.

FirstPort has also established the remediation programme and produced this guidance to assist leaseholders in understanding the options available and making informed decisions regarding their own equipment.

The objective is to improve the long-term reliability of the communal comfort cooling system whilst helping to minimise future disruption for all leaseholders.

33. Why can't FirstPort simply replace all of the original coils?

The original coils generally form part of each leaseholder's demised property and cannot ordinarily be replaced by FirstPort without the leaseholder's instruction.

Accordingly, the decision whether to proceed with replacement rests with each individual leaseholder in accordance with the terms of their lease.

However, FirstPort strongly recommends the proactive replacement of the original coils as the most appropriate long-term engineering solution.

FirstPort will continue to support leaseholders by coordinating engineering investigations, providing technical guidance and facilitating the remediation programme wherever reasonably practicable.

34. Will this guidance change in the future?

Yes.

The engineering strategy will continue to be reviewed as further investigations are completed, additional engineering information becomes available and the remediation programme progresses.

Accordingly, this guidance may be updated periodically to reflect new information, revised engineering recommendations or changes to the remediation programme.

Where significant changes are made, an updated version will be issued to leaseholders and managing agents.

35. I still have a question that is not answered in this guidance.

If, after reading this guidance, you have a question relating specifically to your apartment or would like to discuss your individual circumstances, please contact the Development Manager.

Leaseholders and managing agents are encouraged to review this guidance before raising further enquiries, as many commonly asked questions are addressed within this document.

Where appropriate, FirstPort will continue to update this guidance to reflect additional questions received and future engineering developments.

Closing Statement

FirstPort remains committed to managing the communal comfort cooling system in a transparent, consistent and evidence-based manner.

The current engineering strategy has been developed following extensive investigations undertaken over several years, supported by the findings of an independent metallurgical assessment and the engineering expertise of West Mercia Air Conditioning.

Whilst responsibility for equipment within individual apartments generally remains with the leaseholder, FirstPort strongly recommends that leaseholders carefully consider the engineering recommendations contained within this guidance when planning the future maintenance of their comfort cooling system.

The remediation programme will continue to evolve as further investigations and replacement works are completed. Updated guidance and progress reports will therefore be issued periodically to ensure leaseholders remain informed of significant developments.

If, after reading this guidance, you have a question relating specifically to your apartment or your individual circumstances, please contact the Development Manager, who will be pleased to assist.

The long-term success of the engineering strategy depends upon the continued cooperation of leaseholders, FirstPort and its appointed contractors. FirstPort thanks all leaseholders for their continued cooperation and support as this important programme progresses.