

BY EMAIL

Justice Committee

22 July 2017

Dear Mr Neill and colleagues,

**Re: prison fire safety**

I write to pass on information and to raise a concern. I am an NHS whistleblower and former consultant psychiatrist, and some of my most serious disclosures related to the care of vulnerable patients in prison settings.

Following the Grenfell tower fire, I made enquiries about prison fire safety.

I received the following self explanatory disclosure from HMIP:

[https://minhalexander.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/hmip-foi-response-whistleblowing-disclosures-to-hmip\\_dr-minh-alexander.doc](https://minhalexander.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/hmip-foi-response-whistleblowing-disclosures-to-hmip_dr-minh-alexander.doc)

I also received this disclosure from the Home Office indicating that the Crown Premises Inspection Group (CPIG) has inspected 58 prison establishments in the last three financial years and has served 11 fire safety enforcement notices.

<https://minhalexander.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/home-office-foi-disclosure-prison-fire-safety-21-july-2017-44320-response-3.pdf>

The Home Office indicates that the CPIG works according to this inspection framework:

<https://minhalexander.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/cfoa-fire-safety-guidance-audit-form-version-4-2-on-website-as-at-110825-3.pdf>

This framework indicates that CPIG enforcement notices are issued when establishments are of compliance rating 4 ' Generally premises risk rating high' or compliance rating 5 ' Generally premises risk rating very high' (page 16 of the guidance).

Notwithstanding, the Home Office has stated in its disclosure that it does not hold central data on whether prisons are fully fitted with smoke alarms and sprinklers, or have flammable cladding installed. It is difficult to understand how this is so when the inspection framework clearly includes reference to sprinklers and alarms. I have also asked the Ministry of Justice if it holds the information.

I am very concerned about the safety of inmates if some prisons are significantly non-compliant on fire safety, because evacuation is obviously much more of a challenge due to the security restrictions.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Minh Alexander

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Diane Abbott Shadow Home Secretary

Richard Burgon Shadow Justice Secretary

Meg Hillier Chair of Public Accounts Committee

Sir Amyas Morse Comptroller and Auditor General NAO

Richard Judge CEO Health and Safety Executive

Peter Dawson Director Prison Reform Trust

Frances Crook CEO Howard League for Prison Reform

Deborah Coles CEO INQUEST