

**IN THE UK COVID-19 PUBLIC INQUIRY  
BEFORE BARONESS HEATHER HALLETT  
IN THE MATTER OF: THE PUBLIC INQUIRY TO EXAMINE THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC IN THE UK**

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**SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE COVID-19 BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR JUSTICE  
CYMRU IN ADVANCE OF THE PRELIMINARY HEARING IN MODULE 1  
ON 4 OCTOBER 2022**

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1. The Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru ('BFJC') are a Welsh focussed group dedicated solely to campaigning for and giving a voice to those bereaved by Covid-19 in Wales.
2. The BFJC thank the Chair for designating them as Core Participants in the Module 1 hearings of this Public Inquiry and for the Chair's recognition that the BFJC are best placed to assist this Public Inquiry to achieve its aims by representing the collective interests of a broad spectrum of those bereaved by Covid-19 in Wales in relation to Module 1.
3. It is vitally important that the people of Wales can have full confidence that this Public Inquiry will fully scrutinise decision-making in Wales in respect of Covid-19 and that the experiences and voices of the Welsh people will be properly heard and represented.
4. The BFJC welcome the Chair's commitment to looking at the actions of the devolved administrations. However, as the Chair will be aware there are still concerns in Wales that the preliminary scope of Module 1 does not set out in any detail the Welsh specific issues that ought to be investigated by this Public Inquiry in Module 1.
5. As the Chair appreciates, Wales is a separate country, with a devolved government. Although Wales receives funding from the UK Government, responsibility for health and social care is devolved to the Welsh Government. Wales has its own healthcare system. NHS Wales is comprised of Local Health Boards, NHS Trusts and Public

Health Wales. Relevant offices and agencies such as the Office of the Chief Medical Officer and Care Inspectorate are specific to Wales.

6. This means that the key decisions made in Wales in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic were largely separate to and quite often different from those taken by the UK Government. Clearly, Wales has strong links with the UK Government and the other devolved Governments, and it will obviously be necessary in Module 1 to unravel the links between these Governments and the extent to which they influenced the Welsh Government, whether for good or bad.
7. In relation to preparedness, whilst the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011 concerned a *“UK-wide strategic approach to planning for and responding to the demands of an influenza pandemic”*<sup>1</sup> the Cabinet Office Guidance of November 2017 on Pandemic Flu Planning made absolutely clear that, *“devolved administrations are responsible for the major areas of pandemic influenza planning and response in their respective countries”* and that the Wales Resilience Forum chaired by the First Minister for Wales *“provides the mechanism for a national multi-agency overview of pandemic preparedness in Wales.”*<sup>2</sup>
8. In relation to Module 1 the BFJC also wish to highlight some other areas of concern that this Public Inquiry must scrutinise in relation to Wales. These include, for example:
  - a. the funding provided to Wales by the UK Government and whether the level of funding had an impact on the planning and preparedness in Wales for the Covid-19 pandemic;
  - b. intergovernmental political relations between Wales and the UK Government;
  - c. coordination between the UK Government and other devolved governments;
  - d. variation in standards in the approach to planning and preparation;
  - e. the capacity in NHS Wales for coping with and implementing infection control measures in the Welsh hospital estate, including segregation;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213717/dh\\_131040.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213717/dh_131040.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu#devolved-administrations>

- f. whether there was an understanding of and adequate resourcing for infection control measures in Welsh hospitals and Welsh care homes, including PPE stockpiling and distribution;
  - g. whether there was adequate or any planning in relation to post-death procedures to protect dignity and to support the Welsh bereaved in the event of a pandemic.
9. The BFJC look forward to making further submissions to the Public Inquiry after disclosure has been received and to assist the Chair in understanding how scope needs to be developed in respect of Module 1 for Wales. The BFJC note that the Listening Exercise is still in development and that further details will be provided in due course. The BFJC have offered their commitment to continue working with the Inquiry Team to assist in the development of the Listening Exercise. Submissions will be made where necessary on all the other matters raised in Counsel to the Inquiry's Note of 22 September 2022.

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**28 September 2022**