



Fire Engineers Advisory Panel: Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Fire Engineers Advisory Panel

- 1.1. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report makes the case for reform in the fire engineering profession with recommendations for greater government and regulatory oversight of the sector, as well as proposing intervention to address capacity and capability issues.
- 1.2. The establishment of the Fire Engineers Advisory Panel is a direct acceptance of Recommendation 17. The first and foremost priority of the panel is to develop an authoritative statement of the knowledge and skills as per this recommendation.
- 1.3. The Panel's secondary aim includes advising government on regulating the profession, measures to improve capacity and capability, the conduct and ethics of those in the profession alongside providing ad-hoc expert advice on other recommendations in respect of fire engineers included in the Phase 2 report.
 - Recommendation 15: For the profession of fire engineer to be recognised and protected by law and for an independent body to be established to regulate the profession, define the standards required for membership, maintain a register of members and regulate their conduct (113.25);
 - Recommendation 16: That the government take urgent steps to increase the number of places on high-quality masters level courses in fire engineering accredited by the professional regulator (113.25);
 - Recommendation 17: That the government convene a group of practitioner and academic fire engineers and such other professionals as it thinks fit to produce an authoritative statement of the knowledge and skills to be expected of a competent fire engineer (113.27);
 - Recommendation 18: That the government, working in collaboration with industry and professional bodies, encourage the development of courses in the principles of fire engineering for construction professionals and members of the fire and rescue services as part of their continuing professional development (113.28).
- 1.4. The Panel will conduct its work with the recognition that a fundamental duty of a fire engineer is to protect life, including firefighters.
- 1.5. The Panel is an official led panel. It does not set the political direction, which remains the remit of Government Ministers. The Panel will provide advice to inform government policy, developing outputs that officials will use to advise

Ministers. The Panel is not responsible for making decisions or advising Ministers directly, unless requested by Ministers.

- 1.6. The business of the Panel is set out in the “Deliverables and Workplan” section of this document.

2. Deliverables and Workplan

- 2.1. The Panel will work to a plan developed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (“the Department”) and agreed with the Panel. This workplan will detail deliverables for the Panel to output.
- 2.2. The primary deliverable will be an authoritative statement of the knowledge and skills to be expected of a competent fire engineer. Such a statement might assist a future regulatory body. It would also improve the competence of other construction professionals and the fire and rescue services through understanding of the role of fire engineering.
- 2.3. In undertaking its work, the panel will take into consideration the activities that fire engineers undertake and trigger points for fire engineer involvement in regulatory systems. This may include the fire safety strategy, as mentioned in Recommendation 10 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry’s Phase 2 report. It will also consider opportunities to align and share learning with other building and fire safety professions to improve competence in the construction sector.
- 2.4. In producing these outputs, the Panel will aim to proceed in consensus. When this is not possible the differing views and reasons will be noted formally in the minutes of the meeting.
- 2.5. The Panel may be asked to provide ad-hoc advice outside the remit of the agreed workplan, such as provide other advice on the fire engineering profession, stakeholder engagement, and opine on data relevant to the fire engineering profession.

3. Operations

- 3.1. At the discretion of the Panel, other individuals and organisations may be invited to observe or attend meetings to support the Panel’s work. The Panel can ask the Department to arrange invitations to Panel meetings and to obtain written evidence for use at the Panel meetings.
- 3.2. At the discretion of the Chair, the Panel may establish sub-groups to move forward areas of work in line with the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report’s recommendations.
- 3.3. Panel members will submit apologies in advance of meetings if they are unable to attend. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, they shall arrange for another Panel member or official to deputise.

- 3.4. Alongside pre-arranged full Panel meetings, Panel members should aim to progress work outside of the main meetings and contribute to individual working groups. This includes reviewing, drafting, and providing input to papers and materials to support the work of the Panel and other work as is appropriate to support the wider work of the Panel.
- 3.5. In carrying out their duties, the Panel members will adhere to the confidentiality and use of official information clauses set out in their Terms of Engagement.
- 3.6. To support candid and open discussions the information discussed by the Panel is confidential and should not be disclosed to any third parties outside of the Panel meetings without agreement. This duty of confidentiality also applies to any third parties who are invited to give evidence to the Panel. Minutes of meetings will not be routinely published but such minutes and other information relating to the Panel and its work may be subject to disclosure by the department in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or other legal requirements.

4. Membership

- 4.1. The Panel will consist of members and a Chair appointed by the Department initially in line with the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Recommendation 17 above. The membership and workplan of the panel will be kept under review as the panel matures. Additional expertise may be brought in through an expansion of membership at the discretion of the department. The Department may elect to terminate appointments at its discretion and in accordance with the Terms of Engagement of the Panel members.
- 4.2. Members are appointed in their personal capacity to represent their particular areas of expertise and experience rather than as representatives of organisations or interest groups that they may be affiliated with.
- 4.3. Members should also take care when commenting publicly on anything which could be related to government policy, including when making presentations or writing articles, to ensure that comments are not inappropriately attributed collectively to the Panel and that no conflict of interest arises. In such circumstances members may find it helpful to discuss the matter with the Chair and the secretariat beforehand.
- 4.4. The Chair has responsibility for providing effective leadership of the Panel. The Chair will set the strategic direction of the Panel and oversee the Panel's engagement with other individuals and organisations that attend the meetings, as arranged by the department. The Chair is ultimately responsible for the outputs of the Panel and the recommendations which the Panel makes to MHCLG.
- 4.5. The Chair may appoint a Deputy Chair. The Deputy Chair will support the Chair in fulfilling their duties, at the discretion of the Chair.

4.6. The Chair is appointed to the position on an ongoing basis at the discretion of the Department.

4.7. The membership of the Panel is provided at **Annex A**.

5. Conflict of Interest

5.1. Panel members will disclose conflict of interests before joining the Panel. If there is any change to the information provided upon appointment, then the changes must be disclosed to the Chair and the secretariat.

6. Secretariat

6.1. The secretariat function will be carried out by officials from the Buildings Design and Construction directorate.

6.2. The role of the secretariat is administrative support for the operations of the panel such as organising the meeting times and dates, working with the Chair to draft the agenda, and drafting minutes, that will be approved by the Panel.

6.3. The secretariat is the link to the wider policy team function, which is responsible for providing advice to Ministers and supporting policy development.

6.4. All costs of the operation of the Panel will be borne by the Department.

7. Frequency and Location of Meetings

7.1. The Panel will meet initially for a 9-month period. The duration of the Panel may be extended as appropriate, at the discretion of the Department. Dates will be set by the secretariat.

7.2. The Panel will meet in-person, online, or in a hybrid meeting format, as organised by the secretariat. In-person meetings will be held at 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF.

7.3. The Panel's activities, membership and purpose will be reviewed when there are significant changes to the vision or significant milestones to ensure alignment to the overall objectives and with the overall policy direction.

Annex A: Panel Membership

- Chair: Director of Buildings Design and Construction until 9 May 2025, subsequently Deputy Director for Building Professions
- Professor Luke Bisby
- Mr Jim Fitzpatrick

- Dr Vasilis Koutsomarkos
- Dr Barbara Lane
- Mr Neil O'Connor
- Dr Michael Spearpoint
- Professor Jose Torero