

Resident Speech to Scrutiny Committee
6th January 2016

Thank you for allowing the residents of Grenfell Tower the opportunity to inform the Scrutiny Committee of the ill treatment, incompetence and plain abuse that we have experienced at the hands of the TMO during the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works. I am speaking to you in my capacity as a Lead Representative of the Grenfell Tower Resident Association, that was formed through adversity, in the summer of 2015 with the support and encouragement of our local MP, Lady Victoria Borwick.

To back up the testimony of Grenfell Tower residents to the Scrutiny Committee members of our R.A recently conducted a quantitative survey of leaseholders and tenants to measure levels of resident satisfaction / dissatisfaction as a result of the TMO's handling of the Improvement Works. The findings of this survey are truly shocking.

The survey revealed the following facts: 90% of Grenfell Tower residents have reported that they are dissatisfied with the way in which the TMO has conducted the Improvement Works. The survey found that 68% of residents said that they had been lied to, threatened, pressurised or harassed by the TMO. The survey also revealed that 58% of residents who have had the Heating Interface Unit (HIU) fitted in their hallways would like them to be moved to a more practical and safe location.

As a result of the findings of our survey and with the support of Lady Borwick the Grenfell Tower Resident Association is calling for the Scrutiny Committee to commission an independent investigation into the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works, not least, so as to prevent the traumatic experiences of local residents being replicated when the RBKC undertakes the Improvement Works to other tower blocks in North Kensington.

After extensive consultation between the RA and residents the following main issues as a result of the Improvement Works have been identified;

LACK OF CONSULTATION/RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT.

The residents of Grenfell Tower are calling for an independent investigation into the appalling lack of consultation and meaningful resident engagement during the Improvement Works. From the outset of the project, the TMO have adopted a policy of "divide and rule" that specified that they would not recognise our right to commune and would only deal with residents on an individual basis. It was only through the intervention of our local Councillor and our MP that our right to collective representation was recognised and this led to the forming of the Grenfell Tower R.A. However, since the formation of our RA the TMO have systematically continued to ignore the voice and wishes of Grenfell Tower residents. A good example of this is the failure of the TMO to respond to residents concerns regarding the illogical and dangerous re-numbering of floor levels within Grenfell Tower and the TMO's abject failure to organise regular meetings with our RA despite our requests for them to do so.

THE SECOND ISSUE IS THE POSITIONING OF HIU IN HALLWAYS.

Another prime example of lack of resident engagement occurred when the TMO decided to locate the HIU in residents' hallways without any prior consultation or warning. We had originally been informed and agreed that the HIU would be placed in our kitchens and over a third of households in Grenfell Tower were so incensed by this oppressive and unfair action of the TMO that they came together to deny access to their properties to TMO contractors.

As a result of this protest by residents and with the support of our MP the TMO finally agreed to locate a number of HIUs in their original position (i.e. in the kitchen). However, many residents are currently lumbered with the HIU being located in their hallways which they believe is a health and safety issue, not least, because the HIU is positioned directly above the electrical fuse box at the entrance to their properties and the fact that the sharp edges of the boxing protrude to cause a live danger to small children.

Given the evidence that over 58% of residents who have had the HIU installed in their hallways want it moved we are asking that the Scrutiny Committee ensures that the TMO are held to account over this matter and that they are made to supervise the re-location of the HIU, from the hallway to the kitchen, of any resident who is currently unhappy with the location of their boiler.

THE THIRD ISSUE: THREATS, HARASSMENT, LIES AND INTIMIDATION.

The Grenfell Tower residents are asking for an independent investigation into our allegations of threats, harassment, lies and intimidation by the TMO against residents. As a consequence of the TMO's decision to not consult with residents we believe that many residents became the victim of harassment and intimidation by members of TMO staff. Anyone with a vulnerability was targeted by the TMO and residents report that they were told that their tenancy would be under threat and that they would have no hot water or heating unless they granted access to the TMO's contractors. In addition, many residents report receiving totally inappropriate and threatening letters from solicitors acting for the TMO demanding entrance to properties that had never been denied to them in the first place. It appears, from the perspective of residents, that the TMO were determined to simply plough on with the Improvement Works and anyone who got in their way was bullied and threatened without regard. This is backed up by the fact that 68% of residents felt lied to / harassed / pressured or threatened by TMO.

LACK OF RESPONSE TO LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS.

The Grenfell Tower RA is calling for an independent investigation into the way that Peter Maddison (the TMO's Head of Assets and Regeneration) and the TMO in general have dealt with residents' complaints during the Improvement Works. Despite giving explicit assurances to our local Councillor and to the residents of Grenfell Tower that our complaints would be responded to at a meeting on July 11th 2015 the TMO have entirely failed to investigate or take on board our concerns. We believe that Mr Maddison has taken no responsibility to ensure that the legitimate complaints are followed through and has, instead, worked tirelessly to ensure that any voices of dissent or complaints among residents are crushed without an

adequate or appropriate response from the TMO.

POOR WORKMANSHIP AND SITE MANAGEMENT.

The Grenfell Tower RA is calling for an independent investigation into the awful quality of individual works and the general poor management of the Improvement Works project. There are far too many examples of poor quality works and poor site management to list to you individually but some examples include a number of residents who were left without any hot water for months on end, a vulnerable, disabled, non- English speaking women being denied a toilet in her own home for three days and being forced to walk to a friend's in Shepherd's Bush in order to take a shower for three months.

Other examples of poor workmanship and site management include the shoddy design of the communal hallway cupboards, the lack of care and concern by a number of contractors to deliver a proper job inside residents homes, heating pipes being laid across residents carpets, existing decorations inside residents properties destroyed and little effort from the TMO to make good any of the damage they have caused as a result of removing radiators and even one example of workmen using a pet dog's water bowl belonging to a resident as a vessel to drain a toilet system.

In addition, the residents of Grenfell Tower have been greatly inconvenienced by the workmen making use of the lifts at Grenfell Tower and we are also very concerned that the lifts and communal areas of Grenfell Tower have been badly damaged by the contractors as a result of the Improvement Works. We would like assurances that the Scrutiny Committee will ensure that the floors are returned to their former state, that the lift is serviced and re-fitted (at no cost to leaseholders) and that the communal areas (including the stairwell) are redecorated to a high standard.

COMPENSATION.

The Grenfell Tower RA are calling for the Scrutiny Committee to reassess an adequate level of compensation for residents, as a result of the disruption and damage caused by the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works. The Grenfell Tower RA are aware that residents generally feel the £50 on offer from the TMO is a derisory amount. Residents believe that a standard compensation of £1,500 would be appropriate for all households. This would cover costs incurred for redecoration, damage to property and furniture, replacing curtains and blinds, lost work and holiday (many residents took time off work to then have the TMO's contractors not attend to the work as promised), general inconvenience, etc. As there has been no process in place for people to record specific costs incurred for each individual case, the Grenfell Tower RA believe a standard payment the best solution.

In conclusion, the Grenfell Tower RA are asking the Chairman of the Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee to undertake an urgent scrutiny of the TMO management of the Improvement Works at Grenfell Tower and commission an independent investigation into the issues we have just raised. Time and again residents' views have been ignored or down played. Despite interventions from our MP, Victoria Borwick, and our ward councillors, our day-to-day concerns have been belittled and side-lined and we have had to endure living conditions that, at times,

have been intolerable.

The Grenfell Tower RA understand that the Council will be commencing a major programme of regeneration throughout the borough and that this may involve refurbishment rather than demolition of some other tower blocks. In view of this, it is vital that all the lessons from the Grenfell Tower project are learned, so that the terrible daily living conditions inflicted upon us for so long are not replicated elsewhere.

Grenfell Tower Refurbishment

Briefing Note

1. Details of the Petition

At Full Council on 2nd December, Cllr Blakeman tabled a petition signed by 60 residents of Grenfell Tower. The signatories represent 51 of the 120 households in the block.

The petition stated:

"We, the under-signed residents of Grenfell Tower, ask the Chairman of the Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee to undertake an urgent scrutiny of the TMO and Rydon's management of the refurbishment project currently underway at Grenfell Tower. Time and again residents' views have been ignored or down played. Despite interventions from our MP, Victoria Borwick, and our ward councillors, our day-to-day concerns are belittled and sidelined. While we recognise that, once completed, the Tower will – at long last – be fit for the 21st Century, during this process we have had to endure living conditions that at times have been intolerable. We understand that the Council will be commencing a major programme of regeneration throughout the borough and that this may involve refurbishment rather than demolition of some other tower blocks. In view of this, it is vital that all the lessons from the Grenfell Tower project are learned, so that the terrible daily living conditions inflicted upon us for so long are not replicated elsewhere. As part of this investigation, the residents of Grenfell Tower ask that their views and experiences be canvassed and included in the scrutiny report."

2. Background to the Works

In June 2014, Cabinet agreed the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower

The scope and benefit of the works include:

- Replacement of heating and hot water system for all properties within the Tower: giving residents direct control of their heating and hot water.
- Replacement of windows with double glazed units: improving thermal and sound insulation.
- Thermal cladding of the building: reducing energy usage.
- Delivery of nine new hidden homes in the lower areas of the building: delivering additional housing, including family accommodation and wheelchair accessible units.
- Re-provision of premises for the nursery on the ground floor.
- Re-provision of premises for the boxing club.

- Smoke/fire safety and ventilation works
- Redecoration of the communal areas of the building.
- Environmental improvements – including a new play area and improved landscaping
- Provision of a new community room

On 24th July 2014, KCTMO Board agreed to enter into contract with Rydon Construction Ltd for the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower with a total scheme cost of £10,300,000 (inclusive of fees).

Works inside residents' homes is almost complete: the new double glazed windows are installed and all residents are now connected to the new heating and hot water system. The new communal entrance will be commissioned early in the New Year and the nursery and boxing club will be able to move into their new premises.

There have been some delays in the works relating to demolition works and the requirement to amend the planning permission to increase the number of hidden homes from seven to nine. In recent months, two of Rydon's subcontractors went into liquidation which caused considerable delay to the completion of the steelwork to the new entrance area and the installation of the cladding. These works are now due to complete early in 2016.

3. Resident Engagement at Grenfell Tower

Over the duration of the works, KCTMO and Rydon have engaged with residents in a variety of ways. Rydon has a site office within Grenfell Tower with Resident Liaison staff who ensure that residents are informed and consulted over the duration of the works.

The full range of resident engagement includes:

- a) Public Meetings:
 - A series of public meetings has been held, including a number with the recently established Grenfell Residents Compact.
- b) "Drop-in Sessions". Open to all residents. Topics include:
 - Scheme Design
 - Heating proposals
 - Window design
 - Heat Interface Unit (HIU) Location
- c) Rydon Coffee Mornings: regular informal "drop-ins"
- d) Monthly Newsletter: delivered to all residents
- e) One to One Resident Consultation:

- Rydon Resident Liaison staff on site
 - Letters to residents
 - Home visits to discuss details of work
- f) Complaints Procedure:
- Rydon's Site Team – first point of contact
 - KCTMO's Complaints Procedure
- g) Resident Satisfaction Survey
- A full survey will be carried out on completion of works.

4. Issues Raised by the Residents Compact

There appear to be two main issues raised by the Residents Compact where we have not been able to agree a resolution.

- a) An allegation that KCTMO and Rydon have “harassed and bullied” residents over the duration of the works.

This issue was first raised at a meeting with residents and local ward councillors in June 2015. KCTMO has given a commitment that any specific allegation will be fully investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure and appropriate action taken to resolve the matter. To date, no specific detail has been provided.

Since this meeting, 4 complaints have been received from residents of Grenfell Tower. Each complaint was about a specific aspect of the works and each of the matters was resolved. None of the complaints made any reference to harassment or bullying.

KCTMO's position remains that we will investigate any specific allegation of harassment or bullying through the official complaints procedure. However, the Grenfell Residents Compact continues to insist that the matter should be investigated without providing any specific details.

- b) The location of the Heat Interface Unit (HIU) within the flats.

Some residents have objected to the new HIU being located in the hallway of their flats. We originally proposed that the HIU would be located in the kitchen, however, when Rydon were appointed and we considered the full practical implications of locating the unit in the kitchen, a decision was made to locate it in the hallway. Residents were informed of this change in newsletters and in a series of drop in sessions in the show flat late in 2014 and early 2015.

In June 2015, we received feedback from some residents that they were not happy with the HIU being located in the hallway. Following the meeting, we agreed to offer residents a

kitchen installation on condition that those residents agree in writing to the high of disruption that this will cause, including:

- Residents must allow access for 5 consecutive days
- There would be no heating or hot water supply for the duration of the works
- Residents must agree to kitchen units and fittings being moved
- Pipework would be enclosed in ducting to be installed at high level in the bathroom and toilet

We have now installed and connected all HIU's and heating systems and 84 have been installed in the hallway and 36 in the kitchen/living room.

We have agreed to quantify the number of residents who would like to see the HIU moved from the hallway to the kitchen as part of the post work resident satisfaction survey. We will use this information to consider the cost and practicality of moving the units at a later date. To date, a small number of residents have expressed a wish to have the unit relocated.

5. Disruption to Residents

We are now approaching the end of three years of construction in and around Grenfell Tower. The refurbishment of the tower itself follows on from the construction of the KALC project directly adjacent to the block.

We recognise that the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower has caused significant disruption to residents over a prolonged period of time. The construction of the block means that contractors have had to use the passenger lifts – causing delays and disruption at peak times. Some of the work includes demolition and modification of concrete structures and this can be very noisy. Also, plasterwork and wet trades in communal areas are very dusty and it is difficult to contain the dust as residents move in and out of their homes.

We have tried to mitigate the disruption, for example, by limiting noisy working hours and providing respite facilities. However, some level of significant disruption is inevitable.

The level of disruption inside residents homes has been relatively limited (approximately 6 days) and is less than the duration of the works we are currently carrying out inside residents homes where we are installing kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring, which can take around 15 days. However, the overall disruption within the block and in the immediate area has been prolonged.

6. Compensation

We have explained to residents that, if they have any specific issues relating to damage or loss associated with the works, then we will consider them on a case by case basis.

There are a small number of common issues that have been raised:

a) Redecoration relating to new radiators:

We have explained to residents that the new radiators are smaller than the previous one used. We have therefore given residents the choice of having either:

- the radiators mounted on a painted backboard that will cover the area affected, or
- having a redecoration allowance of £50

b) Rehanging of Curtains and Blinds:

As the dimensions, operation and configuration of the new windows is different to the old ones, some residents will find that their blinds or curtains will no longer fit. We have asked residents to discuss their specific needs with Rydon in the first instance and they will look at adjustments that will help overcome the issue. If it is not possible to work around the issue, then we will consider an appropriate response on a case by case basis.

7. Progress of Works and Quality Control

On completion of the works, there is an inspection process to ensure that works are completed to the specified standard and that any defects are resolved before the work is accepted as complete. This process has a number of stages including an inspection by Rydon's site staff, followed by an inspection by KCTMO's Clerk of Works. We will also carry out a residents satisfaction survey to collect information relating to any outstanding or defective work.

The handover of work completed inside residents' flats is underway, with 31 properties to date having been signed off by KCTMO's Clerk of Works. The Clerk of Works checks every window and talks to the resident about the operation of the heating system. They also explain that the works are covered by a 12 month "defects guarantee period", during which time, Rydon are responsible for the maintenance of any work carried out as part of the contract.

8. Door Knocking Survey – December 2015

Following receipt of the petition that was tabled at Full Council in early December, KCTMO undertook a door knocking exercise to take stock of any current issues facing residents in relation to the refurbishment works.

It should be noted that we have only accepted full handover of 31 of the 120 properties to date, so it is to be expected that there are issues relating to incomplete works or minor defects. These matters will be addressed by Rydon before works are signed off as complete.

We spoke to 77 of the 120 households in the block. A summary of the feedback received is as follows:

- 90% of residents confirmed that the improvements to the heating and hot water were working effectively.
- 85% of residents confirmed that they understood how to operate the new heating system
- 83% of residents are happy with the new windows
- 97% confirmed that they understood how to operate the windows

Following the survey, Rydon have visited households that have reported defects and any difficulties operating the new heating and window installations.

The following table gives a summary of the issues raised by residents in the survey:

Summary of Issues Raised	Households
Draughts from Windows:	5
Cleanliness Following Work:	1
Operation of Heating:	4
Location of HIU:	5
Incomplete work / Minor defect:	7
Noise from Extract Fan:	6
Repair Issues (Not related to Rydon Works):	3
Management Issues (Not related to works):	1
Water Pressure Issues:	2
Operation of Windows:	2

36 of the households that we surveyed had also signed the petition that was tabled at Full Council on 2nd December. The following table details the issues raised by these households as part of our survey:

Summary of Issues Raised	
Draughts from Windows:	3
Cleanliness Following Work:	1
Operation of Heating:	2
Location of HIU:	3
Incomplete work / Minor defect:	3
Noise from Extract Fan:	4
Repair Issues (Not related to Rydon Works):	3
Management Issues (Not related to works):	1

Appendix 1 of this report gives a detailed breakdown of the feedback received from residents as part of our survey. Appendix 2 is an extract detailing the results from the residents who signed the petition tabled at Full Council.

A couple of specific issues have been raised which need further investigation, including:

- Six households reported that the new extract fans are noisy when there are high winds
- Five households have reported draughts around the new windows. This may relate to the operation of the “trickle vents” in the windows.

These matters will be investigated and resolved early in the New Year.

No resident raised any issues relating to “bullying” or “harassment”.

We also received some very positive feedback from residents:

“It is all good”

“windows are perfect”

“All fantastic! Happy with the work”

“Rydon very good”

9. Next Steps

None of the work to Grenfell Tower has yet been formally signed off as complete. It is important that Rydon complete the works early in 2016 and the works are checked by the Clerk of Works and handed over.

When the works are complete, we will carry out a detailed post-works survey residents – this is likely to be in Spring 2016. This survey will help us learn from the project and feed this learning into future works. We will also use the survey to identify any outstanding items of work that need to be resolved. There will also be a further survey of the completed works at the end of the 12 months “defects liability period” – this will take place early in 2017.

We would welcome the involvement of RBKC Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee and the KCTMO Board in the review and evaluation of the project on its completion.

Analysis of Door Knocking Survey Results

Respondents: 77 of 120 households (64%)

1. Following the improvements, is your heating and hot water working effectively?
Yes: 66 (90%)
No: 7 (10%)
a) Are there any issues with water pressure or heating temperature?
Yes: 18 (26%)
No: 52 (74%)
b) Are your radiators operating/heating up adequately?
Yes: 55 (86%)
No: 9 (14%)
2. Do you know how to operate the heating and hot water system?
Yes: 60 (85%)
No: 11 (15%)
3. Are you happy with your new windows?
Yes: 62 (83%)
No: 13 (17%)
a) Do you know how to operate your windows?
Yes: 67 (97%)
No: 2 (3%)
b) Do they open and close properly?
Yes: 62 (90%)
No: 7 (10%)
4. Any outstanding snagging issues which you wish to report?
Yes: 38 (51%)
No: 36 (49%)

Summary of Issues Raised

Draughts from Windows:	5
Cleanliness Following Work:	1
Operation of Heating:	4
Location of HIU:	5
Incomplete work / Minor defect:	7
Noise from Extract Fan:	6
Repair Issues (Not related to Rydon Works):	3
Management Issues (Not related to works):	1
Water Pressure Issues:	2
Operation of Windows:	2

Analysis of Survey Results from Respondants who signed the Petition:

Respondents: 36 of 51 Petition Signatory Households (71%)

1. Following the improvements, is your heating and hot water working effectively?
Yes: 29 (88%)
No: 4 (12%)
a) Are there any issues with water pressure or heating temperature?
Yes: 6 (19%)
No: 25 (81%)
b) Are your radiators operating/heating up adequately?
Yes: 25 (86%)
No: 4 (14%)
2. Do you know how to operate the heating and hot water system?
Yes: 27 (82%)
No: 6 (18%)
3. Are you happy with your new windows?
Yes: 30 (83%)
No: 6 (17%)
a) Do you know how to operate your windows?
Yes: 31 (97%)
No: 1 (3%)
b) Do they open and close properly?
Yes: 30 (91%)
No: 3 (9%)
4. Any outstanding snagging issues which you wish to report?
Yes: 20 (59%)
No: 14 (41%)

Summary of Issues Raised

Draughts from Windows:	3
Cleanliness Following Work:	1
Operation of Heating:	2
Location of HIU:	3
Incomplete work / Minor defect:	3
Noise from Extract Fan:	4
Repair Issues (Not related to Rydon Works):	3
Management Issues (Not related to works):	1

