

Press release: Greater protection for renters thanks to plans to tighten tenant safety

- Minister announces plans to tighten health and safety standards for rental accommodation – ensuring all tenants have a safe place to call home.
- Move to clampdown on small minority of rogue landlords who turn a blind-eye to dangerous conditions – including the possibility of minimum health and safety standards.
- Action to ensure carbon monoxide rules are fit for purpose – protecting people from the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Renters are to receive greater protection thanks to plans announced by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP which will overhaul health and safety standards for rental accommodation – helping to keep safe the minority of private tenants who currently live in unsatisfactory conditions.

While the vast majority of landlords are responsible owners who take great pride in the properties they lease to their tenants, some private renters live in sub-standard homes with problems such as inadequate heating and damp.

Under current rules, councils are required to ensure rental properties in their area meet important safety standards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and are able to force criminal landlords to take action where tenants are languishing in unsafe accommodation.

Yet the system hasn't been updated in over 12 years, and a new review of the system will consider whether it should be updated and if so, to what extent. The review will also look at whether to introduce minimum standards for common health and safety problems in rental accommodation in order to keep renters safe.

Today's measures build on government action to drive up standards in the rental sector – making sure tenants are living in safe and secure properties; cracking down on the small minority of landlords that are renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation; and ensuring the housing market works for everyone.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has a right to feel safe and secure in their own home.

These reviews will allow us to revisit the current systems for health and safety ratings and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure that both are fit for purpose and meeting the needs of tenants.

By looking again at these rules, we can make sure that they are working as they should to keep people safe and give them peace of mind in their homes.

Ministers have also outlined further detail of the [review into carbon monoxide alarm requirements in the home](#), to help ensure people remain safe from this silent killer.

There are currently around 8 million carbon monoxide alarms in homes across England, with current rules stating that alarms must be fitted in privately rented homes with solid fuel appliances and when solid fuel stoves and boilers are installed.

The review will judge whether legislation goes far enough in keeping people safe from the risks of carbon monoxide in their homes, and whether there should be a blanket requirement to install alarms for other methods of heating, including gas and oil, and to social housing.

Ministers will also consider new research including technological improvements and the falling costs of carbon monoxide alarms and whether this supports a case to extend requirements.

The news demonstrates ongoing government work to support people to feel safe and secure in their home.

Ministers have also introduced tough new powers for councils to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties, including fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

The [Tenant Fees Bill](#), currently making its way through Parliament, will also bring an end to unnecessary, costly fees imposed by landlords or property agents – stopping tenants being charged hundreds of pounds for minor fixes to their homes and putting cash back in their pockets.

Together, the measures will make sure the housing market works for everyone by making renting fair and more transparent for all.

Further information

The [Housing health and safety rating system](#) is used by local authorities to assess health and safety in residential properties – this includes both private rental properties and council/housing association properties.

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[Press release: Further environmental checks for Grenfell site](#)

- Additional environmental checks to reassure survivors and local residents following Grenfell Tower fire
- Past land-use assessment underway and soil testing programme proposed
- Air quality testing to date indicates that the risk to public health is very low
- Up to £50 million already committed by the NHS to fund long-term health services for survivors and local residents

Additional environmental checks are to be carried out in and around the Grenfell Tower site to provide extra reassurance to survivors and local residents.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, NHS England, Public Health England and the Environment Agency have joined forces to ensure the bereaved, survivors and

wider North Kensington community receive health assurances and support.

In addition to up to £50 million committed by NHS England to carry out a 5-year health monitoring programme, as well as ongoing air quality monitoring at the site, the plans involve:

- further environmental sampling of the site, including comprehensive soil analysis to check for any signs of contamination
- water analysis will take place if required
- wider health monitoring and treatment options to reassure those affected

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

We take the wellbeing of Grenfell Tower survivors and local residents extremely seriously and it's essential they have peace of mind regarding their health.

The government is asking leading experts from the Environment Agency to make sure soil surveying around the tower is comprehensive and that analysis will be provided to the public.

We recognise the concerns the community have raised with us, and we are clear that we will do whatever it takes to give them the reassurance they need and deserve.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Dr Patrick Vallance added:

I fully support the decision of the Secretary of State to commission further environmental analysis and stand ready to offer scientific advice on the process.

Public Health England's Regional Director for London, Dr Yvonne Doyle, said:

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have been working very closely with local health partners and the Grenfell community to ensure that they have access to best available public health evidence and advice.

It is not unusual to find areas of contamination in cities which is often associated with historic land use or heavy traffic. It is generally considered to be very low risk to health because people would need to be exposed to the soil over long periods of time.

We will continue to speak to local people and community groups to ensure they have all of the information they need about health.

The immediate risk to health in the aftermath of the fire was from potentially contaminated air and independent air quality monitoring was

commissioned by Public Health England, which has shown the risk to public health to be consistently low.

Soil testing will determine whether there are contaminants identified beyond those which we would expect to be present in cities like London.

Many parts of the land that will be investigated are known to be former industrial sites where contamination can already exist, but the examinations that will be carried out will determine if remediation is required.

Contaminated land is generally considered to be very low risk to health, as any impact would be the result of exposure over a long period.

Further information

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, health services have specifically targeted survivors, bereaved, neighbouring residents and the wider North Kensington community. This has included extended appointments and health checks, including physical and mental health, and enhanced case management. NHS England has also delivered ongoing respiratory fast track provision and community engagement on health and wellbeing to identify any unmet needs.

Advice to the public remains unchanged. Local residents who are concerned about their health should contact their GP. Further information is available on the [North Kensington Health Response website](#).

The air quality around the Grenfell Tower will continue to be monitored daily and the findings published weekly by Public Health England. See [results and general health advice](#).

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[News story: Thorp: One of the largest construction projects of the eighties](#)



The Thorp plant was one of the largest construction projects of its day

Thorp was one of the largest construction projects of its day, ranking alongside the Channel Tunnel and Disneyland Paris in sheer scale and ambition.

Thousands of workers descended onto Cumbria to help tackle some of the most unique engineering challenges in the world.

[Thorp: The largest construction project of the eighties](#)

At a third of a mile long, the cabling inside it could stretch from Whitehaven to Warsaw and parts of it were built knowing people would never be able to go back to those areas while it was operating as a reprocessing plant.

Thorp changed communities, changed Sellafield and changed the face of the world's nuclear industry.

[Archive clip on Thorp construction](#)

Published 26 October 2018

[News story: DASA hackathons open for registration](#)



Black background with different coloured data

The first hackathon will focus on real-world incident response and take place on 26-27 November 2018.

The second will be a defence logistics hackathon, taking place on 29-30 November 2018.

For these events, we are looking to bring together the best from academia, industry and government in the defence and security arena.

Brief details about the hackathons are as follows:

Real-World Incident Response Hackathon

This Hackathon will focus on improving the way we investigate incidents through the application of Multimedia Analysis and Artificial Intelligence.

Further details are available on the [Real-World Incident Hackathon](#) page.

Defence Logistics Hackathon

This hackathon will focus on accelerating Logistics Decision Support through exploiting Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) capabilities.

Further details are available on the [Defence Logistics Hackathon](#) page.

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