



Home Office

FIRE SAFETY REFORM PROGRAMME UPDATE

Welcome to the first in a series of regular bi-monthly updates on the Home Office's fire safety reform programme. Our reforms aim to strengthen and improve the legislative and regulatory landscape in response to the Grenfell Tower fire and the recommendations made in both the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Part 1 report and Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations and fire safety.

In each update we will provide an overview of key aspects of the work we are undertaking to implement our reforms and how we are monitoring the impact they are having as they begin to take effect. We will also cover other initiatives that we are taking forward alongside, and in support of, our reform programme or that may in due course form a further phase of the programme.

We hope you find this update useful and would welcome your feedback and views. You can get in touch with us via the following email address:
firesafetyreform@homeoffice.gov.uk

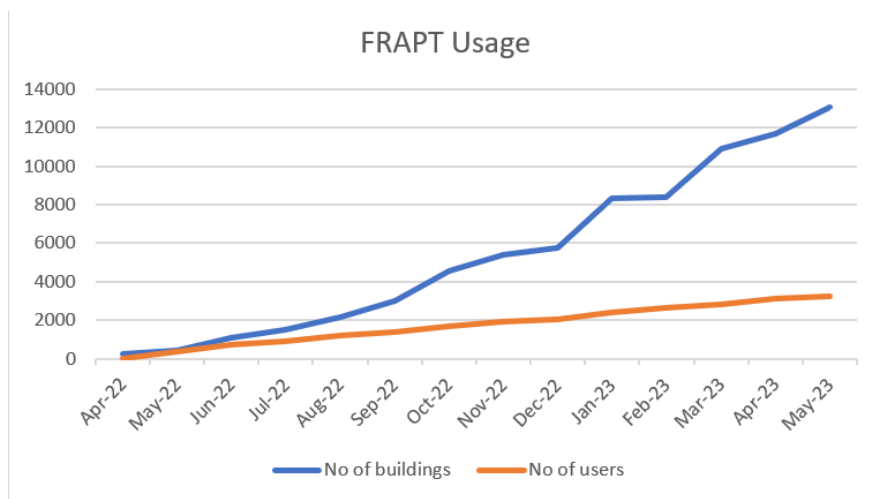
An increased focus on external walls

Phase one of our reforms, delivered through the Fire Safety Act 2021, clarified that the external walls of buildings and individual flat entrance doors must be considered in fire risk assessments completed under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). The relevant provisions of the Act for this purpose came into force in relation to premises in England on 16 May 2022.



Fire Safety Act 2021

At the same time, we launched the Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool (FRAPT) to help Responsible Persons (RPs) prioritise their external wall assessments if they haven't already been considered. Since then, the FRAPT has been used over 13,000 times, and usage of the tool has been steadily increasing with around 150 - 200 new users joining every month. The prioritisation tool should only be used by Responsible Persons but if you would like to see how it works then the link to the guidance is [here](#). Below is a graph showing the recent uptake in use of the tool.



Ensuring essential fire safety precautions are implemented and maintained

Phase two of our reforms was delivered through the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. The regulations strengthened fire safety in multi-occupied residential buildings by, amongst other things, introducing requirements to regularly check fire doors and key fire-fighting equipment and share fire safety information with Fire and Rescue Services.

The regulations came into force on 23 January 2023 and early indications are that they are bedding in well. As we continue to monitor implementation, we are engaging with the fire safety sector to ensure the requirements within the regulations are clearly and fully understood. With this in mind, we will shortly be publishing an updated version of our fire doors guide, and we would welcome your views on any other parts of the regulations about which further guidance, information or clarification would be helpful. We are also developing a Q&A pack to answer frequently asked questions and address some common issues in relation to the regulations. We will aim to publish this on the Fire England website in the near future. If you have any views on this issue, please do contact us at firesafetyreform@homeoffice.gov.uk.

When we developed the regulations, we set up a Design and Implementation Group with representatives from across the fire safety sector to help shape our proposals. Now that the regulations are in force, we intend to repurpose this group to help us monitor implementation. We will re-launch the group with a revised name and purpose in the near future, so if you were not involved in the original group but would like to attend the new one then please do get in contact with at firesafetyreform@homeoffice.gov.uk

Increasing cooperation to support a whole building fire safety approach, improving information sharing and making regulation easier

Phase three of our reforms, delivered through Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022, will further strengthen fire safety in all FSO regulated premises by improving cooperation and coordination between Responsible Persons (RPs) when there is more than one in a building, making it easier for enforcement authorities to take action against non-compliance and ensuring residents of multi-occupied domestic premises have access to comprehensive information about fire safety in their building.

In April we laid commencement regulations for all but sub-section 156(4) and the provisions will come into force on 1 October 2023. Ahead of that, we will publish guidance under Article 50 of the FSO to support Responsible Persons in meeting these new legal requirements. We recently ran a stakeholder engagement exercise seeking views on the draft guidance and received over 130 comments. These are now being considered by our Guidance technical Group and we are grateful to everyone who responded and provided feedback.

An increased focus on Fire Risk Assessor competence

Subsection 156(4) of the Building Safety Act 2022 places a new legal duty on RPs not to appoint a person to assist them with making or reviewing a fire risk assessment under the FSO unless that person is competent. We have decided not to commence this provision in line with the rest of s156 while we work with the fire risk assessor (FRA) sector to develop a robust roll-out strategy and plan.

To this end, we have established an FRA strategy group, jointly chaired by the Home Office and the Fire Sector Federation (FSF), that includes representatives from current competence scheme holders, professional bodies, UKAS, training providers and the devolved administrations. To help inform our implementation strategy, we are taking learning from competence approaches across a multitude of different industries ranging from dentistry and social care to welding and radiation protection, and from right across the world including Canada and Australia. To date this has seen us research 27 examples of other schemes, holding around 30 detailed conversations with more than half of them. This has formed part of wider engagement with over 50 stakeholders from the fire safety sector and wider. We are now analysing all of the evidence gathered and will provide more information on our intended approach once we have finished doing so.

A competence standard for FRAs has been developed by the FSF and work is underway with BSI to develop this into an FRA Competence Code of Practice. A set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Fire Risk Assessors has also been developed to support training providers in delivering a national approach to qualifications that is aligned to the competence standard.

Improved Fire Safety Guidance

Article 50 of the Regulatory Reform (FSO) places a legal duty on the Secretary of State to ensure that guidance is available to assist RPs in discharging the duties imposed on them by Articles 8-22 of the FSO and regulations made under Article 24.

We are in the process of renewing the guidance we publish under article 50 to ensure it reflects the latest legislative and non-legislative developments. As part of this, we recently published a series of guides on fire safety in simple premises. These new, concise elementary guides enable RPs in very simple premises to conduct their own fire risk assessments (if they are competent to do so). We have also published guidance to help responsible persons understand their duties under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

We recently completed stakeholder engagement exercises on a new overarching guide for RPs which will help them to understand their wider duties under fire safety legislation and a guide to the enforcement and sanction options available under the FSO. We received feedback from 34 different respondents on these guides and are again grateful to everyone who has provided feedback.



Links to the published guides mentioned above can be found below:

[Fire safety risk assessment: 5-step checklist - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Making your small block of flats safe from fire - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Making your small paying guest accommodation safe from fire - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Making your small non-domestic premises safe from fire - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022: fire door guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Check your fire safety responsibilities under the Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)