



Government Legal Department

Solicitor to the Inquiry
Grenfell Tower Inquiry
Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London
WC2A 2LL

Litigation Group
One Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4TS

T 020 7210 3000

DX 123242 Kingsway 6

www.gov.uk/gld

By email to [REDACTED]@grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk

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13 March 2018

Dear Madam

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Response to Grenfell Tower Inquiry

I write to formally advise you of the work the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are undertaking in relation to fire doors. On 14 February 2018, the Metropolitan Police informed MHCLG that a glazed fire door from Grenfell Tower failed BS EN1634, the European Standard of fire resistance for a 30-minute fire door, before 16 minutes. I understand that the Public Inquiry is currently in discussions with the Metropolitan Police regarding this issue. I wanted to take this opportunity to advise you of the work MHCLG has been doing since 14 February.

MHCLG has commissioned tests on further doors from the same manufacturer, Masterdor. This is to help ascertain whether the Grenfell door's failure was a one off (perhaps influenced by having already been exposed to smoke, heat and moisture in the fire) or indicative of a wider issue. Two doors, one glazed and one unglazed, from Masterdor have been tested to BS476-22, the British Standard of fire resistance for 30-minute fire doors. This is how the doors were marketed. They failed prior to 18 and 28 minutes respectively. The Government is clear that these failures should be properly investigated and that action will be taken accordingly.

MHCLG Ministers have asked the Building Safety Independent Expert Panel to advise on risks to public safety and any resulting action that should be taken. They have also sought technical expertise from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Government's Chief Scientific Advisors and technical experts from industry. Further inspection and testing of fire doors is necessary to fully investigate the issues. A timetable for this work has been set out, including testing and visual inspection of doors. This process will take several months. The Secretary of State intends to provide an update to Parliament by the end of April and we will keep you informed of progress.

At this stage, the Expert Panel, the Chief Scientific Advisors and the NFCC agree that there is no immediate risk to public safety and they are confident that the right approach is being taken with regards to public safety. Additionally, the London Fire Brigade, on behalf of the NFCC, have provided an initial risk assessment. They see no need to change their practice or advice to the public in the event of a fire.

Lee John-Charles - Head of Division
Gary Howard - Deputy Director, Team Leader Litigation B5



Nonetheless, in the interests of transparency and considering that a robust testing process will take time, it has been recommended that MHCLG Ministers make an early and measured Parliamentary announcement for transparency and to mitigate and manage the risk of public concern. This is currently planned for 15 March.

Please do let us know if any further information or clarification would be helpful at this stage. We would be happy to discuss as helpful.

Yours faithfully



Prachi Kanse
For the Treasury Solicitor

D [REDACTED]
F [REDACTED]
E [REDACTED]@governmentlegal.gov.uk