



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Dr Jo Farrar

Director General, Local Government and Public
Services

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and
Local Government**

4th Floor

Fry Building

2 Marsham Street

Westminster

London

SW1P 4DF

psjofarrar@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dclg

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To Local Authority Chief Executives

DAME JUDITH HACKITT'S FINAL REPORT

Dear Colleague,

It is almost one year since the Grenfell Tower tragedy. 71 people died in the greatest loss of life in a fire in a century. A 72nd resident from the tower passed away earlier this year. The Government's immediate priority was to support those affected, and the Government is determined to ensure that they continue to receive the support they need and deserve. The Government is also determined to learn from this terrible tragedy so nothing like this can ever happen again.

It is with this in mind that Dame Judith Hackitt was asked to undertake her review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which was published yesterday. I am writing to update you on the Government's response to this publication and the related announcements made this week.

Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

The Hackitt review has shown that in too many cases people who should be accountable for fire safety have failed in their duties. In future, the Government will ensure that those responsible for a building must demonstrate they have taken decisive action to reduce building safety risks and will be held to account.

The Government agrees that the system should be overseen by a more effective regulatory framework, including stronger powers to inspect high-rise buildings and sanctions to tackle irresponsible behaviour.

Finally – given the concerns raised following the Grenfell tragedy – the Government agrees that residents must be empowered with relevant information. They must be able to act to make their homes safer. The Government committed yesterday to bring forward legislation that delivers meaningful and lasting change, and ensures residents have a much stronger voice in an improved system of fire safety.

In the meantime, the Department is consulting on significantly restricting or banning the use of “desktop studies” to assess cladding systems. Inappropriate use of desktop studies is unacceptable and the Secretary of State will not hesitate to ban them if the consultation – which closes on 25 May – does not demonstrate that they can be used safely. The Department is also working with industry to clarify Building Regulations fire safety guidance, and will publish this for consultation in July.

The cladding believed to be on Grenfell Tower was unlawful under existing building regulations, and should not have been used. The Secretary of State will ensure that there is no room for doubt over what materials can be used safely in cladding of high rise residential buildings. Having listened carefully to the arguments for banning combustible materials in cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings, the Government is minded to agree and will consult accordingly, as we are legally required to do so by the Building Act (1984).

A copy of Dame Judith Hackitt’s report can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report

Remediation of ACM Clad Buildings

As social sector landlords, we know that you, along with housing associations, are getting on with the job of making your buildings safe. Interim measures are in place across all affected buildings in the social sector and work has already started on two thirds of these. The Government recognises that the expense involved means that you are having to make decisions about how to prioritise important services, repairs and maintenance work and new supply.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will fully fund the removal and replacement of dangerous cladding on buildings owned by councils and housing associations, with costs estimated at £400 million. The Government will also continue to offer financial flexibilities for local authorities who need to undertake essential fire safety work. The Government will allocate this funding as soon as possible. More details will be announced shortly about how councils and Housing Associations can apply for funding, including conditions attached to the grant.

In the private sector, the Government is clear that building owners and developers should take responsibility for remediating unsafe cladding and not pass costs on to leaseholders. Within the next week the Secretary of State will be calling in representatives from industry and leaseholders to reiterate this and establish how the industry can make sure residents are safe and feel safe in their homes. Government is keeping this under review.

The Government will also give local authorities further levers to speed up identification and ensure remediation of unsafe cladding in the private sector. The Secretary of State yesterday issued a direction to all Local Housing Authorities to pay particular regard to cladding-related issues when reviewing housing in their areas. The Direction letter is available here

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707813/Direction_to_local_authority_chief_executives_17_May_2018.pdf.

Fire Doors

You will be aware that a door recovered from Grenfell Tower marketed as meeting a 30 minute fire resistance standard, failed the test after approximately 15 minutes. The Government has been undertaking an investigation into flat entrance 30 minute fire doors supplied by Manse Masterdor, a company that ceased trading in 2014.

The Government sought advice from the independent Expert Panel on Building Safety and yesterday laid a written statement informing Parliament that the Expert Panel has sufficient evidence to conclude that flat entrance doors supplied by Manse Masterdor do not consistently meet the 30 minute fire resistance standard they were marketed as providing.

The Secretary of State has asked his officials to continue with their investigations into the wider fire door market, and that fire doors from other door suppliers are tested. The Department has written to affected customers of Manse Masterdor.

The Expert Panel advises that all doors should be assessed regularly to make sure they are likely to meet minimum standards, and an advice note from the Expert Panel on assurance and replacing of flat entrance fire doors can be accessed using the following link www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors.

The Department will continue investigations into the wider fire door market, and will test fire doors from other door suppliers.

I know that your top priority on receiving this letter will be considering what needs to be done to ensure that residents are safe and feel safe in their homes. As the Government takes forward Dame Judith's recommendations, I look forward to hearing your views and working with you to build a system of regulation that puts people and their safety first, and which rebuilds public trust.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Farrar', written in a cursive style.

DR JO FARRAR