



Message from the Chair of the Inquiry



Welcome to the May newsletter. We have reached the end of a major milestone in the Inquiry - [Every Story Matters](#).

Soon after I accepted the role of Chair of the Inquiry, I realised the importance of listening to people describe the impact of the pandemic on them, in their own words. That is why we created Every Story Matters. Over 58,000 stories have been shared with us online, by post or in person at one of our events, making this the largest listening exercise ever undertaken by a UK public inquiry.

I know that some will have found sharing their story with the Inquiry very distressing, but I wish to assure everyone who contributed that it has been worthwhile. Our aim is to learn lessons from all the stories we have gathered and analysed. In that way we hope to reduce the suffering and hardship of others in the future.

I [would like to thank you for telling the Inquiry about your experience](#) - it will make a real difference to the Inquiry's investigations.

All the stories will help to inform my findings and recommendations in reports that will follow [each module](#). Stories are collated and used in the production of documents, known as [Every Story Matters Records](#); these are then entered into the investigations as evidence. [Three Records have been published](#) so far, in relation to healthcare, vaccines and therapeutics and test, trace and isolate, with more to follow on topics such as the care sector, children and young people and the economic response to the pandemic. Counsel to the Inquiry have already used the published Records during hearings.

On that note, the Inquiry's investigations have continued throughout May with hearings for [Test, Trace and Isolate \(Module 7\)](#) closing this week. I have heard oral evidence from over 40 witnesses about the different test, trace and isolate systems adopted across the four nations of the UK and how they affected millions of people's lives. A report detailing my findings and recommendations will be published next year.

Hearings for the investigation into the [care sector \(Module 6\)](#) will begin on 30 June. I hope to see some of you at our hearing centre then and I am sure many more of you will be watching remotely.

Thank you for your interest in the Inquiry.

[Watch Baroness Hallett's video message on YouTube.](#)



What we heard during Module 7 hearings

This month we have been [hearing evidence in relation to Test, Trace and Isolate](#) during the pandemic.

We heard from over 40 witnesses, whose names can be found in the [hearings timetable published on our website](#).

Topics covered during these hearings included:

- Policies and strategies developed for test, trace and isolate between January 2020 and June 2022, including differences across the four nations of the UK
- The preservation of infrastructure and capacity for future pandemics
- The availability, effectiveness and structure of different testing technologies and tracing systems, including the NHS Test and Trace app
- Barriers to self-isolation and support available for those required to isolate
- The impact of testing availability on vulnerable communities
- The use of data, including access by testing and healthcare services
- Implementation of pandemic-specific regulations, including the role of the police in ensuring compliance



Clockwise: Prof. Naomi Fulop (on behalf of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK), Anna Louise Marsh-Rees (on behalf of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru), Hazel Gray (on behalf of Northern Ireland Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice) and Nicola Boyle (on behalf of Scottish Covid Bereaved)

An Every Story Matters Record was submitted as evidence into Module 7. It brings together people's experiences of the Test, Trace and Isolate system during the pandemic. [This and other Every Story Matters Records can be accessed on our website](#).



On the first day of Module 7 hearings we screened an impact film featuring people affected by testing, tracing and isolation policies, reminding everyone of the human cost of the pandemic. This latest impact film is [available to watch on YouTube](#). Please note that it includes themes that you may find upsetting.

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

Module 10 update

The Inquiry has now announced hearing dates for its final investigation - [Module 10 \(Impact of the pandemic on society\)](#). Public hearings will run from Monday 16 February – Thursday 5 March 2026.

[The Inquiry has so far held 8 roundtable discussions with multiple sectors](#) representing many groups most impacted by the pandemic. This month we heard from organisations in the Justice, hospitality, retail, travel, community-level sport and leisure sectors and those representing cultural institutions.

Early next month our final roundtable discussion with organisations in the housing and homelessness sector will take place.

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.