**The Navigator Service Plays a major Role in Rehousing Grenfell Tower Leaseholders**

The Grenfell Tower fire that occurred on 14 June 2017 was a humanitarian disaster on an unprecedented scale within the borough. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) gave the highest priority to securing long-term rehousing for those in the community worst affected by this tragedy and chose Westminster Community Homes Ltd (WCH). to provide the Navigator Service to the affected Leaseholders. WCH was appointed because, of its proven Skills in managing and negotiating with leaseholders; it was able to gear up quickly to do the work, and because they have the necessary resources.

**The Navigator Service**

This is a personalised support service to leaseholders to assist them as necessary. It is based on the way Westminster City Council works with leaseholders in its regeneration estates to ensure that leaseholders can make informed choices about their future to:

* Understand the choices open to them
* Make an informed choice (including accepting temporary accommodation)
* Identify and negotiate for a suitable property
* Manage the acquisition process (understanding all the issues entailed – terms of leases etc.) through to completion
* Manage the moving process and ensure that all arrangements are in place for them to receive continuing support

**Leaseholders re-settled:**

Out of the 209 households from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk, there were 17 leaseholders, of these the 14 properties located in the tower were destroyed totally by the fire and the three leasehold properties in Grenfell Walk were rendered uninhabitable.

The Navigator Service, working Closely with RBKC recognised that leaseholders and their households need time to assess their options and decide how they wish to proceed. All leaseholders were offered the opportunity to meet with the Navigator Service and the Council and put forward their views.

The series of face to face meetings with the leaseholders not only created trusts and understanding of the individual distinct leaseholders’ case, but provided vital information which enabled the Navigator Service to offer a package of personal support to individual leaseholders to help them make appropriate choices either to return to home ownership or to be rehoused into social housing, within the borough of RBKC, or outside the borough.

The constructive and friendly customer centred approach enabled the Navigator Service, to successfully complete and re-settle into permanent accommodations, 13 out of the original 15 leaseholders. Two of the leasehold properties held by a Residential Social Landlord was offered leases on similar properties within RBKC. The last two remaining leaseholders are engaging and in negotiation with RBKC, through their solicitors and representatives. Westminster Community Homes Ltd. believes that these negotiations are progressing well and has proposed to handover to RBKC the two remaining cases with effect from the 2nd week of June 2020.

In summary, the Navigator Service (Westminster Community Homes Ltd.) provided a consistent and reliable service with compassion and deep understanding of the individual leaseholders needs. This not only revived but has also improved the trust between the leaseholders, the Grenfell Community and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council.