

Local leaders pledge to continue vital building safety work

- Twenty-five more local leaders have pledged to ensure vital building safety improvements continue during the pandemic
- This will ensure the safety of those living in high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding is prioritised
- The announcement follows regional mayors agreeing the Pledge

The leaders from 25 councils have joined the ranks of those [pledging their commitment](#) to ensuring vital building safety work continues where this can be done safely and in line with public health guidance, Building Safety Minister Lord Greenhalgh has announced today (6 May 2020).

The Pledge, so far signed by 26 councils and 5 regional mayors, sets out a commitment to improving the safety of residential blocks while ensuring those working on site are given clear information and support to guarantee their own safety and limit the spread of COVID-19.

The new signatories to the Pledge include representatives of 18 London councils, as well as leaders in Manchester, Slough, Leeds, Sheffield, Salford and Liverpool.

This follows the Housing Secretary securing an agreement with regional mayors and other local leaders to sign the Pledge earlier this month. This included the mayors of Greater Manchester, Sheffield City Region, London, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands.

Building Safety Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

We are bringing about the biggest change in building safety in a generation backed by our unprecedented £1 billion fund for removing unsafe cladding from high-rise buildings, in addition to the £600 million already made available.

In order to ensure the safety of residents, building safety work must resume where it can be done safely and in line with public health guidance.

The agreement reached with local leaders from across the country is an important step that demonstrates a shared commitment to ensuring this vital work continues during the pandemic.

John Biggs, Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets, said:

As a borough with more high-rise buildings than almost anywhere else in the UK, we know how important the issue of fire safety is to our residents.

Almost 3 years on from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, delays and inaction on the part of private property owners means there are still too many people forced to go to sleep at night not knowing if they are safe in their homes.

It is right that we are focusing as many resources as possible on our coronavirus response, but where work can continue safely, it is also essential that we continue to make progress on vital fire safety work.

The government has provided sector specific guidance on how to apply social distancing in the workplace in England.

This was also reviewed by Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive and includes updated guidance for construction workers making clear that 'work on-site can continue if done in accordance with the social distancing guidelines wherever possible'.

Where work continues on-site, [detailed guidance is available from the Construction Leadership Council](#) on further reducing the risk, including measures for maintaining high standards of hygiene.

In order to support this vital work, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has appointed a firm of construction consultants, Faithful & Gould, to advise those planning and doing ACM cladding remediation work, including identifying and increasing awareness of safe practice under current COVID-19 restrictions.

The National Fire Chiefs Council has also published [revised guidance on waking watch interim measures](#), in the context of coronavirus, that reflects higher rates of occupancy and vulnerability due to people staying home for an extended period of time.

The Pledge has today been agreed by the following:

- Cllr Daniel Thomas (Leader, Barnet Council)
- Cllr Muhammed Butt (Leader, Brent Council)
- Cllr Colin Smith (Leader, Bromley Council)
- Cllr Georgia Gould (Leader, Camden Council)
- Cllr Tony Newman (Leader, Croydon Council)
- Cllr Julian Bell (Leader, Ealing Council)
- Cllr Danny Thorpe (Leader, Greenwich Council)
- Philip Glanville (Mayor of Hackney)
- Cllr Joseph Ejofor (Leader, Haringey Council)
- Cllr Damian White (Leader, Havering Council)

- Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE (Leader, Hillingdon Council)
- Cllr Richard Watts (Leader, Islington Council)
- Cllr Elizabeth Campbell (Leader, Kensington and Chelsea Council)
- Cllr Jack Hopkins (Leader, Lambeth Council)
- Cllr Debra Coupar (Deputy Leader, Leeds City Council)
- Joe Anderson (Mayor, Liverpool City Council)
- Sir Richard Leese (Leader, Manchester City Council)
- Rokhsana Fiaz (Mayor of Newham)
- Paul Dennett (Mayor, Salford City Council)
- Cllr Julie Dore (Leader, Sheffield City Council)
- Cllr James Swindlehurst (Leader, Slough Council)
- John Biggs (Mayor, Tower Hamlets)
- Cllr Andrew Western (Leader, Trafford Council)
- Cllr Ravi Govindia (Leader, Wandsworth Council)
- Cllr Rachael Robathan (Leader, Westminster Council)

The Pledge was initially agreed on 16 April by the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) and the following:

- Andy Burnham (Mayor of Greater Manchester)
- Kate Henderson (Chief Executive, National Housing Federation)
- Dan Jarvis (Mayor of the Sheffield City Region)
- Peter John (Chair of London Councils and Leader of Southwark Council)
- Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London)
- Steve Rotheram (Mayor of the Liverpool City Region)
- Andy Street (Mayor of the West Midlands)