

Environmental checks around Grenfell Tower

Grenfell – Stage 1 environmental checks

Environmental checks in and around the Grenfell Tower site were announced last October and have been carried out over the spring and summer of 2019.

This is a two-stage process and the laboratory analysis of Stage 1 by the independent specialist AECOM is now complete and the preliminary data is now available. This information will let us know if the soil has been contaminated by the Grenfell Tower fire and whether there are any health risks as a result.

The initial findings are:

- At this point, the levels of substances found in samples are typical of those generally found in London and other urban areas across England.
- At the moment there is nothing to suggest anyone needs to take any immediate action or that we need to change the investigation strategy or update the existing health advice from Public Health England.
- Substances tested for in the soil do not appear to be present at high enough concentrations to lead to what is legally defined as a 'significant possibility of significant harm'.
- Some levels of substances were above what are known as 'soil screening levels'. This does not mean they necessarily pose a risk to health – the levels are similar to those found in other urban areas. If this were purely a legal and regulation matter, findings at these levels would not require any action, but we intend to continue to investigate them.
- Stage 2, which involves further sampling, will proceed as planned so we can be more certain of the findings.

There is more work we need to do to analyse the data and the full report is being worked on. This will be published in September, but we wanted to share any findings as early as possible, which is why we are updating the community today.

Stage 1 testing

In total, AECOM took 93 samples from 20 areas within a 1km radius of the Tower and within the Grenfell Tower site cordon itself.

The sampling sites were decided with help from the community who identified where debris had been found and combined with scientific data from the Met Office about the smoke plume resulting from the fire.

The aim of Stage 1 was to collect background information including through research, a site walkover and exploratory samples from selected publicly accessible areas. The results from Stage 1 will help us to agree where to test and what to test for in the next stage.

Stage 2 will involve more detailed sampling and analysis leading to a report which will provide conclusions and recommendations.

We expect to receive the full Stage 1 report, including the design for Stage 2, from AECOM in September. This will be published in full online and the community will be updated on the findings.

Health advice

The results of this stage did not show levels requiring any action or any change to the investigation strategy and means our health advice to the public remains the same. Until we have full results of all the testing, we should continue to take a precautionary approach.

If any members of the community around Grenfell are concerned about their health, they can contact their GP and ask about the enhanced health check available to them.

These health checks are designed to find the early signs of health problems or underlying health conditions that might have been exacerbated by the fire itself. Their GP will either do these or refer them to another GP practice which does. They are also available at various clinics in North Kensington via our community provider Enhance whom you can call on 020 3434 2500.

Further health information and advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-advice-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>

Independent oversight of the testing

These results are being independently reviewed by the Suitably Qualified Person (SQP), Dr Paul Nathanail of Land Quality Management Ltd, who is checking the specialists' work at each stage.

The testing process has been overseen by an independent group of scientific experts – the Science Advisory Group (SAG). They have released the following statement on the results:

Following a review of technical documents and a meeting with AECOM and the SQP, the SAG has concluded that the programme of environmental checks for Stage 1 was scientifically rigorous and that the SAG has confidence in the measurement data.

Next steps

Stage 2 testing will continue as planned.

We appreciate the community's continued involvement and help as this work continues and we will communicate further details about the next stage of testing as soon as we can. As before, any decisions about the next stage of testing will be taken with the involvement of the community.

Further information about the soil and environmental checks process can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/eu-cas.ms/guidance/soil-and-environmental-checks>