

21<sup>st</sup> August 2017

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower.

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower on 14 June have shocked us all deeply. As the Minister for Housing and Planning, I have heard first-hand the devastating stories from people caught in the fire. My fellow ministers across Government and I are all clear that this should never have happened and must not happen again, which is why we have announced a full public inquiry, led by Sir Martin-Moore-Bick, a highly experienced former judge of the Court of Appeal. Residents' voices must be heard, and we will provide funding for their legal representation to make sure this happens. More information about the Inquiry is available on the Inquiry's website:

[www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk](http://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk)

As the Prime Minister said, the initial response to the tragedy from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) was not good enough. The immediate response to the disaster is being coordinated by the Grenfell Response Team, headed up by John Barradell. He is ably supported by a number of colleagues drawn from London Councils, the wider local government sector including RBKC, the voluntary sector (including the Red Cross), Police, Health and Fire services as well as central government.

The Prime Minister promised that the local authority would make an offer of new temporary housing to all those who have lost their homes as a result of the fire, within three weeks. These are good-quality, fully-furnished homes so that families can move on from emergency accommodation and live – rent-free – in a proper home while permanent accommodation is found. Every household from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk able to engage with a full housing needs assessment and in a position to move has now received an offer of a good quality, suitable, temporary home. All of these properties are either in Kensington and Chelsea or a neighbouring borough.

A new £5 million Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund was made immediately available - and given to the local authority to help, over and above the provision of accommodation, to those who had to flee their homes in the middle of the night leaving all their possessions behind. This money can be used to cover loss of possessions, funerals and emergency supplies.

Each household whose home was destroyed in the fire will receive a guaranteed £5,500 payment from a £5 million discretionary fund announced by the Prime Minister. We are also paying all additional adults over 16 in these households £500 in cash. Funding will be available to meet funeral costs and to top up payments for those households with complex or additional needs. The fund will be kept under review and will increase if necessary.

**Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma\_RDG**

**Please reply to: Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
e: [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) w: [www.aloksharma.co.uk](http://www.aloksharma.co.uk) t: 0118 941 3803**

## **Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West**

The Secretary of State also announced that Government will be giving an additional £1 million to the local consortia of charities, trust and foundations which have done such sterling work so far.

On 26 July, the Secretary of State announced details of the independent Grenfell Recovery Taskforce; this will support RBKC to develop and implement a long term recovery plan following the Grenfell Tower fire, and provide assurance to the Secretary of State that RBKC has the capacity and capability to deliver an effective long term recovery plan for its residents, taking into account their views. The support from other local authorities, as well as voluntary organisations, has been truly inspirational.

Turning to concerns about fire regulations, I would like to reassure you that there are already clear standards that landlords are legally required to meet, whether in the private rented sector or for student housing.

An independent expert panel has been set up to provide advice to the Government on any immediate measures needed to make buildings safe following the Grenfell Tower fire. The panel will be led by Sir Ken Knight, former London Fire Commissioner and former Government Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser. It will consider safety measures, policies, inspection and regulation, taking account of both the Grenfell Tower fire and ongoing fire safety inspections. It will look at any immediate action required to ensure public confidence that everything possible is being done to make all public and private buildings safe as quickly as possible.

Immediately after the Grenfell Tower fire, the government began a testing programme on ACM on high-rise residential buildings, which is one element of a wall cladding system. Following advice from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel, BRE has now started a further programme to test the system of a building in its entirety. Three different types of ACM cladding are being combined with two different types of insulation to test their combustibility when taken together, with six combinations being tested in total.

The landlords for all the affected buildings are taking action to inform tenants and implement the interim safety measures needed. In the meantime, local authorities are contacting fire and rescue services in their area to conduct fire safety inspections of all such tower blocks to inform them on what remedial works might be required.

The Government announced on 28 July that, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, Dame Judith Hackitt will chair an independent review to examine current building regulations and fire safety with a particular focus on high rise residential buildings. It will report jointly to the Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, and the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd.

The Secretary of State also wrote on 22 June and 11 July to update all Members of Parliament on the Grenfell Tower disaster and the action we are taking in response, and he will provide regular updates as further information is released. These updates are available here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/grenfell-tower](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/grenfell-tower)

Furthermore, an explanatory note on safety checks and testing and the wider steps that are being taken to ensure safety in all relevant buildings - published on 30 June - is available via the following weblink:

**Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma\_RDG**

**Please reply to: Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
e: [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) w: [www.aloksharma.co.uk](http://www.aloksharma.co.uk) t: 0118 941 3803**

## **Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-note-on-safety-checks-and-testing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-note-on-safety-checks-and-testing)

We are determined to stand with the victims and wider community and ensure that everything is done to prevent anything like this ever happening again.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

**Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma\_RDG**

**Please reply to: Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
e: [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) w: [www.aloksharma.co.uk](http://www.aloksharma.co.uk) t: 0118 941 3803**