

Fire at Lakanal, Havil Street, SE5 on 3 July 2009 – Main report

Role and actions of the LFB Control

Protect – Policy

November 2012

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Annexes (in separate document)

LFB Annex A	– About Lakanal
LFB Annex B	– Comparison between national guidance and LFB policy and training (Gap analysis)
LFB Annex C	– Fire control personnel training document “Keeping people safe”, 1994 (Home Office)
LFB Annex D	– Control officer training presentation and Control officer training hand-out
LFB Annex E	– Reference Information File (RIF) on fire survival (March 2007)
LFB Annex F	– LFB Policy 539: Emergency call management (2007)
LFB Annex G	– Operationally urgent audio traffic related to the Lakanal fire (3 July 2012)
LFB Annex H	– LFB Policy 164: Training (January 2009)
LFB Annex I	– LFB Policy 155: Standard Working Routine (December 1993)

A. Introduction

A.1 About this report

1. This report sets out the part that Control played in the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) response to the fire at Lakanal, SE5 on 3 July 2009. The report provides a background to the work of Control by setting out the government and LFB policy framework, arrangements for the training of Control Officers (CO) and how they are advised of policy and guidance, as well as a description of the working practices in Control.
2. The report reviews the events during the fire at Lakanal focussing upon the management of the incident response within Control. The report analyses the available information, sets out learning points and makes recommendations.
3. This report comes at the end of a long piece of work and builds on a gap analysis between national guidance and LFB policy and training (included in this report as Annex B) which was completed in April 2010. A number of recommendations arising were agreed and have since been actioned and implemented, these are included in the overall recommendations which are summarised at the end of this report for completeness.

A.2 Scope of report

4. The purpose of this report is to ensure that the learning points from the incident have been identified in order to confirm and update policy and training. It does not seek to analyse or comment on detailed actions of individuals or impinge on the Coroner's Inquests.
5. This report focusses on the provision of fire survival guidance to callers who were trapped in Lakanal during the fire, and the communication between the incident ground and Control during the fire. This report summarises the key content of relevant policies, procedures and training in place at the time of the fire. It analyses the impact they had on Control and communications.
6. Recommendations and changes implemented as a result of the investigation into Control's response to the incident are outlined at the end of the report.
7. The report focusses on the relevant policies, training and systems in place on the 3rd July 2009.

A.3 Information used to compile this report

8. A range of information has been used to compile this report as follows:
 - Transcripts of and recordings of 999 calls and operationally urgent messages to Control linked to the Lakanal fire.
 - Recordings of operational urgent messages (OUM) handled by LFB Control during the Lakanal fire.
 - Data about the Lakanal fire from LFB systems.
 - Statements made to the Police by staff on duty in Control at the time of the Lakanal fire
 - Other investigations into the Lakanal fire (e.g. the fire investigation report).

A.4 Definitions used in this report

9. A definition of fire survival guidance is as follows:

Fire survival guidance (FSG) – "... guidance to maintain the caller's safety, provide reassurance to the caller that help and assistance is forthcoming, and [to] strengthen relationship with caller". [LFB policy 539 on emergency call management (November 2007 version)]
10. 'Stay put' advice within the context of FSG is also relevant to this report and a definition is provided here;

Stay put advice – "... high rise flats are built to be fire-proof and most fires won't spread further than one or two rooms. Walls, ceilings and doors will hold back flames and smoke, so if there is a fire somewhere else in the building, you are usually safest in your flat unless you are affected by heat or smoke". [ODPM Fire prevention handbook, August 2005]
11. Definitions for some other key terms used in this report are set out below.

A.5 Control officer knowledge about Lakanal

12. It is important to understand that the actions of COs was driven by the information they were able to obtain from callers, from shared information within Control during the course of the incident, and from information that was provided from the incident ground by incident commanders (ICs) and fire crews.
13. COs generally know nothing about the buildings they deal with, the layout and potential alternative escape routes. The CO will, generally speaking, have only the information obtained from the caller to help her/him understand the situation of the caller.
14. Information about Lakanal is provided in annex A. This is taken from the separate report about the Lakanal fire by the LFB fire investigation team.

A.6 Abbreviations and other definitions

15. The following abbreviations are used in this report:

2GVP – 2 Greenwich View Place (site of the LFB Primary Control at the time of the Lakanal fire).

ACD – automatic call distribution (a means of distributing emergency 999 and other telephone calls received in Control between Control Operators to ensure an even workload).

Appliance – LFB vehicle capable of pumping water to fight fire.

Call sign – alpha numeric identifier for LFB resources (Appliances and officers)

CC – Control Commander (the post senior person on a Control watch)

CLI – caller line identification (a system which helps display the telephone number of the person making a call)

Control staff – The generic term for all staff employed as part of the LFB's Control function

CO – Control Officer

CC – Control Commander

CU – Command Unit

DDI – Direct Dialling In

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government, the government department with responsibility for the fire and rescue service in England (at the date of writing this report).

Duty BCSM - Duty Brigade Control Senior Manager

EISEC – Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (shows the billing address for fixed (land) line telephones)

FSC – Fire Service Circular (government document providing guidance or information for the fire and rescue service)

FSG – see Fire survival guidance (section A4 above)

GIS – Geographic Information System (a means of presenting digital maps and showing locations).

IC – Incident Commander

ICCS – Integrated Control and Communications System

ICP – Incident Command Pump

IMS – Incident Management System (IMS) (the LFB's main system of record for the incidents and calls it attends).

ITC – Incident Type Code (the code used to determine the type of incident when mobilising. The ITC will help determine the PDA for the incident).

MobIS – Mobilising Information System (the LFB's computer system that allows reporting of incident information held on the ProCAD mobilising system. It helps feed data to the IMS).

NIF – New Incident Frame (The ProCAD screen presented to a CO when a 999 call is answered).

Operational urgent calls – The processing of requests by Control staff for incident information from Senior Officers, and notifications from fire stations regarding changes in resource and asset availability. The forwarding of operationally urgent messages to Fire Stations and any deployed resources where appropriate.

ODPM – former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The government department which had responsibility for the fire and rescue service before the current Department for Communities and Local Government.

PDA – Pre Determined Attendance (the resources which are designated in advance on the ProCAD mobilising system to attend different types of incidents and/or locations. The ITC and location will

determine what resources are offered for mobilisation to the Control Officer by the mobilising system).

POM – Principal Operations Manager (the most senior role within Control).

ProCAD – Motorola Professional Computer Aided Despatch mobilising system

PTO – Public Telecommunications Operator (the companies that provide the 999 emergency call service in the UK).

Reference Information File / RIF – Pull up reference files which are in place on the computer-aided mobilising system to assist the CO

RT – radio telephone (part of the LFB's main scheme radio system)

Running call - where Brigade Control is notified of an incident by a fire station or fire appliance because they have come across an incident requiring the Brigade's operational attention

SCO – Senior Control Officer

SOM – Senior Operations Manager (second most senior role within LFB Control)

Spate conditions or conditions of spate - where there is a sudden or sustained increase in the number of emergency calls; call numbers may exceed the numbers of officers available.

SWR or Standard Working Routine – Control's working routine, designed to ensure that operations managers and team leaders are able to plan the work which will be undertaken at Brigade Control level and make best use of the skills and abilities of control room officers in meeting the needs of the Brigade and the community it serves.

Stop or Stop Code or Stop message – Stop messages are sent to indicate to Control, and to any remote monitoring officer, that the number of appliances and personnel attending are sufficient to deal with the incident and that no further emergency mobilisation will be necessary. A stop message only indicates that the incident is under control not that the fire is out, or that people involved have been located, released, or rescued.

Target staffing level – the number of staff identified as desirable to meet the requirements of the Standard Working Routine (SWR) after allowing for staff leave, sickness and other absences.

B. Working practices in LFB Control in 2009

B.1 Overview of functions of Control

16. The London Fire Brigade Control was located at 2 Greenwich View Place, Docklands, E14 (2GVP) at the time of the Lakanal fire. The workload of the Control can be summarised as dealing with:
- **999 emergency calls** – In 2009 Control answered 224,763 emergency calls including duplicate calls (i.e. repeat calls for the same incident) and mobilised resources (i.e. appliances and officers) to 124,441 incidents. These emergency calls included those calls received for LFB attendance through DDI from the Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service, London Underground, etc. plus 'running calls'. A running call is where Brigade Control is notified of an incident by a fire station or fire appliance because they have come across an incident requiring the Brigade's operational attention¹.
 - **Operationally urgent calls** (approx. 400,000 a year) – This includes (a) calls received from Senior Officers responding to paging, updating location, updating their availability (i.e. status), and (b) calls received from fire station operational personnel updating availability of appliances (i.e. status), updating appliance equipment availability, requesting permission to become unavailable for training or other purposes, and (c) calls received from other organisations requesting/providing updates on previously notified calls (e.g. estimated arrival time of police at the incident scene), notifications of bridge/road/tunnel closures, etc.).
 - **Administrative calls** (approx. 20,000 a year) – out-of-hours requests that would normally be received through the Headquarters' switchboard (at 169 Union Street, SE1) or Press Office.
17. In July 2009, 126 personnel were employed as Control staff operating a four watch system. The 126 included five staff detached to other duties, leaving 121 staff dedicated to working in Control. This 121 staff, included Control managers and staff, as well as support staff undertaking administrative and information and communications technology (ICT) roles.

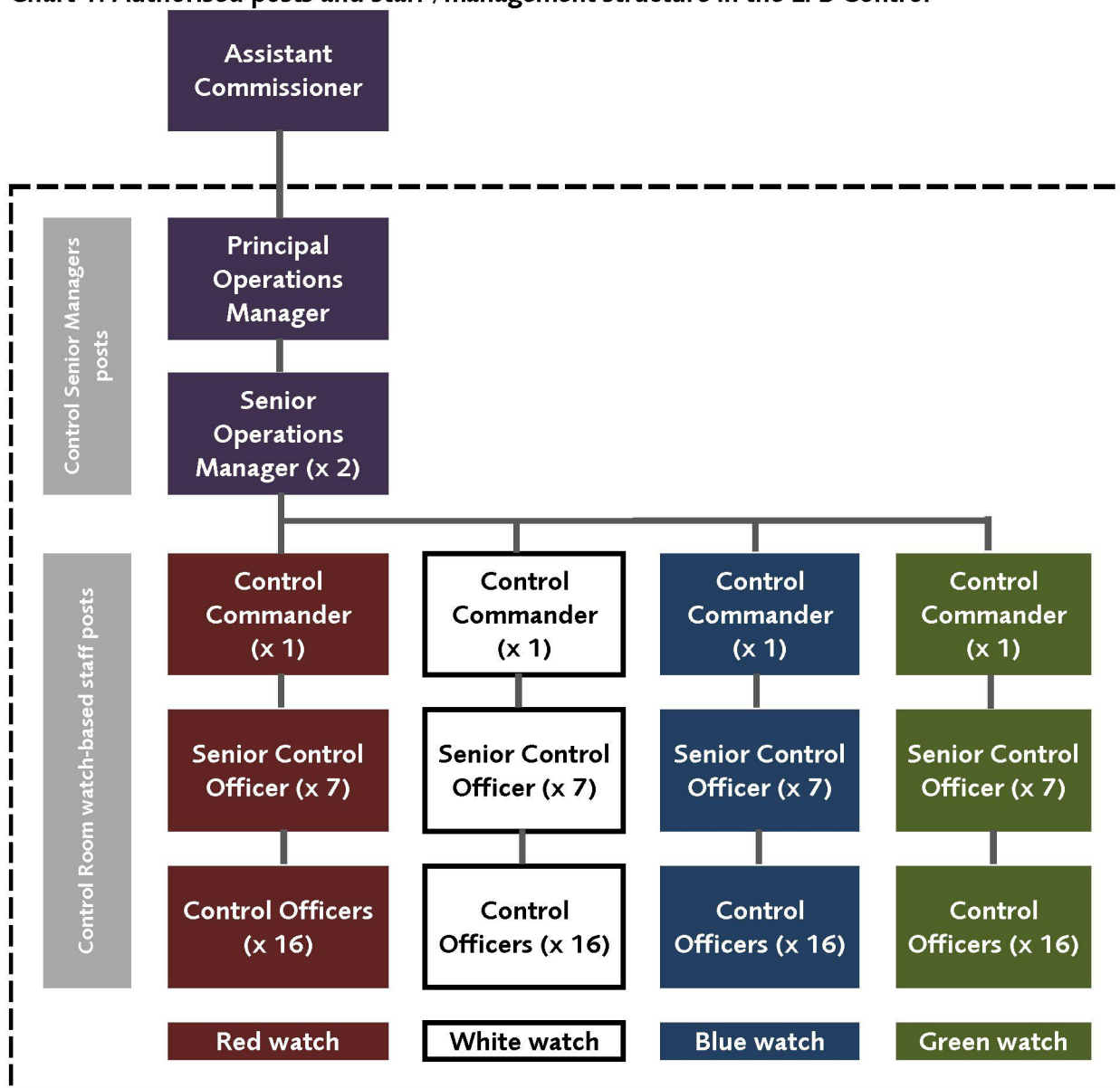
B.2 Staffing and roles in the Control

18. The staffing structure and management arrangements for Control (excluding administrative and support functions) in 2009 is shown in chart 1 below.
19. The Principal Operations Manager (POM) and two Senior Operations Managers (SOMs) were responsible for the overall management of all aspects of Control. The POM reported directly to the Assistant Commissioner.
20. The POM and SOMs worked day duties (not a shift pattern) but were available to support Control and also carried out a monitoring role over a three week 'on-call' rota. This meant that for one week in every three, one manager was designated Duty Brigade Control Senior Manager (Duty BCSM) with 'on-call' responsibilities. These managers were not permanently based in Control. They would be called to assist in the Control during large operations; a six-pump fire was the trigger for the Duty BCSM to be paged (whether at work or at home) but they were not required to attend at this point unless there was some special interest in the incident (e.g. press interest or injury to FF). They are required from 12 pumps.
21. Below the senior management structure staffing in Control was watch-based, with four watches (red, white, blue and green) covering two shifts each 24 hour period. The shift changed at 0800 hours and 1830 hours each day. A Control Commander (CC) was in overall charge of Control operations on each watch. The CC was supported by two Senior Control Officers (SCOs) on each watch with each responsible for the team of Control Officers (COs) who took emergency calls and who mobilised human and physical resources in response to emergency calls. The SCOs supervised the work of COs and also dealt with further requests and urgent tasks generated by an incident. The target staffing level (including supervisory staff) was 14 control staff on duty each shift. Additionally, two SCOs were always at the LFB's fall-back Control located at a separate site in Stratford. At the time of the first call to the Lakanal fire there were 13 COs on duty.

¹ Some typical circumstances are: a person presents themselves to a fire station with an injury that requires first aid treatment; a person informs an appliance crew of an incident nearby while the appliance is away from the station; or an appliance crew find an incident themselves whilst out of the station, e.g. a road traffic collision or even a fire.

22. In addition to the above within control there is a dedicated control training team who are tasked with developing and delivering core training to control room staff and a technical support group who provide an interface between control systems and the requirements of the wider organisation.

Chart 1: Authorised posts and staff /management structure in the LFB Control



23. Chart 1 shows the authorised establishment in Control (i.e. watch-based staff) together with the senior management structure at the time of the Lakanel fire. Each watch had an establishment of 24 excluding the Control Commander. The target staffing level was 14 staff per watch in Control at 2GVP with two SCOs always at a fall-back Control located at Stratford; therefore a total target of 16 staff. This difference between the working establishment and target staffing was to allow for staff leave, sickness and other absences.

24. Staff in Control at 2GVP were role based as follows:

- **Call taker (x 6)** – the call taker received and dealt with emergency and operationally urgent calls, was responsible for updating appliances and officers on the Mobilising system and accessing the CIRUS (chemical information retrieval and update system) and CRR (Central Risk Register) databases for information when required by crews/officers at incidents. During an incident, the CO will also process any messages received (from officers at the incident ground) and circulate them when necessary to monitoring officers, those en-route to the incident scene, the press office, RMC, etc., informing/requesting other authorities when required including alerting the supervisor of any priority messages.

- **Paging operator (x 1)** – informed and ordered, when necessary, senior officers and appliances by pager. Receipt of paging, by officers, ensuring supervisors are kept informed of officers attending incidents. The Paging Operator was also available as a call taker.
 - **Radio Operator (x 3)** – Three COs were assigned to deal with LFB's radio system and each is assigned to one of the three radio channels on the radio system (channels 2, 3 and 4) each representing a specific geographical area of London. They recorded any messages received by radio and transmitted orderings (i.e. ordering appliances to incidents via radio) and messages to appliances/Senior Officers, and to responded to and actioned those communications, where necessary. They would also update appliances /'Senior Officers' availability.
25. It was common practice, when Control was busy, for any role to take an emergency call, including CCs and SCOs.
26. As a resilience measure, two SCOs were always located (24/7) at LFB's fall-back Control located at Stratford fire station where they had the ability to take and deal with emergency calls in the same way they were dealt with in the main Control. Their roles included supporting the Resource Management Centre, located in the same building, during shift changes of the operational fire crews. However, in times of high demand (e.g. conditions of spate or during major incidents) these SCOs would return to the fall-back Control to support the mobilising function under the direction of the CC (based in the primary Control).

B.3 The mobilising process

The 999 call service

27. When a member of the public reported a potential emergency incident (either as a witness or because they were involved in it) by dialling 999 (or 112/ 911) they spoke initially to an operator from either BT or Cable & Wireless. BT and Cable & Wireless – as Public Telecommunications Operators (PTOs) – were obliged, under the terms of their licences, to provide a public emergency call service by which any member of the public (without charge) could communicate as quickly as practicable with any of the local emergency authorities to communicate an emergency. The member of public calling would tell the operator which emergency service they required, or they would describe the nature of the incident to the operator, who would then direct their call to the appropriate emergency service (including LFB). Incidents could also be reported directly to LFB Control by other emergency services control rooms. Calls were also received in Control via the 999 system from auto-dialler devices which provided voice recordings giving details of the incident and location or from running call telephones located outside fire stations (which automatically dial 999/112 when used).

Systems to support call handling

28. The LFB used the Motorola Professional Computer Aided Dispatch mobilising system (ProCAD) to handle the despatching of resources in response to emergency calls and the LFB's response to those calls. ProCAD maintained a record of all actions taken by control staff, as well as automated system actions from ProCAD software. A ProCAD terminal and an Integrated Control and Communications System (ICCS) client was on every desk position in Control, with a Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping tool, which was used by the CO to assist the caller who provided information on the location of the incident and pinpointed it for responding LFB resources.
29. All incoming calls to Control were received through the ICCS and all calls were recorded. The ICCS facilitated ACD which sent emergency and administrative (including operationally urgent) calls to whichever of the available COs the ICCS determined whose turn it is to handle the next call.

The emergency call handling process

30. LFB's emergency call handling arrangements were and remain as set out in LFB policy 539. The version of this policy issued on 14 November 2007 was the version current at the time of the Lakanal fire. The policy described the arrangements for the receipt, processing and management of emergency calls. The Policy is described in more detail in section D1.
31. When an emergency call was connected to the LFB through the 999 system, the caller's telephone number was automatically inserted into the ProCAD system 'telephone number' field by caller line identification (CLI). If the

emergency call was made from a BT 'fixed' telephone, the Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) would display the billing address for the telephone.

32. A CO answered the 999 call saying "Fire Brigade" and as the call was answered the ProCAD mobilising computer system automatically presented a new screen (called a 'New Incident Frame' (NIF)) so that the CO could enter the location and other details of the incident. When a call was received the CO would establish the location of the incident, the incident type, and any other information that may be of help to LFB crews on arrival. The CO would then mobilise the appropriate response based on the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) (see para 34). The system allows the CO to mobilise a response whilst still talking to the caller. This was of particular assistance if the caller was trapped by fire. The CO could then provide fire survival guidance whilst also ensuring that any additional information gained was passed on to crews whilst they were en-route (or at the scene) via the Main Scheme radio.
33. When a new call was answered the CO would enter the location of the incident provided by the caller into the new incident frame (NIF) screen displayed by ProCAD on the CO's computer terminal. The ProCAD system would then perform an address search which would validate the address provided by the caller. The CO would select the correct address which was read back to the caller for confirmation. Depending on the specific information provided by the caller, and the precise nature of the location or building, the number of potential address matches would vary widely. If a large number of matches were returned by ProCAD, the operator would enter additional information to narrow the potential options. Out of those address options, the CO would pick one as the incident location. Once an address was selected, a map of the area would appear on a second screen which allowed the CO, if required, to confirm the location with the caller (e.g. using other street names or landmarks nearby) and see any other incidents occurring in that locality.
34. The 'time of call' is from the first address selected on the ProCAD mobilising system, this time is the 'incident creation time', the system then generates a new incident screen² for the CO to complete. Once the location had been established, it was then necessary to enter information regarding the type of incident. The incident type was entered either as free text or from a list of incident type codes (ITCs); each CO had a hard copy table of ITCs on their control desk. ProCAD would then consider the location and the incident type and would establish the Pre-Determined Attendance for the incident. A Pre-Determined Attendance is a specific response in terms of LFB vehicles and officers. ProCAD contained a number of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDAs) which LFB had specified as the appropriate resources to attend a type of incident (e.g. fire, a spillage of chemicals, a road traffic collision, etc.). These PDAs reflected the LFB's Mobilising Policy (Policy number 412) which set out the response to different types of emergency calls. PDAs were available for approximately 90,000 addresses in London. These PDAs aided the CO by presenting the appropriate attendance for mobilisation to respond to the incident being reported. The CO could accept the ProCAD recommended PDA or, if they had additional information to hand to suggest that more or fewer resources were needed, or perhaps additional specialist appliances were required, the CO could then override that recommendation. However, this override facility was rarely used and would only be used in consultation with a supervisory officer (i.e. the CC or an SCO). The CO would then confirm the attendance and ProCAD would mobilise the necessary resources. It was at this point that the CO advised the caller that Brigade would be on their way and disconnect the call.
35. The CO would ensure that resources were mobilised as swiftly as possible acting on the information available to them and provided by the caller.

Post mobilisation actions

36. Having mobilised the necessary resources the CO would then need to carry out various post mobilisation actions (referred to as 'action plans'). Action plans are comprised of actions such as requesting the attendance of the London Ambulance Service or the police service, requesting fire officers to attend the incident, notifying senior specialist fire officers (e.g. press liaison), informing Control Supervisors and contacting fire appliances that were not in their stations at the time of call by alerting the radio operators, etc. All different incident types (as determined by the ITC) would have an action plan which contained a list of actions relating to the incident, known as 'plan items', that must be carried out by the CO or the supervising SCO. The number and detail of

² Called 'New Incident Frame' (NIF) in ProCAD. Times for calls used in this report are NIF when the first address is selected and the ProCAD mobilising system generates a NIF.

these plan items depended on the type of incident being reported. The larger and more serious the incident, the bigger and more complex the action plans were. The CO that had taken the call would complete all the action plan items before being made available to take another emergency call. It was essential that Control staff completed these actions at the time as most action plans were about notifying other services, or LFB staff, to support satisfactory resolution of the incident.

37. Between taking emergency calls COs had to answer internal calls from officers who were responding to pager alerts sent out by Control. They were also taking other internal calls and would ensure that all alerts generated by the mobilising system were acted upon in a prompt manner. During major incidents a large number of alerts could be produced by the ProCAD mobilising system (e.g. crews requesting additional appliances) and that these were acted upon as quickly as possible. These were prioritised sequentially by the system; if there were two similar requests then the system will prioritise them by the time of receipt.
38. The ProCAD system allowed COs concurrent access to provide more than one CO to simultaneously access the same incident to update information.
39. The ProCAD system had a system of 'alerts', generated by the software, which acted as a reminder to COs to ensure that actions have been fully completed. For example, an alert would occur if an appliance or officer had not notified within a specific period of time that they are on their way to the incident. These alerts allowed the CO to consider additional actions to ensure that tasks were properly carried out. Alerts were graded (high or low) depending on the urgency.

Reference information files

40. The ProCAD mobilising system allowed access to Reference Information Files (RIFs) which supported the CO in dealing with a call; they were like 'help' files. These RIFs provided additional information to COs that would help them to follow the correct procedure. The RIFs covered a range of different topics, including one on fire survival guidance. These additional files were only for confirmation of the more complex incidents/events as they added time to mobilising process.
41. COs were trained to alert a supervisor or colleague that they were taking a fire survival call. The supervisor could then monitor and support the officer or instruct another officer to assist.

Passing information to attending crews/officers and receiving information

42. The information passed to appliance crews which were mobilised to attend (i.e. the mobilising message sent to the Station printer; sometimes called the 'call slip') would depend on what information was being taken from the caller. The 'call slip' usually included the address and incident type only, but could include additional information such as 'persons believed involved' to assist the mobilised crews.
43. The primary method of communication between appliances and Control was by radio telephone (RT); mobile or fixed line telephones were also used but mainly with officers or Command Units (CU). Appliances were allocated a radio channel to pass information, such as updating their availability (i.e. 'status'). In order to monitor resource movements and receive any requests from appliances at an incident COs monitored three separate radio channels with the facility to use an additional channel should one become inoperable. The three radio channels covered different geographic areas; the one covering the location of the Lakanal fire in Peckham was M2FS (Southern Area). COs used the radio through the ICCS which has the facility to combine the radio channels to enable one CO to monitor more than one channel at a time. During the initial stages of an incident, an Appliance is designated as initial command pump (ICP)³ and, until a CU is on scene, the ICP will provide the communications link between Control and the IC. The appliance main scheme radio would be monitored, as risk critical information may need to be passed to the IC from Control.
44. As soon as resources had been mobilised, and the incident was therefore in progress, information was normally passed to the ICP until relieved, at larger incidents, by a CU. A CU would be mobilised to any incident requiring four or more fire appliances (and in some other specified circumstances).

³ In accordance with LFB policy 541 *Command support at incidents* and policy 238 *Incident command procedures*, the Incident Command Pump will be the focal point at an incident, until relieved by a Command Unit. The ICP will provide the communications link between Brigade Control and the IC. The ICP will be established as soon as possible whenever more than one pumping appliance is in attendance.

45. When it was difficult to contact the IC e.g. in the initial stages of a fire, in order to pass key or critical information to the incident ground the CO could attempt to contact any appliance attending the incident through 'all mobiles' as happened in the early stages of the Lakanal fire. All appliances shared the same radio channel so that fire crews could hear messages about any incident even if they were not directed at their specific appliance.
46. The radio operator in Control was in charge of receiving radio messages from the incident ground and for passing information to the incident ground by radio. Any member of Control staff who was handling calls could enter the details of a message to be passed to the incident ground on ProCAD and send it to the 'alert list' (i.e. a list containing actions for the COs to carry out, including notifications, dealing with appliances not responding, messages and priorities for appliances via radio) which was being monitored by the relevant radio operator. Any messages given to the radio operator from the incident ground could be recorded on the ProCAD incident record by using a radio message frame on the ProCAD system. In addition, all radio calls were recorded for future reference.
47. In the initial stages of an incident control contact the pumping appliances via radio. Crew and Watch Managers would normally be contacted by the radio call-sign of the pumping appliance they were riding (initial command pump) or if contact could not be established, by any other appliance in attendance. The reason for non-contact was normally due to the initial crews being totally committed to rescue situations and firefighting operations. Once the incident escalates Station Managers and above can be contacted via the initial command pump or via a CU (if present at the incident scene) or by pager or mobile telephone.
48. Incident mobilisations for principal/senior officers were transmitted via pager; the pager message provided limited incident details, including incident type, incident description, location, map reference and station ground. The officer would then contact Control either by mobile or landline telephone or by radio to confirm receipt of the mobilisation and to gather any further available relevant information. At this point, the officer status is changed by the CO to confirm that they are proceeding to the incident. Once the officer has arrived at the incident, they are able to update their status from their hand-held radio by data exchange which, in turn, updates the mobilising system. As described earlier, in the event of a system failure or the mobilising message not being acknowledged, an alert was automatically generated to advise the CO.

C. Government and national guidance/policies on fire survival

49. This Section of the report looks at the national guidance available on fire survival including the related recommendations about the training of COs. It reviews each of the national documents that were in place at the time of the Lakanal fire in 2009.
50. This guidance was variously issued by different government departments as responsibility for the fire and rescue service in England changed over time (i.e. the Home Office (until May 2001), the Department for Transport, Local Government and Regions leading to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (until May 2006) and currently the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

C.1 Dear Chief Officer Letter 2/1987 'Training of Control Room Staff' (DCOL 2/1987)

51. Before 1987 no national guidance on the scope or content for training for fire control room staff existed. In June 1985, the Joint Training Committee of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) set up a working party to review the training of control room staff. This review led to the publication of Dear Chief Officer Letter (DCOL) 2/1987 "Training of Control Room Staff" by the Home Office in 1987 which included formalised training for Control staff. The DCOL is sometimes referred to as Fire Service Circular 2/1987.
52. The DCOL 2/1987 contained advice on training for fire control staff, including recruitment and continuation training with examples of syllabuses, a qualified officers test and assessment criteria. It also referred to the need for Control staff to be familiar with the principles of fire safety: '... the aim being to equip staff with the basic knowledge which would enable them to give advice; - get out, close the doors etc.'
53. DCOL 2/1987 did not include any advice or information on the giving of fire survival guidance by COs.

C.2 Fire Service Circular 10/1993 'Training of Fire Control Staff'(FSC 10/1993)

54. In June 1991 the Joint Training Committee of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) agreed to set up a working group to review and update DCOL 2/1987. Having reviewed the DCOL the working party concluded that the majority of the recommendations within the document remained valid and required little change. However, the review made a number of recommendations which were commended to brigades in a new Fire Service Circular (FSC) 10/1993 called 'Training of Fire Control Staff' issued in October 1993.
55. FSC 10/1993 referred to the 'Dear Chief Officer Letter (DCOL) 2/1987 and the advice it contained on training for Control staff and the need for Control staff to be familiar with the principles of fire safety, the aim being to equip staff with the basic knowledge which would enable them to give advice; - get out, close the doors, etc. FSC 10/1993 acknowledged that:

"While this approach is adequate in the vast majority of cases, in some cases a different approach may be needed. In the situation where, for example, the caller is prevented from escaping due to location (such as high rise flats) and/or smoke density, or for some other reason is in danger, the operator taking the call may need to give very specific safety instructions in addition to establishing the location of the incident for mobilising purposes. Additionally, in circumstances such as these a fire control operator may need to take into account that the normal procedure of calming the caller may not be appropriate, and may even be dangerous in some circumstances."

56. For the first time guidance on the training of fire control staff in providing FSG was included. The Circular says:
"Recruits with between 8 and 12 weeks of service who have gained some initial call handling experience should be given further training in emergency call handling techniques and fire survival guidance, to enable them, when dealing with callers who are trapped in domestic accommodation, to make a proper assessment of the situation, give appropriate advice where necessary and otherwise assist in minimising the hazard to the caller."

57. Continuation training is mentioned. It said "Following completion of initial training, when the recruit is attached to the watch, further (continuation) training should be carried out progressively with the aim of improving skills and knowledge gradually." The Circular provided an example of an appropriate training programme at Appendix B (Emergency call handling techniques – fire survival guidance) which says that training :
- "... should be presented jointly by fire control and fire safety personnel and should comprise a lecture session of 1 to 1½ hours followed by a practical role play session to confirm the instruction."
58. The subjects to be included in the training were: an introduction to fire safety, the effects of fire, escape from fire, assessing the situation, and giving advice. Suggested training aides included 'tape of an incident, the video "The Front Room Fire" or similar film showing the effects of a typical domestic fire, Home Office leaflets "A Fire Survival Guide" and "Fire Safety Advice for Disabled People"'. It added that "... a selection of suitable role play scenarios should be prepared for practical sessions."
59. The Circular recommended that "... on-watch refresher training should be given to all fire control staff on a systematic basis, i.e. it should be both scheduled and monitored. The subject matter will depend on local circumstances but emphasis should be given to little-used procedures or areas of weakness."

C.3 Fire Control Personnel Training document 'Keeping People Safe' 1994 (supports FSC 10/1993)

60. The Home Office issued a Fire Control Personnel Training Package 'Keeping People Safe' to compliment FSC 10/1993. Although the training package is undated it was issued after April 1994; a letter accompanying it referred (in the past tense) to a seminar at the Fire Service College in April 1994. The training package is included as LFB Annex C.
61. The Fire Control personnel training package (1994) set out the training requirements for all control staff in Fire Survival Guidance (FSG), with an accompanying example of an appropriate training programme. The training package (which included a structured layout for the training presentation and a list of training aids) contained:
- A. Introduction
 - B. Training Notes entitled 'Emergency call handling techniques Fire Survival Guidance'
 - C. Prompt – aide memoire
 - D. Home office leaflets
 - E. 15 overhead projector Transparencies.
62. The training package included an explanation of a call requiring FSG. The key parts of the explanation for a caller who is trapped by fire in domestic accommodation and in a distressed condition:
- get the caller out of the premises to safety.
 - if trapped by fire and in danger, give some constructive advice to minimise the hazard to the caller, in addition to offering reassurance.
 - advice is given only on those rare occasions when the situation demands it.
63. Section two of the training package on 'Call Handling Techniques' acknowledged that experienced COs are generally proficient in extracting relevant information from callers who may be in a distressed or excitable state, and defined these call handling techniques as being 'proactive' and 'reactive'. The training package identified that the CO can be "... entirely reactive if the caller provides the necessary information in the correct order without prompting...". It also said "Where a caller is in danger it is likely that the Fire Control Operator may have to adopt a fully proactive technique taking control of the situation".
64. The training package acknowledged the possibility that a bond may develop between the member of Control staff and caller but stressed that "Prolonging the attachment and providing reassurance without giving advice may lead the caller to remain in a place of danger when escape might have been possible".
65. The training package acknowledged that "overall... the giving of recognised fire safety advice contained in Home Office literature... would be difficult to criticise after the event". At the time, these materials would have been the leaflets "A Fire Survival Guide" and "Fire Safety Advice for Disabled People" (referred to in Fire Service Circular 10/1993, appendix B); these are no longer available although alternative materials are.

66. The training package outlined toxic effects of smoke on callers and the likely change in the behaviour of the caller this may cause.
67. The training package included fire safety content (which is indicated to be delivered by a fire safety instructor). The package included an outline of effects of fire (i.e. flames, heat and smoke), escape from fire (including sections on houses, houses in multiple occupation, flats and maisonettes). With particular relevance to the Lakanal fire the advice said (at section 5.3) about 'Flats and maisonettes':
- "These consist of a number of self-contained dwellings within a building served by one or more common staircases. Lifts may also be installed but these should never be used in a fire situation. A small number of such dwellings will normally open onto a common balcony or landing which will in turn be served by one or more stairways.*
- Individual dwellings will generally be separated from each other and from the common landing by fire resisting construction. In multi-storey flats, the staircase will usually be separated from the landing by fire resisting construction. Whilst a fire in an individual dwelling may smoke log the common landing it should not directly affect adjacent dwellings or the protected stairway.*
- A maisonette has two levels and its own staircase within the individual dwelling and some alternative escape route is normally provided from the level which does not contain the main entrance. These alternative exits may lead onto a balcony or corridor giving access to a common stairway."*
68. The training package emphasised that the CO should offer the general advice "Get out and stay out" and only where this not immediately possible will further advice be appropriate, i.e.
- escape
 - protect
 - rescue
69. The introduction to the training package recommended that trainee COs receive their initial FSG training between eight and twelve weeks of joining the fire brigade. This was to allow for "some initial call handling experience to be gained first". It also specified that refresher training for all control room staff should be undertaken at intervals of no more than 12 months.
70. The introduction to the training package emphasised that the COs first priority should always be to complete the mobilisation and get the caller out of the premises to safety whilst recognising that if it is clear that "a caller is trapped by fire and in danger, it is desirable for FCOs [Fire Control Officers] to be in a position to give some constructive advice to minimise the hazard to the caller, in addition to offering reassurance...".
71. The training package also accepted that the approach the CO adopts will depend "... on the nature of the person and their immediate situation" and that "... some assessment of the caller will have to be inferred from the caller's voice, manner and response to questions". It stated that before any advice can be given it is necessary to obtain some basic information about the circumstances and the type of property involved.
72. The training package also provided information on:
- Assessing the situation – in order for the appropriate advice to be given information will need to be obtained if it is not already apparent.
 - Giving advice on
 - escape
 - protection
 - rescue
73. The training package went on to verify the use of role-play "... allowing an assessment of the students' understanding in establishing whether the caller can get out and stay out, recognise unusual responses, determine the location of the caller and follow a sequence of prompts devised to give appropriate advice to caller."
74. The four phases of call handling as set out in the Fire Control training package (1994) are very briefly summarised here:

- **Assessing the situation** – The Fire Control training package (1994) said that before advice is given “information will need to be obtained if it is not already apparent.” It said “Can the caller escape to safety immediately? If not, what is preventing this? (e.g. fire smoke, locked doors, obstruction, incapacitation)”, and “Is the person calling from the house or flat on fire?”, “What type of property is involved?” and “Which room is caller in?”, “Can the caller reach another room, from which escape might be easier?”, and “What materials are available for use in that room to assist with survival or escape?”.
- **Giving advice - escape** – “The standard advice to persons involved in a fire situation is to ‘GET OUT AND STAY OUT’”. It said “Initial efforts should concentrate on ascertaining whether the caller is able to escape by their own efforts using their normal exit route or perhaps by alternative routes or techniques which they have not tried or considered. Clearly the best advice will be for the caller to escape from the property immediately where this is possible. If the normal exit route has been found to be blocked, ascertain if alternative exit routes e.g. secondary staircase, back door, balcony or windows opening onto roof extensions”. There is nothing specifically in the guidance about the circumstances in which the caller might ‘stay put’ and not try to escape.
- **Protection** – “Once it has been established that escape is not feasible then advice should turn to protecting the caller as far as possible from the effects of fire and smoke. As soon as possible the caller should be advised to get down on the floor to avoid the worst of the heat and smoke. As many doors as can be reached between the caller and the fire should be closed. If smoke is penetrating around the door edges these may be sealed with clothing or bedding. They may also be wetted if a supply of water is available. Reassuring the caller will be beneficial as people breathe more slowly when calm making them less susceptible to the effects of smoke. If a window is available this should be reached and opened.”
- **Rescue** – “Once measures have been taken to protect the caller, information can be obtained and advice given to assist any subsequent rescue operation. Effective communication between the Fire Control Operator and attending appliances. As far as possible precise information about the location of both the fire and the caller should be obtained and passed on to the attending appliances.”

C.4 Fire Service Manual: Volume 1 – Fire Service Technology, Equipment and Media – Communications and Mobilising 1998 (Control Staff — Training Competence and Promotion)

75. Volume 1 of the Fire Service Manual (Fire Service Technology, Equipment and Media – Communications and Mobilising) is described as being “... invaluable to brigade Communications Officers and all personnel who are or become intimately involved in the planning, procurement, implementation and operation of mobilising systems, communications systems, radio and fixed and mobile communications”. Most of the Manual, which was issued in 1998, is of a technical nature. However, appendix 1 covered “Control Staff – Training Competence and Promotion”. It said “Training should be appropriate to the position held and must develop and consolidate the skills, knowledge and attitude of personnel to allow them to deal with a wide range of situations both efficiently and safely...”.
76. The Manual set out a strategy which identified all training requirements and set out the provisions and guidelines to comply with these requirements. It said:

“Through training of personnel, the Brigade will respond to the needs of those it serves by defining training needs and providing the most effective means of fulfilling those needs, thereby providing a quality service. Training for control personnel has always been hindered by the small numbers of staff available, and the need to maintain cover in the Control Centre. Training is usually watch related and carried out at the normal place of work, this ensures the maximum number of personnel available. For these reasons Brigades should consider the provision of a Training Officer, and/or Watch training days away from control.

Operator Training should ensure that potential problems for the Operator are kept to a minimum, the emphasis on call-handling training needs to address primarily the issue of how to handle an individual caller and what precisely to say to callers, especially those who appear to be in danger.

At all times the operator must:

- Listen — do not make assumptions.
- Be firm but polite.
- Be in control — interrupt callers if necessary to ask questions.
- Keep questions simple and unambiguous.
- Repeat address details to confirm they are correct — care should be taken not to do this 'parrot fashion' or at the same speed as typing. This sounds very inefficient and does not inspire confidence.
- Reassure the caller when necessary but do not state that the Fire Brigade is 'on the way' until sufficient information has been obtained for crews to locate the incident. Informing a caller that appliances are en route may prompt them to hang up prematurely and result in a delay locating the incident.
- Remain calm, do not reflect panic or anger.
- Keep the tone of voice normal, even if having to speak louder.
- Speak clearly.
- Be prepared to rephrase questions to obtain details.
- Do not use Fire Brigade terminology.
- Do not hesitate, or tell the caller to 'hold on' or 'bear with me' or use any other phrases or slang that may indicate lack of confidence or not being in control of the situation."

77. The Manual reiterated the earlier advice about reactive and proactive techniques for dealing with callers and says:

"Where the caller is in danger, however, there may be a need to adopt a fully pro-active technique by:

- Providing relevant fire safety advice aimed at minimising the hazard to the caller; and
- Providing reassurance to the caller."

78. On fire survival guidance the Manual said:

"Fire Control Operators should have some basic knowledge of fire survival techniques. The first priority must always be the mobilisation of appliances followed by the standard fire safety advice —

GET OUT AND STAY OUT".

Only when the caller or the situation clearly requires further intervention by the Operator to enable survival should additional guidance be offered. This guidance should be limited to standard fire survival advice suitably adapted to the situation, following an assessment based on information obtained from the caller.

The details obtained from a caller have to be as informative as is necessary to enable crews to locate incidents as quickly as possible. A few extra seconds questioning the caller may save minutes in actually locating the incident."

79. Appendix 1 also covered brigade-based initial recruit training and sets out the skills for a fully qualified fire CO. It dealt with Watch refresher training and said:

"In addition to the basic core skills all Control personnel should undergo continuous on-watch refresher training. This training will be carried out on a systematic basis, both scheduled and monitored. The subject matter will depend on local circumstances with emphasis being placed on little used procedures."

80. Finally, appendix 1 of the Manual said that a strategic document on Standards of Competence for Control Centre staff was issued to Brigades in 1997. These Standards were produced by a steering group comprising of experienced control personnel and drawn from brigades representing the variations of size, risks, geographical make up, etc., in the UK. It says that the Standards of Competence should be used by all control staff to evaluate their own performance and to identify personal development needs. The Manual said:

“Brigades can use the functional outcomes contained in these standards to 'role-map' the work and training needs of all watch related control personnel. In total there are 22 functions and 57 elements used to describe the full range of work carried out by control personnel.

Training provided for control personnel should be structured, and delivered, to provide each individual with the knowledge, skills and attitude required to fulfil the functions contained in their role-map. Once the individual has demonstrated that she or he can perform to the standard described in the functional outcomes she or he can be described as competent in acquisition.

In order to ensure that competence is continuously and consistently being applied, a process of continuous work place assessments should be provided. Assessments should be conducted by Watch officers who should routinely assess their staff to ensure that there is a consistent demonstration of competence.”

81. The Manual made a direct reference back to the “full guidance on 'Training in Emergency Call Handling Techniques and Fire Survival Guidance' [which] is contained in the Fire Control Personnel Training package issued to complement Fire Service Circular 10/1993.” The Manual said “Many of the recommendations in FSC 2/1987 remain valid. However, further (and updated) recommendations are made in FSC 10/1993”.

C.5 Fire & Rescue Service Circular 54-2004 “Emergency Call Management”

82. Whilst FSC 10/1993 remained an extant document⁴, the Fire and Rescue Service Circular 54-2004 'Emergency call management' was published by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in December 2004 and “...provides advice and good practice developed jointly by CFOA and HMFSI to assist effective emergency call handling by the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)”. The Circular did not make any reference to previous national guidance.

83. The Circular was the result of a review of emergency call handling commissioned in 2001 by the then Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA)⁵, and supported by HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMSFI). This review evolved into the Emergency Call Management Project with the following objectives:

- “To improve the quality of emergency call handling by CRO
- To improve the quality of information to responders
- To reduce the risk to responders
- To provide appropriate safety advice to the public
- To review the guidance on “Training in Emergency Call Handling Techniques and Fire Survival Guidance” as contained in the Fire Control Personnel Training Package issued to complement Fire Service Circular 10/93, and
- To aid dynamic mobilising to ensure an appropriate response is made to each call.”

84. The Circular was issued at the time when the fire and rescue service had a new statutory framework (the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004) and a new duty to respond to emergencies other than fires. The Circular emphasised that it was important that COs have the right training and guidance “... for the new role that they will undertake during the emergency call management process”. This 'new role' is presumed to be in respect of the new duty under the 2004 Act to respond to emergencies other than fires.

85. The Circular recommended a generic three stage Emergency Call Management Protocol (ECMP) which was set out in detail in Annex A of the Circular and is a 'scripted' process:

- Stage One – focused on primary questions, which aided the mobilising decision.
- Stage Two – provided assessment questions that helped build a picture of the incident, aided mobilising decisions, and assisted the safety of responders and the caller.

⁴ Email from Howard Jones, Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's unit (Department for Communities and Local Government) to LFB dated 17 February 2010 confirms that FSC 10/1993 “is extant”.

⁵ now known as the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)

- Stage Three – gave pre arrival advice designed to assist the safety of the caller and the public at scene.
86. Stage 2 was concerned with establishing the safety of the caller and recommended a review of the assessment by a CO when dealing with an emergency call, in light of further information obtained. In annex 2 of the circular the aim of Stage 2 is about "Obtaining specific information to aid continuous assessment and build a more detailed picture of the incident. This will assist in maintaining the safety of responders, the caller and other members of the public at the scene."
87. The objectives are stated as:
- "Identify the hazards and risk associated with the incident.
 - Gain critical information for resources attending the incident.
 - Review assessment in light of further information.
 - Continue to assess the call.
 - Aid the decision as the type of incident, scale and size of response, linked to FRS policy for attendance.
 - Enable operator to provide appropriate safety advice."
88. There was a rider called "Questions – Assessment" where the circular states "This should only be carried out when it has been established that the caller considers they are in a place of safety and the CRO believe that the caller is able to continue with the call. The safety of the caller is paramount and the caller should be advised that:
- They must remain alert as the situation could change quickly
 - If it becomes unsafe to continue they must end the call
 - The assessment may include ascertaining the number of people affected and/or if there are any hazards."
89. There was also a flow chart at paragraph 7.4 which depicted the process of a call and recommended revisiting stages and reviewing/amending initial decisions as necessary.
90. The Circular outlined (in Annex D – Fire Call prompts) the specific details of fire survival guidance prompts for the CO to be used at Stage Three of the ECMP . It said "only give advice appropriate to the situation" and provided these prompts:
- "Assess the situation**
- What is preventing the caller escaping?
 - Alternative means of escape?
 - Location of caller/other persons in building
- Assess the caller**
- Age
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Mental or physical disability
- Protect caller**
- Open window
 - Keep low
 - Keep smoke out/seal door edges
 - Breathe slowly
 - If caller is in immediate danger, advise to open window, drop bedding or cushions to the ground to break fall, get out feet first and lower themselves to full length of arms before dropping.
- Assist Rescue**
- Caller to make noise
 - Mark window/location"

91. Annex D added:

“Consider that:

- You may have to revisit Stages One and Two [of the ECMP]
- You may have to revert to Stage Two
- You may have to use another generic call type
- No further action required – call is complete.”

C.6 CLG publications and other government fire safety advice

92. Alongside the main policy documents and guidance that were aimed at the fire and rescue service management, there were other government documents available providing advice directly to members of the public. These are included to provide a picture of the pattern of advice that existed in 2009 and, where appropriate, differences and any contradictions in advice provided is highlighted. These materials are important as the Fire Control training package 1994 says that the giving of recognised fire safety advice contained in literature would be difficult to criticise after the event.

93. The following are the relevant government fire safety documents :

- **“Make your plan. Get out alive”**, Home Office, September 2000 and ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), September 2002. Leaflets giving escape advice. In a section ‘When it’s safer to stay in your home’ it says “If the stairs in a block of flats are blocked by fire or smoke, don’t use the lift. Stay calm and go back inside your flat – it’s designed to keep fire out”. This leaflet was available in a range of languages.
- **“Fire safety in the home”**, ODPM, 2003. This was one of four booklets (the others being “Smoke Alarms”, “Plan Your Escape” and in January 2004 “Escaping from a High Rise” – see below). Check “The Fire Code”.
- **“Escaping from a high rise”**, ODPM, 1 January 2004. One of a series of leaflets in the ‘Get Smart! Get Equipped! Get Out!’ fire safety range. It said that high rise flats are built to be fire-proof and most fires do not spread further than one or two rooms. It recommended (a) having escape plan; (b) choosing an escape route; and (c) choosing a safe room “if you cannot escape, you are safer in a room, lobby or corridor as they are protected by fire-resistant walls”.
- **“Fire prevention handbook”**, ODPM, August 2005. Key information which the LFB later used was based on this document. In this booklet there is a section on escaping from a high rise building (pages 47-51). It says on page 47; “... high rise flats are built to be fire-proof and most fires won’t spread further than one or two rooms. Walls, ceilings and doors will hold back flames and smoke, so if there is a fire somewhere else in the building, you are usually safest in your flat unless you are affected by heat or smoke”. Page 50 ‘If Your Escape Route is Blocked’ says:

“If the Fire is Inside Your Flat:

- Get everyone into the safe room you have chosen
- Put cushions, bedding and so on at the bottom of the door to stop smoke getting in
- Phone 999, giving your address and the number of your flat
- Open the windows. If you feel in serious danger, wave a sheet out of the window, so the Firefighters know where you are

If the Fire is Outside Your Flat:

- Seal your front door with tape if you can, as well as cushions and bedding, to stop smoke getting in
- Close any ventilators
- Phone 999 giving your address and number of your flat”.

Page 51 says “If There is a Fire - Get Out, Stay Out and Call 999”.

- **“Fire safety in the home”**, DCLG, 14 January 2008. This document had a section in it called ‘How to Escape from a High Level Building’.

94. In 2007 DCLG reviewed all their literature and a consultative group/panel was set up comprising representatives from different brigades. In 2008, DCLG advised fire brigades, including the LFB, to stop producing separate fire safety leaflets which duplicated information produced by DCLG. A Fire and Rescue Service Circular "Fire Kills – National Fire Safety Advertising and Targeted Campaign Plan 2008/2009" published by DCLG in April 2008 (FSC 04/2008). At paragraph 3.1 it says "Following our 2007 review of the "Fire Kills" literature, we will produce a new suite of material during 2008, which will be freely available to fire and rescue services from the CLG distribution centre at Wetherby. Details of the available literature will follow shortly".
95. In 2008 DCLG did rebrand their suite of literature to look the same as 'Fire Safety in the Home'. As part of that review, the 2004 booklet 'Escaping from a High Rise' was discontinued and information subsumed into the 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet although the advice is not provided in the same detail.
96. Although not government guidance, in October 2008, the British Standards Institution issued **BS9999:2008 "Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings"**. Under the heading 'General fire safety advice for occupiers of dwellings in residential buildings' it says "High-rise flats are built to be fire-resisting, and most fires won't spread further than one or two rooms. Walls, ceilings and doors will hold back flames and smoke, so if there's a fire somewhere else in the building, you're usually safest in your flat unless affected by heat or smoke".
97. Specific materials on the directgov website relevant here are:
- **directgov website** (Home and Community – Support and safety in your home), February 2009 says [snapshot taken on 10 February 2009 of web content selected for preservation by the National Archives]. This web page says, in relation to 'high rise escape' – "Living above the first floor doesn't make you any more at risk from fire. Most of your planning should be the same as homes at ground level, but there are some key differences ... high-rise flats are built to be fire-proof – walls, ceilings and doors will hold back flames and smoke; if there's a fire elsewhere in the building, you're usually safest in your own flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you...".
 - **directgov website** (Home and Community – Support and safety in your home), April 2010 says [snapshot taken on 8 April 2010 of web content selected for preservation by the National Archives]. In the section on 'Escaping from a high rise building', the format is slightly different from the February 2009 version and says: "... if there is a fire elsewhere in the building, you are usually safest in your own flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you. The last sentence is an addition.

C.7 Conclusions on national guidance and other related government advice

98. Between 1987 and 2004 the government issued five documents to fire services containing guidance on answering emergency calls including fire survival guidance. The 1993 circular and accompanying 1994 training package are more specifically about FSG whilst the 2004 circular was more generic in terms of call handling and FSG.
99. During the same period the government published a further series of leaflets giving fire safety advice to the public, these were subsequently reviewed between 2007/2008.
100. The guidance documents issued to the fire services emphasised that the generic advice is "get out/stay out". The documents also set out FSG in a generic way with emphasis being on fires in domestic houses where you can drop from 1st floor windows etc. It describes within flats and maisonettes that whilst a fire in an individual dwelling may smoke log the common landing it should not directly affect adjacent dwellings or the adjacent stairway (Fire Control Personnel Training Notes 1994).
101. There is mention in the government's training package (Fire Control Personnel Training Notes 1994) that COs should be aware of fire safety advice contained in Home Office literature. Government leaflets advised that if escape routes are blocked or there is a fire elsewhere in a block of flats the fabric of the building was designed to keep fire out ("Make your plan. Get out alive", Home Office, September 2000) and would offer protection from fire ("Escaping from a high rise", ODPM, 1 January 2004). Similar advice was still available in 2009 on the direct.gov website. The "stay put" advice is consistent with advice issued by the British Standards Institution in BS9999:2008.

102. The overlap of national guidance and lack of specific guidance on incidents in high rise buildings is not an ideal basis on which to form LFB policy and training.

D. How national guidance on fire survival is reflected in LFB policy and fire safety publicity

103. This section of the report reviews how national guidance, particularly in relation to fire survival guidance, is reflected in various LFB materials, including in policy, in CO training, and in advice/prompts to COs. It also sets out the relevant fire safety advice made available by the Brigade to the public.

D.1 LFB Policy 539 – 'Emergency Call Management'

Background

104. LFB emergency call handling arrangements in Control are governed by Policy 539 – Emergency Call Management. The current version at the time of the fire was issued on 14 November 2007. This document is included as LFB Annex F.

Policy content

105. The Policy made reference to two government documents:

- Fire Service Manual Volume 1, Equipment and Media (Communications and Mobilising); and
- Fire and Rescue Service Circular 54/2004, Emergency Call Management.

106. Policy 539 covered a wide range of issues including setting out the function of the Control Room, configuration of the LFB's emergency call management systems, and emergency call management procedures. The policy contained detailed guidance on the process of handling an emergency call from commencement of the call to completion.

107. Section 5 of the policy included a section 'Calls where people are unable to escape from the premises or are trapped and unable to escape or those threatening to take their own lives' and said "There may be occasions where during the course of handling an emergency call, it is apparent that the caller is trapped inside premises, machinery or confined spaces and is unable to escape." It went on "Prompts are in place on the computer-aided mobilising system to assist the Control Officer in these situations." These 'prompts' were the Reference Information File (RIF) already described in Section B3 above and described in more detail in section E5 below.

108. The Policy said "The prompts are designed to assist COs in assessing the situation, including:

- Providing appropriate pre-arrival safety advice to callers and the public at the scene.
- Providing reassurance to the caller that help and assistance is forthcoming.
- Obtaining information appropriate to the type of call reported including the location where the people are trapped.
- Improving the quality of information to responders and aid their on-arrival tactics.
- Reducing the risk to responders
- Ensuring the appropriate response is sent
- Improve public safety"

109. In appendix 1, the Policy gave fire survival guidance. It said "There may be occasions where, during the course of handling an emergency call, it is apparent the caller is trapped inside the premises and cannot escape". In such circumstances the policy advised that COs would be given prompts by the mobilising system to assist in:

- Providing guidance to maintain the caller's safety
- Providing reassurance to the caller that help and assistance is forthcoming
- Strengthen relationship with the caller

110. Paragraph 6.6 of the 2007 version of the policy introduced a system for monitoring and assessing emergency call handling and other related tasks carried out by COs. The assessment process (outlined in paragraph 6.15) was focussed under eight headings:

- Emergency call handling skills.
- Receipt of call.

- Address, incident and response validation.
- Speed in call handling.
- Call challenge.
- Mobilising policy.
- Diversity.
- Fire Survival Guidance.

111. The assessment criteria for FSG calls was set out in paragraph 6.15 and required that the CO, "identify that the call requires Fire Survival Guidance and tactics were required and demonstrated where the information could be found on the mobilising system".
112. Paragraph 6.16 of the Policy set out arrangements for the monitoring of the call handling policy and specified the following:
- Regular screening/training of Control Officers on attitudes and aptitude and how to handle stress.
 - Establishing good and best practice.
 - The maintenance of high quality standards – continuous review and appraisal of call answering and call control techniques.
 - Implementation, compliance and continuous improvement.
 - Monitoring of call handling, answering.
 - Regular audit of policy to monitor and improve efficiency and effectiveness of call management systems.
 - Any apparent decreases in quality will be investigated by a Brigade Control Senior Manager.
113. Appendix 1 of Policy 539 contained an abridged version of LFB Training material 'Fire Survival Guidance training PowerPoint' which was provided to all new CO entrants as evidenced by new entrants programmes and documents that are available.
114. Appendix 1 recommended that the CO should advise the caller to "Get Out and Stay out!" and should "Stay calm and reassuring throughout the call" to provide guidance and support to the caller. The CO was advised to suggest an alternative escape route if normal means of escape was blocked, e.g. back door, window, balcony, adjacent balcony, flat roof. If the caller cannot escape, Appendix 1 suggested phrases to offer reassurance: "The firefighters will be with you very soon" and "I'm going to talk to you until the firefighters arrive".
115. It also gave instructions for protecting the caller if they could not escape, for example – "stay low", "open window" including closing doors. Prompts were also suggested to assist in rescue: for example, obtaining the location of room, which floor, front or rear of the building, which room? Attracting attention by "shouting to passers-by" and to "firefighters searching". General advice was given to COs to "stay calm and reassuring throughout the call".

Relationship between the policy and the RIF

116. Policy 539 referred to 'prompts' contained on the ProCAD mobilising system which was a reference to RIFs explained in section E6 of this report. They were available to each CO by pressing the Help key on the keyboard.
117. The RIF reflected Appendix 1 of Policy 539 and provided both key instructions on escape, rescue and protection. It also suggested supportive phrases for the COs to use. It included the advice to "... consider exchanging names, speak clearly with authority, remain calm and supportive, avoid using fire brigade jargon and reassuring throughout the call".
118. Both Policy 539 and the RIF for FSG advised about providing reassurance to the caller that help and assistance would be forthcoming.

Gap analysis

119. A 'gap analysis' was conducted by LFB to identify any differences between national guidance and LFB policy. The detailed findings of the gap analysis have been incorporated into the body of this report. The gap analysis is set out in LFB Annex B in full.
120. In summary the gap analysis identified that:

- National Guidance should be reviewed and changes proposed by LFB in line with the findings of the Gap analysis should be considered.
- The LFB should conduct an audit of current training arrangements within Control.
- Current LFB documentation should be reviewed in line with the findings of the Gap analysis.

D.2 Fire safety advice for the public produced by LFB

121. Details of fire safety advice for the public published by the LFB is provided below to illustrate the LFB's position relating to fire survival, particularly in purpose built flats and maisonettes high-rise, and is included to illustrate the complex picture of advice available (either to COs or directly to the public).
122. In September 2008, the LFB published an article in the LFB's internal newsletter ('Shout') advising LFB staff, including Control staff, that the Home Fire Safety leaflets and flyers were changing. As stated earlier, DCLG advised fire brigades in April 2008 to stop producing separate fire safety leaflets which duplicated information produced by DCLG.
123. A range of fire safety advice was produced by the LFB in the form of leaflets and web site pages to provide guidance to the public. Previously the advice available is summarised below:
- **"Living in flats"**, LFB flyer, March 2000. This document says "... if there is a fire somewhere else in the building, it should be safe for you to stay in your home. Many purpose-built flats and maisonettes have fire safety measures built into them, but if your home is affected by heat or smoke, get out at once and close the doors and windows behind you".
 - **"A guide to your survival"**, LFB brochure, March 2000. The document relates to fire safety in flats. The document says (on page 2) "... your building has been designed and built with safety in mind. The walls, the front door, and the doors between stairs and corridors are specially designed to resist fire and stop the spread of smoke. Make sure the doors are not wedged open. If they do not close properly tell the Estate Office".
 - **"Fire safety in the home"**, LFB, 2005/06. This document was produced following the start of home fire safety visits by the LFB (which started in around 2004). Firefighters were encouraged to use this booklet when carrying out home fire safety visits. It does not contain any specific advice in relation to high rise buildings.
 - **LFB Website** (In the event of fire), created in May 2008, contained guidance on escaping from fires in flats and maisonettes including - "... if there's a fire elsewhere in your building you are usually safer staying in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you".

D.3 Conclusions on how national guidance on fire survival is reflected in LFB policy and fire safety publicity

124. Following a gap analysis some differences were identified between internal LFB Policies and national fire survival guidance, these have been set out in detail in the gap analysis attached at Annex B to this report. Some of the reasons for this may be the disparate way that national guidance and resulting LFB policy has evolved as outlined in section C above.

E. LFB Control officer training and knowledge in FSG.

125. The LFB published policy 164 'Training' on 29 September 1994, this policy set out the general provision of training for Control staff pre July 2009.
126. This policy had been reviewed as current in January 2009.
127. Policy 164 sets out the basic structure for CO training. The initial training course lasted approximately 8 weeks. The course includes radio telephony, operating communications equipment and general training in Control Room responsibilities, duties and procedures. It goes on to describe Control Watch Officers as being responsible for providing continuation training in new or existing procedures or equipment, or to meet individual training needs. Refresher training is described as being provided for individuals who were absent from duty, through sickness, injury, maternity leave or any other extended leave period. Policy 164 is attached at LFB Annex H.
128. The LFB published policy 155 Standard Working Routine on 16 December 1993. This policy was reviewed as current in June 2009.
129. Policy 155 describes the Standard Working Routine as providing uniformity, continuity and consistency in application across all watches in Brigade Control. Paragraph 3.4 of policy 155 identifies at least four hours over the tour (2 hours per day shift and 2 hours per night shift) for the above continuation training. The intent being to allow the officer in charge of the watch to accommodate perceived training needs, whether on a 1 to 1 basis or in a group session as required. This policy is attached at LFB Annex I.
130. A non comprehensive database of training was kept and is attached as LFB Annex I. It shows initial, refresher and continuation training being delivered, including some evidence of FSG training, throughout the period of 1981 to 2009.

E.1 Provision of FSG training to COs from 1994 to 2009

131. Following the publication by the Home Office of Fire Control Personnel Training document 'Keeping People Safe' in 1994 (section C3 of this report), LFB Control management rolled-out a training package to all existing Control staff.
132. It is known that all Control Officers received FSG training when it was introduced in 1994 and those who joined subsequently received FSG training in their initial Control training course. Control staff training records detailing the contents of the initial FSG training course, (from 1994 to 1997), cannot be located. Extensive efforts have been made to locate training records from this period (including searching premises, checking the LFB's records archive, asking the staff involved in drafting them, etc.) and it is believed they may have been destroyed or otherwise misplaced during the Control room relocation (Control relocated from "Lambeth Control" to the new control in "Greenwich View Place" in April 2004)
133. A local database has been found which has training records for Control staff with some records dating from the 1980s but this database is incomplete and does not include the delivery of the initial fire survival guidance training around 1994. However, it has been confirmed by staff that this training took place. Entries on the database appear more comprehensive after April 1997. Between April 1997 and the Lakanal fire there are only a few records of training that mention FSG (one member of staff in October 1998, two staff in January 1999 and one member of staff in October 2000). There is also an entry for FSG RIF training (two staff) in March 2007. There are also entries described as "fire safety officers" (11 staff), and "fire safety advert video and note" (11 staff) from January 1999 although there is no further detail about what this training included or whether it was related to FSG in anyway.
134. In addition to the training mentioned above there has always been training carried out which was watch-based. This training was determined by the CC for the watch. It has not been possible to locate any records for the watch training between 1994 and 2009.

E.2 Changes to FSG training following publication of F&RSC 54/2004

135. FSG training was amended by Control training staff following the publication of F&RSC 54/2004 . In addition, the introduction of assessment of trainees in July 2004 ensured that new entrants were tested at the end of their FSG training session.
136. Between 2005 and 2009 the fire survival training for new entrants has consisted of:
- A presentation with accompanying notes
 - A 'survival guidance training package' hand-out
 - both documents are included as LFB Annex D

Presentation

137. The presentation stated that the training aims "to enable Control officers to deal with emergency callers, who are trapped in a fire situation, to be able to assess the situation and give appropriate guidance to the caller as needed." The objectives were "to identify those callers who require specific assistance, to follow accurately the pre-determined guidelines, to assess the information gained and offer appropriate guidance".
138. Some of the phrases used were directly lifted from the accompanying video to the 1994 Fire Control training package.
139. The Presentation also covered the basic principles of FSG – Assess, Escape, Protect and Rescue.
140. The 'Assess' element occupied seven slides of a 20 slide presentation, and looked at what was preventing the caller from escaping; seeking an alternative means of escape, the situation of the caller, and the type of property the caller may be in. The presentation stated:
- "For purpose built dwelling flats e.g. high rise blocks, if fire is NOT in the caller's flat advise them to remain in their property until the arrival of the Fire Brigade...".
141. The last slide of the presentation on call psychology advised COs to "create a bond with the caller" by:
- "Asking them their name, use it
 - Tell them your name
 - Ask the caller to tell you about him or herself
 - Reassure the caller that they are going to survive
 - Tell the caller that the firefighters are on their way and will be there very soon"

'Survival guidance training package' hand-out

142. The FSG techniques hand-out, given to new entrants at the end of the FSG training session, contained five sections:
- Section One – Introduction with aims and objectives (identical to the PowerPoint presentation)
 - Section Two – Survival Guidance techniques
 - Appendix A – containing information on breaking the glass in a double-glazing window unit
 - Appendix B – containing information relating to self-rescue from a first floor window
 - Section Three – Call psychology and creating a bond
 - Section Four – Supporting role of watch
 - Section Five – Self assessment questionnaire (containing 20 questions and related answer sheet)
143. Section Two of the hand-out 'Survival guidance techniques' mirrored the presentation slides, with additional information relating to the call handling techniques required, as either:
- **reactive** – the caller provided the necessary information, in the correct order, without prompting or
 - **proactive** – the CO takes full control of the call obtaining incident details as required.
144. It lists the four basic principles of FSG as:
- Assess.
 - Give advice on escape.
 - Protect the caller.

- Assist in rescue.

145. The hand-out is identical to the presentation in content when it stated:

“Can the caller escape to safety immediately?”

Yes – Advise caller to ‘GET OUT AND STAY OUT’. For purpose built dwelling flats e.g. high rise blocks, if the fire is NOT in the caller’s flat advise them to remain in their property until the arrival of the Fire Brigade.”

146. Section Three of the hand-out – ‘Call psychology and creating a bond’ – provided additional advice (which was added following a CO having to deal with a suicidal person and, thereafter, became a key part of CO training):

“It must be remembered that the situation will always be as serious as the caller has perceived it to be. It is this perception that will lead to how well he/she reacts. It is not up to operators to judge whether the caller is right or wrong, but to ensure that the caller’s needs are met efficiently and sympathetically.

It is important to respond to the caller’s needs and to ignore the manner in which the request is made. Operators should not react negatively to the fact that the caller is shouting down the phone. Whether the caller explains the situation calmly or shouts it, it is the message that is important and not the manner in which it is being delivered. However, the manner in which the operator delivers their message is important.

If there is no reaction or response from a caller repeat the statement verbatim, maintaining a firm but caring tone of voice.

- Always couple the desired action with a reason.
- Be calm but firm, using the caller’s name where possible.
- Never use the offensive command ‘shut up’.”

147. Section Four - ‘Supporting role of watch’ was about what other members of the watch should be doing when a CO was involved in a FSG call:

- The supervisor should instruct the radio operator to keep the responding appliances updated as required.
- The supervisor should be ready to reassure the call taker that they are doing well. They should encourage the officer to continue talking to the caller, suggest further lines of questioning and ensure that all stages of Survival Guidance techniques have been covered.

148. The hand-out ‘Survival guidance techniques’ covers more than FSG techniques. Section five - self assessment sheet – contains multiple choice questions relating to: General fire Safety in the home i.e. best location to fit a smoke detector, road traffic accidents, entrapment guidance. Five questions relate specifically to FSG.

E.3 Frequency of FSG provided by LFB Control Officers

149. LFB Control maintained a database of ‘notable’ fire survival guidance (FSG) calls. The collection of data for this database relied on COs and/or supervisors recording the call. Table 7 below shows the number of FSG calls recorded on the database between 2005 and 2009.

150. Following a notable FSG call an informal debrief of the call would be conducted at the CO’s manager’s discretion to provide support for the CO and identify any potential learning. A central log of these debriefs is not held by the LFB and so it has not been possible to identify the total number or frequency of these debriefs.

151. It has not been possible to find any definition for a ‘notable’ FSG call or to confirm that all such ‘notable’ calls were entered on the database. Senior Control Managers confirm that the database provides the opportunity for supervisors to record a call if they deem it to be worthy; it is the only record of FSG calls taken in Control.

Table 1: Number of FSG calls recorded in the LFB FSG database

Year	Calls where FSG was given	Total number of calls received	Total number of calls attended
2005	28	273,252	158,099
2006	11	247,348	151,783
2007	13	228,301	146,002
2008	15	231,613	138,445
2009	10	224,763	134,441

Source: Database maintained by Control

152. The number of calls where FSG has been provided is very small compared to the overall volume of emergency 999 calls handled. In 2009 out of some 225,000 emergency calls handled there were just 10 calls where FSG was given. For the five year period shown in Table 1, apart from the Lakanal calls in 2009, of the total of 77 calls where FSG was given only one call, in 2007, resulted in fatal casualties (two).

E.4 Training and experience of COs in providing FSG

153. The COs providing FSG to Lakanal residents (as outlined in Section F5) had the following training and experience in, and understanding of, fire survival guidance:

- CO Lewis had worked in Control room since 1975 and received formal FSG training in 1994 when it was originally delivered to all LFB Control staff (on introduction of national policy 10/93). However, she has previous experience of handling FSG calls, with five calls between 1999 and 2001 registered in the LFB FSG database. CO Lewis says, in her statement (May 2010), about FSG: *"Advice about getting low to the ground with your face down to the floor was gained from experience"*.
- CO Gotts had worked in LFB Control since 1971. She received FSG training in 1994. However, she can recall reading aide memoirs regarding FSG and undertook a fire safety role in approximately 2005 giving talks to schools under the 'Prison me No way' programme during which CO Gotts played a FSG call. In her statement (July 2010), CO Gotts said *"Although I cannot remember any specific Fire Survival Training. I have gained much experience and skills over my past 29 years' service. I have read aid memoirs regarding the subject and have dealt with previous calls needing Fire Survival advice. I also gave talks to school children under 'Prison me, no way' programme. This talk revolved around hoax calls and at the end of each talk I would play a call of a trapped woman who received Fire Survival Advice. I gave this talk around 12 times, the last 5 years ago. Due to my experience, self-learning and giving talks I have a very good knowledge of Fire Survival Advice."*
- CO Kidd had worked in LFB Control room since 1986 and received FSG training, when it was originally delivered to all LFB Control staff in 1994. In her police statement (July 2010), CO Kidd, said *"I received my initial basic training when I first became a Control Officer and received specific training relating to Fire Survival Guidance Calls several years ago. Additional training has been provided during my career but I cannot recall anything in relation to Fire Survival Guidance Calls until the recent continuation training that was introduced after the incident at Lakanal."*
- CO Di Muro had worked in LFB Control room since 2005 and received FSG training in week five of her new entrant course. CO Di Muro has no calls registered on the FSG database. CO DiMuro said in her police statement (June 2010) about the Lakanal call, *"She told me that she was trapped and smoke was getting into her flat, I remembered my Fire Survival Guidance Training, basic fire safety training I received on my 10 week initial course. The Fire Survival Guidance training was a talk and examples on how to advise people to survive fire. Examples include keeping away from fire/smoke, getting to a window, opening a window, laying on the floor, stopping the smoke getting in, basic fire survival techniques."*
- CO Bushell had worked in LFB Control since 1979 and received FSG training in 1994 during the initial delivery. CO Bushell has one FSG call registered in the FSG database. CO Bushell said about training in her police statement (July 2010) *"I received basic training when I joined 31 years ago and have since received various additional training relevant to my role. With specific regard to Fire Survival Guidance Calls (FSGC), the general nature of this type of advice has always existed but it was formalised during"*

the early to mid 90s and I recall receiving training during that period. I do not recall any additional training regarding FSG but there is a Reference Information File (RIF) on our call-handling system which provides on-screen guidance regarding appropriate forms of advice and questioning." She added "... our objective is to deal with the call quickly and effectively while being mindful that the caller may require Fire Survival Guidance. I generally work on the assumption that the caller can get out of the building unless they say otherwise and, ordinarily, I would advise a caller to exit the building if able to do so. If they indicate an inability to leave their premises, I may ask about alternative exits or balconies but would not routinely enquire about access to escape routes. Once it is confirmed that they are unable to leave their premises, Fire Survival Guidance is initiated. In summary, this is designed to keep the caller safe until the arrival of a Fire Crew and will include advice such as: everyone to congregate in one room; block gaps in the doorway to prevent the entry of smoke; where possible - get access to an open window. It is also important to establish their exact location so as to assist in their rescue and we have a strong expectation within the Control Room that people will be rescued."

E.5 LFB Reference Information File (RIF) on FSG

154. As set out in section B3 of this report, the mobilising system provides access to Reference Information Files (RIFs) that provide additional information to COs to support call handling. The RIF provides prompts (or reminders) for COs to use during call handling and the RIF on fire survival guidance was designed to reflect LFB policy on FSG and the training delivered, in abbreviated form.
155. The full fire survival guidance RIF dated March 2007 (and in force at the time of the Lakanal fire) is set out at LFB Annex E.
156. The key advice from the RIF (at the time of the Lakanal fire) was:
 - "GET OUT AND STAY OUT"
 - STAY CALM AND REASSURING – throughout the call
 - SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE ROUTE – if normal means of escape is blocked e.g., back door, window, balcony, adjacent balcony, flat roof.
 - IF THE CALLER CANNOT ESCAPE – OFFER REASSURANCE – BE POSITIVE! (suggested phrases to use are "the fire brigade is on the way", "the firemen/firefighters will be with you very soon", "stay calm and don't be frightened"). It says to consider exchanging names, speak clearly with authority, remain calm and supportive, avoid using fire brigade jargon and be reassuring throughout the call
 - PROTECT THE CALLER – IF THEY CAN'T ESCAPE (does the caller have any disability, is their mobility impaired, that may affect them carrying out any of these actions?)
 - CLOSE DOORS – Block off the bottom of the door and any other opening where smoke could get in, use bedding, clothes, towels etc. anything that is to hand. This will reduce the amount of smoke coming in
 - STAY LOW – Get your face down close to the floor. There is cleaner, fresher, cooler air closer to the floor. Cover nose and mouth with handkerchief or anything else
 - OPEN WINDOW – If you can open a window then do so. Stay on the floor by the window. Fresh air will come in through the open window, and provide an opportunity to attract attention. If smoke or flames appear to come in then CLOSE IT AGAIN
157. The RIF provided information on escape which is identical to information provided in FSC 10/1993; including some reassuring phrases to use with callers such as 'Stay calm and don't be frightened' and 'The firefighters will be with you very soon' and some protection advice, in the form of closing doors and staying low including specific considerations if the caller is disabled. For example, 'Does the caller have any disabilities, is their mobility impaired, that may affect the carrying out any of these actions'.
158. As well as providing prompts on FSG for COs to use, the RIF also included general points about information gathering and how information obtained during fire survival advice should be passed to crews:

"Try and get another Con Off to do the messages to [the] incident commander, another con off to inform Ambulance/Police".

159. The RIF also instructed Control Commanders "If the person trapped has a disability or has impaired mobility, ensure this information is passed to the incident commander. Consider obtaining names of persons involved in cases where more than one person is trapped, pass information obtained to an appropriate call sign, command pump, command unit".
160. The advice offered by the Fire Control Personnel training package (1994), the guidance in Fire Service Circular 54/2004 and the LFB RIF are different in some respects.

E.6 Managing feedback and performance

Setting standards for Control Officers and managing performance

161. LFB policy 539 (2007 version), included at Annex F, sets out standards for monitoring the performance of COs. It provides a framework for assessing performance and recommended that each watch-related SCO sample two calls per month for each of their nominated COs according to an agreed schedule. The sampling was to include fire survival guidance, i.e. "Identify that the call required Fire Survival Guidance and tactics were required and demonstrated where the information could be found on the mobilising system".
162. Managing feedback and performance management has always taken place on a daily basis as the COs work very closely to their Control Commanders sharing the same room. Supervisors are also able to monitor the calls and radio traffic in real-time. An example that this does take place is SOM Turner supporting CO Lewis during her FSG call on the 3 July.
163. The LFB invested in a performance monitoring system known as 'Call Coach' in 2008 but this had not gone live prior to July 2009. The system was designed to take audio information from any call taken by a CO and allowed the CO and their supervisor to review their calls and improve their basic call taking/handling skills. This review could include, if appropriate, whether specific questions had been asked of the caller

Performance Review of Command

164. The LFB has established policy⁶ for the review of command and operations at specific types of incident. LFB Policy 421 sets out the arrangements for the performance review of command (PRC) functions.
165. Attendance at the PRC would include all ICs, the monitoring officer who was in attendance at the time of the stop message, as well as an Operational Review Team (ORT) officer. At the time of the Lakanal fire, a representative from Control was not included in the suggested attendance although on some incidents the chair of the PRC may have sought Controls views.

E.7 Conclusion about LFB Control Officer training and knowledge

166. There are extant Government and LFB documents which cover training provision for COs. These documents cover initial training, continuation training and refresher training of COs. With regard to FSG there are some differences between the national documents and the LFB documents and an analysis of these differences are included in LFB Annex B.
167. An incomplete database record of training provided by the LFB to COs exists covering the period from 1981 to 2011. This record includes initial, continuation and refresher training given to COs.
168. FSG is only provided infrequently. Between 2005 and 2009 77 'notable' FSG calls have been identified. Of these there was one call with recorded fatalities (two) where FSG had been given.
169. Although the available training records are considered to be incomplete there is evidence from staff that all COs received FSG training when it was introduced in 1994 and those who joined after 1994 received FSG

⁶ The aim of the PRC is to provide a constructive and supportive environment within which the performance of the command function can be discussed openly. The objectives are to identify good practice and how individual team and organisational performance may be improved. In order to achieve this, the process provides feedback to individuals, line managers and the organisation. A PRC will be held for all incidents and training events of 6 pumps and above, and for other incidents at the discretion of a deputy assistant commissioner (DAC) or above.

training as part of their initial Control training. In 2009 there was no structured, regular FSG continuation/refresher training.

170. Whilst systems are in place to monitor performance within Control improvements could be considered to further develop means to inform and influence performance management.

F. Handling of the fire at Lakanal on 3 July 2009 (incident 117648091)

F.1 Staffing in the Control on 3 July 2009 (Green watch)

171. On 3 July 2009, at 0800 hours Green Watch reported for duty. The staff were made up of one CC (Officer in Charge), two SCOs, six CO call takers, a CO on paging and three COs on radios. Table 2 shows names of green watch control staff, together with their ProCAD identifier (ID), role and function.

Table 2: Staff functions allocation during the Lakanal fire, Green watch 3 July 2009 (to 1830 hours)

Name	ID	Role	Function
Harry Simmons	HFS	Control Commander	Officer in Charge
Debbie Real	DR	Senior Control Officer	Supervisor
Paul Real	PWR	Senior Control Officer	Supervisor
Heidi Kidd	HJK	Control Officer	Call Taker
Natasha Di Muro	NDM	Control Officer	Call Taker
Lorraine Bushell	LB	Control Officer	Call Taker
Angie Gotts	AG	Control Officer	Call Taker
Ruth Herring (Clark)	RC	Control Officer	Call Taker
Shelia Lewis	SAL	Control Officer	Call Taker
Julie Gardiner (Brown)	JB	Control Officer	Paging
Vicky Barnett	VB1	Control Officer	Radio Operator (RT2)
Tina Weston	TW	Control Officer	Radio Operator (RT3)
Lorraine Hayford	LAH	Control Officer	Radio Operator (RT4)
Peter May	PM	Senior Control Officer	At Stratford Fall-back
Gary Court	GWC	Senior Control Officer	At Stratford Fall-back

Note: all COs can cover the three roles (call taker, paging and radio operator) during the course of a shift.

172. The Operations Manager (Scott Hayward) was on duty on 3 July 2009 but away from 2GVP for meetings at LFB Headquarters. Of the two Senior Operations Managers (SOMs) (Lindsay Turner and Joanne Stibbards), SOM Stibbards was Duty Brigade Control Senior Manager (Duty BCSM) with 'on-call' responsibilities for that week but she was off-site. However, SOM Turner was on-site and it was agreed in a telephone conversation with SOM Stibbards that because she was at Control, she would deal with the incident and keep SOM Stibbards updated.

F.2 Workload in the Control on 3 July 2009

173. During the period of 1600 and 1900 hours on 3 July 2009 control dealt with 188 emergency calls of which 59 were duplicate calls for the Lakanal fire. These 188 calls generated 77 attended incidents (including Lakanal).

Table 3: The volume of calls into LFB Control between 1600 and 1900 on 3 July 2009:

Time period	999 emergency calls			Operationally Urgent Audio Traffic			TOTAL	Incidents that Control were dealing with (incl Lakanal)
	Lakanal related calls received by Control	Non Lakanal calls received by Control	Sub Total	Lakanal related handled by Control	Non Lakanal handled by Control	Sub Total		
1600-1614	0	9	9	0	46	46	55	1
1615-1629	27	7	34	50	9	59	93	4
1630-1644	12	6	18	41	15	56	74	4
1645-1659	5	18	23	32	32	64	87	9
1700-1714	8	13	21	32	26	58	79	8
1715-1729	3	8	11	27	18	45	56	5
1730-1744	3	13	16	22	26	48	64	8
1745-1759	1	16	17	23	20	43	60	10
1800-1814	0	11	11	20	33	53	64	9
1815-1829	0	14	14	15	41	56	70	6
1830-1844	0	4	4	13	15	28	32	2
1845-1900	0	10	10	24	44	68	78	8
Total	59	129	188	299	325	624	812	77

Source: LFB Mobilising Information System (MobIS), Oak call logger and Audionet

Note: There 60 calls about Lakanal; one Lakanal call was after 1900 hours and is not shown in this table.

174. "Operationally urgent audio traffic"; this includes operationally urgent calls to control via radio traffic and by phone. This is summarised in LFB Annex G.
175. There were some 299 instances of operationally urgent audio traffic relating to the fire at Lakanal made to and from Control between the first call received and 1900 hours.

F.3 Calls associated with the fire at Lakanal

How the incident started – Flat 65 (Ms Jade Spence)

176. At 1618 hours Control received a call reporting a fire at Lakanal, Havil St, Camberwell, SE5 (incident 117648091) and the call was answered by CO DiMuro. This was the first emergency 999 call to the fire at Lakanal and was from the resident of Flat 65 reporting a fire in the bedroom of her flat. She confirmed to the CO that she was leaving the building (with her baby) and was told to stay outside. [Note: The caller escaped from the flat via the living room door onto the eastern escape balcony situated at the upper level of the flat.] After confirming the address, the CO dispatched four pumping appliances and one aerial appliance at 1621 hours using the incident type code (ITC) A1HR⁷. The standard PDA for attendance to a fire at a high rise property is three pumping appliances. This attendance was pre-configured on the mobilising system and is in accordance with LFB Mobilising Policy 412. The PDA for Lakanal also stipulated an aerial appliance, and a fourth pumping appliance was also mobilised to ensure that a Watch Manager attended the incident (in accordance with the Mobilising Policy) as none of the three nearest and available initial pumping appliances selected by the mobilising system had a Watch Manager in charge.

⁷ Incident Type Code (ITC) A1HR = "Fire high rise flats (6 floors & above)"

177. The call handling time for this initial call (i.e. the period from the time the call is answered in Control to the mobilisation of the first resource(s)) was 161 seconds.
178. Due to the number of calls being received, the recall system was initiated by the CC. The recall is an alarm which sounded throughout Control to indicate to Control staff not present in Control (e.g. breaks from screen working as required by the DSE⁸ regulations), to urgently return to the control room to deal with the increasing volume of calls. CC Simmons says in his statement, "It was apparent at an early stage that the situation at Lakanal was likely to become a significant incident and I recalled four Control Officers, by activating a buzzer within the building, who were on their recognised half-hour break between 1600 and 1630."
179. COs answered and processed a total of 60 calls (including the first call) reporting a fire at Lakanal that day (and which are recorded as duplicate calls to the fire at Lakanal). Of these calls, 39 were made from passers-by and workers from neighbouring office blocks in Camberwell. A further 21 were made from residents of Lakanal, reporting heavy smoke and/or fire within the block (based on an analysis of the recordings of calls). Just under half (45 per cent) were received in the 15 minutes between 1615 and 1630 hours. During the period up to 1715 four COs were dealing with FSG calls.
180. The call time, duration of call, brief details of all calls and the ProCAD identifier (ID) for the CO is shown in table 4 below. The table also shows those calls where fire survival guidance was given.

Table 4: Calls received by Control regarding the fire at Lakanal, including time of call, duration, call handler and in indication whether fire survival guidance (FSG) was given

	Call Time	Duration of call hh:mm:ss	Brief specifics of call	Flat number where known	CO	FSG given
1	1618:40	00:01:58	Resident Flat 65, 9th floor. Fire in bedroom. Resident on way out with baby.	65	NDM	
2	1620:09	00:00:52	Resident reports fire on 6th floor.		SAL	
3	1620:56	00:00:59	Fire on 6th floor.		HJK	
4	1621:27	00:52:51	Resident flat 79, 11 th floor reporting fire below.	79	SAL	●
5	1621:34	00:00:42	Resident reports fire on 11th floor - on way out from 9th floor with baby.		NDM	
6	1621:47	00:01:33	Fire on 8th floor.		DR	
7	1621:50	00:01:01	Resident reports smoke coming from Lakanal.		PWR	
8	1622:04	00:00:49	Resident of 5th floor reports fire between 7th and 9th floor.		RC	
9	1622:17	00:01:07	Fire Lakanal.		VB1	
10	1622:24	00:00:23	Fire block of flats Dalwood Street in Central Place.		HJK	
11	1622:28	00:00:54	Resident flat 64 (knocking at neighbours door).	64	TW	
12	1622:35	00:01:25	Calling from Lakanal on 9th floor - on way out.		LAH	
13	1622:36	00:00:30	Fire on 9th floor.		NDM	
14	1622:41	00:00:52	Fire in big building near Southampton Way.		JB	
15	1623:08	00:00:17	Resident Flat 30 - reports smoke issuing high above her.	30	RC	
16	1623:13	00:00:16	Fire Lakanal House.		NDM	
17	1623:15	00:00:20	Smoke issuing 91 Lakanal House.		HJK	
18	1623:34	00:00:13	Fire Sceaux Gardens (Fire Brigade already there).		VB1	
19	1623:47	00:00:32	Resident flat 61- reports fire going on over roof - on way out.	61	NDM	

⁸ Display Screen Equipment regulations are the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 and Guidance L26 (2003) (Reference 2.3). This is covered in LFB Policy 422.

	Call Time	Duration of call hh:mm:ss	Brief specifics of call	Flat number where known	CO	FSG given
20	1623:50	00:00:33	Fire Southampton Way.		RC	
21	1623:55	00:00:46	Fire off Southampton Way.		JB	
22	1625:32	00:00:21	Fire Sceaux Gardens.		HJK	
23	1625:48	00:00:22	Calling from office building - can see flats on fire.		LAH	
24	1626:02	00:02:00	Calling from Camberwell College of Art - can see fire in Camberwell.		VB1	
25	1626:12	00:00:52	Fire Lakanal, Sceaux Gardens.		TW	
26	1626:53	00:00:33	Fire Southampton Way.		JB	
27	1627:16	00:00:20	Fire in Tower block - seen from Commercial Way.		TW	
28	1628:08	00:01:36	Resident flat 68.	68	HJK	●
29	1629:11	00:00:37	Fire 10 storey building Peckham High Street.		NDM	
30	1630:35	00:00:40	Fire block of flats behind Peckham Road.		AG	
31	1632:46	00:21:16	Resident flat 68 (2nd call from woman – call 28).	68	AG	●
32	1633:08	00:00:27	Fire corner of Havil Street.		LB	
33	1633:33	00:00:36	Fire Havil Street - can see people inside on top floor .		RC	
34	1634:36	00:00:27	Calling from 173 Havil Estate - can see 3 flats on fire.		LB	
35	1635:43	00:00:20	Calling from office in Southwark - can see block of flats on fire.		HJK	
36	1635:58	00:00:25	Fire flat near Southampton Way.		RC	
37	1636:27	00:00:58	Resident flat 80 trapped in flat.	80	LB	
38	1637:08	00:04:13	2 nd call from Resident flat 57, 9th floor with neighbour and baby.	57	HJK	●
39	1642:48	00:00:24	Husband of woman with baby reports they are trapped in flat 81 (He is 3 mins away by car).	81	LB	
40	1643:20	00:00:54	Smoke issuing off Havil Street.		TW	
41	1644:20	00:00:35	Smoke issuing Havil Street.		NDM	
42	1644:26	00:01:32	Block on fire SE5.		LB	
43	1645:10	00:03:24	Woman at Flat 82 trapped with baby .	82	NDM	●
44	1646:12	00:00:18	Calling from Kings College Hospital - can see building on fire (due east of hospital).		HJK	
45	1650:46	00:01:26	Resident reports fire moving from 7th to 3rd floor - is out of block - has left bird in flat.		LB	
46	1702:37	00:00:43	Calling from Kings College Hospital - can see fire towards Camberwell Green.		LB	
47	1704:01	00:00:21	Fire block of flats Camberwell.		HJK	
48	1704:22	00:01:17	Fire high rise building near Camberwell Road.		NDM	
49	1705:16	00:00:53	Calling from Kings College Hospital - can see building burning not far from Tower Bridge.		RC	
50	1706:57	00:02:21	Man on top floor inside flat while building is alight.		NDM	
51	1707:21	00:01:18	2nd call from resident (previous 45) - Block is falling, she has left animal inside.		AG	
52	1710:39	00:00:49	Fire in high rise block - seen from office (Camberwell Green Magistrates Court).		NDM	
53	1710:54	00:02:02	3rd call from resident (previous calls 45, 51) says should be more water.		AG	

	Call Time	Duration of call hh:mm:ss	Brief specifics of call	Flat number where known	CO	FSG given
54	1713:17	00:01:06	2nd call from resident (previous call 50) - people are shouting. It's spreading. A man is shouting.		HJK	
55	1719:51	00:00:25	Caller "in Letsom" reports fire in block opposite.		JB	
56	1723:00	00:00:22	Fire in building off Peckham Road.		HJK	
57	1725:03	00:01:09	Community midwife Re: woman/baby trapped in flat 82 - in bathroom.	82	HJK	
58	1730:17	00:00:52	2nd call from community midwife - flat No of woman/baby is 81 not 82. Baby can't breathe.	81	RC	
59	1752:19	00:01:45	4th call from resident (previous calls 45, 51, 53). The water has stopped, but fire continues downstairs.		RAG	
60	1908:55	00:01:28	Woman or man on top floor balcony facing Dalwood Street		PAC1	

1. Source: LFB Mobilising Information System (MobIS)

181. The 60 calls came from 51 different telephone numbers; there were four calls from one single number (most likely to be the resident of flat 10) and two calls each from three other numbers (likely to be the residents of flats 57, 68 and 82 as these addresses are mentioned in the call records). All 13 control staff took at least one Lakanal call; nine control staff dealt with multiple calls (between two and 13 each). Both SCOs handled 999 emergency calls; none were handled by the CC.
182. Between 1635 and 1650 hours there were four FSG calls taking place, all requiring a control officers dedicated attention. The total duration of the four calls totalled 80 minutes in length (see chart 2).

Availability of senior Control management during the incident

183. At just before 1639, CC Simmons telephoned Senior Operations Manager (SOM) Lindsay Turner at her desk to inform her of the fire at Lakanal, now a six pump fire and the on-going multiple fire survival guidance calls. SOM Turner immediately came to the control room. At 1705 hours SOM Stibbards responded to a pager message and spoke to SCO (Paul) Real and he updated SOM Stibbards on the fire at Lakanal, now an eight pump fire and during the conversation he told her that this become a 12 pump fire with fire survival guidance calls. He confirmed SOM Turner is in the Control room and that SOM Stibbards does not need to attend.

Support from Stratford fall-back control

184. At 1623 hours, CC Simmons received a call from SCO May (one of two staff at Stratford Fall-back). He asked whether the Control Room needed any help (taking calls). CC Simmons informed him that, "all staff are in the room" and they agreed that if the call waiting figure went into double figures, the two SCOs at Stratford fall-back would pick up emergency calls to assist. SCO May commented that the numbers are "going down now". During the Lakanal fire, SCOs at the fall-back control at Stratford assisted in dealing with operationally urgent calls to take the pressure off the main control room.

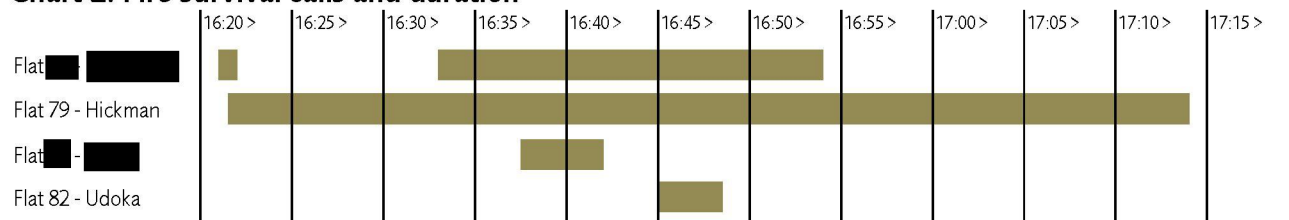
F.4 The fire survival guidance given during the incident

185. Four of the 13 Control staff on duty in LFB Control room on the 3 July 2009 provided FSG to four of the residents of Lakanal. These were:
- CO Sheila Lewis to Miss Catherine Hickman (occupant of flat 79) reporting a fire in the flat below.
 - CO Heidi Kidd/CO Angela Gotts (two calls) to [REDACTED] (occupant of flat [REDACTED]) reporting smoke in the corridor and entering her flat.
 - CO Heidi Kidd to [REDACTED] (occupant of flat [REDACTED]) reporting a fire and saying he was with a neighbour and her baby.

- CO Natasha Di Muro to Ms Helen Udoaka (of flat 82, but in flats 80 and 81) reporting smoke entering her flat.

186. The timing of the calls and the duration of each call is set out in the chart 2 below.

Chart 2: Fire survival calls and duration



F.5 Control Officer actions for key flats where fire survival guidance was given

187. Section F5 below looks at the actions of COs where FSG was given. It brings together, by flat, all the actions taken by Control together with a narrative of the conversations between COs and Lakanal residents trapped by the fire (and with some other people). It includes interactions between Control and officers/appliances on the incident ground, (which are indented and marked with a dotted line in the left margin).
188. The sequence of events that follows has been compiled using data obtained from the ProCAD mobilising system, as well as from recordings of exchanges with those people who called 999 about the fire and of radio and other messages between Control and the incident ground.
189. Where relevant, the narrative includes some reference to the fire survival guidance given. So that each narrative is complete, some actions– (particularly messages between the appliances/officers on the incident ground and Control) – may be repeated for different flat numbers where messages contain information about more than one flat.
190. Some explanatory text has been added in square brackets (and smaller type size) to explain the narrative, but it must be stressed that this information was not always apparent to Control or individual COs dealing with the calls concerned, and has been obtained from sources such as the separate fire investigation report and is provided simply as background information. Also, in this section, times have been truncated to the hour/minute simply for brevity. The descriptions are presented in flat number order.

Flat [redacted] – [redacted]

191. At just before 1622 [redacted] (of flat [redacted]) called 999 (call 7) and the call was answered by SCO Paul Real; [Note: Unknown to the CO, flat [redacted] was on the ninth floor and situated at the far end of the south corridor]. Mr [redacted] said that the fire was “really, really serious”. The call lasted just over a minute and was mainly concerned with getting the address of the fire before SCO Paul Real ended the call.
192. At just after 1637 [redacted] called 999 for the second time (call 38) and the call was answered by CO Kidd who responded by asking the caller’s address. The caller provided his flat number as [redacted] (ninth floor of Lakanal at the farthest end of the south corridor). [redacted] stated that the fire brigade were trying to put a fire out in his block (Lakanal) and that his neighbour and young baby were with him but they could not get out due to the smoke advised. He described smoke coming through the front door and CO Kidd advised him to close all the doors and block gaps around the doors to prevent smoke coming in. [Note: Mr [redacted]’s neighbour was [redacted] and her baby from flat [redacted] also located on the 9th floor].
193. After providing advice, CO Kidd began to find out the caller’s location in the flat by asking what room he was in and whether he was downstairs or upstairs. [redacted] advised that he was on the upper level of the flat. CO Kidd advised him to use wet towels at the bottom of the front door. When [redacted] repeated that his neighbour and her baby were with him in the same flat as him, she advised them to sit on the floor to get below the smoke level and that the fire crews were being informed about their location.

- ⋮ 194. At 1646, CO Barnett contacted Old Kent Road’s pump ladder (call sign E351) indicating that there was smoke going into flat 57 on the ninth floor level and that there was a young baby

inside with 'persons' and asking that the flat be checked. E351 was told by the CO that the persons were upstairs in the flat.

195. Two minutes after [REDACTED] provided information relating to his situation, CO Kidd informed the caller "I'm telling them on the radio, so they should be with you in a minute to come and make sure you're safe". CO Kidd then ended the call saying "So I'll put the phone down and now and you concentrate on doing that and just keeping the smoke out".
196. [Note: At 1646 a fire crew rescued four occupants of flat number 57 on the ninth floor in the south corridor. These occupants were [REDACTED], his neighbour [REDACTED] and her two children.]

Flat [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

197. At 1628 [REDACTED] called 999 and her call (28) was answered by CO Kidd, who had already taken four calls to this incident, so would have been aware of it. [REDACTED] said immediately that she "can't come out". CO Kidd asked where she was and [REDACTED] replied Flat [REDACTED]. [Flat [REDACTED] was on the ninth floor level and north corridor.] [REDACTED] said that there was "smoke all about the place" and that "she didn't notice in time". CO Kidd said that the Brigade was already aware of the fire and were speaking to the occupant of flat 79 at the time and asked whether that flat was above or below the flat [REDACTED] was in. [REDACTED] said that she thought Flat 79 was above her. CO Kidd gave her advice to keep her front door closed, put a towel at the bottom of the door and to open her windows. She confirmed with [REDACTED] that she had followed this advice and that said she would inform the fire crews which were at the scene. CO Kidd then ended the call.

198. At 1630 CO Kidd alerted the Control radio operator via the ProCAD system to relay a message to the incident command pump (Old Kent Road's pump ladder – (call sign E351). The message said 'further call. Caller at flat [REDACTED] is unable to get out of property – please check, she is very nervous and panicking'. CO Barnett failed to get a response from the incident command pump (E351) but Peckham's pump (call sign E372) responded at 1633. CO Kidd asked E372 to pass the message to the incident command pump and informed them that a caller from flat number 79 was also on the line and that there was the smoke in her flat and that flat number [REDACTED] was also becoming 'quite bad'. CO Barnett recorded on the mobilising system 'relayed info to E372 about callers being in Flat [REDACTED] and 79 with bad smoke in both flats'.

199. At 1632 (call 31) a second call was received from [REDACTED] and was answered by CO Gotts. [REDACTED] stated that she was overwhelmed by the smoke coming into her flat and that she could not breathe. CO Gotts asked if she could get to a window and whether she was able to block the door. [REDACTED] explained that she couldn't come out. CO Gotts repeated advice about blocking up the door but [REDACTED] responded by explaining that the smoke was coming in the window. CO Gotts advised her to shut the windows and keep away from them and asked whether she could move to another part of the flat. [REDACTED] replied that she 'can't come out'. On the information provided by [REDACTED] each room was full of smoke. CO Gotts confirmed that the Brigade was in attendance and that she would let the firefighters know that [REDACTED] was in her flat. [REDACTED] volunteered her flat number as [REDACTED] Lakanal. CO Gotts asks which room she was in and [REDACTED] says she is in the sitting room upstairs. CO Gotts said she was letting the firefighters know she was there.

200. At 1633 CO Barnett contacted Peckham's pump (call sign E372) and informed them that there was a caller from flat number 79 on the line and that there was smoke in her flat and also that flat number [REDACTED] was becoming 'quite bad'. CO Barnett recorded on the mobilising system relayed info to E372 about callers being in Flat [REDACTED] and 79 with bad smoke in both flats".

201. At 1634 CO Gotts asked [REDACTED] whether there was anyone else with her, and she confirmed she was alone. Her smoke alarm could be heard sounding due to the smoke within her flat. CO Gotts provided advice about keeping her doors closed, and keeping close to the floor and to stay calm to [REDACTED]. CO Gotts asked again whether there was another room she could get to and whether anyone was with her. CO Gotts offered advice that [REDACTED] should keep calm and said that the firefighters would be coming to get her. CO Gotts asked again about her location in the flat and [REDACTED] location in relation to the front door. CO Gotts asked if the flat was more than one floor. [REDACTED] confirmed there were two floors. CO Gotts said she was recording that [REDACTED] was on the upper level of flat.

202. At 1635 CO Gotts asked whether [REDACTED] had any pets. [REDACTED] confirmed that she did not have any pets. She confirmed that she had shut the windows and that every door was shut but smoke was still coming in. CO Gotts asked whether she had blocked under the door but [REDACTED] said she could not get down to the door to do this. CO Gotts suggested she throw something down to stop the smoke coming in.
203. At 1636 CO Gotts alerted the Control radio operator via the ProCAD system to relay a message to Peckham's pump (callsign E351).
204. At 1638 hours CO Barnett sends a message to Peckham's pump (call sign E371) 'caller is trapped in sitting room on upper level of flats... she can't go down as too much smoke coming in window and its downstairs'.
205. Between 1635 – 1636 CO Barnett tried on three occasions to pass a message to Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) but received no response. At 1636 CO Bushell sent a radio message to 'all mobiles' to pass on urgent information. An officer (OK16) initially answered the message, then Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) also responds. After receiving a message to 'make pumps 6', CO Barnett informed that people were trapped '... in [REDACTED], caller trapped in sitting room and in 79, they cannot open the front door to get out of the property. Both flats smoke logged. Flat [REDACTED] heavy smoke logging.' This information was acknowledged by E351
206. At 1637 CO Gotts advised [REDACTED] that she understood that it was frightening but that firefighters were coming and that the fire was affecting other flats. She asked which floors she was on and [REDACTED] said she was on the 9th floor. CO Gotts again asked whether there was anything she could use (e.g. cushions) to block the front door. [REDACTED] said that her lungs were full of smoke and CO Gotts asked whether there was less smoke nearer the floor but [REDACTED] said it was worse.
207. At 1638 [REDACTED] mentioned [REDACTED] and CO Gotts asked whether there was anyone else in the flat. [REDACTED] responded that she was trying to speak to her daughter on a mobile telephone to tell her about her situation. CO Gotts again asked whether there was less smoke nearer the floor but [REDACTED] said she could not go downstairs. CO Gotts confirmed that information was being passed to fire crews.
208. CO Gotts asked if all the doors to the living room were closed but [REDACTED] advised that there was no door to the living room, and CO Gotts said that she had not realised that. CO Gotts again asked if there was less smoke lower down in the room. At 1640 CO Gotts suggested that [REDACTED] should sit on the floor and [REDACTED] said she was sitting on a low chair, but that there was not less smoke nearer the floor. At 1641 CO Gotts asked [REDACTED] her name and the CO said her name was [REDACTED]. CO Gotts asked if the smoke was clearing and [REDACTED] said 'not at all'. [REDACTED] confirmed that she had shut all doors and windows but that smoke was still coming into her flat. CO Gotts advised [REDACTED] to keep calm and said that she knew it was difficult, but firefighters knew where she was. CO Gotts asked again whether there was any way to stop the smoke or whether there was another room and [REDACTED] said no.
209. At 1644 hours SCO (Paul) Real contacted Command Unit 4 (CU4); SCO Real said that COs were still talking to occupants of flat numbers [REDACTED] and 79 who were 'in a right old state. There's a lot of smoke in both flats...if they could get someone up there really quick...they can't get down to their front doors because of the smoke...'. The Watch Manager said he would pass information via the fire ground radio to the IC. SCO (Paul) Real recorded on the ProCAD mobilising system that a message was sent to CU4 'urged to get assistance to Flats [REDACTED] and 79 as people trapped inside'.
210. At 1644 CO Gotts told [REDACTED] to 'stay with her' and 'keep talking', and started a conversation about her daughter and her family. CO Gotts continued with advice telling [REDACTED] to stay where she was and reassured her that firefighters were at the incident. At 1645 [REDACTED] appeared to talk to someone else saying she was inside her house, with smoke and could not get out. CO Gotts asked if she was speaking to the firefighters, or her brother, and asked if he was inside the flat. [REDACTED] replied that she was speaking to her daughter on the mobile 'phone. At 1646, [REDACTED] said she could not breathe and she didn't know what to do. CO Gotts said that she should put the 'phone down to her daughter and save her energy saying that 'talking to two of us would be too much'.
211. At 1648 [REDACTED] said that her daughter was coming in a taxi. [REDACTED] then had another mobile telephone conversation with her daughter.

212. At 1649, CO Gotts asked if [REDACTED] had anything to put over her face to stop the smoke, and [REDACTED] confirmed she had something over her face. CO Gotts asked if she could make the cloth damp, but not to leave the room if dangerous. CO Gotts confirmed that there were six fire engines at the scene, that firefighters knew where she was and that she was on the upper level of her flat.
213. At 1649 hours SCO (Paul) Real called CU 4 requesting an update on flats [REDACTED] and 79 advising that Control were dealing with fire survival calls. CU4 stated that the IC was aware and he was 'on the case, they've definitely got crews up there'.
214. At 1650 CO Gotts confirmed to [REDACTED] that the firefighters were coming up to her "now". CO Gotts asked about other rooms on the upper floor, confirming that the bathroom and bedrooms were downstairs and said that this information was being passed to firefighters. [REDACTED] said that she was trying to find her keys to go "downstairs" but CO Gotts said not to go downstairs as that was where the smoke seemed to be coming from. [REDACTED] confirmed that smoke was coming up the stairs and from windows on both sides. CO Gotts confirmed that there were two sets of windows. CO Gotts advised [REDACTED] to keep as low as she could but [REDACTED] said that she would not be able to get up. CO Gotts confirmed that she should get down as low as she could and that firefighters and ambulance personnel would get her up. She needed to find the "freshest" air, CO Gotts said (at 1652). [REDACTED] stated that no one had come and that smoke was still coming into her flat.
215. At 1652 (some 20 minutes into the call), [REDACTED] said that 'someone is knocking'. In the background, voices could be heard and [REDACTED] was talking about finding her key. CO Gotts asked [REDACTED] if it was a firefighter but she could not get her attention and at 1654 CO Gotts ended the call.
216. [Note: At just after 1654 hours, [REDACTED] was rescued from flat [REDACTED].]
217. At 1711 hours CU4 called Control, spoke to CO Di Muro, and confirmed awareness of resident in flat [REDACTED] (and flats 79, 80 and 82); they confirmed that they are aware of people 'in the four flats'.
218. At 1724, CO Bushell takes a call from CU4 seeking to confirm the flats where Control has reported persons trapped. CO Bushell initially gives flats [REDACTED] 79, 80, and 81. After checking she adds flat 82. SCO (Paul) Real takes over the call to say that he is particularly worried about the occupant of flat 79 where a CO had been on line for some time but the line went dead. SCO (Paul) Real also confirms flats [REDACTED] 79, 80, 81 and 82. SCO (Paul) Real asks if they have news about flat 79 and CU4 say they have no news and are trying to get BA crews up there. SCO (Paul) Real asks if flat 79 is on the top floor and CU4 respond that they think it is.
219. At 1907 hours, SCO Juby spoke to CU4 and then to Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Chidgey. She stated that she was able to identify the flats as [REDACTED] 79 and [REDACTED], as the only flats where Control spoke to callers. She highlighted flats [REDACTED] and 81 as those where they knew of callers but did not speak with them directly. DAC Chidgey stated he will go and check the crews have this information.

Flat 79 – Ms Catherine Hickman

220. Miss Hickman, flat 79 Lakanal, called 999 and the call was answered at 1621 hours by CO Lewis (call 4). CO Lewis, having already taken a previous call to the fire at Lakanal, asked if the location was Lakanal to which Miss Hickman provided a positive response and stated that she was in flat 79, and that the flat below had flames coming out the window. This was the first call where Fire Survival Guidance was given and would last some 52 minutes. [Note: Flat 79 was the first flat on the left in the north corridor on the west side of the building. The CO would not have known this information.]
221. CO Lewis immediately directed Miss Hickman to stay in her flat, confirmed the Brigade were on the way and confirmed the address as being Havil Street. Miss Hickman confirmed and repeated that the fire was in the flat below her. CO Lewis advised Miss Hickman that she knew the fire was in the flat below her and that was why she should stay in her flat. CO Lewis asked if there was smoke coming into the flat and Miss Hickman said she was going upstairs to close her windows. She said there was "loads of smoke". CO Lewis asked if there was smoke coming under her door and Miss Hickman said there was. Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that she wanted to stop breathing. CO Lewis responded by saying that she needed to listen as she was going to tell her what to do. CO Lewis advised Miss Hickman to keep the windows open on the side of the building where the smoke was not coming in; Miss Hickman acknowledged this.

222. At 1622, Miss Hickman asked if she should go on the balcony "out stairs". CO Lewis did not answer this directly but asked if she was on her mobile phone and Miss Hickman said yes. She told Miss Hickman to put something across the bottom of her front door. Miss Hickman replied and said that the door was probably well insulated.
223. At 1623, CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she was alone and she confirmed she was. Miss Hickman then exclaimed "Oh my God! Oh my God!" and said there was black smoke coming right up outside her window. CO Lewis told her not to worry as the Brigade knew where she was. She also told Miss Hickman that she would stay on the line until the firefighters got to her.
224. Miss Hickman then stated that there was "fire" coming through the floorboards and added "I'm in smoke". Miss Hickman asked CO Lewis what she should do and whether she should get out. CO Lewis asked "where the floorboards are?" to which Miss Hickman said yes. CO Lewis then advised Miss Hickman to go into another room where the "smoke isn't coming through" and Miss Hickman responded saying that she was going upstairs. CO Lewis confirmed again we have told them "where you are". CO Lewis asked if she was in another room where smoke was not coming in and Miss Hickman replied to say she was out on the balcony and that the smoke was going in the other direction. CO Lewis advised Miss Hickman to return inside the flat. Whilst on the balcony Miss Hickman said she could hear lots of people. CO Lewis responded that there were a lot of people in the same situation and that she would "stay" and talk to her and that she would be fine. CO Lewis asked for confirmation that Miss Hickman was in flat 79 and she replied that she was. CO Lewis confirmed that she had told the crews and the Brigade was in attendance.
225. At 1625, CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman her name and she replied "Catherine". CO Lewis told Miss Hickman saying that she was "doing well". Miss Hickman volunteered that the room downstairs was full of smoke and CO Lewis said that she wanted Miss Hickman to stay where she was and that she did not want her to move. CO Lewis said that more details were being given to the crews.
226. At 1625 hours CO Bushell sent a message via radio to Old Kent Road's Pump Ladder (call sign E351) which was en route to the fire. The message said that a caller in flat number 79 was on the telephone line to Control and referred to smoke being in the flat. They were asked to investigate on arrival. CO Bushell noted on the ProCAD mobilising system 'For info we have a caller on line who is trapped in Flat 79 Lakanal House on 11th floor flat is heavily smoke logged caller is unable to leave'.
227. At just after 1625, CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she was on the balcony and if the balcony was at the front or the back. Miss Hickman told her that she was not on the balcony but indoors CO Lewis asked what floor she was on and Miss Hickman replied, the eleventh floor. She told CO Lewis that she thought the flat (which was on fire) was on the ninth floor and was the flat below her flat. Miss Hickman provided information relating to the layout of her flat that it was a maisonette on two levels. CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that the firefighters knew where she was and that the Brigade had plenty of fire engines. She said to Miss Hickman that she had told them where she was and that they were on the way to her.
228. At 1626 hours Miss Hickman said that it was "really scary" and that she could hear the fire "crackling". CO Lewis said that Miss Hickman was doing really well. CO Lewis then asks whether Miss Hickman has any pets and about her work as a seamstress; Miss Hickman said that all her clothes would smell of smoke.
229. At 1627 Miss Hickman said that "it was going to be awful" and said that the flat was "filling up with quite a lot of smoke". CO Lewis asked if she was on the balcony and Miss Hickman replied that she could go out there and that the smoke was "sort of blowing away" from her". CO Lewis asked if the flat was full of smoke and Miss Hickman replied saying that she was shutting the door and that the balcony was "full and people are screaming and going first" [Note: The recording is unclear and this could also be either 'past' or 'fast']. CO Lewis said that the Brigade was giving lots of people advice and asked whether the smoke was on the balcony or in her flat. Miss Hickman replied saying there was more smoke on the balcony on the side "like Havil Street" [Note: Havil Street was on the west side of Lakanal] and that it was "raging". CO Lewis asked if she had shut all the windows and Miss Hickman said, "I hope I shut all the windows".
230. At 1628 CO Lewis told Miss Hickman not to go back into her flat if it was full of smoke saying that it was the smoke that was damaging. Miss Hickman replied to say that it was "really smokey". CO Lewis asked if she was clear of the smoke and Miss Hickman replied "sort of" but said she was going to get her boyfriend's T-shirt.

She added that it was "*pretty smoky*" in her flat and that she was now inside the flat as the balcony was "*too smoky*". CO Lewis explained that in the same way that heat rises, smoke rises too.

231. At 1628 hours CO Bushell passed information to Old Kent Road's aerial appliance⁹ (call sign E355) that the caller in flat 79 was still on the line and was apparently trapped in her flat. The message was acknowledged by E355 and the CO advised that the information would be passed on.
232. Miss Hickman said, responding to a question about the smoke, that it was coming upwards and was blowing towards Havil Street.
233. At 1629 Miss Hickman said that there was "*raging smoke*" on the other side of the building. CO Lewis said to Miss Hickman that she was going to be fine, that she was doing really well and that crews knew where she was. CO Lewis added that if there was more black smoke it meant that the fire was being put out. Miss Hickman said it was "*a bit cloudy*" and that it was "*wafting each way*" and CO Lewis confirmed that it was "*where they're putting the fire out*".
234. At just before 1630 Miss Hickman expressed concern that her neighbour's windows were all open but CO Lewis told her not to worry about them. At 1630 Miss Hickman asked CO Lewis whether she should go downstairs or "*anything in the corridor*". CO Lewis advised her not to go out of the flat; CO Lewis said that she did not know what was on the other side of the door and that she just wanted to keep her safe until the crews arrived. Miss Hickman said about the fire that she 'never thought it would happen underneath me' and that there was "*lots of noise coming*". CO Lewis said Miss Hickman should keep out of the smoke and whether it was coming through the floorboards. Miss Hickman said that downstairs was "*really really smoky*".
235. At just before 1631 CO Lewis confirmed that Miss Hickman was in a maisonette and asked whether she could go upstairs to the bedrooms. At 1631 Miss Hickman explained that the bedrooms were downstairs and the kitchen and living room were upstairs. Miss Hickman repeated that it was "*really really smoky*" downstairs where the front door was.
236. At 1631, CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she could get to the kitchen and she told the CO that she was already in the living room/kitchen area upstairs. CO Lewis asked if she could shut any doors but Miss Hickman explained that it was "*open*". Miss Hickman added that the fire alarm was now "*going off*". CO Lewis asked if she could open the kitchen window or whether the smoke was "*coming that way*" but Miss Hickman said that it was "*pretty bad that way*" so she "*better not*". [Note: Unknown to the CO, the kitchen of flat 79 was on the west side of Lakanal above the bedroom of flat 65 where the fire started.] CO Lewis asked if there was smoke in her kitchen and Miss Hickman replied that there was; Miss Hickman said she was in the lounge and the kitchen area on the west was really bad and she was facing east. CO Lewis informed Miss Hickman that the fire crews were nearly up to her.
237. At 1632 Miss Hickman asked where she should go. CO Lewis said she just needed to stay where she was and that she couldn't go back down as there was too much smoke. Miss Hickman then asked CO Lewis if the fire crews would come onto the balcony where the fire escape was and then exclaimed it was "*like orange*". CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she could open the kitchen window to which she replied that she could not as it was "*orange everywhere*" and that she couldn't open any windows. She was then asked if there was a balcony that she could go back to, or was it too smoky.
238. At 1633 Miss Hickman stated that she could go into the stairwell as she was "*right next to the stairwell*". CO Lewis said that she did not want her going on to the landing as it was not clear what was on the other side of the door. Miss Hickman acknowledged this saying that she would "*just go in here*". CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman what room she was in within the flat. She replied that she was in the lounge and facing east "*near Peckham*". CO Lewis asked if the smoke was still coming up and she replied that it was coming up both sides. When asked if it was coming into all the rooms, Miss Hickman replied that it was coming up through the floorboards downstairs and that it was outside on the balcony. She added that it was "*really smoky now*". CO Lewis offered advice about getting close to the floor.

⁹ The passing of urgent messages to the incident ground is covered earlier in this report and explains how COs will attempt to contact different appliances in order to pass on information.

239. At 1633 CO Barnett contacted Peckham's pump (call sign E372) and informed them that there was a caller from flat number 79 on the line and that there was smoke in her flat and also that flat number 68 was becoming "quite bad". CO Barnett recorded on the mobilising system relayed info to E372 about callers being in Flat [REDACTED] and 79 with bad smoke in both flats.
240. CO Lewis provided advice keeping close to the floor and suggesting that Miss Hickman covered her mouth with something to prevent or limit smoke inhalation and added that smoke "never touches the floor". Miss Hickman said that she had her boyfriend's T-shirt over her face.
241. Between 1635 – 1636 CO Barnett tried on three occasions to pass a message to Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) but received no response. At 1636 CO Bushell sends a radio message to 'all mobiles' to pass on urgent information. An officer (OK16) initially answered the message, then Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) also responded. After receiving a message to 'make pumps 6', CO Barnett informed that there were people trapped '... in [REDACTED], caller trapped in sitting room and in 79, they cannot open the front door to get out of the property. Both flats smoke logged. Flat [REDACTED] heavy smoke logging.' This information was acknowledged by E351.
242. At nearly 1635 Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that she could hear banging and thought that someone was banging on the front door. Miss Hickman asked if she should go down. The CO told Miss Hickman stay where she was as she did not want her to go back through the smoke. She confirmed that she was still in the lounge upstairs and CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that she thought the crews were outside her flat but she would check.
243. At 1635 CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she could still hear banging on her door. Miss Hickman replied that she could and asked if she should open the door and whether she should try and let them in. [Note: The Control recording indicates that the CO was establishing where the crews were at this point and so may not have heard Miss Hickman asking about opening the door.] CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she could get to the door without going through the smoke. Miss Hickman said that she had reached the door but could not open it. CO Lewis advised her to go back to the lounge.
244. At 1636 Miss Hickman informed CO Lewis that she was back on the "landing" after trying to open the front door and asked if the fire crews could come up onto the landing. Miss Hickman repeated that she was on the landing and the CO advised her to go back to the lounge; Miss Hickman responded telling her that she was "outside now". CO Lewis informed her that she was going to tell the fire crews that she could not get the front door open to which Miss Hickman replied that she had tried to pull the door and it would not open. CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that it may not have opened due to heat on the other side of the door and that she should go back up stairs. Miss Hickman confirmed she was upstairs and CO Lewis told her to get back down onto the floor, with her face close to the floor; she told the CO that there was a lot of smoke now. CO Lewis asked her to get on the floor and to cover her face with a T-shirt or whatever she had with her. Miss Hickman asked the CO whether the crews would be coming. CO Lewis replied that crews were coming and she would be fine.
245. At just after 1637 Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that her situation was "awful" and appealed "please get me out". CO Lewis advised Miss Hickman to keep down low with her face to the floor and not to start screaming as she would use up air. She praised Miss Hickman for how well she was doing. Miss Hickman stated that she thought the fire was coming into her flat and that she could see flames at the door. CO Lewis continued offering advice and asked if Miss Hickman could get to water, instructing her to keep low and take slow breaths. CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that the brigade were dealing with the fire downstairs and that they would be coming "straight to" her. Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that she could not breathe very well. CO Lewis told Miss Hickman to take small breaths and that she should not start shouting (to conserve air). Miss Hickman asked if the fire crews would be coming as she believed there was fire coming into her flat. CO Lewis attempted to reassure Miss Hickman that help would be coming "straight to" her.
246. At 1638 CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if there were any windows that she could open. Miss Hickman told her that she could open the door "here" but that it was "really hot". CO Lewis asked again whether Miss Hickman could get to a window and Miss Hickman replied she could get to a door. Miss Hickman stated that she could see flames at the door. CO Lewis advised her not to go to the door and to move away from the door. Miss Hickman said that she did not know where to go. CO Lewis asked if she could get any water and she replied that she could not. CO Lewis then advised Miss Hickman to stay down on the floor. Miss Hickman repeated that she could not breathe. CO Lewis advised her to breathe very slowly. Miss Hickman exclaimed "Oh my

God" and CO Lewis encouraged her to take slow breaths and to listen to what she was saying. CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that she had to stay where she was if she could not get to a window she should stay on the floor.

247. At 1639 Miss Hickman asked CO Lewis "I'm not going to die, am I?" and CO Lewis reassured her that she was not going to die saying that this was the London Fire Brigade and "we don't let people die". Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that it was "getting really hot" and CO Lewis continued to remind her to breathe slowly, keep her face covered and close to the floor. At this stage, Miss Hickman was giving very short answers but was answering CO Lewis and maintaining communication.
248. At 1640 CO Lewis told Miss Hickman that the Brigade were dealing with the fire downstairs and they would then come straight to her. She explained that they could not take her out through the fire because it would be more dangerous for her.
249. At 1641 CO Lewis reassured Miss Hickman that she would stay with her until the fire was put out and the fire crews came and got her. CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman how long she had lived in the flat, what she was doing when she noticed the fire, about her job and her boyfriend. Miss Hickman asked CO Lewis if the crews were coming. CO Lewis reassured her that they were and continued to talk to her.
250. At just before 1642 Miss Hickman said to CO Lewis that it was "choking" inside her flat. CO Lewis again told her that the fire crews were nearly there and advised Miss Hickman to breathe really slowly and that firefighters had nearly put the fire out. She urged Miss Hickman to keep talking to her and to keep calm, and reminded her to keep her face down near the floor.
251. At just before 1643 Miss Hickman asked CO Lewis again "am I going to die". CO Lewis said that she would not die. CO Lewis maintained conversation with Miss Hickman and asked her age. Miss Hickman said *its getting really hot now*". Miss Hickman told CO Lewis that she thought the blinds had collapsed and a short while later that something had fallen down and that she did not know what it was.
252. At 1644 Miss Hickman said again that it was 'getting so hot'. CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if she could make anything wet and if she was able to move to anywhere where there was water. Miss Hickman told her that it was so "black" in the room she could not see anything. CO Lewis advised that she stay where she was and to stay on the floor. Miss Hickman then stated that she had to move but CO Lewis told her to stay where she was on the floor as if it was so black in the room she did not want her falling over.
253. At 1644 hours SCO (Paul) Real contacted CU4; SCO (Paul) Real said that COs were still talking to occupants of flat numbers 68 and 79 who were "in a right old state. There's a lot of smoke in both flats... if they could get someone up there really quick... they can't get down to their front doors because of the smoke..." The information was passed via fire ground radio to the IC. SCO (Paul) Real recorded on the ProCAD mobilising system that a message was sent to CU4 'urged to get assistance to Flats [redacted] and 79 as people trapped inside'.
254. At nearly 1645, whilst Miss Hickman was speaking to CO Lewis, banging could be heard in the background and Miss Hickman said 'can you hear someone banging?'. CO Lewis, in response, said that she thought the fire crews were coming. At 1645 CO Lewis explained to Miss Hickman that the fire crews would have breathing apparatus on and that she should not be scared when she saw them. She continued to praise Catherine and told her how courageous she was. Miss Hickman suddenly screamed and CO Lewis asked if she was alright and Miss Hickman stated "something hot fell on me" and that it had fallen from the ceiling. CO Lewis suggested to Miss Hickman to get "on your belly can you move to a different area" but that she did not want her to stand up.
255. At 1646 CO Lewis told Miss Hickman to crawl to a different area. Miss Hickman asked "where to?" and indicated that she could not move. CO Lewis asked her to slide along somewhere so nothing else would fall on her. Miss Hickman said she was "just doing it now" but added "I don't know where though". CO Lewis asked if she had moved "a little bit" and Miss Hickman confirmed she had. CO Lewis asked Miss Hickman if anything else had fallen and Miss Hickman said "no" adding "please help me". Miss Hickman was asked if she had the T-shirt over her mouth still and she acknowledged that she had.
256. At just before 1647 CO Lewis confirmed that firefighters were "almost there" and that Miss Hickman did not have to "hold on much longer". At 1647 Miss Hickman's breathing was becoming very heavy and CO Lewis asked her to clam down and encouraged her to take slower breaths. Miss Hickman told her that it was getting

"so hot in her" and that she was "so scared". CO Lewis continued to reassure Miss Hickman and told her that she did not need to talk and had to preserve air, as long as she could hear that she was there.

257. At 1648 CO Lewis asked about her boyfriend again. Miss Hickman stated it was "terrible in here" and said "Can tell I'm dying". CO Lewis confirmed that she was talking to the crews and confirmed with Miss Hickman that she was in the lounge, adding that she was doing "really well". Miss Hickman said "its really scary".

258. At 1649 CO Lewis reminded Miss Hickman to keep her face to the floor and to breathe through the T-shirt. Miss Hickman could no longer be heard to be breathing but CO Lewis continued to talk to her.

259. At 1649 SCO (Paul) Real contacted CU4 on scene to request news on the flat numbers and progress on getting crews to flats 68 and 79. CU4 confirmed they had spoken to the IC who was aware and "on the case, they've definitely got crews up there". SCO (Paul) Real informed CU4 that the ceiling in flat 79 was coming down and CU4 stated they would update the IC.

260. At 1655 hours, SCO (Paul) Real contacted CU4 to report the information regarding Miss Hickman at flat 79. He informed the CU that even though they had passed on a few flat numbers, flat 79 was urgent. The CU stated that they had this information written down and were doing something as a priority. SCO Real stated "we were talking to the woman but now stopped talking to her and can't hear her breathing". He added that it "sounds like they have got into [REDACTED], that seems to be sorted, but 79 seems to be the real big problem". The officer on the CU confirmed he would "run round and take it up to them".

261. At 1704, SCO (Debbie) Real contacted CU4 and requested an update on whether they had got Miss Hickman out of flat 79. She raised her concerns and stated that they were on the phone to her but the line had gone dead and that they could not hear her. CU4 stated that they would contact the IC and see if they could provide an update. SCO Real reiterated this was flat 79.

262. At just before 1711 hours CU4 called Control, speaking to CO Di Muro, and confirmed awareness of resident in flat [REDACTED] (and flats 79, 80 and 82) and confirmed that they are aware of people "in the four flats".

263. CO Lewis continued to try to communicate with Miss Hickman until the call closed at 1714.

264. At 1724, CO Bushell took a call from CU4 seeking to confirm the flats where Control had reported persons trapped. CO Bushell initially gave flats [REDACTED], 79, 80, and 81. After checking she added flat 82. SCO (Paul) Real took over the call to say that he was particularly worried about the occupant of flat 79 to whom a CO had been on line for some time but the line had gone dead. SCO (Paul) Real also confirmed flats [REDACTED] 79, 80, 81 and 82. SCO (Paul) Real asked if they had news about flat 79. CU4 said they had no news and were trying to get BA crews up there. SCO (Paul) Real asked if flat 79 was on the top floor and CU4 responded that they thought it was.

265. At 1831 hours, CU4 contacted the Control supervisory desk, and spoke to SCO Lyn Juby (Red Watch, who had come on duty at 1830 hours). During the conversation SCO Juby asked for an update on flat [REDACTED] stating that control had a "distressed operator".

266. At 1907 hours CO Juby called CU4 DAC Chidgey regarding occupants of [REDACTED], 79, 81 and 82. (no transcript available)

267. [Note: Miss Hickman was found, apparently dead, at approximately 2051; she was pronounced dead by the LAS at 2113.]

Flats 80/81/82 – [REDACTED] / Ms Dayana Francisquini (and her children – Felipe Francisquini-Cervi and Thais Francisquini)/Ms Helen Udoaka (and her baby, Michele Udoaka)

268. At just after 1636 a call (37) was received from [REDACTED] by CO Bushell [Note: Unknown to the CO, Flat 80 was situated on the eleventh floor]. [REDACTED] stated that he (and his family) were trapped in his flat and that he made the call after his bathroom started filling up with smoke. Screaming and crying could be heard in the background. CO Bushell established the location and confirmed that it was Lakanal and stated that the Brigade were there; she asked what flat [REDACTED] was in and he confirmed Flat 80. CO Bushell asked whether it was just the smoke that was coming in. Less than one minute after being connected to LFB control CO Bushell told

██████████ that the firefighters were there and that they were on their way up to him. CO Bushell then disconnected the call.

269. Between 1635 – 1636 CO Barnett tried on three occasions to pass a message to Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) but received no response. At 1636 CO Bushell sent a radio message to 'all mobiles' to pass on urgent information. An officer (OK16) initially answered the message, then Old Kent Road's pump ladder (call sign E351) also responded. After receiving a message to 'make pumps 6', CO Barnett informed that people were trapped "... in ██████████ caller trapped in sitting room and in 79, they cannot open the front door to get out of the property. Both flats smoke logged. Flat 80 heavy smoke logging." This information was acknowledged by E351. At just after 1640, CO Barnett noted on the ProCAD mobilising system that she had alerted E351) "Further call to Flat no 80. Caller is panic stricken and has been advised that you are on the way to them".
270. At just after 1642 ██████████ (the husband of Dayana Francisquini and the father of Felipe Francisquini-Cervi and Thais Francisquini) called 999. The call was answered by CO Bushell (call 39). ██████████ informed CO Bushell that he was en-route to the fire, about five to 10 minutes from his home, and that his wife and children were trapped in the flat above the fire. CO Bushell confirmed that the Brigade was aware of the fire and was in attendance; she said that the Brigade would get to everyone as soon as they could. ██████████ said that his wife could not breathe and CO Bushell confirmed that the Brigade already had several reports about the fire and that firefighters were on their way up. CO Bushell asked ██████████ for the flat number and he initially said "eleven" just above the one that had the fire; CO Bushell queried this saying that the fire is on the 9th/11th floor of the building and ██████████ then confirmed it was flat 81 on the 11th floor level. CO Bushell informed him that the Brigade knew there were people in flats 79, 80 and 81 and firefighters were on their way to them. CO Bushell confirmed that ██████████ was on his way to Lakanal and ended the call.
271. At just after 1645 Ms Helen Udoaka called 999 (call 43). The call was answered by CO Di Muro. Ms Udoaka said that there was a fire in her flat and that she was in flat 82 Lakanal. CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka to slow down and asked her to repeat her location. The CO asked her to spell Lakanal and then asked Ms Udoaka for the postcode. Ms Udoaka told CO Di Muro that she was trapped in smoke and had a three month old baby with her and confirmed again that she was in Flat 82. CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka to confirm that the address was on Havil Street and that smoke was coming into the building. Ms Udoaka confirmed there smoke coming in to her flat. CO Di Muro advised her to get a towel or blanket, but Ms Udoaka interrupted and said again that she had a three month old baby. CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka to listen to her so she could help her and asked again whether she had a "towel or something". Ms Udoaka said she had a blanket and asked if she should cover the baby with it. CO Di Muro said no and explained that she wanted her to put the blanket against the front door. Ms Udoaka confirmed that she would do this. CO Di Muro repeated the advice to use the blanket to stop the smoke coming into the flat. Ms Udoaka asked about the windows and said there was smoke. A child or baby could be heard coughing in the back ground. The CO asked if there was a room within the flat with less smoke; CO Di Muro could hear a man speaking in the background and Ms Udoaka appeared to be speaking to him. CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka to listen to her and that it was very important. Ms Udoaka repeated that her baby was trapped. CO Di Muro confirmed that firefighters had been told that they were in flat 82 and that she would help her with the smoke. A baby could again be heard coughing. CO Di Muro asked again whether there was a room in the flat that had less smoke. Ms Udoaka said again that there was a lot of smoke and that "they were trapped". CO Di Muro said she understood about the smoke and asked again whether there was a room she could go to which had less smoke. Ms Udoaka again said there was lots of smoke and CO Di Muro asked whether there was a window Ms Udoaka could get to. Ms Udoaka replied that she was in flat 80 [Note: not flat 82 which she had said previously]. CO Di Muro contradicted her and said that she knew she was in flat 82 and Ms Udoaka did not correct her. CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka if she could speak to the man who was there. Ms Udoaka replied "the man who is there?" and CO Di Muro asked Ms Udoaka who was in the flat with her and she replied that she was trapped. There was confusion and the CO had difficulty getting Ms Udoaka's attention. CO Di Muro asked to speak to someone who would listen to her. There is further confusion with a man's voice again heard in the background to the call. CO Di Muro tried to get someone's attention by saying "hello" several times but failed to get anyone to respond.
272. At 1648, three minutes from the start of call, the telephone exchange operator confirmed to CO Di Muro to inform her that the caller (Ms Udoaka) has closed the call. [Note: Unknown to the COs, the FI report shows it was at this time (1648) that all the occupants of flat 80 (i.e. Ms Udoaka and her baby and ██████████ his wife

and son) went upstairs in the flat (i.e. to 12th floor level) and exited via the escape balcony on the east side of Lakanal as smoke conditions within their flat (80) were getting worse and smoke was entering under the front door. They knocked on neighbours' windows and doors along the escape balcony and one was answered by Dayana Francisquini (flat 81). Dayana Francisquini let them in and led them to the bathroom downstairs where she had been sheltering with her two children Felipe Francisquini-Cervi and Thais Francisquini.]

- 273. At 1649 supervisor SCO (Paul) Real contacted CU4 on scene to request news on the flat numbers [REDACTED] and 79, informing the Control Unit that there had also been calls from flat numbers 82 and 80, where there may have been a baby. The callers were also described as being 'in a panic'.
 - 274. At 1711 hours, CO Bushell answered a call from CU4 requesting a local authority liaison officer for Southwark. CU4 confirmed that they were aware of people in flats [REDACTED] 79, 80 and 82.
 - 275. At 1724, CO Bushell answered a call from CU4 and asked for confirmation of the flats where Control has reported persons trapped. CO Bushell initially gave flats [REDACTED] 79, 80 and 81. After checking she added flat 82. SCO (Paul) Real took over the call and also confirmed flats [REDACTED] 79, 80, 81 and 82.
276. At 1725, the midwife of Helen Udoaka called 999 (call 57). The call was answered by CO Kidd. The midwife reported that she has just been paged by Ms Udoaka, who had her baby recently, and was stuck in her flat. CO Kidd requested the address and the midwife gave the address as flat 82 Lakanal. The midwife then stated that she thought Ms Udoaka was in the bathroom with the baby and that no one was coming to her. CO Kidd requested Helen Udoaka's mobile telephone number and asked if she could ring her. The community midwife provided the telephone number. CO Kidd confirmed that she would telephone Ms Udoaka, then ended the call.
277. At 1726, CO Kidd dialled Helen Udoaka's mobile telephone number. The call was answered but no greeting was given, and coughing and a baby crying could be heard in the background. CO Kidd attempted to get Ms Udoaka's attention but failed and whilst still connected to the call, talked to her supervisor SCO (Paul) Real and explained the situation. Whilst this conversation was taking place, Ms Udoaka responded and said her baby was crying and hungry. CO Kidd attempted to confirm her location and Ms Udoaka stated she was in flat 81. CO Kidd informed her that she was going to tell the firefighters that she was in flat 81. Ms Udoaka said that she could not breathe and CO Kidd advised her to block the doors with a towel. CO Kidd then heard a recorded message "*you have been placed on hold*". CO Kidd then ended the call.
- 278. At 1729, SCO (Paul) Real contacted CU4 regarding their concerns over the occupants of flat 81, reporting that there was a woman and a new born baby in the bathroom. CU4 confirmed they were aware and 'have a rescue sector going into there'. SCO (Paul) Real stated that control was trying to re-contact Ms Udoaka. An officer in CU4 replied that they would relay to the sector that she was stuck in the bathroom. At 1730 CO Kidd, made an entry on the ProCAD system log reading 'Flat 81 has a 3 wk. baby who is stuck in bathroom'.
279. At 1730, a second call was received from Helen Udoaka's community midwife (call 58) and was answered by CO Clarke. The midwife explained that she had rung a minute before about a woman stuck in a block of flats on fire and explained that she provided the wrong information about the flat number and said that the woman was in flat 81 not flat 82. She said she had just spoken to Ms Udoaka on the phone and that she was in the bathroom with a two week old baby and the baby could not breathe. CO Clark confirmed the address as flat 81. CO Clark then ended the call.
- 280. At 1737 CO Barnett contacted CU4 by radio and informed them there was a three week old baby stuck in the bathroom with a female in flat 81. CU4 confirmed there were crews investigating this.
 - 281. At 1831, CU4 contacted Control (and spoke to SCO Juby (Red Watch) who had come on duty at 1830). CU4 requested the telephone number for flat 80. SCO Juby and CU4 had a conversation regarding the mobile numbers. CU4 confirmed they required the telephone numbers of callers at flat 81 and flat 80.

282. [Note: At between approximately 1820 and 1830 firefighters searching flat 81 found an adult female, Dayana Francisquini, a young baby, Michelle Udoaka, and a young boy, Felipe Francisquini-Cervi. The casualties were passed the London Ambulance Service's Hazardous Area Response Team (HART).]
283. At 1840 hours, CU4 was contacted by SCO Juby, she stated that she had located the call regarding flat 81 where the woman and baby were and confirmed that the details were passed to the CU. She asked if the telephone number for flat 80 was still required and was told that it was not.
284. At 1907 hours, SCO Juby spoke to Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Chidgey on CU4. She stated that she was able to identify the flats as 68, 79 and 80 as the flats where COs spoke to callers given FSG. She highlighted flats 80 and 81 as those where Control knew of callers but did not speak with them directly. DAC Chidgey stated that he would go and check the crews had this information.
285. [Note: From statements taken from firefighters, at between approx. 2054 and 2109 firefighters searching the lower level of flat 81 found an adult female and child on the floor in the bathroom. Neither had any signs of life. The two casualties were Helen Udoaka and Thais Francisquini. They were removed from the bathroom and pronounced dead by London Ambulance Service's Hazardous Area Response Team (HART).]

F.6 Conclusion about Handling of the fire at Lakanal 3 July 2009

286. It is important to understand the extent to which COs had experience of, and training in, providing FSG which is outlined in section E. A key finding is that FSG refresher training was not provided to COs and they relied on training provided either in 1994 (when the Fire Control Personnel training package 1994 was introduced) or later as part of recruit training when the CO joined the Brigade. National guidance recommends that there should be an annual refresher course for staff in order that they are familiar with FSG for the 'rare' occasions when it might be required. Although no formal refresher training was provided, there were debriefing arrangements in place in Control in the past and therefore opportunity to learn from FSG calls and understand whether changes to guidance, training or personal development was needed, however, to a large extent COs had to rely on experience gained from previous FSG they may have taken or from experiences shared by other COs.
287. **Workload:** At the time of the Lakanal fire Control was busy taking other emergency calls and dealing with operationally urgent messages. There were no other significant incidents in progress before or immediately after the initial Lakanal call. Control resources were dedicated to dealing with three FSG calls at the same time during the period 1635 to 1650. This will have made overall call handling more complex given the need for a supervisor or another CO to be available to support the CO dealing with the FSG call and increase both workloads and the personal pressure on the staff involved. In his statement, CC Simmons said, *"During my many years service I have experienced other major incidents involving similar levels of focus, commitment and volume of work. However, the unfolding and deteriorating circumstances experienced by the trapped persons who were communicating with the Control Room created an intensity that I have never previously experienced and placed my staff and I in a unique situation."*
288. **Premises layout:** The COs providing the longer FSG calls sought information about the layout of the flats to establish the safest place to protect the caller. This proved difficult for two reasons, firstly some of the flats were largely open plan and a 'safe room' was not available and, secondly, some callers were moving about their flat or between flats. Both issues meant it was not possible for COs to develop a clear picture of the layout of the flats and how this might affect smoke, heat and fire spread. Further, it is not practicable to expect COs to understand the layout of thousands of different types of building, especially when the only information source is from a possibly distressed and confused caller.
289. **Situational Awareness:** As a consequence of the above although all COs played a part in managing the calls associated with the Lakanal fire and other emergency calls during that time, no single CO could have had a comprehensive picture of the incident and its progress.
290. **Information gathering:** The quality of the information gathered by COs during the incident varied dependent on the type and length of call. Some calls only required the confirmation of the address to confirm it was a 'duplicate' to the Lakanal fire, whereas the FSG calls involved detailed information gathering. COs often found out about the callers flat number, which floor they were located on, if they were on their own and their specific

location in the flat. However, in the various source documents (e.g. MobIS report, FI report, recordings) there is reference to floor numbers being gathered from callers but these were not always passed to the incident ground in every instance.

291. **Using the Reference Information File (RIF) on FSG:** Whilst one CO statement refers to accessing the RIF, LFB systems do not automatically record when a RIF is accessed.
292. **Role of Control supervisors during an incident:** There is evidence that supervisors (including a senior manager) supported COs during the provision of FSG.
293. **Expectations that callers would be rescued and 'stay put' advice:** COs had a clear expectation that fire crews would reach the callers quickly. Their experience was that fire appliances arrive quickly and that people are rescued by the Brigade. This is borne out by the fact that only rarely, where FSG is given, do people die in fires (see section E3). As rescues by crews were not immediate there is a question whether the CO and/or callers, could have assessed the risk of attempting to escape from the flat and whether the risk of moving closer to the fire (but escaping) was less than staying put and awaiting rescue. COs relied on advising callers to 'stay put' expecting that this would keep callers safe from the fire.
294. **Escape/alternative escape routes:** Many callers mentioned that there was smoke outside their flat or that there was smoke in the corridor preventing escape. This may have caused COs to move straight into the 'protect' phase of FSG and not explore alternative escape routes with the callers. There is a real risk in attempting a self-evacuation from a building on fire that the occupant will move themselves into a position of greater harm rather than waiting in a safe location for rescue.
295. **Assessment/re-assessment of the call/caller:** Some COs did repeat questions to find out what was happening at different stages of the call, including trying to find rooms with less smoke. National guidance (FSC 54/2004) suggests a model which has review of assessment/initial decisions built into it, although this was not included in LFB training materials. Moving to protect advice with the intent of keeping the caller safe may not always be the best solution and the call should be continually re-assessed. There may be a tendency to limit re-assessment due to the protect ethos, although there is evidence that some pro-active call handling techniques did take place.
296. **Effective communication between Control and incident command:** There is evidence of information passing from Control to the incident ground and only one occasion when the details of a flat with people trapped were not passed in a timely way. Control supervisors regularly tried to obtain information about the progress with the incident particularly in relation to callers being given FSG. In line with practice at the time, there was much less information being passed from the incident ground to Control about the progress of firefighting and rescue efforts. It is not clear that if COs had been given information about progress that it would have influenced the advice given to callers.
297. **Ending a call:** The overriding principle is for COs to deal with calls as quickly as possible and to release the caller so that the CO can move on to the next call. The CO needs to strike a difficult balance between gathering information and if necessary supporting the first caller and the need to move on to another caller who may require more attention based on their situation. Senior Control managers say that all training, which reflects national guidance, must lead the CO to disconnect the caller as soon as practicable once all relevant information has been taken.

G. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

298. This section of the report draws down the conclusions and learning points above and sets out a series of recommendations to take forward.

G1 Government and National guidance and other related government advice (section C)

299. Between 1987 and 2004 the government issued five documents to fire services containing guidance on answering emergency calls including fire survival guidance. The 1993 circular and accompanying 1994 training package are more specifically about FSG whilst the 2004 circular was more generic in terms of call handling and FSG.
300. During the same period the government published a further series of leaflets giving fire safety advice to the public, these were subsequently reviewed between 2007/2008.
301. The guidance documents issued to the fire services emphasised that the generic advice is "get out/stay out". The documents also set out FSG in a generic way with emphasis being on fires in domestic houses where you can drop from 1st floor windows etc. It describes within flats and maisonettes that whilst a fire in an individual dwelling may smoke log the common landing it should not directly affect adjacent dwellings or the adjacent stairway (Fire Control Personnel Training Notes 1994).
302. There is mention in the government's training package (Fire Control Personnel Training Notes 1994) that COs should be aware of fire safety advice contained in Home Office literature. Government leaflets advised that if escape routes are blocked or there is a fire elsewhere in a block of flats the fabric of the building was designed to keep fire out ("Make your plan. Get out alive", Home Office, September 2000) and would offer protection from fire ("Escaping from a high rise", ODPM, 1 January 2004). Similar advice was still available in 2009 on the direct.gov website. The "stay put" advice is consistent with advice issued by the British Standards Institution in BS9999:2008.
303. The overlap of national guidance and lack of specific guidance on incidents in high rise buildings is not an ideal basis on which to form LFB policy and training.

Recommendation 1: It is unhelpful to have two extant national guidance documents (FSCs 10/1993 and 54/2004), alongside the Fire Service Manual volume 1, and it is not clear what national guidance comprises, and how the different advice fits together. National guidance on fire survival techniques and training, and its interaction with community safety literature, should be reviewed and updated. The Commissioner should write to the Department for Communities and Local Government to prompt such a review and the issues identified in this report be provided as a contribution to the review. Given DCLG's current stance on the provision of operational guidance (that this is something for the FRS sector rather than government), the Brigade could offer to lead on such a review.

Action 1: Following the conclusion of the Inquests, and depending on DCLG's stance, LFB to either contribute to a review or lead on a review of the national fire survival techniques and training.

G2 How national guidance on fire survival is reflected in LFB policy and fire safety publicity (section D)

304. Following a gap analysis some differences were identified between internal LFB Policies and national fire survival guidance, these have been set out in detail in the gap analysis attached at Annex B to this report. Some of the reasons for this may be the disparate way that national guidance and resulting LFB policy has evolved as outlined in section C above.

Recommendation 2: LFB policy 539 on emergency call management (November 2007) should be reviewed to ensure compliance with current national guidance, including in respect of fire survival guidance, and the learning points in this report.

Action 2: Completed. LFB Policy 539 on Emergency call management was reviewed and rewritten to align with national guidance in February 2011. This included a review of the Reference Information File (RIF) on fire survival guidance, which includes specific guidance for supervisors.

G3. LFB Control Officer training and knowledge in FSG (section E)

305. There are extant Government and LFB documents which cover training provision for COs. These documents cover initial training, continuation training and refresher training of COs. With regard to FSG there are some differences between the national documents and the LFB documents and an analysis of these differences are included in LFB Annex B.
306. An incomplete database record of training provided by the LFB to COs exists covering the period from 1981 to 2011. This record includes initial, continuation and refresher training given to COs.
307. FSG is only provided infrequently. Between 2005 and 2009 77 'notable' FSG calls have been identified. Of these there was one call with recorded fatalities (two) where FSG had been given. .
308. Although the available training records are considered to be incomplete there is evidence from staff that all COs received FSG training when it was introduced in 1994 and those who joined after 1994 received FSG training as part of their initial Control training. In 2009 there was no structured, regular FSG continuation/refresher training.
309. Whilst systems are in place to monitor performance within Control improvements could be considered to further develop means to inform and influence performance management .

Recommendation 3: CO training should be kept under review with formal periodic reviews. Such reviews should include officers from outside Control who can advise on the specialist content of training (e.g. fire safety).

Action 3: Initial audit completed, this is to be an on-going process. A training audit was requested and carried out by LFB Training & Development Department (prior to outsourcing to Babcock) on the training provided by Brigade Control Training Section (BCTS) with the following recommendations:

- a. Annual refresher training to be carried out in accordance with national guidance for training for rare incidents
- b. Introduce role play for a variety of training elements
- c. Provide a more proactive annual training plan.

Recommendation 4: With regard to Fire Survival guidance training specifically this should be reviewed to more fully reflect national guidance and current fire safety advice (and any specific issues arising from the gap analysis included in this report). This should include a review of training for:

- (1). Recruits
- (2). Control Officers (continuation / refresher training)
- (3). Supervisors

Action 4(1): Completed. Recruit CO FSG training was reviewed and updated in late 2009 and delivered from 2010. FSG training has been moved from week five of the old training course to week

nine of the new training course for new COs to give trainees more experience of 'live' calls before they undertake FSG training.

Action 4(2): Completed. A programme of refresher/continuation training was implemented for all in-post COs between May and August 2010. Continuation training is provided annually to all Control staff over a two year cycle with year one being a trainer led course and year two being a computer based training course. The training includes:

- a. role play, to ensure confirmation of learning, was introduced into training. This allows all new and existing staff to experience a number of FSG call scenarios in a safe, supportive environment.
- b. inputs from Brigade fire safety officers covering aspects of building design and construction, coupled with current fire safety advice to educate COs on fire behaviour and building types.
- c. FSG training has been extended to encompass whole day training.

Action 4(3): Completed. Control have introduced a supervisor's course, focussing on leadership and general supervisory actions and role within the Control room including FSG.

Recommendation 5: Control staff training records should be maintained on Brigade systems, and other records retained in accordance with the Brigade's records management strategy and policy, including retaining properly referenced (and dated) record copies of all training material used.

Action 5: Completed. Control training records are now maintained on the main Brigade systems and appropriate records are maintained in accordance with the Brigade's records management policy.

Recommendation 6: The arrangements for the performance management of Control staff should be set out clearly in a policy, including the standards that staff are expected to reach, how performance will be assessed and monitored particularly in relation to calls where fire survival guidance is given.

Action 6: Completed. Since the Lakanal incident, Brigade Control senior managers have undertaken an extensive review on all high-rise or FSG calls that have occurred, reviewing these and making amendments to the RIF and training to better align Control practices with FSC 10/1993 and the 1994 Fire Control training package.

G4. Conclusion about Handling of the fire at Lakanal 3 July 2009 (section F)

310. **Workload:** At the time of the Lakanal fire Control was busy taking other emergency calls and dealing with operationally urgent messages. There were no other significant incidents in progress before or immediately after the initial Lakanal call. Control resources were dedicated to dealing with three FSG calls at the same time during the period 1635 to 1650. This will have made overall call handling more complex given the need for a supervisor or another CO to be available to support the CO dealing with the FSG call and increase both workloads and the personal pressure on the staff involved. In his statement, CC Simmons said, *"During my many years service I have experienced other major incidents involving similar levels of focus, commitment and volume of work. However, the unfolding and deteriorating circumstances experienced by the trapped persons who were communicating with the Control Room created an intensity that I have never previously experienced and placed my staff and I in a unique situation."*
311. **Premises layout:** The COs providing the longer FSG calls sought information about the layout of the flats to establish the safest place to protect the caller. This proved difficult for two reasons, firstly some of the flats where largely open plan and a 'safe room' was not available and, secondly, some callers were moving about their flat or between flats. Both issues meant it was not possible for COs to develop a clear picture of the layout

of the flats and how this might affect smoke, heat and fire spread. Further, it is not practicable to expect COs to understand the layout of thousands of different types of building, especially when the only information source is from a possibly distressed and confused caller.

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317. **Escape/alternative escape routes:** Many callers mentioned that there was smoke outside their flat or that there was smoke in the corridor preventing escape. This may have caused COs to move straight into the 'protect' phase of FSG and not explore alternative escape routes with the callers. There is a real risk in attempting a self-evacuation from a building on fire that the occupant will move themselves into a position of greater harm rather than waiting in a safe location for rescue.
318. **Assessment/re-assessment of the call/caller:** Some COs did repeat questions to find out what was happening at different stages of the call, including trying to find rooms with less smoke. National guidance (FSC 54/2004) suggests a model which has review of assessment/initial decisions built into it, although this was not included in LFB training materials. Moving to protect advice with the intent of keeping the caller safe may not always be the best solution and the call should be continually re-assessed. There may be a tendency to limit re-assessment due to the protect ethos, although there is evidence that some pro-active call handling techniques did take place.
319. **Effective communication between Control and incident command:** There is evidence of information passing from Control to the incident ground and only one occasion when the details of a flat with people trapped were not passed in a timely way. Control supervisors regularly tried to obtain information about the progress with the incident particularly in relation to callers being given FSG. In line with practice at the time, there was much less information being passed from the incident ground to Control about the progress of firefighting and rescue efforts. It is not clear that if COs had been given information about progress that it would have influenced the advice given to callers.
320. **Ending a call:** The overriding principle is for COs to deal with calls as quickly as possible and to release the caller so that the CO can move on to the next call. The CO needs to strike a difficult balance between gathering information and if necessary supporting the first caller and the need to move on to another caller who may require more attention based on their situation. Senior Control managers say that all training, reflecting national guidance, must lead the CO to disconnect the caller as soon as all relevant information has been taken.

Recommendation 7: Operational policies should better reflect the need for two-way communication between Control and the incident ground when FSG calls are underway.

Action 7: Completed. A new policy on Fire survival guidance calls for operational personnel (LFB Policy 790) was issued in February 2012. This introduced a mechanism enabling COs to inform the incident ground and crews en-route that they are dealing with a FSG call. The new policy provides a format for recording and communicating relevant information to the incident ground about the caller's location, environment and the FSG advice given. The policy includes the use of two-way communication to enable fire crews to pass incident information about the person who may be trapped to Control, and which may impact on the FSG advice being provided.

Recommendation 8: The operational Performance Review of Command (PRC) and operational review team (ORT) processes, should include contributions from Control so that any issues encountered during the incident can be addressed and improvements made.

Action 8: Completed. A performance review process similar to the Brigade's Performance Review of Command (PRC) has been introduced to Control which feeds into the Operational process. This will ensure that any issues from control or from the fire-ground are addressed. This provides for the feeding back of information to staff following incidents. The Control process includes a template which is completed by the on duty Control watch following any relevant / large fires identifying any issues. This is sent to Operational Review Team and used at the PRC to ensure the operational and Control issues are shared at the PRC. Policy 421 was updated in February 2011 to include provision for the attendance of the Control officer at a PRC where required.

Recommendation 9: Decision support (or structured call handling software) should be considered for introduction into Control.

Action 9: In progress. The specification for a replacement mobilising system includes a requirement for structured call handling. A contract for a replacement mobilising system was let to Capita in June 2012 and includes the provision of such software. The new system is expected to be delivered in 2014 (second half).

321. Subject to the outcomes of the Inquests it is recommended that the above learning points from the Lakanal fire should be shared with other fire and rescue services.