

# Grenfell Tower Inquiry

## Grenfell Tower Inquiry venue COVID-19 Risk Assessment Information September 2021

### Summary

In 2020, the Government Property Agency (GPA) conducted a thorough risk assessment of the Inquiry venue at 13 Bishop's Bridge Road enabling the Inquiry to resume hearings in July of that year. This allowed hearings to recommence at the hearing venue albeit on a limited attendance basis. Thereafter risks were continually assessed to ensure a consistently safe environment at the venue which allowed for a gradual increase in the limited numbers of people in attendance each day. Following recent changes to Government covid related advice and rules, GPA have reviewed arrangements at our venue and confirmed that, in light of the reduced risks, it will be safe from September 2021 to end the limits on the number of people in attendance each day.

### What did this latest assessment of covid related risks include?

- An assessment of the number of people who would be in the building each day, including where they would work and take breaks
- Information regarding daily activities to be conducted on-site
- Mapping of movement of people around the building
- Ongoing measures to protect persons from Covid-19 transmission
- An evaluation of hygiene and sanitisation, including the level of enhanced cleaning measures
- A review of all building maintenance and regulatory compliance including evacuation procedures

### What findings were made?

- GPA were content all appropriate measures have been taken and that it was now safe to end limited attendance hearings
- The combination of all the measures taken resulted in an acceptable level of risk of Covid 19 transmission on-site
- A further risk assessment would be required if usage of the venue changed or if the risks of covid transmission significantly increased

**Details of Work Activity to be Undertaken on site at 13BBR:**

Following a consultation with core participants, legal representatives, witnesses and the Inquiry's wellbeing support services, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) resumed hearings on 6 July 2020 at 13 Bishop's Bridge Road (13 BBR), on a limited attendance basis (i.e only the minimum number of staff and visitors who needed to be physically present for hearings to take place). Following an August 2020 break, hearings continued in a limited capacity from September. GPA approved a modification to allow the Inquiry to accommodate two witnesses and those accompanying them in one hearing day when the timetable required. Limited attendance hearings were suspended in December 2020 and resumed on the 19 April 2021. The GTI has previously stated that, as soon as it is safe to do so, the attendance of bereaved, survivors and residents (BSRs) will be prioritised. In light of government advice and a reduction in Covid-related risks, it was assessed as safe to allow up to 15 BSRs into the venue each day to observe hearings from May 2021. Following further changes to government advice and there no longer being a requirement to maintain 2 meter social distance, from September 2021, limits on attendance at the venue will end and the venue will be once again open to the public on hearing days.

Inquiry Hearings will recommence from the 6th of September with the Inquiry Team offices also re-opened.

Although there will no longer be a cap on the number of people who can be on site at the same time, GTI will continue to promote distance and look where possible to allow people space to work within. To support this the Inquiry Team will adopt a hybrid working model with the majority continuing to work from home. In addition core participant's legal representatives will be asked to work remotely unless there is a valid reason why they need to physically attend hearings.

The 13 BBR venue when fully occupied has a maximum capacity of approximately 250 persons, however it is anticipated that the venue will continue to operate at under 50% of capacity for most days.

**Reason that this activity can only be completed in the office and not remotely** *(If the activity can be completed from remotely, it should be):*

Inquiry Hearings need to be physically held in the purpose-built hearing room, and now that restrictions have been lifted, core participants and members of the public given the option to attend the hearings in person.

Inquiry staff and professional participants (e.g. Legal Representatives) will be encouraged to work remotely when their presence on site is not required.

**Risk assessment summary**

<b>What are the hazards?</b>	<b>Who might be harmed</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Additional Controls</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Action</b>
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<p>Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus</p>	<p>GTI staff, Inquiry Counsel and other attendees at 13BBR</p> <p>Vulnerable groups – the elderly, pregnant workers, those with underlying health conditions</p> <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with attendees in relation to business</p>	<p><b><u>Encouraging people on site to maintain distance</u></b></p> <p>Although the 2 meter social distance requirement is no longer in place, the GTI will encourage distancing where ever possible. This will include 1 meter spacing of public seating in the hearing room and encouraging those who do not need to attend to the venue to work or follow proceedings remotely.</p> <p>Taking steps to enable core participants and legal representatives to participate remotely with appropriate support arrangements and review work schedules, including the majority of GTI staff continuing to work from home, significantly reduced occupancy on-site at 13 BBR.</p> <p>Video Conference calls and telephone conferencing to be used instead of face-to-face meetings where possible.</p>	<p>M x H</p>	<p><b><u>Encouraging people on site to maintain distance</u></b></p> <p>GTI staff, attendees and contractors to be regularly reminded of the importance of respecting distance both in the workplace and outside of it.</p> <p>GTI will ensure risks are being assessed in relation to disability, shielding issues and wider wellbeing and managed in accordance with government guidelines for Covid-19.</p>	<p>L x H</p>	<p>GTI have worked closely with GPA and the ISS project team to ensure all necessary controls are in place. All safety measures, including provision of sanitiser, gloves and face masks, to be continuously monitored</p>
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		<p><b><u>Working Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic – Returning To The Office (RTTO)</u></b></p> <p>Business, Energy &amp; Industrial Strategy (BEIS) guidance is the lead documentation in Working Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-COVID-19/offices-and-contact-centres">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-COVID-19/offices-and-contact-centres</a></p> <p><b><u>Risk Assessment</u></b></p> <p>GTI have conducted a risk assessment for Working Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic (RTTO) and will engage with all relevant parties.</p>		<p><b><u>Working Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic – Returning To The Office</u></b></p> <p>GTI will ensure:</p> <p>The risk assessment is visible and communicated to all employees.</p> <p>Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated where necessary.</p> <p>The actions taken as the result of the assessment do not disproportionately impact those with disabilities and consider how to support those with disabilities to comply with social distancing.</p> <p>In line with the 'returning to the office ' Cabinet Office guidelines, line managers have access to the COVID-19 Individual Risk Indicator (CIRI) tool on the Intranet to assess individuals returning to 13 BBR.</p>	LxH	<p>GTI will continue to review the full suite of documentation for staff and other users, including an updated user guide.</p> <p>All regular participants attending 13 BBR from September 2021 onwards will still be encouraged to regularly take lateral flow tests and make use of the 2 free lateral flow tests per adult per week now made available.</p>
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				<p><u>Entry to the building</u></p> <p>All users will be advised not to attend the venue if they have covid type symptoms (unless negatively tested) or are required to isolate in accordance with NHS guidance.</p> <p>On entry staff will present their staff pass and non-staff. The lobby for entrance / exit space will be occupied by a security officer, a hand sanitiser station is located in the lobby.</p> <p>NHS track and trace QR codes posters will be pointed out</p> <p>Required attendees will be directed to their allocated waiting rooms.</p> <p>All attendees will be encouraged to wear face masks when moving around the building.</p> <p><u>Hearing room</u></p> <p>Attendees will be allocated seating areas and Ushers will manage seating, encouraging distancing is maintained where ever possible. A Hearing Room seating plan will be implemented to encourage distancing.</p> <p>The requirement to wear face masks will be relaxed in the hearing room to assist with the delivery of hearings (eg - the panel when entering / leaving the hearing room)</p>	LxH	
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		<p><b><u>Cleaning</u></b></p> <p>Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods.</p> <p>GTI's FM provider, ISS, have in place risk assessments, Infection Control Cleaning Strategy and Cleaning Excellence Processes to manage the following stages of cleaning:</p> <p><b>Responsive Disinfection/Infection Control Deep Cleaning</b> - The method of cleaning to be established in the event that someone in the building has a connection to a person or persons with a contagious virus or is self-isolating with a suspected infection</p> <p><b>Responsive/Decontamination Cleaning</b> - The steps that should be taken when a person or persons in the building has been diagnosed with a contagious virus and there is a significant risk of the virus spreading</p>		<p><b><u>Cleaning</u></b></p> <p>ISS have employed a hygiene steward who will be responsible for cleaning all high contact points on a two-hour cycle.</p> <p>Additional hand sanitiser and wipes will be distributed throughout the building.</p>	LxH	<p>GTI to continue to promote individual responsibility to maintain cleaning requirements of wiping down appliances before and after to use and to limit contact points where possible.</p>
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		<p><b><u>Moving around the venue</u></b></p> <p>All persons attending the venue will be encouraged to wear face masks when moving around the venue. A supply of masks will be kept on site if required.</p> <p><b>Workplaces and workstations</b></p> <p>A clear desk policy is in place, with all surfaces cleaned at the end of each working day.</p>		<p><b>Workplaces and workstations</b></p> <p>The sharing of pens and other objects will be avoided. Where shared equipment is used (e.g printers) ensure there are wipes available [at each bank of desks] and appropriate signage.</p>	LxH	
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		<p><b><u>Meetings</u></b></p> <p>Our objective is to mitigate the risk of transmission due to face-to-face meetings.</p>		<p><b><u>Meetings</u></b></p> <p>All meeting rooms have ventilation. .</p> <p>Best practice in meetings will be encouraged with masks worn when 1 metre social distance cannot be maintained.</p> <p>Hand sanitisation will be available in meeting rooms.</p> <p>Ensure only necessary participants should attend meetings in person that are already on-site and any other participants should dial in and use other remote tools.</p>	LxH	
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		<p><b><u>Common areas</u></b></p> <p>Sanitser units are located throughout the venue.</p> <p>Water coolers with disposable cups are available.</p> <p>Vending and coffee machines in common areas will have sanitising wipes available to wipe down after use</p>		<p><b><u>Common areas</u></b></p> <p>GTI has allocated separate rooms to user groups for use on hearing days to mitigate the risk of overcrowding in common areas.</p> <p>Whilst GTI is hermetically sealed from other tenants within the building there are some shared spaces, such as the stairwell. WPP (Landlord) will be responsible for cleaning and signage within the stairwell, as well as any shared toilets.</p> <p>A perspex screen has been fitted to the reception desk to provide a barrier for those using the reception area.</p> <p>Lockers normally designated for public use can also be assigned to individual attendees as required.</p>	LxH	<p>Signage installed that detail which user group is in which room.</p>
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		<p><b><u>Managing customers, visitors and contractors</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To minimise the number of non-essential visits to 13 BBR.</p>		<p><b><u>Managing customers, visitors and contractors</u></b></p> <p>The GTI staff in liaison with ISS will:</p> <p>Ensure Information will be available to all staff and required attendees before attending the site. Where site visits are required, for example inbound supplier deliveries, they will be made where possible before 8am or on Fridays when. Site guidance will be explained on or before arrival.</p>	LxH	ISS to manage supplier deliveries
		<p><b><u>Providing and explaining available guidance</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.</p>		<p><b><u>Providing and explaining available guidance</u></b></p> <p>GTI/ISS will take on host responsibilities relating to COVID-19, providing any necessary instructions and guidance.</p> <p>An updated user / attendees guide will provide clear instructions on how to work safely within the building during limited attendance.</p> <p>Guidance will be made available to attendees in advance of their attendance advising them on what to expect.</p>	LxM	GTI to disseminate user guides to all required attendees and place supporting information posters across the venue

		<p><b><u>Keeping the workplace clean</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.</p>		<p><b><u>Keeping the workplace clean</u></b></p> <p>Signage and cleaning products in place for individuals to clean items) before and after use.</p> <p>Areas such as the hearing room are cleaned between uses using the provided cleaning products</p> <p>Staff are asked to keep to a clear desk policy, clearing workspaces and removing any waste and belongings from the work area at the end of the working day.</p> <p><b>Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets</b></p> <p>Comply with signs and posters and build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to avoid touching your face and the need to cough or sneeze into your arm.</p> <p>Comply with regular reminders and signage to maintain personal hygiene standards to all staff and required attendees.</p> <p>Ensure regular use of hand sanitiser provided in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.</p> <p>Comply strictly with cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean</p>	LxH	ISS to continually monitor levels of products to ensure sufficient amounts of stock are maintained on-site.
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		<p><b><u>Handling goods, merchandise and other materials</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace.</p>		<p><b><u>Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and on-site vehicles</u></b></p> <p>The ISS Facilities staff will:</p> <p>Implement cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.</p> <p>Restrict non-business deliveries</p> <p>All efforts will be made to arrange deliveries out of hours, with security staff taking delivery within the entrance lobby to minimise contact with the rest of the building.</p>	LxH	
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		<p><b><u>Symptoms of COVID-19</u></b></p> <p>Staff and other required attendees must comply with reporting procedures for suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19.</p> <p>If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or a high temperature in the workplace, they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay-at-home guidance.</p> <p>Line managers will maintain regular contact with staff members during this time. GTI operational staff will maintain contact with non-staff attendees</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or required attendee has developed COVID-19 and were recently on our premises, the management team of the workplace will contact the GPA and Cabinet Office as required.</p> <p>Staff must follow the guidance within the covid attendance policy</p>		<p><b><u>Cleaning - Potential Infection and Confirmed case of COVID-19</u></b></p> <p><b><u>GTI/ISS Staff - Potential Infection</u></b></p> <p>Where GTI /ISS are concerned about the possible spread of infection if a member of staff or required attendee is unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, they can request a <i>General Infection Control Clean or Precautionary Clean</i> via their FM Contactor/Landlord. As a precaution any desks used by the member of staff or required attendee affected should not be used until cleaned or for a minimum period of 72 hours, where practicable.</p> <p>All required attendees will be given information by the Inquiry to inform GTI if they develop any symptoms after leaving the inquiry within a 14 day period.</p> <p>Inform the Senior Decision Maker on-site (who will manage the required notification process). They will discuss the situation with the GPA Assurance Lead or Workplace Services Health and Safety Manager in Workplace Services who will assess the risk assessment to identify any additional actions required.</p> <p><b><u>Confirmed case of COVID-19</u></b></p> <p>If an attendee reports they have been confirmed as having contracted COVID-19 the Senior Decision Maker will follow advice on</p>	LxH	<p>Clear procedures in place between GTI and ISS for the reporting and management of any suspected or confirmed cases.</p>
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				<p>how to manage the situation and required notifications.</p> <p>They will discuss the situation with the GPA and ISS facilities management manager who will take all required action. The risk assessment will typically consider:</p> <p>If the member of staff or required attendee has been in 13 BBR within the last 72 hours, they should isolate any work desk areas that are known to have been used and immediately request a Responsive <i>Disinfection or Infection Control Deep Clean</i> via the FM Contactor/Landlord.</p> <p>If any tracing of locations can be confirmed such as nearby toilets, kitchen areas or printers that may have been used by the individual, an additional disinfection can be carried out in those areas (as deemed appropriate).</p> <p>Where applicable, carry out contact tracing for the individual with the confirmed case in relation to their recent movements, contacts and travel.</p> <p>Where contact tracing has identified persons who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 from the confirmed case member of staff, managers should follow the NHS guidance:</p>		
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		<p><b><u>Accidents, security and other incidents</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.</p>		<p><b><u>Accidents, security and other incidents</u></b></p> <p>GTI staff are reminded that in an emergency (for example, an accident, fire or break-in), people do not have to distance if it would be unsafe to do so.</p> <p>Staff involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.</p>	LxH	<p>Emergency evacuation procedures will be announced in the hearing room each hearing day.</p>
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		<p><b><u>Hand Washing</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand washing facilities with soap and hot water in place.</li> <li>• Stringent hand washing taking place.</li> <li>• Paper towels for drying of hands</li> <li>• See hand-washing guidance.</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/</a></li> <li>• Use Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Wearing of Gloves</u></b></p> <p>Where Risk Assessment identifies wearing of gloves as a requirement of the job, an adequate supply of these will be provided. Staff will be instructed on how to remove gloves carefully to reduce contamination and how to dispose of them safely.</p>		<p><b><u>Hand Washing</u></b></p> <p>GTI staff, contractors and visitors will be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap and the importance of proper drying.</p> <p>It is also important to remind everyone to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it and to avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.</p> <p>The hygiene steward will be empowered to challenge any person they believe has not complied with the hand washing guidance.</p>	LxH	
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		<p><b><u>Contractors and Landlords</u></b></p> <p>GTI/GPA have established communication forums with Contractors and Landlords that will be used and expanded to manage COVID-19</p>		<p><b><u>ALL Contractors and Landlords</u></b></p> <p>GTI/ISS will have regular communication with the Landlord and contractors to ensure they comply with Government advice on COVID-19 to support our staff, clients and visitors.</p> <p>ISS will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the HVAC system, which draws fresh air directly into the building to keep it ventilated.</p> <p>A ventilation survey has been completed which has confirmed the system in operation is in good working order and achieved a green (best) score</p>	LxH	<p>ISS to routinely provide GTI with confirmation that all statutory compliance items have been tested.</p>
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**The wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings will be encouraged on site when moving around the building.**

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings**

LxH

Facemasks are encouraged to be worn when not seated and moving in the building. A small supply will be available at reception for those who have not brought their own.

		<p><b><u>Mental Health</u></b></p> <p>Mental health &amp; wellbeing awareness during the Coronavirus outbreak</p> <p>Reference -</p> <p><a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.hseni.gov.uk/stress">www.hseni.gov.uk/stress</a></p>		<p><b><u>Mental Health</u></b></p> <p>An NHS Clinician will be available to support witnesses.</p> <p>An Hestia counsellor will be onsite to support the BSR's and others in attendance at BBR.</p> <p>For core participants and other following the proceedings remotely, Hestia will provide a range of services for those following proceedings remotely including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One-to-one telephone or online support sessions that BSRs will be able to book with a counsellor during the day or at the end of the day's hearings.</li> <li>● In addition to services provided by Hestia, Counselling support services from the NHS outreach team will continue to be available for anyone wanting to talk about anything to do with their emotional well being.</li> </ul> <p>GTI are operating and will continue to maintain a process to check on staff welfare whether they work from home or are on site during limited attendance hearings.</p>	LxH	<p>Details on the wellbeing support arrangements are provided to core participants and published on the Inquiry website.</p>
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		<p><b><u>Communications and Training</u></b></p> <p>Objective: To make sure all GTI staff and attendees understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.</p> <p>Objective: To make sure all attendees are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.</p>	<p><b><u>Communications and Training</u></b></p> <p>GTI will provide clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.</p> <p>GTI will engage with attendees through existing communication routes and to explain any changes in working arrangements.</p> <p>GTI will develop communication and advice for attendees especially around new procedures for arrival at work (and anything attendees are expected to bring with them to help maintain new safety or hygiene standards) and attendance at hearings.</p> <p>GTI SMT will promote awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>GTI SMT will communicate approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.</p>	<p>LxH</p>	<p>A suite of supporting documentation will be in place explaining the arrangements.</p>
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		<p><b><u>Fire Safety Management in reduced occupancy sites</u></b></p> <p>Fire Risk Assessments are in place for GPA sites based on normal operation</p>		<p><b><u>Fire Safety Management in reduced occupancy sites</u></b></p> <p>The GTI/ISS staff will:</p> <p>Ensure provision of sufficient numbers of daily fire wardens.</p> <p>Comply with building fire alarm systems and any announcements/instructions.</p> <p>Comply with temporary evacuation procedures; adherence with social distancing as far as is practicable.</p>	L xH	<p>ISS will provide a revised fire evacuation procedure during LAHs.</p> <p>This will be communicated to all attendees.</p> <p>Fire Evacuation points will be clearly signposted across the venue.</p>
		<p><b><u>First Aid</u></b></p> <p>Normal first aid cover may not be available during the COVID-19 Pandemic.</p>		<p><b><u>First Aid</u></b></p> <p>GTI staff interim measures for First Aid:</p> <p>Notify security staff, who are all trained first aiders to ask for assistance.</p> <p>Contact the emergency services to summon specialist advice and support without further delay.</p>	LxL	

