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Oral statement to Parliament

## Update on Grenfell Tower fire: 15 March 2018

Statement by Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

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The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/sajid-javid>)

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Mr Speaker, with permission, I wish to make a statement on issues arising from the Metropolitan Police investigation into the Grenfell tragedy.

This investigation has involved a thorough examination of every aspect of the Tower, including front doors to flats within the property.

These doors include a glazed fire door manufactured around 5 years ago.

Initial inspections indicate the door is believed to have been designed to resist fire for up to 30 minutes. But, when tested by the Metropolitan Police, it failed after approximately 15 minutes.

The Metropolitan Police considered that this test result might have wider implications for public safety and alerted my department.

The government immediately sought advice from the Independent Expert Panel to test the findings to see whether any action was required as a result.

This Expert Panel is made up of a range of building and fire safety experts and chaired by Sir Ken Knight, the former London Fire Commissioner and former government Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser.

The panel consulted with representatives from the Metropolitan Police, the government's Chief Scientific Advisers and the National Fire Chief's Council.

Following this, the Expert Panel has advised that the risks to public safety remain low.

There is no change to the fire safety advice that the public should follow.

I, nevertheless, fully appreciate that this news will be troubling for many people, not least all those affected by the Grenfell tragedy.

That's why based on expert advice we have begun the process of conducting further tests and will continue to consult with the Expert Panel to identify the implications of those tests.

I have made it clear that the necessary tests and assessments must be carried out thoroughly, but at pace.

There is no evidence that this is a systemic issue. Data between 2009 and 2017 shows that fire does not generally spread beyond the room of origin.

I am also clear that my department and the Metropolitan Police will ensure the bereaved and survivors are kept informed of progress.

And I commit to updating the House when further information is available, and no later than the end of April.

I should stress that, in carrying out these tests, conclusions should not be drawn about the nature or cause of the Grenfell tragedy.

That is a matter for the separate police investigation. It must be allowed to run its course.

Honourable Members will be aware that Dame Judith Hackitt is undertaking an independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety to ensure that the regulatory system is sufficiently robust.

Dame Judith has been made aware of these latest findings. And, having accepted the initial recommendations that were set out in her interim report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-interim-report>) in December, we look forward to her final report, which is expected in the spring.

Mr Speaker, 9 months ago, we faced a loss of life and suffering on an unimaginable scale at Grenfell.

Since then, significant efforts have been made by the government and others to support survivors, to find them new homes and to help keep people safe.

However, I know that the matters I have raised today will of course raise questions.

I want to reiterate that on the basis of expert advice my department has received, there is no evidence that risks to the public have changed.

And I want to reassure Honourable Members that all possible steps are being taken to properly investigate the issues and to take action where needed.

Public safety is paramount.

Our position is clear: the events of 14 June 2017 must never be allowed to happen again.

I commend this statement to the House.

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