



**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
THE TOWN HALL KENSINGTON W8 7NX**

Tel: 020 7361 2114 email: theleader@rbkc.gov.uk

**Councillor Elizabeth Campbell
Leader of the Council**

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Communities and Local Government Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

7 August 2018

Dear Clive

Thank you for your letter. I would also like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide evidence to your committee. The Grenfell Tower fire was a tragedy of national scale, and in order for both individuals directly affected and the wider community to recover, local and national government will need to work together. Your committee will play an important role in scrutinising that collective effort.

Clearly many of your recommendations are directed specifically at the Government, but nevertheless I wanted to provide some further information regarding points you have raised that directly involve the Council.

1. We are making continued progress with supporting more families to move into their new homes. 109 households from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk have now moved in to permanent accommodation - 20 more than when we met. We will do everything we can to rehouse families as quickly as possible and support them in rebuilding their lives, but we do not think imposing deadlines will help expedite this complex and sensitive process.

There are currently seven households with children from the Tower and the Walk who are still living in commercial hotels - a total of 16 children. All of these households have accepted an offer of permanent accommodation. All the families in hotels have had the opportunity to move into local high quality private rented accommodation whilst they await their permanent home. The legal limit you refer to applies to non-self-contained B&B (hotel) accommodation rather than to temporary accommodation in general. We are of course anxious to ensure that families with children do not spend any longer in any kind of emergency or temporary accommodation than is necessary.

2. We are sensitive to residents' individual needs and have tried to be as flexible as possible in finding them the right permanent home. We will continue to work with people on a case-by-case basis to ensure those needs are met.

3. We have consulted extensively on the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy and, after representation from residents and others, we extended it to cover tenants of Bramley House and Treadgold House, many of whom were similarly affected by the fire. For any households in hotels who are not eligible under the policy and do not wish to return, we are accommodating them wherever we can by accepting a duty and providing them with temporary

accommodation. This includes those who were renting privately on the estate, whom we were asked about at the Committee hearing.

We have been clear that we cannot purchase more properties unless we receive additional funding specifically for this purpose. We are adding the additional properties already acquired for Tower and Walk residents to the Housing Register and these will be available to Wider Grenfell residents. The majority of residents who moved away after the fire have chosen to move back to the estate and many are participating in the refurbishment of Lancaster West and playing a role in its future.

4. We recognise that rebuilding trust is the central challenge we face and that this will take time. I do not, however, accept that the comments you cite fully reflect the work our staff are doing. The Council is putting in place an organisational change programme aimed at strengthening our culture, values and behaviours. We are constantly reviewing our staffing levels, as well as the training that is given to all staff involved. The Taskforce Report from which you quote dates from March and we meet with the Taskforce regularly to update them on our work.

5. We are working closely with the NHS and regularly review all emotional and mental health provision in consultation with residents. Hestia play an important part in that provision but they are one contract amongst many. As those affected move out of hotels into new homes, their specific needs will change and the support we provide will change in turn.

I hope this information is helpful. We look forward to attending the committee again when you think it would be useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
Leader of the Council

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
The Town Hall, Horton Street, London W8 7NX

Cc The Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP