



Message from the Chair of the Inquiry



Welcome to the December newsletter. Many of you will have been following our [Module 3 hearings into healthcare systems during the pandemic](#), which ended on 28 November. I would like to thank everybody who attended the hearing centre or watched these hearings [via our YouTube channel](#). While the pandemic may be a memory for some, I am acutely aware that many of you are still living with its consequences.

A huge amount of evidence was gathered as part of the investigation for the M3 module and I heard a selection of it at the hearings. We share a summary of the topics covered in the oral evidence in this newsletter. Drafting of the report based on the evidence (both the written and the oral evidence) has already begun.

The hearings in [Module 4 \(Vaccines and Therapeutics\)](#) begin on 14 January 2025. As with previous investigations you can watch these hearings in person at our hearing centre, Dorland House, or remotely. We will publish our second [Every Story Matters record](#), which will detail people's experiences of vaccines and therapeutics during the pandemic. We will share more information about the record in the next newsletter.

Every Story Matters is your opportunity to share your experience of the pandemic with the Inquiry. All stories inform our records and are formally entered into evidence and referred to by Counsel to the Inquiry as they question witnesses. I also make use of these records as I write my findings and recommendations. You can share your story online or using one of several accessible methods - please see our [Every Story Matters website](#) for more information.

You can also attend one of our [Every Story Matters events](#) that take place across the UK. In February, our team will be in Manchester, Bristol and Swansea to hear people's stories in person. We share information about dates and venues in this newsletter.

As we end the year I want to thank everyone who has supported the work of the Inquiry in 2024. The new year will be an incredibly busy period for the Inquiry with more than 25 weeks of public hearings. I look forward to seeing some of you in person for these hearings in the new year.

What we heard in final hearings for our Module 3 healthcare investigation

Hearings for our [Module 3 investigation into healthcare systems across the UK](#) have now completed. We heard from over 90 witnesses, whose names can be found on the [Module 3 hearings timetable published on our website](#).



Topics covered in the final weeks of these hearings included:

- Decision-making and leadership within the Department of Health (Northern Ireland), Department of Health and Social Care (Scotland), Department of Health and Social Services (Wales) and Department of Health and Social Care (UK).
- The impact on existing inequalities of measures taken to control the spread of Covid-19.
- The impact on staff working in the healthcare system and support provided to them during the pandemic in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.
- The preparedness of healthcare systems to respond to future pandemics.
- Decisions taken on healthcare provision and treatments including the use of do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation instructions (DNACPRs) and the extent of any consultation with the patients or their families.
- Visiting restrictions
- Long Covid
- The impact of deaths of Covid-19 patients in healthcare settings, on their families and loved ones.

Public hearings for Module 3 began with an impact film showing accounts from people from across the UK with experience of healthcare and or from people working in a healthcare setting during the pandemic. All impact films, including the two that were shown during Module 3 hearings, can be accessed via our [commemoration page](#). Please note that the films contain material you may find distressing.

You can also watch all hearings for this module on our [YouTube channel](#).

Watching our Module 4 hearings

Public hearings for the Inquiry's investigation into [Vaccines and Therapeutics \(Module 4\)](#) will run from Tuesday 14 to Friday 31 January at our London hearing centre, Dorland House.

These hearings will investigate:

- The development, procurement, manufacture and approval of vaccines during the pandemic.
- The development, trials and steps taken to enable the use of new therapeutics and repurposed medications during the pandemic.
- Vaccine delivery across the UK.
- Barriers to vaccine uptake.
- Vaccine safety issues.
- Whether any reforms to the UK Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme are necessary.

As with all our public hearings, 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's hearings.



Hearings will be livestreamed on the [Inquiry's YouTube channel](#), subject to a three minute delay. All livestreams are available to watch later.

Our hearings timetable will be published on our website on each Thursday for the week ahead. A link to the timetable will be available on Thursday 9 January from the [Module 4 hearings page](#).

We send out weekly hearing updates following each week of hearings, summarising the key topics and witnesses who appeared. You can sign up for these from the [newsletter page of the website](#) if you have not already done so.

Update on other Inquiry investigations

A preliminary hearing for our Module 5 investigation into procurement during the pandemic took place on Wednesday 11 December. The [transcript for this hearing can be found on our website](#) and the [recording is on our YouTube channel](#).

Every Story Matters public events

Every Story Matters events are a way of sharing your pandemic experiences with the Inquiry in person. We hold these events to reach a range of communities in towns and cities across the UK to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to find out about Every Story Matters and share their experience with the Inquiry.

The final phase of public events begins in February 2025. Over the last 12 months the Inquiry has held 17 events, visited all four nations and every region of the UK and spoken to just over 9000 people. We look forward to seeing more of you at our events in 2025. Dates and locations are as follows:

Date	Location	Venue	Live Event Timings
6th and 7th February 2025	Manchester	The Rates Hall in Manchester Town Hall Extension (due to renovations this will be accessed via Manchester Central Library) St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD	10.30am - 5.30pm



11th and 12th February 2025	Bristol	The Galleries, 25 Union Gallery, Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3XD	10.30am - 5.30pm
14th and 15th February 2025	Swansea	LC2 Oystermouth Rd, Maritime Quarter, Swansea SA1 3ST	11am - 7pm

[You can find more information about our events on our website.](#)

We also attend events in coordination with organisations representing particularly impacted groups. Over the course of the past month we have attended the Learning Disability Wales Conference in Swansea, the National Association of Headteachers Executive Council in Birmingham and the Violence Against Women and Girls Conference and Institute of Health Visiting Leadership Conference in London. At each of these events we spoke to delegates about the Inquiry and how they could share their pandemic experiences with the Inquiry. We are very grateful to these organisations and the delegates who spoke with us. If your organisation is running an event and would like us to come and speak to your audiences, please email engagement@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.



Left to right: Members of Inquiry team encouraging people to share their experience via Every Story Matters at the Learning Disability Wales Conference, Violence Against Women and Girls Conference and Institute of Health Visiting Leadership Conference

How the Inquiry is working with organisations to raise awareness of Every Story Matters

Ahead of the public hearings for [Module 8, which will investigate the impact of the pandemic on children and young people](#) and [Module 9, which will look at the economic response to the pandemic](#), we are encouraging groups including parents and those who suffered financially during the pandemic to share their experiences with us through [Every Story Matters](#). We have partnered with a number of organisations to share blog posts and information on their websites:



- [Mumsnet](#): Lizzie Kumaria, Head of Every Story Matters at the Inquiry, has written about her experiences of parenting during the pandemic.
- [Royal College of Nursing](#): Claire Sutton, a nurse, shares her experiences of undergoing treatment for a brain tumour during the pandemic.
- Money Saving Expert featured Every Story Matters as their campaign of the week at the end of November.



Above: a social media post by Money Saving Expert encouraging participation in Every Story Matters

Bereaved forum

Did you lose a loved one during the pandemic? Do you want to get more involved in the Inquiry's work?

The Inquiry hosts a 'bereaved forum' - which is a group of people who lost loved ones during the pandemic, who are consulted on aspects of our work. Forum participants provide their advice based on their personal experiences to inform the Inquiry's approach to aspects of its work, for example its support and safeguarding strategy, its online presence, Every Story Matters and commemoration.

The bereaved forum is open to anyone who lost a loved one during the pandemic between 2020 and 2022.

Those on the bereaved forum will receive regular emails detailing opportunities to provide the Inquiry with advice on relevant work.



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

If you need to talk to someone about losing a loved one then you can contact our emotional support provider, Hestia, by calling 0800 2465617 or emailing covid19inquiry.support@hestia.org. More information is [available on our website](#).