LEVELLING DOWN LIFE CHANCES

**SUMMARY**

- The choices and opportunities available to leaseholders are being levelled down by the building safety crisis, with some expecting to be worse off than their parents.
- The slow pace of funding decisions and support means that leaseholders will continue to face disruption for many years as they await remediation.
- Leaseholders remain trapped and face significant uncertainty; some questioned whether remediation would really restore confidence and trust in the leasehold sector.

**POLICY SOLUTIONS**

- Legislative protection for all leaseholders from the costs associated with remediation of cladding and other safety problems, to ensure the completion of all work to make buildings safe.
- Extension of financial support to all impacted buildings, including those under 11m.
- Forward funding by Government to facilitate swift and risk-based remediation.

The building safety crisis refers to a range of safety issues identified in buildings for multiple occupancy of varied heights, including problems with: flammable cladding, insulation, fire breaks, cavity barriers, compartmentation, fire doors, and balconies.
The building safety crisis has undermined the belief in the housing market as a relatively stable and secure building block of a future life. Many leaseholders put their life savings into a deposit for a flat, believing that this would deliver greater security and control over their lives. But many now face a future in which their life chances have been levelled down by leasehold – expecting to be worse off than their parents, with life choices and opportunities being closed off rather than opened out by the purchase of their home.

“This is the first time that I realised actually I’m not going to be any better off than my parents are...I felt like I’ve been quite successful in my life, up to this point. I’m well educated, I’ve got a decent job, but all of that has just suddenly become so fragile”

Ed, age 35-44, London

Individuals also questioned whether remediation would restore confidence and trust in leasehold flats as a safe purchase. They had bought properties trusting in the systems of regulation and certification for buildings. Testimony to the Grenfell Tower inquiry has shown that there have been catastrophic failures here. And yet, leaseholders are being asked to trust in that same system as buildings are remediated.

“Why would I trust these people again to fix the problem correctly?...I bought [my flat] on the very basic presumption that it was safe...When I get these works done...how do we know it’s solving the problem? How do we know they’re not going to come back in five years’ time and say, ‘oh sorry, the standards have changed again...so we need to do this now?’”

Lauren, age 35-44, London

This briefing is based on in-depth interviews with leaseholders in England impacted by the building safety crisis, living in buildings of different heights. The full report can be found here: housingevidence.ac.uk/publications/living-through-the-building-safety-crisis/

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