

Answers from Public Health England to questions from Central West London Healthwatch to Kensington and Chelsea Council and West London Clinical Commissioning Group

28th July 2017

Air quality and environmental concerns

Many concerns have been raised around the air quality and breathing difficulties.

- Local people have reported feeling dizzy, breathless, having nose bleeds, chest pains and unable to sleep. Has information been provided explaining these symptoms and what to do?
- People are being advised to see their GP if they are experiencing symptoms however GPs do not appear to have the right information. What information is being provided to GPs?

Public Health England has written to all GPs in Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea about levels of particulate pollutants in the air around Grenfell Tower which remain at low levels and will not have caused any respiratory problems. There is a referral system available for GPs to refer people with respiratory illness to the West London Community Respiratory Service.

- There is still debris in surrounding gardens and on balconies – how will that be dealt with and when?

If people have waste material or debris from the fire at their property, they can contact Kensington and Chelsea Council on 020 7361 3001 to make arrangements to collect it.

- How are Public Health keeping people informed about what substances they are monitoring in the air, how they are doing this and what their findings are in a way that is easy for people to understand?
- Where can people go for more information if they have concerns about the air quality?

Following discussions with local residents, Public Health England (PHE) publishes weekly reports containing the air quality data from the monitoring locations around the site. The reports contain data tables, graphs and photographs of where the equipment is based, alongside an explanation of the data. These reports along with further public health advice can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-advice-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>. Regular updates are being sent to residents via the printed newsletters and updates via social media.

4th August 2017

Air quality and environmental concerns

- What is the potential risk to the environment and local area following the fire?

The risk to people's health from air pollution around the Grenfell Tower site continues to be low and no asbestos has been detected.

PHE advises that there is currently no wider risk to people's health related to air quality or to the wider environment following the fire, however PHE continues to monitor the situation closely.

- During the hot weather the smell from the tower was overwhelming. Have any measures been put in place to ensure that this is not the case again during another warm spell?

The human nose is very sensitive to odours and often detects odorous chemicals at concentrations in air which pose no risk to health, however odours can be unpleasant and affect wellbeing. Many substances that are perceived as odorous are usually present at levels below which there is a direct toxicological effect. Odours can cause a nuisance to the population possibly leading to stress and anxiety. Some people may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches or dizziness as a reaction to odours even when the substances that cause those smells are themselves not harmful to health.

25th August 2017

Respiratory issues and air quality

- The ash and material deposited from the tower is causing the drains around people flats to be blocked. Drains are being blocked by the ash and material from the tower, they are starting to smell in the warm weather. What is being done to address this?

Please see previous answer about odours. RBKC should address the question of what is being done to clear blocked drains.