

# The future of Grenfell Tower: advice that will inform a decision

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### What is this update about?

Following important advice from structural engineers about the condition of the Tower, we need to consider this summer if, and when, Grenfell Tower should be carefully taken down to maintain safety. This is so that we can plan what happens once the safety works currently taking place within the Tower are completed next spring.

We want to share the information and advice we have received with bereaved families, survivors and local residents now, to provide an opportunity to examine and comment on the information before a decision is reached. We recognise that decisions about the Grenfell Tower site are sensitive and we have committed to engaging closely with the bereaved families and survivors of the Grenfell tragedy, as well as local residents.

### Introduction

The government became the guardian of the Grenfell Tower site in July 2019. We are responsible for, and committed to, keeping it safe and secure until a decision is reached both about its future, and until the community has determined a fitting memorial to honour those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

The independent Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission is developing the community-led vision for a memorial and their work is progressing. Bereaved families, survivors and the local community will continue to be at the heart of determining what the future memorial will be. The government is committed to supporting the Memorial Commission and the community in their creation of a lasting memorial to honour those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

### Approach to the decision on the future of Grenfell Tower

In 2018, the government outlined four [key principles](#) that would guide a decision about what would happen to Grenfell Tower:

- the community will continue to be engaged at each step along the way to a lasting memorial
- the health and safety of those living, working and at the school in the local area, as well those working on the site, will continue to take priority
- decisions that are taken about the Tower site will be evidence-based, informed by the advice of public authorities and technical experts
- we will consult with the police and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to ensure that decision-making does not interfere with the path to justice.

In line with these principles, we want to share the advice we have received from engineering and other experts.

We welcome any comments on the advice by **31 July 2021**. The Grenfell site team from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and the experts who have written the advice,

are available to meet bereaved families, survivors and local residents to understand their questions, concerns and priorities about the way ahead. Information on how to provide comments can be found at the end of this document.

It will be at least a year before we begin to implement any decision, which means there will be no change to the Tower before the fifth anniversary in 2022.

## Independent, expert advice on Grenfell Tower

The government is advised by a range of experts, including an independent dangerous structure surveyor and specialist structural engineers. Engineers contracted by the government routinely complete inspections, alongside 24/7 monitoring of Grenfell Tower. They have also independently undertaken structural assessments of Grenfell Tower and its condition.

In summary, the key points from the published information are:

- Engineers have confirmed that Grenfell Tower is stable. Immediately following the fire, measures were put in place to ensure the Tower was stable and to protect the building as fully as possible to allow access to facilitate the police investigation, the return of personal property and for the inspection and maintenance of the building.
- The Tower continues to be closely monitored and maintained. An automated system was installed to assess the Tower's stability 24/7 and is supplemented with daily inspections and regular visual floor-by-floor checks by structural engineering specialists.
- All of the works that we have completed to date, including the installation of props (aluminium or steel supports) 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. However, even with the additional props being installed as part of the ongoing safety works to ensure the stability of Grenfell Tower, the condition of the building is worsening and will continue to do so over time.
- A range of structural engineering experts providing independent advice to the government have unambiguously and unanimously advised that we should start to carefully take down Grenfell Tower once the current programme of safety works within the Tower have been completed in spring 2022.
- We have sought an independent peer review of the engineering advice from Dr John Roberts FREng, Senior Director of Structural Engineering at Jacobs. He has endorsed the recommendation that Grenfell Tower should be carefully taken down following the completion of the safety works. He has not previously worked on any aspect in relation to the Grenfell Tower site.

Please note that the advice documents contain detailed descriptions and diagrams of the Tower, 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.

## The documents available

The **Summary of Technical Advice** (May 2021) provides an independent overview by engineers of all the information available about the structural systems of Grenfell Tower pre-fire and post-fire, the work undertaken to stabilise Grenfell Tower, the current situation with the structure, and independent advice on next steps to mitigate residual risks. It includes the recommendation that Grenfell Tower should not be propped further for the medium-term but should start to be carefully taken down at the earliest possible opportunity following the completion of the safety works in spring 2022. This advice is based on protecting the safety of those working in and living around the Tower, primarily due to the significant fire damage to the Tower but also as a consequence of the ongoing deterioration.

A peer review commissioned to independently review the engineering advice given to MHCLG endorses the recommendations and advice that MHCLG has received. We have published the **executive summary** and **full report from this independent peer review** (May 2021).

Other detailed documents available include:

- The **Final Design Validation** (June 2020) is a design verification of the damaged primary structure of Grenfell Tower, taking into consideration a version of the supplementary 'Stage 3' propping being installed in the Tower as part of the safety works. This report assesses the damage to the structure, and the need for propping where the structure is not thought to be able to support its own weight. The work was carried out within the framework of modern codes of practice.
- **The Propping risk mitigation study – Part 1: Stage 3 propping from Level 4** (July 2020) develops the work carried out in the **Final Design Validation**. This work is a proof of concept study relating to the installation of supplementary propping. The analysis indicates that the less damaged floor slabs are capable of resisting the applied loads to allow the propping to start at Level 4. The detailed design of the propping system has then been carried out by the specialist temporary works designer.
- The **Update to Design Works** (December 2020) captures the key points and findings from the **Final Design Validation** and **Propping risk mitigation reports**. This report provides a high-level summary of the work done to this point and summarises the reasons associated with the recommendation that, from an engineering perspective, Grenfell Tower should start to be carefully taken down once the current programme of safety works within the Tower have been completed in spring 2022. The document outlines the risk that the longer the building is left in-place, the risk of the structure's condition deteriorating to an unacceptable level, and the risks to the site operatives having to go inside the building, increases.
- Correspondence from a range of independent engineering experts (August 2020) have been provided by the **building surveyor with responsibility for the site** and from **Michael Barclay Partnership**, the former lead engineers for the site from August 2020. These outline their recommendations about what should happen to Grenfell Tower, following a joint visual inspection of Grenfell Tower by those experts. They unanimously agree that Grenfell Tower should be carefully taken down at the earliest opportunity. The **Health and Safety Executive** also wrote to MHCLG at the same time outlining our responsibilities to them.
- **Grenfell Tower Monitoring: Automated Monitoring Systems Annual Monitoring Report** (January 2021) includes summary information for the automated monitoring regime within Grenfell Tower captured for the whole year of 2020. This regime monitors any movements of the structure to ensure that these movements remain within acceptable levels and explains the reasons for alert levels being triggered. The monitoring data shows that the actions being taken to keep the Tower stable are working, but that the Tower continues to be affected by weather cycles. 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 document identifies occasions where monitoring system errors have been identified and how they have been resolved.

## Mental health and wellbeing

We have committed to prioritise health and safety, which includes the impact of the decision on the future of the Tower on mental and physical health.

In seeking to identify evidence on any public health impacts of the Tower and decisions on its future, we have also considered publicly available information from surveys conducted by other agencies which have included a reference to the impact of living, studying or working by Grenfell Tower. Public health assessments may not be able to capture how all individuals may feel the impact of the Tower, which is why we also want to hear directly from those individuals affected by the decision.

The Department of Health and Social Care's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) commissioned a literature review on behalf of MHCLG from the Health Protection Research Unit (HPRU) in Emergency Preparedness and Response at King's College London on international disasters and the psychological impact of living near a disaster site. This will be published on [the HPRU website](#) in June. The review did not find any evidence internationally on the long-term impacts of living near to a disaster site but did highlight that lessons from other disasters suggesting that ensuring a community is involved in discussions about the future of a site is likely to be beneficial.

## Not interfering with the path to justice

The government remains in contact with the Metropolitan Police, Coroner and Grenfell Tower Inquiry to ensure that decisions on the Grenfell Tower site do not interfere with their work.

The police released Grenfell Tower as a crime scene in August 2018. They confirmed at that time, as well as subsequently, that they have obtained all the evidence that they require from Grenfell Tower.

The Inquiry have confirmed that their expert witnesses have been able to gather all required evidence and they have no current need to return to the Tower.

We will nonetheless write to the Coroner, Grenfell Tower Inquiry and police again, as well as to core participants to the Inquiry via their legal representatives, before a decision on the future of the Tower is reached. At the point of the decision on the future of Grenfell Tower, we will publish information about any requirements they have raised, and how these have been addressed in our decision-making.

## Next steps

[Since summer 2020](#), an independent engagement organisation, Kaizen, has been helping MHCLG by gathering the thoughts, questions and concerns of bereaved families, former residents, local residents and the North Kensington community on the Tower and about decisions on its future.

Kaizen are continuing to gather views about **what people think should happen with Grenfell Tower**. If you haven't yet had the chance to share your thoughts with Kaizen, you can do so in whichever way suits you best:

- **email your views to:** [grenfelltower@kaizen.org.uk](mailto:grenfelltower@kaizen.org.uk)
- **call:** 020 7082 5505 or text 07984 434855 to arrange a phone conversation.
- **write to:** Kaizen, 22a Cliff Villas, London NW1 9AT
- **complete the online survey at:** [www.surveymonkey.com/r/GrenfellTower](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GrenfellTower)

If you would like to provide your views directly to MHCLG, or arrange to speak to us, including about the information published above, please do so by **31 July 2021** by:

- emailing [GrenfellTowerSite@communities.gov.uk](mailto:GrenfellTowerSite@communities.gov.uk)
- calling: 0303 444 0011
- **booking a household bubble meeting, online presentation or drop-in session with us at:** [Grenfell2021.eventbrite.com](http://Grenfell2021.eventbrite.com)
- attending one of our upcoming events or drop ins, details of which are in MHCLG's [latest community update](#) and that are also detailed here: [Grenfell2021.eventbrite.com](http://Grenfell2021.eventbrite.com)
- further information can also be found at: [www.gov.uk/grenfell-community-updates](http://www.gov.uk/grenfell-community-updates)

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