

Press release: Statement from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel: 30 June 2017

The tests that are currently being conducted are a screening test to identify which Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) panels are of concern. It tests the filler – the core of the panel – to check if it is of limited combustibility (category 1) or not (category 2 or 3). This is in line with the requirement of the Building Regulations guidance. The filler is one element of the overall cladding system.

If the panel core fails the test we would expect the landlord to take the recommended interim fire safety measures issued on [22 June 2017](#).

The Panel will engage with experts across the country to consider whether these panels can be used safely as part of a wider building external wall system, and therefore could remain on a building under certain approved circumstances. If, in the meantime, a landlord chooses to take down and replace cladding, care should be taken to consider the impact that removal may have on the other wall elements, especially insulation, and therefore on the overall fire integrity of the building as well as other Building Regulation requirements.

Speech: Women in Finance Awards: City Minister's speech

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Steve Barclay's speech at the first Women in Finance Awards.

News story: 'Prioritise gender equality' says City Minister to finance firms

[Speaking at the Women in Finance Awards](#) last night, newly-appointed minister

for financial services, Stephen Barclay laid out the importance of the four industry actions in the Charter which aim to build the pipeline of female talent for leadership positions.

Mr Barclay made clear that the Charter offers financial firms, both large and small, the flexibility they need to make a real difference:

The [Charter](#) is simple. It doesn't tell companies who to hire, or how to run their businesses.

But it does ask them to make a real commitment to supporting women and their progression to more senior roles.

It asks them to set their own targets for what that looks like.

To measure their progress in achieving them – and make that progress public.

I simply don't buy the argument of those firms who say they cannot do this.

As well as celebrating the success of women in finance, the Economic Secretary emphasised that firms should also think about improving different types of diversity:

The charter does not prevent firms focusing on other aspects of diversity, and if we are to meet the economic and political challenges ahead, we need a meritocracy which promotes diversity across all areas, including LGBT, class, and geography.

The [Women in Finance Awards](#), held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, identified and celebrated role models and advocates in financial services.

The Awards are supported by HM Treasury, 30% club, London Stock Exchange, Virgin Money, Bloomberg, Prudential and Rolls-Royce, among others.

Winners were chosen by an independent panel of judges. Many of the winners, including the top prizes of the night, went to those from firms signed up to the Charter.

Stephen Barclay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said:

For too long many women have been underpaid, underrepresented and undervalued compared to men and it is events like the Women in Finance Awards which rightly shine the spotlight on female excellence and achievement in financial services. I want to congratulate all of the winners and I wish them luck for their future careers.

Top winners include:

Woman of the Year – Emily Cox, Virgin Money

For the flagship award of the night, given to an inspiring leader who has challenged, influenced and revolutionised the culture of the business, the judges chose Emily Cox. Emily stood out as a game changer for all of her work on the Gadhia Report, and for furthering the momentum of the Women in Finance Charter.

Banker of the Year- Maria Harris, Atom Bank

Maria stood out as one of the most influential and inspirational women in banking thanks to her genuinely disruptive approach to mortgage lending. Her work in mentoring team members and hiring for diversity singled her for this award. This was also evidenced by the scores of testimonials from clients and co-workers in praise of her hard work.

Advocate of the Year- Andrew Bester, Lloyds Banking Group

Andrew has gone out of his way to drive greater diversity and inclusion at all levels of Lloyds bank. Under his leadership, Lloyds Bank is now on track to reach its 2020 commitment of 40% of women in senior roles.

Employer of the Year- Columbia Threadneedle

Columbia Threadneedle has a proven track record of proactively cultivating a diverse workforce, introducing specific measures to promote diversity and backing these up by measurable impact.

Insurance Leader of the Year- Debbie Cannon, LV= Insurance

Debbie takes the title of Insurance Leader of the Year for her truly inspiring journey, her compellingly honest story, and for standing up as a role model to other women in the sector.

Legal Adviser of the Year- Leigh Kirkpatrick, RBS

Leigh stood out as a lawyer who has broken barriers to advancement, carved out a niche for herself in finance, while simultaneously paving the way for greater diversity in her firm. This was further bolstered by her mentoring and pro bono work outside of office hours.

Further information

Over 120 firms that have signed up to the Treasury's [Women in Finance Charter](#), covering over half a million members of staff – more than half of the financial sector staff.

The Charter sits among a set of wider government reforms to improve gender equality in the work place. These include the £5 million fund for 'returnships' announced at Budget 2017 and making gender pay gap reporting

mandatory from April this year.

[Press release: New charity investigation: NSA Afan \(Community Regeneration\)](#)

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [NSA Afan \(Community Regeneration\) registered charity number 1088934](#). The inquiry was opened on 23 February 2017.

The charity has objects to promote the regeneration of the local area, the provision of education and training and the relief of poverty.

In May 2016 the charity reported a serious incident to the Commission outlining that there had been a theft at the charity, with £90,000 of the charity's funds unaccounted for. The Commission immediately opened a case to monitor the charity's response, the matter was then referred by the charity to Action Fraud and the police.

The Commission has also been liaising closely with the Welsh Government (a major funder of the charity) who have expressed concerns about the governance of the charity.

The Commission has serious concerns about the charity's governance and internal controls and the apparent failure of the trustees to remedy these issues, placing the charity's property and its operations at risk. In view of this the Commission opened a statutory inquiry in February 2017.

The inquiry will examine:

- the financial controls, management and application of charitable funds, property and assets belonging to the charity
- the governance, management and administration of the charity by the trustees, particularly whether the trustees have acted prudently and exercised reasonable care in respect of the day-to-day running of the charity
- whether the charity's decision making process is adequate, in particular how it has managed conflicts of interests

The Commission stresses that opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrong doing. The purpose of an inquiry is to examine issues in detail and investigate and establish the facts so that the regulator can ascertain whether there has been misconduct and mismanagement; establish the extent of the risk to the charity's property, beneficiaries or work; decide what action

needs to be taken to resolve the serious concerns, if necessary using its investigative, protective and remedial powers to do so.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the [Commission's online charity search tool](#).

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Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
 3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
 4. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.
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[Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on international investigation into Syria chemical weapons attack](#)

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) publishes a statement on its investigation into the chemical weapons attack on Khan Sheikhoun in Syria on 4 April 2017. The OPCW confirms that deadly nerve agent sarin was used in the horrific attack.