

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: DUDENEY, STEPHEN

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: FIRE FIGHTER

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This statement (consisting of 4 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: S DUDENEY

Date: 05/02/2018

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

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Further to the statement I made to Police on the 6 July 2017 in relation to the fire at Grenfell Tower I have been asked to clarify certain points and answer some further questions in relation to my training and aspects of the incident, building and so on.

My call sign is F110 and was the same on the day. When I attended the incident I was ordered to an RVP in Ladbroke Grove. I approached the RVP along Ladbroke Grove from Holland Park Avenue. I noticed the road was heavily congested as I would expect from such a large incident. Because I am a licenced London Taxi driver I knew the area so I decided to make a left into Blenheim Crescent and found a parking space there rather than go up to the RVP in Ladbroke Grove. I knew that the local side roads would take me towards the scene so I walked the rest of the way in.

I have been a competent Group Manager since May 2011. At my level over the last five years I have been involved with several combined training drills as an Officer where I have led the training in relation to LFB compulsory training packages such as Back to Basics and others because high rise firefighting has been a topic of training since the Lakanal House fire in Camberwell and the Shirley Towers fire in Southampton where two firefighters were killed. Through experience and self study I am informally considered as a high rise firefighting expert. Therefore, in a lot of the training I take the lead due to that experience and study. The last time I was formally involved in high rise command training was in the summer of 2016 when I was assessing station manager promotion candidates against a high rise fire scenario similar to Shirley Towers at the Babcock Training Centre in Beckton.

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As far as I can recall the last time I was involved in actual training rather being a lead was around 2005 or 2006 when I was a Station Commander in Hackney Borough. This is very much because the role we take in training is rank specific and thus at my rank my training would be more about the command of an incident.

In relation to actual experience of firefighting in a high rise as a firefighter and junior officer through the late '80's and 1990's I attended many high rise fires. I cannot remember the times and locations of all of them but a few spring to mind due to their serious nature. Such as a major fire at Rainhill Way in Bow in the early 1990's involving cable TV wires burning several floors in a shaft causing smoke logging to most floors and people to self-evacuate in a panic. My role at that fire was part of a BA crew that went to the upper floors to reassure people and tell them to stay in their flats. I also remember as a temporary sub-officer in the late 1990's two major fires in tower blocks in Bow in one week. I remember a large fire on the upper floors of a high rise building in Leyton when I was temporary sub-officer and also a major fire in a high rise block in Plaistow in the early hours of the morning when I was a firefighter at Poplar around 1991. There are many other smaller and medium high rise fires that I can't clearly remember. In 2002 I was ordered as an ADO to the Telstar House fire in Paddington. Two firefighters were injured at this fire and I was asked to assist with the debrief and lessons learned due to my high rise firefighting knowledge and experience.

As a Group Manager since 2010 I have attended 12 serious high rise fires before Grenfell Tower. I would list these and their dates below:-

- 11.10.10 GM initially in charge of a 10 pump fire at the Marriott Hotel in Docklands. This was the first time since Lakanal House that fire survival guidance calls (FSG) were received in a high number. At one point we had 22 outstanding FSG calls from residents of the flats above the hotel. As a result of this the on-duty officer in charge of control established an on the spot FSG procedure which following de-briefs from this incident which I was involved in established the formal FSG that we now use ie: dedicated CU for FSG handling
- 01.01.11 6 pump fire Secon Tower, Westferry Road, E14 where I was monitoring officer
- 03.03.11 6 pump fire in a council block Paragon Road, Hackney where I was monitoring officer
- 06.11.11 10 pump fire in a council block Arbinger Grove, Deptford. I can't remember my role at this job but I believe it may have been Sector Commander Safety on the upper floors
- 06.06.13 8 pump fire in a block of flats Kestrel House, City Road where I was Incident Commander

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- 14.07.13 12 pump fire Dorrington Point, Bow where I was the second Group Manager to attend and carried out a Sector Commander role in the Fire Sector within the building. This incident is significant because the fire extended out of the building and caused slight damage to the flats above due to the high fire loading within the flat of origin (contained a high a quantity of flammable material).
- 31.01.14 6 pump fire Brinklow House, Harrow Road, Paddington. Attended as monitoring officer.
- 11.09.15 6 pump fire Capitol Apartments, Western Gateway, Docklands E16. This was a fire on a balcony believed to be caused by a cigarette but the fire spread into the external cladding but didn't spread too far. As this was before Grenfell Tower and I had attended other similar incidents in other clad buildings I didn't consider this significant at the time as the spread of fire was limited.
- 16.12.15 6 pump fire Great Eastern Street, EC2. Attended as a Fire Safety Officer. This was a fire in a commercial office block under redevelopment.
- 18.06.16 4 pump fire Arnold Estate, Druid Street, SE1. Attended as Fire Safety Officer as it was a medium rise new build block of flats with shared social/private flats. There was nothing unusual about the fire spread in the building.
- 14.07.16 Attended a kitchen fire in The Shard as Fire Safety Officer. Small fire in cooking range extinguished before arrival of LFB by a fitted firefighting system.
- 23.03.17 6 pump fire in a block of flats in London Road, Norbury. Attended as Fire Safety Officer and no irregular spread of fire.

I have never worked in Fire Safety but have been a qualified Fire Safety Officer since 2015.

In terms of Grenfell I know that there had to be a firefighters lift, there is no way there wasn't one because it is a high rise block. As to whether or not it was used at all on the night I cannot say. I was made aware, through talking to people at the incident, that there was a single staircase in the block. I could also see a single staircase from the glass entrance lobby on the southeast corner of the block.

I worked throughout the day on a separate command channel due to my role. There were times due to geographic location that I struggled to communicate. This is mainly when I was on Ladbroke Grove.

Throughout the day I did hear officers talking from within the building, again this was on a Command channel a significant time into the incident, so I am not aware of any communication difficulties early in the incident.

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I am aware of major safety risks involving sandwich panels which is a type of construction used generally in what we term lightweight construction — for example B&Q warehouse type buildings. They are known to fail very quickly in a fire situation and fire can travel unseen through these buildings. There are several cases of firefighters being killed whilst firefighting in such buildings. In terms of cladding on high rise buildings there is some limited understanding and from my own point of view limited personal experience of fire spread involving cladding panels as I mentioned earlier in relation to the fire at Capitol Apartments in Docklands in 2015. Until the Grenfell Tower fire I had no expectation that fire could spread through cladding panels as it did on the night.

In my experience most residential high rise buildings are relatively simple in design in as much as each flat should be a contained concrete box. On the understanding that each flat is designed and should have been constructed to contain a fire for up to 60 minutes the best course of action and the inference of the design is that people living in or using other parts of the building should be unaffected by a fire in a flat. Due to that construction residential high rise buildings mainly built for local authority use over the past 60 years have contained just a single staircase. Therefore I understand the Stay Put policy to be a strategy whereby people remain safe within their own flats if they are not affected by the fire.

On that basis and with my personal experience of many high rise fires I have attended over the past 30 years if the building behaves as designed as it has in every high rise fire in a residential building that I have attended over my career then the Stay put policy has worked.

Where people have ignored the Stay Put policy as an example the fire in Rainhill Way that I attended early in my career the people who decided to evacuate put themselves at risk because they were breathing in toxic smoke and were at risk from tripping on the stairs in their panic. They also hampered fire crews trying to reach the upper floors. So, in summary, as one of the most experienced firefighters and officers in the LFB today I have to say in my experience that the Stay Put policy works well and has always worked well in the vast majority of cases.

At Grenfell Tower the visual fire spread up the external façade of the building and any internal fire spread which at this point I have not been made aware of, would obviously have affected the Stay Put policy as multiple flats were becoming involved in fire beyond anything that any of us had experienced or could imagine.

As noted in my statement of the 6 July 2017 where I was very surprised at the extent of the fire spread and the fact some flats were apparently just becoming involved in fire several hours into the incident this clearly indicated to me there had been a massive failure of the fire precautions that had allowed the fire to

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spread up the building and into individual compartments via windows that were either open due to the warm weather or failed due to fire conditions. As I had no involvement with the building prior to the fire I cannot comment on the state of the fire precautions apart from what I saw on the day.

Until I have a full idea of exactly what happened and at what time and how the interventions were made to the changes as the fire developed I could not objectively state at this point what I would personally recommend however by the very nature high rise fires are difficult to deal with primarily because of intervention times and atmospheric conditions around the building therefore I have always been a strong advocate of larger initial attendances to include an aerial appliance to give firefighters the best possible advantage at the point of arrival. I am pleased to see that since Grenfell tower an aerial appliance has been added to the pre-determined attendance. I would strongly recommend this is never removed nor should aerial appliances ever be alternately crewed as they are in some other FRS in the UK and have been proposed in London before Grenfell Tower.

In terms of access as a Borough Commander at two similar inner London Boroughs parking and emergency vehicle access are a growing problem as car ownership grows. I have worked with both Hackney and Tower Hamlets councils in the months after Grenfell Tower to advise them that their parking penalty regime should be aimed more at inconsiderate or restrictive parking than how it currently appears which is punitive towards vehicles that don't display the correct parking permits. I would also like to state that in the week after Grenfell Tower I had a meeting with strategic leads at the London Borough of Hackney where I recommended due to the high number of housing estates versus limited firefighting vehicles that the refuse services who use vehicles of a similar size to fire appliances report back to Hackney council any difficulties they have or had previously encountered with access and free movement on housing estates with high rise buildings.

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