

Publication of research by Professor Anna Stec into environmental contamination following the Grenfell Tower fire

In brief:

- We are taking Professor Stec's findings extremely seriously, and fully appreciate the ongoing health concerns.
- We have established a comprehensive programme of environmental checks to fully assess the risks and take appropriate action.
- The research published today is preliminary and states that further analysis of the area around the Tower is necessary to understand the potential health risks.
- Professor Stec's findings, and other independent soil testing undertaken by other local organisations, will feed into the programme of checks we are conducting.
- Professor Stec is part of the independent Science Advisory Group providing scientific assurance to the Government-led programme. The Science Advisory Group will consider this new evidence to inform its advice and recommendations.

Publication of Professor Stec's Research

The Communities Secretary and Minister for Grenfell Victims wrote to members of the community on 15 March 2019, to advise that Professor Stec's research was due to be published. This is being published today in Chemosphere, an international scientific journal and is available on the University of Central Lancashire's website.

This preliminary research is independent of Government and publication has been expected since the original media reports in October 2018.

A Government-led programme of comprehensive environmental checks was announced in October 2018 to reassure the community that any environmental and health risks will be fully assessed, and appropriate action taken, if required.

The research states that further analysis of the area around the Tower is necessary and, along with other independent soil testing undertaken by other local organisations, will feed into the programme of checks we are conducting.

Your health

The NHS encourages people living near Grenfell Tower who are concerned about their health to contact their GP to get an enhanced health check, which assesses your current health. Enhanced health checks are available for children and adults.

The NHS are holding dedicated clinics in the North Kensington area tailored to local need. These are available on request by calling 020 8962 4393 or by emailing grenfell.response@nhs.net

If you have problems like asthma or breathing difficulties, your GP can refer you for more specialist help if needed. This help includes a specialist respiratory clinic. The NHS will fast track anyone affected by the fire.

Environmental contamination

Professor Stec's research has concluded that there is an increased risk of a number of health problems associated with the levels of contaminants found, including respiratory conditions and cancer. This risk is based on repeated, long-term exposure.

The research states that further analysis of the area around the Tower is necessary to understand the potential health risks. That is what we are doing through the programme of additional environmental checks, which will inform any changes to public health advice.

Our current public health advice recognises that contaminants in soil can be harmful but need to be breathed in, eaten or come into regular contact with the skin on a repeated basis over a long period of time. The advice therefore is aimed at reducing contact with debris or the soil. This is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779168/factsheet_for_contaminated_land.pdf

The research states that the data needs to be interpreted with caution as soil is complex and can vary significantly, even within a small area. The comprehensive programme of environmental checks will also seek to identify the potential source(s) of the contamination, by additionally reviewing any previous uses of the land. This is a key part of Stage 1 (background and scoping) of the environmental checks.

Health screening

Professor Stec has called for long-term health screening to assess any long-term adverse effects of the fire.

Unlike health checks, screening can only be implemented where there is a risk of a specific condition and a specific treatment or advice is available, based on scientific evidence.

The environmental checks programme, together with the ongoing air quality monitoring, will inform any changes to public health advice including whether screening is required.

The NHS has currently committed £50m to fund long-term monitoring and treatment for those affected by the fire. If the comprehensive environmental checks identify that screening is needed, this will be taken forward and local residents will be contacted immediately.

Programme of Additional Environmental Checks

We have appointed AECOM as an independent specialist contractor to carry out Stage 1 of the additional environmental checks. We expect this stage to take about

three months from start to finish. The checks being undertaken on behalf of the Government involve background research, testing and analysis.

The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser has established an independent Science Advisory Group (SAG) to provide assurance to ensure that the approach to the Government-led programme of testing and analysis is scientifically rigorous.

Professor Stec is a member of this Group, which includes experts in public health, land contamination and toxicology. They will continue to consider any new evidence as it emerges, including the detailed findings from Professor Stec's research now it is published, to inform their advice and recommendations on the programme of checks.

A community consultation workshop will be held immediately after the Easter holidays, to enable residents to inform the scope and locations of the testing.

Members of SAG will be attending the workshop to explain their role and answer questions about the science behind the Government's environmental checks programme.

Further information

If you would like to speak to a member of the Government Project Team, we will be available at:

- The Curve on Thursday, 28 March between 12 – 5pm
- Al Manaar Mosque, on Friday, 29 March between 1 – 3pm
- The Space at the We are One event, on Saturday, 30 March between 12.30 – 5.30pm
- Baseline, on Monday, 1 April between 10am – 3pm.

We can also be contacted directly by email: environmental-checks@communities.gov.uk or by phone on 03034440078

For the most up-to-date information, you can download the **Nextdoor** app on iOS and Android devices or visit www.nextdoor.co.uk and search for **Grenfell Community Updates - HM Government**.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
28 March 2019