



UK Covid-19 Inquiry Newsletter

June 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 June newsletter. In this issue we will cover:

- Inquiry news and progress
- Key dates and timetables
- Every Story Matters
- Commemorative tapestry

Message from the Deputy Secretary to the Inquiry



Hello, I am Sam Hartley, Deputy Secretary to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry. We are now a matter of days away from the start of public hearings for the Inquiry's first investigation into pre-pandemic resilience and preparedness for the pandemic (Module 1).

These hearings are when the Chair, Baroness Hallett, begins formally listening to evidence, examining the facts and investigating what happened in order to make findings and recommendations. We will do our utmost to ensure the Inquiry answers as many questions as possible about the UK's response to the pandemic.

13 June also marks the launch of our nationwide listening exercise, [Every Story Matters](#). We discuss this in more detail later in the newsletter. Every Story Matters is an opportunity for everyone in the UK to share their experiences of the pandemic. I cannot reinforce enough that every story really does matter and the more responses we have, the more we can ensure that the Inquiry's findings and recommendations will be informed by people's experiences. Please do participate via the [new form on our website](#) and share with members of your organisations to ensure that we hear how the pandemic affected those that you represent.

I am also pleased to provide a further update on the Inquiry's timetable. The Chair, Baroness Hallett, has set out plans to open three further investigations in 2023 and confirmed she aims to conclude public hearings by summer 2026.

We are launching:

- Module 4 this month: vaccines
- Module 5 in October: government procurement across the UK
- Module 6 in December: care sector

There is more information about the new investigations in the [news story on our website](#).

Thank you for reading and I look forward to you joining us for our public hearings from 13 June, whether in person or online. You can find out more information about [how to follow the hearings on our website](#).

Every Story Matters: We have made it easier to share your experience



The UK Covid-19 Inquiry is pleased to announce the launch of its new and improved [Share Your Experience online form](#) to make it easier for people to share their stories with the Inquiry.

Every Story Matters provides an opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England to tell the UK Covid-19 Inquiry about their experiences of the pandemic.

Every story shared with us will be used to shape the Inquiry's investigations by adding insight about the human impact of the pandemic on the UK population.

The new form has been designed to be as short and simple as possible, following feedback from people across the UK. For those who cannot use the website form, there will be paper versions available. Later this year we plan to open a phone line to help people who wish to share their stories but find it harder to do so online. We will offer information about how to share your experience in a range of accessible formats, including British Sign Language, video, Easy Read, braille and other languages. We will also be able to receive submissions in other languages, including over the phone via our 'language line'. These accessible formats will be launched later this year and paper versions of the form are available on request by emailing contact@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.

Every Story Matters will launch with a public information campaign on 13 June to help reach the widest possible range of people across the UK. You will see advertising in the press, online and on the roadside, in city centres and in local communities. You will also hear adverts on the radio during this time encouraging you to share your experience.

The scale of the pandemic was unprecedented, but no one's story is the same. Please help us understand the full picture by sharing your story. [Read the Every Story Matters news story on our website for more information](#) and you can also [access the online form via the website](#).

You can [watch a video on our website](#) of the Chair, Baroness Hallett, explaining why sharing your experience via Every Story Matters is vital to the Inquiry. The Chair makes clear that by sharing the personal impact the pandemic had on you, your life and your loved ones, you can help her and the Inquiry's legal team to shape the Inquiry's recommendations so that the UK is better prepared in the future.

The start of Module 1 public hearings - how the legal team have been preparing

The legal teams at the Inquiry and for the Core Participants have been working hard to prepare for public hearings for the [Inquiry's first investigation](#) on 13 June. Here are some facts and figures about what has happened to get to this point:

- The Inquiry has made 212 formal requests for evidence from individuals and organisations as part of our first investigation into pandemic preparedness. 123 separate information providers have submitted evidence for our first investigation.
- In response to this, over 6,400 documents of evidence provided to the Inquiry have been reviewed and shared with Core Participants. Each document received is carefully reviewed by the Inquiry legal team and is managed through a process involving several stages before disclosure to Core Participants. This process exists to ensure that both the Inquiry and all Core Participants are prepared for the start of public hearings.
- 27 Core Participants are involved in our first investigation. A 'Core Participant' is an individual or organisation that has a formal role in the legal proceedings, including having prior access to evidence, making statements at hearings and suggesting lines of enquiry.
- Six weeks of hearings are planned for Module 1, which focuses on the structures in the UK dealing with civil emergencies and planning and preparedness. Module 1 is concerned with whether the structures and procedures in the UK were ready to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred.
- Around 70 witnesses will give evidence during Module 1. Counsel to the Inquiry will conduct the questioning, although Core Participants' legal teams will have the opportunity to question some of the witnesses directly. We have published [a copy of our witness timetable for the first week of hearings on our website](#).

Commemorative tapestry

Renowned art curator Ekow Eshun has been appointed to oversee the co-creation of a commemorative tapestry for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry that will capture the experiences and emotions of people across the UK during the pandemic. Ekow is Chairman of the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group, overseeing one of the UK's foremost public art programmes.

Ekow will curate the tapestry, which will feature panels produced by different artists over the coming months. The Inquiry is working with a range of organisations and individuals across the UK to identify stories to inspire each panel.

The first panels will be unveiled at the public hearings on 13 June.

Thank you to those organisations and individuals who have been working with community artists across the UK to capture their experiences of Covid-19 and the pandemic in the tapestry. [You can read the full news story about our commemorative tapestry on our website](#).

What is a public hearing?

As we head into the public hearings we recognise that members of the public might be unsure as to what they can expect to happen during the legal proceedings. [There is a page on the Inquiry website](#) which explains what a hearing is, how they are structured and guidance on how to watch, whether in

person or online.

How can I watch the hearings?

Our hearings will be live-streamed on our [YouTube channel](#), which can be found via the UK Covid-19 Inquiry website during the hearings and afterwards.

We understand that a number of individuals and organisations may want to set up screenings of the Inquiry's hearings once these are underway, to follow hearings with others. We have [published a guide on the Inquiry website](#) which provides advice on how to do this.

Transcripts will also be placed on the Inquiry website at the end of each day, [on our documents page](#), where previous transcripts can also be accessed.

More information about Dorland House

Members of the public are welcome to watch the hearings in progress from the centre. There are 41 seats available in the public gallery, plus a further 18 in the separate viewing room, on a first come, first served basis. Up to 8 seats can be reserved in advance by Core Participants via their legal representatives for those who are travelling long distances or have accessibility requirements. Individuals who meet these criteria should discuss reserving a seat with their legal teams if they want to attend.

We will be publishing a guide to our hearings centre, Dorland House, Paddington, on the Inquiry website soon. This will include guidance on its location and reaching the centre via public transport, accessibility, facilities on offer and the procedures that will be in place to ensure the safe and smooth running of the hearings. While Dorland House will host the London-based hearings, hearings for Modules 2A (Scotland), 2B (Wales) and 2C (Northern Ireland) will take place in the devolved nations. We will share more information on this in the next few months.

Sign up for weekly updates about the hearings

If you would like to receive weekly email updates about the hearings from the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, you can sign up via our [hearing updates registration form](#). These updates will be a summary of the witnesses who attended hearings that week and the topics discussed.

Please note that this email will be sent in addition to the newsletter and registering via this form will not affect your subscription to the Inquiry 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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