National Housing Maintenance Forum

BUILDING & FIRE SAFETY
Working Group

October 2025

Building Assessments: Lessons Learnt

Building Assessment Certificate (BAC) – Tranche 1 & 2 Implementation Insights – October 2025

The Current Picture

The Building Safety Regulator has published sobering findings from Tranche 1 assessments, revealing significant sector-wide challenges

74% of high-rise residential buildings assessed so far have FAILED to meet the standards required for a Building Assessment Certificate (BAC)

This high failure rate highlights substantial gaps across the sector, requiring urgent attention and a demonstrable shift in safety culture and robust safety management systems.

Scale of the Challenge Ahead

Tranche 2 of the BAC application process for 2026/27 includes approximately 1,440 higher-risk buildings directed to apply

Common reasons for rejection include:

- **Gaps in safety case documentation**
- **Weak resident engagement strategies**
- **Insufficient evidence of fire & structural risk management**

Key Regulatory Requirements

A comprehensive Safety Case Report must address 12 critical areas:

1. Building overview & knowledge
- Full description of the building: height, age, number of residential units, use type
- Construction methods and materials (e.g., cladding, structural system)
- Building layout and access routes
- Services and utilities responsibilities including gas layout
- Known design limitations or legacy issues

2. Works carried out
- Summary of past refurbishment, remediation, or upgrade works
- Fire safety improvements (e.g., compartmentation, alarms, sprinklers)
- Structural interventions (e.g., strengthening, defect repairs)
- Dates, contractors, and scope of works, competency
- Lessons learned and impact on current safety profile

3. Future Plans for the Building
- Planned capital works or safety upgrades
- Timeline for future inspections, surveys, or certifications
- Strategy for ongoing compliance and resident engagement
- Integration with asset management and investment planning
- End of building life plan, where applicable and how you are managing the risks

4. Structural Safety
- Structural condition and integrity assessments
- Review of structural calculations and inspection reports
- Known defects and mitigation measures
- Maintenance history and future structural monitoring

5. Fire Safety Measures
- Fire strategy and compartmentation
- Active and passive systems including cause and effect
- Evacuation procedures, drills, communication and training
- Maintenance and testing records

6. Building Safety Risk Assessments
- Identification and evaluation of fire and structural risks
- Mitigation strategies and control measures
- Risk prioritisation and monitoring framework

7. Emergency Planning
- Emergency response protocols
- Coordination with fire and rescue services, any enforcement or past incidents
- Resident communication and contingency planning

8. Safety Management Systems
- Policies and procedures for managing building safety
- Staff training and competency tracking
- Incident reporting and Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR)

9. Resident Engagement strategy - MOR policy
(Required as part of the submission)
- Communication channels and feedback mechanisms
- Evidence of consultation and transparency
- Resident involvement in safety planning

10. Evidence & Documentation (Golden Thread)
- Inspection reports, certifications, maintenance logs
- Demonstration of compliance with legislation and guidance

11. Continuous Improvement
- Review cycles and update plans
- Integration of lessons learned
- Forward-looking safety strategy

12. Accountable Persons
- Identification of Principal Accountable Person (PAP) and other accountable persons
- Roles, responsibilities, and governance structure

Common RFI Patterns: Learning from Tranche 1

Peabody submitted 8 BAC applications in Tranche 1, 3 pass outcomes to date, and requests for more information for the remaining blocks. *Key lessons from their RFI responses:*

- **Respond promptly:** You have 7 calendar days to respond to an RFI—don't ignore it or request extensions without cause
- **Use plain English:** Demonstrate understanding through clear narrative; technical drawings are secondary and slow review processes
- **Update frameworks:** Incorporate RFI feedback into your safety case report template to avoid repeated questions in Tranche 2
- **Document quality:** Frequently requested documents include Fire Risk Assessments Fire Strategies, Structural risk assessments, and Building Risk Assessments

Tranche 2 Best Practice Approach

Conduct a thorough audit: Don't treat the safety case report as a data dump. Go to site, verify the building matches documentation, and demonstrate how it passes audit standards.

- **Include evidence of competency:** for all authors of the safety case report, and members that contributed to the building risk assessment, building manager, structural consultants, fire risk assessors etc
- **Golden Thread integrity:** Review all documentation; ensure documents are complete and don't contradict each other
- **Risk acknowledgement:** Always include an action plan. Acknowledging risks is acceptable; failing to demonstrate active management is not

To join the Building and Fire Safety Working Group or other NHMF initiatives, contact: neil.watts@peabody.org.uk