

## **GRENFELL TOWER PUBLIC INQUIRY**

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### **SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARIA JAFARI**

#### **PHASE 2**

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I, **MARIA JAFARI**, will say as follows:

1. I make this statement for the purposes of Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. This statement does not, and is not intended to set out my experiences on the night of the fire or the impact that these events and the aftermath have had on my family and me. I will refer selectively to certain matters rather than give a full account.
2. I provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry dated 1 June 2018 (Unique ID: **WS00000744**) for the purpose of Phase 1. I also provided two witness statements to the Metropolitan Police Service dated 8 February 2018 and 1 May 2018 respectively.

#### **Background: 14 year of 'temporary' housing and impact on life in Grenfell**

3. In 1999, I moved to the United Kingdom from Afghanistan with my father Ali Yawar Jafari; my mother, Fatima Jafari; and sister, Nadia Jafari. I was 20 years old at the time. We came to the UK to join my three brothers, Farid, Basheer and Hamid. Farid was living in Barandon Walk, adjoining Grenfell Tower, and we wanted to be close to him so we applied for housing in the same Borough.

4. We were placed in emergency accommodation for 4 years and lived in three or four different hotels. Immediately before moving to the Tower, we were living in Monarch Hotel, Earls Court for 2 and half years.
5. In 2001 my mother became ill with tuberculosis of the spine and was admitted to hospital. She became extremely unwell and was unable to walk or do things for herself. Her health problems were very serious and we knew that when she left hospital we desperately needed space to care for her. We tried to explain this to RBKC's housing department but it made no difference.
6. After a few months in hospital, her doctors decided that she was well enough to leave, but her health problems were still very serious and a hotel was not a suitable place for her to live. Without somewhere suitable the hospital would not discharge her. Social services became involved and began to suggest that she should go to live in a care home. This was completely unacceptable to our family. My brother Farid could not face my mother going into a care home and although his property was too small, he arranged for my mother to stay with him but this was not a long-term solution.
7. Eventually Social Services wrote to the housing department to explain how serious the situation was. It was only then that the council began to consider alternative accommodation. My mother needed a wheelchair at that time and we explained that needed a flat on the ground floor.
8. Eventually the Council offered us a flat in Grenfell Tower. I was very worried about being in a flat so high up and not on the ground floor. Although it had lifts, I knew that if they were out of service my mother would become trapped in the flat. We tried to explain our concerns and said we did not think this was suitable. RBKC told us that if we moved into Grenfell Tower, they would continue to seek a suitable property. They said; 'don't worry, its temporary accommodation. You will only stay in Grenfell Tower for a few months, at most a year'.
9. We moved into the Flat 86 on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of Grenfell Tower, on 10 March 2003. We lived there for over 14 years until the day of the fire. In that time we were offered no alternative properties.

## **Grenfell Tower**

10. Our status in Grenfell Tower was very confusing and meant we struggled to get any work done and seemed to be by passed as residents. About 2 months after we moved into Grenfell Tower someone from Octavia Housing Association demanded access to our flat to check the condition of the property. We also started receiving letters from Octavia asking for rent. We did not understand why this was and so asked our housing officer who told us not to worry about it, as they would deal with it. It was only then that we discovered that RBKC did not actually own our flat. Octavia was the leaseholder and so they were technically our landlords. Although this was confusing, we thought the property was only temporary. Two or three years after we moved in, the leaseholder changed to Notting Hill Housing Trust.
11. As our flat was not managed by the TMO we could not just go downstairs and report an issue to the concierge or the local Estate office in the way that our neighbours did. When we needed repairs carried out in our flat, we would have to call Octavia/Notting Hill Housing Trust and it would usually take them some weeks to get things fixed. It was not clear what RBKC were responsible for and what Notting Hill were responsible for.
12. It made things complicated because we could not follow the same procedures as our neighbours when it came to repairs, complaints or refurbishment. No one from RBKC or Notting Hill Housing Trust ever told us about their formal complaints procedures. Although we lived in the flat, it was as if we were invisible to RBKC.
13. An example of the difficulty that this confusion caused was during the refurbishment by Rydon, when there was a huge leak, about 5 floors above, which affected several flats including ours. It was like a shower, which flooded our bathroom. Rydon admitted that they caused the leak and visited in order to dry our bathroom. They removed tiles in order to dry it properly as the leak had soaked through the tiles and was causing them to come loose. When they finished drying the bathroom, they simply placed a plastic sheet in the bathroom and refused to replace the tiles. They said they could do this because they did not have permission from Notting Hill Housing Trust.



14. Although all other flats affected by the leak, had the issue resolved quickly, we had to wait for over 6 months before the bathroom tiles were replaced. The leak also damaged the carpets but these were never replaced. When we would try to raise our concerns with RBKC, they would say that we had to see Notting Hill Housing and we were passed between the two without any explanation or solution.
15. All the time we lived in the Tower we were waiting for permanent accommodation and because of this we were never able to settle and feel at home. I would often go to the RBKC Housing Office in person, to check what was happening with our housing application. It was said to be temporary but years went by without us being moved or given permanent accommodation. I remember speaking to one woman at the Housing department who was so shocked that we had been living in temporary accommodation for over 10 years that she couldn't help but shout over to her colleagues to let them know. In 14 years she was the only one who ever showed any sympathy for our situation.
16. If we had been offered the flat in Grenfell Tower as a permanent home, we would have agreed. We desperately wanted permanent accommodation in order to be settled. We wanted to be free to do small things, such as changing the carpet or painting our own walls, without having to ask for permission. We lived there for 14 years, but were never allowed to forget that it was not our home. We had to keep all items that came with the flat. For example when the fridge broke, we bought a new one but were told that we had to keep the old one.
17. We made good friends with people in the Tower and I knew Sakina Afrasehabi. When we came to the UK, I did not speak any English. I attended English classes at a college in Earls Court and and became friends with Sakina Afrasehabi, who worked in the college kitchen. A year before the fire Sakina moved into Grenfell Tower and so I was able to see her much more. Tragically, Sakina died in the fire. I last saw her just two days before.

#### **Disability and lifts**

18. My mother could not use the stairs in any way when we first moved in; she used a wheelchair for our first year in the Tower. She had no other options. RBKC knew that



she used a wheelchair but nothing was in place to help her when the lifts were not working.

19. After we moved into Grenfell Tower my mother slowly recovered from her tuberculosis and through physiotherapy became able to walk again, although this was limited and she continued to have limited mobility. As I had feared the lifts would regularly break down and my mother would be trapped in the flat. When the lifts were out of service, she started trying to use the stairs but really struggled. It would take at least an hour for her to walk up or down the stairs. She would need to take a lot of breaks and rest. Even then, it was very difficult for her to cope with the stairs.
20. The lifts in Grenfell Tower were changed at some point around 2005. This was not an improvement. After replacement, the lifts broke down more often, usually two or three times a month. Sometimes both lifts would be out of order at the same time and it usually took several hours for them to be fixed. During the refurbishment, the lifts were used frequently by the construction workers and would break down even more often. It felt like they stopped about once a week. My mother really struggled during that time. I remember on one occasion we had returned home with a lot of shopping and the lifts were out of service. I called someone from the TMO and explained that the lifts were broken again. They told me it would take two or three hours to fix the lifts. The person who answered the phone overheard my mother complaining in the background in Dari and asked what was going on; I told them that she worried about how to get her shopping up the stairs. On that occasion, they called someone from Rydon to help us upstairs with the shopping. This was such a surprise as it was the only time that this ever happened.
21. My father was completely unable to use the stairs. When the lifts were out of service, he would have to sit on the benches outside the entrance of the Tower and wait until the lifts were fixed. If he needed to use the bathroom, he would go to Farid's home in Barandon Walk. RBKC knew of my family's reliance on the lifts but I am not aware of any plans or ways that they could get out in the event of a fire other than using the lift. As explained in my first statement my father used the lift on the night of the fire and was killed by smoke when it stopped on a smoke filled floor. I do not understand

why the lifts were not better managed and why my father was able to use the lift alone on the night of the fire and become trapped.

### **Fire Safety**

22. Nobody ever spoke to us about what to do in the event of a fire. We never took part in a fire drill and we were never given any information about where the assembly point would be if the building was evacuated. We were not warned about the lifts or told what to do or how to get out if a fire broke out.
23. If there was a fire in our flat or next door, I would have simply left the building. From undertaking fire drills at College, I knew that in the event of a fire I was supposed to leave the building. I never heard of “stay put”. I remember that there was a fire before the refurbishment but did not hear a fire alarm. I never heard a fire alarm go off in the communal parts of the Tower in the 14 years that I lived in the Tower.
24. I think there was a fire sign next to the lifts, but I do not recall reading it or understanding it. Nothing was translated or explained in person.
25. We had a single fire alarm in our flat. It was in the corridor near to the kitchen and had been put in by Notting Hill Housing Trust. I know that the fire alarm was working at the time of the fire because we would hear it going off when we cooked. When we were dealing with Octavia, a Housing Officer would come to the flat once a month to check that everything was working, including the smoke alarms. When it changed to Notting Hill Housing Trust, they would come once a year or maybe every two years, to check the smoke alarms.
26. I am not aware of any checks being carried out in the communal parts of the Tower. I never saw anyone from the fire brigade or anyone else doing fire checks. No one from the fire brigade ever came to our flat.
27. I knew from my own experience not to use lifts in the event of a fire, but had been told by the College that in a serious fire, the fire brigade would turn the lifts off so you would not be able to use them. On the night of the fire, I thought that because the lifts were working, and people were calmly using them, the fire was not serious and it was

okay to use them. I was aware that my father had no choice, as he could not use the stairs. That night he used the lifts and it resulted in his death.

28. A few years before the refurbishment, we heard from our neighbours that their front doors were being changed, so we asked RBKC if they would be changing our door. They said that it would not be and when we asked why, they just said ours would not be changed because Notting Hill Housing Trust would not pay for it.

29. On 14 June 2017, we had the old heavy doors, which did not close automatically behind you as you left.

30. On that night, when I tried to look outside our window and down the Tower to see if there was a fire, I could not see the Tower properly because the cladding was so bulky.

### **2012 – 2016 Refurbishment ('the refurbishment')**

31. I first heard that the Tower was going to be refurbished when we received a letter from a group of residents who lived in the Tower; I believe it was the Grenfell Compact. We often received letters from them asking us to attend meetings, but I never felt that there was any point in us attending because we lived in temporary accommodation and did not have any rights.

32. We then received newsletters from the TMO and Rydon letting us know that they will be changing the windows and heating system. I think that I first realised they would be refurbishing the outside of the Tower, when I saw a sample of the cladding which was installed above the main entrance to the Tower. They told us that it would be the same as the new Academy they were building.

33. We had no choice but to let the workers into our flat to carry out the work. Rydon made it very clear to us that Notting Hill Housing Trust gave them access to come in and do whatever they wanted. Lynda Prentice, was the Resident Liaison Officer from Rydon we had the most contact with. However, because we lived in temporary accommodation and had no rights, she mostly communicated with our Notting Hill Trust Housing Officer. We basically acted as their go between. I would send the



Housing Officer pictures and reports of the work being done in the flat and they would call Lynda.

34. I understand Rydon visited and asked about the family's health problems. I do not recall the meeting but know that they were told about my father's diabetes and my mother's back problems. It should have been evident that they needed the lift. As I said, my parents really struggled during that periods because the lifts were either being held up by the construction workers or completely out of service from overuse.

#### *Windows*

35. Before the refurbishment, we had a lot of trouble with our windows. I remember once when I was cleaning the window in my mother's bedroom it came completely out of the frame. The only reason it did not fall to the ground below was that I was holding on to it. I remember shaking because I really did not want to drop it and have it fall on someone outside. I managed to slowly get it back in to the frame, but after that, my mother told me to stop cleaning. We were very careful not to go near it.
36. The new windows were installed in August 2015 . They were installed from the outside first and a few weeks later they came into our flat to do the work from the inside. At first, I was pleased because with the new windows because the problems with the old ones were gone. However, we had a lot of trouble with the handles to the replacement windows, we could not shut the windows properly. It was cold and windy; we had to put things in front of the window to try to block the draught.
37. I called the TMO to complain about the window and was told that it was still under warranty with Rydon so they were called. Two men came to the flat to try to fix the windows; I do not know which company they were from but assume it was Rydon. They were on the phone for almost an hour with someone because they did not know how to fix it. They eventually managed to get it shut. After the left, we still had a lot of trouble opening and closing the windows, we had to call someone on two or three other occasions to fix the handles. We eventually gave up. The kitchen window was constancy closed until the night of the fire. We did not bother opening the main window in the living room; we would only use the small panel.

38. I also remember that the new window in one of our neighbour's flats had fallen out of the window frames and on to the ground on the road near Latimer Road tube station. When that happened I remembered a conversation that my father had with one of the workers who installed our window, they warned him that the windows were difficult and he would never put it in his home. My father was very friendly with the construction workers, he would make them tea when they were working in our flat so they like him and spoke to him.

39. Rydon had also installed a new extractor fan in our kitchen window; it was noisy especially when it was windy. I remember that we reported this to them, a lot of our neighbours also had the same issue. It took them two or three weeks to repair the extractor fan, I think all they did was remove the cover, which seemed to resolve the issues.

### ***Heating System***

40. I did not like the new heating system because it became expensive to pay-as-you-go. The pay-as-you-go meter would make a beeping noise when it was running out of credit. There was a shop on Latimer Road, which provided a top-up service, but they closed down. There were no other shops around the Tower that provided that service. So I would have to get in my car and drive to Ladbroke Grove, to a shop next to the fire station in order to top up the meter card. If we topped-up the meter with £20 or £30, as a family of four it would only give us two or three days heating and hot water. It was horrible in the winter and very expensive. Before the refurbishment, we would only pay £6 a week for the communal heating system.

41. A few months after the new heating system was installed, there was a meeting with RBKC in the communal room. Many of the residents complained about the new system, especially those who were not working or pensioners who found it very expensive.

### ***Aftermath***

42. As this statement is made for the purpose of Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and will become a public document, I do not wish to go into detail about the

effects of the fire on me and my family I have already set out some of my experience of the night in my first statement.

*14 June 2017*

43. On 14 June 2017, after Nadia came out of the Tower coughing, struggling to breathe and without my father, I left her near the Leisure Centre with my mother, three brothers and three sisters-in-law. I had called my brothers as soon as I left the Tower so they were all there. Farid lived in the Walkways and Bashir lived on Harrow Road so it only took him a few minutes to get to the Tower. Hamid arrived about half an hour later. I had also called my mother's sister and she also came to the local area.
44. I went to search for my father. I looked for him around Latimer Road station, because that was where they brought all the people rescued from the Tower. I thought if someone found him in the lift, they would bring him out. I saw Flora Neda there, and asked her if my father had been brought out, she said no. I asked someone else where I might find him and they told me to check next to the Leisure Centre, I went there to check but no one had seen him. My brothers and I, decided to keep an eye one side of the Tower each so we wouldn't miss our father if he was brought out. I went back near to the station and checked to see if he was in any of the ambulances. I went around the area at least six or seven times. I could not tell how much time had passed.
45. Nadia became very unwell, and at some point between 5am and 6am she collapsed. She could not breathe; a doctor came and said she needed to go straight away to the hospital. I went with her in the ambulance; we were waiting for half an hour before the ambulance started moving because there were a lot of cars blocking the road. When we arrived at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, five or six doctors or nurses collected Nadia from the ambulance and took her to the emergency room, they asked me to stay in the waiting area.
46. When I was in the waiting area, I saw several people searching for their family members from the Tower. I also asked if my father had been brought there, but no one had any information for us. A woman who was visiting the hospital, topped-up my phone because I had run-out of credit calling people to check whether my father had been found.



47. Nadia had to have her lungs cleared out because she was suffering from smoke inhalation; they had put a tube down her throat. They also gave her oxygen and an IV drip. When I knew she was okay, I decided to go back to the Tower. I left Nadia at the hospital at around 10am or 11am. I did not have any money to get back to the Tower. I explained my situation to a woman who I met coming out of the Mosque in the hospital and she very kindly gave me all the change she had. I stopped a black cab and explained to the driver that I needed to get back to the Tower but I had no money other than the handful of change. He was very kind and agreed to take me to the Tower without charging me, he even topped-up my phone with credit for me. If it had not been for the kindness of strangers that morning, I am not sure what I would have done.
48. When I went to the hospital with Nadia that morning, I left my mother sitting outside the Tower with my sisters-in-law, other family members and friends who had come to check on us. She had been sitting there all morning because no one was there to tell her where she should go. After I left the hospital, I called her and asked where she was. She told me that she had just arrived at the home of a Bangladeshi family who lived near the Tower. We did not know them, they had just come to the area around the Tower to help and hand out water. When they saw Hamid's son, they offered to take him to their home so he could sleep, and they opened their home to our whole family.
49. When I arrived at their home, the Bangladeshi woman gave me her phone to use so I could call around the hospitals and emergency services to ask about my father. I did not know what else I should have been doing. I then started calling around the hospitals, giving them my father's date of birth and a description of him. I called many hospitals, so did Bashir, and none of them had any information. By that point, it was the afternoon and I was very worried. I asked my brother to drive to the hospital in Kings Cross to check in person. There were rumours in the community that some survivors had taken to hospitals outside of London like in Birmingham. So we still had hope that he might be alive and maybe just unconscious and not able to tell anyone who he was.

### ***Relief Centres***

50. The Bangladeshi woman offered us some clean clothes and said that we could use her bathroom to have a shower and change, but I wanted to go to St Clément's Church. I had called Hamid to ask where he was and he told me that he was at the Church with my brother Farid and older nieces and nephews; they told me to come there. My mother and I went to the Church because we were hoping they would make an announcement about the people who were still missing. My mother was so distressed that a doctor came to see her. . She was in shock and was very distressed about my father and where he was. They did not have any information about those who were missing.
51. I did not see anyone from RBKC or the government at the Church. There were a lot of people but I think it was only volunteers and charity workers. They were handing out food, chargers, clothes and a lot of other items which had very quickly been donated. We stayed there for two or three hours, until the volunteers told us that they were closing the Church, and that we had to go to the Westway Sports Centre ('Westway') or the Rugby Portobello Club. Farid's wife was already at the Westway and she called us and told us to come there. We had no idea that we would be staying at the Westway for several days.
52. We wanted to stay near the Tower in case my father was found. We were there for about 10 days, sleeping on the floor, before being moved to temporary accommodation. Farid's family spent the first night in the Westway with us. They were then transferred to a hotel and after a few weeks moved back in to the Walkways but for a long time, they had no gas or hot water in their flat.
53. In the Westway there were several different people from the community taking registers of those who made it out of the Tower, but there seemed to be no one official taking a formal register. No one had any information about my father.
54. Nadia was discharged from hospital at about 7pm or 8pm on 14 June 2017. The doctors wanted to keep her longer but she was fighting with them. She told them that she needed to get back to check on our father and that if they did not discharge her she would run away, so they agreed to let her go. I did not want her to come to the Westway because she was in a fragile state; she had had an operation only a few days before the fire and was supposed to be resting. I did not want the smoke inhalation to

complicate things or for her to catch an infection. She agreed to go stay with our cousin for a night, but the next day she insisted on joining us in the Westway because she wanted to be there if our father was found.

55. Staying and sleeping in the Westway was horrific. AS a Muslim woman modesty is important to me and when sleeping I did not want to expose parts of my body. I found this very stressful. For two days after the fire, I stayed in the same clothes I was wearing on leaving the Tower; no one offered us a change of new clean clothes. All day there were people coming in and out, it was very public. My brothers Bashir and Hamid, Hamid's wife and son also stayed with us.

56. As it was still Ramadan, we were fasting. The local mosques would send us food at Iftar so that we could break our fast. Nadia was supposed to be on a special diet of fresh food because of her operation, so she could not eat a lot of the food which was available at the Westway, which was mostly takeaways, tinned and dried foods. We did not have any money to buy her food. I remember that one of the volunteers very kindly bought her salads using her own money; she did this for a couple of days.

57. On two or three occasions, burglars came into the Westway through the back door, which had been kept open as it was summer and it was very hot at night. We had security guards and police the first night after the fire, but after that, they disappeared. People came in to steal the donations. A lot of them were drunk homeless people. It felt very unsafe.

58. When we were staying at the Westway, there were many different people who came and asked us the same questions about what we had gone through. They told us that they were going to help us with housing. We were worried about our father; we had lost our home; we had no clothes or money to buy what we needed, so we were not thinking clearly. We gave a lot of people our personal information assuming that they would help but they would just disappear after taking information.

59. I remember speaking to a journalist two days after the fire. I was standing near the Tower crying because we still did not know where our father was. I told her which



floor we lived on and that my father was missing. I heard someone tell the journalist that my father was dead and not to tell me because I was crying. They had seen registers or signs outside the Tower but no one had told my family or me what had happened to my father.

60. The following day, a Family Liaison Officer from the police came to ask for a description of what my father was wearing on the night of the fire. Three days later, she came back to take Nadia and Bashir to do a DNA test. Bashir came back from the test, hugged my mother, and told us all that hope was gone. We were all devastated. After my father's death was confirmed, we could not grieve in private, we had to go back to the Westway.
61. Many people visited the Westway during those first few weeks. Politicians such as Nick Hurd and Sajid Javid M; celebrities such as Adele; and members of the Royal family. The Queen and Prince William visited and the Key Worker told my mother to meet Prince William because it might help her, she agreed and he reassured her a little.
62. Twice, RBKC booked hotel rooms for us and even booked the taxis to take us but my mother said no. The first time was on 15<sup>th</sup> June but my mum said that until we had news about our father she would not go anywhere. She wanted people to be able to easily find us if they had news.
63. A few days later, there were only six or seven other people in the Westway with us. Even after we were offered temporary accommodation, my mother refused to move anywhere until we were offered permanent accommodation. The council said that they would offer "temporary" housing. My mother remembered that when she was told this before it was 14 years of being left in accommodation. She was not trying to be difficult, but simply did not trust council promises. She had spent 14 years in 'temporary' accommodation after being told by RBKC that it would only be for a few months. She was terrified about being forgotten again and did not have my father to support her. She did not want to move into another situation of uncertainty.
64. We were in the Westway for 10 days and were the last to leave. We wanted to be able to grieve in private but my mother could not cope with moving anywhere "temporary" as this caused huge problems to us before.

65. The Council wanted to reopen the Westway Sports Centre to the public and move us somewhere. We met Altin Smajli from RBKC who was in charge of re-housing survivors and residents affected by the fire, who came to put pressure on us to move from the Westway. One day, my mother went to see a flat in Westbourne Park. As soon as she entered the building and saw the lift, she started screaming. She did not even want to go in and see the flat because she did not want to use a lift ever again after our father died in one. Angela understood and bought her back to the Westway.
66. We had promises that we would be re-housed within two weeks of the fire. Barbara Brownlee who was acting as Gold Command came to visit us at the Westway. She told my mother that if she agreed to temporarily move into the flat in Westbourne Park, she would come back the day after Eid (which started about 10 days after the fire) and would take my mother in her car and personally show her houses in Ealing. She said that whatever my mother chose, they would provide as permanent accommodation. They told us to think of the flat as a large room in a hotel, not as temporary accommodation, because in two weeks, we will be in permanent accommodation. Because of that promise, my mother agreed to move into the flat. She really did not want to but felt under pressure from everyone to agree to do so.
67. Barbara Brownlee promised, in front of the media, that she would come and see us again and then take my mother around Ealing to see houses she had in mind. We never saw her again.
68. When we signed the tenancy agreement for the flat in Westbourne Park, it was for a year, but they reassured us that we would be able to move out as soon as they found something permanent. We were in temporary accommodation for over a year, not the two weeks promised.

### ***Financial support***

69. After we moved into the flat, we went back to the Westway almost every day to sort out replacement of our documents. Because of the kindness of the public we were able to collect some replacement clothes that had been donated. The support from the community really helped in the days after the fire. The community just wanted to help us; I am not sure what I would have done without their support.

### ***Communication***

70. We met Angela our Key Worker for the first time, on the day after the fire. She did not explain her role or where she was from and we assumed that she was another volunteer. She was nice and polite. She worked for Hammersmith and Fulham Council but this meant that she did not know anything about what was going on in RBKC. We would get information about services and and would then have to tell her. Because of that, we mostly did things for ourselves, but there were some services, which you could only access through your Key Worker. However she did not have access to the RBKC's computer system and could not tell us what services were available to us. She was not nice but not actually helpful and we asked for someone from RBKC instead. It took a year to find us a Key Worker from RBKC.

71. In the aftermath of the fire, nobody official took steps to understand our cultural needs. They also did not understand that not all Afghans speak Farsi, so when they bought interpreters who spoke Farsi to communicate with my mother, they couldn't understand her because she spoke Dari. When they were offering us properties, they did not understand that we couldn't accept somewhere with an open plan kitchen and living room because we couldn't have the women cooking, with male visitors sitting in the living room.

72. We will never forget about the fire, there's no enjoyment, no happiness in our house. We cannot trust our life anymore. We finally got what we always wanted, a permanent home, but we cannot enjoy it because the fire broke our family. I have not even decorated my bedroom, because I'm afraid that something else could happen and it will all be gone, we've only bought essential items for the house, it doesn't feel like a home. When we lived in the Tower we collected things that we were going to put in our permanent home, but it all went up in smoke in five seconds.

73. At least when we were living in the Tower, we had our family, it was a happy home and we always had visitors. Our relatives have stopped visiting us. They feel that our house is too sad, so a lot of the time it's just Nadia, my mother and I.

74. For two and half years, there has been sadness in this house we cannot forget.



**Statement of truth**

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

I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed:  .....

Dated: 4 - 3 - 20

Maria Jafari