

## Mayor to help leaseholders get vital building safety information

4 years ago



The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has today set out how he expects landlords and managing agents to help London leaseholders get hold of vital EWS1 building safety forms.

Nearly five years since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire that claimed the lives of 72 Londoners, thousands more continue to live in a state of anxiety over the safety of their homes and the substantial costs of remediation. Many leaseholders have found themselves trapped in properties that are no longer suitable for them but that they are unable to sell because they cannot guarantee their home is safe. The EWS1 form was intended by the Government to remedy this by providing a simple assessment of building safety to support mortgage, lease and staircasing negotiations. However, too many leaseholders have been unable to secure a form, leaving them unable to re-mortgage or sell their property.

Leaseholders have told City Hall of frustrations including identifying who is responsible for securing an EWS1 form for their building and disagreements about when documentation should be required. Leaseholders are often left feeling anxious and confused about the EWS1 process, especially given the various changes in Government policy and guidance on the process since its inception. This anxiety is further compounded by the consequences that a failure to provide an EWS1 can have on their lives. Frequently leaseholders are unclear as to whether their building has or needs an EWS1 form, and how close they are to securing one.

The new guidance published by City Hall today is designed to set out how landlords can raise standards and provide a better service to leaseholders when it comes to dealing with EWS1 forms. Recommendations in the guidance include:

- Landlords and managing agents should support leaseholders and commit to facilitating EWS1 assessments
- Landlords and managing agents should prioritise the most at-risk buildings for assessment
- Landlords and managing agents should clearly set out how the costs of an EWS1 assessment will be met, shared or reimbursed
- Leaseholders should be kept fully informed, about not just EWS1 assessments, but also the costs and implications of wider building safety issues

The Mayor recognises that this guidance is no silver bullet, but is determined to do everything in his power to help leaseholders while Ministers fail to act to end this crisis. To fully end the stress for leaseholders, the Government needs to take responsibility for building safety remediation and leasehold reform. Sadiq has tirelessly fought for the rights of leaseholders and frequently hears concerns that residents are often kept in the dark about the safety of their homes. He has campaigned for a levy on major developers to help fund remediation costs and has called on the Government to commit to fully funding non-cladding remediation works, such as the installation of effective sprinklers, where the absence of these systems poses a fire risk.

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London said: “Nearly five years after the Grenfell Tower fire there are still too many Londoners who don’t feel safe in their homes.

“For too long now Londoners trapped in unsafe flats have faced a drawn out and complicated process to get an EWS1 form. The guidance published today will help leaseholders get this vital information by improving the way landlords and managing agents commission EWS1 forms and share those findings with the leaseholders who need them.

“The building safety crisis is a national crisis and it requires national solutions. While some progress is now belatedly being made by the Government, leaseholders are still facing huge bills for problems they played no part in causing. I’m determined to continue to fight for the rights of leaseholders to feel safe in their homes and to prevent them paying for a building safety crisis that is not of their making. That includes putting pressure on the private sector, the developers, the Government and those who manage these sites to ensure Londoners can feel safe in their homes again.”

Geeta Nanda, G15 Chair, Chief Executive of Metropolitan Thames Valley and Chair of the Task and Finish Working Group, said: “The building safety crisis is having a devastating impact on thousands of people’s lives. The EWS1 process, whilst well intentioned, has in many cases exacerbated the confusion and anxiety that the crisis is causing. Housing providers, such as not-for-profit housing associations, are working hard to obtain assessments and to work with original contractors and those responsible to ensure remediation works are carried out where they are needed. I want to thank all those people who have helped bring this best practice guide together, especially resident representatives. The guide seeks to support all those involved and affected by this crisis to navigate this complex process, and to ensure that the needs of residents remain at the forefront throughout.”

Cllr Darren Rodwell, Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council and Executive Member for Housing and Planning at London Councils, said: “It’s essential that every Londoner is safe – and feels safe – in their home. Ensuring that all homes in the capital comply with fire safety standards is a top priority.

“London boroughs welcome this best practice guidance as an important resource that will support

landlords and managing agents and improve leaseholders' experience of navigating External Wall System forms, for example when selling a home. Through providing much-needed clarity on the processes involved, this document sets out clear expectations and principles that we hope will provide reassurance and better results for Londoners."

Dave Richards, London Cladding Action Group said: "Thousands upon thousands of Londoners are trapped in unsafe buildings through no fault of their own, it is essential buildings are made safe. We welcome the Mayor's move to engage with residents and bring stakeholders together in developing this new guidance. It will help bring about an improvement in standards and help provide a better service to leaseholders when dealing with EWS1 forms."

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