

Legislation Committee No.1

Response to the consultation on the Proposed Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure

Mary Sinclair

Dear legislation office

Anything which helps protect people is welcome but let us first go to basics.

1. Why don't those who install cavity wall installation check that the interior walls are sealed and leak proof? We were friends with people in two brand new bungalows, both with to us a horrible smell of rotting chemicals, a plastic smell. People told us it had to be the smell of new paint, but we had never smelled anything like it. It made my husband ill every time he entered those homes. Living in them the residents did not notice it. Both women developed breast cancer. This may of course be a co incidence. What caused the smell which lingered for a few years?

2. Another friend had cavity wall insulation pumped into her walls from the outside but the workmen did not check that it would not leak into her home. Why not? Not all builders are efficient or honourable to properly seal the interior.

3. Some People resident in new homes in the County approached me to say how worried they are about the poor standard of those homes. They cannot say anything publicly because it would lower their house values or make them unsalable and would cause grief to their neighbours. How dare people be left in this position? Where are building standards now? Please address these concerns or is the sprinkler system a substitute for or a way of coping with poor material and techniques. They have no redress because the companies change their names.

4. Please can we have more rigorous testing of newly built or refurbished homes so that we can be confident that they are built to a decent standard? This is before any sustainable and carbon neutral provisions are made. Please can we have fewer undersized roofing struts and more rigorous and honest policing of builders and enforcement of basic standards? People invest a lot of money in buying their homes they should be able to be reassured they are fit for purpose.

5. Perhaps it is time we suggested that everyone undertakes some pretty basic checks on features of any house they buy such as no cavity wall poison leaking into their homes, proper drainage that is not fudged into neighbouring properties, a sewerage system which is sufficient for the household. Roofing timbers to the required standard are essential if we are going to get stormier weather with global warming. Please address the basics first. House building may be A1 in Cardiff but according to new owners who have contacted me all is not well elsewhere.

Many thanks