



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner

**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities**
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2 Marsham Street
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By Email Only

01 September 2023

Dear Chief Planning Officer,

Thank you for your continued work with the Department and others to make sure that high-rise buildings are safe for those who live in them.

More than six years have passed since the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Since 2017, the Government has been clear about the urgent need to remediate unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding; the same cladding found on Grenfell, and all other types of unsafe (non-ACM) cladding found on high-rise buildings.

As of end-July 2023, 96% of all identified high-rise buildings in England have either completed or started remediation work to remove and replace unsafe ACM cladding. For high-rise residential buildings with other forms of unsafe cladding, over £1.9 billion has already been allocated from the Building Safety Fund. 416 buildings, supported by the Building Safety Fund, have started or completed remediation.

This progress would not have been possible without the valuable contribution of local planning authorities in working proactively with applicants and making timely decisions on planning applications for development for proposed remediation (when permission is required).

ACM cladding and all other types of unsafe cladding on high-rise buildings present a significant fire hazard. Whilst some planning decisions are being made promptly on these buildings, there are inconsistencies across planning authorities and some planning applications still waiting for approval. To this end, I would encourage local authority planning departments to prioritise and take a proactive approach to planning applications for high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding.

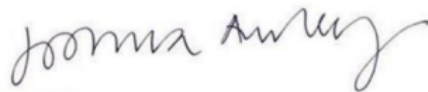
[Written Ministerial Statement of 18th July 2019](#) remains relevant today, and includes practical advice to local planning authorities. For instance, planning approval may not be required where the external appearance of a building is not materially altered by replacement cladding. To this end, local planning authorities should work proactively with building owners to identify whether planning approval is necessary.

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Where a planning application is considered necessary, pre-application engagement can help to resolve any issues and assist local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions. Local planning authorities should also take a proportionate approach to the amount of information needed to support an application.

I appreciate all the efforts that you have made to date to drive forward progress on remediation in your area and that remaining unsafe buildings are remediated as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Joanna Averley', written in dark ink on a light background.

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner