

## **Witness support**

### **Who is a witness?**

Anybody who provides a formal statement (written or otherwise) to the Inquiry is a witness. Some witnesses will be called to give oral evidence to the Inquiry, where they will be asked to expand on and further clarify points raised in their statements.

### **Support for witnesses**

The Inquiry is committed to ensuring all witnesses are fully supported and feel comfortable throughout the process of giving their evidence.

For witnesses the Inquiry intends to call to give oral evidence, the Inquiry will arrange a familiarisation visits to the venue, which can be used to discuss the best package of support.

### **Process of questioning**

As set out in the Inquiry Rules, only Counsel to the Inquiry will ask the witness questions unless in exceptional circumstances. They will be aware of any support requirements and vulnerabilities the witness has and witnesses will not be cross-examined or asked questions by other legal representatives. Any questions CP Legal Representatives may have, will be given to Counsel to the Inquiry to ask.

### **On site counsellors**

NHS and Hestia staff are available daily at the Inquiry. The NHS are identifiable by their blue lanyards, and Hestia by their green and orange scarves.

Support is also available via [www.grenfellwellbeing.com](http://www.grenfellwellbeing.com) to self-refer or for any queries on 020 8637 6279.

Any concerns during the hearing can be raised in confidence at the press or information desks.

### **Expenses**

Witnesses can claim expenses for childcare costs, accommodation, loss of earnings and travel to and from the venue. The Inquiry team will work with witnesses to ensure they can travel in a way which meets their individual needs.

## Vulnerable witnesses

The Inquiry can put in place measures to make witnesses feel more comfortable in giving their evidence. Where the Chairman determines that a witness is vulnerable, he may direct that additional measures be taken to assist a witness in participating effectively in that role or to improve the quality of their evidence. The Inquiry is open to hearing any suggestions of suitable arrangements.

A 'Vulnerable' witness is someone who:

- experiences stress or difficulty in giving evidence;
- is likely to suffer a detrimental effect in the quality of any statement or evidence they give;
- requires increased support to ensure they are able to fully participate; and/or
- may be at a significant risk that giving evidence may have a negative effect on their mental health or well-being.

Below are some examples of what the Inquiry can do to support vulnerable witnesses.

- **The appointment of an interpreter** for those who wish to give evidence in a different language.
- **A recorded interview** in place of a written statement.
- **Screens** meaning you are behind a screen and people sitting in the hearing room cannot see you.
- **A live link from a location outside the Inquiry hearing room** i.e. another room within Holborn Bars or a different location.
- **The support of a friend or relative** who will be allowed to sit with you while you are giving evidence.
- **Regular breaks** at prescribed times.
- **Time limits** for questioning a witness.
- **The appointment of an intermediary** to assess the additional needs of any witness, to assist with making a statements and/or to assist with giving oral evidence at the hearings.