



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Clive Betts MP
House of Commons,
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The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
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6 July 2018

Dear Clive,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June 2018 about the concerns raised by Claire Curtis-Thomas, Chief Executive of the British Board of Agrément (BBA), that there may be 32 tower blocks which have had ACM cladding removed but would still fail building regulations.

I agree that it would be very concerning if steps taken to remove dangerous combustible cladding from buildings, had potentially placed residents' lives at further risk. I would like to assure you, that from the outset, we have been taking steps to ensure that buildings with dangerous cladding are remediated effectively and that the buildings are made safe for the long term.

Advice from the Expert Panel and from the Government has made it clear that building owners must seek expert professional advice and ensure that external wall systems are installed and maintained correctly.

In addition, we have written to building control bodies (July 2017) to highlight key issues that building owners and building control bodies need to consider in ensuring compliance with the building regulations when undertaking re-cladding work to tall buildings over 18 metres. We expect building control bodies to follow this advice when conducting their inspections on buildings.

Working with technical experts through the Industry Response Group, the Department published a step-by-step guide to remediation for building owners which included advice on ensuring that key elements of works critical to the building safety are checked during the construction phase.

The Expert Panel met on 27 June 2018 to review this advice and agreed that this remained the right approach.

The Industry Response Group is also working on ways to improve competence in the industry. The Construction Industry Council (CIC) is reflecting the findings of the Hackitt review and addressing recommendations on competence with the aim of creating an overarching body to oversee competence requirements. BuildUK is working with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to develop courses for cladding installers. The department is making every effort to ensure the recommendations of the Hackitt review are implemented and that buildings are made safe for residents.

Since the HCLG Select Committee, the Department has been taking steps to assess the claims that have been made. We also continue to closely track the remediation of buildings with unsafe ACM cladding.

Ultimately it is for building owners to ensure that their buildings are safe and that remediation work is carried out effectively on the advice of competent experts. This is what the residents and public are entitled to expect.

Neither the government, nor the building control bodies can take action on specifics without having the details and we need those from the BAA. Where information on specific buildings has been provided previously (in six cases), we have been able to follow this up (and can report that work is being monitored by building control bodies).

I am aware that Sir Ken Knight, who is the Chair of the Expert Panel and who was also in attendance at the Select Committee, has contacted Claire Curtis-Thomas to ask her to share details of the other buildings she is concerned about with my Department. Once we have this information we will review it, checking against our records and engage with building owners if appropriate.

I would like to assure you that I share your concern for fire safety and I am determined to ensure that we learn from the Grenfell Tower fire and make sure nothing like it can happen again. We are determined to play our part in making the system work better and fixing the problems.



RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE