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INQUEST

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Below you will find a proposed Terms of Reference for the [Grenfell Tower Inquiry](#) by INQUEST, to be submitted to the consultation. For a basic translation by Google click 'View this email in your browser' (above) and select the desired language.

For over 35 years INQUEST has provided free, confidential advice about contentious deaths and their investigation to bereaved people, community groups, lawyers and the voluntary sector. This means that we are uniquely placed to advise about the various investigations now taking place into the fire at Grenfell Tower. We are a charity and are independent of Government. We will work to try and ensure the legal processes underway deliver truth, justice and hold those responsible to account.

Proposed Terms of Reference for the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Purpose

To establish and report on the causes of the Grenfell Tower fire, ensure that the necessary changes are made to prevent similar deaths in the future and that shortcomings in the aftermath of the tragedy are not repeated.

Underlying principles

The voices and experiences of those affected must be at the heart of this Inquiry and inform every stage of the process. The Inquiry must:

- A. Recognise and address the pain, trauma and individual and community

- damage caused by the tragedy and the lack of public trust and confidence in the state institutions involved;
- B. At all times ensure that bereaved people, survivors and affected residents have a full and central role in the inquiry process;
 - C. Ensure all those affected are treated with dignity and respect;
 - D. Examine the role played by institutional racism, discrimination and inequality;
 - E. Establish truth and accountability;
 - F. Ensure visibility of its processes and its decision making.

Terms of Reference

The Inquiry should investigate the following:

1. The background leading up to and surrounding the fire:

- a. The provision of social housing and its relevance to Grenfell Tower and the surrounding area;
- b. The design, planning, development, construction, modification and fire safety of the building, including the procurement and tendering processes;
- c. The role and oversight of public bodies, their agents, contractors, inspectors and auditors;
- d. The concerns raised by affected local residents and the extent to which those concerns were adequately addressed;
- e. The action taken by local and central government in response to warnings about safety risks in similar social housing;
- f. The extent to which the human right of residents to live in adequate and safe housing was respected.

2. The fire, its cause/spread/impact, and the immediate emergency response:

- a. The building and its materials;
- b. How the fire started, why it spread so fast and the preventative measures in place – fire alarms, sprinkler systems, fire doors etc.;
- c. The situation faced by those inside the tower and the advice provided to them;
- d. The immediate emergency response;

- e. Allowing the fire to burn out and the impact upon forensic evidence, the respect for the dignity, integrity and identification of victims and the impact on the bereaved and their families;
- f. A record of those who lived in the building before the fire, identifying those who have died, and explaining in the fullest possible terms whether there is justification for any on-going delay in producing a full list of fatalities;
- g. An audit of relevant recommendations and reports emerging from inquiries/inquests, expert reports into fire safety and the response of the relevant authorities to those recommendations and reports.

3. The aftermath of the fire, including:

- a. The adequacy of the support and help made available to bereaved people, survivors and affected residents;
- b. The role that discrimination, inequality or institutional indifference played in the systemic failures in the aftermath and the response at a local and national level;
- c. The support role that voluntary organisations, non-state individuals and agencies were required to play;
- d. Why the recommendations and best practice learning from inquiries into previous disasters and mass fatalities regarding the treatment of survivors, bereaved people and affected community were not implemented.

In relation to each of the above paragraphs the Inquiry should consider the relevant content, compliance, enforcement and adequacy of applicable local and national policies, legislation and practices and regulatory controls.

Process

For the sake of their own dignity and wellbeing and in light of the State's obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, bereaved people, survivors and affected residents should be granted the right to ask questions in public of relevant witnesses, including through their own lawyers.

The Chair should be assisted by a diverse group of panel members and/or

assessors who hold the necessary relevant expertise and the confidence of bereaved people, survivors and affected residents. This must include expertise in working with traumatised people, equality and diversity issues and lived experience of social housing.

Funding

In both phases, bereaved people, survivors and affected local residents must have the benefit of legal representation and automatic non-means tested public funding in order to achieve their full and effective participation.

Method

The Inquiry should report to the Prime Minister as soon as practicable in two phases:

- Phase 1 should address the matters identified at paragraph 2 above, with a view to reporting urgently within 3 months on the immediate measures necessary to prevent any future recurrence of a similar tragic fire and its

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by the Prime Minister where necessary.

- Phase 2 should address the matters identified at paragraphs 1 and 3 above, with a view to reporting within 18 months on the medium and long term measures necessary to prevent any future recurrence of a similar tragic fire and its consequences.



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