

Safe and decent homes - facilitated by Andy Bates, Leather-market JMB and Tony Bird, Housing Consultant: Are the recommendations in the Hackitt report and for policy changes since the Grenfell tragedy sufficient to keep our homes safe? In the London context, could the London Mayor do more? Do we need a new decent homes standard? To what extent should any possible improvements to our homes be determined by tenants at the local rather than national level?

1. There should be an independent national organisation (funded by government) that gathers together expertise on issues relating to fire and smoke safety, and load-bearing large panel buildings. Importantly this should be a resource for tenants to gain access to independent advice on issues relating to their estates.
2. There must be greater transparency by all social landlords about risk assessments and annual monitoring / following up on areas of risk identified. This might include distribution of information to each household and availability online.
3. The national safety regime needs to be tightened through regulation / legislation, including a legal requirement for tenants' voices, at the estate-based level, to be heard.
4. There should also be legal requirements for tenants to be involved in major works specifications and greater accountability to tenants around delivery and supervision of major works. Buildings may be safe when built but subsequent changes can create significant health and safety / fire risk problems.
5. Social landlords should be required to directly employ independent Clerks of Works to oversee major works contracts as there are endemic problems in the construction industry. There is a need for greater safety consciousness and the monitoring of the quality of works, particularly when large numbers of subcontractors are involved.
6. Government funding must be made available to: (i) ensure that works relating to required safety in social-rented homes is carried out and (ii) ensure social landlords implement delivery, supervision and monitoring of works in an open and transparent way.