



PROGRESS OF REMEDIATION INQUIRY

HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

1. On 13 March 2020, the Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) Committee launched an inquiry into [Cladding: Progress of Remediation](#) to investigate ongoing concerns around the direct and indirect costs for residents, the pace of remedial works on affected buildings, and wider fire safety concerns that are emerging.
2. This work continues the scrutiny undertaken by this Committee and its predecessor in the 2017-19 Parliament. Over the last three years, we have called for the ban on combustible cladding ([9 January 2018](#)), the installation of sprinkler systems where structurally feasible ([July 2018](#)), Government funding for the removal of any form of dangerous cladding ([July 2018](#)), and a clear deadline by which this should be achieved ([July 2019](#)). Many of our recommendations have been adopted by the Government.
3. However, the Committee is aware that there is much more to do. That is why, as a key part of our new inquiry, we published a survey to ask residents of high-rise and high-risk buildings about the fire safety concerns in their properties, tell us the impact this has had on them, and give their views on the adequacy of the Government's response.
4. We are very grateful to the 1,352 people who took the time to respond to the survey.
5. This high-level summary highlights the key messages we heard through our survey. The Committee will use these findings as we continue our scrutiny of Ministers over the coming weeks.

IT'S MORE THAN COMBUSTIBLE CLADDING

"I have highly flammable insulation, missing fire breaks, missing compartmentation, poorly fitted fire protection to the structural steel and poorly fitted fire doors. I fear for my life on a daily basis." – North West

"Combustible timber cladding, lack of fire breaks, faulty alarm system, plus a long list of other things that have been wrapped up into a very confusing bundle of technical jargon by the management company." – North West

"Everything that can be wrong, is wrong" – Greater London

6. As anticipated, the vast majority of respondents (70%) told us about the different forms of combustible cladding that continue to require removal from their buildings.
7. However, a significant number of respondents also told us about other serious fire safety defects in their buildings, which require urgent remediation but are not covered by existing Government funds. These included, but were not limited to: missing or inadequate fire breaks (noted by 34% of respondents), combustible or missing insulation (30%), timber balconies or walkways (14%) and inadequate fire doors (5%).



8. It was also clear from the responses that there is an ongoing lack of clarity for residents regarding the extent of fire safety defects in their buildings. One respondent told us they had made, *“repeated attempts to get the management agency to assess this but they have said they will not undertake a survey or carry out remedial work in the future”*. This lack of clarity is particularly concerning three years on from the Grenfell Tower fire.

RESIDENTS ARE FACING VERY HIGH COSTS

“As a result of waking watch costs, which completely decimated the reserves that our building had built up over 20 years in 3 months, our service charges increased hugely.” – Greater London

“The majority is on the waking watch. Our freeholder has offered to pay a small sum towards the costs (around £26,000), but is demanding immediate payment from all leaseholders, at between £2,300 and £3,000 per leaseholder.” – North West

9. Respondents told us about the very high and ongoing costs they were facing, for which they have received no Government support. These included: waking watches (24-hour fire patrols of affected buildings), higher insurance premiums, new fire alarm systems, and the costs of fixing fire safety defects not covered by existing Government funds.
10. Affected residents told us they are also facing significant indirect costs from delays in surveys and remedial works, including having their properties valued at zero by lenders, leading to lost sales and difficulties re-mortgaging.

“Please help - we are so, so desperate. We’ve done everything right our entire lives and our future is at stake. We are ordinary working people who didn’t come from money. We deserve better than this hell we’ve been given.” – North West

“Our flat is currently unsellable. We are so scared it will cost tens of thousands and fear for our future as we don’t know where we will find the money” – North West

“I cannot sell or re-mortgage and I’m living in a building that could set on fire at any point. My mental health is all over the place.” – North West

11. A clear theme that emerged through our survey was the sense of uncertainty that those affected are still experiencing and the emotional distress this has caused. Many respondents told us they were struggling with their mental health, angry that they are facing potentially unaffordable bills through no fault of their own.

**CALLS FOR INCREASED FUNDING TO COVER ALL FIRE SAFETY COSTS**

“The funding will need to cover all buildings, not just those above 18 metres, and will likely need to exceed £1 billion, as it should be expanded to cover all sorts of fire safety defects” – North West

“If the government is going to remove dangerous cladding then they should go the whole way and rectify other faults that do not meet fire regulations. Why remove dangerous cladding but do nothing about the other fire safety issues that were never met when the building was built.” – North West

“The Government needs to set our timelines for the remediation works to be completed, ensuring that there is a specific end date by which all works would be finished”, Greater London

12. At the [2020 Spring Budget](#), the Chancellor announced a £1 billion Building Safety Fund to remediate all unsafe materials from private and social sector residential buildings, above 18 metres in height. Many responses from survey participants welcomed the additional funding, but noted that it would not cover all the costs they were incurring.
13. More than a quarter of respondents to the survey (27%) said the fund should be extended to cover all serious fire safety defects, including missing fire breaks. Several respondents called for residents to be reimbursed for the costs of waking watches and fire alarm systems, which they are continuing to pay through their service charges.
14. A number of respondents questioned whether £1 billion would be sufficient to fully remediate all affected buildings (16%), while others wanted the Government to confirm the fund would cover buildings below 18 metres (15%). A large number of respondents called on the Government to ensure that, now funding had been put in place, remedial works will be undertaken as quickly as possible (9%).

“It is great the government has announced the fund, but it is taxpayers money eventually and developers that broke the law should be held accountable financially.” – Greater London

“[...] force those entities who are ultimately responsible for the failures/signed the failures off as being compliant, to pay proportionately into the fund. This includes the architects, developers, contractors, builders, product manufacturers, new home warranty providers, insurance companies, banks, building control and solicitors” – South East

15. While Government funding for remedial works was welcomed, many respondents (13%) expressed their view that taxpayers should not be responsible for paying these costs, calling on the Government to ensure that those who caused this crisis - the developers, freeholders, inspectors – are held accountable in the longer term.