

Press release: Action plan to accelerate remediation of private high-rise residential buildings with ACM cladding

A package of measures to drive forward swifter action by building owners to remove potentially unsafe cladding on private sector high-rise residential buildings was announced today (28 June 2018) by Secretary of State for Communities, Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP.

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, local authorities have been working hard to identify affected buildings in their areas and have carried out the large-scale, complex task of assessing more than 6,000 buildings.

Monthly data published today show that 297 private sector high-rise residential buildings have unsafe cladding – with a small additional number expected to be confirmed.

Building owners are responsible for ensuring the safety of their buildings and their residents, and government and councils will continue to monitor and hold them to account where they have unsafe cladding systems.

Local fire and rescue services have been informed about all of these buildings to ensure appropriate interim measures are in place so residents are safe now.

Ministers have been clear that building owners are responsible for making buildings safe and local authorities have also started enforcement action in all but a handful of cases to compel them to take action.

Whilst remediation work has begun on 21 of these buildings, of which 4 have been completed, the government is determined to accelerate the pace of this work and has announced a number of steps to progress this work:

- A new taskforce which will oversee a national programme of remediation in the private sector and ensure plans are in place for every single building affected. The taskforce will be chaired by ministers and membership will include Local Government Association (LGA), National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), London Councils, local authorities who have experienced the largest degree of impact and industry representatives.
- A new inspection team, backed by £1 million government funding, consisting of experts from environmental health, building control and fire inspection who will provide support to individual councils boosting their capacity and expertise to undertake enforcement action and ensure building owners take the necessary action and speed up the remediation

process.

- A follow-up industry roundtable next month so representatives can present their proposals on solutions to remove unsafe cladding from high-rise buildings without passing on the costs to leaseholders. In the meantime, MHCLG will continue to explore other routes for protecting leaseholders, such as supporting local authorities to take more targeted action to identify and remediate affected buildings and recovering costs from those responsible for ensuring the safety of buildings; and supporting leaseholder enfranchisement.
- Letters will be sent to all relevant private sector building owners to remind them of their responsibility to make their buildings safe.

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

The safety of residents is my main priority and fire and rescue services are working with building owners to ensure residents are safe now. But I want to see swifter progress in removing unsafe cladding which is why I have announced further action to support councils as they work with owners of high-rise blocks.

I have been clear that leaseholders should be protected from unfair costs and we expect the industry to do the right thing. If they don't, I will continue to explore other routes and I am not ruling anything out.

You can find the [latest monthly data release on the building safety programme](#).

Secretary of State for Communities, Rt. Hon James Brokenshire MP, provided an [update to Parliament](#).

To identify affected buildings, the government has already provided £1.3 million to the authorities most affected. With this funding they were able to assess more than 6,000 high-rise private sector buildings.

[Speech: CIH Housing 2018](#)

Introduction

Thank you very much and good afternoon everyone. Can I just start by thanking the Chartered Institute and your team for hosting us, And to all of you for

the energy, enthusiasm and expertise you have brought to this conference.

I have to say that I took on the housing brief, in January, with real excitement, But also a measure of trepidation. Because we seem to get through ministers almost as quickly as England get through football managers ... although the current one is not doing too badly.

But what I found very quickly, amidst the fine detail of the National Planning Policy Framework, The myriad of housing schemes, And the varied views amongst all of you, Not to mention my even less bashful colleagues in the House of Commons ... that this really is a 'heart and soul' job.

It touches on everyone's most basic aspirations, And what it takes for us to feel secure in our daily lives: A roof over our head, A place to call home, And within the walls of an Englishman's castle, The crucible for our hopes and dreams, Not to mention the everyday happiness that defines our quality of life, indeed our way of life.

And, of course, these are not ordinary times. That precious sense of homespun security was shattered in the most tragic way, just over 1 year ago, With the appalling fire at Grenfell that cruelly saw 72 lives lost and we recently commemorated that tragedy, and my heart goes out to those who perished, Those who survived, And the community as a whole as they strive heroically to put their lives back on track.

I have seen some of that pain and suffering up close through my work with individual families, as well as local groups including Grenfell United. I have to say I am deeply impressed by their determination to find answers and see justice done. I am struck by their resolve to make this a moment for social change ... for individual tenants but also for whole communities like Grenfell who have long felt neglected or disdained.

Against that most poignant of backdrops, there is a wider national issue facing this country as a whole: our broken housing market.

To fix it, our strategy draws together three essential strands: safety, aspiration and innovation.

Safety

After Grenfell, it must begin with safety.

People must feel safe in their homes, people must be safe in their homes.

Grenfell was a wake-up call. The public inquiry must get to the bottom of the facts. And there must be accountability and justice for that precious community.

And there is already action underway to overhaul the regulatory framework and restore public confidence in it.

Last month, the Prime Minister undertook to fully fund the removal and

replacement of all potentially dangerous ACM cladding on buildings over 18 metres owned by social landlords. We're pressing building owners in the private sector to step up to the plate too, Because leaseholders should not pay those costs, And the private sector should not be let off the hook. I have to say that I hugely welcome the lead taken by Taylor Wimpey, Barratt Developments and Legal & General in shouldering the costs of remediation. They are doing the right thing. I urge others to follow their lead. And the government has made clear that if nothing happens we rule nothing out.

Next, we've launched a consultation on banning the use of combustible materials on the external walls of high-rise residential buildings.

We are also revising the building regulations, so there's no doubt about which materials you can and can't use.

And of course Dame Judith Hackitt's report was a watershed moment for our overarching regulatory framework, It is an opportunity to make a paradigm shift, From the comfort-zone of the box-tick approach to building safety, Towards a far more consistent and rigorous focus on compliance and identifying who takes responsibility ... from the original design right the way through to later and subsequent refurbishment.

This is the model that is used in sectors with the best practice and the best safety records, like for example the civil aviation sector.

Aspiration

But our homes need to be more than just castles, places where we must feel safe, as essential as that is. They are also the place we rest our heads, the places we dream our dreams that inspire our lives.

For too many, today, the dream of buying your own home feels all too faint. Across the country, the average house price is now 8 times the average income. Here in Manchester, prices are rising by double the national average.

That's why we've set a target of delivering 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s ... It is not because it's a nice round number dreamt up by Civil Servants in Whitehall around a water cooler, It is because we need to be delivering at that rate, To start making the cost of buying a home more affordable, For the nurse or teacher who can't afford to live in the community they serve, For the couple working extra shifts trying to save for a deposit, And for the next generation who look at what it takes to rent or buy in the private sector, And find it just far too far beyond their reach, however hard they work.

I understand that frustration, We share their aspiration, And the government is determined to make it a reality.

Building more homes, stronger communities

Of course, people care about the community they are moving into, not just the individual home. That's why we have strengthened the sections of the National

Planning Policy Framework, so councils insist on high quality design. That's why my department hosted the first ever Housing Design Quality Conference this year, to bring together experts in the field, And to recognise that driving up quality of new homes it will be instrumental to getting more of them built ... persuading communities to welcome rather than oppose new residential development.

Now where councils share our ambition as many do to get those homes built, we need to give them support. I know what it's like, as a constituency MP in Esher and Walton. Residents say: we understand the need for extra homes ... But, where are the roads, the schools, the clinics to accommodate the extra families? It's a fair question. That's why we have doubled the Housing Infrastructure Fund to £5 billion ... to build the bypass, the new primary school, the local clinic to go with the new development ... so that as we build more homes, we build up stronger local communities too.

I recently visited Heyford Park in Oxfordshire. And at the heart of what is a truly vibrant and aspirational community there is Heyford Park Free School, there is a care village, there is a sports park. In fact, the school was up and running before many of the homes were built. That's forward thinking. That's how we broaden people's perspective about the opportunities for the sustainable communities that can come with building new homes.

Generation rent

And for those who aspire to rent rather than own their own home, we want a better deal for you too.

The Tenant Fees Bill, currently going through parliament, bans unfair fees charged to tenants. From now on, when you're renting a house or an apartment, what you see is what you pay.

We're championing the Build to Rent sector, which delivers long-term tenancies on a serious scale. Before 2012, the sector hardly existed at all. With our backing we now have over 20,000 Build to Rent homes and 100,000 more coming through in the pipeline. Build to Rent properties are springing up in over 40 sites here in Manchester alone.

And, yes, we're cracking down on rogue landlords with banning orders and increased civil penalties, First of all to protect tenants, But also to preserve the reputation of the vast majority of decent landlords in the sector.

Social housing

The tragedy at Grenfell also shined a spotlight on some of the deeper failings in social housing. Residents not heard. Credible concerns all too lightly dismissed.

Grenfell survivors told me about gaps left between windows, And attempts to install boilers on top of electrical fuse boxes in people's hallways. When one group of residents asked a senior manager: "How would you feel if this

was in your flat?' He said: "Well if I was getting it for nothing I wouldn't mind".

That's not right. That's wrong and we must change such contemptuous attitudes.

Now while most social housing landlords treat their people, their residents, with dignity and respect, too many still have not.

So inspired by the crie de coeur from the Grenfell community, Our social housing green paper, which we intend to publish next month, will set out our plans to ensure everyone in social housing gets fair and decent treatment.

We will look to strengthen the role of the regulator, to give it more teeth. But ultimately, what we really want to empower residents as consumers, With clearer expectations of the treatment and service they are entitled to, And with the voice and ability to meaningfully hold landlords to account.

Let's remember ... nearly 60% of all adult social tenants are in work. The overwhelming majority are good neighbours. They take pride in their communities, They share the same aspirations we all do ... to live in a safe, comfortable and happy home. Many just happen to live in areas with extremely high housing costs.

As we conducted our social housing workshops up and down the country, as part of the consultation that was leading and informing the green paper, I met first-hand entrepreneurs, NHS staff, professionals. They were held in high esteem in their places of work only to find they felt scorned when they went home.

So, let's tackle some of the lingering prejudices that paint all social tenants as relying on welfare, Let's show them the respect they deserve, And let's also open the door to them sharing in the same aspirations we all hold.

Social housing should be a spring board for social mobility, not a glass ceiling. After all, many social tenants aspire to own their own home. [Political content removed] And I look forward to announcing our first pilot of Voluntary Right to Buy in the West Midlands later this year, As a first step to extending the dream of home ownership to Housing Association tenants across the country.

Innovation

As well as safety and aspiration, finally, I want to say something about innovation, Because the housing sector is home to some of the most exciting technological changes around.

And frankly, government needs to keep up.

Modern design and methods of construction offer a chance to build at pace with a leaner and high-skilled workforce.

That's one reason we altered and revised the density provisions in the NPPF, to make sure the regulatory framework doesn't hold back this innovative means of building homes quicker, at lower cost, whilst maintaining high quality design.

In April, I joined the Design Quality Conference where I toured modular homes built by Ilke Homes and CHIC – you can see examples of these on the forecourt just outside this conference centre.

We are supporting builders that embrace this kind of innovation through the £3 billion Home Building Fund.

At the Autumn budget, we added another £1.5 billion to this fund to encourage custom builders and new entrants to the market place.

We're now seeing a real change in market activity. Modern Methods of Construction are entering the mainstream, with Britain emerging as a world-leader.

Beyond MMC, next month I am going to convene a seminar of experts on how digitisation of land holdings and planning decisions could help stimulate SME developers, To ease the vice like grip that the big developers hold over the market, And to promote more competition that ultimately will offer more choice and better deals for everyone as consumers of housing.

Conclusion

With your help, we can deliver in each one of these three vital areas, to: Restore public trust in building safety, Make the dream of home ownership a reality for the next generation, And drive the innovation and reform ... so, from the private to the social sectors ... the housing market delivers a better deal for the consumers it is there to serve.

Thank you.

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Speech: Serving Those Who Served – Policy Exchange Speech

I am delighted to be here in Armed Forces week. And earlier this year I reset the focus and our work at UK aid.

I made a speech about our national values and our connection to humanity and why that for us is something more than just a pragmatic choice for our nation.

Being unselfish and caring for others is at the core of our national values. It's embedded in our politics and in our democracy. It's at the heart of how we organise our public services. And it is the core principle behind how we pay for them.

The British people like to help each other. It's in our communities, it's how we work with our neighbours and our belief in good causes. And it is our ultimate expression of that willingness to help to serve in our Armed Forces.

And I say this as a Secretary of State who is both a current member of our Armed Forces and a former aid worker.

In that speech I spoke about operations MANNA and CHOWHOUND, run by the RAF in the closing stages of World War II. They were humanitarian aid drops of food to save the lives of thousands of people in the still unliberated Netherlands.

They were operations done at great risk, with little benefit to the war effort and they took from our own. Our own rationing was cut in Britain just 19 days after those air drops ceased.

So why did we do it? Because that is what great nations do. And I know that the connection between UK aid and our Armed Forces is deep and strong.

The instinct to protect and defend walks hand in hand with our politics.

Defence, diplomacy and development are inter-reliant on each other.

Often, we need our Armed Forces to create the security and the means to reach those that we are trying to help. Our Armed Forces are the global role model in this regard.

And defence depends on diplomacy and development to reduce the crises that it is dealing with.

As General Mattis said as he argued to maintain funding to the State Department, "If you want to cut the budget, you better buy me some more bombs."

We're both operationally focused departments, expert at getting the job done,

often in incredibly difficult circumstances.

We are both members of the National Security Council. Our purpose is aligned, and with huge operational experience of working together: Typhoon Haiyan, Ebola, Mount Sinjar, the Caribbean hurricanes and the Nepal earthquake – and of course we work in conflict zones most notably on operations in Afghanistan.

We work in the same places, with DFID committed to spending 50% of our Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in fragile and conflict affected states.

The UK has two of the largest mine action charities, HALO and Mines Advisory Group, who are already making use of ex-service personnel with explosive ordnance disposal expertise.

And sometimes our people aren't just similar; they are the same people. There is a huge crossover between those who work in international development and those who are Armed Forces reservists.

Many I meet out in the field carrying out projects in the wake of disasters are Armed Forces veterans on their second career.

Part of the 0.7% Gross National Income aid budget has always been spent by defence and in support of defence.

But there is now a new approach that we are taking that involves much more explicit co-designed and co-funded projects. And these will help deliver excellence in aid but also will work more explicitly in Britain's national interest.

A good example of that approach is the new projects that we're taking forward with the MOD.

We're doing this with every department, but defence was a particular priority. The first non-humanitarian trip I did as Secretary of State at the turn of the year was to the United States to look at civilian-military cooperation, which the Americans do extremely well.

I worked with their Armed Forces, with my US counterparts and others to develop our thinking on this.

Mark Green and I spoke at RUSI earlier in Spring on this issue and later together we launched the Hope in Conflict fund. This is a tech challenge to organisations around the world to provide us with new capabilities and solutions to protect people in conflict situations.

I want DFID and the MOD to develop those capabilities together. Whether it's civil contingencies at home or humanitarian crises overseas. We can inform and support each other to better meet the challenges that we both face.

We've sought to generate our own capabilities which again will give Her Majesty's Government more options in crises. For example, we're tapping into

the best minds in tech, defence civil contingencies and elsewhere to better protect civilians. And this was the idea behind the Humanitarian Innovation Hub I announced earlier this year.

I was fed up with going to the House of Commons and having to explain to them why technically we couldn't air drop food and aid, or get the power back up, or create drinking water for people under siege in conflict zones. So we are developing those new capabilities.

And at the core of these changes is my intention to make best use of both our budgets. If I can deliver a humanitarian operation and it is cost-effective, and appropriate for me to seek the use of UK military assets to do so, then I will.

The fact that my actions benefit another department is a reason for doing it, not a reason for not doing it. And that's why we must demonstrate in everything we do with UK aid that it is not just that we are spending money well, but that we couldn't spend the money better in the national interest.

That is the new higher spending bar that my department has to meet.

So if there's spare capability in defence that development can use, then we should do so and we should foot the bill for it. That's right, to sweat those assets that have been paid for by UK taxpayers.

This is not about the militarisation of aid, but about ensuring that each department plays a complimentary role.

Government must be more than the sum of its parts.

And Global Britain remains committed to upholding and promoting international humanitarian law and its principles.

Remember, this country was the driving force behind the Geneva Conventions of 1949. And we were the driving force between the anti-personnel landmine ban and the Cluster Munitions Convention.

We take the preservation of international humanitarian law seriously.

Why? Because we have long memories.

And it has proved very expensive in the past for us to restore those norms, once they've been lost.

A disregard for those principles is directly responsible for the increasing civilian death rate and suffering in conflict.

Increasingly, parties to conflict are putting obstacles to civilians receiving even the most basic relief and protection. This is one of the main challenges faced by my department on a daily basis.

And we simply must make every effort to ensure that where that law is broken those responsible are held to account.

So, what else will you see different in the future about how we work with defence?

We're talking about how we can best work together, share ideas and learn lessons.

We'll further improve our joint preparedness for extreme weather events and in particular the hurricane season. And we'll build the disaster response capability of all developing country partners.

We're also building stronger ties in our respective worlds.

DFID briefs defence attachés before they go out into country. And DFID colleagues take key MOD leadership courses and the MOD brief us regularly.

In the future, we're looking at working on several new projects tackling gender-based violence.

And this might include the provision and the improvement of quality of peacekeeping troops, as well as joint training programs and building stability and preventing conflict in developing countries.

The future does look exciting and there's much more we can do to ensure that we're more than the sum of our parts. But there are further things we can do too to support those who chose to do their duty for our nation.

Across the Commonwealth, many answered the call to serve alongside Her Majesty's Armed Forces before their countries became independent.

And approximately 8,500 of these elderly veterans, or their widows, face a daily struggle to meet their basic needs for decent food, shelter and medicines. No-one could possibly think that is right.

Those who have served alongside our nation deserve our support in their twilight years.

So, I am very pleased to announce that DFID is designing a bespoke program for pre-independence Commonwealth veterans, who served under the Commonwealth banner as UK allies prior to their countries becoming independent, and are now living below the poverty line.

We're working with veterans' charities to ensure that those who have given so much are looked after for the rest of their lives.

We expect the program to commence next year at the point when Libor funding for those individuals ceases.

It's a win for the developing world and it's a win for the UK on an issue the public care passionately about: the welfare of our veterans.

And it is a further example of how UK aid is changing. A national mission in the national interests.

A global Britain delivering the Global Goals.

Thank you.

Corporate report: Euratom exit: quarterly update, April to June 2018

This report is the second of a series of quarterly updates to Parliament on the government's progress on the UK's exit from the Euratom Treaty.

It covers developments in relation to:

- EU negotiations on Euratom exit
- international agreements
- the setting up of a domestic nuclear safeguards regime
- implementation
- research and training
- stakeholder engagement
- wider issues in the period leading up to March 2019