

Press release: New taskforce to support recovery from Grenfell fire disaster

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (26 July 2017) announced [details of the independent Grenfell Recovery Taskforce](#) that will support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) to develop and implement a long term recovery plan following the Grenfell Tower fire.

The Taskforce will provide assurance to the Secretary of State that RBKC has the capacity and capability to deliver an effective long term recovery plan for its residents taking into account their views. The Taskforce members will be:

- Aftab Chughtai, Chair of the West Midlands Police Independent Advisory Group
- Javed Khan, Chief Executive of Barnardo's
- Jane Scott, Leader of Wiltshire council
- Chris Wood, partner at Altair housing consultancy, and former director of housing for 3 London boroughs

The Taskforce members have a wealth of experience in local government, housing and the voluntary sector as well as a track record of effectively engaging local communities in key projects. They will support RBKC in helping them rise to the challenge of delivering their recovery plans, working and re-establishing trust with the local community.

Initially the Taskforce has been asked to:

- look at whether RBKC has the proper arrangements in place to engage with the local community on their long-term recovery plans
- ensure that all the immediate housing needs resulting from the fires are fully and promptly addressed by RBKC
- support the council to significantly improve housing management including addressing weaknesses in the tenant management organisation
- make sure the council develops, in partnership with the local community, a plan for the Grenfell Tower site; and ensure that the right leadership and governance arrangements are in place across the council

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I am determined that everything possible is done to support the local community following the disaster. This includes ensuring an effective recovery plan is developed that takes into account the views of the local community. The new Taskforce has extensive experience in this area and will provide the council with the expertise needed to deliver this important work.

Over the next few months there needs to be a managed transition from the Grenfell Response Team, also known as Gold Command, who are dealing with the immediate response, to a council we are confident can deliver the longer term recovery for the community.

The government also believes the remit and composition of the Taskforce might need to develop in response to their assurance reports, and the Secretary of State will take advice from the Taskforce on this.

The Taskforce will be based alongside RBKC in the offices in Kensington and supported by a secretariat in DCLG. Over the next few weeks the Taskforce will meet and agree their priorities. The Secretary of State has asked for an initial report by end of October 2017.

The Taskforce will, over the summer scrutinise RBKC plans to make sure that they are robust and that they have the right resources in place to deal with the challenge of recovery.

The Taskforce will be in place for as long as the Secretary of State considers necessary.

Aftab Chughtai

Aftab Chughtai is chair of the West Midlands Police Independent Advisory Group. Aftab also runs a department store in East Birmingham. He received an MBE honours in this year's New Year honours list, awarded in recognition of his services to business and community relations in Birmingham.

Javed Khan

Javed Khan is Chief Executive of Barnardo's which runs 1000 services in local communities and is the fifth largest charity in the UK. As a British Pakistani, he is the first non-white CEO in Barnardo's 150 year history.

Previously he was CEO at Victim Support and before that Executive Director to the London Serious Youth Violence Board in the Government Office for London. In 2007 he was London Borough of Harrow's Director of Community and Cultural Services and Director of Education before that. Previously Javed was Assistant Director of Education in Birmingham. He started his career as a Teacher in the West Midlands, is a member of the Advisory Board for the Children's Commissioner for England and a lay member on a London Clinical Commissioning Group.

Jane Scott OBE

Jane Scott has been Conservative Leader of Wiltshire council since its formation as a unitary council in 2009. As the seventh largest unitary council in the country, Jane has led a major programme of transformation that has focused on building strong communities, protecting those who are most vulnerable and growing the local economy. The council is recognised nationally for its approach to working with communities across Wiltshire; empowering local decision making and service delivery.

Jane is chair of the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Military and Community Integration Programme, the Wiltshire Public Services Board and is a member of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership. Jane was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2010 New Year Honours for services to local government. In August 2015, it was announced that Jane was to be created a life peer, giving her a seat in the House of Lords.

Chris Wood

Chris Wood is a partner at Altair housing consultancy. Chris has worked with numerous local authorities and a broad range of public and private sector housing organisations on strategic regeneration planning, asset management and capital programme delivery. Chris has been Director of Housing in 3 London boroughs and CEO of the London Borough of Newham, leading the borough's contribution to the 2012 Olympic Games and the development of Stratford City. He was the architect of London's largest estate-based regeneration scheme at Canning Town.

Government support for survivors

The government is committed to doing everything possible to support survivors and the local community following the disaster. This includes providing an emergency £5 million Discretionary Fund for households that lost their homes and working with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to find permanent homes for all these families.

See [full details of the government and wider support available](#).