

MAYOR OF LONDON

To building owners and/or managers

Date: 29 October 2021

Dear building owner and/or manager,

Tomorrow marks two years since the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report. I am writing to remind you of the importance of urgent progress on its recommendations if we are to safeguard building safety and rebuild trust with residents.

On 14 June 2017, our city witnessed the tragic and avoidable loss of 72 people and with over 1,000 buildings in London now deemed so unsafe they require interim safety measures, we simply cannot afford delays that further risk the lives of Londoners. I am doing everything in my power to put in place the changes needed, and I urge you to also work swiftly and not wait for legislation where improvements can be secured now.

Since the fire, I have taken significant action to protect Londoners' safety. New homes on Greater London Authority land commissioned via my development panel are now required to meet higher standards than the building regulations, including a requirement for sprinklers in all purpose-built blocks of flats and a complete ban on combustible materials in the external walls of buildings regardless of height. The same requirements have also been introduced for new homes funded by the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme. My new London Plan embeds fire safety into the planning process, ensuring that safety is considered from the very beginning of a building's lifecycle. I have also called on building owners to disclose building safety information to both current and prospective residents.

I am also committed to ensuring that all the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report are implemented in full by the organisations under my control, and I will do all in my power to ensure that other organisations do the same. The London Fire Brigade has completed 23 of the 29 recommendations directed at it while progress is being made on the remaining six.

You will be aware that the Government needs to bring forward legislation in response to the report. However, three recommendations were aimed at building owners and managers and can be implemented without the need for legislation. These are:

1. Floor numbers to be clearly marked on each landing within the stairways of high-rise buildings and in a prominent place in all lobbies in such a way as to be visible both in normal conditions and in low lighting or smoky conditions.
2. The owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings to carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards.

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3. All buildings to contain a premises information box, the contents of which must include a copy of the up-to-date floor plans and information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the fire and rescue services.

I am aware that many of you have already acted upon these recommendations and I thank you for that. For those who have not done so yet, I urge you to act on them immediately. Two years on from the report and over four years since the fire, it is unacceptable that Londoners are still waiting for the lessons of Grenfell to be learned and for buildings to be made safe. There must not be any further delays.

It is also important that we respond to the particular challenges faced by some residents. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry heard about the barriers faced by residents with disabilities, which culminated in 41 per cent of disabled residents losing their life. The report recommended that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) should be provided to assist those living in high-rises and unable to self-evacuate.

I am calling for PEEPs to be available in all buildings covered by the Fire Safety Order regardless of height and have written to the Government recommending that its proposals are strengthened accordingly. This will require the Government to commit funding to ensure that the cost of developing PEEPs does not fall onto the residents they are intended to protect. I await the Government's response to the consultation but in the interim I ask all building owners to conduct PEEPs for residents that require them.

I am committed to promoting fairness and equality in our city. My London Plan responds to the needs of disabled Londoners and requires that buildings enable safe and dignified evacuations through high standards of accessible and inclusive design. It is vital that all building owners consider the needs of disabled Londoners in their buildings.

I will continue to lobby hard for the wider systemic changes and the necessary funding needed so that a tragedy like Grenfell can never happen again. I am committed to working with you all to ensure that London is a safer place to live, and the measures in this letter will help us get there.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London