

## **Information Sheet: Public Health Summary**

### Summary

- Testing of the soil as well as fruit and vegetables grown around Grenfell tower has found no evidence of harmful contamination due to the fire.
- In Treadgold House and Avondale Park Gardens, some soil samples showed higher lead levels than the rest but there was too much variability in the small number of samples taken to be certain of our findings.
- The high results found in these locations could be due to the past industrial use of the land. Further sampling in these two areas will be carried out as well as checks to determine how the land is used so we can to assess the level of any risk posed by the lead levels.
- Apart from the higher lead levels in those two areas, the levels of all potential harmful chemicals in the soil were within the range of typical urban areas.

### About this Information Sheet

This Information Sheet provides a summary of the public health position and advice following the completion of the environmental checks programme. The purpose of the checks was to identify any significant contamination as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire and assess any health and environmental risks that may have arisen.

It should be read in conjunction with the Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP) Lay Summary and the Non-Technical Summary for the Stage 2 soil assessment report prepared by AECOM, the environmental specialist company who carried out the land contamination investigation. MAP comprises, amongst its members, representatives from Public Health England, the Environment Agency, the Local Authority Director of Public Health and NHS England.

### Public Health position

The detailed technical reports and Non-Technical Report were received by Public Health England (PHE) and other members of the MAP. PHE have looked at the evidence presented by AECOM for both the Stage 1 and 2 testing. This evidence included: identifying any contaminants which may have been released during the fire; potential sources of soil contamination from past historic land uses or other human activities; results of the soil and fruit/vegetable produce testing; and the risk assessments and conclusions drawn by AECOM.

PHE agrees with AECOM's interpretation of the results, that Stage 2 did not find detectable concentrations of contaminants in soil specifically associated with the fire.

PHE agrees with the assessment that the health risk poses a low to minimal or negligible risk to human health for all the sampling areas except two, Treadgold House and Avondale Park Gardens.

To provide more certainty about soil concentrations and remove uncertainty about the way that the residents used the land, more sampling and assessment is needed at both sites to be able to draw conclusions. PHE supports this further work to provide more certainty about any health risks from exposure to lead in soil. We will review our advice following further assessment at these two sites.

Based on the results of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 risk assessment our advice is to continue to adopt a good hygiene approach when using gardens and outdoor community spaces. The results of the ongoing air quality monitoring, combined with extensive soil testing, indicate that potential contamination following the fire has not entered the soil from the atmosphere. Further information about the ongoing air quality monitoring in the vicinity of the Tower can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmentalmonitoring-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>

### Public Health advice

We recommend that anyone handling soil in any urban area should keep to the following good hygiene practices.

- Continue to enjoy using all of your garden space as you normally would, including grassed areas, decking, patios and other areas of hardstanding.
- Wear gloves when gardening. If you have cuts or sores, be especially attentive to avoiding any direct contact with the soil
- Follow normal hygiene precautions and wash hands thoroughly after working or playing in the garden or allotment and before handling food, drinking or smoking.
- Remove and clean your outdoor gardening shoes, tools and gloves before entering your home; indoor dust may become contaminated by soil if you don't wipe your feet or take off your shoes.
- If you grow vegetables or fruit in your garden or on your allotment wash and/or peel produce before cooking and/or consumption.
- Where possible, don't let young children put soil in their mouths.

However, if any members of the community around Grenfell are concerned about their health, they should discuss this with their GP who is best placed to assess individual health needs and consider the most appropriate clinical investigation and/or treatment. The NHS are also offering enhanced health checks for residents who are concerned about their health. (Further details are available at [https://www.grenfell.nhs.uk/application/files/3716/2446/5412/Enhanced Health Checks North Ken June21.pdf](https://www.grenfell.nhs.uk/application/files/3716/2446/5412/Enhanced_Health_Checks_North_Ken_June21.pdf))