



UK Covid-19 Inquiry Newsletter

October 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 October newsletter. In this issue we will cover:

- Every Story Matters events (Autumn schedule)
- Bereaved forum
- Evidence processing update
- Module 2 round-up
- How to reserve seats at Dorland House

Message from Baroness Hallett, Chair of the Inquiry



Welcome to the October newsletter, which is arriving in your inbox as we begin the second part of [Module 2 hearings](#). The focus of [Module 2](#) is on core political and administrative governance and key decision making in the UK - during the time when the pandemic was at its worst and caused so much suffering.

We began this [second investigation](#), by hearing from some bereaved individuals and people living with Long Covid in our impact film (which can be watched on [YouTube](#) but please note that it contains upsetting material). I am extremely grateful to those who took part. I know how difficult it will have been for them to do so on camera. They have

played an important role in ensuring that our hearings are grounded in the human impact of the pandemic.

When I was appointed Chair 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. Hearing the experiences of some of those who have suffered, and continue to suffer so much, underlines the urgency of this Inquiry's investigations and why it is so important that we learn the lessons of the pandemic so that the country is better prepared in the future.

I appreciate that many of those who lost loved ones or experienced hardship and suffering would welcome the opportunity to provide evidence as a witness during our public hearings. We will hear from some of them during our future modules. Although the scale of the suffering means that it is not possible for me to call everyone who wishes to give evidence as witnesses in our hearings, there is a way for everyone in the UK to share their experiences of the pandemic with the Inquiry through [Every Story Matters](#).

That is why I attended one of our Every Story Matters events in Birmingham last week, where I had the opportunity to meet a small group of people from the West Midlands who lost a loved one during the pandemic. I would like to thank those individuals who took the time to meet with me, who bravely shared their stories and told me what they think can be learned. Not only will your stories, and all of the experiences shared with Every Story Matters, help to shape my recommendations through the Every Story Matters reports but they will stay with me throughout the Inquiry.

By sharing your experience in these ways, at events, or online on our website, you are helping the Inquiry to understand the full impact of the pandemic.

We share more information about the Inquiry's Every Story Matters events later in the newsletter. You can [read more about how to share your experience, including how we are making this as accessible as possible, on our website](#).

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the Inquiry's work. I look forward to seeing many of you during the course of the Inquiry, whether at our public hearings in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, or at one of our future Every Story Matters events across the UK.

Every Story Matters events Autumn 2023

Visited

Visited

Visited

15th - 16th Sep - Liverpool

16th - 17th Sep - Belfast

17th - 18th Sep - Birmingham

15th Nov - Carlisle

17th Nov - Wrexham

27th - 28th Nov - Exeter

29th - 30th Nov - Newham

Every
Story
Matters

Every Story Matters events are a way of sharing your story with the Inquiry in person. Some of these events are targeted for specific groups of people affected by the pandemic, while others are

open to the general public.

We have been busy planning for the next phase of these events, having begun with the Trades Union Congress in Liverpool from 10-13 September and the Northern Ireland Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Conference in Belfast on 30 September. We also held an event in Birmingham on 25 October, where Baroness Hallett and Inquiry Secretary Ben Connah met people from the locality, some of those who had lost a loved one, to listen and learn about their pandemic experiences.

All are welcome at the following upcoming public events, which will be attended by members of the Inquiry team. Although Baroness Hallett will not be able to attend all events, she will join selected events from time to time.

Carlisle

- Wednesday 15 November 9.30am-5.30pm at [The Lanes Shopping Centre, Carlisle](#)

Wrexham

- Friday 17 November 11am-5pm at [Llyfrgell Wrecsam/Wrexham Library](#)

Exeter

- Monday 27 November 3pm-8pm at the [Exeter Community Centre](#)
- Tuesday 28 November (venue and further details TBC)

Newham

- Wednesday 29 November-Thursday 30 November (venue and further details TBC)

We will also be attending a Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru event in Ruthin/Rhuthun to listen to bereaved individuals in North Wales on 18 November. We will be returning to Birmingham from 22-24 November to listen to the experiences of healthcare workers at the British Geriatrics Society Conference.

If you're in one of the areas we are visiting please join us and help us understand how the pandemic affected you. We want to hear about your experiences to help inform our recommendations to make things better in the future.

We will share more information about these and other upcoming events (which will be taking place at locations across the UK) on the [Every Story Matters events page of our website](#), on our [Facebook page](#) and in future newsletters.

Can we speak to those you represent?

We are planning to hold smaller targeted listening events in Wrexham, Carlisle, Exeter and Newham with health and social care workers, carers and people living in care homes. If you can help us to reach these groups of people in Wrexham, Carlisle, Newham and Exeter please let us know by contacting engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.

If you are holding an event or meeting over the next year anywhere in the UK where you are bringing together those impacted by the pandemic and would like us to come along, please get in touch by emailing engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.



Left: Inquiry Secretary Ben Connah with colleagues at our Birmingham event; right: our Every Story Matters stand at the Trades Union Congress in Liverpool.

Bereaved forum

The Inquiry is setting up a bereaved forum, open to anyone who lost a loved one during 2020-22.

The people on the forum will provide valuable insight based on their own personal experiences to help inform the Inquiry's work. Its advice will be considered alongside advice from our other forums and engagement with interested organisations representing those most impacted by the pandemic.

Those on the bereaved forum will receive a regular email detailing opportunities to provide the Inquiry with advice on our Every Story Matters and commemoration work.

If you are interested in joining the forum mailing list, please email engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.

Update on processing evidence

Following on from our feature on evidence processing in the September newsletter, we are providing an update on documents disclosed to Core Participants (CPs) to date. All evidence goes through several stages before being disclosed to CPs, with input provided by CPs being used to develop the lines of questioning taken by the Counsel to the Inquiry.

To date, the Inquiry has disclosed:

	Documents	Pages
Module 1	18,945	302,109
Module 2	50,563	429,924
Modules 2A , 2B and 2C	16,255	202,723

Document processing is continuing so these figures will rise.

Module 2 round-up

- [Public hearings for Module 2: Core UK decision making and political governance](#) began on Tuesday 3 October, with the first phase of these hearings concluding on Thursday 19 October.

- The second phase of Module 2 hearings will run from Monday 30 October until Thursday 9 November.
- The third phase of Module 2 hearings will begin on Monday 20 November, running to Thursday 14 December.

All hearings are streamed live on our [YouTube channel](#), where you can also watch recordings of all past hearings.

Over the course of the Inquiry's investigation a number of witnesses attended to give oral evidence in addition to the written statements provided. Names of all the witnesses to date can be viewed on the [Module 2 public hearings timetable page on the Inquiry website](#).

You can find transcripts of all our hearings on the documents page of the website, where evidence used in hearings by the Inquiry is also uploaded.

As with all of the Inquiry's investigations, Baroness Hallett will publish a report of her findings and recommendations following the conclusion of the module. This means that we will not need to wait until the end of the Inquiry to know what lessons can be learned for the future.

Throughout Module 1 and Module 2 hearings we have been issuing weekly updates about the hearings. These are separate emails from the newsletter. If you are not already on our mailing list for these updates and would like to receive them in the future, you can sign up via the [newsletter page of our website](#).

The next public hearings following the conclusion of Module 2 will be those for [Module 2A: Core UK decision making and political governance in Scotland](#). These will begin on Tuesday 16 January 2024 in Edinburgh.

Inquiry opens its fifth investigation: Procurement across the UK

The Inquiry opened [Module 5, which will examine Procurement across the UK in relation to the government's response to Covid-19](#), on Tuesday 24 October. Evidence hearings for this module are scheduled for early 2025. The Core Participant application window is open until 17 November 2023. [You can read more about the Module 5 launch in the news story on our website](#).

Preliminary hearings

- The third preliminary hearing for [Module 2A: Core UK decision making and political governance in Scotland](#) took place on Thursday 26 October.
- The third preliminary hearing for [Module 2B: Core UK decision making and political governance in Wales](#) will take place on Thursday 16 November.
- The third preliminary hearing for [Module 2C: Core UK decision making and political governance in Northern Ireland](#) will take place on Tuesday 12 December.

Reserving a seat at the hearing centre

Our hearing centre, Dorland House in Paddington, London has a public viewing gallery which comprises 41 seats, as well as a separate viewing room where members of the public can view the hearings on screens via live stream.

In response to feedback from a number of organisations, we have introduced a new system for reserving seats at Dorland House. This is done via a reservation form which is available for anyone to use to reserve a seat in the public gallery. The reservation form goes live on our website every Monday during the public hearings, for the following week. The majority of the seats in the public viewing gallery (within the hearing room) are available for reservation. The remaining seats in the hearing room and all seats in the viewing room are available on a 'first come, first served' basis, in person, on the day of the hearing.

You can access the form via the [‘Public hearings’ page of our website](#), where you can also find [further guidance about reserving seats](#).

Share your feedback about our newsletter

We are very keen to know how useful this newsletter is and how it can be improved and would encourage anybody who has not already done so to fill out this [anonymous feedback form](#), which consists of a few multiple choice questions and should take **no more than a minute of your time to complete**.

Thank you to everybody who submitted feedback in response to our request in the last issue. The vast majority of respondents told us that the newsletter increases their understanding of the Inquiry’s work and that they want us to continue sending it out.

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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