

GLA Oversight Committee – Wednesday 31 January 2018**Transcript of Item 5 - The Charitable Response to the Grenfell Tower Fire, Terror Attacks and other Events in London**

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Before I mention our guests by name, for those who are watching on the webcast, I just want to mention what the main focus of the meeting is. It is to discuss how funds were distributed post the Grenfell Tower tragedy. We have invited some of the fundraisers so that we can have a discussion about the whole of the system and the processes. One of the issues in the aftermath of the fire was the cause of some confusion: the number of fundraising and distribution bodies involved. There were lots more people we could have invited today but we are not sure if that would have been very manageable. We have nine guests before us today. Therefore, we focus on those organisations that raised and distributed the bulk of the funds, and we must recognise the contribution of all other charities involved and other co-ordinating groups, such as the Grenfell Muslim Response Unit, hosted by the National Zakat Foundation.

Just for the sake of anyone watching on the webcast or in our audience, this meeting will focus on monies and gifts in kind raised from the public and distributed to survivors and victims' families. It will not examine the monies raised by trusts, foundations, and the contributions of time by volunteers/members of the public or the support for businesses. We are quite clearly focused around those issues.

Can I now welcome our guests? We have David Farnsworth, Director of City Bridge Trust; Sarah Atkinson, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications of the Charity Commission (can I remind members again that Sarah has to leave us at 11.00am, so we need to focus any questions towards her so that can happen); Mark Simms, Chief Executive at the Rugby Portobello Trust (RPT); Susan Dolton, Director of the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation (K&C); Gerald Oppenheim, Chair of the London Emergencies Trust (LET); Rob Bell, Director of the LET; Zoe Abrams, Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross; Manny Hothi, Director of Programmes and Strategic Partnerships, London Community Foundation; and lastly, our very own Greater London Authority (GLA) officer, Emma Strain, Assistant Director of External Affairs. Can I welcome you all?

Can I go straight into our questions, rather than take any opening statements? I think it would be best if we go straight to some of the issues that we wish to explore with you. If we could cast our minds back to the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund (LBRCF), why was that approach, and those, processes considered to be such a good model for distributing charitable funds following an emergency?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Shall I take that? In 2005, when the LBRCF came into being after the 7 July bombings that year, quite at that point an absolutely unprecedented event in terms of its scale and immediacy and the number of people who were affected by it, LBRCF was set up to distribute what came to be £12 million. When that job was done, it closed down, but the model was the only one to respond to those sorts of incidents. Of course, in 2017 we know there were, in the end, four terrorist incidents in London, so when the Westminster attack happened and then London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green, we were doing the job again as the LET, a new charity but a successor body with the same overall objectives and aims. When the Grenfell fire happened, with the partnership we already had with the British Red Cross as our fundraising partner - LET is the distribution end of that, with a particular specialism in assisting those who are next of kin for those who lost their lives and those who were injured, whether that

was just a short visit to A&E or something much longer - we were there doing the job. We had the experience back from 2005 of working with families, with next of kin, in very, very difficult circumstances for them. The rest of us can, I think, only imagine some of that. The model that we had was there and ready to go to help people caught up in the Grenfell Tower fire.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Thank you. Do you wish to add anything, David?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Just briefly. The link from City Bridge Trust through to that work was manifested in two individuals, one of whom was able to be seconded for 18 months to work with Gerald and others, and he is still on my team and was seconded to inform this particular response and also give some advice to the Manchester events. Through the trust, we also supported the learning piece after ten years to make sure it was all gathered and not lost in terms of corporate memory, so that was there ready to be activated, albeit in a very different context.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Is it fair to say that that is the model from the modern day, 2005, which we broadly follow in subsequent tragedies that occur in terms of where there is general fundraising and others to distribute to victims and associated families?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Indeed.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Sarah Atkinson, can I ask you a question? If that is the model, and we heard that Manchester has adopted it in terms of the arena issues, how did the Grenfell Tower tragedy differ from other emergencies such as terror attacks, and what has made it so challenging?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): Thank you. Obviously, all emergencies are different because they happen in a different context and to a different community. From our perspective, the particular features that we would say are distinctive about Grenfell: firstly, it was the number of organisations that from the very beginning were involved, were asked to respond or stepped up to respond. In most of the previous emergencies we have seen, a natural focus emerges, either from an existing organisation that is ready to respond or a focus naturally falls around a single organisation that steps forward. We did not have that in this case. We had a number of charities and organisations involved from the very, very immediate aftermath.

We would also, from our perspective, identify the uncertainty and the confusion around the number of individuals affected that pervaded for quite a long time. Uncertainty in the immediate aftermath is very normal, but the length of time that that persisted was unusual in our experience and that really affected how charities were able to respond and the nature of the response.

Then the third thing that it is very important to highlight, in the context of Grenfell, is the lack of trust in state agencies and the way that that has spilled particularly into the larger charities working in an auxiliary capacity but, more broadly, that the public uncertainty and lack of trust around how much money was being raised and how it was distributed, and that context of lack of trust and uncertainty was much more acute than we have experienced before around the public response.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): In various emergencies, would the legal considerations change, or would there be a core legal partner, and there may well be fringe issues that would guide the distribution of funds or fundraising activities? I know we are going to come on to crowdfunding and your pages and everything else

later, and there are some issues around that, but can you just paint some pictures of some of those complexities around some of the legal background in terms of approaching?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): In the broadest sense, there are two kinds of funds that are raised in emergency situations. One is charitable funds, donations to registered charities, or appeals organised on behalf of registered charities. There are charitable funds. They are under the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission and the courts, as charitable funds with all responsibilities that relate to that, and the trustees of those funds are responsible to us for managing those. Gift Aid and other tax reliefs normally apply in the way that they do to charitable funds.

The other stream, broadly speaking, is what you would call person-to-person donations. These are the kinds of individual responses - for example, for a particular family or a particular individual - that have been raised, often online, but traditionally this has been happening for centuries, communities collecting in pubs, informally around streets, for those individuals. Those are not charitable funds. Those are gifts given as freely as if I gave you money today from me to you. There is no jurisdiction of the Charity Commission usually, or the courts around those and the tax reliefs are not usually applicable. What can happen, however, and this is where it blurs, is where an individual without realising it, because of the way that they have raised those funds, may create a charitable trust. If I appeal to you today to give me money for the victims of the Grenfell Fire, I may inadvertently be creating a charitable trust. I do not mean to do that. I do not want to be the trustee of those funds with all the responsibilities that come, but I may inadvertently do that on the terms of the fundraising. We saw appeals that were intended as a natural human response to support victims that inadvertently became charitable trusts in these situations. That is where we have to get involved and help those individuals who did not mean to create that trust but may have taken those responsibilities on and need to fulfil them.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Sorry, Andrew, do you want to come in on that point?

Andrew Boff AM: Very quickly to Mr Oppenheim, if I may. Do you self-activate, or does somebody ask you to do your role?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Back in 2015, as we came up to the tenth anniversary of the 7 July bombings, as well as working independently with Emma [Strain] and colleagues at City Hall to organise a tenth anniversary event for that one, some of the former trustees of the 2005 fund looked at the world around us and thought, "This might happen again, so what we ought to do is put some infrastructure in place", which became the LET, ready to activate if something happened, as in the end it did in March 2017.

We also talked to the Head of Paid Service and senior staff here about the arrangements to do that, and that if something happened, in part to help the fundraising, in part to help the profile and the knowledge that there was a charitable organisation in existence that would channel money to those affected, we arranged that there would be a statement by the Mayor to help launch that in the wake of, as I say, what happened on 22 March. It is a bit of both: self-activation and then formal activation.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you for that. I suspect we are going to get a similar question a little later from someone else.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can we just continue with some of the context? Can I just go to Zoe? Red Cross: an incredible international experience. How does that differ when you are doing a domestic-type emergency situation, just to paint some pictures in terms of the issue of redistributing some of the monies that were given to you? What are the challenges?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): The first thing to say is it was quite an unusual situation because we had not raised money for domestic emergencies since 7 July 2005, and our involvement in Grenfell came off the back of Manchester happening, and I was working with the Mayor's Office there to establish the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund, along the same lines as the LET, during the London Bridge attack, in which we set up the Solidarity Fund with our partners here as well at the GLA to be the beneficiaries of that. It is not a typical scenario.

What happens in an international emergency? Operationally, in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally, it is quite similar in the fact that we are volunteers who are on the ground straight away, and in the case of Grenfell we were, as part of the resilience plan, immediately involved. We are in the Westway. We then set up the friends and family centre, etc. Our operational involvement was continual throughout that. That would be the same as in an international emergency. The key is whom we partner with. In an international emergency, essentially our partner is the national society of the country. For example, when there was a typhoon in Philippines, which had a huge storm surge wave, it was the Philippines Red Cross that we were raising money on behalf of, and they would distribute the money appropriately. In the UK, we need to partner with the authorities, so with the relevant local authority or with the national Government.

One of the situations here was that it was quite difficult to get hold of the local authority to have the conversation on fundraising. Once we did, we made the offer, which was to launch a fund - I think that was on Thursday morning, eventually - to distribute cash, which was turned down, to set up the friends and family centre, which was accepted, and to set up a support line, which was also accepted. We already had a support line running for Manchester and London Bridge, so that would be a way of ringing up and saying, "I need some more information, including how I can access the funds that are being raised on my behalf".

One of our lessons is that we would exercise a greater right to initiate ourselves in future. There was an expectation among the public that we should be raising funds. Our supporter care line is sort of like a customer care phone line that you ring up. Members of the public were calling us, saying, "We want to donate money. Can we do it through you?" Partially because the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea named a local charity in the initial days, but then also because of the lag in being able to get in touch with the Chief Executive, there were other players that came into the field.

The other thing to note as well is that in the case of both Manchester and the UK Solidarity Fund, the local paper got behind the British Red Cross fundraising. In Manchester, *The Manchester Evening News* immediately set up using the crowdfunding platform, a form of raising money. Once the official We Love Manchester Fund - which was between British Red Cross and the Mayor's Office - was established, they then channelled their funds into that. Equally, with the Solidarity Fund, the *Evening Standard* partnered with us. That did not happen in the case of Grenfell, in part because of the time lag, I think.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): OK. Thank you for that. In terms of the techniques, we have background information about the parity of funding for victim societies, and we are probably going to go into a bit more detail about this later on, but just setting the scene, in different disasters, they are all tragedies and they are all terrible in their nature, but they are slightly different. Is the parity of funding for victims and survivors in

different disasters a desirable aim, or do some disasters mean that you adjust and have to adapt? What is the thinking about that generally, rather than specifically if we are facing different emergencies?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): I will start. The challenge for any charitable fund distributing money that is raised is that you never quite know how much you are going to get, so you have to be very careful as a trustee, and indeed as an officer supporting the trustees, early on, not to overcommit your funds and not to overpromise, because that would be the worst thing to do. “Well, we promised you £10,000 but we can only give you £5,000 because it is not there.” That is just terrible. We do not want to go there. Inevitably, you end up setting some tariffs, if you like, to use a really rather cold-sounding words, which say, “We will pay a certain amount for injury, we will pay a certain amount for next of kin”. We were very clear in 2005 and again in 2017 that, as more money became available and we had greater certainty of what we could do, so we would increase the payments that were made. These are all charitable gifts, as Sarah [Atkinson] was saying earlier on.

You also want to try to treat people in similar circumstances of loss or injury in a broadly similar way as best you can, but with a caveat that Westminster had its own fund. As Zoe [Abrams] was saying, the Solidarity Fund later came into being to support London Bridge, and indeed was used for Finsbury Park and Parsons Green afterwards. Then, of course, Grenfell on top of that had a completely different fundraising stream attached to it, and bringing Manchester into the reckoning as well. There was huge fundraising success in Manchester on the back of that incident. Of course, all the funds end up with slightly different sums of money in them. Your aim as a distributor, over time, is to try your best to equalise what you award, so that someone who is next of kin from one incident is ending up with broadly the same amount of money as someone in another incident where the funding was much higher. Certainly, we had to do some work both with the Red Cross and colleagues at the Charity Commission to make sure that for Westminster, which had the smallest pot of money in the end, we were able to do some transfers of funds, or the Red Cross was, within the Solidarity Fund, to bring awards in Westminster up to the same level.

In the terror sites, we broadly achieved that. For those at Grenfell, we are a bit ahead of that, so it is a balancing exercise. You are constantly on a tightrope to try to achieve that, but the aim is parity.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Yes. One of the consequences of that attempt to try to get parity, with all the uncertainty about how much money is there, is that, when you add into the equation uncertainty about the number of fatalities or injured where that is changing quickly, you then have a complicated bit of financial management. You need to make sure that as you increase the pay-out to those you know about, you set aside an amount of money so that, at any point in time when those numbers firm up, you can make the same level of payments to them. That makes sense when you explain it to people, but when we began sharing data through the Charity Commission about the distribution, of course, it appeared that LET had a stubborn amount of money that seemed to just be sitting inactive, which we were having to hold on to until at Grenfell the number of fatalities was clear. We had to explain that many times to people who quite rightly asked, “Why is that money not going anywhere?”

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That is quite a crucial point, because the ascertaining of the final number takes time in the nature of Grenfell-type situations?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Yes. We had to sit down at the start with our board, with the best available data from the police, from the media, from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the ground, and model around a certain number of fatalities, to be blunt. We set aside money to pay in

case of up to 100 fatalities. When the figures were clarified at the end of the year, then we could take that money and distribute it accordingly.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Zoe, is there anything you want to add to that at this stage?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): The other thing that I would add as well is, when we come to it, we have had a lot of conversations with the LET as we release the funds, and we think British Red Cross has raised £7.2 million for Grenfell, ultimately, which is something that we are very proud of. We were thinking as we were making decisions about how we could make the best contribution in terms of distribution, what our key focus could be. For example, we have really weighted distribution around people who have been bereaved because we are aware that potentially that is one group that has not received as much money. When you look at the balancing out of how the different pots of funding are being distributed, that was one group that we felt there would be a finite time when they continued to receive support, whereas there might be more ongoing support for others. In a way, there are some positives in terms of having a number of different pots with regards to that, and having a distribution body that has been involved with various fundraising bodies has enabled LET to have a bit of that sight in regards to how things will play out.

Sian Berry AM: You talked about a sum of money and having to parcel that money up because you did not know how many victims there would be, but what effect does the actual tragedy have? If you compare the Grenfell situation to Manchester, both are very tragic, but at Manchester there was no loss of homes, for instance. There was no need to house people or contain them in that short period. How does that affect how much you give or what you give for, or is it just emergency there and then, what you are given for that five, ten, 24-hour period?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): As Gerald has said already, the specific focus and expertise of LET is dealing with people who have lost loved ones or been injured. It became apparent very quickly that there were people who did not necessarily fit into those categories or had also lost property and possessions. We were aware that there were people able to get some money at that time, but, as people have said already today, it was slightly disorganised. Other funders are maybe better than us to talk about the money that was raised and how, over the weeks that ensued, it became clearer that there was a growing need among survivors who were not bereaved or injured, who had lost everything and could not get access to money. In other words, there were problems with the distribution of that, and it was beyond the capacity of LET at that time to step into that area. I think it took a couple of weeks to get organised and work out a strategy between us about how we distribute to all of those groups.

In the end, the picture simplified into LET distributing to the bereaved and the injured, and Mark [Simms] and colleagues at RPT distributing to the survivor households. Behind that distribution (to households) was a whole process of working out who fell into that group.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): For us, right from the get-go, the early hours, our focus was on survivors. We opened our doors at 1.30am in the morning. Within eight hours, we were able to put cash in people's hands and clothes and things like that. We launched an appeal internally to our donors, whom we knew, and we raised £118,000 in about five hours. We were able to make sure that people were supported immediately with emergency cash to get taxis to hotels, and all that kind of stuff. Then colleagues at K&C Foundation came in very quickly after and gave us £30,000 to distribute straight away.

It has to be said, though, with a note of caution, we are not a grant-making or a distributing organisation. We are a local youth charity that runs a youth club and various activities to support the community. The people that were doing this distribution were our 20 staff onsite and we had 100 volunteers who turned up, whom we knew. It was those people who set up a very crude system. We are embedded in the community, so our idea was that we knew people and then we asked survivors to self-identify one another. It was absolutely not perfect, but in those early hours it was the best we could do, and then it went on from there into something a bit more sophisticated later on.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Can I just comment? There was something going on at that time which was really critical. There was an absence of trusted data about the number of people who had died and about people who had been displaced or injured. At that time, LET was working very intensively with the police, so we felt that we were as confident as anybody in understanding what we knew about fatalities and we were able to get going quite quickly because we worked very closely through the police in exchanging information, finding out where there is a bereaved family, and so on.

There was a lack of information about who was in that building, who survived, and what counted as a 'household'. In the absence of that, several organisations were piecing together the best available data and triangulating, and I think it is fair to say that RPT was doing that and had as good a grip on that as anybody. You had two organisations (LET and RPT) willing to distribute, with reasonably good data that we could be confident in, and ready to get going quickly. There was no hard data at that time - it was changing every day - but we knew we needed to get going quickly.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That was very valuable context: very wide-ranging, but setting some of the scene for our more in-depth questions.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I want to focus on the relationship between the London Resilience bodies and the raising and distribution of the donations. We know that there are certain distinctions between the tragedy that happened at Grenfell. It was a geographically isolated part of London. There was a delay in taking a view that a London-wide response was required. Who makes that decision, and what are the criteria for declaring that a London-wide response is required? Let us start with you, David. What are the criteria for making a London-wide response, and who makes the decision?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): I think that is a civil response. It is for local government to decide that, rather than charities.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Pardon?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): It is not charities that would make that call. It is Government who would do that.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Who would make it, then?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): I can only speak as I was doing in answer to an early question, that the discussions that we had before any of the incidents happened in 2017 with senior staff here, both the Head of Paid Service and with Emma's [Strain] team, were that in the event that something happened, in order to support the fundraising effort and after that the distribution effort, a statement by the Mayor or the Mayor's Office to the effect that a terror incident - which is what we were thinking of, rather than the fire - would prime all that. Indeed, after the Westminster attack, that is what

happened so that we and the Red Cross as the fundraising partner could get going and the Red Cross could approach donors, could respond to the public, and we could get the distribution mechanisms into place and activated. We did it that way. We were not technically reliant on the declaration of the civil emergency or anything like that. We recognised it when we saw it, in that sense.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): The answer to your question is: it is the authorities that do it, essentially, so there is a --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: The sense is that the charity bodies were looking towards the Mayor for the declaration of the --

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): No. The local authority will have a strategic co-ordinating group, and each local authority has a resilience plan. The Red Cross is written into those resilience plans. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea did initiate the Strategic Co-ordinating Group essentially as a phone call with all the authorities on there, the Red Cross is on there, and they start to manage the actual incident straight away.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): The London Resilience team co-ordinates that piece initially. If a major incident is declared, it is normally police that will chair that group. It involves all of the operational bodies that are involved and whoever is relevant. Depending on the incident, it could involve the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), it could involve the National Health Service (NHS), it will involve the local authority's police, fire, ambulance, everything, and that is the co-ordinating body that gets to that incident piece that --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Did local authorities get this right? Did they think that a London-wide response was required? We have heard on this Committee that there was a delay in that happening. What is the role of the Local Authority Gold Command?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): I know there have been other meetings that have covered some of this topic off, but the way that that process happens is reasonably well controlled and everybody is clear on what their roles are with that. The local authority will raise that initially. As it became clear that the Grenfell incident was becoming more serious and it was declared as a major incident, the police then hand over on that piece, and that is where that machine comes into operation.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I just want to pin it down here. Was there a delay with the local authority declaring the London-wide response was required, or was there no delay there?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): It is a perception point. For me, my personal view is that --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I am just looking back in history, rather than --

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): -- with the benefit of hindsight and what we now know about the scale of the tragedy, the London Local Authority Gold solution should perhaps have been brought in earlier, but that is with the benefit of hindsight. It is worth noting that it felt like a long time in the process, but these meetings took place every three or four hours from the point that it happened.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: When decisions are made, what are the criteria used for declaring the London-wide response? What are the criteria that have been used?

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I think we need to clarify in terms of the London-wide response in the sense that, bringing you all together, as you are developing a very fast-flowing, complex situation where organisations have had to adapt to the needs on the ground and to others coming into play, if we have a model in 2005, should the post-recovery plan - if we can call it that in the resilience models that we have in the Gold - include you in a much clearer way than what I think is apparent? I think that is what the Member is saying. One of the questions the Member will follow up on is the issue about the co-ordinating role of the Charity Commission of bringing people together and setting some co-ordinating framework over your work. Sorry to interrupt, but I just wanted to get some clarity into that.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Certainly back in 2005, again, the history here is that the then-resilience plan that existed in this building had the capacity in it for a charitable response, and when the 7 July event happened, very shortly afterwards the then-Mayor set up what was originally called the Mayor's Fund, which very quickly became the LBRCF. It worked very well, and LBRCF in those days had direct access to Gold Command. The Chief Executive went on to it and that worked extremely well in a whole range of situations that developed there. This time, the response was, as I have said, looking just purely at the terror attacks first. We were activated in the way that I was saying earlier on, after the Westminster attack, and then when London Bridge happened, when Finsbury Park happened, when Parsons Green happened, we were already there and doing the work with the Red Cross, with others, so those events one after the other followed a pattern from the original activation. Because through Rob [Bell] and the LET team and the British Red Cross we had access at that point to the police, and all the NHS standing behind that and local authorities and so on, that all worked. Grenfell was a bit different because of the nature and scale of what happened, as colleagues have said, and it took a little time for that to get rolling. In answer to your question, I think the experience we have all had is that if you are going to do contingency planning for a future event, one of the big bits of learning is that because charities together have a key role in delivering services in the ground, raising money, distributing it, having a presence on a Gold Command is going to be really, really helpful and important.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Can I add to that as well that British Red Cross was called in to Gold on the Saturday by John Barradell OBE [Chief Executive, City of London Corporation] and we stayed in there for over a week? We did not have a formal co-ordinating role with other voluntary sector organisations, although we tried to have as many conversations as possible with everybody. There are mechanisms. It is about how effectively they are deployed in every case.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): Just from on the ground, I think it feels like we are still waiting for it to happen, to be quite honest. In those early days, there was lots of talk of Gold and things going on and all the rest of it. From where we were sitting, there was an absence of leadership; there was an absence of response from Government, both locally, nationally and London-wide. There was a total absence. There was a void. That is why organisations like us, like ClementJames, like the Harrow Club, like all of those other local organisations, moved in to fill that void, and it was entirely unco-ordinated, entirely. I do not want to get into an emperor's new clothes kind of situation. We were just doing our thing, supporting people on a human-to-human basis, and waiting for the civic response to catch up. In many ways, if you speak to survivors, that is their absolute experience and it is ours.

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): My experience was I was asked by John Barradell on the Sunday to go into the Gold Command structure, and that was by dint of my day job as Director of City Bridge Trust, which is charitable. It works with 500 or 600 charities across the communities of London. There was something very strong about the fact of the breakdown in some quarters in trust and confidence in the public bodies, and coming from that constituency, the community voluntary sector rather than the statutory, was of value.

What I found there, yes, the Red Cross was there with that hat on. In terms of the future, there are lessons in terms of the connection between the local community voluntary sector and the national, which is key, and I know there is already some work being done on that.

There is also something key in resilience response around the language. The way that the statutory sector operates in resilience response is a very unfamiliar language to me, and I was suddenly in a world which was unknown to me. In terms of future planning, the community voluntary sector could be better equipped, rather than this language of Gold and Platinum, which does not mean much to us, although within the emergency service and in first responders it is bread and butter. There is something about how the different sectors can work together in advance of the next - heaven forbid - situation.

Sian Berry AM: Obviously we had a whole meeting where we discussed in some detail, and we had a very steep learning curve in terms of Gold and what happened when and all of that, where we talked about how long it took for the Gold management side of things to spring into action. Here today we are really trying to get to the bottom of when the official fundraising appeals were set up, and I do not think we have yet. Zoe [Abrams] from the Red Cross has said people were contacting you, trying to give money, wondering if you had set up an appeal yet, and you needed the permission of the local authority for that, and obviously the local authority took its time triggering the London-wide Gold response itself and so did not give you permission for a number of days.

LET, I am not sure it is completely clear whether or not you were able to set up an official appeal until you had got some permissions in that respect as well. Did it need to wait until there was the London-wide Gold thing triggered, or is that a separate process? On what day were your official appeals actually set up?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): The partnership we have with the Red Cross is already there. LET is not a fundraising body. We distribute, and that is where our expertise lies.

In terms of the fundraising that happened, as Zoe [Abrams] was saying, the Red Cross was on it pretty instantly and was asked to get involved on that basis. Quite quickly, again, something we have not talked about yet, but in concert with both the K&C Foundation and indeed the Dispossessed Fund through the *Evening Standard* and the London Community Foundation, there was a very quick exchange of views and information there, and some of the --

Sian Berry AM: Can you tell us what days those different appeals started? That is the crucial thing. There seems to have been a delay on the ground of some days, during which people felt very abandoned, and just to get clarity on the timeline would be great.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Susan [Dolton] may be able to help us?

Susan Dolton (Director, Kensington and Chelsea Foundation): We are a very small, locally based charity, and we had a phone call. We were set up with our fundraising appeal at 11.00am that morning, and

we went live on three platforms, and within one month we raised £5 million. We are now at £6.7 million. We were the first. I know that because those first few hours ticked by very, very slowly indeed, and suddenly that money started to flood in. With a team of four, it became a heavy responsibility of, “What are we going to do with this money?” We felt there was nobody for us to talk to, apart from our local community partners.

We were quickly on the phone to Mark [Simms] at RPT, to ClementJames, to Westway Trust, to Al Manaar, Notting Hill Methodist - I have probably missed one or two out - the Harrow Club, and we were able to get cash out by the Saturday, when people were saying, “Where is the money? Why isn’t it getting out there?” That was our first response. Of course, you cannot go on giving out cash like that. Pretty immediately - in fact within days - we sat around the table with the Charity Commission, probably three or four days if I look back in my diary, and they were fantastic in terms of co-ordinating the main funders. That included the London Community Foundation, working with the *Evening Standard* Dispossessed Fund, and the Red Cross, who had come in at that point. We came up with distribution methods fairly quickly.

The issue, as Rob [Bell] says, is pretty much around the data and how we were going to distribute the funding. If we look back on the timeline, we promised money, and 17 June, we got £110,000 out. On 23 June, when the Prime Minister said that people would be offered housing within three weeks, we thought, “We will respond to that and we will get £10,000 per former household out. Of course, that did not happen, but I believe we responded as quickly as we could under the circumstances. Without the local element, working with RPT to get the money out to the survivors, I still do not know where we would be now, frankly. I think the money would still be sitting there. Having the LET set up and ready to go was absolutely fantastic. Collaboratively, as charities, we worked as effectively as possible under the circumstances.

Sian Berry AM: I am trying to focus on the raising part; we have lots of questions about distribution to come.

Susan Dolton (Director, Kensington and Chelsea Foundation): OK. We have raised £6.7 million. The first month, we had raised £5 million. It is tailing off obviously now, but we are still getting donations of about £2,000 to £3,000 per week.

Sian Berry AM: What about the Red Cross, then? You said a bit ago that you wanted to collect money immediately but there was a delay. When did you manage to get your appeal out?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We got agreement to launch from the local authority on the Thursday and we launched on the Friday. That was partially because we had a conversation with *The Evening Standard*, which had already launched at that point, about how to co-ordinate in regard to that. We did ours on the Friday morning. We were trying to, again, at that stage, already co-ordinate between ourselves so that there was clarity. Those were the three biggest funds, am I right in saying that? There was the K&C Foundation- you went first because you were asked to by the local authority, is that right?

Susan Dolton (Director, Kensington and Chelsea Foundation): No, we were asked by London Funders, the umbrella side, and LET.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Right. Then the *Evening Standard* sought to partner with the London Community Foundation, and then British Red Cross came after that. Both the *Evening Standard* and the British Red Cross would need a distributing body

as well. You need the fundraiser, ourselves, and the distributing body, which is London Community Foundation, LET. Is that right?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Forgive me, I have confused them.

Sian Berry AM: The *Evening Standard* appeal launched on the Thursday?

Manny Hothi (Director of Programmes and Strategic Partnerships, London Community Foundation): We launched, yes, on the morning of the fire. There was a phone call from the *Evening Standard*, which was the Wednesday. We have a longstanding relationship with *The Evening Standard*. We run the Dispossessed Fund every year, picking a particular issue affecting London's communities, raising and distributing money to grassroots organisations.

On the morning of the fire, we received a phone call from the *Evening Standard*, which said, "We want to launch a campaign. Do you want to partner with us?" As a senior management team, we got together and then discussed with our trustees whether we did. We did, obviously, and the appeal was launched pretty much straight away online. In that first day, we raised about £500,000. The second day, it was about £850,000. The third day, about £700,000. It was very, very quick. We distributed our money via LET and RBT as well. We are not a local actor; we are a pan-London organisation based in Brixton, so we had to have those conversations. We had to go to sites to figure out what was going on on the ground and how we could get that money out.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can I just bring Sarah [Atkinson] in?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): Briefly on the pace of fundraising. Looking back at some of our records, we chaired a conference call which many of the groups here and the others that we talked about were on, on the Friday lunchtime at 2.00pm. Part of our goal in doing that, as well as to convene the conversations that were already happening, was to make sure that they were happening in as co-ordinated a way that we could support, but also to get our sense as a regulator, a grip on the fundraising issues. In previous disaster situations, we have given advice on how the public can give safely, but where there has been a single focus of appeal we have been able to give advice that giving to that appeal will be the safest and best way to get funds.

It was clear already by 2.00pm on Friday that there were significant funds raised across several appeals. I am looking at a briefing that we sent to Government on the Monday morning. By that point we estimated, from the reports that we had had and from other reports on crowdfunding, that £10 million had already been raised. The pace of funds raised was fast, but it was not around a single focus. There were already considerable funds with several appeals. It was clear at that point that trying to direct and consolidate public gifts into a single place was not going to be desirable; it was not going to be possible. We already had funds in places that we would need support, and that is really from that point where the unusual role that we took, the convening role which colleagues already described that we took, really started because of those separate significant sums.

Andrew Boff AM: You originated that call?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): We did. There were already conversations happening. In all honesty, I cannot remember whether someone said, "You

call”, or “We then have a call. Can you chair it?” We called. We had information that we needed as the regulator around giving safely. We were already giving individual bits of advice and support to charities on the --

Andrew Boff AM: You were the body that concluded it would be a good idea to have such a call, and you organised it. Is that correct?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): Yes. As I say, other calls and conversations were happening, but that call at 2pm and then the subsequent meeting that we held at our offices with many of these groups on Wednesday was really where the collaboration and the co-ordination started to take shape. In our role as the regulator, we had to be extremely careful here because we had a regulatory job to do, but we also wanted to convene and support the dialogue that was happening and facilitate that collaboration. Clearly, as the --

Len Duvall AM (Chair): One of your primary motives for that must have been about trust and confidence in institutions, what was happening with the money and the distribution of it?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): Absolutely. It was clear that we had charities that were managing significant sums of money that they were not previously managing, that, as Mark [Simms] and Susan [Dolton] have said, was not what they were set up or had expected to do, but had stepped up to do it. Cash was already being distributed. As a regulator, “Ask for forgiveness, not permission” is not normally our watchword, but in this situation money had got out to people who needed it and we needed to be part of helping those charities make sure they were OK about doing that.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Just for clarity for this part of the table, that role, for those who are aware of the Gold, Silver issues, was almost like a charity version of the Gold, Silver Command issues of trying to get to grips with that. Would that be fair to say that role was your equivalent to that approach in terms of this disaster?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): I am not sure how complimentary that necessarily is. I would say it was a collaboration that came from people who instinctively wanted to work together, recognised there were some gaps opening up. There were some issues around data, issues around how we co-operated, and I think the Charity Commission’s instincts reflected those of the group who were distributing, which is: we need to work this out and we need to, as much as we can, align what we are doing on the ground. It was not a command and control; it was more of a collaboration, albeit with the regulator in the centre.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Collaboration, command and control. It all makes sense in times of emergency.

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): We were very conscious that, while as the regulator there are requirements that we set down for charities, these were also independent charities with their own responsibilities, and we in law cannot direct trustees. As the regulator, you are both an authority and also you have to create space in which charities can do what charities are supposed to do. It was both enabling and enforcing all in one go, and there an element to which we look back and can make sense of it, but at the time everybody was doing what they thought needed to happen.

Navin Shah AM: It is about the process. Obviously, depending on the nature of the incident, Gold Command practices can be different and are different. From my experience, when Gold Command becomes

operational, led generally by police and a local authority, they will also incorporate local faith and community groups to take their advice and have their input. I understand that there was no such role played by the various organisations from charities and people who have expertise in this field. Is that true? Do you believe that there should have been that role right from the outside, so that we do not lose vital time in coming together?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): The faith groups embedded in the community stepped up in exactly the same way that Mark [Simms] and Susan [Dolton] have described their organisations doing, so they were absolutely in the mix from the beginning. Again, there was a significant fundraising strand through the National Zakat Foundation.

Navin Shah AM: Were you at any stage invited to be party to Gold Command, or that never happened?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): I cannot speak to whether they were invited directly. In terms of the Charity Commission and Gold Command, there was informal contact and conversations through people we knew and through organisations we knew, London Funders. We did seek to have a more formal engagement with Gold Command, particularly around the data issues and some of the information needs, and also seeking to reflect to Gold Command, from our perspective as the regulator, some of the trust issues and how that was hampering response on the ground and distribution of money. It was difficult. David's [Farnsworth] role was for the function in civil society, not for the regulator. We should have had a better direct route as a statutory body, but we did not, so we worked with David and through David, and again, that was not conventional but we had to work because we had to get it done.

Eventually, about three weeks in, there was a more formal role for us in Gold Command. My colleague, our Chief Operating Officer, attended meetings, and we put formal requests through. David is still involved post-transition.

Navin Shah AM: How long did this take to happen?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): About three weeks, I would say, until we had a *modus operandi* that was more formal than the informal. It took a few days for us to be having conversations.

Navin Shah AM: Could it have been sooner? Should there be --

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): Yes, it should have happened sooner. It would have been better.

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): There are a couple of points. Back to that local-national point I made earlier. I am sure that, within the response of the Red Cross are giving to this and other disasters and emergencies, there is room for improvement in terms of how the structural piece, the community voluntary sector, is represented within that space at local level, and also through the independent trust and foundation piece, which turned out to be not so much for today - it will come later - but in terms of co-ordination of some of the organisation funding responses. In terms of how it happened in this instance in Grenfell, there was a woman on secondment from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) called Hilary Patel [Team Leader, Faith Engagement, DCLG], whose day job was working with faith and community organisations, and she was tasked with being the liaison between those groups on the

ground. In terms of how effective that was, she was doing her best within difficult circumstances, but structurally that could be improved.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Might I add to that as well? One of our reflections at the Red Cross was, first of all, to recognise that we were already under a huge amount of pressure. We only have so many emergency response volunteers and they had already been deployed in both Manchester and the response to London Bridge. We called in people from across the country to come and help with Grenfell.

In any emergency, what will always happen is that the local community mobilises first because they are literally there on the site of the emergency, and you rush to help your neighbour or the person that you know or you do not know but is physically close to you. The local organisations, including the faith groups, did a fantastic job and were there day in, day out, from the moment the fire happened. One of our reflections as the British Red Cross is that it did take us too long to reach out to the grassroots groups, and that is something that we are working very hard to rectify and think about how we do things differently. We have this extraordinarily well-recognised brand and this ability to convene people, and people look to us to be a way of showing their kindness for people experiencing crisis, and there are other organisations who might have different or better expertise in terms of the particular community that we need to proactively collaborate with much earlier in order to genuinely reach the people in crisis more effectively.

Navin Shah AM: I think, Chair, they have answered the question, but my question was about the Grenfell Muslim community which grew up from that community, and the Charity Commission played a greater role in helping them become much more regulated. How do the big charitable organisations like the Red Cross engage with this faith group?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): Locally, we are working very collaboratively with not just local faith communities, but within two or three hours - we have a school onsite and we had already decided to close the school - we had Humanity First, Muslim Aid, a whole raft of organisations from all faiths across London who turned up and were hosted in our building and just joined the community effort. We were liaising with the Al Manaar and other faith groups locally because we knew one another and we knew each other's phone numbers. We did not have to search for it, and we could have that conversation. In the absence of anything else, we organised ourselves a bit, really.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: Ms Atkinson, can you update us on the total amount raised to support survivors of the fire at Grenfell Tower and their families?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): I can. We have been publishing regular updates on funds raised, funds passed to distributing organisations by fundraisers, and the total distributed that is in the hands of survivors and those in need. We have been doing that since August, and again that is unusual. We would not normally do that. We have not done that in previous emergency situations, but we did that because of the public concern about the amount raised and the distribution and the pace of distribution, and the need as part of our co-ordinating role to step up and give some information around that to reassure the public that money was held properly and moving at the right pace. Colleagues have already described some of the reasons that money does not move as quickly as you might expect it to in these situations. We have been publishing that on a regular basis since August, at first weekly. We have now moved to fortnightly because the pace of change of figures is not so fast.

In the last update, we issued on Thursday last week, it was £26,532,564 raised overall - and that is charitable funds - so that does not include the funds I described earlier that are person-to-person gifts for individual families or pupils at particular schools and so forth. That is charitable funds under our jurisdiction. Of that, £22,349,470 has moved from fundraisers to distributing organisations so the vast majority is out in the hands of the distributing organisations and, of that, £20,944,310 has been distributed, so the vast majority of those funds have been distributed; they are with the individuals, the families, the survivors, and the next of kin. There is still some money yet to be passed to distributing organisations and there is still some money with the distributing organisations yet to be distributed, and colleagues can talk to any specifics but, broadly speaking, the bulk of the money has now gone out. The pace of funds raised has slowed to a trickle but has not stopped, so there are still funds coming in.

Andrew Boff AM: Between different releases of information the amount has declined, is that an administrative error?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): As I say, we do not normally publish these kinds of very regular updates and one of the reasons that there is a downside to doing that is that there can be occasional fluctuations because, for example, amounts are pledged that do not come in. There can be estimates of gift aid that do not materialise because a donation did not turn out to be eligible for gift aid that could be expected, and because we have tried to map all the funds raised there has been the occasional inadvertent double counting. For example, Just Giving reporting a sum to us that they passed to one of the organisations and the organisation reported the same sum. We have tried, and the organisations have tried, to winnow those out, and we have been very accountable every time there has been a fluctuation but there have been occasional fluctuations in those sums.

Andrew Boff AM: Which organisations raised the bulk of the funding?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): The biggest fundraising appeals are the three we have talked about, donations to the K&C Foundation, and that was largely direct appeals that were set up very quickly after the fire; the partnership between the London Community Foundation and the *Evening Standard* has been very significant; and then the Red Cross is the big fundraiser for the LET, and those are the three biggest. But there have also been other significant fundraising strands, for example the Artists for Grenfell people may be familiar with, and the charity single; significant donations that have gone directly to the National Zakat Foundation, donations directly to RBT, which is not a fundraiser but appealed to donors and people gave. But those three are the big chunks, the three big chunks.

Andrew Boff AM: You must have had experience of other such fundraising, emergency fundraising efforts. Were you surprised by the community's response to this emergency?

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): No. As colleagues have described, different emergencies raise different amounts and no one is ever in the business of predicting what something will raise. But the nature of the disaster, the community's reaction, the clear need, both for the support for survivors to help them in the immediate aftermath and also the impact on the families and all of this played out very, very publicly through the media. We were not surprised that it was significant sums. As I have said, the difference really that we observed in this was that there was not one single focus, as there might previously have been, there were several significant appeals and colleagues have described the relationship that panned out with the focus for the LET on next of kin and the injured and the

focus through RBT for support for survivors, that took shape over a lot of hard conversations and hard thinking, but that is broadly how it panned out. But that was part of trying to make sense of a lot of money that needed to go to people in need and the need to work out how to do that in an empathetic way.

Andrew Boff AM: See if I can broaden this to some of the other fundraisers here, so Red Cross, can you tell us how quickly those donations came in and when did they peak and when did they start to peter out?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): I do not have that information in front of me right now but we can get back to you with that.

Andrew Boff AM: Anybody else?

Manny Hothi (Director of Programmes and Strategic Partnerships, London Community Foundation): I have some of that data. It's important to clarify that, while we worked with the *Evening Standard* Dispossessed Fund, we also received the money from Artists for Grenfell and donations that were received through that appeal and also the money from the Game for Grenfell, well half the money from Game for Grenfell. Our total amount was about £7.9 million, of which £6.7 million was the *Evening Standard* and there were others. But in terms of the speed of donations, on the 14th, so the Wednesday, we received £509,000, rounding up a little bit. The next day it was about £856,000, then it was £702,000 on 16 June, then it drops dramatically to £189,000 and it dropped to about £100,000 for the next --

Andrew Boff AM: When did it drop to £189,000?

Manny Hothi (Director of Programmes and Strategic Partnerships, London Community Foundation): £189,000 on 17 June. The day after, the 18 June, it was £93,000, which I think was a Sunday, and then it bumped up again to £129,000 on the Monday and £177,000, £129,000, £141,000 on 22 June, and then it started really going down, £70,000, then it went right down to the 20 and 30 thousand pounds. We can provide that data to you.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes, that is an unusual profile, is it not, it went up, down, and up again and then down.

Manny Hothi (Director of Programmes and Strategic Partnerships, London Community Foundation): Yes, I think a lot of it is attached to the media profile, what is happening, how much news coverage there is. The first day is for digesting the situation. The second day people understand the magnitude of it and donated the highest amount that we received and the day after that as well. Then as time goes on the donations are more from, not necessarily direct to us, but from other people who are fundraising and giving their pot to us essentially.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): I think it is quite unusual because that was *The Evening Standard* Dispossessed Fund, so what you would see is when *The Evening Standard* run a story in the paper on a Tuesday night, on Wednesday donations would rise, so that explains the unusual aspect.

Andrew Boff AM: It is more about media activity.

Sarah Atkinson (Director of Policy, Planning and Communications, Charity Commission): It absolutely is, so that is what we saw in Manchester, which was the first of these things, which only happened over a three-week period, it was the first attack that children were affected and then an international pop star decided to have a benefit. The amount of media coverage of that was huge. With the UK Solidarity Fund,

the terrorist attack happened on the Saturday and then the Thursday was the general election, so the coverage waned for that and we managed to raise a much smaller amount despite launching a public relations effort called Saturday Night for London to try to raise funds. But with Grenfell the media coverage went on for days and days and days and days, and that really does drive the donations. It is effectively free advertising for the fundraising.

Susan Dolton (Director, Kensington and Chelsea Foundation): We do not have a day-by-day account because we were not capable of producing one but, at the end of week one, we had raised £3.4 million, so that was one week in, and the next time we looked was on 7 July and that was £4.5 million, 14 August £5.75 million, 21 September £6 million and then 14 November £6.4 million, 15 January £6.7 million, and I do not think our appeal was affected so much by the media because we were not partnered with a newspaper, although the *Metro* did run, "Donate to the K&C Foundation", for at least the first three weeks after Grenfell.

Andrew Boff AM: Is that information you have shared with us or can share with us on the profile of donations? Yes, thank you so much. Perhaps to Ms Abrams, you took on the role of co-ordinating the gifts in kind. What challenges did you have in that?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): The role that we were asked to take in terms of dealing with the tremendous outpouring of compassion, where people had been moved to empty their cupboards and bring physical belongings to the site, was a considerable challenge. It was something we were asked to do by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. We have a retail outlet, so we have over 100 stores across the UK, so we have a kind of logistical operation and capability to do this.

There were 211 tonnes of goods distributed. That is the equivalent of three football pitches worth of goods. Part of it was sorting, so what we did was there was sort around 40 tonnes of goods that had come directly from stores, brand new, they all went straight to Humanitarian Assistance Centre in Westway and they were distributed by other organisations, by the local authority. Then we sorted through the rest into goods that could be sold and, frankly, there was quite a lot of goods that were not of saleable quality at all. We sorted through those goods in a warehouse, we had hundreds of volunteers come and help us to complete that task. Those goods were then tagged to specifically for Grenfell and put into our stores and then sold and every penny that was raised went into the London Fire Relief Fund. That raised around, I think, over £200,000 to go into the London Fire Relief Fund. In addition, we had people come into our shops and we had around £50,000 worth of cash donations that came via our shops as well.

That is the role that we played but one of the difficulties that we faced in that was understanding from media and the local community about our role in dealing with those goods. One of the questions we were asked was, "Who has given you the right to do this?" We were asked to by the local authority and the question is, if we had not have done it, who else would have done it, in terms of distributing those goods. It was the right thing to do and to a certain extent there was a little bit of opportunity cost for us because all those volunteers that came in to sort the goods for Grenfell were not then working in our stores helping to raise general funds for other British Red Cross work, both in the UK and across the world. It was absolutely the right thing to do and we have the capability to do it, so we stepped up.

Andrew Boff AM: There did not appear to be any communication going out that more stuff was not going to help; more physical goods were not going to help. Why was that?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): That would have been a requirement for the local authority to say that and in those first days, the majority of the goods came in the first few days, or certainly there was a large volume of them anyway. We know the series of events that happened and an additional Gold Command was brought in on the Saturday so the communication with the community was the responsibility of the authorities. At that point in time the British Red Cross had not been asked to help distribute the goods that were being donated; that did not come until it was the week commencing the 19 June we started having the conversations, and then operationalised after that.

Andrew Boff AM: From the 19 June you were --

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): No, that there was a meeting with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to say, "We have all these donations. We do not know what to do with them, could you help?"

Andrew Boff AM: You went to them or they came to you?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): There was a meeting. I do not know who set it up.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, GLA): There was a point in those early days before the Red Cross were involved, where I remember Kensington trying to push out comms messages that they did not need any more things. I cannot remember at what point that was, but it was definitely in that first few days when it became clear they had a lot of donations.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We were putting that out within 5 hours, we could not move on Walmer Road. It was literally down the street. We were trying to get that message out in 5 hours.

Andrew Boff AM: Of donations?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): No more donations. We are talking thousands and thousands of packets of nappies and things like that. It was literally down the street, and many London mosques turned up to help us clear that. That was on day one, just people just turned up, sorted it, and took it away in vans. You could not get up and down the street.

Andrew Boff AM: Some people who were clearly in need of clothing and other physical items could not access them, because they did not live in Grenfell or had moved to a hotel and had no proof of address. Is that a situation you recognise, and how did it happen if it is?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We almost entirely worked with people from the Tower. Our resources were focused on that and anyone from the Tower. We were very fortunate in that, in terms of clothing and stuff like that. We had lots of retailers across London who sent lots of new stuff to us and we had an army of volunteers who were helping people get that within hours. I know that was a similar situation for other local organisations. But we were helped as well by Google, Apple, Dixons Stores Group, who got everybody back online and gave everyone phones with free contracts. We set up a pop-up-shop around the corner that was staffed by Apple and lots of volunteers who got people back online. There was a whole kind of co-ordinated effort. The issue of ID is not one that we recognise because we kind of

knew just about everyone in the Tower, but if anybody turned up for assistance with clothes to us or anyone else, they would absolutely have been helped.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Following on from Zoe's point in terms of distribution, I think it is important to say that 165 households who received money from the Red Cross via RPT were told in the late summer/early autumn that, of the money they were receiving, £1,000 came directly as a consequence of the sales of those goods as well. That information was passed on as well.

Andrew Boff AM: What was the Mayor's role on the ground in relation to these kinds of gifts, Ms Strain?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, GLA): One of the first things that we did strategically in the morning, I made it clear to that group that we had Team London Volunteering, which also --

Andrew Boff AM: Which morning?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, GLA): The Thursday, so the morning after. We had Team London Volunteering resources that we were very happy to deploy and could be deployed very quickly. As has been discussed in here already, we struggled to get Kensington to come back to us on whether they wanted those resources and when and how we could help with that. The offer was made on the 15th and then, over the following couple of days, we also reached out directly to Kensington to see if we could get them to engage on the topic of volunteering particularly. We also went to the London Local Authority Gold and made the same offer. In the end, Kensington came back to us on Monday, the 19 June, to say that they would like some support but that support is more for community liaison and communications support as opposed to the donations, which obviously by that point the British Red Cross were looking after.

In the end, the Team London Volunteers provided community support and provided support from 20 June until about the 30 June when we deployed 168 volunteers over that timeframe. For me, looking at learnings, there needs to be quicker and better deployment of resources. Kensington were overrun with people wanting to help but we had volunteers. You need them to co-ordinate that resource. Team London had that ability, the Red Cross had that ability, and we are both working together with the London Resilience Team, and there is a subgroup that deals with the voluntary sector for that place to kind of think about how we improve that in the future.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you. Ms Abrams, would you concur with that and is there anything else you want to add as to what the Mayor could have done at the time? No? If there was no communication from the Mayor to stop the flow, you were expecting the local authority to do that; is that correct? Why do you think so many people opted for online crowd funding, and what were the issues with the crowd funding? Perhaps Ms Abrams.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): I think what we saw last summer was these horrific events, but also the amazing spirit of the British people, their kindness, and it is a spontaneous response when you see somebody suffering to try to do something to help. People could clearly imagine themselves in the situations that these people living in the Tower and around there were in and, because of the nature of the fact that it was on television, it was on social media, the fire went on for such a long time, it was unsurprising and in some ways one of the kind of positive things that you can see about humanity rallying around. People will want to take action themselves; some people will want to set up their own fundraising, other people will choose to donate via a well-known brand, other people will

seek out a local organisation because they believe they will have the experience and know-how and trust of the community, which was very clearly the case with RBT, to be able to be most effective. We live in a digital world, so people are used to raising money and doing everything online and we need to be, as a charity sector, as agile and responsive as people are in the rest of their lives.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): I want to add to what Zoe was saying there, in my day job, as Head of Policy at the Fundraising Regulator working with charities, we are engaging with the Charity Commission with the fundraising platforms - because they have a variety of different forms, some of them are commercial companies, some of them are registered charities, some are stages between - to try to get some better regulation and better messaging in there, so that the public has good guidance about what happens when you decide to donate through a fundraising platform. You have to be very sure where the money is going. If you name a charity, if you name the British Red Cross or the K&C Foundation, as the end recipient of the money that you collect, that is very straightforward because there is an entity there that can be seen and the platform can transfer the money with the gift aid if appropriate.

If you are just saying, "I want to raise money because I want to help", and you do not specify clearly where the money goes that is very clearly going to cause problems. Some of the issues that came up in Manchester and at Grenfell, and to a lesser extent at London Bridge and Westminster, meant that everybody had to work very hard to decide where the money should go, so that the donors were getting what they wanted, clarity about helping people affected by the fire at Grenfell, but making sure that the money went through a route that would ensure it got there. There is a lot of work we have to do on the regulatory side, the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Commission, to make that a better reality so that people have greater assurance about the safety of the donations that they make and that they encourage others to make. Zoe was saying it is a new form of fundraising, it is getting bigger and bigger all the time, nobody wants to get in the way though of the generosity that people are expressing when they do that.

Andrew Boff AM: Just go back a little bit of a stage about some of the timings, we kind of know that everybody was working really hard, I am just trying to get an idea of the timeline and who activated this. Ms Abrams, was it you that approached the local authority offering assistance, or did they come to yourselves?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We approached them.

Andrew Boff AM: When did you do that?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): It took us a while to get hold of them, the conversation ended up happening on the Thursday.

Andrew Boff AM: You had tried on the Wednesday to contact them?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Yes, and so effectively, because we are part of the Resilience Forums, on an operational level we were already in conversation. It was about having a conversation with the Chief Executive around our fundraising capability as well and offering that as part of our capability. What we have said in the past is that we need to be asked to launch a fundraising appeal, and as I mentioned earlier, in future, we may take a right to initiate without being able to make that where things are failing, because it was a very complex situation and the local authority was struggling to manage everything that was going on.

Andrew Boff AM: You called the local authority; did you call the Mayor's Office or the GLA as well?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Emma [Strain] and I were already talking because we had been working together on the London Bridge, so we were in constant communication, and ultimately Emma gave me John Barradell's [Chief Executive, City of London Corporation] phone number, which I passed to my chief executive, so that we could have the conversation. That was a very helpful facilitative role that was played.

Andrew Boff AM: When was that?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): That part of it was on the Friday.

Andrew Boff AM: But, prior to the Thursday, when you finally got communication with K&C, you are saying you were trying to get communication with them. Did you try to get hold of the GLA as well prior to Thursday?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We were already talking, yes.

Andrew Boff AM: Sorry, you were already talking?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): It is the local authority that we would need to have the conversation with, on offering to raise funds and we offered to distribute funds --

Andrew Boff AM: You were talking to the GLA on the Wednesday about the possibility of offering assistance, is that correct?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Yes, but we were talking, but the conversation that we needed to have was with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as the responsible body.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, GLA): To be honest, we were the Strategic Co-ordination Group and the discussions that happened afterwards, we were all, on a variety of different topics, attempting to get Kensington to engage and give us some decisions on that piece.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We have a special status, so we are not an NGO; we are an auxiliary to Government established in Royal charter, so we have a relationship with the authority. That is the same in any Red Cross/Red Crescent society around the world, it has a specific relationship and we are guided by our fundamental principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, so we exist in part to help serve when there are emergencies that are so big that the authorities are struggling to meet the humanitarian need and that is where we can come in and provide assistance.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): OK, thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: You were in communication with the GLA, you had tried to get hold of the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, at any point did anyone from the Strategic Co-ordinating Group, which was set up at 5.00 am on the morning of the tragedy, had they tried to contact you at all?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We are on the Strategic Co-ordinating Group in terms of operations, which is why on the Wednesday night, or on the night the fire broke out, we had our volunteers at the site providing humanitarian support, and so that includes emergency response volunteers and then very specifically we have psychosocial support volunteers who are people with, for example, a clinical background who are able to help people who have been traumatised. We were physically, in terms of operations, humanitarian operations - taking it by its strictest definition - we were involved right from the outset.

Andrew Boff AM: You were part of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group, as per the London Resilience Partnership Strategic Co-ordination Protocol, and that caused you no problem in there. It kind of infers that it is the decision-maker, does it not, or were you told to wait for the permission of the local authority before you did any work?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): We generally deal with the operational side and the fundraising side separately. Our focus would be on the people in crisis and what practical help we can give them, and then the conversation would generally be at a leadership level. That is what happened in, for example, Manchester, we would seek a conversation with the leadership of the authority to say, "We think that there is big public response and desire to give in relation to this, can we work with you to fundraise?" Particularly one of the conversations we would be having there is, "We have expertise in fundraising". We do it as part of our humanitarian response and we can handle issues like, for example, the fact that we understand there needs to be a distributing body, we understand how to phrase the terminology when you launch a fund, all those kinds of conversations as well.

Andrew Boff AM: I do not expect you to remember right now, but you contacted the K&C Foundation on the Thursday, then communications started, I would really appreciate if you can let us know what time that was. I am not expecting you to remember straight away, unless you do. That would be great.

Mr Oppenheim, when was the first call that you got to seek assistance or did you make the call, and who from?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Again, we were already working with our fundraising partners at the Red Cross and I cannot tell you the time or exactly when, but we certainly had a very early conversation with the Chief Executive of the Red Cross about what was going on and the fact that the Red Cross had been activated to fundraise, as Zoe [Abrams] has been saying.

Andrew Boff AM: Forgive me, would that have been on the Wednesday or the Thursday?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): I will have to check, to be honest, I cannot remember off the top of my head, but it was very early on. If it was not Wednesday it was Thursday, so it was 24 hours or thereabouts, so that we could bring our expertise to bear. It was becoming very apparent very quickly that there had been loss of life and that people had been injured, so we were, given what we were doing at the other sites already in existence, an obvious place to go to distribute charitable funds in those circumstances. But we will check the dates for you.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much. Mr Farnsworth, you were saying that people were speaking a language you did not understand, to paraphrase, when you were talking to the local authority or authorities. What kind of clarity would you have been seeking?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): I think in terms of just the Gold Command structure, which the Committee now has a deeper knowledge of - and some of you have particularly deep knowledge of - that was not something that I was personally familiar with, so, in terms of understanding that, the side of A4 that says what that is, and a greater awareness in terms of the community voluntary sector in times when there are not emergency situations, such that when they do happen it is not a great surprise the sort of language used. Because it could take on a sort of mystique attached to language, which is unhelpful on the ground, what is "Gold"? "What is Gold doing?" sort of thing. Therefore, it is an area where officials and first responders and British Red Cross are very familiar with this language, but personally it was not something I had encountered before. Although, by dint of the relationship between City Bridge Trust and the City of London Corporation and the experience of the 7/7 bombings, I was familiar with the broader resilience piece.

Andrew Boff AM: Were you familiar with the London Resilience Partnership or the protocols?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): By dint of different roles I have, I was familiar, because in terms of by dint of the City Bridge Trust relationship with the 7/7 bombings and also the LET. I am a trustee of that LET, so I was privy to that aspect of the conversations. Then by dint of my role as Chair of London Funders, of which every London borough is a member of, again I was familiar with work in this area. But I had not personally engaged in any of the resilience exercises or anything in terms of preparatory response.

Andrew Boff AM: Finally, I wonder if there is a general awareness of strategic co-ordination protocols set up by the Mayor of London, is there an awareness of that?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): In a general sense, yes, because that is what we had always talked about from the time that we decided to put the LET into place as part of the response, so that meant engagement with officials at City Hall to make sure roles were understood and what we could deliver was understood. We have been doing that, had that general awareness, if not detailed involvement.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Let us move on to our next set of questions, Assembly Member Berry.

Sian Berry AM: Yes, thank you very much. I think we wanted to talk now about the distribution of the aid that was provided and who it went to and when, if that is OK. In terms of the money that was raised, if we can start with the LET, who I think you said previously you had basically been set up to support bereaved people and injured people because of your background of that in relation to terrorist attacks. Do you know what proportion of the money that has been raised has gone out in those kinds of bereavement and hospitalisation-type payments?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): I can give you a figure across all five incidents, if that is helpful. Since March, we have worked in five incidents and we have made awards to 215 people --

Sian Berry AM: I am just asking about Grenfell.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): About Grenfell, sorry, we have made awards to 71 fatality cases at Grenfell and 59 injury cases, so they are people who were injured and hospitalised for different periods of time.

Sian Berry AM: You have given out £90,000 for every fatality, and that is more than usual because of the higher level of donations.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): So far, yes, and we are beginning now, working with the Red Cross over the last few days, to increase that tariff to £100,000 per fatality.

Sian Berry AM: Then people hospitalised for a week or more, £30,000. That is also higher than usual?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): It is the same now – it takes us back to our parity point, – as with the four terror sites. We have managed to get parity there. Across all five incidents, if you had been hospitalised for a week or longer, the payment level is £30,000.

Sian Berry AM: This money that has gone out to people, bereaved families, but also people who are injured, did it go out in one go or have you added it in tranches?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): No, it did not. At the start, Gerald [Oppenheim] described some of the complexity of not knowing either how much was coming in or ultimately the number of people you are dealing with, and so that has been a management challenge and a communication challenge, because at no point have we unfortunately been able to say to a bereaved family, “This is the sum that ultimately you will get”. We began with clarity saying we know what an initial payment will look like and we shared that information widely in the first few days and weeks. But, broadly speaking, over the last six or seven months, we have increased the payment levels every month. We began, for example, in the case of fatalities, we began in July, £20,000 per fatality, and that went up to £40,000 in August, £60,000 in September, £90,000 in November, and will now be £100,000.

That has been challenging because it makes financial management difficult for those recipients. We communicate generally with bereaved families through the police family liaison officers and the key workers attached to them. We indicate that more money is likely. We give a rough sense of how much and when, but we cannot unfortunately give specific details months in advance.

Sian Berry AM: That makes quite a lot of sense. Do you know how much in total has been given out in these kinds of payments?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Yes, we have given out just about £7 million now in these kinds of payments. We gave a further £773,000 to survivors.

Sian Berry AM: I will get on to survivors in a minute; I just want to take these one by one if that is OK. That is £7 million out of £20 million, nearly £21 million that has been distributed so far in those kinds of payments.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): To be clear, we had just a little over £8 million to distribute to bereaved and injured at Grenfell. Most of that came from the Red Cross, but also, as you have heard, from London Community Foundation and K&C Foundation.

Sian Berry AM: OK, great. We have a table here of the distribution and trying to move on to the survivors. I mean there is a crossover, some survivors were injured and hospitalised and some were not, but there are a lot of people - I think it is 255 families - who were made homeless by the fire and those are the ones who, certainly as an ex-representative, have taken up much of my time trying to work on the practicalities of that. According to my table here - I am looking at Mark [Simms] from RPT - there are payments that have gone out from your trust of cash to all of the families who were displaced, and it was not based on injury or anything. Was that distributed equally to all families? How were you determining their need when you gave out the payments?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): I can be very, very honest with you. We put a call out to our donors. We wanted physical cash, so in those first few hours people turned up from right across the borough and parts of London and tipping up their purses and stuff and we had over £100,000 and it broadly went something like this, the conversation, because it was human-to-human, "How many people are in your house and how much do you think you would need?" Some people said, "I think I need £500", and that is what we gave them. It was just that. We did not have criteria, we just worked with people broadly based on their needs and said, because we knew most people were going to go to a hotel, we said, "We are here tomorrow". Because it is things like, if you are a size 3½ shoe and we only have 5s or 2s, you have no shoes, it was that kind of stuff. We were really practical about it and worked with people on an individual basis.

Sian Berry AM: That is really good. On this table, though, there are lines that come under you having distributed it. There is a line that says, "£10,000 for every household from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk from the K&C Foundation fund, and further funds from Karalina Hardy's Just Giving appeal". You did that. You gave that £10,000 to people?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): That came to us. In total, if it helps, we have given out to individual households in the Tower just over £83,000 in total to each individual household as a minimum, and to people from Grenfell Walk £30,000 as a minimum, and they are minimum figures because in those early days after the fire some families had £2,000, some families had £400, some people managed to get out, like we were offering people assistance and they said, "No, I have my bank cards and I can work and that kind of stuff, I do not want any money". It was individualised, but those are the broad figures. We were doing distributions for the K&C Foundation, British Red Cross, and in the very early days after the fire the *Evening Standard* Dispossessed Fund asked us to distribute £1,000 to every family, and then a couple of days later another £1,000.

Sian Berry AM: You are confident that you had all the families on your list, I mean there were not any missing people?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We think we have, yes.

Sian Berry AM: Was that from the beginning that you had them all, because, as far as I understood it, there were various different aid organisations, you managed to get a consolidated number together quite quickly?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): Oddly, since within a week of the fire, we think we got about the right number and since then we have had two additional families that we have made payments to, they were very individualised cases where people were getting divorced and stuff like that and were not living with one family. But, yes, because the families themselves, the people from Grenfell Tower worked with us and were coming to us every day, and within hours of the fire, what has now become Grenfell

United, have quite a definitive list of the missing and who was in each flat, so we have reasonably reliable data.

Sian Berry AM: OK, thank you. There is another line on the table that is a grant of £15,000 to each of the households from the Tower and £8,000 to the Grenfell Walk households. That was on you as well. Is that separate, or does that just happen to be on two lines?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): It is in with that £83,000. Those figures amount to that. It is kind of like there is another line on there, sorry, from the Art for Grenfell, £1.9 million that was something that they raised, they gave to us on the Thursday and we distributed that in its entirety on the Friday.

Sian Berry AM: Was that given out as sort of cash payments to survivors as well?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): No, all of these larger figures were into bank accounts and we helped the people who had survived the fire to get their bank accounts sorted out within a few days.

Sian Berry AM: When I say cash I just mean money rather than cash.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): Yes, directly into bank accounts. We did physically give cash but the larger amounts have all gone through banks for faster payments.

Sian Berry AM: OK and people who did not have bank accounts or had lost their stuff, you helped them set up new accounts?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We helped them to, yes.

Sian Berry AM: OK, thank you very much. Moving on to the next set of people, then there is the community groups who were helping and you are one, you said you initially raised some of your own money directly from people you already knew, then you started to receive money partly to distribute, partly to spend on your own activities. There were lots of other community groups around the place doing work, looking after people, there is a very diverse community there, there were groups from different cultures, different types of community centres serving different populations. Were you also the people on the ground helping to direct funds and practical things that were needed towards them? Because that seems to have been, when I went to visit on the 19 and 20 June, and then later that month, those seem to have been the more problematic things to try to get help for.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We were talking to other people that we knew but in the immediate days after the fire people facilitated really human response, neighbour to neighbour, person to person, and set up little groups of their own and were working with quite defined groups of people or indeed with the broader community doing different things. Our role, right from day one, was that we said our focus was going to be supporting survivors, so we were not doing community infrastructure stuff. We were not working with people from the broader Lancaster Estate. We have a staff group of 20 people and we were keeping our building open just about not short of 20 hours a day with staff and volunteers. The survivors wanted somewhere safe, where they knew there was going to be no press and, forgive me, they knew there was going to be no politicians, and they knew there was going to be no sort of hypersensitive

media attention. We said, "This is your building, we will work with you". We did not need to ask for ID and all that kind of stuff, it became their base, we worked with survivors exclusively.

Sian Berry AM: OK, so you were not really doing any distribution to other groups around the area. My question to the rest of the panel is: how did they get support? Certainly, I think, when I visited, there were identified needs emerging, notably for counselling in the wider community, for support for children's activities who had been disrupted with school and things like that, and really translation was an issue that I found very difficult to get sorted out. I tried to liaise via the Red Cross people on the ground, just thinking they seemed to be the right people, I tried to notify the Mayor's Office. In the end, a small group of people who were worried that the official information that was going out, and we all know the rumour mill that there was and the difficulties, people without English as their first language needed to see the official information, the legal advice from Inquest and the information from the Red Cross in their own languages. In the end that group, I helped them get a tiny grant from another funder that I know who is not related to any of you and they did manage to do that. They had a lot of volunteer translators but they needed to fill the gaps in. But they did that themselves. I cannot see on this table much support going out to the wider community outside of RBT.

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Most of the work to wider communities is not detailed in this; it was funded through co-ordinated efforts through people like London Funders and other trusts and foundations. Most of that money - in fact I do not think any came from what was raised - came from institutional funders.

Sian Berry AM: The £20 million has primarily gone to survivors and families. Moving on, there was a grant fund set up by London Funders. Can you tell us about that?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Yes, so on that point, I mean there was an early awareness that what was being given out to individuals, there were a lot of organisations whose day job was totally put on one side to respond to the immediate emergency. There were early conversations, which involved London Funders, the then director of London Funders, and also conversations with DCLG, through Gold Command, to try to get some resource in, in a simple way, to be accessed by those organisations. There is a lot of detail on that. I am not sure whether you want that today or we can get it to you. I thought that was being considered later in one of your sessions. In terms of the independent funding community coming together, with some statutory money to get money out and working together, there was significant work done by London Funders, but also with John Lyon's Charitable Trust, on the ground, particularly on the children focus. A list, which again we could get to you, in terms of different foundations working together through a single point of entry and then linking with people on the ground in terms of accessing that money.

Sian Berry AM: When was that fund set up?

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Again, I do not know the exact date, but I can get that to you. There was £1 million that the DCLG made available to distribute through that initial central pot and I think, from memory - again, I can confirm the exact dates - there were four tranches of payments made out to organisations through an infrastructure fund, and then there were separate collaborative funding efforts particularly focused on children and a couple of other aspects. There is a whole raft of information on that, which is easier to document and more readily available, but, again, that was something that I think, in terms of future planning, could be anticipated. It was something that emerged rather than it being triggered by the structural piece.

Sian Berry AM: We have things like support for Moroccan women, Arabic speaking women, there is a centre that I visited a couple of months later, they had not received any grants, they had not really had any information on how they could get grants and the Deputy Mayor gave them some information on how they might do that. But they had been running, all their staff had been doing overtime, they had been running on volunteer time, they had really pulled out all the stops, but these organisations --

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): Is that the Moroccan Women's Centre?

Sian Berry AM: Yes.

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): They did get a grant.

Sian Berry AM: They did, I think in the end they did. But it was hard to keep your staffing up.

Susan Dolton (Director, Kensington and Chelsea Foundation): It was pretty early on. The funding for community organisations, I cannot remember the timing either, but certainly for young people's activities, those were during the summer holidays, which, by definition, are mid-July, so it happened pretty quickly, the community funding.

Sian Berry AM: That is good. I would like to see a report on that because I think that is something we could have planned better for, and I do not know if Zoe [Abrams] has a view on this, people giving to the fund, the charitable funds, may have imagined that money was going to go towards the healing of the community and support of the community, the humanitarian support, more than it might have been going into grants to the individuals.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): You can only use the money for what you say on the front of your appeal it is being raised for, and I guess we will be limited by that in regard to how it got set up. Just a few points that I would make as well, which is that in that phone conversation that happened on the Thursday between the Chief Executive of the British Red Cross and the Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Red Cross did offer to distribute cash and that was not taken up. That is something that we do in an international context.

Sian Berry AM: Distribute cash to local groups?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): No, to people, to survivors, to people in humanitarian need essentially. In terms of communications as well, several of my team went to gold on the Saturday when it was moved to there and started proactively taking on what was an auxiliary communications role and that was particularly in terms of social media in regard to sharing information about how you could access support, including advertising our support line, and again that is somewhere where members of the public, those affected, survivors, could get in contact and find out information.

The other thing that I would like to say as well is that part of the role that the British Red Cross has played has been in reuniting families. That is something we have strong expertise in as the largest provider of services to refugees in the country, so we put £100,000 into bringing families over for funerals or to be in touch with people who have been affected by this tragedy.

Sian Berry AM: Really good. You are saying that the fact that the appeal said, “For the victims”, essentially, we will give the money to them, that restricted in charitable terms what the money could be used for, it could not be used for the wider support that was supporting the victims but was not the victims themselves.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): That is my understanding of how Charity Law works, I am sure Gerald [Oppenheim] can confirm that exactly. What is also interesting as well in regard to this is when we have been thinking about this latest distribution we had a conversation with Grenfell United, who are an organisation, a self-mobilising organisation of survivors, about whether or not they wanted us to, for example, focus the next distribution on children who had been affected directly and they were ambiguous about that. We have attempted to have conversations with the community, the community are diverse and are not as one necessarily. Making decisions is complex, in regard to how to best steward this money that the public have given.

Sian Berry AM: Gerald, can I ask you a bit more about that because I think potentially all the LET, there are aspects of this emergency that were perhaps not covered by the immediate fundraising effort, is that something you might change in the future and how do you respond to criticisms that some of the aid reaching people was a bit slow potentially?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): As we have said, our role was very clear, it is to support the next of kin and the injured through making charitable gifts. As we have said, the British Red Cross, the K&C Foundation, London Community Foundation, and a few other small contributions, is the primary source for that. The trustees view there is that we stick to what we are good at there. We did make some money available through RBT to get to survivors and that was again as a part of the discussion that was going on with the Red Cross, with RBT as the distribution arm for that. But we have a clear view that is where our remit is.

We do not have a view at all about the use that individuals who get the money, we do not have a view about how they use it, it is up to them. It is a charitable gift, pure and simple, and we act within our objects to do that, within our charitable objects, so that is absolutely clear.

In terms of the speed of distribution, as Rob was saying earlier on, this is complicated. What we learned as a result of 7/7 is that families, particularly where there has been loss of life, next of kin, particularly in cases where people are more seriously injured, the money is not the first thought. It comes along of course and it is helpful and welcome, particularly because the way we do it, it is a gift, we do not mind what you use it for, not our call. It is there to support you and we are the vehicle that helps express public generosity to people in severe distress and need. That is the way we look at it.

Certainly, at Grenfell some of the money - and again Rob [Bell] can add to this in a second - some of the money went out fairly speedily, we built it up over time, but there have been a significant number of cases, which were very, very complicated. For example, where the next of kin was a minor and what you are talking about here is putting money into trust so that they can draw it as they achieve their majority. There are cases where there may be questions over the capacity of the person who is next of kin, so very, very complicated arrangements to have to put in place. Working with people who might, for example, have to be named as guardians for the person you are putting the money in trust for, engaging with different family circumstances, very large dispersed families, not all necessarily in the UK either, in other European countries or in North Africa typically where Grenfell is concerned. Where sadly in some cases, as colleagues have mentioned, families had broken up and you had different legal advisers representing different parts of the same overall

family where we have had to broker arrangements. That of course takes time and sometimes that makes it appear that money is moving slowly when there are very, very clear cases why not.

As we were saying earlier, there was a perception that we were not distributing all the money we had, but that was because we were providing for a greater number of fatalities, in particular, than were known early on and that only became clear at the end of the year. As soon as we knew that the number was 71, we could release money into the system. We could always be better at communicating all of that, those are not easy messages to get over, but that is what we sought to do and I think that is a good lesson learned.

Sian Berry AM: I appreciate that you needed to be thorough, but also that the speed did seem to be rather slow, the headline figure that came out in August I think was released by the Charity Commission was that only 15% had been distributed. Even if you are thinking about the uncertainty you are talking about, it seems rather low.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): But what we are doing where next of kin are concerned in particular and where people are in hospital, we do, in order to act responsibly and fulfil our duties as trustees, we do have to have some evidence for that and, as we have referred earlier, some of the data to do that was very slow in coming and did not help any of us get the money out as quickly as we would have liked. Where you are dealing with next of kin, you need some basic evidence that the person that you are going to assist is indeed the next of kin. We follow the Intestacy Act 1925 as the key bit of UK law to underpin that. That sets out a hierarchy of relationship where it is not immediately clear. But, because of particular family circumstance sometimes, you couple that with trustee discretion about what the best thing to do in the circumstances is, and it does take a time sometimes to establish that. It may appear slow but we were moving at the pace of families, on the one hand, and at the pace of the data and the evidence that we needed to support the awards on the other. Do you want to add to that, Rob?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): That is very comprehensive and it reflects our experience on the ground. My main concern for the first fortnight was whether in the cacophony around the money available and the noise and information and misinformation, would we be able to communicate with those who were bereaved or injured so they knew they could apply? But we were paying out within three weeks to bereaved families and we were doing that by working with the police, with the key workers, making sure that they all knew and were sharing that information face-to-face, which incidentally was in my experience a much more effective way of communicating in that context. We were passing out written material that was disseminated in other ways, but we felt that the relationship-based flow of information was much more reliable. Within a few weeks, we had a high volume of applications, we were beginning to pay out, and then, as Gerald says, we were trying to go at the pace of the family and the police and doing the work. There were very few cases that stalled because we could not track down documents, very few.

Sian Berry AM: That is fair enough. Quite a lot of this seems to stem from the fact that you are treating these payments more like bequests than aid. Mark, you put your hand up; you were just giving out money?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We would have been able to do more, but (1) we had not been asked and (2) we did not think it was our role and (3) we were quite reticent about it because of all the noise around mistrust and so on and we were part of the community. But within a couple of weeks people like the K&C Foundation, *Evening Standard* Dispossessed Fund, were saying, "Could you give £10,000?" We did not have a grants team. We had youth workers and volunteers, and RPT is a local charity that is also part of a larger national charity that is based up in Derbyshire. We merged ten years ago but RBT remains intact. Within a week or so of this we started to think we might have to, and then we went

to a meeting with the Charity Commission. It told us in late July [2017] that it would like us to be the single distribution point and, "Can you go away and build a grants team". That is what we did. There was a slight complication in that the LET has dispensation that if it makes a gift it does not affect people's welfare benefits, pensions, tax and so on. We were not part of that and we very quickly made sure that we were. We were dealing with those practical issues. There was this issue about, "If I get this money, does it mean I am not going to get a house? If I get this money, does it mean the borough are off the hook?" and all that kind of stuff.

Sian Berry AM: We have down here that it took until 4 August [2017] for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to confirm that payments would not affect people's benefits. You can see that that was a problem.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): That is right. You will see after 4 August that payments escalated and we became the single distributor. We had a very straightforward way of doing that, we did not require any further identification and all that kind of stuff.

Sian Berry AM: We have an awful lot of money that has been donated by the Red Cross that is a humanitarian disaster relief organisation providing things on the ground. We are all very familiar with its work abroad, for example. That is the kind of work that was needed for very many displaced people. However, we have the LET that is by necessity, because of the objectives you have written down, giving out essentially insurance type and bequest type payments only. That might be an issue. Did you say the LET was essentially set up under the Mayor's jurisdiction but is now independent? Is there something the Mayor's Office could do to change the remit so more of the money donated after events could go to humanitarian assistance?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): No, the Mayor's involvement back in 2005, after 7/7 happened and the shock of that day, was to launch what initially for just a few days was referred to as the Mayor's Fund, but when set up in law it very quickly became the LBRCF with independent trustees because that is what charity law requires. From that moment LBRCF - and then LET, when it was set up - were completely independent charities, with their own trustees and their own decision making. However, of course, we work in concert with all the others who have involvement, as we have been explaining this morning.

Sian Berry AM: You were distributing funds collected by these other bodies as well. Your restricted remit limited what could happen?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Indeed, that is based on what was done in 2005, the historic experience of that and the evaluation of it at the time. Also - as David [Farnsworth] referred to earlier on - a ten-year look back in 2015 at what worked and why in 2005 it worked really, really well compared to other similar sorts of funds around the world responding to disasters that often have ended up in legal horrors, which thankfully we never have and have not to this day. We have that model and it works. It can always be better, of course, it can. Perfection takes longer.

Sian Berry AM: This is not a criticism of how well you work according to your original remit.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): No, I understand the question.

Sian Berry AM: Can I ask Emma? One of the things we have talked about is the likelihood of other things happening in London. This was a fire. We have had terrorist attacks. There have been floods due to burst

water mains and there are other types of floods that could happen in London due to severe weather events. There are many things that might not cause death and injury but might cause displacement and humanitarian need. Is there a case for the Mayor to do something different and has that been looked at by the Mayor's Office?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): What is really important is that the Mayor's role is to be that voice for London, to reassure people and to talk to them. The local resilience arrangements around housing and all those kinds of things rightfully fall to the boroughs because in this building we cannot provide that practical support.

Sian Berry AM: No, it is the fundraising I am talking about. The LET is basically the only vehicle we have for London-wide fundraising and distributing. That is something potentially that is the Mayor's remit.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): One of the other things that happened around Grenfell was that the Regeneration Team, which is led by Debbie Jackson [Assistant Director of Regeneration, GLA], set up a fund to support businesses that had been impacted by the events of the fire, for example if their customers could not get to them. We did that this time as well. We would look to using those kinds of models again, if appropriate, as how we can provide support. That is the first one that springs to mind.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): From a British Red Cross perspective, we are very live to some of the tensions you describe. As an executive team, we have had a lot of conversations about it. In fact, we published this report last week, *Harnessing the Power of Kindness for Communities in Crisis* so we have done a lot of thinking about it.

The point we have come to is that people should expect the British Red Cross to take that right to initiate in future and, in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, that would include us distributing cash ourselves. We would still want to work with distributing bodies on the distribution that requires case work, which is what LET has particular expertise in. However, we feel we have a duty to be there more quickly and to be the organisation that people expect us to be which, as you say, is a humanitarian aid organisation.

Sian Berry AM: In the future there would be no blockage and you would give out cash. You would have a blanket reassurance - presumably from people like DWP - that this would not affect benefits and other things people might need to get from their local authorities.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): That would be ideal. That is only one conversation that has gone on. We also were having a conversation with the Home Office about people who were worried about their immigration status, them being given space to be able to have their humanitarian needs met first and foremost - for them to be seen as people first - and then worry about their immigration status in the fullness of time.

Sian Berry AM: We had that conversation at our last review. It took a long time to get that reassurance.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Yes.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): It is worth adding - amongst those important points that Zoe made just now - that last Friday the Charity Commission got all of us, and others, together because the experience that has been gathered through 2017 has been in London and in Manchester but, obviously, an incident could take place in any other town or city. The question as well is how we collectively - and this inquiry is very clearly part of that and all the better for it - take all that collective experience into Government nationally to say when something happens - that is the age we live in, sadly - there is a proper response that recognises where the skills lie and where the ability to mobilise quickly lies, whether it is the BRC's team of volunteers from Lands End northwards. There has to be a better response.

There is also an issue we have raised quite publicly with officials and Ministers, when we have had the chance, about the Government's own support for what has gone on, just not in the capital city because people who get caught up in these come from wherever they come from when they are here. In Grenfell, those were people who lived there but with families and next of kin in other places. There is a whole range of really complicated issues that we need to work out to bring all of this together in a better way for the future.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Even though you have ongoing work to do, was there a debriefing on learning the lessons around this particular exercise? Around that table were even smaller groups involved in that conversation?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Yes, to both of those. Certainly not just Mark [Simms] for RBT on the ground, there were also people there from Muslim Aid and people from local Muslim communities contributing their experience to that discussion in a really, really important way.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): When do you think that document will be available for the public?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): It is going to take a little while because that was a first meeting. There must have been 30 - 35 of us around that table on Friday morning last week and there will be a smaller group producing the report that pulls our direct collective experiences together. There were people there from the Local Government Association (LGA) around the table as well, because of the national perspective.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We have already submitted some evidence to the various public inquiries on the issues around the post-recovery response of the local government family. We would be very keen to have - even if there was a summary - an indication of some of the issues and processes. I get the issue. It is very clearly about regional and national organisations working with local organisations. That makes sense and I see it internationally as well. It is how quickly you build that relationship up. I am getting a picture around communication. I am getting a picture that people want to do something but sometimes their efforts are not necessarily the right efforts. They rush in, giving you stuff you do not really need. It is important you deal with it but it takes you away from the core bits you need to do in the immediate tragedy as you build up on other issues. A picture is developing. We are obviously going to look at the transcript.

We have a few more questions to raise that start picking up some of those issues. Were all those things part of the conversation you had around the table? Also, the end recipient of any support, how did they feel and what was it like for them? It is always going to be difficult, but what it was like for the end person receiving something.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): The meeting was very much about the charity response to this and the role that charities - whatever they may be and whatever their skills and expertise may be - pull together to support first responders and to support the immediate aftermath. You are absolutely right; there is a whole host of other things that sit with that.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Somehow, we have to get through that personal data issue that you mentioned earlier on.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Very much so.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): In these circumstances how do we do that? Once we have that evidence we can move on.

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): On data - it may be bit of a folk memory now 12 or 13 years on - but in 2005 access to data was not difficult. We knew who to give money to through the then Gold Command and through the London teaching hospitals that took the injured. It took much longer this time and I do not really understand why that should be.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): For the Assembly Members present, when we come to wrap this up we should not lose sight of some of these issues that are emerging. We might be able to lend our voice to yours in terms of moving some of those issues forward.

Let us move on to section 5. Section 5 is really concentrating on the Mayor's role. Assembly Member Bacon?

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you, Chairman. Emma, this is all going to be aimed at you. Could the Mayor take a direct fundraising role? As a result of Grenfell, you put the donations button on the London.gov.uk website. How long did it take to set that up and how long did it stay on?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): I would not consider it as a direct fundraising role. What we did with that was signpost the Red Cross's fund. The reason why we did that was that we were in a situation that was effectively an emergency. We were receiving calls in from both the media and the public asking where the right place was to donate. That felt the right way to provide that information to people. That was effectively a hyperlink that drives to that place. That is semantics, but just to be clear on what that does. I would have to check the dates when it went up and how long it was there for. I do not have that information to hand.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): I was interested in how quickly that was set up.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): From a technical perspective it does not take us long. I cannot remember when we decided that would be the right thing to do and when it went live. I do not know. I would have to check.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): Do you have any data showing how many people clicked through that to the Red Cross site?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): Again, I am sorry, I do not know. I can check.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): Perhaps that can be circulated a bit later on. Are there any other examples of city mayors – probably not in this country, because obviously there are only a few, but maybe overseas – acting in a similar way in response to similar circumstances?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): It has happened in London on different occasions. We have talked about the bombings and the relief fund in 2005. There is a place in the digital world for more direction from city mayors. Because of the digital world there are so many different ways to donate and so many different options for that in terms of crowd funding and how these things work. Personally, I think the modern-day age has made that role more important. The digital world means it is easier for people who have less good intentions to establish sites and things so providing direction to what is a legitimate fund is really important.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): Completely reasonable. In the event of another – hopefully there will not be – emergency such as this, is there anything that has been learned from the Grenfell process that the Mayor would do differently next time?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): We informally connected as a group here in a good way very early on. I checked my emails when we were talking earlier and Gerald [Oppenheim] and I were in conversation at 8.38am on the morning after the fire broke out that evening. Those relationships for us are really good and positive. We should keep having those discussions. Using the Mayor, his voice and his reach from a communications perspective is really important going forward.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): Not going to wash up on specific lessons learned?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): One of the things that we are looking to do is to ensure we can provide support to LET. One of the very important things is that all of the money that is donated goes to the victims and is not used for administrative costs. One of the things we are working on currently is putting some money in place that LET can use to cover things, like legal fees, and the costs it needs to cover to run its operation. I am speaking for Gerald [Oppenheim] now, but corporate donations have come in to help do that, but the idea is that we put an amount of funding in which means Gerald and his colleagues can focus on the proper job. It can rely on that small pot of funding to cover those base costs, and not have to rush out to corporate funders and think about how they are going to cover legal fees, for example, in those early days. That is one of the things we are actively working on now.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): In terms of the signposting, everyone has their own memories of the Grenfell fire. The following day everyone wakes up, sees the appalling pictures on the television and that obviously drives people to want to do something about it. They are looking to contribute. It makes perfect sense for the GLA website to be used to direct people. How quickly was it established who the right people to signpost people to were? How quickly was that done? I suppose that is a supplementary question to the one I asked you earlier on about setting up the button on the website.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): We were working with the British Red Cross very early on in this process and had been in the events prior to that, with all of the other disasters. We had a very strong working relationship with them. We also had worked previously with the *Evening Standard* and its funds. It seemed that the Red Cross was a natural and trusted partner for this piece.

Gareth Bacon AM (Deputy Chairman): More or less instantaneously, OK.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): . Navin Shah?

Navin Shah AM: Thank you. Rob, you commented earlier on that some victims lost practically everything and also touched upon financial management related aspects. If I can ask you and Gerald [Oppenheim], what legal advice has been offered to recipients of donations to help them manage their funds, both long and short term?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): There are two main things we have been involved in. Earlier on we began conversations with other funders and with central Government officials about the need for recipients of charitable donations to have access to free high-quality advice to help them with financial management. There did not seem to be a very strong need expressed by the people we were dealing with but we could see that if the distribution continued at the same pace some individuals could have substantial amounts of money they were not used to dealing with. I am glad to say that at the end of last year there was grant funding put into Kensington and Chelsea Citizens Advice Bureau that now offers that service to all charitable recipients. If you are a bereaved family you can go to the Family and Friends Assistance Centre, sit down with someone and get information about how you manage that.

Gerald talked about some of the more complex cases we are dealing with. We have just a small number now where we are supporting families to set up legal trusts for a number of reasons, including children who are minors. We work closely with a law firm that is offering their specialist services *pro bono*. This is a very expensive area of legal activity for people normally. We have a very high-quality firm that will come down and work with families to explain what this is, find a solution that works for them and a solution that gives the trustees confidence that we can make a payment into that trust and it will benefit in the medium and long term the child and the child's family. These are the main two areas we are involved in.

Navin Shah AM: That is a totally free service for recipients?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): It is totally free. Where there is an unknown is where there is a complex family situation where a professional trustee may be required. We have not got to that point yet but it is a possibility. In that case we may need to ask someone to put in a considerable amount of time over a number of years *pro bono*, or we may need to look at ways of paying for that.

Navin Shah AM: You can assure this Committee that you are satisfied there is adequate legal provision in terms of advice to those victims who are the recipients of various levels of donations?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Certainly, in respect of the donations LET has been giving out, there are - as others have commented on - two particular groups, yes, we think there is support. It remains to be seen whether people use it and, to be frank, what their feedback is on that. Certainly, they are on the table. I am less clear about what is available for the households who have received money from other means. However, they can access the Citizens Advice support. A lot of families we are dealing with now have law firms offering *pro bono* support to them generally. My experience is they tend to sweep up a number of legal issues and have a point person with the family, then their colleagues support them on issues like housing, finances, immigration and so on.

Navin Shah AM: There is an adequate mechanism to check this process working and, if it is not, immediate measures to be put in place?

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Probably the first point will be that Citizens Advice will need to account for its activity with the Government department that funds it, which is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It will need to account for that and provide some data on that. Certainly, once we know we are at the end of distribution to our particular subset we can go back to them, make contact and ask them about their experiences.

Navin Shah AM: Monitoring is critical. You can have the best system in place but if it does not work on the ground that needs to be picked up so it is fit for purpose in the end.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): We have a relatively small number of cases, 71 bereaved cases. We work very closely with those, day-to-day contact with the families, to make sure if there are issues coming up like that we can point them in the right direction.

Navin Shah AM: I have a question for Zoe. Is there a way to better educate the public about how to give in disaster situations, both in terms of gifts as well as cash donations?

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Indeed. Of the eight points our reports make, two of them are about harnessing kindness following a major incident,

“People should know how best to give financial support in an emergency and be supported to do so. They should be assured their donations will go to people affected quickly, simply and equitably;” and

“People should be supported to give in ways that will help the most the vulnerable.”

That is about co-ordination between national, local and regional bodies, between the authorities and charities. It is about giving people clarity. We have all worked really hard together to try to give that to people in crisis and to the public. It has been a rich source of learning. We have to do better if, and when, a terrible tragedy like this ever happens again.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): Can I make one further softer point but that is often overlooked? Although families may have access to sound financial advice, in actual fact in every family at Grenfell - like any other family - there are tensions and conflicts between people. When you put money in the mix it sometimes exacerbates those issues. My experience is that families have fewer options of a place to go to get help resolving that at present. They are very reliant on the key worker to do some of that. They are very complex issues. Most have very close relationships with the police family liaison officers but that is well outside of their remit and scope. This is a very real issue for people who have been through trauma, are bereft, have got through the access to money part and then, in some cases, there are challenging family dynamics. We would do well to think about that support being available to people. It is difficult for families to go and ask for that, but having it on offer would be extremely helpful from our point of view.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you for that. I have a broad question for the panel. How can civil actions, like volunteering and gifts in kind, be better co-ordinated around emergencies, particular the infrastructure it requires?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): It is quite difficult to come up with a solution that works in that way. What you highlight in the question is very real and very pertinent. What our collective experience - for all of us, whether fundraisers, distributors or service providers - is that when

something happens people are incredibly generous. You can look at pretty well any incident, large or small, that has happened anywhere in country and people galvanise, get stuck in and want to help. You can take a completely different example to everything we have talked about this morning and look at the floods in Cumbria that are in recent memory. The local community foundation was the focus of a lot of that, harnessing not only donors and going out after other money but also acting as the focal point for local people and local organisations to help in those circumstances. It is hugely impressive. Some of that is also galvanised by British Red Cross volunteers on the ground and British Red Cross itself. There are the makings of that infrastructure.

We need to be careful not to put too much in the way of individuals' generosity and wanting to help. However, there also needs to be some mechanism to channel that in the right way. Certainly, as far as fundraising is concerned - when people want to open up a JustGiving page, let us say - who would want to stand in the way of doing that? Our responsibility - and, again, I am thinking of my day job rather than my LET trustee role here - is to make sure we, the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Commission, provide simple and straightforward advice to say, "If you want to open up a JustGiving page or use one of the other platforms this is what you do, this is how it works and these are the things to bear in mind when you do it". For example, "Specify as well as you can who the beneficiary of the money you want to raise is to be because if you do not it will cause delay in the money getting to where you want it to go". It is very simple messages like that, although they are quite complicated underneath. There is a bit of work to do there. I think that also reflects everyone's collective learning.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): There is something about co-ordinating volunteering. However, in the immediate aftermath of Grenfell, it was people who stood up and did whatever needed to be done. In some ways, we expected and paid for a co-ordinated response from local government, from regional Government, from national Government and it was absent. That space was occupied by volunteers. We do not need to ask people's permission for them to help. We need to allow them to have their own agency and occupy that space when they need to and in some way, support them. A lot of that is still going on, on the ground, in Grenfell. There are lots of people who are still volunteering who have never volunteered before but still see there is a job to be done.

The issue of co-ordinating volunteers in terms of a civil emergency and how they can be an auxiliary to Government is a really important question. However, you should not be giving people permission to volunteer. It is their absolute right to help one another.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can I just take that point up? I do not think it is permission. I am very much taken with your points about this tragedy. It is about how to help people channel their efforts in the right way. That is the really difficult bit, is it not? They think they are doing it in the right way. You ending up with a street full of nappies is an interesting example of that. It was well-meant and well-intended but that was not the right bit. Is there a case for trying to say, "Look, this is where it is at"? Immediately a disaster happens, "This is what we think our immediate response is and we are going to try to carry on with that". Is that possible? Is that unrealistic?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): It is, except there was a vacuum. That is what occupied the vacuum. It is people standing up and doing what they think they can and are able to do. There was no messaging. There was no, "There is a fire. We want you to stay away from the area. We are after people with these skills in this kind of thing. This needs to happen" and so on. There was nothing, so people occupied that vacuum themselves.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We have had that conversation on the pace of recovery issue. We fully concur with that on a number of levels.

Andrew Boff AM: Very quickly, I shall try to ask the same question a different way. Fools seldom differ. For the future, is more clarity required as to who is co-ordinating or was the clarity there and they just did not co-ordinate? Do you understand the subtlety of the question?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): I am no expert in this. I can only talk about my experience.

Andrew Boff AM: From your experience, that is exactly what we want to hear.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): From our experience, nothing happened. If someone was supposed to have done it, they did not.

Andrew Boff AM: You were not aware of who was supposed to be doing it?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): We were told to call the BEC. We had to work out what the BEC was; it is the Borough Emergency Command Centre. I am still, to this day, waiting for somebody to ring me back. That was all the information we were given until people started to show up; people like the Red Cross and Susan and her team saying, "How can we help?" and our friends and neighbours saying, "We have heard from ClementJames that someone is there from Hammersmith and Fulham". It was that build up. There was no co-ordination, or it certainly did not feel like it for a couple of days.

Andrew Boff AM: The boroughs and the GLA spend a long time getting together a plan for this kind of eventuality. You did not know who was in charge. That is what I am trying to get at. Is there a similar view from the others?

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): Look at Team London Volunteering. It is great at stuff. Not only does it provide brilliant volunteers but it also provides people to co-ordinate those volunteers. If there has been an issue and you go out on social media and say you need volunteers, hundreds of people will turn up but then they do not know what to do and you do not know what to do with them. There is something about that co-ordination point. For me, there is something around how we equip as many organisations as possible with the knowledge that there are resources out there that can help them and how we tell them that when we are not in the middle of an emergency situation. For example, how do we ensure all the boroughs know that Team London volunteers are trained in resilience and can be called on? How do they know that?

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): They have to be around for a while. What you do not want is re-traumatising people by getting them to tell their story to 55 different people because volunteers are there short term.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Indeed, yes. That is absolutely true.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Is that not a question about where we align ourselves? If things were working post-recovery - although it takes many forms and day 1 will be different from day 15 - and everyone was

doing their bit, things would happen much more quickly and you would be able to do what you need to do. That is the very point from a survivor's perspective of, "I am talking to about four different people and, quite frankly, my head is spinning because of what I have just suffered, never mind other people offering me help". I think there was a failure of that post-recovery response on a number of levels. We have to try to get to grips with that because, unfortunately, as Gerald [Oppenheim] said, there will be other situations.

We are interested in learning from those experiences and we are also interested in learning about what you think works. I am interested in putting them into processes so people are clear. In a sense, what happened informally, when you were asked to turn up the expertise and many others trying to grapple with the plans, did not happen. People were trying to put it in because they realised it was important enough to try to do something on that Saturday, never mind in terms of the operational response, and for it all to go in very clearly the next time. We should not be having this conversation again around the table about some of the circumstances we find ourselves in.

Zoe Abrams (Executive Director for Communications and Engagement, British Red Cross): Many of us here had a meeting with [The Rt Honourable] Tracey Crouch, the Minister for Sport and Civil Society. Mark made a suggestion at that which I thought was really good, that there should be a clear lead for the voluntary sector in Gold, with that being a formal role.

Again, many of us were in a meeting with Grenfell United quite soon after the incident. What the people in the room asked for was for a single fund. It was after that meeting that the Charity Commission started publishing the updates. That is what people in crisis were saying, they wanted a single fund. Whilst I completely agree we want diversity in the sector, we want diversity of generosity and we want diversity of kindness. People who are in crisis are asking for a co-ordination of that as well. A single fund and a single lead - or a largely predominant fund and a single lead in Gold - for the voluntary sector right from the get go, carrying on to when John Barradell OBE [Chief Executive, City of London Corporation] got involved, would be some of our recommendations.

Emma Strain (Assistant Director of External Affairs, Greater London Authority): Very briefly, this has come back to this leadership point. Who is in charge? Who is taking control? It is very difficult for lots of organisations to do everything by committee in a really quick period of time. My reflection on it now is that everybody did a fantastic job of moving as quickly as was possible in a slight leadership vacuum.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): In some ways, in that leadership vacuum, but we can do better. You are all telling me we can do better. We are coming to the conclusion, on the evidence we have heard even before you walked into the room, we can do better. Some of that is clarifying who that leadership is in different roles. It is also about a place at the table and a place in the structures.

From what you are telling us today there is this issue about the community-led sector/voluntary sector bit and then there is the survivor/next of kin bit and other dependents. We need to bring forward both because they need to go forward post-recovery. It might be at different timescales but we have to try to speed up that process for getting some money out to people in real need and supporting those people in terms of some of the things they are faced with. I have very much taken that back about one of your best practices may be keeping money back for some of those extra supports that we did not envisage and that we might, in terms of a future disaster, need. It is a question about how you divvy up the pot and some of those issues. I am minded to take on that.

Rob Bell (Director, London Emergencies Trust): We have heard a lot about the quality of relationships being really important here, especially in a low-trust environment. Mark has described how RPT had that in spades. We had it with families we dealt with very quietly in the background with the police. We were frustrated by the rotation of key personnel who were there to give advice and information and were responsible for communications. That is not a comment on them as individuals, they were seconded or volunteered to come and get stuck in. However, you would just build up a relationship. You would think this person understands what financial support is available and then they would be off again. There was one week - I think it was week 2 or 3 - when I went to Westway. I walked around and went to the financial assistance desk and asked them what they did. They were delighted. They said, "LET, we have sort of heard about you. What do you do?" Essentially, they were there just to point people towards a helpline. It was not that complicated a funding picture at that time. There were several main funders with clear routes in. At that level people had been in the job two days. There had been some sort of handover but they did not know. People on the ground experienced that repeatedly and it built up irritation about the whole thing. It compounded the view that things were a shambles. There is a principle in there that is, as much as you can, invest in stability and do not rotate people out because it is really important. That is why the charities there do so well, because they are there, they are permanent and know people.

David Farnsworth (Director, City Bridge Trust): I gave notice that I have to leave for a Board meeting shortly but have a couple of points to make. In terms of the learning for this Committee and the co-ordination with about four or five other pieces of work going on, it would be really great if this Committee could proactively link in with those pieces. It would be helpful within certain Government departments to help them join up.

In terms of what exists now and in terms of any response to this, it is being very clear about the different tapestries that exist across the UK in the community voluntary sector and some of the infrastructure which is of differing levels of expertise and strength across the country. There is a lot already through that and also through the independent funder networks. It is thinking about what is there, getting an accurate picture and then sometimes sourcing that rather than a parallel universe that could come out of this. Forgive me having to leave slightly early.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Please do, thank you very much for your contribution.

Now, Navin, do you want to finish off? I think this is our last set of questions.

Navin Shah AM: Obviously it is gratifying we had very generous donations and lots of funds raised and distributed. However, given some of the difficulties we have discussed, are there any reviews taking place on this charitable giving aspect or is there any need for a radical overhaul of what has happened?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): There are more reviews going on than anybody might know. There is this one, there is the gathering we were all at on Friday of the Charity Commission. OK, that was looking towards what a national response might be in the future but it is also about reviewing what we have all done. Individually we have looked at our own performance, coming to a view about what we could do better. I know inside LET we want to get an independent look at what we did, how we did it and when we did it across all five incidents we have been working on, as well as the support we were able to give to Manchester colleagues. Yes, that is going on. I am certain that pretty well every Government department involved in Whitehall is looking at what happened. We expect, any moment, to be asked to contribute in a very similar way to this which we are happy to do because it is about learning. However, I do hope that all

the different inquiries come out with similar conclusions otherwise it is going to get even more complicated than it is now.

Navin Shah AM: Is it ensuring direction in terms of a radical overhaul?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): I would not necessarily say it was a radical overhaul. We certainly need to understand what we all did, how it happened and evolve what we do so where there are areas of expertise that exist, either in individual charities or more widely in the public sector, it is clear what they are and how they are to be drawn on if there is a repeat. If I take LET, what we know about is support, next of kin and the injured. Our role would be to spread that knowledge and information. We tried to do it in 2005 but with the march of time it got lost. We must not make that mistake again. It needs to evolve and it needs to get better. Without wanting to appear self-satisfied or smug in any way about this, we did do the best job we could in the circumstances we found. It was probably a good job in the end but it may not have felt like that as it was being done. We need to build on that, learn where we did not get it as good as we could have done but also make clear that this worked and other people can do this in future.

Mark Simms (Chief Executive, Rugby Portobello Trust): There is one other review going on that is being funded by the Muslim Aid Foundation. That is working entirely from a local perspective about what happened with the local organisations and how they responded so they will be more co-ordinated to speak to a national response. That is going on now.

Navin Shah AM: One final, very pertinent question, to you, Gerald, as Head of Policy at the Fundraising Regulator. There was one incident that was reported on 1 October about a fraudulent website. That is always a worry. Who is collecting donations? Was that properly dealt with? Have you had any further incidents like that? Is there a mechanism whereby that can be curbed entirely or be dealt with more effectively for this as well as any other fundraising activities that may occur?

Gerald Oppenheim (Chair, London Emergencies Trust): Thankfully, as far as we are all aware, there has been very little fraud. RBT spotted a couple of cases very early on and dealt with them in absolutely the right way. It is a criminal matter. It goes straight to the police and/or Action Fraud where that is spotted.

The fundraising platforms, where the greatest vulnerability lies here, have a lot of very sophisticated algorithms that they use so when somebody opens up a page for the first time there are all sorts of background checks. We know that at Westminster very quickly - I cannot remember whether it was GoFundMe or JustGiving but one of those two - spotted that somebody opening a page had just served time in prison for fraud. That page was quarantined straightaway. We are on this. If the public has any worries about it then the place to go is either us where it is fundraising and/or the Charity Commission. We talk to each other all the time and we take action as best we can in the circumstances. My message is, if anybody thinks there is a fraud going on, go straight to the police, that is the quickest way to get it dealt with, as well as telling the organisations concerned who might be affected.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you, that is reassuring.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can I, on behalf of the Committee, thank you for the way you answered our questions. Our intention has always been not to try to duplicate other areas of work. We chose this area of work because we thought we needed to shine a light on it. Because of the nature of the tragedy you were dealing with, and are still dealing with, we thought we might lend our voice to some of those issues. That has been very useful for us. We have asked for some information from various people and we will follow that up.

Finally - because I do not think we do this enough or in an appropriate form, and I hope people have already said this to you and to your colleagues who are not around this table - thank you for the work you have done. It is very difficult. It is very complex. Yes, there were problems but hopefully everyone will seek to reduce those problems in the future as and when they happen. I want to thank you for the work you have done. We are constantly in awe of some of the work that goes on behind the scenes. The media does not get it unless there is a sensationalism part of it or something like a bad news story. In some ways, you have helped victims and their families a little bit further in this terrible tragedy. Thank you for that and your ongoing work. Thank you.