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To: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE REMOVAL OF DANGEROUS CLADDING

This circular brings attention to two recent developments in respect of the campaign to have dangerous cladding removed from buildings, particularly residential buildings.

The first are statements made by one of Britain's largest housebuilding firms, Berkeley Group, in which the company stated to *The Times* newspaper that "*It shouldn't be 'all ACM should be removed' or all HPL' should be removed. It's low risk. There should be a risk-based approach on the whole building*".

[Note for new members: ACM – aluminium composite material; HPL - high-pressure laminate cladding]

This appalling statement is an indication of the complacency and disrespect for those living and working in buildings enveloped in these materials.

In the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell fire the FBU, alongside other key fire sector stakeholders, in recognition that all cladding could not be removed overnight, adopted the rational position that the remediation works should be carried out on a risk-based basis. That was in 2017. In that time, in the absence of any genuine concerted pressure by government, the building industry and building owners have taken pigeon steps in their approach to carry out the necessary measures. In this announcement, cynically made just four days after the third anniversary of this tragic fire, the company seeks to cover its past inaction by attempting to sanitise their position by calling for a risk-based approach now - when they should have been doing that the past three years.

Unfortunately, *The Times* online is a subscription-service, but for those with a subscription the article can be found on this link:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/time-to-relax-ban-on-grenfell-type-cladding-housebuilder-urges-tc8qk297j>

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Having become aware of the comments made by Berkeley Group, the FBU issued a press release which is attached as an appendix to this circular.

We can only assume that the timing of the comments being made was not accidental. They were made to *The Times* for publication on 18 June the day before the expected publication of the report by the National Audit Office, which has been carrying out its *Investigation into remediating dangerous cladding on high-rise buildings*. It was inevitable that the NAO's report would bring exposure to the woeful inadequacies of both the Westminster government and building owners in addressing the problem of cladded-buildings. It is difficult to believe that the comments made to the press were anything other than "getting the retaliation in first".

The NAO report brings attention to the fact that the government has now extended its original promise of having the remedial works completed within three years by a further full two years. Given the track record, the FBU does not believe it is being cynical for thinking that we can expect further delay and slippage in the timetable. The second appendix to this circular provides the press release issued by the Fire Brigades Union following the publication of the NAO report.

Members can read the full NAO report using this link:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Investigation-into-remediating-dangerous-cladding-on-high-rise-buildings.pdf>

An executive summary of the report can be found using this link:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Investigation-into-remediating-dangerous-cladding-on-high-rise-buildings-Summary.pdf>

The FBU will continue to campaign and lobby, with others in the broader sector, for this cladding to be removed as quickly as possible, as well as for higher standards in building construction and in particular more stringent and safer standards for cladding than those introduced by the Westminster government since the Grenfell fire.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally



Andy Dark
Assistant General Secretary

Att.

AD/sll