

RIBA shares further building safety reform recommendations following Grenfell Inquiry's Phase 2 report

1 year ago



On Thursday 16 January 2025, the [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (RIBA) shared a [further response](#) to the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report's recommendations.

This follows [RIBA's initial reaction](#) on Wednesday 4 September 2024, the day the report was published.

Identifying further opportunities for change, RIBA recommends that:

Regulatory:

- The idea of a single statutory body, like that of the Engineering Council, to ensure a comprehensive competence system for construction professionals is explored.
- The definition of a higher-risk building is reviewed and extended to include assembly buildings and temporary leisure establishments.
- A holistic review of Approved Document B – as we have long called for – is urgently undertaken.
- Both staircases in new residential buildings over 18 metres should be required to function as fire-fighting staircases.
- Existing single staircase residential buildings over 18 metres are refurbished with appropriate safety measures as 'consequential improvements' where a building is subject to 'material alterations'.
- A broader use of sprinklers across new and converted buildings where there is a higher risk to vulnerable occupants is required.

Structural:

- The responsibility for the functions relating to fire safety are brought under a single Secretary of State.
- The proposed Chief Construction Advisor is a suitably qualified person – for example, a chartered professional.
- An organisational level licencing scheme for principal contractors is created.

Operational:

- Independent research and development is required to restore faith in construction product testing standards.
- The role of contracts and procurement processes in defining the obligations and agency of the different members of the client, design and construction teams are reviewed.
- Any safety critical guidance should be freely available.
- Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are developed, for all people who identify as or are identified as having the need for one, in all residential buildings of 11 metres or higher.

[Read the full response.](#)

RIBA Chair of Board Jack Pringle said:

“The full findings of the Inquiry’s report make a clear case for further regulatory, structural and operational change, alongside a fundamental shift in culture and behaviours – and we remain fully committed to playing our part.

As the professional body for architects, we have taken significant steps since June 2017 to enhance training and education, including but not limited to our mandatory Health and Safety test and our Principal Designer Register. As recommended, we are reviewing these measures, ensuring our members maintain the highest standards of professional competence.

To help deliver a comprehensive competence system for professionals across the construction industry, we suggest exploring a model similar to that of the current Engineering Council. This could take the form of a single statutory body for all construction professional bodies which should set processes that all professional bodies certifying the competence of individuals, including architects, must meet.

We fully support the Inquiry’s recommendation to bring responsibility for the functions relating to fire safety under a single Secretary of State, supported by a suitably qualified Chief Construction Advisor, to aid coordination and accountability.

Aside from structural and regulatory change, we support the Inquiry’s call for independent research and development to restore faith in product testing standards. We also believe that the role of contracts and procurement processes in defining the obligations and agency of the different members of the client, design, and construction teams should be reviewed.

The long-term efficacy of the construction sector hinges on making these evidence-based changes. It remains our duty to drive meaningful reform at all levels to deliver a built environment in which the public has complete confidence.”