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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/PO/129/2023

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee
Welsh Parliament
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5 May 2023

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter regarding building safety.

Building Safety in Wales continues to be a priority for this Government. It is critically important that residents feel safe and secure in their homes.

As you will be aware, this Government, unlike in England, has taken a different and more holistic approach to building safety by not limiting access to funding for buildings with cladding, instead considering fire risks arising from both the exterior and interior of buildings of 11m and above. Intrusive surveys are commissioned and funded by the Welsh Government on behalf of leaseholders, ensuring a clear, consistent, and comprehensive understanding of building safety issues across Wales.

Following the completion of the intrusive survey, a report is issued to the Responsible Person that sets out, in the consultant's opinion, whether the issues identified relate to construction faults, maintenance or leaseholder actions. The information that all surveys need to be completed before the reports are sent out is incorrect, the reports are issued to the Responsible Person as and when they are completed.

I believe the Freedom of Information request referred to in your letter asked whether any payments had been made to refund leaseholders retrospectively of survey costs incurred prior to the Welsh Building Safety Fund opening in September 2021. The response to which was that a total of £75,590.40 had been requested from five applicants to cover survey costs. Three of these claims have been paid to date and the remaining two claims will be paid subject to the receipt of eligible paperwork. This is just one mechanism in which we are funding survey costs. As mentioned above, we have commissioned our own consultant to undertake surveys, and have provided c. £1,400,000 for this work to date.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

As well as funding the survey work, the Welsh Building Safety Fund will also be used to:

- Remediate social sector housing - £78.5 million has been allocated to date, with works completed on 26 buildings, and works being undertaken on a further 79 buildings.
- Remediate an initial cohort of 28 private sector buildings where the developer is unknown, has ceased trading, or the building was constructed more than 30 years ago. Up to £100 million has been allocated for this purpose.
- Fund the Leaseholder Support Scheme, a free to use service designed to help people who are in, or facing significant financial hardship, as a direct result of fire safety issues affecting their property. This scheme provides free independent financial advice and if appropriate, the option for leaseholders to sell their property and either move on or rent it back.
- Deliver a developer loan scheme, with an initial amount of £20 million. This is available to developers who have signed up to a legally binding contract with the Welsh Government. The intention behind the loan is to minimise any delay to works which would extend the suffering of leaseholders who find themselves in buildings with fire safety issues.

For the reasons you outline, reforming the current system of building safety to establish a fit for purpose building safety regime, is a key commitment for this Government. Building Safety in Wales must both address our present situation and undertake fundamental reform of the building safety regime to ensure the problems we face now cannot arise again in the future.

This is a highly complex area of work, and whilst it is important that we work at pace to find solutions that will resolve this crisis, it is as equally important that those solutions are the right ones.

Over recent months, we have worked closely with stakeholders from both the public, third and private sector, as well as managing agents, to further test, shape and refine our policy development. CladDag have been directly consulted on our building Safety reform proposals and were pleased with our intentions to ensure disabled residents were consulted and have offered to help us source disabled participants for our focus groups.

Our pilot scheme for Welsh Government led remediation of 'orphan buildings', will ensure that the impact on all leaseholders and residents is fully considered when planning and preparing for these works, including those with additional requirements. The programme will identify the fire safety issues on, and in the buildings, with the objective of making the building as fire safe as possible for all residents. But, just as every building is unique so can be the needs of individual leaseholders. Support should be in place for those who have additional needs in the form of a Personal Evacuation Plan. This plan should be discussed with their support workers or social services.

I will also raise the experiences and examples provided by CladDag when I next meet with the Strategic Stakeholder Group to raise awareness amongst relevant members, specifically those such as the Fire and Rescue services.

The collaborative approach adopted in Wales has proved successful in engaging with and holding developers to account, with a number of developers having already started remediating buildings for which they are responsible. In March I announced that all but two of the Developers signed up to the Welsh Government Pact, had now signed the formal legal documentation. Of the remaining two developers, Bellway have confirmed their intention to sign in writing, and have indicated they will do so by the end of April, whilst St Modwen have confirmed they have no i buildings in-scope in Wales.

Each developer will have 30 working days from the date of signing to provide their detailed remediation plans. The legal document also requires developers to effectively engage with leaseholders/residents and managing agents, and monitoring arrangements to be put in place so progress can be measured. My officials will work with developers to ensure that they have fully considered the needs of disabled leaseholders during the remediation process.

Please be assured that I am committed to addressing building safety in Wales and my officials continue to develop our building remediation programme, alongside a significant programme of reform to establish a fit for purpose building safety regime in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



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