

PE2113/N: Provide support to RAAC-affected communities

Cabinet Secretary for Housing written submission, 30 October 2025

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2025 on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.

To respond to the two requests made to me in your letter in turn:

- 1) to urge you to arrange a meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland, Douglas Alexander MP, and with your counterparts in the UK Government, in order to agree a solution to provide financial assistance to homeowners and tenants affected by RAAC

Both the former Minister for Housing and I have written on several occasions to the UK Government advocating for the setting up of a national RAAC remediation fund. Most recently, on 2 October, I wrote to Steve Reed MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. My letter emphasised the UK-wide nature of the issue, with many of the properties were sold under UK Right to Buy legislation, and many reserved issues being engaged namely insurance, tax and consumer protection.

In my letter I have offered to work with Steve Reed on this issue and currently await a reply along with the proposed discussion. I will consider including the Secretary of State for Scotland in any resulting meeting.

The Committee may also wish to note that in June, I wrote to the former Deputy PM stressing the need for the UK Government to take the lead in putting in place financial arrangements on a cross-UK basis for RAAC remediation, noting this issue has its origins in the pre devolution era. Regrettably, the reply reiterated that the UK Government had no plans to set up any RAAC scheme or fund to address RAAC in residential settings.

It is the view of the Scottish Government that the presence of RAAC across the nations of the UK emphasises the need for a UK wide approach to this issue, with the UK Government being the only government across the UK with the financial flexibility to respond to such unexpected costs. I would invite the Committee to support this position.

The Committee may also wish to be aware that, from previous correspondence with the UK Government, including the former Deputy Prime Minister, we understand that the assessment of the prevalence of RAAC in housing in England as being 'low' is based on the limited data available. This contrasts with the extensive data we hold in Scotland thanks to the comprehensive data collection exercise undertaken by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and overseen by the Scottish Housing Regulator. I have pressed Steve Reed to consider this point and, again, would welcome the Committee's support in this.

- 2) to ask for an update regarding the Scottish Government's monitoring of local authorities' engagement and interaction with affected residents, and of sharing best practice across local authorities in Scotland

Effective communication and engagement with residents impacted by RAAC is an issue of particular importance to me and one which was considered – and emphasised – during the first meeting of my newly convened RAAC in Housing Leadership Group on 4 September.

I am aware that the extent – and methods – of communication vary across Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and, with this in mind, one of the actions arising from the Leadership Group meeting was for members to provide a short note and update on their approaches to engagement with residents affected by RAAC.

While these are in the process of being provided and collated by my officials ahead of the next meeting of the Group, responses so far indicate a broad range of actions focussed on keeping affected residents and homeowners informed. These include meetings, various methods of correspondence, drop in sessions, visits, sharing of survey results and remediation plans and the dissemination of information on webpages and via social media. It is essential that robust channels of communication are created and maintained.

The Committee may also wish to be aware that ahead of September's meeting, a request was made to RAAC impacted Local Authorities and RSLs seeking general information on their approaches to engagement and the provision of information, advice and guidance on the issue of RAAC.

The range of information provided varied – dependent on variables including the number of affected properties as well as the condition of the RAAC and the extent it may or may not have required remediation and, as a consequence, communication with residents.

The earlier responses from the affected Councils and RSLs (as also indicated in the more recent information now being provided) generally suggested an understanding of the need for engagement with tenants as well as provision of, or direction to, sources of relevant information. In respect of private homeowners, it would broadly appear to be the case that owners in mixed tenure blocks were more informed of relevant issues than RAAC affected owners in entirely private blocks where the general approach was to direct to sources of guidance such as that available from The Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE).

Various methods of engagement were highlighted in the information provided, some of which other housing providers might wish to consider adopting if not already doing so. In addition to correspondence and updates, respondents noted visits, one-to-one meetings with tenants, dedicated email addresses for enquiries and RAAC specific webpages and FAQs. Other forms of engagement included meeting residents through the local Community Council, the appointment of a resident liaison officer, block meetings and an open door/drop in session for owner occupiers.

While it is a matter for individual organisations to choose the frequency and method of communication with affected residents, I strongly encourage all impacted Councils

and RSLs to maximise their efforts in keeping both tenants and private owners as fully informed as possible.

This is a message I have also been keen to emphasise in the meetings I am currently undertaking across Scotland with councillors and RAAC affected residents (to date in Dundee and Aberdeen, with Clackmannanshire and West Lothian being arranged) as well as in associated media engagements.

Finally, in addition to liaison work through the RAAC in Housing Leadership Group, I would note that my officials are routinely in contact with officers in Local Authorities and RSLs for RAAC interests, not least in supporting co-ordination of work in connection with the development of guidance specific to the management and remediation of RAAC in housing which is currently in the final stages of development by IStructE.

Yours sincerely,

MÀIRI MCALLAN