

In the matter of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Witness statement of Tobias Neville Guise

1. My Name is **Tobias Neville Guise**.
2. This is my first witness statement prepared to assist the Chairman of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
3. I have not previously made any witness statement to the Metropolitan Police Service.
4. I am currently employed by J S Wright & Co. Limited, Atlas Building, 16 Portland Street, Birmingham B6 5RX (hereinafter referred to as “JSW” or the “Company”) as the Associate Director for Health, Safety and Quality. I was employed in that role at the material time.
5. In this witness statement I will provide some background information and details of my involvement in the Grenfell Tower refurbishment in my capacity as an employee of JSW. I am authorised by JSW to make this statement.

Qualifications and Experience

6. I spent much of my early career working as a carpenter in Shropshire, where I also spent 11 years as a Retained Fire Fighter with the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.
[REDACTED] I decided to pursue my interest in health and safety and I obtained a Diploma from the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH).
7. I joined JSW in March 2009 as a Health and Safety Manager. Since joining JSW I gradually became responsible for a growing portfolio of different aspects of JSW’s business and in March 2014 I was appointed to the role of Associate Director for Health, Safety and Quality. I am currently responsible for JSW’s Health and Safety, Installation Quality, Management Systems, Aftercare and Maintenance Departments.

Responsibilities during the Grenfell Tower Refurbishment

8. My involvement with the Grenfell Tower refurbishment project (the “Project”) began when work commenced on site on 6 October 2014.

9. I'm not involved in the tender or design stages of JSW's projects. I get involved once work starts as my portfolio includes Installation Quality. This wasn't originally one of my responsibilities when I first joined JSW but about 3 or 4 years ago I put some proposals to JSW's Board to improve quality to try to prevent what I considered to be avoidable defects and the Installation Quality team followed from that.

Installation Quality

10. I have 2 Quality Engineers working for me who routinely undertake quality audits on all of JSW's projects. They will go to a site regularly, usually at least monthly but sometimes more often if there's a lot of work going on on-site.
11. At the time of this Project the Quality team was in its early stages and I only had one Quality Engineer, Ben Wright. Ben is really hands on and very thorough. He'll go to a site and be on his hands and knees, taking fittings apart to see if they're built properly, inspecting all our works and then reporting back on what he finds.
12. Quality reports will identify any issues and the remedial works necessary to put those things right. Those reports will be sent to the Project Foreman and the Contracts Engineer. Then usually every three to four weeks the Quality Engineer will go back to undertake another inspection and make sure that previously identified remedial works had been completed.
13. If our Quality Engineers identify an issue with a sub-contractor's work then they will include that in the report and a copy will be sent to the sub-contractor to resolve. However, our Quality Engineers can only assess works within their expertise, so works completed by specialist sub-contractors on specialist systems wouldn't usually be included.
14. I have reviewed our records for this Project and found that installation quality checks were completed on:-
- a. 18.12.2014 (TNG/1:);
 - b. 17.02.2015 (TNG/2:);
 - c. 14.04.2015 (TNG/3:);
 - d. 20.05.2015 (TNG/4:);
 - e. 12.08.2015 (TNG/5:);

- f. 02.09.2015 (TNG/6:);
- g. 17.11.2015 (TNG/7:);
- h. 08.12.2015 (TNG/8:);
- i. 11.01.2016 (TNG/9:);
- j. 29.02.2016 (TNG/10:); and
- k. 03.03.2016 (TNG/11:).

15. If our Quality Engineers identify problems coming up often then they will try and address them by arranging training or by getting manufacturers down to site to explain their plant and equipment and how it should be installed correctly.
16. The Installation Quality Department also ensures that all the necessary paperwork is completed on each Project. I run a Foreman League Table which encourages our Foremen to ensure that they're getting important documents completed and returned at the appropriate time. Generally Richard Moss, the Foreman on this Project scored very well as he is very diligent with his paperwork and record keeping.

Practical completion and the defect period

17. As practical completion occurred in stages on this Project we had three distinct defect periods. These were laid out in our practical completion letter for the remaining works on 18 July 2016 (TNG/12:) as follows:-
 - a. Beneficial use of new boiler system: 21.09.15 to 20.09.16
 - b. Existing apartments: 19.12.15 to 18.12.16
 - c. Remaining elements: 18.07.16 to 17.07.17
18. At JSW we deal with defect periods in a unique way. In theory once any particular defect period ends we should stop attending for defects for that particular equipment. However, at JSW we usually respond to all defects on any of our installations right up until the end of the last defect period if they are relatively close together. Even when the final defect period ends I tend to allow a short grace period where our aftercare team will still answer questions and help our client with their transition to taking complete responsibility for maintenance and dealing with defects and problems themselves.

19. The defect period starts after testing and commissioning and practical completion so JSW's aftercare engineers aren't involved in commissioning. However, I try to ensure that our engineers are familiar with our projects before the defect period begins. I now have a schedule for all of my engineers to ensure that they all attend every site at least once and someone from my team is there for first fix, second fix and commissioning. At the time of the commissioning on this Project this system wasn't as well developed, but I still made sure that my Lead Aftercare Engineer, Zeni Canaj had a proper walk round the Project with one of the engineers before the first defect period began.

JSW Aftercare Department

20. I am the Associate Director with responsibility for Aftercare. I have an Aftercare Supervisor who reports directly to me and he manages two Aftercare Administrators, four Aftercare Engineers and one Resident Engineer whose job it is to respond to reported defects and make the necessary repairs.
21. The Aftercare Engineers have different expertise and which engineer we send will depend on the fault that has been reported. Zeni is my Lead Aftercare Engineer and as well as attending routine defects, I will also ask Zeni to attend if a defect is particularly complex or one of the other engineers hasn't been able to attend to resolve a defect after a couple of visits.

JSW Defect System

22. JSW have a bespoke aftercare system that I had built exactly to my design. It gives a full audit trail of all the activity relating to any reported defects.
23. Clients receive our aftercare information and procedures within our practical completion letter which explains how they log a defect with JSW. When a defect comes in it is given a unique computer generated ID and once it has been opened it can't be changed or deleted. It has to be dealt with and closed down properly which allows me to track all defects.
24. JSW's target is to close all routine defects within 5 days. Our target for urgent defects is 24 hours and for emergency defects it is 4 hours. Most of our clients have much longer targets -- urgent is commonly 5 days and routine could be as long as four weeks.

25. I track our defects closely using our bespoke system and will monitor any that go past our service level targets. If defects are open longer than target it is usually because the occupier is away and we can't access the property. I take pride in delivering a superior service compared to standard practice in our industry.
26. The defect system also allows us to indicate whether an attendance by one of our Aftercare engineers is chargeable to the client or not. We cover the costs of genuine defects as part of the contract with our client, but sometimes we attend for issues that aren't actually defects. There is a difference between a genuine defect when something on our installation isn't working as it is supposed to, for example faulty pipework, and damage caused by a resident. In theory the client should pay if we fix damage caused by someone else but I don't always enforce this as sometimes it is more important to deliver a good service to our clients. JSW focus on building and maintaining relationship with a network of clients and I consider that responding to defects effectively is an important part of that.
27. Once a defect is reported and logged on our system an appointment will be made for one of JSW's Aftercare Engineers to attend. Once logged the engineer will receive details of the appointment and the defect reported onto his iPad. Once they have attended the property and resolved the defect they complete their engineer's report on their iPad which is saved on the system. They can also upload photos and anything else that is relevant to that defect.
28. JSW only deal with defects in our own installations. If there are further repairs required to make good damage arising from a fault then the defect will be referred back to our client to complete their part of the works.
29. JSW's clients receive automatic updates on their defects through the system. They will get a copy of the defect log and the engineer report detailing the action taken. They will also receive an alert when their defect is closed.
30. On this Project defect updates were set up to go directly to Rydon Maintenance Limited's ("Rydon") Aftercare team. However, after the events of 14 June 2014 I disabled the automatic alerts to Rydon and closed down the outstanding defects with a note explaining this.

AOV system defects

31. I am aware that JSW received a number of defect reports following practical completion relating to the AOV system cutting out the heating and hot water to the block. I understand that there were some issues with false alarms. Zeni Canaj provides more information about this in his statement to assist the Chairman of the Inquiry.
32. However, a lot of the defects reported actually demonstrated that the AOV system was working properly. For example, on 2 April 2016 JSW received a defect report that there was no heating or hot water in the block. Mick Ferguson, Aftercare Engineer attended and reported that:-

'Found smoke extract fan making loud noise. Accessed the plant room and found nothing working, no warning lights apart from gas valve was off. Set everything to manual, all came on except the boilers. Went to find out what made the fan work, found the fire alarm panel showing alarm is on 15th floor. Reset fire alarm and the fan went off. Checked the 15th floor and there was no evidence of any fire. Went to the plant room and put all back onto auto. Everything was running apart from the boilers.' (TNG/13:)

33. This shows that smoke was detected on the 15th floor which activated the AOV system. The AOV system went into smoke mode and the smoke extract fans kicked in. This sent a signal to the building management system ("BMS") panel to close down the plant in the basement and shut the solenoid valve on the gas main into the basement plantroom.
34. When Mick reset the AOV panel he was able to restart the equipment. I think that the reference to the boilers not restarting was a reference to the old boilers that served the Finger Blocks. I think that they needed to be manually restarted because they were on the old BMS system but they weren't part of JSW's installation so JSW's aftercare engineers didn't deal with those.
35. I am aware that there was also an issue initially with our Aftercare Engineers getting access to the basement plant room as there wasn't a permanent caretaker on site. I therefore agreed with Rydon and the Kensington and Chelsea Tenancy Management

Organisation ("TMO") that they would install a key safe in the bin store with keys to access the basement plant room.

Planned Preventative Maintenance ("PPM")

36. JSW have recently started offering planned preventative maintenance as an additional service. However, when this Project was taking place we only offered reactive maintenance to respond to defects during our contractual defect periods. We weren't equipped to deal with PPM and I understand that this was made clear to Rydon during the tender process, although I wasn't involved in the tender personally.
37. There were some discussions during the aftercare period between us and Rydon regarding responsibility for PPM but we were very clear that this wasn't something we could offer. In the case of work carried out by our specialist sub-contractors on this Project we would not have had the skills or expertise to maintain their specialist systems in any event.

Meeting with Shkelzen (Zeni) Canaj on 14 June 2017

38. On the morning of 14 June 2017 I was already in London with Ben Wright as we had stopped in accommodation the night before. I was aware that Zeni Canaj, my Lead Aftercare Engineer had been to Grenfell Tower to attend to a defect in one of the flats the previous day. I was concerned to make sure that he was okay so I arranged to meet with him that morning.
39. Zeni explained to me that he had attended to the defect in the flat by opening the valves on the resident's IHU and performing the usual checks but as he was walking out of the main entrance to the Tower he bumped into the caretaker who was with someone who appeared to be from the TMO and someone from a fire protection company. They were talking about a fault with the fire alarm system but told him that it was nothing for him to worry about. I made sure that Zeni was okay and recorded a note of our discussion (TNG/14:).

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

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

Signed: 

Dated: 26/10/18