

The Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety and Communities
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

By email only

29 January 2021

Dear Minister

Remediation of cladding and fire safety issues in legacy buildings

First and foremost, I am writing to assure you that home builders remain committed to working with all parties to address the problems that leaseholders are currently facing in respect of remediation of cladding and fire safety issues.

However, I also wanted to address the concerns of HBF members and others regarding the remediation of issues that have been identified in legacy apartment buildings and to propose a collaborative approach to find a solution that delivers for residents and leaseholders.

For our part, we remain committed to exploring all possible solutions and want to reaffirm our desire to work with Government and stakeholders to achieve the breakthrough that so many residents are anxious to see.

Inevitably, building safety encompasses a number of complex and multi-faceted issues. The most problematic area at present concerns legacy apartment buildings. Leaseholders are experiencing a variety of issues including differing approaches to determining the scope of necessary remedial works due to the inconsistent interpretation of regulations and guidance by building owners, management companies and advising consultants.

We are aware of many examples where building owners, management companies and managing agents have received poor advice that does not take account of the risk-based practical approach recommended by Government and contained in Building Regulations. This can lead to unnecessary stress, uncertainty and costs being incurred and ultimately risk being passed to leaseholders.

There are further issues that will be familiar to you concerning the EWS1 process and the availability and cost of Professional Indemnity Insurance. Whilst we recognise these issues are being addressed separately, the EWS1 process continues to create problems and delays in agreeing and carrying out necessary work. This is having a significant effect on the housing market and is likely to create issues with housing supply.

In the period following the Grenfell Tower fire, Government led a series of roundtable meetings bringing stakeholders together to discuss issues and provide direction for action. I think it would be helpful to re-engage a similar forum in order to address current challenges, reinforce the need for practical risk-based approaches by all stakeholders and prevent problems relating to legacy buildings escalating further.

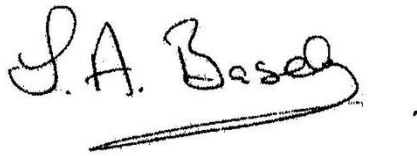


HBF would be happy to assist with the coordination of such an approach and find ways to reach satisfactory solutions for leaseholders.

It is vitally important that we resolve issues in legacy buildings as soon as possible, addressing concerns about building safety and mortgagability to enable residents and leaseholders to get on with their lives. In turn, this will provide greater confidence to those who are looking to develop and invest in multi-storey and multi-occupancy schemes, many of whom are currently concerned about the lack of clarity over building safety issues.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future and would be more than happy to discuss this issue at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S.A. Baseley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stewart Baseley
Executive Chairman

- c.c. Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Christopher Pincher, Minister of State for Housing
Sir Edward Lister, Senior Strategic Advisor to the Prime Minister
Jack Airey, Special Advisor