

MAYOR OF LONDON

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Date: 19 March 2021

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Home Secretary

Dear Robert and Priti,

Nearly four years on from the terrible fire at Grenfell tower, the shameful fact remains that many Londoners continue to live in a state of fear over the safety of their homes, and far too many are bearing the costs of correcting past failures which they had no part in causing.

I have always been clear that leaseholders must not be forced to bear responsibility for funding remediation of cladding and other building safety defects. While I welcome the additional building safety funding announced in February, the Government's commitments still fail to cover all those living in unsafe homes.

The daily nightmare faced by residents in potentially unsafe buildings, living in fear for themselves and their families, is exacerbated by the lack the transparency about basic fire safety information for the buildings in which they live. Shockingly, building owners have no legal duty to compel disclosure of a building's Fire Risk Assessment - the essential document which contains information about a building's fire risks and the measures in place to reduce the spread of fire.

I therefore urge you to introduce a new duty for building owners and landlords to share Fire Risk Assessments with their residents. This should also extend to prospective buyers and renters of properties in a building, so they can have the full facts before they move in. A statutory duty would be a big step in the right direction to increase transparency and give residents the basic fire safety information about their homes that they deserve.

In her Independent Review, Dame Judith Hackitt recommended strengthening the role of residents if we wanted the building safety system to improve. However, we cannot achieve that if residents do not have the most basic information about the buildings they live in. In fact, one of the main findings of a Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on cladding last June was that residents often feel they are left entirely in the dark when it comes to understanding whether their buildings are safe or not.

The Government reported this week on its 2020 consultation on the Fire Safety Order, noting that the majority of respondents agreed with the need to enhance provision of information to residents. This included strong agreement in favour of the provision of Fire Risk Assessments, which supports my proposal to introduce a new duty for building owners.

MAYOR OF LONDON

While some landlords have followed a policy of transparent and proactive communications, and share Fire Risk Assessments with their residents, many still do not. Amid a broken system, fire risk assessments are one of the most practical tools we have to hold building owners to account. I urge you to act swiftly to take this important step to support leaseholders up and down the country.

I look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Paul Scully MP, Minister for London
Lord Udney-Lister, 10 Downing Street