

# Government forces developers to fix cladding crisis

- Secretary of State for Levelling Up Michael Gove gives industry deadline of early March for fully funded plan of action
- Mr Gove warns industry he will take all steps necessary to make it happen, including imposing solution in law
- Government set to announce further measures to protect leaseholders and restore common sense to building safety

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove has today (10 January 2022) warned developers that they must pay to fix the cladding crisis that they caused as he overhauls the government's approach to building safety.

Mr Gove has today [written to industry](#) giving them a deadline of early March to agree a fully funded plan of action including remediating unsafe cladding on 11-18 metre buildings, currently estimated to be £4 billion.

He warns he will take all steps necessary to make this happen, including restricting access to government funding and future procurements, the use of planning powers and the pursuit of companies through the courts. He adds that if industry fails to take responsibility, the government will if necessary impose a solution in law.

Later today, the Secretary of State is also due to make an oral statement to the House of Commons announcing plans to protect innocent leaseholders, who are trapped in unsellable homes and face excessive bills to fix dangerous cladding defects.

Mr Gove will also unveil a package of measures to restore common sense to the industry and end the situation of buildings being declared unsafe when they are not.

In the letter, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Michael Gove says:

Our home should be a source of security and pride. For too many of the people living in properties your industry has built in recent years, their home has become a source of misery. This must change.

Mr Gove adds:

It is neither fair nor decent that innocent leaseholders, many of whom have worked hard and made sacrifices to get a foot on the housing ladder, should be landed with bills they cannot afford to fix problems they did not cause.

Government has accepted its share of responsibility and made significant financial provision through its ACM remediation programme and the Building Safety Fund. Some developers have already done the right thing and funded remedial works and I commend them for those actions.

But too many others have failed to live up to their responsibilities.

In the letter, the Secretary of State asks companies to agree to:

- make financial contributions to a dedicated fund to cover the full outstanding cost to remediate unsafe cladding on 11-18 metre buildings, currently estimated to be £4 billion
- fund and undertake all necessary remediation of buildings over 11 metres that they have played a role in developing
- provide comprehensive information on all buildings over 11 meters which have historic safety defects and which they have played a part in constructing in the last 30 years

The vast majority of 11-18 metre buildings are safe and others that do have combustible cladding may also be safe or can be made safe through effective use of existing or new fire safety measures, such as sprinklers and alarms. There are, however, a small number of residential buildings with unsafe cladding which must be addressed.

Mr Gove says developers must take forward all necessary remediation work at pace – prioritising those with greatest risks first and in all cases finding the quickest and most proportionate solution to make buildings safe.

He calls on industry to enter an open and transparent dialogue with the government to hear their proposals, starting with a roundtable with the largest residential developers and trade bodies. The government will invite leaseholders and those affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy to the table to discuss solutions at appropriate junctures to ensure discussions are not taking place behind closed doors.

The government will announce a decision on which companies are in scope for funding contributions following discussions with industry but expect it to cover all firms with annual profits from housebuilding at or above £10 million.

The statement follows the Secretary of State ordering the suspension of Rydon Homes, who are linked to a company responsible for the refurbishment of the Grenfell Tower, from the government's Help to Buy scheme.

Mr Gove also condemned the Mercedes F1 team sponsorship deal with Kingspan, a company connected to the crisis.

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# Government teams with charity Scope on Disabled Persons Passenger Charter

- charter to help all passengers travel with confidence as we build back fairer
- a one-stop shop of advice for disabled passengers travelling by road and rail
- updated expert guidance on tactile paving and inclusive mobility also launched

The government has joined with disability charity Scope to develop a new Disabled Persons Passenger Charter for bus, coach, taxi, private hire vehicle and rail.

Providing a clear explanation of their rights, the charter will improve journeys for disabled people by helping ensure they can travel easily and more confidently.

It will bring together a host of information for disabled passengers travelling across England and advice for passengers on what to do when things do not go as expected.

The charter follows last year's unveiling of the government's [National Disability Strategy](#) – a range of initiatives to improve journeys for disabled people including:

- an accessibility audit of all rail stations
- clearer audible and visual announcements on buses
- introducing legislation for taxis and private hire vehicles in Parliament
- £1 million to improve access at seaports

Wendy Morton, Accessibility Minister, said:

I am delighted that we will be partnering with Scope to develop a charter for disabled passengers that will help boost confidence across our road and rail network.

This practical guide will pull together disabled passengers' rights so they understand how they can get from A to B with the dignity and ease they deserve.

Scope research suggests that passengers who travel frequently are faced with a multitude of documents about their rights, which can be unclear. Acting on this feedback, the charter will collate existing information for passengers

and centralise it into one coherent and easy-to-use format.

Once developed, it will be published online, providing a one-stop shop on passenger rights and complaints procedures.

Mark Hodgkinson, Scope Chief Executive, said:

We are delighted to work with the Department for Transport to develop a Passenger Charter. Thousands of Scope supporters have backed calls for this vital step towards transforming a system that sometimes makes travel unnecessarily hard, if not impossible, if you are disabled.

Public transport should be accessible for everyone and this charter will help disabled passengers better understand their rights, the standards they should expect across the network and how to hold providers to account when travel goes wrong.

As part of our pledge to build back fairer, the government has today (10 January 2022) also updated its [Use of tactile paving surfaces](#) and [Guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure](#). The guidance has been amended following research and stakeholder engagement to include the latest standards.

It will support the building of accessible pedestrian and transport infrastructure while making sure that public spaces are open to all.

This government is committed to making our transport network more inclusive and to making travel easier for disabled people. Today we are also publishing the first [evaluation report of progress against our Inclusive Transport Strategy](#). Incorporating evidence from disabled people on their transport experiences, this report will help shape future changes and build a fairer system for everyone.

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## [\*\*New campaign launched urging pregnant women to Get Boosted Now\*\*](#)

- Pregnant women are being urged to Get Boosted Now in a New Year advertising drive launched today
- New social media and radio assets highlight the risks of catching the virus and benefits of the vaccines to both mothers and their babies
- Almost all pregnant women who were hospitalised or admitted to intensive care with COVID-19 were unvaccinated

Pregnant women who have not yet had their first, second, third or booster

dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are being urged to get their jab as soon as possible, as the government launches a new advertising campaign for the New Year.

The new campaign joins forces with the experts at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) to highlight the serious risks of catching COVID-19 and the benefits the vaccines bring to protecting both mothers and their babies.

Testimonies of pregnant women who have had the jab to keep themselves safe will be played out in adverts across social media and radio stations across the country from today [Monday January 10].

The new campaign urges pregnant women 'don't wait to take the vaccine' and highlights the risks of COVID-19 to mother and baby, and the benefits of vaccination.

The latest data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows COVID-19 vaccinations provide strong protection for pregnant women against the virus. It also shows the vaccines are safe for pregnant women, with similar birth outcomes for those who had the vaccine and those who had not.

DHSC Chief Scientific Adviser and Honorary Consultant Obstetrician Professor Lucy Chappell said:

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is one of the most important things a pregnant woman can do this year to keep herself and her baby as safe from this virus as possible.

We have extensive evidence now to show that the vaccines are safe and that the risks posed by COVID-19 are far greater.

If you haven't had your COVID-19 vaccine, I would urge you to speak to your clinician or midwife if you have any questions or concerns, and book in your vaccine as soon as you can.

Data from the UK Obstetric Surveillance System shows 96.3% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with COVID-19 symptoms between May and October 2021 were unvaccinated, a third of which (33%) requiring respiratory support. Around 1 in 5 women who are hospitalised with the virus need to be delivered preterm to help them recover and 1 in 5 of their babies need care in the neonatal unit.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe for pregnant women and have no impact on fertility, which has been made extremely clear by the government, its senior clinicians and a range of independent experts from stakeholder groups such as RCOG the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the British Fertility Society.

Since April 2021, around 84,000 pregnant women have received one dose and over 80,000 have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. In August 2021, only 22% of women who gave birth were vaccinated. Dr Edward Morris,

President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said:

We welcome this national campaign as an important way of amplifying the very clear message to pregnant women that vaccination provides the best protection for both them and their babies from COVID-19. We urge all pregnant women to get vaccinated as soon as possible, and to get boosted 3 months after the second dose.

We are very concerned that many pregnant women have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19 and we hope this campaign will help reassure them that vaccination is safe and effective. Pregnant women are more vulnerable of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 infection, and this can lead to an increased risk of giving birth prematurely, and stillbirth.

Gill Walton, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), said:

There is overwhelming evidence that the COVID vaccine is safe for pregnant women and for their babies – and that it's the best way to keep them safe from harm. Sadly, there are too many pregnant women being admitted to hospital with COVID, and 96.3% of them haven't been vaccinated.

The consequences of COVID when you are pregnant are clear and potentially devastated, from increased possibility of premature birth and admission to intensive care to a heightened risk of stillbirth.

We know that pregnant women want to do everything they can to protect their baby, which is why midwives want to reassure them that vaccination is the best thing they can do.

Dr Jen Jardine, from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, who is also seven months pregnant and has had her COVID-19 booster jab, said:

Both as a doctor and pregnant mother myself, we can now be very confident that the COVID-19 vaccinations provide the best possible protection for you and your unborn child against this virus.

I would strongly call on all pregnant women like me, if you haven't had the vaccine yet, to either speak to your GP or midwife if you still have questions and then book right away today.

- [Latest UKHSA study on vaccines and pregnancy](#)
- [The advertising assets](#)
- In December, the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)

advised that pregnant women of any age should be considered a clinical risk group within the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

- All pregnant women in the UK have been offered first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 booster vaccines are being offered to all pregnant women over age of 18 years, 3 months after their second dose.
  - Pregnant women of any age should be considered a clinical risk group within the COVID-19 vaccination programme and to support this pregnant women have been added to Priority Group 6 for vaccination.
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## [New campaign launched to help parents improve children's diet](#)

- New Better Health campaign launches today to help families eat better, with new NHS Food Scanner App feature offering healthier alternatives
- Former 'Girls Aloud' member Nadine Coyle, dietician Dr Linia Patel and a Netmums family test the app in a new film supporting the campaign
- 60% of parents say they are giving their children more sugary or fatty snacks than before the pandemic

Families will be given support to help to improve the diets of their children through a new campaign as the new statistics reveal the number of parents giving unhealthy snacks to their children has increased during the pandemic.

The multimedia Better Health campaign has been launched today [Monday January 10] to encourage families to eat better and includes a new 'scan, swipe and swap' feature for the NHS Food Scanner App, which provides a simple solution to help families maintain a healthier diet.

The campaign follows a record rise in obesity amongst children since the start of the pandemic, [with latest data highlighting](#) that one in four (27.7%) children of reception school age are overweight or obese; this rises to 4 in 10 (40.9%) in Year 6 (ages 10-11). [Evidence shows](#) that families purchased food more during lockdowns and this remained above normal levels even once lockdowns ended.

A [new survey conducted with Netmums](#) showed that nearly 6 in 10 (58%) parents give their children more sugary or fatty snacks than before the pandemic and nearly two-thirds (64%) of parents said they often worry about how healthy their children's snacks really are. Nearly 90% of parents said they would benefit from an App which would help them make healthier choices for their children.

Families can scan the product barcodes from their shop and the app will suggest healthier alternatives to help them make an easy swap next time they shop. The app uses a "Good Choice" badge to help signpost people to healthier food and drinks in line with the government's dietary recommendations for

added sugar, saturated fat and salt.

Public Health Minister Maggie Throup said:

We know that families have felt a lot of pressure throughout the pandemic which has drastically changed habits and routines

The new year is a good time for making resolutions, not just for ourselves, but for our families. Finding ways to improve their health is one of the best resolutions any of us could make.

By downloading the free NHS Food Scanner App, families can swap out foods from the weekly shop for healthier alternatives and avoid items high in salt, sugar and saturated fat.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at DHSC said:

We are all aware of the increased pressures families have been under throughout the pandemic with children being stuck at home more. With advertising promoting unhealthy foods to kids, it's not surprising that parents say they've often found it hard to resist pestering from their children for more unhealthy snacks, and that is why the NHS Food Scanner App is a great tool to help families make quick and easy healthier swaps.

It's so important that children reduce the amount of sugary, fatty and salty foods they eat to help them stay healthy and reduce the risk of health problems such as diabetes and tooth decay.

'Girls Aloud' member Nadine Coyle and dietician Dr Linia Patel met with a family to talk about eating habits and to trial the NHS Food Scanner App for themselves, and [recorded a short film to support the campaign](#).

Nadine Coyle said:

As a busy working mum, I find it hard to say no to my kid's demands and often give in to "snack" pressure – even though I know it's not that good for them. I had no idea some foods were so high in sugar, saturated fat and salt – so it's great that the App gives you alternatives.

I love using the NHS Food Scanner App and so does my daughter; she likes choosing the healthier swaps which is great – we are already making small changes through good food choices.

Dr Linia Patel, Dietician said:



We know that parents find it really hard to find healthier snacks for their kids, especially if they're fussy eaters.

The NHS Food Scanner App is a fun way to get the kids involved in choosing healthier foods that they'll love – so get going and scan, swipe, swap!

Annie O'Leary, Netmums Editorial Director said:

That two thirds of parents find they're giving kids more treats as snacks than pre-pandemic doesn't surprise me in the slightest – we all comfort ate our way through the pandemic and I know my kids ate far more treats than usual.

But thank heavens there's now something to help get us all back on track. And that it's from the gold standard in terms of trustworthiness, the NHS, hopefully means millions of families will be downloading it and using it ASAP.

Shopping for snacks can be an absolute minefield for busy parents, so thank you for coming to the rescue yet again, NHS.

As part of the Government's Obesity Strategy, the department is regulating the promotion of less healthy foods to children and has dedicated £100m of funding to support children, adults and families achieve and maintain a healthier weight.

The NHS Food Scanner App provides parents with the ideal hack to improve their children's health in 2022. The free App [can be downloaded](#) or search 'Food Scanner App'.

- Link to [full campaign film and assets](#)
- [Netmums surveyed](#) 2,030 parents with children aged 5-11 years old, conducted between 7th-17th December 2020,
- Running throughout England from 10th January to 31st March, the campaign will include new advertising on TV, video on demand, radio, out of home, media partnerships, social media and other digital channels, together with national and regional PR activity.
- The new TV ad brings the swaps to life by presenting the Food Scanner App as the simple solution to help parents find healthier swaps for their families.
- Primary teachers will also be able to help pupils learn about making healthier food choices using a range of fun curriculum linked [teaching resources](#) that feature the NHS Food Scanner App.
- The 'Good Choice' badge\* helps signpost consumers to healthier food and drinks that meet nutrient criteria in line the Government's dietary recommendations for added sugar, saturated fat and salt.
- NHS Digital [National Child Measurement programme England 2020/2021](#)
- The dietary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic [report](#)
- [Government Obesity Strategy](#)

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# Sudan: Quad statement, January 2022

Press release

The UK, US, UAE and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have issued a Quad statement to welcome discussions to resolve Sudan's political crisis.



The Quad (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America) welcome the announcement that the UN Interim Transition Assistance Mission to Sudan is facilitating discussions to resolve Sudan's political crisis.

We strongly support this UN-facilitated, Sudanese-led dialogue initiative. We urge all Sudanese political actors to seize this opportunity to restore the country's transition to civilian democracy, in line with the 2019 Constitutional Declaration. We look forward to this being a results-oriented process that will guide the country towards democratic elections, in line with the Sudanese people's manifest aspirations for freedom, democracy, peace, justice and prosperity.

Published 8 January 2022