

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5 March 2021

Dear Clive,

Cladding Remediation - Follow-up

Thank you for your invitation to provide evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee follow up inquiry into 'Cladding Remediation'. During the evidence session, I said I would write to you with further information about if there are any social housing blocks with waking watches.

LGA officers have consulted our regional advisers and a range of partners, including the National Housing Federation, National Federation of ALMOs, and the Association of Retained Council Housing, to try and provide you with the number of blocks with waking watches. However, this figure is not collected centrally.

We did find out some information relating to specific cities, which may be helpful examples. These are listed below.

Social housing blocks in London with a waking watch:

- Over 18 meters (some may be mixed tenure):
Local authority - 52
Housing association – 234
- Under 18 meters (some may be mixed tenure):
Local authority - 11
Housing association – 65

Blocks in Greater Manchester with interim measures:

We understand that none of the social blocks listed here are council-owned.

	Over 18 metres		Under 18 metres		TOTAL
	Social	Private	Social	Private	
Buildings with interim measures	20	96	0	17	133
Fire Alarm	2	50		11	68
Reliant on Waking Watch	16	25		4	45
Common alarm supplemented by Waking Watch	2	21		2	25

Other cities:

- Birmingham City Council has confirmed it has waking watches in eight council blocks.
- Slough has one, although this is in a private block purchased by the council following the discovery of serious fire safety issues.
- We understand that there are no waking watches in council blocks in Leeds, Nottingham, Sandwell or Sheffield, nor are there any in ALMO blocks in Newcastle.

I hope the information outlined above is helpful. It is welcome that your Committee is looking into the issue of remediation again, with a focus on the impact it is having on leaseholders across the country. This is a priority issue for councils and the LGA, and we have been consistently clear that we do not believe that leaseholders should have to pay the costs of making their homes safe. We are also concerned about the impact the cost of remediation will have on the ability of councils and housing associations to provide new housing, on rent levels and on refurbishment programmes, if Government continues to only fund remediation of ACM cladding in social housing, and not fund remediation of other building safety issues. As far as we know, no councils have applied to the waking watch relief fund and only two housing associations have. The waking watch relief fund only covers the costs of waking watches passed on to leaseholders.

If we can be of further assistance to your Committee, please do not hesitate to get in touch with my colleague (jade.hall@local.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Lord Gary Porter of Spalding
LGA Building Safety Spokesperson