



End Our Cladding Scandal statement on the Seventh Anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire

On the seventh anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, we continue to stand with the bereaved, residents, survivors, and wider community. The fight will not end until there is truth, justice, change – and charges.

Seven years after Grenfell, residents and leaseholders of flats across the country are still paying the price for a decades-long collective failure of the state and the construction industry. Everyone deserves a safe home in which to live, work, care for their families and make plans for their future – but an estimated **600,000 people will go to bed tonight in homes that are still unsafe**, and almost 3 million are trapped with homes they cannot sell,¹ unable to move on with their lives.

The pace of making homes safe remains shockingly slow – and at this rate, it could take decades. The government previously admitted that as many as 10,000 mid- and high-rise buildings are likely to need remediation works.² If their estimate is correct, then the latest statistics show that **in seven years, works have only been completed in 10% of unsafe buildings and started in a further 10%**.³ The government has committed funding of £9.1bn, but only £2.2bn (24%) has been spent so far. The Sunday Times recently documented how **more than 15,000 residents have been ordered to leave their unsafe homes since Grenfell**, and evacuations are on the rise: last year residents were ordered to leave at least 21 buildings.⁴ Between December 2023 and March 2024, DLUHC says it “assisted local regulators in preventing at least 800 residents from being decanted.”⁵ The fact that last-minute interventions are happening at this scale demonstrates the very real and present risk that so many people are living with on a day-to-day basis.

It is worth repeating: these are *life-critical* fire safety defects. **Recent cladding fires, from Wembley⁶ to Valencia,⁷ have clearly demonstrated why remedial action remains so urgent.** Being “in negotiations” about remediation or having “plans in place” counts for little when dangerous cladding – or other construction defects that enable fire to spread rapidly – remain on people’s homes. Fire won’t wait while the legal and administrative battle continues between responsible parties who want to limit their own liability first.

In the last year, Remediation Orders and Remediation Contribution Orders have begun to work their way through the First-tier Tribunal, including five applications by the Secretary of State against large freeholders. With average legal costs of £170k per building,⁸ this route to justice is clearly out of reach for most ordinary citizens. This case-by-case approach is also far removed from the simple comprehensive solution that is needed for a widespread national crisis on this scale. The next government must get a grip of this. **We urge the state to use its resources to fully fund remediation of all defects up front – and then use its ability to recover costs from responsible parties.** Making homes safe must surely be the first priority.

Unbelievably, there are no firm deadlines for making homes safe, which means that building profitable new homes continues to take precedence over fixing existing ones. **The government must set clear deadlines for remediation works** and ensure that all parties are held to account and face real consequences for delays.

Even buildings that have apparently “completed” remediation works can be left with serious safety defects. Firstly, this is because government funding schemes only cover cladding – but will not fix internal defects such as faulty compartmentation, smoke extraction systems or fire doors. Unfunded defects may simply be covered up again. It is self-evident that **buildings cannot be made “half-safe”**– and the government’s developer remediation contract terms already recognise **internal building defects can be life-critical too**.

Secondly, the terms of the developer contract allow them to commission their own building assessments, and there are concerns that this is reducing the scope of work or leading to decisions not to remediate at all. Other stakeholders – such as freeholders, insurers, mortgage lenders or the fire service – will often disagree with the minimum standards that developers insist are sufficient to meet their legal obligations. **A robust and independent dispute resolution process was promised** by the Secretary of State, and it must be brought forward urgently, so that leaseholders and residents are not left to fend for themselves against powerful corporate interests. It is also imperative that the government takes a leadership role to break the deadlock and **brings all stakeholders to the table to agree an acceptable standard of remediation**. Until they do, safety issues may remain unresolved – and innocent leaseholders will continue to face financial ruin.

After seven years, some people desperately need to move home – because they can no longer afford to live there or need to relocate for work, move in with a partner, or upsize to allow their families to grow – but **homes are frequently unsellable until remediation is complete**⁹. Meanwhile, exorbitant building insurance bills are draining their finances with every day that passes. It is **common for insurance premiums to have rocketed by several hundred percent or more** and to remain elevated even after remediation works.¹⁰ The government’s response to this assault has been incredibly lacklustre and hands-off so far; this must change.

Specific measures also need to be taken swiftly to **support leaseholders on limited incomes, who bought unsafe homes via government-backed schemes such as Shared Ownership and Help to Buy** but are now completely trapped. We want to see buyback schemes made available to those who are least able to bear the continued delay in buildings being made safe.

The good news is that the solutions are straightforward if there is the political will to implement them. It is already within the power of the government to make homes safe at the pace we need and deserve, and to fully protect all blameless leaseholders and residents. Our manifesto¹¹ sets out our key asks and the steps to deliver them. Whichever party forms the next government has an **opportunity to step up and deliver a much fairer and faster end to the building safety crisis** – and it is time to grasp the nettle. We are determined to see justice and we won’t stop campaigning until this crisis is fixed, for good.

Notes

- For further information on our campaign, please visit <https://endourcladdingscandal.org/>
- For queries or interview requests, please email endourcladdingscandalmedia@gmail.com

¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/forced-to-wash-clothes-in-a-bucket-scandal-of-the-cladding-victims-left-homeless-xbz237qpt>

² <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/almost-10-000-buildings-unsafe-with-danger-cladding-five-years-on-from-grenfell/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-april-2024>

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-21/19948>

⁶ https://youtu.be/g_OH25-O2AI

⁷ <https://www.wired.com/story/valencia-tower-fire-grenfell-cladding-siding/>

⁸ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-05-14/26235>

⁹ <https://endourcladdingscandal.org/newsfeed/half-of-high-rise-mortgage-valuations-still-require-an-ews1-despite-industry-pledge/>

¹⁰ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cladding-grenfell-insurance-bills-government-b2512005.html>

¹¹ <https://endourcladdingscandal.org/posts/end-our-cladding-scandal-manifesto/>