

IN THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF MONICA LOKKO

**I MS MONICA LOKKO PREVIOUSLY OF FLAT 3, GRENFELL TOWER W11 WILL SAY
AS FOLLOWS:**

1. I make this statement in support of Phase Two proceedings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry
2. I make this statement based on my own knowledge save where stated otherwise in which case it is to the best of my knowledge and belief.
3. This statement should be read in addition to and in conjunction with my first Witness Statement (“IWS00000138”).

Issues prior to the fire

4. I had already mentioned the issue with my smoke alarm in my last Witness Statement. However, I have not yet found a copy of my complaint in relation to this in my Housing File or from documents disclosed by the Inquiry. I do note other complaints data has been disclosed (“JSW00001836” and “RYD00086548”).
5. One of the issues was mobile phone signal, linked to the tower build itself. This meant if something happened, I could not call from the toilet, shower, bedroom, kitchen or hallway etc. if I had an emergency.
6. My cordless landline would also not work. I had to go to my sitting room, near the window, if I wanted to make call from either my landline or mobile.
7. In relation to my smoke alarm, I note TMO10012809 mentions the alarm was connected to the mains in my flat and is certified, but ART00005588 which is after the date of the certificate, mentions possible faults with the circuits.

8. My Tenancy Agreement (“ML/1”) at 5.3.6 stated it was my responsibility to change the batteries. However, I could not do this due to my health issues, and in any event the TMO had not come to check the smoke alarm to figure out what the fault was.
9. In my dealings with the TMO in the past I have had to make complaints to councillors and Environmental Health Officers to get things done.
10. I have also noted during my signup, while my health issues were noted and various leaflets given, I was not given any fire safety information (“ML/2”).
11. All I was told on the sign-up date by Millicent Williams, when I asked about a fire, was that I would have to stay in the flat.

After the fire

12. I was staying Copthorne Tara Hotel on High Street Kensington in the first week after the fire. I provide more detail as to what happened during the initial days below.
13. I was at the Copthorne Tara Hotel for a few months. I moved to Gloucester Road Hotel on 1st July 2017 and left there around 21st December 2017.
14. While at Copthorne Tara Hotel, I was sexually assaulted when a doorman touched my breast. I was also aware that my daughter, who was also in a room at the hotel, had people knocking on her door in the middle of the night on two occasions.
15. I reported this to the hotel manager, Alexis, who spoke to the worker there. Enid Grant’s manager, Arlene at RBKC, was meant to speak with Alexis. She however did not come to meet Alexis to discuss the matter. Alexis called to chase me about the meeting. However, this serious situation was not dealt with by RBKC and I have not heard about it since. I also note no mention of this in my Housing File.
16. I understand Arlene has since transferred positions within RBKC.

Days after the fire

17. I did not have any contact from RBKC at this time and I am aware they had my correct phone number on record.
18. My sister, Olivia, advised me to go to St Clements James Church and I went there on 15th June 2017.
19. There were a large number of volunteers and other Grenfell Tower residents there.

20. While sitting I saw people crying, I was shaking, distressed, frightened, thinking of those still trapped in the building and what has happened to them. Volunteers were giving water and food, clothes, blankets etc. the priest was talking to me to reassure me. My sister was with me at this time and the priest told me to speak to RBKC, who were present, to decide what to do next.
21. I saw RBKC telling younger men to go stay with friends or family and come back the next day. This annoyed me and I told my daughter this at the time.
22. I was waiting for about 8 hours at the church before I spoke to a lady, who I think was from RBKC. There were some Social Workers present who asked me about my disabilities and health issues. I was informed I will be placed in temporary accommodation, but it may take some time to sort out. I told them about my mobility issues and arthritis. They however did not complete any assessments with me at this time.
23. I note there is suitability re-assessment in my Housing File dated 18th June 2017 (“ML/3”) which expressly mentions my health conditions. This expressly mentions my mobility issues and that I cannot do any stairs. There is then a more complete and detailed version of this dated 19th June 2017 (“ML/4”). The second assessment was done by staff not from RBKC but a different borough.
24. I also note my mobility issue, including wheelchair need, is noted on the spreadsheet given to Peter Johnson (“MET00017598”) but is not mentioned in what seems to be TMO’s list of tenants (“RBK00014572”) as the field is left blank.
25. Due to my mobility problems a taxi was arranged for me to get to the Copthorne Tara Hotel, however, due to congestion in the area I had to walk about 25 minutes to get to the taxi. I had to rely on my younger sister, Lilly and my daughter to help me.
26. Lilly also picked up some clothes for me as the clothes at the church did not fit me and some medication. This was due to police cordons restricting access to the area and I could not go myself.
27. I did not hear from the Council until a few days later. During this time, I was reliant on donations of food and clothes from volunteers. Some were local people, including the Sikh community and some people from the mosque were providing monetary help. I also using my own money to buy food from Marks and Spencer’s. We had not heard anything from the Council.

28. Christine Hummings attended with Yvonne, an Occupational Therapist (“OT”). I was not happy during this meeting due to the delay in adapting the hotel room so that it was suitable for my needs.
29. At this meeting Christine:
- (i) Gave £500 cash which was for all tenants;
 - (ii) Informed we had to go to Post Office at Goldbourne Road for our post and if I took ID there to pick up, I think was about £5,000. I filled in some forms and they credited my account. At the time there were workers who expressly said they were not from RBKC but from Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster etc.
 - (iii) I did not want anything to do with RBKC at this time because I was angry and distressed. It was like a horror film or a dream. It was like I was not living in reality.
30. I informed the Occupational Therapist at the assessment that I needed:
- (i) Raised toilet seat;
 - (ii) Step for bath;
 - (iii) 4 wheeled walker;
 - (iv) Perch stool;
 - (v) Bath board/ seat;
 - (vi) Bed lever, but OT disagreed on how I was using it, to help keep my balance and get in and out of bed.
31. The majority of the above is something previous OT reports via RBKC have known I’ve needed since 2011.
32. I understand there is a copy of my Health and Disability Assessment in my housing file dated 13 July 17 (“ML/5”). I advised that I would prefer a property with no lift due to the issues with them on the night of the fire.
33. The walker, step and raised toilet seat was given a few days later. Prior to this I had to use a bar on the wall and the sink to get on and off the toilet.
34. I previously had a double bed, but the hotel only had single beds, and couldn’t change this for me. I fell off the bed on around 31st July 2017. Two security guards had to help me get up. I informed Yvonne I needed help to get in and out of bed I was told they would order a

bed leaver for me, but eventually I had to buy a bed leaver myself from Argos due to the time they were taking. The OT eventually came with the lever in the first week of August 2017.

35. My Daughter informed RBKC of my fall and concerns on the phone (“ML/6”).
36. My only updates during this time were through the charities and word of mouth from other tenants in the hotel. Without this I would not have known what help was available.
37. In around late June, Gemma Cade, a Keyworker from Islington Council, was assigned to me. A few days after this, Arlene from RBKC contacted my daughter to see if I was happy with Gemma and if I still needed her assistance. My daughter found this phone call a bit abrupt. She had advised my daughter she was my new Social Worker and asked if I had reported to my benefit agencies what had happened. I found this callous and uncaring. My daughter later found out she was a manager with the department.
38. Gemma visited me at the hotel with a gentleman from Southwark Council who did a housing application with me. He informed me they would ignore the older one completed in an earlier visit.
39. In late June my daughter was informed by Gemma that any viewings we have for potential properties would be with an OT to ensure it was suitable (“ML/7”).
40. In around July I was contacted by Pat from Westminster Council who offered me a 2-bedroom property on DuCane road. However, it was unclear if this was a temporary or permanent offer. Pat discussed with me the distance from the bus stops to the accommodation. Yvonne at this time advised I could walk, contrary to my actual mobility. This property was in fact on the motorway and had no bus stops nearby.
41. The next day, a Friday, I viewed a property on the Harrow Road along with Yvonne, Pat and an Occupational Therapist. However, this was on the second floor and the fire escape was not adequate.
42. About a month after this Yvonne informed me to speak to him or Gemma about any housing issues. Gemma called me about a week after. She called me in the morning and attended in the afternoon. We agreed that we would meet once a month unless she has an update.
43. She advised me that there will be a bidding process for all Grenfell Tower residents, and I asked for a 2 bedroom due to my care needs. This resulted in an argument with Yvonne and I asked her to leave multiple times before she did so.

44. During this meeting I also threw the raised toilet seat which had broken. This was not replaced for a few days and only then because I was pushing. I was informed they were waiting on Yvonne to sign off on ordering it. I note my Housing File says I did not respond to his question if I wanted this replaced – this was not the case.
45. I understand that during this period one or two residents were receiving “Dear Residents” letters from RBKC giving updates and informing about meetings. However, neither I, nor a number of residents, were getting these. My main source of information was Grenfell United meetings which were occurring every two to three weeks. Through this, we discussed what support was available, charities that were assisting and any upcoming meetings. I recall RBKC was invited to these meetings but did not attend.
46. I went to about three of these meetings. There was a lot of anger at these meetings.

Continuing Support

47. Due to the effects of the fire I was to be referred for psychiatric assistance. However, despite the referral to RBKC’s internal team there was no follow up for the assistance I required.
48. Enid Grant, my keyworker, referred me to Isla from a different team who then helped to get an assessment with Marcia. However, I feel she didn’t do the assessment properly.
49. Enid eventually set up counselling for me.
50. RBKC were due to give me allowances for respite and food while at the hotel. However, payments were delayed, not made and on one occasion put in my daughters account instead of mine. These issues were brought up with Enid but were only resolved after I raised an official complaint and my Solicitor’s intervention.
51. Information requests were not explained to me properly as well as support that was available. There was one example when I was asked for my National Insurance Number from an officer. Upon my Solicitor asking clarification as to why this was needed from a senior manager, he was informed it wasn’t.

Knowledge of my health

52. Prior to my move to Grenfell Tower, I was a resident of Peabody Estates. During my request for a move, in around May 2014, my daughter had advised RBKC of my health issues, the adaptations I had. RBKC, via HDAT, assessed my needs on the basis of health. (“ML/8”)

and has spoken to my GP in the past about my Anxiety and Depression, Arthritis, Hypertension, Sciatica, and Migraine.

53. I also had submitted detailed medical evidence in around May 2007 when looking to move from my then basement flat due to health reasons and disrepair. I was given priority due to this. My 2011 application with RBKC also expressly mentioned my health issues (“ML/9”) and I had been awarded priority points in 2009 due to this as well.
54. In any event during the course of my dealings with RBKC and numerous complaints I had raised in the past about them not considering my health or disrepair. I, or my daughter, expressly raised my health issues and had sent in numerous medical letters about both my physical and mental health as it changed.
55. In around March 2015, I had expressly told RBKC, about adaptations I would require when viewing another property, such as a wet room and was told an Occupational Therapist would assess me in this regard (“ML/10”). An initial referral was however made by my daughter in April 2011 where I was given adaptations (“ML/11”) and my issues with doing even two steps to my front door were noted.
56. An OT assessment happened on 13th July 2016 (“ML/12”) following my acceptance of Flat 3 Grenfell Tower, which RBKC stated was suitable for my assessed need (“ML/13/14”). I understand from my Housing File that my mobility was an express consideration, as was the need for my move on medical grounds (“ML/15”). I also note adaptations were agreed and my existing equipment was to be moved along with me. However, the further required major works could not happen until after July 2017, such as a level shower. (“ML/16”).
57. Due to my back problems and need for mobility aids, I had informed RBKC I would not move in until these aids were in place (“ML/17”). I eventually was to sign my Tenancy agreement on 5th September 2016 at the same time as Medequip setting up the bed and chair raisers.
58. The OT visited on 6th September 2016 to check all equipment was present and what other items I would need (“ML/18”). A further visit occurred on 10th November 2016 to check the equipment, order further equipment and refer me to Adult Social Services for an assessment (“ML/ 19”).

Moving from the Hotel

59. I understand from my Housing File (“ML/5”) that on 11th July 2017, RBKC acknowledged my need for a walker and some adaptations for an accommodation to be suitable for me.
60. When moving from the Hotel to my new temporary accommodation I felt bullied by my keyworker Enid Grant. I felt she did not take into account my health issues and by repeatedly informing me that the hotel was ending and their last payment date, my anxiety was made worse.
61. While the move out date was extended, due to my health, it would have taken me some time to pack and adjust to the move. I felt this time was not given to me.
62. The breakdown with Enid due to her behaviour reached such an extent that I had to insist all correspondence had to go through my Solicitor at Oliver Fisher.
63. Due to my health I asked for assistance with my move, however there were a number of issues, namely:
 - (i) Boxes were sent without tape or fragile stickers;
 - (ii) Resettlement officer was not liaising with my Social Worker as to progress and next steps;
 - (iii) Arranging keys to be present when the movers were going to be at the property prior to my taxi arriving. This was in fact done by Jemima from my Solicitors, Oliver Fisher;
64. During my move from the hotel to the accommodation, the lack of clear information was frustrating. My Solicitor had to confirm with them, from about 4th December 2018, items such as:
 - (i) Inventory of what would be provided;
 - (ii) Estimate of charges following the “free period”;
 - (iii) If RBKC could arrange for regular smoke alarm checks as my health issues would prevent me from doing this (I was told while the Landlord could check the alarms on the day of move in, they could not do this on a regular basis);
 - (iv) Adaptations I required;
 - (v) My care package and when a new assessment would be done at my new property by Social Services;
 - (vi) Ensuring flat was clean and vermin free;

- (vii) Telephone line and Internet;
 - (viii) Adequate water pressure and water temperature in bathroom;
65. While I got replies via my Solicitor, I feel this should have been dealt with better by RBKC and the settlement officers. Especially given my health issues and anxiety and depression.
66. Eventually the lack of communication resulted in my keyworker and resettlement officer changing to someone I am more happy with now.

Issues since move

67. Since I moved, I have had a number of issues, for example the blinds fitted in the bedrooms required them to be pulled via a cord. This being difficult for me due to my arthritis. The blinds either got stuck or cord snapped on the blinds in both bedrooms and I reported the issue to the new agent. Despite Paul Mitchell from the Lettings team attending on 4th and 9th January 2019, an adequate fix was not done. I eventually asked for these to be removed and curtains put in.
68. By 10th January 2019, I still did not have:
- (i) A disability step;
 - (ii) Bed grab rail;
 - (iii) Lack of Landline and Internet (essential as I would call to book appointments).

My Thoughts

69. Throughout my dealings with RBKC I feel there are a few issues:
- (i) They did not have all my information in one place, especially about what my medical issues were and as such what my needs were and what adaptations I required.
 - (ii) There was a lack of communication internally and with me about what help I could get, should get and was getting. It is only due to my daughter and Solicitor and his team assisting me did I get the help I was entitled to.
 - (iii) There was a lack of assistance or assessments from Social Services until my daughter and I asked for help.
70. This resulted in multiple occasions where they did not take into account my health or what my Solicitor describes as their Equality Duties, as they were just not ready or prepared for

someone with my health conditions in arranging evacuations or putting me in and adapting accommodation so it would be suitable for me.

71. They also did not take extra steps to assist me in light of my health issues when I asked for help with my repairs at Grenfell Tower.
72. I also note, my housing file, as was disclosed to my Solicitor in September 2017 and then in September 2019 were vastly different. With the first being 203 pages and the latter 741 pages. Between the two they only had 14 documents in common. This seems to indicate, both before and after the fire RBKC record keeping and data collation process is not adequate. The worry for me is, if they did not have all my information in a central location, available, they then could not have made decisions taking into account all my issues and history.
73. Prior to the fire I was reliant on my daughter and sister, Lilly, to assist due to my health issues, especially my mobility. While RBKC used to give a respite payment to my carers, as they were not providing direct help. This has not happened for about 3-4 years.
74. After the fire, despite seeking help about carers respite and other assistance. I was however, incorrectly told, I could not get help. I would think they need further training on how to deal with vulnerable people and what benefits and packages are available.

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STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the contents of this Statement to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I am willing for my statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's web site

Signed *Ms. Lokko*.....

Dated *14/02/2020*.....

MONICA LOKKO