

Implementation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations

21st progress report

COPYRIGHT

Greater London Authority

Published November 2021

Published by

Greater London Authority

City Hall

The Queen's Walk

More London

London SE1 2AA

www.london.gov.uk

enquiries 020 7983 4000

minicom 020 7983 4458

Copies of this report are available
from www.london.gov.uk

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
London Fire Brigade's transformation process	4
Implementation of the recommendations	6
Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings	12
Visits under Section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	13
Building plans	14
Lifts	15
Communication between the Control room and the Incident Commander	16
Emergency calls	18
Emergency calls – transition from 'stay put' to 'get out'	19
Emergency calls – other control rooms	20
Command and control – breathing apparatus crews	21
Command and control – communication	22
Equipment	23
Evacuation	24
Evacuation – duties for building owners and managers	25
Evacuation – smoke hoods	26
Internal signage	27
Fire doors	28
Co-operation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine	29
Co-operation between emergency services – information-sharing	31
Other action taken by the Mayor and GLA to promote building safety	33

Introduction

The Grenfell Tower fire was an appalling tragedy and Londoners will always remember the 72 people who lost their lives in a fire that should never have spread on such a scale. We owe it to the people who died, their loved ones and those who survived to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again.

On 30 October 2019, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, published its Phase 1 report.¹ This phase looked at the events of the night of 14 June 2017. Phase 2, now underway, is looking at events leading up to that night and the immediate response.

This report provides an overview of what the Mayor and the London Fire Brigade have done to respond to the Phase 1 recommendations since the Inquiry's report just over two years ago. Over three-quarters of the recommendations aimed at the Brigade have now been implemented, with ongoing assurance taking place to ensure the changes are effective. Work is underway on the remaining recommendations, which require longer-term projects in order to be implemented or are dependent on other partners at the national level.

The report also provides a summary of progress made implementing recommendations aimed at the Government. To date, although significant steps have been taken to address the recommendations by the Government, none of these recommendations have been completed.

The Phase 1 report highlighted some serious issues for the London Fire Brigade and for fire and rescue services more generally, as well as failings in the building itself. While it is clear that every single firefighter, member of Control staff and other Brigade staff member who responded that night did so to save lives, it is also clear that the Brigade was overwhelmed by the unprecedented nature of the fire. Institutional failures meant that the overall response to the disaster was not good enough.

The Mayor oversees the Brigade, which is part of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group of organisations, and he has undertaken to ensure that the recommendations directed at the Brigade are implemented. Recommendations aimed at other bodies such as the national Government or building owners are outside the Mayor's direct control, although the Mayor has committed to using the full extent of his influence to ensure other organisations implement the recommendations in full.

¹ The report can be found here: <https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-1-report>

The Government is responsible for building regulations, including those that relate to fire safety. Issues relating to the construction, refurbishment and management of Grenfell Tower are being examined in more detail in Phase 2 of the Inquiry, but it is vital that the Government, housing and building industries do not wait for the Inquiry's next report to take action on such an important issue.

Since the fire, the Mayor has been calling for urgent changes to building safety regulations, including for the Government's ban on combustible cladding to be extended to all buildings, and for sprinklers to be made compulsory in all purpose-built blocks of flats, regardless of height, as well as in schools, care homes and other places that are home to vulnerable people. The Government has not yet implemented the wholesale reforms that are needed to fix a broken system, although we are pleased to see some progress has been made in recent months.

The Mayor has been publishing a monthly update report on the implementation of the recommendations; this report is the 21st to be published. This ensures that all Londoners, especially those who survived or lost loved ones in the fire, are able to see the progress being made and can hold the Mayor to account for this.²

² Previous monthly updates can be found at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/mayor-london/grenfell-tower-inquiry-mayoral-updates>

London Fire Brigade's transformation process

The London Fire Brigade accepted all of the Inquiry report's recommendations, many of which have direct implications for the Brigade's operations. Changes made as a direct response to individual recommendations are detailed in the following section, but the institutional failures detailed in the report have wider implications for the way the Brigade will take its work forward.

Since taking up the role of London Fire Commissioner in January 2020, Andy Roe has been working both to rebuild the Brigade's relationship with the Grenfell community, and to ensure that the Brigade makes the changes that are required to respond both to the recommendations and the conclusions of the Inquiry report.

The Brigade is also responding to the findings of its 2018/19 inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which was published in December 2019. This was the first inspection of the Brigade since an inspection regime was re-introduced by the Government. The report highlighted a number of areas where the Brigade needs to improve, for instance in training, which correlated closely with the findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report.

HMICFRS conducted three further inspections of the Brigade in late 2020, firstly to examine the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and secondly, two concurrent inspections to examine the delivery of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) recommendations and the Brigade's response to the 2018/19 inspection. In the findings from the Covid-19 inspection, the Inspector found he was "impressed by the Brigade's preparedness for the pandemic and how it continued to fulfil its statutory functions, protect the public and support staff wellbeing."

The findings from the GTI inspection reflected the good progress made by the Brigade, with Her Majesty's Inspector noting that there has been "a sustained focus and effort on understanding the lessons from the fire and acting where the inquiry recommended it should." The Inspectorate was also clear that there is "still a huge amount of work for the Brigade," and highlighted where a number of recommendations had been delayed, as has been set out in previous versions of this progress report. A new, full inspection of the Brigade is about to get underway; we hope this will demonstrate the progress made, but will ensure action is taken on any new recommendations from HMICFRS.

The delivery of actions in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, and consequently actions in the Brigade's wider Transformation Delivery Plan, has been affected by COVID-

19. As an emergency service, the Brigade is vital to London's response to this ongoing situation. For instance, a partnership between the Brigade and the London Ambulance Service saw firefighters assisting the ambulance service in order to boost the COVID-19 response.³ The Mayor made clear that improvements required by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry must continue to be delivered with any delay during the pandemic minimised.

It is clear the need for transformational change is urgent and the Mayor has been working with the LFB to consider what external assistance should be secured to support the effective and timely delivery of the change required. This work will include how the Brigade and the Mayor obtain assurance about the changes being implemented by the Brigade. A key element of this was the establishment of an audit committee for the Brigade, which has now begun its work, alongside the oversight provided by the Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board.

The Brigade has now begun the process of producing its next community risk management plan; this is the key organisational strategy setting the overall direction for service delivery and showing how the Brigade will address the risks London faces, which has previously been known as the London Safety Plan. The new plan will embed and drive forward the transformative work that is underway at the Brigade. Londoners were recently invited to share their views on the changes being considered.⁴

The resources available to deliver much-needed transformational change may be reduced by the forecast loss of council tax and business rates income as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19. These sources provide over 80 per cent of the Brigade's income. The Mayor and Commissioner have both called on the Government to ensure that funding for essential public services such as fire and rescue are preserved.

³ For more details of this partnership see: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2020-news/april/london-ambulance-service-and-london-fire-brigade-announce-blue-light-partnership-to-tackle-covid-19/>

⁴ To view details of the initial consultation please visit: <https://www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/london-fire-brigade>.

Implementation of the recommendations

The Phase 1 report made 46 recommendations, directed at bodies including the London Fire Brigade, fire and rescue services more widely, other emergency services, national Government and owners and managers of residential buildings.

In total there were 29 recommendations aimed at the London Fire Brigade, 14 solely for the Brigade to address and 15 to address in conjunction with other organisations.

For the 14 recommendations aimed solely at the Brigade, action to deliver these recommendations continues. Implementation has been completed for 11 of these:

- Updating the LFB's policy on gathering and managing operational risk information, including procedures to support the completion of Premises Risk Assessments, and training firefighters in the new policy (Recommendations 3 and 4);
- Reviewing policy on communication between the incident commander and control room, and training both incident commanders and control room officers in this (Recommendation 10, 11 and 12);
- Providing a dedicated communication link between the incident commander and senior control room officer (Recommendation 13);
- Revise operational policy to distinguish between callers seeking advice and callers needing to be rescued (Recommendation 14);
- Providing regular refresher training to control room officers – this has started and will continue (Recommendation 15);
- Developing policy to ensure better control of breathing apparatus deployments (Recommendation 22);
- Developing a system of direct communication between the control room and incident commander, and improving communication between the incident commander and bridgehead (Recommendation 24); and
- Upgrading the servers on Command Units to enhance the connectivity and usability of the Command Support System software – further improvements are also planned in this area to enhance capability (Recommendation 27).

There are 15 recommendations directed either at fire and rescue services or emergency services generally, which includes the London Fire Brigade. Action by the Brigade to deliver the recommendations directed at the organisation is underway for all of these recommendations. Of these, 12 recommendations have been implemented by the Brigade, but not necessarily yet by all other fire and rescue services:

- Training staff in the risks of external wall fires in high-rise buildings (Recommendation 2);
- Developing policy for handling a large number of ‘fire survival guidance’ calls simultaneously (Recommendation 16);
- Developing policy for managing a transition in advice to from ‘stay put’ to ‘get out’ during emergency incidents, and training control room officers to handle this change in advice, when necessary (Recommendations 18 and 19);
- Developing methods to enable effective information-sharing between control rooms for different fire and rescue services during incidents (Recommendation 20);
- Developing policy and training for the evacuation of high-rise buildings (Recommendation 29);
- Introducing smoke hoods to aid in the rescue of people in smoke-filled environments (Recommendation 34);
- Updating procedures to improve communication between emergency services in a major incident (Recommendations 40, 41, 42 and 43); and
- Investigating ways of improving the collection and sharing of information about survivors (Recommendation 46).

There are 12 recommendations aimed primarily at the Government. This includes 11 recommendations where the report recommends a change in the law to place new requirements on building owners and managers; this process is underway, notably with the passing of the Fire Safety Act 2021 and introduction of the Building Safety Bill. A further three recommendations are aimed at building owners and managers, but without requiring legal changes. Nine of the recommendations aimed at the Government or building owners and managers will have significant implications for the London Fire Brigade, which is working to ensure that it is in a position to implement these recommendations in the most effective way. A recommendation aimed at the National Police Air Service, to enable emergency services to view images recorded by helicopters at incidents, has been implemented.

In September 2021, the Home Office published an update on progress against the recommendations aimed at the Government. Information has been reflected in this progress report where relevant, and summarised in Table 3. The Government’s report should be consulted for further detail.⁵

The Brigade has faced a number of issues with specific projects over recent months which have led to the expected completion dates for some of the remaining recommendations to be extended. This includes the delivery of a new IT application for sharing Fire Survival

5

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021621/Quarterly_Thematic_Update_on_progress_against_the_Grenfell_Tower_Inquiry_Phase_1_Recommendations_v2.pdf

guidance information during incidents (Recommendations 17 and 25) and the procurement of new breathing apparatus (Recommendation 26).

A full summary of progress against each recommendation aimed at the Brigade, either directly or as part of the national fire and rescue and wider emergency services is provided in the tables overleaf. Table 1 shows recommendations aimed directly at the Brigade, including two in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service and London Ambulance Service. Table 2 shows national recommendations, which the Brigade are required to implement as part of action being taken at the national level.

Overall, 23 of the 29 recommendations aimed at the Brigade (79 per cent) have now been completed.

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PHASE 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 1: Progress with recommendations aimed specifically at London Fire Brigade

No.	Aimed at	Recommendation summary	LFB progress
3	LFB	Revise operational policy on gathering risk information for high-rise buildings.	Implemented by LFB in July 2020
4	LFB	Train senior officers in the inspection of high-rise buildings.	Implemented by LFB in September 2020
10	LFB	Review policy on communication between incident commander and control room.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
11	LFB	Train incident commanders in communication with the control room.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
12	LFB	Train senior control room officers in communication with incident commanders.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
13	LFB	Dedicated communication link between the incident commander and senior control room officer.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
14	LFB	Revise operational policy to distinguish between callers seeking advice and callers needing to be rescued.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
15	LFB	Provide regular refresher training to all control room officers.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
22	LFB	Develop policies and training to ensure better control of breathing apparatus deployments.	Implemented by LFB in July 2021
23	LFB	Develop policies and training to ensure better information from crews returning from deployments.	To be implemented by LFB by December 2021
24	LFB	Develop a system for direct communication between the incident commander and control room, and improve communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead.	Implemented by LFB in April 2021
25	LFB	Investigate the use of a direct communication link between the control room and the bridgehead.	To be implemented by LFB by January 2022
26	LFB	Obtain equipment to allow firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead.	To be implemented by LFB in August 2022
27	LFB	Ensure the 'command support system' is operative on command units, and crews are trained to use it.	Implemented by LFB in March 2020 (further upgrades planned)
44	LFB, MPS, LAS	Investigate steps to enable LFB, MPS and LAS to read each other's messages.	Implementation date to be confirmed by Home Office ⁶
46	LFB, MPS, LAS	Investigate ways of improving the collection and sharing of information about survivors (also aimed at local authorities).	Implemented by LFB in September 2021

LAS: London Ambulance Service, LFB: London Fire Brigade, MPS: Metropolitan Police Service

⁶ This action is dependent on the development of the national Multi-Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) system; please see relevant section of this report for further information.

Table 2: Progress with national recommendations for all fire and rescue or emergency services

No.	Aimed at	Recommendation summary	LFB progress
2	Fire & rescue services	Train staff in risks of external wall fires in high-rise buildings.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
7	Fire & rescue services	Store electronic buildings plans and make them available for responding to incidents.	To be implemented by LFB by March 2025
16	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for handling a large number of 'Fire Survival Guidance' calls simultaneously.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
17	Fire & rescue services	Develop systems to display 'Fire Survival Guidance' information at the bridgehead and in command units.	To be implemented by LFB by January 2022
18	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for managing a transition from 'stay put' to 'get out' advice.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
19	Fire & rescue services	Train control room officers in handling a change of advice from 'stay put' to 'get out'.	Implemented by LFB in February 2021
20	Fire & rescue services	Investigate how assisting control rooms can gain access to information from the host control room.	Implemented by LFB in February 2021
29	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for the evacuation of high-rise buildings and training to support them.	Implemented by LFB in March 2021
34	Fire & rescue services	Services to be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in evacuations.	Implemented by LFB in November 2018
40	Emergency services	Communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to other emergency services.	Implemented by LFB in October 2021
41	Emergency services	Establish clear lines of communication between emergency service control rooms in a Major Incident.	Implemented by LFB in October 2021
42	Emergency services	Designate a single point of contact in Major Incidents to enable communication between control rooms.	Implemented by LFB in October 2021
43	Emergency services	Send a 'METHANE' message as soon as possible when a Major Incident is declared.	Implemented by LFB in October 2021

JESIP: Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (a national partnership of emergency service chief officers)

METHANE: Major incident, Exact location, Type of incident, Hazards, Access, Number of casualties, Emergency services

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PHASE 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 3: Progress with national recommendations for the Government or building owners

No.	Aimed at	Recommendation summary	Progress
1	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire and rescue service with information about external walls.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
5	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire and rescue service with building floor plans.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
6	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide a premises information box.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
8	Government	Legislate to require building owners to carry out regular inspections of firefighting lifts.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
9	Government	Legislate to require building owners to carry out regular tests of the mechanism allowing firefighters to take control of lifts.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
28	Government	Develop national guidelines for carrying out evacuations of high-rise residential buildings.	Review underway but no forecast delivery date.
30	Government	Legislate to require building owners to draw up and regularly review evacuation plans.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
31	Building owners	Equip high-rise residential buildings with facilities enabling firefighters to send an evacuation signal in the building.	Government considering new guidance but no forecast delivery date.
32	Government	Legislate to require building owners to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised.	Government has consulted on this issue and is considering responses; no forecast delivery date.
33	Government	Legislate to require building owners to include information about residents with reduced mobility in the premises information box.	Government has consulted on this issue and is considering responses; no forecast delivery date.
35	Building owners	Clearly mark floor numbers on each landing in stairways and in all lobbies.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
36	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire safety instructions in accessible formats.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
37	Building owners	Carry out an urgent inspection of fire doors to ensure they comply with legislative standards.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
38	Government	Legislate to require building owners to check fire door self-closing devices at least every three months.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021
39	Government	Legislate to require that people responsible for flat entrance doors ensure they comply with current standards, in buildings with unsafe cladding.	Regulation to be introduced by Government in Autumn 2021

This table is based on the content of the Home Office's Phase 1 update report, published in September 2021, with Red-Amber-Green ratings added.

Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings

1. **That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to provide their local fire and rescue service with information about the design of its external walls together with details of the materials of which they are constructed and to inform the fire and rescue service of any material changes made to them.**
2. **That all fire and rescue services ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.**

Recommendation 1 is for new legal requirements on building owners and managers to provide information on their external walls. In April 2021, Parliament passed the Fire Safety Act, which clarifies that the scope of the Fire Safety Order – the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue services – includes building exteriors. The specific requirements of Recommendation 1 are expected to be met by further changes to the Fire Safety Order, on which the Government consulted in late 2020, and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.⁷

Ahead of this legislation, the London Fire Brigade has already established an Operational Risk Information project to improve how it gathers, records and disseminates this type of information for the purposes of responding to incidents. This will be further enhanced by the introduction of the One Risk solution by 2025, which is being designed to hold all of the Brigade's information on risk associated with buildings in London. To implement Recommendation 1 in full, a consistent national approach is needed to enable fire and rescue services to prepare for the volume, frequency and format of information that building owners and managers will be instructed to share with fire and rescue services. The National Fire Chiefs Council has reported to the Mayor that it is addressing this through its Community Risk Programme, which has developed a national definition of risk and is now seeking to produce metrics and guidance for fire and rescue services.

Addressing Recommendation 2, the Brigade has provided new written guidance to firefighters on responding to the rapid spread of fire on the outside of buildings; this was issued in August 2019. This included advice on buildings with combustible cladding, Fire Survival Guidance calls (advice given by Brigade Control operators to callers directly affected by fire, heat or smoke), operational discretion for firefighters responding to incidents, and incidents with rapid or abnormal fire spread. The guidance also identified a number of methods of communicating with residents to initiate an emergency evacuation. Training for operational staff on the new guidance was delivered after it was issued.

The Brigade has also revised its operational policy on High-Rise Firefighting (Policy Number [PN] 633). This document sets out the procedures firefighters should follow when

⁷ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

responding to a fire in a high-rise building. The new PN 633 covers operational tactics for use in exceptional circumstances when a building is not behaving as designed, for the purpose of emergency evacuation of residents.

The Brigade has delivered a robust training programme on the revised PN 633, delivered to all station-based officers. Changes to the training schedule for new procedures were introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has limited face to face training. Computer based training packages have been developed and went live in early September 2020, and in-person training for incident commanders began in October 2020; this first phase of the training programme completed in March 2021, with further training now underway.

The policy was implemented after the Brigade had considered the findings of an advisory panel that examined the new policy, to ensure its procedures enable the Brigade to both protect high-rise residents and ensure the safety of firefighters. PN 633 will remain under review until such time as national guidance, changes in legislation and subsequent remediation work have been undertaken.

Finally, the Brigade has also reviewed its Incident Command training to incorporate learning from the Grenfell Tower fire. This training will make sure that Brigade personnel of all ranks, who take charge of incidents, understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings, and how to recognise when it occurs. The Brigade is aiming for Incident Commanders at all levels to be trained by December 2021.

Visits under Section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

- 3. That the LFB review, and revise as appropriate, Appendix 1 to Policy Note 633 to ensure that it fully reflects the principles in Generic Risk Assessment 3.2: Fighting Fires in High Rise Buildings (GRA 3.2).**
- 4. That the LFB ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out the requirements of PN 633 relating to the inspection of high-rise buildings.**

The Brigade has completed the implementation of these recommendations.

Section 7(2)(d) visits, also known as familiarisation visits, enable firefighters to learn about buildings in their local areas, to help prepare for possible incidents in that building. National guidance on conducting effective visits in high-rise buildings was set out in a

document called Generic Risk Assessment (GRA) 3.2.⁸ This recommendation requires the London Fire Brigade's own procedures to reflect national guidance.

The Brigade has now completed the implementation of Recommendation 3 by producing relevant guidance based on the content of GRA 3.2 in a revised Policy Note (PN) 800 on the Management of Operational Risk Information, which was published in July 2021. This document sets out how London firefighters should inspect buildings, record information, and so on.

Recommendation 4 requires that all officers will be trained in the requirements of the revised policy. This training was mandatory for operational staff at fire stations and has now been completed.

The Brigade's new independent Operational Assurance Adviser has undertaken a review to the revised PN 800 and its implementation, conducting fieldwork with the Brigade in two London boroughs. This review found that the policy intention and practical application of PN 800 is robust.

Building plans

5. **That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to provide their local fire and rescue services with up-to-date plans in both paper and electronic form of every floor of the building identifying the location of key fire safety systems.**
6. **That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to ensure that the building contains a premises information box, the contents of which must include a copy of the up-to-date floor plans and information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the fire and rescue services.**
7. **That all fire and rescue services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and to make them available to incident commanders and control room managers.**

Recommendations 5-6 are for new legal requirements on building owners and managers to provide information on their buildings. The Government has stated that the most appropriate way to introduce these measures is through changes to the Fire Safety Order, the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue services. The Government consulted on changes to the Fire Safety Order in late 2020 and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.⁹

⁸ The Government has now withdrawn Generic Risk Assessment 3.2 as its content has been incorporated in National Operational Guidance. GRA 3.2 is available as legacy guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generic-risk-assessment-32-fighting-fires-in-high-rise-buildings>

⁹ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

To implement Recommendations 5 and 7 a consistent national approach is needed to enable fire and rescue services to prepare for the volume, frequency and format of information that building owners and managers will be instructed to share with fire and rescue services. The Building Safety Bill and associated regulations are expected to address this. The National Fire Chiefs Council has reported to the Mayor that it is addressing this through its Community Risk Programme, which has developed a national definition of risk and is now seeking to produce metrics and guidance for fire and rescue services.

The Brigade has already established an Operational Risk Information project to improve how it gathers, records and disseminates this type of information for the purposes of responding to incidents. The Brigade is planning to implement a 'One Risk' solution to consolidate building risk information it receives into one database. This will address Recommendation 7, and has a completion date of March 2025. A series of workshops to develop the specification for a new system have taken place. The specification has been completed and market engagement began in early 2021. The Brigade's existing Operational Risk Database can provide an interim solution for the management of information building owners may have to provide, depending on the requirements of legislation and any national solution developed by the Government.

Lifts

- 8. That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular inspections of any lifts that are designed to be used by firefighters in an emergency and to report the results of such inspections to their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals.**
- 9. That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular tests of the mechanism which allows firefighters to take control of the lifts and to inform their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals that they have done so.**

It is essential for public safety that firefighters are able to take control of lifts in emergency situations in high-rise buildings, so ensuring that lifts and control mechanisms are in working order is vital.

These recommendations are for new legal requirements on building owners and managers to inspect and test the lifts in their buildings, and to provide information to fire and rescue services. The Government has stated that the most appropriate way to introduce these measures is through changes to the Fire Safety Order, the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue

services. The Government consulted on changes to the Fire Safety Order in late 2020 and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.¹⁰

The Brigade has already established an Operational Risk Information project to improve how it gathers, records and disseminates this type of information for the purposes of responding to incidents. The Brigade is planning to implement a 'One Risk' solution to consolidate building risk information it receives into one database. This will address Recommendation 7, and has a completion date of March 2025. A series of workshops to develop the specification for a new system have taken place, and market engagement began in early 2021. The Brigade's existing Operational Risk Database can provide an interim solution for the management of information buildings owners may have to provide, depending on the requirements of legislation and any national solution developed by the Government.

Communication between the Control room and the Incident Commander

- 10. That the LFB review its policies on communications between the control room and the incident commander.**
- 11. That all officers who may be expected to act as incident commanders (i.e. all those above the rank of Crew Manager) receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the control room.**
- 12. That all CROs of Assistant Operations Manager rank and above receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the incident commander.**
- 13. That a dedicated communication link be provided between the senior officer in the control room and the incident commander.**

These recommendations are now complete.

The recommendations are aimed at improving communication between the Control room and the Incident Commander. The London Fire Brigade's Control room is a facility based at Merton, where officers receive emergency calls from the public and mobilise firefighters to incidents. The Incident Commander is the officer in charge of the Brigade's response at the scene, responsible for the tactical plan to resolve the incident and the safety of firefighters.

Communication between the Control room and the Incident Commander is a key area for the London Fire Brigade to address following the Grenfell Tower fire. In particular, Control staff need to be able to provide information from Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls –

¹⁰ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

where Control operators give advice to callers directly affected by fire, heat or smoke – to the Incident Commander at the scene.

To implement these recommendations, the Brigade has reviewed and revised the operational procedures set out in its Policy Number 790 on Fire Survival Guidance calls, to ensure it serves to improve communications. This specifically addresses the requirement on communication between Control and the Incident Commander. New procedures have been tested and consultation on the revised policy has now taken place, and the policy has been finalised. Training in these new procedures was completed by March 2021, and the policy is now live.

The recommendations were also addressed with changes to the Vision mobilising system used in the Brigade's Control room. A new layout has been introduced for Fire Survival Guidance and High-Rise calls, with Control officers trained on this in November 2020. The new layout has been implemented and provides an easily accessible telephone number for each caller trapped in a building that Control staff can access quickly in order to pass on any change in guidance or additional information.

The Brigade is also improving communication between Control and the incident ground with a new IT application; this will enable information from Fire Survival Guidance Calls to be displayed simultaneously at the incident and in Control. This project is discussed further under Recommendations 17 and 25 below. The Brigade has also implemented the 999 Eye system, which is being used by Control as an additional tool to gain situational awareness of incidents. Control can send a link to a caller's mobile phone, which enables the live streaming of images to Control and other devices.

Emergency calls

- 14. That the LFB's policies be amended to draw a clearer distinction between callers seeking advice and callers who believe they are trapped and need rescuing.**
- 15. That the LFB provide regular and more effective refresher training to CROs at all levels, including supervisors.**
- 16. That all fire and rescue services develop policies for handling a large number of FSG calls simultaneously.**
- 17. That electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units.**

Recommendations, 14, 15 and 16 have now been completed by the London Fire Brigade.

The Brigade received an unprecedented number of Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls – where Control operators provide advice to callers directly affected by fire, heat or smoke – on the night of the Grenfell Tower fire. The Brigade has identified the need to improve the way it handles these calls, and arrangements for when a large number are received simultaneously.

The new operational policy on Fire Survival Guidance calls (PN 790) addressed Recommendation 14 and Recommendation 16. As discussed under Recommendation 10, training on the new policy was completed in March 2021, and it has now been implemented.

Refresher training on FSG calls has been delivered and will continue to be provided on an annual basis, based on the new procedures contained within PN 790, as required by Recommendation 15. The refresher training is now part of the Brigade's Development and Maintenance of Operational Professionalism (DaMOP) system, a cyclical framework for risk-critical competencies. A new competency framework for Brigade Control staff has been developed and was rolled out in July 2020. This is part of a wider Control Improvement Plan, which the Assistant Commissioner for Control and Mobilising has produced and is currently implementing. The enhanced policy and training will enable the Brigade to more effectively manage multiple Fire Survival Guidance calls.

Also addressing this recommendation, the Brigade has now developed a protocol to assist control rooms across the country with the challenge of large call volumes and to share risk critical information quickly. This occurs via a new talk group on Airwave, the communication network used by emergency services. This talk group is now in place following agreement with the NFCC and Home Office. At the Brigade, all Control officers have now received training in the use of the talk group. There was a national training event in October 2020, and NFCC has reported to the Mayor that work with the Home Office on regular testing with other fire and rescue services is ongoing. This protocol was also

implemented at the New Providence Wharf incident in Poplar, on 7th May 2021, and during recent flooding incidents in London.

Recommendations 15 and 16 have also been addressed with changes to the Vision mobilising system used in the Brigade's Control room. A new layout has been introduced for Fire Survival Guidance and High-Rise calls, with Control officers trained on this in November 2020. The new layout has been implemented and provides an easily accessible telephone number for each caller trapped in a building that Control staff can access in order to pass on any change in guidance or additional information.

To implement Recommendation 17, an IT application to increase situational awareness and communication between the incident and Control has been developed, which will enable information from FSG calls to be displayed simultaneously at the incident and in Control. The introduction of the application has been delayed due to technical issues, which are still to be fully resolved. Training in the application began on 4th October 2021, prior to it going live. The recommendation is now forecast to be complete by the end of January 2022.

Emergency calls – transition from ‘stay put’ to ‘get out’

- 18. That policies be developed for managing a transition from ‘stay put’ to ‘get out’.**
- 19. That control room staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.**

These recommendations have now been completed.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has identified that the London Fire Brigade did not recognise the extent of the building failure at Grenfell Tower soon enough or alter its advice to residents to ‘get out’ as quickly or effectively as it should. The Mayor has ensured the Brigade is prioritising action in this area, with improvements in the handling of Fire Survival Guidance already implemented in the Brigade's Control room.

The Mayor and the Brigade have called for the Government to initiate a national review of the ‘stay put’ principle of building design, specifically to respond to circumstances of building failure, recognising that mass evacuation is not without challenges and risk. The Mayor has urged the Government to act quickly to put in place new national guidelines for the total or partial evacuation of residential high-rise buildings. A national steering group has been established by the Home Office to consider new national protocols, with new academic research commissioned to support this. The Home Office reported in April 2021 that a report from the first stage of the steering group's work is currently being finalised.¹¹

¹¹ For the Home Office update see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-thematic-update-on-progress-against-the-grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-1-recommendations>

The Brigade has now produced a new Evacuation and Rescue policy (PN 970), and revised its Fire Survival Guidance policy (PN 790), setting out new operational procedures for a transition from ‘stay put’ to ‘get out’ advice, and how firefighters should plan for and execute the safe and effective evacuation of a building, and/or rescue of large numbers of people. Specific work is being undertaken by the Brigade into how firefighters can support the evacuation of people who have learning difficulties, people with neurodiversities, such as those with dyslexia, and potentially people whose first language is not English. The LFB has implemented both the new Evacuation and Rescue policy and the Fire Survival Guidance policy, following the completion of a robust training programme in March 2021.

The Brigade put new procedures into action at the fire at New Providence Wharf in Poplar, on 7th May 2021. This fire in a high-rise block shared some similar characteristics to the Grenfell Tower fire, with fire appearing to spread between flats via the exterior of the building. Firefighters carried out an effective evacuation of the building, rescuing 35 people, having made the decision to evacuate early in the incident. Two people were hospitalised as a result of the fire, with no fatalities or life changing injuries.¹²

Control officers have now received specific training which includes a role play element to better prepare them for any transition from stay put to get out. This is assisted by the new screen layout for Fire Survival Guidance callers on the Vision mobilising system. The new layout has been implemented and provides an easily accessible telephone number for each caller trapped in a building along with the circumstances of the caller so that Control staff can easily pass on any change in guidance or additional information. Control officers received training on the new layout in November 2020.

Emergency calls – other control rooms

- 20. That steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.**
- 21. That the LAS and MPS review their protocols and policies to ensure that their operators can identify FSG calls (as defined by the LFB) and pass them to the LFB as soon as possible.**

These recommendations are aimed at addressing problems the Grenfell Tower Inquiry identified in communication between London Fire Brigade Control and other services during the incident. A number of other Control rooms handled calls from people at Grenfell Tower during the fire, but there was a lack of effective information sharing between them and the Brigade. This included information from Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls, where operators provide advice to callers trapped by fire.

¹² A preliminary fire investigation report is available at: <https://london-fire.gov.uk/media/5816/london-fire-brigade-preliminary-fire-investigation-report-053666-07052021-new-providence-wharf-redacted.pdf>

Recommendation 20 is now complete. The Brigade, supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council has undertaken work on the dissemination of risk critical information between Control rooms, including protocols for sharing information beyond current mutual aid agreements. The Brigade has developed a protocol to assist control rooms across the country with the challenge of large call volumes and to share risk critical information quickly. This occurs via a new talk group on Airwave, the communication network used by emergency services. This talk group is now in place following agreement with the NFCC and Home Office. At the Brigade, all Control officers have now received training in the use of the talk group, and it has gone live nationally.

Addressing Recommendation 21, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and London Ambulance Service (LAS) have both reported to the Mayor that they have reviewed protocols on Fire Survival Guidance calls to ensure these are passed to the London Fire Brigade. The Brigade has now issued guidance to MPS and LAS, following the implementation of the new Fire Survival Guidance policy, PN 790.

Command and control – breathing apparatus crews

- 22. That the LFB develop policies and training to ensure better control of deployments and the use of resources.**
- 23. That the LFB develop policies and training to ensure that better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments and that the information is recorded in a form that enables it to be made available immediately to the incident commander (and thereafter to the command units and the control room).**

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry team has clarified that Recommendation 22 refers to the management and use of breathing apparatus (BA), and to deficiencies in how officers in command at the incident exercised control over deployed firefighters. Related to this, Recommendation 23 requires improvements to the debrief process for crews returning from deployments to ensure crucial information is obtained and used.

Recommendation 22 is now complete, following the implementation of the Brigade's revised High-Rise Firefighting policy (PN 633). This addresses Recommendation 22 by including information on crew deployments, including on tasks relating to Fire Survival Guidance calls. The initial training in the new procedures was completed in March 2021. The policy was implemented after the Brigade had considered the findings of an advisory panel, which examined the new policy to ensure its procedures enable the Brigade to both protect high-rise residents and ensure the safety of firefighters.

Delivering Recommendation 23 depends on the delivery of a new operational briefing model being developed by the Brigade for crews and officers on the incident ground, for both briefing and debriefing purposes. This will ensure that information is both passed and received (and captured) in a consistent manner. This model will be used by BA teams and

committing officers during search and rescue operations. The model has been incorporated into incident command training, and training for the new High-Rise Firefighting, Fire Survival Guidance and Evacuation & Rescue policies. The final completion date for the recommendation has been confirmed as the end of 2021, to allow for the completion of consultation with Brigade staff on a related project on National Operational Guidance.

A review of the Brigade's radio channels has been completed. As a result of this, a radio channel has been identified for allocation only to specific tasks as required during an incident, to be determined at the discretion of incident command officers. This was communicated to officers in the Operational News publication in July 2020.

Command and control – communication

- 24. That the LFB develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander and improve the means of communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead.**

- 25. That the LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide a direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployments.**

Recommendation 24 is now complete, with the implementation of the Brigade's revised Fire Survival Guidance policy, as discussed under Recommendation 10.

Recommendation 24 has also been addressed through various other actions. This includes guidance issued to firefighters on effective communication at incidents, and changes to the radio channels used by the Brigade during incidents to allow for dedicated incident command channels. Further actions are required to complete the implementation of this recommendations through the use of drones and body-worn video to increase situational awareness at incidents. Drones have been introduced, with information able to be live streamed at Brigade Control; drone pilots are also being trained to deliver smoke hoods and flotation devices at incidents.

An IT application to increase situational awareness and communication between the incident and Control is being developed, which will address Recommendation 25. The system will enable information from FSG calls to be displayed simultaneously at the incident and in Control. The introduction of the application has been delayed due to technical issues, which are still to be fully resolved. Training in the application began on 4th October 2021, prior to it going live. The recommendation is now forecast to be

complete by the end of January 2022.

Equipment

- 26. That the LFB urgently take steps to obtain equipment that enables firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead effectively, including when operating in high-rise buildings.**
- 27. That urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.**

At the Grenfell Tower fire, there were serious problems with radio communication between the bridgehead (the safe position within a building from where firefighting operations are co-ordinated) and deployed firefighters. The London Fire Brigade is now addressing these issues, as set out below.

Responding to Recommendation 26, the Brigade has replaced and upgraded the radios that it uses at incidents. This project is being taken forward in two phases. The first phase, completed in May 2021, delivered a new single type of radio used for both fireground and breathing apparatus communications and radio repeaters. This is a more powerful radio for breathing apparatus communications than the current model.

The second phase of this project will be the delivery of new breathing apparatus including an integrated communication capability. The recommendation will not be considered complete until the end of the second phase. This had been due to be completed by May 2022; the Brigade has undertaken a procurement exercise for the new equipment. However, a subsequent legal challenge from an unsuccessful bidder for the tender has caused delay, and the completion date has been extended to August 2022.

Problems were also experienced with the command support systems on the Brigade's Command Units. Recommendation 27 is aimed at addressing these. The Brigade has identified that connectivity issues were the primary cause of the problems. An interim measure was implemented in January 2019, to ensure all Command Units have 4G-enabled laptops. In addition, servers on Command Units have been upgraded to support 4G connectivity, a project that was completed in March 2020.

The Brigade has therefore completed the implementation of Recommendation 27. However, further long-term upgrades are being planned, with procurement of new Command Units and a command support system. This project is due to be completed in October 2021.

Evacuation

- 28. That the government develop national guidelines for carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise residential buildings, such guidelines to include the means of protecting fire exit routes and procedures for evacuating persons who are unable to use the stairs in an emergency, or who may require assistance (such as disabled people, older people and young children).**
- 29. That fire and rescue services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them.**

The London Fire Brigade has now completed Recommendation 29, with the implementation of the new Evacuation and Rescue policy, setting out how firefighters should plan for and execute the safe and effective evacuation of a building, and/or rescue of large numbers of people. The LFB has implemented the revised Evacuation & Rescue policy following the rollout of a robust training programme being delivered to all station-based officers and senior officers, which completed in March 2021.

The Brigade put new procedures into action at the fire at New Providence Wharf in Poplar, on 7th May 2021. This fire in a high-rise block shared some similar characteristics to the Grenfell Tower fire, with fire appearing to spread between flats via the exterior of the building. Firefighters carried out an effective evacuation of the building, rescuing 35 people, having made the decision to evacuate early in the incident. Two people were hospitalised as a result of the fire, with no fatalities.

Regarding Recommendation 28, the Mayor and the Brigade have called for the Government to initiate a national review of the ‘stay put’ principle of building design, specifically to respond to circumstances of building failure, recognising that mass evacuation is not without challenges and risk.

The Mayor urged the Government to act quickly to put in place new national guidelines for the total or partial evacuation of residential high-rise buildings. However, two years on from the Inquiry’s Phase 1 report, this work still appears to be at an early stage.

A national steering group has been established by the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support a research project on means of escape and the stay put policy. The steering group identified four strands of work for this research:

- an evidence review on methods of evacuation;
- operational research into evacuation strategies;
- building design research on fire safety provisions; and
- research into human behaviour.

The Home Office reported in April 2021 that a report from the initial evidence review was being finalised, but it had not been finalised by the time of the next Home Office update in

September 2021.¹³ Suppliers have been appointed to lead each of the research strands, but the Government has not provided any forecast completion date for the research or new guidelines.

Evacuation – duties for building owners and managers

- 30. That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises.**
- 31. That all high-rise residential buildings (both those already in existence and those built in the future) be equipped with facilities for use by the fire and rescue services enabling them to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building by means of sounders or similar devices.**
- 32. That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition).**
- 33. That the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises information box.**

These recommendations are aimed at placing new duties on building owners and managers of residential high-rise buildings to help enable residents to be safely evacuated.

The Government is intending to implement Recommendation 30 through changes to the Fire Safety Order, the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue services. The Government consulted on changes to the Fire Safety Order in late 2020 and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.¹⁴

Significant work is likely to be required of the London Fire Brigade in implementing this recommendation, which would require building owners and managers to provide evacuation plans to fire and rescue services. The Brigade has already established an Operational Risk Information project to improve how it gathers, records and disseminates this type of information for the purposes of responding to incidents. In preparation for new

¹³

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021621/Quarterly_Thematic_Update_on_progress_against_the_Grenfell_Tower_Inquiry_Phase_1_Recommendations_v2.pdf

¹⁴ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

legislation, the London Fire Brigade is considering how it would receive, record and use any new information provided by building owners and managers.

In response to recommendation 31, the Government has said that it is working with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on a series of tests of evacuation alert systems, with a view to including guidance in a future update of building regulations (Approved Document B).¹⁵ As yet there is no clear indication of what the new guidance will be or a forecast completion date for the recommendation.

Some progress has been made, in that a new British Standard (BS8629) has been designed for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of evacuation alert systems; this was published in November 2019.¹⁶ Building owners and managers are primarily responsible for implementing this recommendation, although the Brigade is considering the policy and training implications that may arise, taking into account possible changes in national guidance on evacuation. The NFCC has now produced training materials associated with BS8629 and shared these across the fire and rescue sector.

The Government's approach to Recommendations 32 and 33 is not yet clear. It was anticipated that measures on personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) would be introduced under the Fire Safety Order, but this has not been confirmed. The Government has recently undertaken a consultation on this issue.¹⁷ The Mayor responded to the proposals to support the introduction of PEEPs and give residents a right to their own PEEP regardless of their building height. The Mayor has also argued that the cost of producing a PEEP should not be passed on to residents either directly or indirectly. The Government is currently considering the consultation responses, and there is no forecast completion date for this recommendation.

Evacuation – smoke hoods

34. That all fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.

Smoke hoods, also known as fire escape hoods, are provided by firefighters to people caught in smoke-filled environments, to help enable them to safely escape. The hood is worn over the head, and a tight seal around the hood prevents any smoke from getting in. Air comes into the hood through a filter, which removes the toxic gasses found in smoke.

¹⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021621/Quarterly_Thematic_Update_on_progress_against_the_Grenfell_Tower_Inquiry_Phase_1_Recommendations_v2.pdf

¹⁶ The British Standard is available at: <https://standardsdevelopment.bsigroup.com/projects/2019-01237>. A standard is not necessarily mandatory and enforceable in its own right. For further explanation please see:

<https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/Information-about-standards/standards-and-regulation/>

¹⁷ To view the consultation document please see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/991957/PEEPs_consultation_document_Final.pdf

This provides clean, safe air for 15 minutes. Smoke hoods can be provided by firefighters when trying to get someone through a smoke-filled area, or when someone needs to stay in a smoky environment until they can be rescued.

The London Fire Brigade did not have smoke hoods available at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire. However, they were introduced in November 2018, and the LFB is the first fire and rescue service in the country to implement this capability. They have been issued to all fire stations and are carried on all breathing apparatus sets on all fire engines. Their effectiveness was evident at the fire in a high-rise block in Poplar on 7th May 2021, where firefighters rescued 22 people from the building using smoke hoods.

The Brigade's research into smoke hoods and their use has been shared with the National Fire Chiefs Council, to support national implementation of the recommendation.

Internal signage

- 35. That in all high-rise buildings floor numbers be clearly marked on each landing within the stairways and in a prominent place in all lobbies in such a way as to be visible both in normal conditions and in low lighting or smoky conditions.**
- 36. That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not it is a high-rise building) be required by law to provide fire safety instructions (including instructions for evacuation) in a form that the occupants of the building can reasonably be expected to understand, taking into account the nature of the building and their knowledge of the occupants.**

These recommendations are aimed at placing new duties on building owners and managers of residential buildings to display floor numbers and fire safety instructions. The Government has stated that the most appropriate way to introduce these measures is through changes to the Fire Safety Order, the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue services. The Government consulted on changes to the Fire Safety Order in late 2020 and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.¹⁸

The Mayor has written to building owners and managers in London to draw attention to a range of recommendations to improve the safety of residential blocks, including recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. This letter encouraged building owners to implement a number of urgent actions for existing buildings and start preparing for a number of other recommendations, ahead of legislation.¹⁹ The London Fire Brigade will also provide support and advice to the Government and building owners and managers to assist with implementation as required. The GLA encourages

¹⁸ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

¹⁹ The letter is available at:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/letter_and_recommendations_from_the_mayor_of_london.pdf.

building owners and managers in London to implement these recommendations and is considering the best ways to engage further with the housing sector in the coming months.

Fire doors

- 37. That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards.**
- 38. That the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) be required by law to carry out checks at not less than three-monthly intervals to ensure that all fire doors are fitted with effective self-closing devices in working order.**
- 39. That all those who have responsibility in whatever capacity for the condition of the entrance doors to individual flats in high-rise residential buildings, whose external walls incorporate unsafe cladding, be required by law to ensure that such doors comply with current standards.**

These recommendations are aimed at placing new duties on building owners and managers of residential buildings to ensure fire doors are working properly and regularly checked. In April 2021, Parliament passed the Fire Safety Act, which clarifies that the scope of the Fire Safety Order – the key piece of regulation setting out the fire safety responsibilities of building owners and the powers of fire and rescue services – includes building exteriors. The specific requirements of these recommendations are expected to be met by further changes to the Fire Safety Order, on which the Government consulted in late 2020, and has stated it aims to implement changes in Autumn 2021.²⁰

²⁰ For details of the consultation see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety>

Co-operation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine

40. That the Joint Doctrine be amended to make it clear that each emergency service must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible.
41. That the Joint Doctrine be amended to make it clear that on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services.
42. That the Joint Doctrine be amended to make it clear that a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication.
43. That the Joint Doctrine be amended to make it clear that a "METHANE" message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report identified problems with the way London's emergency services worked together on the night of the fire. In particular, the report was critical of emergency services for each declaring the fire a Major Incident, but without immediately informing each other they had done so. A Major Incident is "an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency," as defined in the National Operational Guidance on Major Incidents.

These recommendations are aimed at all emergency services and are about the content of the Joint Doctrine. This is an interoperability framework setting out a standard approach to multi-agency working and training material. It is developed by the national Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), a partnership of emergency service chief officers.

"METHANE" refers to a model promoted by JESIP for managing the initial stages of an incident. It stands for:

- Major Incident
- Exact Location
- Type of Incident
- Hazards
- Access
- Number of Casualties
- Emergency Services

The METHANE model tells emergency responders what information they need to gather and share about an incident. The Inquiry's recommendation is that a message containing this information is shared by the service declaring a Major Incident.

Each of these recommendations is primarily being addressed by JESIP. A review of the Joint Doctrine, including consideration of these recommendations, has now taken place. A revised version of the Joint Doctrine was issued to emergency services on 11 October and followed up by a Joint Operational Learning Action Note setting out the actions required to embed the revisions to the Joint Doctrine.

In London, emergency services have been working together ahead of the national review in order to address the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's recommendations, which are being incorporated into the Major Incidents Procedures Manual owned by the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP). A review of the manual was completed in September 2021, and presented to the London Resilience Forum in October.

The Brigade had already made changes to its own operational procedures to address these recommendations. Specifically, the Brigade has revised its Major Incident Policy (PN 263), which includes a specific section regarding informing other category 1 responders, the initiation of a Major Incident for Incident Commanders, reinforced METHANE messaging, and the activation of a tri-service call at the declaration of a Major Incident. The revised policy was finalised in January 2021.

Addressing Recommendation 41 specifically, there is now a procedure in place for the activation of a conference call between London's emergency service control rooms following the declaration of a major incident. Addressing Recommendation 42 and 43, the Brigade also has a dedicated contact within its Control room to facilitate this communication and has embedded the sharing of a METHANE message in tri-service calls with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and London Ambulance Service (LAS). The three services have now reviewed and updated a Memorandum of Understanding via the London Control Room Operations Group in order to confirm these procedures.

Further to the issuing of the new Joint Doctrine and Major Incidents Procedures Manual, the Brigade has confirmed that the necessary changes have been embedded into Brigade policies, and each of these recommendations is therefore considered complete.

Co-operation between emergency services – information-sharing

- 44. That steps be taken to investigate the compatibility of the LFB systems with those of the MPS and the LAS with a view to enabling all three emergency services systems to read each other's messages.**
- 45. That steps be taken to ensure that the airborne datalink system on every NPAS helicopter observing an incident which involves one of the other emergency services defaults to the National Emergency Service user encryption.**
- 46. That the LFB, the MPS, the LAS and the London local authorities all investigate ways of improving the collection of information about survivors and making it available more rapidly to those wishing to make contact with them.**

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report identified problems with the way London's emergency services worked together on the night of the fire, including the way key pieces of information were collected and shared.

In London, emergency services have been working together ahead of the national review in order to address the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's recommendations, which are being incorporated into the Major Incidents Procedures Manual owned by the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP). A review of the manual was completed in September 2021, and presented to the London Resilience Forum in October.

Recommendation 44 is dependent on further action by the Government, but it remains unclear how the Government will proceed. The Multi-Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) is a protocol enabling information to be shared between emergency services and, ultimately, the implementation of MAIT will ensure this recommendation can be met. The Brigade's mobilising system is already MAIT-compliant, and MPS and LAS have both reported to the Mayor that they are adding this capability to their own systems. The Home Office has announced funding for the development of MAIT, and the National Fire Chiefs Council is leading a project to introduce MAIT to all fire and rescue services in England; a forecast completion date for this recommendation is still being determined. The Home Office stated in its April 2021 update on the Phase 1 recommendations that implementation of MAIT should be underway in 2021; however, in its September 2021 update there was no reference to the implementation of MAIT.²¹

The Brigade have broadened their current communications channel which shared risk critical information with MPS and LAS and other emergency service control room to encompass the notification of major incidents and events. The Emergency Services inter Control Channel (ESICRL) is an airwave channel monitored 24/7 and supported with a

²¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021621/Quarterly_Thematic_Update_on_progress_against_the_Grenfell_Tower_Inquiry_Phase_1_Recommendations_v2.pdf

Memorandum of Understanding between all emergency service control rooms in London with a robust testing regime.

Recommendation 45 refers to the images recorded by the police helicopter present at Grenfell Tower. These images may have assisted firefighters in responding to the fire, but the encryption of the information was incompatible between the London Fire Brigade and the National Police Air Service (NPAS). The recommendation from the Inquiry is that common encryption is used in the future.

The Brigade already has the capacity to receive images from the NPAS and is engaging with the NPAS to ensure that arrangements for sharing these types of images are implemented, and improved, if necessary. NPAS have now issued information to all Police and Crime Commissioners that the encryption will now default to enabling all emergency services to view images via the downlink. There will still be an option for the information to be encrypted if deemed necessary by the police, but this is not the default. Therefore, it is considered that this action is now complete.

As discussed in relation to Recommendation 24, the Brigade is now also using aerial drones at incidents. Images from drones are therefore already being used by commanding officers and live streamed at Brigade control.

Recommendation 46 is now complete. The recommendation is about improving the way information about the survivors of an incident is collected and shared by London's emergency services and local authorities. Procedures for this are already set out in London's Major Incidents Procedures Manual. LESLP's Blue Lights panel has reviewed this recommendation with the Humanitarian Assistance Working Group. This work was completed in September 2021 with the revised manual presented to the London Resilience Forum in October.

Other action taken by the Mayor and GLA to promote building safety

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the Mayor has done everything he can to improve the safety of buildings by using his powers directly or lobbying the Government for change. For the first time, the London Plan requires all development proposals to achieve the highest standards of fire safety. The London Plan ensures that safety is considered at the very earliest stage of building design.

In addition, the Mayor wants to be at the forefront of best practice in fire safety when commissioning new homes on GLA land. New housing developments delivered on GLA land via the London Development Panel will require the provision of sprinklers, control over combustible items in the walls in buildings of any height and the registration of white good products. The Mayor has produced guidance for other landowners encouraging them to do the same.

The Government is in the process of reforming the Building Regulations and the processes around how homes are built and managed safely. The Mayor is actively engaged in shaping these proposals. For instance, the Mayor has been a long-time supporter of the London Fire Brigade's campaign for increasing the installation of sprinklers. In his response to the consultation on sprinklers and other fire safety measures in high-rise blocks of flats, he has called again for the inclusion of sprinklers in all purpose-built flats. In March 2021, the Government confirmed its intention to require sprinklers in all new buildings of a height of 11 metres or above.

With respect to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, many of the recommendations addressed to building owners and managers will require new legislation. The new Fire Safety Act 2021 and proposed Building Safety Bill are expected to address a number of the recommendations; the Mayor is lobbying to ensure this legislation delivers fully and quickly on the requirements of the Inquiry's Phase 1 report.

The Mayor has called for a number of improvements to the Building Safety Bill. Namely, the Mayor asked the Government for a more comprehensive coverage of buildings within the new regime, including supported accommodation and any building that presents a fire risk. The Mayor also asked for reassurances that leaseholders would be protected and that the building safety charge would not be used to cover remediation works associated with safety defects that are the result of the failings of the current regulatory system. Finally, the Mayor asked the Government for clarity on the enforcement measures proposed, particularly with respect to how remediation would be monitored and how residents and leaseholders would be involved in these processes.

The Mayor has written to building owners and managers in London to draw attention to a range of recommendations to improve the safety of residential blocks, including recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. This letter encouraged building owners to implement a number of urgent actions for existing buildings and start preparing for a number of other recommendations, ahead of legislation.²² The Mayor wrote to owners again in October 2021, and will carry out further engagement to ensure recommendations are implemented as far as possible. The London Fire Brigade will also provide support and advice to the Government and building owners and managers to assist with implementation as required. The GLA encourages building owners and managers in London to implement these recommendations and is considering the best ways to engage further with the housing sector in the coming months.

The Mayor is responsible for administering the Social Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund, the Private Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund and the Building Safety Fund on behalf of the Government for buildings in London. All decisions regarding the scope and design of the fund, and approvals of applications, are carried out by the Government. The Mayor has called for a long-term funding solution which protects leaseholders from the cost of remediating all unsafe buildings of any height or type of safety defect.

The Mayor is also responsible for administering the Waking Watch Relief Fund for London. This fund pays for the installation of common fire alarm systems in high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding, removing or reducing the need for waking watch.

The Mayor has written to more than 40 London landlords to demand faster action on the removal of ACM cladding.²³ These were building owners who had funding applications approved but were yet to start remediation work. With thousands of Londoners still living in unsafe buildings, the Mayor has made it clear that owners must take all necessary steps to remove and replace dangerous cladding.

Finally, the Mayor has now published draft planning guidance on Fire Safety. This has been published for information, ahead of a consultation process later in 2021. The guidance provides further information on the application of fire safety policies in the London Plan and are aimed at ensuring that essential fire safety measures are considered at the outset of the development process.²⁴

²² The letter is available at:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/letter_and_recommendations_from_the_mayor_of_london.pdf.

²³ The letter is available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-demands-action-from-unsafe-building-owners>

²⁴ The draft fire safety guidance can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance-and-spgs/draft-fire-safety-guidance-pre-consultation-information>

Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Telephone **020 7983 4000**
www.london.gov.uk

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format and title of the publication you require.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please phone the number or contact us at the address above.