

## News reporter of the year

*Government did not act after warning about Grenfell-style cladding*

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/government-did-not-act-after-warning-about-grenfell-style-cladding-in-2014-minutes-reveal-57433>

While speaking to a contact about the build up to Grenfell, Pete was told about a meeting where the government had been specifically warned that its guidance did not outlaw the kind of cladding used on Grenfell.

His source was unable to provide the minutes himself, but he was able to provide specifics of the meeting – including its date, title and crucially the name of a civil servant to whom the minutes had just been emailed – which enabled Pete to obtain the minutes of the meeting through the Freedom of Information Act.

What it revealed was damning – officials had ignored a specific warning that regulations needed to change to ban the exact form of cladding used on Grenfell Tower in 2014. The story, described as a “devastating” revelation by survivors of the blaze, was followed up by *Channel 4 News*, *The Mirror*, *The Times* and others.

*Sharma refuses request to fund sprinklers in high rises*

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/sharma-refuses-request-for-help-funding-sprinklers-in-high-rises-52394>

In the aftermath of Grenfell, the government was keen to insist it would not let financial constraints stand in the way of safety. But behind the scenes, its position was different.

It was Pete’s journalism which forced this into the public domain. After speaking to a contact, he was leaked a letter from the housing minister to Nottingham Council which revealed it would not meet the £6m cost of installing sprinklers in 13 towers.

The letter branded sprinklers “additional not essential” a day after the London Fire Brigade said they “can’t be optional”. Pete achieved an eye-catching follow up a week later by revealing sprinklers were planned in the Houses of Parliament at a cost of £118m.

The stories were followed up in national titles including *The Guardian*, *The Mirror* and *Private Eye* and were crucial in revealing the reality of the government’s unwillingness to spend money on safety improvements.

*Ministers consider league tables for social housing green paper*

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/ministers-consider-sector-league-tables-for-social-housing-green-paper-57269>

The Social Housing Green Paper was trailed by government as “the most substantial report of its kind for a generation”, pitched at attempting to reframe the social housing sector in the aftermath of Grenfell. It was, therefore, an absolutely essential document for Pete’s core audience of social housing professionals.

Relying on a network of contacts developed over several years at the title, Pete was able to report the headline announcement of this document almost a month before its eventual publication.

Based on off-the-record briefings with sector sources close to the development of the ideas, Pete was able to secure no fewer than five sources confirming the government was planning to publish 'league tables' of housing association performance.

Among eye-catching scoops about fire safety, this type of critical policy exclusive is the sort of specialist journalism that subscribers really value: advanced warning of what government will do next.



**AFDD+**  
enhanced fire protection for residential applications



Download the white paper

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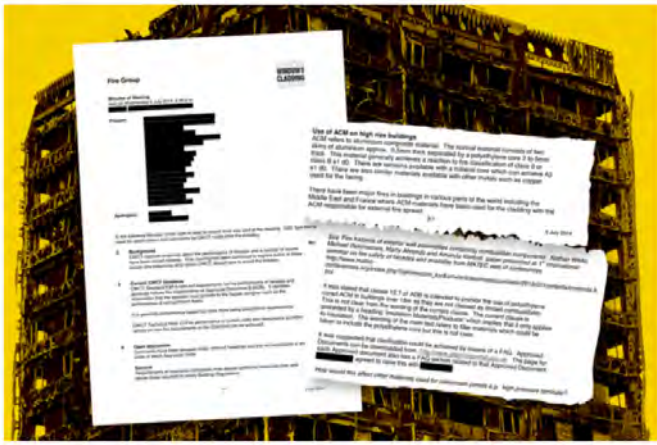
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## Government did not act after warning about Grenfell-style cladding in 2014, minutes reveal

NEWS 02/08/18 6:30 PM BY PETER APPS

The government was told it needed to clarify official guidance to ban Grenfell-style cladding in 2014 but failed to act, minutes released to *Inside Housing* reveal.



### Sharelines

Exclusive: government ignored a specific warning about Grenfell-style cladding in 2014, released minutes reveal #ukhousing

The government was told it needed to clarify its official guidance to ban Grenfell-style cladding in 2014 but failed to act #ukhousing

Minutes of a July 2014 meeting held by the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology, show officials were warned guidance was "not clear" regarding the use of deadly aluminium and polyethylene cladding.

The minutes show the Building Research Establishment (BRE) agreed to draft a clarification to clearly outlaw the material – compared to solid petrol by experts – but this was not done.

The aluminium composite material (ACM) polyethylene cladding was fitted onto the outside of Grenfell Tower in a refurbishment which was completed in 2016.

### READ MORE



**A specific warning about Grenfell-style cladding the government shrugged off**



**Government removes passage blamed for cladding crisis from new draft guidance**



## Raab: 'inquiry to decide' whether guidance allows combustible cladding

In June last year, flames ripped through this cladding system engulfing the building in flames and killing 72 people.

The minutes, released to *Inside Housing* under the Freedom of Information Act, say: "There have been major fires in buildings in various parts of the world where ACM materials have been used for the cladding, with the ACM responsible for the external fire spread."

[Download the white paper](#)

"It was stated that [official guidance] is intended to prohibit the use of polyethylene-cored ACM in buildings over 18m... This is not clear from the wording of the current clause."

They add that the BRE agreed to draft a 'Frequently Asked Question' for the official website to clarify this point, but this was never done.

### The ACM cladding warning: full text

*Taken from the minutes of the CWCT Fire Group meeting minutes, held on 2 July 2014, which government officials attended*

#### Use of ACM on high rise buildings

"ACM refers to aluminium composite material. The normal material consists of two skins of aluminium approx. 0.5mm thick separated by a polyethylene core 2 to 5mm thick. This material generally achieves a reaction to fire classification of class 0 or class B s1 d0. There are versions available with a mineral core which can achieve A2 s1 d0. There are also similar materials available with other metals such as copper used for the facing.

"There have been major fires in buildings in various parts of the world including the Middle East and France where ACM materials have been used for the cladding with the ACM responsible for external fire spread.

"It was stated that clause 12.7 of ADB is intended to prohibit the use of polyethylene cored ACM in buildings over 18m as they are not classed as limited combustibility.

"This is not clear from the wording of the current clause. The current clause is preceded by a heading 'Insulation Materials/Products' which implies that it only applies to insulation. The wording of the main text refers to filler materials which could be taken to include the polyethylene core but this is not clear.

"It was suggested that clarification could be achieved by means of a FAQ. Approved Documents can be downloaded from [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk). The page for each Approved Document also has a FAQ section related to that Approved Document. [a representative from the BRE] agreed to raise this with [an official at the Department for Communities and Local Government]"

*Square brackets indicate redacted names, which have been confirmed through sources. The full minutes can be downloaded below.*

[DOWNLOAD THIS DOCUMENT](#)

Reacting, Edward Daffarn, a survivor from the tower and part of campaign group Grenfell United, said: "The more we learn about what happened before Grenfell, from council to government to industry, the more we believe 72 people would be alive today if those in power had done their basic duty.

"To see the government was specifically warned about the dangers of using of this type of cladding years before the fire, before the refurbishment of Grenfell, is devastating. It adds to the growing list of warnings that were ignored."

He added that "there must be no more excuses" over the banning and removal of combustible materials from other towers.

Steve Reed, a Labour MP who has campaigned on cladding, added: "This is damning proof that the government knew their fire safety guidance was flawed and dangerous and yet they did nothing."

The minutes show government officials believed Approved Document B – the official guidance on fire safety – banned the use of flammable ACM through a clause stipulating that 'insulation materials/products' should be of limited combustibility.

However, this argument was rejected by the industry figures present as ACM cladding has no insulation function (see box: the Class 0 debate).

### The 'Class 0' debate explained



- ▶ Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the government has insisted that its official guidance, Approved Document B, required cladding panels to be of 'limited combustibility'. But many industry figures disagree, saying the standard the guidance set was 'Class 0' or 'Euroclass B'.
- ▶ Approved Document B sets limited combustibility as the standard for 'insulation materials/products' in paragraph 12.7. It sets Class 0 or Euroclass B as the standard for 'external surfaces' in paragraph 12.6.
- ▶ Paragraph 12.7 says that "insulation product, filler material etc" must be of limited combustibility. In a letter to social landlords on 22 June, the government said that the word "filler" in this context covered the plastic in between the aluminium sheets in the cladding.
- ▶ But experts have disputed this view, pointing out that the cladding itself does not have an insulation function.
- ▶ The cladding used on Grenfell was certified to Class 0 and so would apparently have met the official standard for external walls.
- ▶ This debate remains crucial in assessing the liability for the removal of cladding, much of which is also rated Class 0, from hundreds of tower blocks nationwide.

The minutes say: "The current clause is preceded by a heading 'Insulation Materials/Products' which implies that it only applies to insulation. The working of the main text refers to filler materials which could be taken to include the polyethylene core but this is not clear."

After the Grenfell Tower blaze, government ministers – including chancellor Philip Hammond – relied on the passages about 'insulation' to claim that the cladding on Grenfell was banned.

In a letter to social landlords, sent on 22 June last year, Melanie Dawes, permanent secretary at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), wrote: "For the avoidance of doubt, the core (filler) within an aluminium composite material (ACM) is an 'insulation material/product', 'insulation product', and/or 'filler material' as referred to in Paragraph 12.7... of Approved Document B."

David Metcalfe, director of the CWCT, who attended the meeting, said: "It may well have been the intention that that the clause prohibited those materials, but the simple fact is that's not what was written in the guidance – and that is the big problem here."

### Timeline: a short history of cladding and building regulations



➤ **January 2000** - Following the lower block fire at Garnock Court - which killed a pensioner with disabilities - a report by the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee concluded that building regulations required "external surfaces (and hence cladding)... should be of a material classified as 'Class 0' for spread of fire". It adds: "We do not believe that it should take a serious fire in which many people are killed before all reasonable steps are taken towards minimising the risks [from cladding fires]."

➤ **January 2008** - The British Board of Agrément provides a certificate confirming a Class 0 rating for Reynobond PE, the material later installed on Grenfell Tower

➤ **March 2013** - The coroner investigating the Lakanal House blaze in south London, which killed six, writes to Eric Pickles, communities secretary, advising him to review official guidance contained in Approved Document B "with particular regard to the spread of fire over the external envelope of a building". Mr Pickles replies, indicating that changes will not be made until "2016/17"

➤ **July 2014** - At a meeting of the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology, the government is warned that its guidance is not clear enough to prohibit the use of aluminium composite cladding with a polyethylene core (ACM(PE)) on tall buildings, which has been linked to a number of fires worldwide. The Building Research Establishment agrees to draft an 'FAQ' making it clear that this material is prohibited, but never does.

➤ **14 June 2017** - A kitchen fire at Grenfell Tower, west London, spreads to the recently installed ACM(PE) cladding. The resulting fire totally engulfs the building, trapping residents and killing 72 people.

➤ **22 June 2017** - The government writes to social landlords claiming ACM(PE) is banned by guidance, despite its failure to clarify this point before the fire. Philip Hammond, chancellor, repeats this claim on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

➤ **17 May 2018** - The government announces plans to ban combustible materials on high rise buildings, and later publishes draft 'clarified' guidance, removing the passage which had been interpreted as permitting 'Class 0' cladding.

Emma Dent Coad, the Labour MP for North Kensington, where Grenfell Tower is located, said: "It is shocking but not altogether surprising that this very clear and prescient advice was totally ignored."

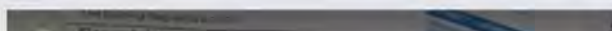
A spokesperson for the BRE said: "We were part of an ongoing discussion around FAQs for the planning portal with CWCT and other experts. This discussion concluded when the online government consultation re Approved Document B (ADB) was launched in February 2016. This was based on the collective view that these issues would best be covered off in the subsequent revision to ADB."

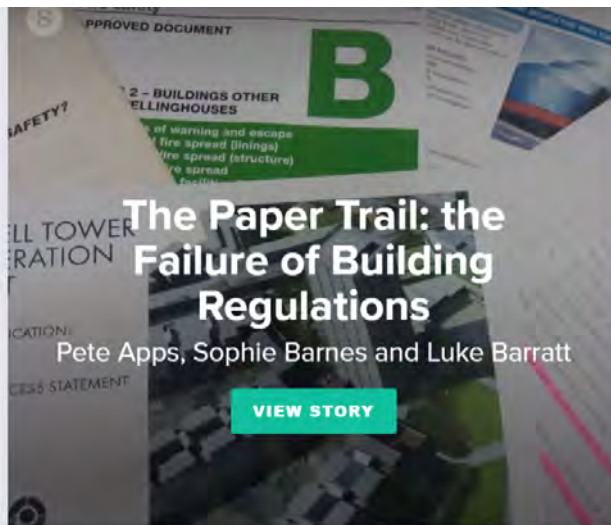
An MHCLG spokesperson said: "As we have said repeatedly, our view is that the limited combustibility requirements in the guidance cover the core filler of a cladding panel."

"We are consulting on a ban on the use of combustible materials in the external walls of high rise residential buildings."

### **The Paper Trail: The Failure of Building Regulations**

Read our in-depth investigation into how building regulations have changed over time and how this may have contributed to the Grenfell Tower fire:





## The Paper Trail: the Failure of Building Regulations

Pete Apps, Sophie Barnes and Luke Barratt

[VIEW STORY](#)

### Never Again campaign



In the days following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017, *Inside Housing* launched the Never Again campaign to call for immediate action to implement the learning from the Lakanal House fire, and a commitment to act – without delay – on learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy as it becomes available.

One year on, we have extended the campaign asks in the light of information that has emerged since.

Here are our updated asks:

#### GOVERNMENT

- Act on the recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations to tower blocks of 18m and higher. Commit to producing a timetable for implementation by autumn 2018, setting out how recommendations that don't require legislative change can be taken forward without delay
- Follow through on commitments to fully ban combustible materials on high-rise buildings
- Unequivocally ban desktop studies
- Review recommendations and advice given to ministers after the Lakanal House fire and implement necessary changes
- Publish details of all tower blocks with dangerous cladding, insulation and/or external panels and commit to a timeline for remedial works. Provide necessary guidance to landlords to ensure that removal work can begin on all affected private and social residential blocks by the end of 2018. Complete quarterly follow-up checks to ensure that remedial work is completed to the required standard. Checks should not cease until all work is completed.
- Stand by the prime minister's commitment to fully fund the removal of dangerous cladding
- Fund the retrofitting of sprinkler systems in all tower blocks across the UK (except where there are specific structural reasons not to

do so)

- Explore options for requiring remedial works on affected private sector residential tower blocks

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Take immediate action to identify privately owned residential tower blocks so that cladding and external panels can be checked

#### LANDLORDS

- Publish details of the combinations of insulations and cladding materials for all high rise blocks
- Commit to ensuring that removal work begins on all blocks with dangerous materials by the end of 2018 upon receipt of guidance from government
- Publish current fire risk assessments for all high rise blocks (the Information Commissioner has required councils to publish and recommended that housing associations should do the same). Work with peers to share learning from assessments and improve and clarify the risk assessment model.
- Commit to renewing assessments annually and after major repair or cladding work is carried out. Ensure assessments consider the external features of blocks. Always use an appropriate, qualified expert to conduct assessments.
- Review and update evacuation policies and 'stay put' advice in the light of risk assessments, and communicate clearly to residents
- Adopt Dame Judith Hackitt's recommended approach for listening to and addressing tenants' concerns, with immediate effect

#### CURRENT SIGNATORIES:

- › Chartered Institute of Housing
- › G15
- › National Federation of ALMOs
- › National Housing Federation
- › Placeshapers

Fire safety

Govt agency/department/organisation

London



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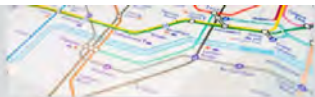
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# INSIDE HOUSING

## Lord Porter speaks

The Tory council leader tell us why he gives his party a hard time over housing  
*Analysis, page 10*



## Breaking the silence

A housing officer gives us the inside steer on the homelessness crisis  
*Feature, page 18*



# Officials warned about ACM cladding in 2014

**Cladding** Government failed to act following meeting hosted by industry experts four years ago

### Peter Apps

The government failed to act on a specific warning about the deadly cladding used on Grenfell three years before the fire, a document released to *Inside Housing* has revealed.

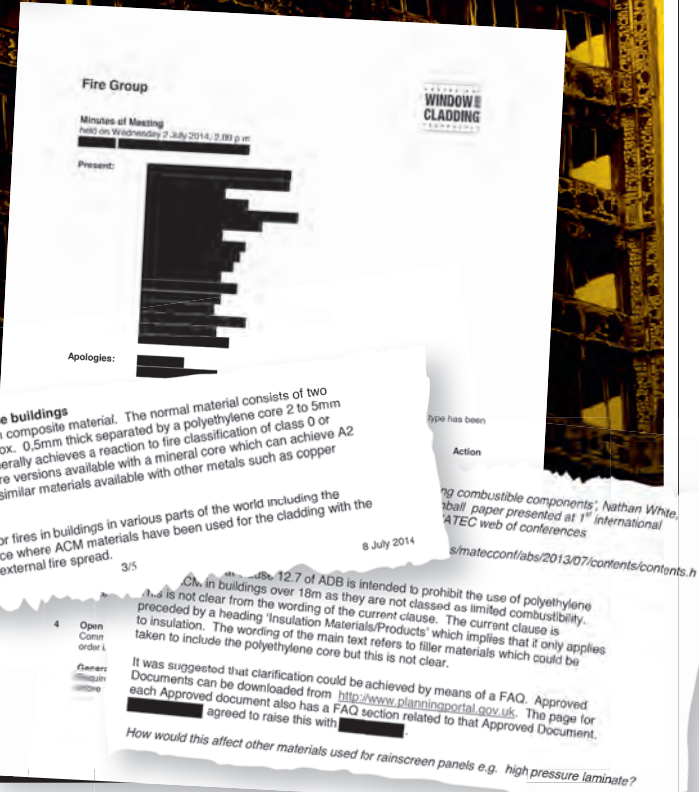
Seventy-two people died when flames ripped through aluminium and polyethylene panels attached to the outside of Grenfell Tower, in west London, in June last year.

Since the fire, the government has insisted its guidance 'banned' the use of this combustible aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding - which has been compared to solid petrol by experts. But *Inside Housing* has obtained the minutes of a 2014 meeting

hosted by industry body the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology, which prove officials were warned the guidance was being interpreted to permit its use. Officials were told it "is not clear from the wording of the current clause" that the material was banned, and advised a clarification should be issued, which was never done.

Edward Daffarn, a survivor and part of Grenfell United, said: "To see the government was warned about the dangers of using this type of cladding years before the fire, before the refurbishment, is devastating."

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→ Home improvements for the vulnerable, p22

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[www.insidehousing.co.uk](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk)



#### ● Six most read

1. Regulator downgrades housing associations over risk management and safety
2. S&P downgrades five large associations' credit ratings
3. Housing association chief executive steps down after 30 years
4. The development that is 100% affordable housing
5. MHCLG promises green paper 'shortly' amid criticism for missed recess deadline
6. Government restores 'social rent' to definition of affordable housing

## Wales

# Wales works on grant solution

## Welsh Government looks at alternative to merging all funding streams

**Nathaniel Barker**

The Welsh Government is carrying out work to establish a new housing-related services grant, as an alternative to controversial proposals to merge current funding streams.

Ministers previously proposed rolling 10 separate grants - housing and non-housing-related - into an Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Grant from 2019/20.

This would include Supporting People - a £125m programme which sees local authorities given cash to fund housing-related support services for people vulnerable to becoming homeless, as well as older and disabled people.

The Welsh Government claims 57,000 people a year are helped by the scheme.

Some providers have raised concerns that the grant merger could lead to cuts in funding for vital support services, as cash-strapped councils focus the funds on more politically popular areas.

A report by the Welsh Assembly's Public Accounts Committee in May said the changes risk "letting down vulnerable and elderly people" and create uncertainty for the organisations involved.

Ten housing and homelessness bodies in Wales, including Community Housing Cymru, the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru and Shelter Cymru, later made the case for an alternative to the poverty prevention mega grant.

The Homelessness and Housing-Related Support Grant, they suggested, would merge Supporting People, the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Rent Smart Wales and short-term supported accommodation grants.

The bodies claimed this would help safeguard the future of services while helping the Welsh Government achieve its target to reduce the number of different grant streams it manages.

A spokesperson for the Welsh Government told *Inside Housing* it is "undertaking work to understand how a separate grant focusing only on housing-related services might meet the aims of our grant integration work".

It is understood that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) - which has expressed support for the Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Grant - is softening to the idea of a housing-only grant.

"WLGA is aware of the genuine concerns that have been raised about the inclusion of Supporting People and homelessness monies in the EIPSG [Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Grant] from within the housing sector," said Anthony Hunt, finance and resources spokesperson for the WLGA and leader of Torfaen Council.

"Local government hugely values the Supporting People programme and the important work it does to support those at risk of homelessness and those who need housing-related support.

"It is because of this that the WLGA remains open to finding solutions based on agreement across all stakeholders."

## Cladding

# Government warned about ACM in 2014

→ Continued from front

The notes show that at the meeting, it was said that "there have been major fires in buildings in various parts of the world... where ACM materials have been used for the cladding with the ACM responsible for the external fire spread".

They add that the government responded by claiming it believed Approved Document B - the official guidance on fire safety - banned the use of these materials by stipulating that 'insulation materials/products' should be of limited combustibility.

"There have been major fires... where ACM materials have been used with the ACM responsible for the external fire spread."  
*Meeting minutes from 2014*

This is an argument ministers have advanced since the fire and which many industry figures have rejected.

The notes show this was expressed to officials at the meeting. They say: "The current clause is preceded by a heading 'Insulation Materials/Products' which implies that it only applies to insulation."

They show the Building Research Establishment (BRE) was asked to clarify the guidance by adding to the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section on the government website. A BRE spokesperson said this was because it later decided to make the change through an edit to Approved Document B.

The meeting was held at the same time as the cladding material for the Grenfell refurbishment was being decided, and two years before the refurbishment finished.

# MAKE EVERY DECISION THE RIGHT DECISION.

# INSIDE HOUSING

## Homeless students

We investigate why some university students are ending up homeless  
*Feature, page 24*

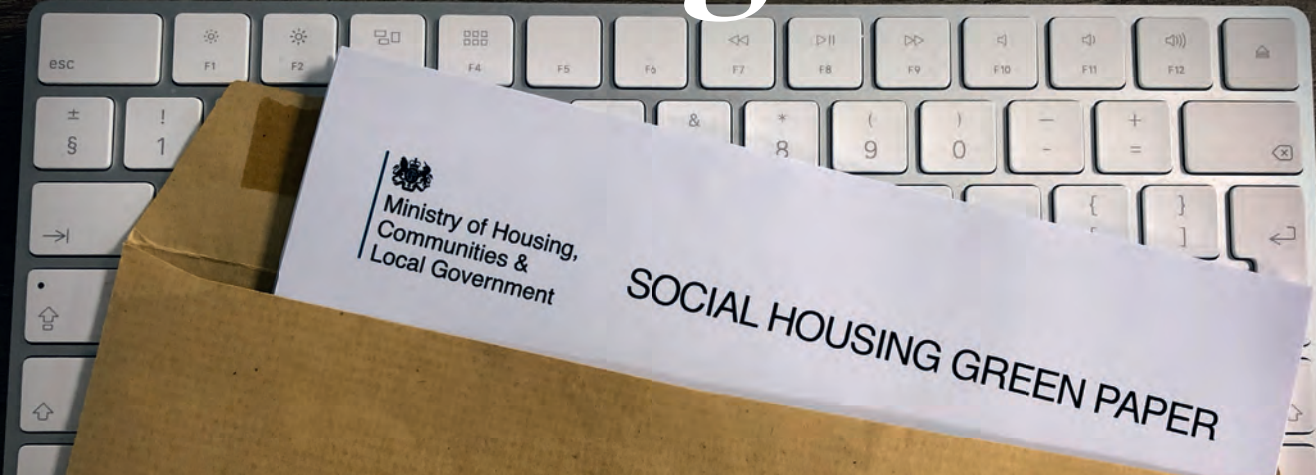


## Prevention and cure?

How councils are setting up new ways to prevent people becoming homeless  
*Feature, page 20*



# Ministers consider sector 'league tables'



### Peter Apps

Ministers have been exploring the idea of 'league tables' for housing associations as a key policy recommendation of the imminent Social Housing Green Paper.

Multiple sources told *Inside Housing* this week that officials had been developing the idea of a publicly

available league to rank associations' performance in terms of services to tenants. Sources said the league table suggestion would involve ranking housing associations on key metrics, such as the time taken to complete repairs, customer satisfaction or complaints.

The paper is expected to include proposals surrounding a beefed-up

role for consumer standards in regulation and suggestions of ways to reduce stigma for social housing tenants.

However, despite being discussed in detail with the housing sector, it is not known whether these measures will make the final draft of the key policy document, particularly given the recent shift in housing ministers.

The government would not confirm a publication date, but has committed to releasing the document before parliament goes into recess for the summer on Tuesday.

*Inside Housing* went to press on Wednesday, before the document had been published.

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## In this week's magazine

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## And 4 pages of jobs

### Fire safety

# MPs argue for ban extension

## Select committee calls for retrofitting of sprinklers in high-rise buildings

Luke Barratt

The government's proposed ban on combustible materials in cladding systems should be extended to cover existing buildings, a group of MPs has recommended.

A report from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee has concluded that the ban should apply retrospectively to existing buildings and those currently under construction, not just new ones.

Among other recommendations, it called for the retrospective installation of sprinklers in high-rise residential buildings, a key ask of *Inside Housing's* Never Again campaign.

It added that the government should tackle the "clear conflict of interest" in the product testing system, as well as other conflicts of interest in the construction industry.

Officially, the report was a response to Dame Judith Hackitt's post-Grenfell review of building regulations.

It welcomed Dame Judith's proposal that the construction industry "should no longer be able to choose their own regulator", referring to her plan for a stricter building control regime.

Clive Betts, chair of the committee, said: "The industry is riven with conflicts of interest at every turn, with manufacturers choosing the most lenient testing bodies for their products. It just cannot be right that builders get to choose who marks their homework and urgent action is needed to make sure this does not continue."

The committee criticised Dame Judith, however, for failing to recommend a ban on combustible materials, something the government is now consulting on. As well as its recommendation for extending this ban, it suggested that as well as using only non-combustible materials in cladding systems, all systems should be subject to large-scale testing.

The committee stopped short of banning so-called desktop studies, a controversial means of clearing materials for use without testing by extrapolating results from previous tests. It said, however, that they should be limited.

### Social Housing Green Paper

# Ministers mull sector 'league tables'

→ Continued from front

It is understood ministers have considered turning the document into a 'white paper' and including clear policy proposals rather than headline aims, although this is believed to have been dropped.

The green paper is expected to focus on tackling stigma, encouraging homeownership, giving residents more influence over services, better recourse for escalating complaints and increased transparency.

The Social Housing Green Paper was announced by Sajid Javid in September last year, as part of the government's response to Grenfell. Sector sources expressed concern that league tables could prove too simplistic as a way of ranking services.

Mr Javid said the paper would be a "top-to-bottom review of the issues facing the sector" and represent "the most substantial report of its kind for a generation". Since then, housing ministers Alok Sharma and Dominic Raab have carried out a series of round table discussions with social housing tenants to discuss the policy proposals before both were reshuffled to different ministerial roles.

The government had promised to publish the document by spring, before moving the date back to the end of the parliamentary term.

## From the web

[www.insidehousing.co.uk](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk)

### Ten most read

1. Seven problems with last night's Dispatches programme
2. Dispatches episode was not a balanced documentary
3. Social Housing Green Paper expected by recess
4. The fall and rise of social rent
5. Social housing allocations policy 'discriminates against Travellers', court rules
6. End the housing minister merry-go-round, say sector leaders
7. Council considering handing back homes leased from private landlords
8. Universal Credit claimants make up 25% of council rent arrears, report finds

### 9. Regulator undertakes 77 investigations into breaches of tenants' rights

10. Morning Briefing: Channel 4 criticised over Dispatches programme

### Blog

The *Dispatches* episode was not a balanced documentary - self-funding has helped housing associations to create homes and communities in the face of declining government subsidy, argues *David Montague*, [www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/57241](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/57241)



### Blog

*Dispatches* was one-sided and simplistic, and failed to mention many key points. *Carl Brown* looks at seven problems with the programme, [www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/57239](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/57239)





**AFDD+**  
enhanced fire protection for residential applications



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## Sharma refuses request for help funding sprinklers in high rises

NEWS 13/09/17 3:30 PM BY PETER APPS

The housing minister has described sprinkler systems as "additional rather than essential" as he refused a council's request.



Picture: Getty

### Sharelines

Twitter Sharma refuses request for help funding sprinklers in high rises

Alok Sharma wrote to Nottingham City Council earlier this month to decline its request for help funding £8m of works to high rises in the city, including a £6m bill to retrofit sprinklers in 13 towers.

In his letter, dated 3 September and seen by *Inside Housing* today (see document below), Mr Sharma said: "The government expects building owners to fund measures designed to make a building safe and to draw on existing resources to do so. We would consider the removal of financial restrictions in limited circumstances.

"It would appear the work you want to carry out to buildings does not meet either of these categories and the fire safety measures you outline are additional rather than essential. On that basis, any costs would have to be borne by your authority without any further financial assistance.

His comments directly contradict Dany Cotton, commissioner of the London Fire Brigade, who told BBC Breakfast this morning that retrofitting sprinklers "can't be optional; it can't be a 'nice to have'. This is something that must happen".

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### Corbyn calls on Treasury to fund sprinkler retrofit



### LFB commissioner calls for 'clarity' over fire safety regulations



### LFB commissioner calls for retrofitting of sprinklers

*Inside Housing's* Never Again campaign calls on the government to fully fund the retrofitting of sprinklers in high rises across the UK.

Encouraging the retrofit of sprinklers in high rises was a recommendation of the coroner following the Lakanel House fire in London in 2009, which killed six people.

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In a cladding fire similar to Grenfell in a high rise in Australia in 2014, there were no fatalities. The building was equipped with a sprinkler system.

In a letter to the minister on 8 August, Jane Urquhart, portfolio holder for planning and housing at Nottingham City Council, had called for funding support from government.

She wrote: "You seem to be unaware of the financial pressure councils are under, much thanks for funding reductions implemented by your government... We estimate the cost of installing sprinklers in our tower blocks will cost in the region of £6m; money we haven't got or budgeted for.

The government contributed to this crisis and must contribute to the response."

#### Never Again campaign



*Inside Housing* has launched a campaign to improve fire safety following the Grenfell Tower fire

#### Never Again: campaign asks

*Inside Housing* is calling for immediate action to implement the

Inside Housing is calling for immediate action to implement the learning from the Lakeland House fire, and a commitment to act – without delay – on learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy as it becomes available.

#### LANDLORDS

- › Take immediate action to check cladding and external panels on tower blocks and take prompt, appropriate action to remedy any problems
- › Update risk assessments using an appropriate, qualified expert.
- › Commit to renewing assessments annually and after major repair or cladding work is carried out
- › Review and update evacuation policies and 'stay put' advice in light of risk assessments, and communicate clearly to residents

#### GOVERNMENT

- › Provide urgent advice on the installation and upkeep of external insulation
- › Update and clarify building regulations immediately – with a commitment to update if additional learning emerges at a later date from the Grenfell inquiry
- › Fund the retrofitting of sprinkler systems in all tower blocks across the UK (except where there are specific structural reasons not to do so)

We will submit evidence from our research to the Grenfell public inquiry.

The inquiry should look at why opportunities to implement learning that could have prevented the fire were missed, in order to ensure similar opportunities are acted on in the future.

[READ MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN HERE](#)

Asset management

Fire safety



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**JC Townend** 13-Sep-2017

Alas Alok I see the protection of residents in high and medium rise property as essential.

Parliament is going through the process of refurbishment of the Houses of Parliament, but sprinklers will be retro fitted. Dany from LFB has it right the protection of human life is an essential, therefore maybe we need to remember the words of our prime minister after Grenfell blaze that government will assist with aid in ensuring residents are safe within their homes.

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