

**Cartrefi  
Cymunedol  
Cymru** | **Community  
Housing  
Cymru**



# **Fire Safety Network**

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Chair – Sarah Roberts, Wales & West HA**

**Vice-Chair – Seamus Doyle, Pembrokeshire HA**

**Will Atkinson, Policy Officer CHC**

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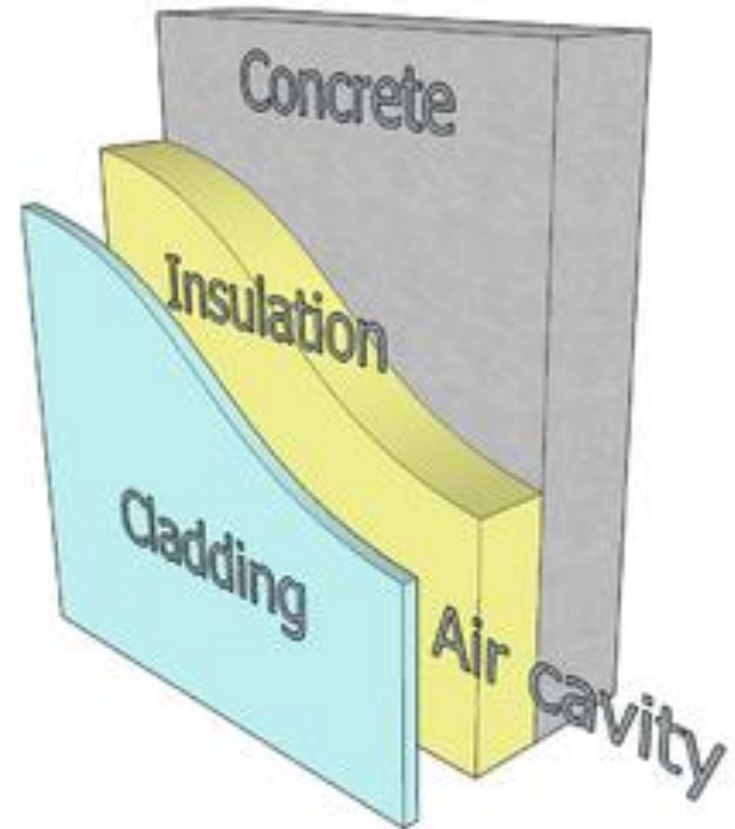
- 10:00** Refreshments on arrival
- 10:05** **Welcome** – Sarah Roberts (Chair), Seamus Doyle (Vice-Chair) & Will Atkinson (CHC)
- 10:15** **Update from CHC on situation in Wales following Grenfell Tower** -Will Atkinson, CHC
- 10:45** **Feedback from urgent NSHFSG meeting** – Seamus Doyle, Vice-Chair
- 11:15** **Welsh Government Update** – John Howells, Welsh Government
- 11:45** **Primary Fire Authority** – Chair, Vice-Chair & CHC
- 12:15** Lunch
- 13:00** **Assembly Inquiry & Fire Safety Advisory Group** – Stuart Ropke, CHC
- 14:00** Discussion and member feedback – All
- 15:00** Close

# Timeline

- 14<sup>th</sup> June: Grenfell Tower fire
- 18<sup>th</sup> June: DCLG issues technical guidance to social landlords on identifying ACM cladding
- 19<sup>th</sup> June: DCLG begins testing scheme for social landlords with suspected ACM cladding on buildings of 18m+ in height
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June: Testing expanded to include Welsh social landlords
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July: Four blocks in Swansea fail tests
- 5<sup>th</sup> July: Three blocks in Newport fail tests
- 6<sup>th</sup> July: 190 of 191 UK cladding samples tested have failed
- 6<sup>th</sup> July: DCLG announces commissioning of six whole system tests

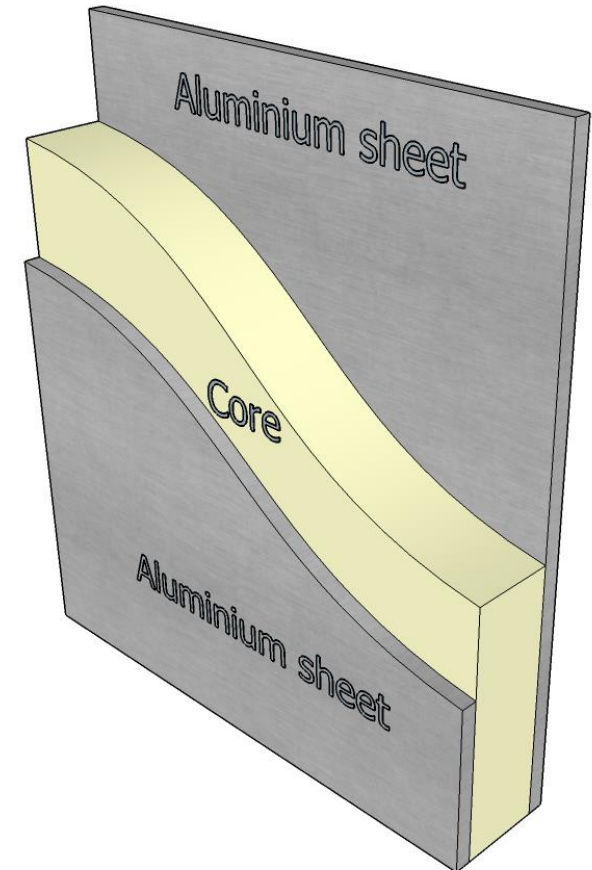
# Cladding

- Weather protection for external wall insulation
- Can be very thin (2mm)
- Numerous specifications
- Solid material or composite



# ACM Cladding

- Aluminium Composite Material
- Can be very thin (2mm)
- A material core sandwiched between two sheets of aluminium
- Three main sub-types:
  - Unmodified Polyethylene Core
  - Fire Retardant Polyethylene Core (Mix)
  - Non-Combustible Core (Mineral Fibre)



# DCLG Cladding Test

- Undertaken by the BRE (Building Research Establishment)
- Designed to ascertain whether the **ACM core material** is of limited combustibility (classified as A2 or above EN13501-1)
- A sample of core material is extracted and tested within a bomb calorimeter
- Scores:
  - 1 – material meets limited combustibility (PASS)
  - 2 – material does not meet limited combustibility but does have some fire retardant properties (FAIL)
  - 3 – material has no flame retardant properties (FAIL)

# Whole System Testing

- Testing of the façade set up as it is on the building
- A large scale replica (8m+) of the insulation, cladding, firebreaks, fixings etc. is produced in the lab
- This replica is then subjected to flame
- Designed to test the cladding and insulation in real world conditions
- Tests have been commissioned by cladding manufacturers and are representative as long as fitting and insulation matching guidance has been followed
- Six representative tests have been commissioned by DCLG
- Results expected within next two weeks

# DCLG Whole System Testing

- Six tests to be undertaken by BRE
- Three types of cladding, each tested with two types of insulation
- Cladding:
  - Unmodified Polyethylene Core ACM (e.g Reynobond PE (Grenfell))
  - Fire Retardant Polyethylene (mix) Core ACM (e.g Alcubond Plus)
  - Non-Combustible Core (mineral) ACM (e.g Alcubond A2)
- Insulation
  - Rigid Polyisocyanurate Foam (e.g Celotex RS5000 (Grenfell))
  - Mineral Fibre (e.g Rockwool)



# The Situation in Wales

- **38 buildings over 18m (7 storeys) in height owned by LAs and HAs, and used for social housing**
- 14 of these are owned by housing associations
- There are an additional 7 blocks over 18m owned by Welsh housing associations and used for student housing or market rent
- Of these 21 blocks, 14 are clad
- Of the 14 clad blocks, 3 are clad with ACM (Aluminium Composite Material) type cladding. These blocks are in Newport. The samples failed the DCLG cladding sample test. These blocks have been deemed safe for residents to remain. They are insulated with Rockwool mineral fibre.

# The Situation in Wales

- **38 buildings over 18m (7 storeys) in height owned by LAs and HAs, and used for social housing**
- 24 of these are owned by Local Authorities
- 4 blocks are clad with ACM (Aluminium Composite Material) type cladding. These blocks are in Swansea. These blocks failed the DCLG cladding sample testing. These blocks have been deemed safe for residents to remain. The blocks are insulated with Rockwool mineral fibre insulation

# What Next?

- Await results of DCLG whole system tests
- Seek clarification from Welsh Government as to what the results mean for cladding in Wales
- Welsh Assembly inquiry
- Welsh Government Advisory Group

# **Feedback from National Social Housing Fire Safety Group (NSHFSG)**

Seamus Doyle

# Welsh Government Update

# Primary Fire Authority

Sarah Roberts, WWHA

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# **Assembly Inquiry & Fire Safety Advisory Group**

**Stuart Ropke, CHC**



# Assembly Inquiry

- One day inquiry on 13<sup>th</sup> July
  - What fire safety requirements and measures are currently in place in Welsh high rise blocks?
  - Are there any obvious gaps or weaknesses in the current system of regulation in Wales of fire safety in high rise blocks?
  - Is guidance to residents of high rise blocks in Wales, in the event of a fire, appropriate?
  - How are residents in Wales being informed about recent developments and being reassured about fire safety measures in their block?
  - To what extent are residents' views about fire safety being listened to and addressed?

# Assembly Inquiry

- What fire safety requirements and measures are currently in place in Welsh high rise blocks?
- Are there any obvious gaps or weaknesses in the current system of regulation in Wales of fire safety in high rise blocks?
  - Types of cladding and insulation
  - Retrofitting of sprinklers and current sprinkler requirements on new blocks
  - Fire safety assessments
  - The response of housing associations to events at Grenfell Tower, and
  - The appropriateness of current building regulations

# Assembly Inquiry

- Is guidance to residents of high rise blocks in Wales, in the event of a fire, appropriate?
- How are residents in Wales being informed about recent developments and being reassured about fire safety measures in their block?
  - ‘Stay put’ and evacuation policies
  - How housing associations are engaging with the fire service on the safety of tower blocks
  - What steps have been taken to test cladding after events at Grenfell Tower
  - How housing associations have communicated information to tenants about fire safety

# Assembly Inquiry

- To what extent are residents' views about fire safety being listened to and addressed?
  - Whether tenants have a clear complaints process on fire safety
  - How housing associations deal with such complaints
  - Any concerns that exist among tenants currently

# **Assembly Inquiry & Fire Safety Advisory Group**

**Stuart Ropke, CHC**

# Discussion and Member Feedback

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# Stay in touch

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