

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Heather Wheeler MP and Kit Malthouse MP
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF

25th October 2018

Dear Secretary of State and Ministers

Re: Electrical safety in dwellings

BEAMA agrees with the Secretary of State's comment to the House of Commons on 19th July 2018 that "Nothing is more important than ensuring that people are safe and feel safe in their homes". However, as a trade association for the electrical industry, experts within our membership have concerns and evidence that this is not the case for electrical safety. With them, we presented their concerns with recommendations for making people safer in our new paper "[Electrical Safety in UK Residential Dwellings](#)".

Electrical installations within buildings – including wiring, circuit protection and outlets – deteriorate over time, becoming less safe and more likely to lead to electrical faults resulting in shocks and fires. The ONS states that there are 350,000 injuries from shocks each year, and faults within the electrical distribution system cause over 3,500 fires a year.

Meanwhile, although products are now available that can make buildings safer – as acknowledged in the (then DCLG) Housing Survey from 2013-14 – few buildings with older installations are fitted with these products and there is no policy mechanism to encourage householders to install them. The renovation rate for existing housing stock is less than 4% a year, so we know very few householders are choosing to make improvements either.

We are pleased that the Government has instigated many reviews and proposals for improvements to building safety since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, including the proposal for a requirement for 5-yearly inspections of electrical installations in the private rented sector. Furthermore, legislation and standards are already in place for new buildings, and the current Social Housing Green Paper is considering changes for that sector too.

However, these do not address the old buildings that will continue to comprise the majority of UK housing stock (currently 84% of homes are over 25 years old). These same dwellings will see a greater number and types of sources of electricity demand as the markets for new appliances, electric heating and electric vehicles continue to grow, leaving unimproved electrical installations increasingly unsuitable and unsafe.

All houses should be safe, regardless of whether they are privately owned, rented or socially rented. And so should householders, future occupants and neighbours.

As such, **we believe that there should be a legislative requirement for inspections of electrical installations within all dwellings when there is a change of occupancy or use, and at least every 5 years.** This will help ensure that electrical installations for everyone in the UK are safe and suitable for now and during the rapid change of the future.

Industry has the expertise and capacity to deliver the necessary improvements so we can support the Government's aim to keep people safe and feeling safe. We hope to meet with you to work alongside you and the Department in implementing this change that will improve safety for all.

Please refer to our recent publication attached with this letter which outlines the evidence from industry to support improvements for electrical safety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Howard Porter'.

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CEO

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