

Minister for Housing

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6th January 2025

Dear Convener,

Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024

I am writing to make you aware of a Government Initiated Question that I have answered today. The answer sets our strategic priorities for action on cladding in 2025, covering the following:

- continuing to take forward our current programme of action
- taking action to increase both the pace and breadth of action on cladding
- seeking to develop a collective, national endeavour to address the risks of cladding.

This builds on the recent evidence I gave to the Committee on the 10 December. I include the full statement in Annex A and hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Paul McLennan

ANNEX A

With the commencement of the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act taking place on 6 January 2025, it is timely to set out a brief statement of our strategic priorities for action on cladding in 2025.

In particular, we will be:

- continuing to take forward our current programme of action
- taking action to increase both the pace and breadth of action on cladding
- seeking to develop a collective, national endeavour to address the risks of cladding.

On continuing action – completing work currently underway

We will deliver assessment and remediation for properties that have been part of our 'pilot' programme and for which the Scottish Government is taking responsibility in the absence of an identified developer:

- we will deliver assessment and if required remediation for an initial set of 'pilot' buildings for which the Scottish Government is responsible. 13 Single Building Assessments are underway at the moment. Based on their findings, we will set in train all necessary remediation action, putting interim safety measures in place where needed
- based on due diligence work currently underway, we will also take forward assessment and remediation for any additional pilot buildings within the scope of the Act for which it is confirmed that responsibility falls to the Scottish Government. Where responsibility falls to others, we will identify and communicate this to those parties and to residents.

We will complete implementation of the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024:

- we are commencing the Act in its entirety on 6 January 2025
- we will put in place practical arrangements for the long-term operation of the Cladding Assurance Register, building on the interim arrangements now in place
- we will develop, consider and consult on proposals for a statutory Responsible Developers Scheme

- as part of the response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase 2 report, we will confirm our position on the use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (including use of the powers provided by the Act).

We will enable the assessment and remediation of affected properties by the relevant larger developers:

- we will seek swift agreement with the larger developers on the 'Developer Remediation Contract', enabling them to take forward assessment and remediation on properties for which they have accepted responsibility
- as part of an ongoing process of engagement with the larger developers, we will track, assure and gather information on their remediation progress.

We will continue to improve communication with residents and owners affected by cladding:

- we will continue to produce a quarterly newsletter aimed at residents along with monthly updates, backed by up-to-date information on the Scottish Government website including 'Frequently Asked Questions'
- we will fully observe the new statutory duties on communication with owners and residents in buildings for which assessment and remediation is being taken forward under the new Act.

On new action to increase pace and breadth

In parallel, we will work with partners to develop and deliver **two new schemes** of assessment and remediation:

- we will issue a new 'open call' for further properties which may require Government-led assessment and remediation. This will enable residents faced with problems of potentially unsafe cladding, but for which no owner or developer is willing or able to undertake assessment and remediation, to bring this to the attention of Government, and to be considered for Government-led assessment and remediation
- we will also develop a further scheme designed to identify and address those buildings which appear to be at an elevated risk from cladding. In doing so, we will work with local authorities and fire services to help identify the buildings which should be prioritised and will consider where responsibility for taking forward assessment and remediation should lie – including, where the Scottish Government has a part to play.

More generally, we will bring partners together to seek to make action on cladding a **national, collective endeavour**:

- we will engage proactively with local authorities, the fire service and other partners, to harness the skills, knowledge and capacity of all to greatest effect. In doing so, we will develop the clearest possible picture of the position across sectors in Scotland, and the action being taken. We will seek assurance where appropriate, and be prepared as Government to play our part where this is needed
- we will consider the circumstances of properties which are partly owned by a Registered Social Landlord or local authority but have a mix of tenure including private owners, or where the owners are not in a financial position to be able to take forward remediation. In these and similar situations, we will consider the potential need for Government funding on a case-by-case basis
- we will also work with partners to explore the potential for new, more effective delivery models for assessment and remediation.

We will publish a renewed plan of action in March, setting out how and when we will be delivering these priorities.

Interested parties can at all times sign up to receive our regular newsletter, and/or raise specific cladding issues with us on our website.