

Thank you for allowing the residents of Grenfell Tower the opportunity to inform the Scrutiny Committee of the ill treatment, incompetence and plain abuse that we have experienced at the hands of the TMO during the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works. I am speaking to you in my capacity as a Lead Representative of the Grenfell Tower Resident Association, that was formed through adversity, in the summer of 2015 with the support and encouragement of our local MP, Lady Victoria Borwick.

To back up the testimony of Grenfell Tower residents to the Scrutiny Committee members of our R.A recently conducted a quantitative survey of leaseholders and tenants to measure levels of resident satisfaction / dissatisfaction as a result of the TMO's handling of the Improvement Works. The findings of this survey are truly shocking.

The survey revealed the following facts: 90% of Grenfell Tower residents have reported that they are dissatisfied with the way in which the TMO has conducted the Improvement Works. The survey found that 68% of residents said that they had been lied to, threatened, pressurised or harassed by the TMO. The survey also revealed that 58% of residents who have had the Heating Interface Unit (HIU) fitted in their hallways would like them to be moved to a more practical and safe location.

As a result of the findings of our survey and with the support of Lady Borwick the Grenfell Tower Resident Association is calling for the Scrutiny Committee to commission an independent investigation into the Grenfell Tower

Improvement Works, not least, so as to prevent the traumatic experiences of local residents being replicated when the RBKC undertakes the Improvement Works to other tower blocks in North Kensington.

After extensive consultation between the RA and residents the following main issues as a result of the Improvement Works have been identified;

LACK OF CONSULTATION/RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT.

The residents of Grenfell Tower are calling for an independent investigation into the appalling lack of consultation and meaningful resident engagement during the Improvement Works. From the outset of the project, the TMO have adopted a policy of "divide and rule" that specified that they would not recognise our right to commune and would only deal with residents on an individual basis. It was only through the intervention of our local Councillor and our MP that our right to collective representation was recognised and this led to the forming of the Grenfell Tower R.A. However, since the formation of our RA the TMO have systematically continued to ignore the the voice and wishes of Grenfell Tower residents. A good example of this is the failure of the TMO to respond to residents concerns regarding the illogical and dangerous re-numbering of floor levels within Grenfell Tower and the TMO's abject failure to organise regular meetings with our RA despite our requests for them to do so.

THE SECOND ISSUE IS THE POSITIONING OF HIU IN HALLWAYS.

Another prime example of lack of resident engagement occurred when the TMO decided to locate the HIU in residents' hallways without any prior consultation or warning. We had originally been informed and agreed that the HIU would be placed in our kitchens and over a third of households in Grenfell Tower were so incensed by this oppressive and unfair action of the TMO that they came together to deny access to their properties to TMO contractors.

As a result of this protest by residents and with the support of our MP the TMO finally agreed to locate a number of HIUs in their original position (i.e. in the kitchen). However, many residents are currently lumbered with the HIU being located in their hallways which they believe is a health and safety issue, not least, because the HIU is positioned directly above the electrical fuse box at the entrance to their properties and the fact that the sharp edges of the boxing protrude to cause a live danger to small children.

Given the evidence that over 58% of residents who have had the HIU installed in their hallways want it moved we are asking that the Scrutiny Committee ensures that the TMO are held to account over this matter and that they are made to supervise the re-location of the HIU, from the hallway to the kitchen, of any resident who is currently unhappy with the location of their boiler.

THE THIRD ISSUE: THREATS, HARASSMENT, LIES AND INTIMIDATION.

The Grenfell Tower residents are asking for an independent

investigation into our allegations of threats, harassment, lies and intimidation by the TMO against residents. As a consequence of the TMO's decision to not consult with residents we believe that many residents became the victim of harassment and intimidation by members of TMO staff. Anyone with a vulnerability was targeted by the TMO and residents report that they were told that their tenancy would be under threat and that they would have no hot water or heating unless they granted access to the TMO's contractors. In addition, many residents report receiving totally inappropriate and threatening letters from solicitors acting for the TMO demanding entrance to properties that had never been denied to them in the first place. It appears, from the perspective of residents, that the TMO were determined to simply plough on with the Improvement Works and anyone who got in their way was bullied and threatened without regard. This is backed up by the fact that 68% of residents felt lied to / harassed / pressured or threatened by TMO.

LACK OF RESPONSE TO LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS.

The Grenfell Tower RA is calling for an independent investigation into the way that Peter Maddison (the TMO's Head of Assets and Regeneration) and the TMO in general have dealt with residents' complaints during the Improvement Works. Despite giving explicit assurances to our local Councillor and to the residents of Grenfell Tower that our complaints would be responded to at a meeting on July 11th 2015 the TMO have entirely failed to investigate or take on board our concerns. We believe that Mr Maddison has taken no responsibility to ensure that the legitimate

complaints are followed through and has, instead, worked tirelessly to ensure that any voices of dissent or complaints among residents are crushed without an adequate or appropriate response from the TMO.

POOR WORKMANSHIP AND SITE MANAGEMENT.

The Grenfell Tower RA is calling for an independent investigation into the awful quality of individual works and the general poor management of the Improvement Works project. There are far too many examples of poor quality works and poor site management to list to you individually but some examples include a number of residents who were left without any hot water for months on end, a vulnerable, disabled, non- English speaking women being denied a toilet in her own home for three days and being forced to walk to a friend's in Shepherd's Bush in order to take a shower for three months.

Other examples of poor workmanship and site management include the shoddy design of the communal hallway cupboards, the lack of care and concern by a number of contractors to deliver a proper job inside residents homes, heating pipes being laid across residents carpets, existing decorations inside residents properties destroyed and little effort from the TMO to make good any of the damage they have caused as a result of removing radiators and even one example of workmen using a pet dog's water bowl belonging to a resident as a vessel to drain a toilet system.

In addition, the residents of Grenfell Tower have been greatly inconvenienced by the workmen making use of the lifts at

Grenfell Tower and we are also very concerned that the lifts and communal areas of Grenfell Tower have been badly damaged by the contractors as a result of the Improvement Works. We would like assurances that the Scrutiny Committee will ensure that the floors are returned to their former state, that the lift is serviced and re-fitted (at no cost to leaseholders) and that the communal areas (including the stairwell) are redecorated to a high standard.

COMPENSATION.

The Grenfell Tower RA are calling for the Scrutiny Committee to reassess an adequate level of compensation for residents, as a result of the disruption and damage caused by the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works. The Grenfell Tower RA are aware that residents generally feel the £50 on offer from the TMO is a derisory amount. Residents believe that a standard compensation of £1,500 would be appropriate for all households. This would cover costs incurred for redecoration, damage to property and furniture, replacing curtains and blinds, lost work and holiday (many residents took time off work to then have the TMO's contractors not attend to the work as promised), general inconvenience, etc. As there has been no process in place for people to record specific costs incurred for each individual case, the Grenfell Tower RA believe a standard payment the best solution.

In conclusion, the Grenfell Tower RA are asking the Chairman of the Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee to undertake an urgent scrutiny of the TMO management of the Improvement Works at Grenfell Tower and commission an

independent investigation into the issues we have just raised. Time and again residents' views have been ignored or down played. Despite interventions from our MP, Victoria Borwick, and our ward councillors, our day-to-day concerns have been belittled and side-lined and we have had to endure living conditions that, at times, have been intolerable.

The Grenfell Tower RA understand that the Council will be commencing a major programme of regeneration throughout the borough and that this may involve refurbishment rather than demolition of some other tower blocks. In view of this, it is vital that all the lessons from the Grenfell Tower project are learned, so that the terrible daily living conditions inflicted upon us for so long are not replicated elsewhere.