

# Phase 1 - Welsh Building Safety Fund - FAQs

## Grant funding for the creation of “Fire Safety - Building Passports”

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### What does Phase 1 funding cover?

We are making grant funding available for responsible persons/ building owners/ managing agents to commission comprehensive fire safety surveys of eligible buildings. This will provide an assessment of any fire safety defects present in or on the building and measures that should be taken to address them. This will form the basis of a Fire Safety - Building Passport.

### Which buildings are eligible for Phase 1 funding?

Multi-occupied residential buildings 11m and over will be eligible for Phase 1 funding. However, high rise buildings (18m+ or 7 or more storeys) will be prioritised initially.

### What aspects will a fire safety survey include?

In order to ensure eligible buildings are as safe as they can be, we will provide grant funding to allow responsible persons to commission fire safety surveys to identify any internal and external issues. The surveys will include an assessment of the cladding on the external envelope of the building and an assessment of internal

compartmentation (the ability of the building structure to contain fire where it breaks out). These will inform the creation of a Fire Safety – Building Passport.

### **What is a Fire Safety - Building Passport?**

A Building Passport is an asset management system which recognises the opportunity for works to a building to be integrated and provide economies of scale, minimise disruption and make the best use of available resources. Information obtained in the fire safety survey will form part of the Fire Safety - Building Passport.

The Fire Safety - Building Passport will be developed by responsible persons/ building owners/ managing agents. It will identify issues within a building and set out what fire safety measures should and can be implemented, it will also prioritise those works. The Passport will aim to align fire safety works required for the building, alongside planned maintenance and decarbonisation measures to provide opportunity for cost savings through shared commissioning and project management costs and to minimise disruption to residents.

In summary, the survey provides information on **what** defects are present and **how** they can be addressed. The Fire Safety - Building Passport takes that information a step further and indicates **when** necessary remediation work can, and needs to be undertaken.

Rather than taking a “one size fits all” approach, the creation of a Fire Safety - Building Passport ensures that the remediation fits the requirements of the individual building.

We will provide guidance on how to develop the Fire Safety-Building Passport.

### **Does this apply to both the private and public sectors?**

Yes. Multi-occupied residential buildings 11m and over from both the public and private sectors will be eligible to apply. This includes mixed-use buildings.

### **How quickly can a fire safety survey be undertaken once funding is secured?**

Responsible persons/ building owners/ managing agents will be responsible for commissioning the surveys once funding is granted. There is also a range of factors that will impact on timescales for surveys such as availability of suitable qualified professionals to undertake them, making it difficult to provide a timeline.

We are aware there are issues with capacity and professional indemnity insurance (PII) in relation to surveys. These aspects require intervention from UK Government and we are working with colleagues there to address these issues. The UK Government has already provided additional funding to increase the number of assessors qualified to undertake external wall surveys (EWS1) which will help address demands on capacity.

## **How long will a Fire Safety - Building Passport be valid for?**

A Fire Safety - Building Passport only needs to be created once, but it is a living document. Any information and surveys relating to the building such as fire safety, decarbonisation and planned works (condition surveys) are fed into the Passport and create a timeline for them to be done. This is flexible and can be adjusted to allow for a number of factors including, but not limited to, the priority of safety measures, availability of resources in the supply chain, funding, emerging technologies etc. As with any asset management system, the Fire Safety - Building Passport will be constantly maintained and updated as works are completed.

## **How do we apply for Phase 1 funding?**

Applications for funding will be made by responsible persons, building owners or managing agents of eligible buildings. We will make a further announcement on the detail of how to apply. We anticipate that the scheme will be ready to accept applications in Autumn 2021.

## **Who will be undertaking the surveys?**

Due to the holistic approach of funded fire safety surveys, it is likely that more than one professional will be required to review these different aspects. For example, this could include building surveyors and fire engineers. We will provide further detail on expertise required to undertake a valid fire safety survey and guidance to support commissioning and provide confidence that people with the right expertise are conducting the survey. This information will be available in the Autumn.

## **If a building has already undergone previous surveys will they need to undertake another one before being able to create a Fire Safety - Building Passport?**

If a responsible person/ building owner/managing agent has evidence of recent valid assessments or surveys that cover the same aspects as the fire safety survey, it may not be necessary to undertake further surveys and existing information can be used to inform the Fire Safety - Building Passport.

However, consideration must be given to both the internal and external aspects that will make up a fire safety survey. For example, if a building has undergone a recent EWS1 survey which identifies issues with cladding but has not undertaken any assessments of internal compartmentation, then it will be necessary to commission work to assess the compartmentation. In that case an application for funding to cover a survey for the compartmentation only can be made.

## **I am a resident/leaseholder. Can I access information relating to the fire safety survey and Passport?**

As part of demonstrating responsible management and meaningful resident engagement we would expect responsible persons/ building owners/ managing

agents to share information relating to safety issues where present, and steps being considered to remediate them. This could include sharing information obtained as part of the fire safety surveys and developed for the Passport.

There will be an expectation that information obtained through Welsh Government funded fire safety surveys should be made available to residents/leaseholders in an accessible way.

**Will the fire safety survey remove the requirement to obtain an EWS1?**

No, the Building Passport does not replace the need for an EWS1 form.

**What can I do if my building owner/managing agent will not apply for funding for a fire safety survey?**

We would expect responsible persons/ building owners/ managing agents of eligible buildings to seriously consider the needs of their building and residents and apply for Phase 1 funding to obtain assurance that their building is as safe as it can be.

If a resident/leaseholder wants their building to undergo a survey they can raise this with the responsible person/ building owner/managing agent. If there are concerns that a responsible person is not properly observing their duties around fire safety this can be raised with the local authority and/or the fire and rescue service.

**Why are you only funding surveys, not actual repair and remediation work?**

We need an accurate picture of the true scale of issues to better inform the development of our plans for supporting remediation. A Fire Safety - Building Passport will help identify how much funding is needed and when, by mapping the pathway so that resources can be utilised to the maximum benefit.

**What next? If problems are discovered will Welsh Government help fund remediation?**

We are developing a remediation fund which will form the next phase of our programme of support. The details of this fund are being developed and will be informed by Phase 1 funding. Fire Safety - Building Passports will be key in identifying the route to remediation.

Further details of this next phase of support will be made available as soon as it is finalised by Spring 2022.

**Is it necessary to produce a Building Passport as a prerequisite to obtaining further funding?**

Yes. Decisions on funding allocation will be made by reviewing safety measures identified in the Fire Safety - Building Passport which will provide coherent and reliable evidence of what is required.