



## 'Data and related things'

Those who have read my blogs will recognise that I have a theme in mind when I first put pen to paper – or – fingers to keyboard. The theme that struck me for this blog was 'data', and just how many of my conversations involve the gathering, analysis and use of data. Big data, sharing data, using data as evidence and a thirst for data – figures and numbers that can be measured by organisations, not least of which is Government.

One area of focus that calls for this big data approach is Grenfell, from the very early days of recovery and aftermath there was and continues to be a need for data: how many people involved; how many victims need assistance and rehousing; what is the financial need; what is the need for welfare and mental health support; how many buildings may also have ACM on the outside; are they residential, public or private sector, schools, hospitals, other buildings; how do we find them all and how do we measure what other fire safety issues may be a concern?

An immense amount of work has gone into this national response from many hundreds of organisations and individuals; I believe there are almost 500 applications to be core participants of the Public Inquiry. The NFCC through involvement in the Expert and Technical panels, discussions with other groups such as the Industry Response Group and organisations like the Institution of Fire Engineers – plus the co-ordination and information role via the West Midlands hub – for Fire & Rescue Services has had a significant part to play. This involvement continues as we now enter, what I have termed phase 2 of the Grenfell recovery.

Phase 2 follows the re-issue of the interim measures letter and the publication of the Waking Watch guidance that were issued at the end of September and beginning of October. Fire & Rescue Services are expected to re-visit these ACM-clad buildings to ensure they are as safe as possible until the ACM is removed. There was also a request for new data to ensure both NFCC and Government know as much as we can about these buildings, and that fire safety is being maintained whilst the external cladding is upgraded or removed.

Work is ongoing to identify similar buildings in the private sector. The work of colleagues in the NFCC Protection and Business Safety Committee has been exceptional, as has the work of fire protection colleagues across the country. Linked to this work is [our submission](#) to Dame Judith Hackitt's [review](#) of the building regulatory and fire safety framework, and again my thanks go to many of Mark Hardingham's team, particularly from London Fire Brigade and the support they have given. The other data matter that struck me this week was the statistical releases from the Home Office on Prevention, Protection and the Workforce. The [NFCC comment](#) on these statistics highlights that this is a reality check for us. Losing one fifth of the operational workforce this decade is not a trend that can be maintained. Yes, the number of fires has decreased, but we resource for risk and – not demand – and we know the threat of disaster and even attack is always with us. We need to maintain the ability to respond in our usual professional manner whenever called.

### ***Recognising excellent work***

Recognising the need for exceptional response was a theme of a reception at Downing Street for the emergency services who have responded so magnificently to Grenfell and the dreadful terrorist attacks this year.

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And talking of recognition of magnificent work, I was proud to represent the NFCC at Lambeth Palace where the Firefighter's Memorial Trust, supported by the Fire Brigades Union lottery fund, held a ceremony to present medals to the families of firefighters who have given their lives in the service of others. This one afternoon was definitely not about statistics and data, it was about people, memories and pride. I was personally pleased to see the families of Michael Miller and Jeff Wornham there to receive their medals and certificates.

### ***Recognising important progress***

I was pleased to see that women now form 12 per cent of whole-time operational new entrants. Still some way to go, but I am really pleased to support the #FirefightingSexism campaign started by London Fire Brigade.



London Commissioner Dany Cotton is asking people to support the campaign using the hashtag #FirefightingSexism on their social media accounts. You can find more information [here](#). And in that vein, I was grateful that the NFCC's council last week voted to support the United Nations [HeForShe](#) movement.

This is a worldwide movement to end inequality of opportunity and quality of life because of gender. I believe the Fire & Rescue Service is a fantastic career, a well-kept secret that needs to become the job of choice for all.

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