



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Update on building safety**

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While we continue to do everything in our power to repair building safety defects – without these costs falling on leaseholders – and to reform building safety law. There are many things our governments can do to improve building safety on a UK basis.

I was deeply disappointed when the Secretary of State for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities Michael Gove announced an England-only developer pledge last month.

The Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Local Government and Housing, Shona Robison and I have repeatedly called on the UK Government to adopt a UK-wide approach to the pledge. A UK “pledge” would commit developers to repairing buildings they were involved in developing.

The UK Government’s unilateral approach to building safety issues makes it harder to ensure all developers take their responsibilities to contribute towards the costs of fixing building safety problems in Wales seriously.

It inhibits our ability to hold developers and manufacturers to account for fixing their mistakes and it runs counter to the recent Review of Intergovernmental Relations.

It also creates more confusion for residents at a time when they need consistency and clarity.

We raised these matters directly with Lord Greenhalgh, the Minister for Building Safety and Fire at a meeting earlier this month.

There we told him there is a limited window of opportunity to make the Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities’ approach work for all parts of the UK through a collective crafting of the legal contracts with developers.

Lord Greenhalgh has assured us the legal underpinning of the developer pledge would be extended and tailored to include the Devolved Governments.

We have subsequently received a letter from Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, providing renewed assurances of collaborative working.

In the interests of Welsh homeowners, leaseholders and tenants, we will continue to press for the following:

1. A change in the pledge letters with developers and in the resulting detailed legal agreements from “with no prejudice to other nations” to a matching and proportionate commitment to self-remediate across the United Kingdom.
2. UK Government redoubles its efforts to introduce this year a credible, affordable and UK-wide Professional Indemnity Insurance scheme, and commissions work to support the creation of a companion insurance scheme for certification of remedial works which includes relevant aspects of fire safety.
3. Our officials to be engaged directly with developers and UK Finance bodies as a pragmatic approach to designing-in the needs of Devolved Governments.
4. An assurance that the Devolved Governments will receive every support in extending the introduction of the Building Safety Levy.
5. Support from Secretary of State Gove in seeking additional baseline capital and resource funding from HM Treasury over the UK Spending Review period.

A building safety four nations meeting is due to take place later this month and I hope the outcome will be more positive for the many thousands of people living in buildings with identified safety defects.