

22nd February 2022

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

Dear Clive,

I write further to the Secretary of State's appearance before the Committee as part of its inquiry into the Government's building safety plans.

During his appearance he confirmed that whilst landlords who had become one by "default" and let just one property would be covered by the Government's cladding plans, he made it clear that landlords owning "a string of properties" will not be protected. He argued that this was to protect against an open-ended commitment to landlords of multiple properties who may have the means to pay for remediation work themselves.

We are seriously concerned about the implications of what the Secretary of State since:

- He seems to be indicating that even though it is developers who installed dangerous cladding illegally, the Government feels individual landlords renting out just a few leasehold properties should be liable to foot the bill. This would seem to be totally against the principle behind the plan which is that, quite rightly, it is the developers who are culpable and who should pay for remediation, not the leaseholders, whoever they are and whatever their means.
- If the Government doesn't want all individual landlords to be covered by its scheme because it considers that they have the means to contribute to removing dangerous cladding themselves, what about very wealthy owner occupier leaseholders with properties worth millions of pounds? Surely they should be made to pay given that they will have a lot more wealth than a landlord renting out just 2 or 3 properties, possibly for a pension?
- It should be remembered that the Government's own data shows that 94% of private landlords rent property as an individual with 44% becoming a landlord to contribute to their pension. In addition, a written parliamentary answer last year pointed to 70%¹ of landlords being basic rate income taxpayers. It is concerning therefore that the Secretary of State seems to have fallen for a simply false belief that all private landlords are somehow wealthy property tycoons.

¹ See <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-14/HL2005>.



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In the end, this is not about who does and does not have the means to pay. It is about fairness. No leaseholder, irrespective of how many properties they own, should be expected to foot the bill for dangerous and illegal cladding installed by someone else.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ben Beadle', enclosed within a simple rectangular box.

Ben Beadle
Chief Executive

