

IN A MATTER CONCERNING THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF PHILLIP EDWARDS

1. I, Phillip Edwards, make this statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in response to a written request for evidence dated 13 April 2021.
2. To make this statement as clear and helpful as possible I repeat the Inquiry's questions below (**in bold and using the original numbering**) followed by my response.
3. **Question 1: Please describe your role at PDERS**
4. Field Service manager for Hackney and Kensington KCTMO (16/3/2016 – 1/11/2016)
 - Directed team of service professionals focused on Maintenance and Repairs.
 - PPM , Callout and insurance report review and detailing.
 - Staff Time sheets / HSE requirements / HR first contact.
 - Collaborated with customers to discuss service needs and offer available solutions.
 - Prioritising technician's diary.
 - KPI reporting to internal and external customers.
 - Analysing and re-routing portfolio.
 - Running all minor repairs < £6000.00 GBP on the route portfolio.
 - Quoting repairs on portfolio Control of hire & purchasing, for plant and material for stock and repairs.

- Controlling and processing minor repair invoicing.
5. Operations Manager: 1/11/2016 – 31/10/2018
- P & L responsibility for business with 6000 units, operational responsibility for full-service portfolio, minor repair portfolio.
 - 17 direct reports (administration and management) whom in turn have 74 direct reports, through all business sectors.
 - Reporting to the business director.
 - Defined business requirements, data models, and transformation logic and report structures to enhance organisational efficiencies. Directed day-to-day operations by spearheading implementation of short-term and long-term strategies to achieve business plan and profitability goals.
 - Hired, trained, tasked, and evaluated associates and management staff.
 - Elevated customer satisfaction ratings by resolving issues and fostering speedy resolution.
6. **Question 2: Please set out a summary of your qualifications and employment history.**
- October 2018 to November 2020: Operations Manager - Premier Lift Group
 - November 2016 to October 2018: Operations Manager - ELA Group PDERS
 - March 2016 to November 2016: Field Service Manager - ELA Group
 - August 2014 to March 2016: Area Service Manager - 21st Century Lifts
 - July 2012 to August 2014: Contracts Manager - Orono Ltd
 - August 2009 to July 2012: Service Supervisor - Apollo Lifts Ltd
 - November 2007 to August 2009: Installation Area Manager - Schindler

- February 2007 to November 2007: Design lead Project Engineer - Fujitec UK
 - November 2002 to February 2007: Design Engineer - Britannia Lift Ltd
7. My career started in 2002 as a designer of goods and goods passenger lifts manufactured within the UK. Since 2007, I have managed teams for installation, modernization, repair, and PPM for all types of lift equipment, working for companies such as Apollo Lifts and 21st Century Lifts before joining the ELA Group (PDERS/Otis) as Field Service Manager in 2016 and later taking up an Operations Manager role. Since October 2018 I have been employed by the Premier Lift Group as an Operations Manager. In terms of professional qualifications, I have an ONC and HNC in Mechanical manufacturing / engineering.
 8. **Question 3: Do you have any experience or expertise in the field of servicing or maintenance of lifts (passenger or firefighting)? If yes, please describe.**
 9. I have no direct hands on experience or formal qualification in this subject, but I have managed combined teams of sales, operations, admin staff and lift engineers since 2009.
 10. **Question 4: Please describe your experience, training and/or expertise in (a) inspecting fire control switches connected to lifts (b) supervising others in doing so.**
 11. My experience is based on my years within the industry and is knowledge based with on the job learning and lift Standards knowledge (EN81, BS6640, EN1570 etc.). I have no official training, nor specific expertise in this subject and have never been in a role where I have been required to inspect fire control switches or to supervise others doing so. This inspection would be down to trained lift engineers and other competent persons.
 12. **Question 5: Please explain your supervision duties in respect of PDERS engineers (frequency, what was being assessed, how they were recorded etc.)?**
 13. In my first role at ELA/PDERS as a field service manager, duties included overview of engineer's monthly maintenance worksheets, review of contractual obligations and

minor repairs. In full Comprehensive contract types (like the one we had for KCTMO), some work items fall into contractual works and therefore would be replaced by the service engineers. Generally, items that fall out-side of the contract terms would be reviewed by myself and passed to the dedicated salesperson to quote. Details of the contract terms and works quoted would be held by PDERS.

14. In my second role as operations manager (1/11/2016 – 31/10/2018) my direct reports where the field managers, repair manager and operational administration team. My overview was to engage the PDERS team to meet contractual client KPIs ,business KPIs and financial reporting. I would also roll out new and existing initiatives with the team for all business aspects. I would have very little day to day engineer oversight, and my engineer-facing protocol would be as the hierarchy, second/ third point of contact after the initial field managers review, for example on issues such as HR.

15. **Questions arising from statement to the MPS**

16. **With reference to your statement to the Metropolitan Police dated 4 April 2018, {PDR00000012}: Question 6: On page 2 you state: “As far as we know the lifts were not connected to any fire system to shut down the lifts or return to ground floor in the event of fire alarm activation. If this was required we believe this would have been requested during the building refurbishment. There was no fireman's recall switch connected to these lifts which is operated by a switch installed at the street level entrance. Such a switch when operated would bring the lifts to the ground floor and stop them from being used or they could be used by the fire brigade if the equipment was fitted with fire-fighting equipment. It is unusual for the equipment in this type of environment not to have some sort of system.”**

- (a) Please explain what you mean by ‘fireman recall switch’ in this statement.**

17. In my experience (in multiple occupancy residential dwellings) lifts other than fully specified fire-fighting lifts and evacuation lifts are often provided with a suitable electrical signal, connected to the building’s fire alarm system, to automatically recall them to an exit floor and then automatically removed from service for no further use.

18. Where there is no suitable fire alarm system, alternative measures may be put in place where appropriate, such as recalling the lift from a manual recall device, e.g. key switch. I do not believe the lift had what I would call a fire recall switch (as in a firefighting lift). I would call it an evacuation switch.
19. For clarity there are three switch types:
- Fire Fighting Switch / Fire Recall Switch
 - Evacuation Switch
 - Recall Switch
- (b) **Is this a reference to a manually operated fire control switch, which is operated with an express drop key by, for example, the Fire Brigade, in order to take the lifts out of service and put them into fire control mode?**
20. A fire recall switch would work with a firefighting lift. An evacuation switch would be similar, but for a lift which isn't a firefighting lift and should not be used to tackle or access a fire, only to rescue persons from landings. This would be in reference to a manually operated key switch (which in this instance would have been a drop release).
- (c) **Where the statement records you stating that "*There was no fireman's recall switch connected to these lifts which is operated by a switch installed at the street level entrance*", is this an accurate record of the information you conveyed to the statement taker? If not, why not?**
21. I cannot recall my reviews when conducting my original statement, however I hold my view that this is an evacuation switch and not a fire recall switch (for firefighting).
- (d) **There was a fire control switch at Grenfell Tower on the ground floor and a disconnected fire control switch on the walkway floor. If the Metropolitan Police statement accurately records your answers, why did you state that there was no fireman's recall switch?**

22. As mentioned above, I did not think that the switch on the ground floor was a fire recall switch (as connected to a building system). I am unsure if this is a recall switch or an evacuation switch as noted previously.
- (e) **To the best of your knowledge, were PDERS' engineers regularly testing the fire control switch on the ground floor at Grenfell Tower? Please explain your answer (including the source of your information) in full.**
23. At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower I was not the direct contact for KCTMO nor had been for some time in reviewing service / breakdown sheets , nor conducting periodic monitoring visits to engineers (which were called FPAS - Fatality Prevention Audits). I believe this role would have sat with David Watkins, Field Service Manager, from the time of November 2016 through to March 2018. From my recollection of my weekly review meetings with the Field managers I believe the PDERS engineer team would have actively checked all safety components within all lift units which would include any recall switch of any type.
24. To my knowledge this would have been checked on the monthly service visit as part of the safety items check list, and I think this item was noted in the PDERS / OTIS service regime manual (blue A5 book). It would not be noted on service sheets unless there was an issue, therefore there would be no written evidence for every visit on this check. Many other specific checks are not noted down either.
25. **Question 7: In general, were there issues or concerns raised as to the standard of maintenance of the lifts at Grenfell Tower?**
- (a) **If yes, please describe the issues.**
26. Not that I can recall.
- (b) **Why did such issues arise?**
27. N/A
- (c) **What steps were taken to rectify the issues?**
28. N/A

(d) Were concerns raised as to the safety of the lifts at Grenfell Tower?

29. Not that I can recall.

30. **Supervision of Mark Wallis**

31. **Question 8: At paragraph 28 of his Rule 9 witness statement to the Inquiry, {PDR00000036/8} Mark Wallis states that every 4 months either Dave Watkins or yourself would accompany him on visits to ensure that he was undertaking the routine lifts maintenance work correctly. He further states that to the best of his recollection, he remembers that you accompanied him on one of the regular maintenance visits to Grenfell Tower before the fire. According to Mark Wallis' statement at paragraph 7, page 2 he carried out two monthly maintenance and service checks on the lifts at Grenfell Tower, on 12 April 2017 and 9 May 2017.**

(a) Do you recall accompanying Mark Wallis on one of his visits prior to the fire?

32. No, The Field Service Manager at this date was David Watkins. Holiday cover for David Watkins would have been Mark Ironmonger as the opposite Housing Field Service Manager. The only other time I would have visited site to see an engineer would be after a meeting at the KCTMO head office, and I would have accompanied David Watkins, This may have been to audit David Watkins completing an Audit on the engineers noted as an FPA (Fatality Prevention Audit), I recall that these audits were logged with original paperwork including Date and Site at PDERS head office.

(b) If yes, which visit did you attend?

33. As above, I don't recall this.

(c) Was your attendance on this visit documented?

(i) If yes, where? Please provide a copy.

(ii) If not, why not?

34. As above, I don't recall this. My visits to any lifts, these included, would generally have been logged in the Service Log card on site within the motor room as Supervisor Visit

(d) Please describe the visit to Grenfell Tower in detail.

35. N/A.

(e) What tests did you observe Mark Wallis carry out on the lift and associated equipment?

36. N/A.

(f) Did you observe Mark Wallis test the fire control switch on the ground floor of Grenfell Tower?

37. N/A.

(g) If yes, please describe the testing carried out and the outcome. Why was this test not documented?

38. N/A.

(h) If you observed Mark Wallis testing the fire control switch on the ground floor, (a) what procedure, method or standard did you assess his performance in doing so and (b) did you have any concerns about how Mr. Wallis tested the switch?

39. N/A.

(i) If you did not observe Mark Wallis test this fire control switch as part of the supervision visit, why not? Did Mr. Wallis say anything about the switch, its condition or testing it?

40. N/A.

41. Question 9: In relation to a second fire control switch on the walkway floor of Grenfell Tower:

(a) **Were you aware of this switch? Did you know it had been mechanically disconnected from the system?**

42. I was not aware.

(b) **Did you observe Mark Wallis test the fire control switch on the walkway floor?**

43. N/A.

(c) **Why was the presence of a defunct fire control switch on the walkway floor not recorded in the documentation?**

44. I cannot recollect this switch or if it was or wasn't recorded in the documentation.

(d) **Did you and/or PDERS recommend its removal to the TMO?**

45. If not, why I cannot recollect this.

46. **Question 10: At paragraph 30 of his Rule 9 witness statement to the inquiry, Mark Wallis states that, on a monthly basis you would attend meetings between Patrick Barrett and Mark Wallis to discuss any of the lifts serviced by PDERS under the KCTMO contract.**

(a) **Is this correct?**

47. When I was in Role 1 in 2016 I would have visited monthly with the first instance Anthony Cheyney, and then Patrick Barrett (on his employment) and Maria (whose surname I cannot recall). In Role 2 I would only visit if the service manager David Watkins required assistance, as his manager and a business lead.

(b) **Were the lifts at Grenfell Tower ever discussed?**

48. Yes

(c) **If yes, what was discussed?**

49. I can recall these lifts being discussed on the following occasions:

50. I visited site with Anthony Cheyney due to the Decommissioned goods lift at the basement / rear of the building leaking oil from the sealed hydraulic Bore Ram. I believe an email was sent to KCTMO detailing this report and recommending that the ram should be emptied and re sealed.
51. I visited site with Patrick Barrett when we had supplied and fitted new car floors to each passenger lifts due to age and damage. These were installed by a sub-contractor of PDERS.
52. I visited when a repair was being undertaken to the right-hand passenger lift (when viewed from landing) by PDERS engineer Stephen Birch and Mike Birch. This was due to a door skate being damaged. This was also with Patrick Barrett following a monthly meeting.
53. **Question 11: You sent an email on 28 June 2017 to Patrick Barrett of TMO soon after the Grenfell Tower fire {TMO00830305}:**
- (a) **You wrote that “*These switches are checked on the service visit. Mark Wallis the regular service engineer since April 2017 has confirmed both switched were in a working capability with no faults as per above statement.*” What ‘switches’ (plural and referring to ‘both’) were you referring to?**
54. I cannot recall. I am unsure because of the age of the conversation and I cannot recall the full context. However, I may be advising the one switch has “switched” in both directions, i.e. on and off. By switches I believe I mean any type of recall switch (either Ground recall, Fire evac or firefighting).
- (b) **How and when did you ‘confirm’ with Mr. Wallis that the ‘both switches’ were working properly? Was it verbally, by email, memo etc.? If in writing, please append the communication to your response.**
55. I am unsure, I believe it to be verbal. I don’t believe it was “both switches” as advise previously.
- (c) **To the best of your recollection, did Mr. Wallis give any detail about testing the fire control ‘switches’ beyond what is recounted in your email?**

56. I cannot recall. But things would generally only be raised as an issue if there was a fault.

The contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I am content for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PD Edwards', on a light blue background.

Phillip Edwards

Dated: 24/05/2021