

BSR plans to reduce external remediation delays and improve management of application caseloads

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The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) introduces a comprehensive external remediation improvement plan to reduce delays to higher-risk building safety works.

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has introduced a comprehensive external remediation improvement plan. The plan is aimed at increasing the speed of essential higher-risk building (HRB) safety works across England.

The improvement plan introduces several measures including:

- a dedicated taskforce: a new external remediation multidisciplinary team (MDT) will mirror BSR's existing Innovation Unit's success by streamlining communication and processing through dedicated account managers
- reduced caseloads: a recruitment drive to increase regulatory lead capacity, reducing individual caseloads from an average of 25 down to a more manageable level of circa 10 to the benefit of both applicants and BSR processes
- flexible approvals: using 'approval with requirements', where appropriate, to allow projects to start safely while work continues to resolve any distinct technical issues
- new guidance for external remediation with further supporting information and resources over the coming months, aiming to help industry to overcome challenges in the building control process for existing buildings

Addressing older and complex cases

Around 40% of ongoing external remediation applications rely on government funding. While late 2025 and early 2026 applications are showing an improved picture - a high percentage of complex, older external remediation cases are taking longer to make decisions on.

Internal resource constraints and a high volume of older, non-compliant industry submissions are causing BSR's current caseload.

To address this, BSR plans to model its new external remediation MDT on its successful Innovation Unit, which has been handling new build projects since September 2025.

This team will be supported by external remediation account managers. These will release capacity for technical regulatory leads by handling communications with applicants and addressing any portfolio concerns.

BSR will also look to pilot the use of building control professionals from different classes to support case officers and regulatory leads.

This will help manage and significantly reduce workloads by allowing regulatory leads to focus on work that can only legally be carried out by them as direct employees of BSR.

Streamlining the external remediation building control process

A new consistency process to be introduced will help to rapidly resolve any technical disputes between the MDT and applicants.

Furthermore, BSR is moving away from only written communications towards increased direct engagement with applicants, which reflects feedback from industry.

This includes initial meetings for more complex projects and encouraging direct contact between the MDT and applicants to clarify issues faster.

To manage the flow of work, BSR will develop and publish a clear external remediation prioritisation structure. This will help to address frustration among applicants unsure of where they sit in the assessment process.

Improving industry submissions

Incomplete applications cause a significant portion of delays, as they often lack basic technical information or the documentation required by law. This includes:

- insufficient evidence of fire-resistant properties for replacement cladding and related materials, for example, membranes, including assurance that products are available on the market that fulfil the required design or performance specifications
- lack of structural loading calculations, this includes wind loading, load transfer methods and confirmation that the building can support the new cladding design
- insufficient explanation or evidence for cavity ventilation provision in external walls to prevent moisture build-up that could damage building fabric
- incomplete demonstration of thermal performance (U-values) of the new cladding system

Other major, non-technical reasons for delays include:

- incomplete design information: relying on statements of future intent, for example, “design details will come later”, instead of finalised evidence
- unsupported ‘non-worsening’ claims: failing to provide comparative analysis demonstrating that standards will not be reduced

- poorly organised documents: failing to use clear folder structures, indexes or ensuring documents link up correctly
- retained combustibles: ambiguity regarding the extent of retained combustibles is a frequent cause for failure

To address application issues, BSR has published initial external remediation-driven guidance. The guidance has benefits across all work to existing HRBs. BSR will publish further improved feedback, resources and support targeted at these applicants over the coming months.

This will include advice for applicants on unique challenges such as non-worsening provisions, gaps in existing HRB information and thermal performance.

BSR is also working on enhancements to 'digital visibility', giving applicants the ability to track their application's progress once submitted.

BSR is also planning to improve data sharing with organisations managing government funds, such as Homes England, to better track funding pipelines.

By December 2026, BSR is aiming to reduce average decision times for remediation applications to less than 12 weeks, with an aim to achieve approval rates of over 65%. This is still above the statutory milestone of 8 weeks but will be a major improvement on turnaround times for remediation applications.

A targeted package of measures

Lord Roe, BSR Board Chair, said:

We continue to accelerate our decision-making for new build applications, speeding up approvals for new build and external remediation projects and increasing the supply of safe new and existing homes through the recent changes we have made to our processes.

However, we recognise current determination times for remediation cases are falling short of statutory targets. This plan represents a targeted and achievable package of measures to reset the system and clear older legacy remediation cases.

By doing so and then focussing on more recent applications, we can ensure high-rise residents see essential safety improvements they deserve without unnecessary or further delays.

Charlie Pugsley, Acting CEO of BSR, said:

As we enter an important new chapter as a standalone regulator, our focus is on strengthening safety, rebuilding trust and supportively collaborating with industry.

Collectively these measures will ensure current and future remediation applications can proceed as smoothly and quickly as possible.

By launching a dedicated multidisciplinary team and introducing account managers, we are dramatically increasing our capacity to make faster decisions.

But speed cannot come at the cost of safety. We will also publish further specific guidance and support to help industry submit higher-quality applications, ensuring thousands of residents can feel safe, and are safe in their high-rise homes.

Monthly publication of decisions

Monthly gateway 2 transparency data will now include decisions from the new remediation plan.

After addressing legacy cases, BSR aims to reduce its remediation application caseload to a steady 80 to 100 cases by 30 September 2026.

BSR also has useful resources for applicants at Building Safety Regulator - Making Buildings Safer.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bsr-plans-to-reduce-external-remediation-delays-and-improve-management-of-application-caseloads>