



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 Revised Full Fund Application Guidance

This guidance applies to buildings
which make an application to the
Waking Watch Replacement Fund from
2 September 2024

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INTRODUCING THE WAKING WATCH REPLACEMENT FUND 2023

1. The Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023, launched in May 2023, is a £41.71 million fund to install alarms and replace costly Waking Watch measures in all residential buildings in England where a Waking Watch is currently in place. This fund is separate from and builds on the work of the Waking Watch Replacement Fund launched in January 2022.
2. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, buildings with an increased fire safety risk may no longer be able to support a 'Stay Put' fire safety 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 interim measures, such as a Waking Watch or a common fire alarm. The guidance (The Simultaneous Evacuation guidance) was updated in August 2022 and is available on the NFCC website. <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/simultaneous-evacuation-guidance>
3. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Fire Safety Order), 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 risks and identifying suitable mitigating measures where they are needed. The Simultaneous Evacuation guidance was produced and updated to help Responsible Persons adapt their building's fire safety strategy once it is established that interim measures are needed. The guidance is clear that a common fire alarm is preferable to Waking Watch on the grounds of both safety and cost efficiency.
4. In December 2020, the government announced the £30m Waking Watch Relief Fund. This fund was focused on high-rise residential buildings (above 17.7m) with unsafe cladding. The fund aimed to protect leaseholders from costly Waking Watch measures by funding the installation of a common fire alarm system in line with the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance. This fund was extended in September 2021 to cover demand, with an additional £5m and closed on the 10th of December 2021.
5. In January 2022, the government launched the Waking Watch Replacement Fund with an additional £27m. The fund had the same aims as the Waking Watch Relief Fund but

expanded eligibility to include all buildings with a Waking Watch where costs were being passed on to leaseholders regardless of height or the reasons for the waking watch being in place.

6. Current data shows that, up to the end of April 2023, in total 367 buildings have been approved for funding, covering 26,900 leasehold dwellings, and 318 buildings have completed their alarm installation saving leaseholders an estimated average of £172 per month per dwelling. Data on the existing funds is published on the gov.uk website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-april-2023>
7. This guidance is designed to help Responsible Persons making an application to the fund after 2 September 2024. Further information on the application period and how and where to apply is provided from paragraph 23 onwards.
8. The Secretary of State reserves the right to update the guidance.

The Objective of the fund

9. Protecting leaseholders from fire safety costs and reducing the excessive use of Waking Watch remain a priority. The government has acted to protect leaseholders from the costs of historical fire safety defects by introducing the leaseholder protections set out in Part 5 of the Building Safety Act 2022. The protections mean that the majority of leaseholders can no longer be required to contribute to the costs of Waking Watch and alarms and moves liability to pay, that would previously have sat with leaseholders, to landlords and building owners. This excludes non-qualifying leaseholders such as those with more than three properties. Although in most cases the leaseholder protections shift the liability to pay for costly Waking Watch measures away from leaseholders, the Secretary of State is clear that Waking Watch remains in place in too many buildings and for too long. Waking Watch should only be used in the most exceptional circumstances and, where it is used, it should be in place for the shortest period possible while an alarm is installed.
10. The Secretary of State has, therefore, decided to extend the fund to all residential buildings (as defined in paragraph 13 of this guidance) with a Waking Watch regardless of where the costs of Waking Watch fall. The new fund builds on the progress made by the initial Waking Watch Relief Fund and the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2022. The additional funding will incentivise the installation of alarms and protect more residents in more buildings pending their full remediation or the provision of long-term mitigation measures. The funding of alarms is aligned with the advice contained in the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance.

How much money is available?

11. Up to £41.71m is being made available to cover the reasonable capital costs of installing a common alarm system in eligible buildings. A completed application must be received for a building that meets the eligibility criteria along with all the required evidence with the

installation ready to proceed. On 11 April 2025 it was announced that the £20.6m Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 would be extended to March 2026, with up to £21.11 million additional funds being made available. The intention is to allocate funds to eligible buildings on a first come first served basis until the whole of the £41.71m fund is exhausted or the application period closes.

12. 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

13. The Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 will be made available for residential buildings only. "Residential buildings" means, for the purpose of the fund, properties used primarily for residential accommodation (including student accommodation). For the avoidance of doubt this excludes property used as hotels. It will be in the Secretary of State's discretion to determine whether or not a property subject to an application to the fund is primarily residential.
14. There are a set of key principles underpinning the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 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. Receipt of this funding and the installation of an alarm is not an alternative to addressing the risk or risks that have required the change in fire safety strategy. It is expected that work to correct any fire safety risks continues at pace (see paragraph 17 for ongoing obligations in respect of required remedial measures).
 - The fund is designed to incentivise the installation of a fire alarm in residential buildings and replace Waking Watch measures, delivering a more sustainable interim fire safety system in the buildings pending remediation or mitigation work.
 - When funding is agreed an alarm system should be installed as quickly as possible to 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 DLUHC or any other party assumes the responsibility for the fire safety of any building where an alarm is fitted.

15. Applicants should note that the funds may be repayable in certain circumstances, as set out in the Grant Funding Agreement, which includes those set out in paragraph 17 (ongoing obligations) of this guidance.

Eligibility criteria and scope of the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023

16. Funding is available for the reasonable costs to support the installation of an alarm system in eligible buildings.

- To be eligible:
 - (1) The building must be located in England.
 - (2) The building must be a residential building (as defined in paragraph 13 of this guidance).
 - (3) The building must 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.
 - (4) The installation of an alarm in the building must be sufficient (when combined with any other remediation measures notified as part of the application) to remove the need for the Waking Watch, save for in exceptional circumstances involving high risk buildings as may be approved at the discretion of the Secretary of State (and in which case the circumstances should be described fully in the application, with supporting evidence).
 - (5) The proposed alarm must meet the required standard (see paragraph 18 for the alarm specification).
 - (6) The costs must be reasonable. This will require the provision of 3 quotes from different alarm installation companies. Applicants must specify their preferred supplier from the 3 quotes provided and their reasons for this preference.
 - (7) The building has not received the benefit of funds from and is not the subject of an application to the Waking Watch Relief Fund or the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2022.

Evidence Requirements

17. 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 16.

Evidence that a Waking Watch is in place may include an enforcement notice, correspondence from the Fire and Rescue Service or Competent Person,

correspondence with leaseholders or a Fire Risk Assessment supported by information that shows that recommendations have been acted upon.

Where the costs of Waking Watch are being passed on to leaseholders, we may require evidence that this is the case, for example invoices, correspondence or accounts that show the costs being charged directly to leaseholder. We may also require an explanation as to why the Building Safety Act leasehold protections do not apply in that case.

- As part of the application the Relevant Person will be required to disclose all remediation measures that, so far as it is aware at that time, are required to the building to ensure the Waking Watch can be removed following installation of the alarm. Applicants will need to provide evidence that these additional remediation measures are achievable and the proposed timescales for achieving these.

Post installation

- Evidence that the alarm has been fitted to the appropriate specification. This will normally be in the form of a commissioning certificate or other evidence certifying that the installation has been completed to the appropriate specification and the date of completion.

Ongoing Obligations

- The terms of the grant funding agreements shall require applicants to confirm at the point of entering into the agreements and at the point at which funds are released that they have disclosed all remediation or mitigation measures of which they are then aware are required to the building to ensure the Waking Watch can be removed following installation of the alarm. Where additional measures are disclosed, applicants will need to represent that these measures are achievable and the proposed timescales for achieving these.
- If, post installation of an alarm, an applicant subsequently receives a Fire Risk Assessment or correspondence from the Fire and Rescue Service or Competent Person requiring further remediation measures to remove or avoid a Waking Watch in addition to those disclosed at the point of the application, the applicant will promptly notify the Secretary of State and provide details of plans for addressing those measures within 10 Business Days.
- Where additional measures which have been disclosed or notified are not undertaken within the necessary timescales such that the building is subject to a Prohibition Notice within 1 year of the alarm installation, the funding provided to that applicant may, in some circumstances, need to be repaid.

What costs are covered by the fund?

18. The fund will cover the reasonable upfront capital costs of the alarm and alarm installation. These costs may include VAT where it is irrecoverable. The common fire alarm system should be designed in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1 for a Category L5 system, in order to satisfy the specific fire safety objectives for the building based on the risks present. 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 (*Refer to link in paragraph 2*).

19. The fund may cover the reasonable costs of an alarm that is capable of being upgraded to the BS 8629 specification. 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 or mitigation work is completed. This is because when the building reverts to a 'Stay Put' evacuation strategy when remediation or other work is complete, a normal common alarm system may have to be removed as it is not compatible with a 'Stay Put' strategy. Where it is the desired long-term outcome for the system to be converted, the responsible person should discuss this future conversion with a competent fire alarm engineer prior to the initial installation of the common fire alarm system. It will be necessary to 'over-engineer' aspects of the installation in order to achieve the new build standard for an evacuation alert system for use by the Fire and Rescue Service or as a means of giving a remote warning of a fire in a flat. 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 (*Refer to link in paragraph 2*).
20. Costs should be reasonable. Where the Secretary of State makes a decision that costs are unreasonable or unnecessary, full funding may not be provided.
21. The fund **will not** cover the following activities (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Project Management, 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 paragraph 19 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.
 - Costs that are considered unreasonable by the Secretary of State.

Will retrospective costs be considered?

22. The fund will cover the cost of alarms where installation work commenced on or after 25 May 2023. Installation means the date that work started to install the alarm in the building.

Who is responsible for applying for the fund?

23. Applications to the fund will be accepted from the Responsible Person for a building or entity nominated by them to apply on their behalf. 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.

24. We expect the Responsible Person to keep residents informed of their application and progress.
25. We encourage the Responsible Person to speak to their local Fire and Rescue Service about the implications of installing a common alarm in their building and to keep residents informed of their intentions.

Delivery of the re-opened fund and applications

26. The aim is to start providing funding for the installation of alarms as quickly as possible. We encourage the Responsible Person or those nominated to apply on their behalf and who meet the basic eligibility criteria not to delay and to start considering what information they are likely to need to make an application.
27. All applicants should apply using the same application form. The application form link is provided on the gov.uk website [LINK: <https://forms.office.com/e/33kaCyxVy5>). An applicant will not need to send an application form outside of this process unless specifically requested to do so. Once the application form has been completed you will be sent a link and a specific unique code where you can upload your relevant documents to be assessed.
28. The fund re-opened for all residential buildings on 2 September 2024 and will close at 23:59 on 31 March 2026. Applications received after 31 March 2026 will not be considered for funding. Any application enquiries should be sent to the following email address:

WWRFapplications@communities.gov.uk
29. If your building has already successfully applied to the Waking Watch Relief Fund or the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2022 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.
30. If your building applied to the Waking Watch Relief Fund or the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2022 but had their application rejected, it is open to the Responsible Person for your building to apply to this Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 provided the eligibility criteria in paragraph 16 of this guidance are also met.

On site progress tracking and draw down of funds

31. Once a decision has been made that a building is eligible for the fund a grant funding

agreement must be signed before funding is made available. The grant funding agreement will set out the basic criteria on which funding is being provided and other requirements necessary to ensure that funding is being used in a timely and appropriate way. 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.

32. Where funding has been provided work should be carried out as quickly as possible. We expect installation to be complete within six months of application, if not before. The government will not be assuming procurement responsibilities or providing a list of approved contractors. This remains the responsibility of the Responsible Person or entity working on their behalf. Any excessive delays in installation from the Responsible Person or entity working on their behalf, which results in increased installations costs will result in these costs being funded by the Responsible Person.

General enquires: Contacts

33. General enquiries about the Waking Watch Replacement Fund 2023 should be sent to the following email address.

WWRFenquiries@communities.gov.uk