

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**

Secretary of State

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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18 November 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Firstly, we would like to thank you for meeting with us and taking the time to listen to our concerns. We found the meeting constructive and an important first step to restoring trust in the government's commitment to a community-led memorial.

We are writing to set out the key areas of our discussion. We would be grateful if you could confirm these points in your response, so we can reassure our communities and continue our vital journey towards a fitting and lasting memorial to those who lost their lives. An early response to this letter would be appreciated as it will enable us to restart the work of the Commission, including our engagement with the community, as soon as possible.

Thank you for opening our meeting by once again apologising for the insensitive article in The Sunday Times, the upset this caused bereaved families in particular, and its impact on the Memorial Commission's work. We have been encouraged by your candid approach to date: during the bereaved and survivor meeting on 13 October; in your letter published in the Sunday Times on 14 November; and in your commitments to us.

In our meeting, we were clear that trust is fragile, and you accepted that following recent events it needs to be rebuilt and then protected going forwards. It is therefore important to us that government publicly recognises and reaffirms the [commitments](#) made to our community by previous ministers, in addition to the further reassurances you provided in our meeting. Importantly, you recognised that the Tower is the final resting place of our loved ones and agreed it is essential that any decisions about its future must command the confidence of those most intimately affected. You reassured us that a decision on the Tower was not being considered at this time and

that a decision would only ever be expedited to keep our community safe. Publishing your response to this letter and these commitments on *gov.uk* will help to start rebuilding trust and protect those commitments in the years ahead.

Lasting change to ensure that no other families suffer in the way that we have and the journey towards a fitting and lasting memorial are essential, but as you recognised these are only part of the overall picture. To be able to begin to heal, we need individuals to be held accountable for the loss of our loved ones. As you have heard directly from families, justice is a critical part of our journey. The experience of the Hillsborough families has shown the importance of protecting all evidence to reduce the chances of a failed trial and potential accountability being lost. It is not sufficient for justice authorities to state they have no further need for the building, or that they are 'confident' that the Tower will not be needed as part of any future trial. We need absolute certainty and clarity on this for us to begin to have confidence.

We emphasised the need for trust in the Tower safety advice and any decisions that are based on it. You stated that you had seen some of the most recent engineering reports and that the advice is clear that the Tower is currently safe. It is incredibly important that there is clarity about this point to avoid continued speculation and distrust. Should the safety advice change, you re-confirmed that government will support the bereaved and survivor families and community to appoint an independent structural engineer of their choosing. This should be in good time and with full access to the Tower, as well as any information that government already holds. This transparency was refreshing and we thank you for reiterating that there should be "nothing to hide".

Finally, thank you for recognising the progress the Commission has made. We remain committed, as individuals and as a Commission, to establishing a permanent memorial to ensure what happened at Grenfell is never forgotten. You acknowledged that the Commission is an independent body with an elected mandate, and that we cannot carry out our work without the trust of our communities, and especially without the support of bereaved families. You helpfully confirmed the importance of ensuring anyone interested in giving their views about the memorial should do so to the Commission and not to or through central government. This is important as we want to speak directly with everyone affected. Our role is to represent their views on the future memorial.

Our approach to working with families and the community is based on sensitivity and respect; these are conversations that cannot and should not be rushed. You agreed that the memorial process and decisions on the Tower need to move step by step and at the pace of the community.

We are all on a journey, and our shared goal is that what happened at Grenfell on the 14 June 2017 is never forgotten by future generations.

Again, we thank you for your openness, honesty, and desire to work with us.

We look forward to your early response.

Kind regards,

Adel Chaoui, Sandra Ruiz, Hassan Hassan, Nabil Choucair, Hanan Wahabi,  
Mohammed Rasoul, Abraham Abebe, Hanan Cherbika, Susan Al-Safadi, Andrea  
Newton

Michael Lockwood and Thelma Stober

**Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission**