

Apartment Owners' Network

Representing Homeowners in Managed Estates



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, January 18th 2023: Apartment Owners' Network Welcomes Government Decision to Establish Defects Remediation Scheme for Apartments & Duplexes

The Apartment Owners' Network has welcomed today's decision by Government to draft legislation to support the remediation of apartments and duplexes with fire safety, structural safety and water ingress defects, constructed between 1991 and 2013.

Bryan Maher, Director of the Network, said, "Today is an important milestone in the long journey towards ensuring that action is taken to remediate the serious defects affecting tens of thousands of people living in apartments. The establishment of the scheme recognises that ordinary owners, who purchased in good faith, should not be liable for the costs of remediation caused by the incompetence, negligence or deliberate non-compliance of others. Government support is fully justified on the basis that national regulations during the period were wholly inadequate to protect homeowners.

"We warmly welcome the announcement that Government have approved the principle of allowing remediation costs already incurred or levied to be covered under the legacy defects scheme. Many owners, working with their Owners' Management Companies (OMCs), have paid huge bills to make their homes safe. They have effectively paid twice for what should have been built properly in the first place. Retrospective financial support for projects already completed or underway was a key recommendation of last summer's Apartment Defects Working Group report to ensure all owners are treated fairly.

"We understand that further work is required to determine the fine detail, particularly in relation to scheme access. It is vital that OMCs receive grant funding for 100% of remediation project costs – partial funding will not deliver 100% safe housing. We note that there are specific limitations or exemptions will apply for certain commercial owners – we would welcome further detail on how this may practically impact the funding of project costs.

"There is a huge body of remediation work to be done which will undoubtedly take several years to complete. Apartment developments that are queued for remediation over the next few years should be able to avail of interim supports to ensure the costs of temporary safety measures are covered.

"Hands-on support from the Housing Agency will also be necessary to support OMCs and their volunteer directors in navigating the remediation projects.

"Finally, it is important that a stakeholder implementation group is established to ensure that the fine detail of the scheme is fit for purpose. The practical experience of OMC directors, property management agents, fire safety professionals, approved housing bodies and other industry professionals must be availed of.

"Today is a significant step, but we still have a lot of work ahead to ensure that the scheme delivers for those impacted owners," Maher concluded.

The Apartment Owners' Network looks forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure the success of the Defects Remediation Scheme.

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