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Press release

Government commits to major building safety reforms

Government has made a series of commitments to make sure people living in high-rise buildings are safe.

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From:

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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

The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/james-brokenshire>)



- Government will lead fundamental reform of the system, with strong sanctions for those who fail to comply.
- Government has listened to concerns and will consult on banning the use of combustible materials in cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings

The government has today (17 May 2018) welcomed Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report>), and has made a series of commitments to make sure people living in high-rise buildings are safe.

The government has committed to:

- launching a consultation on banning the use of combustible materials in cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings
- banning desktop studies if the current consultation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/approved-document-b-fire-safety-amendments-to-statutory-guidance-on-assessments-in-lieu-of-tests>) – which closes on 25 May – does not demonstrate that they

can be safely used

- ensuring residents have a better mechanism for blowing the whistle on landlords who do not maintain safe buildings
- changing the law to achieve meaningful and lasting reform of the building regulatory system, with strong sanctions for those who fail to comply
- inviting views to inform how the government could implement major reform of the regulatory system
- restructuring building regulations fire safety guidance to ensure it is clear

This is in addition to the £400 million of funding (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-it-will-fully-fund-unsafe-cladding-removal-in-social-housing>) announced by the Prime Minister yesterday to fully fund local authorities and housing associations with the removal and replacement of aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding, the type used on Grenfell Tower, on social housing buildings above 18 metres.

Secretary of State for Housing, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

It has been deeply moving to hear directly from the Grenfell Tower survivors and community in my first few weeks as Secretary of State.

This was a terrible tragedy that should never have happened. I welcome Dame Judith Hackitt's comprehensive report and her calls for fundamental reform in the building sector. I am committed to making that happen as quickly as possible.

The cladding believed to be on Grenfell Tower was unlawful under existing building regulations. It should not have been used.

I will ensure there is no room for doubt over what materials can be used safely. Having listened carefully to concerns, I will consult on banning the use of combustible materials in cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings.

We must ensure the tragedy at Grenfell brings change and I call on the industry to work with me to achieve the urgent reform needed.

Read the Secretary of State's statement to Parliament on the Hackitt review
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statement-on-the-hackitt-review>)

The government is already acting on Dame Judith's interim recommendations by consulting on restricting or banning the use of 'desktop studies' as a way of assessing the fire performance of external cladding systems.

Dame Judith Hackitt's review was commissioned in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy and has concluded that significant systemic reform is needed spanning every aspect of the 'life' of a high-rise building – from design to construction to ownership and on-going management.

The review has found that regulations and guidance are misunderstood, and oversight and enforcement are inadequate. The recommendations set out a new regulatory system. Dame Judith says a collaborative approach is crucial, bringing together government, industry and the community.

Further information

Dame Judith Hackitt's report is separate to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and, importantly, does not replace the criminal investigation or seek to identify the cause of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

- Dame Judith Hackitt's final report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report>) was published today
- She has published a press release summarising her findings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/radical-reform-of-building-regulatory-system-needed-finds-dame-judith-hackitt>)
- Her interim report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-interim-report>) was published in December 2017
- The consultation on the use of 'desktop studies' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/approved-document-b-fire-safety-amendments-to-statutory-guidance-on-assessments-in-lieu-of-tests>) – a method used to assess fire performance of construction products and systems – will close on 25 May

Background to the review

The review of building safety and fire regulations was commissioned in July 2017 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety>) following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.

It was commissioned by the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, and the then Home Secretary, Amber Rudd.

The review's terms of reference (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-terms-of-reference>) were published in August 2017.

An interim report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-interim-report>) was published in December 2017.

Dame Judith brought industry representatives together for a summit held in January 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-judith-hackitt-hosts-industry-summit>).

Working groups were established and their findings were reported back to Dame Judith in March 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-judith-hackitt-hears-from-industry-working-groups>).

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