



**Department for
Communities and
Local Government**

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Dear George,

12 September, 2017.

Thank you for your email of 7 July, on behalf of your constituents, regarding the fire at Grenfell Tower. We are aware this is part of a Shelter campaign and we hope to give assurances to your constituents on the points raised.

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower on 14 June have shocked us all deeply. My fellow ministers across Government and I have heard devastating stories from people affected by the fire. We are all clear that this should never have happened and must not happen again.

The first priority must be to ensure that people who have been directly affected are cared for and receive the support they need, so that they can begin to rebuild their lives. In practice that means people who lost their homes in the disaster must be rehoused at the earliest possible opportunity. Work continues to find all families of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk new permanent homes as quickly as possible. In accordance with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Grenfell rehousing policy published on 21 July 2017, former residents who lost their homes in the fire will be offered a lifetime tenancy in social housing, in Kensington and Chelsea or a neighbouring borough, as soon as possible, and within one year of the fire. The Government is supporting the Council to deliver this commitment.

You also raised the issue of immigration – on 5 July the Government announced a policy on leave to remain outside the Immigration Rules for residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. Individuals directly affected by the Grenfell Tower fire who contact the Home Office via a specified process will be given 12 months' leave to remain in the UK with full access to relevant support and assistance if they meet the eligibility criteria. The policy is aimed at giving survivors the time they need to deal with the extremely difficult circumstances in which they find themselves and start to rebuild their lives whilst considering their future options, as well as to assist the police and other authorities with their enquiries about the fire.


As you know, on 15 June the Prime Minister announced a public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower. We are very clear that survivors, families of victims and local residents' voices must be heard and we will provide funding for their legal representation to make sure this happens. The Inquiry, led by Sir Martin Moore Bick, consulted on its terms of reference which were announced by the Prime Minister on 15 August and are available in full on Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grenfell-tower-inquiry-terms-of-reference-published>. Sir Martin Moore Bick intends to hold a preliminary hearing on 14

September and to provide the Prime Minister with an initial report dealing with the cause of the fire and means by which it spread by Easter next year.

The immediate priority of the public inquiry is to establish the facts of what happened at Grenfell Tower in order to take the necessary action to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again. Beyond that immediate focus, it is also important that all the wider lessons from both this catastrophe, and the inspections of other buildings around the country that followed it, are identified and learnt.

Finally, I would like to reassure you this government is committed to fixing the broken housing market, and our recent Housing White Paper set out our measures to improve affordability and protections for renters and home purchasers. Affordable housing is a top priority, and we have delivered nearly 333,000 new affordable homes since 2010, including 240,000 affordable homes for rent. Our future plans include making housing more affordable, boosted by a £7.1bn investment in affordable housing by March 2021.

Thank you again for your letter. We are determined to stand with the victims and wider community and ensure that everything is done to prevent anything like this ever happening again.

Kunal *regards,*


ALOK SHARMA MP