



UK Covid-19 Inquiry Newsletter

January 2023



UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry

The Independent public Inquiry to examine the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK

The independent Public Inquiry to examine the response to and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK

Welcome to our first newsletter. If you do not wish to continue receiving this, please opt-out using the link at the bottom of the page.

We will keep you up to date with:

- Inquiry news and progress
- Key dates and timetables
- Updates on the listening exercise

Message from the Chair of the Inquiry, Baroness Heather Hallett



Welcome to the first newsletter for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

I am determined to run this Inquiry openly, thoroughly, fairly and efficiently - bearing in mind the huge breadth of issues set out in our Terms of Reference.

When I was appointed Chair just over a year ago, I said that I would do my utmost to ensure the Inquiry answers as many questions as possible about the UK's response to the pandemic so that we can all learn lessons for the future. We are making good progress and have opened our first six investigations.

I also promised that I would ensure the Inquiry creates ways for people to tell us what happened to them during the pandemic and we have been discussing with interested groups the best ways in which we can do this. As a first step, we have recently launched a new part of our website on which people can share their experiences. Contributions to our 'listening exercise' will inform reports. The reports will form part of the evidence disclosed to core participants and used in our hearings. I will take this and other evidence into account when making findings and recommendations about the UK's response to the pandemic and its impact.

As we start the New Year, I thank everyone who supported the Inquiry in 2022 - including all those who contributed to our public consultation on the Terms of Reference, shared their experiences, feedback and ideas with us, or participated in the Inquiry's hearings.

This year, I shall begin hearing evidence. From that evidence and the stories people share with us, I hope to understand more about the preparedness of the UK for a pandemic, the response to it and how it has affected everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Update on the Inquiry's work

- Last spring, the Inquiry held a public consultation on our Terms of Reference, which set the scope for the Inquiry. We received more than 20,000 responses, which led to key issues such as the impact of the pandemic on children and mental health being included in the scope of our work.
- We have now opened six investigations; Module 1, into the UK's pandemic preparedness and resilience, Modules 2, 2A, 2B and 2C into core political and administrative decision making by the UK, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments and Module 3 into the impact of the pandemic on healthcare systems in the UK. The Inquiry will hold its first preliminary hearing for Module 3 on Tuesday 23 February.
- Future modules will consider issues including vaccines, therapeutics and antiviral treatments; the care sector; government procurement and PPE; testing; tracing; government business and financial responses; health inequalities; education, children and young persons; public services, and frontline key workers. As with Module 3, each module will investigate issues across the UK, including in the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- In 2022, we held four days of preliminary hearings for Modules 1, 2, 2A, 2B and 2C, and set out more detail for each module. Further preliminary hearings for these investigations will take place in February and March. [Find out more here.](#)
- So far, the Chair has awarded 93 organisations and individuals Core Participant status for Modules 1, 2, 2A, 2B and 2C, and is now reviewing applications for Module 3.
- The Inquiry will hold its first public hearings, where the Chair will hear evidence from witnesses in May 2023.
- We are in the process of securing a permanent hearings and administrative centre for the Inquiry and will update you in the coming weeks.
- The Inquiry has instructed its first four subject-matter specialists to provide independent expert opinion on pandemic planning, constitutional affairs and decision-making in government. Professor David Heymann will report on the epidemiology of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Professor Ailsa Henderson will examine inter-governmental decision-making between the UK Government and the devolved administrations. Professor Thomas Hale will analyse the effectiveness of the UK's decision-making in comparison to other countries. Alex Thomas will report on the decision-making structures of the UK Government in an emergency. We will continue to identify additional subject-matter experts as the Inquiry develops.
- We are working hard on developing a UK wide listening exercise so that people can share their experiences of the pandemic and inform the Inquiry's work. As well as informing Baroness Hallett's recommendations, the experiences will provide a record of the pandemic for future generations.



Sharing your experiences of the pandemic with the Inquiry

Our Terms of Reference require us to listen to and consider carefully the experiences of bereaved families and others who have suffered hardship or loss as a result of the pandemic.

In November, we launched [a new part of our website](#) which anyone can use to share their experiences of the pandemic directly with the Inquiry.

This is an important first step and we will be improving this part of the website between now and the spring. The current Share Your Experience online offering may not be right for everyone, and you can choose to wait until we have further developed what we are offering before sharing your experience. Thank you to all those who have already taken the time to share their experiences and feedback on the online system.

Over the coming months we shall make other ways available for people to tell us what happened to them.

Help us to shape the logo for the listening exercise

Over the past few months the Inquiry has worked with a range of organisations and groups representing those most affected by Covid to develop a name and logo for its listening exercise. We are pleased to announce that the listening exercise will now be known as: Every Story Matters.

The Every Story Matters logo will incorporate a series of words to capture the ethos of the listening exercise and show that everyone's experience of the pandemic matters. If you would like to nominate a first name or word to describe someone who meant a lot to you during the pandemic, to feature in the logo, please enter it [here](#) before midnight on 26 January. A selection of words will be chosen at random for inclusion in the logo, and we shall share the final logo in the next edition of the newsletter.

Further information

We understand updates from the Inquiry may have an emotional impact. We have provided a list of external organisations that can offer [support](#) if needed.

We have published a series of [FAQs](#) on our website to help explain the Inquiry's work.

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