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Our Ref: CDL/1436

Helen Jones MP  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 letter about the Government's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry e-petition 206722.

Publication of the formal Government response to the petition was preceded by a 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017 letter, from the Prime Minister directly to the survivors and the bereaved families, informing them of the decision she had made about the composition of the Inquiry panel and her reasons for that decision.

The Prime Minister also wrote to the Chair of the independent Inquiry, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, communicating her decision and this correspondence was published on gov.uk on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017. A copy is enclosed for ease of reference.

I am grateful to you for raising this issue with me and please find enclosed a revised Government response for the Committee's consideration.

**Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP**



# Petitions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 7614 Email [petitionscommittee@parliament.uk](mailto:petitionscommittee@parliament.uk)

Website [www.parliament.uk/petitions-committee](http://www.parliament.uk/petitions-committee)

Rt Hon David Lidington MP

Cabinet Office

70 Whitehall

Westminster

London SW1A 2AS

10 January 2018

*Dear David,*

**Response to e-petition 206722: "Call on PM to take action to build public trust in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry"**

The Petitions Committee met on 9 January and considered a recent e-petition entitled "Call on PM to take action to build public trust in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry", to which your Department has responded. The Committee does not consider that your Department's response meets the guidelines agreed between the Committee and the Government, and has asked me to write to you.

The response falls below the standards we expect in two important ways.

First, the Committee is disappointed that the response fails to acknowledge the fact that this petition was started by family members and survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire. We expect the Government, in responding to petitions, to treat petitioners with the appropriate sensitivity and compassion. It is regrettable that this has not happened in this case.

Second, it is not entirely clear from the response what the Government's position is. The response begins by saying that the Prime Minister is committed to considering the issue of panel members following confirmation of the assessors appointed to assist the Inquiry. It goes on to say, however, that she considers that the Inquiry panel has the necessary expertise to undertake the inquiry and that additional panel members should not be appointed at this stage.

The Committee would be most grateful for a response which sets out the Government's position more clearly. Please send a revised response which can replace the original on



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the petitions site. In sending this response, it would be helpful if your officials were to make clear what changes have been made to the original response.

*Best Wishes,  
Helen.*

Helen Jones MP

Chair of the Petitions Committee



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

*Dear Sir Martin*

Thank you for your letter of 13 November. I noted with interest the proceedings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's procedural hearing of 11 and 12 December.

As you know, I committed to consider the issue of panel members once you had appointed assessors to assist the Inquiry. Having regard to the assistance that may be provided by those assessors, and the Terms of Reference which it is the Inquiry's role to deliver, I believe that the Inquiry has the necessary expertise to undertake its work. I am also very conscious of the need for the Inquiry to complete its initial report as quickly as reasonably possible. I therefore consider that additional panel members should not be appointed at this stage. In reaching this conclusion, I have had regard to the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

I am pleased that you are taking care in gathering evidence from those most affected by the tragedy, so that they are given a chance to share their experience. I know that you agree with me that it is of paramount importance that the Inquiry provides an opportunity for the bereaved, survivors, and the community to be heard and for lessons to be learnt from their views and experiences. I would encourage you to continue working with the community affected by the fire and to consider a full range of options to foster closer engagement in the future.

I was particularly pleased to hear you propose at last week's hearing the establishment of an advisory panel of those affected by the fire. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has established such a panel, and it is closely involved in the work of that Inquiry, providing advice and guidance to the Chair. Clearly, it is for you, as the Chair of the independent Inquiry, to decide how best to take this forward, in consultation with the Grenfell Tower community. But I believe that such a panel could play a very beneficial role in putting those most affected at the heart of the Inquiry and enabling them to ensure that their views and experiences are heard.

I know that you understand how important it is, particularly for the survivors, the families of the victims and others most affected by the tragedy, that the Inquiry completes its initial report as quickly as reasonably possible. I am very grateful for the work that you and your team have undertaken to date, and look forward to receiving a further update in due course on the Inquiry's progress. I will continue to instruct the Civil Service to provide whatever assistance and resource is needed to support your work.

Yours sincerely  
Randy