

An aerial photograph of a city street with a green map overlay. The map shows a grid of streets and a central area that is highlighted in a darker shade of green. Several people are walking on the street, some in groups and some alone. The overall scene is a busy urban environment.

Cladding Recommendations

Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning
Committee

LONDONASSEMBLY

Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee

Introduction

Since the publication of the Fire, Resilience, and Emergency Planning Committee's report on the impact of the cladding crisis in January 2021, the Government has announced an additional £3.5bn of funding to help ease the financial burden of those who are living in high-rise properties affected by the cladding crisis. The total amount of funding committed by the Government to help with the removal of cladding from properties is now £5bn.

While this funding has brought relief to those living in unsafe properties over 18 metres, there are a number of other types of buildings that have unsafe cladding or other fire safety defects which are ineligible to receive support from national government.

The recommendations in this report provide an update to the Committee's cladding crisis [report](#) from January 2021 on what the Mayor and the Government must do to help all of those trapped in unsafe, overcrowded and unsellable homes due to their buildings having cladding or other fire defects.

What the Committee has done to date

The Fire, Resilience, and Emergency Planning Committee started looking at properties with cladding and how this impacted Londoners shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017. Since September 2020, the Committee has been speaking with Londoners who live in homes with cladding and other fire safety defects. From these conversations, the Committee has made a number of recommendations to the Mayor of London, the Government, and the London Fire Brigade on how they each play a vital role in supporting people stuck in properties affected by cladding.

[Read more about the Committee's work](#)

What is the Committee calling for now?

There are many properties affected by cladding, with a complex picture of different challenges faced by leaseholders based on the individual defects in their buildings emerging. A blanket policy is not enough to help all those living in buildings with fire safety defects.

The Committee has listed the types of homes that they are currently aware are impacted by the cladding crisis. The recommendations proposed to the Mayor, Government, and London Fire Brigade in this document must take into consideration all the different properties impacted by the cladding crisis.

Types of buildings that are impacted by the cladding crisis include: -

1. All buildings with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) Cladding
2. High-rise buildings (over 18 metres) with non-ACM cladding privately owned
3. High-rise buildings (over 18 metres) with non-ACM cladding social sector owned
4. Low to medium-rise buildings (under 18 metres) with non-ACM cladding privately owned
5. Low to medium-rise buildings (under 18 metres) with non-ACM cladding social sector owned
6. Shared ownership properties with non-ACM cladding
7. Dwellings with non-ACM cladding (one / two / three storeys) privately owned
8. Dwellings with non-ACM cladding (one / two / three storeys) social sector owned

In addition, there are a number of properties that will not be issued with an External Wall Survey form (EWS1) due to other fire safety defects. An EWS1 form is required when selling a property to prove to the new buyer that the building is free from fire issues. Mortgage lenders will not release finance without an EWS1 form.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has recently taken action to unblock the housing market and has produced guidance following consultation with stakeholders which it aims to be implemented from 5 April 2021. The guidance creates clarity and consistency about when a valuer is not required to request further investigation of cladding through an EWS1 form before valuing a property in a building of multiple occupations.

While properties with fire defects do not fit into a category above, the Committee has called for local and national government to come up with a plan to deal with buildings with other fire safety issues across the capital. Some fire defects include lack of compartmentation, fire doors and alarms, sprinklers, combustible balconies, and missing compartmentalisation.

The Committee is therefore making a number of recommendations to both the Mayor and the Government to help leaseholders and residents living in homes with cladding and other fire safety defects.

Recommendations

The Committee welcomes the £5bn funding provided by the Government towards remediation of dangerous cladding on buildings over 18 metres. Whilst this will bring relief to some of the thousands of leaseholders currently living in high-risk buildings, there is yet to be a detailed strategy published of how local and national Government plan to help those living in unsafe buildings that are under 18 metres. The £5bn funding also does not help the thousands of people who are in severe financial hardship with many facing bankruptcy due to costs relating to buildings that have cladding or other safety defects. As such, the Committee feels there is still more work to do by the Mayor and the Government including: -

Recommendation 1

As each type of building listed above will need different funding, legislation, and government intervention to remove cladding and rectify other fire defects, the Mayor should set up a taskforce with representatives from each of the property areas to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. The Mayor should then use the taskforce to understand what he needs to do to help Londoners stuck in unsafe homes, but also report back to Government on what's needed to remove cladding from all buildings around the capital.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor must work with councils and the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to audit how many buildings have cladding on them. Funding will need to be provided for Councils to conduct this work. Once this is done, the Mayor should publish a 'Cladding Strategy for London' working with leaseholders and the recommended taskforce as well as London Councils and the LFC.

Recommendation 3

The Government must publish a plan of how it is going to remove cladding from all of the buildings listed above and in what timescale by the fourth anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2021 and publish a monthly progress report on how many buildings have had cladding removed.

Recommendation 4

A plan is published as soon as possible on what action the Government will take to deal with other serious fire defects and protect leaseholders from being made to pay for these to be remediated.

Recommendation 5

The removal of the terms of shared ownership properties which state that residents of a shared ownership property, regardless of what percentage they own, are required to pay full costs for the removal of cladding.

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