

Grenfell Report – Phase 2

Key Findings from the Phase 2 Report and Their Impact on the Industry

Key Findings

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report revealed widespread failings in fire safety and accountability throughout the refurbishment process. It exposed poor decision-making, with the use of unsafe cladding materials being a critical factor in the fire's rapid spread. There was a lack of oversight and competence among contractors, architects, and managers, all of whom failed to follow fire safety regulations. Additionally, there were critical gaps in communication and record-keeping, with safety information not being properly documented or shared. The report also highlighted a culture of cost-cutting, prioritising aesthetics over safety. Key recommendations include stricter material testing, enhanced regulatory oversight, ensuring compliance of contractors and a focus on ensuring accountability across the construction and fire safety sectors.

How Roles Matter:

Principal Contractors

The Inquiry criticised the principal contractor, for neglecting fire safety and relying on others for critical issues. Moving forward, principal contractors must take direct accountability for fire safety throughout the construction process. Principal Contractors should ensure that the work they undertake or tender for is appropriate for the level of experience within the organisation.

Tenant Management

TMOs were strongly criticised for ignoring resident concerns and failing to manage fire safety risks. In the wake of Grenfell, they now face stricter enforcement, requiring thorough fire risk assessments and enhanced transparency and communication with residents, as specified in Fire Safety Regulations 2022 and Building Safety Act 2022.

Architects

Architects faced criticism for neglecting fire safety, especially with combustible materials like the ACM cladding at Grenfell. The report emphasises that accurate records are kept, providing assurances that regulations are met at every stage, as mandated by the "Golden Thread" in the Building Safety Act 2022.

Competence of Contractors

The report highlighted a significant lack of contractor, and subcontractor competence in managing fire safety, which was a critical factor in the Grenfell tragedy. Moving forward, it is essential that contractors demonstrate a clear understanding of fire safety standards and practices. Only qualified professionals should oversee fire safety during construction, ensuring that all work meets established safety protocols and regulations.