

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: COOK, MATTHEW

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

Occupation: GROUP MANAGER

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This statement (consisting of 12 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: MATTHEW COOK

Date: 30/11/2017

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

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I have been asked to make a statement in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire on the 14th June 2017. I have been spoken to, via digital media by DC Lou JONES and DC David PEARL. I understand the audio interview is my main evidence but that this statement is a full version of what was said. During the interview I referred to my contemporaneous notes which I exhibit as exhibit reference MCC/1. I also refer to four photographs later in my statement.

My history within the Fire Service is; I started at Hampshire Fire Rescue Service. I joined at [REDACTED] and was posted to the East of the city at High Town Fire Station. This is predominantly an urban area where I did fire-fighting duties. There were at least 9-10 high rise buildings on that fire ground so I have dealt with a number of concrete high rise incidents. Then, after 5 years I went into Community Fire Safety focusing on Fire Prevention. I left Hampshire as a Crew Manager and transferred to London. In order to do this I reverted back to a fire-fighter, this was a career decision. I was initially posted to Whitechapel Fire Station where there was a mixture of office and residential high rise buildings. Then I was promoted to Crew Manager at Whitechapel Fire Station, temporary Watch Manager (WM) at Shadwell Fire Station, temporary Watch Manager at Millwal Fire Station, Station Manager at Whitechapel Fire Station and then Station Manager (SM) in Strategy and Inclusion, as a project manager. I was then promoted to Group Manager (GM) in Strategy and Inclusion and I am now a Group Manager

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in the Operational Review Team (ORT). I have about 17 years service in the Fire Brigade and as 3 years as an ORT officer.

When I am on a 24 hr on call, I get allocated as either GM or ORT. ORT is a pan London response, my role is to support Incident Commanders (IC) as an Operational Tactical Advisor and to assist them in the effective and efficient resolution of an incident. I review Standard Operating Procedures and the application of these at incidents pan London. The role provides an assurance that we are delivering organisational objectives and expectations, in line with policy and best practise.

When on shift SM Mick Mulholland and I cover London, it is divided into two grounds. I cover the North-East and South-East; SM Mick Mulholland covers the North-West and South-West. If an incident comes in and is a 6 pump fire, one ORT officer goes to it. If it is an 8 pump fire or more then we both go out to support the IC.

On the 14th June 2017 I was on call as an ORT officer, at my callout base [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When I am on duty for a 24-hr shift, I am available by on call pager from my home address. At 01:14hrs I was informed by pager of a 6 pump fire at Grenfell Tower. I have two pagers; one (E61) as GM, the other one is for ORT. The latter is a group pager. There are 9 ORT officers in the team and we all get the same message. Due to this I knew that the message would have gone to SM MULHOLLAND as well. Mick mobilised, as it was in his command area being in the NW of London. Because it was a 6 pump fire he went alone. I monitored the incident by airwave radio, channel 4, and listened to the incident just in case it got bigger and I needed to go too. I used Google maps for the address, just in case. I did not know the building nor had I been there before. At 01:19hrs, very shortly afterwards, it went from 6 to 8 so at 01:19hrs I immediately mobilised. Two ORT officers' now have to go as it is an 8 pump fire. I informed Control on route and I heard a number of priority messages including MP10 (make pumps), request for police, MP15, Aerials 2 (ALP), persons reported (people involved and need rescue), MPS20, MPS25 and multiple Fire Survival Guidance calls (FSG) from Control to Command Unit (CU) 8 ranging from 10-22<sup>nd</sup> floors. I was in my car driving and I was listening to the rapidly escalating incident with large numbers of people involved. FSG means that calls were being taken from members of public who were unable to leave their property and Control were staying on the line giving advice to the occupants on how to stay safe in their property. The information from control gets shared immediately with the

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Command Unit (CU) on scene. A CU is basically a lorry that provides a focal point for officers and a command point for the IC. The FSG information includes how many people are trapped, the flat numbers, floor location etc. On route I was counting the number of FSG calls coming in and I remember counting at least 10. This is unprecedented and something I have never experienced before.

Due to the escalation and the number of FSG calls, I knew we were dealing with a significant fire. Coming from Bexley, I approached the incident from the South. I could see the Tower and external fire on the East side. At this point I thought it could be external building netting that was alight, I was trying to understand what was causing the fire. Is it coandering up the outside of the building or is it netting? I parked quite away, viewing it from the South and I could see it on the East side, I was still trying to understand what was alight.

I arrived at approximately 01:56hrs and parked on the South side of the incident. I couldn't get through to control on the airwave radio because of the significant amount of radio traffic. I knew my time of arrival was approximately 2am because I had rigged in fire kit at the rear of my car and I then received a call from AC Andy ROE. He informed me he was on route to take over and I was instructed to speak with the IC and ascertain whether this was a major incident and if so to declare it as such to ensure the relevant support mechanisms and notifications were established and to prepare all emergency responders in line with LESLP protocols.

SM WEST parked behind me, who is an ORT officer now but at the time he was shadowing with a view to becoming an ORT officer. When people go through the ORT selection process, they shadow to gain experience and then become permanent and go to incidents on their own. SM WEST and I both made our way to CU8 on BOMORE ROAD. On route I heard 'MP40, GM Welch now IC and CU's 4' on my airwave radio. For me this was ticking all the criteria for a major incident. 40 pumps is a huge draw on resources; as well as dealing with this incident we also have 'normal business' to consider as well. When a major incident is declared, it mobilises an additional 6 pumps, additional officers, 2 command units and a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU). Police and LAS are also informed. We also set up a number of back office functions and trigger a number of notifications including the Commissioners Group and gold command. This includes establishing the Brigade Co-ordination Centre (BCC) which has a number of cells including logistical planning, resources, communications and operations are managed by a DAC to ensure the

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incident is supported as well as maintaining normal business. Major incidents can also include: call filtering to ease pressure, notification to the London resilience team — pan London, local authority support. It pulls together all the emergency responders. For us, it kicks in LESLP including cordon control, Health and Safety of the inner cordon, support of other agencies, such as the draw on the LAS, hospitals, the police and the local authority.

I stepped onto CU8 and spoke to GM WELCH. We discussed whether this was a Major Incident and we both agreed it was, which was immediately declared at 02:06hrs with bridge control. We discussed the appropriate METHANE message in line with JESIP principles and this was tasked to SM WEST as Command Support. SM West was meant to be shadowing me but we agreed he was best placed not to shadow but support GM Richard WELCH. The CU had two dedicated officers sending messages, Steve WEST took on the role as Commander Support. SM WEST stepped up to the role and fully supported GM Richard WELCH. 'Methane' stands for Major incident declared, Exact location of incident, Type of incident, Hazards, Access, Number of casualties, Emergency responders in attendance and required. JESIP principles are Joint Emergency Support Interoperability Programme which is about emergency services sharing information, creating a joint understanding and working together to resolve incidents.

Divisional Area Commander (DAC) Andy O'LOUGHLIN arrived. As it was a 40 pump incident the DAC becomes the most senior officer on the fire ground so he took over as the IC. GM WELCH was wearing the white IC tabard, and a formal handover took place, exchanging all information and informing the fire ground and control that he was now the IC. At this time I believe the IC's before DAC O'LOUGHLIN were GM WELCH, SM LOFT and WM Mike LOWDON.

We confirmed the key priorities for the incident, these were to establish a command structure across the scene in order to deliver the key objectives to save saveable life, establish a safety structure to protect fire-fighters and emergency responders and manage the provision of resources to support the incident. The key aim was to save life, and maintain the safety of our fighters and other emergency responders. DAC O'LOUGHLIN requested a Dangerous Structures Engineer (DSE) and utilities and 10 FRU's for Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA). I was asked by DAC O'LOUGHLIN to make my way to the Incident Ground with GM WELCH and SM MULHOLLAND to carry out a full scene assessment and to establish the Fire Sector with GM WELCH assigned as the Fire Sector Commander. As a high rise

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incident our procedures are to vertically sectorise the building in order to break it down to manageable areas and implement a command structure. Senior Officers are then allocated to take charge of the sectors. The first sector was the fire sector is inside the building, it is a vertical sector covering all floors affected by fire.

I walked towards the Tower and spoke with officers on CU7 which was parked on GRENFELL ROAD. They were in the process of setting up as the FSG CU, taking over as the single point of contact for all FSG information coming from control. Our control was set up at Stratford, FSG was set up at Stratford, FSG information went from control to CU7 and then CU7 prioritised the calls so that fire fighters could respond and rescue those people in greatest need. Initial information was going to CU8 but CU7 took over and recorded and prioritised this information. All priority information was being recorded on whiteboards on the CU and sent to SM EGAN by fire ground radio. SM EGAN had set up as Search Co-ordinator at the end of GRENFELL RD, outside of the Tower. I went to SM EGAN and confirmed that the FSG information was being passed to the Bridgehead (BH) which had been set up on the 3rd floor. This was being done by fire ground radio on channel 3. FSG information was being recorded on the Control Information Forms. I confirmed that the FSG structure and flow of information was effective in terms of managing and co-ordinating FSG information from control, to the BH, in order to coordinate rescues. BH is a forward staging area set up in high rise buildings. There is a BH officer in charge, Entry Control established with fire officers ready in their Breathing Apparatus (BA) so that they can be briefed and sent up into the Tower to carry out rescues. My assessment of the FSG process was it was working effectively.

I observed Paddington's Turn table ladder (TL) (A213) and North Kensington's appliance (G271) were both set up on the East / South corner. North Kensington's appliance had been set up into the Dry Riser Main (DRM) and water had been secured by G271 from the hydrant to the DRM. So water was being taken from a hydrant, twin-lined, (two lines of hose) into the back of the appliance, then the appliance feeds straight into the DRM and obviously fire-fighter crews can then take that from the pipes inside. I was particularly focused on this as water is a key priority in order to suppress the fire, extinguishing it, and carry out rescues, the TL was also providing a water curtain to the 11th floor. The TL was set up and providing a water spray to external side of the building. Due to the falling debris the TL and appliances were both at risk of becoming compromised and crews were in the process of moving it back.

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There was a significant risk of the burning debris cutting off our entry point to the Tower and the potential for our water supply to become compromised, I immediately instructed a Watch Manager (WM) to provide covering jets to protect our entry point, appliances, DRM hose lines and as a water curtain to the external side of the building. He confirmed this was being carried out. Due to falling windows, glass was spraying across the area and I ordered everyone to have visors down. As ORT, normally I wouldn't give out command instructions but due to stuff falling, it was landing on the roofs of the appliances and there was a significant amount of burning debris, if the fire engine caught fire it would block our entry / exit route. Moving it back under the canopy protected the appliance and enabled us to continue to provide water into the building. Hose line monitors were also being set up, which are jets of water which you can leave in place and it acts like a water curtain. This was on the South-East corner of the main entrance. There was a huge amount of people in the area; people were screaming, panicking and visibly distressed. Our role is to put control over the situation and to get in as quickly as possible so we can get people out.

A (DRM) is an empty pipe already built into the structure of building which we plug into on the ground floor with an appliance, charge it and there are inlets on each floor which BA crews set into with hose lines to get water and fight the fire. It is a much a more effective way of fighting high rise fires. Buildings over a certain height may have a wet riser (over 60m, 50m since 2006.) A wet riser is permanently charged, full of water and has dedicated base pumps which will then maintain pressure, which we can then augment. Grenfell Tower only have dry risers, I would have expected a wet riser.

Facing the East side of the Tower I observed a fully developed, venting compartment fire on the 4th floor. When we talk about Compartments we are talking about the flat of origin. It's a concrete construction, floor, walls, and ceiling. Fire had vented this, means the fire had broken out of the compartment and was spreading up the outside of the building effecting other compartments in close proximity. I could see fire was spreading upwards from the 4th floor to the upper floors. There was a rapid horizontal and vertical fire spread on the outside of the building. I observed a Coanda effect where the fire seemed to be whipping around the building and propagating towards the South side of the Tower. The Coanda effect basically means where the fire and hot gases hugs the outside surface of the building. I observed a significant part of the left side of the upper East part of what I now know to be, the external cladding was

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alight and moving diagonally upwards towards the upper South - East corner. The fire was behaving like burning plastic or magnesium. Windows were failing and paining away from the Tower and a significant amount of burning debris was falling, ranging from a foot to a metre in size. The fire was generating thick, black, yellow smoke and the rate of fire spread was significant compared to what I had experienced before. I took a photo of the East side as a visual update for the IC at approximately 02:34hrs. You can see it spreading up in the compartments', it was spitting like magnesium and spreading upwards. The picture also shows the falling debris and the smoke. This photo is exhibit reference MCC/2.

I've never experienced a fire spreading like that before, I have seen fires in high rise spread vertically up but not like this. My expectation was that the building would provide adequate compartmentation to protect the occupants while we made an attack on the fire and co-ordinate rescues. Therefore my main focus was to ensure that an appropriate structure was in place to support internal fire-fighting and rescue operations. My priority was to ensure that BA crews were being committed to the upper floors where FSG calls had been received in order to rescue those trapped inside, unable to leave their compartments. As a professional fire officer arriving at the scene, based on my previous experience and my understanding of fire behaviour in buildings - it is a concrete building: it should have good compartmentation inside that building; so where fire spreads externally to unaffected compartments, people will obviously be evacuating their properties via the protected central staircase, those who felt unable to escape because of smoke and putting in the FSG calls, were the priority.

I went to the main entrance and met GM WELCH and SM MULHOLLAND at the BH. Due to the volume of FSG information a WM had been tasked with writing all FSG information on the wall. This was to capture and prioritise information from SM EGAN and CU7 so that rescues could be co-ordinated and prioritised. The BH had been established on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and GM WELCH had taken over the fire sector commander. SM WALTON was assisting as BH officer. Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) crews had been committed with 45mm jets from the DRM to the upper floors. I spoke with GM WELCH and confirmed with him that his tactical plan was for SDBA crews to clear each floor and commence fire-fighting, and prioritise and carry out rescues based on the FSG information. The aim was to move the BH up as crews made progress.

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SDBA has a working duration of 31 minutes with a safety margin of 12 minutes, so if the BH is higher you can move crews higher up, without using as much air. Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) has a total working duration of 45 minutes with a safety margin of 18 minutes. The end of the working duration is signalled by the actuation of a low level warning.

An alternative entrance was also being established by FRU's with cutting gear. This is enhanced cutting gear normally used in Road Traffic Collisions RTC's. They were doing this at the West side through two rear utility doors on the ground floor.

Outside I could see that the external fire spread had reached the South and West sides at an unprecedented rate. I returned to CU8 to provide a sit-rep to the IC.

At CU8 AC ROE had taken over and DAC O'LOUGHLIN had been assigned as Operations Commander. I provided them with a sit rep and confirmed that the fire sector had been established, crews were being committed to carry out internal fire-fighting and rescues. An Operations Commander is established at larger scale incidents and wears a red tabard. They have the responsibility for implementing the IC's overall operational tactical plan for the incident and manages all operational sectors. This enables the IC to take a more strategic overview to set key objectives, liaises with other agencies, resource management, relief planning etc.

Based on my observations the fire was spreading throughout the building. I passed this information to the IC and Op's Commander. A command decision was taken by AC ROE to change the FSG advice from stay put to a full evacuation; this was confirmed with Control and communicated across all sectors. AC ROE confirmed that SM McCONOCHIE had been assigned as loggist, GM O'NEIL as Sector Commander Safety, and SM KIPLIN had set up BA main control at the main entrance of the leisure centre on LANCASTER GREEN. The LAS had also established the main casualty triage area at the Leisure Centre with forward casualty handling areas situated on STATION WALK, and at the end of GRENFELL ROAD. Due to the change in the 'stay put' guidance I was asked to liaise with GM WELCH to ensure he was aware of the command decision and the change in advice given by control. As the building has one entry in and one out and it was a congested single story staircase, there is a risk there that you could have a large number of people exiting the building and hinder our plan to commit crews, also those people evacuating could enter the central staircase, full of smoke in the stairwell so would need assistance to get out of the building, so it was really important that this information got relayed down to

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the fire sector.

AC Roe, DAC O'LOUGHLIN and I made our way to the fire sector so that the IC and Ops Commander could obtain an update from the Fire Sector. The fire had now fully developed to the South and West side of the Tower and large sheets of metal cladding, spalling concrete, windows, and chunks of burning cladding were falling into the threshold between the main entrance and the canopy that was protecting responders waiting to cross, the gap was approximately 5-6 meters. A line of people were waiting in twos to go under riot shields, into the building, and there were spotters advising when to go. Due to the risk of being hit by falling debris a hazard zone management area had been set up outside the building. It was an unsafe environment for responders and the public. I have never seen that level of debris falling from a building. I have seen debris falling from high rise fires but never to this degree. It was a significant risk to put responders into that zone. We had to weigh up this risk and implement control measures, to enable us to save saveable life. Key control measures at that point included the establishment of spotters, a defined hazard zone with minimal crews and exposure time. This enabled resources and people to move in and out of the building. Initially TSG riot shields were requested from the IC as there was a risk of civil disturbance caused by the hysteria that was setting in, but then we then used the shields above our heads to protect us from the falling debris.

I observed men, women and children being carried and escorted from the Tower to safety by fire-fighters and officers. I particularly remember one girl, who was about 5-6 being carried out by a fire-fighter, I think she was unconscious at the time and was taken to the casualty area to get medical assistance. It was my priority to get back into the building, so I was at the front of the line ready to cross with DAC O'LOUGHLIN and AC ROE. Crew Manager (CM) MURPHY I think it was, was holding a shield above us, when a man fell from the tower struck the canopy above and glanced off CM MURPHY's shield. I was standing directly to the right of CM MURPHY. The man landed in the Hazard Zone area missing DAC O'LOUGHLIN and myself by just a few feet of where we were standing. At the time it felt like everyone froze trying to understand what had just happened. The man was lying directly in front of me with debris coming down on top of him, so I immediately stepped forward into hazard zone. We grabbed his wrists, I grabbed the man's right wrist and DAC O'LOUGHLIN grabbed his left wrist and we pulled him to safety and away from the falling debris.

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We moved the man to the back of the appliance (G271) which was parked under the canopy opposite the garage on the left side as you enter from GRENFELL ROAD. We moved him to a place where the canopy would protect him. I checked the man who was a black, middle-aged male wearing only a t-shirt with no clothing from the waist down. His left leg was missing from the hip joint. I checked for signs of life and there weren't any that I could discern. I felt an overwhelming sense of compassion and loss for this man and I wanted to remain with him, however I had a professional duty to those still trapped inside and to my fire-fighters struggling to reach them. I therefore asked two fire-fighters nearby to get a sheet to protect him and provide dignity, and then inform the LAS. I re-entered the Tower and re-focused myself on our key objectives to save saveable life, establish a safety structure to protect fire-fighters and emergency responders, and manage the provision of resources to support the incident. It was only later that this incident with the man really hit me.

I met with AC ROE who was briefing fire-fighters within the lobby area of the Tower. We had made an additional entry point on the West side and there must have been about 20-25 people standing inside the lobby area. AC ROE gave a rallying brief to everyone inside, It was amazing what he said. He stated that this was an unprecedented incident and there was a significant risk to ourselves and despite this we would continue to make every effort to get everyone out the building, it was an unprecedented point in our careers and we must look after each other. We were going above and beyond to save those inside but equally paramount was the safety of each other. For me a demonstration of Leadership from that officer and it galvanised us all towards saving as many people as possible and keep each other safe.

SM WOLFENDON had taken over the role of Search Co-ordinator and was in contact with GM GOODHALL by fire ground radio channel 3, who had now taken over as FSG co-ordinator on CU7. He had positioned himself by a huge white wall where he was writing everything down within the ground floor lobby area. He made sure all the information was passed to the Fire Sector Commander so that BA crews could be deployed accordingly. It is a really important process that FSG is continuously updated and disseminated. Therefore, initially it was a SM in the FSG CU but this was quickly upgraded to a GM due to the volume of calls. The FSG information was being continuously updated and shared with the fire sector and BH. We would normally write on a Forward Recording Information Board (FRIB) but due to the volume of information it was being written on a wall, it was a much more effective space to capture this volume of information.

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I went to return to the incident ground to ensure that the support structures, established by the IC and Ops Commander, were being managed effectively and appropriate provisions were in place to deliver the IC's key objectives. It is part of my role to continuously assess the command structure and support the command team. As I made my way out of the Fire Sector I encountered two fire-fighters on the mezzanine floor who were struggling with a casualty. He was a Somalian male, middle aged, unconscious and not breathing. I assisted the rescue and carried the man by his left leg and another SM carried him by holding his right leg while the two other officers carried him by the arms. As we were coming down the stairs there was also water coming down making the stairs slippery and we were struggling to carry him. We had to stop a number of times with a coordinated effort to get him out as quickly as possible. We went to exit with the man via the South side but the falling debris significantly hampered us as we crossed the threshold. We had to wait for spotters to give the all clear so that we could carry the man across the hazard zone. We carried the man to a single LAS paramedic who was stood in the casualty area at the end of GRENFELL ROAD. I and another fire-fighter from Red Watch North Kensington lifted the man and secured him into a stretcher chair so he could be removed to the main triage area at Leisure Centre.

As part of the command team I re-focused on my role to support the establishment of a command structure to support officers to save saveable life. I made my way to the BA main control staging area on Lancaster Green and spoke with SM KIPLING. The BA main control area is set up away from the main scene of operations to manage additional resources coming on, and to manage the delivery of fresh resources to the incident ground, its all about working together and keeping continuity on the fire fighting and rescue operation.

I informed SM KIPLING that he needed to establish a BA holding area on the West side, at the bottom of STATION WALK where the LAS had also set up a casualty handling area, he allocated WM Matt GREGORY from Red Watch Kentish Town. I believe that's who he was, some of the officers I met that night were for the first time. I briefed WM GREGORY to set up a BA forward holding area on the West side of the Tower and to include a provision for welfare arrangements, drinking water, and as a holding area for fresh BA crews. This meant we could get fresh crews to the fire sector without any delay. This provided an effective supply chain and the access to the West side was underneath a canopy service tunnel, providing good protection for crews.

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WM Matt GREGORY and I both walked to the West side of the Tower via the safe access point through the service tunnel and I showed him where to set up. My aim was to ensure a constant supply of BA was maintained across the incident via BA main control at the leisure centre, to the forward BA holding area at the base of STATION WALK, and then onto the fire sector. This was to ensure that there was no delay in providing fresh BA resources to the Fire Sector and continuity was maintained for the provision of BA across the incident.

I re-entered the Tower with another three officers via the West side. As we entered the Tower we were narrowly missed by a large section of burning building material and concrete that landed in front of us. The spotter behind us shouted and ordered us to stop, which narrowly prevented us from being directly hit. Small amounts of burning material were falling on my back and down the gap between my helmet and my fire tunic; I felt it burning through to my skin. I and the other officers stepped around the debris and into the Tower.

I made my way into the Fire Sector and spoke with GM WELCH who informed me that the BH was being moved to the ground floor due to the smoke logging on the upper floors and that a fire-fighter emergency had been declared for a missing BA wearer. He confirmed an emergency BA crew had been committed but that the individual had been safely located outside of the sector, this had been communicated to CU8. The original plan was to move the BH up as we made progress, but this wasn't possible due to the smoke and escalation of the fire within the building. The BH needs to be in fresh air and had to be moved to the ground floor, this however, creates difficulties in fire-fighting because the crews use more air going from the ground floor. It's a much more demanding and quicker turnover on BA resources. Fire-fighter emergency is where one or more fire-fighter or other responders under our control have lost contact with us. Emergency crews are established for our safety and committed to find the missing person.

The LAS had now fully established their casualty handling areas and main triage area. As we were rescuing casualties we took them to the LAS so they could get immediate medical attention.

I believe that due to the behaviour of the fire it was creating a Stack Effect whereby smoke was being

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forced down into the central stairwell. I discussed the movement of the BH with GM WELSH and agreed that this was essential; he confirmed the movement of the BH to a higher level was impossible due to the unusual smoke travel. The establishment of the BH on the ground floor also provided a better position for an emergency withdrawal should the structural integrity of the building become compromised. The potential for a full or partial collapse remained a risk throughout the incident however my assessment was that our duty to save saveable life was an overriding factor against the likelihood of a collapse. There were fires on multiple floors and heavy smoke in the stairwell; I believe pressure was pushing smoke down into the central stairwell. This created difficult conditions for us. The BH couldn't be moved outside as this would make fire-fighting operations difficult for us due to the falling debris and the travel distance but the trade off was the potential collapse of the building and smoke logging within the building creating challenging conditions.

Due to the movement of the BH the travel distance for BA had increased and required a change in the tactical plan to utilise EDBA for carrying out rescues on the upper floors with SDBA used to protect the escape route. We discussed the BA resource requirements needed to maintain this tactical plan. I informed GM Welch of the BA holding area that had been set up outside and that the large number of BA crews in the ground floor lobby area should be moved to the BA holding area outside. The reason to reduce the number of BA wearers in this area was to reduce congestion and improve the movement of resources, and if a collapse did occur a rescue could be quickly co-ordinated from outside by fresh crews. GM WELCH agreed and I arranged this through SM WALTON. I informed SM WALTON to liaise directly with WM Matt GREGORY so that BA crews could be brought onto the Fire Sector when needed and held in the staging area within the ground floor lift lobby area. Once I was satisfied that the management of BA resources was set up and communication lines established I made my way out of the Fire Sector. EDBA was now being used to prioritise the FSG rescues and SDBA's to protect the escape route, which we were now operating above the fire which we wouldn't normally do. Normally we would go to one floor, extinguish the fire, move up, extinguish that fire and search crews with hoses line would move up above the fire to carry out rescues. Due to the fire now involving all floors above the fourth floor we had to go above the fire to commit crews to prioritise life saving-rescues. This was the safest plan to implement and get people out. SM Mick MULHOLLAND I discussed the BA turnover for the incident, which was around 20 EDBA to 25-30 SDBA per hour, this was a significant number of BA resources. SM MULHOLLAND reported this information back to the Ops Commander and IC.

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Outside I spoke to the Sector Commander Safety, GM O'NEIL, to assess the establishment of the safety structure across the incident. A full Hazard Zone had been established at the base of the Tower with spotters and Police riot shields in use for crossing the threshold between the canopy via the South and West entrance. He informed me that safety officers had been briefed outside the building to monitor the Tower for any signs and symptoms of collapse. I contacted DAC Adrian FENTON at the Brigade Co-ordination Centre (BCC) by mobile phone and asked for an eta on the DSE, who I knew had been ordered by Andy O'LOUGHLIN. I asked that once in attendance he liaise directly with GM O'NEIL in order to carry out a full assessment of the structural integrity of the Tower. I was informed that the DSE was being blue lighted onto the scene by the Police. I also requested a Fire Engineer to attend so that they could carry out an assessment on the behaviour of the fire and its' relationship with the building. My aim at this point was that I wanted the senior safety officer to liaise with the DSE and with the fire engineer to establish what the risk is and likelihood of collapse or partial collapse. I think it was SM Jim FLYNN who attended as Fire Engineer.

I returned to CU8 and met with SM MULHOLLAND, we spoke with AC ROE and DAC O'LOUGHLIN to provide a sit rep on the movement of the BH, change in tactical plan, and the BA resource requirements for the Fire Sector. AC ROE made a command decision to request all available EDBA resources within the brigade. To my knowledge, that's never happened before. This included 14 FRU's as well as the 40 appliances in attendance, it was a hugely BA intensive job. We also used PEG, (Personal Equipment Group) who provided cleaning equipment, fresh cylinders, and the transportation of used cylinders to be recharged and brought back to the incident so we could continue to circulate BA resources.

SM Mick MULHOLLAND and I kept checking in with each other, constantly working together to support the IC. GM GOULBOURNE had also been assigned as Search Sector Commander, under the direction of the Fire Sector Commander, with a briefing to assist in directing BA crews to carry out rescues based on FSG information. This structure worked effectively and all decisions made were liaised with via the Ops Commander to the IC. Externally the incident was sectorised as Sector 1 South side, Sector 2 West side, Sector 3 was North, and Sector 4 was East.

Due to the significant risk of being killed or seriously injured by falling debris from entering the Tower,

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and the limited, congested, access/egress points, a decision was made by the IC and other service Commanders that only fire officers' under the protection of TSG police with shields, would enter the Tower. All casualties were to be brought to the LAS at the forward casualty handling areas for treatment and extrication to the main triage area at the Leisure Centre. This created an effective inner cordon control for resources entering and leaving the Fire Sector and an efficient process for quickly extricating casualties to safety. We are responsible for the safety of all responders; we had resources inside the Tower, the LAS had an effective casualty handling and triage area, the Police were supporting us to protect us with riot shields. Police support with shields was absolutely critical and we couldn't have done it without them.

The IC, with support from the Monitoring officer, Dany COTTON, exercised operational discretion and a number of key command decisions were made and recorded. These included continuing to exercise our duty to continue offensive fire fighting rescue operations to save saveable life under the F&RS Act 2004, and the Human Rights Act 1998, despite the significant risk to fire-fighters and officers from falling debris, structural collapse, and significant fire spread within the upper floors. The second key decision was to continue to use EDBA for compartment fire fighting and to allow the use of additional wears by SDBA and EDBA crews. This is not normally done unless in exceptional circumstances and this was an exceptional circumstance. All decisions to move away from standard operating procedures were highly calculated and taken in order to enable firefighters and officers to continue life saving operations. As an ORT officer I fully supported these decisions and the appropriate structures were in place to safely manage these command decisions. They were made with the full acknowledgement and consideration to standard operating procedures and were regularly reviewed by both myself as ORT and the rest of the command team.

I returned to the Fire Sector. GM WELCH informed me that they were having radio problems on the dedicated channel 6 for BA and that Telemetry Repeaters were deployed (boxes which boost signal via the BA telemetry board). BA boards have got a telemetry system built into them, it's basically a signal that connects with the BA wearer's set and tells you what their consumption rates are, how much air they've got, what their time of whistle is. You can communicate via pressing buttons; you can ask teams to withdraw, or individuals to withdraw. We were getting connection problems with that so Telemetry repeaters were deployed to boost

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that signal. Also our analogue fire group radios were having problems. They were also experiencing radio problems on channel 1 for command. We have separate channels so we don't interrupt the BA crews on channel 6. I went back to the IC and provided an update. I recommended the establishment of channel 2. The IC ordered a message to be sent to all sectors by CU8 confirming the change to channel 2. SM MULHOLLAND and I visited sector commanders and informed them of the change to channel 2. Runners were also used to carry important information between sectors due to the on-going challenges with fire ground communications. Changing to channel 2 didn't help because we were still experiencing problems so we changed back to channel 1. We were relying on runners to share the information.

I returned to the Tower, West side and spoke with GM O'NEIL who expressed concerns over being able to safely manage two entry points; we agreed to close the South entrance due to the amount of falling debris and limited space for spotters to adequately monitor conditions. I spoke with the WM safety officer at the main entrance (South side) and instructed him to cordon off the main entrance and to ensure all responders access the Tower via the service tunnel to the West side. This was to ensure that a safe access/egress point was maintained for responders and casualties, with protection from police riot shields and safety spotters via the West entrance.

I spoke with a WM in sector 2 and asked him to liaise with SM West in Command Support and speak to each pump operator to ensure that the pumping appliances had a sufficient supply of diesel and to arrange for an Operational Support Unit (OSU's) to deliver fuel stocks to the incident. This was to ensure that pumping appliances supplying the DRM, water jets, TL etc didn't run out of fuel.

I made my way back to the Fire Sector and spoke with GM WELCH and GM GOULBOURNE. They stated that they had concerns about losing water due to the burning debris falling on hose lines and the risk of overrunning the supply from our four jets coming off the DRM. They had also experienced a burst hose length which was releasing water. They were in the process of securing an additional water supply using Light Portable Pumps (LPP). I instructed SM COOK to take over as Water Sector Commander and co-ordinate the LPP's to provide two additional 45mm jets as an alternative water supply for BA crews. Once complete I asked SM COOK to then assess the water resources across the incident and liaise directly with the Fire Sector. At this point the priority was not to lose water.

I returned to CU8 and informed the IC and Ops Commander of the establishment of the water sector as a

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functional sector, with SM COOK as water sector Commander and that the water supplies had been secured. The IC had also requested a bulk media advisor (BMA) to attend and support this sector. This is a Pan London role who attends incidents if there are water supply concerns. They can provide a water plan, liaise with Thames water (or whoever the water supplier is), boost pressure if needed and look at the efficiency of water tactics on the incident ground. The IC had also requested an additional DAC for Command Support.

I returned to the fire ground. The amount of smoke within the ground floor was also increasing. SM MULHOLLAND organised the delivery and deployment of a Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) fan that was positioned just outside the South ground floor entrance to help clear the smoke. This was having limited effect so we ordered fire-fighters to smash glass on the ground floor lobby with small gear and Fire-fighter axes, this significantly improved the conditions at the BH.

As I went to leave the Fire Sector and an elderly Indian woman, approximately in her 50's, wearing a headscarf and a traditional dress, maybe 5 foot, had been brought to the exit point on the West side. She was screaming and crying for us to get her out and clearly suffering from smoke inhalation. She had been exposed to a significant amount of smoke, her face was covered in soot, and she was hysterical and terrified. I put my arm around her and with protection from a shield, I waited for the spotter to give me the all clear and I carried her across to safety. Another fire-fighter took her from me to the casualty handling area on Station Walk. Without support from TSG covering us it would have been much more dangerous for that member of public.

Sector 2 had now been formally established on the West side with SM Brett LOFT as Sector Commander. SM Mick MULHOLLAND had set this up and given a briefing to SM Brett LOFT, with the knowledge of the Ops Commander. I returned to CU8. At this point we had BA main control set up on LANCASTER GREEN, we had a safe entry point under the canopy into the West side of the Tower, we had established Sector 2 with a SM in charge, we had a forward BA control holding area with fresh crews in fresh air, ready to be deployed, we had a hazard zone with a GM Senior Safety Officer in charge with spotters and Police TSG protecting our entry and exit point, we had a fire sector and an established water sector and a casualty handling triage sector set up by the LAS.

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The following command structure had now been fully implemented: Ops Commander (DAC O'LOUGHLIN), FSG Co-ordinator (GM GOODALL, SM EGAN, SM WOLFENDON and CU7, GRENFELL RAOD), Fire Sector (GM WELCH as Fire Sector Commander and GM GOULBOURNE as Search Sector Commander), Bridgehead (SM WALTON and WM DOWDEN), Sector 2 (SM Brett LOFT), Sector Commander Safety (GM Dave O'NEIL), Water Sector (SM COOK), Command Support (DAC Lee DRAWBRIDGE, GM FOSTER, SM SAUNDERS and SM WEST), BA Main Control (SM KIPLIN), BCC (DAC FENTON), ORT (Myself and SM MULHOLLAND).

I re-entered the Tower and spoke with GM WELCH and GM GOULBOURNE who informed me that due to an increase in the severity of the fire and the loss of communications with a BA team, a tactical withdrawal had been called, BA emergency team committed, and the declaration of a second fire-fighter emergency. This was communicated to CU8 and provisions made to account for the missing fire-fighters. It was confirmed that they had passed through entry control and were safely accounted for. A decision was made to re-commit EDBA crews up to the 11th and 12th floors with SDBA protecting the escape routes. I asked GM WELCH what resources they needed and he asked for an additional 10 EDBA wearers. I carried out an assessment of the resources at the staging area and confirmed 7 EDBA were ready for deployment; these were standing by in the lift lobby area ready to go. I spoke to Andy WALTON and asked him to arrange an additional 10 EDBA from the BA holding area outside in Sector 2. I also spoke with WM Mike DOWDEN and asked what resources were needed for the BH. He requested more drinking water. I went outside to sector 2 and arranged for a supply of drinking water to the Fire Sector. This was provided by the Command Support team from the Operational Support Units (OSU). I escorted the 10 EDBA across the Hazard zone and into the BA staging area located in the ground floor lift lobby area. I informed GM WELCH that his BA resources were ready. I got some water myself and was handing it out, we had to look after one another. I asked GM GOULBOURNE if he required any additional resources and he asked for a relief for the Entry Control Officers, (ECO). These people are in charge of the entry control boards. This is a high pressured function and they were working under considerable pressure and for a considerable amount of time. They were doing a fantastic job but we had to recognise the need to relieve these officers. I spoke with the ECO and established that they required x3 WM's and x2 CM's. I went to sector 2, spoke with the Sector Commander SM Brett LOFT and established the relief officers. I again escorted them to the Fire Sector where the ECO change-over took place. They were briefed and changed over one at a time to maintain continuity.

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SM MULHOLLAND and I confirmed the BA resources required for the next hour and went back to the IC to communicate this information. As I was leaving the Tower an Asian woman had been brought down into the lobby area. She was conscious, breathing and covered in thick black soot. She was screaming to get out. I and another fire-fighter carried her across the Hazard Zone to the awaiting LAS paramedics on STATION WALK. The debris was around a foot deep and we had difficulty in carrying her across to the other side. I also observed two children approximately 4-5 years old being carried out of the Tower by fire-fighters and taken to the LAS casualty area on STATION WALK. I believe they were conscious and breathing.

SM MULHOLLAND and I made our way back to CU8 to provide an update to the IC. On route I observed the man who had fallen from the Tower, he had been placed in a body bag with sheeting covering him. He had been carefully moved into the garage area providing additional protection. SM MULHOLLAND and I walked over to two Police officers that were standing on LANCASTER GREEN and I informed them of the location of the body and asked that arrangements be made to remove him from the scene. When relieved from the incident I later handed this over to ORT officer John SIMPSON and ORT officer Andy CANE to ensure this had been completed. To my knowledge it was.

Radio communications on the fire ground were still causing problems so this was enhanced by DAC DRAWBRIDGE (Command Support) through the establishment of Airwave radio. Flon Ops (a radio channel) 1 was set up for Command and Flon Ops 3 for Command Support. SM MULHOLLAND and I had already changed our Airwave radios to the ORT channel so that we could communicate with each other. This is normal practice for ORT at large scale incidents.

I spoke with sector 2 and confirmed that we had received two fire-fighter injuries. One with burns and another with smoke inhalation. I went to CU1 (Command Support) and spoke with DAC DRAWBRIDGE to confirm the details and that this information had been captured. He informed me that all details had been passed to CU8 and that the fire-fighters had been treated, removed and were in a stable condition. At this point I took the photograph of the headline board on the Command Support CU. This is exhibit reference MCC/3.

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I returned to CU8 and was asked by the Ops Commander, DAC O'LOUGHLIN, to report to the FSG CU and confirm which flats still had people trapped inside and then to co-ordinate external rescues via Aerial ladders. I spoke with GM GOODALL and he asked his CU operative to write down the flat numbers that still had FSG calls. At this time they were all above the 16th floor. I confirmed that this information had also been passed to the Fire Sector for internal rescues. I first went to the East side of the Tower and spoke with WM BEALE (Red Watch Soho). We assessed the feasibility of ladder rescues however this was impossible due to the trees at the front of the Tower and the falling debris making rescues impossible via aerial ladders as they were beyond the reach of our ladders at the time. We spoke about moving the aerial appliances closer but due to the debris falling down and the potential to compromise our appliances, it was impossible. He informed me that a member of public could be seen in the window of a corner flat on the 11th floor, at the East/South corner. We could see the individual coming back and forth to the window and turning the lights on and off.

As this information was not on my list I asked WM BEALE to send a runner to CU7 so this information could be passed to the Fire Sector for an internal rescue attempt. I also asked that the jet on Soho's ALP (A245) was trained to the 11th floor to protect the occupant from external fire spread. I went to sector 2 and spoke with SM Brett LOFT to assess the suitability for a ladder rescue. Again due to the location of a triangle shaped children's park and falling debris the access and reach of the Aerial was not possible.

I went onto the Fire Sector and informed GM GOULBOURNE of the person that had been seen on the 11th floor and which flat they were seen in. I had to make sure the information had been shared and an actual internal rescue had been attempted. I was informed that the EDBA had reached the 11th floor and were searching the flats. At approximately 08:25 I observed a partially sighted Asian man who had been rescued from the 11th floor being brought out by BA crews and escorted to safety by two fire-fighters. I don't know 100% but I believe that was the male brought out and was the last person to be brought out alive at 08:25hrs. I was stood on the fire sector ground floor and saw him being carried out; he was completely covered in soot. For me that was the team work of every single fire-fighter and officer on the fire ground who were working together to try and co-ordinate those rescues, with all emergency responders working collectively together.

GM John SIMPSON relieved me as ORT and I left the incident ground at approximately 11:33. I drove to

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Paddington fire station and began the process of writing my contemporaneous notes. I then got some respite before I returned to the site on 14th June as ORT at approximately 18:00hrs until 01:00hrs, relieving the ORT officers and to support the recovery phase of the incident.

When I returned there was a different command team in place, at that point they were still searching for saveable life but also moving from the rescue phase to the recovery phase, it has a different focus on primacy, this is more led by the Police. We have to weigh up the structural stability of the building v's saving saveable life. I think we had reached all floors by then. AC Dominic ELLIS was in charge at this point. They were using Urban Search and Rescue, there were still pockets of fire, the gas mains needing capping, there was the element of protecting the scene and the people inside, there were specialists assessing the stability of the building and using sensors to monitor the movement, drones were also being used and the aerial ladder from Surrey was in place.

To clarify some LFB terminology, an appliance is a fire engine. It carries between 4-6 people and has got a dedicated pump inside, the officer sits in the front passenger seat and is in charge of that appliance, a driver also acts as the pump operator, and then the people in the back sit with their BA sets.

A pump ladder is a fire engine with a 135 ladder on it and a Watch Manager in charge, a pump has a 9m ladder and a Crew Manager in charge. We have 142 front line fire engines across 102 fire stations. We have 14 fire rescue units with enhanced cutting equipment, EDBA, and other specialist capabilities on them. Aerial platforms, of which we have 11 of those across London. They ride 2 people, a Crew Manager and a fire-fighter driver and provide extended reach rescues via the ladder. They can be used as a rescue ladder or a water Tower.

The FSG information on the wall in the lobby area would have included the flat numbers, which floor they're on, how many occupants there are, whether they are male or female, the conditions, whether they're in situ and need rescuing or have been rescued.

As for the advice for people in high rise buildings on fire, the standard approach is to stay put unless the fire is in their compartment or is effecting their compartment. If it is not then the advice is it is safer to stay put. Advice is given by control to put towels by doors, stay by the windows, and stay by the phone

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and await rescue. The expectation is that compartments will give you at least 1 hour of protection in that compartment. We then know exactly where they are, so we can carry out rescues, also if they come out and they go into an area full of smoke and breathe that smoke in, they can be quickly overcome. There is also a single staircase and people rushing out can affect our ability to carry out rescues. It was all unprecedented and the fire in the building did not behave as it should so the advice to people was changed to self evacuate.

With regards to the fire spread; it was spreading vertically and diagonally upwards. It was a summers evening so windows would have been open, so it is possible for the fire to catch on the curtains etc, it may also coander and catch alight to the external facia of the building and spread to the compartments above. But I have never seen external fire spread like this before. Something was causing the fire to spread rapidly, diagonally upwards but also internally from compartment to compartment. I wouldn't expect it to spread outside from floor to floor at that rate. In a 1970's concrete block of flats there should have been adequate compartmentation inside to stop the fire and smoke spread, and the means of escape should have protection to give a degree of time to get people out, and for the fire service to extinguish the fire. It was spitting like magnesium and fizzing with pieces of debris detaching from building and falling down. At the time I did not know what it was, as it continued to burn against the building . The concrete elements began to spall and fall away with windows failing and rapid fire spread internally and externally. There was straw coloured, acrid, thick toxic smoke which is unusual for that type of fire. I now believe this may have been the cladding attached to the outside of building. There were also pieces of sheet material paining away from the building and bent up pieces of metal falling down. In a high rise block there could be a gentle breeze at ground level but up top you have got the wind factor that was whipping the fire around the building.

MCC/4 is the photo from where the playground is.

MCC/5 is photo from East side when fire has been extinguished.

What I would have expected from a concrete block is the concrete elements to give significant protection and at least 4 hrs of protection . There should be fitted fire doors with closers, to protect the communal areas. If a fire happens in a compartment it is contained long enough for fire crews to extinguish it and for people to be protected. I wouldn't expect the exterior to be combustible or the means of escape to be

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compromised. People should be able to step out of a compartment and walk down to a place of safety. If the fire has filled the central staircase with smoke then it should have been safe to stay in an unaffected compartment until fire-fighters got to them. Internal and external fire spread is not expected to behave like that in a concrete block of flats. This created significant difficulties in relation to our standard operating procedures.

I have been asked whether I have suffered any injuries. There are none that I reported. I banged my head, I had neck ache for a couple of days after and small burns on my back and neck from the burning material that went down my tunic, but no medical attention was sought for the physical elements. As for the psychological stuff, I think at the time you just sort of get on with the job as a professional fire officer- that's what I joined for; to help people and do my duty. But afterwards the fact I was nearly killed by a falling person, the debris, and fear of collapse you feel guilty [REDACTED] and yet at the same time I also wish we had been able to save more people, I was willing to give my life to save those inside.

I wish to formally place on record my admiration for every single fire-fighter and officer who attended Grenfell Tower. They all worked tirelessly to save as many people as possible despite the significant risk of losing their own lives and/or the lives of their colleagues. This was achieved through the shared Leadership and dedication demonstrated at all levels and in particular the strong Leadership from the Senior Command Team, AC Andy ROE and Commissioner Dany COTTON. As well as the support officers working in the Brigade Co-ordination Centre; as well as the functional aspects of the incident; as well as the dedicated officers in Control, who worked tirelessly to share Fire Survival Guidance information with those at the scene and helped us co-ordinate all the rescues and finally to all the emergency services including the Police, the LAS, and every responder that attended the incident and supported us to save as many people as possible.

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