



## Grenfell Next of Kin

March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Open letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Rt Hon. Home Secretary Priti Patel

Rt Hon. Minister Robert Jenrick

Dear Prime Minister and Rt Hon Ministers of Her Majesty's Government

As we approach the fourth-year commemoration of our collective National Tragedy, and our devastating personal tragedy, we are jolted from one mangled truth to another. For us, it feels like June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 was but yesterday. We are trapped in a holding pattern of pain and trauma, ordered by the glue of obfuscation, lies, lack of moral courage, scrutiny, and fairness.

Over the last few months, we have heard of the most heinous acts of greed, negligence, incompetence, and profit over the lives of our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, husbands, wives and grandparents. We have heard the shocking revelations about who knew what, who cheated tests, who paid whom, chummy cosiness of unscrutinised negligent behaviour, nepotism, lack of care, critical thinking, an abundance of cowardly organisational cultures and a shocking display of incompetence. These iterations led to our night of catastrophe. The evidence gave us sleepless nights and what echoed was the meaning from these revelations: 'we never considered your kin worthy. For if we did we may have cared enough to make different choices.'

And now we are about to start a new module looking at the role of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. And from evidence we have seen, it is more of the same. Only for this phase it will be even more painful as this Council was left in charge of our welfare and that is a brutality we want to highlight to you as Secretary of State, the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary in this open plea.

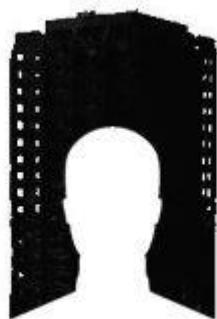
Only a few days ago, this Government announced in Parliament that the Independent Inspector report to examine the culture of Liverpool City Council and a best value inspection had necessitated the 'last resort' action of 'commissioners to run certain aspects at the City Council for a minimum of 3 years'. Surely these measures should be applied to our reality in the Royal Borough where 72 innocent souls were reduced to ashes before the eyes of their family, neighbours, and helpless community? Surely intervention was necessary then and should be more urgent now?

We are not comparing apples with oranges. We are comparing apples with rotten apples.

Our kin, friends, neighbours and community were at windows on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 begging for help and rescue until their last final breath. We are their voice now on earth. We need our Government to intervene just as it did in aspects of Liverpool City Council governance entrusted to independent Commissioners. We and our traumatised community cannot be left in the hands of the same Council at the heart of a major police investigation for manslaughter through gross negligence and corporate manslaughter, and a major public Inquiry where the evidence will reveal a corrupted culture of governance, disinterested, defensive, dismissive, discriminatory, with a wall of obfuscation, lies, perfunctory reports made to uninformed councillors who were kept in the dark. With a lack of scrutiny, but plenty of bullying, intimidation whose goal it was to 'close down', 'close off', or 'shut down' any complaint or warning. We cannot be left at the mercy of the same Council with a system of governance that created the conditions that led to the fire but now as traumatised vulnerable victims? Recovery of the victim should NEVER be put in the hands of the victimiser. As for 'best value inspection', this Borough has had none since the fire, effectively our tragedy being a blank cheque for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea with audit pending until 'until the outcome of the Grenfell Tower enquiries'... which could take many years.

We are asking for an Independent inspector and independent audit as a matter of urgency and Commissioners just as they were in Liverpool City Council for less fatal outcomes.

This is a holy season for all Abrahamic faiths, which we shared in Grenfell Tower and is a feature of the community of North Kensington. It is a period of prayer, reflection, deliverance, resurrection, and forgiveness. A time when we should recognise common values and maintain a sturdy moral compass. We are asking our Government to consider the impact of the last 4 years on us and give us some peace and salvation from this torturous abusive aftermath. Free us from the bondage of the appalling governance of this Council which created the conditions under which the fire could occur, and which has continued in the same vein in the aftermath with no impunity. We are asking at least for the same level of compassion and concern that moved the Minister to act with determination, presumably in the best interests of the residents of Liverpool, and to exercise the same commitment for us in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. 72 people died here in our neighbourhood. For some of us, they were our immediate kin.



**Grenfell Next of Kin**

For and on behalf of Grenfell Next of Kin of 29 of the 72 deceased