



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Waking Watch Relief Fund

Revised Full Fund Application Guidance

This guidance applies to buildings which make an application to the Waking Watch Relief Fund from 26 May 2021

May 2021

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



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## **INTRODUCING THE WAKING WATCH RELIEF FUND**

1. The Waking Watch Relief Fund is a £30 million fund to pay for the costs of installing a common fire alarm system in eligible residential buildings with unsafe cladding systems. Common fire alarm systems will enable costly Waking Watch measures to be reduced or replaced in buildings waiting to have unsafe cladding removed.
2. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, many buildings containing unsafe cladding can no longer support a 'Stay Put' fire strategy. As a result, a sector led group convened by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) issued guidance to support a change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy by putting in place a Waking Watch or a common fire alarm. The guidance (The Simultaneous Evacuation guidance) was updated in October 2020 and is available on the NFCC website <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance>
3. Under the Fire Safety Order, it is the responsibility of the Responsible Person to ensure the safety of the occupants of a building from fire, and in addition assess the risk and identify suitable mitigating measures where they are needed. MHCLG published guidance, '*Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings*' to support Responsible Persons in reviewing their fire risk assessments and in the decision-making process for whether interim measures are needed. The Simultaneous Evacuation guidance was produced and updated to help the Responsible Person adapt their building's fire strategy once it is established that interim measures are needed. Whilst Waking Watch, when established and operated in accordance with the sector led guidance, is an acceptable temporary short-term risk mitigation strategy, the guidance is clear that a common fire alarm is preferable on the grounds of both safety and cost efficiency.
4. Regardless of interim measures or alarms, the best way to make buildings safe is to carry out remedial work. Interim Measures are not a substitute for the swift remediation of buildings with an unsafe cladding system.
5. This guidance is designed to help applicants make an application to the fund when it re-opens for applications on 26 May 2021. Further information on the application period and how and where to apply is provided from paragraph 22 onwards.

### **How much money is available?**

6. The £30m grant funding was launched in January 2021 to cover the reasonable costs for the installation of a common alarm system upon receipt of a completed application. Grant funding is available for qualifying work. Qualifying work means that the alarm system meets the correct specification. A completed application must be received that meets the eligibility criteria along with all the required evidence with the installation ready to proceed. The fund is re-opening to use unallocated funding from the original £30m fund. The precise amount that is available will depend on funding decisions currently being made but will be at least £2m. The intention is to allocate funds to eligible buildings on a first come first served basis until the whole of the £30m fund is exhausted or the application period closes.
7. The Secretary of State expects the funding to deliver value for money in respect of the installation of alarms. Although each building is different and this will impact on the requirements and the cost of an alarm system, installation costs that are above a £1500 per dwelling threshold will require additional scrutiny and may require additional evidence from the applicant to show whether the

costs are necessary and reasonable. Applicants should consider the cost per dwelling prior to applying to the fund. Where the total costs applied for are more than £1500 per dwelling, they should consider what evidence may be required to support the claim being made and provide it with their initial application – for example on grounds of a building’s complexity.

### **Key Principles underpinning the fund**

8. There are a set of key principles underpinning the Waking Watch Relief Fund which all applicants should make themselves aware of. These are set out below:
- Interim measures such as Waking Watch and alarms are a short-term option that mitigate an immediate risk and are not a substitute for remediation where buildings have unsafe cladding. Receipt of this funding and the installation of an alarm is not an alternative to remediation.
  - The fund is for the benefit of leaseholders facing high costs for interim safety measures by providing financial support and delivering a more sustainable interim fire safety system in their buildings pending remediation. Residential Buildings in the Private Rented Sector, Non-residential buildings (hotels and student buildings) and social sector buildings where leaseholders are either not liable or have not borne the costs of Waking Watch are excluded from the fund.
  - When funding is agreed an alarm system should be installed as quickly as possible to reduce or remove the need for a Waking Watch.
  - The responsibility for fire safety of a building always remains with the Responsible Person under the duties conferred on them by the Fire Safety Order. The provision of funding does not mean that MHCLG or any other party assumes the responsibility for the fire safety of any building where an alarm is fitted.

### **Eligibility criteria and scope of the Waking Watch Relief Fund**

9. Funding is available for the reasonable costs to support the installation of an alarm system in eligible buildings.
- To be eligible a building must:
    - (1) Be over 17.70m in height when measured according to diagram D6 of Approved Document B (Annex A).
    - (2) Be a residential building.
    - (3) Have a Waking Watch in place which has been identified and agreed by either a Competent person (as described in part 2 of the Simultaneous Evacuation guidance) or via Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) intervention to support a move to a simultaneous evacuation fire safety strategy and where unsafe cladding is present on the building, and  
Where, as a result of the lease agreement, Waking Watch costs are being passed on to leaseholders; and
    - (4) Be located in England.
  - Additional eligibility criteria for Social sector buildings;
    - (1) the Registered Provider of Social Housing must evidence that Waking Watch costs have been charged to leaseholders and that the costs of installing an alarm will be charged to leaseholders on a proportionate basis if not covered by this fund.

### ***What costs are covered by the fund?***

10. The fund will cover the reasonable upfront capital costs of installing an alarm system. The common fire alarm system should be designed in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1 for a Category L5 system. Any fire detection and fire alarm system should be designed, installed and commissioned by an appropriately qualified, third-party accredited competent person/s. This alarm system is in accordance with the standards referred to in the Simultaneous Evacuation guidance published in October 2020.
11. The Simultaneous Evacuation guidance advises that consideration should be given to installing an alarm specified to allow upgrade to a BS 8629 Emergency Evacuation Alert System once remediation is completed. This is because when the building reverts to a 'Stay Put' evacuation strategy when remediation is complete, a normal common alarm system may have to be removed as it is not compatible with a 'Stay Put' strategy. However, with a BS 8629 system suitably configured to operate as a common alarm system it might be possible to retain some utility and can be converted into the new build standard for an evacuation alert system for use by the FRS or as a means of giving a remote warning of a fire in a flat. The Responsible Person may wish to give this consideration as this system needs to be specified prior to installation. The reasonable costs of installing these alarms may be covered by the fund. In considering the specification the Responsible Person should take relevant technical advice. The full definition can be found in the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance
12. Costs should be reasonable, and the test of reasonableness set in paragraph 7 will apply. Where MHCLG, on behalf of the Secretary of State makes a decision that costs are unreasonable or unnecessary full funding may not be provided.
13. For social sector claims funding is available for the proportion of the alarm installation costs that would have been charged to leaseholders, subject to the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 9.
14. The fund will not cover the following:
  - management or administrative fees. The fund will cover the costs of installing a common alarm system only.
  - the costs of Waking Watch.
  - the costs of the maintenance or repair of the fire alarm while it is in place, removal costs where this may be incurred, or conversion costs if it is to be configured into an evacuation alert system later. However as mentioned in para 11 applicants can consider installing a BS 8629 system as part of their application.
  - the costs of residual fire wardens or evacuation management personnel where they are deemed necessary even where an alarm has been installed.

### ***Will retrospective costs be considered?***

15. The fund will cover the cost of alarms installed after 17 December 2020.

## **What evidence will be required to support an application for funding**

16. The following evidence will be needed to support an application:

### All buildings

#### *Pre installation*

- Evidence that an application meets the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 9.

In addition, the application form will be seeking the following evidence in support of an application. This list is not exhaustive, and applicants should refer to the application form.

- Evidence that the applicant is the responsible person for the building and/or has the authority to carry out the works (for example they have an existing obligation for the management of the building and manage the fire safety on behalf of the responsible person).
- Evidence that the leaseholders in the building are liable for the costs of installing a common alarm system.
- Evidence that the installation of an alarm will reduce or remove the need for Waking Watch.
- Evidence that the proposed alarm meets the required standard.
- Evidence that costs are reasonable. Generally, this will require the provision of at least 3 quotes from different alarm installation companies.
- An undertaking that the installation will not delay – or be a substitute for - remediation.

#### *Post installation*

- Evidence that the alarm has been fitted to the appropriate specification.

### Additional requirements for Social Sector buildings

17. We expect that most Registered Providers will have taken responsibility for the installation of a common alarm system or other interim measures without recourse to charging leaseholders. Where a Registered Provider wishes to make an application to this fund the following applies;

- A Registered Provider will be able to claim for funding of an alarm where they have or intend to charge leaseholders for a proportionate percentage of the installation costs. We will require evidence to support that the costs claimed are proportionate.
- We will require evidence that the Registered Provider has had a Waking Watch prior to installing the alarm system and that the costs of the outgoing Waking Watch were charged to leaseholders.

## **Who is responsible for applying for the fund?**

18. Applications for the fund will be accepted from the Responsible Person or entity nominated by them to apply on their behalf. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Responsible Person, is the person, group, company or other entity that is responsible for ensuring the safety of occupants in their building from fire. The fund assumes that a Waking Watch is already in place and much of the relevant assessments will already have been made and responsibilities – including where costs lie - will be well established. The Responsible Person or any entity nominated on their

behalf should already have the information they need to assess their eligibility and the evidence needed to progress their application.

19. We expect the Responsible Person to keep leaseholders informed of their application and progress. Leaseholders should be informed that an application has been made, of the outcome of that application and, where funding is granted, the timescales for installation.
20. We encourage the Responsible Person to speak to their local FRS about the implications of installing a common alarm in their building and to keep leaseholders informed of their intentions.

### **Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**

21. The fund will cover all reasonable capital costs for the installation of a common alarm system. The assumption is that a s20 consultation is not required in respect of costs as leaseholders will not have to make a financial contribution. If costs are not deemed to be reasonable full costs may not be provided and the Responsible Person will have to consider how any shortfall is covered.

### **Delivery of the re-opened fund and applications**

22. The Waking Watch Relief Fund will reopen for applications on 26 May for a 4-week period. The application period will close on 24 June. Applications received after this date will not be considered for funding. The funding will be on a first come first served basis.
23. Applications made in this tranche (i.e. applications to the re-opened fund from 26 May 2021) will be administered by MHCLG regardless of where buildings are located or the tenure. MHCLG will work closely with Local and Regional Authorities in delivering this tranche of funding.
24. To ensure the allocation is fair, those who submitted late applications to the fund should re-submit them if they are still interested in pursuing this funding. We have written to all of the late applicants we are aware of to let them know about the scheme re-opening.
25. All completed applications, including those that are re-submitted, should be sent to the following email address.

[WWRFApplications@communities.gov.uk](mailto:WWRFApplications@communities.gov.uk)

26. All applicants should continue to use the application forms available on gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waking-watch-relief-fund>

27. If your building has already successfully applied to the Waking Watch Relief Fund as part of the initial tranche of funding and is currently in the process of being awarded funding or has already been awarded funding this guidance does not apply. Those applicants should continue to work with the authority that is administering your application.
28. If an applicant has any queries regarding an application they wish to make from 26 May, they are encouraged to contact the enquires email in box at Paragraph 30.

### ***On site progress tracking and draw down of funds***

29. Once a decision has been made that a building is eligible for the fund a funding agreement must be signed before funding is made available. The funding agreement will set out the basic criteria on which funding is being provided and any other requirements necessary to ensure that funding is being used in a timely and appropriate way. We anticipate that the funding will be made available in two tranches. A proportion of funding will be made available up front with the balance to be paid on completion of the work once evidence has been provided that the alarm has been installed satisfactorily and in accordance with the correct specification.

### **General enquires: Contacts**

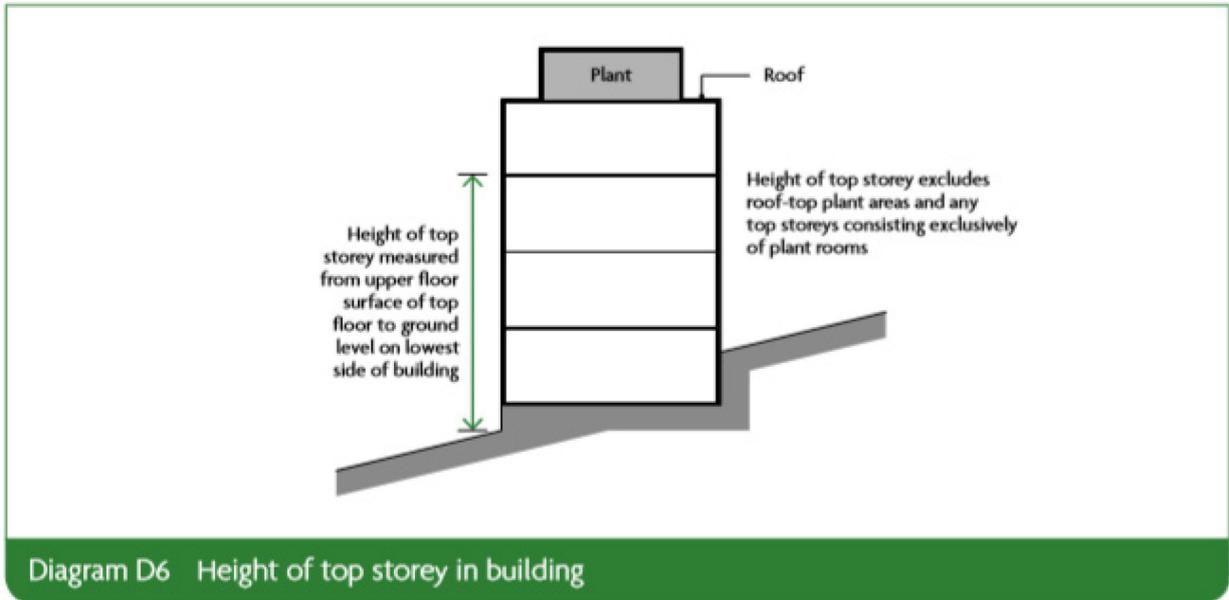
30. General enquiries about the Waking Watch Relief Fund should continue to be sent to the following email address.

[WWRfenquiries@communities.gov.uk](mailto:WWRfenquiries@communities.gov.uk)

## Annex A

### Measuring the height of your building

For a building to be eligible to apply to the fund, the building should measure 17.7m or above, when measured according to diagram D6 of Approved Document B. This diagram is included below:



The measurement should be taken from the lowest ground level to the finished floor level of the top occupied storey (i.e. excluding roof-top plant and any top storeys consisting exclusively of plant rooms).