

Witness Statement from Group Manager Nigel Dilley, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS).

1. What is your current role?

I am the Group Manager for Operational Policy, for the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

2. What was your role on the night of the fire at Grenfell Tower, namely 14 June 2017?

I was one of two Level 3 Incident Commanders on duty for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. In addition to this, I was carrying out the role of the Duty NILO (National Interagency Liaison Officer), which involved a number of responsibilities, detailed below as part of my response to question 3.b.

3. In terms of the role you took on the night of the fire:

a. How long had you been in this role?

I have been carrying out the role of a NILO since 2012, however on the night of the fire I took up the role of the Duty NILO for a 24hr duty period that started at 0900hrs on the 13<sup>th</sup> June through to 0900hrs on the 14<sup>th</sup> June.

b. What were your responsibilities?

My responsibilities of a National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO) are to support existing Strategic, Tactical and Operational (Gold, Silver and Bronze) inter-agency coordination. Within the Fire & Rescue Service Incident Command System (ICS), the role of a NILO is defined as:

*"A trained and qualified officer who can advise and support Incident Commanders, police, medical, military and other government agencies on the Fire & Rescue Service's Operational capacity and capability to reduce risk and safety resolve incidents at which a Fire & Rescue Service attendance may be required."*

c. What training had you received to undertake this role?

I successfully completed a two week, nationally recognised, National NILO Course at the Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh, in 2012.

4. Did you have any prior knowledge of Grenfell Tower? If yes, what knowledge and how was this obtained?

I had no prior knowledge of Grenfell Tower.

5. What were the arrangements between Essex Fire and Rescue Service and the LFB for taking overflow calls from the LFB?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague –  
Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*There was no specific arrangement between ECFRS & LFB. There is a National arrangement between BT and all Fire services that allows for the dissemination of 999 calls to other Services when the 999 system is under pressure or a Service is experiencing extremely high call volumes.*

6. How would Essex Fire and Rescue Service obtain information from the LFB about an incident?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague –  
Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*By phone or, if necessary, e-mail though phone is preferred. Fax is also an option but as a last resort.*

7. How would Essex Fire and Rescue Service communicate information taken from overflow calls to the LFB?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague –  
Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*By phone or, if necessary, e-mail though phone is preferred.*

8. Did these lines of communication operate on the night of 14th June? If not, why not?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague –  
Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*ECFRS Control struggled to reach LFB Control due to the sheer number of 999 calls, FSG calls and other incident related communications taking place on the night. Communication was established at points throughout the night but these were sporadic as was to be expected due to the unprecedented nature of the incident.*

9. What, if any, difficulties did the Essex Fire and Rescue Service encounter with contacting the LFB?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague –  
Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*ECFRS Control struggled to reach LFB Control due to the sheer number of 999 calls, FSG calls and other incident related communications taking place on that date.*

10. If difficulties were encountered, how did you become aware of these difficulties?

I was paged just before 0200hrs and informed that ECFRS Control had received a number of calls from residents about a fire in a tower block in West London and ECFRS Control were having difficulties in passing these calls through to London Fire Brigade.

11. What efforts did you make to contact the LFB? Please provide as much detail as possible.

My normal course of action would be to contact the LFB Duty NILO via LFB Control, however as ECFRS Control were unable to get through to them, my next option was to try via my Airwave radio, searching for an LFB NILO channel. Although I did locate a channel and tried to make contact, there was no response.

As such, and conscious of time I decided the next best option was to contact Met Police Control with a view of getting them to pass the caller details I had, via Police, directly to the LFB Command team at the incident.

12. If you made contact with the LFB on the night, please detail:

- a. What time you made contact;
- b. Who you spoke to;
- c. The content of your conversation; and
- d. Any further actions you took after your contact with the LFB.

No contact with LFB was made by myself on the night.

13. Did you make contact with any other service on the night about the Grenfell Tower fire (eg Metropolitan Police Service, London Ambulance Service, other Fire and Rescue Services)

- a. If yes, what time?

The only other services I made contact with on the night were Essex Police Control and Met Police Control at Hendon. These calls took place between around 0215hrs to 0230hrs, although do not have the exact time of calls.

- b. Who did you speak to?

For Essex Police I spoke to the Officer on Duty at the Force Control Room and for the Met Police I spoke to one of the on Duty Control Operators.

- c. What was the content of your conversation?

For Essex Police it was to ascertain the number for Met Police Control. For Met Police the content of the conversation was around passing on the information I had received from ECFRS Control to Met Police in order for them to pass on the caller details directly to the LFB Command team at the incident.

- d. Did you take any further actions?

Yes, I passed the telephone number of Met Police Control to ECFRS Control in order for them to be able to speak directly with each other should the need arise.

14. Did you become aware that the LFB changed the stay put policy during the night?

- a. If so, how did you become aware?

I became aware when talking to the Met Police Control Operator.

b. When did you become aware?

At the time of the call, although I do not have a record of the exact time.

c. What did you do with this information?

I passed this information straight back to ECFRS Control immediately after I had finished the call with Met Police.

d. Were you told what the new advice should be and how it should be delivered?

I was told that Met Police had been informed to advise all residents to make their way to the fire exit/escape.

e. If so, by whom were you told this and what was the new advice?

I was informed by the Met Police Control Operator.

f. Did you communicate with callers who had previously called to advise them that the advice had changed and to give them the new advice?

No, and not aware if ECFRS Control had done so.

15. Can you provide any other information about your role on the night which has not already been provided in answer to the above?

No.

16. Did you make any notes on or after the night of the fire about your role? If so, please attach a copy of these notes to your witness statement.

No notes taken.

17. Is there a log of actions or communications recording communications between your Control Room and the LFB Control Room, BT and other emergency services such as the MPS? If so, are you able to provide a copy of all relevant entries with your statement?

In order to ascertain the correct response I needed to refer this question to a colleague – Group Fire Control Officer (GFCO) Peter Suarez, ECFRS, who gave me this response:

*I understand that this has already been done? I believe everything was provided to the MPS/LFB by FCO Michael Terry, ECFRS Control, the next day.*

The information I have submitted above is correct, as far as I can recall, concerning my actions on the night of the Grenfell Tower fire.

I am willing for my statement to form part of the evidence submitted before the Inquiry.



Nigel Dilley

19<sup>th</sup> October 2018