

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

2 March 2022

Dear Mr Betts,

**Committee Meeting on 21 February 2022:  
Building Safety: Remediation and Funding**

I write in connection with an exchange between Mr Ian Byrne MP and The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) at your Committee meeting on 21 February.

We were very surprised to learn of a comment made by Mr Byrne to the Secretary of State in which he refers to BSI as having to withdraw a standard, "as it was against the law". BSI is not aware of any standard that it has had to withdraw due to it being against the law.

It may be that Mr Byrne was referring to the withdrawal of PAS 79-2 Fire risk assessment, Housing, Code of Practice in August, 2021. Following new information presented during the Grenfell Inquiry, we agreed with the PAS steering group to undertake a further revision and in doing so replace the PAS with a new British Standard. We have withdrawn the PAS whilst the British Standard is in development, although it remains available free of charge and in redacted form on our website in the meanwhile. All our standards are developed using an open process which requires a consensus of all interested parties and public review. Pending Government's response to the evidence presented at the Inquiry we will publish the new British Standard at the earliest opportunity.

Separately, Mr Byrne referred to BSI as a "privatised company". BSI has never been publicly owned and is an independent, non-profit distributing company incorporated by Royal Charter. In our role as the National Standards Body, we operate in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding with Government administered by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

**Scott Steedman CBE FREng**  
Director-General, Standards

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Contd. 2 of 2

We work closely with Government on a wide range of issues in line with the public policy interest, including building safety.

The Secretary of State's response to Mr Byrne included a comment that the system of building control was flawed. We are working closely with his department on the building safety system as a whole and how standards may support the urgent transformation that is necessary in industry culture and practices, including supporting the Building Safety Bill and associated construction product regulations. We recently published PAS 9980, a code of practice for the fire risk appraisal of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats, which was sponsored by DLUHC, and we are working together with officials to develop a framework of documents which will raise the standards of competence across the built environment.

I am keen to offer our assistance to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee to discuss how standards are used by industry and government and to remedy issues that may be identified. In our role as the National Standards Body, we bring together thousands of experts and representatives of the public from academia, regulatory bodies, industry, government, consumer organizations and NGOs to work on national and international standards for industry that may be used to support the delivery of regulatory policy and relied upon by consumers. We are ready and committed to play our part in ensuring the building safety system is demonstrably fit for purpose. I have written separately to the Secretary of State to offer our further assistance.

I would welcome the opportunity to engage directly with the Committee to support your important work in this area, for example by giving evidence at a future session, and to meet with you to brief you on BSI and the role of standards in support of public policy objectives.

Yours sincerely,



Scott Steedman CBE FREng  
Director-General, Standards

Cc Mr Ian Byrne MP