

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: DAVIES, ROB

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

---

This statement (consisting of 8 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: R DAVIES

Date: 06/10/2020

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

---

On 7th December 2017 I provided a statement to police in relation to the fire at Grenfell Tower. At the time of my previous statement I was Staff Officer to the Director of Operations Deputy Commissioner Tom GEORGE. I have since transferred and I am now Borough Commander for Richmond. I still retain the rank of Group Commander (previously known as Group Manager).

I have also provided two Rule 9 statements to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry dated 12th February 2019 and 29th July 2019, parts of these have been included in this statement.

I have been employed by the London Fire Brigade (LFB) for 22 years, I have moved up the ranks from Firefighter and I am currently, as stated earlier Borough Commander, this involves responsibility for two stations, Twickenham and Richmond, I have approximately 150 staff between the two fire stations. I am based, primarily at Twickenham Fire Station. On my promotion from Station Manager(SM) to Group Commander, I was posted to Hounslow Borough but I took on the day to day running of Kensington and Chelsea Borough, from 3rd August 2015 to 31st March 2017.

Prior to my promotion as Group Commander, I was training and information officer (SM).

I have never received any formal training for the role of Borough Commander, it is what I would describe as a "job role" not a "rank", you run a Borough. Training is provided as you move up the ranks, as you

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

proceed up one rung of the ladder you are provided with training or a form of development for example for my current rank Group Commander there is a 5 day course mainly around Incident Command. There is a phrase that is used in the LFB “there’s the keys, there’s the pager, get on with it”, so there is no formal course or role specific training that you attend for Borough Commander. You speak with your peers and you muddle your way through. I am not sure if this has changed.

After my rank, DAC (Deputy Assistant Commissioner), again there is no role specific training I believe there is a handbook for DACs, as this role is quite different but again no training. Training seems to be more structured for the lower ranks for instance when I was promoted to Crew Manager (CM) there was at the time, a seven week course. This develops you, as it is your first step from firefighter to becoming an officer. The further up you go it seems that training becomes further diluted.

When I was promoted from Watch Manager B at Ealing to Station Manager I do not recall any formal development training, I was acting as an SM on a temporary basis at 3 or 4 stations before I received any training. Once I passed the assessment centre, that’s when I received formal training for my rank.

There is no training to do your day to day job, it is more about carrying out the role of an Incident Commander. I do recall receiving search and rescue training and this was part of the Incident Command training. This is delivered by the LFB’s training provider, Babcock. I believe there is also a Computer Based Package (CBT) on this subject. However I cannot provide any further detail on this.

I am aware of crews training in the Borough (Kensington and Chelsea) on High Rise residential properties. I recall a 6 pump exercise that was carried out in Trellick Tower during my 18 months as the Borough Commander, this was organised by WM (B) Wayne U-CHONG Blue Watch from North Kensington, I believe he is now retired (pre Grenfell Tower). This was a simulated exercise, they were, I believe practising on arrival tactics and high rise procedures. In my statement provided to police on 7th December 2017 on page 4 I mention Tolworth Tower, however I cannot recall any specific details around this exercise. Every year all Boroughs will do exercises such as these. DAC’s will rotate the exercises, there are 2 x 12 appliance exercises in each area and the DACs will distribute these out to the fire stations. Each borough will have a 6 appliance exercise. For instance as I am Borough Commander for Richmond ,we will carry out a 6 pump exercise, our venue is Richmond College, we will “ smoke it out “ and carry

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

out an evacuation/rescue scenario. These training exercises take place on strategic resource days. We also conduct Borough Training Days. The area I currently command, has 22 miles of the River Thames, so again, this is a potential risk, our training at Richmond will focus on that. These Borough training days are LFB led.

In order for these exercises to take place, fire engines need to be made available. This is known as Strategic Resource, there are approximately 142 fire engines across London, up to 33 will be taken out on what is called "strategic resource" by Resource Management Centre. This is led by Establishment Performance Team (EPT). EPT will organise which Boroughs are allocated fire engines for their exercises which means we can have the guarantee of knowing the exercise will go ahead. The appliances cannot take calls. There is always a small risk that appliances can be recalled but on the whole this system works.

I have been asked to expand on a comment that I made in my statement provided to Police on 7th December 2017 on page 6 I stated "looks like Telstar House again". Telstar House, was a serious fire in a high rise office block in Paddington. The office block, which I believe was originally a residential high rise building, that has been converted. I first saw the image of Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017 at the Commissioner's Suite at LFB Headquarters, Union Street. At this time, I was Staff Officer to Deputy Commissioner Tom GEORGE. On the night, he was unavailable as he was annual leave, however I still kept him updated. The Commissioner's suites have screens that provided a live feed of Grenfell Tower from Sky news etc. As soon as I saw the live image of Grenfell Tower, it reminded me of Telstar House and hence I made the comment. It was the way the fire was travelling up the building. Telstar House was an office building so there is no compartmentation like a residential High Rise, fire and smoke could spread and windows fail. I didn't actually attend the fire at Telstar House so I do not have extensive knowledge, but I was aware of this incident as it is a historical fire and two firefighters were injured because of burning cabling. There are photographs of this fire at Paddington Fire station. There is training on this fire, a case study. I believe the fire at Telstar House happened around 2006.

I have also been asked to expand on HFSV database (Home Fire Safety Visits). This is essentially a recording system. A system called P1 postcode (Priority Postcode) is used, areas across London are covered by this P1 Postcode. It is a prediction tool to assess risk in London, information technology takes

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

data from family mosaics and previous fires, it gathers this data and makes an analysis to identify those most at risk from fire.

Station crews will carry out HFSVs in these P1 areas. Station Crews will access Imapping tool on their desk top, this brings up the P1 map, this is overlaid with a Map of London and crews can see where to carry out HFSVs. Once the visit is complete the HFSV database is updated. This process is led by Watch Managers.

Parts of Lancaster West Estate did sit within P1 Postcode and therefore visits will have been carried out. I believe that a group risk visit was carried out on Grenfell Tower on 10/06/2017 where 25 Home Fire Safety Visits were completed. For HFSV's there is a recording and aide memoire which I now produce as exhibit RJD/3. The relevant entry for Grenfell Tower I now produce as exhibit RJD/4. The duty watch that carried out these visits were White Watch North Kensington.

As a Borough Commander I will get a report from South West Area Team to say I am meeting my targets regarding HFSV. I might have to speak with SMs to increase visits and make sure we hit our targets for P1.

Even though Grenfell Tower was identified on the PI I was not aware of any specific problems at Grenfell Tower while I was Borough Commander at Kensington and Chelsea.

I can recall that I had some information regarding Grenfell Tower, this was back in October 2015, when SM Daniel HALLISSEY informed me of being consulted about the numbering of flats post refurbishment. SM HALLISSEY advised that from LFB operational crews perspective was that the overriding issue is to ensure clear signage at the ground floor, so when LFB crews enter the block they know which flat numbers are located on which floor levels. He also recommended that signs be placed at each lift lobby to clarify the floor level and what flats are located on that specific floor. Providing signage is adequately addressed the LFB should be able to accommodate whichever floor numbering sequence is adopted. If crews from outside the local area are required to respond to an emergency at this block, it is likely that the most straightforward floor numbering sequence (ground, 1st, 2nd.....) would facilitate the most speedy and effective response. The only other issue I can recall during the refurbishment

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

programme was when works were ongoing to the dry riser. We mitigated any risks while this work was continuing, a “time activity” was placed on all fire calls, which means extra resources are mobilised in the event of a fire being reported.

I can confirm that I received an e-mail dated 5th February 2016 from Laura JOHNSON of RBKC (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea). Also “Cc” into this e mail was Nicholas HOLGATE (RBKC) and Robert BLACK of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO).

Laura JOHNSON was requesting a meeting with myself and Robert BLACK to discuss the two Enforcement notices that were served on KCTMO by LFB following the fire at Adair Tower. The second enforcement notice, included the sister block, Hazelwood Tower. In the e mail Laura JOHNSON is also requesting that Hazelwood Tower is not placed on the public registrar as she would like further discussions around the ventilation system, which she believes does work and does not want to challenge this through the court system. Laura in the e mail offers a link to a short clip of the fire at Adair Tower. Laura JOHNSON also states she would like to discuss the policy of “Stay Put”. On the same day, I replied to Laura’s e mail and pointed out that I had no powers regarding enforcement notices as this comes under the remit of Fire Safety department, however I pointed out that I was still happy to attend this meeting. The email does not specify a date or time for this meeting. I now produce a copy of this e mail printed from my e mail system on 29/09/2020 as exhibit RJD/5.

The fire at Adair Tower occurred on 31.10.2015, I attended the day after the fire. I recall seeing a Georgian wire glazed style door that had been involved in the fire and it had an open vent next to it. This seemed bizarre to me, I have limited knowledge in this area, but a fire door with a completely open vent next to it, I thought would be an issue. I now know the reason for open vents is for cross winds to clear the staircase via the vents venting to open air. The level of combustion overwhelmed the venting system so that the staircase was overrun with products of combustion. So I had some knowledge that were issues at Adair Tower and therefore its sister block, Hazelwood would have the same issues. As far as I was aware Rebecca BURTON (Fire Safety Representative) and Spencer SUTCLIFFE (now DAC) were the lead on this, I had asked to be kept in the loop, as I held various meetings with RBKC and I wanted to ensure good relations were continued. Unfortunately, the process of enforcement notices went through without my knowledge and I feel this effected the relationship I had with RBKC.

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

My understanding is that the enforcement notices were served on both Towers as they are identical properties and Hazelwood is the "sister" tower of Adair Tower. If a problem is identified in one Tower then the problem would exist in the other therefore the enforcement notice is served on both. The fire had identified the problem. As I understand the process Fire Safety Department would still carry out an audit on both properties.

I believe the issue was to do with doors and whether they were self closing. My meetings with Robert BLACK (Chief Executive KCTMO) took place however I cannot confirm the date, from memory I recall attending 2 meetings. I remember him saying we (LFB) wanted all doors to be converted to fire doors. I know it becomes a grey area, as flats can be sublet, and LFB are stating residents need to change front doors and this can become difficult.

My knowledge is somewhat limited around this area but I know The Fire Safety Department do an audit and in this case, on both properties, the notice is served and it then goes on a Public Registrar. This can become problematic. There are time limits and I understand they can be extended but I do not know any more than this. I have no knowledge as to why they were extended in this case.

I do not know the technical issues around this, this would be a question for Fire Safety Department. They carry out regular audits. I believe there are different levels to enforcement notices. We are the operational process, Fire Safety Department are the prevention, we do not get involved any further therefore I do not have knowledge around the level of detail surrounding these enforcements notices.

I have been asked to expand on Borough Training Plans. As a Borough Commander it is my responsibility to write these plans. As I was Borough Commander for Kensington and Chelsea between 3rd August 2015 to 31st March 2017, I wrote one of these training plans.

These plans run from April to April, in line with the financial year.

DC Amanda WEBSTER has shown me three Borough Training Plans for Kensington and Chelsea exhibits LMB/25 dated 2015/2016, LMB/26 dated 2016/2017 and LMB/28 dated 2018/2019. I believe I

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:



was responsible for the second one (Exhibit LMB/26), however I do believe that GM Martin WILSON, who was assisting our Borough on a temporary basis may have had some involvement with one of the training plans, as I joined the Borough half way through the year (August 2015). I may have amended the first page to reflect that I was now Borough Commander.

Jane PHILLPOTT may have had some involvement, she was Borough Commander of Kensington and Chelsea before taking up position of temporary area DAC and then made up as substantive in that role.

In order to write these training plans, one of the first things you do is look at the previous year training plans, and compare that plan to what you have now, are there any new risks, has anything changed on the Borough, for example is there a new building or an event that has occurred and created a new risk. It may be a new High Rise building that is significantly taller in height or the building may have specific fire engineered solutions. It is a case sometimes of refreshing these plans. There is a policy on borough training plans and this tells you how to write them. However there is no training on how to produce one.

Once written they are stored by the area team, this is a shared point site on South West Team. The South West DAC will review them on a yearly basis, this is a form of quality assurance, any mistakes identified should be picked up during this process and the relevant Borough Commander will be informed.

It has been brought to my attention that for 2 years running the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Training Plans on dates 2015/2016 ( exhibit LMB/25) and 2016/2017 ( exhibit LMB/26) have Grenfell Tower listed as a hospital and not as a High Rise residential property. The relevant training solution is then shown for a hospital ie cylinders and infectious disease.

This is an admin error, due to "copy and paste" from the station diary. As stated before if there are no significant changes from one year to another then the previous year's training plan will be used. I believe that copying from excel onto to word caused the issue. At the time this error was not identified during the quality assurance process. However I am absolutely sure that the crews on the borough would know that Grenfell Tower is a High Rise residential property and not a hospital as 7 (2)(d) visits are carried out, and again I cannot explain why the error was not rectified as visiting crews would realise this, but for some reason the error was not amended on the training plan. It was never flagged up. The person who would

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

have quality assured them at the time would have been either DAC Tom GEORGE or temporary DAC Jane PHILPOTT.

Once the training plan has been written, the training plans are then incorporated into the station diary. As stated before training can be a borough training day or a reading of policy. There is also the requirement for 2 hrs minimum training on day duty and 1 hour minimum night duty. This is part of DaMOP (Development and Maintaining Operational Professionalism).

This is mandatory training and is recorded on Station diaries and Individual Training record. Crews can view the training plans and this process should mitigate any risks that are on the Borough.

I have been asked to explain about Radio repeaters on the Borough training plans, I cannot say if this training happened. All I can say is that a Watch Manger on a 7 (2) (d) visit should test communication equipment and the result would be submitted on a tactical plan so if communications are not good then radio repeaters are an option to use. However just because one High Rise has this issue ie Trellick Tower, North Kensington it does not mean the same for another High Rise, communications can be effected by electrics and how dense concrete levels are or how wide a staircase is. I note that Trellick Tower has a Training Solution on Policy 700 (use of TSR2000 Radio Repeater) however I cannot provide any further details around this, I do not know what training took place and I cannot offer an explanation as to why it is not listed on lectures to be taught.

I know now there is a CBT (computer based training) package for radio repeaters but I do not believe this was in existence at the writing of the training plan.

I have been asked if there are any changes on the training plan, by 2018/2019 Kensington and Chelsea Training Plan (exhibit LMB/28) there were some changes to Index 3 "Borough Risk Inventory", for instance the index no longer lists "Ops Info Folder" this is because they are now on the ORD (operational risk database) so it does not need to be listed on Index 3. Other areas removed are Contingency plans and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (sssi). This is for the same reason. A further change in 2018/2019 is that actual High Rise properties are not listed, the same is for Hotels. The plan states this list is a representation of risks found in the borough and for further details see the outside master list on the

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:



station diary. In addition to training solutions, there is now an additional heading, specialist training and for High rise this will include regular training exercises.

Appendix 6 “Borough Training Risk Matrix” shows High Rise will now have in addition to Station Training and Station Visit, Joint Station Training. This can involve training with the fire safety team, either a lecture or a visit to a High Rise property. Joint station training can also involve linking up with another local fire stations. Previous training plans only had the option of Station Training and Station Visit.

It is not realistic to train on every High Rise property in your Borough, to a certain extent 7 (2) (d) visits assists with training, as you know where the hydrant is, you can discuss your on arrival tactics. We may carry out a handful of exercises every year, there are some aspects that are just not practical to do ie practising a wet drill. We do listen to operational crews and try to establish which properties have a risk and try to mitigate them.

Kensington and Chelsea Borough Training Plan involves three fire stations; North Kensington, Kensington and Chelsea, the training plan addresses each area separately for instance North Kensington will list its “ at risk premises” and then the “training solution”, the training solutions under North Kensington area are in more detail then Kensington and Chelsea. I cannot offer any explanation as to why this is.

A further section on Borough Training Plans, has a section named “Regulatory Fire Safety” this section covers property’s with “engineered fire safety solutions”. Grenfell Tower had a smoke extraction system, so this means it had a “engineered fire safety solution”. I cannot explain why it is not listed in this section.

I can say that it is up to local crews to inform the Fire Safety Team when they come across this during a 7 (2) (d) visit, it is a specialised area. It needs to be entered on the ORD and become part of a tactical plan. However Fire Safety Department need to be aware so they can send a fire engineer and assess the property, carry out an audit. Local crews will not have their level of knowledge.

At present Fire Safety Departments will be auditing all High Rise properties with cladding.

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

**OFFICIAL**

Statement of: DAVIES, ROB

Form MG11(T)

Page 10 of 10

This statement has been written using notes and recording from my interview on 29th September at Paddington Fire Station. Exhibits used from Rule 9 statements have been re numbered so they follow in order from first police statement dated 7th December 2017.

Signature: R DAVIES  
2021

Signature witnessed by:

**OFFICIAL**

**MET00075424/10**  
MET00075424\_0010