

PE2113/L: Provide support to RAAC-affected communities

Petitioner written submission, 24 April 2025

Response to PE2113/I: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland Submission

We are grateful for the considered response from the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS), and we wholeheartedly agree with the call for a national, government-led remediation scheme and long-overdue reform in procurement practices. The parallels drawn with previous large-scale remediation efforts—such as the post-war PRC homes—are apt, and underscore the necessity for a well-funded, centralised programme to address the RAAC crisis.

However, while RIAS rightly highlights the urgency of immediate action, we respectfully submit that a public inquiry is **not** a distraction but an essential parallel step. Without an inquiry, we risk repeating the same systemic failures in future construction practices. It is not enough to acknowledge that "poor oversight" and "lowest cost materials" were favoured decades ago—we must understand **how** and **why** this persisted for so long, even as serious concerns about RAAC's safety became known.

A public inquiry will bring much-needed transparency and accountability to the way RAAC was handled by councils, housing associations, surveyors, and regulatory bodies—many of whom **do still exist in successor forms**, and whose current practices remain influenced by that legacy. Furthermore, an inquiry can explore why Scottish local authorities—unlike their counterparts in England—initiated secondary roofing projects over RAAC panels in the early 2000s. Were these decisions quietly intended to conceal, rather than address, known structural risks?

We agree that a review of procurement practices is vital, but we must also consider the lived experience of current homeowners—many of whom were never informed about the presence of RAAC in their homes. An inquiry offers not just a retrospective lens, but a platform for these voices, for evidentiary fact-finding, and for developing long-term safeguards.

Yes, inquiries require investment and time, but their role in rebuilding public trust and shaping safer futures cannot be understated. We cannot dismiss scrutiny simply because key actors have retired, or records are fragmented. On the contrary, those very gaps in accountability are why a statutory inquiry is needed.

Let us not choose between urgent action and long-term reform. Scotland can, and must, do both.

Response to PE2113/J: the Chartered Institute of Building Submission

We also welcome the Chartered Institute of Building's (CIOB) written submission and their recognition of the urgent need for government leadership and coordinated action in tackling the national RAAC crisis. Their emphasis on developing a national programme and the importance of funding, guidance, and systemic reform reflects

many of the concerns raised by affected communities. However, while the CIOB focuses heavily on long-term structural change, there remains a pressing need for immediate action to support those already displaced and living in limbo.

The CIOB correctly identifies the inconsistency in current approaches across Scotland. However, they do not go far enough in calling out the consequences of these disparities. Many homeowners have now been out of their homes for over a year without meaningful updates, while properties continue to deteriorate—sometimes becoming unsafe or vulnerable to criminal damage. Acknowledging this frustration is not enough; urgent interim solutions must be developed, including clear timelines for assessments, temporary re-entry protocols for salvaging belongings, and emergency financial support for displaced residents.

The comparison to cladding is apt, and we would go further by urging policymakers to apply lessons learned from that crisis more rapidly. The protracted nature of cladding remediation and the psychological toll it inflicted should serve as a warning against allowing RAAC victims to suffer the same fate. We are particularly concerned about homeowners who are ineligible for council-funded works, excluded from tenders due to tenure status, or trapped with unsellable properties and unpayable mortgages.

The CIOB's endorsement of Compulsory Owners Associations (COAs) and legal reforms is a positive step for the future, but the lack of current legal tools must not be used as an excuse for inaction. Local authorities should be provided emergency powers and guidance to compel joint assessments in mixed-tenure buildings, with government underwriting the cost where necessary.

We echo CIOB's call for a national programme— but it must be shaped not just by professionals and policymakers, but also by the very communities affected. Those living through this crisis have valuable insights and deserve a seat at the table. Without their voices, any future framework risks being detached from lived reality.

We urge the Scottish Government to act now—compassionately, urgently, and transparently—to prevent this building crisis from becoming a humanitarian one.

In conclusion, it is clear that professional consensus exists: the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS), and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) have all publicly called for the creation of a national fund to support RAAC-affected homeowners. These leading bodies recognise that without a centralised, government-backed funding mechanism, the situation will continue to worsen—particularly for those left displaced, financially burdened, and emotionally drained.

Yet, despite these repeated and authoritative recommendations, we are now over a year into this crisis and no national fund has been established. Homeowners remain in limbo, forced to watch their properties decay while they shoulder the burden of inaction. The lack of urgency displayed by the Scottish Government is unacceptable. Each day that passes without financial support intensifies the hardship faced by residents and widens inequalities in how this crisis is managed.

Scotland must now match professional recommendations with tangible action. The establishment of a national fund is not just an expert recommendation—it is a moral imperative. The time for talking is over. Homeowners need solutions now.