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Sent: 18 June 2017 21:50
Subject: Grenfell Fire Response Team Statement

Sent to all London Local Authority Chief Executives

Please see the press statement made today by the Grenfell Fire Response team.

18th June

GRENFELL FIRE RESPONSE TEAM

Below statement by Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive of Southwark Council, on behalf of the newly established “Grenfell Fire Response Team” which includes London-wide local and regional government, central government, British Red Cross, Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade.

We want to make clear that whilst the emergency and local community response was nothing short of heroic, we know that the initial response was simply not good enough on the ground. People are angry, and rightfully so.

Our focus is now ensuring those affected are being cared for and looked after.

This new team is now leading the recovery and response to the Grenfell Tower fire, which has been one of the most tragic and horrendous events ever seen.

We are currently responding to what the community are telling us they need. If you come to the Westway Sports & Fitness Centre you will be able to access services and support provided by our new team around the clock, 24 hours a day:

1. There are a range of support services available in the Assistance Centre. This includes housing needs, emergency funds, health, social care services, experienced volunteers from the Red Cross and other organisations, food and above all, a kind and sympathetic team of people ready to provide advice on anything.
2. As the Prime Minister has just announced every household whose home has been destroyed as a result of the fire will receive a guaranteed £5,500 initial emergency payment from the £5m discretionary fund. This will be made up of a £500 cash payment and £5,000 delivered through DWP into bank accounts or similar in a single payment. The cash payment is available now – either at the Westway Centre, or from Monday, through the Post Office in Portobello Road. The £5,000 payment will be available from Monday and assigned key workers will assist households in accessing this.
3. Housing is our main priority. We will organise and speed up the rehousing process. We are currently working with those affected households to establish what their housing need is – as you can appreciate this takes time. By the end of Monday, 19 June, we aim to have contacted all known families affected by the fire and completed an assessment of what they need. The latest information we have is that 201 households have received emergency accommodation to date, of which 113 are homeless.

I am urging any families or individuals who have been affected and who have not come forward, for whatever reason, to please come to the Westway Centre so that we can help.

I'm pleased to have the British Red Cross here to help us coordinate and provide assistance where it is needed. Red Cross personnel and volunteers have been on site 24 hours a day since early Wednesday. This has so far involved a team of more than 66 volunteers alongside trained psycho social support specialists.

From today the Red Cross will help support a more dedicated community assistance centre at the Westway Centre and will be part of the teams allocated to every household affected. Today they are doing outreach work to find people

who need help and we have also asked them to be at airports to meet grieving relatives as they arrive. They can also help distribute donations that have poured in from the public.

A Red Cross helpline is in action to help give practical or emotional support to anyone who needs it and capacity of this is being expanded to give people a central point of contact. The number is [REDACTED].

We want to work with all those who have stepped in to help the people affected by this tragedy. Whether it is the fantastic volunteers at the centre, those who have made such generous donations of all types or those who are still caring directly for those affected, we in local government have a lot to learn from their response. So it is vital that we work together in the coming days, weeks and months ahead.

There is nothing we can say that will blunt the feeling of loss and anger. But what I hope the new team and this package of support will start to get those affected by this tragedy the urgent assistance from the authorities they need.

Many of those affected by this horrific incident will be observing Ramadan. With the end of this holy month and Eid approaching, I know this is an important time for families and the community to be together. The new response team are absolutely committed to making sure those affected have all the support they need from us at this important time.

These events have put the country and this community to the test. Like others I admire the resolution shown in the face of adversity and the response team are determined to do all we can to work with you all and help those rebuilding their lives so horribly affected by these events.

Kind regards

John

John Hetherington

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PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES



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