



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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Ron Dobson CBE QFSM FFireE
London Fire Commissioner

Her Honour Frances Kirkham CBE
Assistant Deputy Coroner
Inner Southern District of Greater London
Sent by email to: [REDACTED]

London Fire Brigade is run by the London
Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

Date 30 July 2015

Dear Coroner

I am writing to advise you on the outcome of work the London Fire Brigade (LFB) has undertaken in response to one of the recommendations made as part of your Rule 43 Report following the inquests into the deaths of Catherine Hickman, Dayana Francisquini, Thais Francisquini, Felipe Francisquini Cervi, Helen Udoaka and Michelle Udoaka in the Lakanal fire of July 2009.

Recommendation one in your report dated 28 March, 2013 highlighted the need for residents living in high rise buildings to have a clear understanding of what they should do in case of fire and asked the LFB to consider how it would improve dissemination of fire safety information to achieve effective communication with those residents.

In response we made a commitment to make sure that the knowledge and awareness already being delivered was as effective as possible and that we would work with our partners to share a consistent fire safety message.

In addition, the LFB undertook a 12 month fire safety campaign called Know the Plan. The two audiences targeted were residents of purpose-built flats and maisonettes and their landlords. The campaign focused on two key messages:

One: Know your fire plan: This clarified and explained why professional guidance from the LFB is for people living in purpose built blocks to stay put if a fire is outside their home but inside the building (and equally how they should get out if the fire is inside their home).

Two: Know who to ask for advice: The second message focused on where to find information, who to find it from and how building owners/managers can be prepared to offer fire safety information. The communications sought to clarify any uncertainty about what to do during such fires and influence all partner agencies to use a consistent public guidance message.

YouGov research commissioned by the LFB showed that there was a level of confusion about what people should do in a flat fire or that people hadn't thought about it as different. Raising the question about having a fire plan, to key audiences, was part of the campaign's approach to encourage people to think about their behaviour and whether they should be doing more to stay safe or keep other people safe. To help us do this the LFB launched a dedicated website targeted at both key audiences. This offered advice on what action residents should take in the event of a fire and also provided landlords and housing providers with information about their fire safety responsibilities, as well as providing downloadable materials so they could communicate the correct fire safety information and advice to tenants.

The press campaign used traditional and social media to raise awareness of the issues, as well as promote the Know the Plan website, and this secured coverage in broadcast, print and online media throughout the year. A paid for marketing campaign saw adverts placed across the same media channels. We also successfully worked with the capital's housing providers – London boroughs,

ALMOs and housing associations – to promote the campaign's key messages and asked for their help to reach our target audience.

A second YouGov survey carried out halfway through the campaign showed behaviour change in the form of a 70 per cent increase in the number of people saying they had a fire plan – a good result given there are nearly 1.3 million households living in purpose-built blocks of flats in London.

The number of people who said they would stay put didn't change but we knew that it would be challenging to try and change such instinctive behaviour in such a short period of time. However, the YouGov poll showed that the campaign was being seen and recognised, and we will be taking every opportunity to build on its legacy by continuing to push the stay put messaging via press and social media work and continued engagement with our housing provider partners.

Attached to this letter is a full report on the Know the Plan Campaign which sets out more detail on what the campaign involved and the results we saw. LFEPA Strategy Committee considered this report at a meeting on 21 July and agreed for me to write to you, DCLG, members of the former Lakanal House Working Group and members of the High Rise Forum to share the outcomes of this campaign.

If you would like any further information about this report or the Know the Plan campaign in general please don't hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Dobson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ron Dobson
London Fire Commissioner