



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# Grenfell Notting Dale resident meeting: UKHSA response

28 June 2023

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1. What were UKHSA asked to test for and when did monitoring start?
2. Need for clarity on what is being monitored and what else could you monitor
3. Is there air quality data between 2017 to 2023 and in this period what was identified as high?

The air quality in the area surrounding Grenfell Tower has been assessed and monitored since the start of the fire on 14 June 2017, firstly by Public Health England (PHE), and then by UKHSA when it took over PHE's remit on 1 April 2021.

Initial risk assessments, using data from the Met Office, carried out in conjunction with partner agencies, including the Environmental Agency, London Fire Brigade, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Environmental Health Department, focused on the smoke plume from the fire which rose upwards rapidly and was carried in a northerly direction by the wind. This meant that potential impact on local air quality from the smoke was considered to be low.

Assessment of data from the London Air Quality Monitoring network was used to confirm the initial risk assessment that levels of particulate matter were low, and remained so over the next 10 days. A small elevation in particulate matter concentration was observed at two monitoring stations to the north west on the morning on 14 June 2017, these peaks could have been due to the smoke plume but the elevated levels occurred for less than an hour.<sup>1</sup>

Data in the next table (Table 1) is taken from the North Kensington monitoring station in the grounds of Sion Manning School, St. Charles' Square, North Kensington, less than 1km north of Grenfell Tower. Further information about this site is available on the [LondonAir](#) and [Defra UK-Air](#) websites.

The table also includes the London Mean dataset, produced by King's College London and based on mean measurements across the London Air Quality Network.

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<sup>1</sup> [London Air Quality Network on Grenfell Tower Fire](#)

**Table 1. Monitoring data from North Kensington LAQN site from 12 June to 23 June 2017**

Date	24 hour mean: North Kensington PM <sub>10</sub> µg/m <sup>3</sup>	24 hour mean: London mean PM <sub>10</sub> µg/m <sup>3</sup>	60 minute maximum: North Kensington PM <sub>10</sub> µg/m <sup>3</sup>	60 minute maximum: London mean PM <sub>10</sub> µg/m <sup>3</sup>
Mon 12/06/17	17	17	20	20
Tue 13/06/17	21	21	28	25
Wed 14/06/17	23	25	33	32
Thu 15/06/17	26	25	42	36
Fri 16/06/17	21	22	27	28
Sat 17/06/17	23	23	28	26
Sun 18/06/17	25	22	31	25
Mon 19/06/17	32	32	40	40
Tue 20/06/17	39	38	68	59
Wed 21/06/17	34	37	44	49
Thu 22/06/17	29	28	41	40
Fri 23/06/17	17	18	20	24

Measured particulate matter concentrations are compared against the [Daily Air Quality Index](#): a colour and numbered banding system that gives information on the level of air pollution and associated health advice. The index is numbered from 1 to 10 and is divided into 4 bands, low (1) to very high (10), as illustrated below and its application is shown in Table 1.

### Index bands

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low			Moderate			High			Very high

Following the fire, multiple agencies acknowledged that residents in the area remained concerned about air quality and debris deposited in the area. Therefore, to supplement the initial risk assessments, plume modelling and the information available from the London Air Quality Monitoring Network, PHE was requested to organise air quality monitoring for particulate matter in close proximity to Grenfell Tower, which started on 24 June 2017. Monitoring of asbestos fibres commenced on 30 June 2017; and monitoring on dioxins, furans and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were implemented on 3 July 2017.

It is important to note that fires are not the only source of these contaminants; there are other sources in the environment, for example traffic and industrial sources. However, it is also important to ensure that the fire had not resulted in significantly higher levels of these chemicals in the local area, and to also ensure that as work progresses on the site, this did not result in notably elevated levels of these contaminants.

The results of the monitoring have been published weekly online.<sup>2</sup> The [results to date](#) show that the air quality around the tower has been similar to the rest of London with no significant elevation detected.

During summer 2018, activity on the site was reduced and the tower was fully covered. Therefore, the strategy was changed to stop monitoring for dioxins and PAH as these chemicals are no longer likely to be released and no significant elevations were detected for these chemicals after 12 months of monitoring.

The air quality monitoring strategy is periodically reviewed based on activities around the site, and we are in regular dialogue with the site management team to ensure the strategy is appropriate. Agency partners will be consulted if the strategy is to be changed.

#### 4. What protection will be given to residents during tower deconstruction?

The Grenfell Tower site is currently managed by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and would be best placed to answer questions about the future of the tower.

Because of this, we have reached out to DLUHC for their response, and they confirm that a decision on the future of Grenfell Tower has not yet been taken, and the government will not make a decision about the future of the tower without having further conversations with bereaved families, survivors and local residents.

DLUHC remain committed to making sure that all work carried out at the site is considerate and minimises disruption for those living, studying and working nearby.

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<sup>2</sup> [Environmental monitoring following the Grenfell Tower fire](#)

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If you have any questions about the Grenfell Tower site, or would like to talk to DLUHC, please get in touch via:

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