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Proposals to improve safety of residential buildings in Wales after Grenfell Tower tragedy

- [WALES](#)
- [GRENFELL TOWER](#)
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The Welsh Government is setting out extensive proposals to improve the safety of residential buildings in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The night of June 14, 2017 saw [fire engulf the 24-storey residential Grenfell Tower block in North Kensington, London](#).

The housing minister says it is clear that "far more fundamental changes" are needed to ensure new buildings are safe for every resident.

Julie James MS says the Welsh Government has set out extensive reforms which, if approved by the Senedd, would give Wales the most comprehensive building safety regime in the UK and provide residents with a stronger voice on matters affecting their homes.



The Welsh Government says proposals in the Building Safety White Paper cover all multi-occupied residential buildings, from a house converted into two flats, to a high-rise apartment block.

The proposals set out major reforms to the way we design, build, manage and live in properties in Wales so that safety can be observed at all stages of a building's lifecycle, as well as proposing clear lines of accountability for building owners and managers.

In January 2020, the [use of combustible materials in cladding systems was banned in Wales](#).

This applied to all new residential buildings such as flats, student accommodation, care homes and hospitals over 18m in height.



Julie James said: "In the wake of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the Welsh Government has already taken action to make buildings safer for residents.

"It's always been clear, however, that far more fundamental changes were needed to improve building safety in the round.

"That's why we are proposing improvements to every stage of the life-cycle of multi-occupied buildings, from design, through construction and into occupation, so new buildings are safe for each and every resident.

"Most importantly, these proposals are designed to empower residents by giving them far more say in the matters that affect their homes and providing clear channels for them to speak up and alert those responsible when things go wrong. Those who own and manage our buildings must live up to their obligations to put things right.

"These proposals, if passed into law in the next Senedd term, will create a new and much improved regime which puts the safety of residents first."



However, there have been criticisms of the Welsh Government's proposals, with one charity saying that the plans do not go far enough.

Robert Jervis Gibbons from Electrical Safety First said: "The Welsh Government's Building Safety Plan must go beyond its current scope to protect residents in high rise buildings from the risks electricity can pose.

"As the plan stands it fails entirely to prevent a fire before it has started, instead focusing prominently on safety once a fire has occurred. Unless it is reviewed to tackle the source of fires effectively it will fall short of protecting residents.

"Electricity is responsible for more than 60 per cent of domestic fires in Wales and it is deeply regrettable the Welsh Government has failed to acknowledge this real risk to residents.

"We urge the Government to reconsider its proposal and to include five yearly mandatory electrical safety checks. Without doing so, this plan will fail to adequately protect residents in Wales."



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