



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Robert Jenrick

*Secretary of State for Housing,
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**Ministry of Housing, Communities and
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To All MPs in England

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Dear colleague

26 May 2020

UPDATES ON BUILDING SAFETY REFORMS

The Government announced the biggest change to building safety in a generation this April through a series of ambitious measures. Today, as we approach three years since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, I am writing to provide a further update regarding some of these measures which will help to ensure residents are safe in their homes – now and in the future.

This letter covers the latest steps we have taken as we publish the Building Safety Fund for the Remediation of Non-Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) Cladding Systems prospectus and an update to Approved Document B on fire safety.

Building Safety Fund for the Remediation of Non-ACM Cladding Systems prospectus

As outlined in my letter to you in April, today I am publishing the prospectus for the Building Safety Fund for the Remediation of Non-ACM Cladding Systems.

In the March 2020 budget, the Government announced that it will provide £1 billion in 2020/21 to support the remediation of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems¹ on residential buildings 18 metres and over in both the private and social housing sectors.

For buildings in scope, the fund is designed to address the financial blockers currently preventing or slowing remediation of buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding systems.

¹ Further detail about eligible unsafe non-ACM cladding systems is outlined in the prospectus and the technical annex.

However, prior to registering for the fund we expect all potential applicants to have explored every opportunity to fund remediation from sources other than leaseholders and Government funding. This fund is predominately targeted at supporting leaseholders in the private sector facing significant bills. However, the Government is clear that for leaseholders living in buildings owned by providers in the social sector, including those in shared ownership properties, funding is to meet the provider's costs which would otherwise have been borne by leaseholders; or where providers financial viability is threatened by the cost of remediation.

This fund is in addition to the £600 million which the Government has already made available to ensure the remediation of high-rise buildings with unsafe ACM cladding, which poses the greatest risk.

The prospectus sets out the scope of the fund, which will be available for the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems in line with the consolidated Expert Panel advice published on 20 January 2020².

The prospectus also asks for potential applicants to register their buildings ahead of the full application process opening by the end of July 2020. This is so that the fund program can confirm eligibility in advance based on a technical assessment of the height of the building, an assessment of the cladding system and confirmation of who can apply for funding. This will help to ensure the funds can be speedily allocated to eligible applicants and vital remediation work can happen without delay.

Updates to Approved Document B – Fire Safety

Today I am publishing the Government response to our consultation on the statutory guidance to the Building Regulations with regards to fire safety (Approved Document B). This follows the Government's consultation between 5 September and 20 November 2019.

Last month I said an update to Approved Document B would be published in May that would include the provision of sprinkler systems and consistent wayfinding signage in new blocks of flats over 11 metres - in order to further improve building safety.

These amendments will come into force six months after the publication of the Approved Document B amendment booklet. The Government will continue working with industry to ensure that these changes are implemented in a timely manner. Today I am also publishing the full impact assessment for these amendments to the guidance.

The Government response to the consultation shows that there is support for the provision of sprinkler systems and consistent wayfinding signage. While there is also strong support for the inclusion of guidance for evacuation alert systems, we are continuing to work with the National Fire Chiefs Council on a series of tests of this new technology, with a view to including guidance in a later update to Approved Document B if these tests are successful.

² Document titled "Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings"

Work continues at pace to deliver further reforms to ensure resident safety in existing and future buildings. We are working towards publishing the Building Safety Bill, that will legislate for the radically new building and fire safety system, in draft before summer recess. The Fire Safety Bill and associated regulatory changes introduced by the Home Secretary recently passed its second reading in the House. This Bill is a significant first step in delivering on the recommendations of the Grenfell Public Inquiry Phase 1 report. The Home Office will also publish a public consultation on proposals to further deliver on the Grenfell Inquiry recommendations.

As we approach the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government remains committed to restoring trust in the building safety system, and thus honouring the legacy of all those that were affected by the tragedy.

The measures I am announcing today further demonstrate this commitment to making sure that residents are safe in their homes now, and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jenrick." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP