



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Ms Joanne Kearsley,
Senior Coroner
HM Coroners Office
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Melanie Dawes CB
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Dear Ms Kearsley,

REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS: EMMA WARING

I am writing in response to the Regulation 28 report arising from the tragic death of Emma Waring, dated 22 September 2015, submitted by Simon Nelson, Senior Coroner for the Coroner area of Manchester North. The Regulation 28 report raised a matter of concern regarding the compulsory inclusion in the design, planning and building phases for residential properties (especially for those properties housing vulnerable individuals) of automatic water suppression systems (sprinkler systems).

I would like to offer the Department's deep condolences to Emma Waring's family for her tragic death. I am very sorry also that the Department did not reply to the report at the time. The Department has searched through its records and although the report was received, it would seem that it was not actioned properly through our correspondence management system and therefore a response was not issued. Clearly this should not have happened and the Department is revising its procedures to ensure that it does not happen again.

I hope that you will accept this letter as a belated response to your report.

I have noted the conclusion in your report, based on the evidence provided to the Coroner's Inquiry by the Community Service Manager of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. You will be aware that the issue of sprinkler provision has been raised also in the context of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

Since 2007 the Building Regulations fire safety guidance in Approved Document B has said sprinkler systems should be installed in blocks of flats over 30 metres above ground level. Sprinklers are also provided for in other buildings, such as care homes, where the circumstances make this necessary. This is part of a range of measures intended to provide

protection from fire and a means of escape.

In response to the recommendations of the coroner's report in February 2013 into the Shirley Tower fire, the Department wrote to providers of social housing (in April 2013) to encourage them actively to consider installing sprinkler systems in their high rise properties. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, we issued advice on interim fire safety measures to local authority and housing association landlords with tower blocks with aluminium composite material cladding systems, which recognised the role which sprinkler systems can play in considering what fire safety measures might be needed in high rise buildings.

We cannot anticipate the findings of Sir Martin Moore-Bick's public inquiry into the circumstances of the Grenfell Tower fire. But the Government is clear that current fire safety and Building Regulations need to be reviewed in order to ensure that they are as effective as possible. The Government therefore launched an independent review of Building Regulations and fire safety on Friday 28 July 2017. The Review, led by Dame Judith Hackitt, is looking at the regulations around the design, construction and ongoing management of buildings in relation to fire safety, and how the building control system operates in relation to fire safety, including compliance and enforcement. The terms of reference for the review can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640790/Hackitt_Review_terms_of_reference.pdf.

The interim report from Dame Judith is expected to be published shortly. The Government stands ready to take action on the recommendations made in the report.

Thank you for writing on this matter and I apologise again for the unacceptable delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Dawes

MELANIE DAWES