



## Message from Ben Connah, Secretary to the Inquiry



Welcome to the April newsletter. We are busy preparing for public hearings for our [investigation about Test, Trace and Isolate \(Module 7\)](#), which begin on Monday 12 May. These hearings will investigate the different test, trace and isolate systems adopted across all four nations of the UK and how they affected millions of people's lives. On the first day of hearings, the Inquiry will also publish its next Every Story Matters Record, detailing the experiences shared with us by people across the UK on this topic.

We have continued to listen to insights shared by organisations about the impact of the pandemic on the population of the UK as part of our [roundtable discussions](#) to support [Module 10 \(Impact of the pandemic on society\)](#). We are grateful to the organisations who have given their time to share the impact of the pandemic on the people they represent with us. More information about Module 10 is later on in this newsletter. The information shared at roundtables will help to inform our Chair, Baroness Hallett's, findings and recommendations for Module 10 alongside other evidence such as witness statements, expert reports and [Every Story Matters](#) records.

The purpose of this Inquiry is to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future. As part of this process Baroness Hallett not only makes recommendations but she also monitors the response to them. Last year we published our [Recommendation Monitoring process](#) setting out the steps that the Inquiry will take to monitor the response to recommendations by institutions such as the UK and devolved governments and any other public bodies named in the Chair's reports.

[We mentioned in our February newsletter](#) that the governments of the UK, Scotland and Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive had published their responses to [Baroness Hallett's Module 1 \(Preparedness and resilience\) recommendations](#). Baroness Hallett has now written to each administration in relation to their responses. Her letters have been published on our website:

- [Letter to the UK government](#)
  - [Response to the Chair by the UK government](#)
- [Letter to the Welsh government](#)
- [Letter to the Scottish government](#)
- [Letter to the Northern Ireland Executive](#)

The monitoring process will also apply to upcoming Inquiry recommendations, such as those for [Module 2 \(core decision-making and political governance\)](#) which will be published later this year.



Thank you for your interest in the Inquiry's work and I hope to see some of you at our hearing centre for Module 7 hearings in May.

### **Watching our upcoming Module 7 public hearings**

Hearings for [Module 7 \(Test, Trace and Isolate\)](#) will take place from Monday 12 to Friday 30 May 2025 at our [London hearing centre, Dorland House](#).

These hearings will investigate:

- The UK and devolved governments' approaches in relation to testing, tracing and isolation during the pandemic.
- The availability and use of technologies including lateral flow and PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests, testing for variants of Covid-19 and digital contact tracing, including how well these technologies worked.
- How systems to test, trace and isolate Covid-19 were set up in the four nations of the UK, including the organisations that made decisions, the involvement of the private sector and how much these systems cost.
- How testing, tracing and isolation rules were enforced, what affected whether people followed the rules, the quality and trustworthiness of public messages, money and practical help for people who needed to isolate and the use of data in making decisions.
- Planning for future pandemics, including keeping testing and tracing systems ready and research to improve testing and isolation methods.

As with all our public hearings, there is 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 streamed live 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 8 May from the [Module 7 hearings page](#).

### **Update on Module 10 investigation**

The Inquiry is continuing with its series of roundtable discussions with organisations on the impact of the pandemic on the UK population as part of [Module 10 \(Impact on society\)](#). Four roundtable discussions have taken place to date with representatives of:

- Major faith groups in the UK
- Key workers
- Victims and survivors of domestic abuse and organisations providing support



- People who were bereaved during the pandemic and organisations providing support to the bereaved



*Above: image of our roundtable discussion with representatives of charities supporting the bereaved (left); image of our roundtable discussion with representatives of Covid-19 bereaved families in progress (right)*

A further five roundtable discussions will take place with representatives from the following sectors:

- Prisons and other places of detention and those affected by the operation of the justice system
- Business leaders from the hospitality, retail, travel and tourism
- Community level sport and leisure
- Cultural institutions
- Housing and homelessness.

Each roundtable discussion will be written up as a summary report which will be entered into the Module 10 investigation as evidence. They will also be published on the Inquiry website when Module 10 public hearings are in progress next year. The reports, alongside other evidence, will help to inform the Chair's findings and recommendations.

You can read more about the progress we have made with Module 10 roundtables in the [news story on our website](#).

### **Update on Inquiry experts**

The Inquiry has instructed 54 leading experts across our [10 Modules](#) to provide independent evidence to the Inquiry. This can be in the form of written reports as well as oral evidence during the hearings. Experts play an important role in helping the Inquiry to maintain its impartiality and conduct a thorough investigation.



To support our [investigation into the impact of the pandemic on society \(Module 10\)](#) we have recently commissioned experts to each write a report looking at any disparities in the impact of the pandemic, including:

- The impact on old age and later life
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Race and ethnicity
- Gender inequalities
- Disability and clinical vulnerability
- Unequal impacts of the pandemic on different groups and why these impacts were unevenly distributed across the whole population

A further report will consider the impact of the pandemic on people with severe mental health conditions.

All Inquiry expert reports that have been entered into evidence to date [can be downloaded from our website](#).

### **Every Story Matters online form closing soon but there is still time to share your story**

Our Every Story Matters listening exercise comes to a close on Friday 23 May and we want to hear your pandemic story. We have been listening to people from all walks of life across the UK about how the pandemic has impacted their lives through our engagement exercise, Every Story Matters.

People have shared their story through our online form, by post or at one of our events across the UK over the past 18 months. It has been the largest engagement exercise of any UK public inquiry.

Every Story Matters will close for new submissions on Friday 23 May. If you would like to share your story and have not yet done so, [you can do this online](#) or by requesting a paper form by [contacting the Inquiry](#).

If you need to talk to someone during or after telling your story you can access the Inquiry's support services, [details of which can be found on our website](#).

Each story shared with the Inquiry helps us to understand how the pandemic affected different people and communities across the UK. These stories are looked at together, so we can identify any common themes in people's experiences, as well as any differences. All stories contribute to [Every Story Matters Records](#), which assist Baroness Hallett and legal teams in the investigations.