

## Message

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**Sent:** 15/06/2017 06:12:04  
**To:** Buckley Richard: H&F [richard.buckley@lbhf.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** Fwd: National Incident at Grenfell Tower - Gross Negligence

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**From:** Grenfell Tower Leaseholder's Association <GrenfellLeaseholdersAssociation@hotmail.co.uk>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 14, 2017 11:52:48 PM  
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**Subject:** National Incident at Grenfell Tower - Gross Negligence

Dear All,

This letter is following the **tragic "Towering Inferno"** at Grenfell Tower on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, to demonstrate gross negligence from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council and their managing agent KCTMO (Kensington and Chelsea Council Tenant Management Organisation) in their handling of events leading up to the catastrophe.

KCTMO is responsible for the management of nearly 10,000 properties, of which Grenfell Tower is one. Grenfell Tower was built in 1974, undergoing refurbishment in 2016 led by Rydon and has 129 flats spread across 24 storeys, housing between 400-600 residents. There were 13 Leaseholders in the building and the remaining residents social housing tenants.

The key objective of the two Resident Associations at Grenfell Tower namely: the Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association and the Grenfell Action Group, is to improve the quality of the lives of residents of Grenfell Tower. For almost a decade, both groups have been imploring KCTMO to improve what is regarded by most residents as poor and ineffective service, despite supposedly being a tenant led organisation. As recently as May 2017, the majority of residents provided signatures to provide the Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association with the mandate to address critical issues, which was shared with Local Councillors. This

ranged from insufficient security and increased vandalism resulting from a lack of concierge, to pushing for KCTMO to carry out a full health & safety inspection of the premises. <sup>(1)</sup>

The key point to highlight is that from the outset issues on fire safety had been raised with KCTMO on countless occasions and we have pleaded for action to be taken alongside the Fire Brigade, but to no avail and this was recently acknowledged by KCTMO themselves, *"we are aware that concerns have been raised historically by residents."* <sup>(2-4)</sup> in fact, as was highlighted by the Guardian, KCTMO was handed a deficiency notice last year by the London Fire Brigade for another one of its properties *"Lonsdale House on the Portobello Court Estate"* <sup>(5)</sup>. Sadly, an effort to engage with the Fire Safety Inspecting Officer to complete a full risk assessment of Grenfell Tower did not lead to any action <sup>(6)</sup>. Unfortunately, it is evident that a failure to genuinely acknowledge the gravity of the health and safety risk posed by a fire to Grenfell Tower, has had a devastating impact on the lives of hundreds of residents.

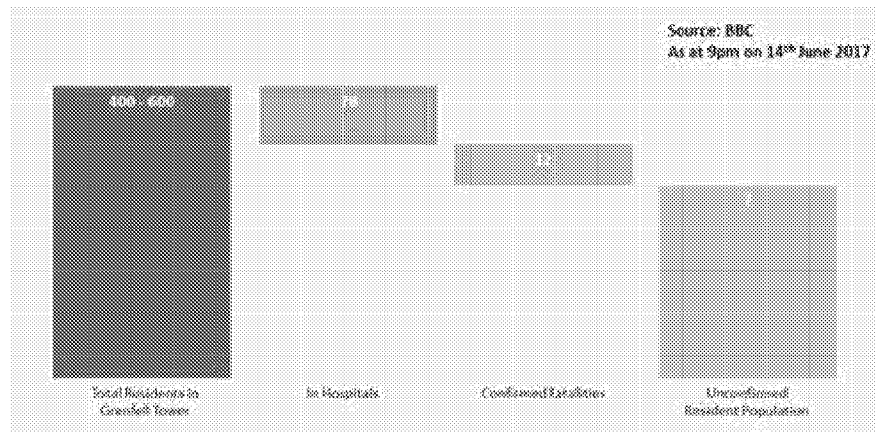
Clearly investigation is ongoing as to both the underlying source of the fire and the catalyst for the rapid spread. However, one thing is absolutely clear - the fire on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at Grenfell Tower will be remembered as one of the worst residential fires in the history of the UK. It is critical to highlight the lack of adequate controls, both as preventative and controlling measures, to protect the lives of residents in the building. The critical gaps can be classified as the following:

- The building only has one stairwell to both enter and exit the building which is also used as a fire exit, and was also the home of unprotected gas pipes. Therefore, there was no safe and effective method of vacating the building
- There was clear instruction on signs within the building to "stay put" in the event of a fire. However, the design of the building and the insulation properties meant that this was not an effective survival method
- No fire drill has ever been undertaken in the building to test the effectiveness of the fire alarm system, i.e. if all fire alarms are audible
- There were no installation of sprinklers to contain the internal impact of the fire for hard to reach areas for the Fire Brigade
- Permanent firestopping was not put in place after the heating refurbishments replaced underfloor pipes, and this was not effectively tested with clear safeguards

It is widely acknowledged by authoritative sources in the Fire Brigade that the material of the cladding used by Rydon did not meet health and safety requirements in the "true" sense, i.e. is a fire risk as it is combustible<sup>(7)</sup>. **The crucial question that we as a Residents Association have is, who signed off that the refurbishment delivered by Rydon in 2016 met all the required health and safety standards?**

In addition, witnesses also observed gas explosions, and again the issue associated with the National Grid installation of gas pipes in the stairwell was flagged to both Councillors and KCTMO <sup>(8-10)</sup>, but again it was a case of too little action too late. **We wholeheartedly urge the results of the full inquiry to be carried out by the Fire Brigade to be shared publicly**, to bring justice to those who have lost their lives and those whose lives have changed irreversibly, with life-long memories and possessions wiped away in the space of minutes.

As at 9pm on 14<sup>th</sup> June according to the BBC, there were 12 confirmed fatalities. If you reflect that the fire occurred before 1am where the majority of the 400-600 residents were asleep, we are deeply concerned that the figure is a gross underestimate of total casualties. **We strongly suggest metrics on "registered as safe" are communicated alongside the fatality figure**, as most of the residents either know directly/indirectly of friends and family who are still missing. At this stage of the operation, tragically these are likely to be serious casualties. In other words, we need confirmation of how many of the unconfirmed resident population are registered as safe, or are potential fatalities.



In summary, the failure of the Council and KCTMO to work with our Residents Associations to establish preventative measures to reduce the huge health and safety risks, means they need to be held to account. **Importantly, given the heightened level of uncertainty, we strongly encourage the Council and Government put forward a considered and full proposal covering financial and emotional provisions, including housing to all tenant and leaseholders alike.** And again, we urge the results of the full inquiry to be carried out by the Fire Brigade to be shared publicly as a matter of National urgency.

Yours Sincerely,

Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association

## References

- (1) Mandate from residents overview (001)
- (2) <https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/>
- (3) Fire risk escalation (011)
- (4) <http://www.kctmo.org.uk/news/336/further-statement-on-the-fire-at-grenfell-tower>
- (5) <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/14/fire-safety-concerns-raised-by-grenfell-tower-residents-in-2012>
- (6) Gas pipe escalation (014)
- (7) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/14/everything-know-grenfell-tower-blaze/>
- (8) Gas pipe escalation (010)
- (9) Gas pipe escalation (007)
- (10) Gas pipe escalation (013)