



## Message from Laura Kenny, Director of Human Impact, Communications and Engagement



Hello I am Laura Kenny and welcome to our October newsletter. I am the Inquiry's new Director of Human Impact, Communications and Engagement.

This month the Inquiry reached a significant milestone, as hearings for our [Module 8 investigation](#) into the impact of the pandemic on children and young people concluded. Over the past four weeks Baroness Hallett has heard evidence from a range of witnesses including organisations supporting children disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, school leaders, former Government ministers and officials, regulators and health and social care professionals. The Chair will now consider this oral evidence, together with a wealth of written evidence including the Every Story Matters Children and Young People Record and the Children and Young People's Voices research before making her findings and recommendations. Further information about the evidence the Chair has heard is set out later in this newsletter.

The Inquiry is now preparing for the publication of [its second report detailing Baroness Hallett's findings and recommendations in relation to Modules 2, 2A, 2B and 2C. These relate to core decision-making and political governance across all four nations of the United Kingdom](#). This will take place on Thursday 20 November, following which public hearings will resume for [Module 9 \(Economic Response\)](#) on 24 November.

Thank you for your interest in the Inquiry.

### Key insights from hearings for our children and young people's investigation

This month we heard evidence in relation to the impact of the pandemic on children and young people.

We heard from 50 witnesses, over four weeks of hearings, about topics such as:

- **School Closures** - remote learning, the digital divide, the impact on education and attainment, persistent absence and health and safety measures in schools
- **Vulnerable Groups and Children with Long Covid** - Impacts on disabled children, those with special educational needs or additional learning needs, young carers, children within the social care system or in the youth justice system, migrants and unaccompanied children and children with Long Covid and family health vulnerabilities
- **Safeguarding** - Protecting vulnerable children during lockdowns, including challenges in identifying and monitoring at-risk children, reduced referrals to children's services and the impact on child protection systems



- **Mental Health** - Children and young people's mental health during the pandemic
- **Decision-making and Children's Rights:** the consideration of children and young people in government decisions, the relaxation of legal duties with respect to children and the extent to which children's rights were upheld/respected



*Clockwise from top left: Nuala Toman (Disabled People's Organisations), Susan Acland Hood (Permanent Secretary, Department for Education), Sammie McFarland (Long Covid Kids) and Boris Johnson (Former UK Prime Minister) providing evidence to the Inquiry during Module 8 hearings*

The [Every Story Matters: Children and Young People record](#) has been referenced more than 18 times in Module 8 hearings, including on the opening day of hearings by [Baroness Hallett](#), [Clair Dobbin KC \(Lead Counsel to the Inquiry for Module 8\)](#) and [Galina Ward KC \(representing Department for Education\)](#). It was also referenced when witnesses were questioned, including:

- [Lara Wong \(Clinically Vulnerable Families\) on 1 October](#)
- [Prof. Emeritus Samantha Baron \( British Association of Social Workers\) on 13 October](#)
- [Susan Acland-Hood \(Permanent Secretary, Department for Education\) on 15 October](#)
- [Derek Baker \(former Permanent Secretary, Department of Education \(Northern Ireland\)\) on 15 October](#)
- [Boris Johnson \(former UK Prime Minister\) on 21 October](#)



[The Children and Young People Voices report](#) provides an insight of children and young people's experiences, and how they perceived the impact of the pandemic on them. It was cited at various points during the Module 8 hearings, including by:

- Counsel to the Inquiry [when questioning Dr Carol Homden CBE \(Coram\) on 30 September, Sammie McFarland \(Long Covid Kids\) and Lara Wong \(Clinically Vulnerable Families\) on 1 October](#) and [Sir Hamid Patel CBE \(Star Academies\) on 6 October](#).
- [Matthew Coffey CB \(Ofsted\) also referred to the Children and Young People Voices report in his evidence](#) to the Inquiry on 6 October.

Inquiry hearings can be watched live or on demand [on YouTube](#). [Transcripts are published daily on the Inquiry's website alongside any written evidence disclosed during the hearings](#). You can subscribe to our weekly hearing updates via the [newsletter page of the Inquiry website](#) for a regular summary of what we heard during hearings and details of the following week's timetable.

### **Module 10 preliminary hearing taking place on 4 November**

A preliminary hearing for the Inquiry's final investigation into the [impact of the pandemic on society \(Module 10\)](#) will take place on 4 November. Public hearings, where the Chair will hear evidence, will begin on Monday 18 February and end on Thursday 5 March 2026.

During the preliminary hearing, Counsel to the Inquiry will provide an update on the investigation's evidence gathering process and preparations for the substantive hearing. Core Participants will have the opportunity to make submissions on matters such as the key issues to be explored and the approach to the investigation.

Module 10's scope includes the impact of the pandemic on:

- the bereaved and bereavement support
- the hospitality, retail, travel and tourism industries
- vulnerable people, including those who faced domestic abuse, homelessness, were within the immigration and asylum system, were in prison or other places of detention and those who were affected by the operation of the justice system
- adult mental health and wellbeing
- key workers, excluding health and social care workers, but including those working in the police service, fire and rescue workers, teachers, cleaners, transport workers, taxi and delivery drivers, funeral workers, security guards and public facing sales and retail workers.

The full [provisional outline of scope of Module 10](#) is available on the Inquiry website.

The hearing will be open to the public to attend. It will also be livestreamed on the Inquiry's YouTube channel, with the recording available to view later. Seats at the hearing centre, [Dorland House](#), need to be reserved in advance - information about how to do this is on the



[Public Hearings page of the website](#). We request that anyone planning to visit the hearing centre takes a moment to review [the Inquiry's Covid-19 policy](#).