



HM Government

24 June 2017

Dear All,

Thank you for inviting us to join the Community Safety Partnership meeting on Monday evening. We were both deeply moved by what you told us, and by the bravery and dignity that you showed in such terrible circumstances.

This disaster should never have happened. We are absolutely determined to make sure that this never happens again, and that you have every support to rebuild your lives.

We promised to write to you about the support that we are offering to those who have been affected.

Practical support at the Westway Centre

- The Grenfell Community Centre is currently open at the Westway Centre (1 Crowthorne Road, London W10 6RP) from 9am to 9pm each day. Staff are on hand to help with issues like benefits, immigration and visas, help with transporting your children to school, NHS support including mental health services, and help with your children's schooling. This service will be available for as long as it is needed by you.
- Your keyworker can help you to get the right specialist advice. If you do not have a keyworker please go to the Westway Centre.
- You can also call the Red Cross helpline on 0800 458 9472, which is open 24 hours a day and free to call from landlines and mobiles.

Financial support

- The Government has provided £5 million to help those whose homes have been destroyed in the fire with immediate financial needs, and we will provide more if needed.
- If your home has been destroyed by the fire, we will give you a £500 cash payment immediately. We will also pay £5,000 into your bank account. We can help you to get a post office account if you do not have one. We have discretion to provide more money to people who need it – for example very large families, or people with extra support needs.
- These payments can be accessed through the Post Office in Portobello Road or the Westway Centre.

- It is essential that people understand they can keep the money they receive; these grants are not loans and they will not be expected to repay a single penny. Neither are they waiving any legal rights as a result of accepting this financial help. The payments will be disregarded for means-tested welfare payments, so no one in receipt of benefits will see their benefits cut if they accept emergency support.
- Separately, for anyone who has lost loved ones, we will provide help with the costs of funerals.
- Both financial and practical help with arranging funerals is available from the Westway Centre.

Rehousing for people whose homes were destroyed

- The Prime Minister committed last week that everyone whose home has been destroyed by the fire will be offered a temporary home in the local area (Kensington and Chelsea or a neighbouring borough) within three weeks.
- We believe that every household who lived in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk who has asked for help has been provided with emergency accommodation and most have now completed a full housing needs assessment. This will help us to match people with the right homes. However, if you are aware of anyone who has not been offered accommodation please let a member of staff or volunteer know.
- If you have not completed a housing needs assessment with a housing officer, please go the Westway Centre. You can also call the Red Cross helpline on 0800 458 9472.
- Some of you were worried that if you did not accept the first home offered, you would be considered “intentionally homeless”. That is not true. We will work with every family whose home was destroyed in the fire to place them in a home which meets their needs.
- Some of you had told us that you heard reports of families being rehoused outside of London. We are not aware of any cases like this. This would only ever happen if requested, otherwise it would be in Kensington and Chelsea, or a nearby borough. If you have details of a particular case, please let us know and we will follow it up.
- Of course, some residents whose home has been destroyed in the fire may want to leave the area, for example to be closer to family. We will support that. But all those that want to be housed locally, will be housed locally.
- In the longer term, everyone from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk will be offered a permanent home in the local area with a local authority or housing association landlord.
- We have already relaxed benefit rules for anyone affected by the Grenfell Tower fire and our staff are handling people’s claims with sensitivity, understanding and flexibility. As part of this, our recent guidance to Local Authorities is that they should treat these residents as a priority for extra payments to help with their rent if they are rehoused in a larger property.

- The Government's commitment to those whose homes have been destroyed by the fire, of rehousing into temporary homes and a future social tenancy, extends to all sub-tenants. Everyone will receive an at least equally secure tenancy, at a similar rent.

Support for people whose homes are not fit for habitation

- Emergency accommodation will be provided if your home is not fit for habitation until such time that you are able to return following refurbishment.
- If your home has been damaged, or you do not have hot water, gas or heating and it is not possible for you to remain in your home, please call the Red Cross helpline on 0800 458 9472, or visit the Westway Centre.

Immigration

- You raised questions about how those with unresolved immigration status would be treated. Our priority is to support all of those whose homes have been destroyed in the fire.
- We will provide support to obtain updated immigration papers and visas, which can be accessed at the Westway Centre.
- We will provide housing to those with ongoing asylum applications until their cases are concluded.
- We will not use this tragic incident as a reason to carry out immigration checks on those involved and those providing vital information to identify victims. We will also make sure that all people whose homes have been destroyed, irrespective of their immigration status, will be able to access the services they need, including accommodation and healthcare.
- Individuals who wish to speak directly to Home Office staff can do so by visiting the Westway Sports Centre, close to Grenfell Tower, or call 0300 222 0000 in order to arrange a call back from specialist immigration staff concerning passport, visa and immigration queries.

Public Inquiry

- The Government will do whatever it takes to get to the bottom of the causes of this disaster.
- To do this we have announced there will be a full public inquiry chaired by an independent judge. It will leave no stone unturned to get to the truth and will question everyone that has evidence to provide.
- Survivors and victims will be consulted about the terms of reference of the enquiry.
- We will also ensure that victims are able to be represented and the Government will cover the costs of legal representation.

- The inquiry will not delay the conclusion of the Police inquiry which will draw on the fire investigation. If criminal proceedings result from these investigations, they will be a matter for the independent prosecution authorities and we would not expect them to be delayed by the establishment of the public inquiry.

We are determined to maintain continued close engagement with you and we stand ready to respond where you need any further assistance.

As we made clear at the meeting, we will attend further community meetings of this kind and continue our dialogue with you.

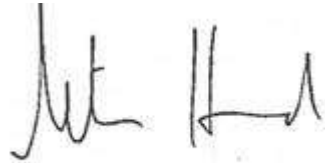
We know we have to work to earn your trust and working together we want to do our best to help you through what is an incredibly traumatic and distressing time for you.



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