



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Lee Rowley MP

*Minister of State for Housing, Planning and
Building Safety*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: PO2024/06281

Cllr Miranda Radley
Aberdeen City Council
MRadley@aberdeencity.gov.uk

21 March 2024

Dear Miranda,

Thank you for your letter of 9 March to the Prime Minister regarding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in Residential Properties in Aberdeen. I am replying as the Minister responsible for building safety policy.

I am grateful for you getting in touch and thank you for sharing your concerns.

To ensure you receive a substantive and prompt response, I have instructed officials in the Department to provide an update on your specific concerns, which is appended.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter and I hope this information clarifies the position.

Yours ever,

LEE ROWLEY MP



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Dear Cllr Radley,

Thank you for your letter of 9 March to the Prime Minister regarding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in Residential Properties in Aberdeen. I have been asked to reply.

Thank you for raising this important issue. The decision to rehome residents was no doubt a difficult one, but I commend you for prioritising residents' safety and wellbeing which should always be at the forefront of decision making. It is welcome to hear that positive engagement has commenced with those affected and each family will be individually supported to determine their needs and the best option for them over the coming months. Everyone has a right to safe and decent housing.

As you will have highlighted, RAAC is a longstanding known issue. Building owners are responsible for managing all building safety and performance issues of all kinds, including RAAC, in a proportionate, risk-based, and evidence-based manner, to keep residents and the public safe. To do so, all building owners should continue to follow guidance published by the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE). From the recent actions, we understand you are following the IStructE guidance appropriately, which we commend.

We continue to understand the prevalence of RAAC to be low in housing. The Regulator of Social Housing in England wrote to all registered providers of social housing in England in September 2023, reminding landlords of their responsibility to have a good understanding of their homes and any risks to tenant safety, and to develop proportionate mitigation and remediation plans where required. This letter also set out their understanding that RAAC is not widespread in social housing in England. This was based on engagement with their stakeholder and sector leaders. However, we recognise that RAAC may be present in a small number of residential buildings constructed from 1950 to 1990, including those identified in Aberdeen. We are engaging with Scottish Government officials to understand the ongoing findings of the Scottish Housing Regulator's RAAC surveys. To date it remains that there have been no reported incidents of RAAC failures in residential buildings across the United Kingdom.

You raise concerns about funding to mitigate the risk of RAAC where it has been identified in your housing stock. Local government finance is devolved to the Scottish Government, and therein local authorities are responsible for management of their finances to deliver on their responsibilities. This includes keeping housing conditions in their area under review, and taking any action required to keep buildings safe for residents and the public. I encourage Aberdeen Council to continue to engage with Scottish Government on this matter.

Thank you for raising concerns shared by private owners regarding RAAC. Though we cannot comment on individual lending or mortgage decisions, we would welcome more information on the issues being raised where RAAC is identified. Building owners of all kinds should continue to follow IStructE guidance to identify and manage RAAC where it is identified.

I agree that RAAC is an important issue which the Government continues to act decisively to address, taking a proportionate approach informed by experts. Professional advice from experts on RAAC has evolved over time, from advice in the 1990s that RAAC did not pose a safety hazard to recent advice on identifying and assessing structural adequacy.

As building safety is a devolved matter, the work of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has been focusing on estimating the level of risk associated with RAAC in England. However, DLUHC and the BSR are continuing to engage with the Scottish Government regarding the technical approach to RAAC – and collectively agree that the IStructE guidance is the right one to follow. Also, the recent Inter-ministerial Group for Housing, Communities and Local Government discussed our collective approach to managing RAAC, and officials continue to engage on the issue through a cross-government working group led by the Office of Government Property. The BSR also engage regularly with officials from the devolved administrations on building safety and performance issues.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Hodgson
Deputy Director, Grenfell Inquiry and Policy Investigations