

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: WALTON, ANDREW

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 46 page(s) each 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.

Signature: A WALTON

Date: 25/01/2018

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am making this statement in relation to my involvement with the fire at Grenfell Tower on the 14th June 2017. I have been spoken to by way of digital media with DC Peta JAMES and DC Lou JONES. I understand this statement is a written version of what we discussed.

Post the incident I made the following notes which I entitle and exhibit as follows:

ANW/1 Contemporaneous notes made at Paddington Fire Station 14.06.17

ANW/2 Further notes made at home address - Book 1 - 14.06.17

ANW/3 Further notes made at home address - Book 2 - 14.06.17

ANW/4 ARC form completed 19.06.17

ANW/5 Prompt notes for statement compiled using all previously submitted notes

ANW/7 Record of Actions of SM Andrew WALTON completed 06/11/17

In addition I drew a sketch during the course of making my statement which I exhibit as:-

ANW/8 Sketch of the layout around Grenfell

Before I get to the details of that night I am going to set out my history as a fire fighter in terms of where I have served, my qualifications, training and experience. I will also explain some of the technical terms for procedures and equipment used by the London Fire Brigade (LFB), what they are used for and, in some instances, why we use them.

I have been in the Fire Service for just short of 29 years. I joined in the West Midlands starting at training school on the January 1989. I went through my early career in an inner city fire station in Birmingham.

During that time I did my Leading Fire Fighters and Sub Officer's exams. After about 5 years an

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opportunity came up to transfer to the Isle of Wight (IOW) Fire Service as a Fire Fighter so I went down there. I was entered for the Station Officers exam which I took when I got down to the Isle of Wight. I went from Fire Fighter, through to Leading Fire Fighter, Sub Officer to Station Officer and when Rank to Role came in (which is when our rank structures were changed to managerial roles) I was assimilated to a Station Manager in that process.

In my time in the IOW I was an operational fire fighter on a multi skilled station. Basically every piece of specialist equipment on the IOW was based at that station so I have used aerials, rescue equipment and chemical equipment as well as the normal fire-fighting equipment on a fire engine

I also worked in what they termed Technical Fire Safety. That would cover going in and inspecting premises initially under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and then the Regulatory Form Order that came in under the more risk based approach to fire safety. So in that role I had gone to Moreton in the Marsh and completed Fire Safety Modules A, B, C and D which meant I was trained to go from commercial properties through to residential properties and have a basic understanding of engineering solutions and how they could be applied to buildings to have more imaginative fire safety.

The Regulatory Form Order then came in and is still the legislation that all buildings use from a fire safety point of view. The responsible person, the person who has control over the building, who is in charge of the building, has a duty to ensure that the means for raising the alarm of a fire, the means for escape and the systems that are place in the building, are adequate for the use of the building and are maintained. So you risk assess your own building and you make a decision — is the way I am using this building, with the features the building has got, fit for purpose. As an inspecting officer you can challenge that rationale and if you do not believe they have proven that their risk assessment is suitable and sufficient you can take action against the occupier and then, depending upon what the action is, you may end up going to Magistrates Court or Crown Court and arguing why you believe that risk assessment wasn't adequate in the first place

I also spent a lot of time looking at Approved Document B. Approved Document B is a reference document for builders and planners and fire safety officers to refer to and apply to what is in front of them. I have made a conscious effort not to try and learn Approved Document B as it gets updated and amended and you don't want to apply a standard from a year or even a month ago if it is no longer the applicable standard.

Approved Document B contains a section which talks about all of the facilities that a building may have to assist the fire service in dealing with a fire. So with a high rise of the nature of Grenfell it covers things

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like the need for a fire fighting shaft which gives an hour fire separation to protect the stair case, the lifts, whether it is suitable for a dry rising main or if it is to the height that requires a wet main (which means it is always fully charged with water). With Grenfell it was right on the limit of what would have been acceptable at the time, it was built for having a dry rising main.

One of the other features in Approved Document B in a high rise building is that they have a fire lift which is a lift that has a load of safety features in it which means we can use it to access upper floors because it has got secondary power supplies, it has got features to stop it getting flooded and compromised by the fire-fighting water, it is in a fire resistant shaft which means fire shouldn't be able to get to it for at least an hour, all that sort of thing. In addition it has what is known as the fireman switch — it is in a box on the wall with a lever in it and is above where you can normally reach and we use a ceiling hook to put into the lever and pull the lever down. That then operates the fireman's lift. Any lift that is operated like that then descends to the ground floor and it can only be operated from inside the lift from that point on. So procedure is that you put a fire fighter into the lift car and they then act as a lift operator. They take it to where it's needed and it always comes back down to the ground floor unless it is held by the operator.

On those courses you are taught to look at a plan of a proposed building and apply Approved Document B to the specifications and features that are on that plan and say whether or not you think that is going to be an adequate solution to give people the warning they would need in a fire and the time to escape using the features that are in place. It is about applying Approved Document B with the minimum impact on the building but still allowing it to be safe for purpose.

I probably spent about 18 months going backwards and forwards to Moreton on various courses. I also did a Fire Investigation Course which was a fortnight, being trained to be a fire investigator which was one of the roles I had on the IOW.

If the officer in charge could not determine what they believed was the cause of fire they would request a fire investigation team. We would assemble a team of two, one taking the lead and as a team we would go to the site, take witness statements, do a physical investigation of the site, getting to the point of excavating if need be to try and determine the radius of error which is where you think it is most likely that a fire started. The more sure you can be, the smaller the radius of error so you zone in on a smaller area of the fire and that is where it is most likely to have started. You then excavate that area and try and identify the candle, the cigarette, the accelerant whatever it was that was used to start the fire. Because it

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was the IOW I have probably been involved in just two investigations where I took that role. I can't remember leading an investigation I can only remember being part of the team.

I also worked with a Home Office Forensic Investigator on a job where there had been an attack on a stable block and we were trying to determine whether it was accidental or arson. As a result of this I had some experience of working with the more scientific based approach to determine if accelerants were used and so on, but very limited application of the training that I had received because it was a small brigade. This is one of the reasons why I transferred in to the London Fire Brigade (LFB). I am coming towards the end of my career and I wanted to finish in a busier Brigade applying more of the skills I have obtained. At heart we all join the job for the same reason, I still want to do it and I felt as if I had been in a back water for too long and wanted to get back into where is a bit more action.

Whilst in the IOW I did all my Fire Safety Modules up to Module D. I wasn't a Fire Engineer, which would have been the next couple of modules and would have meant I could have designed engineered solutions for buildings, but I was at the point where I could look at a design that had been submitted by somebody else and try and interpret that and try make a judgement as to whether it was suitable and sufficient. As part of that I did a HNC in Fire Safety Studies which meant I looked at the history of the regulations, where they had come from and why they were designed as part of my thesis. I was a Fire Investigator and when I was in the role of the Health and Safety Uniform Lead I did my NEBOSH - National General Certificate — so I learnt about the Health and Safety Legislation and all the regulations in the framework within that.

I was a Station Manager in the IOW which equates to Group Manager in the LFB. I was running a station and a department. My day job was my department which was Health and Safety, and I had responsibility for the station from an administrative point of view. For a very short period I also headed up Fire Safety, but that was literally to cover colleague absence. I also worked in Performance Management and at the Training Centre. On the IOW they train their own fire fighters for Breathing Apparatus (BA) and piggy back other brigades training for everything else. This includes Initial Training which is carried out with other Brigades and recruits then come back to us and learn how to apply those skills to the IOW policies and procedures, equipment etc.

Before I left the IOW I was attached to a Regional Team called the Collaborative Partnership which comprised of 9 South East Fire Brigades, other than London, talking together and trying to co-ordinate our policies and procedures, Every Brigade dealt with various incident types in slightly different ways with slightly different equipment so it was about trying to get a bit of co-ordination between us, making

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sure that we were all applying adequate safe systems of work, that no Brigade was deficient to another in what they thought was appropriate.

I had been in this group for about 18 months on and off but I had been whole time detached into a central team that was based at Reigate Fire Station in Surrey and I had been there for coming up to 12 months looking at what the actual tactical guidance was going to be that would be coming out to the fire stations, that they would be using as their training, to base their new standards on. So I got immersed into Policy and Procedures and why they were there. We did it all from a risk based approach so would start off with a risk assessment for the incident type we were looking at eg: high rise and we would say okay what are the reasonable hazards we would anticipate at that incident and we would have a list of hazards. What are the controls we need to put in place to deal with those hazards and we would have different systems that we could put in place, what resources do you need to be able to do that and we would look at the activities that were associated with those controls and who was required to do that so you would have dedicated resources. We would call it the predetermined attendance (PDA) you would need for that job, from the first fire engine that would get sent to a call of that type, what is the minimum amount of resources you need to be able to make a safe intervention at that job.

As a result of that I got to know a few of the officers who were in the LFB and one of them was Lee DRAWBRIDGE who at the time was a Group Manager in what was called National Operational Guidance. He had come to the CP to look at what we were doing to develop a tactic because he was in a team that was looking at what was required from a legal and policy point of view to be able to deal with an incident so we were coming from opposite ends of the same problem and were going to meet in the middle at some point.

Because I was trying to get into the LFB he came and had a chat with me and he told me that there would be another round coming up and that there was a Station Managers role in National Operational Guidance (NOG) where he was working and that my experience would be really useful for them.

I got through that round and my posting was in to the NOG I spent about 12 months in the NOG and my role was again looking at incidents. I was in the part of the team that was looking at how we implement the tactics we needed to put into place in the fire ground, into national guidance, bearing in mind our legal requirements.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act places certain duties on us. We haven't actually got a duty to put a fire out but we do have a duty to be able to respond to calls to fire. We have got a duty to make ourselves available to deal with emergencies but that is quite broad. We have got a legal power to investigate fires.

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We have a legal power to obtain samples and that type of thing but we haven't got a legal power to enter a premises to do that investigation. We have to give 24 hrs notice or be invited in by the occupier.

So there are certain things we can do and certain things people think we can do but we have no real powers to be able to do it. You need to know what you have the power to do, what there is a requirement on you to do and make sure it is reflected in the policies and procedures of the service that then frame the tactical guidance that goes out in the training to your personnel so that they do the right actions to put the right safe systems of work in place and meet their legal requirements but do not overstep their legal powers. It is about what's legal. Is it necessary, is it proportionate, it is about applying those principles. One of the big issues at the moment is the Environmental Act, the fact that we could become the polluter if we intervene at an incident where there wasn't any environmental impact until we started to try and deal with what was in front of us, our firefighting could be the cause of major pollution not the fire itself. You have to get the balance between intervening in a fire against the environmental impact your actions will have. The first machine at a fire usually sets out how likely it is that you are going to get a successful outcome in terms of environmental impact.

In lay persons terms a lot of that training is making sure our fire fighters understand why they are doing what they are doing, why the policy says what it does because if they understand it they will apply it without even thinking rather than if it something that is dictated and they may start thinking do we really need to do this.

I was a competent Station Manager for 8 years before I joined the LFB in October 2014. However when you transfer in from another Brigade the LFB puts you back on a Development Programme so I did another Development Programme for 18 months and reproved my competency as far as London was concerned about 18 months ago. In effect I have been a Competent Station Manager for about 10 years in total and in terms of the LFB 18 months. I have been SM at Kingston Fire Station for the past 12 months. As part of the development process you prove you have got the skills and can apply them so it is all evidence based. You show three or four occasions where you have applied a particular skill and you then do a formal assessment process. Your manager sees you apply the skill a few times and then tests you in a bit more of a controlled manner. They will then either set a time period for you to demonstrate the skills and at the end of that time sign you off as competent or if they know that you won't have the opportunity to deal with a particular type of incident or managerial issue, they will do a simulation and have a professional discussion where you are asked questions to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding

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as to how you would apply it in the circumstances described then will deem you as competent. That is the sort of way you get through your competency.

Before I came into the LFB I used to turn up at a fire and just deal what was in front of me. It was a very reactive way of dealing with an incident, which you can never really get away from, being reactive initially, but to get through the selection process to get into London I had to become a lot more structured in the way I dealt with incidents. Information gathering, getting a situational awareness, identifying priorities, identifying the objectives you need to achieve to deal with those priorities which identifies the tasks that need to happen and then it is about putting in a structure that allows those tasks to occur. It definitely improved me as an Incident Commander going through that process of transferring in.

I have now got a framework that I put in place at every incident that I attend. On that framework you hang your information gathering and the process of identifying what you need to do and how you need to do it. You never get the opportunity to go through it the way you want to go through it. There is always stuff that comes in from the side, the fire doesn't do what you thought it was going to do, which Grenfell is all over, or the resources you thought would be there aren't there, somebody turns up with an issue that is absolutely not on anyone's radar at that time and that is the way incidents happen. That is why you continually need to refer back to the framework. It allows for a more structured approach.

In my current rank we do a lot of command focussed training, mainly by our self but we do have structured assessments from Babcock training. We will have a morning input and then, per the most recent training sessions I had we had a command simulation exercise where you deal with a simulated incident and apply your command experience, policies and procedures to deal with that incident, so it keeps your skills refreshed.

One of the areas we covered on my recent training was applying operational discretion. That means that where you are dealing with a fire where there are in effect life threatening circumstances and you knowingly step outside of the normal policy and procedures, you know you are going to do that, you know why you are going to do it and are able to justify that the move from policy was beneficial. In effect if we don't do this we're going to lose a life that we could save, but if we wait for X, Y and Z to be put in place which would be policy that life would be lost. You need to know that what you are going to do instead is proportionate, safe enough and you must be able to take that risk to achieve that end.

As part of that information gathering you identify the key hazards to your own and the public's health and being able to go through those objectives enables you to put in safe systems of work that will allow you to achieve those objectives.

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After about 12 months in the NOG I became a Service Standard Support Officer (SSSO). This is a group of Station Managers who are there to support the Station Managers on stations and one of the aspects in that role is to organise the Back to Basics training.

Back to Basics training is annual training which does what it says on the tin. We go back to one of the basic skills of a fire fighter and we do a session of training to make sure those skills have been covered and everyone understands why we do what we do and has an opportunity to have some input and then to demonstrate it in the afternoon doing a drill.

In terms of realistic training of fighting a fire in a high rise I think this was the main subject of our Back to Basics training in 2015. I might be wrong on the year but it was definitely in the last couple of years that we covered high rise firefighting procedure. We were looking at making sure water supplies were adequate, you established the correct Bridgehead, that communication was correct, that the right equipment was taken to the Bridgehead, the right recording systems were used such as the Forward Information Boards (FIB) which are big laminated sheets attached to the back of the BA entry control boards.

The entry control boards are where we record who has been committed into the building, how much air they have got and which tasks they are taking so that we know where people are in the building and what time we expect them to exit the building. If they don't come out on time we know there is a problem and we can initiate emergency procedures and brief crews to go to their last location that is what the entry control board is for.

I believe FIB's came out of Lakanal House, which was an incident that occurred before I was in the LFB but at that job there was an issue that information was being gathered and there was no-where to record it from an operational point of view at the Bridgehead which is the coal face of fire-fighting.

It also came out of Shirley Towers which was an incident in Hampshire where they had the same issue there. Two fire fighters were lost in Shirley Towers and at Lakanal House it was members of the public who lost their life.

One of the contributing factors potentially was that it was hard to get information from outside of the incident ground to where it was needed and record what was happening so these FIB's were developed and that was part of that training to make sure you know what the board was, you knew what it was for, you took it to the right place and that it was used correctly. We would then compare the information that was on the board with the information that we thought should be on the board and take the learning points out of that so if there was duplication or confusion why did that happen and making sure it didn't happen.

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During Grenfell FIB's were being used and they were being used well.

A BA board is about 2ft wide and 4ft long. Every BA set has a tally, a plastic label which has a space for the name of the wearer and it records how much air they have got and the time that they go into the job.

On the back you can record other information for example if it is a radiation incident. That tally goes into what we call an Automatic Distress Signal Unit Unit (ADSU) which in London is known as the bodyguard, which is the manufactures name. It is built into the set pressure gauge that lets the wearer know how much air they have left and indicates how fast they are using it..

If you think of a BA set as a diving/sub aqua set, you have a gauge on it that tells you how much air is left in the tank on your back. You have to factor in how hard you are working, how long it has taken you to get to where you are going, what sort of obstacles you have come past to get there, how much air you have used to get there, what work you have to do when you get there, and ensure you have enough air to get back to where you came from.

So for example you have gone into a building and you have worked hard to get there, you have now got a casualty that you have got to carry back through what you have already gone through and you are going to use more air getting out than you would getting in because you will be exerting more energy carrying the casualty. It is about the wearer having that knowledge, applying that and making sure they have got enough air to complete what they are doing.

On the set is the gauge that you monitor and you make those sort of calculations as the wearer. In the side of that gauge is a slot where this tally clips into. Once the tally is removed from the side of the gauge and placed into the entry control board it activates a monitoring system — we call it telemetry because it is a radio system from the set to the board. The board has a computer in it and it does lots of calculations so that we on the outside get an idea of how hard that person is working and what sort of time their air is going to run out. If they are in trouble they can press the gauge and it shows outside on the board that they have got a problem. That all activates because you take the tally out and that tally stays in the board outside so you can't switch it off once you have got it working.

The boards have a number of slots in them and are big enough to take that number of wearers. That is one of the things as an Incident Commander, you go and look at the board even if you don't look at it in too much detail you can get some really quick learning form what the board is showing.

I think it is relevant to mention at this point an incident I was involved in at a high rise block of flats very early on in my service in the West Midlands.

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In 1992 I was in a fire at a building called Charlecote Tower in the West Midlands. It was a fire on the 9th floor of a block of flats and I was in about the 4th or 5th fire engine that arrived. It is an incident that I do get emotional about but basically one of the fire fighters that I was at training school with, Iain MCPHEE, got killed in that fire.

They had responded to what we would call a bread and butter flat fire. During the course of that fire, due to the layout of the building, the fire doors were breached by the fire-fighting hose going from the dry rising main through the structure to get to where the fire was. This created a ventilation path.

On a high rise building the wind blowing onto it becomes a pressurised side of the building and behind the building where the wind wraps round there is a little pocket of low pressure. So you have high pressure on one face and low pressure on the other face. If there is a pathway from the high pressure side to the low pressure side fire can get sucked through the building and in that process you get what we call a blow torch effect. If you think of the old fashioned decorators blow torch that is a pressurised flame with a perfect mix of fuel and air so you get a really intense blue flame.

That is what happened at Charlecote Tower. That was a blow torch effect fire. They call it a wind driven fire now. I think it was the first time that had been recorded in the UK.

We definitely didn't know what we were looking at. I turned up to a fire where the building didn't do what you thought it would do and on that occasion that resulted in the death of a fire fighter.

We already knew things were going wrong because there had already been an injured fire fighter make their own way out and there were other crews that were being committed to find who was missing. Then we heard a DSU sound so myself and my BA partner went onto a staircase to make our way to where that fire was and met the crew bringing Iain down. We assisted getting him onto the Bridgehead.

We had gone into the lift in that building and gone up to the Bridgehead in the lift car. There was no-one else in the lift car and it had descended to the ground floor. That meant that we ended up on the Bridgehead with no lift and an injured fire fighter in a life threatening condition. We had no first aid equipment with us, nothing. We had to spend 2 or 3 minutes that seemed like hours while we radioed down and got the lift sent back up and got him away.

I mention this incident because it was a fire where the building wasn't doing what it should have been doing and where I had had experience of not having the right kit and not having the right people in place and what some of the consequences were.

What I didn't realise at the time was that all of that experience has influenced some of the things I did at Grenfell and that has also come out through the counselling I have had, it has helped me draw the links as

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to why I did some of the stuff I did. It has helped me be content, comfortable, with my actions even though the outcomes were no-where near what we wanted.

I have been asked if I had any previous knowledge of Grenfell Tower. Part of my role in the SSSO was to go and audit Station Managers on their own stations. I had never worked on a Fire Station in London and not worked in the Station Manager role in London on a fire station so I asked if I could have some experience of an LFB Station in that role so I could apply that experience to what I was asking to be demonstrated to me when I did the Quality Assurance visits.

DAC Jane PHILPOT organised for me to be detached for a couple of months into North Kensington Fire Station and, in effect, to become their Station Manager. I worked with Nick DAVIES who was the Station Manager who covered North Kensington and Kensington at that time. He concentrated on Kensington and I looked after North Kensington working under Borough Commander Rob DAVIS.

During the time I was there it just happened that there was a 7(2)(d) visit to Grenfell Tower. This visit is under the Regulatory Form Order and is purely about the fire brigade familiarising ourselves with a building so if we were called out to a fire at 2 o'clock in the morning it wouldn't be the first time we had stepped through the door. We check things such as the access and egress, where the staircase was, where the outlets and inlets for the riser were on each floor and all the run of the mill stuff.

When we go to premises and do a 7(2)(d) we do a risk assessment based on the information we have gathered and depending on what the score is will depend upon how much information will go on the Operational Risk Database (ORD) and how often we go and reinspect that place. The less risk, the less frequently the premises will be inspected and it will probably be a lot less comprehensive in terms of the information held on the ORD.

Conversely, the higher the risk rating, the more information is recorded, in more detail and we would visit the place more regularly. You can have some places visited four times a year (once every three months) so over the year it is likely a different watch will visit, so they will always be fairly familiar.

With regards to Grenfell Tower I don't know where that stands I never went into that sort of detail, it was just luck I happened to be there when that visit took place and it was luck that they were demonstrating the smoke system when I was there and that was the only time I had ever been.

When we arrived there was a caretaker or engineer — I don't know which — stationed at a control panel in the lobby of Grenfell Tower. The Management Team and the engineers working on the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower had commissioned a negative pressure smoke extraction system and were about to demonstrate it so asked if I wanted to see the demonstration.

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We went up to the 4th or 5th floor for the demonstration. No alarm was sounded — I don't even know if there was a fire alarm (still don't know). They talked about the fact that a fire in a flat would be detected because once the smoke entered the lobby, the pressure would be raised in that lobby, the system sensors would detect that pressure rise and it would then open the vents on that level, the fans on the roof would kick in and they would suck the higher pressure out of that landing until it equalised with the pressure on all the other landings. The fans would run at a speed that would maintain that.

What that basically meant was if there was a fire in a flat that was kicking smoke and heat into the lobby the system would suck the smoke out of the building and it wouldn't be a problem on that floor and it wouldn't affect anywhere else in the building, it would protect the fire resistant lobbies in the building by the lift lobbies on each floor, and should ensure that the smoke from a fire in a flat would not compromise the escape of everybody else in the building.

I had never seen a negative pressure system before. I had seen and heard of positive pressure systems where they pump air into that sort of area to push the areas of combustion back into the place they are coming from and hold them back so that people who are not in the flat (compartment) can go past and escape, so you get positive pressure stair cases — the idea being that it keeps the smoke out of the staircase — this was the reverse of that principle.

From the demonstration, it seemed to work. When demonstrated as if it was working on more than one floor the fans got quicker and noisier and were moving more air. I asked "if it was a really well developed fire could it definitely deal with amount of stuff that would be coming out of that flat?" and they gave assurances that it was the case. I also checked that if it was running at full speed would people in the other flats be able to open their front doors or was the suction going to keep the doors stuck on the jamb. The front doors opened inwards not outwards so they would have had to have physically pulled the door against the suction to open them. I had a go and went into a flat that wasn't occupied — which is probably why they chose that particular floor to demonstrate it — and it was like operating against a stiff, normal self-closing door. It wasn't too bad at all. So I was happy that even a frail person would be able to get their door open — maybe with a bit more of a struggle but still be able to open it.

We had the control panel on the ground floor shown to us and I think I asked if I needed to make notes but was told that no, if ever there was a fire it is an automatic system but if you did want to use the system to help you fight the fire the caretaker lives local and would always be at the fire anyway so he would be able to do it for you or tell you what you needed to do. I wasn't based at that station and so I didn't go

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into the ins and outs of what you would press and what you wouldn't because I felt it was information I would not retain, rightly or wrongly, it was the sort of thing I didn't need to know.

I asked questions about whether the fans were protected from the products of combustion that would be going through them because there was the potential they could suck fire up the main ventilation system and out through the fans and would they carry on operating and they said that would never be a problem, it would never get to that point and I questioned if they were sure about that. I believe it was an engineer answering the questions and he was assuring me that that was the case so I took it at face value.

I am not an engineer and I wasn't going to try and argue the point there but it meant that I had something I wanted to close off as I came away so I went back to station having done that inspection and having had those reassurances and I sent an email to the local Fire Safety Team which was the Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea Fire Safety Team. I flagged there was a system going in and made sure the Brigade was aware of it. My main thing being was "are we being consulted about this?" because I really didn't want for them to be able to say LFB came and signed it off so I made a point of saying at the time we were only there for a 7(2)(d) inspection, that we were not engineers and pointed out they should be in liaison with our team for this sort of solution or the local authority should be talking to us.

However, I would expect details of the extraction system to have been entered on the ORD.

I don't know if it was the same day or a couple of days after but I sent a courtesy email saying FYI I went to this building and they demonstrated this system, are you aware they are doing this engineered solution and if so can you let me know who is dealing with it because I will then copy them in to whatever I may receive. As it was I never had any more interaction with anyone from the building, never had any more emails and I came away from that temporary detachment to the SSSO role and completely forgot I had even been to that building to the point that I didn't even realise that was where I was going that night, it didn't ring any bells at all.

I will now move on to discuss the 13th June 2017 moving into the 14th June and the fire at Grenfell Tower. I had started work at 0800 hrs on the 13th June 2017 and had been at my desk all day. At the time I was on North Rota 3 on a 24-hour shift. At about 16:30 hrs I was mobilised to an incident at Platts Eyot Island, which is quite a large island on the Thames by Hampton Court. The call was to an industrial premises with what we call a Yankee hazard attached to it — this is a warning flag on the ORD and it told us the premises housed small amounts of ammunition, pyrotechnics or the like. As a result of this it required a heavy sort of response. It transpired it was a small fire away from the Yankee Hazard and was easily dealt with. However because of its location I was unable to take my vehicle onto the island and had had to do

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quite a bit of running to and fro from the Command Unit, the result of which was I was hot, sweaty and hadn't been able to hydrate after the incident. I was involved there until about 19:30 hrs when I was released and made my way to Fulham Fire Station which is where I am currently staying when I am on 24's, arriving there at about 20:00 hrs.

When we are on 24's we do our office job 8-5 on a week day and then we are on a pager system stood-by from 17:00 until 08:00 the next morning. If any operational incidents occur during that time and we are the nearest officer with the appropriate skills it is possible we will be called out. These incidents can range from responding to fires to dealing with central managerial tasks eg: if someone gets injured at a fire station and they have to be taken to hospital we can be asked to look after them as a liaison at the hospital, make sure family knows, they can get home from hospital etc.

When I went into the rest area on the 4th floor at Fulham there was already an SM there — Brett LOFT — who I didn't really know that well but had met before at Fulham whilst on 24's. He was doing an extra 24 providing additional cover on top of his contracted hours. We had a chat, I had a meal and rehydrated a fair bit and then I went to bed.

At 00:59 hrs on the 14 June 2017 my pager went off informing me of incident 76029 which came across my pager as Flat 16 Grenfell Tower, Lancaster West Estate, W11 1TG. I was being informed — not required to mobilise — that there was an incident I needed to monitor or make a decision whether I needed to mobilise. I copied the information off the pager as best I could and then I phoned Paging (I have it pre-plumbed into my phone). It just rang and rang and I didn't get through. We had just changed our system so my inability to get through did not alarm me. While I was waiting I got the map book out and found where the tower was and started to work out my route. Normally if I don't get through on my first or second attempt I would go through the officer on the watch and that normally gets answered but I can't remember if I did that. I do know that after three or four goes I got through to Paging.

Also on the pager message you are told what channel the incident is being run from. As a general rule of thumb anything North of the river is channel 4 and everything South of the river is channel 2. So for example London Ops 4 = LonOps4 and on the pager is said LonOPs4 so I switched my radio on to monitor that as well.

My process is that I usually confirm the incident I am being called to and what I am being contacted as. If you are being mobilised you are also told which role they want you to perform at that incident eg: SM = Station Manager; PR = Press Officer and so on or INF is that you are being told about it so you can monitor it and make a judgement call if you need to go.

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I asked how we had been told of the incident and they said there was a mobile phone call. They told me it was North Kensington's two appliances G271 — the ladder which is the one the Watch Manager would be on and G272 which would have had a crew manager riding in charge. Euston's ladder was going (G231) and Acton's pump (G262).

I asked who was in charge and she said Watch Manager (WM) Michael DOWDEN. I knew him from the Red Watch at North Kensington when I had been there, plus I had attended a fire where he had been in charge and he had done a pretty good job of organising it. It wasn't a run of the mill fire and he had done a good job of adapting the policy that was required to the circumstances he was dealing with. So I was quite relaxed with Mick DOWDEN being in charge of the job.

I think I asked how many calls we had had and I think (but don't remember to the point of being sure) she said three. A few weeks earlier that would have been what we called "multiple calls" and I would have had to have rolled out but Policy had changed a month or two before that and we had upped the number of calls we received to four or more before we decide it's "multiple". I was conscious of that Policy change when I asked the question.

The significance of it being "multiple" calls is that it usually indicates that it is a fire that lots of people think is an issue. It's an indication that this is probably a working job and we put more resources into it, one of them being a Station Manager. Not necessarily to take over but to be there to monitor and mentor and take over if required.

As a result of this Policy change I therefore didn't necessarily think I was going to go. But I asked the question is there anything in the calls that makes you think this is anything out of the norm. I definitely had an answer of no, and at that time that would have been the case.

The reason I mention this is because a couple of weeks before I had had a very similar sort of call in the very early hours to a block of flats. The caller was two floors above the fire and they could see smoke and flames. That was enough for me to get in the car and go because it was an indication of a fire for me.

When I got there it was nothing more than a big flower pot on the balcony full of compost and someone had put a cigarette out in it causing it to catch fire. The crew had already put out what we call a coded Stop message which we don't hear. A Stop message is when you don't need any more resources to deal with what you have got and you send coded stops when it is such a small incident it doesn't warrant the radio time for us to say what it is.

So that was part of my thinking at the time of this call. I decided I would listen to the radio and monitor it remotely. Because I was monitoring the call I got dressed, keeping my pager on me, my radio plus my

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phone. I checked the map book (with my magnifying glass) as I knew the address I had been given — Lancaster West Estate — was of no real use to me and I knew that I would struggle to find it. I worked out my route as Fulham to Hammersmith Fire Station, past Hammersmith Fire Station up to Shepherds Bush Green, hang a right there and go through Holland Park roundabout proceeded to a little crescent, round the crescent and on to St Anne's Road, keep going straight down St Anne's Road until you come to Latimer train station, go under the bridge there, hang a right which I now know is Silchester Road and that would take you to where it was indicating the tower was on the map book. So that was the route I was going to take, I wouldn't need to use my Sat Nav. I still did not recognise the address.

At about 01:15 hrs more or less to the second the radio went over and it was from G271 and it was a make pumps 6 message. This means I'm moving, at six pumps I have to attend and I have to take charge. My recollection is they made pumps six, aerials one. I didn't write it down it is purely my recollection. I threw my notebook in my bag and started to move to go the incident. As I did that there was an informative message sent so I stopped and got the pad back out and wrote down what the informative was.

I recorded:- "from WM DOWDEN at Grenfell Tower, a residential block of 20 floors, 25m x 25m, 5 room flat on the 4th floor, 75% alight, high rise procedure implemented, MDT in use, Tactical Mode Oscar. Further traffic".

From that message the significant thing is that it is a good message. It describes the building so I have got a picture of what I am dealing with, it tells me there is a flat that is well involved in fire (75% of the flat is alight) and that they have put high rise procedure in place, they have got crews being committed with the right kit, they have the water supply secured, the right weight of attack going in with the right equipment and the right size of hose with enough water to go and deal with the fire. MDT in use means they are using the on-board computer to get the information which is on that ORD about the building, the water supplies, whatever it is they need to know about. In any work place we have to comply with Health and Safety at Work Act which means the activities we do have to be risk assessed. We haven't got time in those sort of dynamic situations to do a written risk assessment — these are the hazards identified, these are the controls required, these are the systems we are going to put in place to implement those controls, record and time stamp it. So there is an agreement that if we declare our tactical mode as either Oscar (Offensive) or Delta (Defensive) the HSE will take that we have carried out that risk assessment process in a dynamic way. So tactical mode Oscar means we are aware that there are hazards and that we are

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going to enter the hazard zone to deal with this incident but we have put sufficient controls in place to allow us to do that.

From that message I can read the type of building it is, that it is quite a large fire in a flat and that they have hit it with the right weight of attack if what he has said is true, they have done a risk assessment and they are happy that what they are doing is safe to do.

I was then up and away. When I got to the bottom of the steel set of stairs, Brett LOFT'S car was parked in one of the Station Manager's mobilising points and my car [REDACTED] was in the bottom of the yard. It is fitted with a magnetic blue light and two tones and I responded in my own vehicle. By the time I had run and opened the gates, then run back and got my car it must have been make pumps eight because I was then thinking well I may be in charge for a short while but someone else will be coming to take over from me because at eight pumps a Group Manager would take it.

So I was thinking I would need to get a really good scene awareness to hand over and build in the command structure for them to take further, making sure that the actions taking place were adequate, we had the right number of resources that type of thing. Then I would drop somewhere else in the command structure. My thinking had changed a little from what am I going to be doing as the officer in charge to what am I going to be doing initially as the officer in charge to facilitate it passing elsewhere. All of this was going through my mind in the split second of hearing it was make pumps eight.

I think it may have gone to pumps ten before I even got out of the yard, or at least very early in the journey. Six pumps is not unusual for a flat fire. You need that level of resources if you are going to put high rise procedure in place and you have a fire you are dealing with. So it is normal for a good Watch Manager to make pumps six for a flat fire and I wasn't concerned.

Eight and an aerial, again I wasn't overly concerned it is a 75% involved flat so you are probably going to be committing more than one or two BA crews in to deal it. It's probably adequate resourcing so again I am not overly concerned.

Once it got to ten or more that's unusual for the size of fire but it could just be that they are putting in a lot of back-ups. So this was more out of the norm than anything else but not worrying too much.

On the way over I think it then went aeriels two and Fire Rescue Units were requested. I know persons reported went over the radio whilst I was en route and that does up the ante.

Persons reported means the fire crews believe people are trapped in this building. We do everything on a risk/benefit basis so we will take more risks if the benefit is greater in a controlled way so once there are

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people involved we will push harder than we would if it was just property involved but we do it in a safe way.

While I was on the way over it just kept getting made up, more and more. It started up as a creeping make up in two's, meaning you are calling on an extra two fire engines at a time, but then it started jumping in bigger numbers so I think it went from ten to fifteen and I think I thought it was still a fifteen pump fire when I arrived.

However, I am pretty sure it had gone twenty when I was en route and I can't remember if I processed that information. It may even have been twenty-five by the time I arrived. When you arrive and you get into your fire kit you lose a little bit of contact with the radio messages but that might have happened while I arrived.

Also while I was on the way over Fire Control started to pass what we call Fire Survival Guidance calls (FSG's) over. That is when people are in the building, they are phoning Fire Control and they are saying "we are trapped". Fire Control take a lot of information off them so we know exactly where they are and what conditions they are in and they send that information to the fire ground via the radio. That gets recorded by the crews that are on the scene and that helps to prioritise where the BA crews are being sent because these are people who are saying they are definitely trapped. It is normal then to send crews and prioritise dealing with and protecting those areas as well as fighting the fire you are dealing with. Control then stay in contact with that caller so it is like a two-way street. The information goes from the caller to Control and it goes to the Fire Ground. We record it and then feed-back to control the action that is being taken so that Control can then tell the caller "they are on the way, they will be with you in two minutes" or "they're on the ground floor, you're on the fourth they will be with you" and again if anything changes that is a two-way communication stream that stays open but it means a fire control operator is tied up with that call and is dedicated to that one call.

So, FSG's had started to come over. Normally, and I say normally but it is not a normal situation, but when they occur they usually occur in one's or two's — maybe. If you get more than two FSG's you are thinking, this is not good and on the way over it started off, FSG — Flat number whatever. I didn't record it because I was driving but I was trying to remember the detail so I had an idea which flat it was, which floor, how many people were in it, that type of thing, so I was consciously trying to remember. Then the next one came through and I'm trying to remember two, then another one, then another one and I thought just know there are lots of FSG's.

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Going through my head was the fact that I was probably going to be the first Station Manager in attendance. I was thinking about what information I needed to gather ready to hand it over, but make sure we are driving the fire forward, our priorities are correct and we have got people in trying to get to the FSG's and so on.

I am also thinking there are going to be other officers on my tail who will co-ordinate the FSG activity, there will be Fire Safety Officers coming, Fire Rescue Units (which carry a lot of equipment on them to break into buildings, break doors down etc) and two aerial appliances which meant there was potential for either water towers which is where we put an aerial up and fire a high pressure monitor (hose) from it into the building, or more likely as an observation tower so you can get up and see what is happening, or for rescues as you can get up to higher floors (30 m is its limit which is about 10 floors).

I was going down St Anne's Road before I got to Latimer Station and I came to a completely closed road due to some sort of gas works or something. I had already driven through one set of roadworks, moving the barrier, but I wasn't able to do that here. I did a U turn and a left hoping to parallel run down a road and then turn and get back onto the right road but ended up in a real rabbit warren of streets. I didn't even know which way I was now pointing so I got hold of Control and asked them to contact G271 and provide the best road to approach as no RVP had been declared. They came back with Bowmore Road using my map and Sat Nav I managed to get myself in.

As I was coming into the zone, 500 metres from the incident according to the sat nav, I still couldn't see anything and I was thinking to myself it can't be that bad. You would normally expect to see smoke or whatever and it was a hot summer night, clear and still. I might even have opened my window to see if I could smell anything and I could definitely smell fire.

I was driving along looking and people were gesticulating "it's over there". I turned the corner and caught the first glimpse of the tower. It seemed like it was on fire $\frac{3}{4}$ of its height on one face, or at least half of its height on one face there were visible flames. I have never seen anything like that before, ever. As I started to drive down the road it was absolutely full of people, it was like being in the side roads off the carnival where you are not shoulder to shoulder but there are a lot of people meandering in the road, but they were all heading in the same direction, they had phones out, people were shouting, filming, but everybody was moving with purpose.

I carried on and saw a parked fire engine. With us we usually end up parking up behind the fire engine because you don't want to block access and egress and you walk your way in. That allows you to see the

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scene and get a feel for what is going on and you notice hydrants and you notice if its twin feeds, all this sort of stuff as you go in.

As I moved up towards where I was going to park there was a gap in the buildings next to me and I could see the side of the tower so I stopped. I now know that I was outside Tredgold House which is on Bowmore Road.

There is FSG traffic on the radio, the main scheme is rammed with messages and my handheld radio is chock-a-block with traffic, messages about kit, about water, really confused messages for me. I didn't want to go on the main scheme to book in attendance (status 3), thus taking up time and traffic with all the FSG traffic. I tried to phone in instead, redialled a few times as I was getting rigged, looking at the tower and the road to get a feel for what was going on.

People were shouting in anguish, disbelief and as I say I could see all the people were ramming the road. I ended up pressing 7 on the radio and waited for them to get back to me on the radio.

Just before I parked up I heard someone else booking in attendance and they had a Sierra call sign so there was another Station Manager on scene before me. Because of that I didn't put my Officer in Charge tabard on. I made a deliberate decision not to have a tabard on because in my thinking I wasn't going to be in charge I was going to be doing another role so I left it behind.

I snapped my radio into my loop and clipped my other radio on. Tried 7 again and booked status 3 which meant I was now showing as in attendance at this incident.

As I was doing that a woman ran past me and got to a security gate in between two buildings through which I had a clear line of sight. She swiped into a pedestrian gate between the two buildings and the gate opened and I shouted to her "if I go through the gate can I get to the Tower" she replied "yes" and then ran off so I ran, got my foot in the gate and ran through. I was now in a courtyard between two buildings and I could see the tower through the fence. I ran through the little courtyard type space and I could see people on the balconies of the flats or maisonettes, the balconies are lined with people. I shouted up and asked if I carried on round the corner could I get through to the Tower and a bloke on the balcony said yeah you can go that way so I ran got round the corner and there was a padlocked gate in the fence so I had to run back and shouted up to them to not let any other fire-fighters go that way as it was locked and got back out to where my car was.

I did not want to run up to the building. Old school thinking is you don't ever want to see a Station Manager running because if they are running its going wrong.

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So I was walking fast past the fire engine and there I see the Command Unit(CU). In effect a CU is an office on wheels that we, the senior officers, use to run a job from. There is a computer on board, we can get to all the ORD information, we can use screens that show us maps, aerial views, everything like that. They also have white boards where we can plan things and we keep a record of who is in attendance and what they are doing, we do a structure map of who's in attendance, what they are doing and where, it is a really key appliance for us.

We all carry an identification board — we call it a nominal role board. On it it says what your different skills are. For example mine would show I am a Senior Accident Investigator, I have been trained in Press Liaison etc, my contact phone number and my call sign. Normally you turn up at a job, put your board in to a Command Unit so they know who is where on the site, you tell them what you are doing if you are there for a specific purpose and they let the Commanding Officer know. It is the same for anyone that turns up.

I opened the door to the CU and went to throw my board in. There was one CU officer in there that I can recall, I didn't actually go on, and I think I asked "who's in charge of the job, who's in charge?" and he said "I think it's still Mick DOWDEN". I asked if I was the first SM there and he said "you're the first I've seen" so at that point I am now thinking I might still be taking this on. I said "I've heard another call sign, another Sierra" and he said "I've not seen anyone". So I said "Here's my board, Andy WALTON, I've booked in".

I ran then, down the road and round the corner past parked fire engines all of which are empty. I think there were about 10 fire engines in all, including the ones I had seen on the way to the tower.

As I looked at the building and saw that at least half of it on one side had visible flames and I thought, I know what's happening here, it's got balconies, they've got a load of crap on the balconies, there has been a fire in the flat and its gone on the balcony and then it has gone up the balconies. These are balconies on fire, that's not a problem and I was literally thinking he's over resourced this, he's over reacted here. The people in the flats might think they are trapped but they're not because it's just smoke on the stairs and the fire looks spectacular but it's not, so as long as it's not getting back in we'll have this out really quick, so I'll probably have to take this back and scale it down. That was part of my thought process along with, well if it isn't I've never seen anything going like this. There's no way on earth this can be a fire that is burning in this way unless it is flashing on the balconies.

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I could see two lines of fire, I called them ribbons of fire. There was definitely two separate vertical lines that were going from about the 4th floor up the building separately and were about ¾ of the way up at that point.

There were fire engines under the covered walkway and the turntable ladder was near the corner of the South and East faces of the block pointing diagonally towards the building.

As I approached the bottom of the tower, it was a very busy scene but I noted there was a hydrant set in, there were multiple hoses so I think there was a least a twin feed, there was a turntable ladder in the process of getting into position, it was elevating - coming off the bed of the fire engine and being extended and trained towards the building at the same time (it is all simultaneous movement).

Then I spotted a Watch Manager in an Officer in Charge tabard which is fluorescent yellow with white shoulders and it indicates you are the officer in charge, so everyone focuses on you as you are the one directing operations.

As I jogged towards him I realised it was Mick DOWDEN. He was very busy talking to BA crews who were then disappearing into the building, then he was talking to a junior officer and they were running off, then he was talking to someone else so it was really dynamic. He had a melee of people around him, he was fairly close to the back of the turntable ladder (TL), fairly close to what was going on and I was thinking you're too sucked in. As I thought that he stopped what he was doing and took massive steps backwards, putting himself on the grassy mound on the side of the building, by the side that was on fire. It was a good vantage point, outside of the hazard zone, outside of the paved area where everything was going on. I think he must have done a load of tasking and while that was happening he was giving himself some think time and got himself to where he could review what was happening. As I was walking up I shouted "Mike" as I recognised him. He seemed to recognise me and when I got to him we shook hands. I have this structure when taking over. Like most LFB officers we talk about the life at risk, the fire and the hazards. We use an acronym Little Fat Harry (LFH) to remember it — Life, Fire, Hazards. Normally I want to know all the minutiae, the ins and outs starting with life, moving on to hazards and because we have talked about hazards we talk about risks so what does that hazard mean, what can we do about it how can we get round it and then we talk about the resources you need to be able to do that. You think about all of that from the information you have gathered, that gives you the objectives you are going to try and achieve — get those people out of there, stop the fire moving up the building, that type of thing. Then you know the tasks you need to do to make that happen, give different fire fighters or different officers those tasks or jobs to make that objectives met and that priority dealt with.

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It's quite quick, quite dynamic but very structured. When taking over you normally allow the person to talk first, because you might restrict something they might say, so I let them talk for a little bit and then clip them back in to the bits that I want to know.

The first thing I said as I approached Mick was "Are you still the officer in charge" because he still had the tabard on and I thought he might have forgotten to take his tabard off. He went "Yeah". I said "I've heard another SM here, haven't you seen any other SM's". He said "Yeah". He didn't know his name and I didn't at the time but it turned out to be Brett LOFT. He said "He's come but he took the FSG's off me" he said he had given the first SM a quick overview of what was happening and as a result of this he said he was going to take on the FSG's. He pointed towards the tower and said "he is doing it from over there".

Being in charge of FSG's effectively entails dealing with the people who say they are trapped, finding out what is happening with them and making sure all that information gets to the fire ground and BA crews know where they are going to look after those people.

I said "I will be taking this off you so I want a really quick and dirty handover". He started to talk so I said "This is what I know" and I told him what I had heard over the radio, what I had seen and I told him a lot of information and then I asked "what else do I need to know" and he started talking. I can't remember the detail but I know when he went off the areas I wanted to know about I clipped him back in. We spoke about life I said "I know you've got multiple FSG's, I know there is another SM dealing with them I will find him and talk to him about them. That flat, is there anybody left in the flat you initially got called to". He was confident there was no-one in that flat and I asked him why he was confident of that. He said they were out and he had spoken to them and they have told me there was no-one else in there. I asked if the BA crews had searched it and he confirmed they had. I then asked about the fire and whether or not it had been put out in the flat. I said "I can see the fire spreading up the outside of the building and we will come to that, but is the fire out in the flat". He said "Yes, the fire is out in the flat, they are just damping down as it's still hot in there. There are BA crews in there and they are searching again to confirm the fire is out and there is definitely no-one else in that flat". He said the crew had looked out of the window and could see it had started to get into the cladding, they had literally leant out the window and tried to get a jet onto the fire but it had got away from them. He said they were getting the aerial up to try and knock it down before it got any further, they had a jet on the floor and they were trying to get a pitch (another aerial being positioned to work on the building) on it on the other side. I confirmed he had water and they had no problems with water.

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Hazards is the next thing and as I am thinking this debris starts to fall off the side of the building. The face that was initially on fire. I think I identified this as the East face. It was landing on the paved area at the foot of the building. I remember there being a jet (water from the hose) being played from the ground where the turntable ladder was towards the line of fire on the East side of the building, nearest to the front door on the South side of the building. I asked if the person on the jet was outside the hazard zone and the reply was yes, there is nothing landing there. I then asked if there were any safety officers in place to make sure no-one goes in there. Mike sort of shrugged his shoulders and did the open palm gesture as if to say "What the, where am I going to get them from". He said "When I get enough people I will" and I said "Yeah, daft question". I asked him to contact whoever was on the jet and make sure no-one else went underneath it.

The stuff that was falling off was starting to plane (travel a long distance) away from the tower and was on fire as it was flying, going over the top of the sports arena and heading towards other lower level buildings. I didn't know what the buildings were but I said we would need to get a pump into the side roads and knock down any secondary fires as we didn't want anything else catching fire. He said he already had one over there.

That was a big move. For a Watch Manager in those conditions to have thought of something like that and have got something round there made me feel really comfortable with what he was doing. He has made up a lot of appliances, he has a lot of activity going in to getting water onto the fire and I could see all that was happening, he has not just focussed on the one thing he is thinking about the wider picture as well.

I asked was the fire going up the balconies and he said there are no balconies. That is when he said he thought it was going up the cladding. That was the sort of realisation but we still thought well if it's not inside the building, not coming back in, whilst looking like a spectacular fire it might not be.

While we were talking I was aware of an aerial ladder platform (ALP) being manoeuvred into place on the grass behind the grass mound. This is a ladder but more like a cherry picker. It can extend higher than a ladder and can be moved in a way a turntable ladder can't. It's like a hybrid of a ladder and a cherry picker. Normally you would not put an ALP on grass, you really need it to be on hard standing. It was being manoeuvred into the corner of the East and North faces of the building. However, because it had been quite a hot period the ground was rock hard so apparently the ALP operator made the call that he thought the conditions would take the pitch.

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I confirmed Bridgehead procedures were in place and it was implemented. He confirmed there were jets up there, the emergency kit was in place, everyone was in place. It was implemented.

At some point during this exchanged he said he talked to a FRU crew and some of the crews were going to go up on the roof and see if they could improvise a jet from the roof down the face of the building to try and knock the fire out that was coming up the outside of the building. I thought that was pushing it and I said let's wind this back. I wanted to know what safe systems they had in place to let the people go over the top of the building. He said the FRU crew is with them and they are going to improvise a line system. He said if we could hit the fire with anything else it was worth it. So I said okay but I don't want anyone who is not restrained looking over the edge of the building. They have anchor points, they are lined on and they do it like that. He said that is what he had told them to do so I then let that go. I accepted that as being good enough and moved on. I don't even know if that activity ever took place. So already we are starting to move away from what is acceptable. I am still not 100% convinced that this fire isn't just spectacular while I am doing my questioning. I am trying to rule it out because to me it looks like a massive fire and I was already thinking about whether I would have to declare it a major incident and I wanted to make sure before I declared it as such.

That is one thing that might happen differently if I am faced with anything like this in the future but that was my thought process at the time.

While we were doing the hand-over he is still in charge of the Incident and people were still coming up to ask him for tasking. This was all happening in a matter of minutes, it felt like it was taking forever, but it was really quick. I asked him about access and egress and he told me that there was just one way in and out via the front door and there was only one staircase. That was compromising our options but it was what it was.

I thought we were at about pumps 15 at that point but he said "No, its 25" and I realised there were even more coming than I had thought. I looked at the roadway and it was still fairly clear at that point so we would have been able to get other resources in — aerials, ambulances that type of thing. I thought we had better get an RVP set up to make sure the road stays useable. I knew there was a Command Unit it because I had been on it so I was looking for the Command Unit Support Staff who would normally be in another tabard and they are the ones we give those sorts of messages to. I looked round and there was no one in the tabard so I just thought I would keep that information in the back of my head.

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I was happy with the firefighting side of things. I felt we were on top of that, it had been resourced up and we had an attack on the initial fire, we had put that out, we were now beginning to tackle the fire that was spreading up the outside.

The Bridgehead had been established on the 2nd floor, two Watch Managers were up there, one was running the BA operation and another was with FIB's dealing with the FSG's. That is a good level of command at that sort of stage at that time. I asked if he knew how many BA were in there. He replied he didn't, they were doing that at the Bridgehead. I asked if he knew what they were doing and again he replied he didn't nor did he know if they had got BA to the FSG's. All of this information was held at the Bridgehead. I asked if he knew what was happening internally — making sure the fire wasn't getting back in and again he said that information was at the Bridgehead.

I then told him my first task for him would be to go to the Bridgehead and find out:- how many BA are in, where they are, what they are doing, what their priorities are. I wanted to know if we had got BA to the FSG's, if we had do they think they're trapped or are they trapped. If they are trapped what do we have to do to get them out. Whilst that is happening I wanted BA to the East face (although I didn't call it the East face I just pointed and said 'that face') and I wanted to know if the fire was getting back in or not.

My thinking was if the FSG's are trapped or if the fire is getting back in then I am declaring a major. I am trying to work out what road I am on because I have got to give the exact location and I still don't know what road I am on. I needed a Command Unit crew because I wanted them to get a Methane message ready which is the message we give for a major incident so that all the agencies understand what we are looking at.

Methane is an acronym for:-

M Declaring the incident 'Major'

E Exact location

T Type of incident you are dealing with

H Hazards that are involved so people know what PPE they are going to need and what resources to send

A Access and RVP

N Numbers of people who are involved — dead, dying, injured

E Emergency services that are required

All of that is going through my head and so I needed the Command Unit crew. Those were priorities for me. At this point I thought we had done enough so I said "Okay I think we've done enough, give me the

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tabard now". Before I could get it off him I saw a group of new BA wearers were coming over and a group of London Ambulance Service (LAS) walking down the road with purpose. So I said to him, you deal with the BA and I'll deal with the LAS.

One of the LAS was in a different colour helmet (can't remember what colour) so I guessed they might be the Silver Commander/Tactical Commander on the scene and he introduced himself as such.

As part of the Joint Emergency Services Inter-operability Programme (post the terrorist attacks years ago especially the 7/7 attacks) it was noted that we didn't understand each other — Police/Fire/Ambulance — and there was a potential for confusion. Because of that the JESIP was set up which is about making sure we can work together well at those type of jobs. Part of it is the METHANE message but another part is ensuring tactical commanders talk to each other face to face early on because we are trying to get a shared situational awareness. This ensures they know what I know and I know what they know about this incident. We share our priorities and objectives thus making sure they are compatible and they are apprised of any hazards and vice versa. All of that happens in seconds.

I used that structure and said to him "What we have got is a fire with multiple FSG's. FSG is fire survival guidance call which means there are people in that building who think they are trapped and they are talking to our fire control and we are sending people to try and find out if they are. They may be, they may not. If they are trapped we are going to have a lot of casualties coming out so let's work on that. We have also got a spreading fire up the outside of the building. We are doing everything we can to make sure the fire is not getting back in and we are trying to get it out. If we can do that it could be that this will all calm down but if not we have a fire that spreading and it might get in to more than one floor". I actually used the word might. But I said "If we can get on it the fire looks spectacular but it might not be that much of a problem". I said I was seeking more information to decide whether to declare it a major or not but at that point I hadn't done that. That is more or less what I told him. I talked about life, I told him there was no-one left in the original flat that was on fire. I pointed out where they were and said they may have taken in a bit of smoke. I pointed out that we had falling debris coming off the building so they couldn't be right under the building and so he said "With all that in mind I will set up a triage point here" and it was literally where we stood which would be on the corner of Grenfell Road. He said he would be able to get ambulances in to him and if the BA crews could bring any casualties to them they could triage them and get them away.

I turned back around and Mick had been drawn back towards the base of the tower with the BA crews he was tasking. I wanted that BA information. I was wary of being drawn in so I stayed where I was more or

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less and called him back to me. I had to shout a couple of times because he couldn't hear me. He came over and I took the tabard off him and sent him back to the Bridgehead with the instructions I had given before. I then asked him to repeat back to me what I had asked him to do which he did. As I took the tabard off him I was radioing for the CU to declare I was in charge but I didn't get any response. I think I may then have just put a general message out over the radio "FYI SM Andy WALTON is now in charge of this incident" that type of thing. I cannot vouch 100% that I did this but I believe I did.

I turned round and to see if there was another Junior Officer who I could then task with starting to draft a METHANE message for me because there was no-one there I could give it to and I wouldn't be able to do it myself.

As I turned round DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN was making big steps towards me. He is two ranks above me. I went on to do the same sort of hand over I had had with Mick DOWDEN, informing him that the occupants of the flat of origin were out, there were no other occupants, we had multiple FSG's, BA crews going to determine whether they are trapped or think they are trapped, the fire is out in the original flat and crews are in there damping down and cutting away as we speak. We spoke about the fire spreading on the outside of the building and the aerial trying to get water on it along with the jet. We had another aerial moving to try and get to it. I had asked for BA crews to be working on the inside face to try and ensure the fire didn't get back in. Mick DOWDEN was still in the vicinity as Andy O'LOUGHLIN had called him in so that Mick was there to sense check what I was saying in case there was anything he knew that I didn't and Mick was chipping in at certain points.

He went through the usual questions about water, hazards and so on. I told him my priorities which were RVP, the LAS being in place to triage and their need for access for the ambulances, I said I hadn't declared it was a major and that the radio was useless as it was too congested. I said we needed to set up some dedicated channels for different activities to try and strip some of the traffic out. His answer was "that fire needs to be brought under control. I want you to go to the Fire Sector and you will become Fire Sector Commander on the Bridgehead. I want you to run operations on the Bridgehead. I do not want that fire to get out of control and I want to know what is happening with the FSG". I then asked him to declare what the Fire Sector was. Normally it is a couple of floors above the fire and everything above that is the search sector and that is where you need to go in and secure people or bring them out if you need to. I suggested it be from the fire to the roof and he agreed. So the Fire Sector in this job was from the fire to the roof which I have never seen before either.

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When I had my briefing and was sent in to take over as Fire Sector Commander I made a conscious decision to keep my OIC tabard on. I know I voiced it but I don't know if it was heard but I said until I get the Fire Sector Commander tabard I will keep this one on so they know who is in charge up there as I knew it was a melee

So me and Mick DOWDEN went into the building more or less at the same time. We walked down to what I have called the South face and there was a single width glass doorway, probably 3-4 foot wide. The front of the building was one big glass panel up to about the 2nd floor and there was a normal sized pedestrian door in that front wall, 4 foot wide at most. That door had a wedge tucked in it to keep it open and all the BA crews were going in and out through that door.

I believe it was at this point, as we approached the building that we were approached by a member of the public who had a large axe, the type you would use to take a tree down, on his shoulder. It had a yellow handle and I thought to myself that looks like the sort of axe we use. As he got closer I was able to see that it was indeed marked up as an LFB axe and for a second I thought how has he got that but then just carried on talking to Mick. From what I later learned he had been fairly dynamic early on in the fire and a crew member had allowed him to get hold of the axe and he had been using it to break windows. He asked me if I had been round the other side of the building and I said I hadn't personally. He said "You need to get someone round there soon because there are people who look like they are going to jump". I think he thought that we were not being dynamic enough in what we were doing, without knowing what jobs we were actually undertaking. I think that I said to a crew manager to get a crew round there to see if we can do anything. I didn't question it or do anything further as I was on my way in to take over the Fire Sector.

I think this might be why the 13.5 ladder was round there but I don't know. I know a 13.5 was hauled up on to the covered walkway we were working under and it was pitched up there. This is all information I found out after the fire I didn't see any of it happening but I know that people attempted massive feats to get people out of that building.

As we entered the lobby I started to get some sort of "Oh I think I've been here before" feeling, but I still hadn't worked out when. It wasn't a normal sort of high rise building where you walk in and you're in to a lift lobby there was what I would describe as a two storey atrium. On the ground floor the back half of the building was being used for something other than residential accommodation. You couldn't get into it. The lobby area at the front half of the building was divided about a quarter of it on the right hand side was behind a glass partition. There was a door in the glass partition which I can't remember which way it

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opened and the staircase went round in a dog leg behind that glass partition. It went up to the first floor and then there was a balcony across then it went to the second floor and there was a balcony across and at the end of those balconies was a doorway on the first floor and an opening on the second floor into the building.

As I walked in I am facing a two storey atrium with a wall on my right hand side and a corridor disappearing off. The lift entrances were in front of me if I remember correctly. The lobby area was about 15-20 foot and there was another corridor going down the side of the lifts. It looked like there were some sort of cupboards on the left. What really struck me was how bright it was in there. The power was obviously still on, all the lights are on and it was really well illuminated. I head for the staircase enclosure as I know the Bridgehead is on the second floor and that is where I am headed.

Mick must have been near me because I remember him saying to me they had had a problem with the fire-fighter's lift — they couldn't get it to work on the Bridgehead — so he was going to go and check and see if he could get it down to the lobby. That made me look at where the lifts were and as I did that I noticed the smoke control panel on the wall on the left hand side and it all came back to me about the smoke control demonstration. At the same time I thought I didn't know how to use it as I hadn't looked as I never thought I would have to know how to use it. As he was local I thought he might know how to use it so as he was on his way over to the lift I shouted him and said "Mike, that's the smoke control panel do you know how to use it?" He didn't say yes or no he just looked at it and I said "Check that panel and make sure it's working". He went over and looked at it and said "No" and went to the lifts and from that my assumption was that the smoke control system had failed and that was why there were FSG's because they had got smoke logged staircases.

I do not recall making any senior officer aware of the location of this panel nor of the fact that the system was no working. However, I did record Mick's response to me in my contemporaneous notes. I sent an email to Charlie PUGSLEY on the 18 June 201 7 informing him of this fact and I exhibit that email as ANW/6.

The fire was spreading and if it was getting back in we were in big trouble. All this was going through my head as I walked through the lobby. The staircase was full of BA wearers, not under air but ready to go, the balcony was full of BA wearers, there was someone with what looked like a FIB at the end of the balcony so they are gathering information on that board. I could see it wasn't an entry control board. I got along the balcony and I would describe it as like being on a crowded underground platform in the rush hour. You could get through people but you had to move them to get through them. I got through

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them and got to a person who I thought was monitoring BA. They confirmed they were (I can't remember who it was). I asked them where the Bridgehead was and they pointed down the corridor. Same thing, it was full of people. I noticed a very small staircase going off on the right hand side and it looked like a domestic staircase that dog legs to the left out of sight. Although I had been in the building I couldn't remember the layout and it was really congested.

I was struggling to get through so I shouted "Listen up. Who's in charge on this Bridgehead". I didn't get an answer so I shouted again even more forcefully "Listen up. Who is in charge on the Bridgehead, Station Manager wants to know" and an Irish voice (someone I didn't know) came from the corner "I'm in charge" so I shouted "Come to me" and we headed towards each other. I now know it was Brian O'KEEFE but at the time I couldn't remember even though he told me his name. I told him I was up there for Fire Sector Commander and I was going to be taking the Sector. I told him I was going to organise the Bridgehead. I asked if he had anyone in BA and he confirmed he had. I asked if he had anyone on FIB boards and he confirmed he had and pointed out WM Lou Da SILVA. I know Lou DA SILVA as I have been on a fire with her before and she was really good. I was happy with that so carried on talking to him as I didn't know him and as he was running my BA I wanted to be sure I was happy with him. I asked him how many BA he had in and he said he couldn't tell me off the top of his head but the boards were nearby so he would let me know. He told me they were going to the FSG's and I asked if he had any going to the fire on the other face. I told him that that was one of our priorities, we get to the FSG's but we need people on that face making sure the fire is not getting back into this building. That is one of the things I want you to do. I told him I wanted him to tell me how many BA were in, where they were, what they were doing, where we had searched, where was confirmed clear, that we had BA crews going to the FSG and are they trapped or do they think they are trapped. If they are trapped what do we have to do to bring them out. I also wanted to know that we had BA crews going to the fire and I wanted to know if that fire was getting back in. If it wasn't getting back in let's stop it getting back in. If it has got back in what have we got to do to stop it from spreading. I said I would get back to him in about two minutes as I wanted to speak to the FIB boards and sort the balcony out and I wanted that information when I came back to him. He said okay and that was that.

I turned round and made my way to the BA Entry Control boards (known as ECO boards). I think there were two or three boards running, I can't remember, one board was about half full so that showed me that BA crews had been in and come out so their tally's had gone back, the top of the board was empty. The other boards looked like they were full to me. There was also information being written on the wall with

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chinagraph which meant we were beginning to struggle with the amount of stuff that was coming though so I thought we need more ECO boards up here. Luckily it was a fairly big area but was still quite constricted. I then moved over to WM Lou DA Silva. She also had at least two FIB boards running. The one that was absolutely full had information such as flat numbers, who was in it that sort of stuff and the one that was half full she was filling it in and it appeared she was talking to people on the radio getting information. I didn't want to interrupt that but in between I said "Lou are you overwhelmed by this or can you run this" and she went "I could do with a bit of help" so I said I would try and get her some crew managers to take some of the traffic.

I then went to go back down the corridor to sort the balcony out. My thinking was that if they were coming down those stairs with casualties we have a massive traffic jam here and they are not going to get through so we need to organise this melee. As I got adjacent to the bottom of the staircase GM Richard WELCH was there. Because of my tabard he asked if I was Bridgehead Commander. I said yeah, I have kept this on purely so people know that I am in charge here. He then asked if I had a chinagraph and I gave him one and he started to make note of what I was saying as I was saying it on the wall at the bottom of the staircase.

I told him what we had going on and let him know we had two WM's up there, one running BA an Irish WM I didn't know, who seemed to be doing a decent job and told him the information I had asked him to gather and WM Lou DA SILVA from Acton (that is where I knew her from) who was running the FIB boards with the FSG info on it. I said I was confident she was on top of it but that she needed some crew managers to help her. He then said he was taking over as Fire Sector Commander. I said I was just about to organise the balcony. Once he had had the handover he said "I am taking over" and so I then took off the OIC tabard I had been wearing and threw it into a corner. I didn't need it on anymore as I wasn't in a command role.

His tasking to me was very simple. It was go and sort the balcony out. He said "I don't want to run out of any equipment or any BA. Go and make that happen. You are now BA Resources Officer, go and take over out there". That was more or less the brief and it didn't need to be any more than that. He gave me Crew Manager Glyn WILLIAMS. I didn't actually catch his name although I asked him about five times! It just didn't stick in my mind. He was a really tall, fair haired Crew Manager. He had a really calm demeanour. Almost too calm, it seemed he was trying too hard not to be fazed by what was going on. He was definitely not flapping.

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We went out to the balcony and I think I asked Glyn to go and speak to whoever was running the balcony at that time and confirm how many BA we had got stood-by, any other skills we had got up there, the sort of equipment that was up there and in effect I wanted to always know that we had got a minimum of 10 BA wearers rigged and ready to go. I say 10 but I can't actually remember, but that is the sort of figure I would have gone for I think.

While he was doing that I said I would sort the balcony out. I moved myself towards the middle of balcony with my back to the wall and shouted with as much authority as I could get into my voice "Listen up, this is a really serious incident. We are going to have casualties coming out and this is the only way in and out. They need to be able to get across this balcony. I want BA wearers lined up against the balcony like a squad line. I want all this kit moved to this wall and I want it placed in order of what it is. I want to be able to see resuscitators, I want to be able to see breaking in gear, I want to see axes, I want to see branches. I don't want to have to search for anything. I want to know what it is when I need it. Make that happen now. I want 3 feet clear straight down the middle. Crack on".

Literally in seconds that's what had happened. No-one argued, no-one was lethargic. They were all lined up on the balcony and it felt to me that no sooner had that happened when we heard the first calls of "casualty, casualty" from the main Bridgehead area. I moved towards the bannister side of the balcony and the casualty came out between two fire-fighters. I can't tell you if they had BA on or not, they went straight across the balcony, down the stairs and away. I think as they brought them out they were directed to where the LAS was so they were able to come down, through and away.

My recollection is that that had a sobering effect on everyone and again they were rearranging the kit to be that little bit more clear, that type of thing.

While on the balcony after the initial couple of casualties had come out the officer who was running the resources board on the balcony told me there was a BA crew that was working on an upper floor, I can't remember which floor but it was something like the 12th or higher, a long way up the building, and they had found a family in a flat and they asked permission to have BA sets sent up to that flat so they could put the family in to BA sets, teach them how to use them and bring them down under air because they didn't think they would bring them out alive if they brought them down the staircase. I didn't hesitate I said yes, get the sets up to them, get them in them and get them down and that started to happen. (Later in the incident I had repositioned into the lobby. I can't remember when but I do recall some time later seeing a family walk past me in the lobby with BA sets on. I believe there was a girl who was about 10 yrs old amongst them. She had a mask on and BA set on her back that was as big as she was).

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At the same sort of time I got a message from the Bridgehead that the plan was that the fire was going to be extinguished on the 4th or 5th floor and that once that had happened the Bridgehead would go up a floor in the building and we would adopt the process of making the floor safe and then we would advance and follow the fire up the building and clear it that way. The idea of that is that we would then reduce the travel distance for the BA wearers because they were bringing casualties out on the extremes of their capacity meaning that by the time they were coming down with the casualties their low pressure warning whistles were going off. When this happens it indicates you have got less than 10 minute's air in normal conditions. When you are working hard it is less than that. The whistles weren't just starting as they were arriving, they start quite low and get more severe and you could hear the really, really shrill sounding so these were people with almost no air left in their sets bringing people down.

I remember shouting "Listen up" "I want you in teams of two. I want there to be a Barrie set or at least a fire ground radio on channel 6 and a TIC with every crew" and as I said that one of the BA wearers in front of me said "We haven't got a TIC can we grab one off someone who is going out?". I said "That's a really good idea" so then I voiced it "If you haven't got a TIC go to the back of the balcony and get one off the next crew that is coming out. I do not want anyone going in without TIC's and I don't want anyone going in without Comms. Make that happen, get yourselves organised" and people were moving into positions on the balcony and then it was "Casualty, Casualty" and they again came out and through. At that point I consciously decided that they needed to switch on, be on their A game and that they knew what they were doing, they knew what they were going in to and they weren't going to get swept up and take stupid risks when they knew they had to go and do stuff. So for the first time ever in my life I consciously thought you have got to be a leader here, you have got to make a leadership speech to try and be a bit inspiring and it went back to the fire in which my mate got killed. I wanted them to realise the potential if they weren't doing the right things. I think that was in the back of my mind as well in the way I got all the equipment laid out because back then we didn't have the right gear and it was all about making sure that was not going to happen.

One thing I have always said is that no-one will ever go (die) on my Watch and I really thought they could and I remember looking at them. There was fear in people's eyes, enthusiasm in some — some people looked really excited to be involved in that type of fire, others looked quite apprehensive and some looked scared. That is what made me think — you have got to get them all in the right place.

So I said something along the lines of "Right, listen up. This is a dynamic fire. Only you are going to know the conditions you are in. You have to make the call whether you can carry on or you need to come

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out. Bear in mind no-one is going to come out of this building unless you bring them out. So don't make that call lightly but do not kill yourself trying to do the impossible. Make sure you come out". I was aware of the responsibility and I was aware that I was potentially sending people in who might not come back. It was about making sure that they did their job, it probably did not need saying, I didn't see anyone who looked like they weren't going to do what was needed, but I wanted to make sure there was no-body who had got a misapprehension about the conditions they were going into and how crucial it was that they did what was needed so I gave that sort of pep talk and I had just more or less finished that when there was a shout of casualty and Richard WELCH came onto the balcony.

He was carrying a young woman who was either mixed race, definitely dark skinned with afro hair. She wasn't very big, she could have been a woman or a teenager. He had his hands under her arms clasped behind her and she was facing him. She was in a t-shirt and bed shorts. She was like a rag doll. He came onto the balcony and everybody stepped back. He shouted "A bit of fucking help would be useful" and I helped grab her off him, I think Glynn WILLIAMS was with me. We went to put her on the floor and I said, we need to keep this clear so we took her down across the balcony to a doorway that was set back from the balcony. People were shouting for oxygen behind us. As we put her down I heard a growl, a really throaty growl at the back of her throat. I thought it was the death rattle or just air coming out of her lungs. I thought she was dead. She looked like she was Somalian extract, probably in her 20's, her eyes were rolled in the back of her head, vomit round her mouth, soot round her nose and we put her down and positioned ourselves for CPR. I was positioned to do the heart compression and whoever was opposite me, and I am sure it was Glynn, was going to do the mouth-to-mouth while we were waiting for the oxygen. She growled again and as I was putting my head down to look down her body and check for breath, she growled again in my ear, just as Glynn was going to adjust her head and pinch her nose. I said "Whoa, whoa, I think she's breathing". I listened again and again I heard this growl. I said "Get a bag and valve" which we did. A bag and valve is a mask with a bladder on the back of it. You squeeze the bladder and it pushes air/oxygen in. I was listening, whoever was opposite had the mask in place and I was listening for the growl which was happening on the exhale. As I looked down I saw her stomach fall and then she growled so I think it was the exhale. So I listened for the growl, then they pumped, listened for the growl, pump and that is how we got her breathing going. In the few seconds we were doing that her breathing increased, not massively, but it still increased. In which time the oxygen resuscitator had been set up. That came over, it was put on her and she was carried out.

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I was in the process of standing up from her when the shout of casualty came again, two BA wearers appeared again with a Somali looking male casualty about the same age, about 20 but completely lifeless. One BA wearer was carrying the arms, the other had got the legs and the individual slung in between them was completely lifeless. The head was leaning right back and just clearing the floor, the backside was dragging along the floor, the BA crew was obviously struggling at that point to carry him. That casualty got put down on the floor and we didn't even attempt to do anything CPR wise.

Myself, Matt COOK who is a Group Manager and was there as the Operational Review Team (ORT). The ORT is like a monitoring arm of the LFB. They are senior officers that will come on to bigger incidents or incidents of interest and they will observe what is taking place, make sure policies and procedures are being implemented correctly, offer advice and support to the Officer in Charge and if necessary a bit of direction if they don't feel that policies and procedures are being applied the way they should be. Afterwards there is a very structured review process that takes place where all of the command decisions are analysed with a senior officer who acts like a presiding officer and reviews all the evidence that is put forward, then makes a judgement call as to whether or not the actions were as would be expected. If there are no exceptions that is noted, positive points are exceptional performance but if there are areas in which an individual could improve in the future they get given development points or a direction such as you could have done that better and this is a way you could have gone about it making sure you don't repeat it in the future so go and cover that policy or take that training or have a chat with your senior officer, your line manager and have a bit more practice. We call that a PRC which is a Performance Review of Command. That happens after every 6 pump or more fire.

Mick DOWDEN and I believe Glynn WILLIAMS, took a limb each, I took the left arm, Matt COOK took the right arm, Mick DOWDEN took the right leg and I am sure it was CM Glynn WILLIAMS who took the other leg. We took him down the stairs feet first. Mick DOWDEN was off and running but we had to tell him to slow down. We were going down a narrow stair and there were four of us trying to get down around a casualty, it was quite tight, we were struggling round the dog leg, so we controlled the descent down the stairs, got to the lobby, got out side and across the paved area. I will say that at that point I did not see any falling debris on that front face. We headed for the LAS, stopped, readjusted our grip, I can't remember who called for that but we did, picked him up again and got to the LAS.

As we got to the LAS point Mick DOWDEN said "this is too far, they can't carry them all this far" and he looked straight at me and said "you need to sort this out" and he turned around and walked back off and I thought yeah actually you're right, somebody has got to get a grip of this, we can't keep doing this.

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So I went up to the Silver LAS officer and said “this is too far away, there is a covered area right in front of the doors, you can go under there and you are safe from anything that is coming down, there is nothing coming down there anyway, you can set up there and do your triage there and they can be brought away from there” it meant we only had to cross from in front of the building. He said “That’s great but I’ve got no-one to get them from the triage point to the ambulances. The ambulances are here and that is why we are here.” I basically didn’t take that as an answer and told him I wanted him to come and look where I wanted him to set up and that he should be there. He turned to one of his colleagues wearing a green helmet and told him to come with me and check it out so I took that officer in under the covered area and showed him exactly where I thought it should be, a nice big area and he agreed it was superb but again said “we cannot get them from here to there, there are not enough of us”. I said “Okay, what if I can get you 12 fire-fighters who could do the carrying”, he said “yeah, great” so I said I would try and do that. I never did get to do it because as I turned round from that and went to go back into the building. There was a woman coming out who I think was in traditional Muslim dress and as she stepped outside the door a piece of cladding, probably about 4 foot square, on fire, landed about 3” from her, it literally just missed her. It landed with a loud bang which made me look up and I saw the fire was burning on the upper floors on the front of the building above the front door and lots of the panels were starting to delaminate, starting to lose the outer sheet. The burning plastic was just raining down and then there were lumps of insulation that were on fire falling off the building as well. There was loads of stuff starting to fall down. At the time I didn’t know what these things were I could just see metal sheets with stuff dripping down and lumps of beige burning material. They were beginning to land all across the front door. I thought, we can’t use that anymore and I then thought that is the only door we have got, it is the only way in and out of this building. Then the image of a Roman army going into battle with shields overhead flashed through my mind. Earlier on, on the way over, one of the messages Mick DOWDEN had sent was to request Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for crowd control and I wondered if it was the Tactical Support Group (TSG) that had been mobilised or just the coppers and I thought hopefully it’s the shields. I said to who I think was a WM who was next to me “Do you reckon if we put shields over our heads, riot shields off the law over our heads, we can get in and out of here”. He said “Yeah, I’ll go and get some” and he turned around and went.

As I went back in I told another fire-fighter who was next to me “Watch the top, watch the door and tell us when it is safe to come in and out of the door. I will go over there, I will look at you and I will tell you

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when I want to bring someone out and you tell me if it's the right time to run" and that is what we did. I had a look, timed it right and went back in.

There were other casualties coming down the stairs with fire-fighters carrying them. They went to go out and I was stood in front of the door and they went to walk past me but I stopped them. They didn't look impressed that I had done this but I said "You can't go out. If you take her out she will get hit by this crap coming down". I told them we had shields coming and we would put them over our heads and one of the fire-fighters took his helmet off, put it over her head and said "What about now". I went "Okay, she can go, you can't, you go back up and help keep bringing casualties down" so another couple of fire-fighters took her across. We did that for a couple of casualties, maybe three or four and then the WM came with the shields, I think six or seven shields. They all came into the building and were dumped in the lobby. Some of them were round shields and some were full length shields. What we also had was a collapsible table, like a picnic table probably about 3' x 2' and I had seen people going out under that until the shields had arrived.

The WM who had bought the shields back took on the safety officer role on the far side. So it was him on the far side and me on the inside but it was all verbal and signals because the radios were useless because of the amount of traffic on them but because we were line of sight that's what we were doing.

We organised the fire-fighters using the shields, the long shields. We quickly discarded the round shields as they were okay for your own protection but no good for anyone else. The long shield's handles are about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way along it so we called it a short end and a long end. If it was one of us going out you could have the short end over the person carrying the shield and the long end over the person they were protecting. So they would stand up close behind the person in front and go across under one shield. If it was casualties going out the one at the front had the long end at the back and the one at the back had the long end at the front, the long ends lapped over and the casualty was in between them. That really quickly got established as the technique and was the technique for the rest of the night.

I was still supposed to be in charge of the balcony but I got drawn out by the casualty. As I went out I remember shouting to the guy at the end, I am taking a casualty out, you are in charge until I get back. So the guy at the end who had the board, he was a junior officer (Crew manager or Watch manager) was fully aware that I was not on that balcony anymore and they were running the resources.

I was then drawn into the role of what we call Lobby Sector Commander where you control resources in and out of the building and make sure the needs of the Bridgehead are met. I shouted up from the doorway to the balcony area that I was controlling access and egress because of the debris falling. Could

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they make sure that Richard WELCH knew I was no longer on the balcony. I don't know if he actually got that message but he was soon aware of what I was doing because of the interaction I had with him later on. I don't think I was ever called Lobby Sector Commander and I didn't have a tabard on, just my normal fire gear.

We were bringing BA crews in under the shields, they were getting organised in the lobby and then going up onto the balcony and dispatched in from there. Our staging area was the balcony really.

I remember at some point seeing Glynn WILLIAMS stood in the lobby writing up a schematic of the building and where the FSG's were and what action was being taken. I remember it was him doing this because there was no way I could have reached where he was writing. It was almost at the limit of what I could read, so it was definitely him.

The debris was really starting to get heavy now. Every time crews went in or out under the shields, the shields were getting hit by debris and it was getting relentless. It had gone from a shower of debris, to raining debris and now it was just a deluge, it was just non-stop. It was noisy and it was intimidating the way it was smashing down. You think of aluminium sheets as being light but if you tried moving one of them it was surprisingly heavy. It was not impossible. It is a one person do but it could cause some damage especially coming from 20 storeys above your head and that is what was happening.

I became aware we were taking hits and getting away with it. Every time someone went across they were getting hit, every time someone came in they were getting hit but because they had the shields they weren't getting injured. Everyone became nonchalant about the fact they were getting hit all the time and it was becoming too frequent. It was no longer "its clear, go" it became more like you might as well go for it because it's as light as its gonna get. Control was beginning to fall away, it was still safe, necessary and proportionate but I wasn't as comfortable with it as I had been.

I turned round and SM Pete WOLFENDEN was in the foyer and I said "I've been told this is the only way in and out of this building but I haven't physically checked can you go and look and find another way in and out if there is one because we are going to lose this one". He said "yep, not problem" and off he went. A few seconds later he came back and said he had found one. I couldn't believe it and I turned to the fire-fighter that was next to me and I said "You know what's going on here" (he was one of the ones without a helmet) he said "yeah" I said "right don't let anyone go out unless they've got shields over as we have been doing it and talk to them and make sure it is in a controlled way".

Pete then took me to see the other door. We went down the corridor to the left that I had described as you came into the lobby, there were a couple of toilets off the corridor on your left and then the corridor

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opened up into a large room probably about 10 m2. It was full of tables and chairs and in the corners there were two door shaped recesses in the wall. They were covered with metal plates and had box section metal work in the inside. They were solid structures within the wall so it was as if the wall had been built to have doors in and then they decided they didn't need them and they had steel plated them in. We had a FRU crew attacking the right hand doorway, trying to smash the box section and knock the panel off the back of it so they could get into the box section and there was another crew waiting to take over because it was sledge hammer work, it was brute force that was used. They hadn't got the breaking in gear and I heard people calling to get some RTC kit on it but they hadn't got it at that time so they were attacking it with crow bars etc. I asked the crews that were waiting to fold up all the chairs and tables and move them to one corner and make sure when the door was opened they came and told me as I wanted to relocate to that area and I was going to need all the shield crews on one wall and all the BA crews on the other and a straight line down the middle of the room to the right hand corner kept clear. I told them to move any equipment to the side and once one door was opened to start on the second door so we could have an "in" and "out" system.

I went back to the front door and I then used that firefighter (the one who had taken over from me) as a runner, running messages for me all night, getting across the opening and let them know that we were going to lose the front door but we had found a new door and as soon as it was open we would move operations to the new door. I asked if a new area could be scoped out so that they knew where they were going to stand, what they were going to do and start to get resources moved round so that as soon as the new door was opened we could move round immediately with no delay and get working straight away. Once the message was passed I got a thumbs up from the Watch Manager and we carried on as we were. I then went back to the side room and I stressed how critical it was getting and how they needed to get that door open as we needed it now.

At some point during all of this activity a group of shields came into the building with a group of senior officers amongst them, one of whom was the Commissioner, Dani COTTON. I think Matt COOK and Mick MULHOLLAND (both ORT officers) were with her, as well as Dave O'NEILL. I know at some point I saw him with a safety tabard on so I know he was the person who was co-ordinating the safety activities. I believe they were on a fact finding mission. They came past us and up into the Bridgehead area and then they came down and when they came down Dani COTTON stopped and she gave a talk to the BA crews that were stood by waiting to go up to the balcony and more or less said how proud she was of what people were doing, it was an unprecedented fire and above all else keep yourself safe. It was that

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type of talk. Then she left the building. I know it had quite a galvanising effect on people at the time and I know people afterwards talked about how it was good to see your Commissioner in the fire with you and whether or not it is the normal thing to do it did have a positive effect.

It was around this time that I started to talk to SM Nick MYATT who was on the Bridgehead. I hadn't seen him come in so hadn't realised he was there. He was acting as the BA Coordinator on the Bridgehead and so he was in effect monitoring and controlling how many BA were committed, where they were committed to and what resources were going to be needed to maintain that sort of attack. He was trying to get enough BA wearers in ready, briefed and able to take over and keep the attack going. He started talking to me about how many BA he needed and I told him we had twenty BA wearers ready to go. I don't know if it was at that point they were going to switch to Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA). With Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) you are looking at roughly half an hour, EDBA you are looking at about 45 minutes.

EDBA does not provide double the capacity. It enables a longer wear and normally you don't use it to actually work longer in a fire, it is used to penetrating down a long tunnel where you need to be under air but you are not actually doing the hands on coal face activity. It is to give you the time to get to where you need to do that and then turn around and walk out. That is what it is designed for.

It is more or less written in policy that you won't use it for getting yourself longer at the coal face, but as it happened on this occasion the coal face was from the Bridgehead up and it was a case of we couldn't get to those upper floors and have long enough up there to get people out without EDBA. So the decision was made to get every EDBA set in London to that fire. We had a massive amount, although I don't know how many came, but I know that any other brigade in the Country would not have been able to have done that and I know that if that building had been in any other brigade a lot less people would have come out of that fire because they couldn't have got to them.

The debris started to come down really heavy and a message came from above that the fire was coming down the building so the Bridgehead was going to relocate into the lobby. The lobby was full of all of my resources and we were waiting for the other door to be opened so I moved the BA that were waiting in the lobby into the new room, taking up a position on the left wall, keeping the way through clear. I told the shield crews to stay where they were for the moment but informed them they would be taking up the right hand wall when we relocated.

Then a load of debris came off and hit a row of parked up motorbikes that were nearby and it set fire to them. It also planed and set fire to the turntable ladder. The turntable ladder had moved and was a little

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more under cover than it had been but it still landed on it and set fire to the bed of the turntable ladder.

People had anticipated it could happen and there were jets in place so it was soon put out but it just emphasised how serious the fall was and I thought we are going to lose this doorway and we have not got any other options.

I thought we were trapped. We couldn't get out of the front now so what were we going to do and as I thought that there was a shout from the other room saying the doorway was open. I signalled to the WM on the far side that we were moving and we all moved off at the same time. Moved everyone into the side room and as we moved I saw the Bridgehead move into the lobby, as we cleared it they took it, it worked right for us at that moment.

When the doorway moved round to the West face another WM came on to the scene, who's name I got wrong throughout the night, but I am pretty sure he is called Matt GREGORY. He was alongside the WM who had been doing the safety role at the front door, so now I was dealing with two WM's. The original WM that had been doing the stop/go role and Matt GREGORY who was there more as a staging officer. He was making sure there was enough BA, enough axes, enough hose, enough of everything so that if we came up with a request he didn't have to go and try and find it, it was already there. And that is exactly what happened. Whenever a request came from the Bridgehead or if I anticipated a Bridgehead need I would ask for it and almost as soon as it passed out of my lips there would be shield crews getting formed up and the stuff was being brought across. It seemed like there was no delay in anything. There were one or two requests that stumped him a little bit but even they were there within seconds. I spoke to him after the fire and he said it wasn't all him. He said that everyone that was outside was trying to think what they could do to help inside so they were all trying to anticipate needs and it was working quite well.

When the debris started to fall, as it hit the floor it either self-extinguished or it smouldered, especially the insulation. This produced a lot of smoke/fumes and it was coming into the lobby area and beginning to affect people's eyes. When we were at the front door I kicked the wedge out of the way and the debris out of the way and managed to get the door to close, opening it only when we needed to and closed it afterwards. I didn't have the option in the West doorway room, there was no door to close so we just had to get on with it. So the smoke from the debris was filling that room.

Somebody must have had a look round and they found a couple of big, domestic, pedestal fans in that room and they plugged them in and they worked, all the lights were still on and the power was still on.

The fans were positioned to push the smoke and try and stop it from coming in. It helped but there was still irritation to the eyes and back of the throat. I asked for water to be brought in so that people could get

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a drink and I sent water to the Bridgehead, the idea being that for crews coming in if they were stood by in the staging area I was telling them to get hydrated before they went into the fire and as crews were coming out they were getting a drink as they waited to get back across. We also set the chairs out so they had somewhere to sit while they waited. At some point I knew we ran out of the water but I just got the crews to refill the empty bottles that were lying about with water from a sink that was in the corner. I was more concerned about them staying hydrated than I was about the hygiene of the situation.

Casualties were the priority so if there was going to be a delay for someone it was going to be a BA wearer. If there was no duality the BA wearer went out under the shields and away. If they appeared the same time as a casualty, they got put to one side, the casualty went through and the BA wearer was on the next run. We tried to make sure the shields were balanced half and half, not always successfully as if a number of BA came in under shields we probably had about 10-15 shields at that time and I was trying to keep 6-10 in the building at any one time, in case a family appeared, so we had enough to get them out. Sometimes I ended up with all the shields and had to send some back over.

The FRU then began attacking the door on the left. They were still having to use axes and sledgehammers so I said to them get the RTC gear in here. An electric generator appeared, an electric disc cutter and an electric reciprocal saw (which is like a battery powered hack saw). Normally our processes are that if you are running anything like that you wouldn't use it inside a building because it is run off a petrol generator there would be fumes so you would put the generator outside and the cable into where you were working. The debris was now falling heavily in front of the right hand doorway which told me that the fire had now travelled round to that side of the building as well. I knew before I came into the building we had lost the East wall, I knew we had lost the South wall which is the main entrance and I now knew that we were losing the West wall as the fire had come round to that wall as well.

They wanted to start working and I ordered them to keep the generator inside. I said to point the exhaust to the open door and keep the exit clear but run the generator inside. If it was taken outside something would hit it and then it would be lost. They worked hard using sledgehammers to smash some of the panel off so they could get to the box section then they cut the box section out. It (door panelling) was sectioned slightly off centre with a vertical piece of box section then two or three horizontal sections on it so it wasn't a cruciform down the middle it was slightly to one side so you had a third of the door width then two thirds of the door width the other side of the box section. The narrowest section was to the left hand side of the door way so they smashed the right hand side off the bigger panel and managed to get the

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box section cut out with the reciprocating saw and the grinder and alternated between the two, hitting it with sledgehammers in between they managed to get 2/3 of the door away.

As that happened a shield crew coming in with EDBA wearers burst into the room and one of them was obviously distressed and was tugging at his collar and was saying "I'm on fire" in effect. People were trying to get the BA set off his back, his PPE off and there was water from the drinking water bottles being squirted down his neck. He had had some debris go down his neck. Basically they were all in front of the doorway and so I made them move out of the way of the door and once I knew the way was clear I went and checked on him. There was a sink in the corner of the room in like a kitchenette area and so there was running cold water there so I said drench him and once you have done that get him back out and get him some first aid which they did. I never reported it, I never escalated it which I would normally have done. In fact in my role as an Accident Investigator I would normally be reprimanding someone for not reporting it, but it was a case of he is not injured that badly so it was acceptable. My mind set was completely different to how it would normally be. As long as I knew he was okay that was it, get him away and he can have proper medical treatment, let's carry on doing what we have got to do.

What I didn't know and still don't know for sure, but from talking to people afterwards, I think he was part of the team that was hit by a casualty that had jumped from the building and that is how the shield had been knocked away from them. That casualty had disintegrated on them and I didn't know any of that and didn't deal with any of that and I regret that but I was focussed on different priorities. I still don't know for sure it was that crew but it sounds like it was. I can't remember anyone else coming in the building in that way.

As a result of this I felt it was too dangerous to continue to use the right hand door. I could see there was a deluge of debris now in front of this doorway and I thought right, this is too heavy. The left hand was a straighter run out of the building meaning that people would have to spend less time in the hazard zone. That was all part of my thinking.

By this time the FRU had knocked two thirds of it out but I told them we were going to be using the door while they were still trying to get it open, they could carry on between us taking casualties out through it and bringing EDBA in through it. As a result of that though we did get one Firefighter stuck, physically stuck in the doorway. He was a big lad coming in with EDBA and his shoulders wouldn't get through it. He had taken a run at it because he thought he might get stuck and he did. He was well and truly wedged in the door. Then we heard the shout "casualty, casualty, casualty" and everyone was pushing him and pulling him and he wasn't going one way or the other but in the end he went backwards out the building

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and stood under a shield while the casualty was brought out and then he was able to get back in the building.

The FRU crew hit it with everything after that and got the door open. There was, however, a little bit of box section was left in, a jagged edge, so I had to mention it to the taller fire fighters to get their heads down as they went in and out. I was literally on that door the whole time telling people to watch their heads.

Because the Bridgehead was now in the building lobby, I could look across from what I will call the West doorway room and try and gauge their BA needs were and get the crews ready.

Matt GREGORY and I managed to establish a method of radio communication. Because we were opposite each other and we were eyes on we knew when it was going to be us talking so we knew what we were listening out for and were able to get in on the radio between the gaps because the radio traffic was still very heavy.

The route out of the building was across in a diagonal to the side of the children's play area, onto a paved area that ran alongside this. This opened up under the covered walkway. From there you could also get round to the front of the building. All the resources were coming from the front of the building, under the covered walkway to the back of the footprint of the tower and then coming into the back of the staging area so they were arriving in a safe way and were far enough away from the building that they were not going to get affected by the falling debris.

Matt radioed me and said "I've got the Met Police TSG Commander here and he wants to know do we want to use the TSG crews to hold the shields to free up our fire fighters?" I said "What PPE are they in, have they got boots" and he said "yeah, they've got boots, they're in flame proof overalls, they have helmets with visors and they are wearing gloves". I thought that was appropriate PPE and so I said we would have them ferry fire fighters into the lobby and back so that would be fine. I then asked if he would be able to come over. I think he came over under a shield and I had a quick chat with him. I said all I want you to do is come in, line up against that wall, wait for the casualties or BA crews coming out and we'll do shields like this and described the technique) or if it's one of ours on their own they will follow one of you, are you okay with that? He said no problem at all, I thanked him and he left. I didn't ask permission from anyone, I didn't report to anyone that was what I was doing, I just did it.

That freed up about 20 fire-fighters at that point who got sets on and came in. No-one was reluctant to get off the shields because they fancied the shields more than the building and vice versa. It just happened that way. There were one or two fire-fighters who stayed running in shields but I think it was more a case

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of they were looking for a job to do so picked up the shields again, I don't think it was anyone who locked themselves into that role, it was mainly MPS TSG. Some of them were big burly people, you wouldn't want to get a slap off, others were quite petite in their build. Both genders were there. Everyone just got on with it. There was apprehension in some faces, some asked me if the building was going to fall down. That in itself told me what it must have looked like outside. I was reassuring them that if it looked like it was coming down we would know, we had people outside watching the building and if it was coming down we would get everyone out before it was a problem.

We all carry whistles and the evacuation signal is that whistle - we don't stop blowing on the whistle. I never told the MPS what the signal or what process we would follow, there were too many people for that, I just said if this building is coming down there will be signal given and I will direct everybody out and we will use both doors in that case.

I remember running through my head what I would do if I heard the evacuation signal, if that really happened and it went through my head that I wouldn't stay at the doorway I would go to the end of the corridor at the building lobby end, and blow my whistle there because that way everyone above would hear it and as they were going past me I would tell them the route out, go through both doors, head left, which would have pushed people in the right direction. It was just a split second thing that went through my head. I wear a lanyard attached to my tunic and carry my knife and my whistle on it and I remember checking my lanyard, checking it was there.

I briefed the Police telling them that anyone who went out or in should be under a shield. I said if it is one of ours they will put their hands on your shoulders and you put the short end over your head, the long end over them behind you and you walk, not run, walk across the debris field and don't take the shield off from above your head until you are past the bloke standing over there, and I pointed out Matt Gregory. By now the debris must have been 10" deep. I said if it is a casualty coming out I will have one of you at the front, short end of the shield over your head, one of you at the back, short end over their head and the long ends locking over the people carrying the casualty in between. Again I told them to walk across. By and large that is what people did. Occasionally you would have people coming in who hadn't seen or listened to the brief properly, you would watch them walk across about a foot behind the shield which was a complete waste of time.

Matt GREGORY was really anticipating our needs well and even when it was a curve ball for example at one point they asked for 12 lengths of 45 mm diameter hose which is certain type of hose and I was thinking where is he going to get that from as was he, but he told me later, that as he turned round there

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were already 8 lengths there because as I said before people were anticipating, hearing it over the radio and getting it sorted.

We tried to make sure no-one crossed the hazard unless they had a task. If not we would wait until we had enough people over there to bring them in. However, if it was urgent you made sure they were straight in. The shields were coated in strings of melted plastic that were hanging off them because they had been hit with debris time and time again.

If I had 14 shields in that room I wouldn't send 4 back with nothing. I would wait until we had casualties or wearers to send back as well but occasionally if I ended up with in excess of 20 shields, then I knew that they wouldn't have any over the other side so I would send ten back but that would be the only time I would send them across without a reason so to speak.

I can't remember at any point a casualty being delayed getting out of the building because there wasn't a shield. I can't remember an unduly long delay for any BA wearers either. The only time I remember a BA wearer being delayed was if there were casualties with them at the same time. Casualties would go first and then them, but while they were waiting there was water and there were chairs and they were looked after in the corner of the room. I remember it being like a little welfare area in the corner of the room.

Nick MYATT came to me and said he wanted to get an extra water main in. He wanted a 70 mm hose in through the door. I pointed out it was the only way in and out of the building and I didn't want it compromised but he said he needed the water so I said okay. He asked me for a load of fire fighters without BA. He said "I will use them to get a line of 70 mil from the 5th floor to the door, and I need you to get hose to that doorway, make it up, water on and we will have a 70 mm main up to the 5th floor. I sent that to Matt GREGORY and he got it sorted. He found a pump, a pump operator, a separate hydrant, twin feeds in from the hydrant and by the time he had run that in to the door the hose was ready on the 5th. As soon as he needed it, it was there. This meant that we now had a charged length of hose as an additional main across the debris.

We used the 13.5 ladder that I mentioned before as a landmark. If you headed for the ladder there was a lot of unstable debris and what felt like a hole underneath part of it, but it was dangerous. You had to keep left of the ladder and right of another landmark (I forget what, but think it was the line of 70mm hose) as you went between. Effectively there was a channel to go through. The hose had also been laid so that it was marking the left hand border of that channel. That was again part of the briefing to crews coming in and out of the building.

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I remember SM Gareth COOK coming and telling me he had been asked to get a lightweight portable pump (LPP) into use in the lobby. This is a bit of a misnomer as it's not light at all. It takes 4 people to lift it. It will supply two good fire-fighting jets if it is running at perfect capacity, but certainly one jet. At that time I had no-one spare but I know he went and tasked that off to be done, although I never saw the LPP in use in the lobby.

I began to realise that we must have water issues, we had put a 70 mm through my door and they were seeking to use an LPP which indicates we are trying to improvise water supplies rather than use the rising main in the building. My assumption was that this was as a result of the fact that we must be running hose off the rising main on multiple levels and it was overdrawing the supply, we are using more water than is going in to the bottom.

Later on I saw Gareth COOK again sat in the West Doorway Room welfare area on a chair. He looked exhausted, his fire kit was slightly loosened off. At first I thought he just must be all in having been running up and down the stairs assisting with casualties and so on. Then I noticed he had a BA set on his back and mask clipped in on the side. I haven't seen a SM in a BA set at a fire ever. I had seen a sub-officer (WM as they are called now) at the job my mate got killed in and that was unusual then. They are the gaffers on a job and don't go in. I remember I said something to him along the lines of "What are you doing mate" and he replied "Living the dream". That little bit of humour broke the moment and for a few seconds there was a little bit of light relief. He said "You know me" and then he was off, back up, back into the melee, disappearing out of sight.

I later found out that Brett LOFT, Gareth COOK and I all arrived at the scene within minutes of each other. Brett took on the FSG's, Gareth had a lot of members of the public mob him when he arrived with FSG type information and he got swept up into that initially, then he went up to the Bridgehead and was working with the crews going up doing the rescues, bringing people down.

All of a sudden a piece of debris fell off the side of the building and cut the length of 70 mm hose we were using to feed water to the crew on the floor. It cut a hole about the size of a 50p. A hole of that nature with the pressure we were running the hose at I would have expected it to fail immediately. If it did that it would mean they would lose water in the fire.

I went out of the West Doorway Room along the corridor and straight to Nick MYATT and told him to bring the crews out because of the hole. He said he couldn't bring them out so I said I would get a hose bandage on it but he should be aware that it could go and if it did he needed to be able to get the crews out.

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I went back to the door and got Matt GREGORY to organise a crew under shields to sort out the hose bandage. A hose bandage is a piece of plastic that you wrap round a hole and tie it off tight at each end. This helps support and hose and hopefully prevent it failing. The pressure was that hard round the hose and the hole was that big they couldn't get the bandage to stay in place. All the while they were trying to tie it on they were getting hit by debris.

I sent them back and said to Matt "Get another length of 70, I want it flaked ready to go so if that hose fails or the crew is out we can break the coupling, smack the new hose in and go". Flaking means you plug the hoses all together and then you lay it in an 'S' shape on top of itself so that when you need it you take hold of one end and then it just pays out.

I then updated Nick MYATT with the plan. GM Pat GOULDOURNE was with him at the time and I assumed that Pat had taken over from Richard WELCH but it transpired that Pat was working in conjunction with Richard WELCH, I think they were running the Bridgehead between them. So as far as I was concerned Pat GOLDBOURNE was the Fire Sector Commander. By the time I had updated him the hose had been laid in place. I briefed a couple of fire-fighters and made them an emergency hose crew. I have never done that before. I told them they were not to go anywhere else, this was their job. I told them I wanted them to go out under the shields, find the nearest coupling to the burst, know where it all is so if the hose had to be changed out they would know exactly what they were doing and where everything was. I ensured that they were rotated/relieved but ensured that this was done on a one-by-one basis so that any one time there were always people who knew what to do, I didn't want the whole crew swapped over at the same time. An additional two Firefighters with shields were also dedicated to this Emergency Hose Crew.

I asked Matt to have a similar crew his end. I also asked him to have an axe or really sharp knife to hand so they could cut the hose to relieve the back pressure as they would not be able to break the coupling with the amount of pressure running through the hose should we get the word the BA crews working of the jet had withdrawn and we had a chance to change it out. If the hose bursts the pressure would be broken but if not, we would need this back up.

As it happened it didn't burst it just continued to spray a jet of water up into the air. It was a nuisance more than anything.

Initially the flow of casualties had seemed quite regular but now they were becoming less frequent. Our job became more about getting BA crews in and out. This meant I could become a little more focussed on crew welfare and the circumstances around me and I noticed for the first time, as I was coming back from

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the BA staging area, that I was walking through about 3-4 inches of water on the floor. I looked round the room and there was an IEC pack on floor in the water and that the pedestal fans were still running. One of them had been knocked over and was on its side with the cage of the fan on the floor, still going. So I ordered the fans to be switched off and we moved the IEC pack off the floor, erected one of the tables and put everything that could get damaged by the water on it.

By now it was either starting to get light or it was light and we began to think about the building. It had taken a really good pounding and there was every chance it could come down. It was becoming more and more of a reality in my thinking so again I revisited what I was going to do. We were listening to the building more. It was making noises. We weren't really hearing it that much where we were but occasionally you would hear stuff that you don't normally hear and that assumption was that those noises were the building moving. Whether it was or not I don't know but it was definitely in my thinking, I was conscious of it.

It has been hours since a casualty had come out when all of a sudden there was a shout of "casualty, casualty". Testimony to the Police crews and the way we were organised, it was like clockwork. They were ready with the shields the right way round as the casualty came through the door, being carried between elbow and shoulder — fire-fighters had their arms under his knees and others had his shoulders and arms. He was being carried almost at head height. Just as they reached the door someone shouted "drop him down, the door, the door, the door" and they lowered him to avoid the jagged section of door. I am sure the shields would have protected him but it was nice to see that crews were still paying attention and watching what was going on. The casualty was an elderly oriental looking man.

There was a bit of a lull and my phone vibrated in my pocket. I looked at it and could see that I had missed calls from my wife and my mother. I didn't listen to any of the messages but there was a text from my wife. She used to be in fire control so she had a real understanding of what is going on and her text was very to the point. It said "Are you in the building. Stay safe" so I sent back "In it, safe" and that was enough for her know and be reassured watching it at home.

At times throughout the night people would come into the building. I had seen Andy ROE, Dave O'NEILL, Matt COOK and Mick MULHOLLAND I saw time and time again. When I was using the generator the way I had been Mick MULHOLLAND had come and challenged me as I would expect but once I had explained he was happy for me to continue.

The next event I recall was that a shield team came in with a SM. This SM came in at speed and he went to walk straight past me. I said "Alright mate" and he replied "Oh, yes, I have come to find SM

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WALTON, I am here to relieve him”, so I was like, “Well you’ve found him”. I now know his name was Paul HUMPHRIES. We shook hands and introduced ourselves and then I talked him through what we had been doing in what I believe I called the Lobby Sector. I told him we were controlling everything coming in and everything going out, that the BA resources were there and waiting, how we were doing it, about the shield team on standby for the burst hose, the welfare area for the crews, the emergency hose team and so on. I believe it was quite a good thorough briefing. I then asked him to repeat back to me what I had told him which he did, which is our normal process and he gave me a good feedback. Once I was happy he knew what he was doing I said I would go and tell Nick MYATT he was there and what he was doing and then he could go and introduce himself to Nick.

When I went back in to tell Nick that Paul HUMPHRIES had relieved me and what briefing I had given him I saw Tim FROST who is another GM. In clocking Tim FROST I noticed a waterfall of water coming down the stairs and that is obviously why the room was flooded, either from the sheer weight of water being used or burst hose I don’t know but there was water cascading down into the Lobby area. Nick confirmed he knew Paul, he confirmed what radio channel he was available on and I remember us shaking hands. Both of us had a look of respect and appreciation towards the other on our faces and I remember wishing him luck. I remember feeling guilty that I was getting relieved from the role I was in and he was still in the thick of it. Although I had been in there longer their role had been more dynamic in my opinion, a lot more dynamic than mine. I was glad I was being relieved, I was knackered, exhausted, and in my mind I hadn’t been doing anything other than standing on a door all night, so how they must have been feeling I don’t know.

As I was getting ready to leave the Police Inspector that I spoke about earlier came back, or was in the room which ever it was, he came out of the line and he took me out under his shield. I thought it was a really nice touch.

When I got over to the other side, out of the building, I remember hugging Matt GREGORY and thanking him for everything he had done. It wasn’t intentional it just happened. It was, for me, a very emotional moment. I did the same with the other WM and then got a grip of myself and shook their hands. I just really congratulated them on what they had done all night and they were saying “it’s not us, it’s them. They were ahead of the game all the way through” and behind them as far as you could see there were knackered fire-fighters, laid out, recovering, other fire-fighters rigged out in BA ready to go, loads of kit everywhere. If people weren’t doing something it’s because they were exhausted and recovering. Then there was a row of MPS officers in boiler suits with shields, all waiting to go, so I went down that row

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and shook everyone's hand, genuinely, sincerely for what they had done. I then got to the rows of BA crews. I didn't have time to thank them all individually so I shouted a big thank you to them all for everything they had done, told them I couldn't thank them enough.

At this point I knew I was losing control of my emotions. I wasn't crying at that point but I knew it was coming, I could feel it building up. I looked back at the building and turned round, doubled away under the covered area and when I was sure no-one else was about I just broke down, gave myself two or three minutes of raw emotion, because I knew when I got to the other end of the walkway there would be people, news cameras, families. A knackered fire-fighter crying would be a front page picture and I didn't want it to be me. I got myself together and walked out the other side.

As I walked away down Grenfell Road I heard someone trying to call me on the radio. At that point my battery started beeping which meant my battery was going. This was the second time I had changed my battery during that incident. I called up "Who is calling SM WALTON" and it was GM Tim FROST meaning that the message hadn't got from Nick MYATT to Tim that I wasn't on that doorway any more. I got back to him and told him that Nick was his BA Resourcing Officer and what he had stood-by in terms of EDBA and SDBA and who I had handed over to.

As I spoke to Tim I saw on a wall and looked back at the tower. This was that first time I had had a proper look at it and I couldn't believe it was still an inferno on the upper floors. It was roaring as a fire. There was a massive plume of smoke and absolute orange inferno raging on the upper floors. I could not believe we had been there for 9/10 hours and it was still at that position and we still had crews in there fighting the fire. I thought how did we manage to stay in there and at the same time thought, if we hadn't have been in there people would not have got out.

I came to what I discovered was the FSG CU, saw GM Greg ASHMAN who was taking over the FSG role. I had a quick conversation with him asking him how many dead, were we in the 100's. He hadn't got a figure but he thought it would be in the high numbers. I had done some calculations in my head and I thought we would be about 200 dead. I also asked how many we had out alive and I don't recall him giving me a number for that either.

I then went round to the incident CU to be met by a group of SM's etc all of whom had turned up to take over. They all looked fresh and keen and I was by this time really jaded. We had a brief conversation and I had said to them what role I had been in and just how relentless it had all been, and still was.

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I got back to my car and by luck the Salvation Army was parked by my car so I got a cup of tea and a bar of chocolate and sat for a time to get myself back together. I saw the big Community Centre and went in there to use the facilities. That was the first food and first break I had had all night

I had been told when I collected my board from the CU that I was to go to Paddington to make contemporaneous notes and, if desired, speak to a Counsellor. At the time I wasn't impressed. I was knackered and just wanted to get home to my wife, even though I was still on duty. I just didn't want to be there, but I went.

On the way over I called my wife. It was an extremely emotional call. The traffic was really slow and I remember I was covered in soot, crying my eyes out in a car, with my fire stickers in the windows, going past bus queues, everyone could see me but I just didn't care. I then phoned my mum and went through the same thing again.

When I arrived at Paddington I got myself together as best I could. I did my contemporaneous notes which I found really hard at times, because I was finding it hard trying to keep a grip on myself.

I went to see the Counsellor and said straight away "sign me up. [REDACTED] I told her I couldn't control my emotions, I wasn't seeing things, I was just really worried that I couldn't control my emotions and that I would go to the next fire and I wouldn't be able to do it their either. She said they would treat me as a priority and I have subsequently engaged with their services. I have nothing but praise for whoever set that all in place, made us go back and do our notes and made us do that initial engagement.

I feel it has definitely saved me. There are still times when I can't control them still but there have been testing times since when I have.

After that I went back downstairs and saw Brett LOFT and spoke to him about what we had both been doing in the night. I had heard what turned out to be his pager going off as I got called out and it just so happened that because he had been a cab driver he knew a more direct route that got him there just before me.

I then returned to Fulham to sort out all my kit from the night before. By this time I was dead on my feet and so when I got to Fulham Brett had again beaten me there. I collapsed on the bed at Fulham and woke up an hour later. After that hour I was refreshed enough to drive home.

Because I had been the first SM on the scene I wasn't comfortable not having any of my notes, having given them in at Paddington. As a result of this I made another set of notes which were more comprehensive than the first set of notes made.

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I went back to the tower on the 25th as a relief crew and at that time I went into the tower which gave me the opportunity to lay some demons to rest and confirm some of my recollections.

I have been asked about the Stay Put policy. Depending upon the way a building is designed you either evacuate everybody out of the building if the fire alarm goes or you say this building will keep you safe for a minimum period of time — it is usually at least an hour — in the box you are in and therefore you are safer staying in the box than you are coming down the stairs and getting in our way or being affected by the smoke that might be in that staircase. So in that type of building there is a Stay Put policy that is that the alarm will only go off in the flat that is affected. If the products of combustion get into the communal areas then you might get a general alarm because it is now spreading but it is specific to the building. It should be that the responsible person has assessed their building and has decided whether or not a Stay Put policy is appropriate. If it is appropriate they should make sure that everybody in the building understands it, so if they are supposed to evacuate they know they are supposed to evacuate, if they are supposed to stay put they know they are supposed to stay put. That is where the notices on the walls should actually explain what you should do in the event of a fire.

I think stay put was appropriate for the initial crews and I think it was still appropriate when I got there because at that time we thought we had a fire that was on the outside of the building. The fire that was in the compartment was out. The staircase had smoke in it and that would have affected people coming down the stairs under their own steam.

Having looked back and reflected on it since if people had been told to evacuate any earlier than they were there probably would have been more dead on the staircase instead. As it was there were people being rescued from their flats by fire crews and brought out and they were viable because they had stayed in the flats. We brought a lot of people out of that fire because they were still viable when crews got to them.

The Stay Put changed when the fire got to them. Not because it was now okay to bring people down the stairs, it was because there was no other option. That is my understanding of it.

When a building is built and designed or altered you go through a planning process, you say what you want to do and the local authority tell you whether you can or can't do it. In that process Fire Safety Officers from LFB will be involved and will give advice and their opinion will be taken into account. That building will then be approved. This consultation will then decide whether or not what you think you can do is appropriate and the basis of all that interaction the use of that building will be decided. If the authorities don't agree that is where enforcement action would take place.

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The person who is the controlling mind for that building should ensure that the occupants understand what they should do in the event of a fire in that building. They base their risk assessment on people doing a certain thing and they have to make people react in a way you would expect them to.

I have been asked what should have been in place to help fire-fighters deal with the situation with which they were confronted. In a nutshell there should have been fire separation that did what it was supposed to do. I have not been involved in the investigation into that building or anything but my fear is that that building probably complied with building regulations. It is likely it complied with building regulations when it was built and over time it has been renovated and improved without necessarily thinking about what the effect of one improvement would have on another and that is probably why the building didn't react the way you would have expected it to react.

I would like to see more than one staircase, so we have an attack staircase and an evacuation staircase. I personally would like to see fire doors that have got either a brush corner or flap in the bottom corner that's big enough to allow at least one or two lengths of hose to be laid, so that a fire door will close over the top of hose and doesn't compromise the compartment. As things stand when we lay hose we open every door in that building because we need to and the door stays open. I have been saying that since 1992 when my mate got killed and I have never managed to get anyone who could do something about it to listen. That would make a massive difference in keeping separation in place.

The biggest thing that could have helped us that night is a building that contained the initial fire and didn't let it spread, because we put that fire out so there would have been nothing else to deal with. Everybody else in the building wouldn't even have known there had been a fire in their block until they were told about it the next day. That is what happens 999 times out of 1000. The fire should never have been able to get into flammable material that compromised the fire separation by going up the outside of the building and back in. That is something that needs to be looked at. How can we have flammable material going up the outside of buildings and think it's going to be safe.

When cladding first started to be used I was in the Fire Safety role and I queried it, more from a radiated heat aspect with it setting fire to other buildings due to the amount of heat it generated, that type of thing. That is all part of the building regulations and all part of what has to be considered. Whether or not the issue of cladding has been factored in on these buildings I don't know.

Sprinklers stop a fire getting out of where it starts. In my opinion a fire in a domestic building would not have got out of the room it started in if there were sprinklers in that room. It would have held it in check

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and we would have gone in and put the fire out. It doesn't put the fire out, it lets us have the chance to do it. While it was doing that, if need be, everybody could have walked out of that building.

We don't have anything to put anyone in to get them out of a fire. There are debates about smoke hoods or rescue BA sets. Personally if I lived in a flat I would have that kind of thing in my flat. That it something, if I was in a position to, I would be researching as it could have made a difference in that fire. We have now changed our PDA in London for high rise buildings to include an aerial. I think a high reach on the initial attendance could make a difference. If you have it up as an observation tower it doesn't take much to make it a water tower.

I would like to finish by saying I cannot believe that we managed to do what we did that night. I can't believe the commitment that people showed. I can't believe the professionalism that I saw and the risks that were being taken in a calculated way. I don't think anyone was reckless or gung-ho but I do think there was more risk taken at that fire than would normally be tolerated but it was for a reason every time and it was necessary. People stepped up. If they took a risk they knew what that risk was and why they were doing it. I have never been more proud of the people I work with. Not just in the fire service, but the MPS were brilliant, the ambulance service were brilliant. Everyone that was there. I would say that from about the 7th minute of our attendance to the very end fire-fighters performed above and beyond the call of duty.

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