



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Eddie Hughes MP
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***Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
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To: All Council Leaders in England,
CC: Chief Executives,
National Housing Federation,
G15,
Northern Housing Consortium,
Chartered Institute of Housing,
Local Government Association

9 March 2022

Dear all,

NEW SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM REQUIREMENTS

I would like to start by thanking those of you who have already taken steps to keep your residents safe through improved building safety measures.

As leaders of stock-holding local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations, you may be aware that my department published our Social Housing White Paper in November 2020. The White Paper made clear our intention to transform the regulatory regime in the social sector, by strengthening protections for social residents in a number of areas, including safety measures.

The White Paper sets out actions we are taking to ensure residents feel safe and have a clear route to redress. This includes speeding up access to the Housing Ombudsman through the Building Safety Bill, ensuring there is greater transparency and learning through the Ombudsman publishing decisions and spotlight reports, and the new Complaint Handling Code. We have also launched a second awareness campaign, so residents know their rights and are confident in how to complain and escalate where needed. Landlords have a vital role in this work and we are grateful for everything they have done so far.

Alongside the White Paper, we launched a consultation on proposals to mandate smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in social homes. I am writing to you to provide an update on the outcome of this consultation and next steps for landlords. I recognise that there have been a number of announcements affecting the sector on building safety recently, and I am very keen to ensure that you are aware of these upcoming changes and understand the importance of acting on them.

In November we announced that we will press ahead with our proposals to mandate both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in social homes. Alarms are shown to save lives and it is vital that residents in our homes are protected by them. The changes, subject to parliamentary approval, will mean social landlords must:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every storey of their homes; and
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in every room which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers)

More detail on the changes and what you will need to do can be found with our consultation response [here](#).

We want to bring forward these changes as soon as practicable, once the regulations are made in Parliament. This is a crucial measure for residents' safety, and the timeframe has been informed by the responses to our consultation: a clear majority of respondents were in favour of regulating without delay. We are working at pace to bring these changes in, which could be as soon as **Autumn 2022**. I will write to you again in the coming months once the regulations have been laid, to provide clarity on the exact date they will come into force.

I am writing to you today to strongly encourage you to begin installing alarms without delay. I welcome the positive action of those who have already installed alarms, and encourage others to act early too. I am sure you will agree that installing these alarms now is the right thing to do to make sure residents are protected as soon as possible. It is important that I make you aware that, should the legislation be approved by parliament, any landlord found to be in breach could be fined up to £5000. As such, it is vital that your organisation prepares for these changes now.

These changes are part of the Government's ongoing reforms to make sure everyone's home is a place of safety. We are committed to delivering a much-needed overhaul of the building safety system, making sure that residents are safer in their homes now, and in the future. Our Building Safety Bill will deliver improvements across the entire built environment. It will strengthen oversight and protections for residents in high-rise buildings. It will give a greater say to residents of tall buildings and toughen sanctions. Shortly, we hope to see the Bill complete its passage through Parliament so that we can progress with these once-in-a-generation reforms.

If you have any questions, you can contact the team of officials overseeing the review at smokeandcarbonmonoxide@levellingup.gov.uk.

I trust this information is helpful and thank you for your engagement on this important matter.

Yours ever,



EDDIE HUGHES MP