

FBU slams government rejection of key Grenfell inquiry recommendation for disabled people

4 years ago



The Fire Brigades Union has written to the government to demand it rethinks its decision to reject a key Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendation, on the evacuation of disabled residents of high-rise buildings.

The inquiry recommended that “that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)” for all disabled residents.

But last month the government rejected the recommendation and revealed downgraded plans, which have been roundly criticised including [by Grenfell campaigners](#) and [disability rights campaigners](#).

The government [had promised](#) to implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase one recommendations “in full”, of which this is one.

In a letter to Lord Greenhalgh dated 6 June 2022, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities, Matt Wrack, Fire Brigades Union general secretary wrote [abridged]:

“The FBU was disappointed with the Westminster government’s decision to downgrade work towards ensuring residents with disabilities are provided with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

“The [government] statement claims that implementation would involve significant issues with practicality, proportionality and safety. The FBU argues that resident safety is paramount, so there is a greater safety issue in declining to implement PEEPs. As for proportionality, the Inquiry has found the introduction of PEEPs to be a proportionate strategy, and the FBU agrees.

“Some reasons given for the refusal seem poorly evidenced, for example stating that if a PEEP advised the purchase of an evacuation chair, there would be an “impact on the good relations between disabled residents and non-disabled residents if disproportionate costs were passed on to the latter. Building owners should carry the costs.”

“The government’s decision is a negative, backward step, and the FBU stands with disability campaigners, the Grenfell campaign groups and the LGA in asking you to reconsider.”

15 out of 37 disabled Grenfell Tower residents lost their lives in the fire.

Image credit: FBU