

P-05-777 Application of the Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Legislation within the current Building Regulations for Wales – Correspondence from the petitioner, 20.12.17

Dear Petitions Committee,

Again many thanks for discussing what I believe should be a significant discussion point for the economic future of the Building trade in Wales as well as ensuring a reasonable, rationalised approach to preventing Fire deaths in Wales.

With reference to Lesley Griffith's reply, it is disappointing that she has chosen not to address the outline questions proposed in the petition. Having shared previous correspondence with Lesley Griffiths on this matter for some time this seems to be a common trait.

Lesley's reply is a clear demonstration of how disconnected from reality the current Assembly lawmakers are, ignoring wider implications and ramifications whilst not even attempting to substantiate with facts and figures reasons behind the legislation implementation only supports that fact that this piece of legislation is not fit for purpose. The basis for this piece of legislation is completely unfounded, there were promises made by the Assembly members, in particular Ann Jones, to provide supporting evidence that Sprinklers were more effective in reducing deaths in dwellings that say, working maintained smoke alarms. No evidence was ever given for this, along with no data provided on type, style, size or age of buildings deemed to be at the highest risk of fire. However, clear evidence has been given by the BRE studies stating that in buildings with less than 3 stories, sprinkler systems are not a financially viable option compared to a working smoke alarm.

News released this week identifies that the Welsh economy is starting to suffer, with Wales currently being bottom of the UK trade and economy table; other news also related specifically to this legislation states that now councils have had to take their own initiative and essentially create their own building companies to enable them to meet their sustainable housing criteria. This current situation is a direct result of building companies choosing to develop over the border in England rather than Wales due to legislative red-tape such as the blanket implementation of the Sprinkler System regulation.

Again in this week's news another clip mentions that homes with broken / unmaintained smoke alarms are the primary cause of fire related deaths. How embarrassing will it be in

the future when the same applies to Sprinkler Systems due to the fact that the Welsh Government refused to include maintenance legislation to back up the primary Sprinkler installation requirements!

After all if people won't even pay for batteries or replacement of out of date alarms, there will be no chance of paying the extortionate annual costs associated with maintaining a Sprinkler System!

Given all the above and also that Fire loading (Hoarding) has just started to be mentioned in the news, surely it is time for the assembly to step-up and recognise that this current piece of legislation needs reviewing and amending.

In light of all the comments mentioned above and supported by other members of the public. I again call for a formal independent review of the current Building Regulations for the removal of the requirement to install or retrofit Sprinkler Systems to dwellings with a) *less* than 3 stories, b) Authorised modifications with an a *reduction* in primary fire sources (Kitchens) as a result of the modification work and c) Amalgamations with the intent of *reducing* the number of dwellings.

Nick Harding