



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 24/61

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	10 December 2024
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Grenfell Tower Inquiry- phase 2 report
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For information
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides a broad overview of the new responsibilities and activities impacting the Service as a result of the Grenfell Tower Inquiries.
RISK ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report. The risks associated with resourcing the pace of legislative change and developing/ maintaining sufficient competent staff are already being managed within the Service's risk management arrangements.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report. Members may wish to note that any works associated with Building Safety Regulator are currently funded from a new burdens grant or through a cost recovery model. Additional regulatory work may have future budget implications but as yet these are unknown.
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to note the report.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-2-report

APPENDICES	None for the purposes of this report
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer Marc House Director of Community Safety marc.house@dwfire.org.uk

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper seeks to summarise the principal responsibilities and issues for the Service arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports and associated building safety legislation.

2 Building safety

- 2.1 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report was published on 30 October 2019 and focussed on the events of 14 June 2017 and the circumstances around how the fire at Grenfell Tower started, how it spread with such tragic consequences and aspects of the firefighting and multi-agency emergency response to the incident.
- 2.2 Recommendations from the Phase 1 report, including training in fire safety systems, building evacuation and fire survival guidance, provision of additional equipment and new working arrangements have been implemented where they fall to fire and rescue services. An internal assurance process has been established to support this.
- 2.3 All the identified buildings within the Service area that have high risk Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding have now been remediated either through removal or via measures to tolerate and mitigate through appropriate risk assessments. Work on many other buildings where external wall defects or compartmentation issues have been identified, is well underway. Where appropriate, interim measures to manage any risks (e.g. changes to evacuation strategies) have been agreed with the responsible person for these buildings.
- 2.4 The Grenfell Phase 2 report was published on 4 September 2024. It runs to seven volumes, or nearly 1700 pages, and is a comprehensive report providing a detailed analysis of:
- the historic development of building regulations and fire safety standards
 - the nature of testing and marketing of construction materials and products and the wider fire testing regime
 - the management of fire safety at Grenfell Tower, including the roles of those involved in the design and procurement of the re-cladding works undertaken at Grenfell Tower; and
 - the identification of the individual victims and the individual circumstances leading to their deaths.
- 2.5 The report concludes by making some 58 recommendations. These included:
- the establishment of a single independent body, headed by a Construction Regulator with reporting obligations to the Secretary of State. In making this

recommendation, the Inquiry noted that even under the Building Safety Act, responsibility for a wide range of functions remains disbursed and that the recommendation is for the Government to draw all of these under a single regulator

- the definition of a "Higher Risk Building" (HRB) should be reviewed and not defined only by reference to the height of a building, but rather to consider the use of the building and the nature and vulnerabilities of occupants of the building
- that Approved Document B (a document approved by the Secretary of State that gives practical guidance on fire precautions and fire safety) be reviewed and updated to provide all information necessary to ensure that buildings are designed to be safe in the event of a fire
- that new testing methods should be developed, as the existing methods do not provide sufficient information to assess the risk posed by fire spread in any construction
- to make Fire Engineering a profession recognised and protected by law (in similar way to the role of an architect)
- that Contractors wishing to take on the construction or refurbishment of higher-risk buildings be subject to a new licensing scheme; and
- that applications for building control approval for HRBs be supported by a statement from a senior manager of the principal designer and that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that on completion the building will be as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.

2.6 The Fire Safety Act 2021 and the associated regulations extended the scope of the fire safety responsibilities for the management and maintenance of fire safety measures in multi occupied residential buildings. This included such measures as a requirement to risk assess external walls and flat entrance doors and to impose regulations requiring better communication with residents. The nominated 'Responsible Person' for a residential building must now report defects of fire safety equipment (e.g. rising mains, firefighting lifts, smoke control systems, sprinkler systems) to the Service. An online reporting process has been established to enable this information to be shared quickly with response crews and for follow up visits by protection teams to ensure faults are rectified within a reasonable timeframe. Work is ongoing to determine the appropriate level of enforcement action where information has not yet been shared with us.

- 2.7 The Building Safety Act 2023 introduced a new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) under the auspices of the Health and Safety Executive. This regulator has the responsibility for managing the building control process for new buildings. The Act also imposed a new Building Assessment Certification process for residential buildings over 18m (or 7 storeys) in height and a requirement to submit a “safety case” in support of the fire safety arrangements in existing occupied buildings. Within the Service area there are currently 146 buildings registered with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and which meet the height threshold.
- 2.8 The Service currently has two fire safety inspectors allocated to the regional BSR team who in turn report to the National Coordinating Hub. This hub has been put in place to manage the sequencing and allocation of workloads to relevant multi-disciplinary teams.
- 2.9 A Memorandum of Understanding between each fire and rescue service and the Home Office now exists to clarify the expectations for support to the BSR. The new burdens funding agreement covers transitional funding until such time as the cost recovery model is fully implemented. This new burdens grant also allows for the training of BSR allocated staff, and any backfill training requirement.
- 2.10 Due to the workloads associated with BSR, these members of staff are now committed to this work on a permanent basis and unable to undertake any significant core fire safety activity for the Service. The potential for additional staff resource being allocated to the BSR function has been requested from the national hub.
- 2.11 Secondary legislation in support of the Building Safety Act has been laid and has strengthened the registration of staff performing the role of Building Control Bodies. This registration has been established to improve the quality and accountability of building control processes for all buildings.
- 2.12 New requirements for sharing “Golden thread” information with relevant organisations is being re-consulted upon to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and does not add to the administrative burden on fire and rescue services due to identified overlaps with other legislation.
- 2.13 Many of the recommendations arising from the report that impact upon our protection function require further changes to legislation, building regulations and associated guidance. This raft of significant changes to legislation and guidance has inevitably impacted upon the training time and requirement for Continual Professional Development for Fire Safety Inspectors who are now also undertaking third party accreditation as part of the increased competence requirements by regulators.

- 2.14 Since the publication of the Phase 2 report, the Deputy Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, acting in her capacity as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has written to Elected Mayors, Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire Authorities to outline government expectations in respect of Remediation Acceleration Plans for High Risk Residential Buildings which have yet to commence work to make them safer.
- 2.15 A response letter has been sent from the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Authority to acknowledge the role of the fire and rescue service in this task and welcoming any support which the government may be able to provide.
- 2.16 Additional work to review the next tranche of buildings within the 11m – 18m height range has been hinted at by government although at this time there is no specific expectation that fire and rescue services should undertake specific work in this area. The Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council has written to government stressing the need for additional funding and an assessment of the consequences of prioritising this activity over other higher risk protection workloads.

3 Summary and key points

- 3.1 Actions arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase1 and Phase 2 reports remain a high priority for the Service. Whilst there have been positive results on the highest risk clad buildings, there is still further work to do in some of our other high-risk buildings where relevant defects have been identified but where timescales for remediation have slowed due to funding or other pressures.
- 3.2 The impacts of changes to legislation, guidance and the scope of buildings considered to be a risk, coupled with the increased community expectations and public awareness are requiring a considerable change to ways of working and resourcing levels within the Service's protection department. Continued investment over the foreseeable future has and will continue to be planned to enable protection staff to develop and undertake the role competently and achieve third party accreditation.