

Environmental checks around Grenfell Tower show no increased risk to health

The first stage of environmental checks around Grenfell Tower show that there is no increased risk to health from the aftermath of the fire.

The levels of chemicals found in the Grenfell area are consistent with those generally found in London.

The checks were carried out by independent specialists and have been verified by experts on the independent Science Advisory Group.

The process for carrying out the checks was agreed by all members of the Science Advisory Group.

Professor Anna Stec, who originally suggested testing around the site, is a former member of the Group who provided advice to the group on fire toxicity.

Sir Patrick Vallance, Government Chief Scientific Adviser and Chairman of the Science Advisory Group said:

Following a review of the technical documents by the Science Advisory Group, they have agreed that the approach taken was scientifically rigorous and met the agreed specification.

The Group has confidence in the results from Stage 1, which will inform the Stage 2 investigation.

To provide further reassurance to the community, a second stage of testing will also be carried out. The Stage 1 results do not show levels requiring any change to the investigation strategy.

Anyone in the Grenfell community who remains concerned about their health should contact their GP, who is best placed to assess individual needs and consider the most appropriate treatment.

More information can also be found about the enhanced health checks that are available. The government has provided £50 million funding to provide additional health services to the community to support this work.

Health checks are also available at various clinics in North Kensington via community provider, Enhance, who can be reached on 020 3434 2500.

What we did in Stage 1

The aim of Stage 1 was to collect background information, including thorough research, a site walkover and samples from selected public areas.

Investigators took 93 samples from 21 areas within a 1km radius of the Tower, including the Grenfell Tower site. The areas were decided with the community's help to identify where debris from the fire had been found, together with scientific data from the Met Office about the smoke plume from the fire.

What the tests found

Most substances tested are at levels expected in London.

The substances found in the soil are unlikely to be present as a unique result of the fire and most would be present in the environment despite the fire.

There are no obvious patterns in the spread or levels of the substances found – if substances were present in the soil because of the fire, we would expect to see much higher levels closer to the Tower and spreading outwards, but the checks did not find this.

Where some substances are at higher levels, this does not mean they necessarily present a risk to health – the levels are consistent with those in other urban areas. Findings at these levels do not require action, but we will continue to investigate them in a second stage of testing.

The results from Stage 1 will help us to agree where to test and what to test for in the next stage. Stage 2, which involves further sampling, will proceed as planned so we can provide further reassurance to the community.