

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF NAZANIN AGHLANI

I, Nazanin Aghlani, make this statement further to my first statement to the Inquiry of 12 September 2018 (IWS00001074). I have additionally paid tribute to my mother Sakina Afrasehabi and my aunt Fatemeh Afrasiabi in the commemoration hearings of May 2018. I have previously made a draft statement to the police but this was never finalised.

1. The purpose of this statement is to provide further evidence in relation to my knowledge of Flat 151 on the 18th floor of Grenfell Tower and my communications with the TMO in this regard, based on my own recollections as well as my mother's housing file a obtained by my legal representatives, which I have now had sight of.
2. I have already at paragraphs 47 and 52-55 of my first statement listed in some detail matters relating to fire safety and defects I was aware of in Flat 151 and at Grenfell Tower generally prior to the fire, in particular within the context of my mother's disabilities. My sister Mona Aghlani has also at paragraphs 18-19 of her first statement to the inquiry (IWS00000774) related to the condition we found the flat in when our mother moved in, and the exhibits to that statement illustrate her points in that regard. Below I add further detail in relation to these as follows:

Bathroom disability adjustments

3. When my mum was initially invited to view the flat with the housing officer, contractors were still working in the flat. They were in the middle of putting in the bathroom, which consisted of a bath that was not appropriate for disabled people despite the TMO and RBKC knowing that my mum was a disabled occupant. We therefore asked the TMO straight away not to install the bath as my mum could not climb in and out of the bath and in her previous property her

bath was fitted with an electric bath lift. We requested a walk-in shower enclosure instead, due to the very small size of the bathroom which also had a toilet and basin.

4. However when given the keys to the flat we saw that the TMO had not put in a shower enclosure and had instead put a vinyl floor in the whole bathroom with a drain in the corner and an electric shower in an attempt to make a wet room. However since they hadn't created a slope in the floor leading to the drain, water came out of the bathroom into the corridor every time my mum had a shower. They had done a cheap botched job. I complained about this to the TMO but they told me I would have to fix the problem privately. Since the bathroom was not usable as it was we paid a lot of money to have it changed to include a proper shower enclosure which stopped the water from flowing into the rest of the flat.

Kitchen hazards and disability adjustments

5. When my mother moved into the flat in February 2016 we found an exposed gas pipe sticking out of the kitchen floor in front of where the cooker should have been. I asked the TMO to come and examine what it was and how to get rid of it because I regarded it to be a hazard to anyone, let alone a disabled person. However, despite my ringing them several times in this regard the TMO told me this defect had nothing to do with them.
6. In the end I had to resolve this matter myself. I was obliged to arrange for an appointment with National Grid via British Gas in order to find out if the gas pipe was 'live' (ie whether it had gas running through it or not). This took a couple of weeks. Following a visit to the flat by National Grid it transpired that the gas pipe sticking out of the floor was not live and so I then arranged for a private plumber to come and cut it off and put an end cap on it below the floor finish level so that we could laminate over it. We paid for this ourselves as the TMO refused to deal with it.

7. There wasn't any space in the kitchen for a standard fridge/freezer when my mother moved in. Due to her disability having to bend down constantly to access an under-the-counter fridge was not appropriate. She already owned a standard size fridge and I asked the TMO to alter the kitchen cabinets so that she could bring her full size fridge there. They refused to do that and said she should get an under-the-counter fridge or make the changes herself privately. In the end we were obliged to redo the kitchen privately to allow for a normal size fridge freezer and extra cabinets. More generally the kitchen was in an awful state with hardly any storage or spaces for electrical appliances.

Concerns in relation to the refurbishment works

Access

8. As described in my first statement my mum moved into her flat in early 2016 when the refurbishment works were still underway. The main entrance was not open yet. Access was only through the ramp entrance from the upper floor. This was the case for approximately 2-3 months and caused a lot of pain for my mum as she had to walk a long way uphill all the way from Latimer Road Station, where the ramp started.
9. For the move itself, all my mum's furniture had to be taken up the stairs of the adjacent estate onto the terrace where the entrance to the upper floor of Grenfell Tower was, which was the point at which the lift could be accessed.
10. The immediate area inside the building where we could access the lift was full of large pieces of furniture which I assume had been discarded by residents. This was both a trip and a fire hazard. This rubbish was there for the full duration of the time we were obliged to use that upper floor ramp entrance.

Windows

11. The living room window that was furthest away from the kitchen and which I understand to have been installed in the course of the refurbishment had a

handle which broke within a few months of my mum living in the flat. However despite my requests the TMO did not come to fix it.

Flat door

12. There was a problem with the front door lock. After I contacted TMO a contractor was sent to fix it.
13. An additional issue was that the flat door didn't allow my mum to easily get in and out of her flat. The door was heavy and as soon as it opened it forced itself shut which caused difficulty for my mother as she had mobility problems and used a walking aid so she needed the door to give her some time to move through it. When I asked the contractor to sort this out and put a slow self-closer on the door he said that couldn't be done, that the door was brand new and that we were lucky to have it.

Heating system

14. When my mum moved in we were told the heating system had been changed during the refurbishment, and that where it used to be controlled externally she now would have a digital thermostat or heat meter unit in her flat and would be able to control the heating system. However the thermostat she was given did not work. I complained about this many times to her housing officer based at the bottom of the tower, both on the phone and in person. Every time I was told it would be hand-delivered to her in a week's time. Once I was told it would be posted from the company. This went on for a quite a few months before she was finally given a working thermostat toward the end of 2016. Until then her heating was either on full blast or completely off regardless of the temperature in the flat.
15. The new boiler and piping were located inside the flat by the entrance. All the pipes as well as electric cables and switches were exposed and right next to each other, and were easily accessible to a child. They were not covered for several months whilst my mum was already in the flat.

16. I understand that this statement will form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and will be published on the Inquiry's website in due course.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nazanin Aghlani', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 25.02.2020