



Safety in your building

25 January 2022

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Dear residents,

Government announcement on cladding funding - what it means for you

Firstly, can I wish you and your friends and family a Happy New Year. In this letter I have summarised Network Homes' understanding of the recent government announcement on building safety and what it means for you, as far as we can tell from the detail that has been confirmed to date.

You may be aware that the government announced on 10 January that leaseholders living in buildings measuring above 11 metres would be spared costs associated with the remediation of cladding on their building. It is with regret that I'm informing you that, while this announcement will be good news to others, **your building is below 11 metres in height and therefore currently still not eligible for government support.**

If you'd like to get some more information, here's a variety of links:

- [Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' announcement](#)
- [BBC Newsnight 10/01/22](#), cladding coverage starts at around 29.30 and lasts 10 minutes
- [Leaseholders will not have to pay to fix any fire risks, government pledges – The Guardian.](#)

Why isn't your building eligible?

Since the Grenfell tragedy, government advice focused on investigating the highest risk buildings – these are generally the tallest buildings which measure above 18 metres. Previously, only these above 18 metre buildings were eligible for the government funding. Following much campaigning from residents, politicians and the sector, the government has now lowered the threshold to buildings above 11 metres. There have been some high-profile fires in buildings between 11 and 18 metres since the Grenfell fire, which may go some way to explaining the government's decision to lower the height threshold to 11 metres.

What else was in the announcement?

There were a few other updates in this announcement which may have some impact on your building:

- The £50 a month leaseholder loan scheme for building safety service charges at buildings below 18 metres has been scrapped.
- An additional £27m added to the Waking Watch Relief Fund to expand the number of fire alarms installed to limit the burden of costs for waking watch (fire wardens).
- The consolidated advice note published in January 2020 which brought buildings below 18 metres into scope in relation to building safety has been removed. It will be replaced by guidance from the British Standards Institute later this month.

A summary of this letter

Housing Secretary Michael Gove has announced that leaseholders in buildings above 11 metres will face no costs for building safety **cladding** costs. However, as your building measures below 11 metres, you sadly won't be eligible for this support.

We're waiting for new guidance to be published by the British Standards Institute and then we will assess how it may impact our programme and if your building will still need an investigation.

Until we know whether it is necessary to investigate/remediate your building, our fire engineer won't be able to issue an EWS1 form.

- Government is aiming to carry out fewer ‘unnecessary’ building surveys and take a risk-based approach for below 18 metres blocks which may see sprinklers and alarm systems installed rather than costlier remediation, except where ‘threat to life’ issues exist.
- Government will look at a package of mental health support for those experiencing difficulties due to the cladding crisis, as well as those with additional disabilities.

In summary, the government is addressing the impact its previous advice has had on buildings under 18 metres and is now recommending a risk-based approach. Much remains to be done and this is likely to take time. Until the government confirms its proposals in more detail, we will not know how this is going to work in practice. Once things are clearer, we will write to you with more information.

Will my building need to be investigated?

We are unable to say at this stage. Our technical team and our consultants are reviewing the new guidance and will determine what it means for your building. This will take some time so we will write to you again in three months with an update. If we do investigate your building and find issues we need to remediate, there is no government funding which can help pay for it. So, if we also were unable to get funding from the original contractor, an insurer or warranty provider, we would have to recover the costs through the service charge. This is always a last resort and we will always do everything in our power to avoid doing this. We also have authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority to offer interest free credit to those who may be affected by building safety service charges¹.

EWS1 forms

Many lenders require an EWS1 form for buildings below 18 metres before they will offer a mortgage. This may affect your ability to sell, remortgage or staircase your property. We will not be able to provide you with an EWS1 form for your building until we have considered the further government guidance referred to above, and if necessary carried out any investigations/remediation.

Where can I get support?

If you are finding the current position distressing, you may want to visit the resident-led End Our Cladding Scandal website, which lists some useful organisations that may be able to help you: <https://endourcladdingscandal.org/get-support/>. We have also listed other organisations that can offer support on our website: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingsafetyresources/>.

Further support is also available at:

- The London Fire Brigade’s website, which has a free online tool which guides you through a fire risk assessment of your home (home visits are available for more vulnerable residents): <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>
- Our website has a building safety section with lots of information and resources including a document library where you can download letters and documents available for your building: <https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/buildingandfiresafety/>
- Or get in touch on customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk if you have any questions.

What happens next?

We will write to you again when we have had an opportunity to consider the new government guidance and assess how it affects your building. You can expect to hear from us every three months or sooner if we have something confirmed which we need to tell you.

Best wishes

Raj Gandecha
Head of Resident Management (Building Safety)