

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: BRADSHAW, BRIAN

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

Occupation: CONTROL ROOM OPERATOR

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This statement (consisting of 6 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: B BRADSHAW

Date: 26/11/2017

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

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This statement relates to my account of events on the night of the Grenfell Tower fire in London on 14th June 2017.

I am a Control Room Operator for North West Fire Control and have been in post since February 2017. Between 2009-2013 I worked for Greater Manchester Fire Control in the same role before the merge of Brigades. I left the Fire Service for 4 years before returning this year. I performed the same role in Manchester Fire Control that I do now, only for 1 Brigade instead of the 4 after the merge.

The Control Room is comprised of a number of people but laid out slightly differently, depending on shifts. For example, a day shift has 8 staff members - 2 Team Leaders and 6 Operators, mid shift has either 11 or 12 staff in total including 2 Team Leaders, and night shifts have 2 Team Leaders and 5 Operators.

The training for me was largely a refresher because of my previous experience but still encompassed the previous 4-week basic training. I received in depth training on new computer systems and how to mobilise resources to incidents as well as call handling and the mapping systems so that we could monitor the progress of appliances going to an incident. Following the basic training, I was moved on to a team and assigned a mentor, in my case Helen OULTON. The mentor was responsible for listening and monitoring the calls that I would receive and the advice I would give and assist or act as a backup should I require help. At any point they would have the ability to take over any call that I was dealing with if they

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felt they need to. The mentoring only last a few tours of duty for me as I had a good background of knowledge. A tour is four shifts. Combined with the mentoring we are also required to complete 2 workbooks, evidencing completion of every conceivable incident. These are known as both phase 2 and 3 and get more complicated as we progress. They cover all aspects from health and safety, fire survival advice and mobilising other resources to name a few. The completion of the phases and the workbooks shows our level of competency in our role and ability to deal with all incidents presented to us. Currently I am halfway through phase 2 and still in development.

The process for taking a basic call is mainly about ascertaining the callers address and what the incident is. Once they have told us, we would repeat both pieces of information back to them to check for accuracy and understanding. Dependent on the circumstances, our system will automatically generate the correct number of appliances required so that we can mobilise them this is known as the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA).

As mentioned, part of our training is the understanding of the Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) procedure. My understanding is that we would utilise this in the event of a person being trapped by fire. The policy is designed around how best to keep people safe, for example we would offer advice around windows. This would include opening windows if it is safe to do so, to enable fresh air supply to come in. Ideally we would want to keep all occupants of an address in the same room if safe to do so and block any doors with bedding to stop smoke from getting in. previously I have dealt with a couple of FSGs in Manchester where people were trapped and it was down to me to try and keep them safe before the crews managed to get to them. The first one I dealt with, the man dies on the phone whilst he was talking to me but the crews got to him in time and managed to revive him. When dealing with a FSG, everything gets put in to a log so that all decisions can be seen and actions made. Usually the person next to you will assist and you work together in a team effort such as taking down exact location within a property, how many people and then ensuring that all the information is passed on to the fire crews on the ground. The basics of it remain the same however and it is centred on trying to keep the person safe and therefore the Control Room Operator needs to remain calm at all times. FSGs relate to any type of property and are not singled out to any particular building or type of building.

Relating to FSGs is the 'stay put' policy. This was particularly relevant to Grenfell Tower. I have no previous knowledge of Grenfell Tower, but have dealt with calls from high rise buildings relating to fire alarms. My understanding of 'stay put' is that it is again designed to keep people safe. Essentially we

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want people to stay where they are so that fire crews can best get to them. It also offers an opportunity to give best advice to callers whilst they are awaiting rescue.

I will now talk about events on Tuesday 13th June 2017 going into Wednesday 14th. The day I was on a night shift starting work at 7pm. When I got into work I sat at pod number 10 in the Greater Manchester pod area. This pod faces the supervisors' desk and I had the televisions to my left. At around 1.30am on the Wednesday morning we received a call from BT saying that there had been an explosion in London and that we may get calls as we are the buddy service for London and take their overflow calls. I didn't answer this call but with the control room being small, we were all aware of it.

Shortly afterwards, calls started to come into our control room from London. I recall taking a call from a BT Operator who told me they received a call from someone in flat 194 at Grenfell Tower, but the line cleared. The operator passed me the mobile numbers that called and I said that I would pass it onto the London Fire Brigade. I didn't call the number back as there was a stack of calls in a queue on our emergency line, and these were a priority to answer. I passed the details of the flat and number to our Team Leaders Paula and Natalie, who passed the information onto London via telephone.

I then answered another call which was from a lady in a nearby street called Silchester Road which was close to Grenfell Tower. The caller told me that on the west side of the tower she could see a woman on the 14th floor with three kids, and that they had been screaming for help for 45 minutes. I asked the caller if she knew the flat number, but she didn't know, so I took the information she had reassuring her that we had crews on scene. I knew it was 25 pump response at that point but didn't know how bad it was as it wasn't on the television at that time.

I passed on the information from my calls through our Operations Manager Ged BASSON, who passed it on to our team leaders Paula CRAIG and Natalie POMPONI who were in charge of all the communications with the London Control Room. This information included flat number, persons involved and any other relevant details.

During the same time, the other Control Room Operators were also taking calls and the Operations Manager Ged BASSON came into control to support us and feed us with information about the fire. After I took the two calls I started listening into the others calls for support. I did this to ensure my colleagues had everything covered around the action plans on the systems, and to help them correct advice to the callers.

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I remember listening to a call that another Control Room Operator Helen OULTON had answered, from a lady who was in a wheelchair on the 3rd floor. They fortunately got out. I then listened to a call that Control Room Operator Aisha JABIN answered from a lady who was from the 14th floor but went up to the 23rd. I listened to this call intermittently as I was still answering calls with the emergency lines still ringing. I particularly remember this call because it ended with the lady not responding to Aisha. When the call did end I heard a radio message in the background saying that crews had got up to the 14th floor, which is where this lady had come from before going up the tower. It stuck in my mind that if the lady stayed where she was, she may have been rescued.

After listening to Aisha's and Helen's calls, I continued to answer calls myself, which were not a lot to do with Grenfell Tower but were calls from the North West area and other admin calls. All the calls from Grenfell Tower came at once and after we had received 19-20 calls, it all died down and no more calls came in.

At roughly 4am, the tower fire came up on the news on the big television in the control room that was to my left. That was the first time I saw the tower and the fire. The whole tower was completely engulfed in flames and the dark backdrop of the sky made it stand out. At that point and I was in disbelief when I saw it, thinking how it could have gone up so quickly with the fire starting on only the 4th floor.

At one point the advice given to callers had changed from stay put to get out. I cannot remember the time but it was during a Fire Survival Guidance call that Sue PIMBLETT had taken earlier on in the morning. We were told of the change in advice by Ged BASSON who came round the control room and told us individually of the change to start telling callers to get out of the building. I could see sense in the change with the ferocity of the fire looking at the television pictures, but if people did stay put you knew where they were and firefighters would have some idea of where they were to help rescue attempts.

Everything in the control room was quiet until I finished my shift at 7am. It is hard to put into words what I think of it. Every time I see the fire, that radio message regarding Aisha's call and the 14th floor gets to me. A few days later when our team returned from our days off, we had a team debrief to discuss the night. At that point it was still fresh in our minds and was emotional, but it was good to talk about it.

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