

Y Grŵp Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Education and Public Services Group



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

To:
Owners and managing agents of
high-rise residential properties in Wales
Local Authority Chief Executives
Local Authority Heads of Housing
CEOs Registered Social Landlords

Copied to:
Council Leaders
Cabinet Members for Housing
Heads of Building Control
Chief Fire Officers
Welsh Local Government Association
Community Housing Cymru
Fire Safety Advisory Group

22 March 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Update on fire safety of high-rise buildings

I am writing to inform you of latest developments and guidance on fire safety of high-rise buildings to support you in continuing to assess the buildings which you own.

Developments in recent weeks have highlighted, once more, the complexity of the construction of high-rise buildings and the need to consider each and every building individually.

The ongoing investigations into the Grenfell Tower and the focus on fire safety was perhaps always likely to bring to the fore other related issues. There are three areas to which I wish, particularly, to draw your attention.

Non-ACM buildings

You will be aware that Cardiff County Council issued a press statement on March 19th which highlighted that six of their high-rise housing blocks had cladding systems which they felt, following expert advice, require remedial work to address fire safety concerns. The risk assessments undertaken by Cardiff County Council were on buildings that do not have Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



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Cardiff County Council made the decision to undertake further detailed fire risk assessments on all of their high-rise buildings in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy. This action is in line with the advice of the UK Government's Expert Panel on Fire Safety on the fire safety implications of external wall systems that do not incorporate Aluminium Composite Material issued in December 2017. A key message in the guidance ([link below](#)) is that building owners should satisfy themselves and their residents that buildings are safe, taking their own professional advice on any necessary further action, reflecting their building's particular circumstances.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666190/111217_Advice_note_-_Non-ACM_advice.pdf

Fire doors

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made an announcement on March 15th that a test on a fire door used on the front of an apartment at the Grenfell Tower revealed that it did not meet building regulations standards of being able to resist fire for 30 minutes.

The MHCLG highlight that there is no evidence that this is a systemic issue as data between 2009 and 2017 shows that fire does not generally spread beyond the room of origin. We will, however, continue to seek assurance on this and shall keep in close contact with the MHCLG as they conduct further tests and consult the Expert Panel on the implications of the test results. Please see letter from MHCLG for further information:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691049/For_information_-_Fire_Doors.pdf

Revised guidance on BRE tests of ACM cladding systems

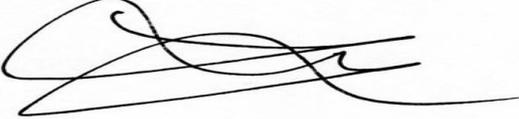
We continue to liaise closely with the MHCLG to ensure consistent messages are communicated to building owners regarding the large-scale system tests of ACM cladding systems commissioned by building owners and manufacturers. Two recent tests have led to a change in advice on what constitutes a cladding system which does not comply with building regulations on combustibility.

The tests have shown that ACM Category 2 with phenolic foam insulation can pass building regulations on combustibility when assembled in a different way from the rig prepared for the original BRE Test 7, which failed. The revised guidance, published on February 28, can be seen at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684350/20180228_-_Update_and_consolidated_advice_for_building_owners_following_large-scale_testing.pdf

I hope this information is useful to you in considering the specific circumstances of your buildings. If you have any queries please contact us at housingenquiries@gov.wales

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Emma Williams', written on a light-colored background.

Emma Williams
Deputy Director, Housing Policy

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