

Huw Irranca-Davies

Aelod o'r Senedd dros Ogwr
Member of the Senedd for Ogmore

(sent by email: correspondence.julie.james@gove.wales)

Ein cyf | our ref: HID/HI2694

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Minister for Climate Change
Julie James MS

Date: 26th May 2021

Dear Julie,

Further to my recent discussions before the election with Lesley Griffiths (as the Minister with responsibility for energy-efficiency installations at the time) I am writing to ask for your help in resolving a long-running problem. I anticipate this will require the support of Welsh Government, possibly by helping to convene a UK-wide stakeholder working group to resolve issues which have arisen due to defective or inappropriate installation of energy-efficiency measures – and in particular exterior wall cladding – as part of the Arbed, CESP, CERT or other schemes.

As you may know, in my constituency of Ogmore there are many properties in the Caerau community damaged by defective installation of energy efficiency products, some from installations which took place more than a decade ago. These properties need to be urgently repaired and made good, and also appropriate recompense must be explored for those households where the effects have compromised their well-being.

But the problems in Caerau may indeed be part of a wider problem. That is why I anticipate we will need the intervention of both the Welsh Government and UK Government to help determine the scale of these issues, and to resolve the problems.

Over twenty properties in the Caerau area were part of the original Arbed scheme supported by Welsh Government, which also had some involvement of the local authority in the administration of grant support. The great majority were actually part of UK-administered CESP and CERT scheme, with no



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connection to either the local authority or to Welsh Government. We believe that the underlying problems however – of the difficulty of identifying accountability and obtaining redress and/or compensation -remain the same regardless of the administration of the schemes, and all affected residents will need proper resolution (not only those affected under the Arbed scheme).

This is very important to gain a proper understanding of the issues and the solutions, as it suggests that this will require a shared and concerted effort – and a willingness to work together on solutions - by the UK and Welsh Government, local government, the energy companies whose funding supported the Arbed scheme (a Welsh Government scheme) and also the Eco schemes (UK government scheme), the UK regulator, and the extant installers too.

I am therefore seeking your help as Minister – and the concerted help of the Welsh and UK governments – in obtaining full engagement by all those stakeholders to examine the full extent of this problem, the complex layers of responsibility and accountability, and most importantly – how this is put right for the residents and avoid this happening again in future.

The frustration and anger of our local residents affected by this is totally understandable. They have been left with properties damaged by these installations, and have had to live with this for years. This has also been frustrating for elected representatives at a local and national level, who have been unable to establish final accountability for what went wrong, or to get redress.

Bridgend County Borough Council have, we understand, made clear their willingness to help resolve the property remediation for those in which there was a local authority involvement. That is a welcome start. But we believe that the responsibility for the larger number of properties locally will need to fall on a larger number of stakeholders who have been involved. This may well be the case for others affected in different areas of Wales and England too.

It may be that one possible way forward would be to establish a co-funded scheme for remediation at a Wales and UK level.

If the different stakeholders can be brought together, then we would want them to hear at outset the devastating effects of the installation failures on our residents homes and their lives. This could be done in person, or by video-recording. But it should be done, so their voices can be heard directly.

I look forward to hearing from you, and stand ready to assist in any way.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Irranca-Davies

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Member of the Senedd for Ogmored/Aeolod o'r Senedd dros Ogwr
Welsh Labour and Co-operative/ Llafur Cymru a Chydweithredol

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



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