

**Local Government and Communities Committee  
High Rise Inventory  
Submission from High Rise Scotland Action Group**

**14 June 2017**

**72 people died in the Grenfell Fire**

**74 people treated in hospital as a result of the fire**

**14 June 2020**

**23% of High-Rise residents in a survey reported having suicidal feelings or a desire to self-harm.**

**90% said their mental health had deteriorated as a direct result of the situation in their building.**

**70% reported having difficulty sleeping.**

**25% had taken time off work or study.**

**28% said they had put starting a family on hold**

(quoted from Cladding & Internal Fire Safety Mental Health Report 2020 May 20 published 10 June 2020 attached as an appendix)

Whilst these statistics may largely be collated from England, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that the figures in Scotland would be more favourable. Indeed, due to the circumstances here they could well be worse.

**100 seconds** to watch a video CLADDING & FIRE SAFETY MENTAL HEALTH "CRISIS" which shows the raw reality for many residents. Please watch it- available at the UK Cladding Action Group Facebook site Posted 11 June at 09:00

## **THE GRENFELL LEGACY**

### **THE COST**

**The Cost is *already* being paid.**

**The Cost is already being paid by High Rise residents not only monetarily, but primarily in health, and mental health issues. Limitation in owners' ability to move, restricts job mobility and advancement. Owners 'locked in' to high cost mortgages who cannot re-mortgage, are thus suffering a financial penalty now, nor can owners re-mortgage to raise finance for business or other reasons. Couples who are suffering the anguish of a breakdown in relationship, are also unable to sell their home to enable a fresh start.**

**There is of course, and there will be a monetary cost to the remediation process. It is the Human cost and the urgent need to**

- **ensure that our homes are safe and avert another fire disaster**

- understand the size of the problem
- understand and contribute to the deliberations of government, professional bodies, lenders and others in seeking resolution

that led to the establishment of this group 'HRSAG'.

## THE GRENFELL LEGACY

### INITIAL OUTCOMES AND RESPONSES

- Attempts to quantify the number of properties affected
  1. High Rise Inventory (HRI)
    - Of necessity initially a 'paper based' exercise based upon local planning authority records and their building warrants.
    - The HRI was limited to buildings with dwellings above 18 metres. That criteria has now been / is being reduced and thus many more buildings will fall within the scope of any review.
    - The information supplied was flawed, in that what was *actually* built was not in accordance with those warrants. Sadly, some of these properties where local authorities had issued letters (upon which buyers relied) confirming their safety have upon *actual* investigation been found to have flammable materials in their wall systems
  2. The requirement by lenders for certification in the form of EWS1 forms has prompted the discovery that builders essentially self-certified their compliance with building warrants, and this certification was not checked.
    - By way of example an investigation of a building in Glasgow revealed lack of fire-breaks and other serious failings.
    - In Edinburgh on a development, the builders approached the factors and asked for permission to undertake an investigation at their cost to complete an assessment of the building to establish what cladding materials they had used!  
The builder subsequently advised  
'It appears that Fire Consultant, .... having discussed the matter internally in relation to completing the required (ESW1) forms and despite the passage of time, they are unprepared to carry out the works requested.'  
The problem in this development is compounded by the factor reporting that the builders response to requests for files was, that they "insisted that computer records of the files were destroyed".
    - In the Edinburgh development a Scottish Fire and Rescue and Rescue Service undertook a review/inspection in the summer of 2019. At that time the Owners Association was advised verbally that the report could be made available by way of Freedom of Information request. A request was made in October last year and was acknowledged. Despite many reminders the

information has not been provided, nor indeed any reason for withholding it.

3. We applaud the Housing Minister's establishment of a ministerial working group 'to establish that the EWS1 approach works and the wider system works for the Scottish market and for Scotland's homeowners.'

It is noted that whilst the working group draws together representatives of mortgage lenders, surveyors, insurers, property managers, solicitors, house builders and the fire service, it includes no representatives of the homeowners, for whom the system has to work.

## **CONFUSION CLARITY CO-OPERATION**

### **CONFUSION**

Confusion exists among our members over

- EWS1 forms
  1. What criteria will be applied to the investigation and assessment of materials in the wall systems?
  2. Who is qualified to complete an EWS1 form, and what PI cover needs to be in place to make an EWS1 form acceptable?
  3. Will lenders accept a B1 certification for lending approvals and will a B1 certification enable valuers to apply a 'normal' value in Home Reports?
  4. For what properties are lenders/valuers asking that EWS1 forms be provided? (Given that we are being told that they are being requested for buildings under 11 metres)
- Remediation costs
  1. The Westminster Parliament has provided a remediation fund with regard to some properties in England. What is the position in Scotland?
  2. Has money been made available by Westminster and /or the Scottish government to address this problem?

### **CLARITY**

1. Each of the parties /groups involved in the resolution of the difficulties need clarity in their approach.
2. It is submitted that this cannot be achieved without the contribution of the owners'/residents' views and thoughts.
3. HRSAG cannot be clear in its thinking or contributions without hearing and understanding the needs of those groups such as lenders, surveyors, solicitors, agents, and national and local government.

## **CO-OPERATION**

- HRSAG is resolved to work urgently with all to remove this blight on the lives of many thousands.
  - HRSAG is building a directory of Owners Associations to facilitate ease of communication for Government and other bodies with owners.
  - HRSAG seeks to be represented on government or other groups established to work to resolve these problems, and to do so on a co-operative basis.

HRSAG looks forward to helping to resolve these issues