

Information re fire safety from your local NUT adviser Ann Kaye

From: Sarah Lyons
Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 3:24 PM
To: nut-health-and-safety-forum@googlegroups.com
Subject: Fire Safety in Schools Update

Dear colleagues

Yesterday the DfE published new information on its website <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-school-cladding-safety-checks>. It is also consulting with all the teacher unions on the content and tone of a model letter to be sent to schools with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding over 18 m high.

All bodies responsible for safety in schools have been asked to identify where external cladding has been used on buildings and what type it is. Any building with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding above 18 metres will have a sample of that cladding checked. So far only two schools have had a sample tested in this way and, according to the DfE, both these schools have cladding which is '*not of limited combustibility*', (in other words it's combustible). We have been told that both these schools have been inspected by the Fire Service and advised that they can safely remain open. We have asked DfE to let us know the names of these schools so we can share this information with the relevant local officers.

We have also sought confirmation from the DfE that all Fire and Rescue Services have confirmed that they will in fact be able to undertake this work for all school building stock where this is necessary and the timescale by which they have said they will be able to undertake this work, as it is clearly a huge task. We understand from colleagues in the FBU that there is a dearth of fire safety inspecting officers in the Fire and Rescue Service. We have asked for clarification that those undertaking the checks will be suitably trained and competent. Schools will need confirmation that the necessary checks required have actually been carried out to the proper standard so we have asked DfE to provide a standard form whereby the surveyor signs to verify that he/she has strictly complied with a defined list of detailed requirements/criteria.

We have asked the DfE to ensure that schools are encouraged to share all relevant information with staff and parents, so as to help allay fears, and that NUT safety reps are consulted on all measures. If there is any suggestion that schools are withholding information then this will make the situation much worse. We have also raised with the DfE the issue of when the combustible cladding will be removed from any affected schools and reminded them that we have had no response to either of our letters to Justine Greening.

On all these areas we are working closely with colleagues in the FBU and reflecting their expert concerns in our correspondence with the Department.

I hope this update is helpful.

Best wishes.

Sarah

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