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THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Sir Martin

Thank you for your letter of 13 November. I noted with interest the proceedings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's procedural hearing of 11 and 12 December.

As you know, I committed to consider the issue of panel members once you had appointed assessors to assist the Inquiry. Having regard to the assistance that may be provided by those assessors, and the Terms of Reference which it is the Inquiry's role to deliver, I believe that the Inquiry has the necessary expertise to undertake its work. I am also very conscious of the need for the Inquiry to complete its initial report as quickly as reasonably possible. I therefore consider that additional panel members should not be appointed at this stage. In reaching this conclusion, I have had regard to the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

I am pleased that you are taking care in gathering evidence from those most affected by the tragedy, so that they are given a chance to share their experience. I know that you agree with me that it is of paramount importance that the Inquiry provides an opportunity for the bereaved, survivors, and the community to be heard and for lessons to be learnt from their views and experiences. I would encourage you to continue working with the community affected by the fire and to consider a full range of options to foster closer engagement in the future.

I was particularly pleased to hear you propose at last week's hearing the establishment of an advisory panel of those affected by the fire. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has established such a panel, and it is closely involved in the work of that Inquiry, providing advice and guidance to the Chair. Clearly, it is for you, as the Chair of the independent Inquiry, to decide how best to take this forward, in consultation with the Grenfell Tower community. But I believe that such a panel could play a very beneficial role in putting those most affected at the heart of the Inquiry and enabling them to ensure that their views and experiences are heard.

I know that you understand how important it is, particularly for the survivors, the families of the victims and others most affected by the tragedy, that the Inquiry completes its initial report as quickly as reasonably possible. I am very grateful for the work that you and your team have undertaken to date, and look forward to receiving a further update in due course on the Inquiry's progress. I will continue to instruct the Civil Service to provide whatever assistance and resource is needed to support your work.

Yours sincerely
Randy