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F.A.O:

- **Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities**
- **Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners**
- **Elected Mayors**

Bcc: Chief Fire Officers & Protection Board Members

5 November 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Assurance Framework for unsafe ACM clad high-rise residential buildings

The Government has made clear that nothing is more important than residents feeling safe in their homes. The Government's priority remains remediating all high-rise residential buildings with ACM cladding and, as you are aware, a number of steps have been taken to ensure this happens as quickly as possible. I am writing to inform you of an additional step we have asked all fire and rescue services to take regarding these buildings.

At the request of Nick Hurd, the previous Policing, Crime and Fire Minister, Roy Wilsher, the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), has agreed to establish and chair a new Protection Board. The Board includes representatives from the Home Office, Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the NFCC and the Local Government Association (LGA). Ministers identified that the Protection Board's initial objective was to develop an assurance regime for all high-rise residential buildings with unsafe ACM cladding. The objective of the exercise is to ensure that all fire and rescue services have appropriate operational arrangements in place for managing the specific risks these buildings present prior to remediation and provide that assurance to Government.

The assurance regime has now been piloted by the NFCC on 10 high-rise residential buildings with unsafe ACM cladding in London, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Merseyside. The pilot Fire and Rescue Services were also asked to provide feedback on the overall exercise. The Board considered the results of the pilot and have determined to extend it to all high-rise residential buildings with unsafe ACM cladding. Details of the assurance regime, accompanying framework and those buildings that are in scope for the exercise will be shared with your Chief Fire Officer, if relevant, by the NFCC.

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Responses will be sought **by or before the 31st December 2019** unless alternative arrangements are agreed. Your Chief Fire Officer will also be asked to send their assurance response to you.

The Protection Board will consider the responses and the NFCC will provide support to your Chief Fire Officer should they have any follow up questions with respect to the operational arrangements in place.

In the coming months the Protection Board will also be overseeing proposals for developing the sector's wider work on protection, particularly in the light of shortcomings identified with regard to the Grenfell Tower tragedy. This includes developing proposals for strengthening the approach to all high-rise residential buildings.

I hope you find this letter a helpful update on the new assurance framework. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please do get in touch.

A copy of this letter also goes to all Protection Board members and to all Chief Fire Officers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Edwards', is centered on the page.

LUKE EDWARDS
DIRECTOR OF FIRE AND RESILIENCE