



# Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

28 June 2018

Dear James,

I am writing to you in light of our evidence session yesterday following-up on the work of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. As you know the session heard from industry representatives, fire safety experts, testers and building owners on the immediate and longer-term changes needed to improve the safety of residential tower blocks, and how improvements can be applied more widely in the construction industry. We will be hearing from the Minister of State for Housing on the same subject on Monday and will no doubt be following up on a range of issues that were raised with us yesterday.

However, more immediately, I wanted to raise one issue of considerable concern that came to our attention during the session yesterday. Claire Curtis-Thomas, CEO of the British Board of Agrément, told the Committee that she was aware of as many as 30 buildings that did not now comply with fire safety regulations after the removal of aluminium composite material panels, following refurbishments carried out on the basis of guidance issued to building owners by your Department in response to the Grenfell Tower fire. She went on to suggest that this was potentially only "indicative" of the wider situation.

It is clearly highly concerning that it is possible that steps taken to remove dangerous combustible cladding from buildings, far from making tower blocks safer, have potentially placed residents' lives at further risk. I am therefore writing to you now to draw your attention to this matter, as I believe it is incumbent on Government to take urgent steps to identify such buildings which potentially remain so dangerous.

I will be writing in similar terms to the Chair of the Independent Expert Advisory Panel, Sir Ken Knight, who himself said to us yesterday that if this was the case it would cause him "real concern" given the advice of the expert panel to building owners. In this context I note that the primary role of the expert panel was to recommend any immediate action that the Government should take that will improve public safety and help to identify buildings of concern. I hope that now, in light of this evidence you will take further steps to identify such buildings. We have not been provided with details of the buildings to which Ms Curtis-Thomas refers, however I am writing to her to urge her to identify these properties to you and the Expert Panel as a matter of urgency. I also enclose a copy of the transcript of the session for your reference.

Finally, I am also copying this letter to the Minister of State for Housing, given it is likely this issue will come up in questioning with him on Monday.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'B'.

**Clive Betts MP**  
**Chair, Communities and Local Government Committee**