

SNP must solve cladding crisis

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Thousands of Scottish people are still living in uncertified properties that they cannot sell, as the Scottish Parliament's local government committee heard this morning.

In evidence to the committee, UK Finance, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; the Law Society of Scotland and Property Managers Association Scotland indicated that thousands of homeowners could be affected by the current situation whereby surveyors cannot value properties with uncertified cladding.

Due to higher cladding standards in the rest of the UK, new Scottish flats are now being held to the safer standard, and property professionals cannot provide a valuation on that basis.

In addition, homeowners in older cladded flats are also liable to be penalised as new surveys, costing thousands of pounds are required.

Lastly, the matter of professional indemnity insurance was also raised. This is becoming less available and more expensive but it must be resolved by both the Scottish and UK governments so that surveyors will not be sued when providing a valuation for these properties.

Graham Simpson, Scottish Conservative shadow housing secretary said;

"It is astonishing that we do not yet have an immediate ban on combustible material in cladding, as in the rest of the UK – the SNP government must introduce this as a matter of the utmost urgency.

"It is not right that properties are being built here to a lesser standard of fire safety than in England Wales, and then owners can't get mortgages. It's a crazy situation.

"With regards to the issues preventing mortgage valuations on property with substandard cladding, the Scottish Government must immediately convene a working group of key stakeholders to solve this problem in Scotland.

"They should also work with the UK government to ensure Scots homeowners aren't being penalised for the increased protection in the rest of the UK.

"The Scottish government must consider setting up a remediation fund to help people who now face potentially ruinous bills and keep people safe."