

# PE2113/H: Provide support to RAAC-affected communities

## Petitioner written submission, 28 January 2025

### 1. Response to [Minister for Housing submission dated 16 December 2024](#).

While we appreciate the detailed response, I must express my disappointment with the Scottish Government's position and its lack of tangible support for RAAC-affected homeowners.

#### 1.1. Local Authority Scheme of Assistance

Councils have repeatedly explained the Scheme of Assistance, which provides little beyond advice. Despite the Scottish Government's claim of financial freedom, Aberdeen, Clackmannanshire, and West Lothian councils state they lack the funds to support RAAC-affected homeowners. They appreciate the UK RAAC Campaign Group (UKRCG) raising the issue but are also seeking additional funding from the Scottish Government. Every council we are communicating with emphasises that decisions must be financially viable, and delays in resolving the crisis are due to a lack of Government support. We have nearly brokered a deal with Clackmannanshire Council for roof repairs, with the council agreeing to continue pressing the Government to cover sundry debts, acknowledging that homeowners will struggle with payments. Meanwhile, Aberdeen Council has reached a stalemate, as a Compulsory Purchase Order will not succeed, and residents are not engaging in the voluntary acquisition process. How long will the Government allow this to continue?

We appreciate the continued efforts to seek support from the UK Government, which we are also pursuing. However, if assistance is refused, a stronger push to reallocate Scottish Government funds is needed. Many homeowners face severe financial and emotional distress, including depression, bankruptcy, and suicidal intent.

#### 1.2. UK Government Responsibility

Shifting responsibility solely to the UK Government is a cop-out. In Basildon, homeowners received fair pre-RAAC valuations, and council tenants got £8,680 grants. In Scotland, councils deduct £50,000–£70,000 from valuations, while tenants received just £1,500—barely enough for carpeting.

This is primarily a Scottish issue, caused by Scottish councils that continued using RAAC while others stopped. Reports of construction problems were ignored, and worker concerns, like in Dundee, were dismissed after brief delays. The Scottish Government cannot deflect responsibility for the consequences of these decisions.

### **1.3. Mischaracterization of RAAC as a building maintenance issue**

RAAC is more than a maintenance issue. Many deteriorating roofs were managed by councils as factors and majority shareholders, yet they failed to maintain them, causing losses for homeowners. By offloading liability for latent defects through the Right to Buy scheme, the government has left homeowners to bear the burden of systemic failures and lack of disclosure.

### **1.4. Lack of Notification to Homeowners**

Homeowners were never informed about RAAC, nor was this disclosed to subsequent buyers. My daughter bought her home in June 2023. Her Home Report recommended a roof inspection, which she commissioned. The inspector found it in good condition but didn't test for RAAC, as it wasn't mentioned. This is common—how can homeowners be blamed for such an oversight?

In Aberdeen, even when RAAC is stable, the council is opting for demolition due to issues like undersized 45mm supporting beams, which fail to meet the current 70mm standard. This stems from cost-cutting during construction, not homeowner negligence

### **1.5. Questions on RAAC Testing and Risk Assessment**

In recent meetings with the Scottish Government's Better Homes Division and Building Standards, we questioned whether RAAC underwent cold temperature or water testing in the 1960s before its widespread use in roofs. We have also submitted an FOI request to determine if risk assessments were conducted for homes near coal mines and quarries, like those in Tillicoultry. Residents recall buildings shaking during quarry blasting in the 1980s, likely damaging RAAC roofs. Was this ever investigated?

### **1.6. Home Report Review and Further Engagement**

We appreciate the Minister's update on the Home Report review. **The UKRCG has ideas to contribute and requests a further face-to-face meeting with the working group, ideally with BRE, IStructE, and RICS also present.**

Officials who met us on 14 January acknowledged gaining valuable insights into the RAAC crisis. We hope to further enhance understanding of its impact on homeowners and propose solutions to strengthen and refine any legislative or procedural amendments.

## **2. Response to [RICS submission dated 13 December 2024](#)**

### **2.1. National Fund**

We welcome RICS's initial support for a national fund to address RAAC issues. However, we believe and made it clear previously the fund's scope should go beyond inspections and monitoring to include remedial works and

compensation for valuation shortfalls, especially where councils opt for demolition.

RICS seems to underestimate the scale of the issue. Based on available data, we estimate up to 1,200 private homes could be affected, with average remediation costs of £30,000 per home, totalling around £36 million. While some homeowners in Aberdeen report lower remediation costs than council quotes, councils must be held accountable for obtaining at least three competitive quotes to ensure cost efficiency.

We suggested the Building Safety Levy as a potential funding source, and the RICS position aligns with ours. Additionally, we propose reallocating parts of the affordable homes budget or creating a dedicated fund to address this crisis.

## **2.2. Public Inquiry**

We strongly disagree with RICS's assertion that a public inquiry is unnecessary. The statement that "not all properties identified with RAAC are 'At Risk'" overlooks the unique challenges faced by Scottish homeowners and reflects a limited understanding of the RAAC housing crisis, where over 80% of affected homes are set for demolition or require full roof replacements.

A public inquiry is essential to uncover the root causes of this crisis, identify responsible parties, and ensure transparency. The public deserves answers on how this safety issue arose and how similar situations can be prevented in the future.

## **2.3. Legislation**

We strongly disagree with the statement that updating legislation (as outlined in the third ask of our petition) "does not seem like a proportionate response" and find the RICS submission dismissive and unaware of key historical and practical realities. The Scottish Government is already reviewing legislation around home reports, while [England and Wales have introduced amendments to the Building Safety Act 2022](#).

## **3. Conclusion**

Given these issues, it is clear to us that the Scottish Government bears significant responsibility. Homeowners purchased properties in good faith, unaware of latent defects caused by poor material choices and inadequate maintenance. The Scottish Government must acknowledge its role and take decisive action to support affected homeowners.

Does the Scottish Government/RICS still contend that this is solely a homeowner issue, despite the systemic failures outlined above?

The RAAC housing crisis is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive and informed response. We urge RICS to consider:

- Advocating for a national fund that addresses all aspects of the RAAC crisis
- Supporting a public inquiry to investigate the historical and systemic failures, based on information provided above
- Re-evaluating its stance on legislation to ensure greater accountability and transparency in the construction of RAAC homes.

We look forward to working collaboratively with RICS and others to address these critical issues and support affected homeowners.