

Fire safety guidance strengthened for new high-rise homes

- New building regulations to assist fire and rescue services in England
- Changes meet recommendations from Phase One of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry
- Clearer safety standards for external walls of buildings including a ban on the highest risk Metal Composite Materials panels for all new buildings

New improvements to fire safety guidance and building regulations to ensure tall buildings are made safer in England have been introduced today (1 June 2022), as part of a wider package of reforms.

The changes meet recommendations from Phase One of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and will strengthen the information available to fire and rescue services.

All new residential buildings over 11m will now have to include a Secure Information Box that will give fire and rescue services access to important details about a building in the event of a fire.

New residential developments over 18m will also have to incorporate an Evacuation Alert System to help fire and rescue services inform residents of a change in evacuation strategy, during an incident. This will give fire and rescue services an additional tool to use on the ground, alongside existing methods of evacuation.

It forms part of a wider update to tighten building regulations and provide clearer fire safety rules for the design or construction of residential developments.

Building and Fire Safety Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

We have introduced the biggest improvements to building safety in a generation, under the Building Safety Act.

These changes will support our tough new regulatory regime – ensuring fire safety measures are incorporated into new high-rise homes and all new residential buildings meet the same safety standards.

It does not end here and I urge the industry act quickly to update their practises in line with these new rules.

The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Protection and Business Safety Committee Chair, Gavin Tomlinson, said:

NFCC especially welcomes the introduction of emergency evacuation alert systems in new buildings over 18m. We also support the inclusion of Secure Information Boxes in buildings over 11m, which will give fire and rescue services access to important details about a building and its residents in the event of a fire.

On the changes to building regulations, we are encouraged that unsafe MCM PE cladding panels are banned on all buildings and that the government has promised stronger safety standards for the use of combustible materials on external walls.

In addition, the government has today introduced tougher standards for external wall materials on new medium-rise blocks of flats.

The government [previously announced](#) a ban on the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of new blocks of flats over 18m, in England – as well as hospitals, student accommodation and dormitories in boarding schools.

Further regulatory updates, introduced today, will now see this ban extend to new hotels, hostels and boarding houses of this height.

These changes will also ban Metal Composite Material panels with unmodified polyethylene core, known as MCM PE, on all new buildings at any height. This follows research carried out by the government and evidence heard at the Grenfell Tower Inquiry on the serious fire safety risks associated with this material.

New statutory guidance will also be introduced to restrict the combustibility of materials used in and on the external walls of residential buildings, between 11-18m in height.

This will mean that lower risk developments between 11-18m meet necessary safety standards – while allowing designers and developers flexibility to use environmentally friendly materials. It builds on a provision, [that the government has already introduced](#), for sprinkler systems to be installed in new blocks of flats 11m and over, in England.

The move follows an extensive consultation and will ensure that residents of all blocks of flats are and feel safe in their homes.

Other updates to the regulations being put forward will:

- include elements of solar shading devices within the scope of the ban
- amend the list of materials exempt from the ban to include fibre optic cables and insulation materials 300mm from ground level
- update the requirement of the ban to refer to the latest version of the British Standard classification for materials used on high-rise residential buildings
- temporarily exempt cavity trays
- amend the requirements for material change of use in buildings

This comes alongside the government's ongoing work to ensure homebuilders

have clear and comprehensive regulatory framework for the design and development of safe buildings. As part of this, the government has today published an update on its technical review of guidance on building regulations for fire safety – known as Approved Document B – and the evidence supporting it.

The government is implementing changes to the Building Regulation's guidance, known as Approved Document B, to meet the Phase One recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry for the provision of Secure Information Boxes and Evacuation Alert Systems. See more information on the [Phase One recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry](#).

Following a review and consultation, the ban on combustibile materials in and on the external walls of buildings, introduced in 2018, will now apply to hotels, hostels and boarding houses – in addition to blocks of flats, hospitals, student accommodation and dormitories in boarding schools.

See the government's [response to its consultation on the review of the ban on the use of combustibile materials in and on the external walls of buildings](#).

See more information on [Approved Document B](#).

See the government's [update on its ongoing work to review of the scientific evidence informing the guidance in Approved Document B](#). See more information on the government's [call for evidence on this review](#).

SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCES NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Brandon Lewis CBE MP, has announced the appointment of eight new Commissioners to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Maureen Brunt, Siobhan Cullen, Ellen Finlay, Monica Fitzpatrick, Colin Kennedy, John McCallister, Sheena McKinney, and Preeti Yellamaty take up their appointments with effect from 1 June 2022.

Background

The Equality Commission was established in 1999, as part of the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. It took over the functions of the Fair Employment Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, and Council for Racial Equality and Northern Ireland Disability Council.

The Commission is responsible for policing the Statutory Duty on all public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across a range of areas including religion, political opinion, gender, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability and those with and without dependants. The Commission is funded and sponsored by The Executive Office.

Further information about the work of the Commission can be found at:
<https://www.equalityni.org/Home>

Terms of appointment

- These positions are part-time for a period of three years ending on 30 May 2025.
- The positions receive a fixed annual remuneration of £5,000.
- The positions are not pensionable.

Biography of Appointees

Maureen Brunt is a development consultant and freelance life coach, formerly employed with Ulster Bank. She is an active volunteer with Integrated Care Partnership and Trillick Leisure Centre as well as an accredited Methodist preacher.

Siobhan Cullen is currently Head of the Department of Law within Letterkenny Institute of Technology. She holds a number of board memberships including Governing Body (LYIT), member of Donegal Women's Centre and is involved with Athena Swan Charter and Advance HE.

Ellen Finlay is a Policy and Development Manager with Samaritans NI. She has worked in the community and voluntary sector for over 20 years and is a member of the NI Food Advisory Committee.

Monica Fitzpatrick is a retired Civil Servant and former Social Inclusion Policy Lead within the Department of Communities. Monica formerly held the position of Equality Advisor in the Department of Justice.

Colin Kennedy is currently Chief Executive of Maplewood Estates Ltd, Chairman of NI Charity Jordan's Gift, Chairman of the NI Football League and member of the pharmaceutical Society of NI Fitness to Practise Committee. He is a former member of the Parades Commission.

John McCallister is a land mobility manager for the Young Farmers Club of Ulster and Board Member of the Community Relations Council. He is a former member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

Sheena McKinney is Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing and has been appointed by the Department of Justice in NI as an Independent Community Observer for the PSNI. She has experience with various committees including the Disabilities Committee, LGBT Committee Older Persons Support Network.

Preeti Yellamaty is a coordinator for Drugs and Alcohol Intervention Service for Young People (DAISY) and Regional Rapid Response Addition Services worker offering

therapeutic support. She is an independent member of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership for Lisburn and Castlereagh Council.

Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public. All of the appointees have declared that they have not been politically active in the last five years.

Regulation

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment (OCPA) regulates appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Statutory Requirements

The Secretary of State makes appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

[RSH updates statutory appointments to Board of Eldonian Community Based Housing Association Limited](#)

Press release

The Regulator of Social Housing (the regulator) has updated its statutory appointments to the Board of Eldonian Community Based Housing Association Limited.



In its 2021 Statistical Data Return, Eldonian was reported as having 382 housing units, the majority of which are general needs social housing units.

The new appointments are:

- Ian Munro
- Jack Lee
- Matthew Sugden

The current regulatory notice for Eldonian is available on the [regulatory judgements and regulatory notices page](#).

Notes to editor

1. The statutory appointments have been made under [s269 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008](#).
2. As stated in the guidance on the regulator's [approach to intervention, enforcement and use of powers](#) a provider is responsible for ensuring that the organisation is properly governed and viable, and achieves the standards set by the regulator. In circumstances where there has been a failure against a standard or where a provider has been mismanaged, the regulator will assess the most appropriate course of action – this includes the appointment of officers to give the provider a range of relevant additional skills and expertise to assist in resolving the failure against standards or mismanagement.
3. The regulatory judgements and notices, and gradings under review are available on our [website](#).
4. RSH promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

5. For press office contact details, see the [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.

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[Voluntary No Anchor Zone Expansion in Studland Bay](#)

Today (1 June 2022) the interim voluntary no anchor zone will be replaced with a new, extended, voluntary no anchor zone to cover a larger area of seagrass off South Beach. This is part of a [strategy](#) to protect the designated features of the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) to ensure that marine activities can continue in a sustainable way.

The new voluntary no anchor zone will help to protect the seagrass habitat and the species that it supports. An interim voluntary no anchor zone was [announced](#) for the seagrass habitat at South Beach on 17 December 2021. This second phase replaces the interim zone.

MMO has engaged with stakeholders and listened carefully to feedback in developing management measures for the MCZ. Based on stakeholder feedback, the no anchor zone is voluntary, and was first introduced as a smaller, interim zone to allow sea users to understand and adapt to the measure. This has now been replaced with the full zone. Close collaboration between MMO and stakeholders has allowed Studland Bay MCZ users to contribute to and shape the management of anchoring, to ensure that the Bay's important habitats are protected and people are able to continue to visit and enjoy this iconic location.

After careful consideration of recent stakeholder feedback, MMO is continuing with the planned introduction of phase 2 of the voluntary no anchor zone to ensure that seagrass beds throughout the site are protected.

MMO have been actively monitoring the voluntary no anchor zone since December and have recently spoken to users in the Studland Bay area through events and drop-in sessions to raise awareness of the voluntary measures. Over the course of the past few months, members of the MMO South Team have been aboard the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Fisheries Patrol Vessel Endeavour in Studland Bay to speak to boat users on the water.

On 1 and 3 June, our local MMO Poole team will be carrying out on water engagement in Studland Bay to raise awareness of the voluntary no anchor zone, listen to stakeholders, and provide information about the phase 2

extension of the zone.

The voluntary no anchor zone is part of the Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy which was developed to ensure that activities in the area continue in a sustainable way. Currently, anchoring activity within the seagrass beds in Studland Bay MCZ is causing significant pressure and is posing a threat to achieving the conservation objectives of the site. The seagrass beds and long-snouted seahorse that feature in the zone have recently been determined by Natural England to be in unfavourable conditions.

The strategy also provides guidance on moorings, including on advanced mooring systems in the bay, an environmentally friendly alternative to anchoring or using traditional moorings in seagrass. A marine license is required to install moorings in the Bay.

MMO understands that advanced mooring systems are an important alternative to anchoring, in order to support sustainable use of the area and effectiveness of the voluntary no anchor zone. MMO is supporting the work of [Studland Bay Marine Partnership](#) who are working on an eco-mooring project.

For more information about the MMO's work in Studland Bay MCZ, please visit the [dedicated page](#) on GOV.UK.

Minister recognises the value of Defence Business Services Veterans UK first hand

The Minister was introduced to team members from Operations, Modernisation, Transformation and Communications and saw first-hand the enthusiasm and dedication from those he met and who are working to deliver every day for Veterans and their families.

Leo Docherty, Min DPV, said:

“I would like to thank Veterans UK for their enduring hard work supporting our veterans and their families. The outputs of their transformation programme will greatly enhance the experience of those making a claim.”

Spending a few minutes chatting with Minister, one of the Operational Leads said:

“We wanted to get across to him how much we value our customers and how the staff here are passionate about delivering for them despite the complexities of the work we do. He was genuinely interested and because he had served in

the Armed Forces we could use him as an example, so it really brought it to life for him.”

She added:

“We discussed the fact that we try really hard to get things right first time but the teams are battling with out of date technology and are often reliant on external organisations for information which can cause delay. As a consequence we don’t always get it right. Where we don’t get it right we always work really hard with our Veterans and their families to put things right and continually learn.”

Next, team members from the Modernisation and Transformation areas explained how Defence Business Services (DBS) are moving from predominantly paper-based systems and the plans for future aspiration to bring all the different systems together to create a much better experience for the end user. A member of the Veterans Modernisation Project said after the visit:

“The Minister was very interested in seeing how our new online claim service is going to work and was particularly interested in, once we go live with it, how fast it will be for our customers; benefiting our overseas Veterans in particular.”

Brigadier Caroline Hull, Head of Armed Forces and Veterans Services for DBS Veterans UK, who welcomed and hosted the Minister at Norcross, said:

“The Minister was genuinely interested and took away with him the strength of feeling Veterans UK staff have for delivering quality services for our Veterans and their families. As the new Head of Armed Forces and Veterans Services I see how hard the team are working and I’m glad that we got a chance for the Minister to see this and the transformation initiatives we are driving to improve things further.”

Leo Docherty attends the Armed Forces Covenant Conference

Earlier in the day, Min DPV also took the opportunity to see first-hand some other Veterans’ related initiatives in the North West as well as attend the annual Armed Forces Covenant Conference in the morning. Delivering his key note speech to the conference delegates at the Kings House Conference Centre in Manchester, the Minister also met with the Greater Manchester Police’s Veterans Network to hear what they are doing to recruit Veterans into the Police Force. Before travelling to Norcross on his final visit of the day, the Minister also met with the team who are involved in the ‘Veterans into Logistics’ in Trafford. The Minister was introduced to Veterans who had taken advantage of the initiative to recruit into the haulage business and hear about the success they were achieving in their new careers.

Leo Docherty visits the charity Veterans into Logistics

As well as modernising our services and looking forward to providing more digitally enabled ways for individuals and their representatives to make a claim, monitor its progress, and stay in touch with us, as demonstrated to the Minister on his visit, we are also committed to continuously improving our services.

Our end users told us that they want and need more information about how the compensation scheme claim and appeals processes work, so our first step has been to produce a [comprehensive suite of diagrams](#) that illustrate the flow of a claim or an appeal, and what happens as the application is considered and processed.

We will keep you informed of all these improvements as they develop, via this and other channels. You can also follow us on Facebook@modveteransuk and Twitter VeteransUK_MOD.