



Dorland House Public User Guide

April 2025

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UK Covid-19 Inquiry's London hearing centre

Welcome to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry's guide to its London hearing centre. This document is designed to help you get to and use the hearing centre. It will run you through the different areas within the building, its facilities and some of the processes and policies in place.

This guide is designed to help you find out where the hearing centre is, how to get there and what to expect when you arrive.

The UK COVID-19 Inquiry's London hearing centre is based in Dorland House, which is a Grade II listed building in Paddington, London W2. It is located around the corner from the new Elizabeth Line entrance at Paddington Station.

Dorland House has two entrances:

- **Public Entrance** (open during public hearings days only) - [121 Westbourne Terrace](#) - the public entrance to Dorland House is located in Westbourne Terrace near the junction with Bishop's Bridge Road.
- **Step-Free Entrance** - [13 Bishop's Bridge Road](#) - a step free entrance is located at 13 Bishop's Bridge Road. Wheelchair users and those who require assistance to enter the building should use this entrance

Opening hours during hearing days

Monday - Hearings start at 10.30am and doors at the building open to visitors an hour before the Hearing begins.

Tuesday - Thursday

09:00 am - Building opens to visitors an hour before the hearing begins

09.30 am - Hearing room doors open thirty minutes before the hearing begins

10.00 am - Hearings due to start

16:15 pm - Hearing due to finish for day

16:30 pm - Hearing room closes fifteen minutes after the hearing finishes

17:00 pm - Building closes to visitors thirty minutes after the hearing finishes

Hearings start and end times are occasionally subject to change due to scheduling requirements. Please check our [website](#) and [twitter](#) for updates.

What does Dorland House look like?

121 Westbourne Terrace



13 Bishop's Bridge Road



How do I get to the hearing centre?

Travelling to the hearing centre and transport links

The hearing centre in Dorland House is located in Paddington, an area in west London. It is a well connected area by tube, bus and national rail services locally, regionally and nationally. It has good links from all mainline stations in London.

Click [here](#) to find further details around transport to Dorland House and use Transport For London's journey planner.

Nearby Stations	Lines Available	Distance from DH
Paddington Railway Station	Elizabeth Line	Approx. 7 Mins Walk
	GWR	
	Heathrow Express	
Paddington Underground Station	Bakerloo	Approx. 9 Mins Walk
	Circle	
	District	
	Hammersmith & City	

Travelling by bus

If you are travelling by bus, the following bus routes stop at the north of the building - Bishop's Bridge Road M (Bishop's Bridge Road / Westbourne Terrace - eastbound) and Bus Stop R (Westbourne Terrace - westbound).

Bus Route	Start Point	End Point
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Accessibility via public transport

The hearing centre in Dorland House is accessible via step-free access from the following London Underground stations:

- Circle and Hammersmith & City lines lift (towards Edgware Road only)
- Elizabeth line lift

Buses can also provide step free access to the street level.

Assisted travel is available for mainline rail services, buses and trams. This is commonly available through an online booking form but can also be made via phone. Requests are usually required no less than 24 hours in advance via the Passenger Assist website or by calling 0343 222 2000, open seven days a week, between 8am and 8pm.

Disabled Persons Protection Policies (DPPPs) are available at the [Transport for London website](#)

Advice and assistance on accessible travel throughout London is also available through the charity Transport for All who run a dedicated helpline Monday to Friday, 1000 to 1300 and 1400 to 1700 on 020 7737 2339, or 07984 755 894 for text phone.

Facilities nearby

A Changing Places disabled toilet is available at Paddington Station and is situated by Platform 12.

The Changing Places disabled toilet has a hoist and is opened by the attendant with a key. It is available for all customers to use. There is also another disabled toilet in the same location but without a hoist.

<https://www.changing-places.org/find>

Opening Times: Monday to Sunday - 7:00 am- 22:00 pm

Contact name: Natalie Holden - 08457114141

Car parking around the hearing centre

Any visitors to the hearing centre with mobility problems can request a free space for the day of their visit and will be first come first served basis. Requests must be made three working days in advance (the parking spaces are in Westbourne Terrace and are limited) to the operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk. Step-free access will be via the Bishop's Bridge Road entrance.

Public parking

- APCOA Paddington Station Car Park - The Kiosk, Car Park, 25 Bishop's Bridge Rd, London W2 6AA
- [Parkopedia](#) - to find other nearby car parks
- On street parking is available locally - charges will apply.

The nearest taxi ranks are at Paddington Railway Station

Witness expenses policy

This expenses guidance explains the rules and the process for claiming back travel and accommodation costs for witnesses attending UK Covid-19 Hearings.

The Inquiries Act and rules allow for the reasonable costs of attending Inquiry public hearings to be refunded. The conditions and rates in this statement have been set, where possible, in line with the practice of public bodies.

[UK Covid-19 Inquiry- Witness Expenses.pdf](#)

Arriving at the hearing centre

When you arrive you may have to queue to enter. We will have queuing system in place for:

1. General public - **to the left** as you're facing the public entrance
2. Core participant legal teams, and the media - **to the right** as you're facing the public entrance

On arrival at the hearing centre, named individuals with a confirmed seat reservation email will not need to join the queue to enter.

Once the hearing centre doors are open they should make themselves known to the front of house team, showing the email confirmation.

They will be issued with a 'Visitor' lanyard. This must be worn at all times when inside the Hearing Centre, and handed back when they leave.

Reserving a seat

There are 41 seats available in the public gallery in the UK Covid-19 Inquiry hearing room, the majority of these 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.

Seat reservations for the public gallery can be made on our website starting at 12pm every Monday, one week prior to the commencement of hearings. Seat reservations can be made on our website here - [seat reservation link](#)

The reservation form is available for anyone to use in order to reserve a seat in the public gallery in the hearing room.

Members of the media are not permitted to use this booking system and must contact media@covid19.public-inquiry.uk and the Inquiry’s media team if they wish to attend the hearings.

Seat availability

Seat reservations will open approximately one week before a hearing week and will be released on a weekly rolling basis.

If a date is not visible on the reservation form then it either has not been released yet, or the reserved seating for that date is full.

Reservations close midday the day before the hearing is due to start.

Reservations must be made for a named individual. The reservation form allows an individual to book for themselves, or on behalf of another, for the week ahead.

Block bookings for multiple individuals should be avoided.

Reservations should only be made for dates that the named individual is able to attend.

Individuals will be notified by email (from operations.team@coronavirus19.public-inquiry.uk) if their seat reservation has been confirmed - a reservation is only confirmed by response email.

If a particular day is full, the email will not confirm the booking but will suggest booking another day or taking advantage of the seats available on the day only.

Hearing room opening times:

Monday - Hearings start at 10.30am and doors at Dorland House open to visitors an hour before the Hearing begins.

Tuesday - Thursday

09:00 am - Building opens to visitors an hour before the hearing begins

09.30 am - Hearing room doors open thirty minutes before the hearing begins

10.00 am - Hearings due to start

16:15 pm - Hearing due to finish for day

16:30 pm - Hearing room closes fifteen minutes after the hearing finishes

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Hearings start and end times are occasionally subject to change due to scheduling requirements. Please check our [website](#) and [twitter](#) for updates.

Sitting in the hearing room:

When sitting in the hearing room, please be considerate and respectful of those around you. You are able to hold images of loved ones in the hearing room (printed or laminated only). We kindly ask that you hold these images on your lap and refrain from raising them any higher.

In the hearing room there is water available but no other food and drink may be consumed in the room. Devices with recording or filming capabilities including mobile phones are not permitted to be used in the hearing room. You will be able to leave and re-enter the hearing room while the hearings are running. We respectfully ask people entering or leaving during proceedings do so as quietly as possible to minimise additional noise.

Filming in the hearing room:

Please note that filming and recording of the Inquiry will be taking place throughout the entire duration of the hearing and simultaneously broadcast via YouTube (with a three minute delay). Anyone within the hearing room may be captured on camera in the background, or while cameras are panning the room. If you do not wish to be filmed, please make your way to the viewing room where the hearing will be broadcast with a three minute delay.

Sitting in the viewing room:

The viewing room will be open at the same time as the main hearing room doors. In the viewing room there is a theatre style seating area (18 seats) as well as two more relaxed seating areas. There will be water and hot drinks available and you are permitted to eat and use devices, including mobile phones.

You can leave the centre during the day and return. Please take your lanyard with you. On return, you will need to show your lanyard and go through security again. If you are leaving the centre for the day please return your lanyard to the Front of House team.

Children and Young People at the Hearing Centre

Children under the age of 14 are not allowed to attend the Inquiry's hearing centre, this is in line with the practice of Courts.

Children and young people between the ages of 14 and 18 can observe the hearings in the hearing centre (either in the hearing room or viewing room) only if accompanied by an adult.

We advise against 14-18-year-olds attending the hearing centre and/or observing the hearings as they may be exposed to distressing and traumatic information, they may witness protests and/or vigils and they may witness or experience intense emotions, which may be unsuitable for a child or young person.

Support available

Parents/carers retain primary responsibility for the wellbeing of and provision of support to 14-18-year-olds if they attend the hearing centre.

The Inquiry has trained trauma-informed counsellors available at the hearing centre who can provide emotional support on each day of the hearings.

Attendees should be aware that we cannot provide specialist support for under-18s at the centre and make a decision about attending accordingly.

Breastfeeding mothers and mothers that have given birth in the preceding 26 weeks

Breastfeeding mothers and mothers that have given birth in the preceding 26 weeks who wish to observe the hearings with their baby can do so in the hearing centre's viewing room.

They will be able to follow the hearing with a 3-minute delay and can breastfeed in the viewing room, or can request access to a room in which they can breastfeed in private.

Security checks and prohibited items

All visitors attending the hearings at Dorland House must go through security every time they enter the hearing centre.

Please allow extra time to go through security and be aware you may have to queue upon entry.

Going through security

You will go through a security check, like you would at an airport. This may include:

- Emptying your pockets into a tray
- Taking off your shoes, coat, gloves or hat
- Being asked to take off or open your belt
- Walking through an archway detector
- Being checked by hand or with a handheld scanner

If you're wearing a head covering for religious or cultural reasons, you can ask for it to be checked with a handheld scanner so you do not have to take it off.

Prohibited items

You cannot take guns, firearms, knives or other weapons into the building - you will be reported to the police if you try to take a weapon into the hearing centre.

You also cannot take in items that security staff think could be used as a weapon, even if you think these are harmless.

These include

- **Blades** - such as scissors, penknives and razors
- **Other sharp items** - such as knitting needles and darts
- **Glass** - for example bottles, framed pictures, perspex
- **Metal cutlery**
- **Syringes** - (unless you have a prescription)
- **Toy guns** - and other things that look like guns
- **Tools** - for example screwdrivers, hammers and nails
- **Ropes and chains**
- **Alcohol** - solvents and other potentially harmful substances
- **All photographic, audio and video recording equipment, whether digital or analogue** - with the exception of mobile phones
- **Liquids that are not drinks or prescription medicine** - such as oils, perfumes, lighter refills, glues, and cleaning products
- **Full-length umbrellas**
- **Crash helmets**

If you cannot take items in with you

Security staff will keep any items you cannot take into the building and give you a receipt that you can use to collect your items when you leave.

Items you can take into the building

- **Mobile phones** - (which should be switched to silent in the hearing room. Attendees are not permitted to film, take videos or make recordings in the hearing room)
- **Hand sanitiser** - you will be asked to use it in front of security staff to prove it's not harmful. Please note, hand sanitiser stations are situated throughout the hearing centre
- **Drinks** - Unopened drinks in cartons and cans, and drinks in a bottle, flask or cup with a lid - these cannot be made of glass. If your drink is opened, or in a flask or cup, you'll be asked to drink some to prove it's not harmful
- **Medicines** - Prescription medicines, must have the pharmacist label with your name and the date they were issued. Security staff will check the label. They will not record or share the information

Please advise us if you need reasonable adjustments to be taken during security checks when attending the centre and contact us via email at - operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk

Facilities at the hearing centre

The main rooms and facilities at the hearing centre are all on the ground floor:

Hearing Room - There is a public seating area within the hearing room for any individual to come in and see the hearings in session.

- There are 41 seats available in the public gallery in the UK Covid-19 Inquiry hearing room, the majority of these are available for reservation.
- Seat reservations can be made using the UK Covid-19 Inquiry Hearing Room - Seat Reservation Form which is available on the [Covid-19 Website](#)
- The reservation form is available for anyone to use in order to reserve a seat in the public gallery in the hearing room
- 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.
- The hearing is being filmed throughout and broadcast via YouTube (with a 3-minute delay) All those in the hearing room may be caught on camera in the background, or while the cameras are panning.
- Use of devices, including mobile phones, are not permitted inside the hearing room.
- Food and drink, other than water, are not permitted in the hearing room
- Water is available in this room via water coolers

Viewing room - Open to visitors, there will be seats available to watch the hearing proceedings, as well as more informal spaces for use during breaks in the hearings.

- Hearing proceedings will be subject to a 3-minute delay in this room - this is to protect any sensitive information that is accidentally

disclosed in the hearings from being reported outside the hearing room

- Use of devices including mobile phones are permitted in this room
- Hot drinks and water are available, and can be consumed, in this room
- Mobile devices and laptops can be used in this room

Support room - Where support can be provided by our emotional support team (identifiable as they will be wearing coloured patterned scarves).

Reflection room - A room for prayer, contemplation and first aid emergencies if needed.

Refreshment area - an open area where individuals can watch the hearing proceedings in a more informal space, or for use during breaks in the hearing

- Vending machines with a selection of free hot drinks
- Snacks and cold drinks are available for purchase from the vending machines
- Hearing proceedings maybe shown and will be subject to a 3-minute delay here
- Mobile devices can be used in this area

Toilets - Male, Female, and Accessible Toilet, including Baby Changing Facilities

Refreshments at the hearing centre and nearby

Water, hot drinks, cold drinks and snacks are available at the centre.

- Hot drinks and water will be free of charge
- Cold drinks and snacks can be paid for via contactless or cash.

Food and drink, other than water, are not permitted in the hearing room.

[Paddington Central](#) and [Paddington station](#) have a wide range of facilities, including shops and riverside cafes, which are a short walk away from the venue.

Supermarkets are also close by, including Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer Food Hall in Paddington Station, and Tesco in Praed Street.

Where can I go to get some fresh air?

Green spaces in the nearby area include

- Little Venice - Little Venice, with its canals and waterways, can be found just to the north of Paddington. Positioned where the Grand Union and Regent's canals meet, it is home to waterside cafes and pubs. Get there in under 10 minutes by turning right on to Bishop's Bridge Road from the main public entrance to the Hearing Centre, and when you get to the bridge you can take the stairs to the right or cross the road for both stairs and step free access.
- Italian Gardens - This is a park with multiple carved historic pools, fountains, sculptures & walking paths. This is a fifteen minute walk from Dorland House.
- Paddington Green - a green space and conservation area in the City of Westminster located off Edgware Road and adjacent to the Westway, is a 10 minute walk

Electronic devices in the hearing room

The use of all electronic equipment is not allowed in the public gallery or media gallery in the main hearing room.

If you would like to use devices while watching the hearing then you can sit in the viewing room (proceedings subject to a 3-minute delay)

If you need to communicate with your lawyer during the hearing, you can do so during the breaks throughout the day.

There are limited plug sockets in the public gallery in the hearing room, if you need to charge your electronic device there are power sockets in the viewing room that are available for use.

Please advise us if you need to use your mobile devices constantly for medical use and want to watch the hearing from the public gallery in the hearing room.

Filming in the hearing room

Please note that filming and recording of the Inquiry will be taking place throughout the entire duration of the hearing and simultaneously broadcast via YouTube (with a 3-minute delay).

Anyone within the hearing room may be captured on camera in the background or while cameras are panning the room.

If you do not wish to be filmed, please make your way to the viewing room where the hearing will be broadcast with a three minute delay.

Safeguarding and support

Attending the hearing centre in person to experience the proceedings may be challenging and trigger difficult and upsetting memories, emotions, and sensory responses.

The Inquiry aims to implement a trauma informed approach acknowledging that the impact of Covid 19 has been widespread and caused trauma on individual, group, and community levels.

To make the hearings more accessible, and reduce barriers to attending in person, we have emotional support available at the hearing centre.

Before you attend the hearing centre

Please let us know if you have additional needs, including needs related to neurodiversity, that require accessibility considerations being made in advance by contacting operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk

At the hearing centre

We have trained trauma-informed counsellors available at the hearing centre on each day of the hearings. They will be wearing colourful, patterned scarves and will be identified during announcements before the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Counsellors will locate themselves across the centre in:

- the main hearing room
- the viewing room
- the refreshment area (located between the main hearing room and viewing room)

Counsellors can be approached by you for support and they may move between areas throughout the day.

You may be approached by counsellors, a member of the support and safeguarding team, or Inquiry staff, to actively check in with you at various points during your time at the hearing centre.

There is a private support room at the hearing centre which is available for use by the counsellors and the safeguarding and support team with people where privacy and discretion is required. If the room is in use then alternative support will be provided until the room becomes free.

Please be mindful that when speaking to support staff and counsellors outside the support room that complete privacy cannot be guaranteed. We will endeavour to be as discreet as possible in public areas.

If you cannot locate a counsellor please approach any Inquiry staff member who will locate one of the counsellors.

SAFEGUARDING NOTE:

If you are concerned about the **immediate safety of yourself or someone else at the hearing centre**, please alert a member of the Inquiry staff or security team who will provide or locate support.

After you attend the hearing centre

If you would like to share feedback about your support experience at the hearing centre please let us know at operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk.

Alternatively you can write to us at: **FREEPOST** UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

We understand that attending the hearing centre can be impactful in a number of ways. Please look at the Inquiry website where you will find contact information for a number of organisations that offer a range of types of support, advice, and services. Opening times vary for these organisations but Samaritans are available 24/7, and are free to call on 116 123.

For urgent support please call 111 or 999

Commemoration

As part of our efforts to recognise and acknowledge the human impact of the pandemic, and to ensure it remains at the heart of proceedings, those present at the hearing centre will be able to view our commemorative tapestry installation.

The tapestry consists of a number of framed panels, each created from an illustration by a different artist, working with a different community or group of individuals impacted by the pandemic.

Some of the tapestry will also travel around the country as Inquiry hearings take place in different parts of the UK.

There are pictures of pandemic memorials from around the country in the public areas of the hearing centre. These include the National Covid Memorial Wall in London and the Scottish Covid Memorial Walk in Pollok Park, Glasgow.

Covid Policy

This policy is designed to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission whilst the Inquiry hosts its hearings.

This document is aimed at all Inquiry staff attending hearings. This includes secretariat, legal teams, contractors and security staff. This document also applies to all visitors attending hearings, including core participants, legal representatives, media and the general public.

All UK Government mandated COVID-19 restrictions have now been lifted, however please keep in mind that some staff at and visitors to the hearing centre may be vulnerable. Please respect all attendees' individual wishes on social distancing and mask wearing.

[Covid Policy](#)

Lost property policy

Dorland House UK Covid-19 Inquiry cannot accept any responsibility for any items of private property that may be lost or mislaid during your attendance at the Hearing Centre. It is therefore vitally important that you take responsibility for your personal property at all times.

If an item is found unattended either by a member of the Inquiry Team or the venue security team, every effort will be made to find the owner of the property. This may necessitate examining or opening an item to see if it contains a name or contact details within it.

It is expected that the vast majority of lost items will not be suspicious and if this is the case the item will be brought to the reception area, at the entrance to the ground floor, and the lost property log will be completed with a description of the item, the date and time, and where the item was found.

Any unclaimed lost property will be left with security until the end of the day when it will be taken by security and locked away securely. Items will be kept for 3 months. After 3 months have elapsed items will be disposed of.

If you believe that you have left personal property in or around the Inquiry hearing rooms, please contact

operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk

in the first instance. If the Inquiry team are able to identify the owner of the property and their contact details, we will seek to get in contact with you directly.

The Inquiry accepts no liability should lost property be returned for any reason to someone who is not its owner - e.g if someone makes a false representation to the Inquiry of ownership of property.

In order for property to be reclaimed, a detailed description of the item(s) and proof of ID (identity), and date that the item was left will be required. Any lost property must be claimed in person from Dorland House UK Covid-19 Reception, unfortunately we will not mail or courier any items.

Any item of lost property found which is on the list of prohibited items will either be disposed of or referred to the police. If the security team has any concerns that an item is suspicious they will consult the suspect package policy and take appropriate action, which may include referring the item to the police.

Inappropriate items

Any property deemed by the Dorland House UK Covid-19 security team to be inappropriate and not authorised will be taken and may be retained and held temporarily by security.

A property tag will be placed on the item with the name of the owner, the date and time, and the owner's contact number. Part of the tag will be passed to the owner as a receipt to collect the item when they are ready to leave. The item will remain in the care of the holding area. Any larger items will be held in an alternative location.

When the owner is ready to leave the inquiry for the day they should return to security with their receipt to collect their property. If the owner does not collect the item on the day, in the first instance we will attempt to contact them using the contact number on the item. If this fails, the item will be treated in the same way as lost property and retained for up to 3 months.

Contact details

For more information please contact the UK Covid 19 Inquiry security team via the reception desk

Evacuation and fire alarm test

For all evacuations the muster point for all building users, staff, public and any witness giving evidence, is the car park area in Westbourne Terrace outside the main entrance doors.

Alternative muster point if Westbourne Terrace is inaccessible is Eastbourne Terrace (runs alongside Paddington Station).

If the Fire Alarm sounds or PA notifies building users to leave:

- All building users on the ground floor and first floor at the time of the alarm activation should evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit.
- Trained fire wardens on the ground floor and first floor will help direct you to the nearest exit.
- Do not stop to collect any personal belongings before evacuating the building.
- Within the main hearing room there are four clearly marked fire exits.

The fire alarm is generally tested every Friday.



Muster point will be the car park near Bishop's Bridge Road.

First aiders and fire marshalls

All security guards at Dorland House are trained First Aiders and there is a First Aid Kit and Defibrillator at Reception.

All security guards are Fire Marshall trained in the case of an evacuation.

Secure Wifi access

In Dorland House we have a secure wifi network called 'GovWifi' for all members of the public to use. Please see the instructions below on how to access the wifi.

1. Create a GovWifi account

You can either:

- text 'Go' to 07537 417 417
- send a blank email from your public sector email address to signup@wifi.service.gov.uk

You will receive a reply with your username and password. Do not share your details with anyone else.