Press release: Further environmental checks for Grenfell site

- Additional environmental checks to reassure survivors and local residents following Grenfell Tower fire
- Past land-use assessment underway and soil testing programme proposed
- Air quality testing to date indicates that the risk to public health is very low
- Up to £50 million already committed by the NHS to fund long-term health services for survivors and local residents

Additional environmental checks are to be carried out in and around the Grenfell Tower site to provide extra reassurance to survivors and local residents.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, NHS England, Public Health England and the Environment Agency have joined forces to ensure the bereaved, survivors and wider North Kensington community receive health assurances and support.

In addition to up to £50 million committed by NHS England to carry out a 5-year health monitoring programme, as well as ongoing air quality monitoring at the site, the plans involve:

- further environmental sampling of the site, including comprehensive soil analysis to check for any signs of contamination
- water analysis will take place if required
- wider health monitoring and treatment options to reassure those affected

Secretary of State for Communities, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

> We take the wellbeing of Grenfell Tower survivors and local residents extremely seriously and it’s essential they have peace of mind regarding their health.
>
> The government is asking leading experts from the Environment Agency to make sure soil surveying around the tower is comprehensive and that analysis will be provided to the public.
>
> We recognise the concerns the community have raised with us, and we are clear that we will do whatever it takes to give them the reassurance they need and deserve.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Dr Patrick Vallance added:

> I fully support the decision of the Secretary of State to commission further environmental analysis and stand ready to offer

> scientific advice.

Public Health England's Regional Director for London, Dr Yvonne Doyle, said:

> Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have been working very closely with local health partners and the Grenfell community to ensure that they have access to best available public health evidence and advice.
>
> It is not unusual to find areas of contamination in cities which is often associated with historic land use or heavy traffic. It is generally considered to be very low risk to health because people would need to be exposed to the soil over long periods of time.
>
> We will continue to speak to local people and community groups to ensure they have all of the information they need about health.

The immediate risk to health in the aftermath of the fire was from potentially contaminated air and independent air quality monitoring was commissioned by Public Health England, which has shown the risk to public health to be consistently low.

Soil testing will determine whether there are contaminants identified beyond those which we would expect to be present in cities like London.

Many parts of the land that will be investigated are known to be former industrial sites where contamination can already exist, but the examinations that will be carried out will determine if remediation is required.

Contaminated land is generally considered to be very low risk to health, as any impact would be the result of exposure over a long period.

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, health services have specifically targeted survivors, bereaved, neighbouring residents and the wider North Kensington community. This has included extended appointments and health checks, including physical and mental health, and enhanced case management. NHS England has also delivered ongoing respiratory fast track provision and community engagement on health and wellbeing to identify any unmet needs.

Advice to the public remains unchanged. Local residents who are concerned about their health should contact their GP. Further information is available on the North Kensington Health Response website.

The air quality around the Grenfell Tower will continue to be monitored daily and the findings published weekly by Public Health England. See results and general health advice.

News story: Thorp: One of the largest construction projects of the eighties

The Thorp plant was one of the largest construction projects of its day

Thorp was one of the largest construction projects of its day, ranking alongside the Channel Tunnel and Disneyland Paris in sheer scale and ambition.

Thousands of workers descended onto Cumbria to help tackle some of the most unique engineering challenges in the world.

Thorp: The largest construction project of the eighties

At a third of a mile long, the cabling inside it could stretch from Whitehaven to Warsaw and parts of it were built knowing people would never be able to go back to those areas while it was operating as a reprocessing plant.

Thorp changed communities, changed Sellafield and changed the face of the world’s nuclear industry.

Archive clip on Thorp construction

Published 26 October 2018

News story: DASA hackathons open for registration


Black background with different coloured data

The first hackathon will focus on real-world incident response and take place on 26-27 November 2018.

The second will be a defence logistics hackathon, taking place on 29-30 November 2018.

For these events, we are looking to bring together the best from academia, industry and government in the defence and security arena.

Brief details about the hackathons are as follows:

Real-World Incident Response Hackathon

This Hackathon will focus on improving the way we investigate incidents through the application of Multimedia Analysis and Artificial Intelligence.

Further details are available on the Real-World Incident Hackathon page.

Defence Logistics Hackathon

This hackathon will focus on accelerating Logistics Decision Support through exploiting Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) capabilities.

Further details are available on the Defence Logistics Hackathon page.

Published 26 October 2018

News story: DASA Real-World Incident Hackathon

The DASA Real-World Incident Hackathon will take place on 26-27 November in Central London.

This hackathon will focus on improving the way we investigate incidents through the application of Multimedia Analysis and Artificial Intelligence.

Participants will be asked to process large amounts of real-world incident multimedia data and rapidly identify key information for on-site experts – people, places, events, in fact anything that may assist an investigations team.

We're interested in how entities relate to each other, the event timeline and narrative, and near-term predictions. Data will mostly take the form of video which will be varied in quality, source, and format. Some will be live-streamed during the event.

This is a unique opportunity for participants to demonstrate their ability to extract useful information and insights from large multimedia data sources which would help teams to respond to incidents more quickly and effectively. We expect participants to exploit cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence techniques, including Machine Vision, to achieve the best results.

At the end of the second day a final prize presentation will take place.

To register for the event, please visit the Eventbrite page.

If you have any questions then please email accelerator@dstl.gov.uk with the title Real-World Incident hackathon in the subject line.

News story: DASA Defence Logistics Hackathon

The Defence Logistics hackathon will be taking place on 29-30 November 2018 in Central London.

We are looking to bring together the best from academia, industry and government in the defence and security arena.

This hackathon will focus on accelerating Logistics Decision Support through exploiting Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) capabilities.

The intent of this hackathon is to demonstrate the ability to analyse and share structured and unstructured multi-source data; maintaining its classification and permission based access rules at machine speed. Data sets from the C130J Hercules platform will be provided to enable the development and testing of potential sharing solutions. The longer-term aim will be the development of predictive maintenance tools, and provides evidence based recommendations to optimise inventory checks and extend the life of components.

This event will require programmers and coders at the leading edge of current technology to develop an AI/ML capability that can be accessed, interrogated and translated to provide better informed and timely decision support across national and multinational domains.

This event will provide a great opportunity to demonstrate your ability to solve current Defence Logistic challenges, as well as the opportunity to network with senior decision makers and end users within this area. Following the event you will be invited to submit a fully costed proposal which could lead to securing funding to further develop your product.

To register for the event, please visit the Eventbrite page.

If you have any questions then please email accelerator@dstl.gov.uk with the title Defence Logistics hackathon in the subject line.