

Grenfell Fire Response News

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Issue No: 8

Assistance Centre open

The Assistance Centre at Westway Sports Centre remains the place to go if you've been affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. The Centre is currently open between 10am and 8pm and offers support, benefits advice, travel advice and more. You can also pick up printed documents, get a new passport photo and collect your post.

There are a range of support services available in the Assistance Centre. This includes housing needs, health, social care services, police family liaison officers, experienced volunteers from the Red Cross and other organisations, food and above all, a kind and sympathetic team of people ready to provide advice.

For practical or emotional support, please call the Red Cross helpline on **0800 458 9472**. The line is currently open 24 hours a day but we are looking at reviewing these hours. If you have any feedback, please email support@grenfellresponse.org

The address is Westway Sports Centre, 1 Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP.

Family and Friends Assistance Centre

The Family and Friends Assistance Centre (FFAC) was set up last week to provide wrap-around support to those that have lost loved ones in the Grenfell Tower fire. Appointments are made by the Family Liason Officers.

The centre accommodates families in private rooms, where they are provided with specialist bereavement support, and access to other professionals who can help them resolve the practical issues they may be facing. This could be anything from help in making arrangements for a family member, support bringing overseas relatives to the UK to attend a funeral, to setting up a bank account for the first time, making an application for benefits, or discussing their rehousing needs.

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What is this newsletter for?

This is the eighth edition of the Grenfell Fire Response Team newsletter. We want to keep you up to date with all the latest information and services available to help.

The newsletter is also available in **Arabic** and **Farsi** languages. For up to the minute info, please follow us on Twitter [@grenfellsupport](https://twitter.com/grenfellsupport) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/grenfellsupport](https://www.facebook.com/grenfellsupport) or visit www.gov.uk

Access to emergency funding

Financial help is available in the form of payments up to £5,000 for individuals, groups or organisations affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. Receiving funding will not affect any existing benefits that are being claimed by individuals.

John Lyons Charity

The John Lyons Charity can provide funds to groups or organisations working with children, young people and families, including registered charities, Community Interest Companies, non-profit local community groups, schools and local faith groups. Simply complete an application form and submit it to info@jlc.london

DWP Discretionary Funding

DWP Discretionary Funding is available for survivors of the fire, and can offer sums of up to £5,000 to all households affected. Please visit The Assistance Centre at the Westway Sports Centre, 1 Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP to access this funding.

London Emergencies Trust

Up to £20,000 of funding is available for people who were living in Grenfell Tower who were injured in the fire, and the families of those who died

or are missing. Those affected should apply by speaking to their Family Liaison Officer, who will give them an application form, or by calling the Red Cross helpline on **0800 458 9472**.

Rugby Portobello Trust

Up to £10,000 of funding is available for residents of Grenfell Tower to support families as they move in to new, permanent accommodation. Those affected should apply through the Rugby Portobello Trust, by calling **020 7229 2928** or emailing newhomesteam@rpt.org.uk

Charitable grants

Every family who lost someone in the Grenfell fire is to receive £20,000, those seriously injured will receive up to £10,000 and there will be a further £10,000 'fresh start' grant to every family who has lost their home.

The DCLG has also announced that it will release £1 million of funding to support organisations working with individuals and the communities most affected by the fire.

Other important contacts

Bereavement support

Call the Freephone helpline on **0808 808 1677** or email helpline@cruse.org.uk. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Replacement UK passports, visas or immigration queries

Call our advice line on **0300 222 0000**. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Air quality and smoke exposure

If you have concerns about any symptoms, please see your doctor or call NHS 111.

NHS Mental health support

Call **0800 0234 650** or email cnw-tr.spa@nhs.net for mental health support. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Victim support

Call **0808 1689 111** for practical and emotional support, or visit victimsupport.org.uk. The line is open 24 hours a day.

Further support

Further support is available at the Assistance Centre, Westway Sports Centre, Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP, open from 10am to 8pm.

You can also call the Red Cross for 24-hour support on **0800 458 9472**.

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

Regular updates

For regular updates please follow us on Twitter at [@grenfellsupport](https://twitter.com/grenfellsupport) and on Facebook at facebook.com/grenfellsupport, or visit www.gov.uk

Government urges everyone to come forward for help

The Home Office has said that it will not take immigration action against undocumented migrants affected by the Grenfell Tower fire.

All victims of the tragedy are being encouraged to access the services they need, including accommodation and healthcare.

The Police and Fire Brigade is also asking for as much information as possible on the people in Grenfell Tower on the evening of 14 June, to help them identify victims.

Police support if you've lost someone

The Police Family Liaison service is there if you know anyone who has lost someone as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire.

Officers have extensive experience with families and are there to help you with the distress you may feel if you have lost someone, and all information is taken in confidence.

If you need to get in touch with the Family Liaison Unit, please visit the Westway Assistance Centre, 1 Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP

Getting help with funeral costs

If you are arranging a funeral for a family member or loved one, you can receive £10,000 to help with the costs. If you need to arrange more than one funeral, you can receive more than one payment.

To find out more, speak to your Family Liaison Officer or Local Authority key worker and they will help you through the process. You will need to provide some simple details so that they can formally confirm next of kin and who will be responsible for arranging the funeral.

A list of local funeral directors can be found online at Nafd.or.uk

Visa and passport support

If you have had passports and immigration documents destroyed as a result of the Grenfell Tower Fire, then you can talk to UK Visa and Immigration and Her Majesty's Passport Office teams face to face or over the phone.

Specialist advisors are available to help at the Westway Sports and Fitness Centre, Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP from 10am to 8pm.

You can also call the 24 hour advice line on **0300 222 0000** to arrange for a call back by a member of the visa and passport team.

Transport update

TFL is operating a free shuttle bus service between the Assistance Centre and hotels where families have been temporarily housed.

Timetables for the bus routes are available at hotels, and online at www.westminster.gov.uk/shuttle-bus-times-westway-centre

Parking update

The last thing anybody should expect after a traumatic incident is a parking ticket. Councils across London, together with Transport for London are working with parking attendants to identify and cancel any outstanding parking tickets for people who lived in Grenfell Tower. No further action will be taken against any unpaid ticket received before the fire.

Anyone who has been moved into temporary housing and is worried about parking tickets received after the fire, or would like to apply for a parking permit, should contact the council area where they are now living.

Day of reassurance taking place today

You may notice extra uniformed police in the local area today. They are there as part of a special day of reassurance being held by the Metropolitan police.

Around 30 extra officers, police staff and cadets will be around the Grenfell Tower area and further afield to offer leaflets and information. They will include officers who speak languages including Farsi, Arabic and Bengali.

The special patrol takes place between 12 midday and 6pm on Saturday, and the majority of the officers will be in uniform or accompanied by a uniformed officer.

So if you have any questions, or just want pointed in the right direction, do stop one of the reassurance patrol and ask as they are there to help.

Grenfell volunteers

Volunteers at the Grenfell Community Assistance Centre are doing fantastic work to provide help for local people.

Typical of those giving up their time are volunteers Tanya Hedges and Abraham Chowdhury, who are working with the Red Cross.

Tanya said: *"They (the Red Cross) have been helping us do a number of different jobs because it takes a lot of manpower."*

Abraham: *"At the end of the day we all have to work together; no one is taking the credit away from anyone. It's just as individuals we cannot do much. We have to work together with other charities to help the people... And that's the main thing we're focusing on – building that trust with the community, and letting them know they can get that help when they come to the Westway and meet the Red Cross and all the other charities."*

The Red Cross helpline is available 24/7 for anyone who has been affected by the Grenfell Tower fire and is in need of support call **0800 458 9472** (free from landlines and mobiles).

Shop for Grenfell

Since the launch of 'Shop for Grenfell', the British Red Cross and community volunteers have been working hard to sort through the donations they have received. A steady stream of sorted goods have started being sent to the Westway and to shops across the country including 20 pallets of new bedding and 66 boxes of toiletries to Kensington and Chelsea council.

The Red Cross has set up a UK-wide operation to sort and distribute the clothes and the money raised will go directly to help those affected by the fire through the charity's London Fire Relief Fund, which has so far raised over £3.2 million.

Support for children

The Grenfell Tower fire has left lots of young people worried and upset. You might be feeling scared or you, or somebody you know, may have been affected by the fire. Whatever you're worried about, Childline is here to listen and provide free, confidential support. You can contact Childline and speak to one of our trained counsellors, anytime on **0800 1111** or for a 1-2-1 online chat at **www.childline.org.uk**

Support in the community

There is also a team working in the community to provide physical and mental health support, who can help you with walk-in appointments at the Westway Centre, or can visit you at somewhere more suitable.

To find out more, call **07712 231 133**.

Community engagement

For regular Community engagement updates, please contact the dedicated email address. If you know anyone who might be interested in hearing updates, please let them know to email

Communityengagement@grenfellresponse.org

Housing support available to you

We are here to help you if you are living in emergency hotel rooms whilst we try to find longer term accommodation.

It has been over two weeks since the fire and families are still living in hotels. There are good reasons for this as we want to make sure that displaced families live in the best property for them. We are not going to push people into making decisions on where they want to live after such a traumatic event.

If you need help, please call the housing line on **020 7361 3008**.

For those people who were living in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk, key workers are here to help you. They are there to talk to you about particular housing needs, schools, issues with elderly relatives, transport or any advice that you might want.

We understand that, for various reasons, some people might not feel comfortable coming forward to claim the help to which they are entitled. But there's absolutely no need – the Home Office has made it absolutely clear that there will be no immigration consequences in coming forward, so please contact us if you need help.

Housing update

We are doing everything we can to ensure that those who have been affected by the Grenfell Tower fire are offered suitable accommodation within a maximum of three weeks.

So far 385 hotel placements have been made for people living in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell walk. Our priority now is to get everyone who has lost their home rehoused and work is now taking place to identify longer-term accommodation.

We have undertaken 147 housing needs assessments and matched 116 households. Some of these will be in the 68 new build flats as part of the Kensington Road development and will be ready by the end of July 2017.

232 key workers have also been allocated to support those who have been affected by the fire. This includes help to obtain passports and driving licenses, through to psychological support.

For further information, please call the housing line on **020 7361 3008**.

Work underway to replace boiler

Hot water is expected to be restored by 5 July, after the boiler underneath the tower was destroyed in the fire. This will allow people in surrounding roads to return to their homes. Those living in affected properties have been offered accommodation in local hotels.

The recovery process

The first phase will make the building safe and is expected to be completed by the middle of next week. After that, a second phase will begin to ensure the building is completely structurally-sound but this could take several weeks.

Teams are continuing to work on-site and arrangements for monitoring building movement have been in place for a number of days, with no movement recorded.

In the meantime, a tall plain white plywood hoarding is being constructed around the site to provide additional safety and security which is in line with standard practices. The hoarding should be complete by the end of the weekend.

Health update

Public Health England (PHE) has been providing specialist advice on health following the Grenfell Tower fire. Here is their latest health advice and update on air quality, asbestos, waste materials and other environmental concerns.

Air quality assessment:

Daily monitoring is ongoing following the Grenfell Tower fire and this shows no detectable deterioration in air quality. PHE advises that there is currently no wider risk to people's health related to air quality linked with the fire and PHE continues to monitor the situation closely.

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. People who continue to experience symptoms should call NHS 111 for medical advice.

Asbestos:

Asbestos is a term for a group of naturally occurring minerals made of microscopic fibres. Before its dangers to health were known, asbestos was often used in buildings for insulation, flooring and roofing and sprayed on ceilings and walls. It is now banned in the UK. Buildings constructed before the year 2000 may still have asbestos in them.

We know that bound asbestos, contained in building materials such as plaster or fibre board (also known as "asbestos containing material"), was present in Grenfell Tower in textured ceilings and header panels inside airing cupboards.

Asbestos may be destroyed at very high temperatures such as those that would have happened during the fire.

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 measures in place that will prevent any asbestos being released from

the site and regular environmental air monitoring conducted to ensure that both contractors and local residents are not put at any risk.

It is possible that very small amounts of asbestos fibres will have been dispersed within the smoke plume from the fire but would have formed only a small fraction of the smoke and particles released in the fire.

There is little evidence to suggest that asbestos was deposited in the vicinity of Grenfell Tower and any asbestos is likely to have remained within the building structure / inner cordon. Even if small amounts of asbestos containing materials were deposited off site, as the majority of asbestos fibres are held tightly within asbestos containing material, they are not released into the air and this minimises the health risk.

To have any long term health effects from asbestos, a direct exposure by inhaling asbestos fibres would have needed to have taken place over a long period of time. There is evidence to show that breathing in large quantities of asbestos over a long period of time (such as in an occupational setting) mainly affects the lungs and in some cases it can cause a cancer of the lining of the lung called mesothelioma; it can also cause lung cancer.

Work on the remediation of the Grenfell Tower site will take into account the protection of contractors carrying out the work and of the people in the vicinity. Appropriate mitigation measures, such as screens, will be installed and monitoring will be undertaken at the site perimeter during the remediation process to ensure there are no off-site impacts from asbestos or harmful materials.

Financial assistance

As of 9am on 30th June, £1,979,970 has been distributed to affected families. This is made up of a £500 cash payments 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.

112 households have been given the £5,000 payments so far.

Waste materials and debris:

If you have waste material or debris from the fire at your property, please contact the Council on 020 7361 3001 to make arrangements for them to collect it. The majority of debris in surrounding areas consists of charred foam insulation and this material is unlikely to present a risk to people's physical health, however as a precaution, residents are advised not to handle any burnt material. Dust on windowsills or outside areas of homes can be safely removed by damp dusting or wiping with a wet cloth.

Water quality:

Drinking water quality has not been impacted by the fire and tap water is safe to use as normal. Drinking water for the area around Grenfell Tower is supplied by Thames Water and the source of this water supply is not local to Kensington. Water run-off from the Grenfell Tower site would have entered the drainage and sewage system and would be processed as normal, so would not present a risk to physical health.

Air purifiers:

Air purifiers, which are generally used to reduce allergens from pets from the air, are not recommended for use in this situation because larger particles produced during the fire will have already settled and not be present in the air.

Larger dust particles settle quickly onto surfaces and are best removed with a damp cloth.

Locally grown fruit and vegetables:

People with gardens in the local area should continue to use their fruit and vegetables as normal ensuring that they are washed and peeled before cooking or eating.

More advice from PHE can be found on their website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

NHS and your health

NHS organisations across West London have set up physical and mental health support for anyone worried about their health since the Grenfell Tower fire at the Westway Assistance Centre.

Visit your GP

The first port of call for any physical, emotional or mental health needs is your own GP. If you don't have a GP, it's easy to register and you can find a local practice via the NHS Choices website. If you do not have access to the internet, you can call **020 8962 4600**, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

All practices are open and accepting patients and the treatment and care of Grenfell residents is a priority. GP surgeries won't refuse registration or appointments because you don't have proof of address or personal identification at hand. This also applies if you are an asylum seeker, refugee, a homeless patient or an overseas visitor, whether lawfully in the UK or not.

The local NHS support line

If you feel that you need support before or after seeing a GP, you can call the 'Single Point of Access' line which is open 24 hours a day on **0800 0234 650**.

The team is there to help as quickly as they can – they will answer the call in under a minute and if anyone requests a call back, they will call you back within 30 minutes.

Support in the community

There is also a team working in the community to provide physical and mental health support, who can help you with walk-in appointments at the Westway Centre, or can visit you at somewhere more suitable. To find out more, simply call **07712 231 133**.

Frequently asked questions

How long will the Assistance Centre be open?

The Assistance Centre will remain open for the foreseeable future. We're speaking to people who've been directly affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower to find out what support they need, when they need it and where the best place is for them to access it. We can then decide how we deliver the services and support they need.

Are people being 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.

Will victims have to pay for outstanding utility bills?

The Government and utility companies have announced a package of support for Grenfell victims across energy, water and telecommunications. This includes suppliers agreeing to write off outstanding utility bills for victims of the fire, and the support comes on top of the £5 million fund to pay for emergency supplies,

food, clothes and other costs. Further details can be found here.

How can people find their post?

Grenfell Tower's post is being held at Royal Mail's West London Delivery Centre, Unit 20-23, 7 Premier Park Road, London NW10 7NZ (Open from 8am to 2pm Mon to Sat, 9am to 1pm on Sun). There will also be a collection location at Westway Sports Centre Car Park. No ID is required for collection. A free Royal Mail Redirection service is available to those affected for a period of one year. For more information on these services call **01752 387055**.

Where should people call with information about missing people?

We are now in a transition from the casualty bureau to our incident room - if anyone needs to report a missing person or report information please use the new incident room number - **0800 032 4539**.

I've lost my passport in the fire and don't know what to do?

If your passport, British Residence Permits, nationality, birth and marriage certificates or visas have been destroyed as a result of the Grenfell Tower

fire, then help is still available to you. You can meet with an advisor at the Westway Sports and Fitness Centre, Crowthorne Road, W10 6RP or call the 24 hour advice line on 0300 222 0000 to arrange for a call back by a member of the visa and passport team.

Will my eligibility for benefits be affected if I receive the £5,500 fund?

The Department for Work Pensions have said the your income-related benefits won't be affected by payments from the fund. Other benefits such as Personal Independence Payments won't be affected either and any payments from the emergency fund will not be taxed.

When will I get hot water back?

The hot water boiler which provided hot water and heating to Grenfell Tower and local properties was destroyed by the fire. Work has commenced on fitting a new temporary boiler and we are working hard to get hot water running as soon as possible. We are offering any residents affected hotel accommodation until we can fix this.

For all other contacts, please consult our leaflet.