



The future of Grenfell Tower: frequently asked questions

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This document provides answers to questions that may be asked about the advice that will be considered as part of the process of reaching a decision on the future of Grenfell Tower. A summary of the documents which have been published, and the full documents themselves, can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Approach to the decision on the future of Grenfell Tower

Q. Have you already decided what will happen to the Tower?

A. No. We are publishing a range of expert advice that will be considered as part of the process of reaching a decision on the future of Grenfell Tower.

Before a decision is reached, we want to share the advice and discuss its implications with bereaved families, survivors and residents.

Q. Why have you chosen to publish these documents?

A. We have committed to ensure that bereaved families, survivors and residents have access to the information that will inform a decision on Grenfell Tower before one is reached, as we understand that some people will wish to examine and comment on the information. These documents represent the key advice that we have received. We are happy to make any of the more detailed background reports available upon request.

Works within Grenfell Tower since June 2017

Q. What works have been completed within the Tower to date? Why has the Tower not been carefully taken down before now?

A. The Tower has been carefully managed with advice from engineers. All of the works that we have completed to date, including the installation of props and wrapping of the Tower, have been completed to protect the Tower and keep it stable.

Immediately after the fire, measures were put in place to ensure the Tower was stable and to protect the building as fully as possible to allow the police investigation, the return of personal property and for the inspection and maintenance of the building. The Tower was propped to enable access for this work.

The site was released as a crime scene in 2018 and the government became guardian of the site in 2019.

Following this, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) planned and is currently implementing the next stage of safety works, to install additional props to ensure its continued stability while a decision is reached about its future. Before these additional props could be installed, we needed to carry out 'enabling works'. This included removing heavy and damaged items to reduce the weight on the new props and also to create the space for them to be installed.

In February 2021, we received advice from engineers who recommended that we proceed with carefully taking down the Tower after the safety works have completed next spring.

Independent, expert advice on Grenfell Tower

Q. Why have you removed the pictures from these documents?

A. The original documents contain detailed descriptions of inside Grenfell Tower, as well as images of fire-damage and the interiors of flats, which could be upsetting for some.

A version of each document has therefore been created with any photographs of fire damage or the interior of the Tower removed, to minimise the amount of potentially upsetting or distressing information within it. A copy of the original documents with photographs can be provided on request.

We have also redacted some personal information about individuals from the documents.

Q. The engineers are recommending that the Tower should start to be carefully taken down in May 2022. How is this different to the completion of the safety works?

A. Engineers have recommended that the Tower should be carefully taken down after the safety works have completed next spring, anticipated in May 2022. The exact timings will be validated with the [new principal contractor on site](#).

If a decision is reached to carefully take down the Tower following the completion of the safety works, a period of preparatory works would then be needed. There will be no change to the Tower before the fifth anniversary in June 2022.

Q. Is the Tower a dangerous structure? What does that mean?

A. Yes. Due to the immediate risk presented after the fire, the building was classified as a Dangerous Structure (as per the Building Act 1984).

This immediate risk has been mitigated. However, the Tower requires ongoing management to ensure residual risks are appropriately monitored and managed.

Q. The documents mention that the Tower is being propped from the fourth floor. Why aren't you propping to the basement?

A. If a decision is reached to carefully take down the Tower following the completion of the safety works, this propping to the basement from the fourth floor is not needed.

If no decision has been taken to move directly to carefully taking down the Tower following the completion of the safety works, then propping to the basement also needs to be completed to a similar timescale as the rest of the safety works within the Tower.

Propping to the basement is difficult and has associated safety risks because it involves removing equipment from the basement and installing props within a narrow space. It will be confirmed with the [new principal contractor at the site](#) what would be the latest date they would need to be instructed to commence and complete any basement works.

Q. The documents mention that a column in the Tower has failed. What does that mean?

A. The fact that the column in the northwest corner at level 13 has failed means that it is no longer able to hold the weight it is meant to by itself. That is why extensive propping has been installed around the column to ensure the Tower remains stable, but this is not a long-term solution.

All of the works that we have been completed or are being completed, including the installation of props, removal of heavy items and wrapping of the Tower, are about protecting the Tower, keeping it stable and minimising the risks to everyone who lives, studies or works nearby to the Tower.

Living, working and studying near to the Tower

Q. Is it safe for me to live, work or study near the Tower?

A. All of the works that we have completed to date, including the installation of props, removal of heavy items and wrapping of the Tower, have been completed to protect the Tower and keep it stable. This means that people can continue to live, study and work nearby.

The building is closely monitored and maintained. A system was installed to monitor the Tower 24/7 and this monitoring is supplemented with daily inspections and regular visual floor-by-floor checks by structural engineering specialists.

Due to the spalling of concrete (the loss of material from a concrete surface such as a slab, wall, column, or beam) inside the building, the greatest risks are to those people who are entering the building.

Q. I live by the Tower, why am I not alerted by the monitoring alarms?

A. The monitoring regime monitors any movements of the structure of the Grenfell Tower to ensure that these movements remain within acceptable levels. The monitoring data shows that the actions being taken to keep the Tower stable are working.

There are three linked but separate monitoring systems installed to ensure a diversity of monitoring parameters (exterior 3D position, interior tilt and distance between floor slab and soffit). This allows each monitoring data point to be verified and compared to identify any inaccuracies.

The monitors can be affected by seasonal weather conditions and data signal issues. Where possible, we have taken steps to reduce the impact of weather conditions on the monitoring system. The monitoring report identifies occasions where an error in one of the sensors has been identified and how they have been resolved.

In the unlikely scenario that a concern was identified from the monitoring data, and which could pose a risk to those living, working or studying in the local area, MHCLG has robust and tested notification arrangements in place to inform public authorities and local stakeholders so they can enact their own emergency protocols as necessary. This has not been necessary to date.

Mental health and wellbeing

Q. Does the literature review suggest that the Tower is having a negative effect on the mental health of the local community?

A. As part of the literature review by the Health Protection Research Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response at King's College, the academics reviewed academic literature to find previous research from international disasters – other than at Grenfell Tower – about the impact of living near to visible disaster sites on someone's mental health. This was to learn from what has happened elsewhere.

They concluded that living near to a visible disaster site could have positive or negative effects on the mental health of a community, but found little scientific evidence about the impact. They do, however, suggest that ensuring a community is properly involved in the decisions around the future of a site is likely to be beneficial.

Q. Will you be carrying out the additional research that is recommended in the review?

A. The review recommends that additional research could be carried out to fill a gap they identified in the academic literature about the impact of a visible disaster site, to increase academic understanding.

As an example, they suggest that research conducted about Grenfell Tower may benefit other communities faced with having to make decisions as to how best to manage the remains of a building. This is a decision for the academics and bodies that commission research to consider.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (27 May 2021)