

Press release: Government announces it will fully fund unsafe cladding removal in social housing

The government will fully fund the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding by councils and housing associations, estimated at £400 million, it was announced today (16 May 2018).

Local authorities and housing associations, which are non-profit making, will be given access to the money to help with reasonable costs of removing and replacing unsafe cladding from buildings which they own to ensure people are safe in their homes.

In the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the government quickly established a comprehensive [building safety programme](#). It made clear that aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding on buildings over 18 metres which was not compliant with building regulations guidance should be remediated by the building owners.

The fund follows the government's offer last year of financial flexibilities to assist local authorities with essential fire safety work. From conversations with social sector landlords, it has become apparent that they are having to take decisions about how to prioritise important services, repairs and maintenance work and investment in new homes.

The government has listened to their concerns, discussed the issue in Cabinet, and decided that, although social landlords have made good progress on replacing unsafe cladding, it is right to provide further support. It is therefore today announcing additional funding for the social sector. It recognises the tough decisions that are being made to carry out fire safety work as well as the potential impact on other services.

The government will also continue to provide financial flexibilities to councils for other essential fire safety measures and is directing local authorities to take cladding-related issues into account when carrying out reviews of housing conditions in their areas.

Social landlords have been working hard to replace unsafe cladding. Interim safety measures are in place in all affected buildings and latest figures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government show that over 65% (104 out of 158) of social housing buildings with unsafe cladding are currently going through the process of remediation.

The additional money will enable social housing providers to focus on providing safe properties for people to live in.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

People must always feel safe in their own home.

Since the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, we have taken steps to ensure the immediate safety of all high rise buildings.

This money will ensure local authorities and housing associations are being given the support they need to get this work done now as well as removing the uncertainty around funding.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We have always been clear that unsafe cladding must be removed from tower blocks so that people are safe in their own homes.

But we do not want vital safety work to put at risk our high priority house-building programmes. So we have decided to provide funding to ensure that housing associations and councils can carry out this vital work.

The government is clear that building owners in the private sector must ensure private sector homes are made safe.

The Secretary of State, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, will meet industry representatives to ensure that remediation work is completed as soon as possible.

The industry roundtable will take place shortly.

Further information

The government will set out further details shortly about how councils and housing associations can apply for funding, including conditions attached to the grant.

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[Press release: Update on fire doors investigation – risk to public safety remains low](#)

Housing Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP today (16 May 2018) updated Parliament on the fire door investigation and confirmed experts advise the risk to public safety remains low.

Earlier this year the Metropolitan Police informed government a fire door installed at Grenfell Tower designed to resist fire for up to 30 minutes – as required by building regulations guidance – failed after approximately 15 minutes when tested by the police.

Government immediately sought advice from its independent expert panel to see what action was required, and have undertaken further testing and investigations focusing on composite flat entrance fire doors manufactured by Manse Masterdor – a company that has not been trading since 2014.

The expert panel has concluded there is a performance issue with these Manse Masterdor fire doors, which do not consistently meet the 30 minute fire resistance standard. Nevertheless, the National Fire Chiefs Council has advised the expert panel the risk to public safety remains low. They point out that fire protection in a building is developed using a range of measures so a failure of one protection measure – such as fire doors – should not significantly change the overall safety of residents. In addition, all doors provide essential protection in a fire if they are properly closed.

Based on this advice, the expert panel advise that owners of buildings with

this type of door should review their building's fire risk assessment and consider how quickly these doors should be replaced. The expert panel has published guidance to assist building owners.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is writing to customers of Manse Masterdor identified in the company's records as having been supplied with these doors. It is also looking at the wider fire door market and intends to test fire doors from other door suppliers.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Public safety is paramount. When we were informed about an issue with a Grenfell Tower fire door, we acted quickly to seek independent expert advice and established a wide-ranging investigation.

Based on the results of these investigations to date, the expert panel advise the risk to public safety remains low. However they advise there is a performance issue with Manse Masterdor which is why we are taking the responsible step of writing to relevant building owners setting out clear advice on what they should do.

Fire service advice to residents remains the same. Regularly test your smoke alarms, ensure your front door is properly closed and in the event of a fire follow existing fire procedures for the building.

What is the safety advice for residents?

- The National Fire Chiefs Council has advised that the risk to public safety is low.
- In the event of a fire people should follow existing fire procedures for the building.
- Residents should also test their smoke alarms regularly to ensure they work and ensure that their flat front door is fitted with a working self-closing device.
- All doors provide essential protection in a fire if they are properly closed.
- Fire safety advice for residents is available at:
www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/High-Rise-Safety-for-Residents

How do I know if I need to replace fire doors in the building I own?

- The department is writing to customers of Manse Masterdor identified in the company's records as having been supplied with these doors and is considering what further support building owners may require to assist with taking timely action.
- The expert panel has published [guidance for building owners](#) who are

replacing or want to inspect their flat front entrance fire doors.

- The department is now looking at the wider fire door market, and intends to test fire doors from other door suppliers and will provide an update on these tests in due course.

What is your advice for owners of buildings which have been installed with these fire doors?

- Owners of buildings where Manse Masterdor 30 minute composite fire doors have been installed should review their building fire risk assessments and consider how quickly these doors should be replaced.
- The expert panel's advice is that these doors should be replaced using a risk-based approach, and they have published [advice for building owners](#) who are replacing 30 minute composite front entrance fire doors.
- General advice for building owners on how to ensure the safety of residents in blocks of flats is available at:
www.local.gov.uk/fire-safety-purpose-built-flats

How do I know if my landlords have installed these doors to my flat?

- We are writing to all customers of Manse Masterdor identified in the company's records as having been supplied with these doors, to notify them of the issue.
- Residents should contact their landlords who will be able to advise whether they have been supplied with the affected doors. If there is uncertainty the expert panel advise that a suitably qualified person can inspect the doors and this advice is set out in their [advice note on fire doors](#) which can be accessed from the [building safety programme website](#)

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[News story: Supporting innovation at work](#)

We told you how we're [transforming Companies House](#). To engage our staff and get them involved, we held an Innovation Day to give them the opportunity to take part in lots of interesting and innovative activities. There was a wide range of creative sessions to get us thinking in new ways and encourage better communication and working together.

There were 'hands on' activities, like interactive puzzle exhibits from [Techniquest](#) and the Escape Room challenge. We invited staff to attend talks by colleagues to learn more about their hobbies and creative skills. There were also opportunities to attend one-on-one coaching sessions, learn more about 'agile working' and watch TED talks introduced by colleagues.

We had 4 keynote seminars from guest speakers. These covered subjects such as creating an innovation culture, how to be happy at work, being creative and taking risks.

Denise Hampson, Desire Code

Denise is a consultant behavioural economist and service designer. During her talk, she told us how human psychology can help us design great experiences, and how we can use this when we design our services.

Steve Dimmock, doopoll

Steve has started a few companies, so he shared his experience about the highs and lows of running a business. His funny and engaging talk looked at how to start and run a business, and how to deal with problems when things do not run as well as they should.

Warren Fauvel, Nudjed

Warren spoke about how we can all be more creative, feel better about taking risks, and how to learn from failure. He showed us some useful tools for creativity and innovation in his interactive and entertaining session.

Marie Edwards, Academi Wales

Marie's interactive session showed us how to use tools and techniques to apply the principles of positive psychology at work. She told us how practical, daily activities could increase your own happiness, satisfaction and success, and how this positively affects other people.

[Companies House Innovation Day 2018](#)

Our Innovation Day let staff try something new and find out how they could work in innovative ways. It was a great way of encouraging a collaborative, creative and supportive work environment.

[News story: New guidance to support staff engagement during insolvencies](#)

Following responses to a call for evidence, the [government will publish guidance](#) to help insolvency practitioners' and employers consult with staff facing redundancy as a result of their employer's insolvency.

When an employer is proposing to make more than 20 employees redundant within any 90-day period, they have a duty to consult with staff or their representatives over ways to mitigate the impact of the job losses.

The employer must also notify the Secretary of State in writing at least 30 days before the redundancies are made.

To better understand the difficulties employers face when proposing to make many people redundant in an insolvency process, the government launched a call for evidence in March 2015.

Responses were received from a range of groups including lawyers, insolvency practitioners and trade unions and these were captured in a document published in November 2015.

Respondents understood that legislation aims to encourage constructive engagement with employees, as well as ensuring the appropriate support mechanisms are available to staff losing their jobs.

However, it was acknowledged that the legislation around collective

redundancy consultation can be difficult to apply in a real-life insolvency situation where decisions need to be made quickly, there is little money available, options are limited and attention is focused on attempts to rescue the business.

Additionally, this may be the first time employers have ever dealt with a collective redundancy situation, which can be daunting while navigating both insolvency and employment law, all while the business is in financial distress.

In response, the government has approved a package of non-legislative measures to help insolvent employers and insolvency practitioners engage with staff when proposing large scale redundancies.

New guidance will set out minimum expectations for insolvency practitioners to:

- notify the government in advanced of collective redundancy proposals
- comply with the requirement to consult when seeking to rescue or wind up a business
- provide information on how to ensure legal compliance when electing employee representatives

Press release: First Northern Powerhouse Business Summit set to be held this summer

A 3-day summit to celebrate Northern innovation and discuss the future direction of the Northern Powerhouse will take place this summer, the government announced today (16 May 2018).

The Northern Powerhouse Business Summit, part of the Great Exhibition of the North, is the first event of its kind ever to be held by government and will take place from 4 to 6 July 2018 in NewcastleGateshead.

The summit will bring together small businesses, government ministers, Northern Mayors, and business leaders from across the North of England. Together they will help to shape the next stage of the Northern Powerhouse through panel discussions, presentations, workshops and speeches.

It will be held at the heart of the Great Exhibition of the North, on the site where 19th century engineer George Stephenson designed the world's first locomotive – the Rocket.

From the Industrial Revolution to the government's Industrial Strategy,

themes of discussions across the 3 days will include how the Northern Powerhouse can be at the forefront of the Strategy, including the role of the North in the government's 'Grand Challenges'. These challenges are: growing the Artificial Intelligence and data driven economy, clean growth, the future of mobility and an ageing society.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry said:

The Northern Powerhouse is a top priority for our government and it is right that it should be central to the Great Exhibition of the North.

The last Great Exhibition was in 1851, when the North was powering the Industrial Revolution. This summit is about making sure that the Northern Powerhouse is creating a Northern economy fit for the future with the North at the forefront of a fourth Industrial Revolution.

The event will explore the creativity and innovation of northern businesses – from SMEs to FTSE100s – and the role the Northern Powerhouse will play in maximising the opportunities of Brexit.

There will also be discussion on how to tackle the North-South divide in educational attainment and outline the measures government is undertaking to reverse historic under-investment in northern transport and super-connect the great cities and towns of the North.

Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism Michael Ellis said:

The Great Exhibition of the North is a watershed moment for NewcastleGateshead that will celebrate not only art and culture, but the incredible design and innovation from across the North.

This business summit will bring Northern leaders together to showcase the region's industrial strengths and attract future investment.

Leader of Newcastle City Council, Councillor Nick Forbes, said:

The Northern Powerhouse Business Summit will be a fantastic opportunity to showcase all that is great about our region and we are delighted to be hosting this event in NewcastleGateshead as part of the Great Exhibition of the North.

Building a stronger northern economy and maximising opportunities for investment is crucially important – not just for our region but for the whole country.

This event will bring together key people and organisations who can

develop the blueprints for future growth in the North.

Cabinet Member for the Economy at Gateshead Council, Councillor John Adams, welcomes the summit and said:

It will provide a platform to showcase the breadth of talent and capabilities of Northern business to a national and international audience, showing that we can compete globally in sectors including manufacturing, digital, and business services and it will demonstrate the exciting and rewarding careers that are available to people here in the North East.

Follow the Northern Powerhouse Business Summit on Twitter by searching #NPHSummit. For updates on the Great Exhibition of the North, please follow [@GetNorth2018](#) or search: [#GetNorth2018](#)

The Northern Powerhouse Business Summit is supported by the European Regional Development Fund and will be free to attend.

Demand for tickets is expected to be high, so businesses who would like to attend are encouraged to register their interest early. See the [website for further details on the programme and how to register](#).

Confirmed speakers and the final programme will be announced in due course.

The Northern Powerhouse Business Summit forms a key part of the Great Exhibition of the North, being held from 22 June 2018 until 9 September 2018. The Exhibition is expected to attract more than 1 million national and international visitors to NewcastleGateshead, generating £184 million to the local economy. For more information on the Great Exhibition of the North visit www.getnorth2018.com

Further information

Background: Northern Powerhouse Business Summit

The Northern Powerhouse Business Summit aims to provide businesses from across the North with learning, networking and commercial opportunities, as well as shine a spotlight on the start-ups and scale-ups which call the North their home.

With a line-up of industry speakers, together with interactive workshops and an exhibition of Northern SMEs, businesses which attend can expect to be inspired by stories of innovation from across industry.

Government ministers will attend the summit to engage key leaders on their views for the future of the Northern Powerhouse.

The summit is being delivered by NewcastleGateshead Initiative, supported by delivery partners BeaconHouse Events, HemingwayDesign, Digital Catapult, Thinking Digital and Sunderland Software City.

For any press enquiries about the Business Summit please contact:

Laura Richards
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Background: Northern Powerhouse

Since the Northern Powerhouse was launched in 2014:

- the North's economy has grown by £21 billion (GVA, ONS 2014/15; 2015/16); almost half a million jobs have been created since 2010 and more power has been transferred from Whitehall to the North than under any government in decades
- the government has also committed to investing more to improve northern transport than any government in history; shaved off 15 minutes on train journey times between Liverpool and Manchester; created and funded Transport for the North, the country's first sub-national transport body; committed £337 million to upgrade the Tyne and Wear Metro in the North East; and ring-fenced £3 billion to dramatically upgrade the rail route between Manchester and Leeds
- in 2016 we published the Northern Powerhouse Strategy, outlining plans to boost economic growth by improving transport connections, strengthening education and skills outcomes, boosting levels of trade and investment, and strengthening private sector growth
- last year, we launched the £400 million Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund and rolled out finance to over 100 northern firms so they can start up, grow, and expand their operations globally
- we have also undertaken over 50 Northern Powerhouse Trade Missions to promote northern businesses and investment opportunities to the world – from San Francisco to Dubai. Over the past 2 years, the number of foreign investments in the North has increased at double the national average
- the government has invested £3.4 billion in the Northern Powerhouse for projects to boost local economies through Northern Powerhouse Growth Deals since 2014

About Great Exhibition of the North 2018:

- in October 2016, NewcastleGateshead was selected to host Great Exhibition of the North; NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI) led the bid and is the lead delivery partner for the Exhibition, working closely with colleagues at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Sage Gateshead, Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and a board chaired by Sir Gary Verity
- City Delivery Partners including Newcastle University, Northumbria University, Gateshead College and NUFC are also providing vital support for Great Exhibition of the North
- on 27 February the BBC announced a partnership to support Great Exhibition of the North
- Great Exhibition of the North is supported by Premier Partners Virgin Trains, Accenture and CISCO
- funding has also been secured via Innovate UK, VisitBritain, Royal Commission for the Exhibition 1851, the Sir James Knott Trust and Reece Foundation and by England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014 to 2020
- National Lottery players have supported the Great Exhibition of the North through £1.7 million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund; Big Lottery Fund and Arts Council England
- Womble Bond Dickinson, Ward Hadaway, Siemens, Port of Tyne, Virgin Money, BT, Robertson and NewSubstance are proud partners of Great Exhibition of the North
- Newcastle Airport, Greggs plc, Go North East, Tyne & Wear Metro and Northumbrian Water, Shout Digital, Stagecoach, PwC, Nexus, the Barbour Foundation and Ubisoft are supporting partners

For all press enquiries including image and interview requests for Great Exhibition of the North, please contact:

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About the European Regional Development Fund:

- the Great Exhibition of the North is receiving up to £636,800 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014 to 2020
- the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for the European Regional Development Fund
- established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and

local community regenerations

- for more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>

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