

# The Housing Commitment to Residents who lived in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk

The Grenfell Tower fire that occurred on 14 June 2017 was a disaster on an unprecedented scale. We wish to express our sorrow at this tragic event and our thoughts are with you and your family.

Rehousing you to suitable and good quality permanent housing is a major priority for Kensington and Chelsea Council, while continuing to provide wider support and assistance.

The Council has developed a rehousing policy that reflects the Government's commitment to provide a new home in social housing for the former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk within the period of one year. The Grenfell Rehousing Policy is enclosed with this letter.

Both the Council and the Government have announced commitments to former residents of Grenfell Walk and Grenfell Tower. This letter sets out the housing commitment to you, delivered by Kensington and Chelsea Council, supported by Government.

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## Important information about your move to a permanent home

### Former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk

The Council's and the Government's commitments to you

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#### Who are we rehousing to permanent social housing?

The Council is committed to rehousing to permanent social housing anyone who, immediately before the fire, was living at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk as their main home. Therefore, we will be helping:

- Council introductory or secure tenants
- Resident leaseholders
- Subtenants or lodgers of the above
- Tenants of non-resident leaseholders.

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#### What help is available to leaseholders in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk?

There are separate discussions with leaseholders, whether resident or non-resident, to understand the choices and preferences that they may have. The Council supported by the Government will ensure that leaseholders can find another suitable home in the area, if that is their preference.

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#### Your priority for rehousing

The Grenfell Rehousing Policy awards you the very highest priority for rehousing to permanent social housing. This priority is worth 3000 points on the Council's Housing Register. This is higher than any other priority for rehousing.

We are committed to rehousing you to permanent social housing within twelve months. If you have not moved to a permanent home within twelve months, we will work with you to ensure our assessment of your needs is up to date and to try to identify and remove any barriers to your rehousing. Housing advice and support will be available to you throughout the rehousing process.

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July 2017

If you, or your Family Liaison Officer or Key Worker, has any questions about the Grenfell Rehousing Policy or the rehousing process, please call the Grenfell Enquiries Team on **020 7361 3034**.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

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## Who will be offered properties first?

All former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk have endured and continue to endure enormous suffering. After very careful consideration, the Council has decided to use four 'priority bands' to ensure the most vulnerable households are given the opportunity to be rehoused first. In summary, the four bands are:

- **First band priority** will be given to anyone who has been bereaved as a result of the fire.
- **Second band priority** will be given to a household that has a member or members:
  - with a serious physical or mental disability
  - with a serious learning disability
  - who has needs for care and support or carer's needs for support
- **Third band priority** will be given to any household which includes dependent children.
- **Fourth band priority** will be given to all other former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk.

If two or more households have the same priority for rehousing (for example, because they both have a household member who is physically disabled and have dependent children) preference for an available property will be given to the household that has lived in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk the longest.

This means, as social housing is made available, it will be offered first to residents who have been bereaved as a result of the fire. Available housing will then be offered for bidding to other residents who lost their home. The bids will be prioritised for residents with health problems and / or care needs, and then to households with dependent children. Social housing that has not been accepted by the above groups of residents will be offered to all other former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk.

The Council recognises that hotel accommodation is not suitable for former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk on an on-going basis. We are committed to helping residents currently accommodated in hotels to move to suitable housing.

The Council recognises the importance and value of consulting former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk on the rehousing policy. The Council intends the policy to assist the residents in a fair and transparent way.

However, the Council must balance consultation with residents with the need to offer to them vacant social housing as soon as it becomes available.

The Council seeks to find this balance by implementing the policy while keeping it under review during a three month period while we consult with the former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. Therefore, the Council may amend the policy where suggested amendments are shown to benefit this community as a whole.

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## Do you have a choice about where you will live?

You will not be forced to accept an offer of social housing, and you will not be penalised in any way if you do not accept such an offer. You will keep your priority for rehousing until you move to permanent accommodation. You will only move to a property if you are happy to do so.

We understand that you may have particular preferences and needs. We hope that you will be offered a property that is acceptable to you within twelve months, but we will make more offers for as long as it is reasonable and practical to do so.

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## What size of property will you be offered?

You will be offered a property of the same bedroom size as your home in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk.

However, if you were overcrowded in your home in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, you will be offered a larger property that meets your family's needs.

The Council can be flexible about the size of the property offered to you, following discussions with your Family Liaison Officer or Keyworker.

When we look at the number of bedrooms you will need, we will use the same rules used by housing benefit. This means that children of the same sex will be expected to share until the eldest reaches 16, and that boys and girls will be expected to share until the eldest reaches 11.

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## Help with moving and resettlement costs

You will be offered a furnished home that you will be able to live in straight away. This will include furniture, flooring, curtains and white goods provided at no cost to you.

Any costs incurred (e.g. removals) moving from your current accommodation to your new home will be covered. This is both for moves into temporary accommodation and permanent accommodation.

Your 'fresh start' package can help to cover the other costs of setting up your new home.

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## What rent will you be charged for your permanent home?

When you move out of your hotel or emergency accommodation into a new temporary or permanent home, you will not have to pay rent or service charges for a year. This will apply if some of that year is spent in temporary accommodation, or whether you have moved into a permanent home. We will make sure that your core utility bills (for gas, water and electricity) are paid for during this year.

If you held a council tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, the Government has confirmed the rent and service charges for your permanent social housing (after the twelve month period) will be no greater than the amount you were paying at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk. This remains true even if you are rehoused to a larger home.

If you held a council tenancy and you are rehoused to a smaller permanent home you will either pay a social rent or the same level of rent you paid for your home in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, whichever is the lower.

If you did not hold a council tenancy for a flat in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, the rent you will be charged will be at a social rent level.

After one year when rent will start to be charged, those on low incomes will be able to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

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## What types of tenancies are being offered?

There will be a number of different social landlords who will be offering permanent social housing.

If you accept a council property you will be offered a lifetime secure tenancy.

If you accept a housing association property you will be offered a lifetime assured tenancy.

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## Will your family members have the right to succeed to your tenancy?

If you held a council tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk you will continue to have at least the same rights and responsibilities in your new permanent home that you had previously.

If you did not hold a council tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, you will be granted tenancy rights in accordance with your new social landlord's Tenancy Policy.

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## Will you have the right to buy your home?

The Government has stated that residents who held a council tenancy in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk will be offered a new home that will be on at least the same terms as the one they lost.

Therefore, if you held a council tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, and you move to a permanent council property, you will have the right to buy your new permanent home.

If you held a council tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk and you move to a permanent housing association property, the Council will ask your new landlord to grant you the right to buy.

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## What happens if you move again in the future?

These housing commitments last for as long as you live in the permanent tenancy.

If you choose to move at some point in the future (for example, through a mutual exchange or a transfer) your rent in your new home will be set according to the policy of your new landlord. This means you may pay more rent if you move to a new home in the future.

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## Will the financial help you have received affect your benefits or right to legal aid?

All households who used to live in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk should have received a £5000 payment from the Government, plus £500 for each household member aged 16 or over.

All households will also receive a £10,000 Fresh Start grant from the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation and administered by the Rugby Portobello Trust.

The Government has stated that these grant payments will not affect any assessment for welfare benefits nor any assessment for legal aid.

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## What happens next

As and when permanent social housing is made available, it will be advertised on a special private online system which is accessible only by former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. The adverts will give you important information about the available property, such as its size, location, social landlord, floor level, and suitability for people with mobility problems.

You will be able to bid for advertised properties if, having seen the advert, you might be interested in living there. If you think you will have problems bidding for the properties on the private online system, we will be able to help you with this. The Council wants to make sure that no-one misses out on the chance of registering their interest in a suitable new home.

The Council will use the priority bands, explained above, to select who will be offered the property.

We will contact you very shortly with further information on how the private online system and bidding system works. We will also let you know what the next steps are, and the support that will be available to help you move to a new permanent home.

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## Temporary accommodation before your move to a permanent home

We do not expect anyone to have to stay in hotels for longer than needed and we are committed to supporting you to move out of your hotel or emergency accommodation as soon as possible.

In the meantime, you have been offered a temporary home that you can live in until suitable permanent accommodation is available. We understand that you may have particular preferences and needs and so if you reject the first offer of either temporary or permanent housing, we will make more offers for as long as it is reasonable and practical to do so.

Temporary homes offered to you will be fully furnished, big enough for each family, and will not be in a high rise building.

Any offer of temporary housing, whether this is an offer made through the Council or whether these are arrangements you have made yourself, will not affect the offer of a permanent home.