



Response to Huffington Post article

Helen Hewitt, CEO of the British Woodworking Federation (BWF) commented:

Our intention had been to remain respectfully quiet on the anniversary of Grenfell to focus on remembering the victims and families affected and reflect on a tragedy that must never be forgotten. However, the news released Friday has reluctantly forced us to make a statement.

The fact that councils are delaying the replacement of thousands of faulty fire doors is completely unacceptable. Kensington and Chelsea council claim that they have been unable to replace the 4,000 fire doors within its housing stock due to a lack of 'reliable products'. This is absolutely not the case – there is no need for a delay of 'up to three years' due to a restricted supply of quality fire doors.

Around 3 million fire doors are certified and put to market every year through the BWF's Fire Door Alliance accreditation scheme. For over 22 years the BWF's scheme has ensured the quality, safety and traceability of fire doors through third party certification. This further counters the council's claims that manufacturers have only just begun producing doors which meet national regulatory standards. We have been doing it for years and the supply is absolutely there.

Lord Porter, chairman of the Local Government Association, argues that councils are 'struggling to confirm that fire doors that have come back on the market meet their requirements' yet gives no indication of what the issues are and whether these doors have been certified.

Timber fire doors consistently deliver on their performance promises and the MHCLG fire door investigations have so far vindicated this - we look forward to the final results. Members who have had their fire doors put through the fire-resistant tests have reported that their timber fire doors have resisted fire for as long as 54 minutes, exceeding the 30-minute requirement time by 24 minutes. On average, across the data submitted, fire-resisting time currently stands at 46 minutes. This is in direct contrast to foam filled, glass reinforced polymer (GRP) faced fire doors which only withstood fire for 15 minutes during the tests.

If the delay is down to a dispute over who foots the bill for replacement, as also suggested by Lord Porter, then that is a separate issue which urgently needs addressing. It is not right that people's lives are at risk because of disputes over money. But to suggest that quality fire doors are not available and ready for installation is simply untrue.