# Government response to Grenfell failures leaves over a third of London’s high-rises dangerously clad eight years on



Eight years on from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, it’s clear that the government’s response has fallen woefully short of what’s needed to protect Londoners. While some progress has been made, the fact remains that over a third of high-rise buildings still have unsafe cladding—undermining the safety of residents and exposing them to ongoing danger. Despite the assurances of remedial work, the slow pace in tackling non-ACM cladding, with only 24% of affected buildings having started remediation and just 40% completed, reveals a fatal complacency. It’s unacceptable that eight years later, many buildings remain in peril because of bureaucratic delays and a lack of real urgency.

Privately rented homes continue to fall short, with 14% failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard—more than the 8% of social housing that also fails. This stark disparity highlights how the government’s housing policies fail to protect the most vulnerable, with no proper measures in place to swiftly improve standards in the private rental sector. Despite promises to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030, a staggering 21% of privately rented properties are still non-compliant nationally, and 12% pose serious health and safety hazards. This indicates a systemic failure to deliver safe, decent housing for ordinary families.

London’s latest attempt at housing expansion—Mayor Sadiq Khan’s £3.5 billion affordable homes programme—sounds ambitious but falls far short in practice. With just 3,991 new homes started in 2024/25, it is a fraction of the 17,800 annual target. The plan to build only 40,000 council homes by 2030 is a drop in the ocean compared to the city’s actual needs. Meanwhile, the initiative to create 6,000 rent-controlled homes for key workers appears more gesture than substance, delaying meaningful change. The creation of new developer entities won’t solve the underlying issues and risks perpetuating a broken system that prioritizes political optics over deliverability.

Energy efficiency remains another missed opportunity. An estimated 210,000 homes annually need upgrades to meet London’s net-zero goals, yet little real action has been taken to accelerate this vital work. This inaction means many residents are left in fuel poverty while the city drags its feet on meaningful environmental progress.

The financial burden of fixing unsafe buildings is colossal—up to £22.4 billion—yet the government’s response is half-hearted at best. Covering just £9.1 billion and relying on a property sector levy to reduce costs to £5.1 billion puts homeowners and taxpayers on the hook for failures that could have been prevented. And the fact that 60% of buildings over 11 meters have yet to be identified for remediation exposes the government’s lack of transparency and urgency. This is a crisis that cannot be addressed by empty promises and slow bureaucratic processes; real leadership is needed, not political distraction.

These failures reflect a broader pattern: a government more interested in spin than in delivering the safe, quality homes Londoners deserve. The chronic delays, underachievement in housing targets, and ongoing safety risks prove that current policies are insufficient. It’s time for a serious rethink—one that puts safety, affordability, and sustainability above political expediency. The status quo is not acceptable; Londoners deserve better.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadiq-khan-council-houses-affordable-housing-40-000-city-hall-b1240943.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadiq-khan-council-houses-affordable-housing-40-000-city-hall-b1240943.html> - This article reports on Mayor Sadiq Khan's £3.5 billion affordable housing programme, aiming to build 40,000 new council homes by 2030. It highlights the challenges in meeting London's housing needs, with only 3,991 affordable homes started in 2024/25, less than a third of the 17,800 target. The programme also includes plans for 6,000 'rent control' homes for key workers and the establishment of a new City Hall developer to boost housing supply.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/8a98fc33-ba07-4fa4-9112-273aa5573272> - The Financial Times reports that remediating dangerous cladding on England's multistorey residential buildings could cost up to £22.4 billion, with the National Audit Office estimating a lower end of £12.6 billion. The report warns that the 2035 remediation deadline for buildings over 11 meters tall might not be met, with 60% of the necessary buildings yet to be identified. The government plans to cover £9.1 billion of the costs, aiming to reduce this to £5.1 billion through a property sector levy.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector/a-fairer-private-rented-sector> - The UK government's 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector' document outlines plans to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030 and require privately rented homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard for the first time. It acknowledges that 21% of privately rented homes are non-decent, with 12% having serious 'Category 1' hazards posing imminent risks to renters' health and safety.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-april-2024/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-april-2024> - The UK government's April 2024 data release on building safety remediation indicates that, as of April 30, 2024, 98% of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding have started or completed remediation works. However, only 27% of high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding have started remediation, and 30% have completed it.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-august-2024/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-august-2024> - The UK government's August 2024 data release on building safety remediation shows that, as of August 31, 2024, 97% of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings with unsafe ACM cladding have started or completed remediation works. For high-rise buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, 24% have started remediation, and 40% have completed it.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-april-2024/building-safety-remediation-monthly-data-release-april-2024> - The UK government's April 2024 data release on building safety remediation indicates that, as of April 30, 2024, 98% of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding have started or completed remediation works. However, only 27% of high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding have started remediation, and 30% have completed it.