

News story: David Mundell in Peterhead and Aberdeen

Scottish Secretary David Mundell has visited north-east Scotland today to meet fishermen's representatives in Peterhead and businesses in Aberdeen.

Following on from his reappointment this week as Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Mundell visited north-east Scotland today to hear the priorities of fishermen and other north-east businesses ahead of EU exit.

In Peterhead Mr Mundell toured the fish market, spoke to traders and fishermen, then met representatives from the Scottish Fishermen's Federation.

In Aberdeen he met small and medium-sized businesses from a number of sectors – including tourism, food and tech – at a roundtable hosted by Aberdeen and Grampian Chambers of Commerce.

News story: Support for victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster

During a meeting with survivors of the fire, she announced a £5 million fund would be made available to pay for emergency supplies, food, clothes and other costs.

The proposals followed a visit by the Prime Minister to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, where people who had escaped the blaze said they had been left with no possessions or money.

The PM then chaired a meeting of a cross-Whitehall group of senior ministers and officials to agree a full range of help, which she set out to a group of residents, victims, volunteers and community leaders during a visit to the Clement James Centre near Grenfell Tower.

The package includes:

- a commitment that victims who lost their homes in the disaster must be rehoused at the earliest possible opportunity and that we should aim to do this within 3 weeks at the latest
- a guarantee to rehouse people as close as practically possible to where they previously lived, meaning they can continue to access the same public services, such as their local school or local GP – this rehousing would be in the same borough and, if not, a neighbouring borough

- until people are rehoused, the cost of temporary accommodation will be met on their behalf
- the government will also provide any necessary financial assistance to families who have been rehoused so children and their parents do not incur any extra costs in travelling to their local school
- the new £5 million Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund, made immediately available and given to the local authority to distribute – this could be used to cover loss of possessions, funerals and emergency supplies
- confirmation the Treasury will work with banks to ensure that those affected by the disaster who lost possessions like bank cards still have access to their accounts
- the Department for Work and Pensions are working with local job centres to ensure that those affected have access to the benefits and pensions they would normally receive

The Prime Minister also gave reassurance to the victims of the fire that they will be consulted on the terms of reference for the upcoming Public Inquiry. This will allow them to help shape the scope of the Inquiry so they can get the answers they are seeking.

The victims and their families will receive state funding for legal representation at the Public Inquiry.

In addition, the PM announced significant central government support to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

It includes sending in a team of experienced central government civil servants from the Department for Communities and Local Government, which has been embedded into the local council to assist with efforts.

The Bellwin scheme has also been activated – meaning that any immediate and uninsurable extra costs incurred by the council in the aftermath of the disaster will be met by the government.

To reassure people living in similar buildings that they are safe in their homes, the PM announced the government is:

- checking at speed with local authorities whether all high-rise buildings in their area have complied with recent fire orders, where work has been deemed required following an inspection
- identifying all high-rise buildings owned or managed by Housing Associations or Local Authorities and conducting a fire safety review of all buildings similar to Grenfell Tower – the government will also work with the devolved administrations on this issue

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

“The individual stories I heard this morning at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital were horrific. I spoke with people who ran from the fire in only the clothes they were wearing.

“They have been left with nothing – no bank cards, no money, no means of

caring for their children or relatives. One woman told me she had escaped in only her top and underwear.

“The package of support I’m announcing today is to give the victims the immediate support they need to care for themselves and for loved ones. We will continue to look at what more needs to be done.

“Everyone affected by this tragedy needs reassurance that the Government is there for them at this terrible time – and that is what I am determined to provide.”

Government response: Statement on charitable giving: Grenfell Tower Fire

The Charity Commission has been working with the charities involved, as well as the key online giving platforms, to help them coordinate their response, ensuring that the victims know how to access help for their urgent, immediate needs, and to help ensure that charities and independent local organisations with strong links to the community are working together to develop plans for supporting the community in the long term. Those who have suffered in this horrendous tragedy are entitled to feel confident that the funds raised in their name reaches them and their community now, and in the weeks, months and years ahead

News story: Civil/crime news: how to contact Provider Records from 16 June

Email is the only option for contacting our Provider Records team from 16 June 2017 as the contact telephone number is being switched off.

Provider Records deals with changes to bank details and applications for:

- solicitor advocate numbers
- barrister account numbers
- roll number registrations

Further information

ProviderRecords-London@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk – for email enquiries

Press release: Tesco hit with major £8million fine for pollution incident

Tesco Stores Ltd has been ordered to pay over £8million in fines and costs after pleading guilty to a pollution incident.

The incident, which occurred in July 2014, sparked a huge multi-agency operation involving the Environment Agency, Lancashire County Council, United Utilities, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and Lancashire Police.

It had a massive impact on the local community and environment with residents having to leave their homes due to petrol odours coming from the sewer network.

The Environment Agency's joint investigation with partners found that the incident resulted from Tesco's failure to address a known issue with part of the fuel delivery system and an inadequate alarm system and was compounded by poor emergency procedures.

Tesco were fined a total of £8million – £5million for the health and safety offence and £3million for the environmental offence.

Between Wednesday 2 July and Thursday 3 July 2014 approximately 23,500 litres of petrol escaped from a petrol filling tank at a petrol station in Haslingden operated by Tesco.

Petrol entered the sewerage system with the odours affecting residents up to 1km away causing people to seek medical attention with headaches and sickness. The odours remained in the homes for a number of days.

Some of the petrol also entered Langwood Brook and the River Irwell causing a significant environmental impact killing fish and other aquatic life.

Samples taken from the River Irwell detected oil up to three miles downstream. Over 40 dead fish, including brown trout, were found within 1.5 miles of where the pollution entered. Anglers reported dead fish in Bury, over six miles downstream.

About 23,500 litres of unleaded petrol leaked from the tank over a 29 hour period. Around 7,000 litres was later recovered at the site and the remainder escaped into the sewer system and watercourse.

Mark Easedale, an Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This pollution incident had a dramatically negative impact on the local community and the environment with Langwood Brook and the River Irwell severely affected. A week after the pollution incident an investigation by Environment Agency officers found fish populations in the River Irwell immediately downstream of Langwood Brook were around 90% lower than those found upstream.

The sentencing today sends out a clear message to anyone whose recklessness causes serious pollution to the environment – we will be relentless in our investigations and take action wherever needed.

Our staff work 24/7 to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents and we encourage people to report such incidents to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

This was a joint prosecution with Lancashire County Council and Tesco Stores Ltd also pleaded guilty to an offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, deputy leader of Lancashire County Council with responsibility for Trading Standards, said:

This was a major leak of fuel in a relatively built-up area and close to a busy superstore. The potential consequences are only too obvious.

The fact that the leak was allowed to continue for more than 24 hours undoubtedly contributed to a risk of harm to people living and working nearby, as well as emergency services and other professionals attending the incident.

- Tesco Stores Ltd were fined a total of £8million at Preston Crown Court – £5million for the health and safety charge and £3million for the environmental offence. They were also ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £35,434.30 and (approx.) £22,000 to Lancashire County Council.
- Tesco Stores Ltd pleaded guilty to causing a water discharge activity not under and to the extent authorised by an Environmental Permit, contrary to Regulation 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010. A guilty plea was entered at an earlier hearing at Burnley Crown Court on 12 September 2016.
- There was a further indictment led by Lancashire County Council: Contravention of Regulation 6(8) of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002 contrary to s.33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. A guilty plea was also

entered for this charge.