



**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
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Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 1 November to Jo Johnson MP about the shortage of materials science and fire safety professionals and experts. I am replying as Minister of State for Housing.

As the Housing Secretary has previously written to Norman Lamb MP, Chair of the Science and Technology Committee, we recognise the importance of scientific evidence and advice in good policy making. As such, in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, as part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's building safety programme, the Housing Secretary appointed an Independent Expert Advisory Panel with a wealth of experience in fire and building safety. Officials are also working closely with the Government Office for Science to ensure the Ministry has access to a wide range of scientific advice.

We have also provided building owners with information on professional fire safety advisors and where to find them, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-note-for-landlords-and-building-owners-of-tall-residential-buildings-with-acm-cladding>.

To improve the system, the Government accepts the direction of travel and specific recommendations in Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report of her Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety and awaits her final report in Spring 2018. The interim report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-interim-report>.

Thank you also for outlining further recommendations of the committee to address the perceived shortage of professionals and experts with understanding of materials science and fire safety in the design and construction of buildings.

With your reference to the research councils, which are independent of Government, I have passed your correspondence to them and they have agreed to consider the proposals. I note that the research councils have rapid-response funding routes for urgent research. In response to the Grenfell Tower fire they funded research on external cladding fires by investigators at the University of Edinburgh, who complemented the cladding system tests performed by the Building Research Establishment.

I have also passed your proposal to research and monitor hazards in fire fighters' working environment to the Health and Safety Executive, National Fire Chiefs Council and Local Government Association's Fire Services Management Committee to consider as appropriate.

You sincerely, 

DOMINIC RAAB MP