

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

(Criminal Procedure Rules, r.27.2;

Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9, Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B)

Statement of: Christina Stephanou

Age of witness: over 18

Occupation: Resident Liaison Officer

This statement, consisting of 2 pages 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.

1. I am making this statement in response to a request for written evidence in relation to Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. I am a Resident Liaison Officer ("RLO") based in London. I joined Rydon Group Limited ("Rydon") in 2007 as a trainee RLO. I was promoted to Lead RLO in May 2015. I was made redundant from Rydon in January 2018.
3. I was an RLO on the Grenfell Tower refurbishment project ("the Project"). I do not recall what date I started on the Project. I attended the initial tender interview with Alan Sharrocks, Contracts Manager, and Simon Lawrence, Contracts Manager. I was at the interview to explain how the RLO role worked and to describe how we would liaise with the residents and Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation ("the Client").
4. My role on the Project initially involved obtaining resident contact details and to set up initial meetings with the residents. I reported into two RLO managers, Nikki Donnelly and Kim Davies. My colleague, Maxine Igbinedion, joined the team and I moved to overseeing access issues whilst Maxine dealt with the residents on a day to day basis. I cannot recall when this was.
5. Maxine was moved from the Project after receiving a threat from a resident and I was involved with the day to day resident liaison until Lynda Prentice was employed as RLO in around February 2015. After Lynda came on board, I was focusing on two sites; the Project and a refurbishment at Ashmole. I was Lynda's direct report but her actual line manager would have been Kim. Generally, I would assist with any issues that would be escalated by Maxine or Lynda. For example a leak we had in a property caused some damage to residents items that needed to be replaced, I visited the resident and recorded details of the items and escalated the matter internally for cheques to be raised for the replacement items.
6. I was moved to another project in May 2016; I was not part of the aftercare team at Grenfell Tower.
7. At the start of the Project, resident information was requested from the Client. This information was not as full as I required so I started gathering as much information as possible regarding the residents, such as, names and contact details, whether there were late night workers, whether the resident had religious requirements. The information was used to build trust with the residents and was also for the safety of RLOs so it would be clear whether an RLO should not attend a flat alone.

Signed.....



Dated.....

12/1/2020

8. There were also coffee mornings put on which gave the residents the opportunity to air their views.
9. The RLO team also kept a spreadsheet detailing residents' complaints. This was provided to the main contact at the Client, Claire Williams, and where the complaint merited it, to Rydon management. The RLO team would not note every issue raised, there were day to day issues on site, many of which could be dealt with there and then. There was also a spreadsheet detailing which flats would allow access for the installation of the Heat Interface Unit ("HIU") and which flats would not.
10. The residents were provided with newsletters which contained contact details for me and Lynda as well as the Freephone number for Rydon RLOs and contact details for Claire Williams from the Client. In addition, the RLOs were based in the office at the bottom of Grenfell Tower so we were readily available to the residents and we could go to their flats to check on things if they had an issue.
11. The RLO team had monthly meetings with Claire and the housing officers from the Client. In the meeting we would go through any re-occurring issues. The housing team were based close to Grenfell Tower and so sometimes it was easier to see them first before going to Claire. If we could help the resident we would try in the first instance but otherwise details would be emailed to Claire.
12. I only recall one fire safety issue raised by the residents and this related to the location of the HIU. The residents were concerned that if the HIU was installed in the hallway it would have been above an electrical circuit which could have exploded if water got into it from the HIU. There was also the concern that if the circuit did explode, the HIU would block the exit route out of the flat door. I do not think there was water in the HIU so this would not have caused water to drop onto the circuit. I also do not believe the HIU would have blocked the exit.
13. I recall that Claire from the Client put up notices to the residents regarding the stay put in the event of a fire policy. This would not be something that the RLO team would have had input in, it was the Client's responsibility. Rydon would ensure that the area where work was being carried out was neat and tidy and that there were no obstructions; site managers would do an hourly walk of the site to enforce this. If there were due to be changes to access as a result of the works, this would be communicated to residents via a letter drop if it was the whole block effected or some signs and barriers clearly marking the diversions out. Letters were approved by the Client before they were sent out.
14. I do not recall any issues with the AOV, cladding or fire doors. I do not believe that Rydon was responsible for the fire doors. Residents were concerned that the installation of smaller windows would affect the view they had and where the location of new radiators would be.
15. I was not involved in liaising with the Clerk of Works or arranging the appointments, this would have been carried out by Lynda. RLOs would not raise anything with the Clerk of Works, it would usually be the site managers who liaised with them.

Signed..... *C. Costa*

Dated..... *12.01.2020*