

Grenfell, Housing and the Need for Change

Professor Susan Bright

Professor Bright is conducting research looking at how property governance impacts upon environmental upgrades to the built environment. She has particularly been involved in a multi-disciplinary project that explores the challenges of energy retrofit for residential leasehold property (flats). An important upgrade made to tower blocks is external wall insulation and this explains how Professor Bright's earlier research led her to look at the issue of fire safety and cladding in residential high-rise buildings.



After the devastating Grenfell Tower fire Professor Bright established an online blog that aimed to examine 'Housing After Grenfell'. Through the blog, Professor Bright regularly publishes short analyses of current issues relating not only to fire safety, but also variety of national and international issues such as housing conditions, tenure reform, regulation, ownership, governance, and voice. In this way, the blog serves as an important open access space for informed discussion, expert opinion, and debate on a broad range of housing issues that have come to prominence since the Grenfell tragedy.

Establishing the blog has enabled new connections to emerge and for different voices to enter the conversations. Professor Bright has spoken at a number of events on the impact of fire safety failings for other high-rise blocks of flats, both social and private housing, including at meetings of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Leasehold and Commonhold, and of the Leasehold Knowledge Partnership. Through the blog Professor Bright has been able to engage with senior-level government officials, parliamentarians, housing experts, and, importantly, with the many people who have been impacted by Grenfell. The blog has led to her co-organising and hosting a conference entitled 'Legal Perspectives on putting buildings right post-Grenfell: what went wrong and how can it be put right?' This conference brings together politicians, policy makers and experts in the field of fire safety, building regulations, local government powers, housing standards, private law and human rights to analyse what went wrong, the adequacy (or otherwise) of the post-Grenfell reforms and to hear the voices of those impacted.

Professor Bright will continue to advance her research on 'Housing After Grenfell' and to engage with current wider debates about tenure reform. She has already connected her research to an additional project on 'Understanding Fleecehold and the Leasehold Scandal'.

If you a researcher or expert interested in issues that affect housing and law-related matters and would like to contribute to the blog, please contact Professor Bright.