

Grenfell Tower

Inquiry

Information for witnesses

This document provides general information for witnesses called to give oral evidence at the Inquiry. In advance of your evidence date the witness liaison team will be in touch with further information and to offer you a familiarisation visit to the venue.

Travelling to the Inquiry's venue

13 Bishop's Bridge Road, London W2 6B

- Rail and Tube:
The nearest station is Paddington which is approximately a 5 minute walk from Bishop's Bridge Road.
- Bus:
Buses 7, 23, 27 and 36 operate services in the area. Please alight at Bishop's Bridge Road or Westbourne Terrace and walk approximately 5 minutes to the venue.

The witness liaison team will check whether you need any assistance with travel arrangements or if you require overnight accommodation. They will also recommend an arrival time (usually one hour before you are due to start your evidence).

On arrival at 13 Bishop's Bridge Road

When you arrive at the main entrance to 13 Bishop's Bridge Road make yourself known to security staff and a member of the witness liaison team will meet you at reception and show you to the witness room, where you will wait until you are called to give evidence. Your legal representative and anyone you bring for support will be able to join you in this room. Tea and coffee will be provided in the witness waiting room and the witness liaison team will be on hand to answer any questions you might have.

The hearing room

When it is time to give your evidence an usher will escort you to the hearing room. There is a separate witness desk for you to sit at, to the right of the Chairman and Panel members. Any documents Counsel to the Inquiry refers to during your evidence will appear on the screen on the witness desk.

Being 'sworn in'

The first time you enter the hearing room to give evidence you need to be sworn in. This is the process of making a formal promise to be truthful when answering all questions put to you. An usher will guide you to the witness desk and whilst you remain standing, the Chairman will ask you to affirm your

formal promise to be truthful by reading the brief text from the screen in front of you. You can choose to be sworn in using a holy book, and the witness liaison team will check your preference beforehand.

Questioning

Only Counsel to the Inquiry and sometimes the Chairman will ask you questions. They will be aware of any support requirements and vulnerabilities you may have in giving evidence. The Inquiry will make provision for Core Participant legal representatives following proceedings remotely to suggest questions to Counsel or raise points as necessary via email.

Timings & breaks

Hearing days (Monday to Thursday) run from 10:00 until approximately 16:30. The Inquiry usually breaks for lunch each day from 13:00 - 14:00, and there will also be breaks during both the morning and afternoon sessions. However, if you do need an additional break at any other time during the course of the hearing please do not feel awkward about asking the Chairman or Counsel to the Inquiry. When the Inquiry breaks the usher will guide you back to the witness room.

When you have finished giving evidence

Once you have finished giving your evidence to the Inquiry, the usher will escort you back to the witness room where you can remain with your legal team until you feel ready to leave.

The evidence you give will form part of the Inquiry record and will be on the Inquiry website. This includes a live video stream of the hearings each day which will be available on YouTube and a transcript of your evidence will be added afterwards. You must not discuss the evidence you have given with any witnesses who have not yet been heard. This includes talking about it on any social media outlets.

Publication of witness lists

Every Friday the following week's witness timetable is published on the Inquiry's website, so your name will be included on the Friday before the week you are due to give evidence. When the witness list is published, the Inquiry media team will email media outlets asking them to note that the witnesses on the list have requested not to be contacted by the media.

Fire alarms

If the fire alarm sounds, a member of the witness liaison team will escort you to evacuate and will remain with you. Within the main hearing room there are four fire exits on either side of the room. The fire alarm at 13 Bishop's Bridge Road is tested every Friday at 15:00.

Expenses

You will be entitled to claim travel costs and other related expenses, as well as any expenses for loss of earnings that you incur during your time giving evidence at the Inquiry. Further information on the expenses policy will be sent to you.

For further information

If you have any questions please speak to your legal representative or contact the Inquiry witness liaison team at hearingenquiries@grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk.