

[Press release: James Brokenshire publishes consultation on banning combustible cladding](#)

A consultation on banning the use of combustible materials on the external walls of high-rise residential buildings which are 18 metres or over has been published today (18 June 2018).

This was announced in Parliament by the Housing Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP.

The cladding believed to have been used on Grenfell Tower was unlawful under existing building regulations and should not have been used. The government wants to ensure that there is no doubt about which materials can be used on high-rise residential buildings.

This [consultation](#) is inviting views on our proposals to revise the building regulations to ban the use of combustible materials in the inner leaf, insulation and cladding that are used in external wall systems on these buildings.

Residents, industry and other interested parties will now be able to have their say on proposals affecting the safety of homes. The government is legally required to consult on substantive changes to the buildings regulations before any change in the law and this consultation will end on 14 August 2018.

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

The Grenfell Tower fire was an appalling tragedy and we must do everything we can to ensure a disaster like this never happens again.

I have listened carefully to concerns and I intend to ban the use of combustible materials on the external walls of high-rise residential buildings, subject to consultation.

The cladding believed to have been used on Grenfell Tower was unlawful under existing building regulations. It should not have been used. But I believe that the changes on which we are consulting will offer even greater certainty to concerned residents and to the construction industry.

Following her comprehensive review of fire safety and building regulations, Dame Judith Hackitt recommended that a simpler but more robust approach to the construction and on-going management of high-rise residential buildings was needed.

The [government welcomed Dame Judith's report](#) and went even further than her recommendations, committing to:

- banning or restricting the use of desktop studies from being used to assess the fire performance of cladding systems, unless our [separate consultation](#) demonstrates that they can be safely used; the consultation has closed and we are reviewing responses
- change the law to achieve meaningful and lasting reform of the regulatory system, with strong sanctions for those who fail to comply
- invite views on how the government could implement major reform of the regulatory system in line with Dame Judith's review
- clarify building regulations fire safety guidance (Approved Document B)

See details of the [consultation](#).

The [Independent Expert Advisory Panel](#) has issued advice to building owners on how to ensure that their buildings comply with the existing building regulations. This advice still stands. The clearest ways of ensuring that an external wall system adequately resists external fire spread are either for all of the relevant elements of the wall to be in the top 2 European classes for fire performance (Class A1 or Class A2); or to use an external wall system which can be shown to have passed a large-scale test conducted to the BS8414 standard. In all instances, building owners are advised to seek professional advice by a competent and qualified person on what further steps to take with respect to their external wall system, based on the specific circumstances of their building including the external wall system design and condition, to satisfy themselves that their building is safe.

The government is consulting on proposals to ban combustible materials for residential buildings 18 metres or over, and whether only materials in those top 2 European classes for fire performance – reflective of the approach taken in Scotland – should be allowed over the entire external wall system – from the internal face of the wall through to its external face – with limited exemptions covering parts of the wall (such as paint) that do not present a significant contribution to the risk of fire spread.

There is a statutory requirement to consult under the Building Act 1984. This consultation complies with the duty on the Secretary of State to consult the Building Regulations Advisory Committee and other representative interests on proposed changes to the substantive requirements in the building regulations.

The deadline for consultation responses is 14 August 2018. Once closed, the department will consider all the comments received and provide a response as soon as possible.

In her [final report](#) Dame Judith Hackitt stated that using products which are non combustible or of limited combustibility is undoubtedly the lower risk option than undergoing a full system test.