



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**  
*Secretary of State for Housing,  
Communities and Local Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and  
Local Government**  
4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

To: Local Housing Authority Leader

Tel: 0303 444 0000

cc: Chair of Fire and Rescue Authority  
Local Authority Chief Executive

Email: [robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk](mailto:robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

August 2021

## **Ensuring safety in higher risk buildings**

Significant progress has been made to correct the errors built up over many decades. 96% of high-rise buildings identified with unsafe ACM cladding (the most dangerous form of cladding) at the start of last year have been remediated, or workers are currently on site. 81% of all high-rise buildings identified as having had unsafe ACM cladding no longer have this cladding.

This progress would not have been possible without the contribution of local authorities. Local authorities have led the identification of high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding, swiftly remediated their own stock, and have been instrumental in driving remediation progress amongst the other residential stock in their areas through monitoring, as well as escalation and enforcement where needed. Minister Greenhalgh and I have joined Leaders of local authorities in meetings with recalcitrant building owners. 20 local authorities have used their powers in the Housing Act 2004 to take enforcement action against those responsible for 43 high-rise buildings with unsafe ACM cladding, including 14 local authorities with the support of my department's Joint Inspection Team.

Like me, you regularly engage with leaseholders and residents of blocks that have not yet been remediated, and will know their frustration, worry and, at times, despair.

In February, I announced that further funding would be made available to pay for the replacement of unsafe cladding systems for all leaseholders in high-rise residential buildings. The Government had already provided £1.6 billion to remediate unsafe cladding, and I announced a further £3.5 billion. This will ensure that where cladding needs to be remediated in high-rise buildings it can and will be, preferably at the expense of those who built the buildings, but failing which the taxpayer will step in to protect leaseholders and residents.

I also recognised the concerns of leaseholders and residents in lower-rise buildings where dangerous cladding needs to be removed. Leaseholders will gain new protection from the costs of cladding removal where needed with a new scheme for buildings 11 to 18 metres in height. Under the scheme, no leaseholder will pay more than £50 a month towards the removal of

unsafe cladding. This will provide reassurance and security to leaseholders, and mortgage providers can be confident that properties will be worth lending against.

We will want to engage with you and the Local Government Association about the role of local authorities in delivering these programmes. As we learned from the remediation of unsafe ACM, the provision of funding as well as construction project management support for freeholders is not sufficient for swift remediation. Local authorities have a key role to play, as demonstrated this year in the success of the locally delivered Waking Watch Relief Fund.

In asking local authorities to play a bigger role, I am committed to providing support to assist you. My department will continue to regularly share information on Building Safety Fund registrants to allow you to understand, manage and prioritise the risks in your areas, drawing also on the data you have gathered since 2019 through the collection on external wall systems. Alongside taking action on buildings known to have combustible cladding, it is also important to ensure that those building owners who have not yet provided information about their cladding systems do so promptly. My officials will be writing to you further on this.

The passage of the Fire Safety Act 2021 presents an opportunity to strengthen your strategic and operational local partnerships with fire and rescue services to support this work. The Act puts beyond doubt that fire and rescue services can also use their enforcement powers against unsafe cladding. Local authorities retain their responsibilities under the Housing Act, and we expect a shared, multi-disciplinary approach from regulators. Local regulators should be sharing information, developing local strategies, and collaboratively considering their approach to buildings. To support this, my department and the Home Office, working with the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council, are reviewing the published joint working protocol between local authorities and fire and rescue services.

Building on the Fire Safety Act, the Government has introduced the Building Safety Bill into Parliament, the next key step in taking forward the most significant building safety reforms in almost 40 years. Local authorities will have a key role working with the new Building Safety Regulator to deliver the new regulatory regime for higher risk buildings, confronting poor practice across the built environment, and establishing new norms and behaviours. And beyond that, you will of course also have crucial new responsibilities for the higher risk buildings you manage. I will look to local authorities to play a key role in helping to change the culture so that problems are identified and dealt with early, residents have a stronger voice in the system, and their concerns are never ignored.

Lastly, our Joint Inspection Team will focus this year on building capability within local authorities to take enforcement action against buildings with unsafe cladding. As well as supporting your work to drive remediation, it will also prepare your environmental health staff for their role in the future building safety regime. The Team, hosted by the Local Government Association, is delivering a series of free training sessions for environmental health officers, as well as producing written materials and hosts an advice line. The Team remains available to support local authorities in undertaking inspections. My department has extended the Team's remit from unsafe ACM cladding to cover high-rise residential buildings with any type of unsafe cladding.

Our approach to all buildings must be a proportionate one, guided by published expert opinion. The risk to life in all buildings is fortunately low and lower still in low and medium rise buildings. We must ensure that only buildings that absolutely need work are subjected to it and even then, that mitigation and fire safety measures such as fire alarms are considered first. Below 18 metres in particular, only a very small number of buildings will require costly remediation works as I set out in my Written Ministerial Statement on 21 July. Nonetheless some buildings do require unsafe cladding to be replaced, such as high-rise buildings with ACM cladding and those with the most dangerous forms of non-ACM cladding for which we have provided funding to ensure the work is completed. We must redouble efforts to finish the job.

Completing the removal of unsafe cladding, where it is necessary and proportionate to do so to achieve an acceptable level of fire safety for residents, requires joint work between the Government and local regulators. Minister Greenhalgh and I and our officials look forward to engaging with you and your officers on how this can best be done to deliver the programmes I announced in February. Would you please also share this letter with your private sector housing / environmental health teams.

**RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP**