

ASBESTOS AND AIR QUALITY FOLLOWING THE FIRE

Dear Ms Folarin

Many thanks - but the original enquiry was: "Is anyone going to warn the local community that there are asbestos fumes in the smoke that they are all breathing, provide masks and encourage everyone to wear them? I am advised by Imperial College that this is particularly dangerous for those who have come out of the Tower".

The response was: "We have been advised that Public Health England have been monitoring air quality around Grenfell Tower and as of yet have not recorded any adverse air quality issues. This will continue to be monitored and if this changes then information will be shared to services to respond to let residents and community members know".

However, when I followed up the enquiry it appears that PHE is monitoring the air quality from St Charles Square, which is a significant distance away from Grenfell Tower. I do not believe that residents will be reassured by this.

The advice for those with worrying symptoms (I have problems with my eyes and a nasty cough) to contact their GP or ring 111 gives no indication that all contacts will be diligently recorded for future use should people's symptoms develop into something worse. Can you give an assurance that such a register will be maintained?

Are you able to let us know that air quality and the debris much closer to the Tower will be measured as quickly as possible?

Residents are being asked to move back into Testerton Walk and Barandon Walk, although a heavy pall of smoke hangs over these two walkways - and indeed others. Where is the risk assessment of this smoke which can be provided to residents to let them know that it is safe for them to return, especially those with small children whose lungs are still developing?

Local residents have community kitchen gardens on the Lancaster West Estate, Whitstable House, the Allom and Barlow Estate, Wesley Square, Henry Dickens Court, etc. Is there any advice as to whether the produce at these gardens is now fit to eat? Can this produce be tested?

The work of the street cleaners is visible and has been rightly commended. What health risks are they facing from their activities?

Residents do not see the work of Public Health England and need the fullest possible information from this organisation. What is being provided so far is not sufficient.

I am meeting residents later today and would welcome an update on all these issues.

Many thanks

Cllr Judith Blakeman

From: Folarin, Cynthia: WCC [mailto:cfolarin@westminster.gov.uk]
Sent: 19 June 2017 19:17

To: Cllr-Blakeman [REDACTED]
Cc: Parker, Charlie: WCC; Cllr, Atkinson, Robert: RBKC; Willis, Andrew: TTS-EnvHealth: RBKC;
ICC.London@phe.gov.uk
Subject: RE: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower
Importance: High

Dear Cllr Blackman
Many thanks for your query.

The current advice on air quality on the RBKC web site has been developed and agreed with Public Health England <<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/all-council-statements/public-health-advice-following-grenfell-tower-fire>>.

Advice on air quality and smoke exposure

Public Health England has been assessing air quality in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire and this shows a minimal wider risk to public health as a result of the fire's smoke plume. People who have been close to the scene and exposed to smoke from the fire may have experienced irritation to the lining of the air passages, the skin and the eyes, and respiratory symptoms including coughing and wheezing, breathlessness, phlegm production and chest pain. People who have concerns about their symptoms should seek medical advice from their GP or call NHS 111.

Advice on odour as a result of the fire

The human nose is very sensitive to odours and often detects chemicals at concentrations in air which pose no risk to health, however they can be unpleasant and affect well-being. Odours can cause a nuisance to people and may lead to stress and anxiety. Some people may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches or dizziness as a reaction to odours even when the substances that cause those smells are themselves not harmful to health.

Advice on face masks

As far as possible, exposure to airborne pollutants, such as dust, should be avoided by preventing or minimising exposure. Public Health England does not recommend wearing face masks for the general public as a method of reducing exposure to air pollution as it is not clear that they would be effective in reducing exposure. Masks can be uncomfortable to use and can worsen symptoms in people with heart and lung conditions as they may find it harder to breathe. Caution is therefore advised when using masks and their use by the public outside of the cordon is not

recommended.

Waste materials and clean up

Information from the London Fire Brigade and Council indicates that the majority of debris in surrounding areas consists of charred foam insulation. This material is unlikely to present a threat to people's health, however precautionary advice for residents is to not handle any waste material or debris from the fire as it may present a physical hazard.

Street cleansing in the area outside of the cordoned off zone, has been carried out by the Council and continues on a daily basis. The Council is currently working on a plan for clearance within the cordoned off zone, in partnership with other agencies.

If you have waste material or debris from the fire at your property, please contact the Council on [REDACTED] and we will make arrangements to collect it.

[Further guidance for people affected by the fire is available online.](#)

[<http://bit.ly/GrenfellTowerSupport>](http://bit.ly/GrenfellTowerSupport)

Assessment of the air quality from local monitoring stations continues. In the borough and monitors are located at Sion Manning School, St. Charles' square, North Kensington in the north of the borough and the site provides real time data on air quality. Currently the site is reporting low air pollution;

[<http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicbulletin.asp?region=0
&site=&bulletin=hourly&lat_id=20
&network=All&postcode=&MapType=Google&VenueCode>](http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicbulletin.asp?region=0&site=&bulletin=hourly&lat_id=20&network=All&postcode=&MapType=Google&VenueCode>)

I am happy to add to the current advice on the RBKC website that "assessment of the air quality from local monitoring stations continues", to provide the additional reassurance you seek.

I hope this is helpful

Kind Regards

Cynthia Folarin

Deputy Director Public Health, Consultant in Public Health, LBHF, RBKC, Westminster

Please note, my working week is Monday - Thursday

Tel: [REDACTED] **E-mail:** cfolarin@westminster.gov.uk [<mailto:cfolarin@westminster.gov.uk>](mailto:cfolarin@westminster.gov.uk)
4th Floor, 5 The Strand, London, WC2N 5HR

From: Judith Blakeman [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 June 2017 09:44

To: Folarin, Cynthia: WCC
Cc: Parker, Charlie: WCC; Cllr, Atkinson, Robert: RBKC
Subject: FW: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower
Importance: High

Dear Ms Folarin

Are you able to provide firm details of the PHE assessment of the air quality and the toxic fumes that local residents have been breathing and who are becoming more concerned day by day?

The information from RBKC is insufficient, does not reassure and we need to be able to give out something more official that indicates beyond doubt that proper testing has been and continues to be carried out.

Many thanks.

Cllr Judith Blakeman

From: Judith Blakeman [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 June 2017 06:31
To: 'BECC Mailbox: WCC'
Subject: RE: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Thank you - can you please give me a contact at Public Health England whom I can contact for further information?

Many thanks

Cllr Judith Blakeman

From: BECC Mailbox: WCC [[<mailto:BECC@westminster.gov.uk>](mailto:BECC@westminster.gov.uk)]
Sent: 19 June 2017 03:48
To: Cllr-Blakeman [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Dear Cllr Blakeman,

I understand that you were asking about advice from PHE regarding air quality. The information we have is from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea website, please follow the link below:

[<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/all-council-statements/public-health-advice-following-grenfell-tower-fire>](https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/all-council-statements/public-health-advice-following-grenfell-tower-fire)

Kind regards

Karen Crook
BECC Information Officer

From: Judith Blakeman [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 June 2017 21:59

To: Borough Emergency Control Centre: RBKC
Cc: Harris Sue: H&F; Austin Nick: H&F; Holgate, Nicholas: CP-TownClerkDirFin: RBKC; Redpath, Tony: CP-PPU: RBKC; Priestley, Stuart: CP-PPU: RBKC; Kerry, David: CP-PPU: RBKC
Subject: RE: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Dear Mr Duncton

Can you please provide me with a copy of the advice from Public Health England?

Many thanks.

Cllr Judith Blakeman

From: Borough Emergency Control Centre: RBKC [[<mailto:BECC@rbkc.gov.uk>](mailto:BECC@rbkc.gov.uk)]
Sent: 15 June 2017 02:13
To: Cllr-Blakeman [REDACTED]
Cc: Harris Sue: H&F; Austin Nick: H&F; Holgate, Nicholas: CP-TownClerkDirFin: RBKC; Redpath, Tony: CP-PPU: RBKC; Priestley, Stuart: CP-PPU: RBKC; Kerry, David: CP-PPU: RBKC
Subject: RE: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Dear Cllr Blakeman

We have been advised that Public Health England have been monitoring air quality around Grenfell Tower and as of yet have not recorded any adverse air quality issues. This will continue to be monitored and if this changes then information will be shared to services to respond to let residents and community members know.

Many thanks

Jack Duncton

From: Holgate, Nicholas: CP-TownClerkDirFin: RBKC
Sent: 14 June 2017 23:49
To: Austin Nick: H&F [<nick.austin@lbhf.gov.uk>](mailto:nick.austin@lbhf.gov.uk) [<mailto:nick.austin@lbhf.gov.uk>](mailto:nick.austin@lbhf.gov.uk)
Cc: Borough Emergency Control Centre: RBKC [<mailto:BECC@rbkc.gov.uk>](mailto:BECC@rbkc.gov.uk); Harris Sue: H&F [<mailto:Sue.Harris@lbhf.gov.uk>](mailto:Sue.Harris@lbhf.gov.uk)
Subject: Fwd: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Nick

If you are available, could you help clarify advice for Cllr Blakeman?

Thank you.

Nicholas

Get [Outlook for Android <https://aka.ms/ghei36>](https://aka.ms/ghei36)

From: Judith Blakeman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 14, 2017 11:47:36 PM
To: Holgate, Nicholas: CP-TownClerkDirFin: RBKC; rblack@kctmo.org.uk
[<mailto:rblack@kctmo.org.uk>](mailto:rblack@kctmo.org.uk)
Cc: Cllr-Atkinson [REDACTED]

Subject: Asbestos in Grenfell Tower

Dear Messrs Holgate and Black

Is anyone going to warn the local community that there are asbestos fumes in the smoke that they are all breathing, provide masks and encourage everyone to wear them? I am advised by Imperial College that this is particularly dangerous for those who have come out of the Tower.

Cllr Judith Blakeman