

From: Judith Blakeman [REDACTED]
Sent: 29/06/2015 15:44:54
To: Peter Maddison [pmaddison@kctmo.org.uk]; Claire Williams [clwilliams@kctmo.org.uk]
CC: Cllr.Feilding-Mellen@rbkc.gov.uk; 'Robert Black' [rblack@kctmo.org.uk]; yourcommunity@rydon.co.uk; Steve.R.Jones@met.pnn.police.uk; cllr.r.atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk; Cllr.Lasharie@rbkc.gov.uk
Subject: Grenfell Tower
Importance: High

Dear Mr. Maddison

Members of thirteen households from Grenfell Tower came to see Councillor Atkinson and me at our councillors' surgery last Saturday. They were also representing other households who were unable to attend. Mr. Daffarn kindly waited outside and so we were able to have a constructive discussion. Both Councillor Atkinson and I accepted that the residents' concerns as outlined to us are real and valid and need to be addressed as quickly as possible. There concerns are broadly as follows:

- They say that poor communication is a crucial issue. They say that numerous e-mails sent to the TMO, including to Mr. Black as Chief Executive, have received neither acknowledgment nor reply. If this is correct, then this is discourteous and unacceptable. For example, they say that the change of plan to install the heat interface unit in the hallway rather than the kitchen and to use a different heat interface unit from the one originally promised was never communicated or explained. I will look at the newsletters that were circulated to residents when I have the time to do so to check the accuracy of this statement.
- The TMO did tell them that, after a survey of all residents, it was agreed that the preferred method of communication was to be by newsletter. Some residents said that they were not aware of this survey, so perhaps you can let us have sight of the aggregate survey results.
- Their concerns regarding the siting of the new heat interface unit in the hallway are as follows:
 - the heat interface unit will partially block the hallway and impede exit if there is a fire or similar problem in the flat
 - the heat interface unit will have dangerous sharp corners at approximately the eye level of a 10 year old child
 - the safety implications of siting water pipes above the electrical fuse box is a matter of concern
 - if the associated pipework is run at floor level, it will not be boxed in. The argument that the pipes will be no hotter than the radiators served is not accepted and all pipes should be boxed in once the new system has been tested. This is also matter of the aesthetics of the completed work.
- There are also aesthetic concerns about the general quality of all the works so far carried out and residents would like these to be addressed before the works are signed off.
- Residents who asked for the heat interface unit to be placed in the kitchen were told that the water must be turned off altogether for 10 days in the flat concerned and also the flats above and below. Councillor Atkinson and I would like clarification of this point, which sounds like an excuse rather than a reason for not putting the heat interface unit in the kitchen when requested. You will recollect that I was re-assured that, if residents wished to have the heat interface unit in their kitchen and it was feasible given the configuration of their kitchen, then it could be done - subject to detailed discussion with the household.

- Some older residents say that they were "forced" to have the heat interface unit placed in the hallway against their will.
- One resident has called in an independent plumber who advised that installation in the kitchen rather than the hallway can be carried out effectively and at no additional cost.
- There is serious concern about the broken entry system to Grenfell Tower being out of order for three weeks – leading to attempted break-ins at some individual dwellings. The TMO then compounded this problem by putting up notices advising residents not to buzz in people whom they did not know. Since these attempted break-ins did not result from unknown persons being let into the block, these notices were perceived to be insulting, seeking to blame residents and not the TMO's failure to fix the entry system as expeditiously as possible.
- Also security-related is one break-in that was reported to the TMO and the Police the following day, which the TMO apparently did not follow up with the security contractor for almost three months, by which time it was too late for the contractor to investigate the incident.

Councillor Atkinson and I would appreciate a full report on these security issues, including any CAD numbers relating to these incidents to enable the Police also to respond.

One resident described how she had returned from holiday to find that the water had been turned off. She was told that this was because the new cold water system had to be switched over and Rydon had been unable to obtain access to her flat. In such circumstances, it is surely a matter of courtesy to put a note through the door explaining the situation? Residents cannot be expected to be at home at the convenience of the contractors without prior warning that access is required - and there should be a mechanism for residents to advise Rydon when they will be away on holiday.

In this instance, I understand that it took from the resident's return from holiday on the Friday evening until the Saturday evening for the water to be restored. This was compounded by the TMO out-of-hours service unhelpfully telling her to ring Thames Water and Thames Water correctly referring her back to the TMO.

This highlights a general problem of often ill-informed service from the TMO out-of-hours helpline frequently raised by residents across the borough that does not seem to have been resolved. This often relates to problems with water and residents being inappropriately told to contact Thames Water. In this instance it suggests that the out-of-hours helpline staff have not been briefed on the refurbishment works at Grenfell Tower, which is a serious shortcoming. Can you please advise what action is being taken to address both the general and the specific issues highlighted here?

Councillor Atkinson and I told the residents that we will raise all these issues with you – as well as the issues previously raised - and that we expect to be able to let them have comprehensive responses within two weeks. We have therefore invited the residents to come to our next surgery on Saturday 11 July.

In order to try constructively to take forward all these concerns, I suggest the following:

- That a representative from the TMO and from Rydon also attend our surgery on Saturday 11 July - in the meeting room of the Kensington Leisure Centre at 10 am. We have confirmed with the residents that Mr. Daffarn will not be joining them.
- That I arrange with some of the residents dissatisfied with the quality of the works in their homes to visit them together with a TMO and a Rydon representative to discuss their concerns on site to see what steps can be taken to address them.

We are copying this communication to Mr. Black and to Cllr. Feilding-Mellen to update them on the residents' perspective of problems at Grenfell Tower, also to Rydon and to Sector Inspector Steve Jones in view of the security problems. We shall also be sending an appropriate paper copy to all the households who attended our surgery last Saturday.

Kind regards.

Councillors Robert Atkinson and Judith Blakeman

Ask Nick: Conversation and question time with Council Leader, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown.
Thursday 9 July, 6pm to 8pm, Holy Trinity Brompton, SW7 1JA.

Submit your question and register to attend at <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/asknick>

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

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