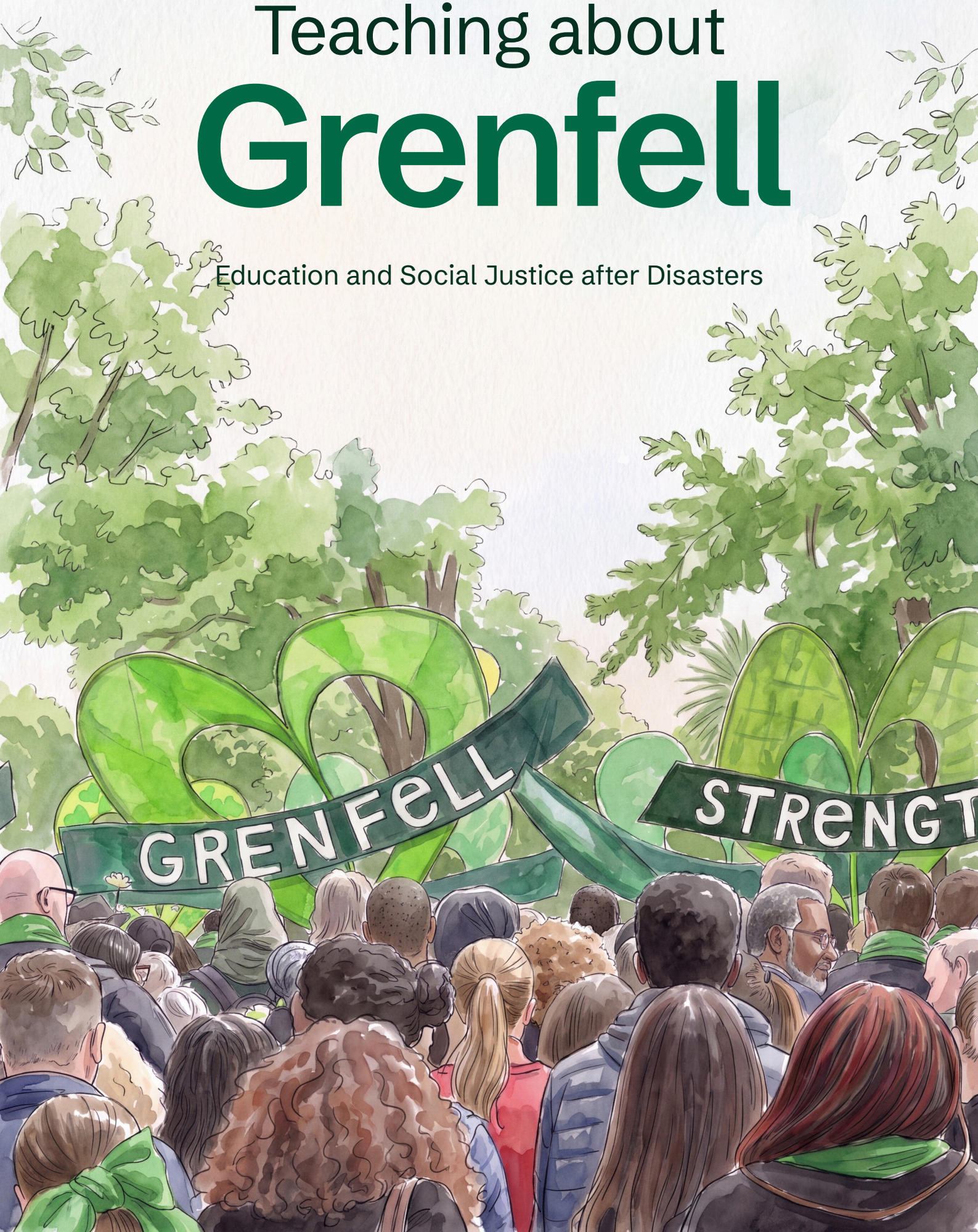
CPD READER AND WORKBOOK

Teaching about Grenfell

Education and Social Justice after Disasters



Teaching about Grenfell

Education and Social Justice after Disasters · CPD Reader and Workbook

HOW TO CITE THIS DOCUMENT

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Edition. Source edition captured on 17 October 2026. This PDF adapts the course for reading and handwriting; it retains the source's substantive teaching content.

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[R001]

The online CPD course

grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Using this pack

This reader and workbook follows the introduction and three weeks of the online CPD [R001]. Read the sections in order, or use the contents and PDF bookmarks to return to a topic.

Activities have printable spaces for handwriting. Work independently or use the prompts for discussion with colleagues. Explanations and activity feedback appear alongside the relevant activity.

Videos, audio, maps and readings open online: click a link on screen, or on paper scan the QR code beside a video or activity. Numbered references such as [R001] point to the full list of links at the back.

A note on wellbeing and sensitive content

We recognise that people have different relationships to traumatic events such as Grenfell. Informed by consultation with the Grenfell Working Group, we have sought to minimise potentially distressing content and imagery in this CPD, focusing on the lessons of Grenfell and how to teach about them. Even so, some material may be difficult to engage with. Please take breaks or step away from particular material as you need.

Symbols in this pack

Read	An article, report or web page to read online.
Watch	A short film or video clip.
Reflect	A question to think about and write down.
Activity	A task with space in the pack to work on it.
Quiz	Questions to check what you have learned, with answers.

More from the Grenfell Curriculum

The Grenfell Curriculum website (grenfellcurriculum.com) provides further resources, including project outputs and lesson packs co-developed by the research team, educators and members of the Grenfell community. [R002]

The Grenfell Tower fire

DATE
14 June 2017
North Kensington, London

The Grenfell Tower fire occurred on 14 June 2017, in North Kensington, London, marking one of the most tragic events in recent British history.

A fire broke out in the 24-storey residential building and rapidly spread due to the flammable exterior cladding. The fire burned for over 60 hours, killing 72 people and injuring many others.

Investigations revealed significant failures in social housing policy, fire safety regulations and building materials, with the state and cladding manufacturers bearing substantial responsibility for creating and perpetuating these social injustices.

Welcome

Welcome to the Grenfell Curriculum CPD programme. In this introductory video, you'll meet members of the project team, hear about the collaboration between the Grenfell community and education researchers, and learn what to expect from the course ahead.

Meet the Grenfell Curriculum project team

An introduction to the course and the people behind it.



[R003]
youtu.be/mNG3fT-bRTE

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

The Grenfell Curriculum project

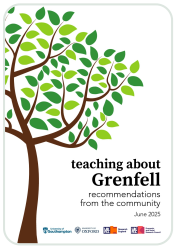
The Grenfell Curriculum Project is a collaboration between the Grenfell community and education researchers which was started to ensure that the legacy of the Grenfell Tower fire is carried forward through meaningful, justice-centred education.

Its purpose is to support schools in teaching about Grenfell with accuracy, sensitivity, and respect, while empowering young people to understand the social, ethical, and structural issues the disaster exposed.

In July 2025, we published *Teaching about Grenfell: Recommendations from the community*, a landmark report developed through two years of community-engaged research with bereaved families, survivors, young people, and local educators. This work established a shared framework for what teaching about Grenfell should include and why it matters.

[R004]

Teaching about Grenfell: Recommendations from the community



eprints.soton.ac.uk/id/eprint/501889

Our approach

1. Working in long-term partnership with the Grenfell community so that educational work reflects their experiences, priorities and hopes for the future.

2. Framing Grenfell as both a human story and a case of systemic injustice, enabling teaching that joins lived experience with critical analysis.

3. Providing practical, research-informed support for teachers so they can engage with sensitive material safely, confidently and thoughtfully.

Centring community voices

In our work with and in the Grenfell community, we have striven to centre community voices, to listen carefully to people's experiences, and to translate that into potential teaching and learning approaches for the classroom.

In hearing these views, we came to understand how important a 'residents up' approach is to devising Grenfell content which can be taught in the classroom. We particularly heard emphasis on "listening to every single voice" and were encouraged by the Grenfell Education Meeting participants to engage more widely and deeply with the diverse views within the community.

Paying particular attention to young people's and children's voices became central to our understanding of an effective approach to teaching about Grenfell.

> **"Give people a voice and listen."**
>
> A young person

> **"It is good to give us a platform."**
>
> A young person

SOURCE

Young research participants, quoted in Park, Fancourt, Habibi and Wahabi (2025), *Teaching about Grenfell: Recommendations from the Community*, p. 8.

Introduction to the CPD

A short video introduction to the CPD programme and how to get the most from it.



[R005]
youtu.be/Okt_iwi5NWI

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

TIME

About 2 hours

a week, six hours across the three weeks

How the course works

Each week consists of approximately two hours of learning, totalling six hours across the three-week programme. Each week is organised into two complementary parts:

1 **Deepening understanding of the Grenfell disaster itself**, covering the community and conditions before the fire, the events of the night, and the social, political, and emotional aftermath.

2 **How to teach about Grenfell** in age-appropriate, sensitive, and justice-oriented ways.

WEEK	FOCUS	PAGE
Week 1	Before the fire	11
Week 2	The night of the fire	43
Week 3	After the fire	69

While the programme is designed as a coherent three-week learning journey, participants are welcome to engage with it selectively, choosing the sessions that best match their time, interests, or teaching needs. This flexible structure enables educators to access meaningful professional learning at a pace and depth that works for them.

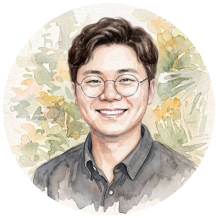
Who it is for

The CPD is designed for educators working in various contexts who wish to develop confident, sensitive, and well-informed approaches to teaching about tragedies such as the Grenfell disaster. It is relevant from primary through to further education, across a wide range of subjects, and for use both in schools and in wider educational settings.

The programme provides example lessons, activities and clear links to the national curriculum, all of which can be adapted to suit different age groups, subjects, and local contexts.

People

Project team



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University of Southampton



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Grenfell Survivor and Bereaved



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University of Oxford



John Schulz
Professor
University of Southampton



Harry Russell
Research Assistant
University of Southampton

The Grenfell Education Working Group

This advisory group consists of survivors and bereaved families from the Grenfell Tower fire, alongside educators in Kensington and Chelsea. In 2025, the research team and the Working Group collaborated to design the CPD, ensuring the curriculum remains rooted in community voice and trauma-informed practice.

Yousra Cherbika
Alaa Hannach
Clare Kitteringham
Melissa Kiley
Rosemary Oyewole
Mouna El Ogbani
Laura Hanley

Collaborating organisations

THE GRENFELL FOUNDATION

GRENFELL UNITED

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission

Notes



Week 1: Before the fire

By the end of Week 1, you will be able to:

1. Describe everyday life in Grenfell Tower and the surrounding community prior to the 2017 fire.
2. Explain the structural, social, and political injustices that created the conditions in which the fire became a disaster.
3. Understand Education for Disaster Justice (EDJ) and apply it to the analysis of specific disasters.

1.3	Explore Kensington through Google Maps	14
1.8	Quiz: Understanding Grenfell	25
1.9	A timeline of failures, 14 events	28

THIS WEEK

About 2 hours

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Find them by their number in the margin.

SECTION
1.1
About you

About you

As you start the course, we'd love to hear from you. Please take a moment to respond to the prompts below in writing, or discuss them with colleagues.

How did you hear about this course?

Let us know how you discovered the course, whether through a colleague, social media, a website, or another source.

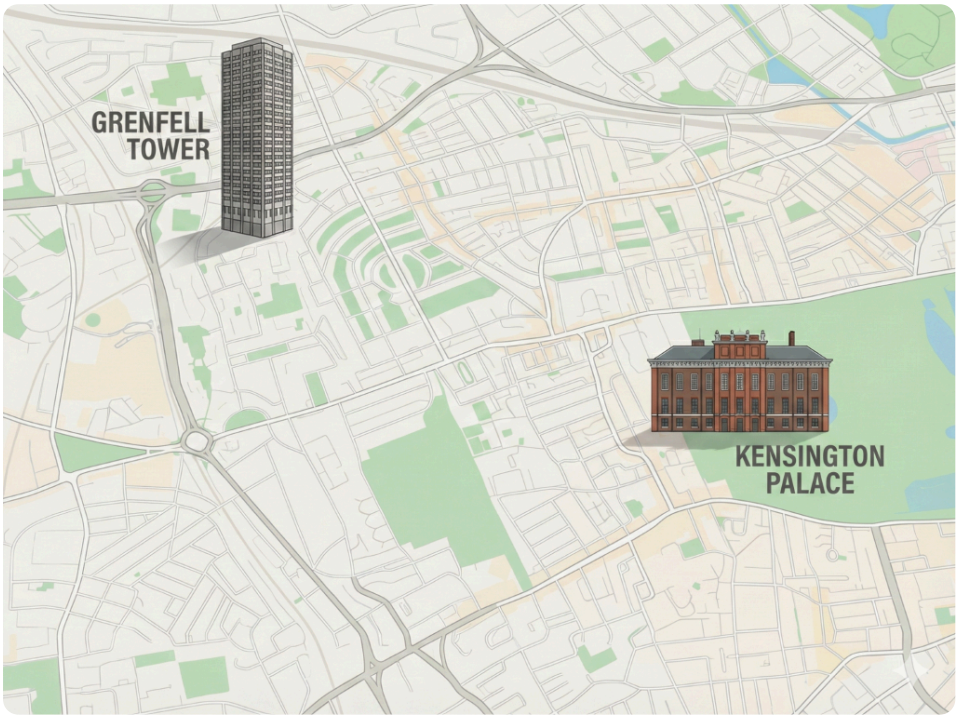
What are you most interested in learning?

Tell us which topics, skills, or areas you're especially excited to explore and what you hope to gain from the experience.

A tale of two Kensingtons

To begin this course, we will examine where Grenfell Tower was and what surrounded it. Few people realise that Grenfell stood within one of London's wealthiest boroughs, close to some of the most expensive real estate in the city. Hence the title of this section: A tale of two Kensingtons.

Grenfell is in the Royal Borough of Kensington – a historic district of West London known for its grand architecture, prestigious residences, and significant cultural institutions, including the Royal Parks and museums like the Natural History Museum. It is home to Kensington Palace and is a hub for luxury living. Yet Kensington also has another side.



South Kensington

South Kensington represents an affluent part of the borough. Here, Victorian terraces and garden squares sit close to world-renowned institutions like the Victoria and Albert Museum, Natural History Museum, and Imperial College, which reinforce its cultural prestige, while high-end boutiques and expensive restaurants cater to affluent residents. Cross the Westway northward, and the landscape transforms dramatically.

North Kensington

SOURCE

A Journey of Recovery: Needs Assessment (2018), Table 1 [R006].

North Kensington, including Ladbroke Grove and Notting Dale, tells a different story. Social renting is far more common here: at the 2011 Census, 55% of North Kensington households rented social housing, compared with 25% across the borough. The tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 highlighted the area's challenges, symbolising the struggles of communities facing housing pressures and uneven access to opportunities.

ACTIVITY

1.3

Explore Kensington through Google Maps

Explore a tale of two Kensingtons through Google Maps

Use the linked map to explore the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Pay attention to the contrasts between the area around Grenfell Tower in the north and the streets of South Kensington just a few miles away.

Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Explore Kensington and Chelsea
[R007] maps.app.goo.gl/o3YD4YivyABY52KL6

Exploring the map

1. **Locate Grenfell Tower** and zoom out slightly. Note what kinds of buildings, roads, and facilities surround it.
2. **Move south towards South Kensington** (around Kensington Palace, Exhibition Road, or the major museums). Compare what you see with North Kensington in terms of housing type, green space, transport links, and visible amenities.
3. Use **Street View** in at least two locations (one near Grenfell Tower and one in South Kensington), and note any differences in the built environment (e.g. building height, density, upkeep, street layout).
4. Optionally, turn on layers such as **satellite view** or **transport** to explore how infrastructure connects (or separates) different parts of the borough.

REFLECT

What contrasts stand out most clearly between North and South Kensington?

How might these spatial differences shape everyday life for residents?

How does seeing Grenfell's location on the map change (or complicate) your understanding of the disaster?

Map comparison notes

North Kensington / Grenfell Tower

South Kensington

A borough divided

North Kensington houses significant Afro-Caribbean and Moroccan communities, refugees, and young professionals priced out of central London. At the 2011 Census, 34% of North Kensington households were deprived on two or more measures, compared with 22% across the borough.

Despite these divisions, connecting threads exist. Victorian architecture spans both areas, though in varying conditions. Portobello Road Market [R008] serves both communities, selling antiques to tourists while providing affordable goods for locals. Excellent transport links benefit everyone, though travel costs impact residents differently.

These contrasts reflect decades of housing policy and urban planning that created distinct economic zones. Today, this small borough serves as a microcosm of London's broader inequalities, where historic neighbourhoods and market forces have created an area of marked economic inequality within a remarkably compact space.

SECTION
1.4
The demographic contrast

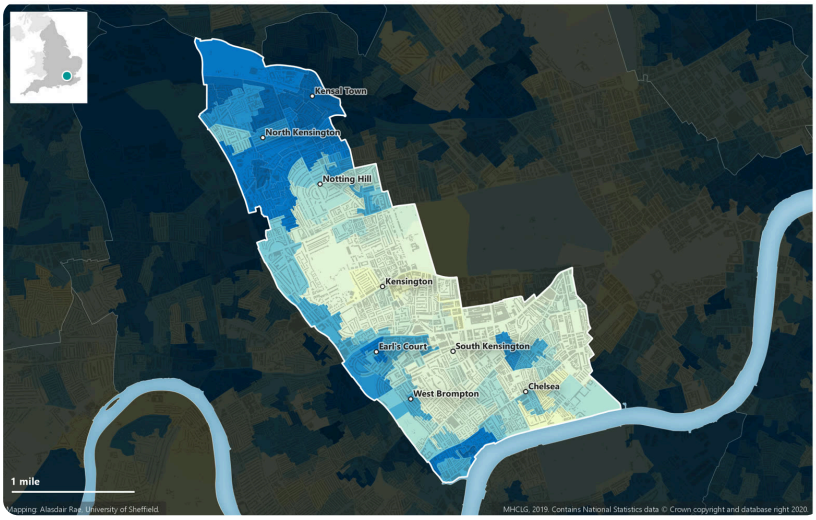
SOURCE
A Journey of Recovery: Needs Assessment (2018), Table 1 [R006].

[R008]
Portobello Road Market
visitportobello.com

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Kensington and Chelsea.
Each area is shaded by its national deprivation decile.

More deprived Less deprived

Source: MHCLG, 2019.
Mapping: Alasdair Rae.



REFLECT

To what extent does the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) map for Kensington and Chelsea reveal a 'polarised' urban society?

Reading the map

The map shows a striking north-south divide: deprivation is concentrated in North Kensington (Kensal Town, Golborne, Notting Dale) while many areas further south show lower levels of deprivation. Borough-wide averages mask this internal inequality. Small pockets of deprivation also appear in the south near World's End and Earl's Court, social housing estates surrounded by immense private wealth, illustrating how inequality can exist at the scale of a single street.

REFLECT

Why might borough-level statistics be misleading when assessing quality of life in a place like Kensington and Chelsea?

What borough averages conceal

Borough-level summaries can conceal substantial differences between neighbourhoods. The IMD measures relative deprivation rather than average income or wealth; some areas of North Kensington rank among the most deprived in England. This matters because policy decisions based on borough-level data may fail to direct resources where they are most needed. The Grenfell Tower fire exposed this gap: a community experiencing significant deprivation existed within a borough widely perceived as affluent, and their concerns about building safety were repeatedly dismissed.

The people of Grenfell Tower

SECTION
1.5
Who lived in the tower?

A common misconception is that Grenfell Tower was occupied solely by social housing tenants. In reality, the tower was home to a remarkably diverse community.

Grenfell Tower: Building and community

Built in the 1970s, Grenfell Tower formed part of the Lancaster West housing estate in North Kensington, west London. The tower exemplified a wider urban development trend of the 1960s and 1970s, when local authorities constructed tower blocks across London to replace slum housing with affordable social housing.

By 2017, Grenfell Tower housed a remarkably diverse community. Its 129 flats were home to people of many nationalities, ethnicities and generations. Residents hailed from countries including the UK, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, and Syria, among others. The community spanned all age groups and life stages. Young families with children lived alongside elderly residents, some of whom had called Grenfell home for decades.

Professionally, the residents were equally varied, including artists, dressmakers, hairdressers, chefs, and architects. While some had established roots over many years, others had arrived more recently for work or educational opportunities. This blend of long-term residents and newcomers created a dynamic, multicultural community within the tower's walls.

GRENFELL TOWER AND NORTH KENSINGTON

A community of many cultures, languages and generations

AROUND THE TOWER Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Walk and neighbouring streets · 2011 Census[1]



48%
of residents were born outside the UK



59%
belonged to minority ethnic groups



31%
had a main language other than English



25%
of residents were under 18

NORTH KENSINGTON state-school pupils living in North Kensington[2]

15+
home languages among local schoolchildren

47%
spoke a language other than English at home

Arabic · Somali · Spanish · Tigrinya · Amharic · Tagalog · Bengali · Portuguese · French · Albanian · Persian · Italian · Polish · Kurdish · English

FAITH AND BELIEF, AROUND THE TOWER[1]



Christian 57% Muslim 28% No religion 12%

129
flats in Grenfell Tower, home to people of every generation[3]

About these figures. Census figures are for the immediate Grenfell neighbourhood: Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Walk and neighbouring streets (population 1,540), not tower residents alone. Language figures cover state-school pupils living in North Kensington; the 15 languages listed include English. [1] *A Journey of Recovery: Needs Assessment* (2018), Table 1, 2011 Census. [2] Same report, Table 3, council schools census. [3] Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 1 Report, Vol. 2, para 10.130.

In 2015–16, Constantine Gras was artist in residence at Grenfell Tower, commissioned by the Kensington and Chelsea TMO to make a mural for the refurbished ground-floor foyer. At a Fun Day in May 2015, held as respite for families living through the refurbishment, about 20 children drew whatever they liked: Grenfell Tower, animals, flowers, and symbols of Moroccan and British identity.

The drawing was so vivid that Gras used it as the finished work rather than a mural. The TMO never hung it in the tower; because it stayed in storage, it survived the fire [R009].



Live, laugh, love, oil pastel, 2015. Large scale drawing made by children of Grenfell Tower and the Lancaster West Estate on the 20th May 2015 Fun Day organised as respite from the refurbishment of the tower. Coloured in by Constantine Gras who wrote the poem inspired by words written by children on the art work. Reproduced with the artist's permission.

[R009]

Live, laugh, love, Constantine Gras (blog post, June 2015)

grasart.com/blog/live-laugh-love

SOURCE

Constantine Gras, "Live, laugh, love", blog post, June 2015, and correspondence with the artist, October 2026 [R009].

Read: The 21st floor

The BBC has created a powerful interactive resource that tells the stories of residents who lived on the upper floors of Grenfell Tower [R010].

[R010]

The 21st Floor

bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/G...

Read: The lives of Grenfell Tower

The Guardian has published portraits of all 72 people who died, drawing on memories shared by their families, friends and colleagues [R011].

[R011]

The lives of Grenfell Tower: the 72 victims of the fire, The Guardian

theguardian.com/uk-news/ng-intera...

The BBC resource focuses on individual stories rather than statistics. What did you learn about residents' lives that surprised you or challenged your assumptions about who lived in the tower?

REFLECT

WEEK 1

"It was a tower block, but it was home."

NATASHA ELCOCK

"It was a community. A true layer-upon-layer of communities integrating and becoming just one community."

NICK BURTON

"Every floor had smells of different cuisines. And different music. Moroccan music on the top floor and then the middle layer someone listening to reggae music."

RABIA YAHYA

"The tower was one big family. Anything we asked for, people would bring it."

MAHER KHOUDAIR

"Me and my next-door neighbour Natalie kept the doors open so children can go in and out."

HANAN WAHABI

"It felt like my success was not only my success it was not only my family's success but the success of the local neighbourhood"

TIAGO ALVES

"It's just, it was my safest place."

TURUFAT YILMA

As quoted in Gillian Slovo's *Grenfell: In the Words of Survivors* (2023), a verbatim play drawn from interviews and testimony to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Grenfell: In the words of survivors

The following clip is from *Grenfell: In the Words of Survivors*, a verbatim play produced by the National Theatre. The piece draws entirely on the testimony of those who lived through the fire.

GRENFELL IN THE WORDS OF SURVIVORS

[R012]
youtu.be/NpEaa2P7qZI

REFLECT

Verbatim theatre uses people's exact words as its script. How does hearing survivors' testimony performed in this way differ from reading a news report or watching a documentary? What might this approach offer, or risk, as a teaching resource?

A disaster foretold

SECTION
1.6
Unheeded warnings

A common misconception is that the Grenfell fire came without warning. In reality, residents had been raising serious concerns about building safety for years, and were repeatedly ignored.

The renovation (2014–2016)

Between 2014 and 2016, Grenfell Tower was renovated as part of a wider redevelopment around Lancaster Green. The new Kensington Leisure Centre had been built to the east, and the football pitches to the north were earmarked for Kensington Academy. The renovation aimed to replace the substandard heating system, install new windows, improve thermal efficiency, and update the tower's appearance to complement the new academy.

But the refurbishment introduced new dangers rather than fixing old ones. Cladding was installed to improve energy efficiency and aesthetics, but residents quickly grew suspicious. The materials felt cheap to the touch, and many questioned whether corners had been cut. Residents raised concerns about the works and about fire safety, and felt that these were dismissed by contractors and management.

Residents' action

The Grenfell Action Group (GAG), a small group of determined local residents, began documenting these problems. Their blog became a public record of what they were witnessing and how their attempts to raise issues were repeatedly brushed aside.

Their posts grew more urgent over time, not just in tone, but in clarity. In 2013, they warned of "serious fire safety concerns." In 2016, after yet another failed attempt to prompt action, they wrote:

> **"It is our conviction that a serious fire in a tower block... is the most likely reason that those who wield power... will be found out and brought to justice!"**

Grenfell Action Group, "KCTMO – Playing with fire!", 20 November 2016

WATCH

Two short films. Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

The first tribunal

This extract from a Sky News report on the first tribunal highlighted the legitimacy of residents' concerns.



[R013]
youtu.be/C2F3bRJMoEc

Edward Daffarn's warning

Grenfell resident Edward Daffarn gives a powerful account of the warnings he and other residents raised, highlighting long-ignored safety concerns and the systemic failures that preceded the fire.



[R014]
youtu.be/UxMEAAOTt30

SECTION
1.7
"Show me the bodies"

"Show me the bodies"

The Grenfell Tower fire is often discussed as a failure of construction or local management. Peter Apps, deputy editor of *Inside Housing* and the journalist who broke a story on the dangers of combustible cladding just thirty-four days before the fire, argues it was something far larger: a terminal failure of the British state. His Orwell Prize-winning book *Show Me the Bodies* traces how three decades of deregulation, corporate dishonesty, and institutional indifference combined to turn a reinforced concrete tower into a death trap.

SOURCES
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 2.10 and 7.2 **[R015]**; *Inside Housing*, 28 March 2022.

The book takes its title from a remark attributed to Brian Martin, the government official responsible for fire safety guidance, who had previously worked at the Building Research Establishment (BRE). The architect Sam Webb said in a witness statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry that Martin used the phrase when Webb warned him that, without a review of the guidance, another fire like the one at Lakanal House was inevitable. Martin denied making the remark. In the 2009 Lakanal House fire in Southwark, six people died.

SOURCE
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, para 2.19 **[R015]**.

The implication, as critics read it, was stark: new restrictions on businesses would not be imposed unless there was a sufficient body count to justify the cost. The Inquiry later found systematic dishonesty on the part of the companies that made and sold the cladding panels and insulation, which manipulated testing processes and misrepresented test data.

Regulation by death

This mentality was not an aberration but the product of a systematic programme of deregulation stretching back to the 1980s. Under successive governments, the institutions that should have protected the public, the Building Research Establishment, the British Board of Agrément, building control itself, were privatised, defunded, or stripped of the power to intervene effectively.

By the 2010s, this had intensified further. The "Red Tape Challenge" and the "one in, one out" rule (later "one in, two out" and "one in, three out") meant that any new regulation had to be offset by removing existing regulation, and the Housing Standards Review that followed explicitly excluded safety standards. The Inquiry found that the deregulatory agenda dominated the department's thinking to such an extent that even matters affecting the safety of life were ignored, delayed or disregarded. Apps concludes that decades of deregulation exacted a tragic and avoidable price.

SOURCE

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 2.13 and 10.4–10.6 **[RO15]**.

A pattern of ignored warnings

Apps documents how Grenfell was not a one-off failure but the culmination of warnings from a series of earlier fires that were never acted upon. Each exposed the same danger, combustible cladding on the exterior of residential buildings, and each was followed by inaction:

1 1991: Knowsley Heights, Merseyside

Fire spread up the full height of one side of the 11-storey block via its exterior cladding. No one died. Guidance was revised in 1992, but the use of combustible cladding on high-rise buildings was not restricted.

2 2009: Lakanal House, Southwark

Six people died when fire spread through exterior panels. The coroner made specific safety recommendations; the government agreed to review building regulations but delayed action for years.

3 2017: Grenfell Tower, North Kensington

72 people died. ACM cladding with a polyethylene core, described as containing material equivalent to "pure petrol", had been installed despite repeatedly failing the already inadequate testing standards.



1 Knowsley Heights, Merseyside; **2** Lakanal House, in Southwark; **3** Grenfell Tower, in Kensington and Chelsea. The two boroughs are shaded.

SOURCE

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 7.3 and 7.18 **[RO15]**.

Why this matters for teaching

Apps' account reframes Grenfell as the inevitable result of a government that viewed safety as an optional expense and human lives as a data point in a cost-benefit analysis. For educators, it provides essential context: the fire was not caused by a single act of negligence but by a political culture in which "red tape" (the regulations designed to keep people alive) was treated as a burden on business. Understanding this is central to teaching about Grenfell through the lens of Education for Disaster Justice.

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Peter Apps on the systemic failures behind Grenfell

In the following video, Peter Apps explains the regulatory and systemic failures that allowed the disaster to occur, providing vital context to the "show me the bodies" mentality and the decades of deregulation that preceded the fire.



[R016]
youtu.be/LFoVARqu9u0

Understanding Grenfell

QUIZ
1.8
Understanding Grenfell

Test what you have learned so far about the community and the warnings that came before the fire.

QUIZ
Demographic profile

Which statement best describes the demographic profile of Grenfell Tower residents before 2017?

- **A** A largely homogeneous group of long-term British residents
- **B** Mostly single professionals working in finance and law
- **C** A diverse, multicultural community across ages, professions, and nationalities
- **D** Primarily recent refugees with no long-term residents

Why did you choose this answer?

ANSWER · TURN UPSIDE DOWN

C

A diverse community

Grenfell Tower was home to a highly diverse community before the fire. Residents came from many different countries and ethnic backgrounds, represented a wide range of ages and life stages, and worked in varied professions. Some had lived in the tower for decades, while others were more recent arrivals. This diversity challenges common misconceptions that Grenfell residents were a single, uniform group and helps underline that the disaster affected a complex, established community rather than an anonymous or marginalised population.

QUIZ

Concerns raised

Re-read the Grenfell Action Group extract in section 1.6. Which safety concerns do residents raise, and how were those concerns expressed?

ANSWER · TURN UPSIDE DOWN

AII

Warnings before the fire

The November 2016 post recalls the power surges of 2013, which were found to have been caused by faulty wiring, and accuses the TMO of ignoring health and safety law. It warns that only a serious fire with loss of life would bring outside scrutiny of how the tower was managed. Residents expressed these concerns publicly and repeatedly, through their own blog, when they felt that official channels had failed them.

QUIZ

Life before the fire

In one or two sentences, explain why understanding life before the fire matters.

ANSWER · TURN UPSIDE DOWN

Life beyond the disaster

Understanding life before the fire is important because Grenfell was a lived-in community, not just a site of tragedy. Focusing only on the night of the fire risks overlooking the everyday relationships, histories, and forms of care that existed within the tower, as well as the longer-term social, political, and housing conditions that shaped residents' lives. Seeing Grenfell in this broader context helps explain why the disaster had such profound human and social consequences.

ACTIVITY
1.9
Self-paced · 14 events. Read each event and consider its prompt.

[R017]

Online version of Grenfell Tower: A Timeline of Failures

grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Grenfell Tower: A timeline of failures

This timeline activity asks you to trace key decisions and missed warnings before, during and after the Grenfell Tower fire of 14 June 2017, in which 72 people lost their lives. You can also complete it online [R017].

As you work through it, consider not only what happened, but where responsibility, communication and accountability broke down.

How this works

Read the three phases in order: Before, During and After. Each event ends with a prompt to consider or discuss. Then complete the final reflection and self-check.

BEFORE THE FIRE

The Grenfell Tower fire did not happen in isolation. It was preceded by decades of missed warnings, deregulation, cost-cutting, and the systematic dismissal of residents' concerns.

1991–2017
CLADDING WARNINGS

Decades of ignored warnings about combustible cladding

From the Knowsley Heights fire in 1991 onwards, there were repeated opportunities for government to identify the risks of combustible cladding on high-rise buildings. A parliamentary select committee warned in 1999 that the government should not wait for a serious fire before acting. The government failed to act on this or subsequent warnings, including fires overseas that demonstrated the dangers of ACM panels.

Why might warnings about low-probability but high-consequence risks be repeatedly ignored?

Lessons of Lakanal House not implemented

2009–2013
LAKANAL HOUSE

In 2009, six people died in a fire at Lakanal House in Southwark – a building with compromised compartmentation. The coroner wrote to the government calling for urgent action on building regulations and 'stay put' guidance. The review of Approved Document B (the key fire safety guidance) was repeatedly delayed and ultimately never completed before Grenfell. The Inquiry found that the coroner's recommendations were not treated with any sense of urgency, and that the official responsible for the guidance had too much freedom of action without adequate oversight.

SOURCE
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 2.10 and 2.12 [R015].

What does the failure to learn from Lakanal House suggest about institutional memory and accountability?

Refurbishment with combustible cladding chosen on cost grounds

2014–2016
REFURBISHMENT

The 2012–2016 refurbishment of Grenfell Tower used ACM (aluminium composite material) cladding with a polyethylene core – a combustible material – partly because it was cheaper than alternatives such as zinc. The switch to ACM formed part of a cost-saving exercise: Rydon quoted the TMO a saving of £293,368 for the cassette-fixed option. The Inquiry found systematic dishonesty by the companies that made and sold the cladding panels and insulation, including manipulation of testing and misrepresentation of test data.

SOURCES
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 4, paras 55.48 and 55.58–55.60; vol. 1, para 2.19 [R015].

How should competing pressures of cost and safety be managed in public building projects?

Fire doors and self-closers left defective despite warnings

2015–2017
FIRE DOORS

The London Fire Brigade issued deficiency notices about non-functioning self-closing devices on flat entrance doors. A decision by RBKC's Laura Johnson to extend the installation programme and not set up regular inspections rested principally on financial considerations; the TMO did not resist. Of the flat entrance doors examined after the fire, 43 had no self-closer and 34 had self-closers that did not work. Many of the replacement doors installed in 2011–12 did not meet the required standards.

SOURCE
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 3, paras 40.1–40.8 and 41.73–41.75 [R015].

What does this tell us about the gap between regulation on paper and enforcement in practice?

Nov 2016

RESIDENTS' WARNING

SOURCE

Grenfell Action Group, "KCTMO – Playing with fire!", 20 November 2016 [R018].

Residents' blog warned a serious fire was coming

The Grenfell Action Group, a residents' organisation, published a blog post stating it would take a serious fire and loss of life before anything was done about building management. Residents had raised concerns about condemned fire extinguishers, broken lifts, and missing fire safety notices. The TMO treated fire safety complaints as an inconvenience rather than an essential duty. No adequate system existed for ensuring defects were remedied in good time.

What happens when the people with the most direct knowledge of risk have the least institutional power?

DURING THE FIRE

On the night of 14 June 2017, a fire started in a faulty fridge-freezer on the fourth floor shortly before 1 a.m. Within minutes, it had spread to the combustible cladding. What followed exposed critical failures in emergency response.

00:54–01:30

FIRE SPREADS

Fire escapes the flat and engulfs the cladding

The fire broke out of the kitchen window and ignited the ACM cladding. Within 30 minutes, flames had reached the roof – climbing 19 storeys in approximately 12 minutes. The fire then spread horizontally and down the other sides of the building. The cladding system, including combustible insulation, acted as fuel. The compartmentation designed to contain the fire to a single flat was bypassed entirely.

The building's design assumed fire could be contained within a single flat. What does it mean when a core safety assumption fails?

01:00–02:47

'STAY PUT'

SOURCE

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 1 report, vol. 1, para 2.7; vol. 4, paras 28.53 and 34.14 [R019].

'Stay put' advice maintained for nearly two hours

The 'stay put' policy – advising residents to remain in their flats during a fire – was maintained until 2:47 a.m., nearly two hours after the first 999 call. The control room changed its advice at 02:35; incident command revoked 'stay put' at 02:47. The Inquiry found that the policy had become an 'article of faith' within the London Fire Brigade. Incident commanders had never been trained to implement a building evacuation. The Inquiry concluded that the stairs had sufficient capacity for all the occupants to escape within a reasonable time.

When does adherence to established procedure become a failure of professional judgement?

Control room overwhelmed; advice change not immediately followed

Even after a senior officer instructed call handlers to tell residents to leave, some call handlers continued to give callers the impression that they could decide for themselves whether to leave. The LFB had not provided structured training on handling multiple simultaneous fire survival guidance calls. The large television in the control room was not working and the smaller one had not been switched on, so staff could not follow news images of the fire. The communication equipment also functioned inadequately in the concrete building.

What does this reveal about the difference between a policy changing on paper and changing in practice during a crisis?

Disabled residents left without evacuation plans

Evidence reported during the Inquiry identified 37 disabled or vulnerable residents, of whom 15 died. No personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) were in place. Lawyers representing bereaved families described the failures as a 'landmark act of discrimination' against disabled and vulnerable people. National guidance had suggested that evacuation plans for residents of general needs blocks were 'usually unrealistic', and the government did not consult those representing disabled people when it reviewed that advice.

What does this failure reveal about whose safety is centred – and whose is treated as secondary – in building safety policy?

02:35 a.m.

CONTROL ROOM

SOURCE

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 1 report, vol. 4, paras 29.89–29.90 and 29.99–29.104 **[R019]**.

Through the night

DISABLED RESIDENTS

SOURCES

Disability Rights UK, 21 April 2021; Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, para 2.14; vol. 3, para 46.9 **[R015]**.

AFTER THE FIRE

The aftermath of Grenfell exposed a national crisis of building safety, a deeply inadequate response to survivors and bereaved families, and a slow reckoning across government and industry.

14 June 2017 onwards

AFTERMATH

Survivors and bereaved families abandoned by the authorities

The Inquiry found that the response of government and RBKC in the first week was 'muddled, slow, indecisive and piecemeal' and showed a 'marked lack of respect for human decency and dignity.' Survivors who had lost everything were placed in hotel rooms with no follow-up contact for days. Families – including those with disabilities and young children – were housed in unsuitable accommodation. The council had no system for tracking who needed help; paper forms were left scattered around rest centres.

The council's chief executive did not accept advice to seek outside help; he was recorded as saying that it would look as though the council could not cope. Language recorded in a government meeting note described residents as 'embittered' and warned that they might 'incite a mob'. Many residents who were observing Ramadan at the time were left without regard for their cultural and religious needs.

Where the state failed, local community organisations – the Rugby Portobello Trust, Al-Manaar Mosque, local churches and volunteers – stepped in to provide basic humanitarian support, from clothing and food to counselling and cash.

What does the contrast between the community response and the official response tell us about who was treated as worthy of care – and who was not?

SOURCES

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 2.103–2.104; vol. 7, paras 100.18–100.20, 104.15, 104.32–104.33, 104.68–104.71 and 106.19–106.21 [R015].

June 2017 onwards

CLADDING CRISIS

National cladding crisis revealed: hundreds of buildings affected

In the weeks after the fire, the government set up a testing service for cladding samples. Every single one of the first 120 samples sent in failed. Hundreds of buildings across the country were found to have dangerous cladding. Camden Council evacuated hundreds of households from four tower blocks on its Chalcots estate. The National Audit Office estimated in 2024 that fixing unsafe cladding on residential buildings over 11 metres in England would cost £16.6 billion.

SOURCES

Inside Housing, June 2020; National Audit Office, *Dangerous cladding: the government's remediation portfolio* (2024).

Why did it take a disaster of this scale for the extent of the cladding problem to be acknowledged?

Leaseholders trapped in unsellable, unsafe flats

2018–2022
LEASEHOLDERS

Private flat owners found themselves financially liable for cladding remediation they had not caused – with bills sometimes reaching six figures. Insurance premiums rose by over 1,000% in extreme cases. Flats became unsellable as mortgage lenders refused to lend on affected buildings. The government initially offered no funding for private buildings and told building owners to 'do the right thing.' Campaign groups such as End Our Cladding Scandal and Grenfell United pushed for change over several years of sustained activism.

SOURCE
Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, *Cladding Remediation: Follow-up* (2021).

What does the leaseholder crisis reveal about how the costs of regulatory failure are distributed in society?

Building Safety Act and ongoing remediation gaps

2022–2026
BUILDING SAFETY

The Building Safety Act 2022 introduced new resident protections, including protection for eligible leaseholders against the costs of removing unsafe cladding. From December 2018, combustible materials were banned in the external walls of specified new high-rise buildings in England. At the end of February 2025, 5,014 buildings had been identified with unsafe cladding, and 32% had completed remediation. The government accepted 49 of the Inquiry's 58 recommendations in full, with 9 accepted only 'in principle'. Residential PEEPs requirements took effect in England in April 2026 for eligible residents in specified buildings.

SOURCES
MHCLG, Building Safety Remediation data release, February 2025; Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report: government response (2025) **[RO20]**.

What is the difference between accepting recommendations and implementing meaningful change?

Inquiry complete, but criminal proceedings still pending

2024–ongoing
JUSTICE DELAYED

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry published its Phase 2 report in September 2024, finding that the fire was the result of decades of failure by government and industry – driven in most cases by incompetence, but in some cases by dishonesty and greed. Seven firms face possible debarment from public contracts. Police submitted all charging files to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on 30 September 2026. Charging decisions are expected before 14 June 2027. Several companies named in the Inquiry have disputed aspects of the findings.

Nine years after the fire, what does the pace of accountability suggest about the systems meant to deliver justice?

Final reflection

You have explored all 14 events. Take a few minutes to consider the following questions. Write your notes below.

REFLECT

The Inquiry concluded the fire was the result of "decades of failure" by government and industry. Which failures do you think were most preventable, and why?

REFLECT

What patterns or recurring themes do you notice across the Before, During and After phases?

REFLECT

What does this timeline suggest about the relationship between cost-cutting, deregulation and public safety?

Self-check: Can you identify...

- [ ] At least two ways the building's fire safety was compromised before the fire
- [ ] Why the "stay put" advice became dangerous on the night
- [ ] The role that cost and deregulation played in creating the conditions for the fire
- [ ] At least two ways the response after the fire has been criticised as inadequate
- [ ] Why residents' warnings before the fire went unheeded

SECTION
1.10
How should we approach teaching about Grenfell?

How should we approach teaching about Grenfell?

Teaching about tragic events such as Grenfell is important, but it can also be challenging for teachers to navigate the emotional, ethical, and political dimensions involved. Many educators are concerned about how to address loss, responsibility, and injustice in ways that are accurate, sensitive, and developmentally appropriate.

Our project developed an approach grounded in education for disaster justice (EDJ), which frames disasters not as isolated accidents but as events shaped by social, political, and structural conditions. This approach supports teachers in helping students critically examine the causes and consequences of disasters, while foregrounding issues of justice, responsibility, and collective learning.

Further details, including practical guidance and classroom strategies, will be provided throughout this CPD course.

SECTION
1.11
What is Education for Disaster Justice?

EDJ principles

These five principles guide our exploration of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. They prioritise humanity, justice, and structural context to ensure a respectful, critical, and emotionally safe learning environment. They were developed by the Grenfell Curriculum project and informed by research with the Grenfell community.

1

Start with humanity, not the horror

Show who lived in Grenfell Tower: families, friendships, cultures, everyday joys. Humanity must come before analysis of the tragedy.

2

Honour lived experience

Treat survivors' and bereaved families' insights as foundational knowledge. Avoid sensationalism or retraumatisation.

3 Situate events in social and structural context

Help students see how inequality, housing conditions, governance and ignored warnings shaped the disaster, understanding Grenfell as systemic failure.

4 Emphasise justice, not just memory

Highlight ongoing accountability, centre community voices, and connect learning to structural causes so students view remembrance as an active commitment to justice.

5 Support emotional safety and dialogue

Create structured, compassionate spaces for discussion, normalise varied emotional responses, and provide alternatives for participation so students can engage safely and respectfully with difficult content.

Introduction to education for disaster justice

This video introduces you to the concept and key principles of EDJ.



[R021]
youtu.be/qSartI3anaM

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

How not to teach about disasters

SECTION
1.12
How not to teach about disasters

Throughout the project, we have discussed not only examples of thoughtful and effective teaching about Grenfell, but also approaches that may be well intentioned yet are problematic from the perspective of EDJ.

Reflecting on what should be avoided is therefore as important as identifying good practice, as it helps teachers make informed, ethically grounded pedagogical choices. Below, we present a few illustrative examples of practices that warrant particular caution when teaching about Grenfell.

Scenario 1: Imagery and trauma

An English teacher opens a lesson by showing graphic images from news coverage of the fire to "capture attention" and generate emotional reactions. Students look visibly distressed, and one asks to leave. The teacher insists they stay, saying, "This is real life, you need to see what actually happened." The lesson proceeds without emotional preparation or structured reflection.

What's wrong?

This scenario sensationalises trauma, shows distressing imagery with no consent or framing, and disregards student wellbeing. EDJ emphasises trauma-informed pedagogy, safe learning environments, and avoiding harm.

Justice-oriented alternative

The teacher prepares students in advance, explaining that the lesson involves sensitive material. No graphic images are used. Instead, students read a reflective piece written by a young survivor about resilience and community solidarity. The teacher emphasises voluntary participation, provides movement breaks, and encourages grounded discussion about empathy, language, and dignity.

Scenario 2: Voices and representation

A drama teacher devises a role-play exercise in which students "act out" the experiences of Grenfell residents on the night of the fire. Students are assigned roles such as "panicking mother" or "trapped family" and asked to improvise emotional scenes. The teacher encourages dramatic intensity, praising students who cry or shout for being "really convincing." No community voices, testimony, or contextual framing are provided.

What's wrong?

This approach treats real people's suffering as performance material, risks re-traumatising students with personal connections to the disaster, and reduces lived experiences to spectacle. It appropriates community pain without consent, centres emotional intensity over understanding, and violates EDJ principles of dignity, recognition, and ethical engagement with testimony.

Justice-oriented alternative

The teacher uses process drama techniques to explore themes of community, responsibility, and power, without directly simulating the fire itself. Students work with published testimony and poetry from survivors (used with permission) to create a devised piece exploring questions like: Who is listened to? What does it mean to be ignored by those in power? The teacher positions students as witnesses and advocates rather than victims, and builds in reflective discussion after each session.

Scenario 3: Systemic neglect vs. individual blame

During a citizenship lesson, the teacher explains the disaster by saying, "The residents should have complained louder, and some communities don't really engage with authorities properly." They present no evidence, ignore the years of documented warnings, and suggest the tragedy reflects community passivity rather than systemic neglect.

What's wrong?

This frames disaster victims as responsible for their own harm, reproduces harmful stereotypes, and erases systemic injustice. It violates EDJ's principles of recognition, structural analysis, and respect for community voice.

Justice-oriented alternative

In a citizenship lesson, the teacher begins with documented evidence that residents raised repeated safety concerns that went unheeded. Students analyse excerpts from inquiry findings, council correspondence, and community testimony. Working in groups, they map out where decisions were made, whose voices were recognised or ignored, and how power shaped outcomes.

Scenario 4: Symbolic vs. structural change

A school marks the anniversary by holding a short assembly with a slideshow of green hearts and a message about "coming together." No mention is made of why the fire happened, ongoing struggles for justice, or the community's perspectives. Teachers are told this single event fulfils "coverage of Grenfell" for the year.

What's wrong?

This reduces Grenfell to symbolic remembrance without addressing cause, responsibility, or justice. It erases ongoing injustice and fails to engage with EDJ's focus on structural learning, accountability, and critical citizenship.

Justice-oriented alternative

For the anniversary, a class holds a reflective session shaped around three themes: humanity, justice, and future change. Students learn about the community's ongoing campaign for accountability, discuss what justice means in different forms (legal, moral, civic), and explore youth roles in promoting safety and ethical responsibility.

SECTION
1.13
Where might Grenfell-related themes sit?

Where might Grenfell-related themes meaningfully sit?

Now take a moment to reflect on your own subject area and teaching context.

The questions below are designed to help you think about where and how Grenfell-related themes and Education for Disaster Justice (EDJ) might sit meaningfully within your existing curriculum. This is intended as an initial piece of thinking, which you can revisit and develop further as the course progresses.

REFLECT

What aspects of your subject or educational setting lend themselves naturally to justice-focused teaching?

REFLECT

What parts of the EDJ framework align with your existing curriculum or learning aims?

REFLECT

What challenges might arise?

End of week 1 & further reading

That's the end of the first week. We hope that gave you a brief understanding of the background to the fire and the community. In the next week we will look at the events of the fire and how it spread.

Further reading

Community & everyday life

The Grenfell Tower Fire (London Museum) **[R022]**
Museum exhibition page on the tower, its residents, and London's housing inequalities.

In Brutal Presence: Nicola Muirhead (LensCulture) **[R023]**
Documentary photography and resident testimony from North Kensington before and after the fire.

Grenfell: Before the Fire (London Intelligence) **[R024]**
Profiles of residents and a portrait of the community that lived in the tower.

Warnings & resident activism

Grenfell Action Group Blog **[R025]**
The residents' blog that documented fire safety warnings from 2012 onwards.

"KCTMO: Playing with Fire!" (November 2016 blog post, PDF) **[R018]**
The blog post that predicted a catastrophic fire, eight months before it happened.

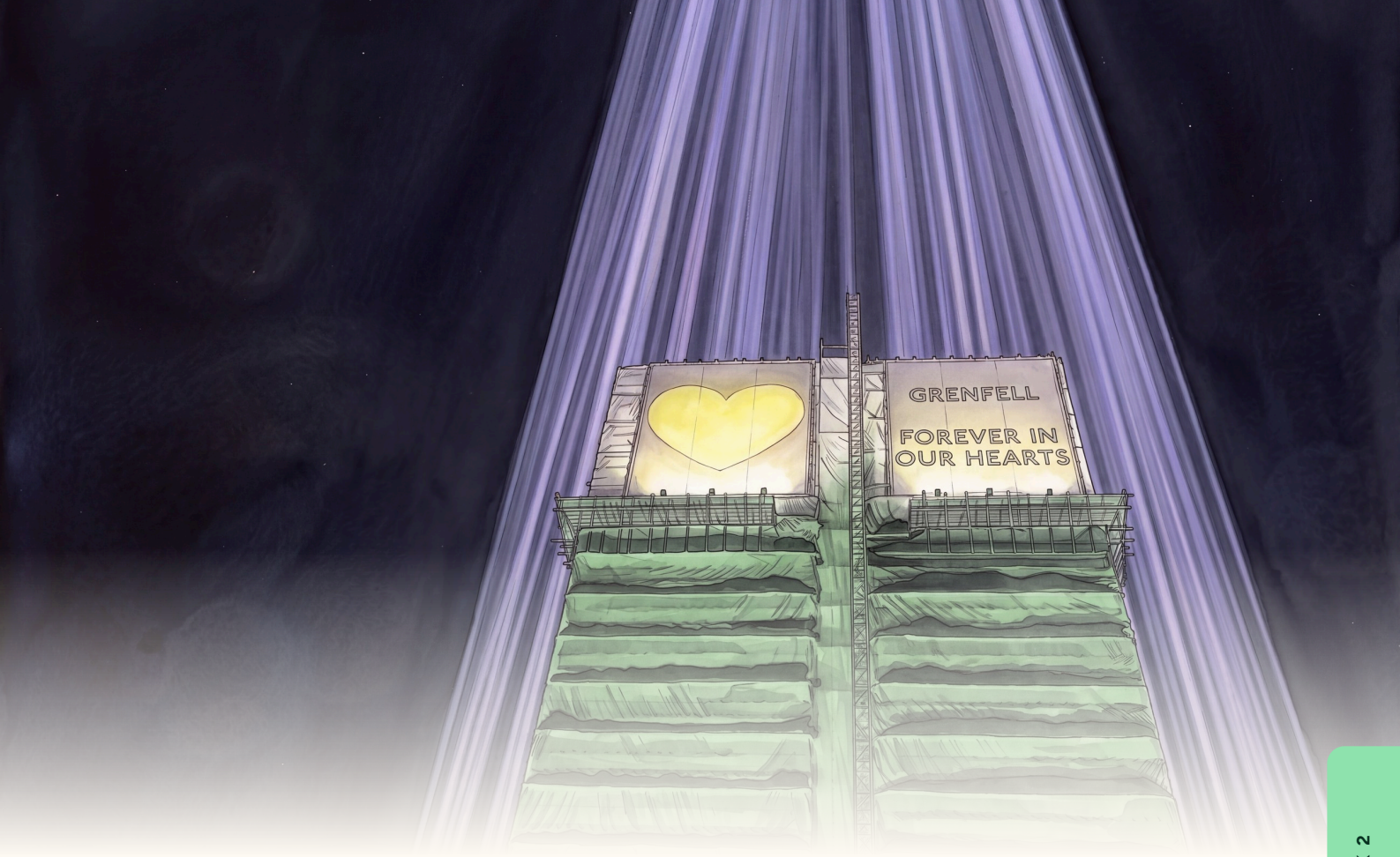
A Residents' Group Made Repeated Warnings (BuzzFeed News) **[R026]**
Overview of the Grenfell Action Group's eight fire safety warnings over three years.

Structural injustice & policy

Six Key Failures in the Way Grenfell Was Managed, Inside Housing **[R027]**
Specialist housing journalism on management failures before the fire.

Following Grenfell, Equality and Human Rights Commission **[R028]**
EHRC inquiry into human rights and equality failings before and after the fire.

Grenfell Warnings and the Collapse of Local Journalism, The Conversation **[R029]**
How the decline of local news meant residents' warnings went unreported.



Week 2: The night of the fire

By the end of Week 2, you will be able to:

1. Understand the events of the night of the Grenfell Tower fire using evidence and survivors' accounts.
2. Explain key considerations and areas of focus when teaching about Grenfell.
3. Select appropriate and subject-relevant content for teaching about Grenfell.

- **2.9** Curriculum mapping 56
- **2.11** Disrupting media narratives 63

THIS WEEK

About 2 hours

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Find them by their number in the margin.

SECTION
2.1
Where were you the night of the fire?

Where were you the night of the fire?

Before looking closely at the Inquiry timeline, pause to locate your own memory of the night of 14 June 2017. This reflection is not about testing recall. It is about noticing how disasters enter public consciousness differently depending on where we were, what media reached us, and how close we felt to the community affected.

REFLECT

Can you remember what you were doing that night? When was the first time you heard about the fire? What shaped your first understanding of what had happened?

Initial response
00:54 – 01:25

00:54
Behailu Kebede calls 999 to report a fire in Flat 16, Floor 4.

00:59
First firefighters reach the tower.

01:09
Fire breaks out of Flat 16 into exterior cladding; starts rapid climb up the east facade.

01:50
168 of 297 occupants have escaped. IC handover to SM Andrew Walton.

01:42
LAS declares a Significant Incident; the police helicopter (NPAS) arrives at 01:45.

01:31
By this time, 110 out of 297 occupants have escaped.

Extensive spread
02:04 – 02:44

02:06
GM Welch declares a Major Incident.

Fire spreads around the crown and diagonally across the building, affecting south-east and north-west corners. Command handovers continue between SM Walton, GM Richard Welch, and DAC Andrew O'Loughlin.

02:44–02:47
Andrew Roe takes command at 02:44 and revokes 'stay put' advice at 02:47.

Final evacuations
02:50 – 08:07

02:50
Commissioner Dany Cotton arrives at the scene.

03:20
First Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) meeting held.

Timeline of the fire

This chronological overview maps the critical sequence of events during the night of the fire, drawing directly from the formal findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report [R019].

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry was established in September 2017 by the UK government following the Grenfell Tower fire. Chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, the Inquiry examined the causes of the fire, the building's refurbishment, and the response of emergency services and public authorities. It involved survivors, bereaved families, local residents, government bodies, industry experts, and construction and manufacturing companies.

SECTION
2.2
The Grenfell Tower Inquiry report

[R019]
Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report
webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.u...

01:14
Firefighters enter the kitchen of Flat 16 for the first time.

01:21
First 999 call from a trapped occupant (Naomi Li, Floor 22).

01:25
First report of smoke entering a flat from a lobby (Floor 14).

01:26
MPS declares a Major Incident.

01:27
Fire reaches the roof and begins horizontal spread.

01:29
Incident Commander (IC) Michael Dowden requests "pumps 20".

Major Incident escalation
01:26 – 01:50

02:26
LAS declares a Major Incident.

02:35
Control room decides to revoke "stay put" advice and tells callers to leave.

Revocation of "stay put"
02:35 – 02:47

The critical turning point in the disaster response.

04:02
Fires on south and west elevations converge at the top corner.

08:07
Elpidio Bonifacio, the last survivor to leave the tower, is evacuated.

REFLECT

The 'stay put' strategy relied on fires being contained within individual flats. At Grenfell, this protection had failed: the fire reached the roof at 01:27, but the control room did not decide to advise callers to leave until 02:35, and the incident commander formally revoked 'stay put' at 02:47. Residents faced life-threatening conditions, often with limited information and options. As an educator, how would you help learners examine why official advice remained in place despite mounting evidence of its failure? What questions does this raise about institutional responsibility, accountability and trust?

A teaching perspective

Learners could examine the timeline alongside residents' testimonies, emergency calls and findings from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. They could consider why 'stay put' was ordinarily considered appropriate in buildings designed to contain fires within individual flats, and how the rapid spread of fire at Grenfell undermined this assumption.

The discussion should avoid judging residents for following or departing from official advice, recognising that they had different levels of information and opportunities to escape. Instead, attention could turn to how institutions recognise emerging evidence, question established procedures and respond when circumstances change.

This case raises important questions about the relationship between expertise, authority and public trust. Trust should not require unquestioning obedience, but should be supported by institutional competence, transparency, responsiveness to evidence and accountability. Educators could encourage learners to consider how institutions can earn, maintain and rebuild trust when their decisions have serious consequences.

How the fire began

SECTION
2.3
How did the fire start?

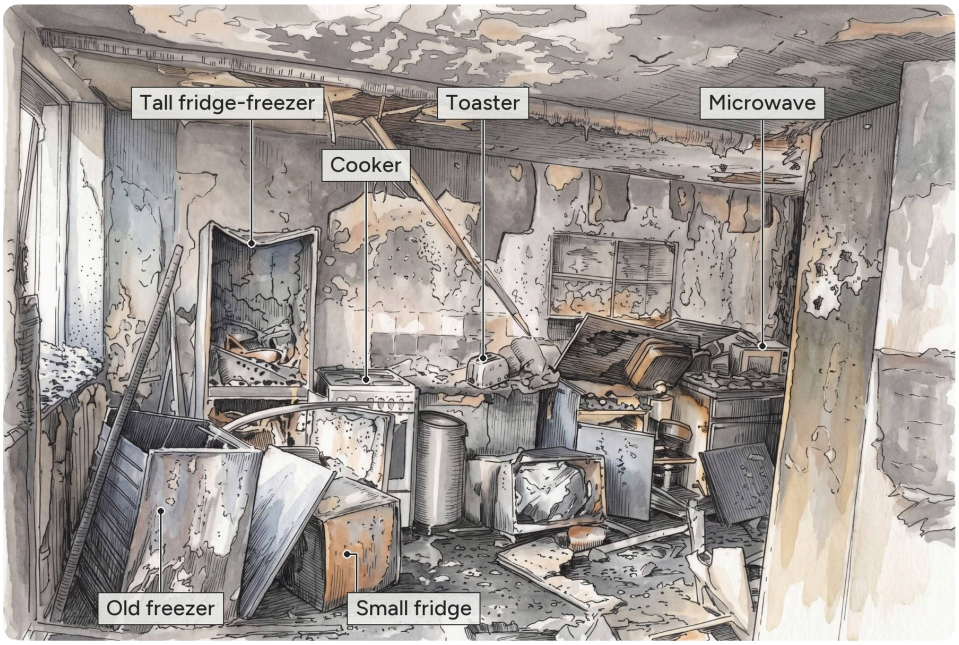
The Grenfell fire is often described as a simple kitchen fire that spread. The reality was far more complex, and far more preventable.

Flat 16, fourth floor

A forensic report by Dr Niamh Nic Daéid of the Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science concluded that the fire began "in or around" a Hotpoint fridge-freezer in flat 16. The occupant, Behailu Kebede, was woken by his smoke alarm and saw smoke near the fridge-freezer and kitchen window. He called the fire brigade immediately.

00:54	999 call logged
00:59	First engine arrives
01:07	Crew enters flat
01:14	Kitchen reached

The crew initially searched the bedrooms before reaching the kitchen at 01:14. There, firefighter Daniel Brown described seeing an "isolated curtain of flame from about 2–3 feet in the air to the ceiling." Thermal imaging showed that hot gases and flames had already spread across the window space, the point at which the fire reached the exterior cladding.



SOURCE
BBC News, Grenfell Tower: What happened **[R030]**. Illustration recreated from a photograph in that report. bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40301289

SECTION
2.4
How did it spread?

How the fire spread

Once the fire in flat 16 reached the exterior cladding, it spread with devastating speed. Within minutes, the building's design, intended to contain a fire to a single flat, had catastrophically failed.

Vertical and lateral spread

From the fourth floor, the fire raced upwards and across the eastern face of the tower. Fire safety engineer Dr Barbara Lane, reporting to the Grenfell Public Inquiry, identified it spreading vertically up the tower columns and laterally along the cladding above and below the window lines and between the window panels.

01:27	Fire reaches the roof (east side)
01:31	Fire spreads to the north elevation
02:20	Fire spreads to the south elevation

Less than 30 minutes after firefighters arrived, the blaze had reached the top of the 24-storey building.

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Grenfell Tower fire: How the night unfolded



[R031]
youtu.be/D_RPHNGy-aw
Content note: includes footage of the tower on fire.

The "stay put" policy

At 02:06, the London Fire Brigade declared a major incident. By then, around 40 fire engines were either on scene or en route.

Grenfell Tower operated a "stay put" fire policy: its design was supposed to contain any fire within a single flat long enough for crews to bring it under control. On the night, many residents were told by the emergency services to remain in their flats. As the fire raged out of control and thick, poisonous smoke filled the single narrow stairwell, many became trapped.

Dr Lane concluded that the stay put policy had "substantially failed" by 01:26, less than 30 minutes after the first firefighters arrived. Some residents who ignored the advice and left early made it down the stairs to safety.

Why the fire spread so quickly: The cladding

SECTION
2.5
Why did it spread so quickly?

The fire in flat 16 should have remained a contained kitchen fire. Instead, it engulfed a 24-storey building. The primary reason was the material wrapped around the outside of the tower.

The ACM cladding

The most significant element of Grenfell's 2012–16 refurbishment was the addition of external cladding: aluminium sheets bonded to a central polyethylene (plastic) core. In his report to the Public Inquiry, Professor Luke Bisby concluded that this material was the primary cause of the fire's rapid spread.

The polyethylene filler is highly combustible: it melts, drips and flows at elevated temperatures, releasing large amounts of energy during combustion.

Bisby also found that vertical cavities within the cladding structure acted as chimneys, accelerating the upward spread. Insulation behind the panels and a pre-existing polyurethane foam board may also have contributed.

ADAPTED FROM
Prof. Luke Bisby's report to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

SOURCES
Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 1 report, vol. 1, para 3.24; vol. 4, paras 24.3–24.6, 34.11 and 34.15 **[R019]**. Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 2 report, vol. 3, paras 40.7–40.8; vol. 4, paras 60.111–60.116; vol. 5, paras 81.14–81.21 **[R015]**.

A cascade of failures

The cladding was not the only problem. The Inquiry identified a series of additional failures that compounded the disaster:

Window materials
Combustible materials used in the refurbished windows allowed fire to enter flats from outside.

Smoke extraction
The system was designed for a fire on one floor; the Inquiry identified weaknesses in its design and verification.

Water supply
Water reached firefighters inside the tower through a dry rising main. Flow rates were low on the night, partly because of pressure losses between distant hydrants and the fire appliances.

Gas pipes
The boxing-in of new gas pipes in the lobbies had not been completed at the time of the fire. The Inquiry found that gas did not play a significant part in the fire's spread.

Fire doors
Many replacement flat entrance doors did not meet the required standards.

Lifts
Firefighters could not take control of the lifts using the fireman's switch, although they could still use them in normal operation.

A · THE PANEL



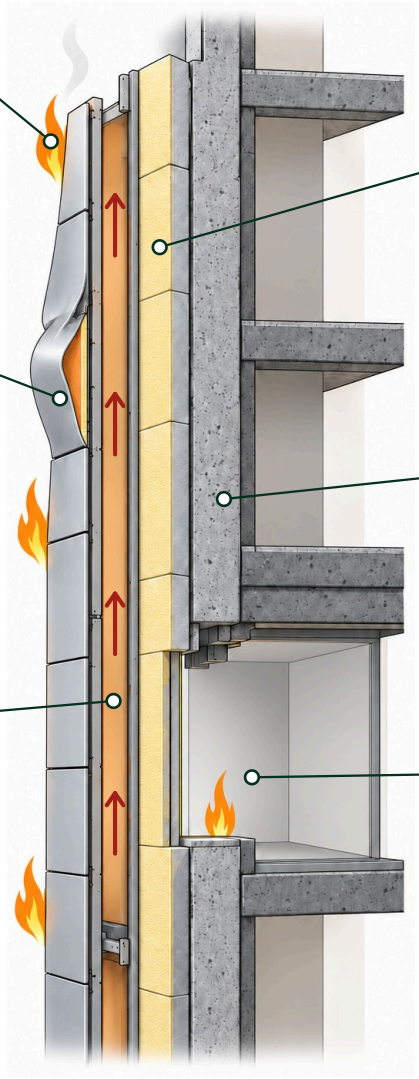
0.5 mm aluminium skin

3 mm polyethylene (PE) core

0.5 mm aluminium skin

Polyethylene is a combustible plastic. In a fire it melts, drips and burns.

B · THE WALL, IN SECTION



Flames on the outside
Within 20 minutes, flames reached the top of the tower.

ACM cladding panel
Its polyethylene core melted, dripped and burned, and was the main fuel for the fire.

Air cavity
The gap behind the panels. Flames and hot gases could travel upwards inside it.

Insulation (also combustible)
Foam boards behind the cavity. They held heat in the wall, helping the fire grow.

Concrete wall
The tower's original structure.

Fire in a flat
The fire began in a kitchen and escaped into the cladding around the window.

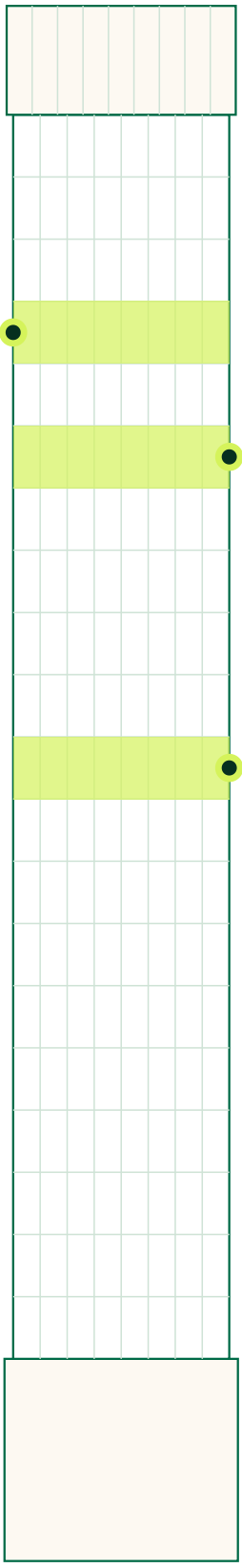
How the cladding helped the fire spread. The polyethylene cores of the ACM panels were the main reason the fire spread so fast; the insulation behind them held in heat and helped the fire grow.

SOURCE

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Phase 1 report, vol. 1, paras 1.1–1.2 and 6.12–6.13; vol. 4, para 23.52 [R019]. Phase 2 report, vol. 1, paras 2.116–2.118 [R015].

Survivors' accounts

While official advice told residents to "stay put," many Grenfell survivors took matters into their own hands, banging on doors, alerting neighbours, and guiding people out of the building. Their actions saved lives.



Emma O'Connor

20TH FLOOR

Extract from Emma's blog about escaping the fire and how the tragedy changed her. Read the full story [R032]

"But as we looked out of our flat window, we saw flames reflected in the windows of the school next door. Then suddenly, Luke saw a window explode from a flat on the fourth floor and I knew we had to get out fast."

Shahid Ahmed

18TH FLOOR

Shahid decided to leave after his kitchen window exploded. Even as he fled down the single stairwell, firefighters told him to go back up.

"I remember saying to one of them: 'There's a fire upstairs,' and they told me to go back up. They had masks on. I couldn't see their faces."

Miguel Alves

13TH FLOOR

Miguel told his children to leave the building, then knocked on every door on his floor, despite worrying his neighbours might be annoyed to be woken.

"It was my duty to help my neighbours, because they are my family; the people that live on my floor is like my family."

SOURCE

The Guardian, Grenfell Tower survivors tell how they ignored advice to stay put [R033]
theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/...

What should learners understand about Grenfell?

We now move to the second part of this week's learning, focusing on the substance of teaching about Grenfell: What should learners know and understand about Grenfell?

In this video, we explore what learners should truly understand about Grenfell, drawing on research with survivors and the community to present a framework that centres dignity, lived experience, and the vibrant life that existed before the fire.

It highlights the ongoing human impact, the systemic failures and ignored warnings that led to the tragedy, and the community's continued fight for justice and accountability.



WATCH

What should learners understand about Grenfell?

[R034]

youtu.be/UoqMxj2P_HA

Life before the disaster

Grenfell Tower was a cherished home and a vibrant, multicultural community. Teaching should make space for residents' positive memories, friendships, family life and pride in their homes.

"We had a really nice period as a family ... we've got amazing memories of going to that tower and being a family"

BEREAVED FAMILY MEMBER

The human impact

Remember the 72 people who died and recognise the profound effects on survivors, bereaved families and the wider community. Loss includes relationships, homes and a sense of safety.

"This loss, this pain, is never-ending, and you should know that"

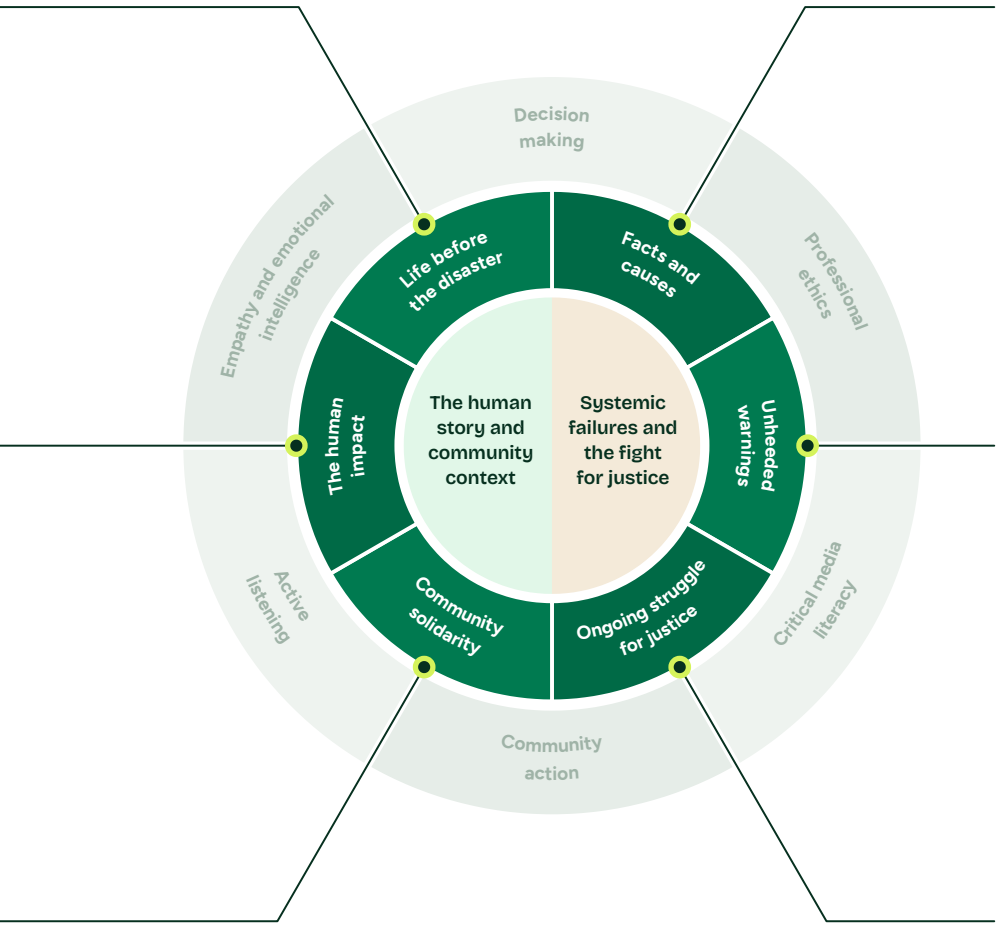
SURVIVOR

Community solidarity

The community organised immediate support and mutual aid when official responses failed. Teaching this history recognises residents as people with agency and civic capability.

"... if you could put in a bottle what this community did for each other, it's quite extraordinary"

SUPPORT WORKER



Facts and causes

Teach the established facts of the fire and the decisions that made it possible, including flammable external cladding, corporate practices and regulatory failures, alongside the social inequalities through which residents' safety was devalued.

"I would say they just didn't care because we were not white and rich"
COMMUNITY MEMBER

Unheeded warnings

Residents repeatedly raised concerns about fire safety, but those with power failed to respond. Their warnings show that the disaster was foreseeable and that community knowledge was available before lives were lost.

"Some of the people who were speaking up before Grenfell were people who were disabled ... if those people had been heard, maybe there would have been fewer victims"
RESEARCH CONTRIBUTOR

Ongoing struggle for justice

Justice is a continuing concern that includes accountability, recognition and redress. An inquiry or settlement does not, by itself, end an affected community's pursuit of justice.

"Yes, there's been a civil lawsuit and that's been settled, but I don't think anyone thinks that's justice"
SUPPORT WORKER

Framework, descriptions and quotations adapted from Park, W., Fancourt, N., Habibi, A. & Wahabi, H. (2026). Beyond remembrance: a community-engaged framework for education for disaster justice after the Grenfell Tower Fire. *Oxford Review of Education*.

Explore the framework online, with each component explained.
[R035] grenfellcurriculum.com/edj

What should learners be able to do?

In this video, we move beyond what learners should know about Grenfell to explore what they should be able to do, outlining six key competencies drawn from community research that translate justice-centred education into meaningful action.

It highlights the importance of critically analysing decision-making, applying professional ethics, practising empathy and active listening, engaging in community action, and developing critical media literacy to help build a more accountable and compassionate society.



WATCH

What should learners be able to do?

[R036]
youtu.be/C-qNjdi9ET4

Empathy and emotional intelligence

Connect with the people behind the statistics, recognise experiences of loss and trauma, and learn to talk respectfully about tragedy.

"... it's not hard to talk about like loss respectfully ... all it takes is just a bit of emotional intelligence"

YOUNG SURVIVOR

Active listening

Attend to what people say, recognise their concerns and resist redirecting a conversation away from their experience. Not hearing residents before the fire makes listening urgent.

"we needed to be active listeners and that it's a sign of respect"

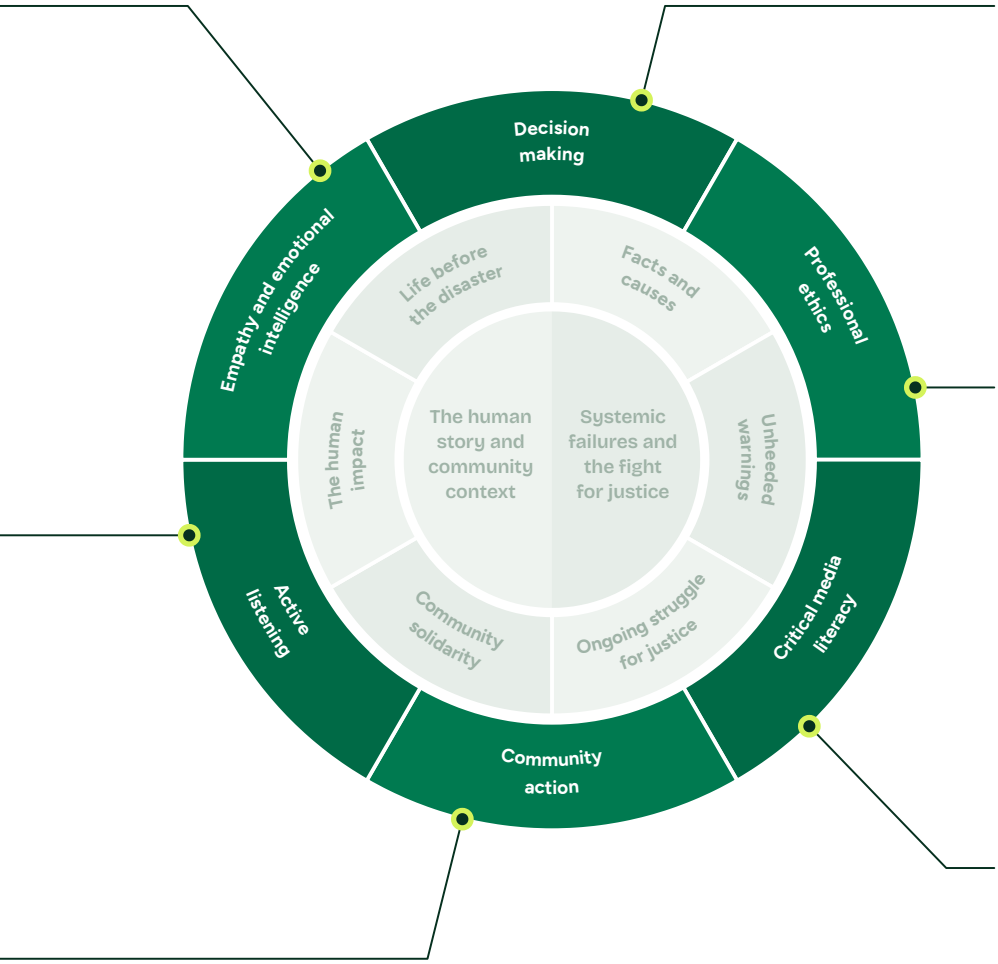
PARTICIPANT

Community action

Support others, organise collectively and advocate for rights. The Grenfell community's mutual aid and campaigning show how people act together when official systems fail.

"... learning how to raise our voices, how to build self-esteem, and how to support each other"

COMMUNITY MEMBER



Decision making

Scrutinise decisions made by authorities and corporations: whose interests they serve, whose safety they put at risk and how power shapes the available choices.

"The corporate greed, desire for profits and money were evidently more important than hundreds of human lives"

SURVIVOR

Professional ethics

Recognise and refuse practices that endanger people, including unsafe shortcuts justified by cost or institutional pressure, in every role with responsibility for others.

"It doesn't matter if you're going to be a playground monitor or running a 40,000-unit housing management organisation; it's about ethics"

BEREAVED FAMILY MEMBER

Critical media literacy

Question sources, identify bias and examine how news and social media frame disasters, asking whose perspectives are represented and whose interests a story serves.

"rumours and stuff like that ... fly around"

PARTICIPANT

Framework, descriptions and quotations adapted from Park, W., Fancourt, N., Habibi, A. & Wahabi, H. (2026). Beyond remembrance: a community-engaged framework for education for disaster justice after the Grenfell Tower Fire. *Oxford Review of Education*.

ACTIVITY
2.9
Curriculum mapping

TIME
5 min

Curriculum mapping

The story of Grenfell connects closely to core learning objectives across multiple subject areas in the national curriculum. In the following activity, we draw on selected objectives from the National Curriculum for England to illustrate what the story of Grenfell can help learners understand and explore.

ACTIVITY

Matching pairs: Grenfell Tower & curriculum

Match each Grenfell-related theme to a curricular context in which it could be explored. Write the corresponding letter beside each theme. An online version of the activity is also available [R037].

GRENFELL-RELATED THEMES

1 The flammability testing of the cladding materials which failed to predict the rapid spread of the fire. LETTER

2 The repeated concerns raised by the Grenfell Action Group regarding fire safety that were overlooked by the Tenant Management Organisation. LETTER

3 Locating the disaster within the historical context of North Kensington and social housing development. LETTER

4 The breach of the residents' right to life and safe housing. LETTER

5 The community-led response and the formation of support hubs by local residents immediately after the disaster. LETTER

CURRICULAR CONTEXTS

A GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (PEARSON EDEXCEL)
Investigate and analyse the work of past and present professionals and companies in the area of design and technology in order to help inform their own ideas.

B KS4 CITIZENSHIP
Income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

C KS4 CITIZENSHIP
The legal system in the UK, different sources of law and how the law helps society deal with complex problems.

D KS2 HISTORY
A study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

E KS3 CITIZENSHIP
The roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities.

Sources: curriculum wording from the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013); A is adapted from the Pearson Edexcel GCSE Design and Technology specification.

Consider which links feel strongest, most teachable or most ethically demanding in your context.

✂ ANSWER KEY · TURN UPSIDE DOWN

Suggested connections

1 A 2 B 3 D 4 C 5 E

These pairings suggest possible curricular connections; other connections may also be justified.

SECTION
2.10
Media failures and delayed justice

Media failures and delayed justice in Hillsborough and Grenfell

Media coverage of the Hillsborough disaster (1989) and the Grenfell Tower fire (2017) exposes systemic failures in British journalism that prolonged injustice and protected powerful institutions.

In both cases, the media amplified official narratives that blamed victims, failed to scrutinise authorities, and marginalised working-class and minority communities.

These were not isolated errors but structural problems rooted in weak investigative practice, commercial pressures, and over-reliance on official sources.

Hillsborough: Manufacturing blame

The Hillsborough disaster on 15 April 1989 ultimately caused the deaths of 97 Liverpool supporters. Four days later, *The Sun* published the headline "The Truth", falsely accusing fans of drunken violence and interference with rescue efforts. These claims, later admitted by police to be fabrications, were reported as fact. Other outlets, including the *Daily Express* and the BBC, repeated police accounts without verification, embedding falsehoods into public understanding.

Example: The Sun's front page, 19 April 1989

The Sun's front page carried three sub-headings beneath its headline: "Some fans picked pockets of victims," "Some fans urinated on the brave cops," and "Some fans beat up PC giving kiss of life." These allegations came from unnamed police sources, the local Conservative MP, and a South Yorkshire Police Federation spokesperson. None were independently verified. The claims were later comprehensively discredited by the Hillsborough Independent Panel in 2012 and the 2016 inquest jury. Wikipedia gives an overview of the coverage and its long aftermath [R038].

[R038]
Coverage of the Hillsborough disaster by The Sun (Wikipedia)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coverage_of...

Some newspapers, such as the *Daily Mirror* and the *Liverpool Echo*, rejected these claims, showing that editorial judgement could have prevented the spread of misinformation. *Mirror* reporters checked the police claims and could not substantiate them; one, Ted Oliver, reportedly said he would resign if his name appeared on the story. Instead, the *Mirror* ran with the more cautious headline: "Fury as police claim victims were robbed."

Key contrast: Different editorial choices

The fact that some newsrooms rejected the police narrative while others amplified it demonstrates that this was a failure of editorial judgement, not an unavoidable consequence of chaotic reporting conditions. The *Liverpool Echo*, closest to the community and its sources, was among the most cautious. *The Sun*, under editor Kelvin MacKenzie, pushed ahead despite internal misgivings about the story's reliability.

Media narratives aligned with longstanding stereotypes of football fans and Liverpool as unruly and disorderly. Media academic Chris Horrie has argued that *The Sun* treated Liverpool as essentially a foreign country from the mid-1980s onwards, linked to the city's multiracial culture, left-wing politics, and high unemployment. This framing dominated public discourse for 27 years, obstructing justice until the 2016 inquest ruled the deaths unlawful.

97
Lives lost at Hillsborough

27
Years until unlawful killing verdicts (2016)

164
Police statements substantially amended

116
Of these had unfavourable comments removed or altered

The coverage compounded trauma and reinforced distrust between Liverpool and the national press, a distrust that endures to this day, with the city's boycott of *The Sun* still active over three decades later.

SOURCE
Hillsborough Independent Panel report (2012), paras 2.11.53–2.11.56 **[R039]**.

Timeline: The long Road to justice

1989	Disaster at Hillsborough. *The Sun* publishes "The Truth." A boycott of the paper begins on Merseyside.
1991	First inquests return verdicts of "accidental death." Families dispute the findings and campaign for new inquests.
1998	Lord Justice Stuart-Smith concludes there is no justification for a new inquiry. Families are devastated.
2009	Hillsborough Independent Panel established by the government to review all evidence.
2012	The Panel's report reveals the full extent of the cover-up, including 164 altered police statements. PM David Cameron apologises. *The Sun* issues a front-page apology.
2016	New inquest jury returns verdicts of unlawful killing for the 96 people whose deaths it examined. Fans formally cleared of any responsibility.
2021	Andrew Devine, injured in the disaster, dies; a coroner rules that he was unlawfully killed, the 97th victim of Hillsborough.

2025 IOPC publishes its final report, confirming fundamental failures by South Yorkshire Police and the defensive approach adopted in the aftermath.

Key reference

The Hillsborough Independent Panel's full report (2012), which drew on more than 450,000 pages of documents from 85 organisations, is available on GOV.UK [R039]. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) published its final report on the police response in 2025 [R040].

[R039]
GOV.UK: Hillsborough Independent Panel Report
gov.uk/government/publications/th...

[R040]
policeconduct.gov.uk
policeconduct.gov.uk/hillsborough...

Grenfell: Ignored warnings and Victim-blaming

The Grenfell Tower fire of 14 June 2017 killed 72 residents. Unlike Hillsborough, the media's main failure occurred before the disaster. Residents had publicly warned of serious fire risks through the Grenfell Action Group blog, yet mainstream media ignored these concerns. Only specialist outlets, such as *Inside Housing*, sustained attention on fire safety in social housing.

Example: The Grenfell Action Group blog, November 2016

Eight months before the fire, the Grenfell Action Group published a blog post which predicted with chilling accuracy that only a catastrophic loss of life would expose the management failures at the tower. The group had published at least eight warnings about fire safety over the preceding three years. In 2013, the council threatened one of the bloggers with legal action, calling their posts "defamation and harassment." Two women who had campaigned for improved fire safety, Mariem Elgwahry and Nadia Choucair, were also reported to have been threatened with legal action by the management organisation, according to housing campaigner Pilgrim Tucker. Both later died in the fire.

SOURCE
The Independent, 18 June 2017.

On the day of the fire, the Grenfell Action Group published a statement pointing back to its earlier warnings [R041].

[R041]
Grenfell Action Group post-fire statement
grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com...

Veteran television journalist Jon Snow used the MacTaggart Lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival to ask why the mainstream media had failed so completely. He argued that the media was "comfortably with the elite, with little awareness, contact or connection with those not of the elite," and demanded to know why nobody in the mainstream press had seen the Grenfell Action Group blog.

SOURCE
Jon Snow, MacTaggart Lecture, Edinburgh International Television Festival, 23 August 2017.

Example: The role of specialist journalism

Inside Housing journalist Sophie Barnes had been reporting on fire safety problems in social housing long before Grenfell, including the 2009 Lakanal House fire (which killed six people due to exterior cladding) and a 2016 fire in Shepherd's Bush where the London Fire Brigade wrote to all London councils warning about cladding dangers. After Grenfell, Barnes filed Freedom of Information requests to all councils in the country, uncovering that 268 tower blocks had problems with fire doors, 71 had no emergency lighting, and 54 lacked ventilation in escape routes, as *The Conversation* later reported [R042].

[R042]

How specialist journals uncovered the real story (The Conversation)

theconversation.com/grenfell-it-t...

After the fire, sections of the press quickly turned to victim-blaming. The *Daily Mail* identified a resident, Behailu Kebede, implying his fridge caused the fire. Despite widespread complaints, the article deflected attention from systemic failures later identified by the Grenfell Inquiry, including government inaction, regulatory failure, and industry dishonesty.

Example: The Scapegoating of Behailu Kebede

Just two days after the fire, the *Daily Mail* published Kebede's name, photo, and address, framing him as the person whose "faulty fridge started the Grenfell Tower inferno." The article tracked down the traumatised survivor to his emergency accommodation. Kebede's lawyer later told the Grenfell Inquiry that the media harassment was so severe that police offered him witness protection [R043]. He was also falsely called an Islamist in some online coverage. The Inquiry's Phase 1 report formally exonerated Kebede, finding that the fire resulted from an electrical fault in a fridge-freezer and spread catastrophically due to combustible cladding, not due to any action or negligence by the resident.

[R043]

Grenfell Inquiry hears Kebede was offered police protection (HuffPost)

huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/grenfe...

Key reference

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 2 report (September 2024) found that the fire was the culmination of decades of failure by central government and systematic dishonesty by cladding manufacturers. In February 2025, the government published its response to all 58 recommendations, accepting 49 in full and nine in principle [R020].

[R020]

GOV.UK: Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 Government Response

gov.uk/government/publications/gr...

Class, race, and structural bias

Both disasters reveal how media narratives draw on class and racial stereotypes. Hillsborough victims were portrayed as irresponsible working-class "yobs", while Grenfell residents, many of them ethnic-minority residents in social housing, were marginalised before the fire and framed as irrational when demanding justice afterwards. Sympathy proved conditional and short-lived.

Hillsborough and Grenfell, side by side

How each disaster was framed, how long justice has taken, and how institutions responded.

DIMENSION	Hillsborough 15 April 1989	Grenfell 14 June 2017
Community profile	Working-class football supporters from Liverpool, a city stigmatised for its politics and unemployment	Predominantly ethnic-minority residents in social housing in one of London's wealthiest boroughs
Pre-disaster stereotyping	*The Sun* had nicknamed an Everton-Liverpool cup final "The Giro Cup" (a welfare reference); Liverpool was treated as culturally alien	Residents' complaints about fire safety were dismissed; bloggers were threatened with legal action for "defamation"
Post-disaster framing	Victims blamed as drunken hooligans; police narrative accepted as "The Truth"	Individual resident scapegoated; survivors framed as unreasonable for demanding accountability
Duration of injustice	27 years for unlawful killing verdicts (1989–2016); Graham Mackrell convicted of a health-and-safety offence	7 years to final Inquiry report (2017–2024); criminal prosecutions are still pending
Institutional response	PM committed to a "Hillsborough Law", a legal duty of candour on public servants	The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea adopted the "Hillsborough Charter" for its approach to the Grenfell Inquiry

SOURCE
Channel 4 News, 7 July 2020.

In July 2020, bereaved families and survivors urged the Inquiry to examine whether race and discrimination had been factors in the fire. Their barrister, Leslie Thomas QC, told the Inquiry that the fire was "inextricably linked with race".

Further context: The Collapse of local journalism

A 2019 article in *The Conversation* [R029] drew a direct line between the collapse of local journalism and the failure to detect the conditions that produced the Grenfell disaster. As former local journalist Peter Sands recalled: "Any local newspaper journalist worth his or her salt would have been all over that story because of that blog. We would have known about that local group's concerns because we were very much in the local community." Instead, he noted, "there is no-one there."

[R029]
Grenfell Warnings and the Collapse of Local Journalism, The Conversation
theconversation.com/grenfell-towe...

Disrupting media narratives of disaster

ACTIVITY
2.11
Disrupting media narratives

TIME
8 min

[R044]
Online version of Deconstructing Disaster Narratives
grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

In this activity, you will examine the case studies, identify systemic failures, and apply your learning by drafting a response that challenges individual-blame narratives. The activity is also available online [R044].

Use the activity below to move from critique to practice: identify the assumptions behind a media narrative, then reframe it in ways that foreground structural causes and community dignity.

Deconstructing disaster narratives

1 The timeline of justice

Context: The media responses to Hillsborough (1989) and Grenfell Tower (2017) reveal systemic failures in journalism that extended institutional culpability and delayed justice.

Hillsborough 1989
POST-DISASTER FALSEHOODS
The failure happened immediately after the event.

- **Day 4** — *The Sun* publishes "The Truth" (police lies).
- **23 Years Later** — Media apology (2012).
- **27 Years Later** — Inquest Verdict (2016).

Grenfell 2017
PRE-DISASTER SILENCE
The failure happened before the event.

- **2013–2017** — Residents' warnings ignored by media.
- **Day 2** — Media blames individual resident's fridge.
- **9+ Years Later** — Criminal prosecutions pending.

Reflection point. Notice that while the timing differed, the result was the same:

Institutional protection and victim blaming.

QUESTIONS

2 Spot the systemic failure

Test your understanding of the reading materials.

1 THE "TRUTH" HEADLINE (HILLSBOROUGH)

What was the primary institutional cause of this failure?

- A The journalist had a personal grudge against Liverpool.
- B Uncritical reliance on anonymous senior police sources without verification.
- C A printing error at the press agency.

2 THE "FAULTY FRIDGE" (GRENFELL)

Focusing on the fridge represents which media trope?

- A Individualising blame to deflect from system/corporate failure.
- B Investigative rigour.
- C Promoting fire safety awareness.

3 THE MISSING WARNINGS

Why were Grenfell Action Group blogs ignored before the fire?

- A The blog was private and password-protected.
- B Structural decline in local press and marginalisation of social housing residents.
- C The warnings were vague and unspecific.

ANSWERS · TURN UPSIDE DOWN

Answers and explanations

1 B Journalists accepted official accounts without basic investigative work.

2 A It creates a scapegoat rather than examining deregulation or cladding.

3 B Working-class concerns were not seen as newsworthy until tragedy struck.

If your answer differs, revisit the reading and try again.

3 Pedagogical application

Scenario. You are teaching a lesson on current affairs. A student repeats a debunked narrative:

"Well, the Grenfell fire was basically just caused by one guy's fridge."

YOUR TASK

Draft a two-sentence response to that student to shift their thinking from individual blame to systemic analysis.

For example: 'That was the initial report, but we need to ask: why did the fire spread so quickly once it started? Who was responsible for the materials on the outside of the building?'

End of week 2 & further reading

We come to the end of the second week. Hopefully, the final activity gives you some insight into how you might include the Grenfell story in your own teaching. Next week, we will examine the events since the fire and Grenfell's legacy.

Further reading

What happened that night

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report (October 2019) **[R019]**
Official findings on the events of the night: fire spread, evacuation, and emergency response.

Grenfell Tower Fire, London Fire Brigade **[R045]**
LFB's account of the night and the institutional changes that followed.

The Grenfell Tower Fire, Understanding Regulation **[R046]**
Clear summary of the technical and regulatory failures that enabled the fire to spread.

Survivors' voices & testimony

Grenfell United **[R047]**
The survivors' and bereaved families' campaign group, their story in their words.

Grenfell Testimony Week **[R048]**
A project dedicated to giving the bereaved, survivors, and residents a platform to share their experiences.

"GRENFELL TOWER FIRE", Grenfell Action Group (14 June 2017) **[R041]**
The community blog's raw post on the day of the fire: "All our warnings fell on deaf ears."

Media failure

Finally, the Truth About Hillsborough, The Conversation **[R049]**
Analysis of media failure at Hillsborough, a key comparator for teaching about Grenfell.

Accountability & the Hillsborough law

Public Office (Accountability) Bill ('Hillsborough Law'), House of Lords Library (26 August 2026) **[R050]**
A brief introduction to the proposed Hillsborough Law as it stood in August 2026, including the duty of candour for public authorities and measures to support bereaved families.

Notes



Week 3: After the fire

By the end of Week 3, you will be able to:

1. Analyse responses to the Grenfell Tower fire and evaluate their impacts on the local community and wider society.
2. Explain recent developments related to Grenfell, with particular attention to memorialisation and justice processes.
3. Apply an understanding of the temporal dimensions of Grenfell (before, during, and after the fire) to inform instructional decisions.
4. Design a learning experience about Grenfell that is grounded in Education for Disaster Justice (EDJ) principles.

THIS WEEK

About 2 hours

3.6	Mapping your moral compass	80
3.9	Design your learning experience	85

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Find them by their number in the margin.

SECTION
3.1
What happened after the fire?

The government response

The government response immediately after the fire has been heavily scrutinised. It is not only the cause of the fire being questioned but also how the local councils and government responded.

The Guardian article frames the aftermath of Grenfell as a failure of response as well as a failure of prevention. For teaching purposes, the key question is not only how the fire happened, but how public bodies responded to people who had lost relatives, homes, documents, medicines and a sense of safety. The early lack of clear information, visible leadership and coordinated support became part of the injustice experienced by the community.

SOURCE
The government responded swiftly to 7/7 bombings. What went wrong at Grenfell Tower? **[R051]** (*The Guardian*)
theguardian.com/public-leaders-ne...

7/7 bombings (2005)

The London bombings of 7 July 2005 provide a useful point of comparison. Within two days, emergency planners had agreed to create a dedicated family assistance centre, drawing on lessons from earlier disasters and giving survivors and relatives a clearer place to seek information, practical help and emotional support.

The centre first opened at the Queen Mother Sports Centre on Vauxhall Bridge Road and later moved to the Horticultural Halls in Vincent Square. It brought together the police, Westminster City Council and voluntary organisations, including the British Red Cross, and remained in operation for several weeks.

A relief fund and telephone support line were also put in place early in the response. The arrangements were not perfect, but they show what a more planned, visible and joined-up public response can look like when agencies work from a shared emergency framework. The bombings and the police investigation that followed are the subject of the documentary *Attack on London: Hunting the 7/7 Bombers* **[R052]**, and survivors and bereaved families still gather each year to remember those who died **[R053]**.

[R052]
Documentary: Attack on London, Hunting the 7/7 Bombers (Netflix)
netflix.com/title/81715711

[R053]
7/7 Memorial Service 2026, London City Hall
london.gov.uk/events/77-memorial-...

Grenfell Tower fire (2017)

By contrast, many people affected by Grenfell described having to search for basic information and assistance while community organisations, faith groups, charities and volunteers filled gaps left by official bodies. The comparison helps learners ask why an emergency response can be experienced as abandonment by the very people it is meant to serve. In the days after the fire, relatives searching for missing family members described the official helpline as "hopeless" **[R054]**.

[R054]
'The helpline is hopeless': Grenfell relatives criticise lack of information
theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/...

The community response

SECTION
3.2
Bringing a community together

In stark contrast to the slow and disorganised official response, the community around Grenfell Tower mobilised almost immediately. Neighbours, voluntary organisations, local businesses, and religious communities of all faiths stepped in to provide shelter, food, clothing, emotional support, and practical help, often within hours of the fire.

How Grenfell brought a community together



[R055]
youtu.be/ZmgWPUxFv6Q

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

The role of faith communities

Churches, mosques, and other places of worship in North Kensington were among the first to open their doors. They offered space for displaced families, organised donations, and provided pastoral care in the days and weeks that followed.

A report by the Christian thinktank Theos found that faith groups responded "rapidly, compassionately and holistically" to the disaster. The report, After Grenfell: The Faith Groups' Response [R056] (full report as a PDF here [R057]), examines how these communities organised relief efforts and argues that places of worship should practise emergency responses before crises occur, which the report calls "preparation in peacetime".

The Al-Manaar mosque, just yards from the tower, became one of the most important hubs in the immediate aftermath, receiving and distributing donations, hosting community meetings, and providing a safe space for grieving families (read the mosque's own account of its response [R058]).

Solidarity beyond North Kensington

The response to Grenfell did not stop at the boundaries of North Kensington. Across the UK and around the world, people and organisations were moved to act, not as a brief outpouring of sympathy, but through sustained relationships of solidarity that continue years later.

[R056]
After Grenfell: The Faith Groups' Response
theosthinktank.co.uk/research/201...

[R057]
Theos: After Grenfell (PDF)
grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

[R058]
Al-Manaar Mosque Response (PDF)
grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

[R059]

Cornwall Hugs Grenfell

cornwallhugsgrenfell.org

Cornwall Hugs Grenfell [R059] is one of the most remarkable examples. Founded just six days after the fire, the charity has provided over 500 respite holidays in Cornwall for survivors, bereaved families, and firefighters, bridging two communities more than 300 miles apart. Thousands of Cornish individuals, businesses, and organisations have contributed, and the bond between Cornwall and Kensington has become a lasting symbol of grassroots compassion. In 2019, a street sign in the fishing village of Mousehole, on a 200-year-old lane already called Grenfell Street, became the first in the UK to carry the Grenfell green heart emblem, a permanent marker of the partnership between the two communities.

[R060]

4.16 Institute for Life and Safety Education

goe416.go.kr/eng

Grenfell's significance has also been recognised internationally. In South Korea, the lessons of Grenfell are taught at the 4.16 Institute for Life and Safety Education [R060], an educational institution established by bereaved families following the Sewol ferry disaster of April 2014, in which 304 people died, including 250 school students from Danwon High School. The Institute features preserved 'memory classrooms' and offers educational programmes built around the principles of remembrance, empathy, and democratic citizenship. Researchers at the Institute and the University of Southampton have collaborated to explore how disaster education can connect educators and affected communities across national borders, using Grenfell and Sewol as parallel case studies in learning from preventable tragedy.

These examples illustrate a wider truth about Grenfell: the disaster created connections that endure, not only in grief but in a shared commitment to justice, safety, and the belief that ordinary people can hold institutions to account.

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Two communities, one heart: Cornwall & Kensington together

A short film by Cornwall Hugs Grenfell, which organises donated holidays in Cornwall for survivors, bereaved families, and firefighters. By connecting the London community with the peace of the coast, it fosters long-term healing through nature and solidarity. This video documents the lasting bond between the communities of Cornwall and North Kensington.



[R061]
youtu.be/FbdV3ZB5UFc

Remembering Grenfell

As the inquiry has progressed and criminal investigations continue, the focus has increasingly turned to a deeper question: How should we remember Grenfell? What is the legacy of the fire, and what have we truly learnt?

SECTION
3.3
How should we remember Grenfell?

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission, eighth anniversary film



[R062]
youtu.be/fBXA1v2ISbU

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

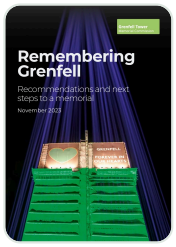
The Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission

Following the tragic events, the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission was established to develop a truly community-led vision for a fitting memorial, one that commemorates those who lost their lives and those whose lives were forever changed. The Commission began its work in September 2019.

They worked closely with the Grenfell community, bereaved families, survivors, Lancaster West Estate residents, and the wider neighbourhood who lived in close proximity to the tower, to understand their hopes and wishes for a future memorial. The result was a set of recommendations published in their 2023 report, *Remembering Grenfell* [R063], which is also available as an audio recording [R064].

[R063]

Remembering Grenfell, Commission Report (PDF)



grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

[R064]

Listen as a podcast

grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/news/...

WEEK 3

SECTION
3.4
Literature as remembrance

Literature as remembrance

How do we remember a disaster without reducing it to facts and figures? Literature, and poetry in particular, can do something that reports and timelines cannot: it can hold grief, absence, and community in a single breath. For educators, literary responses to Grenfell offer powerful ways to centre humanity in the classroom.

Read & listen: 'The missing' by Roger Robinson

Roger Robinson's 'The Missing' is an elegy for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, from his T. S. Eliot Prize-winning collection *A Portable Paradise* (Peepal Tree Press, 2019). The poem evokes the shock and aftermath of the fire through surreal, dreamlike imagery, bodies becoming weightless, a community suspended between presence and absence. Its closing lines draw a quiet, devastating line between those who were lost and those who remained.

Robinson is also an educator: his workshops have been recognised by organisations including the Gulbenkian Museum Prize, and he co-founded the international writing collective Malika's Kitchen. His work demonstrates how poetry can bear witness without sensationalism.

REFLECT

Robinson uses surreal, weightless imagery to describe loss rather than graphic depictions of the fire. How might this kind of literary distance help students engage emotionally with a disaster without exposing them to traumatic content, and how does this connect to EDJ Principle 1, start with humanity, not the horror?

Literary distance and emotional safety

Metaphor and abstraction allow students to feel the weight of loss without encountering graphic imagery. This creates space for emotional engagement on their own terms, exactly the kind of entry point EDJ Principle 1 calls for.

REFLECT

The poem ends by distinguishing between "the city of the missing" and "the city of the stayed." What might your students make of that division? Could this poem open a conversation about who is remembered after a disaster, who is forgotten, and whose responsibility it is to keep bearing witness?

Remembrance as responsibility

The division invites students to consider their own position: are we among "the stayed"? If so, what obligation does that carry? This reframes remembrance as active responsibility rather than passive sympathy.

Read & listen on the Poetry Archive
[R065] poetryarchive.org/poem/the-missing

SECTION
3.5
The future of Grenfell

Demolition of the Tower

For years after the fire, Grenfell Tower remained standing, wrapped in a protective covering to preserve forensic evidence, while its future was debated. On 7 February 2025, the government announced its decision to carefully take down the tower, after then Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner had met bereaved families and survivors to tell them. The decision followed independent engineering advice that the structure was significantly damaged and would continue to deteriorate.

The decision was emotionally charged for the community. For some, the tower is a physical connection to loved ones lost; for others, it is a painful daily reminder of the tragedy. The Grenfell Next of Kin group acknowledged the government's reasoning, while Grenfell United expressed frustration that families had not been fully consulted. Some survivors feared that taking the tower down would risk the fire being forgotten [R066].

[R066]
The Guardian: Demolition would risk fire being forgotten, some survivors say
theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/...

SOURCES
GOV.UK, Grenfell Tower announcement (7 February 2025) and community update (September 2025).

In April 2025, the government gave notice that it intended to extend the existing site contract held by Deconstruct UK to cover the dismantling. Work began in September 2025 and is expected to take about two years. The Deputy Prime Minister committed to ensuring that materials and elements from the tower could be preserved for inclusion in the future memorial, if the community wished.

READ

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Plan to dismantle block 'unforgivable', families say

BBC News reports how bereaved families and survivors responded to the decision to take down the tower.

[R067]
bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq5g99xy9...

The memorial: Progress and vision

Community-led vision

[R068]
Memorial Commission Report (PDF, November 2023)
grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/stora...

The Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission's terms of reference were published in September 2018, and it began its work in 2019, to ensure that bereaved families, survivors, and North Kensington residents lead the decision-making on the long-term future of the site. After years of community consultation, the Commission published its second report in November 2023, titled *Remembering Grenfell: Recommendations and Next Steps to a Memorial* [R068].

The community's wishes for the memorial:

A space that is peaceful, reflective and respectful, conveying remembrance, hope, community and love. The Commission recommends a permanent, peaceful memorial incorporating a garden. Community suggestions include water, light, the colour green and the names of those who died, with decisions respecting bereaved families' wishes.

Design competition

In July 2024, a design competition was launched. By January 2025, five teams were shortlisted: Curl La Tourelle + Head; Freehaus; George King Architects x Grow to Know; New South; and Office Sian. The London-based studio Freehaus, known for its community-led projects, was ultimately selected to develop the memorial design in close collaboration with the Grenfell community. Freehaus was appointed in November 2025. A final design, subject to planning approval, is expected in 2027.

Commission co-chair Lord Paul Boateng said in a 2024 interview with the *RIBA Journal* [R069] that the memorial must reflect the experience of a marginalised community and stand as a monument to the injustice they suffered.

[R069]

RIBAJ: Memorial design must bring sense of peace and justice

ribaj.com/intelligence/grenfell-t...

SOURCES

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission (2023) [R068]; design team announcement, 24 November 2025; RIBAJ interview, 2024 [R069].

Delayed justice

Criminal investigation

Perhaps the most painful aspect of the Grenfell aftermath is the protracted wait for criminal accountability. The Metropolitan Police opened a criminal investigation shortly after the fire in June 2017 and has been considering a range of potential offences including manslaughter, corporate manslaughter, misconduct in public office, and fire safety violations. However, the investigation has been enormously complex, involving 700 organisations, 165 million electronic files, and thousands of witness statements.

54

Individual suspects

Referred to the CPS for charging decisions

20

Organisations

Companies and other organisations identified as suspects

15,000+

Individuals examined

Roles investigated by the police

700

Organisations examined

Before narrowing down potential criminal responsibility

Police submitted all charging files to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on 30 September 2026. Charging decisions are expected before 14 June 2027.

SOURCE

Metropolitan Police, 30 September 2026.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has stated openly that this timeline represents a situation where justice delayed is justice denied.

Additionally, in February 2025, seven organisations were flagged for investigation under the Procurement Act 2023. However, by July 2025, debarment investigations into Grenfell-linked suppliers were paused at the request of the CPS and Metropolitan Police, to avoid prejudicing the criminal proceedings. This further frustrated campaigners who have long demanded that companies found culpable be excluded from public contracts.

The Inquiry and building safety reform

[R015]

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report (seven volumes), GOV.UK

gov.uk/government/publications/pu...

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 2 final report [R015] was published on 4 September 2024. It attributed the disaster to decades of government failure, construction industry incompetence, and the deliberate marketing of unsafe cladding products by companies including Arconic, Celotex, and Kingspan. The inquiry formally closed on 10 February 2025, and the government published its official response on 26 February 2025, accepting 49 recommendations in full and nine in principle.

Key reform commitments

Single construction regulator
Legislation is planned between 2027 and 2029, when parliamentary time allows, with the regulator established in 2028–2029.

Product testing review
Comprehensive overhaul of building product testing regimes.

Emergency evacuation plans
Residential PEEPs requirements took effect in England in April 2026 for eligible residents in specified buildings.

Remediation progress
In the Autumn Budget 2024, the government announced £1 billion for cladding remediation in 2025–26. As of October 2025, 35% of the 5,570 buildings monitored by the government's remediation programme had completed works, and about half had not started.

SOURCES

Grenfell Tower Inquiry government progress report, May 2026; MHCLG, Building Safety Remediation data release, October 2025; Autumn Budget 2024.

WEEK 3

SECTION

3.5

The future of Grenfell: reflection

The future of Grenfell: Reflection

Answer these reflection questions on the future of Grenfell.

QUESTION

Why has criminal justice taken so long to materialise for the Grenfell community, and what tensions exist between thoroughness of investigation and the human need for timely accountability?

The wait for criminal justice

The criminal investigation has been exceptionally complex, involving 700 organisations, 165 million electronic files, and potential charges ranging from corporate manslaughter to fraud. Police needed to wait for the Inquiry's Phase 2 report (published September 2024) before completing their files for the CPS. While thoroughness increases the chance of successful prosecution, the near-decade wait has caused immense distress to bereaved families, encapsulated in the phrase "justice delayed is justice denied". This tension raises the question of whether a legal system can meet the emotional and moral needs of victims even when it is working as designed.

QUESTION

What does the decision to demolish Grenfell Tower, rather than preserve it, reveal about the challenges of memorialising a tragedy while also supporting a living community?

Memorialisation and a living community

The demolition decision reflects a difficult balance. Engineering reports confirmed the tower was deteriorating and posed safety risks, making preservation impractical. For some, the tower was a sacred connection to lost loved ones; for others, it was a source of daily trauma. The choice to demolish and replace it with a community-designed memorial acknowledges that memorialisation must serve the living community by offering a space for peace, reflection and remembrance, rather than preserving a painful ruin. It also shows how memorials must evolve through genuine community participation, not top-down decisions.

EXERCISE
3.6
Self-assessment

TIME
10 min

[R070]

Online version of Mapping Your Moral Compass

grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Mapping your moral compass

This exercise asks you to clarify the ethical commitments you bring to teaching about Grenfell. Use the activity below to think through what you would centre, avoid and make accountable in your own classroom practice. You can also complete it online [R070].

Reflect on your boundaries and responsibilities when teaching about the Grenfell Tower fire. There are no right or wrong answers.

1 Ethical dilemmas

For each scenario, indicate your comfort level from 1 (Very Uncomfortable) to 5 (Very Comfortable).

Scenario A. Mentioning ongoing justice campaigns while teaching the facts of the fire.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Neutral	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

Scenario B. Explicitly discussing systemic causes (e.g., housing policy, deregulation) with students.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Neutral	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

Scenario C. Inviting students to share personal experiences of housing insecurity or loss.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Neutral	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

What makes one of these feel harder than the other?

2 Deep dive

REFLECT

What do your responses reveal about your responsibilities and boundaries as a teacher?

Your reflection summary

Use the same interpretation as the online activity:

4 or 5	You indicated comfort with this area.
All 3s	You maintained a neutral stance across these scenarios.
1 or 2	You expressed hesitation regarding this area. This might be an area for future safeguarding preparation.

REFLECT

The three areas are discussing justice campaigns; addressing systemic causes; and navigating personal student experiences. Read your personal reflection alongside these observations.

SECTION
3.7
The CARE-LEAD approach

The CARE-LEAD model

Teaching about Grenfell is not only a question of what to teach; it is also a question of how. The CARE-LEAD model was developed by the Grenfell Curriculum project from community-based participatory research with Grenfell survivors, bereaved families, young people, teachers, and support workers. It offers eight interconnected considerations to guide educators before, during, and after teaching about the disaster.

These are not sequential steps. They are a framework for reflective, responsible practice, grounded in what the community told us matters most.

C A R E

Clarify purpose

Move beyond symbolic remembrance. Define a clear educational aim, whether ethical citizenship, accountability, solidarity, or critical literacy, so teaching is purposeful, not routine.

Assess the room

Consider who is in front of you: age, proximity to the event, vulnerability, neurodivergence, and local context. Read the emotional temperature and be prepared to adjust.

Resource with legitimacy

Prioritise community voices. Distinguish between personal testimony and official evidence. Acknowledge what remains unresolved: Grenfell is not a concluded case study.

Enact with trauma-informed structure

Design lessons with clear framing, content warnings, opt-out pathways, and emotional containment. Difficult content should not be avoided, but learners must be supported to engage safely.

L E A D

Leverage medium deliberately

Choose images, narrative, poetry, music, and discussion intentionally. Ask: what does this medium make possible for learners, and does it honour the community whose experience it represents?

Evaluate without extractive Assessment

Do not reduce Grenfell to exam questions or mark schemes. Favour reflection, dialogue, and ethical reasoning. Assessment should demonstrate understanding, not extract it.

Aftercare and continuation

Teaching does not end when the lesson does. Plan pastoral follow-up, communicate with families about what is being taught, and ensure learners know where support is available.

Duty of accountability

Remain accountable to the affected community. Update content as contexts evolve. Ask: who is this representation answerable to, and how will I revise it if community priorities, evidence or legal contexts change?

What unites these eight considerations is a single commitment: that teaching about Grenfell must be done with the same care, honesty, and respect that the community has shown in sharing their experiences with us.

Introducing CARE-LEAD

In this video, we introduce the CARE-LEAD pedagogical model, developed through community-based research, to guide educators in teaching about Grenfell in ways that are ethical, trauma-informed, and accountable to those affected.



[R071]
youtu.be/PfBHA8u-YPY

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

SECTION
3.8
Teaching Grenfell in an unfinished present

Teaching Grenfell in an unfinished present

In this video, we examine the challenges and possibilities of teaching about Grenfell as an event that remains legally, politically, and emotionally unfinished, exploring how its ongoing status can create both hesitancy and powerful opportunities for justice-centred learning.

Grenfell is not a closed chapter. Its legal processes, political consequences, and community grief remain ongoing. This creates real challenges for educators, but also powerful opportunities for justice-centred learning.

Key tensions educators face

Hesitancy — Urgency

Unresolved legal proceedings can make teachers cautious, but avoidance risks becoming a form of pre-emptive censorship.

Rawness — Readiness

For some, the event is still too painful. For others, the time is now, before its lessons fade from public memory.

Memory — Routine

Remembrance must remain meaningful. If students hear "never again" year after year without engagement, they will switch off.

Near — Distant

For those affected, Grenfell is lived every day. For learners elsewhere, it can feel like ancient history. Educators must bridge that gap.

Teaching about Grenfell is not about having all the answers. It is about being willing to engage with the questions and building pedagogies capable of holding uncertainty, acknowledging ongoing injustice, and supporting learners to think critically about events that are not yet resolved.

WATCH

Click the link on screen, or scan the code on paper.

Teaching Grenfell in an unfinished present



[R072]
youtu.be/ak5KcXQJuPM

REFLECT

A community member observed that some teachers avoid Grenfell entirely because it feels "too raw" or legally uncertain. Others argue that if we keep waiting, we will never teach it at all. Where do you sit on that spectrum, and what would help you feel more confident to begin?

Confidence through a framework

Confidence often grows from having a clear framework (like CARE-LEAD) and legitimate resources. The goal is not certainty but honest engagement, modelling for students that unresolved questions are worth examining, not avoiding.

Design your Grenfell learning experience

EXERCISE
3.9
Workbook

TIME
30 min

Now that you have explored the historical context of the Grenfell Tower fire, the justice-centred framework for learning, and the CARE-LEAD model for responsible pedagogy, it is time to begin applying this knowledge in practice.

Based on what you have learned about the Grenfell Tower fire and effective approaches to teaching sensitive and complex topics, begin designing a lesson plan. Consider your educational purpose, the age and context of your learners, the resources you will use, and how you will ensure the lesson is ethical, trauma-informed, and accountable to the community's experiences. An online version of the exercise is also available [R073].

[R073]
Online version of Design Your Learning Experience
grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Design your learning experience

Based on what you have learned about the Grenfell Tower fire and effective approaches to teaching sensitive and complex topics, begin designing a lesson plan.

1. LEARNERS AND CONTEXT

TIME
4 min

Who are your learners and what is their starting point?

Consider: age or key stage; subject or setting; prior knowledge; personal connections; sensitivities.

e.g. a Year 10 Citizenship class; a museum family-learning group; adults at a community workshop…

2. FOCUS AREAS

TIME
3 min

Which aspects of the Grenfell story will you prioritise?

Knowledge and understanding

- [ ] Life before the disaster
- [ ] The human impact
- [ ] Community solidarity
- [ ] Facts and causes
- [ ] Unheeded warnings
- [ ] Ongoing struggle for justice

Skills and disposition

- [ ] Decision making
- [ ] Professional ethics
- [ ] Empathy and emotional intelligence
- [ ] Active listening
- [ ] Community action
- [ ] Critical media literacy

Draft objectives across Knowledge, Skills, and Values.

e.g., Knowledge: Understand how deregulation and cost-cutting contributed to the Grenfell Tower fire.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

TIME
4 min

How will you manage the sensitivity of this material?

e.g., Establish ground rules, content warnings and an opt-out route for learners.

4. CREATING A SAFE SPACE

TIME
4 min

5. ACTIVITY IDEA

TIME
5 min

Draft one core activity or task.

e.g., Students examine a timeline of residents' warnings and discuss institutional responses.

Review your lesson plan

REFLECT

Review your responses across all five sections: Learners & Context; Focus Areas (Knowledge & Understanding and Skills & Disposition); Learning Objectives; Safe Space & Safeguarding; and Activity Idea. Return to any section you wish to revise.

End of week 3 & further reading

As you complete this programme, we invite you to carry forward the principles at its heart: listening carefully, centring community voices, and approaching Grenfell with both compassion and critical awareness. Teaching about the fire is not only about recounting events, but about honouring lives, recognising injustice, and supporting young people to think ethically about the world around them.

Thank you for your commitment to this work. By engaging thoughtfully with this course, you contribute to a living legacy, one that upholds dignity, truth, and justice in education, and ensures that the lessons of Grenfell continue to be heard, understood, and acted upon.

Further reading

The Inquiry & accountability

Phase 2 Report: Digest of Key Findings, Fire Brigades Union **[R074]**
Accessible summary of the 1,700-page final report's most important conclusions.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea **[R075]**
The council's response, including adoption of the Hillsborough Charter.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry: House of Lords Debate, Lords Library **[R076]**
Parliamentary briefing covering the Inquiry, criminal investigations, and remediation.

Grenfell Testimony Week **[R048]**
An independent initiative giving the bereaved, survivors, and residents a platform to speak directly to the organisations responsible for the fire.

How the Failures That Caused Grenfell Still Exist Today, The Guardian (February 2026) **[R077]**
Video report on systemic failures that remain unresolved years after the fire.

Justice campaigns & community response

Grenfell United **[R047]**
Survivors' and bereaved families' campaign for justice, safety reform, and criminal charges.

Justice4Grenfell **[R078]**
Community-led campaign documenting the fight for accountability since 2017.

Shouts for Justice at Grenfell Anniversary March, ITV News (June 2025) **[R079]**
Coverage of the eighth anniversary silent walk, likely the last before demolition.

Memorialisation & the Tower's future

Remembering Grenfell: Recommendations and Next Steps, Memorial Commission (PDF, 2023) **[R068]**
The community-led Commission's recommendations for a "sacred space" memorial.

Update on the Future of Grenfell Tower, GOV.UK (February 2025) **[R080]**
The government's decision to dismantle the tower and plans for a memorial.

Two-Year Process to Take Down Grenfell Tower Begins, ITV News (Sept 2025) **[R081]**
Reporting on the start of floor-by-floor deconstruction of the tower.

Grenfell Tower to Be Demolished, Sparking Outrage, The Architect's Newspaper **[R082]**
The contested demolition decision and the five shortlisted memorial design teams.

Further information and resources

[R002]

www.grenfellcurriculum.com

grenfellcurriculum.com

For further information and resources, please visit the project website: www.grenfellcurriculum.com **[R002]**.

Help us improve the course

We would be grateful if you could complete a short feedback form. It includes three ratings, one optional written question and a few questions about your educational context. You may respond anonymously.

[R083]

Complete the course feedback form

grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Complete the course feedback form → **[R083]**

Course feedback

Send feedback to the project team
[R083] grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course...

Use these pages to prepare your feedback. To send it to the project team, use the online form linked above. Writing in this pack does not submit a response.

Thank you for completing Teaching about Grenfell: Education and Social Justice after Disasters. Your feedback will help us understand how the course is being used and improve it for future participants.

Your experience of the course

Overall, how would you rate the course?

☐ 1 star ☐ 2 stars ☐ 3 stars ☐ 4 stars ☐ 5 stars

How relevant was the course to your educational context?

☐ 1 star ☐ 2 stars ☐ 3 stars ☐ 4 stars ☐ 5 stars

How much has the course increased your confidence in approaching Grenfell in education?

☐ 1 star ☐ 2 stars ☐ 3 stars ☐ 4 stars ☐ 5 stars

What was most useful, and what could we improve?

Do not include confidential information about pupils or other people.

Your educational context

These questions help us understand who the course is reaching.

LINKS

Your main role

- [ ] Classroom teacher
- [ ] School or college leader
- [ ] Trainee teacher
- [ ] Teacher educator or professional-development provider
- [ ] Higher-education lecturer or researcher
- [ ] Teaching assistant or learning-support practitioner
- [ ] Community, museum or informal educator
- [ ] Policy, local-authority or professional-body role
- [ ] Other

Main educational setting

- [ ] Early years
- [ ] Primary school
- [ ] Secondary school
- [ ] Special school or alternative provision
- [ ] Further education or sixth-form college
- [ ] Higher education or teacher education
- [ ] Community, museum or informal learning
- [ ] Policy or professional organisation
- [ ] Other

Main subject or area (optional)

Country or region (optional)

How did you find out about the course?

- [ ] Colleague or personal recommendation
- [ ] School, college or university
- [ ] Search engine
- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Professional association or subject network
- [ ] Conference, workshop or event
- [ ] Grenfell community or partner organisation
- [ ] The Grenfell Curriculum website
- [ ] Other

Please tell us how you found it

Notes

In memory

Seventy-two people died as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.
We remember them here by name.

Abdeslam Sebbar
Ali Yawar Jafari
Denis Murphy
Mohammad Alhajali
Jeremiah Deen
Zainab Deen
Steven Power
Sheila
Joseph (Joe) Daniels
Husna Begum
Kamru Miah
Mohammed Hamid
Mohammed Hanif
Rabeya Begum
Khadija Khalloufi
Vincent Chiejina
Fatemeh Afrasiabi
Sakina Afrasehabi
Isaac Paulos
Hamid Kani
Berkti Haftom
Biruk Haftom
Gary Maunders
Deborah (Debbie) Lamprell
Ernie Vital
Majorie Vital
Maria Del Pilar (Pily) Burton
Amal Ahmedin
Amaya Ahmedin
Amna Mahmud Idris
Mohamednur Tuccu
Victoria King
Alexandra Atala
Mary Mendy
Khadija Saye
Farah Hamdan
Leena Belkadi
Malak Belkadi
Omar Belkadi
Jessica Urbano Ramirez
Ligaya Moore
Abdulaziz El-Wahabi
Faouzia El-Wahabi
Mehdi El-Wahabi
Nur Huda El-Wahabi
Yasin El-Wahabi
Logan Gomes
Firdaws Hashim
Hashim Kedir
Nura Jemal
Yahya Hashim
Yaqub Hashim
Fatima Choucair
Mierna Choucair
Nadia Choucair
Sirria Choucair
Zainab Choucair
Bassem Choucair
Anthony (Tony) Disson
Mariem Elgwahry
Eslah Elgwahry
Raymond (Moses) Bernard
Gloria Trevisan
Marco Gottardi
Fethia Hassan
Hania Hassan
Rania Ibrahim
Hesham Rahman
Mohamed (Saber) Amied Neda
Abufras Mohamed Ibrahim
Isra Ibrahim
Fathia Elsanuosi Ahmed

Names as listed in the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission's ninth anniversary video (June 2026).

Links and resources

Use the reference numbers alongside links in the text. All titles, descriptions and weekly reading lists remain at their original points in the course.

All links online

Scan once to open every resource below as a clickable list.

grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/links

R001 The online CPD course
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/index.html

R002 www.grenfellcurriculum.com
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/

R003 Meet the Grenfell Curriculum Project Team
https://youtu.be/mNG3fT-bRTE

R004 Teaching about Grenfell: Recommendations from the community (report)
https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/id/eprint/501889/

R005 Introduction to the CPD
https://youtu.be/Okt_iwi5NWI

R006 A Journey of Recovery: Supporting health & wellbeing for the communities impacted by the Grenfell Tower fire disaster (Needs Assessment, 2018)
https://www.jsna.info/sites/jsna.info/files/Journey%20of%20Recovery%20Needs%20Assessment_0.pdf

R007 Explore Kensington and Chelsea
https://maps.app.goo.gl/o3YD4YivyABY52KL6

R008 Portobello Road Market
https://visitportobello.com/

R009 Live, laugh, love, Constantine Gras (blog post, June 2015)
https://www.grasart.com/blog/live-laugh-love

R010 The 21st Floor
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Grenfell_21st_floor

R011 The lives of Grenfell Tower: the 72 victims of the fire, The Guardian
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/ng-interactive/2018/may/14/lives-of-grenfell-tower-victims-fire

R012 Grenfell: In the Words of Survivors - National Theatre
https://youtu.be/NpEaa2P7qZI

R013 Sky News - First Tribunal
https://youtu.be/C2F3bRJMoEc

R014 Edward Daffarn's Warning
https://youtu.be/UxMEAAOTt30

R015 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report (seven volumes), GOV.UK
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/publication-of-the-grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-2-report

R016 Course video
https://youtu.be/LFoVARqu9u0

R017 Online version of Grenfell Tower: A Timeline of Failures
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/activities/timeline-of-failures.html

R018 "KCTMO: Playing with Fire!" (November 2016 blog post, PDF)
https://assets.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/TMO00835660_GAG%20blog%20post%20-%20KCTMO%20Playing%20with%20fire..pdf

R019 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250320040117/https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-1-report

R020 GOV.UK: Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 Government Response
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-2-report-government-response/grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-2-report-government-response-html

R021 EDJ Principles
https://youtu.be/qSartl3anaM

R022 The Grenfell Tower Fire (London Museum)
https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/london-stories/grenfell-tower-fire/

R023 In Brutal Presence: Nicola Muirhead (LensCulture)
https://www.lensculture.com/articles/nicola-muirhead-in-brutal-presence-documenting-the-impact-of-the-grenfell-tower-tragedy

R024 Grenfell: Before the Fire (London Intelligence)
https://www.londonintelligence.co.uk/grenfell-before-the-fire/

R025 Grenfell Action Group Blog
https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/

R026 A Residents' Group Made Repeated Warnings (BuzzFeed News)
https://www.buzzfeed.com/patricksmith/a-residents-group-for-grenfell-tower-made-repeated-warnings

R027 Six Key Failures in the Way Grenfell Was Managed, Inside Housing
https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/six-key-failures-in-the-way-grenfell-tower-was-managed-before-the-fire-72439

R028 Following Grenfell, Equality and Human Rights Commission
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/following-grenfell

R029 Grenfell Warnings and the Collapse of Local Journalism, The Conversation
https://theconversation.com/grenfell-tower-warnings-might-have-been-heard-if-not-for-the-collapse-of-local-journalism-117427

R030 Grenfell Tower: What happened (BBC News; contains images of the tower on fire)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40301289

R031 Grenfell Tower fire: How the night unfolded (The Telegraph)
https://youtu.be/D_RPHNGy-aw

R032 Read the full story
https://togetherband.org/blogs/news/grenfell-tower#:~:text=When%20I%20finally%20reached%20my,should%20try%20to%20get%20out.

R033 Grenfell Tower survivors tell how they ignored advice to stay put
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/04/grenfell-tower-survivors-tell-how-they-ignored-advice-to-stay-put

R034 What Should Learners Understand About Grenfell?
https://youtu.be/UoqMxj2P_HA

R035 Education for Disaster Justice framework, The Grenfell Curriculum
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/edj/

R036 What Should Learners Be Able to Do?
https://youtu.be/C-qNjdi9ET4

R037 Online version of Matching Pairs: Grenfell Tower & Curriculum
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/activities/matching-pairs.html

R038 Coverage of the Hillsborough disaster by The Sun (Wikipedia)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coverage_of_the_Hillsborough_disaster_by_The_Sun

R039 GOV.UK: Hillsborough Independent Panel Report
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-hillsborough-independent-panel

R040 policeconduct.gov.uk
https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/hillsborough-report/executive-summary

R041 Grenfell Action Group post-fire statement
https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/2017/06/14/grenfell-tower-fire/

R042 How specialist journals uncovered the real story (The Conversation)
https://theconversation.com/grenfell-it-took-specialist-journals-and-social-media-to-uncover-the-real-story-149180

R043 Grenfell Inquiry hears Kebede was offered police protection (HuffPost)
https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/grenfell-inquiry-behailu-kebede-police-witness-protection_uk_5b17b18ce4b0599bc6dea58c

R044 Online version of Deconstructing Disaster Narratives
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/activities/deconstructing-narratives.html

R045 Grenfell Tower Fire, London Fire Brigade
https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/grenfell-tower-fire/

R046 The Grenfell Tower Fire, Understanding Regulation
https://www.regulation.org.uk/ob-grenfell_tower.html

R047 Grenfell United
https://grenfellunited.org.uk/

R048 Grenfell Testimony Week
https://www.testimonyweek.co.uk/

R049 Finally, the Truth About Hillsborough, The Conversation
https://theconversation.com/finally-the-truth-about-hillsborough-but-you-wont-read-it-on-the-front-of-the-sun-58529

R050 Public Office (Accountability) Bill ('Hillsborough Law'), House of Lords Library (26 August 2026)
https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2026-0048/LLN-2026-0048.pdf

R051 The government responded swiftly to 7/7 bombings. What went wrong at Grenfell Tower?
https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2017/jun/21/government-swift-2005-bombings-wrong-grenfell-tower

R052 Attack on London: Hunting the 7/7 Bombers (Netflix documentary)
https://www.netflix.com/title/81715711

R053 7/7 Memorial Service 2026, London City Hall
https://www.london.gov.uk/events/77-memorial-service-2026

R054 'The helpline is hopeless': Grenfell relatives criticise lack of information
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/18/the-helpline-is-hopeless-grenfell-relatives-criticise-lack-of-information

R055 How Grenfell brought a community together
https://youtu.be/ZmgWPUxFv6Q

R056 After Grenfell: The Faith Groups' Response
https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2018/06/01/after-grenfell-the-faith-groups-response

R057 Theos: After Grenfell (PDF)
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/web_resources/Uploaded%20Media/Theos-After-Grenfell.pdf

R058 Al-Manaar Mosque Response (PDF)
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/web_resources/Uploaded%20Media/Al-Manaar-mosque-v4-combined-002.pdf

R059 Cornwall Hugs Grenfell
https://www.cornwallhugsgrenfell.org/

R060 4.16 Institute for Life and Safety Education
https://www.goe416.go.kr/eng/

R061 Two Communities, One Heart: Cornwall and Kensington Together
https://youtu.be/FbdV3ZB5UFc

R062 Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission film to mark the eighth anniversary of the tragedy.
https://youtu.be/fBXA1v2ISbU

R063 Remembering Grenfell, Commission Report (PDF)
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/web_resources/Uploaded%20Media/Grenfell-Tower-Memorial-Commission-report_10Nov2023_0.pdf

R064 Listen as a podcast
https://www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/news/remembering-grenfell-recommendations-and-next-steps-to-a-memorial-audio-version/

R065 Read & listen on the Poetry Archive
https://poetryarchive.org/poem/the-missing/

R066 The Guardian: Demolition would risk fire being forgotten, some survivors say
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/06/grenfell-tower-demolition-would-risk-fire-being-forgotten-some-survivors-say

R067 BBC News: Plan to dismantle block 'unforgivable', families say
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq5g99xy979o

R068 Memorial Commission Report (PDF, November 2023)
https://www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/storage/2025/07/Grenfell-Tower-Memorial-Commission-report_10Nov2023_0.pdf

R069 RIBAJ: Memorial design must bring sense of peace and justice
https://www.ribaj.com/intelligence/grenfell-tower-memorial-design-community-paul-boateng-peace-justice-trauma

R070 Online version of Mapping Your Moral Compass
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/activities/moral-compass.html

R071 Introducing the CARE-LEAD Pedagogical Model
https://youtu.be/PfBHA8u-YPY

R072 Teaching an Unfinished Event
https://youtu.be/ak5KcXQJuPM

R073 Online version of Design Your Learning Experience
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/activities/lesson-design.html

R074 Phase 2 Report: Digest of Key Findings, Fire Brigades Union
https://www.fbu.org.uk/circulars/2024hoc0397mw/grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-2-report-digest-key-findings

R075 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/grenfell-response-and-recovery/grenfell-tower-inquiry

R076 Grenfell Tower Inquiry: House of Lords Debate, Lords Library
https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/grenfell-tower-inquiry-house-of-lords-debate/

R077 How the Failures That Caused Grenfell Still Exist Today, The Guardian (February 2026)
https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2026/feb/05/how-the-failures-that-caused-grenfell-still-exist-today

R078 Justice4Grenfell
https://justice4grenfell.org/

R079 Shouts for Justice at Grenfell Anniversary March, ITV News (June 2025)
https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-15/shouts-for-justice-at-grenfell-anniversary-march-before-tower-demolition-begins

R080 Update on the Future of Grenfell Tower, GOV.UK (February 2025)
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-the-future-of-grenfell-tower

R081 Two-Year Process to Take Down Grenfell Tower Begins, ITV News (Sept 2025)
https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-09-02/two-year-demolition-process-of-grenfell-tower-begins

R082 Grenfell Tower to Be Demolished, Sparking Outrage, The Architect's Newspaper
https://www.archpaper.com/2025/02/grenfell-tower-demolition/

R083 Complete the course feedback form
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/cpd-course/pages/course-feedback.html

R084 privacy information
https://www.grenfellcurriculum.com/contact/#privacy

Glossary

Working definitions of terms used in this pack. Sources are given where a definition draws on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, legislation or official guidance.

Building materials, fire safety and emergency response

ACM
aluminium composite material

A material consisting of two thin aluminium sheets bonded to a core. The ACM panels installed at Grenfell had a highly combustible polyethylene core. The Inquiry identified these panels as the principal reason for the rapid spread of fire around the building.
Inquiry, Phase 1, §2.13.

Cavity barrier

A component designed to restrict the movement of fire and smoke through concealed spaces within a building's construction, including cavities behind external cladding.
Approved Document B, section 8.

Cladding; rainscreen cladding

Cladding is an external covering attached to a building. Rainscreen cladding forms a protective outer layer with a cavity behind it. At Grenfell, the rainscreen panels were one part of a wider external wall system that also included insulation, fixings and cavity barriers.
Inquiry, Phase 1, chapter 6.

Combustible

Capable of burning and contributing fuel to a fire. Materials differ in how readily they ignite, how much heat they release and how they behave within a complete construction system.
Inquiry, Phase 2, chapter 109.

Compartmentation

Dividing a building into spaces separated by fire-resisting construction, intended to contain a fire for a specified period and protect other spaces and escape routes. In blocks of flats, individual flats normally form separate compartments.
Inquiry, Phase 1, §4.2.

Dry riser; wet riser

Fixed pipework supplying water to firefighting outlets on different floors. A dry riser is filled and pressurised during firefighting; a wet riser remains charged with water. Grenfell had a dry rising main.
Inquiry, Phase 1, §3.19 and footnote 15.

Fire door; self-closing device

A fire door is a door assembly designed to resist the passage of fire for a specified period, with smoke-control performance where required. A self-closing device returns the door to its closed position after use.
Approved Document B, Appendix C.

Fire risk assessment

A systematic examination of fire hazards, people who could be harmed and measures needed to reduce risk. It includes recording findings, acting on them and reviewing the assessment as circumstances change.
Government fire risk assessment guidance.

Fire-stopping

Materials or systems used to seal gaps, joints and openings in fire-separating construction, including openings around pipes and cables, so that its resistance to fire is maintained.

Approved Document B, section 9.

Fire survival guidance
FSG

Advice given by fire-service control-room staff to people who believe they cannot escape a fire. It involves assessing their circumstances, offering guidance and passing information to firefighters; advice must be reconsidered as conditions change.

Inquiry, Phase 1, chapter 29.

Insulation

Material used to reduce heat transfer. Grenfell's external wall system contained combustible polyisocyanurate (PIR) and phenolic foam insulation. These insulation products were separate from the polyethylene core within the ACM panels.

Inquiry, Phase 2, §109.1.

PE
polyethylene

A plastic used as the core of the ACM panels installed at Grenfell. Its burning, melting and dripping contributed to the spread of fire.

Inquiry, Phase 1, §2.13.

PEEP
personal emergency evacuation plan

An individual plan addressing how someone who needs assistance can evacuate in an emergency. In England, Residential PEEPs also names a specific regulatory process involving eligible residents in specified buildings, including person-centred assessment and agreed evacuation arrangements.

Government Residential PEEPs factsheet.

Remediation

Work undertaken to address building-safety defects. It can include replacing unsafe cladding and correcting defects in fire doors, compartmentation or other safety measures.

Government guidance on cladding and fire-safety works.

Smoke ventilation; smoke control

Systems designed to manage the movement or accumulation of smoke, helping protect escape routes and support firefighting. They may use vents, shafts and mechanical fans.

Inquiry, Phase 2, chapter 43.

Stay-put strategy

A strategy under which occupants of flats unaffected by fire, heat or smoke can remain while a fire elsewhere is tackled. It depends on effective compartmentation and supporting safety measures. It is not an instruction to remain regardless of conditions.

Inquiry, Phase 1, §§4.2–4.6.

Law, regulation and formal accountability

These entries explain the legal and regulatory context relevant to the pack, principally in England and Wales.

Approved Document B
ADB

Government guidance on meeting the fire-safety requirements of the Building Regulations in England. It gives practical approaches to compliance; it is distinct from the legal requirements themselves.

Government guidance on Approved Documents.

Building control

The process of checking whether building work complies with the Building Regulations, including examining plans and inspecting work. It does not replace the responsibilities of those commissioning, designing and constructing a building.

Building Control Independent Panel report.

Building Regulations

Legally enforceable requirements governing building work, including matters such as structural stability, fire safety, accessibility and energy efficiency. Approved Documents provide guidance on meeting these requirements.

Government guidance.

Building Safety Act 2022

Legislation reforming building-safety responsibilities, oversight and routes to redress. It includes protections against certain remediation costs for leaseholders. These protections have eligibility conditions and should not be described as applying automatically to every leaseholder or building.

Government leaseholder-protection guidance.

Civil proceedings; civil settlement

Civil proceedings concern legal rights and responsibilities and may seek compensation or another remedy. A settlement is an agreement resolving a claim; it does not necessarily involve a court determining liability. It does not establish criminal guilt.

Corporate manslaughter

An offence committed by an organisation where the way its activities are managed or organised causes a death and amounts to a gross breach of a relevant duty of care. Senior-management failings must be a substantial element of that breach.

Crown Prosecution Service guidance.

Coroner; inquest

A coroner is an independent judicial office-holder who investigates certain deaths. An inquest is a fact-finding hearing establishing who died and how, when and where they died. Its role is distinct from determining criminal guilt or civil liability.

Chief Coroner's explanation.

CPS
Crown Prosecution Service

The independent public prosecution service for England and Wales. It makes prosecution decisions in cases within its remit and prosecutes cases investigated by the police and other bodies.

CPS.

Criminal proceedings

Legal proceedings concerning an alleged criminal offence. A prosecution must prove the offence to the criminal standard of proof. An investigation, allegation or charge does not itself establish guilt.

Debarment

Placement of a supplier on a central list that requires or permits its exclusion from specified public procurement. Being investigated for possible debarment does not mean that a supplier has already been debarred.

Cabinet Office guidance.

Duty of candour

An obligation to be open, truthful and forthcoming, including when assisting investigations. The pack discusses it in connection with calls for accountability following Hillsborough. Its precise legal scope depends on the relevant law and context.

Government explanation of the Hillsborough Law proposals.

Duty of care

A legal obligation to exercise reasonable care towards people to whom that duty is owed. Whether a duty exists, what it requires and whether it has been breached depend on the circumstances.

CPS guidance.

Gross negligence manslaughter

An offence involving a death caused by a grossly negligent breach of a duty of care. It requires a serious and obvious risk of death at the time of the breach and conduct sufficiently exceptionally bad to justify criminal punishment.

CPS guidance.

Inquiry finding; recommendation

A finding is a conclusion reached after examining evidence. A recommendation proposes action or change. Accepting a recommendation and implementing it are separate steps. An inquiry finding does not itself constitute a criminal conviction.

Inquiries Act 2005.

Public inquiry; Grenfell Tower Inquiry

A formal investigation into matters of public concern. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry examined the fire and its causes: Phase 1 principally addressed events on the night; Phase 2 examined the underlying circumstances and failures. Its reports were published in 2019 and 2024. Under the Inquiries Act, an inquiry cannot determine civil or criminal liability.

Inquiry reports; Inquiries Act 2005, section 2.

Unlawful killing

An inquest conclusion that a death resulted from conduct meeting the relevant legal criteria for unlawful killing. It does not convict an individual of a criminal offence. This distinction matters when discussing the Hillsborough inquests.

Chief Coroner's guidance.

Organisations and community groups

BBA
British Board of Agrément

A construction-product certification body. Its certificates concerning products used at Grenfell were examined by the Inquiry, which identified serious failures in their preparation and reliability.

Inquiry, Phase 2, chapter 29.

BRE
Building Research Establishment

An organisation undertaking research, testing and assessment relating to buildings and construction products. Formerly government-owned, it was privatised in 1997. Its testing and advisory work formed part of the Inquiry's examination of regulatory failures.

Inquiry, Phase 2, chapter 7.

Grenfell Action Group
GAG

A residents' campaigning group associated with Lancaster West Estate. Its blog documented concerns about housing management and safety before the fire. It is distinct from Grenfell United.

Grenfell Action Group's account.

Grenfell community

A broad term encompassing bereaved families, survivors, local residents and others with enduring connections to Grenfell. Its meaning depends on context; it should not imply that everyone has identical experiences, priorities or views.

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission

An independent, community-led body established to develop a vision for a memorial, working with bereaved families, survivors and local residents.

Commission's 2023 report.

Grenfell United

An organisation formed by survivors and bereaved families to support those affected and campaign for justice, safe homes and change.

Grenfell United.

KCTMO; TMO

Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation

The organisation that managed Grenfell Tower and other council housing on behalf of RBKC at the time of the fire. Housing management and the council's ownership and oversight responsibilities were distinct roles.

Inquiry, Phase 2, chapters 31–32.

LFB

London Fire Brigade

London's fire and rescue service. In the pack, references to the LFB include operational firefighters, incident commanders, control-room staff and organisational leadership, whose responsibilities differed.

Inquiry, Phase 1.

RBKC

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The London borough and, in references to decisions or responsibilities, its local council. RBKC owned Grenfell Tower at the time of the fire and had responsibilities concerning housing, building control and emergency planning.

Inquiry, Phase 2, executive summary.

Housing, inequality and social justice

These are working definitions for understanding the pack's social analysis; they should not be read as interchangeable legal findings.

Accountability

Being required to explain and justify decisions, answer for failures and take corrective action. Accountability may be legal, political, professional or public; these forms do not necessarily produce the same outcomes.

Agency

People's capacity to act, make choices, organise and influence events, within the opportunities and constraints they face. Recognising residents' agency includes recognising their warnings, mutual support and campaigning.

Deregulation

The removal, reduction or relaxation of regulatory requirements or controls. In this pack, it concerns policies and institutional changes affecting how public safety was protected and enforced.

IMD

Index of Multiple Deprivation; deprivation decile

An official measure combining several dimensions of relative deprivation in small areas of England. Deciles divide ranked areas into ten groups. The pack uses the 2019 index. An area's ranking does not describe every person living there.

Official IMD 2019 documentation.

Leaseholder

Someone who owns a property interest for a fixed period under a lease. The lease sets out rights and obligations concerning the property. A leaseholder's position differs from that of someone renting under an ordinary residential tenancy.

Government explanation of leasehold.

Marginalisation

Processes through which people or groups are excluded from resources, influence, recognition or decision-making. In this pack, it includes the dismissal of residents' concerns and unequal access to institutional power.

Social housing

Housing provided to meet needs insufficiently served by the market, commonly by councils and housing associations. In this pack, the term principally refers to rented housing provided on regulated, below-market terms.

Government social-housing rent policy.

Solidarity; mutual aid

Solidarity means acting in support of others through shared commitments and responsibility. Mutual aid is practical support organised among people and communities, such as sharing food, accommodation, information or care.

Structural inequality

Unequal access to resources, safety, opportunities and influence that is produced or sustained through institutions, policies and social arrangements. It directs attention beyond differences between individuals.

Systemic failure

Failure arising across connected organisations, procedures and assumptions. The term helps explain how multiple decisions and omissions can reinforce one another and allow preventable harm.

Systemic racism

Institutional practices and wider social arrangements that produce or sustain racial disadvantage, including without openly racist intentions. In the pack, this is an analytical concept for examining whose safety, concerns and experiences receive recognition.

Education, representation and remembrance

These definitions reflect the pack's approach, particularly its EDJ principles, learning framework and CARE-LEAD model.

Active listening

Giving careful attention to what someone communicates, checking understanding and taking their concerns seriously. It includes recognising when assumptions or institutional habits prevent a person from being heard.

CARE-LEAD

The pack's framework for planning and reviewing teaching: Clarify purpose; Assess the room; Resource with legitimacy; Enact with trauma-informed structure; Leverage medium deliberately; Evaluate without extractive assessment; Aftercare and continuation; Duty of accountability. These are interconnected considerations, rather than sequential steps.

Community-engaged; participatory research

Research undertaken through relationships with the people whose experiences it concerns. Participatory approaches seek meaningful involvement in shaping questions, interpreting findings and deciding how knowledge is used.

CPD

continuing professional development

Learning through which educators develop their knowledge, skills, judgement and practice. In this pack, it combines learning about Grenfell with reflection on how to teach about it.

Critical media literacy

The ability to examine how media accounts are produced, supported and framed: whose voices appear, whose are missing, what evidence is offered and whose interests a narrative may serve.

Curriculum mapping

Identifying where particular knowledge, concepts and learning activities fit within a curriculum, and how learning can develop across subjects, lessons and stages.

EDJ
Education for Disaster Justice

The educational approach used in this pack to connect learning about disasters with humanity, lived experience, structural causes, accountability and justice. It treats remembrance and understanding the conditions that make disasters possible as connected educational responsibilities.

Emotional safety

Conditions that support learners to engage with difficult material with dignity, choice and appropriate support. This involves preparation, respectful discussion and alternatives to participation; it does not promise that learning will be free from discomfort.

Empathy

Seeking to understand another person's feelings and perspective while recognising the limits of one's own understanding. Teaching empathy does not require learners to imagine that they can fully reproduce a survivor's experience.

Extractive assessment

In this pack, assessment that treats people's suffering or learners' personal disclosures mainly as material for demonstrating attainment. An alternative evaluates understanding and ethical reasoning without requiring disclosure, emotional performance or simulated victimhood.

Lived experience

Knowledge and understanding arising from a person's own life and circumstances. Residents' experience of their homes, safety concerns and treatment by authorities is an important form of knowledge.

Memorialisation; remembrance

Practices through which people honour those who died, acknowledge loss and sustain memory. These may include memorials, anniversaries, art, testimony and education. In the pack, remembrance is connected to responsibility and the pursuit of justice.

Testimony

An account given by someone about what they experienced, observed or know. Testimony can be legal evidence as well as a personal or public account; its context, purpose and conditions of use matter.

Trauma-informed pedagogy

Teaching that recognises that learners may have experienced trauma and plans for safety, trust, choice and support. In this pack, it includes careful selection of material, clear framing, alternative participation and pastoral follow-up.

Unfinished present

The pack's term for teaching about an event whose consequences continue to unfold. It asks educators to acknowledge ongoing grief, campaigning and accountability processes, and to revise teaching as evidence and circumstances change.

Verbatim theatre

Theatre constructed from people's recorded or documented words. Although the words originate in testimony, their selection, editing and performance still involve interpretive choices that learners can examine.

Victim-blaming

Assigning responsibility for harm to those who experienced it without adequate justification, often diverting attention from the decisions, conditions and responsibilities that produced the harm.

“If those people had been heard, maybe there would have been fewer victims.”

A free professional-development reader and workbook for educators teaching about the Grenfell Tower fire. Developed with survivors, bereaved families and educators, it brings together the human story, the systemic failures behind the fire, and practical approaches to teaching with care, accuracy and justice.

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