

## **GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY**

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### **WITNESS STATEMENT OF JANICE WRAY**

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#### **I, JANICE WRAY, WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:-**

1. I make this statement voluntarily to assist the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. I understand that I may be called to give evidence to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry in relation to the period between 14 June 2017 and midnight on 20 June 2017. While some of the matters discussed are within my direct recollection, I have been provided with documents which I have used to prompt my memory in respect of other matters.
3. This statement is intended to be read in conjunction with the statement that I provided to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry on 8 February 2019.

#### **Background and role**

4. At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 I was the Health and Safety and Facilities Manager for the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation ("TMO").

#### **The policies, procedures and plans in place on the part of the TMO, central and local government for dealing with a major emergency such as the Grenfell Tower fire**

5. Below I have endeavoured to set out my knowledge of the emergency plans, policies and procedures that the TMO had in place at the time of the fire.
6. The TMO had an Emergency Plan that was intended to be used in minor emergencies, defined as local emergencies on, within, or surrounding TMO properties or estates which could be managed with the resources available to the

TMO. In practice what this meant was an emergency that did not require significant and ongoing assistance being provided to or the rehousing of more than a few households.

7. The TMO's Emergency Plan was first drafted by Adrian Bowman in 2003. It was available in draft until it was first published in August 2004. I believe I was on [REDACTED] leave at the time that the initial draft was compiled. The Plan was stored on the TMO's intranet however my understanding is that several TMO Directors also kept a hard copy on hand. The Emergency Plan contained two cascades which assigned responsibility for initiating the appropriate response to named individuals depending on whether the emergency occurred during or outside of normal working hours.
8. If an emergency occurred out of normal working hours, Cascade 2 would be invoked. Essentially, a resident or other individual would call the Freephone number used to report repairs and concerns to the TMO. Calls to this number would be diverted to the out of hours call handler, Pinnacle, from 5pm until 9am on work days and 24 hours a day at weekends and on bank holidays. Pinnacle call handlers would then clarify the detail of the reported issue, confirm that it was an emergency and contact the duty Estate Services Assistant or the appropriate contractor or utility company to instigate the work necessary to remedy the situation. From experience, I would say that most calls related to a leak or the loss of heating or hot water, however there was a broad range of possible issues which could be reported.
9. If Pinnacle did not get a satisfactory result from this first attempt at remedying the issue, or if for some other reason the matter clearly needed escalating, they would contact the Duty Officer. The Duty Officer would then be required to coordinate a response by providing technical advice and direction over the phone. The Duty Officer might, for example, escalate the issue to the contractor's manager and/or mitigate the risk to the resident through various means.
10. If these actions still did not resolve the problem, the Duty Officer would be required to make a decision as to whether to decant the affected resident(s) into temporary accommodation until the issue could be resolved or made safe

11. The individuals on the technical advice rota were typically TMO staff members with good knowledge of the estates and of technical matters more generally. They received monetary compensation for being on duty. As at June 2017 there were four TMO staff on the rota; Olivia Hutchinson, John Griffin, Adrian Bowman and myself.
12. The Duty Officers met several times a year to discuss any possible improvements that could be made in relation to the handling of incidents, contractors and out of hour's responses in general. There were also regular meetings with Pinnacle to monitor their performance and to identify any further improvements that could be made to the procedures in place.
13. The Emergency Plan was revised in May 2009, May 2015 and February 2016 however I know that the cascades were updated more frequently than this to accommodate policy or contract changes, or changes in the organisational structure and staffing. Once a revised Plan was finalised, Adrian or I would send it to the Executive Team and the Customer Services Centre. We would also send the updated cascades to the RBKC and Pinnacle.
14. If an incident or emergency occurred that had the potential to acutely stretch the TMO's resources or to overwhelm the TMO's capacity to manage without assistance from the RBKC, the RBKC's Emergency Plan would be invoked in addition to or instead of the TMO's Plan.
15. Whether the TMO's or RBKC's Emergency Plan was invoked generally related to the scale and severity of the incident and the response that was required. It was also resource based decision as the TMO did not have the resources to rehouse a large number of residents.
16. I recall that the RBKC's Emergency Planning Team were unclear about who was responsible for rehousing residents at the time of the fire at Adair Tower in 2015. Following this fire we attended a meeting with the RBKC during which their Housing Officers clarified the relationship between the RBKC and the TMO and advised their Emergency Planning Team that rehousing was the RBKC's

responsibility. The TMO's Emergency Plan was then revised to reflect this division of responsibility more clearly.

17. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of the plans that the TMO had in place for the provision of humanitarian relief in the event of an emergency. I am aware that we maintained stocks of bottled drinking water and had the ability to distribute these to whole blocks if the water supply was interrupted. Additionally, staff could certainly be sent to assist vulnerable or less abled-bodied residents if there was a lift break down and they needed help with tasks such as getting their shopping bags up the stairs.
18. However, the TMO did not have a plan in place for the provision of significant humanitarian relief as its Emergency Plan was not intended to be utilised in emergencies that necessitated decanting more than a small number of dwellings. In such circumstances it was always envisioned that the RBKC would take over the provision of humanitarian relief as they had the necessary resources and connections to the emergency services and social services and the ability to establish resource centres across the borough at short notice.
19. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of what risk assessments had been carried out by the TMO and how these assessments had informed the TMO's emergency planning. Part Two of the Emergency Plan contained high level information about the physical properties managed by the TMO. This information was collated by Estate Service Assistants using a proforma that Adrian and I created.
20. The information contained in Part Two of the Emergency Plan was intended to be used internally within the TMO only and was not intended to inform the emergency services when carrying out their response. My expectation was that the response of the emergency services would be based on their own expertise and the information they had collated during familiarisation and information gathering exercises. This would include information that they had requested from us and we had provided.
21. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of any training and exercises that had been undertaken by the TMO in relation to the Emergency Plan. I recall being

involved in organising and undertaking a joint training exercise with the RBKC and Octavia Housing in relation to Burgessfield. Burgessfield was a part care sheltered housing block of which the RBKC was the landlord, the TMO was the managing agent and Octavia Housing were the manager and supplier of care staff who worked there.

22. This exercise was intended to replicate the early stages of an emergency incident at a sheltered housing property and was attended by managers from Octavia, Housing Officers from the TMO and several members of the RBKC Emergency Planning Team. Rehousing in this exercise ultimately fell to the RBKC, however I recall that Octavia had the capacity to open up and run day centres capable of hosting relocated residents in the first instance. The family members of the more able-bodied residents would then be contacted to see if they were able to assist in the short term. Those who could not be accommodated in this way would be rehoused to RBKC.
23. I have no knowledge of what arrangements existed within the TMO to warn/inform/advise the public in the event of emergency like the Grenfell Tower Fire as communications was not my area of responsibility. I am aware that the TMO had a Communications Officer who could be contacted in an emergency. However, as stated earlier, in the case of a major emergency like the Grenfell Tower Fire, the RBKC's Emergency Plan would be invoked and therefore any communications to the public would be made by the RBKC's Communications Team.
24. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of any arrangements in place to share information with other responders to enhance coordination in the event of an emergency like the Grenfell Tower fire.
25. Essentially, the cascades in the TMO's Emergency Plan outlined a backwards and forwards flow of information from Pinnacle to the TMO and to the RBKC. The out of hours cascade required Pinnacle to contact the RBKC Borough Duty Officer and to advise him or her of any major incidents. Equally, if the RBKC Emergency Team became aware of an incident in advance of the TMO they would contact Pinnacle and request that the TMO Duty Officer be advised and contact them directly.

26. While the RBKC Duty Officer was able to pass requests for information via Pinnacle, once contact was made with the TMO Duty Officer then direct communication would generally continue between the RBKC Duty Officer and the TMO Duty Officer. The TMO Duty Officer would endeavour to provide any requested information as soon as possible providing he or she was able to access it. Additionally, the Emergency Services could also contact the TMO Duty Officer via Pinnacle.
27. The TMO did not have specific arrangements in place to utilise and coordinate activities from the voluntary sector for an emergency like the Grenfell Tower Fire. However I am aware that the RBKC's Emergency Planning team had arrangements and relationships with voluntary organisations who would be able to assist in a major emergency.

**The response of the TMO, Central and Local government by way of the provision of emergency relief in the days immediately following the fire**

28. I did not attend Grenfell Tower on the night of the fire on 14 June 2017. I was not on duty as the Duty Officer that week and therefore I left my mobile phones downstairs, meaning that I did not learn about the fire until Adrian Bowman called me on my landline at around 5am. I was unable to leave my house until about 7am as I had [REDACTED] at home with me.
29. I called Robert Black and he requested that I go to Network Hub, the TMO's main office. Once there, Robert asked me to collate information relating to health and safety and complaints. I discuss the information I collated in more detail below.
30. I know that reception centres were set up to assist residents and other relevant individuals however I did not attend any of these centres. My understanding is that the staff who were asked to attend these centres were mainly front facing staff such as Neighbourhood Officers.
31. My primary role in the aftermath of the fire was pulling together information requested by various organisations. The information requested was predominantly fire risk assessments and evidence that the actions arising out of these assessments

had been completed. Most of the information requested related to Grenfell Tower however there were also requests about other properties managed by the TMO. Because I had been advised not provide these fire risk assessments to residents or the media, I spent a lot of time providing the relevant information to residents in other ways so as to keep them informed and calm their anxieties.

32. Following the fire it was decided that Carl Stokes would continue his rolling fire risk assessment programme throughout the stock to ensure that the assessments remained current and a back log was not created. However the RBKC instructed us to procure a new independent assessor, not because anything had been found to be wrong with Carl Stokes' assessments but for public confidence reasons it was felt a new assessor should be brought in. I therefore spent a lot of time procuring a new Fire Risk Assessor to urgently review the Fire Risk Assessments on all other high rise blocks within the stock and to undertake new Fire Risk Assessments on the Lancaster West covered walkways.
33. It was not easy to find a competent Fire Risk Assessor with capacity and willingness to do this at such short notice. I remember speaking to Colin Todd and he contacted several companies on our behalf. One of these companies was Savills, who were unable to assist. Colin then found us an assessment company called FCS-Live which held third party BAFE accreditation for fire risk assessment and was able to take on this work.
34. In the weeks that followed the fire I also spent a lot of time in the covered walkways which lead up to Grenfell Tower. Because the access and egress points at the Grenfell Tower end of these blocks had been blocked off, this impacted on the means of escape. Wates, the construction company who were then based on the site constructed an alternative escape route at the end of the block for each of the covered walkways.
35. While these additional escape routes were being constructed, the London Fire Brigade requested that we install Fire Marshalls to inspect and monitor the blocks and to assist residents to evacuate in the event of an emergency. The TMO therefore immediately deployed Fire Marshals to be based at each walkway 24/7.



36. Once these marshals were in place, we assessed the level of fire safety competence required and then employed a company called Event Fire Solutions that hired experienced firefighters. We kept the London Fire Brigade apprised of our actions and introduced them to the managers and supervisor of the Fire Marshalls. We also shared with them the details of the Marshalls role and responsibilities to ensure that they met the Brigades “Waking Watch” requirements.
37. I had an ongoing role in monitoring the Fire Marshal’s performance and ensuring that they liaised closely with the local Neighbourhood Team on the estate. To ensure that residents were clear about the Marshal’s role, I assisted in drafting a newsletter to residents which included details about the new interim fire strategy for the covered walkways. We also undertook ongoing on-site inspections with Wates to ensure that measures such as signage and emergency lighting were adequate.
38. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of what the TMO understood their role to be in the emergency response to the Grenfell Tower fire. My understanding is that events unfolded so quickly on the night that the TMO’s Emergency Plan was never activated. It is also my understanding that it became clear very early on in the fire that it was of such a magnitude that the RBKC would take the lead on the emergency and humanitarian response. The TMO’s role was therefore to assist the RBKC and the emergency services and the residents in any way it could.
39. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of how the RBKC’s Emergency Plan was operationalised however I was not on duty that night and I did not attend Grenfell Tower. It follows that I do not know the details of how this plan was operationalised.
40. I have also been asked to set out my knowledge of the relationship between the TMO and RBKC in relation to the activation and implementation of emergency plans. As stated earlier, the TMO’s Emergency Plan was for minor emergencies affecting no more than a few households. The cascades were clear in that the RBKC was to be informed immediately in the case of a major emergency and their Borough Duty Manager would take over.



41. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of how the TMO worked with RBKC and other responders in response to the Grenfell Tower fire. I was not on duty or in attendance on the night of the fire and so I do not know the details of this. However, I am aware that there were daily Gold Group meetings following the fire where the TMO, RBKC and the emergency services were all represented at a high level. I did not attend these meetings, although I do recall occasionally being asked to provide information requested by this group.
42. I am not aware of any specific humanitarian assistance provided by the TMO to those directly impacted by the Grenfell Tower fire. I did not attend the Tower during the fire nor did I attend any of the reception centres. It follows that I do not have any first-hand knowledge of how many staff were involved in the response, nor do I have any knowledge of what offers of assistance were received.
43. I have been asked to set out what knowledge I have of what the TMO did to share information in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire to those impacted by the Grenfell Tower fire. I can confirm that I provided details of the locations of asbestos containing materials within the tower to Environmental Health, the Metropolitan Police and their Health & Safety Team and to the Health and Safety Executive following their requests. I can also confirm that I forwarded copies of plans and details of flat numbering, provided to me by a colleague, to the London Fire Brigade.
44. I also responded to requests for copies of the current and previous Fire Risk Assessment for various TMO properties, however the legal advice that we were given at the time was that we should not provide copies of the Fire Risk Assessment to residents who requested them. We were advised that we could summarise the findings of the assessment and confirm which of the recommended actions had been completed. We received a large number of enquiries from residents in relation to fire safety and we responded to all of these with information specific to the specific block and attempted to address residents' concerns and reduce their anxiety. Furthermore, we wrote jointly with RBKC to the residents of all tower blocks outlining fire safety procedure advice.

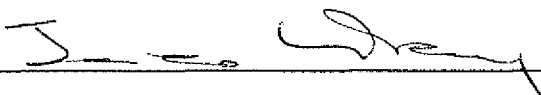
45. We also received a large number of media enquiries and Freedom of Information requests for information and we endeavoured to respond to these within the constraints placed upon us by the TMO legal team at the time.
46. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of how the TMO communicated and shared information with other responders to ensure a coordinated and effective response. The only involvement I had with providing information to other responders was when the Police and the HSE requested information from the TMO about locations of asbestos containing materials at Grenfell Tower. I responded to these requests as soon as possible with the information requested. I also recall receiving a request for information about plans and door numbering at Grenfell Tower from the London Fire Brigade, which I responded to when I was provided this information by a colleague.
47. I have no knowledge of how any voluntary/community response were coordinated and utilised in the aftermath of the fire.

**The adequacy of the response**

48. I have been asked to set out my knowledge of whether the response was adequate and if not, in what respects was it inadequate. I do not feel that I can answer this question given that I did not attend on the night. However, I will say that from what I observed of my colleagues in the aftermath, they were all working extremely hard to assist residents and affected individuals in any way they could over very long hours and for a sustained period.

**I confirm this statement to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

**I confirm that I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry's website.**

Signed: 

Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019