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Press release

Expert panel on safety meets for the first time

Panel agrees terms of reference to provide advice to Communities Secretary.

Published 30 June 2017

From:

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>)



The new Grenfell Tower expert advisory panel on safety has used their first meeting to set out the scope of vital work to ensure people living in high rise buildings are safe.

The expert panel will provide independent advice to the Secretary of State on any immediate measures that may need to be put in place to make buildings safe for residents following the Grenfell Tower fire.

The panel agreed the most immediate issues they will address and confirmed they will call upon other experts from a wide range of professions and services as required to ensure a responsive and dynamic approach, as developments arise.

The panel also recognised the importance of this work being carried out without duplicating or prejudging the outcomes of the public inquiry and police investigation.

To provide advice to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government the panel will:

- Focus on providing advice relating to fire and building safety, and in particular how to ensure the public are safe in high rise buildings.
- Consider whether there are any immediate additional actions that should be taken to ensure the safety of existing high rise buildings.

- Consider whether there are any changes or clarifications required to existing regulations, and provide advice on possible changes, including making recommendations on the use of specific materials.
- Consider whether the current processes for checking building safety are fit for purpose, and whether any changes are required.

The Expert Advisory Panel has said:

The tests that are currently being conducted are a screening test to identify which Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) panels are of concern. It tests the filler – the core of the panel – to check if it is of limited combustibility (category 1) or not (category 2 or 3). This is in line with the requirement of the Building Regulations guidance. The filler is one element of the overall cladding system.

If the panel core fails the test we would expect the landlord to take the recommended interim fire safety measures issued on 22 June 2017

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-checks-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire-22-june-2017>).

The Panel will engage with experts across the country to consider whether these panels can be used safely as part of a wider building external wall system, and therefore could remain on a building under certain approved circumstances. If, in the meantime, the responsible person for the building chooses to take down and replace cladding, care should be taken to consider the impact that removal may have on the other wall elements, especially insulation, and therefore on the overall fire integrity of the building as well as other Building Regulation requirements. The advice of a competent professional who specialises in the fire performance of cladding assemblies should be sought to assist in these considerations.

Further information

Initially the expert advisory panel is established for 3 months after which it will be reviewed.

The appointment of the Expert Panel (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-panel-appointed-to-advise-on-immediate-safety-action-following-grenfell-fire>) was announced on 27 June 2017.

The panel of building and fire safety experts is chaired by Sir Ken Knight. The other core members of the panel are:

- Dr Peter Bonfield, Chief Executive of the Building Research Establishment
- Amanda Clack, President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Partner at EY
- Roy Wilsher, Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council

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