

# New regulator at heart of building safety overhaul

- Reforms outline biggest changes to building safety regulation in a generation
- Building Safety Regulator to oversee a new safety regime for high-rise residential homes, taking safety and cost into account and keeping residents safe
- New 'gateway' points at design, construction and completion to ensure safety considered at every stage of a building's development

The Building Safety Bill, published today (5 July 2021), will create lasting generational change and set out a clear pathway for the future on how residential buildings should be constructed and maintained.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick will today outline the next key step in an extensive overhaul to building safety legislation, giving residents more power to hold builders and developers to account and toughening sanctions against those who threaten their safety.

The Building Safety Regulator will oversee the new regime and will be responsible for ensuring that any building safety risks in new and existing high rise residential buildings of 18m and above are effectively managed and resolved, taking cost into account.

This will include implementing specific gateway points at design, construction and completion phases to ensure that safety is considered at each and every stage of a building's construction, and safety risks are considered at the earliest stage of the planning process.

These changes will simplify the existing system to ensure high standards are continuously met, with a 'golden thread' of information created, stored and updated throughout the building's lifecycle, establishing clear obligations on owners and enabling swift action to be taken by the regulator, wherever necessary.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This Bill will ensure high standards of safety for people's homes, and in particular for high rise buildings, with a new regulator providing essential oversight at every stage of a building's lifecycle, from design, construction, completion to occupation.

The new building safety regime will be a proportionate one, ensuring those buildings requiring remediation are brought to an acceptable standard of safety swiftly, and reassuring the vast majority of residents and leaseholders in those buildings that their homes are safe.

The reforms will tackle bad practice head on, building on Dame Judith Hackitt's review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which highlighted a need for significant cultural and regulatory change.

Under the proposals, the government is more than doubling the amount of time, from 6 to 15 years, that residents can seek compensation for substandard construction work.

The changes will apply retrospectively. This means that residents of a building completed in 2010 would be able to bring proceedings against the developer until 2025.

These reforms also include new measures which apply to those seeking compensation for shoddy refurbishments which make the home unliveable.

New measures in the Building Safety Bill introduced today will:

- Ensure there are clearly identified people responsible for safety during the design, build and occupation of a high-rise residential building.
- Establish a Building Safety Regulator to hold to account those who break the rules and are not properly managing building safety risks, including taking enforcement action where needed.
- Give residents in these buildings more routes to raise concerns about safety, and mechanisms to ensure their concerns will be heard and taken seriously.
- Extend rights to compensation for substandard workmanship and unacceptable defects.
- Drive the culture change needed across the industry to enable the design and construction of high-quality, safe homes in the years to come.

Minister for Building and Fire Safety Lord Greenhalgh said:

The comprehensive steps we are taking today will ensure that industry and the regulatory system fully address the concerns raised in the 'Building a Safer Future' report by Dame Judith Hackitt.

Though the overall risk of fire across all buildings remains low, we can't be complacent – the more robust regime will take a proportionate and risk-based approach to remediation and other safety risks.

And by increasing our measures of enforcement, we will make sure industry follows the rules – and is held to account when it doesn't.

The Bill will include powers to strengthen the regulatory framework for construction products, underpinned by a market surveillance and enforcement regime led nationally by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

The national regulator will be able to remove products from the market that

present safety risks and prosecute or use civil penalties against any business that breaks the rules and compromises public safety.

The Bill also contains measures to protect leaseholders by providing a legal requirement for building owners to explore alternative ways to meet remediation costs before passing these onto leaseholders, along with evidence that this has been done.

This builds on the government's commitment to fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England, with an unprecedented £5 billion investment in building safety. This is alongside the introduction of a new levy and a tax to ensure that industry pays its fair share towards the costs of cladding remediation.

Developers will also be required to join and remain members of the New Homes Ombudsman scheme, which will require them to provide redress to a homebuyer, including through the awarding of compensation. Developers who breach the requirement to belong to the New Homes Ombudsman may receive additional sanctions.

Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety Dame Judith Hackitt said:

I am delighted that we have reached this important milestone for the Building Safety Bill. It is vital that we focus on getting the system right for the future and set new standards for building safety.

Residents and other stakeholders need to have their confidence in high rise buildings restored and those who undertake such projects must be held to account for delivering safe buildings.

National Fire Chiefs Council Chair, Mark Hardingham said:

We welcome this important Bill's introduction as it will contribute to essential developments in fire safety.

We are focused on working with government and partners to fix the broken building regime, make buildings safer and restore public confidence.

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# Health Secretary opinion piece in the Mail on Sunday

Moments after the Prime Minister called to ask me to become Health and Social Care Secretary last Saturday night, I spoke to my teenage daughter in the kitchen.

'You won't have much to sort out then, dad,' she said sarcastically.

When I came back to Westminster on Sunday morning, I found the biggest in-tray I've had at any department – and I've run 5.

I've spent the last year working with Harvard University on how governments can learn from this pandemic and be better prepared for future challenges, now I'm the one faced with so many of those tough choices.

I feel both the heavy responsibility and urgency that comes with this job.

My first video call on vaccine progress had to be at the same time as the England-Germany match. It was all going well until JVT (Jonathan Van-Tam, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England) suddenly took off his headphones because he didn't want to hear the score before he watched a recording of the match.

It was an honour to start the meeting by thanking the team who have delivered the rollout, including everyone in the NHS, the Vaccines Taskforce and the officials in my department.

Amid the endless policy memos and reams of data, I see 2 immediate challenges. The first is how we restore our freedoms and learn to live with (coronavirus) COVID-19. The second is to tackle the NHS backlog – something that we know is going to get far worse before it gets better.

We are on track for 19 July and we have to be honest with people about the fact that we cannot eliminate COVID-19.

We also need to be clear that cases are going to rise significantly. I know many people will be cautious about the easing of restrictions – that's completely understandable. But no date we choose will ever come without risk, so we have to take a broad and balanced view. We are going to have to learn to accept the existence of COVID-19 and find ways to cope with it – just as we already do with flu.

The economic arguments for opening up are well known, but for me, the health arguments are equally compelling. The pandemic has hit some groups disproportionately hard. Rules that we have had to put in place have caused a shocking rise in domestic violence and a terrible impact on so many people's mental health. All the progress we have made is thanks to the sacrifices of the British people – and our phenomenal vaccine programme. The jabs are working. The latest data from the Office for National Statistics shows that 8

in 10 UK adults have the COVID-19 antibodies that help the body fight the disease. The implications of this are huge.

Tragically, the last time we had 28,000 new cases of COVID-19 in a day, we saw about 500 people die each day. On Friday, we had almost 28,000 cases a day, but 24 times fewer people lost their lives.

There will always be the possibility that we have to deal with dangerous new variants that evade the vaccine but I encourage everyone to get their jabs now if they haven't already done so. It is the single biggest contribution you can make to this national effort.

We have many other crucial health challenges that we need to confront. We protected the NHS to make sure it was there for everyone who needed care. The steps we took saved countless lives but also led to the build-up of a vast 'elective' backlog – checks, appointments and treatments for all the less urgent, but often just as important, health issues.

Because of the pandemic, we estimate that about 7 million fewer people than normal came forward for healthcare. Even if only some of that demand returns, we will see enormous pressure on the NHS.

To help meet this demand, build a better NHS and bust the backlog, we need to build on the changes we've all embraced through the pandemic, such as using NHS 111 to direct patients to the most appropriate setting to receive care, expanding the use of our pharmacies and encouraging more people to use the NHS app.

We have to keep doing all of that, and more.

Of course, if you are feeling unwell, you need to come forward. The NHS is always there for you – and now in many different ways.

We're putting record levels of funding into the NHS. In March, we committed a further £7 billion of funding – including £1 billion to begin tackling the elective backlog and about £500 million for mental health services and investment in staff.

And we're bringing so many more talented colleagues into the workforce. We have record numbers employed in the NHS, with more than 58,300 more staff in hospital and community health services since March last year, including over 5,600 more doctors and 10,800 nurses.

We're also embracing technology to help staff spend less time on paperwork and more on patients.

It's time to build on the spirit of innovation we've all embraced and use it for the other challenges we face: from finally fixing social care and putting it on a sustainable footing, to tackling the health inequalities that the pandemic has brought to the fore.

I'm determined we get that right.

There's a lot of work ahead, but if we hold on to the spirit that has seen us through these difficult days, we will have a country that is not just freer, but healthier, too.

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## [MHRA puts delivering for patients at the heart of its Delivery Plan 2021-2023](#)

A new and ambitious Delivery Plan centred on putting patients first, has been published today by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

“Putting patients first: A new era for our agency”, ensures the agency keeps a constant focus on delivering meaningful outcomes for patients, protecting public health through excellence in regulation and science and becoming a truly world-leading, enabling regulator.

At the core of the plan is how the MHRA will draw together its scientific and regulatory expertise to help facilitate the UK life sciences sector and health service; develop new regulatory frameworks; quickly realise the benefits of new therapies and innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), to improve outcomes for patients; and ensure the continued safety, quality and efficacy of medicines and medical devices.

The plan recognises the significant challenges the agency will have to overcome to deliver against its ambition. Priorities include delivering the recommendations set out in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review by ensuring patients are listened to and engaged with more systematically.

Another key challenge will be the strengthening of international regulatory relationships and enhancing partnerships with the wider health system now that the UK has left the EU; the agency will need to work quickly to evolve regulatory frameworks, so they remain fit for purpose in an era of fast-paced, cutting edge scientific developments.

Underpinning this delivery is the creation of a new business model that provides a financially sustainable future that will meet the increasing expectations of patients, healthcare professionals, partners, the pharmaceutical industry, government and wider industry and non-profit stakeholders alike.

Delivery of the plan will build on the MHRA's outstanding service to the UK public during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it continues to pose to global science and healthcare.

The plan sets out 14 objectives grouped into 6 central themes:

- Scientific innovation
- Healthcare access
- Patient safety
- Dynamic organisation
- Collaborative partnerships
- Financial sustainability

Overarching all of these, for every member of staff, is the priority to deliver better patient and public involvement and putting patients first.

**Dr June Raine CBE, Chief Executive, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said:**

Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic is proof positive that we can rise to challenges with fresh thinking and innovative approaches – fulfilling our responsibilities to patients first and foremost, as outlined in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, and opening up the many opportunities now that the UK has left the EU, with real benefit to the brilliant UK Life Sciences industry and to healthcare.

This plan is our response to these challenges and more. We have shown that we can not only excel under pressure and in exceptional circumstances, but also where we can take direct action to support and protect patients and improve health outcomes.

It marks a step-change in our efforts to build a world-leading organisation, bringing together excellence in science and regulation to serve patients and public health to the best of our ability.

**Stephen Lightfoot, Chair, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said:**

We are acutely aware of the many opportunities and challenges we face, but we are confident in the course we have set, our scientific expertise and our vision for progressive regulation to support the global life science industry.

Our Delivery Plan sets out our ambition plainly and prioritises the steps we are taking to achieve it: integrating our undeniable assets in science and regulation; building the UK and international

partnerships we need to support our delivery; and taking the necessary decisions to improve our organisational resilience. These actions will enable us to dramatically improve patient involvement and outcomes from the faster introduction of safe and effective medical products to patients around the world.

### **Innovation Minister Lord Bethell said:**

During the many challenges posed by COVID-19, the UK's brilliant life sciences and healthcare sectors have led the way for scientific innovation, rapidly developing life-saving vaccines and treatments which have helped turn the tide on the pandemic.

The MHRA has played an absolutely crucial role in the success of our vaccination programme by thoroughly assessing and batch testing all vaccines, allowing the UK to be the first country in the world to roll out an approved jab – which has prevented more than seven million infections and 27,000 deaths in England alone.

MHRA's new delivery plan sets out how the UK will apply the lessons learned from the pandemic and grasp the opportunity of innovation now we have left the EU to make sure NHS patients are able to benefit first from all medical innovations.

[Read the MHRA Delivery Plan 2021-2023](#)

### **Notes to editors:**

- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks.
- The Delivery Plan 2021-2023 replaces our current Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

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## **UK Government marks national Thank You Day**

- National Thank You Day, backed by Lorraine Kelly, Dame Katherine Grainger and Tom Kitchin, will give thanks to those who have gone above



and beyond during the pandemic

- Tartan Tea Parties, BBQs and picnics are set to take place across Scotland to celebrate local heroes
- UK Government Communities Secretary thanks community heroes and encourages all to fill the airwaves with tributes to everyone who played their part

The UK Government is celebrating Thank You Day to shine a light on Scotland's unsung heroes who have served local communities during the pandemic.

With backing from a host of Scottish celebrities including TV's Lorraine Kelly, olympic rower Dame Katherine Grainger and Scotland's youngest Michelin starred chef Tom Kitchin, the day is set to give thanks to those who have gone the extra mile to help their neighbours.

The campaign for Thank You Day was started by a small group of people from across the UK including Debbie Matthew, a stroke survivor from Perthshire, and May Parsons, the nurse who administered the UK's first Covid jab.

Thanks to their efforts, people around the country will be gathering to show their gratitude by hosting Covid safe Tartan Tea Parties, BBQs, picnics, and certificate ceremonies in honour of those who have selflessly given their time to help those in need.

UK Government Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick is also calling on people to fill the UK's airwaves with their thanks and tributes on local radio and social media.

Unsung heroes include people such as:

- Faith leaders who embraced technology to ensure communities could celebrate religious festivals online and opened up places of worship as vaccination centres
- The many volunteers who delivered food parcels and those who were always there at the other end of the phone or on the doorstep to smile, listen and talk so people did not feel alone
- Volunteers and charities who worked to get rough sleepers off the streets and provided lifesaving support for those fleeing domestic abuse
- Council staff, social workers and refuse collectors who kept vital services going during the most challenging times.

The Prime Minister will be joining the festivities with a 'BB-Thank-Q', hosting community leaders, NHS workers and representatives from the Royal Voluntary Service.

UK Government Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This past year has been challenging for us all. But in the darkest of times, when people were most in need, the actions of our friends and neighbours to support our communities have shone the brightest.

Across all faiths, ages, backgrounds and languages, our communities have shown off the best of this country.

You are all our community heroes and on behalf of the UK Government I want to say thank you.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

The past year has been incredibly challenging for all of us, but the kindness, generosity and community spirit shown across Scotland has been truly heartening.

From every one of our key workers who kept services going in the most difficult of circumstances, to our voluntary groups who worked tirelessly to help those in need, the people that delivered food parcels to their neighbours, there are so many in Scotland that went above and beyond to support their communities.

The UK Government is proud to be supporting Thank You Day to pay tribute to all those who deserve our sincere gratitude.

### **Further information**

[Thank You Day](#) on Sunday 4 July is a community initiative with events and activity held across the country as a way of thanking each other and of building on the community spirit that so many felt during lockdown.

The day is being marked by faith communities. For example, Imams will be including Thank You Day in their sermons, reminding the importance of all communities coming together to continue to help and support each other. Churches up and down the country will be thanking their congregations and volunteers for helping get through the year. Jewish and Muslim women are organising picnics together around the country.

Members of the public are being encouraged to mark the day in numerous ways from picnics to BBQs and street parties while sticking to Covid guidelines.

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**[Government pledges £2.45 million to](#)**

# improve childbirth care

- In collaboration with the Royal College of Midwives and The Healthcare Improvement Studies Institute at the University of Cambridge, £2 million will be used by Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) to test the best ways to spot early warning signs of babies in distress
- £449,000 will go towards developing a new workforce planning tool for maternity medics to make sure patients get the medical support they need

Today (4 July), maternity safety minister Nadine Dorries is announcing £2.45 million funding which will benefit NHS maternity staff and improve the safety of the women and babies they care for.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is awarding the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) almost £2 million to lead the first phase of the Avoiding Brain injuries in Childbirth (ABC) Collaboration.

This funding will be used to survey maternity staff and parents and test out best practices for monitoring and responding to a baby's wellbeing during labour. It will also focus on managing complications with a baby's positioning during caesarean section to reduce brain injuries.

Maternity safety minister Nadine Dorries said:

I am determined to make sure as many mums as possible can go home with healthy and happy babies in their arms.

This new programme, which we're supporting with over £2.45 million, aims to spot warning signs earlier and save lives, preventing families and their babies from facing the horrific ordeal of a life-changing brain injury. It will help us deliver on our ambition to halve brain injuries during birth by 2025.

Having the right maternity staff in the right place at the right time means they can learn from one another, give the best care for mums and babies and build a safe and positive environment for both staff and pregnant women in maternity teams across the country.

Due to be carried out by the end of this year, the ABC review aims to develop a nationally agreed approach for how staff monitor the condition of a baby during labour by:

- testing different approaches to monitoring babies during labour and surveying maternity staff to see how midwives and obstetricians currently identify when a baby is in distress during labour and how they

then deliver babies even more safely

- interviewing women and their birth partners on these varying approaches based on their personal experiences
- agreeing on a clear process to monitor babies and record readings during labour with a flowchart guide to decide when to escalate a case to the wider multi-disciplinary maternity team
- developing a nationally agreed approach to delivering babies via caesarean section when there are complications with the baby's positioning

The review will be carried out through a partnership with the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), The Healthcare Improvement Studies Institute at the University of Cambridge and the RCOG.

The 3 organisations will aim to agree the best clinical practice for managing deteriorating conditions of babies during labour and test how this could be rolled out across maternity services in England in future.

The DHSC has also provided almost £450,000 to the RCOG to develop a new workforce planning tool to improve how maternity units calculate their medical staffing requirements, to better support families and babies.

Over the next year, RCOG will collaborate with and gather data from the health sector, determining how the tool can help NHS Trusts to understand their own medical staffing needs, and provide standardised, safe and personalised care tailored to their communities.

Due to be freely available to NHS Trusts across the country next year, the tool will aim to:

- provide maternity staff with a new methodology that calculates the numbers, skill sets and grades of medical staff required within individual maternity units based on local needs
- help Trusts tackle inequalities by taking into account local factors such as birth rates, age of population, the socio-economic status of the area, and geographical factors
- calculate the number of obstetricians at all grades required locally and nationally to provide a safe, personalised maternity service within the context of the wider workforce
- identify innovative ways of working to better utilise the current

workforce

- help gain a better understanding of the factors that promote safety and positive culture within maternity teams and how these can be rolled out nationally

Dr Edward Morris, President at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said:

We're delighted to receive funding for a new workplace planning tool and project to reduce brain injuries in childbirth. This investment will go a huge way to improving the quality of care provided to pregnant women and their babies.

We recognise that appropriate maternity staffing is fundamental to providing safe care for women and we hope this tool will give maternity units in England a clear guide to determine how many medical staff they require in their specific setting.

The new project to avoid newborn brain injury in childbirth aims to address the challenges around effective foetal monitoring, building on the great work already being done in this area. We understand that the impact of avoidable newborn brain injury is profound and we want to do everything we can to ensure no family has to experience it.

Gill Walton Chief Executive at The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) said:

Every avoidable brain injury leaves families devastated and affects midwives and maternity staff. For the vast majority of women and their babies, the UK is a safe place to give birth. However, tragically avoidable brain injuries do happen. It's imperative we work together in maternity services to do all we can to reduce avoidable brain injuries during birth.

Partnership working is the key to improving safety for women and their babies. This funding will enable the RCM and RCOG, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, to review approaches to monitoring babies during labour. More multi-disciplinary training in this area will ultimately go towards improving safety for women and their babies. Crucially, this review will also include the voices and personal experiences of women and their birth partners to enable maternity to inform better, safer care.

The RCM also welcomes the funding that has been allocated to the RCOG to develop a new maternity obstetric workforce planning tool. Far too many maternity reviews have cited understaffing and the

impact that has on safety in maternity services. The development of such a tool will bolster safety and improve on the current maternity staff skill mix, which is key to delivering safe, high-quality maternity care.

Chief Midwifery Officer for England, Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, said:

Providing safe and effective care to babies and their mothers is a key priority for the NHS and this new support will bolster our own Maternity Transformation Programme to prevent brain injury during birth – which we aim to reduce by at least half over the next 5 years.

The government's maternity safety ambition is to halve the 2010 rates of stillbirth, neonatal and maternal death and brain injuries that occur during or soon after birth by 2025.

While good progress has been made in reducing the mortality elements of the ambition, the brain injury rate has fallen to 4.2 per 1,000 live births in 2019, since rising from 4.2 to 4.7 per 1,000 live births between 2012 and 2014.

Several independent inquiries into maternity safety, most recently the Ockenden Report, have highlighted the need to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes safe staffing in maternity care. Rota gaps are reported by 90% of obstetric and gynaecology junior doctors in their units, and attrition and burnout rates are high at all career stages.