



CONSTRUCTION DEFECTS ALLIANCE

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FULLY-FUNDED STATE-RUN APARTMENT DEFECTS REMEDIATION SCHEME NEEDED TO ENSURE DEVELOPMENTS ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY

**Failure to make scheme inclusive of owner-occupiers who have paid or are paying
remediation costs will lead to ‘zombie’ unfinishable building and developments**

The Construction Defects Alliance has today informed Oireachtas members that the apartment defects remediation support scheme being developed by the Minister for Housing, Darragh O’Brien TD, and the Government needs to provide full funding for remediation works ‘upfront’ and be managed and run by a State agency in order to ensure that defective apartments are made safe and healthy.

Alliance representatives spoke to Oireachtas members this afternoon at a briefing in the Leinster House Audio-Visual Room after a dignified protest was held on Kildare Street to mark the fifth anniversary of the completion of the *‘Safe as Houses?’* report on defects.

Construction Defects Alliance spokesperson, Pat Montague, said that the Government’s defects remediation support scheme needs to ensure that the tens of thousands of people living in defective apartments are safe and healthy.

“In late July, the Working Group on Defective Homes’ report showed that up to 100,000 apartments are affected by fire safety and other defects. Minister Darragh O’Brien and the Government have been working on proposals to develop a remediation support scheme and it’s critical that this scheme is ‘fit-for-purpose’. In other words, that it ensures that these defective apartments are made safe and healthy.”

Mr Montague explained that legal responsibility for dealing with defects rests on the owners’ management companies (OMCs) that run apartment developments.

“OMCs are composed by and large of volunteer directors who do not have any background in construction or project management so they don’t have the skills, expertise and

competence to oversee complex remediation works. In addition, most OMCs are deeply in debt with service charge arrears so they don't have the financial capability to undertake such works either.

“This is why we are calling for the defects remediation process to be fully-funded ‘upfront’ by the State and for the process to be managed and run by a State agency, like the pyrite remediation process. Anything less than that will, unfortunately, leave many developments unsafe and unhealthy.”

Pat Montague that the scheme needs to be made fully inclusive of owner-occupiers who have paid or are paying towards remediation costs.

“A failure to include owners who have paid or are paying towards remediation costs will lead to ‘zombie’ developments and buildings where fire safety defects cannot be completed – and this means that they are unsafe. The Working Group on Defective Homes specifically warned about such a scenario arising and it's crucial that policy makers grasp the importance of this issue and deal with it.”

Mr Montague concluded by saying that, given the scale of the problems, the remediation process is going to take at least five years to complete and could take up to 10 years.

“People will need to be made safe in their homes while they are waiting for works to be done and this is why we have asked for financial support for fire alarm upgrades and the employment of fire wardens. We understand from Minister Darragh O'Brien that such support will be forthcoming from 2023 onwards and we very much welcome that.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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