

Grenfell Fire Response News

Air quality issues following the fire

Public health experts continue to provide specialist advice and testing following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

Air quality tests are being carried out by Public Health England (PHE), which is advising on air quality, smoke exposure, asbestos and other potential risks.

The risk to people's health as a result of the fire, beyond those directly affected, is low.

What is this newsletter for?

This is the second edition of the Grenfell Response Team newsletter. We want to keep you up to date with all the latest information about what is happening and the services that are available to help. For up to the minute info please follow us on Twitter

@grenfellsupport and on Facebook at [facebook.com/grenfellsupport](https://www.facebook.com/grenfellsupport) and visit www.gov.uk

Dr Deborah Turbitt, health protection director for Public Health England in London, said:

*"We have been assessing air quality over the past week in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire and this shows no detectable deterioration in air quality. **Our advice is that the wider risk to people's health as a result of the fire, beyond those directly affected, is minimal.**"*

People who were close to the scene last week and exposed to smoke from the fire may have experienced irritation to their air passages, skin and eyes and respiratory symptoms including coughing and wheezing, breathlessness, phlegm production and chest pain. People who have ongoing concerns about their symptoms should call NHS 111 for medical advice.

We know that bound asbestos, contained in building materials such as plaster or fibre board, was present in Grenfell Tower in ceilings and header panels inside airing cupboards. It is possible that very small amounts of asbestos fibres will have been dispersed within the smoke plume, but would have formed only a small fraction of the smoke and particles released in the fire; all smoke is toxic and any asbestos would present a minimal additional risk to health.

Asbestos related diseases are typically associated with a long term workplace exposure to high levels of airborne asbestos fibres.

Safety officers working with teams currently on the site have tested the air within Grenfell Tower for dust and asbestos and have not detected any levels of concern.

When work commences to clear the site there will be a system of engineering work that will prevent any asbestos being released from the site and a programme of regular environmental air monitoring conducted to ensure that both contractors and local residents are not put at any risk."

Bereavement support

Freephone helpline

0808 808 1677

24 hours a day.

helpline@cruse.org.uk

Replacement UK passports, visas or immigration queries

0300 222 0000

(outside the UK

+44(0)300 222 0000)

24 hour advice line.

Air quality and smoke exposure

People who have concerns about any symptoms should seek medical advice or call **NHS 111**.

NHS Mental health support

0800 0234 650

24 hours a day.

cnw-tr.spa@nhs.net

VICTIM SUPPORT

Free emotional and practical support for anyone affected.

0808 1689 111

24 hours a day.

victimsupport.org.uk

Financial assistance update

- As of 9am on 24th June, £1,232,040 has been distributed to affected families.
- This is made up of a £500 cash payment and £5,000 delivered through DWP into bank accounts or similar in a single payment, along with discretionary payments made by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- 100 households have been given the £5,000 payments

Housing update

We have offered emergency hotel accommodation in the local area to everyone who needs it.

Housing numbers across Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Walk and the cordon area are:

- In total there are 373 households in emergency accommodation.
- 140 hotel placements have been made for people living in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk.
- There are also 109 additional households now in hotels from the wider affected area.
- 162 keyworkers are supporting people affected.
- There have been 79 additional high-vis workers, including 38 Red Cross in the centre and undertaking community liaison.

Work is now taking place to assess the housing needs of all Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk families to identify longer-term accommodation in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and neighbouring boroughs.

- So far 153 housing needs assessments have been completed.
- 68 new build flats as part of the Kensington Road development in the borough will be provided to re-house residents from Grenfell Tower. These will be ready by the end of July 2017.

Public Health England answer your questions about air quality and asbestos

Do I need to be concerned about air quality as a result of the fire?

Public Health England is regularly assessing air quality in relation to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. This has shown no detectable drop in air quality. Three new air quality monitors were installed in the immediate area of Grenfell Tower on Saturday by an independent environment company. Initial readings suggest low levels of pollution, but PHE will continue to closely monitor all relevant readings to ensure the best advice is given.

The pollen levels in London have been high throughout this week and are forecast to remain at high levels – this may, as it would have done before the fire, cause some people to have symptoms such as irritated nose and throat. Our advice is that there is a very low risk to people's health as a result of the fire, beyond those directly affected.

Could being close to the Grenfell Tower Fire have made me unwell?

People who were close to the scene and exposed to smoke from the fire may have experienced irritation to their air passages, skin and eyes,

and respiratory symptoms, including coughing and wheezing, breathlessness, phlegm production and chest pain.

What should I do if I am concerned about my symptoms?

People who are worried about their symptoms should consult their GP or call the NHS on 111 for medical advice.

Was there any asbestos in Grenfell Tower and could it make me unwell?

We know that asbestos contained in building materials, such as plaster or fibreboard, was present in Grenfell Tower in ceilings and header panels inside airing cupboards. It's possible that very small amounts of asbestos fibres will have been dispersed within the smoke from the fire, but any health risk due to asbestos is very low.

What tests are being done to monitor the risk to people's health?

Safety officers working with teams currently on the site have tested the air within Grenfell Tower for dust and asbestos and have not detected any levels to be of concern. When work starts to clear the site there will be engineering work to prevent any asbestos from being released from the site. An ongoing programme of

regular environmental air monitoring will continue to ensure that people are not put at risk.

I handled some debris from the fire and I breathed in some dust. What should I do?

If you have breathed in dust, it is likely to be a relatively small amount. This single, short term exposure will not significantly affect your health.

I have returned to my home and there is still a smell. Would an air purifier help?

If your home has an unpleasant smell lingering as a result of the fire it would be a good idea to open the windows and let fresh air circulate to clear the smell. We would expect the smell to have disappeared before purifiers could be found, installed and have any noticeable effect.

Where can I find out more?

More information on air quality from Public Health England can be found on their website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-advice-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>

For 24/7 health advice ring **111**

For practical and emotional support, please contact the Red Cross Helpline: **0800 4589 472**

What help is on offer?

If you come to the Assistance Centre at **Westway Sports Centre, Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP** you will be able to access services and support provided by the team from 9am - 11pm.

A Red Cross helpline is in action to help give practical or emotional support to anyone who needs it.

The number is **0800 4589472**.

This is available 24 hours a day.

Any family and friends concerned about their loved ones are asked to contact the Metropolitan Police on **0800 032 4539**.

If you have been affected and have any other questions about the support available, please email **support@grenfellresponse.org**

Please do not send any personal data like bank details or your address to this email account – rest assured when we contact you, we'll get any additional information we need.

Assistance Centre

The centre has been opened to provide information and support to residents of Grenfell Tower and those living nearby who have been directly affected by the fire. The centre is providing the following services through a partnership involving a range of organisations.

Advice

- Registration
- Initial advice on help available
- Government grants
- Emergency financial assistance/payments
- Housing
- Mental health services
- Doctor/nurse access
- Adult social care
- Family and children services
- Consumer issues
- Energy suppliers
- Local business issues
- Royal Mail
- Benefits eligibility
- ID
- Visas
- Embassy inquiries
- Passports
- Driving licences
- Oyster cards
- Consumer issues e.g. utilities/housing
- Victim Support

Frequently asked questions

Are people in emergency housing being put in tower blocks?

No. People are being temporarily housed in hotel accommodation in or close to the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Are people living in parks?

We are not aware of anybody living in parks and there is no need for people to be doing this. We urge people to come to the Westway Sports Centre so we can help with their housing needs.

Are people been forced out of the borough, or being made intentionally homeless?

No one is being forced to move out of London, or being threatened with being made homeless. We're working to find the right accommodation for those affected residents, either in Kensington and Chelsea or neighbouring boroughs.

Are people moving a long way out of the borough?

This is not true. We have tried to keep accommodation as local as possible and we completely accept residents' wishes to remain close to the community.