

What is a witness statement?

A witness statement is a formal, written document in which a person records their relevant account for use in legal proceedings. Witness statements are an important part of the evidence considered by public inquiries.

The Inquiry will ask for witness statements from many individuals and organisations. Public authorities and other organisations might be asked to give an account of why a particular decision was made. Those personally affected by the fire will be asked, amongst other things, to give an account of events on the night of the fire.

The Chairman can request witness statements at any time and may do so because of evidence provided by another person or organisation which he wishes to follow up.

Some witnesses will be asked to provide evidence in person during an Inquiry hearing – this is often referred to as giving oral evidence. Not all witnesses who make a written statement will be asked to give oral evidence. For example, if there were two people who were together when an event took place it may be that only one is required.

Who has to make a witness statement?

- Anyone may be asked to give a witness statement if the Chairman thinks they can give evidence that will assist the Inquiry. You do not have to be a core participant to make a witness statement.
- If the Chairman asks someone to provide a statement, they must do so unless they think there is a good reason why they should not. In that case they may ask the Chairman to reconsider his request, giving their reason.
- This ensures that the Inquiry is able to consider all the relevant evidence and can reach conclusions with confidence.
- Not everybody who has some knowledge of the Grenfell Tower fire or matters related to it will be asked to provide evidence to the Inquiry.

How can I make a witness statement?

- If the Chairman wants a person to provide a witness statement, he will write to that person asking for a statement and identifying the matters or events he would like the witness to cover.
- The witness writes their account of events down, in their own words, and signs a statement of truth to confirm it is accurate to the best of their knowledge.
- If the witness has a legal representative that person can help with this.