

MAYOR OF LONDON

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP

Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 0AA

Date: 12 June 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

It is now seven years since the Grenfell Tower fire. Details of that horrific and traumatic day are seared into our national consciousness. There are still important actions to be taken and vital issues to be addressed, to prevent future tragedies from occurring and to give justice to the 72 people who died. Healing cannot begin until this happens.

Grenfell Inquiry

While it is welcome that a date for publication of the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report has been announced, this is much later than anyone would have expected when it was established in 2017. In turn, this leads to delays to the police investigation and any subsequent prosecutions. This lengthy wait for justice is simply not fair for families – justice delayed is justice denied. It is vital that there are no further delays in the publication of the Inquiry report. It is also vital that the police and Crown Prosecution Service are given all the resources they need to deliver a thorough investigation and prosecutions as quickly as possible.

The London Fire Brigade has implemented in full the relevant recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report. Four recommendations for the Government remain outstanding, relating to evacuation and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). Given 15 of 37 disabled residents tragically died in Grenfell Tower and none had a plan of what to do in an emergency, legislating for PEEPs is the right thing to do.

There are widespread concerns about how the Government will respond to the Phase 2 report recommendations. I repeat the call I have made numerous times for the establishment of a National Oversight Mechanism as championed by the independent charity INQUEST. This would monitor the implementation of all inquiry and inquest recommendations and ensure that lessons are being learned and lives can be saved.

I also repeat my support for Hillsborough Law Now. It is vital that victims of disasters and tragedies are given parity when it comes to legal funding, and also that public bodies, and those doing public facing work are made to tell the truth with a legal duty of candour.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Building Safety

I have contacted the Government over the last year to raise issues about the safety of our built environment, especially with the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete issues and issues with low-rise homes in Barnet with combustible facades. It is clear that the building safety crisis extends beyond cladding on high-rise buildings. When cladding is removed from buildings, there are often fire safety defects discovered underneath which are not covered by the funds. Buildings under 11m in need of remediation due to unsafe cladding are also unprotected by the existing building safety funds. These leaseholders should not have to live in fear and pay to make their homes safe. Funding solutions are urgently needed for these leaseholders. It is currently challenging for social housing landlords to access building safety remediation funds, and this lack of access is undermining the supply of new homes, and I support improving access to these funds for social housing landlords.

Seven years on from Grenfell, we should not be using combustible materials in the external walls of our buildings. The Government's current ban simply does not go far enough, and it needs to be extended to apply to all residential buildings regardless of height. Where it is within my powers to do so, such as through my Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26, I have introduced such a restriction to ensure that Londoners can have more confidence and trust in the safety of their homes.

Social Housing and Tenant Voice

Issues with the construction, maintenance and renovation of Grenfell Tower were not limited to cladding. Equally, there are defects in other properties that were not a factor in the fire at Grenfell. As the case of Awaab Ishak tragically highlighted, there are serious issues with dangerous hazards in our homes including damp and mould. Recent tragic cases where children have fallen from blocks, have also shown the need for all high-rise residential buildings to have permanently fixed restrictors to all windows. While Awaab's Law is a welcome development, a grant funding programme to properly fund refurbishment of existing housing stock to ensure a decent and safe homes standard is sorely needed.

At Grenfell Tower, when tenants raised legitimate concerns about their own safety, they were ignored. The Social Housing Regulation Act is a welcome addition in this space, and it is vital that the Regulator of Social Housing listens to the voices of tenants when conducting their inspections to enforce the new consumer standards.

Memorial

The work of the Grenfell Memorial Commission and its bereaved, survivor and community members is tireless. The Commission has produced a report with 16 recommendations for a suitable memorial for Grenfell. It is important for the Commission to have clarity on funding for the future memorial and a commitment to its maintenance.

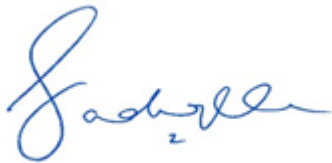
MAYOR OF LONDON

I attended Grenfell Testimony Week earlier this year and the courage and dignity of the families who chose to speak will stay with me for the rest of my life. It was heart breaking to see how families' lives have been affected since the fire and seven years on, the intergenerational trauma is becoming more and more apparent. I am deeply concerned to hear of funding issues to community health groups who have been at the forefront trying to help improve the health, wellbeing and resilience of those affected. It is vital that sustained physical and mental health support is in place for everyone who needs it.

As we approach the 7th anniversary, I think of bereaved family members who have told me that every day is like an anniversary for them as they live with this disaster day in and day out and they simply cannot grieve until there is justice, change and accountability. They do not want to see any other lives destroyed as theirs have been.

I stand in solidarity with all families affected by this tragedy and especially those who lost loved ones.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London