



**Housing, Communities
and Local Government
Committee**

**Rt Hon. Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF**

23 January 2025

Dear Angela,

**Evidence to the Committee on the work of the Ministry of Housing,
Communities and Local Government**

Thank you for attending our committee session on 7 January to answer questions about the work of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and about your priorities during this Parliament.

There were several areas and issues touched on during the session which we would appreciate further information on, which are set out below.

Equality impact assessments

We remain extremely concerned about the impact that freezing Local Housing Allowance rates will have on families. Quite simply, with the allowance frozen, more families may find themselves evicted because they are unable to pay their rent. We are also concerned about the impact that the increase to National Insurance Contributions will have on adult social care, at a time when local authorities are already facing significant financial challenges providing this.

During the session, we asked if equality impact assessments had been carried out before the decisions were made to re-freeze Local Housing Allowance rates and to increase the rates of employers' NICs in the latest Budget ([Q7, 8, 13](#)). In your responses, you indicated that no equality impact assessment had been carried out on these two policies, highlighting the difficulty of performing an impact assessment on individual elements of the Budget. If it was not possible to perform an impact assessment on individual elements of the Budget, **what assessment, if any, did the Department make of these two policy decisions and was an impact assessment carried out on the Budget as a whole?**



Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

Building remediation in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy

During the session, we discussed the Remediation Acceleration Plan and asked whether the Government would consider a proactive approach to forcing action from developers. You acknowledged that seven years on from Grenfell “remediation has begun or has been completed on only 48% of those buildings” that the Department had identified. To address this, you told us that you were considering bringing forward legislation to speed up the remediation process, and that you would also consider doing so to enact the recommendations from the phase 2 report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (Q36 & Q37).

Can you provide us with information about what this legislation will include, and what the timetable for bringing forward this legislation will be?

You also mentioned that 30 developers, covering 95% of relevant buildings, had signed up to the Developer Remediation Contracts to take responsibility for the remediation of buildings they developed (Q36). The Ministry published the latest [Building Safety Trust Statement](#) on 17 December 2024, which appears to show that while developers have promised over £600m to fund the remediation work to date, none of this amount had been paid as at 31 March 2024. **What steps is the Department taking to address this?**

Finally on building remediation, you said that, as part of the remediation acceleration plan, you aim to ensure buildings over 18 metres in height with unsafe cladding have their remediation completed “by the end of *this Parliament*” (Q36 & Q37). However, the [policy paper for the action plan](#) says that the aim is for this remediation to be complete “by the *end of 2029*”. **Could you clarify for us which of these is the Government’s actual target for completing the remediation of buildings with unsafe cladding over 18 metres in height?**

Accessibility in the housing sector

During the session you agreed to provide a response to concerns raised by a constituent about accessibility for disabled people with regards to housing (Q40). Specifically, we would be grateful if you could confirm:

- How many of the 1.5 million new homes that the Government plans to deliver will be wheelchair accessible? In London, 10% of all new builds must meet the M4(3) wheelchair standard. Will the Secretary of State roll out this 10% quota to the rest of England, so that more wheelchair accessible homes are built?



Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

- What is your assessment of the need to implement and enforce section 36 and schedule 4 of the Equality Act 2010, given the shortage of accessible housing?

Responses to our predecessor Committee's reports

During the session, you agreed to provide us with a response to our predecessor Committee's report on [Disabled people in the housing sector](#) (Q41). We would also be grateful for a response to the previous Committee's report on [The finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), which remains outstanding.

We would be grateful for responses to these within one month.

Devolution

We would also be grateful if you could provide some further information about the Government's plans for devolving more powers to local government in England. In particular, we would like to know:

- What metrics the Department plans to use to assess the performance and outputs of areas with single settlements, and when will the Department consult on plans in this space?
- What support will Combined Mayoral Authorities need to get Integrated Settlements and how will the Department provide this support?
- How will the public be able to hold mayors with single settlements accountable as mayors' overview and scrutiny committees continue to struggle?
- Would the Government consider offering further mayoral strategic authority powers to an area that created an indirectly elected mayor?
- Will any two-tier areas seeking a devolution deal be obliged to re-organise and establish a mayoralty?
- Is the Department concerned that local authorities will struggle to establish a devolution deal whilst simultaneously re-organising into unitary councils?

Impact of re-organisation on local authorities

Finally, we would also like to highlight once again our concern that the Government's proposed re-organisation of local government is coming at time when local authorities are already stretched, and that it may impact on their abilities to deliver appropriate safeguarding and support to vulnerable children, and deliver on the Government's ambitious target for 1.5m new homes by the end of this Parliament. **Can you confirm what assessment the Department has carried out of the impact of further**



**Housing, Communities
and Local Government
Committee**

devolution and re-organisation on local authorities' duties, particularly with regards to vulnerable children.

We would appreciate your response to these questions by 26 February.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Florence Eshalomi".

Florence Eshalomi MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee