

Statement Responding to DCLG Advice note 13.

'Advice for building owners; external wall insulation (EWI) systems with a render or brick slip finish.'

The Insulated Render and Cladding Association welcomes the advice document (Advice Note 13). INCA has always promoted the need for building owners to undertake ongoing surveillance and maintenance of external wall insulation systems, particularly those over 18m in height. INCA plans to produce a document to assist building owners in this responsibility in the New Year.

INCA currently recommends that building owners maintain a dialogue with the external wall insulation system designer that supplied the project. We recommend that building owners specify external wall insulation systems that are able to offer a maintenance guide and approved contractors that are able to carry out any maintenance that is required.

It should be noted that INCA is not aware of any evidence that suggests that external wall insulation is any more susceptible to failure than any other cladding systems. Due to the lightweight nature of EWI systems, excluding brick slip systems, they are less likely to cause serious harm. This is no reason to be complacent. It has always been good practice have a surveillance and maintenance scheme in place for any cladding system.

INCA does not currently have a definitive list of organisations that are able to provide a surveillance service but will be working towards providing such a list.

INCA is able to provide contact details for system designers that can assist homeowners in developing a maintenance regime and approved contractors who would be qualified to undertake this maintenance. Particular attention should be made to ensure that adequate seals are in place at verges, sills copings and interfaces. As stated in the advice note, water ingress can reduce the performance of some insulation types.

External wall insulation systems have an exceptional track record, having been used in the UK for over 30 years, and even longer in continental Europe. In Germany in excess of 30 million m² of EWI are applied annually. Properly designed and applied external wall insulation should have a life expectancy in excess of 30 years with a minimum of maintenance. Detailing is critical and INCA advises that an approved external wall insulation system provider be engaged in a project as early as possible to enable building owners to help effectively detail the work. Many systems designers will provide project specific detailing. Beyond this they will also provide a degree of site support to help the contractor ensure the detailing is fitted correctly and any junctures properly sealed.

INCA will continue to work with its members to ensure the correct advice is provided to building owners in relation to external wall insulation.

M. A. Gee
Chairman
Insulated Render and Cladding Association

19th December 2017