



*A grassroots campaign taking action against mammoth fuel bills and working towards an affordable, sustainable and democratic energy system*

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**The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

17 October 2019

Dear Secretary of State,

One of the most crucial measures for reducing carbon emissions is effective insulation and energy efficiency in our homes. Insulation, well-repaired housing, and efficient heating systems can also prevent the misery, illness and death that are caused by cold and damp. As climate change brings more extreme weather, including heatwaves as well as cold, it is ever more urgent to ensure that every home is well insulated and protected from the weather. It is equally important that the materials used for insulation and cladding must be non-combustible, and non-toxic.

- Each year around 9,000 people in England and Wales die because of fuel poverty.
- Homes are responsible for nearly 1/5th of UK carbon emissions, and the Committee on Climate Change says these are not decreasing.
- Each year, around the world, 100,000 to 200,000 people are dying because of climate change (World Health Organisation).

Yet the Government has consistently refused to act. Public investment in energy efficiency has collapsed. Insulation rates in homes have crashed by over 90% since the Government cut back the Energy Company Obligation and abandoned the Warm Front programme for tackling fuel poverty. The targets for bringing homes up to a bare minimum standard are very low -- but will still be missed by miles. The Zero Carbon Homes policy for new builds has been scrapped. These truths are not compatible with any commitment on Climate Change.

*“Since 2011 Pembroke Park estate in West London has been fighting to make the builder Taylor Wimpey and the Housing Association A2Dominion deal with the lack of insulation in houses and blocks of flats across the tenures. Insulation was not installed, or not inspected, at the time of building. No one will take responsibility. Even though climate change is supposedly at the top of the agenda for builders and Housing Associations alike, we can get nowhere with either. What does this say about the reality?”* Suzy Killip, Chair, Pembroke Park Residents’ Association, Hillingdon

*“I am now retired and cannot afford (nor want to increase CO2 emissions) to heat my home all day and so sit with hot water bottles and blankets around me. Sometimes in the winter, I stay in bed as my lounge is not insulated. On our estate in Hackney we have just had a programme of external painting carried out. Windows which should have been replaced because they let in draughts, in some cases were dangerously loose and were not double glazed, were merely patched up and painted over to save money. I questioned this approach with Peabody but to no avail.”*

Sandra McLeod, Peabody tenant, Hackney

### ***Safe cladding and insulation now***

One year ago today we wrote to your predecessor, James Brokenshire, about the urgent need to replace flammable cladding and to ensure that ALL buildings are safe and well insulated, using non-combustible materials. We also insisted that while cladding is off, residents must be enabled to keep warm in their homes. This letter was delivered with 150 weighty signatures from organisations, MPs, residents associations and others. The reply “committed” to “delivering lasting change”.

Today, although work has progressed replacing ACM cladding on social housing, and, more recently, in the private sector, these demands are very far from being met. There are still thousands of residents in tower blocks, as well as lower buildings, with ACM cladding, or other dangerous kinds of cladding and insulation.

*“The residents of Salford are still in limbo re cladding and the poor standard of refurbishment to the nine high rise blocks of flats. It has been over two and a half years and yet Salford is no nearer to having the highly flammable cladding removed. This is not acceptable and is affecting residents mental state of mind. Residents fear for their lives.”* Graeme Langton, Malus Court suspended Chairman, Salford

This winter, as last winter, residents who DO have cladding and insulation removed can expect little help as they struggle to keep warm.

Crucially, the Hackitt Report’s insistence on the importance of listening to residents is being ignored. Monitoring and supervision of building work remain at a level that ensures further deaths, from both fire and cold -- and from all the lethal effects of climate change both here and abroad as carbon emissions continue unabated.

Climate activists, along with residents of homes that are cold and energy inefficient, are determined to see your commitments translated into action.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jonathan Bartley, Co-leader, Green Party  
Hannah Berry, Co-organiser, Greater Manchester Housing Action (GMHA)  
Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretaries, National Education Union (NEU)  
David Collins, former Chair of Grenfell Tower (Compact) Residents' Group  
Helen Davies, Chair, and John Burgess, Secretary, Barnet UNISON  
Emma Dent Coad MP, Kensington  
Dr Michael Edwards, Hon Professor, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL  
Michelle Edwards, Freelance journalist and columnist for Waltham Forest Echo  
Bob Ellard, Steering group member, Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC)  
Almuth Ernsting, Co-director, Biofuelwatch  
Danielle Gregory, Coordinator, Tower Blocks UK  
Roger Godsiff MP, Birmingham Hall Green  
Dr Stuart Hodgkinson, University of Leeds  
Ian Hodson, National President, Bakers', Food & Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)  
Zita Holbourne, National Chair, Black Activists Rising Against Cuts UK (BARAC) UK  
Lorraine Inglis, Volunteer Campaigner, Frack Off London  
Claire James, Campaigns Coordinator, Campaign against Climate Change (CCC)  
Paul Kershaw, Chair, Unite Housing Workers (LE1111)  
Suzy Killip, Chair, Pembroke Park Residents' Association  
Ellen Lebethe, Chair, Lambeth Pensioners Action Group  
Ruth London, Director, Fuel Poverty Action (FPA)  
Sampson Low, Head of Policy, UNISON  
Caroline Lucas MP, Brighton Pavilion  
Hannan Majid, Co-founder, Ledbury Action Group  
Kate Metcalf, Co-director, Women's Environmental Network  
Sandra McLeod, Sustainable Hackney  
John Moloney, Assistant General Secretary, Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)  
Gareth Murphy, Branch Secretary, Unite Community Camden LE/00018  
Phil Murphy, HRRB Fire Safety Consultant, Technical Author of the High Rise Addendum to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System  
Colin Nickless, Housing & Fire Safety campaigner  
Steve North, Branch Secretary, and Ameen Hadi, Treasurer, Salford City UNISON  
Elizabeth Okpo, Founder, Spruce Court Action Group  
Jacky Peacock OBE, CEO, Advice 4 Renters  
Jacob Secker, Secretary, Broadwater Farm Residents' Association  
David Shek, Executive Council Member London, Fire Brigades Union (FBU)  
Tulip Siddiq MP, Hampstead and Kilburn  
Marilyn Smith, Executive Director, The Energy Action Project  
Dave Timms, Head of Political Affairs, Friends of the Earth  
Dr Steve Tombs, Professor of Criminology, The Open University  
Ian Townson, Secretary, Lambeth & Southwark Unite Community  
Tirza Waisel, Barnet Alliance for Public Services  
Richard York, Co-founder, Rainbow Collective