



Dear Prime Minister,

Further to our letter to you on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, to which we have not yet received a reply, we write to again plead with you to help end the building safety crisis and ensure millions of people across the country are finally able to move on with their lives. The situation is only more desperate now and we urgently need you to please step in.

When we relaunched our campaign in September, we set out a ten-point plan to end this scandal fairly. When we wrote to you in March, we set out five key asks we had of you. Now, we ask that you immediately do one thing: **Establish a Building Safety Delivery Group comprising key stakeholders, including leaseholders, that have a direct role in resolving this crisis.** This Group would then:

1. Drive the focus on data collection in buildings of all heights and all safety defects.
2. Ensure there is a robust set of risk-based criteria by which to have consistent assessment standards for remediation or risk mitigation needs at individual buildings.
3. Accurately assess the true funding requirements to finally end the building safety crisis.

In December, you acknowledged, in Parliament, that we are facing an injustice and we are in a very unfair position. In February, you said you appreciated and sympathised with our predicament and that you were determined none of us would have to pay for the unaffordable costs of fixing fire safety defects we did not cause and are no fault of our own. Unfortunately, your deliberate use of the word “unaffordable” means we are still on the hook for costs running into tens of thousands of pounds for serious safety defects. This extends far beyond just cladding and occurs in buildings of all heights – these defects must be addressed before homes can truly be made safe from fire spreading.

So far, the Government’s approach has not led to buildings being made safe at any real pace with many of us having already thrown thousands of pounds down the drain on interim measures and exorbitant insurance premiums, as well as remediation that is being forced upon us.

We are also working alongside building owners on this issue because we recognise that they did not create this problem either and they do not have the funds available to address it. The Government is ultimately responsible for the regulatory system that led to this crisis and therefore needs to provide the immediate cash-flow to resolve the problem, including addressing fundamental issues with the funding agreements to unlock monies promised for high-rise buildings.

We are emotionally, physically, financially, and mentally trapped. There have been bankruptcies and worse, and things are only getting more desperate each day - we cannot wait any longer. Without your immediate intervention, we are deeply concerned that this impasse is only set to continue for years. **We are writing to ask, to beg, you to please take control of this national crisis.**

We understand the Government has committed further funding for unsafe cladding, but this still falls far short of the coordinated, holistic building safety strategy that we desperately need. Estimates put the total cost to make buildings safe at £15bn - whilst there may now be £5.1bn of funding, at least £2bn of this is to be repaid through a miniscule developer levy. In effect, this means that the people you said are in an unfair position and face an injustice are still being forced to pay the bulk of these costs.

The Government's approach is disjointed and piecemeal without any systematic attempt at an all-encompassing and fair solution. The current strategy of doing the bare minimum and relying on industry is just not working – this crisis demands a coordinated, proportionate, and risk-based approach to building safety.

The Government's actions to-date have only created a perfect storm of driving up demand whilst impacting supply – there are severe constraints on the number of fire engineers to assess buildings and contractors able to undertake remediation work, along with insurance issues and concerns over materials supply. Costs are shooting up dramatically, with our high-level analysis indicating post-tender costs received are at least 25-50% above pre-tender budget appraisal estimates.

Most unfairly, too many innocent people are being ruled out of any help whatsoever, despite the issues they are experiencing having the same causes as where people are being offered funding. Leaseholders in 'mid-rise' buildings are to be forced into paying an unworkable and terribly unfair Cladding Tax loan scheme with those in buildings below 11m completely cast adrift. There is still nothing approaching true risk prioritisation to target distribution where it is urgently needed.

Due to the January 2020 Consolidated Advice Notes, and despite the supplementary Advice issued in November 2020, a zero-risk approach still permeates all the way down the food chain, meaning leaseholders are being forced into costly remediation for all issues that are identified, no matter the height of the building or the true risk. Unfortunately, instead of providing much-needed certainty around risk prioritisation in existing buildings, the Government now appears to be relying on the RICS valuation assessment to assess life and building safety.

Any long-term resolution to the building safety crisis must be data-driven to reflect buildings of all heights. Unfortunately, there has only been a brief reference to a pilot scheme for buildings below 18m by Christopher Pincher in October 2020 – it is clear from the Government's own estimates that it does not yet have a handle on the actual number of buildings, of all heights, that require some form of remediation or risk mitigation. Robust and reliable data that provides a true picture of the scale of this crisis must be gathered at pace. Currently, leaseholders in 'mid-rise' buildings are being told they will have to wait up to five years for their building to be assessed. This cannot continue.

Simply continuing down the current path will exacerbate the systemic issues the flat sales market is experiencing. Without your commitment, uncertainty will prevail and government interventions to support the wider housing market will only fail if the property ladder does not have a solid first rung.

We really need you to please listen to us – we understand this is a complex issue but, deep down, it is about fairness. It is about not penalising the innocent people who simply wanted to fulfil the British dream of taking a step onto the property ladder. It is about supporting the very people the Conservatives say they stand for.

It is now four years since the terrible events at Grenfell Tower. You and your Ministers will say "Never again" but, without action, this is meaningless. Shortly after you became Prime Minister, you witnessed first-hand the devastation that could be wrought by fire in minutes, at The Cube in Bolton. You will have seen the recent fire at New Providence Wharf in London; a fire that avoided devastating consequences through a mixture of luck, residents alerting each other and the emergency services. Every day that passes means a life-endangering fire may occur - please, please, please heed the warnings you have been given before it is too late.

We know you have the power to save us from this ongoing nightmare. Please do the right thing and show the political will to help us. Please level us up.

**Signed by:**

Alex Dickin, Jake Ellis, Rebecca Fairclough, Julie Fraser, Jenni Garratt, Giles Grover, Lucie Gutfreund, Natasha Letchford, Dr Will Martin, Carine Marzin, Cerys Owens, Jenny Reid, Dave Richards, Rituparna Saha, Abigail Tubiené - The End Our Cladding Scandal Campaign Partners

Mick Platt - Wallace Partnership Group Limited

Richard Silva - Homeground Management Limited

Michael Gaston - Estates and Management Limited

Dr Nigel Glen - The Association of Residential Managing Agents

Andrew Bulmer - The institute of Residential Property Management

Kate Henderson - National Housing Federation Chief Executive

Jane Duncan OBE, RIBA Fire Safety Expert Advisory Group Chair