

Implementation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations

33rd progress report

COPYRIGHT

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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 has considered 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 under three years ago. All of the recommendations aimed at the Brigade have now been implemented, with ongoing assurance taking place to ensure the changes are effective. The completion of the final recommendation this month is a significant milestone in the Brigade's continuing transformation journey and demonstrates the commitment made to delivering improvements in response to the fire.

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 have been 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. The Inquiry has announced that its Phase 2 was not likely to be published until Summer 2024, which further delay will rightly disappoint those who wish to see justice for the victims of the fire and swift action on the improvements needed to ensure this can never happen again.

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.

Using the Mayor's powers over planning, the GLA has developed new planning guidance for Fire Safety. 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.²

The Mayor has been publishing a regular update report on the implementation of the Inquiry's recommendations; this report is the 33rd 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.³

² The draft fire safety guidance can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance/fire-safety-lpg>.

³ Previous 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 and the Mayor have participated in Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which has examined wider issues, including how the building came to be in an unsafe condition. The Brigade's preparedness for an incident of this type has been further explored in Phase 2. The Inquiry's Phase 2 hearings have now concluded, with the Panel now considering its final report.⁴

The Brigade is undertaking a range of improvement work that relates the issues raised during Phase 2 of the Inquiry. Much of this work began as a result of the Phase 1 recommendations, or as part of the Brigade's wider transformation programme. This includes:

- Investing in upgraded communications equipment for use at incidents, including radios and breathing apparatus.
- Reviewing and updating the Brigade's incident command procedures and training.
- Developing the One Risk database to improve how the Brigade gathers, manages and disseminates risk information about buildings.
- Developing new procedures for building evacuations, and training all operational staff in these.
- Reforming the organisational culture, with a stronger focus on management and leadership capability.
- Appointing an independent Operational Assurance Adviser to ensure the Brigade identifies areas where further improvement is needed and takes necessary action.

⁴ For updates on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry please visit: <https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/news>

Progress with these and other initiatives is monitored closely, and will be reviewed in light of any further recommendations issued by the Inquiry.

In January 2023, the Brigade published its new community risk management plan, entitled *Your London Fire Brigade*.⁵ This is the key organisational strategy setting the overall direction for service delivery and showing how the Brigade will address the risks London faces. The new plan is embedding and driving forward the transformative work that is underway at the Brigade. Alongside this, a number of new measures of the performance of the Brigade have been introduced, including on levels of trust in the communities the Brigade serves.

In November 2022, the Brigade received the final report of an independent culture review, established by the London Fire Commissioner with the Mayor's support, and led by Nazir Afzal OBE. The report contained very difficult findings for the Brigade, including poor treatment of female staff, or those from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. The Commissioner has initiated a range of actions to begin tackling these issues, including setting up an independent complaints service, a review of the Brigade's people services department, and making that clear that the Brigade has a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and bullying.

The Brigade is also responding to the findings of its inspection reports by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the most recent of which was published in July 2022. This was the second 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, including on targeting of preventative work and organisational culture.⁶ In light of the independent culture review findings set out above, HMICFRS has also taken the decision to place the Brigade into its 'Engage' programme of enhanced monitoring.

In early November 2022, the Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI) published its Volume Two report, which considered the response of the emergency services to the terrorist attack on the arena, which claimed the lives of 22 victims.⁷ The report identified a number of failings with the response of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, including in incident command, communication between firefighters and the control room, and coordination with other emergency services. A number of the issues the MAI identified were similar to those identified by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry with regards to the London Fire Brigade. The Brigade has therefore already been working to address these concerns, as set out in this progress report, while further assessing what new action is required in light of the Manchester Arena Inquiry findings.

⁵ *Your London Fire Brigade* is available here: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/6692/lfb-crmp-2023-2029-digital.pdf>

⁶ The 2021/22 inspection report can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2021-22-london>

⁷ The Manchester Arena Inquiry report is available at: <https://manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk/>

The resources available to deliver much-needed transformational change at the Brigade are dependent on government funding decisions. 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.

Seeking assurance on progress with implementation

In the following section of this report, we set out details of how the recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report are being delivered. In this section we describe steps taken to undertake assurance work. Some further information on assurance work relating to specific projects is also included under the relevant recommendation later in the report.

In this context, assurance is the process by which both the leadership of the Brigade and the GLA seek to confirm with robust evidence that recommendations have been fully implemented and that they have been effective in meeting the Inquiry's objectives.

Assurance processes at the Brigade have been transformed since the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report, with both internal changes to modernise how assurance takes place, and the appointment of expert external advisers. The Brigade has new risk management and enterprise assurance frameworks that set out how the major risks facing the Brigade will be managed and ensures ongoing scrutiny of these. These include measures directly relevant to learning from Grenfell Tower, such as the need to fully understand risk in the built environment.

The Brigade has appointed an independent Audit Committee, chaired by Marta Phillips OBE. The Committee scrutinises the work of the Brigade closely, considering the Brigade's performance, risks and finances.

The Brigade also appointed an independent Operational Assurance Adviser, Alasdair Hay, the former Chief Fire Officer for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Alasdair conducted reviews of key aspects of the Brigade's operations, including key areas related to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations, such as reviews of Brigade Control, operational learning processes, incident command training, and how the Brigade gathers building risk information.

The GLA has assurance processes for the delivery of Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations. These include the Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board, which receives a regular update on the progress with delivery; the Deputy Mayor questions senior officers and seeks further information and evidence where required.

The Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board receives updates on the Brigade's risk and assurance frameworks and reports of the Audit Committee. The Deputy Mayor, therefore,

undertakes additional scrutiny to assess whether the Brigade is acting on recommendations arising from these other processes.

'Deep dive' sessions of the Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board are held at least quarterly, looking at a specific area of concern in greater detail. Two deep dive meetings have been fully devoted to exploring progress with the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations, with a further session planned for later this month.

This is supplemented with other activities such as direct meetings between the Deputy Mayor, GLA and Brigade officers to discuss progress with specific projects and challenges as they arise. The Mayor also meets the London Fire Commissioner regularly to receive an update on progress with the Inquiry recommendations, service performance and other major initiatives.

Finally, the GLA has assurance processes for agreeing on major London Fire Brigade spending programmes, which include those delivering Inquiry recommendations such as the procurement of new equipment or investment in training. These decisions are subject to detailed scrutiny, including being reported to the GLA's Corporate Investment Board to ensure the financial commitment will deliver key objectives.

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.

Implementation of the 14 recommendations aimed solely at the Brigade has been completed:

- Updating the London Fire Brigade's (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 policy and training to ensure better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments (Recommendation 23);
- Developing a system of direct communication between the control room and incident commander, and improving communication between the incident commander and bridgehead (Recommendation 24);
- Investigating, and then delivering, a direct communication link between the control room and bridgehead (Recommendation 25);
- Introducing new breathing apparatus equipment that enables more effective communication between firefighters at incidents (Recommendation 26); 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. All of these recommendations have been implemented by the Brigade, but not necessarily yet by all other fire and rescue services:

- Training staff on the risks of external wall fires in high-rise buildings (Recommendation 2);
- Introducing the High-Rise Portal to gather safety information about buildings and make this available to firefighters (Recommendation 7);
- Developing policy for handling a large number of ‘fire survival guidance’ calls simultaneously (Recommendation 16);
- Developing a system to display fire survival guidance information in command units and at the bridgehead (Recommendation 17);
- Developing policy for managing a transition in advice 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);
- Ensuring that the Multi Agency Incident Transfer system is enabled, to allow information sharing among emergency services (Recommendation 44), 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 Building Safety Act 2022. A further three recommendations are aimed at building owners and managers, but without requiring legal changes. A recommendation aimed at the National Police Air Service, to enable emergency services to view images recorded by helicopters at incidents, has been implemented.

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 below. 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 the action being taken at the national level. As set out above, all of the recommendations aimed at the Brigade have been implemented.

In February 2024, the Home Office published an update on progress against the recommendations, including those aimed at the Government and building owners and managers. 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.⁸ At the time of writing, the status of the recommendations aimed at the Government or building owners and managers can be summarised as:

- Eleven recommendations have been reported as completed.
- Three have been rejected in favour of alternative proposals.
- One is subject to additional consideration, without a forecast delivery date.

With regards to the 11 recommendations the Government is reporting as complete, all but one of these were addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which were made under the Fire Safety Act 2021 and came into force in January 2023. Although the Government has therefore fulfilled the requirement to legislate on the issues raised by the Inquiry in these recommendations, there remain significant practical questions about how the regulation will be enforced.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-thematic-update-on-progress-against-the-grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-1-recommendations>

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

No.	Aimed at	Recommendation summary	LFB progress
3	LFB	Revise operational policy on gathering risk information for high-rise buildings.	Completed by LFB in July 2020
4	LFB	Train senior officers in the inspection of high-rise buildings.	Completed by LFB in September 2020
10	LFB	Review policy on communication between incident commander and control room.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
11	LFB	Train incident commanders in communication with the control room.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
12	LFB	Train senior control room officers in communication with incident commanders.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
13	LFB	Dedicated communication link between the incident commander and senior control room officer.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
14	LFB	Revise operational policy to distinguish between callers seeking advice and callers needing to be rescued.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
15	LFB	Provide regular refresher training to all control room officers.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
22	LFB	Develop policies and training to ensure better control of breathing apparatus deployments.	Completed by LFB in July 2021
23	LFB	Develop policies and training to ensure better information from crews returning from deployments.	Completed by LFB in March 2022
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.	Completed by LFB in April 2021
25	LFB	Investigate the use of a direct communication link between the control room and the bridgehead.	Completed by LFB in March 2022
26	LFB	Obtain equipment to allow firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead.	Completed by LFB in March 2024
27	LFB	Ensure the 'command support system' is operative on command units, and crews are trained to use it.	Completed by LFB in March 2020

Table 2: Progress with recommendations for 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.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
7	Fire & rescue services	Store electronic buildings plans and make them available for responding to incidents.	Completed by LFB in June 2023
16	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for handling a large number of 'Fire Survival Guidance' calls simultaneously.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
17	Fire & rescue services	Develop systems to display 'Fire Survival Guidance' information at the bridgehead and in command units.	Completed by LFB in March 2022
18	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for managing a transition from 'stay put' to 'get out' advice.	Completed 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'.	Completed by LFB in February 2021
20	Fire & rescue services	Investigate how assisting control rooms can gain access to information from the host control room.	Completed by LFB in February 2021
29	Fire & rescue services	Develop policies for the evacuation of high-rise buildings and training to support them.	Completed by LFB in March 2021
34	Fire & rescue services	Services to be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in evacuations.	Completed by LFB in November 2018
40	Emergency services	Communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to other emergency services.	Completed by LFB in October 2021
41	Emergency services	Establish clear lines of communication between emergency service control rooms in a Major Incident.	Completed by LFB in October 2021
42	Emergency services	Designate a single point of contact in Major Incidents to enable communication between control rooms.	Completed by LFB in October 2021
43	Emergency services	Send a 'METHANE' message as soon as possible when a Major Incident is declared.	Completed by LFB in October 2021
44	LFB, MPS, LAS	Investigate steps to enable LFB, MPS and LAS to read each other's messages.	Completed by LFB in September 2023
46	LFB, MPS, LAS	Investigate ways of improving the collection and sharing of information about survivors (also aimed at local authorities).	Implemented in September 2021

JESIP: Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles

LAS: London Ambulance Service

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

MPS: Metropolitan Police Service

Table 3: Progress with national recommendations for the Government or building owners⁹

No.	Aimed at	Recommendation summary	Progress
1	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire and rescue service with information about external walls.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
5	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire and rescue service with building floor plans.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
6	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide a premises information box.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
8	Government	Legislate to require building owners to carry out regular inspections of firefighting lifts.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
9	Government	Legislate to require building owners to carry out regular tests of the mechanism allowing firefighters to take control of lifts.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
28	Government	Develop national guidelines for carrying out evacuations of high-rise residential buildings.	Guidelines published in February 2024.
30	Government	Legislate to require building owners to draw up and regularly review evacuation plans.	The Government has consulted on alternative proposals to this recommendation
31	Building owners	Equip high-rise residential buildings with facilities enabling firefighters to send an evacuation signal in the building.	The Government has announced that this proposal requires further consideration
32	Government	Legislate to require building owners to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised.	The Government has consulted on alternative proposals to this recommendation
33	Government	Legislate to require building owners to include information about residents with reduced mobility in the premises information box.	The Government has consulted on alternative proposals to this recommendation
35	Building owners	Clearly mark floor numbers on each landing in stairways and in all lobbies.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
36	Government	Legislate to require building owners to provide fire safety instructions in accessible formats.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
37	Building owners	Carry out an urgent inspection of fire doors to ensure they comply with legislative standards.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
38	Government	Legislate to require building owners to check fire door self-closing devices at least every three months.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023
39	Government	Legislate to require that people responsible for flat entrance doors ensure they comply with current standards, in buildings with unsafe cladding.	New regulation brought into force in January 2023

⁹ This table is based the content of the update published by the Government in February 2024. While the Government's position that the above recommendations have been completed is reflected in the table, there are further issues regarding implementation that need to be addressed. These issues are discussed in the relevant sections of this report. To read the Government's progress report please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-thematic-update-on-progress-against-the-grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-1-recommendations>

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 addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which came into force in January 2023.

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 Government has not specified these requirements in the regulation, which heightens the risk that building owners will not be sharing information in a way that makes it usable by fire and rescue services. There are also issues about the resourcing of fire and rescue services to enable them to process and act on the information, which have not yet been addressed.

The Brigade continues to develop its 'One Risk' project to consolidate building risk information into a single database. This is due for delivery by March 2025. Pending this, the Brigade has reviewed the requirements of the recommendation in light of the introduction of the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations. The Brigade has already introduced a High-Rise Portal to capture relevant safety information about high-rise buildings. This can be accessed by all officers, including on mobile data terminals in fire engines.

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 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 has implemented enhanced training for all incident commanders, with the Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board receiving regular updates on progress until the completion of the initial training programme. The Brigade's new Operational Assurance Adviser has also conducted a review of incident command training, and reported findings to the Board.

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) 3.2.¹⁰ This recommendation requires the London Fire Brigade's 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 of 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, with these findings reported to the Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board.

¹⁰ 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>

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 these recommendations are addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which came into force January 2023.

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 Government has not specified these requirements in the regulation, which heightens the risk that building owners will not be sharing information in a way that makes it usable by fire and rescue services. There are also issues about the resourcing of fire and rescue services to enable them to process and act on the information, which have not yet been addressed.

Regarding Recommendation 7, the Brigade continues to develop its 'One Risk' project to consolidate building risk information into a single database. This is due for delivery by March 2025. Pending this, the Brigade has reviewed the requirements of the recommendation in light of the introduction of the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations. The Brigade has already introduced a High-Rise Portal to capture relevant safety information about high-rise buildings. This can be accessed by all officers, including on mobile data terminals in fire engines. It is considered that this capability meets the requirements of Recommendation 7, although further improvements in this area will continue to be made.

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 these recommendations are addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which came into force in January 2023.

To implement Recommendations 8-9 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 Government has not specified these requirements in the regulation, which heightens the risk that building owners will not be sharing information in a way that makes it usable by fire and rescue services. There are also issues about the resourcing of fire and rescue services to enable them to process and act on the information, which have not yet been addressed.

The Brigade continues to develop its 'One Risk' project to consolidate building risk information into a single database. This is due for delivery by March 2025. Pending this, the Brigade has reviewed the requirements of the recommendation in light of the introduction of the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations. The Brigade has already introduced a High-Rise Portal to capture relevant safety information about high-rise buildings. This can be accessed by all officers, including on mobile data terminals in fire engines.

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 – where Control operators advise 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 Vision, the 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 has also improved 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. The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and GLA officers have undertaken assurance by observing the app being used in Brigade training exercises. 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 to 17 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 an agreement with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Home Office. At the Brigade, all Control officers have now received training in the use of the talk group. The 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 and introduced, which enables information from FSG calls to be displayed simultaneously at the incident and in Control. Implementation of the recommendation has now been completed, with the FSG application having gone live in March 2022, and officers trained in its use. The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and GLA officers have undertaken assurance by observing the app being used in Brigade training exercises.

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 staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.**

These recommendations have now been completed by the London Fire Brigade.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has identified that the 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 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.¹¹

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.

¹¹ 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>

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. In February 2024, almost seven years on from the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government published new guidelines on evacuations for fire and rescue services; this is discussed further under Recommendation 28.

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.

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 an 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 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.

Implementation of Recommendation 23 is now complete. This has delivered 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. Final confirmation depended on the delivery of the FSG app discussed in relation to Recommendations 17 and 25, which is now complete.

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 during 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 recommendation 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.

To implement Recommendation 25, an IT application to increase situational awareness and communication between the incident and Control has been developed and introduced, which enables information from FSG calls to be displayed simultaneously at the incident and in Control. Implementation of the recommendation has now been completed, with the FSG application having gone live in March 2022, and officers trained in its use. The Mayor attended a high-rise training exercise in May 2022 to see for himself the progress on this and a number of Inquiry recommendations. The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and GLA officers have also undertaken assurance by observing the app being used in Brigade training exercises.

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 radio equipment and breathing apparatus that it uses during incidents. This project was 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 involved the delivery of new radio repeater equipment and breathing apparatus including an integrated communication capability. The new radio repeaters and breathing apparatus has been procured and rolled out, with training for firefighters on the new equipment undertaken.

Problems were also experienced at the Grenfell Tower fire 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 the recommendation.

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 Brigade 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.

On 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. In February 2024, almost seven years on from the Grenfell Tower fire, the Home Office published new guidelines to fire and rescue services on the full or partial evacuation of high-rise residential buildings.¹² The Home Office now considers Recommendation 28 complete.

As discussed above, the Brigade has already developed and implemented a new Evacuation and Rescue policy, as well as a modified High-Rise Firefighting policy, to respond to the Inquiry’s recommendations and the lessons from the fire. The Brigade is now reviewing the new guidelines to consider any operational implications. The Brigade continues to review its high-rise firefighting capabilities on a regular basis.

¹² The guidelines are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evacuation-guidelines-for-fire-and-rescue-services-frs>

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 had been expected to implement Recommendation 30 on evacuation plans through the changes to fire safety regulation discussed elsewhere in this report, but in May 2022 the Government announced that it was not intending to implement this recommendation. The Government has developed an alternative proposal, which effectively means that evacuation plans would only be in buildings with a ‘simultaneous evacuation’ strategy rather than all high-rise residential buildings. The Government consulted on its proposals, with the consultation closing in August 2022, but no further update has been provided by the Government.¹³ The Mayor responded to the consultation to reiterate support for the Inquiry’s recommendation and call on the Government to ensure a much wider range of buildings are included in the scope of the new requirements.

Similarly, the Government stated in its May 2022 announcement that Recommendation 31 on evacuation signals, and related measures, “need additional consideration.” At the time of writing, it is unclear how the Government intends to proceed with this recommendation. In December 2022, the Government stated in a progress report that it was “developing an evidence base of existing evacuation alert systems in high-rise residential buildings,” although no further update has been provided.

¹³ The consultation has now closed but further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/emergency-evacuation-information-sharing>

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 2019.¹⁴ 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 has also indicated that it does not intend to implement Recommendations 32 and 33 on personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs). The Government has developed alternative proposals called Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing (EEIS), which would apply only to buildings with a 'simultaneous evacuation' strategy and require building owners to share information about residents with mobility limitations with the local fire and rescue service. The Government consulted on its proposals, with the consultation closing in August 2022, but no further update has been provided by the Government.¹⁵ The Mayor responded to the consultation to reiterate support for the Inquiry's recommendation and call on the Government to implement PEEPs and provide funding to ensure consistent and comprehensive application.

Relating to Recommendations 30, 32 and 33, it should be noted that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities wrote to the Mayor in July 2023, stating that, "The recommendations relating to PEEPs and broader evacuation plans remain a key priority, and the Home Office is currently considering how best to deliver these recommendations, following recent public consultations." No further detail was included in this letter; this will likely be provided when the Home Office publishes its response to the consultations.

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. This provides clean, safe air for 15 minutes. Smoke hoods can be provided by firefighters

¹⁴ 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/>

¹⁵ To view the consultation please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/emergency-evacuation-information-sharing>

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, when the Brigade became 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 the 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 these recommendations are addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which came into force in January 2023.

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.¹⁶ 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 is planning an event with building owners and managers in November 2022 to continue to encourage them to implement the recommendations.

¹⁶ The letter is available at:

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

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 Government has stated these recommendations are addressed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which came into force in January 2023.

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. JESIP is overseen by a Ministerial Oversight Board; we would support more transparency around the work of the Board.

"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, took place after the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. A revised version of the Joint Doctrine was issued to emergency services on 11 October 2021 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 worked 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 2021.

The Manchester Arena Inquiry made further recommendations about JESIP and the Joint Doctrine in its Volume Two report in November 2022, after identifying failures in coordination between the emergency services after the attack on the arena in May 2017. This may lead to further changes in national structures and guidance that the Brigade will need to incorporate.

The Brigade has already made changes to its own operational procedures to address the Grenfell Tower Inquiry 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 Recommendations 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 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 being addressed by the implementation of the Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) system. This is a protocol enabling information to be shared between emergency services. 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 NFCC is leading a project to introduce MAIT to all fire and rescue services in England. The Brigade has taken the necessary steps to complete this recommendation. The Brigade therefore considers this recommendation complete, as of Autumn 2023. It is hoped full implementation among emergency services can be achieved if required steps are taken by partners.

The Brigade has broadened its current communications channel which shared risk-critical information with MPS and LAS and other emergency service control rooms 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 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 has 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 the following month.

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 of 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 are dependent on new legislation. The new Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022 are addressing a number of the recommendations and related issues.

The Mayor called for a number of improvements to the Building Safety Bill while it was being debated in Parliament. 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.¹⁷ 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 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 has written to more than 40 London landlords to demand faster action on the removal of ACM cladding.¹⁸ 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 been developing new planning guidance for Fire Safety. The guidance provides further information on the application of fire safety policies in the London Plan and is aimed at ensuring that essential fire safety measures are considered at the outset of the development process.¹⁹

¹⁷ The letter is available at:

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

¹⁸ The letter is available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-demands-action-from-unsafe-building-owners>

¹⁹ The draft fire safety guidance can be found here, with details of the consultation: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance/fire-safety-lpg>

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