



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

**Lee Rowley MP**

*Minister of State for Housing, Planning  
and Building Safety*  
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SW1P 4DF

Sarah Albon  
Chief Executive Officer  
Health & Safety Executive

Philip White  
Director of Building Safety  
Health & Safety Executive

7 May 2024

Dear Sarah and Philip,

Thank you for your continued work across the built environment to quantify, evaluate and advise on risk; the work you have begun in the last year has been a significant step forward in our long-term shared goal to improve our understanding of how to support the management of residential buildings up and down the land.

Thank you also for sight of your latest research publication, dated 28 March 2024, into spray foam insulation. This is a timely addition to our understanding of how such insulation interacts with properties and, in particular, its performance and impact if not installed correctly. I write to confirm our shared understanding and next steps in this important policy area.

Your latest research concluded, in summary, that timber degradation risks are low when open cell (moisture permeable) insulant is applied in line with guidance described in British Standard BS 5250:2021. That will be welcome news to those who have asked questions about the performance, effectiveness, and impact of spray foam insulation in recent years.

As you know, insulation, lending, and surveying communities published in March 2023 new protocols to allow an assessment of spray foam installations: <https://www.property-care.org/resources/spray-foam-insulation-inspections> and <https://insulationmanufacturers.org.uk/guides-brochures/>. These describe a structured route for property surveyors to assess risks from this type of insulation and are intended to provide reassurance to lenders, which includes advice that building professionals surveying spray foam insulation should be familiar with the requirements of BS 5250:2021 where this relates to hygrothermal evaluation or suitable condensation risk assessment.

As we understand it, your research is in line with the Department's current position that the presence of spray foam should not preclude lending per se. Instead, surveyors should continue to follow the protocols set out to assess whether its installation adhered to the standard described above.

Alongside this, you have indicated that where installation does not meet British Standard BS 5250:2021 that the risk of timber degradation may increase, dependent upon which type of spray foam is applied, how it is applied and climatic conditions. I know you, like me, will be keen to undertake further work in the coming months ahead to quantify that for those who may be impacted. I would welcome confirmation of your proposed next steps in order to build upon this research project.

Thank you again for your work in this important policy area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lee', with a stylized, cursive script.

**LEE ROWLEY MP**