MR RAWAT: Good morning, Mr Chairman.

SIR MARTIN MOORE: Thank you, Mr Rawat. When you’re ready.

MR RAWAT: That’s right. Good morning, Mr Chairman. Good morning, members of the panel. Our first witness who I would like to call is Betty Kasote.

SIR MARTIN MOORE: Good morning, Ms Kasote.

MR RAWAT: Good morning, Ms Kasote.

A. Good morning.

Q. Can I start by thanking you for coming to give evidence to the Inquiry today.

A. Thank you.

Q. Your willingness to continue to assist with our investigation is very much appreciated.

A. Thank you.

Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

A. I have done so.

Q. And you had a tenancy; was that with RBKC?

A. RBKC.

Q. Which one of them was the landlord?

A. I wasn’t aware.

Q. You mentioned the phrase “management board”; did you know that, as a tenant, you could become a member of the TMO?

A. I wasn’t aware.

Q. Were you aware that the management board included tenants and leaseholders amongst its membership?

A. I wasn’t aware.

Q. Were you aware that the council had complaints and relationships with the TMO and the TMO in relation to the tower?

A. All right.

Q. The reason for that is that the transcriber, who you can see over there, needs to be able to record your answers clearly and accurately.

A. Okay.

Q. If at any time you would like a break, please let me know.

A. I will do.

Q. Now, you’ve given two witness statements to the Inquiry. They’re going to appear on the screen in front of you as we go through your evidence today.

A. Okay.

Q. Now, can we deal with some formalities in relation to that second statement. Could we go to page 9, please. Can you confirm that that’s your signature there, Ms Kasote?

A. That is, yes.

Q. Have you had a chance to read that statement recently?

A. I have done so.

Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

A. I do.

Q. Now, everyone here will have had a chance to read your two statements, and what I’d like to do today is to ask you some additional questions about your experiences of living in Grenfell Tower.

A. Okay.

Q. -- and to speak slowly.

A. All right.

Q. My questions are intended to be short and simple, but if you have any difficulty understanding a question or you would like me to repeat it or rephrase it, then please do just ask me.

A. Okay.

Q. You mentioned the phrase “management board”; did you know that, as a tenant, you could become a member of the TMO?

A. Okay.

Q. -- and to speak slowly.

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Q. Now, everyone here will have had a chance to read your two statements, and what I’d like to do today is to ask you some additional questions about your experiences of living in Grenfell Tower.

A. Could we start with some background: is it right that you moved into the tower in 1996?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Now, in your Phase 2 statement, you also refer to the TMO. Before the events of 14 June 2017, what did you understand to be the respective roles of RBKC and the TMO in relation to the tower?

A. Okay.

Q. -- and to speak slowly.

A. All right.

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A. Could we start with some background: is it right that you moved into the tower in 1996?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Now, in your Phase 2 statement, you also refer to the TMO. Before the events of 14 June 2017, what did you understand to be the respective roles of RBKC and the TMO in relation to the tower?
Q. When you say “the end”, when was that?
A. It was after the boilers had been fitted.
Q. So was that during the course of the refurbishment?
A. Yes, it was.
Q. And which resident group did you approach?
A. It was the group that was dealing with the tenants.
Q. Is the name Grenfell Compact familiar to you?
A. It wasn’t Grenfell Compact.
Q. What about the Grenfell Action Group?
A. It could have been the Grenfell Action Group.
Q. Thank you.
A. No.
Q. Could I move on now just to ask you some questions about the ways that were used to give residents like yourself information about fire safety. We can start by looking at your first Phase 1 statement, which is {IWS00000768/5}, please. Could we expand paragraph 21.
A. I don’t remember.
Q. Did you ever visit the TMO’s website?
A. I don’t think I did.
Q. Did you know that they had a website?
A. No.
Q. What about the Grenfell Action Group?
A. It wasn’t Grenfell Compact.
Q. I want to just show you a document. If we could have, please, {TMO00870665}.
A. I don’t remember.
Q. Did they ever provide you with an updated version of the handbook.
A. At the time I moved in Grenfell Tower, they did give me a handbook.
Q. Can you remember when you first saw a tenancy handbook?
A. I think I did.
Q. Did anyone ever tell you that you could find advice about fire safety on the TMO’s website?
A. No.
Q. I’d like to show you now another document, please, it’s {IWS00001762/2}. Hopefully the fact that it’s upside-down isn’t going to be too much trouble, Ms Kasote, but can I just explain what it is. Now you can see it. You can see it’s a headed tenancy handbook, and you can see that it’s from the TMO, you can see Tenant Management Organisation there.
A. Yes, it was.
Q. And I appreciate time can be difficult, but --
A. I don’t remember.

Q. If we just go to page 28 in this document (IWS00001762/28), please.

Ms Kasote, can you see, there is a heading “Preventing Fires”, which begins:

”If you have a smoke detector in your home, you are responsible for testing it regularly to see that it works. If its battery—operated, you must replace the battery if it starts beeping irregularly.”

Then it refers to putting out cigarettes, not drying clothes over heaters, don’t leave the kitchen when using chip pans. So in this document that Mr Rasoul has provided, there is some fire safety advice.

A. I do remember the advice on smoke detectors, and...

Q. Thinking on it now, was that the sort of advice that you were given in your handbook?

A. Yeah, I think this is right.

Q. Can you remember, sort of going back to when you were given the handbook, whether the handbook that you were given had any advice about whether you should stay put or whether you should leave the building in the event of a fire?

A. I remember the stay—put policy on the noticeboard and by the lifts. I could have seen it in the handbook, but I don’t remember, because when I read the handbook, it probably—after reading it, I put it aside, and just...the reminder was the one on the lift and on the noticeboard.

Q. Can I try another document and show you a different document and ask you a question about it? It’s (CST00006750). Again, if I explain, you can see the LFB logo at the bottom right—hand corner of that document, and it’s a leaflet that’s titled “Home fire safety guide for purpose—built flats and maisonettes”.

What I’d like to ask you, please, Ms Kasote, is: do you ever remember receiving a leaflet like this through your door?

A. No, I don’t remember this one.

Q. Do you ever remember seeing leaflets like this in the communal areas of Grenfell Tower?

A. No, I don’t remember.

Q. Could we now have, please, (TMO00873549). This is the front page of Link magazine, and it’s from autumn/winter 2015, described as a bumper issue. It’s the magazine that the TMO would issue to residents. Do you remember receiving copies of Link magazine through your door?

A. There were some Link magazines that came through my door, yes.

Q. What did you do with them?

A. I could have read some articles in them, because it covered quite a broad number of articles, it covered—

if it’s the magazine I’m thinking about, it covered training as well, functions that were going on around in the estate.

Q. Let’s go to page 25 in this document (TMO00873549/25). Now, you can see that there’s an image there of a smoke alarm and heading, “What to do if a fire breaks out”, and then there’s subheadings of “In your home” and then “In your block but not inside your flat”.

Thinking back on it now, were you aware that advice about fire safety was being given through Link magazine?

A. It wasn’t always given.

Q. But do you remember ever reading a copy of the magazine and seeing fire safety advice in it?

A. No, I don’t.

Q. Putting the magazine aside, were you ever made aware that there might be information about fire safety in Link magazine?

A. Sorry, can you repeat?

Q. Did anybody ever tell you, “You ought to read the magazine for purpose”? Please, Ms Kasote, would it be fair to say that your understanding of what to do if there was a fire was to stay put?

A. No.

Q. If that had been said to you, would you have taken more notice of the magazine?

A. I probably would have, yes.

Q. We’re showing you quite a number of documents, but the next one I’d like to show you is (ART00002606). Just to explain what this document is, it’s the first page of a July 2014 edition of the Grenfell Tower Regeneration Newsletter. Can you see, Ms Kasote, that it’s got the TMO’s logo on it and Rydon’s logo? Do you see that?

A. I do.

Q. Now, these were distributed during the course of the refurbishment. Do you remember receiving newsletters like this?

A. I don’t remember this one.

Q. But leaving aside this one, in general, do you remember getting copies of the Grenfell Tower Regeneration Newsletter?

A. I don’t remember.

Q. Thank you. If I could just bring it together a little bit, please, Ms Kasote, would it be fair to say that your understanding of what to do if there was a fire was to stay put?

A. Yes.

Q. Was that your understanding if there was a fire during the course of the refurbishment?
1. A. Yes. You were only allowed to leave the building if you saw the fire. That’s what their advice was on the noticeboard: stay put unless you see the fire —— you see a fire or something like that.

2. Q. And aside from the notice you saw pinned to the board, did your information about what to do if there was a fire in the building come from any other source?

3. A. I could have discussed it with my neighbours.

4. Q. Do you remember actually having conversations with your neighbours about fire safety?

5. A. On ... I did, yes, because I think once when we had a fire, I could have spoken about the stay—put policy, that I wasn’t very comfortable with. I don’t remember exactly when, but I did speak about it.

6. Q. Are you able just to sort of help us with when that fire was?

7. A. It must, but it wasn’t the lock, it was the door was...

8. Q. Can you fix it to a year at all or a range of years?

9. A. Erm ...

10. (Pause)

11. It was way before —— it was before the refurbishment, I should say. Yeah.

12. Q. Thank you.

13. Now, before we move on, just a couple of questions about fire safety when the refurbishment was ongoing.

14. During that period, were you ever provided with any updates about work to fire safety features in the building, such as the smoke ventilation system?

15. A. No, I don’t remember that.

16. Q. Do you remember ever being told that a fire safety feature was not working?

17. A. No, I don’t remember that.

18. Q. Do you ever remember being notified about whether any work would affect your access or egress from the central staircase?

19. A. No.

20. Q. I want to take you back to your Phase 2 statement.

21. A. I do.

22. Q. Thank you.

23. What you say there is: "My front door was replaced around 2013. I remember that not long after it was installed —— a few weeks I think — the door got jammed and would not shut. I called the TMO to report that my door was broken. It took around an hour for someone to arrive to fix it. The person that came adjusted the mechanism on the back of the door which had previously made it close automatically, so that it no longer worked and my door remained open, not closing automatically. I remember asking whether this was a problem. The person that did the work told me it was not an issue and that it was ‘causing complications’. I did not really think about the significance of this at the time and I accepted what he said. I was more concerned at the time that my door could close so I could be safe in my flat.”

24. Now, you also said something about this in your first statement, and just so that we can have the full context, let’s take a look at that. {IW500000768/5}, please. Let’s look at paragraph 19. What you say there, Ms Kasote,

25. "Before the electrics were changed, some years ago, our front doors were replaced. We were told that our doors were being replaced with fire doors. The new doors closed automatically. A few months after my door was replaced, it got stuck and would not shut. It was around 6pm in the evening and the TMO sent someone over to fix it. The person who came to fix it removed a piece of metal from the middle of the door so that it was not stuck anymore, but ever since then it did not shut automatically.”

26. I want to show you one last document before I ask you some questions, and hopefully we’ll be able to bring it up, it might be a bit tricky. Could we have, please, {RBK00053297}.

27. (Pause)

28. We need to scroll down, please, to row 1307. Thank you.

29. Ms Kasote, if I could just explain to you that this is a spreadsheet that’s maintained by the TMO. It shows repairs undertaken to flats. We see in that row a reference to your flat, flat 41, and the date is 21 February 2014.

30. If we look along that row, do you see a box which is recorded as “Special instructions”? What it says in that box is:

31. "Locks and fittings: locks: broken or not working: front door. Front door lock broken, resident unable to close door.”

32. Now, we looked just a moment ago at your statement where you set out your recollection of the problems with your door. Obviously you didn’t have this spreadsheet when you made those statements. But looking at this, do you think that what’s written in that spreadsheet must refer to the issue that you reported in relation to your front door?

33. A. It must, but it wasn’t the lock, it was the door was
Q. It must have been in 2014, because that's the date that
is written there. You would accept that, wouldn't you?
A. It could be this one, yes.
Q. Now, you have pointed out that it wasn't the lock. Can
you tell us a bit more about the problem with the door?
A. I got home one day and opened the door. Normally it
shut automatically, but on that day the door just got
stuck and it didn't move. I tried to push it, it
wouldn't — I couldn't push it closed, so it remained
open. I called — I phoned the TMO, and they sent
somebody to come and fix the door.
What he did, when he arrived, is he said it was the
mechanism that was closing the door automatically that
had jammed, and the mechanism was in the middle of the
doors, not at the top like the normal doors we know. So
he pulled out a metal rod from inside the door and just
gave it to me to keep aside. I asked if it was going to
be a problem. He actually said, "It's causing more
problems than it should," and left it there.
Q. Was that the way your front door remained after that?
A. It remained like that. Nobody ever came to fix it
again.
Q. Did anyone from the TMO ever make you aware at any point
during your tenancy of the importance of these
mechanisms on your front door?
A. Nobody made me aware, but I presumed as long as I kept
it shut, it would be okay.
Q. Were you aware of any other neighbours experiencing
problems with their front doors getting stuck and not
closing automatically?
A. I wasn't aware, I was only aware because the man who
came to fix the door mentioned that it had caused
other — — it had caused problems in other flats.
Q. In other flats?
A. Yes.
Q. Thank you.
A. Nobody did.
Q. Did anyone ever knock on your door and introduce
themselves as a fire risk assessor working for the TMO?
A. I don't remember anyone.
Q. So is the position that after 2014 your front door
wasn't closing automatically and that never changed; is
that right?
A. It didn't change.
Q. Ms Kasote, I just want to move on to another topic now,
and what I want to do is to ask you some questions about
how you as a resident were kept informed of the
refurbishment process in Grenfell Tower.
Can we go to your first statement again, it's
IWS00000768/2), please. If you could expand
paragraph 7, please.
What you say there, Ms Kasote, is — — and it's under
the heading "Refurbishment":
"I remember getting a letter some months before the
refurbishment from the TMO. I cannot remember exactly
what it said but it just gave vague details about what
work was going to be done and the details of the company
that was carrying out the work."
You then name the company, and you go on to say:
"... there was another letter telling us that there
was to be a different company to carry out the work
called Rydon."
Now, is it right that we should understand that
paragraph to mean that these were letters that you
received before the refurbishment actually started?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. Other than those two letters, did you receive any other
letters about the refurbishment?
A. There could have been some more letters, but I don't
remember exactly. This one I remembered clearly because
it mentioned costs and that they were changing the first
company to another company due to cost, so I remember
this one clearly.
Q. Let's keep with this statement, please, and go now to
paragraph 15, which I hope is on page 4 (IWS00000768/4).
What you say there, Ms Kasote, is:
"I remember being told by the TMO at a meeting for
residents that they were going to bring the building
into the 21st century and modernise. I cannot remember
when this meeting was as I went to several. They told
us that the change from one contractor to another was
because it was cheaper to go with Rydon."
Do you think that this meeting, because it refers to
going with Rydon because it's cheaper, was that one that
happened quite early on?
A. It did happen quite early on.
Q. But you went to several other meetings; is that right?
A. I did, yes.
Q. How did you learn about these meetings?
A. There were leaflets that were dropped — — I think there
were leaflets dropped through the door.
Q. At any of the meetings that you attended, do you
remember being asked to complete a questionnaire about
the refurbishment?
A. No, I don't.
Q. Can you remember whether you were shown anything at the
Q. Can you remember who organised those meetings?
A. With residents I attended a few, yes.

Q. Can you remember who organised those meetings?
A. I can’t remember his name.

Q. Did you learn about the concerns of other residents during those meetings?
A. No, I didn’t.

Q. And did you actually attend some meetings that were just through conversations with neighbours?
A. Yes, I remember being shown window designs as well.

Q. Did you see any samples of cladding, for example?
A. Yes, I remember being shown window designs as well.

Q. Aside from these meetings, did you attend any TMO roadshows about the refurbishment?
A. No, I didn’t.

Q. Is it right that the job that you do involves shift work, Ms Kasote?
A. Yes, it is.

Q. And you have said that you were able to go to several meetings, but stepping back from it all, did you feel that you had an opportunity to contribute to the refurbishment proposals for Grenfell Tower before the refurbishment began?
A. No, I didn’t.

Q. Why didn’t you feel like that?
A. Because some residents had given their opinions and it wasn’t taken on.

Q. How did you come to know that residents’ opinions were not being taken on?
A. I had discussions with some of the residents on the floor.

Q. Could you elaborate a little further about how those discussions arose?
A. They arose because people were concerned about some of the refurbishments that were going to take place, so there were discussions on residents not -- -- I mean, us residents not -- -- avoiding to let the people doing the works to come into our flats until they were clear about what they were going to be doing, because some of the refurbishments were not made very clear. Like the boilers, they only had boilers for the bigger flats, they didn’t arrange for boilers for the smaller flats.

Q. Did you learn about the concerns of other residents through going to meetings for those residents or was it just through conversations with neighbours?
A. It was conversations as well.

Q. And did you actually attend some meetings that were residents alone?
A. With residents I attended a few, yes.

Q. Can you remember who organised those meetings?
A. I can’t remember his name.

(Queue)
I’m sorry, I can’t remember his name, but there was somebody who organised the meetings.

Q. Well --
A. Sorry.

Q. -- -- don’t worry about that. I’m going to ask you a question a little later on that may bring us back to that point.

Just one further point about the meetings of residents: how many meetings do you remember going to yourself?
A. Maybe just two.

Q. And tell me if you can’t help with this, but at those meetings, how well attended were the meetings?
A. They were not very well attended. I think it’s because of the times that the meetings were taking place, some people were at work.

Q. When you say “not very well attended”, do you remember how many people were in the room when residents were meeting to discuss their concerns together?
A. The two that I went to, it could have been maybe ten people.

Q. Could I have, please, another document on the screen which is {TMO00840364/30}, please. If we could expand paragraph 170, please.
A. Ms Kasote, I want to take you back to your evidence about attending several TMO meetings, and presumably when you went to those meetings, were other residents present at those meetings as well?

Q. Yes. I’ll go through this paragraph in a moment with you.
A. Okay.

Q. But a short while ago I was taking you through your own evidence that you attended several meetings organised by the TMO, and I just wanted to be clear that when you attended those meetings, there were other residents present?
A. Sorry, did we say TMO or the residents, organised by us?
Q. The TMO. Do you want me to show you your statement again, just so that we’re clear?
A. Okay.
Q. Would that help?
A. Yes, it will.

Q. Right. Let’s go back to {IWS00000768/4}, please. It’s paragraph 15 that we looked at a few moments ago. What you said there, you talked about attending a meeting the TMO had for residents, and your second sentence was:
"I cannot remember when this meeting was as I went
A. They 13
Q. How did they give their opinion?
A. There were a few residents that wanted to give their 11

opinion and what they thought about the refurbishment. 10

A. The meetings where we discussed the — — with the 26

Q. What Ms Williams also says is that subsequent 25
consultation from 2014 was by way of drop—in sessions, 22
newsletters and a one-to—one basis. Do you recall being 21
told that there were drop—in sessions?
A. I was told about the drop—in sessions, yes. 20
Q. Did you attend any of them?
A. I don’t remember attending those.
Q. Would there have been any reason why it would have been 18
difficult for you to attend drop—in sessions?
A. It was the times they were arranged. I was probably 17
working and wouldn’t be able to attend.
Q. Okay.
A. I’m sorry to jump around between documents, but 16
I want to take you back to your first statement again, 15
please, {WS00000768/4} again. If we could look at 14
paragraph 17, you’ve said there, Ms Kasote:
“I remember that there was a resident who started 13
a blog saying that the place was a death trap and some 12
people brought this up during some of the meetings — but 11
I cannot remember exactly what everyone said.” 10

When you refer there to a blog, is that the blog 9
that was run by the Grenfell Action Group?
Q. The resident who set up the blog, was that also the 8
resident who organised the meetings of residents? Do 7
you remember you said you couldn’t remember his name, 6
but was it the same person?
A. I think it was the same person who organised the 5
meetings, yes.
Q. Did you ever read the blog yourself?
A. No, I didn’t.
Q. You say there that, you know, the suggestion that the 4
tower was a death trap was being brought up during 3
meetings. At the meetings, what was the TMO’s response 2
to that?
A. The meetings where we discussed the — — with the 1
discussion about the place being a death trap wasn’t 0
organised by the TMO, as far as I remember, it was 0
organised by the residents. So the TMO was not there at 0
this meeting.
Q. I see. Thank you very much for clearing that up.
Let’s put the question a different way, then: when 0
you heard that, what did you think about that 0
allegation?
A. I was worried, obviously.
Q. Did you take any steps in relation to your concerns?
A. I don’t think I personally took any steps, but I was 0
just following what other residents were saying and 0
putting across to everyone else.
Q. Okay.
I want to now go back to your Phase 2 statement ——
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Sorry, can you perhaps help us with
this: did you have reason to think that what people were
saying was true ——
A. I did have ——
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: —— that it was dangerous?
A. I did have reason to think, yeah, that what people were
saying was true, yes.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And can you tell us what they were?
A. It was the escape route, there was only one escape
route, and I was just also worried about the stay—put
policy. That was my main concerns —— those were my main
concerns, the stay—put policy and the escape route.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good. Yes, thank you.
MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
If we go now, please, Ms Kasote, back to your
Phase 2 statement, and it’s {IWS00001775/5},
paragraph 15, please. If I just read a portion of that
paragraph out, you say there, Ms Kasote:
“Generally, if I made a complaint to the TMO,
sometimes I did not even hear back. Often I had to
follow up a complaint I had made by email. I definitely
noticed that when I first moved in, the TMO would
respond much quicker and were generally nicer and more
responsive. As time went on, I felt that interactions
with the TMO (not just for complaints) became much
worse.”
Now, again, if you could help us just with the
timeline for this. You say “as time went on”, but was
there sort of a year or a period or an event after which
things did become worse in terms of how the TMO
responded to you?
A. It was when they moved the complaints office from the ——
from Grenfell Tower. When I moved into Grenfell Tower,
we used to complain directly to Grenfell, in the
complaints office at the bottom of the —— I mean, at the
basement —— no, sorry, on the ground floor, there was
an office where we went for any complaints, any repairs.
But when they moved the office from there, we had to
make phone calls to a central place, and at this time it
used to take longer to respond to repairs or any
complaints.
Q. Now, taking that change, the move of the complaints
office, as our starting point, you’ve said that you
would have to make a phone call to a central office, and
also, when I asked you earlier about the website, you
said that you were aware of the website in relation to
complaints. After the move, when the office had been
moved from the ground floor, how did you usually make
a complaint to the TMO?
THE WITNESS: Okay.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Rawat.

MR RAWAT: There are a very few questions for Ms Kasote.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right, well, I'll say 11.05. If more time is required, you can let us know.

MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Would you like to go with the usher, please.

MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, I've concluded all my questions for Ms Kasote.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Oh, right, yes.

MR RAWAT: What I would like, I think, is if we could have the usual short break just to see if there are any more questions that I may be asked to put.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.

Well, Ms Kasote, we normally have a break when counsel gets to what he thinks is the end of his questions to give him a chance to just check that there's nothing he's overlooked, and also to give other people who are not physically present in the room the chance to suggest that there may be other points that we'd like your help on.

So we'll have a short break now. I think we'll say until 11.05, although I make it clear that if anyone thinks more time is required, you can let us know. As I say, we will come back at 11.05, and at that point we'll see if there are any more questions we'd like your help on. All right?

I say this to you, because I've said it to everybody else who has come to give evidence: please don't talk about your evidence to anyone while you're out of the room. All right?

SIR MARTIN MOORE: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, those are all the questions that I need to put to Ms Kasote, so all that remains for me to do is to thank her once again for coming to give evidence today.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, Ms Kasote, on behalf of the panel and myself, I would like to thank you very much indeed for coming to give your evidence. I hope it hasn't disrupted your arrangements too much, but it's been very helpful to hear from you, and good to see you, so thank you very much indeed.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And now you're free to go.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.

A. No.

Q. The last matter I want to cover with you, please, Ms Kasote, is: if I were to ask you what a fire control switch is, is that something you would be able to answer?

A. No, I wouldn't.

Q. There was a switch on the wall at the top of the lift doors on the ground floor. Do you ever remember seeing a switch there?

A. No.

MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, those are all the questions that I need to put to Ms Kasote, so all that remains for me to do is to thank her once again for coming to give evidence today.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, Ms Kasote, on behalf of the panel and myself, I would like to thank you very much indeed for coming to give your evidence. I hope it hasn't disrupted your arrangements too much, but it's been very helpful to hear from you, and good to see you, so thank you very much indeed.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And now you're free to go.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)
I can just raise one question. We are going to have this report and so the witness. I don’t know which you would find better. Can I just raise one question. We are going to have the witness. I don’t know which you would find better. Can I just raise one question. We are going to have the witness. I don’t know which you would find better.
Ms Toyoshima—Lewis says at (ii) is:

"One of the issues I did raise was regarding what would happen in terms of me escaping if there was a fire. I asked 'Rob' and the Neighbourhood Officer what would happen if there was a fire in relation to me escaping. I also asked the people working in the Latimer Road office, what would happen if there was a fire as I am in a wheelchair."

If we move forward in the statement to paragraph 67, again at (ii), what Ms Toyoshima—Lewis explains there:

"The response that I received in relation to what would happen if there was a fire and I am in a wheelchair was from Rob and the neighbourhood office was verbal where I was told that I am on the list for disabled people in the tower."

It's useful, Mr Chairman, at this point just to go forward in the statement to page 29 {IWS00001725/29}, please, paragraph 78. What Ms Toyoshima—Lewis says there is:

"I asked the Estate Inspector of the Tower about how I would escape in the event of a fire. I cannot remember his name. He came and talked to me for three hours explaining about how the building was built and designed to contain a fire. He told me that there was very thick concrete (80cm) around the flat ensuring that the flat was completely safe in the event of a fire. He told me that because of this protection, as it was safe to remain in the flat if the fire had not started in my flat."

Just taking the panel back to paragraph 76, please. I think that's on page 24 {IWS00001725/24}. Just reading the first part of this paragraph, it begins:

"I was limited in terms of fire exits because I am in a wheelchair so I cannot run down the fire exit. The only way I felt I could get downstairs and escape if I was on my own was to go down on my bottom. Even on the night of the fire with the fire fighters in attendance, there clearly was no plan or specific route for a disabled person such as me. The best way to explain the escape routes is to describe the events of the night of the fire and how I escaped the fire."

Ms Toyoshima—Lewis goes on there to refer to her Phase 1 statement, but I'll stop reading there. You will recall, Mr Chairman, that on the night of the fire, firefighters did indeed carry Ms Toyoshima—Lewis out of the tower.

The final point to make in relation to her evidence is that her former husband, David Lewis, has also provided a Phase 2 statement. We don't need to bring it up, but for the record, its reference is {IWS00001629}, and I ask at this stage that it be admitted to the record.

MS MAHBOUBEH JAMALVATAN (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: I'd like now to turn, please, to the Phase 2 statement of Mrs Mahboobeh Jamalvatan. That's at {IWS00001724}. The statement consists of eight pages, and if we go to page 8 we can see that it's there signed, dated 24 February 2020, and there is a statement of truth. I ask that it be admitted into the record.

Mr Chairman, members of the panel, Mrs Jamalvatan lived in flat 10 on the third floor of Grenfell Tower with her two adult children, Sahar and Sajad. They had moved there in August 2016. Mrs Jamalvatan is disabled and her daughter Sahar was her carer.

If I take you, please, to page 2 {IWS00001724/2}, paragraph 5, what Mrs Jamalvatan says at that paragraph is:

"I reported the problems about the lift to the TMO two or three times. There was a problem with the lift every month. One or other of them would always break down and it was a big problem for me due to my disability which causes me mobility problems. It would take me ages waiting for the lift, and getting down."

I have a problem with my knees and my shoulder, and I walk with a stick. I am not able to use the stairs, but rely on the lift. I note that my complaints about the lifts breaking down were not recorded in the copy of the RBKC—TMO Housing File which was obtained by my legal representatives despite multiple requests for the relevant information."

If we could move forward in the statement, please, to paragraph 12 on page 3 {IWS00001724/3}, this is in relation to fire safety information, and Mrs Jamalvatan says:

"I refer to paragraphs 10 and 11 of my May 2018 statement [that's her Phase 1 statement] which states that I was never given any instruction or advice about fire safety in the building in person or in writing, and I did not see anything, either in the communal areas or inside my flat, regarding what residents should do in the event of a fire."

If we could go to the next page, please {IWS00001724/4}, and paragraph 15, what Mrs Jamalvatan says at that paragraph is:

"I had never been made aware of any fire safety policy, or of the stay put policy."

Finally, if we go, please, to paragraph 18, which is on the same page, and this is under the heading
"Fire Safety complaints", Mrs Jamalvatan says:

As far as I was aware there were no special provisions that we were made aware of relating to people with special needs, including mobility issues, or language issues. I escaped down the stairs on the 14th June by sitting on my bottom and going down the stairs that way as I was not able to walk all the way down the stairs. I just had to 'bump' my way down."

If I could conclude Mrs Jamalvatan’s evidence by explaining that her daughter Sahar has also provided a Phase 2 statement to the Inquiry, which speaks to the same issues. The reference for that —— again, we do not need to bring it up —— is [IWS00001704], and I ask at this stage that Sahar Jamalvatan’s statement be admitted into the record.

Mr Chairman, I note the time. I think that’s probably a good point to stop.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.
MR RAWAT: So we can then obviously get the witness seat ready for the next witness.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes. Well, it shouldn’t take too long to do that, I hope, and then the next witness, who I think is Mr Khalloud.
MR RAWAT: Youssef Khalloud.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes. If he is here and ready to give his evidence, we will get him in as soon as we can, shall we?

MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: We will rise for a moment while the witness box is cleaned for the next witness. Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I think it would be better if you did get your glasses.

A. Thank you, sorry about that.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Not a problem. We will sit here and wait for you, but there is no great urgency. The usher will come with you.

(Pause)

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Now you can probably read the document. I have the other problem where I have to take mine off to read the documents.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Ms Sivakumaran.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good. Please, yes.

MR YOUSSEF KHALLOUD (sworn)
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right, off we go, then, Ms Sivakumaran.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
MS SIVAKUMARAN: Good morning.
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good morning.

Q. Mr Khalloud, can I begin by thanking you for coming to give evidence today, and also for assisting the Inquiry with our investigations. It is really very much appreciated.

A. Thank you. You’re welcome.

Q. If you have difficulty understanding a question or you want me to repeat any questions or rephrase it, please do ask.

A. I will.

Q. I will also ask you —— I think you’re very softly spoken ——

A. Yes.

Q. —— but if you can keep your voice up and speak slowly for the transcriber, because they’re going to be recording what you say, and if you can keep your answers clear.

A. Sure.

Q. Now, I just want to start with some preliminary matters.

You have provided two witness statements to the Inquiry. I want to take you to those. They’re going to appear on the screen before you.

A. Yeah.

Q. Turning to the first statement, [IWS00000473], this is a statement that you provided to the Inquiry in Phase 1 and has already been put into the Inquiry record and published on our website. You can see that before you?

A. To be honest, I need my glasses, I leave them in my coat, but that’s fine, I can ——

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, no, we might ask you to look at some documents, so would you like us to get your glasses or would you like to get them yourself?

THE WITNESS: That’s fine.
Q. Have you read both statements recently?
A. I think I read one, not both.
Q. Okay. Which statement have you read recently?
A. The first one.
Q. The first one?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. From your recollection of the first and the second one, can you confirm if their contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, everyone here has had a chance to read your statements and we’ve considered them carefully. I will be asking you some additional questions that arise from them. Okay?
A. No problem.
Q. Firstly, you moved into Grenfell Tower in June 2006; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And you lived in flat 85 on floor 11.
A. Yes.
Q. You lived there with your wife and children; is that right?
A. Yes.
Q. And you were a tenant of RBKC.
A. Yes.
Q. I want to now ask you about the relationship between RBKC and TMO, at least your understanding of it.
A. My relationship, it was — to be honest, it was fine. I never have any arguments with them and I never have any problem with them. Well, the connection is going to be between me and them. The payment, I never been behind for the payment, and for repair, most of the job I used to do myself, I never called and I didn’t call them very often, just if some big issue, like door broken or something. Just one time with my experience I have a sink blocked, that is one — the time — it wasn’t an argument, but it was just misunderstood. I called them for one of the sinks, and he was blocked and he try his luck.
Q. Now, Mr Khaliloued, I’m just going to pause you there. We will take you through some aspects of your statement.
A. Sure.
Q. You have been referring to the different organisations. Now, to break them down, there is the TMO and RBKC. Starting firstly with the TMO, were you aware that the TMO is a separate organisation from RBKC?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. What was your understanding of the responsibilities of the TMO?
A. The TMO’s responsibility is the repair of the — any repair on the flat.
Q. Now, you mentioned that you reported several repairs; does that mean you would report them first to the TMO?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
Q. What did you understand were the responsibilities of RBKC in respect of Grenfell Tower?
A. I don’t know, to be honest.
Q. Okay.
Q. Well, to go back to the TMO, you understand that they were managing the repairs. Did you know the TMO was managed by a board?
A. No.
Q. No?
A. No.
Q. Okay. Did you know that you could be a member of the TMO?
A. No.
Q. Okay.
Q. So you weren’t aware that there was an annual general meeting for the TMO?
A. No.
Q. No, okay.
Q. Were you aware of any residents’ associations for Grenfell Tower?
A. No.
Q. No, so the name Grenfell Compact, does that mean anything to you?
A. Of course Grenfell — I used to live in that tower.
Q. So you were aware of Grenfell Compact?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay, and what about Grenfell Action Group?
A. I know this is — too many … what you call it … I’m not sure about it, to be honest, but I know there is, after the fire, too many groups is coming up with supporting us, helping us and …
Q. Okay, so the name Grenfell Action Group, firstly, do you know that name?
A. Yeah.
Q. Yes, and were you aware of it after the fire or before the fire?
A. No, after the fire.
Q. After the fire only, okay.
Q. The final group that I want to ask you about is Lancaster West Residents’ Association. Were you aware of this Residents’ Association?
A. No, to be honest.
Q. Okay.
Q. I’m going to come back to ask you more about the residents’ associations in Grenfell Tower, but I just now want to take you to what you have said about
Q. If we look at your first statement, (IWS00000473/2), starting at paragraph 5, you have said:

"We were never given any advice on what to do in the case of a fire when we signed our tenancy agreement and moved into Grenfell Tower. We were not given a pack of papers or any leaflets on this subject. We were also given no verbal advice on what to do in the event of a fire. I did not witness any fire alarm tests or fire evacuation drills from the TMO, the council or the fire brigade while I lived in Grenfell Tower."

Q. I then want to move forward to page 3 (IWS00000473/3) and pick up your statement again at paragraph 10. You returned to the subject of fire safety advice, and at paragraph 10 you have explained:

"No one has ever explained to me what to do if there is a fire. We were never given any advice on what to do in the case of a fire when we signed our tenancy agreement and moved into Grenfell Tower. We were not given a pack of papers or any leaflets on this subject."

Q. But you knew that the TMO produced a magazine called Link?  
A. Yes.

Q. The Inquiry’s been provided with some documents that I would like to show you, and I would just like to ask if you have seen those before.

A. Sure.

Q. The first one I’m going to take you to is a copy of the tenancy handbook. The reference is (IWS00001762/2). If this can be turned around, we can see that’s a handbook called the tenancy handbook in blue. It’s been provided to the Inquiry by another resident of Grenfell Tower, Mr Mohammed Rasoul, and he has explained in his statement that he was provided this handbook in or around 2004.

So my first question is: have you seen a copy of this handbook before, do you recognise it?

A. No.

Q. No. So you never received a copy, even after moving into Grenfell Tower?

A. No.

Q. No. I’d like to then take you to another document, this is (CST00006750). Now, this is a leaflet titled “Home fire safety guide for purpose-built flats and maisonettes”, and we can see at the bottom that it’s produced by the LFB; can you see that?

A. Yeah.

Q. Have you ever seen a flyer like this before?

A. No.

Q. So you wouldn’t have seen this flyer around Grenfell Tower?

A. No, I can’t remember seeing --

Q. It’s not been posted in your flat?

A. No, I can’t remember I see something like that before.

Q. Okay, thank you.

A. I’d now like to take you to another document.

Q. Taking you through quite a few of the different documents now.

A. Sure, no problem.
1 Q. A leaflet?
2 A. Yeah.
3 Q. Can you describe what that leaflet said?
4 A. Just some like pictures. It’s like some — the pictures you show me now, to be honest.
5 Q. So pictures like this that would say Link?
6 A. Yeah.
7 Q. Did you see any copies of the magazines in the TMO offices?
8 A. I can’t remember, no.
9 Q. Okay. So is it fair to say that you never read the Link magazines?
10 A. No.
11 Q. Now, the TMO also had a website. Did you know that the TMO had a website?
12 A. No.
13 Q. So can we take it, then, that nobody ever told you to visit the TMO website?
14 A. No.
15 Q. And you weren’t aware that there was fire safety advice on the website?
16 A. No.
17 Q. Now, there is one last type of newsletter that I would like to show you, this is the Grenfell Tower Regeneration Newsletters, and if we can pull up {ART00002606}, we can see at the top it says Kensington and Chelsea TMO and Rydon; can you see that?
18 A. Yeah.
19 Q. And then the title of the newsletter is “Grenfell Tower Regeneration Newsletter”, and this particular copy is dated July 2014.
20 A. Yeah.
21 Q. Have you ever seen this type of newsletter before?
22 A. No.
23 Q. No?
24 A. No.
25 Q. And you never received copies of these newsletters?
26 A. No, to be honest.
27 Q. Were you aware that the TMO and Rydon were distributing newsletters like this to residents?
28 A. Should, but I didn’t receive anything, to be honest, like that before.
29 Q. Okay. So you don’t know if your neighbours were receiving them?
30 A. No.
31 Q. Now, returning to your statement {IWS00000473/3}, we already read from paragraphs 10 and 11, and you said you had never seen any notices in the hallway and you hadn’t seen any signs on the floors.
32 A. I would just like to show you an image now, (INQ00000093). This is a fire action notice that was posted next to the lifts in Grenfell Tower. Did you never notice this image?
33 A. No.
34 Q. No. So to confirm, before June 2017, you were not aware of the stay—put policy?
35 A. No, to be honest.
36 Q. Now, you have also explained in your statement that even if you were aware of it, you still would have left the building.
37 A. Yes.
38 Q. Why would you not follow the stay—put policy?
39 A. Which policy is the one?
40 Q. Sorry?
41 A. Which policy I have to follow up?
42 Q. So if I can show you your statement again, it’s {IWS00000473/3}.
43 A. Yeah.
44 Q. At paragraph 11 you said: “Before 14 June 2017 my belief was that I would have to go out of the building for safety of me and my family in the event of a fire. Even if someone had told me to stay in put, I would leave.”
45 So when you say this, are you aware that there is a stay—put policy?
46 A. Yes.
47 Q. My question is: why would you have still left your flat?
48 A. Why still I left my flat?
49 Q. And not followed the stay put advice.
50 A. Because I can’t stay in the fire. If something emergency you have to go out, you have to go out, I cannot stay.
51 Q. My question is: why would you have still left your flat?
52 A. Why still I left my flat?
53 Q. And not followed the stay put advice.
54 A. Because I can’t stay in the fire. If something emergency you have to go out, you have to go out, I cannot stay.
55 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Can I just see if you can help with this: if you discovered in some way that there was a fire in a flat on a different floor from yours, would you think it necessary to leave or would you stay in your own flat?
56 A. Yeah, I have to leave.
57 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I think what you’re being asked is:
1. why would you leave in those circumstances?

2. A. To leave, why ... sorry, can you repeat the question, please?

3. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes. Why would you think it necessary to leave if there was a fire in a flat on a different floor?

4. A. This is for my safety, and that’s what we have been learning, that’s what we have been as in my statement is where I said, I’m working in the hotel, we do testing in fire every six months, that’s what we’re learning. If any fire, see fire or hear alarm, drill and alarm constantly, it didn’t stop, you should leave. It doesn’t matter if you see the fire or didn’t see the fire, you just need to leave if the alarm come off for long time. If the test, it’s going to be.

5. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And that was something you had learned at work?

6. A. Yeah, that’s what I did at work.

7. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you, I understand.

8. MS SIVAKUMARAN: I’m now going to turn to a new subject, and that’s about your door.

9. Now, in your statement, you have said that your door was replaced in 2014. Is it possible that your door was replaced in 2011 and not 2014?

10. A. All the building doors have been changed in one time, to be honest. The date I can’t remember, to be honest, but if it’s been saying 2011, could be, but I’m not sure.

11. But like I said, all building door has been changed in one time. It was like a project for them to be changed, all the building doors, and it starts floor by floor, door by door, whatever is available and needs doing.

12. But the date — maybe I said 2014, but if it’s been done in 2011, this is the record about that.

13. Q. Okay. So we can confirm it wasn’t changed again after 2011?

14. A. No, it’s only one time changed.

15. Q. Okay.

16. A. Okay.

17. Q. How long after the door was installed did that self—closing device break?

18. A. Maybe a year, maybe six months, I’m not sure about the exact date, but...

19. Q. So it was quite soon after the door was installed?

20. A. Yes.

21. Q. And did you report that the self—closing device was broken to the TMO?

22. A. Yes.

23. Q. Once.

24. A. Yes.

25. MS SIVAKUMARAN: I’m now going to turn to a new subject, and that’s about your door.

61. Now, returning to your first statement, if we move down to page 4 {W500000473/4}, at paragraph 16 you have explained about your front door. You said: "Our front door had been there since 2014. The TMO had replaced everyone’s doors in 2014 except if they were private owners. I think it was a wooden door before and they replaced it with a new wooden door. The old door was painted green and the new door was painted black. The door only has one lock. It does not lock automatically if you shut it behind you. On our front door there was nothing in the frame inside the door to pressure it to close if you left the door open. There used to be a door closer on the frame inside the old door, but it had been broken for a long time. It was making noise when you used the door. When they came to put in new doors during the renovation of the building, we just told the builders to take off the closer. They did not replace it."

62. Now, firstly, I’m just going to take you to another document, this is {MAS0000003}. Now, this is a spreadsheet that the Inquiry’s been provided showing all the doors that were replaced, the tenants’ doors in Grenfell Tower. If we look at row 46, it’s not very easy to read, but what it does say is that your door, for your flat, was replaced on 20 May 2011.

63. Q. How did you report it?

64. A. We called them. We just have the number, we call them.

65. Q. What did they do in response?

66. A. Well, he take a bit of time to come to see it, and I told them — he bring another part, but it doesn’t work as well, I just said to him, “Just take it off, it’s not going to work”, and he take it off. At least it can be easy to open the door, open and close it, because it was making some noise and it’s difficult to close it as well.

67. Q. Okay. So did they try to replace the self—closing device?

68. A. Yes.

69. Q. They did try?

70. A. Yeah, he did, but he didn’t replace it.

71. Q. How many times did they come to repair your door?

72. A. Once.

73. Q. Once.

74. "... we just told the builders to take off the closer. They did not replace it."

75. When you say you told the builders to take off the closer, is that your reference to the TMO repairman?
Q. You said it could be one or it could be some; does that inform you with the timing and the date.

A. No.

Q. Okay. Did any of the letters invite a response from you?

A. No.

Q. Now, I want to show you a document which is a TMO summary of their consultations. It’s (SEA00006603/14).

Now, this is a consultation summary, you might not have seen this before, but in this table the first column has the dates and the second column shows the types of consultation that the TMO said that they used. It continues on to the next page, but what we can see on this page is it says that there were roadshows in 2012, estate meetings, evening consultation meetings, newsletters. These are the consultations that took place in 2012.

If you go on to the next page (SEA00006603/15), we can see again that they’re referring in July to evening consultation meetings and daytime drop-in sessions and newsletters, and those were held in July and August.

Now, were you aware that there were roadshows ongoing in 2012 about the refurbishment?

A. No.

Q. Did anyone ever ask you for access to check your flat front door?

A. No.

Q. And no one inspected the self—closing device afterwards?

A. No.

Q. Okay, I now want to move on to another topic, and that’s in respect of the refurbishment process.

Now, if we can look at your Phase 2 statement at (IWS00001754/3), at paragraph 12 you have said: “I stated at paragraph 24 of my Phase 1 statement that there was a refurbishment of the Tower in 2015. I do not recall there being a consultation with residents about the refurbishment. I think we just received letters from the TMO informing us it was going to happen.”

A. Yeah.

Q. How many letters did you receive from the TMO?

A. Not really, to be honest. There’s too many of them, every time someone coming.

Q. So it wasn’t a handyman or an estate services assistant?

A. Not sure.

Q. Now, did the TMO make you aware at any point during your tenancy at Grenfell Tower about the importance of self—closing devices for your flat front door?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Did any of the letters invite a response from you?

A. No.

Q. So can I take it that you were not asked to complete a questionnaire about what you would like to happen in the refurbishment?

A. From them?

Q. From the TMO. Did the TMO send you a questionnaire?

A. No.

Q. Were you aware that there were estate meetings?

A. No, to be honest.

Q. And evening consultation meetings?

A. No.

Q. So can I take it that you were not asked to complete a questionnaire about what you would like to happen in the refurbishment?

A. From them?

Q. I’ll put that a different way. Were you asked to complete any questionnaires about the refurbishment?

A. No.

Q. Now, I just want to show you another document. This is an email, and the reference is (TMO00946124). Now, this is an email addressed to Mr Collins and Mr Daflarn. It’s not one that you are copied in to, so you might not have seen it before, but Mr Collins and Mr Daflarn had asked for a meeting with the residents, and Claire Williams had responded and she set out

...
communication channels or consultation that the TMO had
carried out with residents in 2013 and 2014. So this is
the period after the document that I’ve just shown you.
4. A. Okay, this is before the meeting — — before the
5 refurbishment?
6. Q. This is during the refurbishment, this starts, so it’s
7 2013 into 2014, and the email itself is sent in
8 April 2015.
9. A. No, sorry, I never see that email.
10. Q. Yes, of course. No, I understand you haven’t seen the
11 email, I want to ask you about the content of the email?
12. A. No, I don’t think so happened.
13. Q. Okay. I understand that you haven’t seen the email,
14 what I want to ask you about is some of the types of
15 consultation that Claire Williams said were arranged for
16 residents.
17. A. To be honest, during the refurbishment we’d been asking
18 TMO to come to our meeting. We created residents’
19 meetings sometimes, and never come to sit down with us,
20 never. We asked them during the refurbishment to
21 discuss with us at least what’s going to be inside our
22 flat, what it’s going to do, but never come, until when
23 contacted the councillor, and at that time, it forced
24 them to come to sit down with us in the meeting. That’s
25 the time I saw TMO call us to sit down to have a meeting

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1 to discuss what it’s going to do inside our flats. But
2 whatever it’s doing outdoor — — out our door, will never
3 talk to us at all. But inside our door, that’s the time
4 we told them to come, but never come to sit down with
5 us, to be honest.
6. Q. Okay. I’m going to ask you about those residents’
7 meetings that you had.
8. Before we come to them, were you aware that there
9 were any drop-in sessions for residents with the TMO?
10. A. No, to be honest, never come the TMO to talk to us.
11. Q. Did you know that there was a respite flat that you
12 could visit?
13. A. Yes.
14. Q. Did you ever visit that flat?
15. A. Yes, a couple of times.
16. Q. Okay. Did you have a chance to talk to the TMO on those
17 visits?
18. A. Yes, we talked to them, but … yeah, we talked to them.
19 They show us the flat, how it’s going to be, but we told
20 them about the — — our concern was about the boiler,
21 that’s the main thing we’ve been talking about it, but
22 never come to us to sit down to change the location of
23 the boiler. That’s the — — most of the residents, that’s
24 that their issue was talking about it.
25. Q. Okay. Well, if I can take you, then, to your statement

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1 where you have spoken about the residents’ meetings.
2 A. Yeah.
3. Q. It’s (IWS00001754/3). At paragraph 17 you have spoken
4 about these regular meetings that you have just
5 mentioned — —
6. A. Yeah.
7. Q. — — and you have said, “We would meet once or twice
8 a month”. When did you start attending the residents’
9 meetings?
10. A. During the refurbishment.
11. Q. Do you remember roughly what year it was, or …?
12. A. Not really, but during the refurbishment. The
13 refurbishment, it was in 2014. That’s the time we
14 started doing the meetings. That’s the reason why we’re
15 doing that meeting, just because of the refurbishment.
16 We wasn’t happy about what the TMO or Rydon is doing.
17 Rydon just — — he is doing what he has been told to do,
18 to be honest, but the TMO, what he has been doing to our
19 flats, we wasn’t happy. All the residents, or most of
20 us, we wasn’t happy. That’s why we start sit down doing
21 a meeting and talk to them, to try to change something.
22. Q. Okay, and were those discussions only about the heating
23 interface unit or the boiler?
24. A. Well, that’s the big subject to be honest. Plus the
25 pipe, the gas pipe, plus, you know, whatever is inside

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1 our flat.
2. Q. Okay. So can you just summarise for us what your
3 concerns were about the work that the TMO was doing?
4 What were your main concerns about the refurbishment?
5. A. Windows — — but the windows was not a problem, but the
6 big problem was the boiler. It was in the corridor and
7 we wasn’t happy about it, for the safety, for the
8 location of it, it wasn’t that good, to be honest.
9 That’s why we wasn’t happy to put it in there, in the
10 corridor.
11. Q. You have also mentioned the gas pipes as well.
12 A. Yeah, the gas pipe, it was outside the doors as well and
13 coming in. It was quite a bit of risk for it to be
14 outside like that.
15. Q. Did you have any other fire safety concerns during the
16 refurbishment?
17 A. No.
18. Q. Now, in your statement, I believe if we turn over to
19 page 4 (IWS00001754/4), paragraph 19, it says there:
20 “We were calling on the TMO to come and sit down
21 with us at our meetings and discuss our concerns, but no
22 one attended for months. It was only when we called our
23 local MP to attend one of our meetings that the TMO
24 started to respond to our concerns.”
25 A. As you said, they only met with you after your MP
Q. Did you feel that the TMO responded to any of the concerns that you raised in those meetings?
A. Yes.

Q. You do feel that they responded to them?
A. Yes, it’s been forced them to do it, to be honest.

Q. Why did you feel that they were forced?
A. Well, because he don’t want to listen to us before. If he’s not been forced, he should listen to us when we told them the boiler shouldn’t be in the corridor, it should be in the kitchen, where is the previous place, where is the other one. But he don’t want to listen, and he done it for like 70% of the flats — — of the building, and for like the 25 or 30% left, we told them we’re not going to let anyone to come to our place, our flat, to do it, and that’s the time we forced them as well, because when we don’t let the Rydon to come to do the work, that means it’s going to be some delay of the project, and that’s the time when we called the MP to come to sit down with us and to talk to us and she can talk to them. And the MP, that’s what they told them.

To be honest, I was in the meeting, and she — — it was like two questions or three questions for them. She told them, “Guys, he call us to come to sit down to talk about the boiler, can you change it from that place to that place”, and he said to her, “Yes, he can be”. He said to her, “Just do it, that’s it”. He said, “We’re going to be a bit more time, the job’s going to take more than two days, going to take like five days”, and she told to us, ask us, “And you’re happy, guys, to be work done more than two days, five days?” We said to her, “Yes, fine, just we need to be safe”. That’s it, and the job done. And the next day, they change it, starts putting them in the same place we want it.

Q. Okay. Did that mean that all your concerns were addressed after they moved the boiler?
A. Yeah.

Q. Okay, and you didn’t have any further fire safety concerns after this?
A. Well, at least we moved the boiler from there just for our safety and the kids’ safety, but the rest we cannot control it. For our house, we try to make everything safe for ourselves, but outside we cannot talk to them, to be honest, we cannot change anything.

Q. When you say “off-site”, what area are you describing?
A. That means we’re talking lift area, stairs and ... Q. Did you have any concerns about the safety of those communal areas, the lift areas and the stairs?
A. No, to be honest.
1. sometime, and he was between us and the TMO or —— yeah, he’s the one who was representative.
2. Q. And was he representing your concerns?
3. A. Yes.
4. Q. Okay.
5. Then my final question is: during the sign—up with the TMO —— so this is when you first moved into Grenfell Tower —— do you recall receiving any documents informing you that you could become a member of the TMO?
6. A. No.
7. MS SIVAKUMARAN: Those are my questions. Thank you very much, Mr Khalloud.

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8. MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you, members of the panel. I want to now continue reading statements from residents with particular vulnerabilities. We are moving on now to evidence from witnesses who lived on the fourth floor of Grenfell Tower with her husband, Abdulwahab Abdulhamid, her brother Yasin Yusuf Adam, and there was also a friend, Amna Yousif Mohammed, who stayed with the family on occasion.
9. MS MARYAM YUSUF ADAM (evidence read into the record)
10. MR RAWAT: The first statement that we will go to is that of Alison Moses, and if we could have, please, on the screen, (IWS00001281).
11. Ms Moses lived alone in flat 11 on the fourth floor of Grenfell Tower, and this is the first page of her Phase 2 statement, which consists of 13 pages. Could we go to page 13, please. Mr Chairman, we see that there is a statement of truth, the statement is signed and dated 14 February 2020, and I ask that it now be formally admitted into the record.
12. In terms of reading, I would like to take the panel to page 3 (IWS00001281/3), paragraph 13. Ms Moses says there:
13. “I had informed RBKC/TMO of my health conditions because they impacted my housing needs. Mobility difficulties meant I would need a property that was step—free and I had a wet room. My tenancy agreement for Flat 11 Grenfell Tower notes that I have additional needs.”
14. She then gives the reference for that document.
15. If we move through the statement, please, to paragraph 42, page 8 (IWS00001281/8), under the heading “Fire safety advice”, Ms Moses says as follows:
16. “42. I do not remember being provided with any fire safety advice after moving into the property.

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17. “43. Although I was not provided with fire safety advice, I knew what I would do in the event of a fire. I knew I would get out. This was not based on anything I had been told to do, but my own response to something like that.
18. “45. I suffer from health problems which affect my mobility. This means I cannot use stairs and I cannot easily step in and out of the bath. RBKC and the TMO were aware of these needs. My needs were also recognised by Adult Social Care, which is part of RBKC, as they installed a wet room in my flat.”
19. I have finished reading from Ms Moses’ statement at that point.
20. MS MARYAM YUSUF ADAM (evidence read into the record)
21. MR RAWAT: If I could take the panel, please, to the statement of Maryam Yusuf Adam, that is at (IWS00001296). This Phase 2 statement consists of seven pages, and if we go again to the last page in the statement, we see again that there is a statement of truth, the statement is signed, dated 14 February 2020, and again, Mr Chairman, I ask that it be put into the record at this point.

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22. For background, Ms Adam lived in flat 14 on the fourth floor of Grenfell Tower with her husband, Abdulwahab Abdulhamid, her brother Yasin Yusuf Adam, and there was also a friend, Amna Yousif Mohammed, who stayed with the family on occasion.
23. If we go, please, to page 3 in the statement (IWS00001296/3), and if we look at paragraph 11, this is where in the statement Ms Adam begins to discuss vulnerabilities, as well as her language needs. She says at paragraph 11:
"I do not remember seeing a fire safety sign on my floor or on other floors. When I first moved in, the housing officer told me where I should go in the event of a fire, which was down the stairs. This is contradictory to the 'stay put' policy that I have now been made aware of."

"I remember there was a green/white sign on the wall on my floor that showed the escape routes. I do not remember seeing any emergency lighting on my floor or any smoke control or ventilation systems."

If we go on to paragraph 15 on the same page, Ms Adam continues at paragraph 15: "I was not aware of the 'stay put' policy before 14 June 2017. If the TMO did provide any information, I was not aware of this. Anything sent by the TMO was always in English, which is not my first language."

"16. I was not aware of any special provisions made for those with language or other special needs. I also have mobility problems that make it difficult for me to walk and I don't remember RBKC or TMO providing any specific information about escape routes in an emergency for those with mobility issues."

"I was told by the TMO when I moved in that in the event of a fire, I would have to use the stairs. They made no efforts to resolve this issue for me, given that they knew about my mobility issues." That's where I will conclude reading from that statement, but I would add that Ms Adam's brother, Yasin Yusuf Adam, has also provided a Phase 2 statement. That is under the reference (IWS00001301). Her husband, Abdulwahab Abdulhamid, provided a Phase 2 statement under reference (IWS00001919). These statements go to similar issues and I ask at this point that they be admitted into the record.

MR MAHER KHOUDAIR (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: The next statement, Mr Chairman, I would like to turn to is that of Maher Khoudair, and you will remember, Mr Chairman, that Mr Khoudair gave oral evidence to you during Phase 1 of the Inquiry's hearings. If we could move forward to paragraph 61, please, Mr Khoudair makes the point in this paragraph that the TMO and RBKC would have been aware of his disability, as he had gone to the Town Hall to make a complaint about access to the tower whilst the main entrance was closed. Mr Khoudair says that he informed them that they had to open the main entrance because the bridge was too dangerous for him given his disability.

If we go on to the next page (IWS00001616/9) and paragraph 62, Mr Khoudair continues: "62. In approximately 2016, I complained about the bridge to Victoria [Borwick], who was the MP for Kensington & Chelsea at the time. She came to meet me and other residents of Grenfell Tower and people working from the TMO. She told people working for the TMO to case of fire."
“husband’s disabilities, namely he is partially sighted.

I wanted, and I told him I could not use the bridge and
the stairs at the end of the bridge because I am on
crutches and I have severe mobility issues. Someone
from TMO even promised the MP that the main entrance
would be opened after two weeks, but it was re–opened
after three months only.

“63. I complained almost 20 times about the lifts
not working, but nothing was done.

“64. I am very disappointed at how I was treated.”

That’s where I end reading from that statement,
Mr Chairman.

MS ROSITA BONIFACIO (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: If I could move on to the evidence of
Rosita Bonifacio, please, and that is at {IWS00001887}.

Mr Chairman, you will remember the Phase 1 evidence
relating to Mr Elpidio Bonifacio, who was the last
to escape Grenfell Tower on
14 June 2017. He and his wife, Rosita, had lived in
flat 83 on the 11th floor of the tower for 36 years.
They have two sons who were born and grew up in
Grenfell Tower before moving out as adults.

As we see here, Rosita Bonifacio has provided
a Phase 2 statement which consists of 11 pages. If we
go to page 11, please, again it has a statement of

truth, it is signed, and it is dated 13 March 2020.

If I could ask that we move back to page 3
{IWS00001887/3}, please, and if we could expand around
paragraph 17. This is under the heading “Fire safety
signage and information”. Mrs Bonifacio’s statement
continues:

“17. I do not recall being given any information
about fire safety by the TMO, RBKC or the London
Fire Brigade.

“18. I do not recall seeing any fire safety signage
in Grenfell Tower, outlining what to do in the event of
a fire. There was not a sign by or in the lifts stating
that the lift should not be used in the event of
a fire.”

If we go on to paragraph 25 {IWS00001887/4},
please, and again if we see the heading “Special needs
or vulnerabilities relevant to fire safety”, in this
part of the statement Mrs Bonifacio is explaining why
she thought that the TMO and RBKC were aware of her
husband’s disability.

The statement reads from paragraph 25:

“Shevanthie, my advisor at Kensington’s Citizen’s
Advice Bureau, registered my husband’s disability at the
town hall, so RBKC and the TMO must have known about my
husband’s disabilities, namely he is partially sighted
and has mobility issues... In addition, as I outlined
previously, when the TMO initially refused to carry out
repairs in our flat, I told them that my husband was
disabled, and that we were both unable to carry out the
repairs ourselves.”

In paragraph 26 the statement continues:

“The TMO never spoke to me about moving to a lower
floor in the Tower, despite the fact that my husband and
I are both elderly. The TMO also did not offer to make
adaptations to our flat to make it suitable for my
husband and more accommodating for his disabilities.
They never carried out any kind of assessment of our
needs. It made me feel like they did not really care
and that it was better not to go to them to complain
about anything.”

The next paragraph reads as follows:

“I did not contact the TMO about these issues or
inform them that my husband required a special fire
evacuation plan because of his disabilities, because
I did not think that they would care. It was always
a struggle to get them to respond to my complaints, so
I felt that there was no point going to them for help.”

MS SHAKILA FLORA NEDA (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, I now want to go to another
statement, and that is the statement of Shakila

Flora Neda. If we could have on the screen, please,
{IWS00001272}. Again, Mr Chairman, you will remember
Mrs Neda, she gave evidence during Phase 1, and on the
same day as her son, Shekab Neda. Her Phase 2 statement
consists of 13 pages, and if we could go to the last
page, please, we see the statement of truth, the
statement is signed, it’s dated 2 March 2020, and again
I ask that it be admitted into the record.

Again, for background, Mrs Neda lived in flat 205 on
the 23rd floor with her husband, Saber, and her son.
The family had moved into Grenfell Tower on 17 May 1999.
As everyone will know, Mr Neda died during the fire.

In her Phase 2 evidence, Mrs Neda has described her
reliance on the lifts in the tower, and she explains
that when the lifts were out of service, she would go
back into her flat and not go out for the day.

Mrs Neda, however, had no choice but to take the stairs
on occasions when she had medical appointments.

If we go, please, to page 8 in the statement
{IWS00001272/8}, and we look at paragraph 50, this is
where Mrs Neda describes her medical conditions. The
paragraph reads:

“I suffer from Myasthenia Gravis, I was diagnosed
with this in December 2008, which causes weakness in my
muscles and I am easily fatigued. My TMO housing
MR RA W A T: Mr Chairman, if I could now turn to Phase 2
statements that have been provided by bereaved witnesses
who have given evidence in those statements about their
loved ones who had vulnerabilities, and I would like to
start with two statements from members of the Choucair
family, Sawson and Hisam Choucair, who both speak about
their mother, Mrs Sirria Choucair, who died in the fire.

As you will recall from Phase 1, Mr Chairman,
Sawson Choucair lived in flat 191 on the 22nd floor with
her mother, Sirria. Ms Choucair’s sister, Nadia, lived
on the same floor with her husband, Bassem, and their
three children. The evidence was that they were
a close-knit family who shared meals and valuable time
with each other, and we know from Sawson Choucair’s
evidence that her mother loved living with her children
and grandchildren and the view over London from her
flat.

If we go, please, to {IWS00001799}, this is
Sawson Choucair’s Phase 2 statement consisting of
22 pages. Please go to page 22. Again, we see
a statement of truth, signed and dated 2 March 2020, and
I ask that this statement be admitted into the record.

Can we go back, please, to page 9 (IWS00001799/9)
and start at paragraph 9, please. Here, Ms Choucair
speaks of her mother’s mobility issues, and if I read
from the middle section of the paragraph, it reads as
follows:

“Neither RBKC nor the TMO never discussed
fire safety with me after they became aware of my
disability. They also did not discuss an escape route
in the event of a fire. Although my health had
deteriorated I never requested to be moved to a lower
floor. I loved my flat and was very happy there and
I did not want to move.”

That’s all I read from Mrs Neda’s statement, but
I add now that her son, Shekab, has also provided
a Phase 2 statement where he gives further information
on the same issues as his mother. The reference for
that is (IWS00001302), and I ask that it be admitted
into the record.

MS SAWSON CHOUCAIR (evidence read into the record)

MR HISAM CHOUCAIR (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: Could we have, please, now on the screen
{IWS00001851}. This is the Phase 2 statement of
Hisam Choucair, which consists of 31 pages. If we could
go, please, to page 31, it is again accompanied by
a statement of truth, signed, and is dated
26 February 2020, so again I ask that that be formally
admitted into the record.

Can we take it back, please, to page 2
(IWS00001851/2). At paragraph 8, Mr Choucair begins to
describe and discuss his mother’s health conditions, but
if we pick it up at paragraph 10, what he says is that:

“In my view, in the context of other housing needs,
she was also vulnerable by virtue of the fact that she
could not read or write in English and, although she
could understand and speak limited conversational
English, she would find it difficult to understand any
unusual or technical terms, words or expressions.”

If we could move forward in this statement to page 8
(IWS00001851/8), paragraph 42, there Mr Choucair states
at paragraph 42:

“The apparent failure to prepare a Personal
Emergency Evacuation Plan, or even properly record the
above information about the personal risk to my mother in the event of a fire or to communicate it to others. (for example, the LFB) meant that there were no measures in place to support her in the event of any evacuation.”

Could I ask that we move two pages down to paragraph 56, please {IWS00001851/10}. This is about the provision of fire safety information. At paragraph 56, Mr Choucair records this:

"I think that my family were aware of the fire safety advice. I remember my mother saying that she had had someone from the TMO or RBKC visit her and that they told her to ‘stay put’ if there was a fire. I was not there at the time so I do not know if they brought a translator with them, but even though she remembered the words ‘stay put’, my impression was that she did not understand what that meant."

That is all I propose to read from Mr Choucair’s statement, but the final point to make is that Nabil Choucair, who is also a son of Sirria Choucair, has also made a Phase 2 statement. That is under the reference {IWS00002365}, and I ask at this point that that be admitted into the record.

Mr Chairman, I note the time, and I would propose that we stop at this point.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Is that a convenient point?

The short adjournment

(2.00 pm)

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Rawat. Now, have we got another witness coming after the adjournment, is that right?

MR RAWAT: Yes, we have, at 2 o’clock.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: As far as we know, she’ll be ready to start at 2 o’clock?

MR RAWAT: I hope so.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Very good. All right. Well, thank you.

We will break now, then, and resume at 2 o’clock.

Thank you very much.

(1.00 pm)

The short adjournment

(2.00 pm)

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Rawat. Now, have we got another witness?

MR RAWAT: We do, Mr Chairman, our next witness is Emma O’Connor.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.

MS EMMA O’CONNOR (affirmed)

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Before I invite Mr Rawat to start putting questions to you, can I just say that Ms Istephan hasn’t got the transcript running, for some reason, but she tells me she can manage without it for the time being. We will see how we get on, maybe sort it out at the next break.

Q. If we bring that up, that’s at {IWS00001699}. That’s the first page of the statement. If we go to the last page, which is page 8, can you confirm for me that that’s your signature there?

A. Yes.

Q. We can see it’s dated 25 February 2020.

A. Yes, that’s my signature.

Q. Have you had a chance to go through this statement recently?

A. Sadly I haven’t.

Q. But do you remember making that statement?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. Thank you.

Well, let’s start off by going back to your first statement, {IWS00000121}, please. As I said, that’s the Inquiry. I just want to take you to the first of those, {IWS00000121}, please. This is the statement, Ms O’Connor, that you made for Phase 1 of the Inquiry’s proceedings, and it’s already part of the Inquiry record, so I don’t need you to deal with any formalities in relation to that statement. But we do need to do that for your second Phase 2 statement.

A. Yes.

Q. Can I also ask you just to try and keep your voice up.

A. Yes.

Q. I know it’s a bit of a big room, but it’s important that we hear you, and it’s especially important that the transcript, who is just sitting to your right, can record your answers clearly and accurately. So keep your voice up and try and speak slowly.

You have given two witness statements to the Inquiry. I just want to take you to the first of those, {IWS00000121}, please. This is the statement, Ms O’Connor, that you made for Phase 1 of the Inquiry’s proceedings, and it’s already part of the Inquiry record, so I don’t need you to deal with any formalities in relation to that statement. But we do need to do that for your second Phase 2 statement.
Q. Now, when you were completing this form, were you sitting down with someone from the TMO and going through it?
A. I can’t remember whether it was actually done in the flat or in the office that used to be downstairs.
Q. But did you and Luke fill it in by yourselves and then return it to the TMO, or did someone from the TMO go through the form with you?
A. I think it was done in the presence of Janice.
Q. You say Janice; what’s Janice’s surname, do you remember?
A. I believe it may be Janice Wray.
Q. Okay.
A. She was the one of them to show us around the flat on the viewing date.
Q. So it was someone called Janice who showed you the flat?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, when you were looking at this form, was it ever explained to you why the question was being asked?
A. Personally, I do not remember whether it was explained to you why the question was being asked?
Q. A. I do not remember whether it was explained of why it was on the form.
A. Personally, I do not remember whether it was explained of why it was on the form.
Q. But you’ve obviously ticked “Yes”, as you told us.
A. Yes.
Q. At that time, was there any discussion between you and anybody from the TMO about providing support for you because of your mobility issues?
A. No, not that I remember.
Q. This is obviously in July 2012 when you’re moving into the flat.
A. Yes.
Q. Do you remember whether there was any discussion about how you would evacuate?
A. Absolutely none.
Q. When you moved in, were you given any other advice about fire safety?
A. No. I just remember seeing the signs on the — — in the lift area.
Q. Can I come back to the signs in a moment, please.
A. Yeah.
Q. I asked you about whether there was any discussion about evacuation and your answer was, “Absolutely none”. Did you actually raise that with anybody at the time?
A. At the time, no, I didn’t — — sorry, I’m trying to put it in a way to understand it. At the time we moved in, I felt that the building was safe, so it wouldn’t need discussion at that point — — at the moment in time of just signing it, because we hadn’t actually moved in yet, at the moment of signing the document.
Q. Can I show you another document, please. It’s [TMO00870665]. Now, this, Ms O’Connor, if I explain,
Q. Okay. If I also draw your attention to paragraph 26.

A. Yes.

Q. I don’t want to or need to read out any bits of it to you. It contains obviously advice on fire safety.

A. Not regarding fire safety, no.

Q. And then after the refurbishment, these signs appeared.

A. Yes.

Q. And there was a sign on that noticeboard; is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. So before that, were there any signs?

A. Not in the lift lobbies on the individual floors, just through the first door, before you get into the lift area.

Q. So if we can break that down a little, please.

A. Sorry.

Q. So before the refurbishment there was a noticeboard?

A. Yes.

Q. And there was a sign on that noticeboard; is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. And then after the refurbishment, these signs appeared.

A. Yes, it was only put there once the refurbishment took place.

Q. Which floors did you see these signs on?

A. Mostly ours, which was originally the 17th but then changed to the 20th, and if I accidentally got out of -- at the wrong floor, then I would see them, because I’d have to press the button and they were where the button was to call the lifts.

Q. Thank you.

Now, you’ve made clear in your statements that you were aware of the stay put policy. To call the lifts.

A. Yes.

Q. Why was it your plan to leave via the lift in the event of an emergency?

A. Well, we -- thinking of it, and I know it’s not a smart idea to use the lift in that situation, but it would have been my only means of escape, because travelling down the stairs when everyone’s panicking, it’s not really -- it wouldn’t -- it would usually take me about half an hour to get down the stairs, and maybe even longer to get up.

Q. But in both of your statements, and I can take you to the paragraphs if you want --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- you make mention of the lift being broken --

Q. Okay. If I also draw your attention to paragraph 26.
Q. Do you remember receiving a tenancy handbook at any time?
A. No.
Q. Remember being given a tenancy handbook?
A. No, because I wasn’t informed that there was any fire safety advice on their website.

Q. Do you know that the TMO had a website?
A. No.
Q. Did anybody tell you that you could find fire safety advice on that website?
A. No.
Q. So nobody had told you that you could find fire safety advice on that website?
A. No.
Q. When you visited it, you couldn’t see any links to that advice?
A. No.
Q. And the page is titled “Home fire safety guide for purpose—built flats and maisonettes”, and what it says, you can see the heading, is, “If you have a fire, do you know your plan?”
A. No.
Q. Did you ever receive a copy of this leaflet posted through your flat door?
A. No.
Q. Did you ever come across leaflets like this in the communal areas of Grenfell Tower?
A. No.
Q. Did you ever visit the website or use it in any way?
A. Yes.
Q. When you were using the website, did you notice whether it had advice about fire safety?
A. No, because I wasn’t informed that there was any fire safety advice on it.
Q. When you visited it, you couldn’t see any links to that advice?
A. No.
Q. And the page is titled “Home fire safety guide for purpose—built flats and maisonettes”, and what it says, you can see the heading, is, “If you have a fire, do you know your plan?”
A. No.
Q. Did you ever receive a copy of this leaflet posted through your flat door?
A. No.
Q. Did you ever come across leaflets like this in the communal areas of Grenfell Tower?
A. No.
Q. Did you ever visit the website or use it in any way?
A. Yes.
Q. When you were using the website, did you notice whether it had advice about fire safety?
A. No, no handbook was given to us.
Q. No form of handbook was ever given to us.
A. No.
Q. Did you ever read it?
A. No.
Q. So no Link magazines came through your front door?
A. No.
Q. When you visited your mother and saw the magazine there, did you ever read it?
A. No.
Q. So no Link magazines came through your front door?
A. No.
Q. When you visited your mother and saw the magazine there, did you ever read it?
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Q. When you visited your mother and saw the magazine there, did you ever read it?
A. No.
Q. So no Link magazines came through your front door?
Q. Well, if we go to page 2 of this document, which was in July 2014, is one of two such newsletters that contained fire safety advice. I’m just going to bring up the second one for you.

A. Yes.

Q. If you feel uncomfortable looking at it, just tell me and we’ll deal with it in a different way. All right?

A. Yes.

Q. Let’s bring up (JRP00000028), please. This is headed May 2016. If we could go to page 4 (JRP00000028/4), please, and can you see that there is an arrow pointing to “The ‘stay put’ policy”?

A. Yes.

Q. It says: “The smoke detection systems have been upgraded and extended. The Fire Brigade has asked us to reinforce the message that if there is a fire which is not inside your own home, you are generally safest to stay put in your home to begin with; the Fire Brigade will arrive very quickly if a fire is reported.”

I don’t think I need to read any more, but you have two newsletters there, one from 2014, one from 2016.

Were you aware that the newsletters did contain advice about fire safety?

A. I probably skipped that bit, because I was aware that it was always put in there, but it never — it was just ——
1. Q. What did you understand the role of the TMO was in relation to Grenfell Tower?
2. A. That they took our rent and was aware -- sorry, was the people to go to for repairs and complaints.
3. Q. What was the responsibility of RBKC, then?
4. A. To put us in touch with TMO to be housed under them.
5. Q. Did anyone ever explain to you or Luke how the TMO operated?
6. A. Not that I can remember.
7. Q. So either at the time that you moved in or subsequently, were you ever given information that the TMO was managed by a board which included tenants and leaseholders?
8. A. With our -- because the tower wasn't our first property with TMO, no, no one explained that the first time.
9. Q. Did you ever get any information coming through your door explaining how you could become involved in the TMO?
10. A. No, only in the tower.
11. Q. What was that information then?
12. A. It was that I could join the -- be a member of TMO.
13. Q. Did you in fact join the TMO?
14. A. No.
15. Q. Was there any reason why you didn't want to become involved?
16. A. I felt that I wouldn't have been taken seriously.
17. Q. Did anybody ever come and visit you from the TMO to discuss the refurbishment with just you and Luke in your flat?
18. A. Not that I can remember.
19. Q. Did you attend any of those meetings?
20. A. No.
21. Q. Did you attend any of the meetings.
22. A. Only the ones that were put in the regeneration newsletters.
23. Q. Did anybody ever come and visit you from the TMO to discuss the refurbishment with just you and Luke in your flat?
24. A. Not that I can remember.
25. Q. So either at the time that you moved in or subsequently, were you ever given information that the TMO was managed by a board which included tenants and leaseholders?
26. A. With our -- because the tower wasn't our first property with TMO, no, no one explained that the first time.
27. Q. Did you ever get any information coming through your door explaining how you could become involved in the TMO?
28. A. No, only in the tower.
29. Q. What was that information then?
30. A. It was that I could join the -- be a member of TMO.
31. Q. Did you in fact join the TMO?
32. A. No.
33. Q. Was there any reason why you didn't want to become involved?
34. A. I felt that I wouldn't have been taken seriously.
35. Q. Did you attend any of those meetings?
36. A. No.
37. Q. Did you attend any of the meetings.
38. A. Only the ones that were put in the regeneration newsletters.
39. Q. Did anybody ever come and visit you from the TMO to discuss the refurbishment with just you and Luke in your flat?
40. A. Not that I can remember.

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A. Not to my knowledge when we were in the tower, but it's recently come to light of, like, hearing about the groups through the Inquiry.

Q. But at the time that you were living there, they weren't a group that you knew of?

A. No, we didn't really go out or socialise much, we had — we just socialised with people with dogs, because we used to take our dog for a walk.

Q. If we go back, then, to your first Inquiry statement, {IWS00000121/3}, please. If we look at paragraph 15, five lines down there is a sentence that begins "Accessing the building", and you say there,

Ms O'Connor:

"Accessing the building was more difficult for us during the refurbishment. The builders built a temporary entrance near the ambulance loading bay which was accessible only via stairs. That 'temporary' entrance was in place for nearly 3 years. I complained to the TMO but they said they couldn't do anything about it. It concerned me given my health and mobility problems because in the event of an emergency, it would be more difficult for me to get in and out of the building to the ambulance loading bay."

A. I believe it was their complaints system. I did do some drivers are calm and relaxed and others are really, really pushed to the limits and want you there immediately.

Q. And because of the need to make sure you were down in the bays, it’s not very helpful, because occasionally —

A. Very difficultly. I was — I’d have to go step by step, and when you’ve got patient transport waiting down in the bays, it’s not very helpful, because occasionally —

Q. And did you know at the time, that is before the fire, that it would shut automatically?

A. No. Not that I’m — not that I can remember.

Q. Did anyone ever come to your flat and ask to access your front door but they said they couldn’t do anything about it. It concerned me given my health and mobility problems because in the event of an emergency, it would be more difficult for me to get in and out of the building to the ambulance loading bay."

A. No. Not to my knowledge when we were in the tower, but it’s recently come to light of, like, hearing about the groups through the Inquiry.

Q. Did anyone from the TMO or elsewhere tell you that your front door should be able to close automatically?

A. No. Not that I’m — not that I can remember.

Q. And did you know at the time, that is before the fire, that your front door was supposed to have a device so that it would shut automatically?

A. No. I wasn’t aware of those details.

Q. Did anyone tell you that if your door didn’t shut automatically it was something you had to report to the TMO?

A. No.

Q. Did anyone ever knock on your door and introduce themselves as a fire risk assessor?

A. No, never.

MR RAWAT: Thank you.

SIR MARTIN MOORE: Okay. Thank you. Mr Chairman, those are all the questions I want to put to Ms O’Connor.
MR RAWAT: We can leave it there, Ms O'Connor.

A. I just remember her as Janice. I honestly cannot remember her second name. I could identify her by a picture, but that's all that I can do.

Q. But when I say Janice Jones, does that ring a bell with you at all?

A. Yes, Mr Rawat.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And we’re grateful to you for coming. Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Could I add one thing, sorry?

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.

THE WITNESS: I don’t think it’s fair that we were allowed —— not we, that all these corporate companies were allowed to be given the choice to choose what the price tag on our lives should be. I just lost the possessions, thankfully not my life, but my heart goes out to my fellow neighbours and bereaved. We fight this together, and we’ve got so much support, and thank you for the opportunity to speak. I have been meaning to say that since Phase 1, so thank you.

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, well done. Thank you for coming to talk to us. It’s been helpful, as we say, very helpful, and I hope you feel a little bit better for having had the opportunity to say all that.

MR RAWAT: If I could please have on the screen Mr Ahmed Elgwahry. If I take it to page 13, please, the transcripts@opus2.com +44 (0)20 3008 5900
statement is dated 27 February 2020, it is signed with a statement of truth, and so I ask that it be admitted into the record.

Mr Chairman, as you will remember from Phase 1, Mr Elgwahry’s mother Elsah, and his sister, Mariem, lived in flat 196 on the 22nd floor of Grenfell Tower, and they both died on the night of the fire. The family had lived in the tower for almost 30 years, and Mr Elgwahry’s sister was 27 years old and she had lived there all of her life.

In his Phase 2 statement, Mr Elgwahry speaks of his mother’s health problems, and if we could look, please, at page 7 (IW500001757/7), and just expand paragraphs 19 and 20, what Mr Elgwahry says there is:

19. My mother, Elsah Elgwahry, had a complex range of health problems which resulted in difficulty walking and an inability to climb a high number of stairs without assistance and her hands were also affected, resulting in a lack of dexterity. Neurological problems meant she could not carry anything but light bags and would have to place a heavier bag on her wrist or forearm in order to carry it. The difficulties my mother experienced as a result of her disability were known by the TMO and a ‘tenancy information’ form dated 24 June 2015 (so just before the works got underway I believe) which I exhibit herein [and the reference is then given]. This records that my mother had a physical disability: had support needs; and Mariem was her primary carer. It would have been evident that she could not climb stairs in the event of a fire. It appears that my mother was present when this form was filled in (see box 1 on page 2). As I have mentioned, my mother was a proud woman, who did not like talking about her disabilities and what she could not do. She does not appear to have said that she could only get to the upper floors if there was a lift, or at any rate the form has not been filled in that respect. She would have needed to use the lift, and I believe that must have been clear to the person completing the form.

20. She lived on the 22nd floor and liked doing so, but relied on the lift. If this was out of order she was trapped in the flat. At no point did anyone talk to my mother about what she should do or where she should go in the event of a fire. No plans appear to have been made.” If I can stop reading there.

MS NOHA EL BAGHDADY (evidence read into the record)

MR RAWAT: I turn now to evidence concerning Hesham Rahman. Hesham Rahman had moved into Grenfell Tower in 2012. He lived alone in flat 204 on the 23rd floor. Family members lived close by on the Lancaster West Estate.

His cousin Noha El Baghdady provided the Inquiry with a Phase 1 witness statement and she has provided a second witness statement for Phase 2. I want to just read the section from that statement which deals specifically with Mr Rahman’s vulnerabilities.

If I could have, please, (IW500001535). If we could go to the last page of that statement, it’s a 14–page statement, we see that it’s dated 17 February 2020, it’s signed and it carries a statement of truth, and I ask that it be admitted into the record.

If I could take us back to page 2 (IW500001535/2) and paragraph 7, please, paragraph 7 starts:

“Hesham had diabetes and he had serious mobility problems because of this. This was the case before he moved into Grenfell Tower, although it worsened over the years. It would have been obvious to someone meeting him that he had mobility problems. I remember being concerned about him being on the top floor of the Tower. I remember he said that the flat had an amazing view from there. I think that he shouldn’t have been offered a flat on the top floor given his health. I don’t remember Hesham telling me that his health had been assessed in any kind of way by RBKC before he moved into the flat. I don’t think they asked him about his health or considered that he would be reliant on the lifts because Hesham never mentioned to me that they had before he moved in and if he had told me then either I or another family member would have been involved with this. He would always involve me or other family members in meetings like these and if a meeting with RBKC or the TMO had taken place I expect he would have asked someone from the family to attend with him. As far as I am aware, no one ever asked him if his flat was suitable for his health needs.”

If we could move forward in the statement, please, to paragraph 10 (IW500001535/3), that reads:

“Knowing Hesham, he would have been happy to talk about his health problems with RBKC or the TMO. He was open about his struggles with pain and the difficulties he had walking up stairs. I am sure he would have explained what his health was like had he been given the opportunity. Anyone meeting Hesham would have been aware that he had health problems and this affected his mobility because you could see this.”

Again, if we could just move forward to paragraph 13, please:

“RBKC and the TMO did know, or should have known, that Hesham had a disability, that he had mobility problems. Some thought should have been given as to how
SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good, thank you.

MS CORINNE JONES (affirmed)

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.

Yes, when you're ready, Mr Rawat.

MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY

MR RAWAT: Good afternoon, Ms Jones.

A. Good afternoon.

Q. Could I start first of all by thanking you for coming to the Inquiry to give evidence today and for assisting us with our investigations. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

A. No problem.

Q. What I hope to do as I start to ask you questions is to keep my questions short and simple, but if at any time you have any difficulty understanding a question or you would like me to repeat it or rephrase it in a different way, then do ask me and I will do so. If you feel at any time that you need a break, please let me know.

A. Okay.

Q. Can I also just ask you, however, to remember to keep your voice up and to speak slowly. The reason for that is if you can just see to your right there is the transcriber, and she has to record your answers clearly and accurately.

A. Okay.

Q. We just need to deal with some formalities before we get into the questions, and the first thing I want to do is just bring up the first page of your first witness statement to this Inquiry, which is at [IWS00000033].

This is the statement you gave for the purpose of Phase 1 of the Inquiry, and it's already gone into the Inquiry record, it's been published on its website, but if I show you now your second statement, the one that you've made for Phase 2, that's at [IWS00001548], please. If we could go to the last page of that, which is page 23, Ms Jones, could you confirm that is your signature, please?

A. Yes, that's my signature.

Q. And have you had a chance to read this statement recently?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

A. Yes, it's true.

Q. What I would say to begin with is that everyone has had a chance to read your statements, and so what I hope to do today is just to ask you some additional questions about your experience of living in Grenfell Tower.

If we could just start perhaps with some background:
in June 2017, you were living in flat 145 of Grenfell Tower, weren’t you?

A. I was, yes.

Q. And what floor was that on?

A. The 17th.

Q. You had moved into that flat in July 2016.

A. Yeah, correct.

Q. And you lived there with your partner and your two sons.

A. I did, yes.

Q. Now, just before we carry on, I just want to clarify one thing with you, and that is we may need to refer to your two sons, but I’m not going to refer to them by name, but instead as “elder son” and “middle son”.

A. Okay.

Q. Now, if I just bring up, please, the second page of your Phase 2 witness statement, which is [IWS00001548/2], and if we look particularly at paragraphs 6 and 7, please.

A. He was, yes.

Q. I don’t know. I can’t actually say.

A. I don’t know, to be honest.

Q. And what floor was that on?

A. I was, yes.

Q. Q. Now, if we go back to your statement and let’s look at paragraphs 8 and 9 again, please [IWS00001548/2].

A. Okay.

Q. Now, just before we carry on, I just want to clarify one thing with you, and that is we may need to refer to your two sons, but I’m not going to refer to them by name, but instead as “elder son” and “middle son”.

A. Okay.

Q. Now, if I just bring up, please, the second page of your Phase 2 witness statement, which is [IWS00001545/2], and if we look particularly at paragraphs 6 and 7, please.

A. Yes.

Q. But your son was already experiencing symptoms that meant he had difficulty walking?

A. He was, yes.

Q. Now, if we go back to your statement and let’s look at paragraphs 8 and 9 again, please [IWS00001548/2].

A. I don’t know, to be honest. I can’t actually say.

Q. I don’t know. I can’t actually say.

A. I don’t know, to be honest.

Q. I think the information we have is that she actually worked for RBKC Housing?

A. I don’t know, to be honest. I can’t actually say.

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A. I don’t know, to be honest. I can’t actually say.

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Q. I think the information we have is that she actually worked for RBKC Housing?

A. I don’t know, to be honest. I can’t actually say.
Q. So at the time and before you moved in, were you communicating your concerns about your son’s mobility both to RBKC and to TMO?

A. No, it was just RBKC.

Q. Thank you.

Now, when Moira MacDonald carried out the viewing, did she at that time provide you with any documents?

A. No.

Q. Did she have any discussion with you about your concerns over access in Grenfell Tower?

A. No.

Q. If I could just show you another document, and it’s (TMO00865707). This isn’t a letter that’s addressed to you, Ms Jones, but it’s dated May 2013 and you will see at the top that it’s headed “Fire Safety in your home”.

If we go to the next page (TMO00865707/2), you will see at the bottom that it’s signed off by Janice Wray, TMO health, safety and facilities manager.

Now, at any time, either at the time that you were moving into your flat or subsequent to that move, did you ever receive a letter from the TMO about fire safety?

A. No.

Q. Can I show you another document, please.

A. Yeah.

Q. {TMO00900066}, please.

I think there is a problem bringing up the reference, so I’ll just move on and we can come back to that point.

If we could have Ms Jones’ statement back on the screen, can we go to page 5 (IWS00001548/5), please. If we just go to the bottom of the page, paragraph 24, and then we’ll go over to the next page as I read it out.

What you’ve said, and this is now about your experience after you’ve moved into the building, but you say there, Ms Jones:

“24. One thing I never liked was how long it took us to get out of the tower. The lifts were very busy in the mornings and it could take up to seven minutes to get out of the Tower as most of the times the lift was packed to capacity which meant waiting for the lift to go to the ground and come back up, or wait for the other lift. Most of the time we would go down by the stairs because it would take so long by lift.

25. I had issues living in the 17th floor because of this. I was concerned because of the time it took us to get out of the flat given the issues with the lift and my son’s condition. The joints in his leg would sometimes get stiff and I would have to carry him when we used the stairs. I sent an email to housing nominations at RBKC about this. They did not raise this as an issue that would affect our ability to escape in a fire.”

Now, again, just to be clear, the email that you’re referring to there, is that the same as the email we just looked at a few moments ago?

A. Correct, yes.

Q. So the position was — — and correct me if I’m wrong — — your son had been given a provisional diagnosis which affected his mobility.

A. Yeah.

Q. That was there when you viewed the flat.

A. Yes.

Q. You then moved into the flat, and you had, as you set out there, difficulties with the lifts.

A. I did, yes.

Q. Did you at any time after moving in contact anyone at the TMO about the difficulties your family was experiencing?

A. I did not, no.

Q. Did you contact anyone at RBKC?

A. No, not after I moved in.

Q. Was there any reason that you decided not to do that?
Q. So is the possibility that you could have sat down with your middle son’s condition when you were filling in this form?

A. No, I didn’t.

Q. Do you think you would have filled it in at the same time as you were filling in that tenancy agreement that we just looked at?

A. Yeah, most probably, yeah.

Q. Can you remember at all how this form came to be completed?

A. Could I see the first page?

Q. Yes, let’s go to the first page {TMOH00006560/1}.

A. And, sorry, what was the question you asked?

Q. Can you remember how this form came to be completed?

A. No, I can’t remember.

Q. Do you think you would have filled it in at the same time as you were filling in, in that tenancy agreement that we just looked at?

A. Yeah, most probably, yeah.

Q. At the bottom there, can you see that there is a box under “Family Members”: “Does the tenant or anyone in the household have additional support needs? Please specify and give details of agency and contacts in place.” And you have put there “None”.

A. That’s not my handwriting.

Q. First question from me then: was the phrase “additional support needs” explained to you, do you remember?

A. I can’t remember. I can’t even remember this form, if you can’t remember that.

Q. Yes, let’s go to the first page {TMOH00006560/1}.

A. And, sorry, what was the question you asked?

Q. Can you remember how this form came to be completed?

A. No, I can’t remember.

Q. Do you think you would have filled it in at the same time as you were filling in, in that tenancy agreement that we just looked at?

A. Yeah, most probably, yeah.

Q. At the bottom there, can you see that there is a box under “Family Members”: “Does the tenant or anyone in the household have additional support needs? Please specify and give details of agency and contacts in place.” And you have put there “None”.

A. That’s not my handwriting.

Q. First question from me then: was the phrase “additional support needs” explained to you, do you remember?

A. I can’t remember. I can’t even remember this form, if I’m honest.

Q. Well, if you can’t remember, you must say so. But if you look back and think back to kind of when you were filling in the form before you took over the flat, aside from the email exchange that we looked at with Nana, was...
Q. Were you told about how you could raise concerns or make enquiries about fire safety?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you raise that with anybody once you had moved into your flat 145?

A. I can’t remember.

Q. If you had wanted to raise it, did you know how you would go about doing that?

A. Most probably just through the repairs line. Yeah.

Q. I think we’ve still got the tenancy information form on the pages. If we could go just to page 2 there it says “TMO Membership”, if we could expand that, please. There is a tick:

“Have the benefits of becoming a TMO member been explained to the tenant?”

Q. Were the benefits of being a TMO member explained to you?

A. No. No. I received a booklet that had — — I remember at the back it may have had like something that you could sign and send off to become a member, but if anybody verbally explained it, no, I don’t remember that.

Q. Did you look at the booklet at all any time?

A. Yeah, I did.

Q. And did you apply to become a TMO member?

A. No.

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Q. Were you told about the self-closing device on your flat door?

A. No.

Q. So is the position you didn’t receive any documents that covered fire safety?

A. No.

Q. Did anyone give you any advice about fire safety?

A. No.

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Q. Were you given any information at the time about how the refurbishment, I knew that they put this on for fire safety.

Q. Did you raise that with anybody once you had moved into flat 145?

A. I can’t remember.

Q. If you had wanted to raise it, did you know how you would go about doing that?

A. Most probably just through the repairs line. Yeah.

Q. I think we’ve still got the tenancy information form on the page. If we could go just to page 2 there it says “TMO Membership”, if we could expand that, please. There is a tick:

“Have the benefits of becoming a TMO member been explained to the tenant?”

Q. Were the benefits of being a TMO member explained to you?

A. No. No. I received a booklet that had — — I remember at the back it may have had like something that you could sign and send off to become a member, but if anybody verbally explained it, no, I don’t remember that.

Q. Did you look at the booklet at all any time?

A. Yeah, I did.

Q. And did you apply to become a TMO member?

A. No.

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Q. But subsequent to that, did you think about becoming a member?

A. I did, because it was the first permanent property I had lived in and I thought it might be beneficial, but at the time of moving in, it wasn’t something I was going to sign up to.

Q. Were you given any information at the time about how the TMO was organised?

A. In regards to?

Q. Well, did anyone, for example, tell you that it was managed by a board that included tenants and leaseholders amongst its membership?

A. No.

Q. Were you told that residents could be elected to be members of that board?

A. I don’t know. It could have said it in the leaflet verbally explained it, no, I don’t remember that.

Q. Did you understand that RBKC and the TMO were separate organisations?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your understanding of their responsibilities, then, in relation to Grenfell Tower?

A. Well, RBKC were the people that I was in contact with in the time in my temporary accommodation when they did the refurbishment, I knew that they put this on for fire safety.
regards to moving into the property and them offering
properties, so they were the landlord, essentially, and
KCTMO were the organisation that looked after the
day—to—day running of the tower.
Q. As a tenant living in Grenfell Tower, do you remember
receiving copies of a magazine called Link?
A. I can’t remember.
Q. Would it help if I showed you an example?
A. Yeah.
Q. Could we have, please, (TMO00873549).
Now, this would be before you moved in to your flat,
Ms Jones, but we can see there that it’s a magazine,
this one is from autumn/winter 2015 but that’s the front
piece and it’s called Link. Does that help you at all?
Did you receive magazines like this through your
letterbox?
A. I —— the front of it doesn’t look familiar, but if the
back —— I remember the back of the booklet, if it is
a booklet, where it had some information about, like,
repairs and how well they were doing with repairs, the
response times, etcetera. I don’t know if it was this
booklet, but I remember seeing something like that where
on the back page it had that information.
Q. Let me put it this way: did anyone ever make you aware
that Link magazine would sometimes contain fire safety
advice?
A. No.
Q. So in terms of the information that you had about
fire safety in Grenfell Tower, where was that coming
from?
A. Just when I had the conversation with the two
firefighters that came to my house, that was the only
time I spoke to anybody about fire safety in the tower.
Q. Can we just look at that conversation, please. It’s
dealt with in your first statement, so (IWS500000033/2),
paragraph 7. So this is a visit on Saturday,
10 June 2017 by two firefighters to carry out
a fire safety check. You say:
"They said they were having a fire safety day, and
were going around knocking on doors to check people’s
alarms. I didn’t know about the inspection prior to
them arriving. They pressed the button on both our fire
alarms to check they were working.”
Then you continue to say (IWS500000033/3):
"I was worried about our front door as it didn’t
automatically close.”
Which is something you have already told us about.
You say:
"I wanted to know why there wasn’t an automatic shut
on the door and I also asked whether the doors in our
flat were fire resistant. They reassured me that they
did not need to automatically close, it only depended on
the material the doors were made from. He tested the
doors by banging on them and told me that the front door
and the doors to the master bedroom, the children’s
room, the kitchen and living room (which had double
sliding doors with glass) were all fire resistant and
would hold for 30 minutes. Only the toilet and bathroom
doors were not resistant ... “
Now, you have said that you were aware from your
previous accommodation about the importance of doors
having an automatic shut, and from what we’ve just
looked at, did you raise that with those two
firefighters?
A. I did, yes.
Q. And you’ve said:
"They reassured me they did not need to
automatically close ... “
Is that what you felt at the end of that
corversation, that you didn’t need to be concerned about
having an automatic shut on your door?
A. That’s how they kind of made it sound, yeah.
Q. Why were you concerned that the flat front door wasn’t
fire resistant?
A. Because, as I said, I was in a temporary accommodation
before that and the doors had recently been changed, and
that door was solid and felt very heavy compared to the
doors that I had in Grenfell Tower.
Q. So how did that door in Grenfell Tower feel to you,
than?
A. It just felt very light. So, for example, if you opened
the door and closed the door, you know, if you pushed it
backwards and forwards, you can, you know, get a feel of
how heavy the door was, how solid it was.
Q. So that visit is on 10 June 2017. Following that visit,
what was your impression about the fire safety measures
in your own flat?
A. I just thought they were ridiculous. I just thought
that: okay, if this is what the standard is, it’s not
really good, especially being so high up in a tower.
Q. Now, when you say you thought they were ridiculous, who
is the “they” you were referring to?
A. Just the actual —— just what the firefighters had told
me.
Q. So that’s the measures themselves you thought were
ridiculous?
A. Yeah, the measures, yeah. I think 30 doors
fire resistance —— sorry, 30 minutes for a door to hold
a fire on the 17th floor is ridiculous because, I mean,
it could take the firefighters 30 minutes just to get to
my floor, or even to the tenth floor. I don’t know.

It’s not like we were on a row —— on a road, sorry,

where it’s a row of houses. This is a tower and you’ve

got to keep on climbing up. So 30 minutes to me just
doesn’t sound like enough time.

Q. What about what they said about the door not needing to
be an automatic closer?

A. Yeah, I just thought: okay, he’s obviously not

talking —— or not giving me the best advice, yeah,

because, as I said, I came from a house where it had

an automatic closer on the door, and it was a new door,

and Grenfell Tower had recently been refurbished, so

I would expect that if they’ve changed the doors,

I would have something equivalent.

Q. If you look at paragraph 8 of that statement

(IWS00000033/3), what you say there is:

“The fire officers said if there was ever a fire ,

stay put, don’t leave your flat , we will always come to

you. They also said to put a wet towel at the bottom of

the door.”

Now, you have just described the measures as

ridiculous , and that you’re given advice about staying

put.

Given what you thought about the measures in your

flat , what did you think about the advice to stay put?

A. No. No.

Q. If we look in the same statement at paragraph 10

(IWS00000033/3), please. You start that paragraph by

referring to ”This occasion”, and that’s the visit of

the two firefighters , and you say:

” … was the only time that we had been told

anything about what to do in case of fire … They

didn’t even have signs up when we first moved in, this

came 3 or 4 months after we moved into the property.”

You go on to say that you saw a small sign about

fires by the lifts , that was around autumn/winter 2016,

and it said:

”In the event of a fire , stay put, call 999, don’t

use the lifts , if your house was on fire, close doors

and leave the building via stairs.”

A. Yes.

Q. Can I take you to your second statement now, please,

it’s (IWS00001548/4), paragraph 15. If I just read that

out to you, Ms Jones, you say:

”During my time living in Grenfell Tower, I would

report any problems with the flat by contacting the

KCTMO through their ‘repairs line’. In my experience,

I did not usually have any significant issues with the

TMO taking a long time to get back to me.

Claire Williams of the TMO was also someone who I could

contact about problems with the flat.”

So the first question is: what kind of problems did

you report to the repairs lines?

A. I had an issue with the lock on the front door. That

would have been one of the first things I would have

reported. I had a light in the passage area where the

actual fitting was slightly to the left , so they had to

centralise it. I had issues with my bathroom as well.

Q. And were the responses that you had to those queries,

did the responses come in good time?

A. They did, yeah, because I believe they told me, like,

within the first six weeks of me moving in, if there’s

any issues, just to report them and they will sort them

out. So that was within the six weeks of me moving into

the property.

Q. Now, you say there was an issue with the lock on the

front door.

A. Yeah.

Q. That’s the front door that you thought was a bit

strange ——

A. Yes.

Q. —— because it didn’t have an automatic closer on it.
1. A. Yes.
2. Q. So did someone come along to fix the lock?
3. A. Yes.
4. Q. What was her response like?
5. A. In regards to the Mobix machine, it just seemed to go on forever. They were getting a new batch in at some point, they were going to reset the one that I had — so when I moved in initially I had a Mobix machine, but it didn’t actually work, so she said that they were going to reset it, try and reboot it and sort it out. That didn’t work. They were going to be getting some more batches in a few weeks or a month and I would get one of those. Yeah. It was just a lot of back and forth.
6. MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, I have concluded all my questions for Ms Jones, and so I’d ask for the usual short break.
7. Q. In your statement where you said that you had been given your evidence while you’re out of the room. We say that to all witnesses, just to make sure that things are in good shape. All right?
8. A. Yes, Mr Rawat.
9. Q. Could I have (TM000899748) up, please.
10. A. So we will have a short break now until 4.20, please, and then we will see if there are any more questions for you at that stage. Is that all right?
11. THE WITNESS: Thank you.
12. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Please don’t talk to anyone about your evidence while you’re out of the room. We say that to all witnesses, just to make sure that things are in good shape. All right?
13. A. Good, thank you. Would you like to go with the usher, please.
15. (Pause)
16. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right. 4.20, then, please.
17. A. Mr Chairman, I have concluded all my questions for Ms Jones, and so I’d ask for the usual short break.
18. MR RAWAT: There are a couple of questions, please.
19. SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right, Ms Jones, I’m sorry we kept you waiting a bit longer than I suggested, but I think we are ready now to find out if there are any more questions for you.
20. A. Yes, Mr Rawat.
21. Q. Now, you mention Claire Williams there. What kind of problems did you report to Claire Williams?
22. A. I had an issue with something called a Mobix machine, which indicated how much I think it was electric we had, so that was an issue I had. So for seven months I wasn’t sure when my electric was supposed to be given that when I moved into the property. I wasn’t given that for about seven months, which indicated how much I think it was electric we had, so that was an issue I had. I also had a problem with getting information on how I could pay my rent. For months I requested information from the council where they said that I had missed my rent payments for them to actually give me the details of when it was going to be running out, so that was an issue I had.
23. Q. If we could just have (TM000899748) up, please.
24. A. Mm-hm.
25. Q. If you look at that document, this says “Welcome to your home”. If we go to the next page (TM000899748/2), please, it’s got information about what happens next, managing your tenancy, useful contacts. Is that a booklet that you’ve seen before?
26. A. No. It wasn’t this one.
27. Q. What did the one that you remember look like?
28. A. In regards to the Mobix machine, it just seemed to go on forever. They were getting a new batch in at some point, they were going to reset the one that I had — so when I moved in initially I had a Mobix machine, but it didn’t actually work, so she said that they were going to reset it, try and reboot it and sort it out. That didn’t work. They were going to be getting some more batches in a few weeks or a month and I would get one of those. Yeah. It was just a lot of back and forth.
29. Q. What was her response like?
30. A. Yes.
31. Q. Were these problems you were raising in the first instance with Claire Williams?
32. A. Yes.
33. Q. So did someone come along to fix the lock?
34. A. Yes.
35. Q. What was her response like?
36. A. In regards to the Mobix machine, it just seemed to go on forever. They were getting a new batch in at some point, they were going to reset the one that I had — so when I moved in initially I had a Mobix machine, but it didn’t actually work, so she said that they were going to reset it, try and reboot it and sort it out. That didn’t work. They were going to be getting some more batches in a few weeks or a month and I would get one of those. Yeah. It was just a lot of back and forth.
Q. And that’s not your handwriting, is it?
A. It’s not, no.
Q. You had emailed RBKC, as we looked at earlier, on 30 May —
A. Yes.
Q. — in which you had spoken about your son’s health. Given that email, do you find it surprising that this information sheet dated 21 July 2016 has that “None” written in it?
A. Yes, I’m surprised.
Q. I mean, the email, as we discussed, is addressed to RBKC. A. Yes.
Q. Do you remember at the time of you signing up discussing your son’s conditions with anyone from TMO?
A. No, I didn’t discuss it with anybody from TMO, and that was just because I was dealing with it with RBKC, so I didn’t involve TMO.

MR RAWAT: Right, okay.
Mr Chairman, I’ve no further questions, so for my part all that remains is for me once again to thank Miss Jones for coming to give evidence to us today.

SIR MARTIN MOORE: Right, thank you.
Mr Rawat, I wonder whether we ought to ask Miss Jones whether she has seen the tenants’ handbook.

MR RAWAT: I will just bring a reference up for it.
SIR MARTIN MOORE: Could you?
MR RAWAT: Yes.
SIR MARTIN MOORE: Thank you.
MR RAWAT: (Pause)
SIR MARTIN MOORE: Sorry.
MR RAWAT: No.
SIR MARTIN MOORE: I’m not sure I can put my hand on the reference myself.
MR RAWAT: Is that the one that’s exhibited to Mr Rasoul’s statement?
SIR MARTIN MOORE: Yes. [IWS00001762], exhibit MR6.
MR RAWAT: That’s the one. It always comes up upside down. Do you want to ask the question or shall I?
MR RAWAT: I can ask it. If I explain to Miss Jones: this is the front cover or the first page, at least, and the back page probably, of a tenancy handbook, and the Inquiry’s been provided it by Mohammed Rasoul, who was another Grenfell Tower resident. He had lived in flat 25 since 1994, and his recollection is that he was provided with this handbook in or around 2004.
Do you remember, when you moved in, being given something called a tenancy handbook?

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
SIR MARTIN MOORE: Good, thank you.
MR RAWAT: Right. If you would like to go with the usher, she’ll look after you.
THE WITNESS: Thanks.

(The witness withdrew)
(4.30 pm)
(The hearing adjourned until 10 am on Wednesday, 21 April 2021)
April 20, 2021

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Day 117

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