



Independent Office
for Police Conduct

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Dear Sir/Madam

I am pleased to attach a copy of the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC's) response to your consultation on establishing an Independent Public Advocate (IPA).

I was keen to write personally to briefly reflect on my own experiences arising from my role as Site Recovery Manager at the Grenfell Tower site after the 2017 tragedy where as part of my role, I led on engagement with the bereaved, survivors and wider community.

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, families of the bereaved, as well as survivors, faced huge difficulty in navigating the complex legal and investigative system in which they found themselves. They had to try and make sense of this at the same time as coping with their grief and coming to terms with having lost their loved ones, homes and possessions.

My reflections, from that time, are that those affected individuals would undoubtedly have benefitted from an Independent Public Advocate. Having an individual who could act as a conduit between families and government agencies, and who could signpost to particular support services, would be a huge step forward from the current position people find themselves in following any large-scale disaster such as Grenfell.

There are a few specific points that I would reflect on:

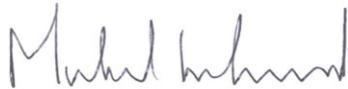
- In the early days there was an issue of trust and it was critical that any individual was seen to be totally independent of Government in its widest sense.
- It was important there remained the same point of contact throughout to be able to build a relationship/level of trust.
- It was vital to be flexible in terms of when/how contact could be made (I remember having calls at 10pm at night).
- Visibility with families and the wider community in the early days was crucial.
- Communicating simply, in understandable language and providing regular updates to them was key (if not misinformation filled the gaps).
- Finally, but most importantly, in terms of personal attributes, it was vital that any individual:
 - o Was a good listener.

- Showed empathy to all of those engaged with.
- Was a good communicator – told them the facts (both the good and difficult news).
- Was friendly and approachable.
- Always followed through on commitments made (honest/trustworthy).

Our attached consultation response sets out further thoughts on how we consider the IPA provision could work in practice, and also how it could be beneficial to those not just in the wake of large-scale disasters but also following other types of incidents.

If you wish to discuss our response or my personal experiences in further detail, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Lockwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Lockwood
Director General
Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)