



## UK Covid-19 Inquiry Newsletter

December 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 December newsletter. In this issue we will cover:

- Upcoming investigations
- Application window for Care Sector Core Participants now open
- Every Story Matters events (February schedule)
- Every Story Matters Easy Read digital form
- Module 2 round-up
- Bereaved forum

### Message from Ben Connah, Secretary to the Inquiry



Welcome to the December newsletter, which is reaching you as we approach the end of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry's [second investigation into core UK decision making and political governance](#). This marks an important milestone in the progress of the Inquiry and we share some information about Module 2 and what is next for the Inquiry later in the newsletter.

Over the past nine weeks the Inquiry has heard evidence from many of those who were at the centre of the UK's government during the pandemic and from some of those who were affected by Covid.

I want to thank those of you who have attended the hearing centre, taken part in our proceedings or watched online. Whether Covid is a memory or you are still living with the consequences, this time of year can be especially difficult so I would like to remind everyone that we have [support organisations listed on the website if you need someone to talk to](#).

December also presents an opportunity for me to update on our Every Story Matters events as we pause them for the Christmas break. We have taken the Inquiry on tour in recent weeks, speaking to people in Carlisle, Wrexham, Newham, Exeter and Birmingham. We have spoken to hundreds of people face-to-face and it has been a humbling experience. Many people who came to share their stories were doing so for the first time. In Exeter I talked to people living with Long Covid about how the pandemic continues to affect their lives and in Birmingham the Chair, Baroness Hallett, and I met a small number of those who have been bereaved by Covid. I would urge everyone to consider telling us their stories via [Every Story Matters](#). The pandemic affected people differently in different places and the stories shared will help to shape the recommendations made by the Inquiry's Chair.

In January and early February we will be in Edinburgh for our [Module 2A](#) public hearings, which are about decision making and political governance in Scotland. I look forward to seeing you at these hearings and of course many more of you will continue to watch online.

### **Venues and timings for Module 2A hearings**

Public hearings for [Module 2A - core UK decision making and political governance \(Scotland\)](#) will begin on 16 January at the [Edinburgh International Conference Centre](#). This module will address the issues investigated at a UK-wide level during Module 2 from a Scottish perspective.

As with the hearings that have been taking place in our London hearing centre, there will be a seating reservation system in place. More information can be found in the [guidance document](#) and [Public Hearings page of our website](#). The booking form will go live every Monday at 12pm for the following week.

Module 2A will be followed by Modules [2B](#) and [2C](#), which will take place in Cardiff and Belfast respectively and will investigate issues from Welsh and Northern Irish perspectives. [More information about the venues and dates for these modules can be found in the news story on our website](#).

### **Applications open for care sector Core Participants**

The Core Participant application window for Module 6, which is the Inquiry's upcoming investigation into the care sector, opened on 12 December 2023 and lasts until Friday 19 January 2024. A 'Core Participant' is a person, institution or organisation that has a specific interest in the work of the Inquiry, and has a formal role defined by legislation. Core Participants have special rights in the Inquiry process. These include receiving documentation, being represented and making legal submissions, suggesting questions and receiving advance notice of the Inquiry's report. You do not need to be a Core Participant to provide evidence to the Inquiry.

[Further information about Module 6 can be found on our website](#). Guidance on how to apply to be a Core Participant [can be found in the protocol published on the website](#).

### **Every Story Matters events upcoming locations**

As well as visiting locations in Wales and England this autumn to talk to members of the public about their experiences of the pandemic and how they can share their story with the Inquiry, we have also worked with charities and support groups to organise online events for people to share their pandemic experiences.



*Left: Images from our event at Llyfrgell Wrexam/Wrexham Library*

*Above: promoting Every Story Matters at Stratford Shopping Centre, Newham, London*

We are pleased to announce that in February 2024 we are planning to visit the following locations, however these may be subject to change based on venue availability.

- Glasgow/Paisley
- Enniskillen
- Derry/Londonderry
- Stockton-on-Tees
- Bradford

If you're based in or near one of these locations please get in touch with us at [engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk). If you are able to help raise awareness of our events locally or are holding an event or meeting where we could speak to your group, then we want to hear from you.

Glasgow/Paisley  
Enniskillen  
Derry/Londonderry  
Stockton-on-Tees  
Bradford



Venue details, locations and dates, about these and other upcoming events (which will be taking place at locations across the UK) can be found on the [Every Story Matters events page](#) of our website, on our [Facebook page](#) and in future newsletters.

Please note that these are the locations for February and we will be coming to more places across the UK later in 2024. More information about these will be shared via the newsletter and [on our website](#) as soon as we have confirmed details.

### **Easy Read Every Story Matters web form**

As part of the Inquiry's commitment to accessibility, we have launched a new, fully interactive [web form for Every Story Matters in Easy Read](#) format. Easy Read forms are usually only offered in printed or PDF formats, which can be difficult for some users of Easy Read documents to complete. This fully interactive web form plays a significant role in making Every Story Matters accessible to as many people as possible. We look forward to hearing from more users of the Easy Read format about their experiences of the pandemic through this important new channel.

Further information about Every Story Matters and the formats available (including printable paper versions of our Easy Read form) [can be found on our website](#). If you require another format, please let us know what you need by emailing [contact@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:contact@covid19.public-inquiry.uk).

### **Module 2 round-up**

Public hearings for the Inquiry's [second investigation into core UK decision making and political governance](#) will end on Thursday 14 December. The hearing recordings and transcripts can be accessed via the [Module 2 hearings page of our website](#).

Over the course of 9 weeks of hearings, the Inquiry heard evidence from 76 witnesses in addition to the written statements previously submitted. Names of all the witnesses can be viewed on the [Module 2 public hearings timetable page on the Inquiry website](#).



The Chair, Baroness Hallett, is beginning work on a report which will detail her findings and recommendations. 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](#).

### **Bereaved forum**

The Inquiry has set up a bereaved forum, open to anyone who lost a loved one during the pandemic between 2020-22.

The people on the forum provide valuable insight based on their own personal experiences to provide advice on Every Story Matters and the Inquiry's approach to commemoration. 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](mailto:engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk).

## How to follow our 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. 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.

With the exception of Modules 2A, 2B and 2C, hearings are held at Dorland House, Paddington, London, W2 6BU ([map](#)). They are open to the public to attend - there are 41 seats available in the public gallery in the hearing room, in addition to a number of seating options available throughout the Inquiry's London hearing centre. [We have recently introduced a new process for reserving seats, more information about this can be found on our website](#). The reservation form opens every Monday at 12pm to reserve seats for the following week.

Emotional support services will be available to those attending the hearings, with staff from Hestia, our emotional support partner, available daily. [Find out more about Hestia on their website](#).

## 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.

If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, you can opt out by clicking the unsubscribe button below.

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