

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 16 JUN 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

I spent several hours yesterday talking to local residents around Grenfell Tower. These were difficult conversations with a tight-knit community that is understandably distraught, frustrated and increasingly angry. They feel the Government and local council haven't done enough to help them in the aftermath of this horrific incident, or to provide answers to their increasingly urgent questions.

I promised the local community that I would fight for them to get the support and answers they deserve as quickly as possible. I am therefore writing to you today to set out the action that I believe the Government needs to take, as a matter of urgency.

Victim support and information

The local community feels their grief has been made worse by the lack of information about their missing family members and friends. They are fully aware of the true scale of this tragedy but cannot comprehend why they are not being given more information. There is also insufficient support for victims on the ground.

I appreciate that the authorities want to be absolutely certain that any information is correct before it is issued publicly, and the fire brigade, police and coroner are doing a heroic job obtaining this information in extremely difficult circumstances. While the current systems in place may work well for a terrorist attack, there are legitimate questions about whether they are still appropriate in situations where obtaining this information could take much longer.

I would ask you to ensure that the local community is given as much information as possible today and over the coming days about the number of victims and their identities. Additional capacity for victim support needs to be provided urgently. In the longer term, I would urge you to review whether the current systems are appropriate for all emergency situations and operate at the pace required.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Relief organisation

The community are concerned about the organisation and coordination of relief and support services across Kensington. I heard multiple stories of local residents not being able to access the information they required and being given conflicting advice by the local authority. This complaint came from local residents, volunteers who had come from further afield to help, charities and local community groups. The scale of this tragedy is clearly proving too much for the local authority to cope with on their own.

Those affected are still not clear about the support available to them – either immediately or in the longer term. For example, the local authority believe they found housing for all residents affected last night, however there are reports that this was not communicated effectively and some residents are still sleeping in the Westway Sports Centre or with family and friends. Please confirm as a matter of urgency that everyone from Grenfell Tower and other evacuated properties will be rehoused locally immediately.

Although additional local authority resilience arrangements have been activated today to provide additional leadership to the local operation, I would urge the Government to provide all necessary assistance and satisfy itself that the operation is functioning to the standard local residents have the right to expect. The Government should also confirm that all residents affected by the Grenfell Tower fire will be rehoused in the area, unless they choose not to.

Tower block safety

Residents I spoke to are worried about the risk of this tragic incident happening elsewhere – particularly in tower blocks that have had similar cladding installed as part of renovations. People are terrified that the same thing could happen to them. I raised this with Ministers on Wednesday and Thursday, and they agreed to lead coordinated efforts to ensure that all other tower blocks across the country are indeed safe.

This issue is not limited to the type of cladding fitted; the material it is attached to and how this has been achieved are also critical factors. It is crucial that other risks from renovation works are urgently and properly investigated, for example protection between floors. And we need to strengthen standards and recall processes around white goods, given the fire risk they can present.

I would ask that you to provide a list of those tower blocks already checked by the end of today, as well as a timeline for the remaining buildings. I would ask that you to set out a timeline for this process today. If the Government has any reason to believe specific tower blocks could be at risk, residents should be rehomed in the local area immediately, while these checks take place.

Please also confirm that there will be an immediate implementation of the improved safety rules proposed in 2013 but still not implemented.

Public Inquiry

The community around Grenfell Tower have many questions about how this was allowed to happen. They urgently need to be assured that they will get all the answers. I welcome the announcement of a full independent Public Inquiry, but we cannot afford to wait years for the outcome.

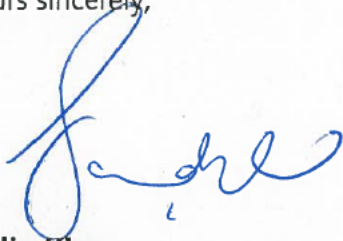
MAYOR OF LONDON

I would urge you to ensure, in the terms of reference of the Inquiry, that an interim report is published this summer, at the latest, and that the terms of reference include all aspects of fire safety standards and inspection in high-rise towers. I would also urge you to ensure that residents and other interested parties are not saddled with any legal costs for participating in the inquiry, and receive the quality legal representation they deserve. Finally, I would seek an assurance that if the Inquiry or police investigation finds any individual or organisation to have been negligent in their duties, then they will be prosecuted.

As the Mayor of London, I will continue to fight alongside this community to ensure they get the support and answers they deserve and justice done.

I look forward to hearing back from you today.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 June 2017

Dear Sabir

Thank you for your letter dated 16 June. The tragic events at Grenfell Tower last week have shocked us all and our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have suffered. I visited the scene on Thursday for a briefing and returned on Friday to meet with some of those directly affected. We have all heard devastating stories of those caught up in the fire and our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones, friends and the homes in which they lived. I want to pay tribute to our emergency services who have done an outstanding job in the most difficult of circumstances.

A disaster of this scale clearly requires a comprehensive Government response. That is why I have set up a dedicated Grenfell Tower Recovery Taskforce. I chaired the first meeting on Friday and I was pleased to welcome you to the second meeting on Saturday. The Taskforce has representation from a number of Whitehall departments including the Treasury, Home Office and Department for Communities and Local Government. Crucially it also has representatives from the emergency services and the Gold Command. We have already agreed on a number of actions that the Government will take forward and I wanted to use this letter as an opportunity to set them out to you in detail.

Victim and family support

The first priority must be to ensure that people who have been directly affected are cared for and receive the support they need. We have established a cross-Whitehall Victims Support Unit, providing a single point of access to central government which will co-ordinate support for each family on the ground. This unit will help resolve a full range of issues facing victims – from benefits and immigration, to health and education.

I completely agree that family and friends of the missing need to be provided with accurate and timely information. The police cannot risk giving out misinformation to families which could further increase their distress. The collecting, matching and validating of this information is an enormous task and involves over 200 trained staff from the Metropolitan Police, and the Casualty Bureau has taken over 5,000 calls.

You will understand that the identification of all victims, and even the number of persons who were present, may be a lengthy process. Identification is undertaken by highly trained Police Disaster Victim Identification Teams on behalf of the coroner, and they will release information on the victims' identities as quickly as possible.

The senior coroner leading the inquest – Dr Fiona Wilcox – is very experienced. I would like to assure you that she is prioritising the provision of information to the families and has been working closely with local partners to ensure that they are fully informed about the process and progress where appropriate.

As I announced on Saturday, after something this traumatic many people will be in need of not just financial support, but also counselling. NHS London will provide specialist long-term bereavement support for the families who have lost loved ones, and immediate psychological support is being provided by Cruse and Red Cross.

We have established processes in place which allow us to consider visa applications outside the Immigration Rules on compassionate grounds. Sadly, Syrian national Mohammad Alhajali was the first victim of the Grenfell fire to be formally identified. As you will know, we have assisted Mohammad's family in making arrangements for their travel to the UK this week.

We are also ensuring we identify cases early, give people a single point of contact and expedite applications as appropriate. This process is being used to help family members living outside the UK that need to travel to support survivors and to attend funerals. We will of course look sympathetically at requests made under these terribly sad circumstances.

Many of those impacted by the fire have also lost passports and important personal documentation. To support those impacted we have launched a 24 hour advice line for people directly affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower who are seeking guidance on UK passports, visas, or immigration. Alongside the dedicated 24 hour line, Home Office staff with immigration expertise are on the ground in West London to support survivors. Our staff stand ready to provide helpful guidance on next steps for individuals and confirmed representatives who have UK passports, visas, or immigration queries.

Relief organisation

We are doing everything we can to support the Local Authority to make sure that every family from Grenfell Tower is urgently given the support they need. The Government has given a guarantee that everyone from Grenfell Tower will be rehoused as close to home as possible meaning that they can continue to access the same public services such as their local school or GP. This will take place at the earliest possible opportunity, and within three weeks at the latest.

The right support and comfort also needs to be provided for those living in the surrounding area and not yet able to return to their homes.

In order to provide the resources needed we have activated the Bellwin scheme. This means that any immediate and uninsurable extra costs incurred by the council in the aftermath of the disaster will be met by the Government.

The Government has also made a £5 million Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund immediately available which will help residents cover the loss of possessions, emergency supplies and other unexpected costs. Every household whose home has been destroyed as a result of the fire will receive a guaranteed £5,500 payment from the £5 million discretionary fund. This will be made up of a guaranteed £500 cash payment from today and £5,000 delivered into bank accounts or similar in a single payment. We will also make sure that until people are rehoused, the cost of temporary accommodation will be met on their behalf.

High-rise block safety

We take the safety of existing buildings incredibly seriously and we will act quickly to reassure people living in similar buildings that they are safe in their homes. We are urgently checking with local authorities whether all high-rise buildings in their area are compliant with regulations and an audit of all high-rises in England by local authorities is underway. Fire and rescue services will follow up the inspection of any buildings this process identifies as high risk and provide any additional advice to residents.

We have established a group of experts to inform our response and we will be carrying out an immediate stocktake of the position on Building Regulations, recognising the need to take account of public inquiry conclusions.

Public Inquiry

A tragedy like this is unacceptable in the 21st century. That is why I have ordered a full Public Inquiry into this disaster so that we can find out exactly what went wrong. We need to look at the conduct of everyone involved, including central government, local government, building contractors and landlords. We owe it to all affected by this terrible tragedy to leave no stone unturned in the investigation that will follow. We are all seized of the need for the Inquiry to be timely and to be able to provide us with early recommendations. Interim findings will provide a basis for early action.

The Inquiry will be led by a Judge and the Lord Chancellor has asked the Lord Chief Justice for a nomination which I hope to announce this week. The families of victims will be consulted on the terms of reference under which the Inquiry proceeds, as will

you and other interested parties. It is important that residents' voices are heard and we will provide funding for their legal representation to make sure this happens.

I can assure you that the Government will cooperate fully with the Inquiry and in the days and weeks ahead the Government will be doing all it can to support everyone affected by this tragedy.

This tragedy has united us all in grief and as Prime Minister it is my job to make sure the Government is doing all it can to help those affected and that we learn the necessary lessons so this never happens again. I am determined that we will rise to this challenge.

Yours sincerely
T. M.

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 20 JUN 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

The devastating fire that tore through Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 has shocked the nation. Survivors, local residents and the whole country rightly want answers on what caused the fire, and what must be done to prevent a repeat. That is why I welcome your decision to hold a Public Inquiry into the fire, as this offers the best opportunity to get to the truth.

General Conduct of the Inquiry

I am writing to you in advance of any decision on the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry in order to contribute my views on how I believe the Inquiry should be conducted if it is to best serve justice, and maintain the confidence of the community.

As you will be aware, there is considerable mistrust and anger amongst the community, particularly directed towards those in positions of authority. A concerted effort is therefore required by Government and then the Chair of the Inquiry to explain to the community the Public Inquiry process, in particular the timescales involved and the likely milestones.

There is an added onus on the government to do all in its power to avoid any perception of undue influence. I welcome what you said at the Taskforce meeting that you would not meet the Chair in order to avoid questions over the integrity and independence of the Inquiry. I would ask that the same apply to Government ministers too.

It is important that the Inquiry is chaired by a senior judge - a Lady Justice or Lord Justice of Appeal. This is not only to indicate the gravity of the inquiry, and place it on a similar footing in terms of its seriousness to other similar inquiries, but also to ensure considerable judicial experience and confidence in relation to the legal rulings that are likely to arise and thereby reduce the risk of proceedings being delayed by numerous interim appeals.

A view has taken hold in some quarters in the local community that a Public Inquiry is sub-optimal to an inquest, fuelling suspicion that this is being used to suppress the facts emerging. Part of the communication effort must therefore also involve explaining the merits of a Public Inquiry, how it will get to the truth and how it does not preclude an inquest at a later date if one is still necessary after the inquiry. In particular, families of loved ones must be reassured that the inquiry won't impede the formal recognition process of those who lost their lives. However, in order to avoid duplications of hearings, evidence and resources, it is vital that the inquiry deals fully with many of the issues that would arise at an inquest. The inquiry must be a thorough and detailed process with standards of representation, investigation, disclosure, evidence and questioning that are no less than would be provided at the most rigorous of inquests.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Relations with the local community can be further strengthened by ensuring families, survivors and civil society groups have a role in drawing up the Terms of Reference for the Public Inquiry and are consulted on where Inquiry hearings are held. Any attempt to exclude them from the process risks further fuelling mistrust.

It is crucial that families, survivors and local civil society groups are designated as core participants so that they can play a full and active role in the process.

In addition, the Government must confirm that families, survivors and local civil society groups will have their legal fees covered, including for the period of consultation on the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry. It is likely that other parties in the Public Inquiry, such as the local authority and construction firms, will secure the very best legal representation and there must be no inequality of arms. Whatever the Chair considers appropriate, the government should fund.

The Inquiry must be given full powers of summoning witnesses and evidence if we are to get to the truth. There must be no hiding place for wrongdoing.

It is also important that immediate steps are taken to preserve evidence if there is a risk of it being destroyed by those holding it. The relevant authorities, whether pursuant to an inquiry or to a criminal investigation should be considering whether those powers of seizure need to be exercised now as a matter of urgency. I strongly suggest that immediate legal advice is obtained as to how material should be preserved and the process of that material being reviewed for the purposes of disclosure to core participants so that there are not a lengthy delays relating to disclosure to core participants, as have occurred in other recent inquiries.

I would also urge you to require that there will be an interim report published this summer. Not only is this crucial for community confidence, but it will allow for the swift implementation of any urgent steps that need taking as regards fire safety in similar buildings across the country.

Structure of the Inquiry

I believe that the inquiry could be structured in two stages. The following points are examples of what should be included at each stage, but I stress that this list will need to be considered carefully in light of any submissions made by the core participants and those representing them.

Stage 1 of the inquiry should focus on:

- The immediate cause of the fire
- How the fire spread and why it spread so quickly
- Whether the design of the building helped the spread of the fire and/or hindered the escape of residents
- Whether the refurbishment contributed, because of the way it was installed and the materials used, and if these were compliant or non-compliant with fire and building regulations
- Whether appropriate action and response was taken in the light of warnings raised by tenants and other community organisations. If not, why not and who was responsible
- Whether fire advice to residents was appropriate

MAYOR OF LONDON

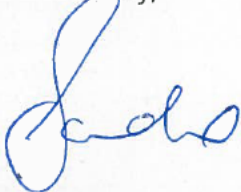
- Investigating the role of the local authority, the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), and any other parties in relevant decisions around the refurbishment and management of the tower
- The timeliness and response of the London Fire Brigade and other emergency services, including the resources deployed and the availability of suitable specialised equipment
- How the post incident response operated, including information and support to families, survivors and local community

The second stage of the Inquiry should focus on the lessons going forward and recommendations on how to avoid a repeat of the tragedy. This includes:

- Establishing whether the lessons were learnt from the inquest into the Lakanal House fire in Southwark
- Investigating the fire risk from domestic white goods
- Whether the level of protection from building design and fire prevention regulations (including sprinklers, alarms, advice and escape routes) is adequate
- Whether the fire safety check regime is to a high enough standard and being adequately enforced
- An audit of the effectiveness of wider resilience arrangements (local, regional and national) and the activation points between them

Getting the Terms of Reference right for the Public Inquiry is absolutely crucial if this is to have the confidence of the local community, families and survivors. I hope you will agree to work closely with the community to ensure this happens.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 30 June 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

The horrific fire at Grenfell Tower and the significant failings of Kensington & Chelsea council in its response to it have demonstrated that the council is not fit for purpose to meet the needs of the residents it is meant to serve.

I welcome the borough Leader's announcement today that he intends to resign. I also welcomed the resignation of the council's chief executive and the immediate appointment of an experienced interim chief executive.

But the crisis facing Kensington and Chelsea goes further than just those two figures.

Following yesterday evening's shambolic council cabinet meeting, it is self-evident that the leadership of the council has lost the trust of local residents. Without this trust, the council cannot effectively serve them or meet its responsibilities. It is also clear that a change in leadership from amongst the existing councillors will not address this situation - in fact it may aggravate it further, as it fails to address the fundamental breakdown in trust that has taken place.

Therefore, I believe the Government has no option but to immediately appoint commissioners to take over the running of Kensington and Chelsea council until the residents of the borough can choose, at next May's council elections, who they wish to represent and serve them. By this time, the evidence from the Public Inquiry should enable voters to make an informed choice about the skills required in the councillors they elect.

It is crucial that the commissioners are people of high standing and probity, have a genuine empathy for local people and the situation they face, and be untainted so that all residents of Kensington and Chelsea can have confidence in them and the manner in which they were appointed. These commissioners should serve the local community who deserve to know that decisions will be taken properly, in an open and accountable way.

As a former councillor, committed to democratic local accountability, I make these representations to you with regret, but feel the response from the council and subsequent breakdown in trust is so severe that there is now no alternative and the Government needs to step-in quickly. My officers and I are willing to assist the Government as you take this action.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Sadiq Khan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small number '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister for London
Rt Hon Gavin Barwell, Chief of Staff, 10 Downing Street

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 6 July 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

Over the weeks since the Grenfell Tower fire, my team has been in contact with local authorities and housing associations across London, and it appears that social landlords in the capital are making progress in reviewing their stock for aluminium composite cladding at good pace.

Identifying aluminium composite cladding and taking appropriate action has clearly been an immediate priority. As I mentioned at the Taskforce meeting you chaired on Monday 26 June, however, our conversations with local authorities and housing associations have revealed a strong desire for guidance from Government on steps they should take to make all buildings safe, and a clear indication of what resources are available to do this.

I welcome the Government's decision to establish an independent expert advisory panel to advise on what immediate measures can be taken to make buildings safe, and I hope the expert panel will be able to make positive recommendations speedily that you can act on. I would ask that you draw the following points to their immediate attention on behalf of the Government.

First, they should consider recommending that Government provide guidance to all housing providers around a managed and prioritised programme of submitting any form of cladding or insulation about which they have concerns for testing. This testing should either be through BRE if there is capacity, or independently, and Government should ensure that the testing covers all appropriate elements of the cladding system. It should be made clear that testing is a sensible precautionary measure that should inform a housing provider's risk assessment, and Government resources should be made available to support this.

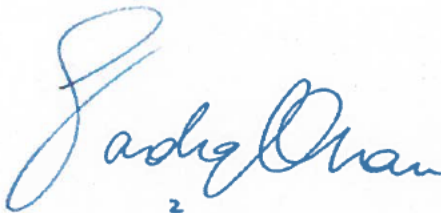
Secondly, the advisory panel should consider recommending that Government encourage housing providers, while awaiting results of such tests, to work with a competent person to review the fire safety risk assessments for all tall buildings for which they are responsible. Government could be asked to clearly communicate to all housing providers that once the fire safety risk assessments have been carried out by a competent person, the person responsible for the building should put in place any additional control measures identified within that assessment. They should ensure that the risk assessment is kept up to date when there are any future material changes to the building. The London Fire Brigade has issued a letter to housing providers in London outlining the range of issues such assessments should take into account, which I attach for your information. My team are ensuring that this is disseminated to as many tall building owners as possible across London, and the Government may wish to consider whether similar communications are being sent out by other fire brigades across the UK.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Thirdly, where premises in London have been identified as failing the cladding testing programme, fire safety inspecting officers from the London Fire Brigade are also carrying out more in-depth inspections of the general fire precautions within the building with representatives of the housing provider. This does not include advice on next steps with regard to those failed cladding systems. It is my understanding that further guidance will be forthcoming from the advisory panel regarding failed cladding tests. In the interim, if the decision is taken to remove cladding by those responsible for those buildings, the panel should consider recommending that Government provide clear guidance around what elements of the cladding system need to be removed and other aspects that need to be considered as part of that process to ensure that the outcome is that buildings are safer.

I will continue to do all I can to support the Government in making buildings across London and the rest of the country safe. It is paramount we ensure resources are targeted in the most efficient and strategic way to address fire safety concerns, and to that end it is vital for the Government to issue clear, well-evidenced advice to housing providers. If my team can assist with any information, please ask your officials to contact mine.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Sadiq Khan' with a small '2' below the 'n'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Att.

Cc: Rt Hon Gavin Barwell, Chief of Staff, 10 Downing Street
Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, Minister for London

Dany Cotton QFSM
London Fire Commissioner

London Fire Brigade is run by the London
Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

Date: 26 June 2017

To all housing providers in London

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower and the programme of checks announced by the Prime Minister last week, I'm writing to housing providers in London to remind you of your duty to ensure there is a comprehensive fire risk assessment for all purpose built blocks of flats and maisonettes that you own or manage. Checking and reviewing this is the single most helpful action you can do at this point to improve the safety of your residents.

This fire risk assessment needs to identify the general fire precautions required for the building. These are:

- Measures to reduce the risk of and spread of fire on the premises; e.g. fire resisting and self closing doors to flats
- A means of escape from the premises i.e. an escape route;
- Making sure that the escape route is clear and can be safely and effectively used at all times; e.g. fire resisting and self closing doors to corridors, lobbies and staircases; emergency lighting; fire exit signs; and smoke ventilation/control systems.
- Having the appropriate smoke detection and warning systems in case of fire;
- Having measures in place to fight fires on the premises e.g. such as dry rising mains;
- Having arrangements in place for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises.

Your fire risk assessment should be carried out by a competent fire risk assessor and might identify additional measures that should be put in place, which you should then act upon.

You should also have an emergency evacuation plan for residents and ensure they know the actions they need to take in the event of a fire. This plan must make sure residents and others are safe, that a fire can be detected and residents are warned. They should be able to safely escape from the fire using the structural protection provided within the property if necessary and safe to do so.

There are more details on this on the London Fire Brigade website here:

<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/landlords-or-housing-providers-know-the-plan.asp>

As you are aware London Fire Brigade officers are working with local authorities and landlords across the capital.

Fire crews are visiting the premises identified by the DCLG cladding testing programme to make sure that in the event of a fire, firefighting facilities are all in place.

The Brigade's fire safety inspecting officers are also carrying out more in-depth inspections jointly with representatives of the housing provider as part of an on-going process to check the general fire precautions within buildings. These are the fire precautions listed in the bullet points above. Inspecting officers will advise housing providers on any immediate actions that need to be taken, but all housing providers need to have looked at their own risk assessment before Brigade visits.

The Brigade's fire safety team targets its resources and inspections at those premises that present the highest risk. Where breaches of fire safety legislation occur our officers provide practical advice or, where the risk is serious, formal enforcement notices. We will work in partnership with housing providers to achieve a satisfactory level of fire safety.

It is important for London that right now all housing providers are being proactive and making sure that fire risk assessments are up to date and appropriate.

Finally, I believe it would be helpful for all of us to make sure the public understand that responsibility for making buildings safe sits with the owners or managers of that building. I have seen public references to the London Fire Brigade making buildings safe or issuing safety certificates, this does not reflect the role of the Brigade. It is the responsibility of the fire and rescue service to enforce fire safety legislation but we do not issue safety certificates or similar. It is for housing providers to ensure residents know how to contact them to raise concerns about their building or to ask about renovations being made to make buildings safe.

Yours sincerely

Dany Cotton
London Fire Commissioner



**Department for
Communities and
Local Government**

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
London
SE1 2AA

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local
Government*

***Department for Communities and Local
Government***

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 3450

Fax: 020 7035 0018

Email:

www.gov.uk/dclg

Our Ref:3421587

14 July 2017

Thank you for your letter of 6 July to the Prime Minister. She has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower on 14 June have shocked us all deeply. My fellow ministers across Government and I have heard devastating stories from people caught in the fire. We are all clear that this should never have happened and must not happen again.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us with issues that stakeholders are raising. It is important that we continue to listen to what people are telling us. We are also very grateful for all your work to ensure local authorities and housing associations across London are reviewing their aluminium composite material cladding at good pace.

As you may be aware, I have established the Building Safety Programme within my Department. The programme is identifying the buildings which are of concern and providing support to landlords to ensure their buildings and residents are safe. As you set out, and following expert advice, the first priority has been identifying Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding that is unlikely to meet the limited combustibility requirement. This work is ongoing and is providing a picture of which buildings have that cladding.

Alongside this, we have given urgent advice to all local authorities and housing associations, drawn up by our Expert Advisory Panel and endorsed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, on interim safety measures that should be taken immediately where it has been determined that a building has ACM cladding that does not meet the test of

limited combustibility. This includes advice on arranging for a fire risk assessment to be carried out and choosing a competent fire risk assessor. The advice echoes many of the recommendations in the London Fire Brigade letter that you kindly shared with us and which I have also sent on to the Expert Advisory Panel for their consideration. We encourage all landlords with tower blocks with ACM cladding to act on the advice we have given to ensure the safety of residents.

The landlords for all the affected buildings are taking action to inform tenants and implement the interim safety measures needed, including contacting fire and rescue services in their area to conduct fire safety inspections of all such tower blocks to inform remedial works where necessary.

As the next step, following advice from the Expert Advisory Panel and a group of technical experts from a wide range of professions and organisations, we announced on 6 July a further test of cladding systems. These large-scale tests will help establish how different types of ACM panels in combination with different types of insulation behave in a fire. These tests, which will run alongside the existing ACM panel screening programme, will be undertaken by the BRE as a matter of urgency. The results of the tests will be made publically available and will help landlords make decisions on any further measures that may need to be put in place to make their buildings safe.

The Expert Advisory Panel is considering what its work programme will be in the weeks ahead. Its initial focus will be to consider the result of the large scale cladding systems tests. If there are some systems which do not pass building regulation requirements, the panel will advise us on issues such as:

- what advice will be given to building owners who know they have a cladding system which has not met building regulation requirements;
- what degree of oversight we should seek to have of buildings where cladding systems have not met building regulation requirements;
- if any further advice is necessary to support building owners to decide on appropriate actions going forward;

We are aware that councils and other building owners are also seeking clarification of actions they should take in relation to materials other than ACM, where cladding has been removed and where new construction has been halted because it was planned to install ACM. For buildings with materials other than ACM, including insulation, the expert panel will consider these issues shortly.

You also highlighted that clear guidance is needed on the process of removing cladding. The Expert Advisory Panel noted that it is important that if building owners decide 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. The Expert Advisory Panel also recommended that the advice of a competent

professional who specialises in the fire performance of cladding assemblies should be sought to assist in these considerations.

My Department has also written to UK-wide building control bodies and local councils to highlight key issues in achieving building regulation compliance when undertaking work to cladding on high rise buildings. The guidance also makes building control bodies aware of the guidance which the Department has provided to building owners following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Thank you again for your support with the response to the Grenfell Fire. I appreciate your continued support to help building owners act on the latest advice that the Expert Advisory Panel provide on steps needed to make buildings safe for residents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Javid', written in a cursive style.

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP