

**GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY**

---

**SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
DANIEL BRENDAN GRIFFIN**

---

I, Daniel Brendan Griffin, make this statement further to my first statement of 12 May 2018 (IWS00000173). As specified in that statement I have also already made a statement to the police.

The purpose of this statement is to provide further evidence in relation to my experiences and communications as a survivor and former resident of Flat 31 on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Grenfell Tower prior to and immediately after the fire.

I have retained photographs of my flat from the time before the fire and where relevant I exhibit these below. I have also had sight of my housing file and files relating to me disclosed by Rydon, and where relevant I exhibit extracts from these.

**Module 3****Passive fire measures within Grenfell Tower:**

1. I have already at paragraphs 8-29 of my first statement listed in some detail matters relating to fire safety and defects I was aware of at Grenfell Tower prior to the fire. Below I add further detail in relation to these as follows:
2. The door to my flat was installed without any door closer.
3. After the refurbishment, floor numbering was added to the wall opposite the lift between the staircase and the rubbish chute. A number 6 was stenciled on the wall in black paint. This was the case on each lobby but I don't recall any numbers on the walls of the escape stairs.

**Communications with TMO**

4. I have already at paragraphs 30-34 of my first statement described in outline my relationship to RBKC and TMO. Below I add further detail in relation to these as follows:
5. As mentioned in my first statement I attended meetings of a residents' organisation in relation to the works. I think the name of the group was the Grenfell Compact.

6. We raised our objections, among other issues, to the location of the Heating Interface Unit ("HIU") by the front door. I don't recall whether I signed any petitions in this regard.
7. We used to have a community hall and Claire Williams of TMO tried to stop us using it. I remember I went to a meeting in relation to this issue.
8. I don't recall raising fire safety issues in the various meetings.
9. I do not recall being asked to participate in the process of procuring the main contractor for the refurbishment, Rydon.
10. I was not involved in the consultation process regarding the refurbishment works. I do not recall attending any meetings in this regard.
11. I did receive newsletters during the works but I did not give them much weight. No input was asked of me for them and I gave none.
12. I do not know of any steps taken by the TMO/RBKC and Rydon to have measures in place, which allowed those with language or other special needs to convey any concerns or complaints to do with fire safety and safety in general.
13. Having reviewed my housing records and the records held about this by Rydon, I have seen I that on 28.10.2014 I filled out a resident profile form for Rydon and that on 30.07.2015 I filled out a TMO tenancy questionnaire which did include some questions about 'particular needs'.

#### **Concerns during the refurbishment works:**

14. I had concerns about the location of the HIU and requested that it not be by the front door. After Claire Williams of TMO had shown us in the show flat how the new gas piping would run around the walls I also requested that the pipes in my flat be boxed in.
15. When the refurbishment works were actually carried out in my flat, the workers left a lot of mess, especially in the bathroom, and I complained by phone to Lynda Prentice, Rydon's residents liaison, who said she would arrange for the mess to be cleaned up. It took several days for the workers to turn up and they did clean it but used my own cleaning materials and the result was not clean at all. Even this was done only because I insisted. As a decorator myself I was not impressed by the level of workmanship.

16. Other concerns relating to the works included the fact that using the lifts was nearly impossible throughout that period. The workers were in there travelling up and down the building while mums and buggies were trying to use them to go to the upper floors. The lifts were left in a right mess as well at the end of each day. This went on for many months
17. I did raise concerns about the lifts to Lynda Prentice by phone but received no feedback or response.

### **Complaints of Disrepair**

18. I have had various disrepair issues over the years. My complaints were not recorded in the copy of my housing file initially obtained from RBKC by my legal representatives and they were only provided in a second set of documents provided more recently.
19. One recurring issue was a leak from the water tank from Flat 61 which I understood to be the result of a fault in the concrete slab in my ceiling. I suffered a leak on 3-4 September 2016 where my property was completely flooded damaging ceiling, floors and furniture.
20. I reported this to the TMO and a few days later the TMO estate manager Millicent Williams and two surveyors, John Griffin and possibly Robert Speak, visited my flat to make a report. I asked the surveyors and the TMO representative for the water-damaged ceiling coating to be removed as soon as possible as I was concerned about asbestos exposure. I was told an asbestos survey would need to be carried out but this did not initially occur.
21. No repairs were carried out by TMO at that point despite extensive damage to my property and in the event I was obliged to sleep in my living room for several months and my floors and furniture were further damaged by mould.
22. At the end of September 2016 I suffered another leak from the same place leading to the loss of my water supply and another flooding of my flat, I contacted the out of hours services but nothing was done as it was a Friday.
23. On the Monday a senior Surveyor Robert Speak attended and confirmed that it was possible the problem would recur. He could not give me any assurances regarding the future.
24. In October 2016 workmen I think from TMO's Repairs Direct came and scraped the coating off a small part of the ceiling and then put some gaffer tape over the area. I understand this may have been an asbestos sampling survey although I was not informed of any results. On 2 November 2016 I took a photo of the

taped area on my phone (exhibited as DG/1  
).

25. On 3 November 2016, since nothing further had been done except the placing of a dehumidifier in my home, my friend and neighbour Willie Thompson of Flat 52 helped me make a Stage 1 complaint through my local Councillor Judith Blakeman, who emailed various people at TMO including Peter Maddison and Claire Williams. I did not retain a copy of these emails but my neighbour Edward Daffarn who also assisted with the correspondence did keep a copy (Exhibited at DG/2 ).
26. On 30 November 2016 I received a response from the TMO by email upholding my complaint in which I was told works for removal and replacement of the ceiling and the flooring would be carried out on 2 December 2016 and at a later unspecified date. I have identified the TMO's correspondence with me in my housing file (exhibited at DG/5 ).
27. Following this on 2 December 2016 I returned from my work to find a sign at the entrance to my bedroom forbidding me entry and my bedroom door sealed. I took photos of this on my phone (exhibited at DG/3 ). I now know this was because of concerns regarding exposure to asbestos but no one confirmed this to me and I was not provided with any details in relation to likely exposure. The bedroom remained blocked until the following day. Workmen then came and scraped the ceiling exposing the bare concrete and leaving a large gap between the ceiling and the window in my bedroom. They also removed flooring from my kitchen and the carpet from my bedroom. I took photos of the exposed ceiling on my phone on 3 December 2016, 12 January 2017 and 29 January 2017 (exhibited at DG/4 ).
28. No further work was done and I was left with exposed floor and ceiling until the end of January 2017. This changed only after Councillor Blakeman escalated my complaint to a Stage 2 complaint on 16 January 2017 (a copy of which is exhibited at DG/2 above ).
29. On 18 January I was emailed by the TMO to say that plastering would be undertaken on 30 January 2017. A TMO plasterer did start work then but the work to the ceiling was not completed until the end of February 2017 and the fitting of new flooring in my bedroom and kitchen and of the light fittings was only completed on 28 March 2017.
30. I don't think the complaints would have been dealt with at all if it were not for Councillor Judith Blakeman's intervention. In her complaint, she stated that

*'TMO's new practice of not sending substantive responses to councillors' complaints and enquiries is unhelpful. If we have no substantive reply then we assume that problems have been properly resolved. This is proving not to be the situation in a number of cases and we will be raising this with the TMO management following a discussion at our next Labour Group meeting.'* (see exhibit DG/2 referred to above)

31. In February 2017 I received a holding response to my Stage 2 complaint, suggesting a full response would be provided by 17 February 2017 (exhibited at DG/5 ). However this did not happen.
32. Since I did not receive any response to my complaint, I discussed this with Willie Thompson and with Edward Daffarn. In May 2017, with Edward's assistance, I wrote a letter to the Complaints Team at TMO claiming compensation in relation to the loss of enjoyment of my home and for the replacement costs of my furniture.
33. Following the letter, the TMO booked someone to meet me in relation to my claim, on what turned out to be the date of the fire. I don't think there would have been any response from the TMO were it not for the intervention of Edward Daffarn and Willie Thompson who assisted me with the correspondence.
34. After the fire I made clear to TMO that I did not wish to discontinue my claim and on 29 June 2017 the sum I had claimed was paid into my bank account.

#### **Asbestos exposure prior to the fire**

35. Having had the opportunity of considering the housing records provided to my solicitors by RBKC I understand that my solicitors wrote to RBKC to seek a complete file after a partial and redacted file had initially been received. I have now seen in the second file a certificate from Scopes Asbestos Analysis Services (a laboratory service) dated 24 October 2016 addressed to Tony Pearce at Express Environmental Solutions Ltd (exhibited at DG/6 ) confirming the presence of two types of asbestos: Chrysotile found in the bedroom ceiling coating and Amosite/Chrysotile found in an infill panel in the vicinity of a cupboard, although I don't know where in the flat this was located.
36. I have also seen subsequent email correspondence from 18 January 2017 (shortly after my Stage 2 Complaint to TMO) between TMO Repairs Direct and Express Environmental Solutions Ltd (exhibited at DG/7 ) in which TMO Repairs Direct requested clarification regarding these two materials. The response was that the materials are types of asbestos. In response to further questions, the company confirmed that the locations from

which asbestos had been removed were in my hallway and my bedroom, that the sites of removal were now safe, and that they would not undertake the plastering works themselves.

37. I am not sure what to conclude from this save that I still don't know what level of exposure to the materials that were identified would be considered to be dangerous and what level I was in fact exposed to, and for how long. I don't know at what point I might have been exposed to them as a result of the damage to the ceiling and floor from the leak. I received no information regarding results of the sample taken in October 2016. I don't know whether dangerous materials were fully removed in December or whether I continued to be exposed to them and if so, for how long. I worry about this because it took so long for them to complete the plastering and I did then continue to decorate the flat myself. The fact that TMO Repairs Direct were seeking advice as to the nature of the fibres and the resultant risks as late as January 2017 is shocking to me, as is the fact that at no stage did anyone from the TMO inform me of any potential risks I was exposed to.
38. As I have already said in my first statement, my experience of TMO overall was unfortunately that they simply were not too interested in us or in our concerns.

#### **Module 4**

39. I cannot be certain that I can accurately remember the exact sequence of events in the immediate aftermath as that period was quite confusing. However I have put together the account below to the best of my ability.

#### **Emergency accommodation, support and records**

40. As described in my first statement I initially stayed with my girlfriend after escaping the fire.
41. In the course of the day after the fire, 14 June 2017 I went back to my neighbourhood to the Rugby Portobello Trust to make myself known and registered. When I gave the people there my address their records showed the name of someone else living there. This was shocking to me as I had been living in my flat for 20 years – I could not believe their records were at least 20 years out of date.
42. I cannot recall what services I was offered at that point. I went back to my girlfriend's home and at some point soon after that I was told by phone by someone at RBKC that I had been assigned a hotel. I wasn't given any choice in the matter but in the event what they gave me was fine.

43. On Monday, 19 June 2017, I checked into Hotel Mercure on Gloucester Road which was a good location.
44. No one was introduced to me at the hotel as being in charge. I just went to the desk, explained my situation and they gave me the room – it had been arranged prior to my arrival and there were other Grenfell families there.
45. The room there was suitable and clean. It was also at the back so it wasn't too noisy and I had privacy. Its size was sufficient as I was alone there, and in the event I only stayed for 3 weeks.
46. The payment and booking were on a week to week basis but no one made me worried about being asked to leave.
47. I didn't like the food they were offering, and since I had heard from others that it was possible for those with dietary restrictions to be given an allowance for food instead, I asked for this and RBKC paid it directly into my bank account. There was a small fridge there but no cooking facilities. I gave my laundry to my girlfriend or my mother and they helped with this.
48. Within a week or not much more I was given £10,000 in assistance, although I can't recall through which agency or organisation and I used this to buy new clothes and other basics.
49. I was also given a prepaid card for public transport that functioned like an oyster card.

### **Relief facilities**

50. In terms of the relief centres, in addition to Rugby Portobello I also visited St Clements and Chelsea Town Hall in the first few days, and eventually the Westway. It was very hectic until they opened that hub at the Westway.
51. I can't remember exactly when I visited the Westway but by this time I was already in the hotel. My passport had been left behind in the fire and my sister phoned the Passport Office and they said I should have a photo taken at the Maxilla centre who were doing photos for free and then go to the Westway with that. I went to the Westway and they treated me well there: I got my new passport within 3 days. I also lost my birth certificate in the fire and my sister arranged to have it replaced, but I am not sure exactly how.
52. The Westway also arranged for a redirection with Royal Mail so that I could pick up any post addressed to me from the Curve.

53. I consider that all the voluntary organisations involved were just great. I also thought the Passport Office functioned really well and so did the Post Office.

### **Keyword support**

54. I was assigned a keyworker shortly after I moved to the hotel, although this keyworker moved on very quickly after that. I saw her only twice before she left. The first time was at the Town Hall. Altogether I had at least four different keyworkers in the months after the fire. They were provided by RBKC. They all did what they said they would do for me, and I think I was looked after quite well.
55. I lost benefits correspondence in the fire, as well as invoices from work but nothing could be done about that. In relation to arrangements with work and benefits, I was assisted by the keyworker.

### **Information and police liaison**

56. In relation to information about my missing neighbours and whether they had survived, I talked with Willie Thompson, who was a neighbour and friend, and with others who knew the missing but we were not approached by any officials about this.
57. I did have two police liaison officers who came to the hotel the first week I was there. They just told me everyone on my floor had got out. I gave them a statement and they eventually dealt with my lost property and connected me to Kenyons although this took some time.
58. Generally speaking information was communicated to me by phone and email. I think I was generally kept informed and if I needed anything the keyworker helped.

### **Healthcare**

59. I was not offered any physical or mental healthcare services but on the day after the fire I visited my own GP. She gave me a referral to Take Time To Talk at St Charles but it did take a while, more than a month, until I was given a first appointment there.
60. I did eventually attend St Charles and I found my counsellor good. I had 6-7 months of face to face weekly sessions.

61. In one respect I feel I was not well informed. There was much talk going around that it was very toxic in our area after the fire but there was no access to proper information about that.
62. I didn't have any respiratory assessment in connection with the fire.
63. In relation to exposure to asbestos – I only heard confirmation that I had been exposed to asbestos before the fire after seeing disclosure of the second set of housing records by RBKC, as sent to my solicitors. I had never been told before and I have received no information since.

### **Other services**

64. I lost a laptop in the fire. Kenyons told me that they had it but that their policy was not to return electronic equipment. I got a laptop and new phone within weeks via the various donations that were made. However I lost lots of photos and there was nothing that could be done about that.
65. Strangely enough I had a call from the keyworker in mid-January 2020 saying I was owed £179 in rent – and this is now being paid to me, 2.5 years after the fire.

### **Transition to temporary accommodation**

66. As explained in my first statement I was told a short time after arriving in the hotel that I could go and view a property. I was told I could have as many choices as I wanted.
67. I went and viewed it and said yes on the same day, 6 July 2017. I moved in very soon after and this has now become my permanent accommodation. I am very happy with it.

### **Conclusion**

68. In the first 7 days and thereafter I looked to family and friends to provide support and they did provide amazing essential support. I think family were the ones I most relied on as well as my friends both from Grenfell Tower and outside. It was very effective and I am lucky to have lived here for a long time so that I had all the support I needed.
69. More generally I can only speak for myself and I think I was treated pretty well by the authorities.

70. As for the RBKC I suppose they were in a lose-lose situation. All their officials were tarred with the same brush even including those who had nothing to do with the fire.
71. In terms of what lessons central and local government and other organisations should learn for the future I would say prevention is the most important thing so check every regulation!
72. I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and for it to be published on the Inquiry's website.

### STATEMENT OF TRUTH

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

Signed: 

Date: 26.2.20