



IN THE UK COVID-19 PUBLIC INQUIRY

MODULE 4

WRITTEN OPENING SUBMISSIONS FOR SCOTTISH COVID BEREAVED

I appear as instructed by Aamer Anwar and Company on behalf of the Scottish Covid Bereaved.

The Scottish Covid Bereaved are, once again, grateful to have a part to play in this module. Modules 4 and 5 are critical in understanding what happened and how we can learn to better protect ourselves against Disease X when to the United Kingdom. In that regard the Scottish Covid Bereaved have provided a detailed statement of their experience in relation to the vaccine.

There are a number of questions the Scottish Covid Bereaved have flagged up about vaccines and between this module and the next, we hope to be able to flag these issues for the Inquiry to consider:

1. What were the “barriers” to enable the rapid development and production of the vaccines to take place were removed and what changes to systems and processes have been put in place since?
2. How the vaccine was rolled out in Scotland, including assessment of who was a key worker and who was not.
3. Was there disorganisation and a lack of consistency which may have led to vulnerable people not receiving the vaccine in time to save their lives
4. What lessons can be learned from the roll out – did we properly protect the most vulnerable by making sure they had priority access to vaccines when needed – especially those who had contact with hospitals and care homes, given what was known about hospital acquired infection
5. Was proper consideration given to the fact that a large part of Scotland is rural and island ; that asking people to attend individually for vaccines may not have been the best methodology – and vaccinating families might have assisted with uptake and minimise financial implication of long travel to get to vaccine appointments.
6. Was vaccine hesitancy properly addressed – was sufficient consideration given to meeting misinformation and challenging disinformation, debunking theories which had not evidential basis, particularly on social media?

7. Was sufficient information given to people, particularly the vulnerable about the effects of the vaccine?
8. What if any flexibility was given to the use of vaccines, some board areas had been given the flexibility to administer excess vaccines as boosters but said this had not happened in all areas leading to vaccines being discarded that could have been used to
9. what 'barriers' were removed and by whom in order to enable the rapid development and production of the vaccines to take place and what changes to systems and processes have been put in place since that time
10. In relation to procurement and distribution, what happened to cause the UK Government to order 100 million covid 19 vaccines from a Valneva, a French company in Lothian and then to cancel that contract, causing the Govt to require to pay damages to that company?
11. Is Scotland ready to implement disease now for disease "x" and if not, what do we need to do to prepare for it?

Behind these questions are people, families, who have lost loved ones and want answers. These answers will not help their loved ones, but answers will ensure that families in the future may be better protected from loss of their loved ones, our loved ones. We would urge two things : firstly that those who come to give evidence before this Inquiry do it understanding that their answers ought to be given truthfully and in a straightforward manner, without agenda, Secondly, that the press who in certain areas have been critical, give proper consideration to how that unwarranted criticism plays into disinformation about covid, and could undermine critical confidence in the recommendation process. As we said in Module 1 : an attack on the work of this inquiry is an attack on the families of those who lost loved ones in the SCB group, and doubtless further afield.

As ever we approach this module keen to help the Inquiry come to a view about the best recommendations possible to ensure any and all lessons that can be learned so that disease X meets a population ready to roll out efficiently and fairly.

We look forward to playing a part in ensuring that the important and relevant questions are asked of our experts, our politicians and our scientists to help formulate effective recommendations for the Chair to consider.

These are the submissions of the Scottish Covid Bereaved.

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