

Ministers must improve process of fire safety checks after only 95 tests completed since Grenfell – Healey

John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, commenting on reports that 95 cladding samples from high-rise residential buildings have failed a combustibility test, said:

"These results point to a collapse in our system of fire safety checks and controls.

"Ministers must now do a great deal more to reassure residents that everything is being done to keep them safe.

"They must improve the testing process which has so far been too slow, too narrow and too secretive. The Prime Minister promised that 100 tests a day could be done but two weeks on from the Grenfell Tower fire only 95 have been completed.

"Ministers must also not outsource all responsibility for urgent remedial action to councils and housing associations. They must guarantee that where fire risks are found they will make available upfront funding, including for re-cladding buildings, fire prevention work and retro-fitting sprinkler systems, starting with the highest-risk blocks."

Ends

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It is being reported that all 95 samples of exterior cladding from high-rise residential buildings so far tested have failed a combustibility test being conducted for the government by the Building and Research Establishment in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire.

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The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid MP confirmed to John Healey yesterday in the House of Commons that only the exterior cladding on buildings was being tested:
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-06-26/debates/02718B34-06C3-4984-9C4C-EAB30F2F0026/GrenfellTowerFireFireSafety#contribution-4320C1F4-1592-483E-8CD5-5FE8B7A9B0C9>

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The Prime Minister has previously said that capacity was available to test 100 buildings a day:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-commons-statement-on-grenfell-tower-22-june-2017>.

There are an estimated 600 buildings that may be at risk as a result of similar cladding to that in place at Grenfell Tower.

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John Healey and other Labour MPs put a series of questions on support, checks, funding, and overhaul of fire and building safety

rules to Sajid Javid yesterday in the Commons which remain unanswered. John Healey's speech yesterday is here:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-06-26/debates/02718B34-06C3-4984-9C4C-EAB30F2F0026/GrenfellTowerFireFireSafety#contribution-1DBB53D7-BCD8-480B-A93A-98F93B78E551>