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Second Witness Statement of Roger Hargreaves

On behalf of: Cabinet Office

Exhibits: 'RH/1 – RH/4'

Date: 28 June 2022

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF ROGER HARGREAVES

I, Roger Hargreaves, of 70 Whitehall, Westminster, London, SW1A 2AS, **WILL SAY** as follows:

1. I am a Senior Civil Servant and the current Director of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (“CCS”) in the Cabinet Office. I am authorised by the Minister for the Cabinet Office to make this statement.
2. Except where otherwise stated, the facts and matters set out in this witness statement are within my own knowledge and are true. Otherwise the contents are based on the documentation that I have reviewed for the purposes of preparing this witness statements, and where that is so I have identified the sources of the information upon which my evidence is based.

Background

3. I make this second witness statement in response to a ‘Request for Evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006’ dated 30 May 2022 (the “Rule 9 Request”) and addressed to Katharine Hammond. Ms Hammond is no longer Director of the CCS and, as envisaged by the Inquiry, I am better placed to deal with questions 9-16 posed by the Rule 9 Request which relate to the National Resilience Project conducted after the fire. For ease of reference, I have reproduced below the questions in the Rule 9 Request to which each of my

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answers relate. I would be happy to clarify or amplify the points addressed in this statement, should the Inquiry wish me to do so.

QUESTION 9: In evidence, Ms Hammond made reference to the National Resilience Project which took place in September and October 2017 and consisted of four workstreams.

[KH/57 {CAB00007080}] Paragraph 3 lists three key recommendations. The first is: “We are proposing to build on the existing- fantastic - capability in ResilienceDirect to solve a number of important practical issues in supporting victims in crisis, around which people often perceive barriers which do not exist, such as restrictions on data sharing.”

- a. At paragraph 82 of your third statement {CAB00014816/30}, draft guidance was said to have been prepared as an update to the ‘Data Protection and Sharing – Guidance for Emergency Planners and Responders’ guidance produced in 2007 and “currently out for consultation amongst the responder community on ResilienceDirect.” Has this guidance now been published?
4. In addition to the 2007 guidance referred to in the question, Chapter 3 of *Emergency Preparedness* addresses information sharing. It is entitled “Formal information Sharing Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 {CAB00004536}.
5. As stated in paragraph 82 of Katharine Hammond’s third statement, CCS developed revised guidance in 2019. This was shared with Category 1 and 2 responders on ResilienceDirect for consultation. Due to intervening events, not least the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the revised guidance remains available on ResilienceDirect but has not been finalised and has not been published.
6. The Information Commissioner published an updated Data Sharing Code of Practice in December 2020. A copy is annexed to this statement as **Exhibit RH/1 {New Document}**. It includes extensive advice as to the circumstances in which data may be shared between different bodies, including in the context of an emergency. There is a chapter entitled “data sharing in an urgent situation or in an emergency”, but there is relevant material throughout the code of practice.

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7. Furthermore, on 10 September 2021, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport issued a consultation entitled "Data: a new direction", in which it sought views on potential changes to the UK's data protection regime, which includes measures on the sharing of personal data. The outcome of that consultation, and the wider process of reform, is still pending.

8. In light of these developments, CCS has put the review of its own guidance on hold. We currently encourage responders to use the ICO guidance (as the experts in data sharing) which is live and relevant. We will consider the need for any further guidance from CCS once the legislative reform is complete.

QUESTION 10: At paragraph 83 of your third statement {CAB00014816/31} you state that "much of the work on ERIC (Emergency Response in Crisis) has been done...however, the system has yet to become operational due to difficulties in finding a suitable departmental owner for the system within Whitehall." Has the system now become operational?

9. As explained in paragraph 83 of Katharine Hammond's third statement, ERIC was developed by Thames Valley Police. It was a proof of concept and has not been continued due to lack of ongoing funding or sponsorship.

QUESTION 11: {CAB00007081} - Workstream 1 - Victims Support Report

In paragraph 23, page 7 of the report one recommendation is: "The agenda for any initial COBR should consider whether victims support is likely to be or become an issue for central government and if so include a short discussion. This should be accompanied by a victims slide within the CRIP. This would allow consideration to be given to both victim's needs and also the resources required to support central government involvement or monitoring." Can you provide an illustration of how this is intended to work in practice, for example a proforma of a 'victims slide'?

10. The contents of a COBR agenda will be decided in light of the specific circumstances at the time, however, support to both responders and those affected by the emergency is key to discussions. It is well established custom and practice for welfare issues to be considered in the initial stages of the

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response to any emergency where there may be a need for the cross-Whitehall coordination system to be engaged.

11. There is no pro forma "victim support" slide for CRIPs nor are there are proforma slides for any other section of the CRIP. A CRIP is simply a set of slides that sets out information about an emergency that may be relevant to the central government departments involved in response and recovery. The information contained in the CRIP necessarily varies dramatically from emergency to emergency. The type of support that victims might require in the aftermath of an emergency will also vary significantly depending on the type of emergency. It is therefore not practicable to produce a proforma slide, beyond a very basic generic one setting out the font and general aesthetic style of the CRIP.
12. In the event that there is likely to be a need for central government involvement in victim support following an emergency, then an appropriate item will be added to the agenda of the meeting. This will in turn result in an appropriate section being added to the minutes and, should it be considered that there is a need for central government involvement, appropriate actions will be added to the action tracker. If there is a need for central government involvement in the provision of victim support, it is likely that there would be a need for information to be included in the CRIP. The information that would be included would depend on the nature of the emergency.

QUESTION 12: {CAB00007079} - Workstream 2 - Assurance and improvement of local resilience capabilities

In paragraph 7 of your third statement {CAB00014816/5} you say that the Resilience Capabilities Survey ('RCS') was launched in 2007 and conducted biennially by CCS up until 2017. Category 1 and 2 responders were asked to provide a self-assessment; this was used by local responders and government to create a picture of resilience capability at the local level.

- a. **Is it correct that the 2014 RCS Survey {CAB00000094} was the latest survey conducted before 2017?**

13. Yes, this is correct.

- b. **Were you concerned that 29% of Cat 1 and 2 Responders did not respond at all {CAB00000094/3}?**

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14. As Katharine Hammond explained in paragraph 9 of her third statement **{CAB00014816/5}**, the RCS was not intended be a tool for auditing individual responder agencies. It was not compulsory. The responses to the survey were processed and aggregated by a third party, and CCS did not obtain the underlying, granular data. It only received a High Level Report based on aggregated data. CCS was therefore not examining the responses of individual category 1 and category 2 responders. The National Capability Survey data along with insight from Resilience and Emergencies Directorate Resilience Advisors, lessons identified, self-assessment and peer reviews helped CCS develop a general sense of local capability.

c. Did you monitor whether Local Authorities, in particular, responded?

15. CCS did not receive local responders' responses at all. They were sent to and processed by a third party, as explained in paragraph 9 of Katharine Hammond's third statement **{CAB00014816/5}**. Furthermore, the survey was voluntary and not conducted for the purposes of auditing individual responder agencies.

d. What action did CCS take as a consequence of the Survey results?

16. Alongside other evidence, the 2014 RCS results fed into the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, which made a commitment "to develop a new set of resilience standards". This resulted in the eventual development of the National Resilience Standards, as described in paragraphs 40 to 43 of the first statement of Robert MacFarlane **{CAB00014791/12}**.

QUESTION 13: In paragraph 8 of your third statement {CAB00014816/5}, you state that "no subsequent iteration of the RCS has taken place since 2017... CCS will undertake a short consultation process with both government departments and local responders to identify where the survey might be improved upon, building on lessons learned from the Grenfell Tower Fire and other events as appropriate."

a. Why was the RCS not continued with?

b. What has been used instead?

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- c. Has this consultation process now taken place?
- d. What progress has been made in this respect, especially in light of the recommendations of the workstream report?

17. The RCS was discontinued as it was an outdated process which was not considered good value for money. Instead, the Government is continuing to consider how best to ensure that local responders comply with their obligations, as described below, in response to question 14.

QUESTION 14: In paragraph 21 of the workstream report, a proposal is made that a Local Resilience Assurance Team is created for the purposes of coordinating London Resilience Forum (“LRF”) assurance plans, facilitating honest self assessment, critically evaluating self assessments, facilitating peer review, enabling peer to peer sharing of lessons and good practice, promoting learning and development and working directly with LRFs to drive improvement against resilience standards. Has the Local Resilience Assurance Team now been established? If not, why not?

18. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposal in paragraph 21 of Workstream 2 was that the Local Resilience Assurance Team (LRAT) would be responsible for coordinating the assurance plans of all 38 Local Resilience Forums. It was not to be limited to working with the London Resilience Forum.

19. The proposed LRAT was not included as a recommendation in the final report of the National Security Review (**Exhibit RH/2**) **{New Document}**. I understand that this was in part because it was considered that the limited resources available could be more effectively deployed towards other proposals relating to wider issues of national security that were taken forward.

20. The Government is now in the process of developing a different approach to strengthening local resilience. The 2021 Integrated Review (**Exhibit RH/3**) **{New Document}** identified “strengthening the role and responsibilities of local resilience forums (LRFs) in England” as a priority action. This work is being taken forward by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities under the LRF Reform Programme.

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21. Furthermore, on 29 March 2022, the CCS published the 2022 PIR (**Exhibit RH/4**){New Document}¹. This is an exercise that the CCS is required to do every 5 years, pursuant to its obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (“CCA”) The 2022 PIR made the following relevant recommendations:

- a. To place an obligation on categorised responders to set out publicly how they comply with their responsibilities under the Act;
- b. To recognise that we need to go further than voluntary assessment and public reporting and that there is a demonstrable gap in assurance of multi-agency preparedness and interoperability; and
- c. To place the [National] Resilience Standards on a statutory footing.

QUESTION 15: {CAB00007083} - Workstream 3 - Understanding local capability
At page 6 of the report, it states “All discussions we have conducted with both the local and national tier have agreed that a workable system to spot signs of overstretch demands a trained, engaged individual, who is – ideally – physically embedded in the local tier during an emergency, and have good pre-existing relationships with the local tier in that area.”

Has this process been established? Is there any guidance about how having someone ‘physically embedded in the local tier during an emergency’ is intended to work in practice?

22. The process has been established, and is explained in paragraphs 78 to 80 of Katharine Hammond’s third statement **{CAB00014816/29}**. The personnel embedded in the local tier during an emergency are Government Liaison Officers and guidance for helping them to identify overreach was created in the form of a document entitled “Identifying Overstretch: Handout Summary”. This was exhibited to Ms Hammond’s third statement as Exhibit KH/91 **{CAB00014822}**.

QUESTION 16: {CAB00007084} - Workstream 4 - Supporting local responders
At page 6, paragraph 20 under the heading ‘Activation of National Support,’ the report states “To be most effective, local responders should be encouraged and incentivised to actively request national support as they are most likely to understand their needs. To achieve this will require:

¹ The Inquiry was provided with a copy of this document prior to the Module 4 hearings

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- a. **Local familiarisation with available national support, including through the provision of reinforced Government Liaison Officer (GLO) functions.**
 - b. **A clear process for requesting national support.**
 - c. **Protocols and training to ensure national support is able to dock into local structures.**
 - d. **Provision of local support not being seen as failure.”**
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- i. **Can you elaborate on ‘reinforced Government Liaison Officer (GLO) functions’?**
 - ii. **Have protocols and training to ensure national support is able to ‘dock into local structures’ been put in place?**
 - iii. **Has a clear process for requesting national support been established?**

23. The reinforced “Government Liaison Officer” functions referred to here are the same as the process described above in response to Question 15. Similarly, the protocols and training are those summarised in the “Identifying Overstretch” handout {**CAB00014822**}.

24. As explained in paragraph 80 of Katharine Hammond’s third statement {**CAB00014816/30**}, it is the role of GLOs to help local responders apply for appropriate national aid, including for example requests for Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA).

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I am willing for the statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry’s web site.

Signed Personal Data Date 28/06/22

Full name ROGER HARGREAVES