



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Response to 'The London Fire Brigade' Recommendations - Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report

October 2024

London Fire Brigade's Response

Context

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 2 report contains 58 important recommendations and was published on 4 September 2024. The final report of the Inquiry is another significant milestone in learning the lessons from the tragic fire.

On 14 June 2017, the Brigade was faced with the biggest challenge any fire service in the UK has faced in living memory. Deficiencies were revealed in LFB's policies, procedures and training. Since then, we have been committed to a programme of change across our policies, procedures and training and we are continuing to learn. The recommendations of the Inquiry have contributed to a deep institutional change across the Brigade, particularly in how we respond to fires in residential high-rise buildings, as demonstrated by our response to subsequent high-rise fires including New Providence Wharf and the Spectrum Building in Dagenham. Londoners are safer as a result. We are in regular dialogue with Government, the Mayor of London and local authorities as we all look at what must be done to ensure that buildings in London are safe for residents. Buildings that are designed, constructed and maintained appropriately remain fundamental to the safety of residents and those responding to fires.

This year, LFB announced the completion of every recommendation directed specifically to it in the GTI Phase 1 report. These were monitored and reviewed through internal assurance processes, including by the Independent Operational Assurance Advisor and the LFB Audit Committee and were externally reported to and monitored by a Home Office Ministerial Board, the Mayor of London, and the Fire Committee at the Greater London Authority. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services also inspected LFB in relation to the progress made against the GTI Phase 1 recommendations in 2021. The Brigade is inspected regularly, and their last full inspection took place in summer 2024 with the report expected to be published in the autumn.

As a result of the Phase 1 recommendations, the introduction of fire escape hoods have saved over 200 lives. The introduction of the Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) app with revisions to our FSG policy mean we are better able to coordinate the rescue of those trapped in buildings, and new training has ensured incident commanders can recognise the signs of a failing building and respond appropriately. Nevertheless, we are not complacent. Change is at the heart of how the Brigade operates today and we will remain a listening, learning and leading organisation.

Our thoughts remain with the 72 people who lost their lives, as well as the survivors, the bereaved families and the Grenfell community. We owe it to them and our staff to continue learning from this tragedy.

Our response to each recommendation is set out in the following slides, which have been developed in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and relevant communities.

London Fire Brigade's Major Incident Case Studies

The examples below demonstrate a total shift in LFB's operational response since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. The Brigade has implemented new training, equipment, policies and procedures to respond to fires in high-rise buildings. These support the actions of initial responders to the risk at an incident, the quick decision to evacuate a building, a calm and professional response from our Control room to support those in the building needing advice, and our ongoing post-incident community engagement response.

New Providence Wharf

Incident: The Brigade attended a fire at New Providence Wharf in May 2021, which was declared a major incident. New Providence Wharf is a set of five mixed use residential, commercial and retail blocks of varying height. The affected block had 19 floors. The development had minimal Aluminium Composite Material cladding and remediation work was due for completion in April 2021. However, there were a range of fire safety issues with the building that caused unusual fire spread. The building had a waking watch in place at the time and regular visits by the local fire station were in place. A Premises Risk Assessment was carried out on 27 April 2021.

Operational Response: At the peak of the incident, 20 fire engines, seven Fire Rescue Units and four Command Units were on scene – this equates to approximately 150-180 operational staff. The fire started on the 8th floor and spread externally to the 9th and 10th floors. The incident put into practice LFB's revised high-rise firefighting policy, FSG policy, and new Evacuation and Rescue from Fires in Premises policy, as well as the training carried out in preparation for the introduction of these revisions. LFB's Community Engagement team met with residents following the fire to provide advice and support.

Control: Control received 19 fire survival guidance calls during the incident. The updated FSG policy facilitated uninterrupted contact between Control and the incident ground.

Incident Command: More than 60 people were evacuated by firefighters and 18 residents self-evacuated. Firefighters carried out 35 rescues, 22 using smoke hoods. A full emergency evacuation of the building was immediately carried out and a significant search and rescue operation took place.

Operational Learning: Important learning was identified at the operational debrief across a range of areas, as this was the first full emergency evacuation of a residential high-rise building in London. As a result, a new learning package was delivered relating to this case and the FSG policy was updated to reflect this incident.

Spectrum Building, Dagenham

Incident: The Brigade attended a fire at the Spectrum Building in August 2024, which was declared a major incident. This block was converted from an office block in 2016. High Pressure Laminate cladding covered the extension on 5th and 6th floors. Remediation was underway but incomplete. An enforcement notice was served by LFB on 3 April 2023.

Operational Response: At the peak of the incident, 40 fire engines, six Command Units, nine Fire Rescue Units and 64-metre and 32-metre aerial turntable ladders were on scene – this equates to approximately 225-250 operational staff. The whole of the building was affected by the fire. LFB's Community Engagement team were on site supporting residents and helping to manage access to the site where possible.

Control: Control received 16 fire survival guidance calls and played an integral role in passing risk critical information to crews en route, regarding the cladding on the building and that the building strategy was to evacuate. Control ensured this was communicated to trapped residents and provided vital fire survival guidance to seven people using our FSG App, which allows information to be exchanged between Control and the incident ground in a timely, accurate and consistent manner.

Incident Command: A full emergency evacuation of the building was immediately carried out and a significant search and rescue operation took place. Firefighters evacuated 80 people, leading residents out to safety and carried out 20 rescues including four using smoke hoods.

Operational Learning: Important learning was identified at the operational debrief across a range of areas, notably positive practice with decision making by initial officers and effective management of calls and information by Control. Learnings included challenges with firefighting modified buildings and dealing with fires involving fully scaffolded buildings.

London Fire Brigade's Training Programme Improvements

LFB has made demonstrable improvements across a number of training programmes since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and specifically utilising incident command training for the broad range of risk in London, commanders learn to make decisions under the kind of pressure experienced when deciding to evacuate a building. Communications and water training was reviewed following GTI Phase 1, with further improvements planned.

Incident Command Revalidation (95% - 100% completion rate)

All levels of incident command at LFB now attend revalidation assessments once every two years, and annual maintenance of skills training. Their acquisition courses are accredited by Skills for Justice.

High Rise, Mass Evacuation and FSG exercising (90% - 97% completion rate)

- LFB delivers a rolling three-year cycle of small and large-scale practical exercising for all firefighters, the first cycle of which is now complete (400 watches trained).
- The next cycle of exercising (from October 2024) considers learning from the previous cycle, and will address the GTI Phase 2 recommendations on communications and water including:
 - using the correct equipment and channels, and understanding signal interference and the impact of buildings on propagation
 - how widespread loss of communications can be restored
 - implementing a robust system of communications
 - managing water at major incidents
- Levels 1 - three incident commanders receive high rise, FSG and mass evacuation training every two years.

Modern Firefighting Training Programme

- Firefighters are undertaking advanced real fire training following an £8m investment for 2024-26. This focusses on understanding complex fire behaviour.
- Incident command decisions based on fire behaviour are a core feature of this course.
- Both incident command levels one and two receive follow up seminars (two per year) and instructor visits at stations on demand. This is supported by e-learning. This course currently has 100% attendance against its delivery plan.
- The current cycle of training is also building foundation knowledge on communication discipline at real fires. Phase 2 of the course (April 2026 onwards), is planned to include:
 - Communicating in practical live high-rise fire scenarios
 - Practical live fire exercises that simulate loss of communications and recovery
- To sustain learning and deliver on the planned scale and ambition of this initiative, further investment of approximately £10m will need to be provided to expand the programme to utilise this foundation knowledge in complex environments, taking decisions under pressure.

Marauding Terrorist Attack (91% completion rate)

- This training recognises that incident command decision-making takes place in a range of risk contexts in London.
- Delivered since April 2023, Incident Commanders take part in theory (one day) and practical (one day) acquisition training for Marauding Terrorist Attack incidents.

Multi-Agency training (100% completion rate)

- Level 3 and 4 incident commanders attend a range of externally-delivered multi-agency command courses:
 - Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command five-day acquisition course, and one-day biennial refresher.
 - Level 3 officers attend a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) silver acquisition and three-yearly revalidation. Level 4 officers attend a CBRNE gold acquisition and three-yearly revalidation.
- These courses are designed to train incident commanders in co-ordinating multi-agency responses to major incidents.

Bulk Media Advisor (BMA) Training (79% completion rate)

- This cadre of officers respond to incidents to provide a liaison with the water undertaker and advise on water management.
- Each officer attends a four-day acquisition course and must attend two of four Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions per year.
- A minimum of one BMA officer is available on all operational rotas.
- This is due to be expanded to a minimum of two BMAs per operational rota by early 2025.

Firefighter Development FF(D) Training (100% completion rate)

- FF(D)s are trained in the full range of core skills for firefighting and the training programme was increased from 11 weeks to a 15-week period. This includes communications equipment and techniques, as well as moving water around the incident ground using Brigade equipment.

Development and Maintenance of Operational Professionalism (DaMOP)

- DaMOP is the framework previously used only by firefighters as the basis for their CPD. It stipulates the frequency and content of training outside instructor-led training. Since 2020, senior officers, specialist roles and Control staff have also used DaMOP.

Recommendations under London Fire Brigade Section

There are 13 recommendations under the London Fire Brigade (LFB) section in the GTI Phase 2 report:

- Five recommendations are for all Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)
- Three recommendations are aimed at His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- Two recommendations are for His Majesty's Government (HMG)
- One recommendation is specifically for LFB
- One recommendation is for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
- One recommendation is for the British Standards Institution (BSI)

We accept the recommendations aimed at the Brigade and Fire and Rescue Services. The Brigade supports the remaining seven recommendations, and we have provided our position and, where relevant, our progress against each of them.

We will also develop a position on the wider recommendations that, although not aimed at LFB, are relevant to our communities and include wider building and fire safety issues.

London Fire Brigade's Response

A College of Fire & Rescue – Recommendations for Government

Recommendation (113.51 & 113.53)

Although the National Fire Chiefs Council provides a forum for discussions and the formulation of policy, there is currently no central body that is equipped to provide education and training across the board to nationally approved standards. We welcome the government's ambition to create an independent College of Fire and Rescue expressed in the white paper *Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service* and we therefore recommend that the government establish such a college immediately with sufficient resources to provide the following services nationally:

- a. practical training at all levels supplementary to that provided by individual fire and rescue services;
- b. education in the form of lectures and seminars on different aspects of the work of the fire and rescue services in order to share experience and promote good practice;
- c. research into matters that may affect the work of the fire and rescue services, including major fires;
- d. the development of equipment, policies and procedures suitable for ensuring the effectiveness of fire and rescue services nationally and the safety of firefighters and the public;
- e. setting and maintaining national standards of managerial competence for senior managers, including control room managers, and providing management training for, and regular assessment of, senior ranks by reference to such standards.

LFB's Position

- LFB supports this recommendation.
- The Brigade and the fire and rescue services sector would benefit from a properly funded National College of Fire, to provide education and set standards to a nationally mandated model. This should be led by fire service professionals and overseen by a board of directors drawn from a range of backgrounds.
- LFB would welcome the opportunity to engage with government, NFCC and the Fire Brigades Union as well as the wider sector in the planning and delivery of a college as a priority.

London Fire Brigade's Response

The Control Room – Recommendation for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.55)

The demands imposed on the LFB's control room by the Grenfell Tower fire were very great, but even so, its performance did not meet reasonable expectations. That was principally the result of inadequate training and a failure to carry out regular exercises, itself the result of poor management. The establishment of a College of Fire and Rescue could be expected to create improvements in all those areas by setting standards for training, by training more senior ranks to perform management roles effectively and by sharing best practice. In the meantime, we recommend that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services ("the Inspectorate") inspect the LFB as soon as reasonably possible to assess and report on:

- a. the extent to which the control room is now integrated into the organisation;
- b. the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying the training needs of control room staff, delivering effective training and recording its outcomes;
- c. the effectiveness of the control room generally;
- d. the ability of the control room to handle a large number of concurrent requests for advice and assistance from people directly affected by fires or other emergencies; and
- e. the quality and effectiveness of the arrangements for communication between the control room and the incident commander

LFB's Progress

- LFB supports this recommendation, and the Brigade has implemented a significant programme of change across Control, which includes aligning Control Officer roles to National Operational Guidance with a focus on service delivery. Control Commanders are now embedded in daily Duty Brigade Officer meetings, which support the integration of Control into operational delivery. When LFB changed the operational rank structures, all Control roles were incorporated into this change, reinforcing the essential role of the Control Room in the command-and-control of the service.
- A qualified Training Manager was recruited in 2021 to lead the Control Training Team and deliver the long-term training strategy and annual training plan. Following changes to the daily Control routine, all Control staff are now provided with two dedicated training times per day. This is enhanced with additional training days such as the FSG refresher course, LFB's Leadership Programmes and Control Command training - resulting in a 70% increase of training time. Continuous improvement and training is embedded. For example, the incident command training team is now based at Control and staff operating Command Units attend joint training with Control officers to cover a range of subjects including FSG calls. Control also take part in large scale high-rise training exercises (real live play) delivering FSG call processes and the interface between the incident ground and Control.
- A Control Improvement Plan was delivered between 2019 – 2024 which transformed leadership, introduced a training and competency framework, reviewed all Reference Information Files and FSG policy to support a high performing culture. Improved governance and scrutiny processes are in place to oversee changes, via the Brigade Control Management Board, Training Board and Change and Improvement Board.
- The performance of Control is now under constant monitoring through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which relate to: time taken to answer 999 calls, time taken to mobilise resources and quality of the interaction with the caller with a particular focus on FSG calls. In 2023, the FSG app recorded details of over 700 premises and 1,600 members of the public – this information was provided to crews en route to FSG incidents to aid rescue. All FSG calls are quality assured and those with a performance score below 85% are reported for managerial action. Only two FSG calls have been reported for managerial action in the last 12 months, demonstrating the improvements made in the handling of such calls.
- Significant investment into Control since the Grenfell Tower fire has delivered a new Control Room layout to improve efficiency in operations, better communication and visual footage for situational awareness using 12 screens, police helicopter footage, drone footage, FSG App and GoodSAM video footage. Together these improvements support dynamic mobilising and decision making. Communication between Control and incident commanders has significantly improved and has been evidenced at a number of incidents, including major incidents as highlighted on Page 2.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Incident Commanders – Recommendation for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.56)

In Chapter 72 we are critical of the LFB's arrangements immediately before the Grenfell Tower fire for assessing the competence of those expected to act as incident commanders, particularly in the early stages of the response to a fire in a high-rise residential building. Steps have already been taken to respond to the criticisms made by the chairman in his Phase 1 report, but in order to reassure those who live in London we recommend that as soon as reasonably possible the Inspectorate inspect the LFB to examine and report on the arrangements it has in place for assessing the training of incident commanders at all levels and their continuing competence, whether by a process of revalidation or otherwise.

LFB's Progress

- LFB supports this recommendation. Following the Grenfell Tower fire the Brigade prioritised improving incident command training. LFB introduced Skills for Justice accredited revalidation courses for all Incident Commanders. These consistently achieve completion rates between 95% - 100% across all levels of incident command.
- Alongside formal revalidation assessments, LFB now regularly trains its Incident Commanders across a range of risk areas, including real fire scenarios, high rise exercising, multi-agency working and Marauding Terrorist Attack.
- Major incidents such as the fires at New Providence Wharf and the Spectrum Building, Dagenham are evidence that an Incident Commander can recognise building failure, make changes to, or confirm the building evacuation strategy swiftly and communicate this to the Control Commander. LFB's policy now requires a Control Commander to implement an FSG Coordinator in Control who will speak directly to the nominated FSG Sector Commander at the incident. This process is embedded in testing and exercising that has, over the last three years, involved every watch in the organisation.
- Following a significant investment in training (£8m for 2024-26), Incident Commanders are now undertaking advanced real fire training that focusses on understanding complex fire behaviour.
- The Modern Firefighting programme and high-rise training must build on this, evolving to train Incident Commanders to take decisions under pressure in practical scenarios that reflect the scale and complexity of the built environment in London and will require approximately £10m from 2026 to implement and embed.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Operational Planning – Recommendation for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.57)

In the years before the Grenfell Tower fire the LFB consistently failed to implement an effective system for the collection, storage and distribution of operational risk information, in particular in relation to high-risk, high-rise residential buildings. We therefore recommend that as soon as reasonably practicable the Inspectorate inspect the LFB to examine and report on its arrangements for collecting, storing and distributing information in accordance with section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and in particular its arrangements for identifying high-risk residential buildings and collecting, storing and distributing information relating to them.

LFB's Progress

- LFB supports this recommendation. The collation of operational risk information is critical to the Brigade's operational response.
- Due to London's complex built environment, the Brigade has over 50,000 Premises Risk Assessments, which through the risk scoring process give rise to over 11,000 entries on the Operational Risk Database (ORD), all of which require a physical visit. Alongside this, crews have access to Electronic Premises Information Plates of which there are 5,252 for high-risk buildings and 6,633 buildings registered on the High-Rise Data Portal (HRDP) with data that currently includes 19,811 sets of plans and 4,342 external wall reports.
- Whilst the Brigade holds operational risk information across various systems, firefighters, Incident Commanders and Control have access to all relevant and necessary risk critical operational information when responding to incidents.
- In response to GTI Phase 1 recommendations and new regulations introduced by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, the HRDP was introduced in 2023, which helps Responsible Persons (RPs) comply with the new regulations by enabling LFB to receive and process information from RPs. This information is available to operational, Control and fire safety staff.
- A dedicated High-Risk Premises Team monitors all higher risk buildings where the evacuation strategy has needed to be changed due to serious fire safety concerns with the building. These buildings receive enhanced monitoring by both Fire Safety and Fire Stations. Data from fire safety enforcement action is added to the ORD and monitored by the High-Risk Premises Team.
- The replacement of LFB's fire safety database (Farynor) and ORD with 'One Risk' was paused to better understand new legislation such as the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and Building Safety Act 2022 and the operation of the Building Safety Regulator. As an interim measure, ORD and Farynor are being updated to improve performance e.g. to target high-rise residential premises and to improve useability. The Brigade will consider the wider recommendations in relation to construction and building safety, including any new legislation that results from the Phase 2 report, with an intent to procure an integrated system that can work alongside other agencies and regulators.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Implement Change – Recommendation for London Fire Brigade

Recommendation (113.58)

The LFB took steps to examine incidents, collect relevant information, establish boards and committees to digest it and produce appropriate changes to working practices. In most cases, however, the process was excessively bureaucratic and undermined the purpose for which it had been established. As a result, too little of the available information was translated into practical outcomes. We therefore recommend that the LFB establish effective standing arrangements for collecting, considering and effectively implementing lessons learned from previous incidents, inquests and investigations. Those arrangements should be as simple as possible, flexible and of a kind that will ensure that any appropriate changes in practice or procedure are implemented speedily.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation and is committed to being a listening and learning organisation to ensure lessons from incidents are learned and good practice is shared across the organisation and with key agencies.
- The process for the collection of learning and data from operational incidents has been improved. There has been a move towards a more open and supportive approach with regard to learning, which reflects best practice from other sectors such as health and aviation.
- Significant and major incidents are prioritised for the purposes of learning, so that information is shared with staff as quickly as possible, should similar incidents occur again. Recent examples include the hazards and incident information relating to electric bus fires, the fire at the Spectrum Building and fire at Somerset House where operational learning and the cascade of information has been provided at pace.
- The Brigade introduced a new bulletin - Operational News Flash - to quickly provide risk-critical information direct to operational staff that separates "need to know" from the "nice to know" in relation to operational learning and identifies operational risks. These arrangements ensure that the operational learning process is provided in a simplified format that produces outcomes which can be implemented quickly and efficiently.
- KPIs have been introduced to drive the collection of information from hot debriefing (seven days from incident), and from structured debriefing (arranged within 14 days, completed within 56 days). As part of continuous improvement, a review of the governance and process for operational learning has also commenced which will consider best practice nationally, as well as incorporating further risk and assurance processes. This work is due to conclude in early 2025.
- Further work is being undertaken with the NFCC Operational Preparedness, Response and Resilience Committee specifically to use best practice across the sector to improve LFB processes.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Communications (1) – Recommendation for all Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.59)

We have explained in Chapter 80 why communication by radio is inherently likely to be adversely affected in certain environments, including tall buildings constructed mainly of dense or reflective materials such as stone, concrete, brick and steel. It is apparent, however, that the use of low-power intrinsically safe radio equipment exacerbates the problem because of its more limited transmission range. In many firefighting situations the danger of a spark from a radio igniting flammable gases is very low. The fire at Grenfell Tower is one example. We understand that intrinsically safe radios capable of operating at higher power are now available. We therefore recommend that fire and rescue services that continue to use low power intrinsically safe radios as part of breathing apparatus consider reserving them only for situations in which there is a real risk of igniting flammable gases and generally using radios of higher power, particularly in high-rise buildings.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation and recognises effective communication that integrates decision-making between the Incident Commander, firefighters and Control is critical to the Brigade's operational response.
- LFB has introduced new Tait fireground radios into frontline firefighting operations. The radios are 4 watt intrinsically safe, higher powered, dual function (analogue and digital) handsets that can be connected directly into the facemask of a Breathing Apparatus wearer to improve communications to the bridgehead as described in the GTI Phase 1 recommendations.
- In addition, all LFB Command Units carry Fire Ground Radio Repeaters for deployment to extend ranges where radio communications become eroded or problematic.
- The roll out of this new equipment has been supported with additional computer based and face-to-face training sessions that cover operation, function and use, channel usage and radio etiquette.
- This included use of a trained cadre of 'super users'. These are station-based staff who have received an enhanced level of training on the operation and safety features of the radios. They delivered a programme of face-to-face training, as well as on-station support for the equipment.
- Practical training has taken place during the delivery of the first cycle of small-scale and large-scale high-rise exercising delivered to every watch in the Brigade. These focused on improving firefighter skills in incident ground communications when responding to high-rise fires. The Brigade will build further on that in current and planned future training in relation to this new equipment.
- Digital airwave radios are available on Command Units and used by Senior Officers.
- As part of continuous improvement, super users will provide further training to firefighters on the theory of intrinsic safety, the types of incident where this is likely to be a critical factor, and the benefits of higher wattage radios. This will be supported by the wider communications training detailed in response to 'Communications recommendation (3)'.

Recommendation (113.60)

There is strong evidence that in general digital radios are more effective than analogue radios. We therefore recommend that all fire and rescue services give consideration to providing all firefighters with digital radios.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation. The Brigade's new radios are dual function and feature both analogue and digital capability.
- However, the analogue function is currently used more frequently due to London's infrastructure (such as underground tunnels and very tall buildings) where there are leaky feeders which boost radio signals that are not yet digitally capable.
- As a result, LFB has introduced Fireground 'Logic 1' Radio repeaters to support longer effective ranges to improve operational communication plans. Digital airwave radios introduced in Command Units and for Senior Officers are in use now. All LFB Command Unit crews completed training confirmation exercises at Battersea Power Station in November 2023.
- LFB has a programme of work underway to review the transition of radio communications capability from analogue to digital.
- There are a number of technical and cultural challenges for LFB to address to ensure a safe transition into the digital domain. A number of Fire & Rescue Services have attempted a digital conversion, only to later revert and restart attempts to overcome issues in relation to both Breathing Apparatus communications and range.
- LFB's desired transition to digital only or digital and analogue, will clear up some known issues with analogue communications, but will introduce new technical and cultural challenges set against a complex London infrastructure.
- It is acknowledged that LFB will need to work through the difficulties of compatibility in a risk critical environment - this needs to be fed into the Modern Services Programme within our Community Risk Management Plan to ensure effective management, costing and implementation. Consideration also needs to be given to the Emergency Services Network, a replacement for the airwave system which will oversee a national project.

Recommendation (113.61)

Since radio communications are inherently unreliable in certain environments, we recommend that firefighters be trained to respond appropriately to the loss of communications and to understand how to restore them.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation. The Brigade provides training to all firefighters to ensure they are confident in the use of all available communication options on the incident ground. This starts with firefighters on development and is programmed into practical exercising and instructor-led training from when trainees arrive at station.
- LFB plans to enhance this and provide dedicated training on building a communications plan at an incident, and how to recover from widespread loss of communications. This will be addressed through the next phase of development of the high-rise exercising; the use of super users to provide on-station input, and the evolution of the Modern Firefighting Training programme and an e-learning/DaMOP review.

Modern Firefighting Training Programme

- This programme of training helps firefighters to build foundation knowledge on practical communication discipline at incidents. To sustain the change delivered in its first two years, and achieve the planned scale and ambition of this initiative, further investment will need to be provided to expand the programme to utilise this foundation knowledge in the following complex environments (Phase 2 – April 2026 onwards):
 - Communicating in practical live high-rise fire scenarios
 - Practical live fire exercises that simulate loss of communications and recovery

High-Rise Exercising

- A three-year cycle of small-scale and large-scale high-rise training has concluded following changes made to LFB's high-rise policies. As part of this cycle firefighters took part in communications exercises with Control, practising exchange of information between Incident Commanders and Control as well as managing practical communications challenges on the incident ground.
- From October 2024, the next three-year cycle will include dedicated communications training, specifically:
 - using the correct equipment and channels, and understanding signal interference and the impact of buildings on propagation
 - how widespread loss of communications can be restored
 - implementing a robust system of communications

DaMOP/e-learning packages

- Alongside a review of all existing DaMOP packages on communications, a dedicated e-learning package will be developed focussing on how to establish a communications plan at an incident and actions to take when a widespread loss of communications occurs.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Water (1) – Recommendation for all Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.62)

On the night of the Grenfell Tower fire firefighters were unable to distinguish between different types of hydrant. That is a clear indication of a need for better training and we therefore recommend that basic training on the structure and operation of the water supply system, including the different types of hydrants in use and their functions, be given to all firefighters. Training should also be given on effective measures to increase water flow and pressure when necessary.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation. Following the GTI Phase 1 report, the Brigade launched its Water Management policy to recognise that water management at an incident is equally as important as understanding equipment. This has taken place as part of the organisation's integration of National Operational Guidance and has formed the basis of further developments in water management training.
- LFB reviewed training for Bulk Media Advisors (BMAs), ensuring a focus on liaising with the water undertaker and utilising fire service equipment to manage water supply at incidents.
- This training has been enhanced by the procurement of two new 8,000 litre water bowsers that provide resilience in the face of water supply challenges, and the inclusion of water undertakers in the cadre's development days.
- Water undertakers are now asked to complete an LFB-approved training package prior to attending incidents.
- In addition to the implicit inclusion of water management in large-scale high-rise exercising and command training, water management training is provided to firefighters through a series of courses outlined below.
 - Water supply training is a fundamental part of the expanded 15-week firefighter development programme, focussing primarily on understanding equipment and utilising it to improve water supplies (i.e. water relay, water shuttle, pump operation).
 - There are six DaMOP training packages (theory and practical for each) requiring completion at regular intervals. These focus on the use of equipment and the water network. These packages are currently under review in line with the water management policy and the GTI Phase 2 report, with new versions scheduled for delivery December 2024.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Water (2) – Recommendation for all Fire & Rescue Services

Recommendation (113.63)

The Grenfell Tower fire made unusual demands on the supply of water, but other major fires may make similar demands in future. If it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of the statutory water undertaker to increase the volume or pressure of the supply, the fire and rescue service should be able to communicate with it quickly and clearly. We therefore recommend that all fire and rescue services establish and periodically review an agreed protocol with the statutory water undertakers in their areas to enable effective communication between them in relation to the supply of water for firefighting purposes.

LFB's Progress

- LFB accepts this recommendation. Following GTI Phase 1, LFB has invested considerable time and effort in engagement with water utilities companies and reinforcing protocols delivered through Control for emergency improvement to water supply at incidents.
- LFB has reviewed and strengthened protocols to communicate with statutory water undertakers in London to enable effective communication in relation to the supply of water for firefighting purposes.
- Currently, Control will inform water undertakers of four-pump fires, who will attempt to improve water supplies remotely if the Incident Commander requests it.
- All water companies must attend incidents at a fire service's request and Control ensures that a request is made at six-pump fires and above. This arrangement is supported by a memorandum of understanding which is currently under review via the NFCC Water Officer group, chaired by the LFB Water Team Manager.
- LFB has an agreement in place with Thames Water, who are the largest supplier of water in London, where their technicians will complete an LFB approved training package and attend BMA training days. However, the level of engagement by water undertakers with LFB does vary and, in some cases, has proved very difficult. We will be writing to all water undertakers following publication of the report to remind them of their responsibilities to engage with the risks to public and firefighter safety of not doing so.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Water (3) – Recommendation for the British Standards Institution

Recommendation (113.64)

In paragraph 81.23 of Chapter 81 we considered British Standard 750:2002 relating to the flow coefficient of fire hydrants and noted that the standard does not state whether the figure stated in paragraph 10.2 relates to a simple hydrant tested under factory conditions or to a hydrant installed in the pipework necessary to connect it to the water network. Any confusion could easily be dispelled by a small amendment to the standard. We therefore recommend that the British Standards Institution amend BS 750 to include a description of the circumstances under which the flow coefficient to which it refers in paragraph 10.2 is to be measured.

LFB's Position

- LFB supports this recommendation.
- BS 750 should be reviewed and amended to avoid any confusion.
- LFB will work with the British Standards Institution to improve the standard and has already begun discussions via our specialist Water Team.

London Fire Brigade's Response

Deployment of firefighters – Recommendation for the National Fire Chiefs Council

Recommendation (113.65)

How to deploy the available firefighters must remain the responsibility of the incident commander, who alone can judge how best to make use of the available resources. We also recognise that firefighters must be allowed to exercise discretion in how best to carry out their instructions. However, anyone reading Part 9 of the report will be struck by the number of times crews dispatched to the highest floors of the tower in response to calls for assistance failed to reach their destinations because they decided to help people they encountered on the stairs on their way up. We cannot tell whether in any of those cases they would have been able to rescue people higher up the building if they had not done so, but we recommend that National Fire Chiefs Council consider whether, and if so in what circumstances, firefighters should be discouraged from departing from their instructions on their own initiative and provide appropriate training in how to respond to a situation of that kind.

LFB's Position

- LFB supports this recommendation for NFCC to review national arrangements for how firefighters carry out instructions during a live incident and whether the training available is appropriate. LFB has reached out to the Chair of the NFCC Operational Preparedness, Resilience and Response Committee to offer assistance with the review.
- As the largest service which attends the most high-risk incidents where this review would be of most relevance, LFB would want to take a leading role in supporting NFCC to undertake this review.
- The dynamic nature of incidents means that firefighters must be able to recognise and react to the unfolding risk picture, including making decisions which deviate from instructions where necessary. However, further consideration of the guidance and training available to support firefighters in making these decisions would be beneficial for the sector and should be based on the 'Safe Person' concept within National Operational Guidance. The safe person concept is a health and safety principle that states that individuals are responsible for their own and others' safety while at work.