



Irrelevant & Sensitive

Aamer Anwar  
Aamer Anwar & Co

By email only to: [Caoimhe@aameranwar.com](mailto:Caoimhe@aameranwar.com)

Your ref: AAFAMI1/1

9 December 2021

Dear Aamer

## Forthcoming Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry

Thank you for your letter.

I have been grateful for the willingness of the families representing Scottish Branch COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice to take time, on a number of occasions, to share with me their perspectives on the Scottish inquiry into the handling of the pandemic. I have taken careful note of the families' views and experiences and, in addition to the written input provided by the group during the engagement carried out earlier in the autumn, these have been important in consideration of the planned terms of reference for the inquiry.

As you note, Ministers have made a commitment to establish the inquiry before the end of this year. I know that bereaved families have welcomed that intention. I am determined that we meet our commitment and that we should announce the arrangements for the inquiry in a way that allows for proper public and parliamentary scrutiny. At the same time I remain keen that there is an opportunity to hear further views of families. You will also be aware that the Inquiries Act places a requirement on Ministers to consult the chair of the inquiry on the terms of reference.

I appreciate the concerns you express about the ability of families to come to St Andrew's House at short notice to view a copy of the scope of the inquiry. The requirement on me to ensure that information is announced first in Parliament means however that I am not able to release a copy by email. I understand that my officials have also offered an alternative of an online meeting in which they would be able to explain the proposed scope and discuss it with families.

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I am sorry that the need to meet all these commitments and requirements means that time is shorter than I would have wished for further discussion. However, I will continue to give the most careful consideration to any further views presented by the families at this stage of the discussions. As at earlier stages of this process, I have the greatest respect for bereaved families' views on the scope of the inquiry, and reiterate my hope that it will be possible to agree arrangements allowing me to receive their further views.

I am copying this letter to Humza Yousaf MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

**Personal Data**

**JOHN SWINNEY**

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