

Open Statement - Protecting Disabled People from Fire

We ask that Government takes urgent action: to protect the lives of disabled people in the event of fire; to prevent disabled leaseholders being forced to leave adapted homes; and to ensure that disabled leaseholders are not impacted by the costs of remedial safety works.

Almost 4 years after the Grenfell Tower Fire in which 72 people died, disabled residents' lives are still being put at risk. Nearly half of all disabled people in Grenfell Tower died in the fire. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has heard evidence of the failure of the Building Owner and Managing Company, to maintain a safe building, to respond to the legitimate concerns of residents, to prepare overall plans for fire evacuation and to produce Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for disabled residents unable to independently and safely self-evacuate.

Safe Evacuation for Disabled Residents

We ask that Government urgently acts to implement the following Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations made in October 2019, to ensure safe fire evacuation for Disabled People:

- That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises.
- That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition).
- That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises' information box.

With regard to PEEPs, we ask that the above recommendations be applied to disabled residents living on the upper floors of residential blocks and not be limited to high-rise buildings. In addition, we ask that aids and equipment which enable Disabled People to independently and safely evacuate, should be provided.

Meeting the Costs of Remedial Safety Works

The high cost of necessary removal of dangerous cladding from residential buildings is causing distress and hardship to disabled leaseholders. Disabled People are living in fear of: losing their adapted homes; being unable to pay the costs of living in dangerous buildings (e.g. Waking Watch); being unable to pay for remedial safety works; and being

harassed by other residents, in respect of the additional costs of aids and equipment that enable escape from fire.

We ask that Government urgently acts to:

- Prevent disabled leaseholders being forced to move out of their homes.
- Protect disabled leaseholders from the costs resulting from remedial safety works.
- Provide disabled leaseholders with the aids and equipment needed for safe evacuation.



Kamran Mallick
CEO – Disability Rights UK

Signed by the following organisations in May 2021:

Disability Rights UK	LCiL (Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living)
Grenfell Next of Kin	Leonard Cheshire
Leaseholders Disability Action Group	Living Options
Access Birmingham	Muscular Dystrophy UK
ACE Centre	Pathfinders Neuromuscular Alliance
Business Disability Forum	Scope
Breakthrough	Sense
Culture Access	Shaw Trust
Disability Resource Centre	Sisters of Frida CIC
Disability Sheffield	SMA UK
DPAC – Disabled People Against Cuts	Spinal Injuries Association
Greater Manchester Action on Housing	Tai Pawb
Greater Manchester Disabled People's Coalition	The Access Association
Guide Dogs U.K.	Tourette's Action
Inclusion London	WECIL – West of England Centre for Independent Living