



12 May 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY - TERMS OF REFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

When you appointed me, you asked me to consult the public on the draft Terms of Reference and you provided those to me on 10 March. On 11 March I began that process and my team and I have now completed our analysis. I enclose my recommended Terms of Reference, which have been amended based on the Inquiry's analysis of the consultation responses.

Over 20,000 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation. During the four-week consultation, I held meetings with over 150 bereaved families and organisations representing different sectors in cities across the UK. I heard first hand how important a thorough inquiry into the UK's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is. This process provided me with an informative and constructive critique of the draft Terms of Reference. It demonstrated people's passion to be part of the Inquiry and their desire to work with me to ensure valuable lessons are learned.

The consultation revealed areas where the Terms of Reference could be improved. I have listened to compelling arguments to focus on children and young people, the mental health and wellbeing of the UK population and collaboration between regional, devolved and national government, and the voluntary and community sector. I am therefore asking you to expand the Terms of Reference to include these issues.

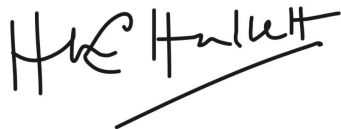
The unequal impact of the pandemic was a theme that came through strongly in responses to the consultation. I am therefore recommending that the Terms of Reference be reframed to put possible inequalities at its forefront so that investigation into any unequal impacts of the pandemic runs through the whole Inquiry. This important recommendation will ensure the Inquiry is inclusive in its approach.

Finally, I am proposing several other changes to sharpen our focus. These changes relate to a number of key areas, including care in the home, regulatory control, support for victims of domestic abuse, and first contact with the NHS, including 111 and 999 services.

I believe these changes will ensure the Inquiry can best fulfill its purpose to examine the UK's preparedness and response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and learn lessons for the future.

I hope that you will accept my recommendations in full. Doing so will recognise the important contributions of all those who took part in the Inquiry's public consultation and doing so swiftly will ensure the Inquiry can begin its formal work without delay.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Hallett', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

The Rt Hon. Baroness Hallett DBE

Enc. Terms of Reference Consultation Summary Report