

Witness Statement of:	Wesley Ignacio
No. of statement:	2
Exhibits:	WI/2
Date of statement:	28.02.20

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF WESLEY RYAN IGNACIO

This statement is a factual statement prepared for Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry dealing with modules 3 and 4 only. It 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 me or my family.

Signed: 

I, **WESLEY RYAN IGNACIO**, will say as follows:

1. I was a resident of Flat 62 of Grenfell Tower and I am a survivor of the Grenfell Tower fire on the 14 June 2017. I am making this statement for the purpose of Phase 2 of the Grenfell Public Inquiry.
2. I made a statement in Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry (URN: **IWS/826**) dated 28 June 2018 with exhibit **WI/1** (URN: **IWS/824**). I also gave two statements to the Metropolitan Police Service dated *19 July 2017* and *27 November 2017*. My mother (Erlinda Ignacio) also made a Phase 1 statement (reference **IWS/830**) with exhibits **EI/1-2** (URN: **IWS/827-828**).
3. This statement addresses the issues within module 3 (fire safety within the Tower and communication with residents) and module 4 (aftermath) from the Inquiry's Phase 2 schedule. I deal with issues relating to module 3 in paragraphs 4-52 and module 4 in paragraphs 53-106. My Phase 2 statement should be read in conjunction with my Phase 1 statement, which also touches on issues relating to module 3 and 4.

Module 3

Living in Grenfell Tower

4. I talk about my family, how long we lived at the Tower and my neighbours at paragraphs 3-10 of my Phase 1 statement. Grenfell Tower had been my home for my entire life. At the time of the fire, I was living in our two bedroom flat with my parents, Eduardo and Erlinda Ignacio and my wife, Madylyn Ignacio. My wife and I had a seven month old daughter, who is now three years old.
5. I was in good physical and mental health before the fire. Both mine and my family's mental and physical health have been impacted following the fire. My wife previously suffered from asthma, but she has been using her inhalers more since the fire. My daughter has also been diagnosed with asthma and started having fits. I am concerned that this is due to the smoke she inhaled when we were escaping from the Tower.
6. My parents are from the Philippines and lived in Grenfell Tower since 1983. In paragraph 7 of my Phase 1 statement, I said my parents had lived at Grenfell for 33 years, but it was actually closer to 34 years. Growing up at the Tower, I have seen a lot of changes over the years.
7. At paragraph 11-17 of my Phase 1 statement, I talk about the Grenfell community. Having grown up in the Tower and gone to school in the local area, I knew a lot of people from the Tower and local neighbourhood.
8. There was a strong Filipino community in the Tower, although people would come and go throughout the years. Some of my extended family and my godfather were still living in the Tower in June 2017, which I have dealt with at paragraphs 13-15 of my Phase 1 statement.

Relationship with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

9. As stated in paragraph 6 of my Phase 1 statement, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) owned Grenfell Tower and it was managed by the Tenant

Management Organisation (TMO). My parents had a secure council tenancy. They were the ones, who would normally communicate with RBKC and the TMO.

10. I remember the "Link" newsletter being posted through our front door. I am not sure how often this was; it may have been once every three months. It gave updates on what was going on in the building and the surrounding area.

Reporting concerns to RBKC and the TMO

11. If there was any issues or problems with our flat, my parents or I would report them to the TMO. The TMO had an office opposite the park downstairs. If I was around during the day, I would pop over during their opening times, otherwise I would call the TMO's general helpline number. I would usually report issues verbally rather than by email or online. I do not recall being told about a formal complaints procedure for the TMO.
12. On 13 September 2016, there was a severe leak from flat 72 above causing damage to the ceiling, walls and floor in our hall and living room. This was after the taps were left on by mistake. When water started coming through the ceiling, my dad called the TMO to report this as an emergency, but the TMO was not very helpful.
13. This led to me making an online complaint to TMO Repair Direct. It then took the TMO over 48 hours to respond with an update. I followed this up again online on 16 September 2016 asking when the repaint would be carried out. I exhibit this documentation as **WI/2**, which is from the housing file.
14. I called the TMO repair line asking what was taking them so long. I often the TMO was slow and unresponsive. All they kept saying was that they would come as soon as possible, but would not confirm when. It took some time for the wall and ceiling to be repaired.
15. There was never any mention about asbestos being in the flat by the TMO, Rydon or any of their contractors or that it had been disturbed at any time. I would have remembered if they had. In fact, I did not even know what asbestos was until recently.

Kensington Aldridge Academy and the Leisure Centre

16. The new Academy was built before Grenfell Tower's refurbishment. It was part of the regeneration of the area.
17. At paragraph 12, 32 and 82 of my Phase 1 statement, I describe how it drastically changed the surroundings where we lived and would have caused issues with access to the Tower. The Academy was built over the football pitches and car park, where I used to play as a child with my friends. This meant that kids had less space to run around and play. It felt as if our community was being squeezed into a smaller space with less open space. I worried that the Academy blocked access to the Tower as the area continued to be built up around us, but I did not raise these concerns through any official channels with RBKC.
18. The building of the Academy also coincided with improvement works to the Leisure Centre.

The Refurbishment

19. Paragraph 41-55 of my Phase 1 statement touches on the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower, but I wanted to provide some further details in my Phase 2 statement to assist the Inquiry.

Knowledge of the Refurbishment

20. I studied at university in the Philippines for four years returning to the UK in 2011. This was when I first found out about the proposed refurbishment of Grenfell Tower. There were newsletters posted through our front door.
21. As part of the refurbishment, I knew that new windows were being installed with a boiler and heating system, which I discuss in more details below. I also remember receiving Rydon's Resident Handbook (RYD69117).

22. I do not remember how I found out about the cladding, but I thought this would make the Tower look more attractive. It was looking old and tired and did not match with the new Academy and improvements to the Leisure Centre. I assumed the main purpose of the cladding was for aesthetic reasons.
23. At the time, I remember some residents raising concerns about the insulation and cladding, but I cannot remember the specifics. Other residents felt that RBKC and the TMO should have done more for residents than just covering up the outside of the building.

Consultations and Meetings about the Refurbishment

24. I do not remember receiving a questionnaire prior to the refurbishment, but as already stated my parents would normally deal with the TMO, so they may have completed this. I certainly did not have any discussions about the colour of the proposed cladding. I did attend the show flat in the Tower. I was shown how the new boiler worked and its proposed new location in the hallway by the front door rather than in the cupboard next to the kitchen.
25. Paragraph 53 of my Phase 1 statement refers to various meetings being held about the refurbishment, but did not go to any of them. I do not really remember being invited to these meetings by either the TMO or Rydon.
26. One time a woman came to our flat to explain what would happen during the refurbishment. I did not recognise her and I do not recall her name. I assumed she was a manager from either the TMO or Rydon and she was supervising the ongoing works. She knocked on our front door unannounced and went through what work would be completed in our home. I do not know if she visited other residents too. She did not tell us how to contact her if there were any ongoing issues or concerns about the works. This is the only time I saw this woman.

Flat 62

27. When work was due to be completed in our flat, my mum would normally receive a call to arrange an appointment time a couple of days in advance. She would also be given an indication about how long the work was anticipated to take. During the refurbishment, both my mum and I worked. We would discuss as a family who would be around to let the workers into our flat.
28. I did not have much interaction with the workers. I normally left for work before they arrived at the Tower in the morning. I only saw them when I was at home to let them into the flat for works to be completed. On the whole, I found them reliable. I had no experience of workers being rude or any mess being left by them. When I had a day off there was normally a lot of noise inside the Tower due to the ongoing refurbishment work. I remember hearing a lot of drilling.
29. After the works had finished on our flat, a different woman from the one described above came round to inspect this and ensure it was done properly. I remember she checked the pipes. I do not remember where she was from and I do not recall her name. She told us work on certain flats had to be completed within a certain timeframe. We were asked to sign off the works and confirm we were happy with them. I remember signing a document, but I do not now remember what it was for specifically.
30. The refurbishment was difficult and long. There was a lot of disruptions. As already stated at paragraph 54 of my Phase 1 statement, I felt that by the end of the refurbishment, people were so fed up with the ongoing work that they stopped complaining to either the TMO or Rydon. They just wanted it over. Many residents felt deflated and they had not been listened to, so many stopped making complaints. My family and I were not vocal ourselves about the concerns we had about the refurbishment, which I deal with in more detail below.

Gas Leak

31. Around October 2016, the gas in our flat stopped working after a gas leak. I think we received a letter about this at the time. A replacement electric stove was provided to

enable us to cook, but this was far from ideal. It probably took around 6 months for this problem to be fixed, which was far too long.

Issues with Gas Pipes and Boiler

32. There was a new gas pipe installed in the main stairwell, which then connected through the communal landing into the individual flats. I refer to this at paragraph 45-49 of my Phase 1 statement. The pipes were exposed in the communal area and in the staircase, although contractors had started to box the pipes in next to our flat around two days before the fire.
33. Many residents including my family and I were concerned about the exposed pipes posing a health and safety risk to residents, especially with the stairwell being the only means of escape from the Tower. In fact, one of our old neighbours from Flat 65 was so concerned they moved out of Grenfell Tower before the fire.
34. I do not remember being consulted about the boiler's new location, which was next to the front door in the hallway, although I had seen it in the show home. My family and I were unhappy. We were worried that if something went wrong and the boiler caught fire that it would have been impossible to escape the flat. It also reduced the space in our hallway. Other residents told us not to agree to the works. We held out for as long as possible, but after the majority of residents agreed to the works being completed, we did too. My family and I felt that we did not really have a choice.
35. As already stated at paragraph 50 of my Phase 1 statement, I did not complain directly to the TMO regarding the above. However, I did discuss my concerns with Shah, who was the Chair of the Leaseholder's Association. I would often see him around the Tower and we would chat whilst waiting for the lifts.
36. On 16 March 2017, Shah forwarded on an email to me from the Leaseholder's Association to the TMO and RBKC dated 7 March 2017 (URN: **TMO10046564**). This was despite not being a leaseholder. I was subsequently copied into the following emails:

- a. Email from Grenfell Tower Leaseholder's Association to Collette O'Hara at London Fire Brigade dated 17 March 2017 (URN: **RBK00000184**);
- b. Email from the Grenfell Tower Leaseholder's Association to Laura Jackson and Sacha Jevans dated 21 April 2017 (URN: **RBK00037619**);
- c. Email from Grenfell Leaseholder's Association to the TMO's complaints team dated 13 May 2017 (URN: **RBK00001012**);
- d. Email from the Leaseholder's Association to Anthony Cheney dated 23 May 2017 (URN: **TMO00840270**).

Front Door

Paragraphs 23-25 of my Phase 1 statement deal with the new front door, which was changed in an earlier refurbishment around 2013. There is an error in my Phase 1 statement at paragraph 23, it was the old door that was heavier than the new door and would close behind you. The new door was lighter and was not self closing.

Concierge

37. I touched upon concierge, who I called a porter at paragraph 35 of my Phase 1 statement. I remember a porter being stationed in the lobby by the entrance to Grenfell Tower from when I was young. The porter would always be my first point of contact, when I had an issue or concern regarding the communal areas. For example, as I was passing I would report any issues with the communal lighting or when the lifts were not working. If there were any issues with our flat, I would report these direct to the TMO rather than the porter.
38. The lobby area completely changed as part of the refurbishment and the porter disappeared as did one of the exits from the Tower to the Walkways, which I refer to at paragraph 43 of my Phase 1 statement.
39. I do not remember being consulted about the porter being removed, I do not know if other residents were. I would have wanted the porter to stay. It was helpful to have him in the Tower as the first point of contact when something went wrong. It was also

important from a security perspective as he would know who lived in the Tower and who was coming and going.

Windows

40. As part of the refurbishment, new windows were installed in our flat around August 2015. I do not remember being consulted about this in advance, but my parents may have been. It is also possible that we received a newsletter but I do not remember this.

41. I was at home when the new windows were installed. The workers were polite and cleaned up after themselves. Once the new windows were fitted, the workers demonstrated how to operate them. There was no instructions booklet.

42. The windows were inspected after completion. I do not recall there being any issues with gaps around the window frames. However, the new windows felt smaller than the older windows and did not let in the same amount of light or air.

Communal Area

43. I deal with the communal areas in Grenfell Tower at paragraphs 26-39 of my Phase 1 statement. Paragraph 36 deals with communal lighting. Sometimes one of the lights on the ninth floor landing would stop working. It would normally take a couple of days for this to be repaired. The stairwell was well lit. I was not aware of any emergency lighting.

44. I am not aware of any issues with the door leading from the ninth floor landing to the stairwell. The door closed automatically behind you and always closed properly.

45. Paragraph 38-39 of my Phase 1 statement deals with the lifts. There were occasions when both lifts did not work. If this happened, my wife or I would stay at home with our daughter. It was too much to carry my daughter, the baby bag and pushchair down nine flights of stairs that double back on themselves. Thankfully we were never stranded with the pushchair at the bottom of the Tower, when the lifts both suddenly

stopped working. It would have been a nightmare to get back to our flat on the ninth floor.

46. However, I do remember a time when mum and I had been out food shopping, when we returned home both lifts were not working. We had no choice but to carry all of our shopping up the stairs. My mum kept stopping to catch her breath. It was a long way to go with heavy bags of shopping.

Fire Safety

47. Paragraphs 27-34 of my Phase 1 witness statement deals with my understanding of fire safety at Grenfell Tower, but I have provided additional details below.
48. I do not remember being given information on fire safety from the TMO or RBKC. This included no information on evacuation procedures or what to do in the event of a fire. The only sign I remember was on the ninth floor by the lifts that I describe at paragraph 31 of my Phase 1 statement.
49. Before the fire, I did not know that there was a formal '*stay put*' policy at Grenfell Tower. If there was a fire, I knew not to use the lifts. I would have left our flat and used the stairs to leave the building as quickly as possible, I would not have followed the '*stay put*' policy. My instincts would have told me to leave immediately.
50. There was only one escape route, which was the main staircase running down the middle of the Tower. I have already dealt with one exit being gated off as part of the refurbishment at paragraph 43 of my Phase 1 statement and paragraph 38 above.
51. Paragraph 29 of my Phase 1 statement deals with the smoke alarms in Flat 62. As already stated at paragraph 28, I am not aware of anyone coming to our flat in an official capacity to test them, although we checked them ourselves. The smoke alarms would sometimes go off when my mum was cooking, so I knew they worked. I also remember the smoke alarm in the hallway beeping when the battery was low.

52. At paragraph 33 of my Phase 1 statement, I said I did not remember any air vents. Having reflected, I realised that these were the grates on the wall in the communal landing, but I do not remember much else about them.

Module 4

53. Paragraph 58-86 of my Phase 1 statement details my recollection of events during the early hours of 14 June 2017. I also briefly described what happened in the days following the fire at paragraphs 86-106 of my Phase 1 statement. I now wish to provide more detail about what happened after the fire, but I do not wish to go into the details of the physical or emotional impact upon me and my family, except to say that the night of the fire is something that I will never be able to forget. The full horrors of that night will stay with me forever. I left my home with my mum and wife with my daughter in my arms, the clothes on my back and my mobile phone. We left everything else behind. I was panicking when the smoke became thicker as I went down the stairs.

54. However, it was only once I exited the Tower that I could see the full scale of the disaster. It was terrifying and I was scared for mine and my family's safety and for those still in the Tower. Debris was falling from the building.

55. We were directed towards Kensington Leisure Centre by firefighters and later pushed back to Walmer Road. I am very grateful to the locals that offered us blankets and chairs.

56. I continued to look up at Grenfell Tower in a state of disbelief as the fire raged on. Around 2.30am, my wife and I sought medical attention for our daughter from a paramedic. We were really worried about our daughter inhaling smoke and toxins as we left the building, especially given how young she was. The paramedic was not able to help as they had to attend to others with more serious injuries.

57. My wife, daughter and I continued to my friend James' place on Clarendon Road, who had kindly said we could stay after I bumped into him outside the Tower.

58. At James' place, we tried to sleep, but my daughter kept coughing in her sleep, so we found another paramedic. They told us to get her checked out if we had any concerns.

My wife and I therefore decided to take our daughter to Charing Cross Hospital. We thought it would be quieter than St Mary's Hospital, which was closer to Grenfell Tower. We wanted our daughter checked over as quickly as possible to ensure she had not sustained any injuries from smoke inhalation. According to my daughter's Accident & Emergency Records, we arrived at Charing Cross Hospital around 06.20. My sister's friend Andy gave us a lift to the hospital in his car. He later took us from the hospital to the Rugby Portobello Club to see my mum.

First Time at the Rugby Portobello Club

59. I had never been to the Rugby Portobello Club before 14 June 2017. When I arrived with my wife and daughter, someone asked where we were from before letting in to the Rugby Club.
60. We went downstairs and found my mum in the chaos. There were a lot of people from the Tower and volunteers. There appeared to be a lot of confusion about what had just happened and what would happen next. People were trying to find their loved ones, friends and neighbours to ensure they were safe. Emotions were running high.
61. I remember volunteers or residents marking up people's names and flat numbers on the wall, so we could all see who was safe and who was missing. It was really upsetting when you saw how many people were missing. Later on, a WhatsApp group was set up by residents to enable us to communicate and share information with one another. All of the above was done by the community and residents coming together not through RBKC.
62. There was some food at the Rugby Club, but I had no appetite. The volunteers were fantastic on 14 June 2017, I do not know what we would have done without them. It felt like residents and the community were coming together and doing more than RBKC.
63. I also do not know what I would have done without my best friend, who bought some milk and a bottle for my daughter, so at least we could feed her.

64. At some point in the afternoon, RBKC attended the Rugby Club and took our contact details. I describe more about this at paragraph 92 of my Phase 1 statement. Later someone called me back and said my family had been booked into the Copthorne Tara Hotel in Kensington. I was also told that RBKC would cover our food costs at the hotel. No further information was given. RBKC did not offer to pay for a taxi to get us there and I had no money as I had left my bankcards in the flat. I cannot now remember how we got to the hotel, but someone must have given us a lift.

Emergency Accommodation

65. When we arrived at the hotel, we were allocated two adjoining rooms on one of the lower floors. One for my mum and dad, he flew back from the Philippines arriving on 16 June 2017. There was another room for me, my wife and our daughter. I remember I had to request a baby cot, which was provided by the hotel.

66. It was such a massive relief to have a roof over your head and a place to rest. We were all exhausted and trying to process what had just happened. The location of the hotel ended up being relatively close to the relief centres and other places that we needed to go after the fire, which was good. There were also a lot of other residents from the Tower staying at the Copthorne Tara, which was a great support for me and my family.

67. I did not know how long we would have to stay at the hotel. I remember there were occasions, when our electronic keycard would stop working. I assumed this was because the booking had come to an end, but this was always extended and the keycard reactivated. The hotel staff treated us as normal guests.

68. There were no cooking facilities, so we ate in the hotel every night. At home we would eat Filipino food around five days of the week, but this was not an option at the hotel. I missed my mum's home cooking. The menu was also limited, so you would end up eating the same food over and over again. It was also not always the healthiest.

69. Our daughter was our priority after the fire. At the time, my daughter was on formula milk. I have already described in my Phase 1 statement and above at paragraph 63 how my best friend bought emergency supplies, so we were able to feed her on 14 June

2017. However, we also did not have essentials such as nappies, any change of clothes, toys, a high chair or a pushchair. All the things that are essential when you have a young baby. We were grateful for all the donations received from the general public immediately after the fire, but we still needed to buy many items again as we had lost everything in the fire.

70. It was difficult to sterilise the bottles in the hotel room. Initially we had no choice but to wash them out by hand until we had some money to buy a new steriliser. There was no urgent additional support available from RBKC for our daughter.

71. Space was limited in the hotel room, so it was difficult for our daughter to play. She also struggled to settle as we were in an unfamiliar place and altogether in the same room. Inevitably there would be more distractions when we were trying to get our daughter to sleep.

72. There was also one occasion that we all went down with a stomach bug. It was horrendous being trapped in a hotel room rather than being in the privacy of your own home.

73. Laundry was available at the hotel, but we only found this out about this when we specifically asked after a couple of days. We needed access to laundry facilities as we only had a limited amount of clothes having lost everything in the fire and were wearing donated clothes. It was also important that we had clean clothes and muslins for our daughter.

74. My wife, daughter and I were in the hotel for around six weeks before we moved into temporary accommodation in Cromwell Crescent. We moved into our permanent home on 23 October 2017. My parents were housed separately nearby.

Support from Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

75. Paragraphs 96-99 of my Phase 1 statement deals with my experience of RBKC after the fire. What was striking was their lack of visibility immediately afterwards and how slow they were to respond. It did not appear that they had any contingency plans in

place. I do not remember anyone from RBKC coming out to the hotel initially. I was also not able to get through to anyone from RBKC on the phone after the fire.

76. A couple of weeks after the fire, a social worker came to the hotel to check on my daughter. I was also assigned a key worker, which I deal with below.

77. Most of the information I received was through word of mouth by talking to other residents at the hotel or through the relief centres. I do not remember receiving any leaflets from RBKC about services available either at the hotel or at the relief centres.

Relief Centres

78. All information tended to be based at the relief centres that were set up immediately after the fire near to Grenfell Tower. I found it stressful having to return to the area and go to multiple sources for information and support.

79. Initially I had no choice but to walk to and from the hotel to the different relief centres because we had no money. It would take around 40 minutes each way. My wife and daughter would stay at the hotel as we did not have a pushchair for my daughter.

Rugby Portobello Club

80. I described my experience of the Rugby Portobello Club at paragraph 100 of my Phase 1 statement. It was a place to get information and meet fellow residents. There were donations from the general public such as clothes and toiletries, which we could help ourselves too, which was a blessing as we had absolutely nothing after the fire. There was also food available.

81. The Rugby Club was a place of safety with many residents preferring to be there than their hotels. It was where we came together and held residents meetings. It was also where Grenfell United (GU) started after the woefully inadequate response to the disaster from RBKC. GU gave residents a voice at a time when many felt helpless and they were not being listened to.

82. I was initially going to the Rugby Club once or sometimes twice a day for the first two weeks after the fire, I was then going around once a week.

83. The Rugby Portobello Club was amazing throughout. It was run by volunteers and set up for residents. They took care of us, when we had nothing and at a very difficult time.

The Westway

84. I found out about the Westway from the Rugby Club. The Westway was more formal and to gain access to the building you had to wear a wristband. I know this bothered some of the residents, but it did not concern me.

85. The Westway also had donations including clothes and basics such as toiletries and food. Different organisations had set up stands to help residents. This included reissuing passports and other ID documents, which was a service my family used. TfL also provided pre-paid oyster cards to enable us to use public transport. This was a massive help as it was easier to visit relief centres and to carry any supplies back to the hotel that we may need, which could be heavy. It also meant it was easier to visit friends and family in the neighbourhood. My wife received help obtaining her National Insurance Number. The NHS had counselling services available, although I did not talk to them at this time.

Other Relief Centres & Support

86. I would sometimes go to the Tabernacle for formula milk and clothes for my daughter, which she desperately needed after the fire. I attended the Al Manar Mosque and Latymer Community Church for various meetings held by different organisations following the fire, but I do not remember any details now.

87. Lots of donations started to arrive at the hotel from the general public. After a few days, the hotel set up a room for these. I remember being particularly touched by one couple, who drove from Essex and offered us baby clothes and formula milk. The generosity of the public with both their time and donations was astounding, but this also showed how ill-prepared RBKC was. They did not appear to have a plan in place and were completely overwhelmed.

88. The Curve was set up later by RBKC. I would go to 'stay and play' with my daughter, so she could play with some of the local kids. I would also pick up my post from here, which had been redirected from Grenfell Tower.

Financial Support

89. After the fire, I had no access to money after leaving my bank cards in our flat. I also had no ID to prove who I was. Thankfully, my bank was very good. It was opposite the hotel and once I explained my situation, they arranged for replacement cards to be issued within a couple of days of the fire, which I collected from the branch.

90. In the week after the fire, I found out from the Rugby Club that RBKC were making emergency cash payments to survivors at the Westway. My mum and I went and were given a one off £500 for all of us. I also received £200 cash from public donations at the Rugby Club. Unfortunately, this money did not last long, especially when you had to buy so much for our daughter after everything was destroyed in the fire.

91. I do not think RBKC gave any special consideration to our daughter's welfare or the additional expenses that my wife and I would have to incur to replace essential items for our daughter. This placed an additional financial burden upon us, when I did not have easy access to money because I did not have my bank cards.

92. At the time of the fire, I had been working as a food and beverage cost controller at the Hilton in Park Lane for the last five years. When my colleagues found out what had happened, they arranged a cash collection for my family that was very generous.

93. When I returned to work around two weeks later, my colleagues offered clothes and toys for my daughter, which was very kind. I was concerned to hear from one of my work colleagues that they had tried to make a donation to the Harrow Club, but they were turned away on the day of the fire as they were overwhelmed.

94. I returned to work too soon and was not coping. I tried to push through as we needed the money to rebuild our lives and to support my family, but it was too much. I resigned on 29 August 2017 and my last day at work was on 1 October 2017. I only felt strong

enough to return to full time work in April 2019. I now work in security at Heathrow airport.

95. I will also not forget the generosity of my friends and extended family.

Other Support

96. Since the fire, I think we have had round three key workers assigned to us. The first key worker was allocated to us within six days of the fire and came to visit us at the hotel. I believe she was seconded from the London Borough of Westminster for around one month.

97. The first key worker was quite active and would message to see how we were, keep us updated on meetings and services available and ask if there was anything we needed. She helped us get a pushchair for our daughter. The second key worker was less proactive and not as responsive.

98. I had a separate housing allocation officer, but when we were being rehoused all viewings were arranged via the key worker. I felt at the time that there was a lot of pressure being placed on us to accept the first property offered. This led to us moving into temporary accommodation that was not suitable for a young child given its location on the second floor with no lift.

99. We heard from other families that key workers assisted with applications to the Home Office for their families to come over to support them after the fire. My wife would have benefitted from her family being here, but we did not know about this service at the time.

100. The key workers could be helpful, but I do feel they were forced upon us. We were not asked in advance whether this was something that we wanted or even needed.

Co-ordination and Leadership

101.I believe RBKC and Central Government failed to show leadership following the fire.
We were supported by our community and the general public.

Ongoing Impact of the Fire

102.As already stated, I do not wish to talk about the impact of the fire upon me or my family in such a public document. However, I do worry about our long term health implications following all of the smoke and toxins we must have inhaled on the night of the fire.

103.I have an appointment at a respiratory clinic at St Mary's Hospital in March 2019 to explore this further.

104.The fire has also impacted on my emotional well-being.

Lessons Learned

105.I feel the Grenfell Tower fire happened in part because of failures to listen to residents' concerns and complaints. We were ignored and this cannot be allowed to happen in the future.

106.I hope that the Grenfell Tower Inquiry leads to real change and accountability.

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:



DATE:

28/2/20