

New regulator established to ensure construction materials are safe

- National regulator established to ensure homes are built from safe materials
- Action taken as Grenfell Inquiry reveals manufacturers ignored safety rules
- Independent review will examine faults in the system and recommend how abuse can be prevented

Residents will be protected through the establishment of a national regulator which will ensure materials used to build homes will be made safer, the Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (19 January 2021).

The regulator for construction products will have the power to remove any product from the market that presents a significant safety risk and prosecute any companies who flout the rules on product safety.

This follows recent testimony to the Grenfell Inquiry that shone a light on the dishonest practice by some manufacturers of construction products, including deliberate attempts to game the system and rig the results of safety tests.

The regulator will have strong enforcement powers including the ability to conduct its own product-testing when investigating concerns. Businesses must ensure that their products are safe before being sold in addition to testing products against safety standards.

This marks the next major chapter in the government's fundamental overhaul of regulatory systems. The progress on regulatory reform includes the publication of an ambitious draft Building Safety Bill, representing the biggest improvements to regulations in 40 years, and a new Building Safety Regulator that is already up and running in shadow form.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The Grenfell Inquiry has heard deeply disturbing allegations of malpractice by some construction product manufacturers and their employees, and of the weaknesses of the present product testing regime.

We are establishing a national regulator to address these concerns and a review into testing to ensure our national approach is fit for purpose. We will continue to listen to the evidence emerging in the Inquiry, and await the judge's ultimate recommendation – but it is already clear that action is required now and that is what we are doing.

Business Minister and Minister for London Paul Scully said:

We all remember the tragic scenes at Grenfell Tower, and the entirely justified anger which so many of us in London and throughout the UK continue to feel at the failings it exposed.

This must never happen again, which is why we are launching a new authority to test and regulate the safety of construction materials, informed by the expertise that already exists within the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety Dame Judith Hackitt said:

This is another really important step in delivering the new regulatory system for building safety. The evidence of poor practice and lack of enforcement in the past has been laid bare. As the industry itself starts to address its shortcomings I see a real opportunity to make great progress in conjunction with the national regulator.

The regulator will operate within the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) which will be expanded and given up to £10 million in funding to establish the new function. It will work with the Building Safety Regulator and Trading Standards to encourage and enforce compliance.

The government has also commissioned an independent review to examine weaknesses in previous testing regimes for construction products, and to recommend how abuse of the testing system can be prevented.

It will be led by a panel of experts with regulatory, technical and construction industry experience and will report later this year with recommendations.

- The announcement follows recommendations in the [Dame Judith Hackitt Review](#) that industry and government must ensure that construction products are properly tested, certified, labelled and marketed.
- In July 2020, the government published in draft the [Building Safety Bill](#). The Bill set out the biggest reforms to building safety regulation for a generation, and included provisions to strengthen and extend the scope of the powers available to government to regulate construction products.
- Together, the Fire Safety Bill, Fire Safety Order and the Building Safety Bill will revolutionise safety and oversight for residents in all buildings.
- The government has published an [update of the progress and steps being taken since the Grenfell fire](#).