

Siân Berry letter to Rt Hon Lee Rowley, MP

Re: Registration deadline for the building control profession

Key information

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27 February 2024

Dear Mr Rowley,

A very concerning threat to the ability of local authorities to undertake building control services from this April, has been brought to my attention by members of the construction industry in London.

I understand that this threat to the delivery of these services has arisen due to the Government requirement that, from 6 April 2024, all building control professionals must have passed a competence assessment and be registered with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). Seemingly, despite the long-standing need for the assurance of higher standards, the limited timetable for these new measures means that a large number of building control inspectors have not yet been able to complete this process.

Those who have raised this with me are concerned that:

“There’s a risk that either construction will grind to a halt or work will continue without inspection (exactly the opposite of what was intended post Grenfell)” [...] The whole thing is a mess though and looks like a significant number of inspectors are poised to retire/resign in the next six weeks.”

They go on to suggest that the Government:

“could potentially allow a temporary six-month registration based on having five years experience and an appropriate qualification (MRICS, MCABE etc) and the person being ‘in process’ of re-qualifying under the new competence scheme.”

I have read similar warnings in the industry press, such as the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) magazine, Housing Today, which quotes the Chief Executive of the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) organisation calling for this six-month buffer period, 1 and Construction News, which focuses on the call from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) for an urgent review of how many surveyors will be registered by April. 2

I fully support this new requirement for surveyors to become registered building inspectors, as I am sure it will lead to improved safety in our building industry. In addition to the shocking death toll at Grenfell caused by inappropriate cladding there have been more recent construction failures, such as the collapse of the balcony in Weavers Quarter on the Gascoigne Estate in Barking and Dagenham last November.

The BBC has just exposed how this failure came about due to the wrong materials being used in the balconies.³ In the article, it states:

“Building surveyor Arnold Tarling has criticised the use of low-quality plywood, exposed by the BBC investigation. He believes it testifies to an overall lack of regulation and enforcement in the new-build sector.”

The risk of stifling this work due to the failure to ensure a smooth transition to the new requirements is potentially dangerous, as well as threatening to the achievement of construction goals.

Therefore, I ask that you take urgent action to ensure that councils across England and Wales do not reach a cliff edge on 6 April and are forced to dramatically reduce their building inspection services due to lack of registered building inspectors. I have no doubt that by working with the Building Safety Regulator and industry bodies, such as CIH, LABC and RICS, you can reach a suitable and timely solution.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Siân Berry

Green Party Member of the London Assembly

1. Notes

1. [Building control chief warns of chaos to council services if competence rules are enforced from April](#), Housing Today, 16 Feb 2024

2. [RICS calls for urgent review into building-control capacity](#), 22 Feb 2024, Construction News

3. [BBC finds major flaws in £41m estate's balconies](#), 21 Feb 2024, BBC News

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