ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Bereaved & Survivors Programme

involve

collaborate
for social change

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What is this report about?

This report gives an overview of the first two years (June 2024 - March 2026) of the Grenfell Support programme for bereaved and survivors, otherwise known as the Dedicated Service, delivered by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC). The Grenfell Support programme is delivered by the Grenfell Partnerships Team (GPT) who are part of RBKC, and also responsible for coordinating the council's wider work on Grenfell, including the commitments made in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

The Grenfell Support programme also includes support for the immediate community near Grenfell Tower, as well as education and training support for bereaved, survivors and the immediate community. Separate reports on the progress of these programmes are available to view here:

linktr.ee/independentscrutinyfunction

How is this report structured?

The first part of this report offers reflections from the GPT on the delivery of the Grenfell Support programme overall. This is followed by a focused look at the Dedicated Service specifically, and the view of the Independent Scrutiny Function (ISF). The job of the ISF is to help ensure the Grenfell Support is delivered transparently and effectively in the interests of bereaved and survivors and the immediate local community near Grenfell Tower.

linktr.ee/independentscrutinyfunction

Overall Grenfell Support programme: summary from the Grenfell Partnerships Team

The three Grenfell support programmes began at different times and are now well established. They continue to provide support in line with the models designed with bereaved, survivors and the immediate community and approved by the council's Leadership Team. While delivery has faced some external challenges, the programmes have adapted quickly to ensure support for bereaved, survivors and the immediate community continues. These challenges included:

- **Changes to council finance systems in April/May 2025**, which affected payments such as personal budgets, education and training funding for bereaved and survivors, and wellbeing grants for the immediate community.
- The **cyber-attack which affected the council** in November 2025 and required the three programmes to review and adapt application and payment processes to maintain service continuity.

The main learnings across the Grenfell Support programmes have been about:

ACCESSIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Simple, inclusive and flexible approaches help users access support in various ways and participate in programmes more easily.

COMMUNITY VOICE

Involving users in decision-making through steering groups and annual surveys leads to services that better reflect community needs and priorities.

RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Regular feedback and a flexible approach enable programmes to adapt and improve support over time.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Clear and honest communication helps build trust and manage expectations when challenges or delays arise.

COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT

Strong partnerships and relationship-based support are essential for addressing complex housing, health and wellbeing needs.

Bereaved and Survivors programme: summary from the Grenfell Partnerships Team

The Bereaved and Survivors programme, also known as the Dedicated Service, provides two key areas of support for bereaved and survivors:

- **Access to a personal budget** to support recovery needs, which vary according to people's experience of the tragedy.
- **A choice to access a named Dedicated Service Worker** to provide tailored, personalised support.

Since the programme launched in June 2024, all key elements of the model have been implemented. This includes the introduction of the opt-in/opt-out process to allow individuals to choose whether to access keyworker support, allocation of personal budgets based on people's experience of the tragedy, direct payments into bank accounts, the opportunity to access future years personal budgets, and the first Dedicated Service feedback survey.

798 individuals are currently eligible for and accessing the Dedicated Service. Over half (57%) live in Kensington and Chelsea and 29% live in another London borough. 8% live outside London and 5% live abroad.

Bereaved and Survivors programme: timeline

- **Years 1-2**: June 2024 - March 2026
- **Year 3**: April 2026 - March 2027

Personal Budgets

As of July 2026, 99% of eligible individuals have shared bank details with the service to receive their budget. The GPT are working proactively with a small number of complex cases who have yet to share their details. During the 24/25 financial year, 2137 requests were paid totalling £3.6m. During the 25/26 financial year, 2137 requests were paid totalling £8.04m.[2]

In 2025/26, the personal budgets were mainly used for health and wellbeing (65%), leisure and housing (35%), and housing (19%). When asked how the funds would help, 41% said to 'support with my personal development' and 40% said 'support with my recovery'. Almost all repeat applicants said their previous budget met the expected outcome, and 79% rated their experience 4 or 5;

Future Years Budgets

Between 1st July 2025 and 31st March 2026, nearly half (49%) of eligible individuals have requested their future years' budget totalling £3.23m. Of these 96% were approved and processed and 4% were rejected in accordance with the policy.

Over a third (35%) of applicants requested their future years budget to improve planning, control and flexibility. A significant proportion of applications related to children and education needs (33%), including school fees, nursery costs, tutoring, extracurricular activities, and specialist support. Over a quarter of applicants requested lump sums to fund holidays, respite and family time (26%) often linking this to emotional recovery, family bonding and relief from ongoing stress related to the Grenfell tragedy.

2 The figures quoted include personal and individual budgets, carried over from the previous year or service, as well as Future Year's Budget.

Access to a named keyworker

To encourage resilience and independence, keyworkers use an outcome-focused model of support, focusing on 3 main types of support:

1. TASK CENTRED

Support to help resolve or alleviate any immediate short-term issues through signposting or advocacy.

2. SOLUTION FOCUSED

Work in partnership with other agencies to find solutions to more complex problems.

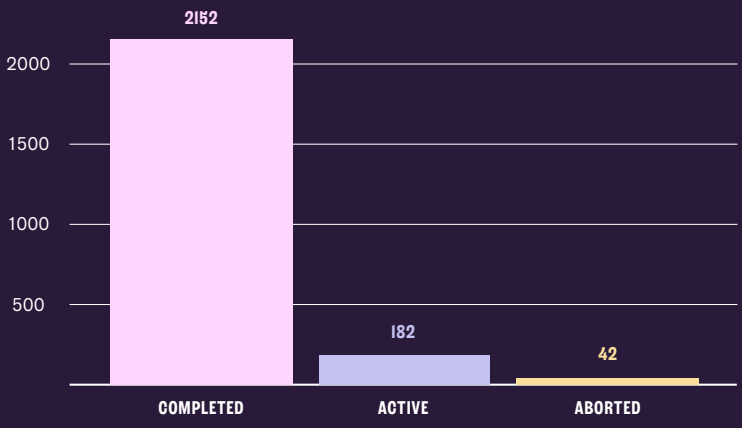
3. RELATIONAL STRENGTHS-BASED

Close working with people themselves to identify changes they wish to make in their life and how to work together towards longer term goals.

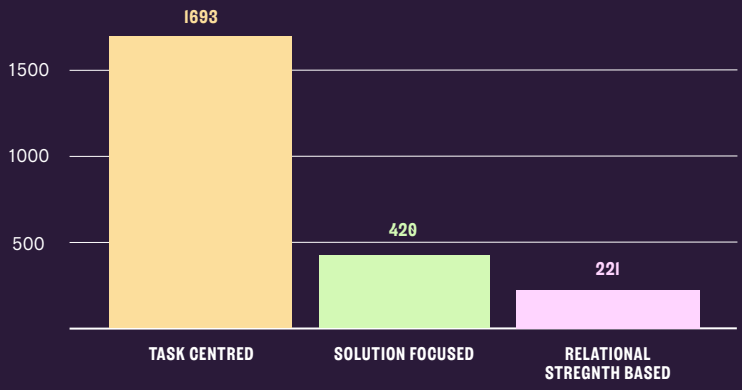
249 individuals have opted in to worker support for 2026/27 (across 160 cases), including 213 adults and 36 children. 59% of those who opted in are Female and 73% live in RBKC. Most (68%) opted-in cases are single-person cases, while 20% include one or more children aged under 18.

2,376 SUPPORT REQUESTS

Support request stage



Service requests by type



Service themes of the requests

Finance accounted for 29% of support requests, with benefits, personal budgets, bank details and prepaid card closure among the main areas of support.

Health and wellbeing accounted for 23% of support requests, including physical health, emotional wellbeing, mental health, referrals and support to access NHS, social care and community services.

Housing accounted for 22% of support requests, including housing management issues such as repairs and housing allocations issues such as support to move.

Education and training accounted for 8% of support requests, mainly around access to the bursary offer, school applications, SEND liaison and adult education.

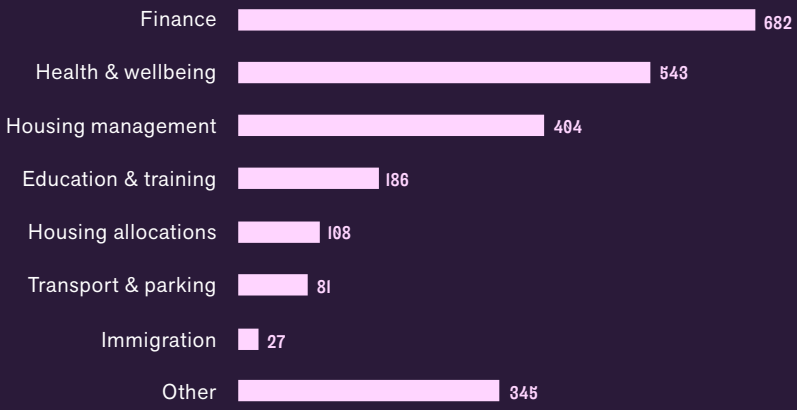
Support request outcome satisfaction

When individuals were asked to rate their satisfaction with support outcomes, 78% of completed requests were rated 4 or 5 out of 5 and only 5% rated 2 or lower. Lower satisfaction scores were most often linked to issues controlled by external systems, particularly housing, benefits or eligibility rules, where outcomes were delayed, refused or unresolved.

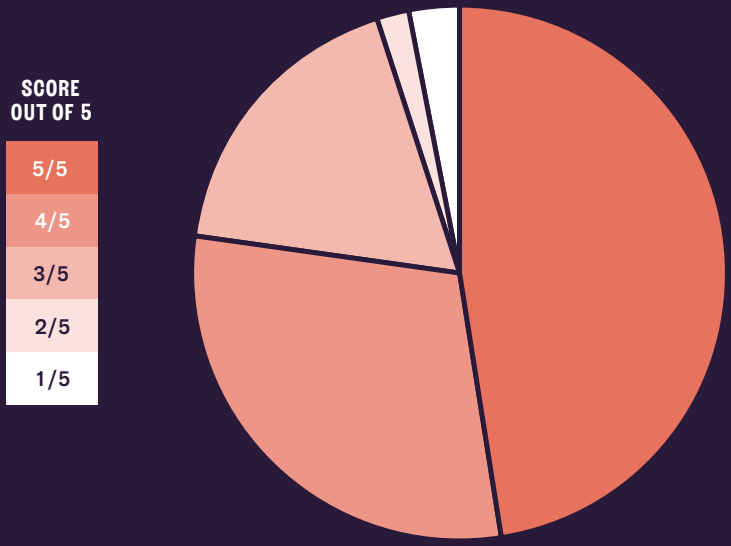
When asked if the individual could complete the task themselves next time, in 54% of cases the answer was ‘yes’, 23% answered ‘no’ and 33% were ‘not applicable’ or ‘unsure’.

Where the answer was ‘yes’, satisfaction with the outcome was lower (66% scoring 4 or higher). Where the answer was ‘no’, satisfaction was higher (88% scoring 4 or higher). This indicates that individuals appreciate the support they receive more, when they feel unable to carry out the task themselves.

Service themes



Support request outcome satisfaction



HOW BEREAVED AND SURVIVORS HAVE SHAPED THE PROGRAMME

Bereaved and survivors have shaped the programme to date through participating in working groups and through participation in an annual survey which had a reach of 110 adults.

An Implementation Working Group was established in September 2024 to oversee the implementation of the key areas of the final model, including the new payments process, monitoring arrangements, and review of the opt-in/opt-out process after the first six months of delivery. Six implementation meetings were held over a nine-month period, with 20 individuals attending at least one meeting. The group provided challenge and helped shape key areas of service delivery.

Following this, an Operational Working Group was established in September 2025 to provide ongoing feedback, challenge and support to develop the Dedicated Service up to 2028. Meetings are held quarterly, both in person and online, and are open to all bereaved and survivors, regardless of whether they have opted in or out of keyworker support. The Operational Working Group has supported new payment processes, suggested and approved changes to the opt-out policy, scrutinised the work of the programme, and contributed to the design, delivery and analysis of the Dedicated Service Annual Survey.

What the Grenfell Partnerships Team has learnt

The programme has generated learning that is relevant beyond the Dedicated Service and it should continue to inform wider service improvements and policy changes at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC):

- **Processes need to be simple, accessible and supported by clear safeguards**. Feedback from bereaved and survivors has led to improvements in the online platform, easier navigation, direct bank payments and the closure of prepaid cards. Responsive communication remains important, including responding to emails and calls from bereaved and survivors regardless of opt-in or opt-out status.
- **Policy changes work best when they are developed transparently and with bereaved and survivor input.** This has informed changes to the opt-out policy, including allowing individuals to opt out for both remaining years and enabling children to opt out regardless of their parent or guardian's decision. Offers of support at RBKC need to remain accessible and easy to re-engage with, even where people have chosen not to access them at a particular point.
- **The service needs to balance flexibility with clear boundaries.** Learning has reinforced the importance of explaining what support the service can and cannot help with and why, particularly where decisions depend on external systems or wider council processes.
- **A restorative and trauma-informed approach to conflict and complaints is key**, and opportunities exist to bring this to wider services, including Housing.

- Housing, finance and health and wellbeing remain significant areas of need. Regular meetings with Housing Management and Housing Needs are being used to review complex cases, address delays and support cross-departmental learning.
- Relational, strengths-based support is important but harder to evidence. The GPT has changed its case management recording so that outcomes, independence-building and longer-term relational support can be captured more clearly.

YEAR 3 OF THE BEREAVED AND SURVIVORS PROGRAMME

The Grenfell Partnerships Team's priorities

Looking ahead the GPT intend to:

- Continue to review its work to identify where closer working with other council teams would improve support for families.
- Work with bereaved and survivors who have opted in for 2026/27 to plan their support and consider how best to meet longer-term needs.
- Work closely with all eligible individuals, particularly those living abroad, to remove barriers to accessing personal budgets.
- Prepare for the final opt-in/opt-out decision-making window in December 2026, including planning for the impact on staff resources and ensuring appropriate support for the team.
- Work with bereaved and survivors to begin planning for the end of the current arrangements in March 2028. This includes work with specific services to ensure people are receiving the right support from the wider system.

Assessment from the Independent Scrutiny Function (ISF)

Since May 2025, the ISF has monitored the programme's progress through quarterly reviews of GPT monitoring data, taking into consideration:

- Delivery, reach and impact of the support provided
- Handling of complaints
- Reporting and transparency
- How well the programme centers residents' experiences and repairs harm
- Expenditure[2]

Alongside this, the ISF has met with the GPT and the Dedicated Service team, facilitated sensemaking sessions with bereaved and survivors, and attended the Bereaved and Survivor Operational Working Group.

Overall, the ISF is satisfied that the GPT has effectively delivered the first two years of the support for bereaved and survivors in line with the consultation agreed model and programme intentions.

In particular, the ISF's scrutiny has highlighted the extent of the GPT's reach in supporting bereaved and survivors, their low complaints level, their ability to continue to support people to access their budgets during the cyber incident, and their efforts to integrate people's feedback from the service itself through ongoing communication and an annual survey.

The ISF have observed ongoing challenges for Bereaved and Survivors outside of the support programme. In response to this, in 2026, the GPT have actively focused on strengthening

2 To see the ISF's assessments in detail, visit: linktr.ee/independentscrutinyfunction

partnerships with other RBKC departments, particularly Housing Needs and Housing Management, to improve service standards and identify systemic issues affecting bereaved and survivors.

In the ISF scrutiny in 2026 we observed the need for the GPT to begin thinking about supporting Bereaved and Survivors towards the end of the support programme in 2028. The ISF is satisfied that this work is now taking place and will continue to monitor the GPT's progress in this area.

YEARS 1 AND 2 OF THE BEREAVED AND SURVIVORS PROGRAMME

What the Independent Scrutiny Function has learnt

Programme delivery

Across years 1-2 of the Bereaved and Survivors support programme the ISF has seen how the support programme has enabled individuals to have choice and control over their level of support. This is evident in the flexibility with which individuals can opt-in or opt-out to core support at various times, and the ability to receive future years payments so that people no longer need to interact with the service if they wish.

A key learning for the ISF is that support needs often extend beyond the GPT's remit. Systemic change is required across council departments. For example, housing-related support requests frequently require Housing Management and Housing Needs involvement. The ISF encourages the GPT to document and share learning about interdepartmental collaboration. The Grenfell support programme and the GPT is a learning opportunity and resource for wider council culture change, including towards restorative practice.

The ISF has also seen clear value to the rich case studies of support which the GPT have begun to provide in their reports, particularly where these detail the difference between task-centred, solution-focused, and relational strengths-based work. These give more insight into the impact of the programme on people's lives and where wider council collaboration is necessary, and informed ISF recommendations for the need for preparing the transition to 2028. This has been a key development in the GPT's reporting which the ISF encourages.

Finally, the ISF has onserved that restorative practice is becoming more embedded in the way that the GPT works. This was evidenced through its clear communications around budget payment changes, opt-in/opt-out processes, and cyber incident impacts. This has likely contributed to the low level of complaints, and the openness of Bereaved and Survivors and GPT colleagues, (during conversations observed by the ISF) about the wider challenges individuals are experiencing.

Wider influence and legacy

The Bereaved and Survivors programme has potential to create a significant longer-term legacy through several key insights the ISF has observed.

The programme has generated evidence about what support bereaved and survivors really need in the years following bereavement and trauma. The detailed data on how people use personal budgets (for personal development, educational support for children, stress reduction, and recovery) provides insights that could inform future approaches to bereavement support and trauma recovery across local government and beyond.

The programme's approach to integrating bereaved and survivors' voices (through the Implementation Working Group, survey feedback, and involvement in decision-making) creates an example of participatory decision making and collaboration between RBKC and residents. This commitment to involving

affected people in programme design and adaptation, rather than making and then defending and/or justifying decisions, is a shift in how public services can approach work with communities in future, especially with vulnerable communities.

The programme models how restorative practice can be embedded operationally throughout a complex programme. Rather than restorative practice being a separate initiative, it informs decision-making processes, addressing complaints, communication strategies, and how the GPT works with bereaved and survivors and other departments.

By bringing bereaved and survivors' feedback into Housing Needs and Housing Management meetings, the GPT are beginning to demonstrate how collaboration can support housing teams to enhance their support and create a shift in communication between residents and wider council colleagues.

YEAR 3 OF THE BEREAVED AND SURVIVORS PROGRAMME

The Independent Scrutiny Function's priorities

Looking ahead the ISF intends to:

- Continue to scrutinise **how the Bereaved and Survivors Support programme develops**, including continued scrutiny of delivery, transition planning, and documenting learning and wider council collaboration.
- Continue to scrutinise **delivery of the Bereaved and Survivors programme**, including the dedicated service and the next opt-in/opt-out windows. There will be four quarters of scrutiny alongside two sensemaking sessions one in July and one around November 2026.

- Ensure scrutiny has a focus on **how robust transition planning is, how bereaved and survivors are included in the process and how the GPT and wider council considers ongoing needs and provision through council services**. With the programme set to end in March 2028, Year 3 will be a key point for the GPT to plan the transition to the end of opt-in support.
- Support the GPT to act on the ISF's recommendations about how to support wider impact and legacy from the programme, based on a workshop held with the GPT in June 2026:
    - **Codify its restorative way of working** e.g identify principles, practical examples and learning (e.g. about barriers and enablers).
    - **Develop a structured approach to learning about how to effectively influence the wider organisation.** Use test and learn cycles to ensure a focused approach with rapid and actionable findings.
    - **Work in partnership with colleagues** across the council who are adopting and working to spread similar ways of working.
    - **Develop approaches to communicating** with and supporting colleagues.

The GPT will start to codify its learning in the autumn of 2026 and identify how best to share the insight to influence more widely within the council. The ISF will review progress as part of its scrutiny in autumn 2026, and provide an update to RBKC's CEO and leader - referencing GPT's work to codify its practice and sharing its recommendations about what's needed to spread the practice across the council.