

1 purposes of your evidence, at paragraph 2 of your report
 2 you've given some examples of the sorts of conditions
 3 that are included and you mention schizophrenia-spectrum
 4 disorders, other psychotic disorders, bipolar disorders,
 5 eating disorders, personality disorders and severe
 6 depression?

7 **A.** That's correct.

8 **Q.** And, Professor, is it right that people with these sorts
 9 of conditions tend to have a high need for mental health
 10 services?

11 **A.** It is true. They're often in contact with particularly
 12 secondary care mental health services but also use
 13 primary care services a lot.

14 **Q.** So GPs and hospitals --

15 **A.** Exactly.

16 **Q.** -- would be providing quite a lot of care to people with
 17 these conditions?

18 **A.** Exactly.

19 **Q.** And why is that? It may be obvious but why do they have
 20 such a high need for these services?

21 **A.** Well, particularly because of the mental health symptoms
 22 that they experience, they can include things like
 23 hearing voices or perhaps having abnormal beliefs, for
 24 instance being paranoid. Others have quite severe
 25 presentations with either low mood, or at times with

5

1 elated mood. So a range of presentations that affect
 2 areas of their daily life, and they require specialised
 3 treatments for those.

4 **Q.** Thank you. So it would be expected then, that any
 5 disruption to services such as may have happened during
 6 the pandemic, or their access to the services, that
 7 would have a significant impact on people like that;
 8 would that be fair to say?

9 **A.** That would be fair to say.

10 **Q.** Now, before we discuss your findings about that impact,
 11 I just want to ask you a little bit about the nature and
 12 the quality of the research that you reviewed.

13 You flagged at paragraph 8 of your report various
 14 limitations. For instance, it's right to say there was
 15 far less evidence about mental health services in the
 16 later waves of the pandemic; is that correct?

17 **A.** It is correct. We found far more evidence in the early
 18 stages of the pandemic published rather than as things
 19 moved on through the months and years.

20 **Q.** Thank you. And also you say there was some evidence
 21 about some specific conditions, so, for instance, severe
 22 obsessive compulsive disorder, so there were a few
 23 things that you didn't find that came up so much in
 24 these studies?

25 **A.** That's correct. We tended to find that it was -- the
 6

1 research was about groups of people with severe mental
 2 illness rather than specific diagnoses, although we did
 3 look for that evidence.

4 **Q.** So that's just one example of a data gap, which is
 5 a concept the Inquiry has heard quite a lot about.

6 **A.** Precisely.

7 **Q.** Whilst we're on that point, I don't need to take you to
 8 it, but right at the end of your report, at section 6,
 9 just to touch on this: you say that whilst you found
 10 a large body of evidence, little was available using
 11 representative populations, and much was published on
 12 single sites or convenient samples.

13 Could you just explain what you mean by that.

14 **A.** I can. There were some strong pieces of evidence, that
 15 were from, for instance, particular NHS provider trusts,
 16 so mental health service providers, but of course they
 17 were one provider, and so it would be difficult to
 18 always say that those results could be generalised all
 19 across the country. However, there were other pieces of
 20 evidence that had far more providers, and indeed some
 21 studies with national evidence, so they speak to each
 22 other to build a bigger picture.

23 **Q.** Thank you.

24 Finally, just in terms of limitations, you also say
 25 that there were fewer studies from Wales,

7

1 Northern Ireland and Scotland, though I think you have
 2 referred to some research from those areas in your
 3 report?

4 **A.** That's correct.

5 **Q.** And again, Professor, despite the caveats, it's right to
 6 say you have reached some findings and conclusions on
 7 the basis of the evidence that you've reviewed?

8 **A.** Absolutely.

9 **Q.** Thank you.

10 Well, I'll just take you through, now, the main
 11 findings that you've made.

12 The first section of your report is changes in
 13 demand for existing mental health services. So,
 14 Professor, you've explained to us that, in normal times,
 15 these sorts of patients would have a high demand or need
 16 for mental health care services, but in this section of
 17 your report, you explain there was a dramatic reduction
 18 in people presenting to mental health services during
 19 the pandemic?

20 **A.** That's right.

21 **Q.** And just to illustrate, if I could ask for figure 1a to
 22 come up on the screen.

23 It says there "Psychiatric presentations". So this
 24 is a study that you've reviewed. Could you just explain
 25 to us -- there are two charts here, one says

8

1 "Psychiatric presentations", in a moment we'll come to
 2 one that's "A&E presentations" -- what's the difference
 3 between a psychiatric presentation and an A&E
 4 presentation?
 5 **A.** So we've got people who have been referred for an
 6 emergency psychiatric assessment in one and we've also
 7 got people who have attended an accident and emergency
 8 department with a psychiatric emergency.
 9 So we see a similar pattern in both of those types
 10 of presentation, which is that, as we went into the very
 11 first wave of the pandemic, there's this huge decrease
 12 in 2020, which is the orangey-yellow line, where we see
 13 a big, big decrease in people presenting, and the top
 14 line just shows -- the year before the pandemic -- shows
 15 that normally there wouldn't be much variation. So it
 16 was very striking.
 17 **Q.** And we also see that in November, don't we?
 18 **A.** We see that -- (overspeaking) --
 19 **Q.** In the second lockdown.
 20 **A.** Exactly. A huge decrease again.
 21 **Q.** Thank you. And then, if we can go to the second slide,
 22 figure 1B, we see the same sort of pattern, do we?
 23 March into April and then November. And that's people
 24 coming to A&E and seeking help for these conditions?
 25 **A.** For these conditions, exactly. A decrease at both time

9

1 points.
 2 **Q.** Now, in your report you have talked about the sharp
 3 reductions that we see on that graph aligning with
 4 lockdown periods and public health messaging encouraging
 5 people to avoid hospitals and observe travel
 6 restrictions. Can you expand a bit more, if you're able
 7 to, on the impact of public messaging on people with
 8 severe mental illnesses?
 9 **A.** I think as you describe, people were perhaps less
 10 willing to go to emergency departments and also fearful
 11 of travel and obviously not wanting to breach the rules,
 12 and that perhaps explains why people were less likely to
 13 go to the emergency department, as well as hearing how
 14 overrun the emergency departments were with the -- with
 15 dealing with the presentations from the Covid pandemic.
 16 **Q.** This is -- as I understand it, these two graphs and this
 17 study that we've looked at, it's from three acute mental
 18 health liaison teams and two acute mental health centres
 19 in England.
 20 **A.** It is.
 21 **Q.** I mean, does it fit with your own experience, looking at
 22 these sorts of reductions, very sharp reductions?
 23 **A.** It does, it does. And in the later evidence it also
 24 fits with the fact that some of these presentations
 25 would then generate people needing to go into hospital

10

1 and in the later evidence we see a big decrease also in
 2 the number of people who were admitted to psychiatric
 3 hospitals in the early stages of the pandemic.
 4 **Q.** Thank you. I want to move on to a different topic or
 5 a different feature that you've flagged in your report
 6 at paragraph 15.
 7 You say, essentially, that those who did present had
 8 more severe symptoms compared to what you'd see before
 9 the pandemic. We're going to hear more from
 10 Professor Das-Munshi about specific impact on symptoms,
 11 but are you saying, in simple terms, people were leaving
 12 it later to seek help during the pandemic? Is that what
 13 you're describing there?
 14 **A.** It is what we're describing there. I think we saw that
 15 people had left it longer to seek help for their
 16 symptoms, and we also saw that people were more
 17 likely -- there were more people with severe
 18 presentations who were being seen in what we'd call the
 19 caseload or the case mix of people presenting.
 20 **Q.** And that, as you say, aligns with public health
 21 messaging at the time, sort of, on the theme of: don't
 22 burden the NHS unless you can absolutely, sort of,
 23 avoid it?
 24 **A.** Exactly.
 25 **Q.** Okay, thank you.

11

1 Can I move on to another topic now, Professor, that
 2 is in your report, again from paragraph 15, you're
 3 talking about involuntary admissions.
 4 Now, in simple terms, is it right to say that an
 5 involuntary admission is one where the person concerned
 6 is detained on a compulsory basis for treatment under
 7 legislative powers?
 8 **A.** That is correct. And the use of the Mental Health Act
 9 so the people who are admitted are not consenting to the
 10 admission.
 11 **Q.** So sometimes you call it a detention; is that correct?
 12 **A.** Yes.
 13 **Q.** And you say that involuntary admissions or detentions
 14 increased according to both an English and a Scottish
 15 study that you've referred to; is that correct?
 16 **A.** That's correct, yes. We saw increases in the proportion
 17 of people who were under this legislation and admitted.
 18 **Q.** And do you consider that the increase in the admissions
 19 was in part also a feature of what you have described
 20 earlier as people presenting later, essentially in
 21 crisis?
 22 **A.** I think that's absolutely one of the likely explanations
 23 for that, possibly that also people did not want to go
 24 into hospital voluntarily because perhaps of fears of
 25 infection and what the situation would be like on the

12

1 mental health wards.

2 **Q.** Now, at paragraph 16 of your report you also refer to an
3 additional study that Professor Das-Munshi has
4 mentioned, I think it's the Hildersley study -- I'll ask
5 her about it later. But to pick up the point with you,
6 the study refers to higher rates of involuntary
7 admissions in Black Caribbean and Black African groups,
8 and am I right to say that the Scottish paper that you
9 referred to had similar findings?

10 **A.** That's correct.

11 **Q.** And that's during the first lockdown?

12 **A.** Exactly.

13 **Q.** You explain that higher rates of these involuntary
14 admissions for some ethnic minorities were already
15 a concern before the pandemic?

16 **A.** That's right. There's a strong body of evidence that
17 shows that there are increased Mental Health Act
18 detentions among some particular ethnic groups and
19 particularly black and Asian ethnic groups.

20 **Q.** But the way you put it is that this ethnic inequality in
21 involuntary admissions was exacerbated by the pandemic.

22 **A.** It was.

23 **Q.** Do you say that because, as we've seen, the study is
24 showing higher numbers of people being detained with
25 higher rates from these ethnic groups?

13

1 **A.** There were a greater proportion of detentions amongst
2 people from black ethnic groups, if I am understanding
3 you correctly.

4 **Q.** So, in summary, there is evidence of higher rates of
5 some ethnic minorities being involuntary detained --

6 **A.** Exactly.

7 **Q.** -- according to those studies?

8 Just a couple more points on this area, would it be
9 fair to say that when people were detained during the
10 pandemic, it would be more difficult to actually provide
11 them with the treatment for which they had been
12 detained?

13 **A.** I think there's strong evidence that people are
14 concerned that treatment on particularly inpatient units
15 was very challenging to provide. To elaborate,
16 particularly because there was lots of -- of course,
17 lots of emphasis on infection control on the wards, and
18 that made it more difficult for people to feel they
19 could offer therapeutic interventions to people, often
20 people needing to socially distance, so not being able
21 to have social contact, and to have therapeutic contact
22 that would be part of normal inpatient care.

23 **Q.** So you have a situation where people are being detained
24 under these powers, but in fact the treatment that's
25 justified that is very challenging to provide during the

14

1 pandemic?

2 **A.** It was certainly more challenging with all the
3 restrictions to control infections.

4 **Q.** And they're also being exposed to the sort of specific
5 infection risks that you've described, and we'll come
6 back to?

7 **A.** Sure.

8 **Q.** Thank you.

9 Just to then tie up on this area, we've just
10 described -- you've just described to us the increased
11 involuntary admissions, but you also say at paragraph 15
12 that there was a corresponding decrease in voluntary
13 admissions?

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** We've already touched on people not wanting to come in
16 so much, but you also say that mental health
17 professionals may have been more cautious about
18 admitting people even if they did attend. Why would
19 that be?

20 **A.** Yes, I think there's certainly factors to do with the
21 individual service user, but also, in the health
22 service, there was --you know, people were concerned
23 not to expose people to a risk of infection by them
24 being in hospital. There were also concerns about
25 capacity, as people weren't sure what was going to

15

1 evolve in that very early wave of the pandemic.

2 **Q.** Thank you.

3 Just final point on this section. You say at
4 paragraph 16 that when people did present, there's some
5 evidence that slightly fewer of them were being
6 discharged without any follow-up being necessary. So
7 follow-up could mean community referrals or other form
8 of support; is that right? Not just being admitted?

9 **A.** Exactly, exactly. So with less community follow-up.

10 **LADY HALLETT:** Sorry to interrupt.

11 Going back to your point about capacity,
12 Professor Osborn, I've heard a lot of evidence about the
13 redeployment of particularly medical staff. Did the
14 mental health services suffer redeployment?

15 **A.** There were some concerns about redeployment. I think
16 there was also huge concern about absence of staff
17 because of people having to isolate and to shield, and
18 especially in those early days where we didn't have
19 testing available. So there were large decreases in
20 staff numbers.

21 **LADY HALLETT:** Sorry to interrupt.

22 **MS RAHMAN:** No, not at all.

23 On the issue of at least some care being required
24 when they did present, is that also consistent with what
25 you've said about people presenting a bit later with

16

1 more severe symptoms? So less people being told, in
 2 fact, "You don't need any further treatment at all"?

3 A. Sorry, could you repeat the question, please. I'm not
 4 sure I fully understood.

5 Q. I think that what you described is that you've got fewer
 6 people in the pandemic being discharged with no further
 7 treatment being required, and I just wondered if that's
 8 consistent with the fact that people are presenting with
 9 more severe symptoms, so some sort of treatment is
 10 required?

11 A. Yeah, I'm not sure I follow that, sorry.

12 Q. I'm sorry. It's not an important point. What is the
 13 significance, at paragraph 16, of the evidence that
 14 slightly fewer were being discharged without any
 15 follow-up? Or it's simply something that you've
 16 observed that's -- (overspeaking) --

17 A. Well, it's something that we've observed. I mean,
 18 obviously there were -- as the rest of the report shows,
 19 there was a lot less -- there was a lot less
 20 availability of community treatment for people with
 21 severe mental illnesses during lockdown, with a big move
 22 towards telemedicine and non-face-to-face contact.

23 Q. Thank you, Professor.

24 Professor, your report then turns to a number of
 25 different mental health care settings. I won't go

17

1 through all of them in detail. They're set out at
 2 paragraphs 19 to 38. But as a broad proposition, would
 3 it be fair to say there's a pattern of reduced
 4 presentations to inpatient wards, GPs, and community
 5 mental health services in the first wave of the
 6 pandemic?

7 A. I think that's correct. There's a striking decrease in
 8 presentations across different services that are
 9 described.

10 Q. And you also identify research which found fewer
 11 referrals to secondary services for adult mental health
 12 including older adults?

13 A. Exactly.

14 Q. Now, you've explored all of those settings in depth in
 15 your report. I just want to pick up on some specific
 16 points that you raise.

17 At paragraph 20 of your report, you talk about rapid
 18 discharges and you refer to a particular paper from one
 19 trust that looked at these rapid discharges. And as
 20 I understand it, Professor, it was looking specifically
 21 at whether or not those patients suffered any acute
 22 relapses or negative outcomes like self-harm or being
 23 readmitted in crisis; is that correct?

24 A. Correct, yes.

25 Q. And I think it's right to say that those negative

18

1 outcomes in this study weren't observed?

2 A. They weren't observed, no.

3 Q. But you point out that this is a single-site study and
 4 you also consider that it is possible that the adverse
 5 outcomes weren't picked up because of pressure on
 6 community services; is that correct?

7 A. That's completely correct, exactly. It may be that the
 8 same factors which were preventing people from seeking
 9 help in the first place also when people were
 10 discharged, perhaps they were less likely to seek help
 11 and so we didn't see the outcomes that you mention
 12 occurring. But I agree with your observation that it is
 13 one mental health provider, albeit a large one.

14 Q. Thank you. You have mentioned community health
 15 services. In the literature that you looked at, did you
 16 find or see any specific evidence about how effectively
 17 community mental health services were able to operate?

18 A. I think there were real concerns that community mental
 19 health services were challenged particularly with
 20 complying with all of the restrictions, and although
 21 they tried to carry on, there was a rapid, rapid shift
 22 from seeing people face-to-face, which would be normal
 23 in mental health care, to using video or telephone
 24 consultations, instead.

25 Q. Thank you, Professor.

19

1 I'm going to move on now to quite an important point
 2 you make in your report a couple of times, starting at
 3 paragraph 22. And this is this concept of rebound,
 4 inpatient admissions rebounding after lockdown and
 5 slightly fewer discharges, as well. Does that mean that
 6 more people are going to be on inpatient wards,
 7 essentially?

8 A. I think that's right. As the restrictions were lifted,
 9 we saw that more people were then referred and admitted
 10 onto wards, and people were perhaps -- I'm not sure, but
 11 healthcare professionals on the wards were perhaps not
 12 pushing to discharge people as quickly.

13 Q. And you've referred in your report quite a few times to
 14 an unmet need and a treatment gap for the periods when
 15 people were not presenting. Is it right to say that you
 16 consider, then, that during this period when people
 17 weren't attending, they were clearly still suffering
 18 from the mental illnesses and they needed the care and
 19 the treatment gap describes the fact they didn't receive
 20 that care?

21 A. I think you describe it correctly. People had ongoing
 22 mental health problems and there's lots of other
 23 evidence showing that they had ongoing symptoms and
 24 Professor Das-Munshi will talk about that, but they
 25 weren't receiving the care in the community during those

20

1 periods.

2 Q. And you would say that the rebound in admission supports

3 there having been that gap?

4 A. Yes, absolutely.

5 Q. Yes, and you cite in your report, paragraphs 29 and 38,

6 a Care Quality Commission report and also evidence of

7 high levels of calls to the NHS England mental health

8 hotline; is it right, Professor that that also supports

9 that there was a high level of need despite the drop in

10 presentations?

11 A. Yes, I think that's exactly what it describes, that

12 people, I mean, these are long-term conditions often for

13 people and so the need hadn't gone away but we have

14 evidence that when these opportunities to seek help were

15 provided, people used them.

16 Q. Thank you. Another way you've explored that in your

17 report is by looking at some research on presentation to

18 GPs. That's from paragraph 26. And you refer to

19 a study that showed a large reduction in mental health

20 diagnoses, and prescription of psychotropic medication

21 and self-harm episodes.

22 I think, just before, I'm just going to take you

23 a figure on that, you do point out that severe illnesses

24 weren't specifically covered in that paper.

25 A. That's correct.

21

1 Q. And also that there were quite significant differences

2 in patterns across the nations?

3 A. There were some differences in patterns, yes, across the

4 nations.

5 Q. But the overall picture as illustrated, for example, if

6 we could get up on the screen, please, figure 5 from

7 your report on page 12.

8 Essentially that is from primary care practices in

9 Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and the larger,

10 thicker, yellow line in the background is what you'd

11 expect, and the pink line shows what actually happened

12 in the initial stages of the pandemic. So you see sharp

13 declines, that -- the vertical line shows the date of

14 the pandemic, sharp declines in prescriptions and

15 presentations across the board; is that a fair summary?

16 A. I think that's correct. I think it's striking to see

17 the decreases across all these different measures of

18 people's mental health, including the bottom right

19 figure, which is referrals for mental health to mental

20 health services, which perhaps would include people with

21 severe mental illness.

22 Q. Thank you.

23 And again, you explain that the prescribing levels

24 then appear to rebound after the first wave of the

25 pandemic. Again, that supports the existence of

22

1 a treatment gap?

2 A. Exactly.

3 Q. We've touched on the public messaging. Another thing

4 that you talk about in your report, at paragraph 27, is

5 that people may not have felt they were worthy of

6 clinical attention during this critical time for the

7 country, and we'll explore that and the term

8 "self-stigma" with Professor Das-Munshi later, but is

9 this an example of that? Is that what you're

10 referring to?

11 A. I think it is an example of that, where people sometimes

12 talk about diagnostic overshadowing, where they feel

13 that their mental health problem overshadows physical

14 health problems, but also perhaps feel that it's not as

15 worthy, particularly when all the headlines were around

16 deaths around Covid.

17 Q. You've also mentioned in your report a fear of infection

18 as another reason why people might not want to attend.

19 Would that have particular relevance to people who were

20 clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely

21 vulnerable, in your view?

22 A. I mean, it's hugely relevant. People with severe mental

23 illness, as you'll hear from Professor Das-Munshi, but

24 that we have lots of evidence that they have lots of

25 coexisting physical health problems, respiratory

23

1 problems, cardiovascular problems, so that people with

2 those conditions would be particularly more at risk of

3 having poorer outcomes with Covid.

4 Q. Thank you, Professor.

5 Professor, pausing now, just to consider what

6 lessons can be learned from what you've described, do

7 you think that the risk of a treatment gap for those

8 with severe mental illnesses should be recognised in

9 devising public health messaging in a future pandemic or

10 civil emergency?

11 A. I think it's important that we recognise that people

12 didn't receive the support and care that they required,

13 and particularly when they're in vulnerable groups.

14 Q. And can you think of any practical steps that could

15 address that risk, that public health messaging

16 inadvertently discourages people from seeking the mental

17 health care that they need?

18 A. I think that would be something around the messaging,

19 that encourages people to make sure they do stay in

20 contact with their mental health services.

21 I think, perhaps as an aside, but there's a -- there

22 were similar concerns that people weren't seeking help

23 for non -- for other physical conditions at the same

24 time, that perhaps they weren't presenting for very

25 serious physical conditions. So perhaps the lesson

24

1 learned is try to really encourage people to keep in
 2 contact with their -- the services that they require.
 3 Q. Finally, on the impact of these delayed presentations,
 4 you say at paragraph 29 that early treatment is
 5 important in achieving the best outcome for those with
 6 severe mental illness, and delaying treatment can have
 7 long lasting impacts.
 8 Could you expand a little on what sort of impacts
 9 you might see in this cohort, people with severe mental
 10 illnesses, if their treatment is delayed?
 11 A. I think certainly we know when people first present with
 12 severe mental illness that if there are delays in their
 13 treatment that that has a negative impact in the longer
 14 term, in terms of their mental health and some of their
 15 social and other outcomes. So, it is a well-recognised
 16 fact that we need to have -- people need access to
 17 treatment very promptly to try to overcome, for example,
 18 symptoms of psychosis.
 19 Q. Does it also follow there's an impact on health
 20 services, because more care would then need to be
 21 provided for those patients in the longer term?
 22 A. Certainly in the longer term, that's correct, because if
 23 people aren't recovering as well then they're going to
 24 need longer term support.
 25 Q. Thank you very much, Professor.

25

1 I think that's a good point at which to move on to
 2 the second part of your report. We've been dealing with
 3 the need for care and we're now looking at the changes
 4 to mental health services during the pandemic.
 5 Again, I'll just ask you some of the main points
 6 that you draw out about this. At paragraph 40, you've
 7 noted some instances of specified mental health centres
 8 or hubs being opened to divert mental health patients
 9 away from hospitals.
 10 Do you have any views on that as something to
 11 consider in any future pandemic or civil emergency?
 12 Does it seem like a good idea to you?
 13 A. I think it was a very successful intervention, and
 14 particularly I have knowledge of one in north London
 15 that opened and was particularly successful in providing
 16 emergency psychiatric care to people, and took them away
 17 from the risk of going to the emergency department, but
 18 also meant they got specialist care more quickly.
 19 Several of those -- to my knowledge, several of
 20 those centres have continued to exist, offering that
 21 kind of specialist care but it's certainly something
 22 that was felt to have worked in the -- during the
 23 pandemic to offer emergency psychiatric assessment and
 24 management.
 25 Q. Thank you.

26

1 And second, of course, the major change that you
 2 describe in your report is the closure or conversion of
 3 some inpatient wards in order to provide Covid-19 care.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And clearly that had the immediate effect of reducing
 6 the availability of mental health beds and that would
 7 have had an impact on services and patients for, I take
 8 it, obvious reasons. However, you have also noted that
 9 some stable patients were moved to receive treatment at
 10 home to reduce infection risk.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Is that correct? And that, again, is because of the
 13 high risk of contracting Covid on the ward?
 14 A. Absolutely. I think that -- I remember these were very
 15 challenging times for mental health inpatient services
 16 wanting to keep the service users safe, and opening
 17 specific wards where people who were infected could be
 18 cared for together, but of course certainly if in
 19 another ward there was somebody infected, then it was
 20 very challenging then to reorganise services to try and
 21 move people to one of the, I'll call it Covid-positive
 22 ward, if you like. So it was a challenge.
 23 Q. So you might have seen a more stable person being moved
 24 home to reduce their risk of infection but would the
 25 other side of the coin be a risk that what was available

27

1 at home wouldn't be adequate for their mental health
 2 support?
 3 A. I think there's certainly that risk with all of the
 4 evidence that we saw about lack of community follow-up
 5 for people. But that, I guess, was balanced against the
 6 risk of being infected while they're on an inpatient
 7 psychiatric unit.
 8 Q. Thank you, Professor.
 9 So I want to move now to infection control for those
 10 who remained in hospital, and you've described this at
 11 paragraphs 43 and 44, and you've said that infection
 12 control was particularly challenging for psychiatric
 13 patients. Could you expand on that a little, please?
 14 A. I think there were a number of challenges. There were
 15 challenges particularly for people who have been
 16 admitted and perhaps are very distressed or agitated,
 17 for them to adhere to the rules, be they about hand
 18 washing, be they about masks, be they about social
 19 distancing, when they're in a state of mental distress.
 20 I think there were also challenges for the staff in
 21 being able to manage those things, as well. And
 22 particularly on the wards, the need to keep places clean
 23 and to deal with PPE when it was available, to deal with
 24 testing; all challenges that wouldn't be a normal part
 25 of psychiatric inpatient care.

28

1 Q. So, I mean, is it right to say that the sort of care
2 you're needing to provide is often face-to-face group
3 activities, sometimes -- it's something you're in close
4 contact with the patients, and therefore any delays in
5 getting PPE, those sorts of things that you've described
6 in your report, they had a particular impact?

7 A. I think they would have a particular impact and we know
8 that from evidence given by surveys of -- large surveys
9 of mental health staff about their experiences of the
10 pandemic, and they found this really impeded their
11 ability to have therapeutic interactions with the people
12 they were caring for.

13 Q. Thank you, Professor.

14 In terms of, again, of lessons learnt from that, are
15 there any specific measures that you could think of that
16 could alleviate some of these challenges that you've
17 described about infection control for these sorts of
18 patients?

19 A. I think -- I mean, the things that were challenges as we
20 all went into the pandemic at the beginning, of things
21 like availability of testing, availability of
22 PPE training to use it -- it's not part of my usual
23 clinical practice to wear masks and aprons and
24 et cetera. So, the availability of those, the training,
25 would be really important.

29

1 Q. Thank you, Professor.
2 Can I move now to another topic, which is remote
3 services. Again, a very major change in service
4 provision, a rapid replacement of face-to-face care with
5 remote services.

6 You touch on particular challenges of delivering
7 mental health care remotely at paragraph 43, and then
8 you have -- and I don't need to take you to all of it,
9 but just to highlight -- you revisited it at section 3.7
10 of your report as well.

11 Is it fair to say that your broad conclusion on this
12 is that rapid transition to remote consultations was
13 seen as a success, but it wasn't suitable for all?

14 A. I think you're correct. There's national evidence and
15 local evidence, and evidence from staff that there was
16 a massive shift to this type of work. However, it was
17 new for many mental health workers, and it was felt to
18 at least fill some of the treatment gap to be able to
19 contact service users in the community.

20 However, there were major concerns about people,
21 particularly vulnerable people, and the suitability of
22 these types of consultations to deliver positive
23 therapeutic intervention for people. So it works for
24 some people but not for a large number of other people,
25 for a variety of reasons which I'm happy to talk about

30

1 if you want me to.

2 Q. I think you've touched on unequal access to technology
3 and adherence to medication. Are they some of the
4 issues that arise?

5 A. Exactly, technology, the ability to use it.
6 Confidentiality, finding a space to have those
7 consultations, both for the service user themselves to
8 have privacy, but also for the staff actually having
9 space to deliver those confidential interventions.

10 Q. And just in terms of the impact on the patients
11 themselves, Professor, we've sent you some extracts from
12 the Every Story Matters report on mental health and
13 wellbeing, and just to illustrate the potential impact,
14 get your thoughts on it, if we could have a slide up
15 with some extracts from accounts.

16 So this is from one or two people, the first says
17 that they sought therapy privately but came up against
18 a brick wall of therapists being unable to take them on
19 as a new client. They describe there no one thinking it
20 safe to see them in person, but it wasn't safe to see
21 them online because of severe PTSD.

22 Does that illustrate some of the issues that you
23 were facing?

24 A. Absolutely. All of these stories were really important
25 to moving about both the treatment gap but also about

31

1 how these types of remote consultations actually were
2 not found to be helpful for a large number of people.

3 Q. The second account there, they say they came close to
4 ending their life. They were admitted to hospital
5 following a suicide attempt and they felt that that
6 could have been avoided if they'd just been able to sit
7 down, talk to a skilled counsellor or therapist or in
8 a group environment. Does that resonate with you?

9 A. Absolutely. I think, again, this is an example where
10 people are not able -- were not able to access the care
11 and support face-to-face in the community during the
12 pandemic.

13 Q. Thank you, Professor.

14 Essentially, these accounts were illustrating some
15 of the issues that arose with this rapid change to
16 online service. Are there any sort of broad, I suppose,
17 rules? Does your research suggest to you there are some
18 circumstances in which remote therapy would always be
19 inappropriate?

20 A. I mean, I think several of the reports highlight the
21 fact that care needs to be personalised and agreed
22 between the clinician and the person using the services
23 and, for some people, it really doesn't work, and they
24 could be for the reasons we outlined just before, be
25 that access to technology, be that not being able to use

32

1 the technology, et cetera.

2 Q. So, in terms of any criteria, that you could consider to

3 determine whether it would be appropriate, it sounds as

4 if what you're saying is that it would be quite case

5 dependent or patient dependent?

6 A. It would be case dependent but I think we've highlighted

7 some of -- the types of people who have got particular

8 financial challenges, housing challenges, challenges

9 with technology, where it's really not going to be an

10 appropriate form of support for them.

11 Q. Were there any alternatives or safeguards that occurred

12 to you as you were experiencing these challenges that

13 you thought: ah, if we needed to do this again, this

14 might help with these challenges? Or was it all just

15 too challenging to think of an easy fix, as it were?

16 A. I'm not sure about an easy fix, but I do think the --

17 considering, as you said, the care plan for the

18 individual person, and sure, some people did report

19 finding telemedicine very helpful. As an example, some

20 people don't like it when mental health professionals

21 come to their home. They feel that it's intrusive.

22 Other people don't want to go to appointments. It costs

23 them time, it costs them money, actually, for them to

24 go. So there were some benefits for some people. But

25 I think, rather than generalise about groups of people,

33

1 it's about having the personalised approach and seeing

2 whether remote consultations will work for them

3 personally, and for the type of treatment plan that they

4 need.

5 Q. Thank you, Professor.

6 At this point, there are -- we are going to hear

7 tomorrow from the mental health charity Mind about some

8 of the initiatives, including digital peer networks.

9 And my Lady, I pause at this point to adduce

10 a number of statements from charities across the UK that

11 also contain information about both the positive and the

12 negative impact of the move to online services, only one

13 of which I'll ask you about, Professor, in a moment.

14 Those statements, my Lady, are from Scottish Action

15 for Mental Health, INQ000657975; Inspire Wellbeing,

16 INQ000588200; the Association of Mental Health

17 Providers, INQ000659785; and finally, the Scottish

18 Mental Health Partnership, INQ000660114.

19 For your part, Professor, as you've said, you have

20 noted some innovations that were positive. There's one,

21 again, it's a specific psychological intervention and

22 you describe it at paragraph 55. Is there anything from

23 that example, from the Manchester Crisis Resolution Team

24 that gives us an insight into how these services can be

25 made to work online?

34

1 A. I think this was an example of a crisis team offering

2 a particular form of therapy that they delivered, and

3 it's particularly interesting how people did move to

4 bring innovations in, and it sounded successful, as did

5 the other intervention in that paragraph, to try and

6 engage people in physical health interventions when they

7 had severe mental illness.

8 They're small studies, so I think they're hopeful,

9 but they perhaps are things that us in the mental health

10 research community need to think more about, about

11 understanding their effectiveness and acceptability to

12 people for any future lessons learned.

13 Q. Just finally, you confirm that according to the research

14 that you've looked at, the rapid transition to digital

15 services is not just something we saw in the UK, but

16 that's an international development in this area?

17 A. Absolutely, yes, yes.

18 Q. It's perhaps worth pausing to say, as well, that at the

19 end of your report you say that all of your findings at

20 section 5 applied across the board. Does that mean,

21 essentially, the trends you've explained about mental

22 health services, they're consistent with the

23 international picture?

24 A. They are consistent with the international literature

25 particularly decreases in inpatient admissions and

35

1 closure of community services, or certainly decreases of

2 community services. Perhaps we were better at

3 maintaining services than some other countries in the

4 international evidence.

5 Q. Thank you.

6 Professor, I'm going to take the next part of your

7 report from paragraphs 58 to 59 quite quickly -- that's

8 also section 3.6 of your report -- and what you're doing

9 there we've already touched on, the impact on staffing

10 in the workforce and my Lady's asked you a question

11 about it. We've also heard about the impact of pandemic

12 on UK healthcare systems in Module 3. But just in terms

13 of mental health services, it's right that you identify

14 factors like illness, care-giving responsibilities, and

15 some mental health staff being required to redeploy?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. And you describe the adverse impact on staff morale,

18 stress, burnout, and exhaustion; is that correct?

19 A. Correct.

20 **MS RAHMAN:** And again, my Lady, to note that the Every Story

21 Matters report has a section on the impact on the mental

22 health workforce with accounts from staff.

23 I'm not going to take you to any more of those

24 accounts, Professor, but you go on to say that that

25 issue with staff severely impacted on the delivery of

36

1 mental health services to patients. You say that --
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. -- at paragraph 58. Perhaps the reason is obvious, but
 4 could you just explain why, why those things impacted
 5 particularly on patients?
 6 A. I mean, particularly because some staff were shielding.
 7 Often, in the early stages of the pandemic where people
 8 were having to isolate when they had symptoms, we had
 9 huge reductions in staff numbers. So this whole range
 10 of factors meant there was decreased capacity to deliver
 11 care to people with severe mental illness.
 12 Q. Thank you. Professor, the next section of your report,
 13 section 3.10, touches on specific disorders affected by
 14 those changes. I'm going to ask you about couple of
 15 them. The first is eating disorders.
 16 A. Mm-hm.
 17 Q. And it's right that there were already issues with long
 18 waiting times for treatment and beds?
 19 A. Correct.
 20 Q. But again, the research you've looked at suggested that
 21 that was exacerbated during the pandemic?
 22 A. Exactly.
 23 Q. And you've said also that the evidence suggests that
 24 some were being admitted to general hospitals rather
 25 than specialist units?

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1 A. That's right, there's evidence for that.
 2 Q. What would be the impact of that on a patient with an
 3 eating disorder?
 4 A. I mean, particularly not receiving the specialist eating
 5 disorder care that would normally be provided to them.
 6 Not to say they wouldn't receive any appropriate
 7 treatment, but perhaps less contact with the staff who
 8 were specifically trained in dealing with eating
 9 disorder care.
 10 Q. You did flag one what you've described as a "novel"
 11 treatment at paragraph 65 of your report, from the
 12 south west, and you say it's enhanced cognitive
 13 behavioural therapy, and I think you're saying that that
 14 study showed that that seemed to get a better outcome
 15 than traditional inpatient treatment. Are you able to
 16 say what it was about that approach that led to that?
 17 A. No, I think -- I mean, I think it was -- again, it was
 18 a small study, but an interesting innovation that came
 19 about during the pandemic that was aimed to help to
 20 decrease the need for inpatient care, so -- and seemed
 21 to improve people's outcomes. So something -- perhaps
 22 a positive innovation during the pandemic.
 23 Q. Thank you.
 24 Moving on to psychosis, that's the other topic I'll
 25 ask you about. You address it at paragraphs 67, 68, and

38

1 you note some research suggesting there was an increase
 2 in first episodes of psychosis; is that correct?
 3 A. That's correct. Yes. These are new presentations of
 4 people with a psychotic disorder.
 5 Q. So I'm going to deal with this point in a little bit
 6 more detail. You note that before the pandemic, there
 7 was evidence that the rate of the presentations was higher
 8 in black Caribbean and black African groups; is that
 9 correct?
 10 A. That's correct, there's well-established evidence for
 11 that.
 12 Q. So a gap between those groups and white individuals?
 13 A. Correct.
 14 Q. That was already a feature?
 15 A. Yes, it was already a concern, yes.
 16 Q. Now, looking at what happened during the pandemic,
 17 you've noted one study, and I'll take you to that in
 18 a moment, where, would it be right to say, the gap
 19 increased during the pandemic for black individuals?
 20 A. Yeah, that's correct. It did increase. So there was
 21 a greater inequality, a larger number of people from
 22 black ethnic backgrounds who presented with psychosis.
 23 Q. And also -- and again, we will look at this figure just
 24 in a moment -- quite a significant increase in Asian
 25 ethnic groups as well?

39

1 A. That's right, there was a --
 2 Q. So let's just have a quick look at that chart.
 3 It's figure 12 on page 27 of your report.
 4 And I'll summarise and you can tell me if I get it
 5 right afterwards. It goes over six years, from 2018/19
 6 onwards. The blue column indicates "White British", the
 7 orange column, "White Other", of the green column
 8 "Asian", and the pink column, "Black" individuals; is
 9 that correct?
 10 A. That's correct.
 11 Q. And within each column at the top is a vertical line
 12 with two ends, a bit like an extended capital I, and
 13 that's the confidence interval?
 14 A. It is.
 15 Q. So the true figure could be anywhere between the top and
 16 the bottom, but you have, for instance, a sort of 95%
 17 confidence that it's somewhere there?
 18 A. Exactly. That's the area of certainty for the result.
 19 Q. And you take the midpoint as the top of the column?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. So would I be right to say that the chart shows the
 22 highest incident rate for black individuals was in the
 23 years 2020 to '21 and 2021 to '22?
 24 A. Yes, that's exactly what it shows.
 25 Q. So, around the time of the pandemic, essentially?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And there's a significant widening of a gap between the
 3 black individuals that were reviewed and the
 4 white individuals in the second year in particular?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And for Asians, again, it seems it's in the second year
 7 you've got a very significant widening of the gap
 8 between them and the white individuals?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Thank you, Professor.

11 Going back to your report at paragraph 68, pausing
 12 to think about the implications of that, you say that
 13 structural inequalities, including discrimination,
 14 substandard living, working conditions, that may be an
 15 explanation for what that study found.
 16 A. Yes, I think there's a wide body of evidence looking at
 17 this increased rate of psychosis in people from black
 18 ethnic groups, and these are some of the factors that
 19 are known to contribute to psychosis which might be more
 20 common in people from black ethnic groups.
 21 Q. We're going to ask Professor Das-Munshi about what she
 22 says about it, and we're also hearing from other experts
 23 on structural inequalities.
 24 A. Exactly.
 25 Q. Professors Bécares and Nazroo, who you refer to in your

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1 report.
 2 There's also a reference in one of the statements we
 3 sent to you, Dania Hanif of the Association of Mental
 4 Health Providers -- just to summarise, I don't need to
 5 take you to it. That also provides further evidence
 6 about higher rates of mental health detentions amongst
 7 black people, and it says that in 2020 to 2021,
 8 individuals living in the most deprived areas of the UK
 9 were twice as likely to be in contact with mental health
 10 services compared to those in the least deprived areas,
 11 and it describes factors like job insecurity,
 12 homelessness, discrimination, displacement, being linked
 13 to increased risk of mental health.

14 Are they the sorts of points that you're referring
 15 to when you talk about structural inequalities?
 16 A. They're exactly the kind of points, yeah, and there's
 17 well-established research around those inequalities.
 18 Q. Thank you, Professor.

19 Section 4 of your report. Again, I'm going to take
 20 this really quite shortly. You've already explained
 21 that massive transformation of services during the
 22 pandemic had an impact on patients, and we've also
 23 talked about the treatment gap. So you've got people
 24 presenting with more serious symptoms. So we see more
 25 people with severe mental illnesses seen after the

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1 earlier waves of the pandemic.
 2 In terms of continuity of care in this section of
 3 your report, we've already discussed issues such as
 4 remote services, PPE. Are there any other particular
 5 challenges you'd like to highlight, for instance,
 6 I think you've referenced segregated patients, guidance,
 7 difficulty with referrals.
 8 A. I think the other thing that people particularly mention
 9 is continuity of care and it's something that comes up
 10 outside of the pandemic, but something that people feel
 11 is -- has been lacking in their mental health care. And
 12 I think we've touched on the -- on some of the
 13 tele-mental health not being felt to be useful or
 14 helpful for people, and people needing to seek help
 15 elsewhere other than mental health services was reported
 16 in some of the studies.
 17 Q. You've dealt in a lot of detail in your report about the
 18 disruption of access to medications specifically. Is it
 19 right to say, in broad terms, the challenges were in
 20 terms of monitoring and lack of flexibility around
 21 essentially caring for people and prescribing their
 22 medications?
 23 A. Yeah -- yes, and again, I think particularly at the
 24 beginning of the pandemic, people were having difficulty
 25 contacting services in order to discuss medication, be

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1 that in the general practice or be that secondary care
 2 mental health services. And then the lack of
 3 flexibility or availability of clinicians to then
 4 consult with people to discuss medication management and
 5 monitoring.
 6 Q. Thank you. And at the end of the section, paragraph 81,
 7 Professor, you touch on the fact -- again, it's
 8 something we'll ask Professor Das-Munshi about --
 9 there's a higher rate of physical comorbidities amongst
 10 people with severe mental illnesses.
 11 A. Exactly.
 12 Q. A particular point, I just want to ask you about, which
 13 you make, you say that this meant that people with
 14 severe mental illnesses also have a higher rate of
 15 morbidities that make them clinically vulnerable?
 16 A. Absolutely.
 17 Q. And you raise in particular the fear of infection
 18 following shielding advice and I think you say,
 19 Professor, you think that might have played a particular
 20 part in people not presenting for the care they need, as
 21 well as cancelled appointments?
 22 A. Absolutely. I mean, we've seen a whole range of excess
 23 physical health problems like respiratory -- long-term
 24 problems or diabetes that make people vulnerable and
 25 potentially therefore in this frightening time for all

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1 of us, more reluctant to seek help.

2 Q. So you you've got people who have got a need not only
3 for mental health care but a real need for physical
4 health care and the fear of infection --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- or following the advice is leading to, again, what
7 you describe as a large hidden backlog of unmet need and
8 long-term implications?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Thank you, Professor.

11 Just couple more questions about the clinically
12 vulnerable and the clinically extremely vulnerable,
13 then. Is there anything specific to them that you can
14 share in terms of access or provision of mental health
15 care, for instance, are you aware of any specific
16 evidence that they were deterred from seeking care due
17 to concerns about PPE, ventilation, other infection
18 control measures? Was there anything about that or --
19 to your knowledge?

20 A. Not research evidence that I came across relating to
21 that, but if you're asking about people being extremely
22 vulnerable, many of the definitions of people being
23 vulnerable, such as homelessness or house insecurity,
24 domestic violence, some people who were really
25 struggling with any type of functioning in terms of

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1 their daily care, those type of factors are much more
2 commonly seen in people with severe mental illness and
3 so would make them much more vulnerable, if that answers
4 your --

5 Q. And in terms of what might be done, I suppose, in any
6 future pandemic, can you think of any specific lessons
7 to be learnt about those who were at the highest
8 clinical risk to reduce the impact on their mental
9 health from the sorts of issues that you've described?

10 A. I think, if we had time again, we've learnt that people
11 with extremely severe presentations, people who were
12 much more vulnerable, that they need to be prioritised.
13 So you might kind of think about it in terms of grouping
14 people and making sure that those extremely vulnerable
15 people were not left behind from receiving both mental
16 health and physical health care and support for their
17 social vulnerabilities.

18 Q. Thank you, Professor. Just a few points to close my
19 questions. At the outset of your evidence, you spoke
20 about certain data gaps, which you set out at section 6.
21 You found research on service provision for those with
22 eating disorders and psychosis during the pandemic,
23 which we've talked about. However, there was an absence
24 of evidence on severe obsessive compulsive disorders,
25 severe anxiety, depression, or PTSD.

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1 What explains the absence of any research on those
2 topics, in your view?

3 A. In my view, it was partly because a lot of the research
4 was very broadly about mental health services across the
5 piece rather than looking at specific diagnostic groups.
6 Perhaps that -- it's also a factor that sometimes these
7 diagnoses are not well recorded in some of the -- some
8 of our healthcare records, but also, I think a lot of
9 the research questions were around what happened to
10 services rather than what happened to specific
11 diagnostic groups, so the data just weren't collected.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 Turning, finally, to section 7 of your report, that
14 sets out some very detailed lessons to be learnt from
15 the pandemic, and you set those out under four main
16 headings: preparedness, continuity of care during
17 a public health crisis, recovery, and cross-cutting
18 principles.

19 Professor, I've already suffered some specific
20 points for learning, for instance in relation to
21 infection control, online learning, the clinically
22 vulnerable. Are there any other specific points that
23 you'd wish to highlight in terms of the lessons learned?

24 A. I think the major concern was about parity of mental
25 health services and protecting them, but also making

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1 sure that they had the best chance of continuing to
2 deliver appropriate care, and particularly access to the
3 things that we've -- were discussed around PPE and
4 testing. That feels particularly important.

5 **MS RAHMAN:** Well, we'll be hearing some more about that from
6 Professor Das-Munshi.

7 Professor, that closes my questions but there are
8 some other questions for you from others here.

9 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much, Ms Rahman.
10 Ms Beattie is over that way, Professor.

11 Questions from MS BEATTIE

12 **MS BEATTIE:** Professor Osborn, good morning. I ask
13 questions on behalf of national Disabled People's
14 Organisations.

15 A. Good morning.

16 Q. In your report, you explain that the Coronavirus
17 Act 2020 altered the safeguards in place for mental
18 health detention, extended periods of -- permitted
19 periods of detention and made it easier to apply for
20 a compulsory treatment order. And you also tell us, and
21 you've given evidence this morning, that the caseload
22 mix in the first waves of the pandemic did change so
23 that we saw more involuntary detention rather than
24 voluntary inpatient crisis in community services.

25 Disabled People's Organisations are concerned that,

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1 as a result, disabled people were detained where they
 2 might have remained in the community, detained for
 3 a longer period, and that this contributed to increased
 4 institutionalisation of disabled people. How did the
 5 changes to the statutory provisions and safeguards
 6 impact services and people with mental health illness
 7 who needed support?

8 **A.** Thank you. My evidence -- just to take the second point
 9 about people being detained for longer, we didn't find
 10 that in terms of the mental health admissions, but I can
 11 imagine that that would be a concern for some
 12 individuals, particularly if there was a lack of
 13 available community care for them. So I share that
 14 concern.

15 I think that the revisions around the Mental Health
 16 Act that were proposed that you reference, they weren't
 17 actually put into place. So there were some real
 18 concerns, I think across the whole mental health
 19 community, that there were suggestions that people could
 20 be detained perhaps with less -- with, for example, less
 21 protections around detention. They were proposed, but
 22 they're not enacted. So I think there's a section of
 23 the report that talks about that, about them not being
 24 in place.

25 **MS BEATTIE:** Just to clarify -- my Lady, I realise I have

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1 limited time -- but it's right, isn't it, that they were
 2 brought in in Scotland and Northern Ireland? And
 3 I think your report addresses that in paragraphs 48
 4 and 49. It's not a memory test, Professor Osborn, but
 5 is it right that we did see those measures in those
 6 jurisdictions and some changes in how compulsory
 7 treatment and detention was implemented there?

8 **A.** Yeah, I think our report highlights, though, the
 9 concerns about those and that they were withdrawn, and
 10 that that should be -- the recommendation was that they
 11 should not be included in future responses to the
 12 pandemic.

13 **MS BEATTIE:** Thank you, my Lady.

14 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you, Ms Beattie.

15 Ms Sergides.

16 **Questions from MS SERGIDES**

17 **MS SERGIDES:** There we go. Can you hear me?

18 **A.** I can.

19 **Q.** Good morning, Professor. You were asked questions
 20 earlier this morning about data gaps and you highlighted
 21 that one of the difficulties is that research about
 22 mental health services across the piece, if you like,
 23 rather than looking at specific diagnostic groups --
 24 sorry, I should have introduced myself, I am
 25 Ms Sergides, I represent the Domestic Abuse Group.

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1 Just turning to that point specifically, if I may,
 2 when considering access to mental health services, do
 3 you agree, therefore, that there is a critical need for
 4 gender-disaggregated data as well as it being broken
 5 down by both ethnicity and gender? So just focusing
 6 really on the data gaps.

7 **A.** Absolutely. And a real call for the availability of
 8 those data, both in terms of gender and ethnic group but
 9 also as having better data quality which is one of the
 10 real challenges, actually, in, particularly, secondary
 11 care mental health research, and including, I think,
 12 data also from the non-NHS, from the voluntary care
 13 sector, to be able to understand what works for people
 14 and what doesn't work.

15 **Q.** Thank you.

16 I'm going to turn to a slightly different topic.
 17 Again, in your evidence and I think in your report you
 18 discuss the benefits and disadvantages of remote
 19 consultations, I note in particular at paragraph 56 and
 20 57 of your report, and the impact on health
 21 inequalities. And again, just now in evidence, you said
 22 that the types of factors much more commonly seen in
 23 people with SMIs are homelessness and domestic violence,
 24 people functioning in terms of daily care, but make sure
 25 that extremely vulnerable people don't get left behind,

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1 that was one of the points you made.

2 The DA Group's experience is that some perpetrators
 3 of domestic abuse control their victim's access to
 4 technology, any technological communications. And so my
 5 question is, do you agree that being required to stay at
 6 home and subject to a perpetrator's controlling
 7 technological communications, makes it hard to contact
 8 existing mental health support or make new contact with
 9 that support?

10 **A.** I completely agree. It's a major concern, and one in
 11 the research, but also in my clinical experience, that
 12 making sure people are safe from the perpetrators is
 13 key, and many of these interventions are therefore not
 14 suitable to support people --

15 **Q.** And therefore --

16 **A.** -- or the victims.

17 **Q.** -- I'm grateful. Just turning to the point you make
 18 therefore in the report, do you agree therefore that
 19 this would have further exacerbated health inequality?

20 **A.** I do.

21 **MS SERGIDES:** I'm grateful.

22 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much indeed.

23 Now, Mr Pezzani, he is over that way, Professor.
 24 Could you please make sure, you have quite a soft voice,
 25 that you keep speaking into the mic --

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1 A. I will.

2 **LADY HALLETT:** -- and Mr Pezzani won't object if you have
3 your back to him.

4 **Questions from MR PEZZANI**

5 **MR PEZZANI:** No, not at all.

6 Good morning, Professor, I ask questions on behalf
7 of Mind, the mental health charity.

8 My questions are threefold but they all relate to
9 the same section of your report, which you have already
10 touched on in your evidence. It's paragraphs 18 to 22,
11 where you describe distinct patterns in inpatient
12 admissions and discharges through the waves of the
13 pandemic and in particular in relation to the first
14 wave.

15 You say that there were relatively fewer admissions
16 in the first wave and an increase in rapid discharges.
17 You mention at paragraph 21 the possibility that the
18 reduction in admissions could be due to changes to
19 clinical thresholds for admissions and discharge?

20 **A. (Witness nodded)**

21 **Q.** And you say that it is possible that a result of
22 decreased availability of community services explained
23 decreased detection of crisis from non-admission or
24 rapid discharge.

25 So, for the first of my questions: were these

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1 changes, in your view, driven by pandemic-related
2 exigencies, or individual clinical need, or both?

3 **A.** I would say both of those. I think there was a need to
4 protect patients from admission that might put them at
5 risk of infection, but I think -- but there were also
6 pressures on the service. So I think each of those
7 factors that you mentioned combined together to affect
8 both admissions and rapid discharges.

9 **Q.** Thank you, Professor.

10 My second question is, where community services were
11 attenuated at the same time as there were changes to the
12 rate and timing of admissions and discharges, so that
13 suitable community aftercare might not have been
14 available or as available as it had been before the
15 pandemic --

16 **A. (Witness nodded)**

17 **Q.** -- can you assist on the consequences for people with
18 severe mental illnesses of non-admission or rapid
19 discharge into that relative absence of aftercare?

20 **A.** I don't have research evidence on that, but I think, of
21 course, there's very strong evidence that people with
22 severe mental illness do well from having interventions
23 which involve continuity, seeing professionals, peer
24 support, all of those things in the community. And the
25 lack of those, we know, puts them more at risk of

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1 a recurrence, a relapse of their severe mental illness
2 symptoms.

3 **Q.** Thank you. And my third and last question, and you said
4 in answer to my previous question, "We don't have
5 research evidence on that", are you able to assist on
6 whether, or to what extent we have reliable data on what
7 happened in this period of time to people with severe
8 mental illnesses who either were not admitted when
9 clinically they might have been assessed to need
10 admission, or who were discharged prematurely?

11 **A.** The only evidence was a small study we referenced
12 earlier, which suggested that people who were discharged
13 did not have very severe relapses, but that does -- that
14 study did not have good evidence on the service user
15 experience, it wasn't measuring service users' mental
16 health, so I can't give you any stronger evidence. But
17 clearly we heard from many staff, and also from service
18 user interviews, that they felt that they were not
19 supported during that time, and they reported concerns
20 about their mental health during that period.

21 **MR PEZZANI:** I'm very grateful.

22 Thank you, Professor.

23 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr Pezzani.

24 Professor, that concludes the questions we have for
25 you. Thank you very much indeed both for all the effort

55

1 that went into your report -- and I think also your
2 colleague assisted, could you thank her for me too,
3 please -- and for coming along today to help us.

4 I suspect in your clinical work you don't have the
5 easiest of jobs at the best of times, but it must have
6 been particularly tough during the pandemic, so thank
7 you for all that you did.

8 **THE WITNESS:** Thank you.

9 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much. We shall return
10 at 11.30, please.

11 (11.14 am)

(A short break)

13 (11.30 am)

14 **LADY HALLETT:** Ms Blackwell.

15 **MS BLACKWELL:** My Lady, may I call the next witnesses,
16 please, Professor Clare Bambra and Professor Sir Michael
17 Marmot.

18 **PROFESSOR MICHAEL MARMOT (affirmed)**

19 **PROFESSOR CLARE BAMBRA (sworn)**

20 **Questions from LEAD COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY for MODULE 10**

21 **LADY HALLETT:** Welcome back, Professors, good to have you
22 back and thank you for your continuing help with the
23 Inquiry.

24 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Thank you, my Lady.

25 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you.

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1 Professor Bambra, Professor Marmot, you should each
 2 have before you a copy to your report which bears the
 3 reference number INQ000588215. Can you each confirm,
 4 please, that that is the expert report, the joint report
 5 that you have prepared for Module 10 of the Inquiry.

6 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** It is, yes.

7 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** It is.

8 **Q.** Thank you. And can you also confirm that the facts
 9 stated within the report are true to the best of your
 10 knowledge and belief?

11 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes.

12 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** They are.

13 **Q.** Thank you. And that any opinions that you have stated
 14 in the report represent your true and complete
 15 professional opinions?

16 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Correct.

17 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yes.

18 **Q.** Thank you. Very much. You last gave evidence back in
 19 June of 2023, and I just want to remind ourselves,
 20 please, of your professional qualifications.

21 I appreciate we've been through this before, but for
 22 those who were not present on the previous occasion:
 23 Professor Bambra, you are a professor of public health,
 24 population health -- at the Population Health Sciences
 25 Institute in the faculty of medical sciences at

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1 Newcastle University; you are an elected fellow of the
 2 Academy of Medical Sciences; the Academy of Social
 3 Sciences; the Faculty of Public Health; and the German
 4 national academy of sciences; you are a senior
 5 investigator in the National Institute for Health and
 6 Care Research at the Academic College; and an academic
 7 co-director of Health Equity North, as well as a member
 8 of the World Health Organization's Scientific Advisory
 9 Group on health equity in Europe.

10 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes.

11 **Q.** Thank you.

12 Professor Marmot, you are a professor of
 13 epidemiology and public health and director of The
 14 Institute of Health Equity at University College London;
 15 an elected fellow of the Faculty of Public Health, the
 16 Academy of Medical Sciences; an honorary fellow of the
 17 Royal Society of Public Health, and the British Academy;
 18 and a Foreign Associate Member of the Institute of
 19 Medicine. In 2000 you were awarded a knighthood, and in
 20 2023 made a Companion of Honour for services to public
 21 health. You chaired the 2008 World Health Organization
 22 Commission on Social Determinants of Health; and led the
 23 seminal UK Government commissioned Marmot Review: Fair
 24 Society Healthy Lives in 2010; as well as the Health
 25 Equity in England: the Marmot Review 10 Years On in

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1 2020, and Build Back Fairer: the Covid-19 Marmot Review,
 2 also in 2020.

3 And more recently, you have been a member of the
 4 Global Council on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics, which
 5 is a council composed of global experts proposing
 6 evidence-based solutions for addressing inequalities
 7 linked to both AIDS and pandemics, looking at how
 8 inequalities affect the course of a pandemic and how
 9 pandemics exacerbate inequalities.

10 And we shall return to that piece of work at the end
 11 of our evidence, if we may.

12 In Module 1 you prepared a report in which you
 13 examined health inequalities and the social determinants
 14 of health in the lead-up to the Covid-19 pandemic, and
 15 you concluded that the UK entered the pandemic with its
 16 public services depleted, with health improvements
 17 stalled, health inequalities increased, and health among
 18 the poorest people in a state of decline.

19 In this follow-up work for Module 10, you have
 20 provided an overview of trends in socioeconomic
 21 inequalities in some of the key social determinants of
 22 health during the pandemic period, namely income,
 23 poverty, debt, and housing.

24 You then examine the socioeconomic inequalities in
 25 Covid-19 mortality, in life expectancy, and in healthy

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1 life expectancy, and you go on to explore protections
 2 and mitigations that were put in place and how those
 3 affected society, and, finally, you make recommendations
 4 for improvements in the future.

5 One point to make before we go into the detail is
 6 that you have told us that it's often the case that data
 7 and studies are only available for certain areas of
 8 the UK, and so your assistance is really determined by
 9 the data that you are able to, and have been able to,
 10 obtain; is that right?

11 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** That's correct, and it varies for the
 12 different outcomes, and we've made it clear on each
 13 occasion whether there were studies available for each
 14 of the devolved nations, for example, and stated where
 15 we were unable to find any.

16 **Q.** Thank you. And we'll come on at the end of your
 17 evidence to discuss what improvements should be made in
 18 terms of data collection.

19 According to the World Health Organization, health
 20 inequalities are a result of disparities in the social
 21 determinants of health, the conditions in which we are
 22 born, grow, live, work and age. Is that right?

23 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** That's correct.

24 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yeah.

25 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** I actually wrote that, but yes.

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1 Q. And in your 2010 review, Professor Marmot, did you
 2 outline six key social determinants of health in the UK?
 3 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Absolutely. We drew both on the World
 4 Health Organization commission report that I chaired,
 5 and a panel of experts in the UK.
 6 Q. Thank you. And those six key social determinants
 7 are: early child development; education and lifelong
 8 learning; employment and working conditions; income and
 9 cost of living; healthy and sustainable places in which
 10 to live and work; and prevention?

11 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Absolutely. May I say we've now added
 12 two?

13 Q. Yes.

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** To tackle racism, discrimination and
 15 their outcomes; and pursue environmental sustainability
 16 and health equity together.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 Professor Bambra, you have described how the
 19 Covid-19 pandemic was a "syndemic". Can you plain to us
 20 what you mean by that term, please.

21 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, the syndemic is a way of referring
 22 to the fact that the virus interacted with the existing
 23 social inequalities in the social determinants of health
 24 that Sir Michael has just outlined.

25 Q. Thank you. And are you also of the view that it's

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1 important to note that health inequalities are often
 2 experienced intersectionally?
 3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, in our evidence for Module 1, we
 4 described how people can have different positions of
 5 privilege and subordination in society. Would you like
 6 me to add to that?

7 Q. Yes, please.

8 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes. So, for example, you can experience
 9 a class advantage or an educational advantage, by going
 10 to university, for example, and that leads to health
 11 advantages on average over your life course. On the
 12 other hand, you might experience disadvantage in terms
 13 of -- by being a member of an ethnic minority or by
 14 being a woman or from another socially -- social
 15 minority group, such as LGBTQ, for example.

16 Q. Right. So when we're considering health determinants,
 17 it's important to look at the full picture and to
 18 assess, on a case-by-case basis, what level of
 19 intersectionality there is?

20 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes. In this report for today, we were
 21 asked particularly on socioeconomic inequality but also,
 22 where possible, where the data showed, for example,
 23 intersections with genders, so if there's variations
 24 between men and women, or other aspects such as
 25 homelessness, domestic abuse, and so on.

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1 Q. Thank you very much.

2 So let's turn to look at your evidence on social and
 3 economic inequalities during the pandemic, and I'm going
 4 to come to you first, please, Professor Marmot.

5 At paragraph 7 in your report, you tell us that:

6 "Income inequality in the UK experienced a small
 7 reduction in 2020/2021, as the lowest income households
 8 experienced a small increase in income whilst those
 9 above them had a small decrease."

10 And you tell us that the most likely cause of that
 11 was the Universal Credit uplift. But then, after that
 12 small increase, things corrected themselves, and in fact
 13 you saw a trend the other way?

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** You could use the word "correct
 15 themselves" if you think the magnitude of income
 16 inequality that we have is the right level. I don't.
 17 Then you could say they "corrected themselves". They
 18 reverted to previous patterns --

19 Q. Reverted, perhaps that's the better phrase. Yes.

20 2021 into 2022 and, going further forwards again,
 21 2022 to 2023, is it right -- and this comes from page --
 22 paragraph 84 of your report -- that UK households,
 23 except for the highest fifth, experienced a decrease in
 24 their real incomes before housing costs? And in
 25 relative terms, that was highest for the bottom fifth

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1 households.

2 First of all, can you explain why housing costs
 3 after so important in terms of any measurement of
 4 increase or decrease of income?

5 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yeah, particularly in England, from the
 6 home nations, and particularly in London, housing costs
 7 are a major contributor. If you measure poverty, for
 8 example, before housing costs and after housing costs,
 9 you get higher levels of poverty after housing costs,
 10 and it seems to me one should -- I prefer to look at the
 11 after housing costs measure, because that's real, that's
 12 what people have to pay. And that's much closer to the
 13 real standard of living, and you see, as I say,
 14 particularly in London and the south east, that poverty
 15 after housing costs is much higher than the before
 16 housing costs.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 You go on at paragraph 86 to talk about trends in
 19 the Gini coefficient. Can you explain to us, please,
 20 what that is?

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yeah, I'll explain it and then say why
 22 there's a slight paradox. If you look at the incomes of
 23 every individual in the population, then if we all -- if
 24 10% of the people had 10% of the income and 20% of
 25 people had 20%, and 30% had 30%, the Gini coefficient

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1 would be zero, the departure from equality would be
 2 zero. But if Elon Musk had all the income in the world
 3 and the rest of us had nothing, then it would be 100%,
 4 it would be a total departure from that line of
 5 equality.

6 So it's a measure of the individual inequalities,
 7 departing from the line of equality, the lower the Gini,
 8 the more equal the income is distributed; the higher the
 9 Gini, the more unequal.

10 The slight paradox is that everything else in our
 11 report, we talk about quintiles or deciles, we talk
 12 about groups, not individuals. So it's a slight
 13 contradiction that we measure income inequality as
 14 individual differences, but we measure health
 15 inequalities as group inequalities.

16 **Q.** Right. Thank you for that explanation. And did you
 17 see, in relation to the Gini coefficient, a similar
 18 pattern over the UK, in terms of what was happening in
 19 England and the devolved nations?

20 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** By and large. The differences don't
 21 merit too much concentration.

22 **Q.** Right. Thank you.

23 Turning to poverty, food insecurity and destitution.
 24 Relative household poverty rates measured both before
 25 and after housing costs, then. Again, slightly

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1 decreased at the beginning of the pandemic, but then
 2 increased again as the pandemic developed?

3 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Exactly right, and we think the Universal
 4 Credit uplift played an important role. £20 a week, if
 5 you're below the relative poverty line, is really very
 6 important, and we think that was part of the decline.
 7 The poverty level -- we're not supposed to talk about
 8 children, families with children --

9 **Q.** Yes.

10 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** -- the poverty level was around -- after
 11 housing costs was around 31%. 31% of families with
 12 children's were living in relative poverty in the UK.
 13 That is worth dwelling on. That went down a small
 14 degree in the first year of the pandemic, but when the
 15 uplift to Universal Credit was removed, the poverty
 16 level went up again.

17 **Q.** And similarly, in terms of food poverty, and you deal
 18 with this at paragraph 11 of your report, official
 19 statistics indicated that the proportion of people
 20 living in food-insecure households in the UK initially
 21 decreased from 8% to 6% in 2020-2021, but then slightly
 22 increased to 7% in 2021-2022, and then jumped to 11%,
 23 that's 7.2 million, in 2022-2023. Does that show the
 24 same trend that you are describing?

25 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Very much so. And we quote the Trussell
 66

1 Trust that has a higher level, and I think that's
 2 because they measured food insecurity in a slightly more
 3 expansive way, being hungry, not being able to satisfy
 4 your hunger because of cost, eating smaller
 5 proportions -- smaller portions. Skipping meals. And
 6 when you measure it in that slightly more expansive way,
 7 11 million people, said the Trussell Trust, in food
 8 insecurity.

9 **Q.** As of 2022-2023?

10 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yes.

11 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

12 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Could I just add, as well, that the
 13 increase, the jump up into 2022/2023 might also reflect
 14 other things happening in that period, for example
 15 that's the beginning of the inflation on food influenced
 16 by the war on Ukraine and also after the pandemic
 17 there's an increase in economic inactivity, so the jump
 18 happens, but it's not necessarily entirely pandemic
 19 attributable.

20 **Q.** Yes, thank you very much.

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** May I add something from our global
 22 report --

23 **Q.** Yes, please.

24 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** -- on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics. We
 25 have a graph in the evidence we compiled for that

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1 report. In the first year of the pandemic, the wealth
 2 of the world's billionaires increased by \$5 trillion.
 3 At the same time, if you look at the trend of people in
 4 the world with food insecurity, it was going up. And at
 5 the same time as the wealth of the billionaires
 6 increased by \$5 trillion, there were 2.5 billion people
 7 in food insecurity. Divide one by the other, you get
 8 \$2,000 per person. If that \$5 trillion increase in
 9 wealth had been applied to doing something about food
 10 insecurity, you could have spent \$2,000 per
 11 food-insecure person in the world.

12 So what we're seeing in the UK, in microcosm, we're
 13 seeing globally in a much bigger way.

14 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

15 Professor Bambra, I'd like to come to you to ask you
 16 about savings, debt and financial difficulties during
 17 the pandemic, please.

18 At paragraph 12 of the report you tell us that
 19 survey data found that increases in debt and rent
 20 arrears, erosion of savings, and severe financial
 21 difficulties were most likely to be experienced by those
 22 in the most deprived fifth of neighbourhoods across all
 23 four UK nations; is that right?

24 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, that's correct, and we've taken that
 25 from the various sources that we were able to find for

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1 the different countries. It's difficult to fully
 2 explain why, other than obviously people wouldn't have
 3 had as much savings, for example, to draw on, but also
 4 there's some evidence that suggests that it might be to
 5 do with the five-week wait that's part of the Universal
 6 Credit system.

7 **Q.** Yes.

8 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** So people would have to drain what small
 9 savings they had. Or there's evidence, for example,
 10 from Ulster University's report saying that people were
 11 having to go to, you know, loans -- debt collector
 12 people, to support them through that period, which
 13 happens in, you know, what we might call normal times,
 14 but also was particularly exacerbated in that period
 15 because, obviously, of the employment changes.

16 **Q.** Yes, it's perhaps worth noting that although the
 17 Universal Credit uplift helped many, as you've just
 18 said, Professor Bambra, it took a while to take effect.

19 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes.

20 **Q.** And so for that period of time people were still
 21 struggling.

22 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, and not everyone was entitled to the
 23 Universal Credit.

24 **Q.** Yes, of course.

25 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Including, for example, people on legacy
 69

1 benefits but also other groups who wouldn't be entitled
 2 to state support regardless.

3 **Q.** Yes. Certain migrants and groups like that?

4 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Potentially.

5 **Q.** Yes.

6 You also note, in terms of financial difficulties,
 7 there were regional inequalities evident particularly in
 8 England. For example, respondents to the survey in
 9 Yorkshire and the Humber, and the east of England and
 10 the West Midlands were more likely to have experienced
 11 a negative financial outcome at the beginning of the
 12 pandemic, April to May 2020, than those in the rest of
 13 the UK.

14 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, we draw on data there from a study
 15 by Cross and colleagues where they analysed the
 16 Understanding Society study, which is a large UK-wide
 17 survey of around 40,000 people, and we present further
 18 data showing the extent of this in table 1.

19 **Q.** Thank you. I'm going to come to table 1 now in fact,
 20 please.

21 Can we display INQ000588215 -- thank you very much,
 22 you're ahead of me. Page 23 of your report.

23 Can you tell us, please, Professor Bambra, what we
 24 can see in this table?

25 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, so this is data showing different
 70

1 measures of financial problems, what they call negative
 2 financial outcomes during that very early period of the
 3 first wave and obviously during the first lockdown. And
 4 you can see that for each of those outcomes, the column
 5 there for the most deprived, number 1, of the quintiles,
 6 is red, indicating that they were worse than the other
 7 80% of the population, that things were worse for them.
 8 You can also see that there were problems across all,
 9 but particularly so for people in the most deprived
 10 neighbourhoods.

11 **Q.** Yes, we see the highest figures in that first column,
 12 yes. Thank you very much.

13 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes.

14 **Q.** And in general terms, did you see a similar type of
 15 pattern across the devolved nations as well?

16 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** With the data that was available, yes,
 17 and of course this does relate -- this survey is
 18 available for the United Kingdom.

19 **Q.** Thank you. Yes, finally in that section -- we can take
 20 that down now, please.

21 Professor Bambra, housing and homelessness.
 22 Inequalities in housing costs increased in 2020-2021,
 23 official data showing that the proportion of household
 24 income spent on rent increased during that period in
 25 both private and in relation to social tenants, and you

1 tell us that that was possibly due to higher rents,
 2 lower incomes, or a combination of both?

3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Mm-hm.

4 **Q.** There was a small reduction in the overall risk of
 5 homelessness in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland,
 6 and you tell us at paragraph 14 that that was likely
 7 a result of the Everyone In policy.

8 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** (No audible answer)

9 **Q.** But that there was an increase in the need in Wales and
 10 amongst the most vulnerable groups in England; is that
 11 right?

12 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** That's correct, we found interactions,
 13 for example, with unemployment risk and for people
 14 experiencing domestic abuse.

15 **Q.** Thank you.

16 You tell us at paragraph 120 that over the same
 17 period, so the beginning of the pandemic, close to
 18 40,000 households in England were assessed by councils
 19 as being owed a "main homelessness duty", which was
 20 a slight decrease compared with the previous year.

21 What does that mean, please?

22 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, it's a way of assessing whether
 23 people are considered to be in need of support for their
 24 housing. Yeah.

25 **Q.** Right. But then, later on, you say at paragraph 120.1:

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1 "... over 15,000 households with children were
 2 homeless or threatened with homelessness due to domestic
 3 abuse ..."

4 And that figure was up by 14% from pre-pandemic
 5 levels?

6 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes. I mean, there is other evidence,
 7 from charitable groups, for example, that domestic abuse
 8 was a particular problem during the pandemic.

9 **Q.** And are you able to comment on whether or not there is
 10 an interaction between homelessness and domestic abuse
 11 generally and during the pandemic?

12 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Generally, yes. And the data here you've
 13 just mentioned would suggest that there's an interaction
 14 during the pandemic as well.

15 **Q.** Thank you. The Inquiry has received a witness statement
 16 from Tim Gutteridge, who is the chief executive of
 17 Shelter, the charity for homelessness, and he tell us
 18 that in terms of overcrowding, which was clearly
 19 a problem during the pandemic because of the close
 20 proximity in which people were living --

21 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Mm-hm.

22 **Q.** -- that appeared to be more prevalent in the rented
 23 sector than for owner-occupiers. He says that during
 24 the period 2021 to 2022, 170,000 households were
 25 overcrowded, those households being owner-occupiers,

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1 compared with 325,000 such homes of private renters --
 2 sorry, of private renters, yes.

3 Do those figures accord with your understanding of
 4 the problems that were persisting during the pandemic?

5 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes. In terms of the evidence that we
 6 looked at, for example, with the inequalities there, for
 7 example, in rent, then there's a difference between
 8 renters and people who own their own homes. And that
 9 might be obviously to do with people's income and family
 10 size and so on, but also to do with some of the aspects,
 11 for example, that mortgage companies put in place to
 12 support, you know, their customers, in effect.

13 **Q.** Yes.

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Could I add?

15 **Q.** Yes, please.

16 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** It's worth distinguishing between the
 17 social rental sector and the private rental sector. In
 18 general, the quality of housing is higher in the social
 19 rental sector than in the private rental sector.

20 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

21 I'm going to turn now to part 2 of your report:
 22 "Health Inequalities During the Covid 19 Pandemic".
 23 And, Professor Marmot, I'll turn to you, please, if
 24 I may, to provide an explanation of the limitations in
 25 interpreting data.

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1 At paragraph 149 you say:

2 "It should be noted that due to different
 3 deprivation indices and other reporting practices ...
 4 across the four nations, the data presented in this
 5 section [of your report] should be interpreted with some
 6 caution."

7 Is that right?

8 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** That's correct.

9 I should add that the quality of data in the UK is
 10 astonishingly high. I mean, we were blessed through the
 11 pandemic with very good data, in general. So any
 12 limitations here need to be put in the context that the
 13 data we had in the UK were much better than in most
 14 other countries.

15 **Q.** That's good to hear.

16 You tell us --

17 **LADY HALLETT:** It's the first time since I've started this
 18 Inquiry that I've had a compliment about the quality of
 19 the data we've had in this country.

20 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, you know, I've done a lot of work
 21 in other countries and we're just blessed with
 22 good-quality data.

23 **MS BLACKWELL:** At paragraph 150 you explain that:

24 "Area-level deprivation is a way of measuring how
 25 well-off or disadvantaged a local area is in terms of

1 factors such as income, jobs, health, education, crime,
 2 access to services, and the local environment."

3 How, then, do you use the area-level deprivation
 4 measurement in terms of mortality? How do those two
 5 interact?

6 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** So, let me make couple of comments about
 7 it. Firstly, it seems odd to have an index that's got
 8 health in the index, when you're looking at the relation
 9 between, then, this index and health outcomes. That
 10 sounds like confusion. It is. But if you take health
 11 out of the deprivation index, it doesn't make any
 12 difference to the relation between deprivation and
 13 health outcomes. So it sounds like a tautology but it
 14 is not, because, as I say, if you remove health out of
 15 the deprivation index, the remaining six indicators
 16 correlate very highly with health outcomes.

17 The second is, we use deprivation of the area
 18 because it's there. We can measure it. So for
 19 convenience.

20 **Q.** Yes.

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** We use it in two ways: one, as a proxy
 22 for individual circumstances, and it's a proxy. So not
 23 everybody who lives in a deprived area is deprived. Not
 24 everybody who is poor lives in a deprived area.

25 **Q.** Yes.

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1 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** They could live in a relatively affluent
 2 area, local housing, whatever. So it's not perfect. We
 3 use it as a proxy. It works pretty well. But it can
 4 also be used to tell us something about the area, when
 5 that's the right measure. You don't want to measure
 6 individual education if you're trying to understand area
 7 effects. You want to measure deprivation of the area.

8 So with those caveats it works remarkably well.
 9 It's a pretty good proxy for individual socioeconomic
 10 position, because if you do measure education, income,
 11 occupation of individuals, you get pretty well the same
 12 relationship you get with the deprivation of area of
 13 residence.

14 **Q.** Thank you. Well, we're going to take a look at the
 15 various areas of the UK, and first of all, please, could
 16 we have on screen INQ000588215, page 32, and it's your
 17 figure 2. And this is in England, so the Covid-19
 18 mortality rates, by deprivation quintile where 1 is the
 19 most deprived and 5 is the least deprived.

20 So what do we see here, Professor Marmot?

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, we said right at the beginning of
 22 the pandemic before we got the data, when people were
 23 saying that Covid will be no respecter of social
 24 position, prince and pauper alike could get Covid, and
 25 we said, yeah, maybe, but the experience of other

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1 pandemics is that it will expose the underlying
 2 inequalities in society, and amplify them.

3 **Q.** Yes.

4 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And I quoted Camus, *La Peste*, that's what
 5 he said, he said it better than I did, but that's
 6 essentially what he said. And you look at this figure,
 7 that's what we predicted. There was a social gradient
 8 in mortality and we'll come on to that in a moment,
 9 and -- before we even knew there was such a thing as
 10 Covid, and then Covid comes along, that doesn't look
 11 like it's affecting prince and pauper alike. It's
 12 a social gradient. The greater the deprivation, the
 13 higher the Covid mortality.

14 And it's really striking. Then the question is, why
 15 does it get less over time? And we'll come on to that,
 16 but we think, you know, society put in place control
 17 measures, and lockdown, and mask wearing, and then
 18 finally the vaccine.

19 **Q.** Yes.

20 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And so the control measures made
 21 a difference to the inequalities.

22 **Q.** And digging in a little deeper, there were regional
 23 inequalities within England, weren't there? You tell us
 24 at paragraph 16.1 that the cumulative death rates were
 25 highest in the north west of England, in London, in the

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1 West Midlands, and the north east.

2 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** So, London was an interesting exception
 3 to the kind of prediction that I made, and it's good to
 4 get things wrong, because then you learn something. And
 5 I think the reason London was relatively high is because
 6 everybody is moving about, coming from abroad, there's
 7 a lot of mixing. It's very crowded, as I say, people
 8 coming in, bringing viruses in. Initially, people were
 9 bringing virus back from skiing holidays and the like,
 10 which only the more affluent do. And we saw the same in
 11 the United States when New York initially was very high
 12 for Covid.

13 **Q.** Yes.

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Apart from that London exception, the
 15 high rates in the north east and the north west were
 16 exactly what we predicted, because that's what we saw
 17 pre-Covid.

18 **Q.** Yes. And what you tell us about that is that the most
 19 deprived local authorities in the north of England, in
 20 the north east, the north west, and Yorkshire and the
 21 Humber, had 14.5% higher Covid-19 death rates than
 22 equally deprived areas in the rest of England?

23 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** That's right, and again, that's
 24 a continuation of the pattern that we'd seen pre-Covid.
 25 In my 2020 report, *Health Equity in England: the Marmot*

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1 Review 10 years on, we pointed to the fact that for
 2 a given level of deprivation as measured by the National
 3 Index of Multiple Deprivation, the consequences for
 4 health, both life expectancy, and healthy life
 5 expectancy, were bigger in the north east and
 6 north west, Yorkshire and Humber, than they were in
 7 London and the south east.

8 So when we saw that with Covid, we said yes, that's
 9 what we saw pre-Covid.

10 **Q.** Predictable. Yes.

11 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** It's got a term to describe it as the
 12 amplification of the effects of deprivation that we can
 13 see in the north and also you can see it in Scotland, as
 14 well, in terms of health outcomes and also here with
 15 Covid as well.

16 **Q.** Thank you. And we're going to turn and look in a moment
 17 at another table which I think demonstrates that.

18 But before we do, let's just look at the other areas
 19 of the UK, please, in terms of Covid-19 mortality. And
 20 at figure 3, please, at page 33 of the same report, you
 21 can see at the bottom of the page, that's regions of
 22 England.

23 Figure 4, please, which is at page 34. Thank you
 24 very much.

25 That's Wales. Does that, in general terms, show the
 80

1 same pattern?

2 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** It does. And just to make the point
3 again, that it's not poor people versus the rest. It's
4 a social gradient.

5 **Q.** Yes.

6 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** People in quintile second from the top,
7 number 4, have a higher mortality than those at the top.
8 It's not much bigger in number 3, but number 2 and then
9 number 1. So it's a social gradient. And again, as in
10 England, it got flatter over time.

11 **Q.** Yes.

12 And then Scotland, please, which is figure 5.

13 The same pattern again?

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yeah, and you can see the gradient very
15 clearly, and it flattens over time.

16 **Q.** Yes.

17 And then finally, figure 6 at page 36.

18 Now, this is a different graph. Is that because the
19 data that you received in terms of Northern Ireland was
20 different data?

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yes. Yeah.

22 **Q.** But we see that the mortality rate for the first
23 quintile is the highest?

24 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And again, it's the highest. In fact,
25 the gradient is not quite as clear as with the other

81

1 nations, but it -- pretty much the three in the middle
2 are intermediate between the poorest and the richest.

3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** And the data was only available for one
4 year for Northern Ireland.

5 **Q.** Yes, thank you very much.

6 Thank you, we can take that down.

7 Now, Professor Bambra, I want to return, please, to
8 intersectionality and the syndemic which you have
9 described to us, and ask you about the five key pathways
10 through which inequalities occurred. Can you explain us
11 to what they are, please.

12 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yeah.

13 When looking at inequalities in Covid-19 deaths and
14 hospitalisations, and you can look at five different
15 things. One is the higher risk of exposure, for
16 example, for people who were key workers still going out
17 to work, and these tended to be people from
18 lower-skilled or lower-income groups, and people from
19 ethnic minorities, you know, interacting with that.

20 Then you have the transmission, which we've touched
21 upon, with the evidence, for example, about
22 overcrowding, but also that deprivation -- more likely
23 to concentrate in urban areas, including, for example,
24 London, that Michael has just talked about.

25 Then there's the vulnerability once someone has an
82

1 infection, then people from lower-economic backgrounds
2 are more likely to have pre-existing comorbidities and
3 clinical vulnerabilities, which means obviously that the
4 disease can have a worse outcome.

5 There's also evidence to suggest that people in more
6 difficult circumstances are also more susceptible to the
7 adverse impacts of viruses, evidence from flu, for
8 example, showing it's -- that their immune systems are
9 eroded, through living in poverty.

10 And then, finally, which we will touch upon later in
11 this section, is around inequalities in terms of
12 treatment, particularly in terms of uptake of the
13 vaccine, for example.

14 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

15 Could we have on screen, please, figure 8 from the
16 report, which is at page 39.

17 I'm going to return to you, please, Professor Marmot
18 to ask you about all-cause mortality by area-level
19 deprivation. What do we see in this chart, please?

20 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** What we see is pretty much what we
21 predicted at the beginning: that the pandemic would
22 amplify the inequalities. So if you look at 2019, the
23 blue or whatever you call that colour -- dark blue -- at
24 the bottom, and then the next year, the first year of
25 the pandemic, in England, in Wales, in Scotland,

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1 particularly, you can't quite see it in Northern
2 Ireland, but in the other three you see a very clear
3 increase in the absolute inequality. So this is
4 a way -- later we'll get on to the gradient, but this is
5 a way of measuring inequality as a difference between
6 the least deprived and the most deprived quintiles,
7 20 per cent. And you can see the big increase.

8 What you can also see is that the absolute
9 inequalities are bigger in Scotland than they are in
10 England. And it's what Clare said a moment ago, that
11 what I described -- Clare used the term the
12 "amplification", what I described, that the consequences
13 of deprivation for your health are worse in the north
14 east and north west of England, and they're worse in
15 Scotland. I think it's the same kind of phenomenon that
16 we're seeing here.

17 So we see the big increase particularly in the first
18 year of the pandemic. And this is all cause mortality.
19 This is not Covid. Covid's important but this is all
20 causes.

21 **Q.** Yes.

22 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And we see it happened in all four
23 nations, and bigger in Scotland.

24 **Q.** Thank you. Yes.

25 Can we take that down, please.

84

1 Moving on and away from mortality to talk about
 2 inequalities in life expectancy and healthy life
 3 expectancy, please.

4 Could we please display figure 9, at page 43 of the
 5 report.

6 Noting that this relates to life expectancy only,
 7 not healthy life expectancy.

8 So could we -- thank you very much.

9 We can see that this is entitled:

10 "Absolute gaps in life expectancy for males and
 11 females ..."

12 Separated out, males are blue, females are orange.

13 "... pre-pandemic between the most and least
 14 deprived local authorities ..."

15 So we're dealing here with before -- the period of
 16 time before the pandemic hit.

17 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yes, and it shows an interesting
 18 phenomenon that we don't -- or certainly I don't
 19 completely understand, that inequalities, in general,
 20 there are some significant exceptions, but in general,
 21 the social inequalities in health are bigger in men than
 22 in women. And I say, I don't completely understand it.
 23 And the exceptions are really interesting and important.
 24 We'll come on to healthy life expectancy in a moment but
 25 also, in my 2020 report pre-pandemic, what we saw was

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1 that if anything, the impact of austerity on health was
 2 bigger on women than on men, and so I say the exceptions
 3 are interesting.

4 **Q.** Yes.

5 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And it was pointed out to me -- I didn't
 6 say it, but it was pointed out to me -- that the impact
 7 of austerity on women's circumstances was bigger than it hit
 8 was on men. The austerity hit women worse than it hit
 9 men. And we saw it in the mortality statistics, the
 10 life expectancy statistics.

11 So I say this general pattern we see for reasons
 12 that I don't completely understand, and the exceptions
 13 are interesting.

14 **Q.** So just so that we understand, life expectancy at birth
 15 is a statistical measure of the estimate of the average
 16 remaining years?

17 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** It's an artefact, it's a convenient
 18 artefact. It -- forgive me for this. It's saying if
 19 you had a theoretical population of people, and to take
 20 today's age-specific mortality rates, the rates that
 21 apply today, and assume that as that group of people
 22 moved through life, today's age-specific mortality rates
 23 would apply to that. And then you sum all that up and
 24 you say that's the expectation of life. It is not
 25 a prediction of what would happen in the future.

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1 **Q.** No.

2 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And so children born today may have much
 3 longer life expectancy than these figures were to
 4 suggest. If something dreadful happens, it might be
 5 shorter life expectancy. But it's a statistical summary
 6 of -- and it's a very useful summary, so having said
 7 it's an artefact but we use it all the time.

8 **Q.** But healthy life expectancy is something different,
 9 that's the average number of years that a person can
 10 expect to live in good health, not impeded by disabling
 11 illnesses or injuries or poor health; is that right?

12 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** That's correct, and were those data
 13 readily available all the time, we would use them all
 14 the time, because in a way, it's a more meaningful
 15 measure. People want not just to live a long time, they
 16 want to be healthy for a long time, and living a long
 17 time with ill health is less desirable than living
 18 a long time in good health. So that healthy life
 19 expectancy is a meaningful measure, and -- you're
 20 probably going to ask me this in a moment -- the
 21 inequalities in healthy life expectancy are much bigger
 22 than the inequalities in life expectancy. And what that
 23 means is, if you're living in a more deprived area, not
 24 only can you expect fewer years of life, you will live
 25 more of those fewer years with ill health.

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1 **Q.** Yes.

2 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** So that's a dreadful inequality. Not
 3 only do you have a shorter life, you have more of that
 4 life spent in ill health.

5 **Q.** Well, let's have a look, please, at the healthy life
 6 expectancy figure which is figure 10 in the report at
 7 page 43.

8 So this is the absolute gaps in healthy life
 9 expectancy, again for males and females, pre-pandemic,
 10 between the most and least deprived local authorities.
 11 So what do we see here?

12 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** So we see that they're bigger. If you
 13 remember the previous figure, it was around nine years
 14 for life expectancy. Now we're talking around 18 to
 15 20 years for healthy life expectancy. So the gaps are
 16 bigger, and when I said that in general, men are
 17 affected by social inequalities more than women, but the
 18 exceptions are really interesting. Here's an exception.
 19 What we've seen consistently is women have more
 20 ill health. They live more years, on average, but they
 21 have more ill health. And again, we saw pre-pandemic,
 22 which we think was a consequence of austerity, that
 23 women's healthy life expectancy particularly did not
 24 improve, because of the increase in ill health.

25 And here, we can see, for England and Wales and
 88

1 Northern Ireland, not for Scotland, that healthy life
 2 expectancy gaps are bigger for women than for men.
 3 Q. And throughout the pandemic, were these patterns
 4 replicated in terms of life expectancy and healthy life
 5 expectancy?

6 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** By and large, yes.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 Professor Bambra, I'd like to ask you, please, about
 9 Long Covid by area-level deprivation, and you deal with
 10 that at two areas of the report. I want to ask you
 11 about the definition of Long Covid, which the Inquiry is
 12 familiar with. It's defined by the National Institute
 13 for Health and Care Excellence, NICE, as signs and
 14 symptoms that continue or develop after acute Covid-19;
 15 is that right?

16 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** That's correct.

17 Q. And what did you find in terms of the available data on
 18 Long Covid? What did the data tell you about patterns
 19 across area-level deprivation?

20 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Thanks for raising this point, Kate,
 21 because I think it's very important that we remember
 22 that people are still suffering from Long Covid at the
 23 moment, and what we found in the analysis that we
 24 present in the report is that basically in deprived
 25 areas, the prevalence of Long Covid is around twice as

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1 high as in the least deprived areas, and we've got that
 2 from two different survey sources that reinforce each
 3 other. That's for England. And we also found data that
 4 showed a similar pattern for Scotland, and to a slightly
 5 more nuanced extent, in Wales.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 Can we put up figure 14, please, from the page 49 of
 8 the report, and we can see that this is per English
 9 region as of March 2023, and does that support the
 10 evidence that you've just given, Professor?

11 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, so that just shows that the north
 12 east and the north west and the West Midlands have, as
 13 of 2023, have the highest prevalence of Long Covid, and
 14 that potentially also reflects the patterning of
 15 deprivation, as well.

16 Q. Thank you.

17 Professor Marmot, as a connected issue, I just want
 18 to ask you about employment, and the data that you have
 19 looked at in terms of what level of danger key workers
 20 were placing themselves in, in terms of perhaps being
 21 more exposed to the virus than others.

22 Is it important to look at the type of employment
 23 that somebody was engaged in, as well as the area that
 24 they were working in, in terms of geographical area?

25 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Indeed. As you said earlier, my third
 90

1 recommendation in the 2010 report was employment and
 2 working conditions. Employment and working conditions
 3 are fundamentally important for health. Unemployment is
 4 very bad for health. Work is much better than
 5 unemployment but the quality of work really matters, and
 6 we know, particularly psychosocial working conditions,
 7 shift work, long hours, job insecurity, high demand, low
 8 control, effort-reward imbalance, poor organisational
 9 justice, all increase physical and mental health, and
 10 all of that would operate during the pandemic.

11 Then, in addition to all of that, you've got people
 12 working in frontline occupations. Forgive my coloured
 13 language, but the heroes who are coming to collect your
 14 garbage, who were serving as cashiers in the
 15 supermarkets, these were the heroes in the pandemic,
 16 putting themselves at risk by helping society to once.

17 So in addition to all the other things that we know
 18 about that would be operating during the pandemic,
 19 there's then exposure to the virus because of the nature
 20 of work, and the inequalities are key, because people
 21 who could work from home and do their work without
 22 interruption were not exposed in frontline ways like
 23 that. So that was on top of all the other things
 24 connected with work. That was an extra risk.

25 Q. Yes, thank you.

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1 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Could I also add that people in those
 2 lower-paid roles, as well, were also less able to access
 3 sick pay which we did discuss in our first Module 1
 4 evidence which would have meant they were potentially
 5 working with symptoms of Covid and also, you know,
 6 potentially spreading it, because they weren't able to
 7 afford to take time off.

8 Q. Yeah. And being placed in that level of deprivation was
 9 not in any way going to encourage people to disclose
 10 their Covid symptoms.

11 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, you'll remember, during the
 12 pandemic, when there were these ill-fated tiers of risk,
 13 and in Manchester and the north west there was the
 14 concern that if people weren't compensated, if they were
 15 told, "If you've got -- if you've tested positive, stay
 16 home. We won't give you any money, but stay home", that
 17 was a pretty strong disincentive to get tested.

18 Q. Yes, thank you.

19 Professor Bambra, you deal within the report, at
 20 paragraph 215, with inequalities in health-related
 21 outcomes.

22 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Mm-hm.

23 Q. And you list several of those: alcohol consumption,
 24 smoking, physical activity, obesity, and loneliness.

25 Just touching upon one of those, please, you talk

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1 about the "alcohol harm paradox". What do you mean by
 2 that phase, please?

3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** So that means that even if you have the
 4 same rates of drinking amongst more educated groups
 5 versus lower educated groups, there's more harm for
 6 people who are at the lower income, lower educated end.

7 **Q.** Why is that?

8 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** It's, I think -- I'm not sure we have the
 9 answer, which is why it's called a paradox, but the
 10 speculation would be around how the drink is consumed.
 11 So, for example, higher prevalence of binge drinking.
 12 But it also would probably, in my opinion, interact with
 13 the other social determinants that Michael has outlined,
 14 and draws into that idea of one of the pathways around
 15 susceptibility and the -- in effect, the physiology of
 16 the body as well.

17 **Q.** Thank you.

18 Well, going back to the pathways, could I ask you to
 19 tell us about unequal treatment, because that is
 20 something which you've already mentioned. I think it
 21 was the fifth of the five pathways. What does your
 22 research tell us about that?

23 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** So, are you wanting me to discuss the
 24 vaccination programme? I'm sorry, I'm not sure where
 25 you want me to go with that.

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1 **Q.** I'm wanting to move on to protections and mitigations --

2 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Okay, that's fine.

3 **Q.** -- so let's deal with vaccinations as the first one,
 4 please.

5 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Okay. So I know that my Lady has had
 6 a lot around the vaccinations, but there's been later
 7 studies showing the impacts on inequalities in Covid
 8 mortality, and there's a strong association over time
 9 that the rollout of the vaccine was effective in
 10 reducing the social gradient, as we saw earlier with the
 11 graphs and Michael's commentary. However, it didn't
 12 eliminate the Covid mortality gap.

13 Modelling suggests that was because of the unequal
 14 uptake. And you can see with the first, second and
 15 third dose, increasingly people from more deprived areas
 16 have a lower take-up of the vaccine. And that's
 17 something I think is a very important point for us to
 18 make, is that the vaccinations were working, in terms of
 19 reducing mortality, but that we need to do more to
 20 ensure that everyone takes up that offer, including, at
 21 the moment, people in more clinically vulnerable groups
 22 who are still entitled, for example.

23 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And can I just add the global
 24 perspective?

25 **Q.** Yes, please.

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1 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** There were huge inequalities globally in
 2 access to the vaccine. Low and middle-income countries
 3 had less access than high-income countries.

4 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

5 We've already touched on housing policies, the
 6 Everyone In policy, and how that assisted, but the
 7 Inquiry has received evidence that, of course, when that
 8 scheme stopped, when it finished, did things go back to
 9 how they were before, or was there any retention of
 10 benefit to the homeless?

11 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** So I think what you find is that you then
 12 get, for example, evictions went down in that sort of
 13 early pandemic period, where there were pauses due to
 14 legislation, but then they go back up again, and in fact
 15 increase, and perhaps compensate for the suspension.

16 And we can also see this -- with other aspects, for
 17 example with the £20 uplift in Universal Credit, when
 18 it's taken away, then the increase in poverty that you
 19 get in the later period, that Sir Michael outlined
 20 earlier, is likely associated with that reversal of
 21 policy as well.

22 **Q.** Thank you.

23 And we've also touched upon Universal Credit, and
 24 you've already told us, Professor Bambra, that one
 25 important consideration is, of course, that not

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1 everybody would have been entitled to that mitigation,
 2 and so the benefit that that had of course only attracts
 3 to those who were entitled to claim it?

4 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, it would only attract to those who
 5 were entitled to it, and in the report we talk about
 6 some of the groups that were less likely to have that,
 7 and that did include, for example, people who had been
 8 on legacy benefits for a long time, such as certain
 9 groups of disabled people.

10 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

11 Professor Marmot, we've already discussed or touched
 12 upon lockdowns and how that helped to reduce the gap in
 13 Covid-19 death rates.

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** (Witness nodded)

15 **Q.** Is there anything else that you would like to say about
 16 the difference in the timing of the lockdowns, or
 17 shielding, or social distancing and how any of those
 18 mitigations assisted?

19 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, in general, I would hope that one
 20 of the things that would come out of the Inquiry is we
 21 get a judicious view of the balance with these
 22 protective measures. I think all of us at the time were
 23 concerned to get the balance right, on the one hand. On
 24 the other hand, if you close schools, children will
 25 suffer. If you stop workplaces, people will suffer. On

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1 the other hand, you let the virus run rampant, and you
 2 get high mortality. So I hope we'll get some reflection
 3 of that.

4 But what it does show -- I mean, my fundamental view
 5 that I've tried to express is that there are deep-seated
 6 social and economic inequalities in society that lead to
 7 inequalities in health. What these data show is
 8 specific interventions -- vaccination, protective
 9 measures -- can reduce those inequalities. Wow, that's
 10 pretty good. That's a good lesson to learn.

11 Q. Yes.

12 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And the fact is, these protective
 13 measures, applied equitably, can reduce inequalities.
 14 Very important. So we, do you know, in learning this
 15 very important lesson, we need to get this balance
 16 right.

17 Q. Well, that brings us very neatly on to lessons learned,
 18 which you deal with beginning at paragraph 328 of your
 19 report, the first of which is: to reduce health
 20 inequalities in pandemics, we need to reduce health
 21 inequalities outside of the pandemic period, and before
 22 the next pandemic or civil emergency occurs.

23 The phrase that you use, and I know that you used
 24 this last time, Professor Marmot, when you were here, is
 25 to "fix the roof whilst the sun is shining".

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1 You've touched upon government actions to mitigate
 2 and how those assisted, but I'd like to ask you about
 3 pandemic planning and implementation, which you say
 4 should integrate a health equity lens across all aspects
 5 of the process. What do you mean by that?

6 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, what we said in Module 1, and it
 7 was amply, amply supported by the council that I
 8 co-chaired on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics globally,
 9 the council, that to prepare for pandemics, you need to
 10 have less social and economic inequalities in society,
 11 because they lead to social and economic inequalities in
 12 health, and that was a key driver of the problems that
 13 we had, which is why, in the early phases, mortality was
 14 so high.

15 So -- and we said this in our global report: we even
 16 got the G20, in a ministerial statement, to say: to
 17 prepare for the next pandemic, countries have to invest
 18 in improving the social determinants of health.

19 So a key message is that we should not limp into the
 20 next pandemic with the same levels of social and
 21 economic inequalities that we limped into this pandemic.

22 Q. And what about those who suffer from particular, either
 23 disabilities or clinical vulnerability, do those
 24 sections of society of need to be protected?

25 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Well, let's look at disability first.
 98

1 What we've shown when we've looked at it in all our
 2 reports, is that people with disability are more likely
 3 to have adverse exposures to the social determinants of
 4 health, whether it's from early childhood, education,
 5 employment conditions, income, housing, all of our
 6 social determinants of health apply even more so to
 7 people with disabilities. So they're more exposed.

8 They may also, to come back to what Clare laid out
 9 in her five pathways, our five pathways, what Clare laid
 10 out, they may also, either because of the ill health
 11 that caused the disability, or because of ill health
 12 that's a consequence of the disability, and social
 13 determinant, be more vulnerable.

14 Q. Yes.

15 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** And I would then apply that to other
 16 subgroups in society, and we were asked not to look at
 17 other forms of inequalities but they applied to other
 18 subgroups in society.

19 Q. Yes, that was because I know that my Lady is going to be
 20 receiving expert evidence from others who have looked
 21 specifically at those areas.

22 But does that come back to intersectionality, that
 23 all of these aspects of difficulties and those that --
 24 those in society who are the most vulnerable need to be
 25 looked at together to determine what level of

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1 protections and what type of protections need to be
 2 added?

3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** I think it comes back to the fact that
 4 inequalities weren't thought about in the preparedness
 5 and the planning in the early -- in SAGE. I noticed in
 6 Neil Ferguson's evidence, for example, that's in
 7 position for today, that he said that they didn't think
 8 about deprivation and the dynamics that might have on
 9 the transmission of the disease in that quite
 10 significant modelling that they were doing.

11 So that's what we mean when we're talking about the
 12 health equity lens, is to actually consider that people
 13 are different, and that that might have impacts on their
 14 experience of a civil emergency like a pandemic.

15 Q. Thank you.

16 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Because there's a -- I don't want to get
 17 philosophical in giving evidence, but there are a couple
 18 of different reasons for classifying people in the way
 19 we do.

20 Q. Yes.

21 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** One is, if that's a target of
 22 intervention, so if people are rough sleepers, you
 23 classify them as rough sleepers because rough sleeping
 24 is not good for your health. And that's the target of
 25 intervention. If people are below the poverty line, and

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1 we describe them in that way because it's not good
 2 before their health, and if we could get them above the
 3 poverty line, their health would improve. So that's one
 4 reason.

5 The other is, it's a guide to the conditions that we
 6 think of what's determining their health. You could
 7 say, "Well, somebody's got to be in relative poverty,
 8 what's wrong with that?" Well, to the extent that it's
 9 a guide to poorer education, to poorer working
 10 conditions, and all the other determinants, it's a way
 11 of looking at what's needed. So the intervention could
 12 be on the descriptor, low-income.

13 Q. Yes.

14 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Belonging to a particular subgroup,
 15 disabled, minority ethnic, or whatever that could -- but
 16 you can't change minority ethnic. What you can change
 17 are the conditions that attach to that descriptor, and
 18 that's what's important.

19 So we're trying to do both of those things.

20 Q. Thank you.

21 And just to come back to your international work,
 22 and the work on the council that you've mentioned,
 23 looking at AIDS and pandemics, is what you have found,
 24 looking at the United Kingdom, similar? Are the
 25 patterns the same, by and large, to what you have found

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1 on that international council, looking at countries such
 2 as Sweden and Brazil and I know elsewhere as well?

3 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** The graphs that you put up on the screen,
 4 we could have put up an almost identical graph from
 5 Sweden or from Brazil that would look the same. So
 6 where we had data -- and, my Lady, my earlier comment
 7 about the quality about data is we don't have such good
 8 data from most other countries, but where we had those
 9 data, we saw the social gradient in all the things that
 10 we've been discussing here: the inequalities that led to
 11 worse pandemics, and the impact of the pandemic on
 12 inequalities.

13 So everything we've concluded here is consistent
 14 with what we found in our global council. Not only
 15 because I was co-chairing it!

16 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Could I just add a little bit on the data
 17 side of things? Because one of our recommendations is
 18 to still further improve the data.

19 Q. Yes.

20 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Because I accept what Sir Michael's
 21 saying in relation -- you know, from a global
 22 perspective, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to
 23 do even better. And I just wanted to particularly
 24 highlight that obviously in today's report it's quite
 25 difficult to find information on, you know,

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1 intersections between area deprivation and other
 2 factors. We have very good area-level data but, as
 3 Michael explained earlier, that's not the same as
 4 individual-level data, and it's therefore very hard to
 5 look into what happens to other groups and -- during an
 6 emergency like a pandemic.

7 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you.

8 Professor Bambra, Professor Sir Michael Marmot,
 9 thank you very much. I think there are two questions
 10 coming from other core participants.

11 **LADY HALLETT:** There are.

12 Ms Davies, who is over that way.

13 **Questions from MS DAVIES KC**

14 **MS DAVIES:** My Lady, thank you very much.

15 My Lady, before I ask the question for which I've
 16 had permission, we have just emailed STI and CTI in
 17 terms of some questions that we were told CTI might ask
 18 about migrants, those subject to domestic abuse, and the
 19 healthcare charging regime. I wonder -- they weren't
 20 asked. I understand that these things happen. Would
 21 you give me permission to ask one more question in
 22 relation to that area?

23 I've reduced the three questions we suggested to
 24 one.

25 **LADY HALLETT:** Very well, Ms Davies.

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1 **MS DAVIES:** I'm grateful.

2 If I may start, Professors, with my first question,
 3 for which I was given permission -- and I'm sorry,
 4 I should have said, my name is Liz Davies and
 5 I represent the Domestic Abuse Group, which is a group
 6 of three organisations concerned with violence against
 7 women and girls.

8 You set out in your report the various
 9 intersectional nature of health inequalities,
 10 socioeconomic status we spent a lot of time on today,
 11 and also ethnicity and groups experiencing multiple
 12 disadvantage.

13 You said so at the beginning of your evidence, and
 14 it's referred to at paragraph 147, but can I just
 15 confirm that domestic abuse should also be recognised as
 16 a contributing driver of health inequalities?

17 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Yes, I would agree that it's an important
 18 health matter for the women that are affected by that,
 19 and would potentially intersect with other inequalities
 20 as well.

21 Sir Michael and I were discussing this in the
 22 evidence room beforehand and, Michael, you had some data
 23 that you could share on that.

24 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Yeah, in general, like most other
 25 important health outcomes, what we see is that the

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1 greater the deprivation, the more frequent is domestic
 2 violence. And probably other forms of domestic abuse as
 3 well.

4 **Q.** Thank you.

5 And my second questions, for which my Lady has just
 6 been kind enough to give me permission, relates to those
 7 subject to domestic abuse who are migrants and may be
 8 considering seeking health care, of course you're
 9 aware -- and I'm sorry, this is not dealt with in your
 10 report, but we did put it in earlier, that there is
 11 a healthcare charging regime for migrants, it's
 12 a condition attached to visas, whereby migrants pay
 13 a certain amount in order to apply for the visa, and
 14 then there are types of migrants who may be undocumented
 15 who have not paid that and would be charged for certain
 16 secondary care -- there was an exclusion for Covid-19,
 17 but other forms of secondary health care.

18 Can I ask, the experience of the Domestic Abuse
 19 Group is that those who were subject to domestic abuse,
 20 predominantly women, who are also migrants, are deterred
 21 from seeking health care, both primary and secondary, as
 22 a result of that charging regime. Would you be able to
 23 comment on that? Can you agree with that?

24 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** We were asked specifically not to deal
 25 with migrants and ethnic differences, so we didn't look

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1 at it.

2 **MS DAVIES:** Thank you very much, I'm grateful.

3 I'm grateful, my Lady.

4 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you, Ms Davies.

5 Ms Peacock, who is right down the end there.

6 **MS PEACOCK:** Thank you, my Lady.

7 Professor Bambra and Professor Marmot have already
 8 addressed my question in response to Ms Blackwell.
 9 I won't ask them to repeat their very clear evidence,
 10 I'm grateful.

11 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much, Ms Peacock.

12 That completes our questions for you,
 13 Professor Marmot and Professor Bambra. We began the
 14 Inquiry hearings, it seems like a lifetime ago, a couple
 15 of years ago and I think we probably, I suspect we
 16 shamelessly used your work throughout the Inquiry
 17 because we have had this focus on inequality, so it's
 18 particularly apt that having begun the Inquiry hearing
 19 from the two of you in that first week, this is our last
 20 module and you're giving evidence again. So thank you
 21 so much for all the work that you've done helping the
 22 Inquiry, for coming back again, and as I say, for work
 23 that even if we didn't call you as a witness, we
 24 probably made reference to your work in other modules.

25 So I'm really grateful to you, and thank you for the
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1 work you do to highlight and therefore fight
 2 inequalities.

3 **PROFESSOR BAMBRA:** Thank you very much.

4 **PROFESSOR MARMOT:** Thank you.

5 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you. Is that a moment to pause for
 6 lunch?

7 **MS BLACKWELL:** It is, and we're a little early --

8 **LADY HALLETT:** Don't worry.

9 **MS BLACKWELL:** -- but I won't apologise for that.

10 **LADY HALLETT:** I don't suppose people will object. I shall
 11 be back at 1.45.

12 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you.

13 (12.45 pm)

14 (The Short Adjournment)

15 (1.45 pm)

16 **LADY HALLETT:** Ms Blackwell.

17 **MS BLACKWELL:** My Lady, may I call the next witnesses,
 18 please, Professor Clare Herrick and Professor Azeem
 19 Majeed.

20 **PROFESSOR CLARE HERRICK (affirmed)**

21 **PROFESSOR AZEEM MAJEED (affirmed)**

22 Questions from LEAD COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY for MODULE 10

23 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you for coming along to help us.

24 **MS BLACKWELL:** Professor Herrick, you should have in front
 25 of you a copy of your witness statement which for our

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1 reference is INQ000661715. Can you confirm, please,
 2 that is your witness statement that you've provided for
 3 the purposes of the Inquiry.

4 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** It is.

5 **Q.** Thank you. And that the facts stated in it are true to
 6 the best of your knowledge and belief?

7 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** They are.

8 **Q.** Thank you very much.

9 Professor Majeed, you should also have in front of
 10 you your witness statement with our reference
 11 INQ000659865. Can you confirm that that is the witness
 12 statement you've provided for the purposes of the
 13 Inquiry?

14 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, I confirm that.

15 **Q.** Thank you. And that the facts stated within it are true
 16 to the best of your knowledge and belief?

17 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, I confirm that as well.

18 **Q.** Thank you very much.

19 By way of introduction, then, Professor Herrick, you
 20 are Professor of Geography and Global Health at King's
 21 College, where you have worked as an academic since
 22 2007. Your research concerns the politics of health and
 23 health care, it spans historical and contemporary issues
 24 across different countries.

25 You have researched and written several publications
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1 about the UK response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the one
 2 that is most applicable to our module is the 2023 paper
 3 entitled "We thank you for your sacrifice": Clinical
 4 vulnerability, shielding, and biosociality in the UK
 5 Covid-19 response".

6 Thank you.

7 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** (No audible answer)

8 **Q.** And although you confirm within your witness statement
 9 that you haven't, since you have completed that paper,
 10 conducted any further research, are you happy to confirm
 11 that your views are as stated in that paper?

12 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yes.

13 **Q.** Thank you.

14 Professor Majeed, you are Professor of Primary Care
 15 and Public Health at Imperial College London where you
 16 also serve as head of the Department of Primary Care and
 17 Public Health. For 30 years you have combined clinical
 18 work as a general practitioner with research and
 19 teaching.

20 You are a National Institute for Health and Care
 21 Research senior investigator, and you're a director
 22 of the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Northwest
 23 London, a fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences,
 24 a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal
 25 College of General Practitioners and the Faculty of

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1 Public Health.

2 Is that right?

3 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes.

4 **Q.** Thank you.

5 I'd like to begin, please, by coming to you,
 6 Professor Majeed, and asking you about the definitions
 7 of clinical vulnerability and clinically extreme
 8 vulnerability, or clinically extremely vulnerable. What
 9 is your understanding of the definitions that will fall
 10 into each of those categories and the differences
 11 between them, please?

12 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** So these are two groups which do overlap
 13 somewhat, the boundaries are not entirely clear where
 14 one ends and the other one starts. So the first group,
 15 clinically vulnerable, they're people with long-term
 16 medical problems like heart diseases, diabetes, asthma,
 17 which place them at higher risk of complications from
 18 infections such as Covid-19.

19 **Q.** I'm sorry to interrupt you. Could I ask you to slow
 20 down a little bit, please.

21 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Sorry.

22 **Q.** No, don't worry. The stenographer needs to pick up what
 23 you have to say.

24 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** So as I was saying, the two groups do
 25 overlap somewhat so the boundary is not entirely clear

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1 where one ends and one starts. The first group,
 2 clinically vulnerable, are people with long-term medical
 3 problems like heart disease, diabetes, asthma that place
 4 them at risk of adverse health outcomes from infections
 5 such as Covid-19.

6 The second group, the clinically extremely
 7 vulnerable, is a smaller group but with more serious
 8 medical problems, for example people who have undergone
 9 organ transplants or with immune deficiency and so
 10 they're at the highest risk of adverse events from any
 11 kind of infection.

12 **Q.** Thank you.

13 During the pandemic, the UK Government identified
 14 these groups based, I think, on guidance from bodies
 15 such as the National Health Service and Public Health
 16 England and later on also the UK Health Security Agency.
 17 And people who fell within those groups were advised to
 18 shield from March 2020; is that right?

19 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, people in the second group, the
 20 clinically extremely vulnerable, were advised to screen,
 21 to shield. The first group were advised to take just
 22 additional precautions but not to shield, so the bigger
 23 group, which was the clinically vulnerable, were not
 24 advised to shield, but were advised to take additional
 25 precautions to reduce their risk of infection.

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1 **Q.** All right. Well, we'll come to the definition of
 2 shielding, as well, in a moment.

3 But Professor Herrick, can I ask you about the
 4 changes that took place between these categorisations
 5 over time. Were they solid, in terms of people who
 6 would fit into each category or was there a certain
 7 fluidity about them?

8 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** There was certainly a certain fluidity
 9 for both the categories, so the people that were
 10 included in the categories changed over time, the
 11 delineation of the categories changed over time, and
 12 people were added to categories, most notably in
 13 February 2021 when the new risk prediction algorithm was
 14 brought in that added, I think, over a million people.

15 And people were also taken away just very suddenly
 16 by text message, just one day to the next, a text
 17 message to say that they were no longer categorised as
 18 clinically vulnerable based on the course of Covid at
 19 that time.

20 **Q.** Yes. So is it right that because of all those changes
 21 and the unpredictability of them, people were finding
 22 the position confused and confusing?

23 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, absolutely. Especially when
 24 people felt that they should be included by virtue of
 25 their own understanding of their personal health

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1 conditions and yet were not included, which meant people
 2 coming back to GPs, to then ask to be included in
 3 a list.

4 **Q.** Thank you.

5 **LADY HALLETT:** Sorry to interrupt. Can I ask you, I may be
 6 asking you to play devil's advocate here, Professor, but
 7 if you change a category depending on the course of
 8 Covid at the time, surely your categorisation will
 9 remain the same, whatever Covid was up to, or do you
 10 mean the knowledge of how Covid was transmitted or --

11 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** The two categories had the same name,
 12 clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely
 13 vulnerable. The people that were contained within them,
 14 and the conditions that delineated who would be in it
 15 changed over time. So people's understanding of what
 16 they were at that time may not have caught up with what
 17 the category itself was composed of, if that makes
 18 sense. If someone tells you --

19 **LADY HALLETT:** Sorry, what I'm asking about is the change,
 20 and how, depending on the course of Covid, you say,
 21 people thought it was a good idea to change their
 22 category.

23 So, in other words, if I was clinically vulnerable
 24 in September 2020, why am I not still clinically
 25 vulnerable in February 2021? Or --

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1 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Well, that's a good question, I think.
 2 Why were you not suddenly -- (overspeaking) --
 3 **LADY HALLETT:** -- devil's advocate.
 4 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yes, I mean, that's a very good
 5 question: why were you suddenly not clinically
 6 vulnerable? And certainly those changes in categories
 7 did not chime with people's own understandings of their
 8 own vulnerability. So, to be told that you're
 9 vulnerable, and then suddenly, "Oh, you're not
 10 vulnerable any more", for people individually that must
 11 have been exceptionally confusing and made very little
 12 sense.

13 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you.

14 Going back to the beginning of the pandemic, you
 15 tell us at paragraph 2.4 that in the Prime Minister's
 16 national address on 16 March 2020, that was the first
 17 moment that the population was instructed to shield
 18 those that had -- and I'm using his words -- the most
 19 serious health conditions. But it wasn't for a couple
 20 of days until the interim list of clinical conditions
 21 was finalised to denote the membership of the clinically
 22 extremely vulnerable category.

23 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Mm.

24 **Q.** And that definition at that time was to remain in place
 25 until summer of 2020. Age was not included as

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1 a criterion, was it, in the CEV category?

2 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** No, it wasn't expressly included as
 3 a category, but, to my understanding, two-thirds of
 4 people included in that category were over 65.

5 **Q.** Right. And those aged 70 and over were advised to take
 6 extra precautions?

7 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** As part of the clinically vulnerable
 8 category, yes.

9 **Q.** Okay. So, in theory, that list would have aligned with
 10 NHS records; is that right?

11 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** As far as I'm aware.

12 **Q.** Yes. And we know from evidence that we're going to
 13 receive in the Inquiry tomorrow from Professors Watson
 14 and Shakespeare, that people were informed by letter,
 15 from their GP or other health provider, whether they
 16 were included on the list?

17 (No audible answer)

18 And they confirm also, as I'm sure they will tell
 19 my Lady tomorrow, that those groups were amended and
 20 changed over the course of time, which chimes with what
 21 you just told us, Professor Herrick.

22 But by May 2020, an estimated 2.2 million people
 23 were classified as clinically vulnerable, which you say
 24 at paragraph 2.6 was far in excess of the 1.5 million
 25 initially estimated to fall within the category.

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1 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Mm.

2 **Q.** Was the categorisation common across all four nations of
 3 the United Kingdom? Was there any variants within it,
 4 do you know?

5 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** That's a good question. The paper that
 6 I wrote was based on England. As far as I'm aware, the
 7 categorisation remained the same but the data that was
 8 used to identify people was different, given the
 9 different data systems that are used. So there would be
 10 perhaps different rates of missing people out or
 11 including people that shouldn't have been there, so the
 12 error rate might well have been higher.

13 **Q.** Yes, I understand.

14 I'm going to take you now to your paper, if I may,
 15 because as well as whether or not there was
 16 a commonality in description -- across the four nations,
 17 I want to ask you about what was happening out elsewhere
 18 in the world, really just to identify and highlight the
 19 importance of a definition and what people were being
 20 asked to do.

21 So, please could we have on screen INQ000655834.

22 Can you confirm, please, Professor, that this is the
 23 article to which I've referred?

24 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah.

25 **Q.** Thank you very much.

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1 So, please can we go to page 2, and to highlight the
 2 part of the paragraph that starts with "This paper".
 3 Thank you.

4 You explain here how:

5 "This paper explores how the UK's ever-changing
 6 clarifications of vulnerability have created a confusing
 7 and 'transient' category -- 'not in the sense of
 8 afflicting a single person for a while and then going
 9 away, but in the sense of existing only at a certain
 10 time and place' ..."

11 Let's go then, please, to page 5, and to highlight
 12 the passage that begins "On March 12". Thank you very
 13 much. There we are in the middle of the page.

14 And I'm just going to read these through before
 15 coming to any questions, thank you very much.

16 So, dealing with the history of matters:

17 "On March 12, Johnson gave a speech in which he
 18 spoke directly to older people;

19 "This disease is particularly dangerous for you ...
 20 even though for the vast majority this will be a mild to
 21 moderate illness, I know that many people will be very
 22 worried. We should all be thinking about our elderly
 23 relatives, the more vulnerable members of their family,
 24 our neighbours, and everything we can do to protect them
 25 over the next few months ..."

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1 Then, three days later:
 2 "On March 15, the government expanded its public
 3 education campaign beyond hand washing, to avoiding
 4 older and 'more vulnerable' people if exhibiting
 5 symptoms. On March 16, now with 1,543 official cases,
 6 the government held the first of its daily coronavirus
 7 briefings during which the Prime Minister, Chief Medical
 8 Advisor and Chief Scientific Advisor announced new
 9 social distancing measures, the suspension of mass
 10 gatherings, asked symptomatic households to isolate for
 11 14 days, the public to cease all unnecessary contact
 12 with others and halt all non-essential travel.
 13 Johnson's speech at the press briefing that same day
 14 warned that,

15 "By this coming weekend it will be necessary to ...
 16 ensure that those with the most serious health
 17 conditions are largely *shielded* from social contact for
 18 around 12 weeks ... this is going to be very disruptive
 19 for people who have such conditions, and difficult for
 20 them ... I know that many people -- including millions
 21 of fit and active people over 70 -- may feel ... there
 22 is something excessive about these measures."

23 Now, I want to just concentrate on the word
 24 "shielded", because in the following paragraph we see
 25 this:

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1 "The linguistic fusion of 'vulnerability' with
 2 'shielding' -- a term not previously used in the lexicon
 3 of public health responses to infectious disease --
 4 quickly become one of the defining narrative strategies
 5 of the UK government's approach to risk reduction. The
 6 implications of this [are then] further explored ..."

7 So the word "shielding", and "shielded", that phrase
 8 hadn't been used before. That was something new in the
 9 pandemic.

10 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Mm-hm.

11 **Q.** And did that in himself cause confusion as to what that
 12 might mean?

13 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, I mean, absolutely. If you
 14 introduce a new word to the public, that means that they
 15 have to adhere to really stringent sets of behavioural
 16 guidelines, it's going to cause confusion and worry and
 17 concern. But I do think that "shielding" took hold
 18 among the public more quickly than "vulnerability",
 19 because "vulnerability" was more confusing.
 20 "Shielding" -- there was a lot of work that went on for
 21 the messaging around "shielding" -- (overspeaking) --

22 **Q.** Yes.

23 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** -- insights team, you know,
 24 government -- NHSX, especially around text messaging, to
 25 convey what shielding was and what it was meant.

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1 **Q.** Yes.

2 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** And because it's linked to a set of
 3 actions, and needs to be done, it was much easier for
 4 people to understand what it meant, whereas to be
 5 vulnerable is very confusing to people, about what they
 6 should then do.

7 **Q.** Yes, so there was something directive but something that
 8 was easily understandable, around the word "shield" and
 9 the term "shielding"?

10 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yes, because I think it connoted
 11 a series of actions that needed to be taken by both the
 12 person shielding and also people that needed to shield
 13 them. That was very clearly communicated.

14 **Q.** Thank you.

15 Let's turn to page 14 of your article, please, and
 16 have a look at the meaning of the word in terms of what
 17 it conveyed. You say here:

18 "Given the overtures of protection, duty and
 19 weakness bound into the word 'shield', it serves to
 20 convey a sense of vulnerability far better than
 21 'isolation'. However, beyond this, its use -- as both
 22 a technical term and moralised political trope -- is
 23 deeply significant, particularly in its creation of a
 24 new category (and thus subjectivity) of 'shielders'".

25 And at the bottom of this paragraph you say:

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1 "As a letter to the British Medical Journal notes,
 2 'the UK shielding policy is unique internationally' ...
 3 even if it was arguably far from unique in its
 4 effectiveness."

5 What did you mean by its "uniqueness"?

6 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** No other country used the word. I mean,
 7 when I was writing this, I searched desperately for some
 8 other example there this word might have been used and
 9 it wasn't used in any other country or -- I mean, it's
 10 not used in any other context when it comes to public
 11 health.

12 **Q.** Right, thank you. I just, finally on this point, want
 13 to look at an expansion of that in the following
 14 paragraph, where you say:

15 "In the US, for example, CDC" -- what does CDC --

16 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Centers for Disease Control.

17 **Q.** Thank you.

18 "... guidance recognises 'people at increased risk'
 19 of severe illness and those who need 'extra
 20 precautions'. Australian guidance singles out those 'at
 21 higher risk of severe disease'. The [World Health
 22 Organization] identifies those over 60 and those with
 23 underlying medical conditions as being 'at higher risk
 24 of getting severe Covid-19 disease'. By contrast, it
 25 defines 'vulnerable population groups' as those who are

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1 socially vulnerable by virtue of being homeless,
 2 migrants, refugees, disabled, living in remote
 3 locations, or closed facilities, or being in poverty.
 4 The French response categorises 'personnes fragiles' as
 5 'those at risk of severe Covid-19 illness'. Similarly
 6 the Swiss classify those at 'higher risk' as 'personnes
 7 vulnérables'. Finally, the European Centre for Disease
 8 Prevention and Control, makes a distinction between
 9 those people 'at higher risk of severe disease' (high
 10 risk groups who are 'medically vulnerable'), which is
 11 counterposed against those populations who are 'socially
 12 vulnerable' to 'the consequences of the public health
 13 measures that have been imposed to control the spread of
 14 the virus' and which may exacerbate their already
 15 challenging life situations."

16 So, across the world, lots of variation.

17 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, absolutely, which I think just
 18 points to the complexity of dealing with the situation
 19 at that time, and thinking about how do you link actions
 20 to categories of people in ways that are meaningful, and
 21 in ways that people can adhere to?

22 **Q.** And I suppose a demonstration of the complication that
 23 can arise by different phrases being used in different
 24 parts of the world?

25 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, you know, there's a lot of

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1 complexity in just the difference between "risk" and
 2 "vulnerability", how you define vulnerability, how you
 3 define risk, is it medical or is it social? And all of
 4 those things come together to mean different words are
 5 used in different contexts and also different medical
 6 traditions may favour different words in certain
 7 contexts. But that said, still I think the UK was
 8 unique in using a word that is not used otherwise in
 9 public health, whereas in other countries it was very
 10 much within the lexicon of public health, so an already
 11 familiar language was used.

12 **Q.** Is there any prospect of there being a common
 13 phraseology used across the world, do you think?

14 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I mean, public health is very particular
 15 to each country, so probably not, although I think the
 16 examples that I list there are probably more similar
 17 than the UK.

18 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

19 Professor Majeed, I'd like to come to you now,
 20 please, to discuss data collection, which you deal with
 21 in your report. Tell us, please, about overlaps in data
 22 collection and the challenge of separating data in order
 23 for it to be used to its optimum potential.

24 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** The NHS has good medical records in
 25 electronic format but they've been quite fragmented in

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1 different systems, so hospitals, GPs, et cetera have
 2 their own systems. So when the pandemic occurred, there
 3 was a need to integrate those records into a unified
 4 whole and that was done fairly quickly, and so we were
 5 able to link records from GPs with hospitals and
 6 elsewhere to provide data to monitor the impact of the
 7 pandemic to identify people who were clinically
 8 vulnerable, and to look at health outcomes as well. So
 9 that was an essential task.

10 You could argue it could have been done before the
 11 pandemic and should have been in place before, but it
 12 wasn't in place, but to give credit to the NHS, it was
 13 done very quickly and was a very useful resource once
 14 that work was done.

15 **Q.** Thank you.

16 I'm going to use a phrase now, "The national data
 17 platform". Is there a suggestion that the creation of
 18 such a platform would bring together general practice
 19 records, hospital data, social care data, in a unified
 20 privacy-protected place so that -- keeping all of that
 21 data in one place, and allowing it to be accessed by
 22 those who need to, it would improve the quality of the
 23 data and would simplify the collection of it?

24 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** It would definitely simplify the process
 25 because the ability to link data from different systems,

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1 that work would have been done through this new system,
 2 so it would definitely simplify the process of data
 3 analysis and data interpretation.

4 **Q.** Do you consider that the lack of routine disaggregation
 5 by clinical vulnerability status in health data has
 6 limited the ability to understand outcomes and
 7 inequalities?

8 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So we know with medical records, there
 9 are errors in all medical records, you get what we call
 10 a false positives where a diagnosis is present, where
 11 actually the patient hasn't got that diagnosis, and
 12 false negatives where a patient has a diagnosis but no
 13 one's recorded it on their record. So there are clearly
 14 errors and by having data aggregated you can look at it
 15 in more detail, you know, by hospital or by general
 16 practice, data quality and feedback information to try
 17 to improve data quality because data quality is, you
 18 know, the key factor which makes these data useful.
 19 With poor quality data, and a lot of errors and
 20 omissions, the data will miss certain people or put them
 21 in a category incorrectly so data (unclear) quality is a
 22 key requisite for any system for addressing health
 23 crises like a pandemic.

24 **Q.** What evidence or data do you consider would best capture
 25 the impacts felt by clinically vulnerable individuals or

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1 their families in this regard?

2 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So (unclear) records systems have their
 3 own strengths, the most comprehensive is the GP record
 4 because that has the most information on it but it is
 5 lacking information on drugs, for example, prescribed by
 6 specialists or by rare diagnoses, so you need to combine
 7 both to get the maximum value, but in general (unclear)
 8 record (unclear) by the GP has the most data but will
 9 miss certain attributes like specialist drugs which are
 10 not prescribed by GPs.

11 **Q.** Moving on slightly to talk about the nature and quality
 12 of research and evidence, including potential
 13 shortcomings, you tell us in your statement about the
 14 INFORM study that took place during the Omicron era.
 15 Tell us what that entailed and what the results showed,
 16 please.

17 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So the INFORM study used data from the
 18 system you just described, the national data repository,
 19 (unclear) data on about a quarter of the population of
 20 England and looked at outcomes in people who were
 21 classed as clinically extremely vulnerable compared to
 22 the general population --

23 **Q.** Could I ask you to slow down again, please.

24 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** Okay.
 25 What it showed was that people who were clinically

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1 extremely vulnerable had a much higher risk of adverse
 2 events like hospital admission or death of people in the
 3 general population and that risk, increased risk
 4 persisted despite vaccination, so although vaccination
 5 did suppress risk in all groups, groups who were
 6 clinically vulnerable still had a higher risk of adverse
 7 health outcomes like admission to hospital or death. So
 8 vaccination does help, but by itself it's not enough to
 9 suppress the risk down to the level of the baseline
 10 population.

11 **Q.** You tell us that ethnic minority data was poor.

12 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So there was often a lack of data on
 13 ethnicity in medical records. The NHS tried for a long
 14 time to improve that data quality, and I think it has
 15 improved since the pandemic, because the pandemic
 16 exposed the need for such data so we have seen
 17 improvements but at the start there were certainly
 18 deficits in data and many people did not have their
 19 ethnic group recorded in their NHS medical record.

20 **Q.** But at a high level, the INFORM study found that
 21 immunocompromised people were up to 13 times more likely
 22 to experience serious outcomes such as hospitalisation,
 23 intensive care unit admission, or death, even after
 24 vaccination.

25 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** That's correct, yeah, depending on your

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1 clinical category. So the risk was highest for those
 2 that had had organ transplants, for example.

3 **Q.** Yes, thank you.

4 Turning to the second area, please, that I'd like to
 5 ask you about, the impact of the pandemic on clinically
 6 vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable groups.
 7 Professor Majeed, Do you agree that the pandemic and its
 8 control measures didn't affect all groups equally and
 9 that for clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely
 10 vulnerable people they often exacerbated existing health
 11 risks and conditions resulting in a distinct health
 12 inequality?

13 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** Yes, that is definitely the case.
 14 Particularly when there was intersections of, say,
 15 poverty and clinical factors, there was definitely an
 16 excess impact on some groups compared to others.

17 **Q.** Yes, the Inquiry has heard this morning from Professors
 18 Marmot and Bambra that really one needs to look at the
 19 intersectionality between different areas of people's
 20 lives, and that the picture is particularly complicated,
 21 or can be particularly complicated, where there are lots
 22 of overlap of vulnerabilities and disabilities and
 23 issues such as socioeconomic deprivation, that sort of
 24 thing.

25 It's not necessarily a clear picture, is it?

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1 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** No, it's not, no, and it does depend on
2 how these factors come together.

3 **Q.** You tell us at paragraph 13 of your statement that
4 several factors mitigated or worsened impacts from
5 infection and that vaccination was a key mitigator of
6 adverse outcomes.

7 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** That's correct, yes. The vaccination did
8 reduce adverse outcomes for all population groups if
9 they were fully vaccinated.

10 **Q.** Thank you. Although you go on at paragraph 19 to tell
11 us that, later in the pandemic, clinically extremely
12 vulnerable patients sometimes reported difficulties in
13 obtaining antiviral drugs after testing positive for
14 Covid-19.

15 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** Yes, that is the case, because there were
16 variations across the country in access, what you might
17 call a postcode lottery. So, in some areas it worked
18 better than other areas, and I think we can learn
19 lessons from those areas where the system performed
20 better than others.

21 **Q.** Yes, thank you. And you go on to say that:
22 "Previously, people would have been contacted by
23 their local COVID-19 Medicines Delivery Unit ... once
24 they logged a positive Covid-19 test."

25 But then the system changed, and:

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1 "In the new system, the onus was now on patients to
2 contact their local health services when they had
3 a positive test."

4 And that caused confusion?

5 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** That's correct, so the system changed and
6 clearly people who were less well educated or with poor
7 English will struggle with that new system.

8 **Q.** Thank you.

9 Professor Herrick, I'd like to ask you about
10 a change in direction or guidance that was given by the
11 government from a rule-based system to something called
12 personal responsibility. And how that affected those
13 who were both clinically vulnerable and clinically
14 extremely vulnerable.

15 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** So when lockdowns were lifted -- well,
16 you know, I think some of the tensions here is that
17 public health guidance is generally based on personal
18 responsibility --

19 **Q.** Yes?

20 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** -- because the -- UK, the predominant
21 diseases are chronic, most of the public health advice
22 is about behavioural risk and self-responsibility and
23 modifying behavioural risk. Obviously when you have
24 a novel infectious disease, the way that risk is managed
25 is completely different, and largely unfamiliar to

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1 people in the UK.

2 But when restrictions were lifted, suddenly that
3 idea of protecting others shifted, and it became
4 an advice to people who had previously been shielding --
5 and at this point, when those restrictions were lifted,
6 still a huge proportion of people who were initially
7 being advised to shield were continuing to do so --

8 **Q.** Yes.

9 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** -- to kind of reintegrate themselves
10 into society, to -- you know, if they could go back to
11 work they should go back to work, or if their workplace
12 was Covid safe they should go back to work. And
13 obviously for people that have been isolated at home,
14 this is a moment, of deep confusion about what is
15 actually safe. And I think the moment of those
16 restrictions lifting also chimed with the sort of moment
17 of a fraying of trust in the government response. And
18 so I think that made things much, much less clear for
19 people.

20 So, rules are easy to follow, but suddenly when
21 there are no rules it's very hard to make personal risk
22 calculations.

23 **Q.** In your view, were there inequalities created by this
24 change of system?

25 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I think certainly yes in some respects,

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1 but possibly no greater than existed before, in the
2 sense that if you were able to work from home before,
3 you know, you could continue your daily life without
4 fear, without risk. For people that couldn't work at
5 home, you know, then you start to get into this set of
6 impossible risk calculations. And especially if your
7 workplace couldn't be made Covid safe, as it was called
8 at the time, what do you do? Do you put yourself at
9 risk, having previously been unable to leave your house,
10 or do you decide that actually the risk isn't worth it?
11 And some of the data bears out that people made that
12 active decision to say: actually, you know, I'm going to
13 have to leave my job because it's not safe.

14 **Q.** What in your view -- what changes are needed, or can be
15 considered so that high-risk groups are not left to
16 manage their harm individually?

17 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I think it would be a very difficult one
18 to say. You know, Covid was exceptional. It won't be
19 the last time that there is an emerging -- novel
20 emerging infectious disease, but it's very hard to
21 generalise from something so specific.

22 If there is another pandemic, the clinically
23 vulnerable groups may be completely different. It may
24 be children. Who knows? So it would be impossible to
25 generalise about what could be done differently in this

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1 sense. It was what it was, based on, you know, who was
 2 categorised as risky and vulnerable at the time.

3 **Q.** Thank you.

4 I'd like to now move to talk about the impact of
 5 shielding.

6 Could we display, please, INQ000661715 -- which is
 7 your witness statement, Professor Herrick -- and go to
 8 page 4 and display paragraph 3.2. Thank you.

9 By February 2021, you tell us, 3.7 million would be
 10 classified as clinically extremely vulnerable, which was
 11 a gross increase on the 2.2 million classified as such
 12 in 2020, which was the previous figure that we
 13 discussed.

14 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Mm.

15 **Q.** "This increase was fuelled by the inclusion of some
 16 disabilities (eg Down's syndrome) as a marker of CEV ...
 17 and the introduction of a new risk prediction algorithm
 18 ... in February 2021 ... This tool identified an
 19 additional 1.7 [million] people as [clinically extremely
 20 vulnerable] as it included deprivation scores, age,
 21 ethnicity and domicile type as indicators of risk ...
 22 This shift also then included women with a history of
 23 gestational diabetes, but not those with current
 24 diabetes."

25 So I want to just pause for a moment and ask about

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1 the characterisation of Down's syndrome as a basis for
 2 clinically extremely vulnerable designation. Is that --
 3 was that included, do you think, because there was an
 4 increased risk caused by an array of health issues such
 5 as immunological issues, congenital heart and
 6 respiratory conditions, and increased rates of obesity
 7 and diabetes?

8 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, that would be my understanding.

9 **Q.** Thank you.

10 "Linguistic slippage" is another phrase which is
 11 used.

12 "... linguistic slippage ..."

13 At paragraph 2.10. We don't need to display this,
 14 but:

15 "... between 'guidance' and 'advice' and the
 16 confusion between CEV and CV led many people [you say]
 17 to shield unnecessarily."

18 So can you explain, please, what you mean by
 19 "linguistic slippage between 'guidance' and 'advice'".

20 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I mean, "guidance" and "advice" have
 21 different meanings, but were used interchangeably, often
 22 in the same sentence, advising people. This guidance is
 23 advisory but we strongly suggest that you follow this
 24 advice. I mean, how anyone is supposed to decipher this
 25 and decide what they should do -- especially against

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1 a background, you know, at the time, 2020, 2021, it was
 2 all about the rules. This is the Covid rule. You know,
 3 2 metres away from someone, don't do this, don't do
 4 that.

5 So you've got a background of the rules against
 6 a sort of patchwork of lockdowns, and then people being
 7 guided and advised, who knows -- who knows what they
 8 should be doing?

9 I think the simplest messaging really was: if you're
 10 shielding, you must stay at home for 12 weeks.

11 That's something that somebody can understand.

12 **Q.** Something solid.

13 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Solid. Very hard to do, but very solid.

14 And I think that was the point of it.

15 But the rest, especially in the letters that were
 16 sent to people, very hard to know. You know, am I going
 17 to be arrested if I step outside my home? What if
 18 I open my window? Can I go into my garden?

19 And these are all legitimate questions that people
 20 had at the time, that seem bonkers, really, but, you
 21 know, when you are being advised and guided, how do you
 22 know what you should be doing, and where the risks lie
 23 in a disease that no one knows anything about?

24 **Q.** The Inquiry has already begun to hear evidence of the
 25 effect of shielding and isolation on people's mental

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1 health and how severe that became for some. So, in your
 2 view, it was important to have as clear a message as
 3 possible so that those who really did need to shield
 4 understood that that was the advice or guidance, whereas
 5 those who really didn't need to shield may have been
 6 confused or shielding unnecessarily?

7 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah. And I think that messaging was
 8 very effective. If you look at the rates of people that
 9 were shielding, it's extraordinarily high. I mean, the
 10 British love a rule, so I think that it was very
 11 effective, but a lot of work went into that messaging,
 12 in terms of behavioural psychology and how do we get
 13 people to adhere to this. And a lot of it was about
 14 messaging of altruism, support, "You can do this", and
 15 encouraging others to support others.

16 So there was a lot of psychology that went into the
 17 adherence to that.

18 **Q.** And finally on this topic, you describe at paragraph 3.5
 19 the neologism of "shielding" entering the mainstream
 20 language. You also go on to say that the notion of the
 21 clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely
 22 vulnerable needing to "be shielded" (which is the
 23 passive rather than the active form of the verb) from
 24 risk, is in stark contrast to the general tenor of
 25 public health messaging that focuses on individual

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1 agency, control and responsibility. And that:

2 "This induced novel forms of health behaviours and
3 beliefs, which, in turn, often set up new types of
4 inter-generational conflict and solidarity."

5 What do you mean by that?

6 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I mean, I think it was socially a very
7 interesting moment, that if you have delineated all
8 people over 70 as clinically vulnerable, you have
9 associated "vulnerability" with the need to shield.
10 Even if technically those who aren't clinically
11 vulnerable don't need to shield, and you've cast
12 "shielding" in the language of protecting others,
13 there's therefore the assumption that anyone over 70
14 must be protected by everybody else, and this is our
15 societal duty. Which is quite a few way of looking at
16 things. And that therefore sets up the assumption
17 amongst people in particular categories that there is
18 a duty of care. Which -- you know, I'm not casting
19 judgment about whether this is right or wrong, but
20 socially that's an interesting thing.

21 So there is an intergenerational difference,
22 I think, in how people viewed what society should do for
23 them, which is very much at odds with the general way
24 that public health goes about things, which is: okay,
25 well, stop drinking so much, please don't smoke, don't

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1 do this, don't do that, but it's your choice.

2 So I think that is a very novel moment, and also
3 a difficult one to exit.

4 **Q.** Yes. What further research do you think might be
5 required to develop and implement appropriate public
6 health strategies which protect risk groups going
7 forwards?

8 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I mean, risk groups aren't static, so
9 this was -- these were risk groups for this particular
10 moment in time. Those risk groups have changed over
11 that time, and they won't be the same risk groups going
12 forward. So I think that we can think about language
13 and messaging and categorisation and the use of data and
14 the efficiency of that, but again, I don't think you can
15 take general lessons from something that is exceptional.

16 But what you perhaps could look at is the impact of
17 how people view themselves, and their own vulnerability,
18 and what long-term consequences has that had for people
19 in terms of how they engage with the world, their
20 workplace, all these things. Has it had an impact on
21 how people see themselves and their own health
22 behaviours going forward?

23 **Q.** And I suppose, as well as thinking about the protection
24 of certain sectors of society in the next public health
25 emergency, there's also the other side of the coin which

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1 needs to be considered, which is the potential adverse
2 consequences of telling somebody to do something or
3 advising somebody to do something. And by that I mean,
4 you know, the mental health impact of shielding and
5 isolation?

6 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, absolutely, but like all risks,
7 you know, it's a cost-benefit analysis. You have to
8 weigh things up. There will be very much adverse
9 effects but are they counterposed against, you know, the
10 decreased risk of severe illness or perhaps death if you
11 contracted Covid? Again, in a novel situation, it's
12 very hard to know what the right thing to do is. You
13 just do the best you have, given the information
14 available.

15 **Q.** Yes.

16 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** But yeah, I think going forward, there
17 will always be certain groups who will be much more
18 vulnerable, where care has to be taken appropriately, in
19 terms of safeguarding those groups.

20 **Q.** Thank you.

21 I'd like us to look now at some of the experiences
22 that the Inquiry has heard about during our Every Story
23 Matters campaign, and let's put up, please -- I'm just
24 going to give the INQ reference for the record --
25 000659895. Thank you. And can we go to page 33,

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1 please. Thank you.

2 So we can see here that this is the experiences of
3 those who shielded, or who are clinically vulnerable.

4 "People who were advised to shield or who did so to
5 protect clinically vulnerable family members, told us
6 how difficult this period was. Shielding often brought
7 deep feelings of isolation, loneliness and anxiety, made
8 harder by the constant worry about catching Covid-19 and
9 the potential impact it could have on loved ones. The
10 experiences of clinically vulnerable people during the
11 pandemic are covered in further detail in Modules 3, 4,
12 and 8, [and their] Every Story Matters records."

13 One Every Story Matters contributor from England
14 said:

15 "I have no spleen due to cancer, so I am clinically
16 extremely vulnerable and we were told to shield. This
17 was isolating and difficult and harder for the fact that
18 the rest of my family didn't have to shield and always
19 risked bringing the virus home to me. Mental health has
20 been an issue since, and I'm still worried about
21 travelling, being in buildings near other people, and
22 I feel far more nervous and anxious than before the
23 pandemic."

24 Another contributor told us:

25 "I was in the extremely vulnerable category, so

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1 shielded for the first few months of the pandemic. It
 2 was a very scary and isolating time -- and it affected
 3 my relationships with family and friends, some of whom
 4 couldn't understand why I was being so cautious. I'm
 5 still suffering from a mental health perspective due to
 6 the stress and isolation.

7 "People who had been shielding spoke about the
 8 distress and anxiety they felt when restrictions were
 9 lifted. Many described how unsettling it was to mix
 10 with others again and how strong their fears remained
 11 about catching the virus. Some in clinically vulnerable
 12 households told us they stopped working or limited
 13 contact with loved ones to protect family members'
 14 health. The ongoing isolation and fear took a heavy
 15 emotional toll, leaving lasting effects on their mental
 16 wellbeing."

17 "Further into the pandemic, when shielding was
 18 lifted, I was told return to work", says an Every Story
 19 Matters contributor from Scotland.

20 "I was so scared of going back to an indoor space
 21 with lots of people, I realised I just had to face the
 22 world again, but the anxiety level was extreme. My work
 23 went through the motions to show support, but it was
 24 clearly causing problems. I was struggling emotionally,
 25 and physically, and so left in May 2021 and I have never

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1 worked since."

2 Thank you, we can take that down now.

3 But it wasn't just the shielding and the isolation
 4 and the undoubtedly mental health effects that that had;
 5 there were also poorer health outcomes for those who
 6 were clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely
 7 vulnerable, and sadly, also a heightened risk of death;
 8 is that right, Professor Majeed?

9 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** That's correct, yes, so there remained
 10 a higher risk of death throughout the pandemic, even
 11 post-vaccination.

12 **Q.** Thank you.

13 Professors Shakespeare and Watson, from whom we will
 14 hear tomorrow, tell us in their report that people who
 15 self-identified on the 2011 census as requiring a little
 16 or a lot of support, represented 60% of all
 17 Covid-related deaths in England between 24 January and
 18 20 November 2020. And they talk about the risk of death
 19 for more disabled men being 3.1 times greater as
 20 compared to non-disabled men.

21 We've also looked at a briefing by the Health
 22 Foundation, which is entitled "Assessing the impact of
 23 Covid-19 on the clinically extremely vulnerable
 24 population", which tells us that NHS Digital data shows
 25 that a total of 50,635 clinically extremely vulnerable

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1 people died in England between March and August of 2020.

2 Does the higher mortality level of rates amongst the
 3 clinically extremely vulnerable population reflect the
 4 nature of their health conditions, or the pandemic and
 5 the effects of the pandemic, or a combination of both?
 6 And is it possible to distinguish between the two?

7 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** It's a combination of all those factors,
 8 so the pandemic, their age, their medical problems,
 9 their disabilities, their socioeconomic status, all of
 10 those will interact to increase their risk.

11 **Q.** And so one of the most important protective factors,
 12 particularly for these groups of people, was
 13 vaccination.

14 You deal with this at paragraph 13 in your
 15 statement, Dr Majeed. By how much did the vaccination
 16 of these groups of people mitigate the risk of death?

17 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So for people who were fully vaccinated
 18 with three doses, perhaps 90%, so it was quite a large
 19 reduction in their risk of death, but that did vary by
 20 clinical group. Some groups showed little benefit from
 21 vaccination but generally it was up to 90% reduction in
 22 death rates if you were fully vaccinated.

23 **Q.** Thank you.

24 Turning to look at unequal impacts and
 25 intersectionality, we've touched upon this already. Did

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1 you find, though, Dr Majeed, that disparities were
 2 stark?

3 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** We did, particularly in the first year of
 4 the pandemic before vaccination was present. So death
 5 rates were much higher in the clinically vulnerable and
 6 extremely vulnerable, in ethnic minorities, in those
 7 with disabilities, in poorer groups, so certainly in the
 8 first year there were stark disparities, though it did
 9 somewhat attenuate over time as vaccination became
 10 available, and everyone essentially became infected with
 11 Covid at some point in their lives, but in the first
 12 wave there were certainly stark disparities in outcomes
 13 between different population groups.

14 **Q.** We've also touched upon mental health but I want to ask
 15 some more questions about mental health and wellbeing
 16 across the whole of the pandemic. We know that
 17 clinically vulnerable families who are a Core
 18 Participant in this module, ran a survey in the summer
 19 of 2025. In fact, let's have a look at the survey
 20 findings that appear in the statement of Lara Wong from
 21 Clinically Vulnerable Families, at INQ000657970.

22 We can see that this is her witness statement, and
 23 if we go to paragraph 23, which I think is at page 11 --
 24 thank you.

25 This is a survey in relation to which they received

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1 125 responses from people in clinically vulnerable
 2 households across the United Kingdom, capturing
 3 experiences over multiple stages of the pandemic.

4 And we can see that the responses:

5 "... showed that impacts were multi-layered, often
 6 combining social, emotional, and practical challenges.
 7 Participants described both the direct strain of living
 8 with increased health risks and the secondary effects of
 9 prolonged exclusion from safe public spaces, healthcare,
 10 and social contact."

11 And the key themes that emerged from the data
 12 included the following:

13 "Social isolation was reported as a major factor for
 14 most respondents, associated with shielding, ongoing
 15 risk from airborne infections, and the withdrawal of
 16 mitigations (for example, masking in public and
 17 healthcare settings), leaving many finding it harder to
 18 return to their former lives."

19 Second:

20 "A large proportion described their concerns linked
 21 to increased infection risks, particularly in healthcare
 22 environments, workplaces, and high population density
 23 public spaces without ventilation or masking."

24 Third:

25 "Many experienced depression and a sense of

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1 hopelessness when mitigations were lifted without
 2 protections for high risk individuals."

3 Fourth:

4 "Grief and trauma were compounded by circumstances
 5 such as being unable to visit dying relatives,
 6 restricted funerals or lack of post-bereavement support
 7 due to shielding".

8 And five:

9 "Reports of loneliness were particularly acute in
 10 households not only where the [clinically vulnerable and
 11 clinically extremely vulnerable] individual lived alone,
 12 but also where they were the only vulnerable member,
 13 creating divisions within families about acceptable risk
 14 and behaviours."

15 So the whole gamut of mental health effects upon
 16 those who were following the rules and who were trying
 17 to protect themselves often, as we've seen with that
 18 final point, in families where they might have been the
 19 only vulnerable member.

20 Do you say, Professor Majeed, that those
 21 difficulties affecting the mental health of clinically
 22 vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable
 23 individuals alleviated as the pandemic began to pass, or
 24 do you think that there is an argument for saying that
 25 for those people, as life was getting back to normal for

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1 the general population, really they were still stuck in
 2 a life of taking these additional precautions for a lot
 3 longer and perhaps until today?

4 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yeah, I think the latter. I think once
 5 measures were relaxed, this group still felt very
 6 vulnerable, and had high levels of anxiety, depression
 7 and still felt concerned about their risk of infection
 8 and risk to their health if they did get infected. So
 9 those feelings did persist once measures were relaxed in
 10 2022.

11 Q. And is it your view that for some of the people who fall
 12 within those categories, though that mental health
 13 difficulty or the changes to their lives which started
 14 during the course of the pandemic are continuing to
 15 persist today?

16 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, even now there are people who
 17 struggled to cope with the changes that have occurred
 18 since the pandemic started and struggle with getting
 19 back to normal, normal routines, as was seen in your
 20 examples.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 Finally, I'd like to ask you about lessons learned
 23 and what can be considered by way of improvement for the
 24 future. We've touched upon data collection. And one of
 25 the other issues which you raise, Professor Majeed, in

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1 your statement, is "an increase of trust between
 2 communities and public health authorities."

3 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, so we did see, in the pandemic,
 4 interventions were taken up not in the same way by
 5 different groups, and some groups had a lack of trust in
 6 authority. So for example, some ethnic minority groups
 7 didn't have confidence in the government or local
 8 authorities, and that then did lead to a lower uptake of
 9 key interventions like vaccination or shielding, for
 10 example. So trust is very important, and trust takes
 11 a long time to build up, it can't be done in a pandemic,
 12 you need to start, you know, essentially now, and keep
 13 working on it constantly.

14 Q. Yes, and something which will chime very much with the
 15 evidence that the Inquiry heard this morning from
 16 Professors Marmot and Bambra, is a targeting and
 17 proactive strategy around the reduction of inequalities?

18 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, so the health service can do so
 19 much, but much of health status is determined by
 20 non-health factors like housing, employment, income, and
 21 so on, which are not under the control of the NHS.

22 Q. And finally, from your suggested lessons learned,
 23 Professor Majeed, you say that there should be an
 24 increased level of support to the workforce.

25 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, so we mentioned people that are

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1 vulnerable in this session, but the health workers also
 2 felt very stressed as well at the time, they were
 3 obviously seeing patients with Covid and some had their
 4 own medical problems and so we obviously need to protect
 5 the workforce as well to ensure its resilience and can
 6 manage any future health crisis that might occur in the
 7 UK.

8 **Q.** Thank you.

9 And Professor Herrick, to identify a couple of the
 10 lessons learned from your statement, you say that there
 11 should be greater public understanding of the terms and
 12 the issues which a pandemic can throw up on to people
 13 who are clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable?

14 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, I mean I think our understanding
 15 of public health terms is probably much better than it
 16 was in 2019, I think we're all very familiar with key
 17 terms and epidemiology by now, but yeah, going forward,
 18 I think a simplification of language, not creating
 19 multiple categories to describe similar things, and
 20 shifting them around would be helpful to people.

21 **Q.** And you also promote a further exploration and
 22 understanding of longer-term effects.

23 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, I mean, I think that the examples
 24 that you put up, your lived experience examples, show
 25 that there's a very long tail to this in terms of

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1 people's, yeah, place in the world, and their very, very
 2 different experiences of what happened in 2020, 2021 and
 3 2022, and understanding the consequences of that set
 4 against the need to protect, so was shielding worth it?
 5 Was it worth it in terms of the consequences that many
 6 people now feel? Yes, maybe it was, in terms of the
 7 lives saved. It's hard to quantify what would have
 8 happened otherwise. But there has certainly been a long
 9 tail, in terms of, yeah, you know, people's wellbeing,
 10 I think, from this, and the way that it was managed.

11 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you very much.

12 Professor Majeed, Professor Herrick, thank you for
 13 your time.

14 There will be some additional questions, my Lady,
 15 I hope you have the list and you can see that.

16 **LADY HALLETT:** I do, thank you.

17 And we start with Mr Weatherby who is just there.

18 **Questions from MR WEATHERBY KC**

19 **MR WEATHERBY:** Thank you very much.

20 Very briefly from me. I ask questions on behalf of
 21 the Covid Bereaved Families for Justice UK group.

22 Professor Majeed, you were briefly asked some
 23 questions about the unified privacy-protected national
 24 data platform. And this is a concept that, in your
 25 report, you argue for with respect to the need for

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1 integrated real-time data linking primary care,
 2 hospitals, and public health. Can you just help us on
 3 what progress, if any, has been made towards that end
 4 since the pandemic?

5 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** So progress, you know, has carried on,
 6 albeit not as fast as you might have hoped, there are
 7 legal rules around data linkage which were relaxed in
 8 the pandemic which, you know, are now back in force, so
 9 those have to be addressed by the government.

10 So yes, so I would say that we need to address those
 11 legal issues, get public consent and trust because the
 12 public need to be fully on board with the process
 13 because it's their data, ultimately. But that resource
 14 is essential because it allows us to identify at-risk
 15 groups and monitor outcomes and plan interventions going
 16 forward for this or any future health issue that may
 17 occur.

18 **Q.** Okay. Can I take it from the fact that there's still
 19 questions over the legality of the data issues that in
 20 fact it is not in place yet?

21 **PROFESSOR MAJEED:** Yes, so in the pandemic, as I mentioned,
 22 the rules were relaxed somewhat, but those rules have
 23 come back now, but the NHS is working towards trusted
 24 environments where data is anonymised and can be used
 25 for -- (overspeaking) --

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1 **Q.** So would it be of assistance if the Inquiry were to
 2 recommend that that is looked at carefully and
 3 expedited?

4 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** Yes, I would fully agree with that, we
 5 need to look at that very carefully so legal issues are
 6 not a problem for any future health crisis that may
 7 occur.

8 **Q.** Yes, thank you very much.

9 Professor Herrick, you may have dealt with this
 10 already but just for completeness really, in terms of
 11 shielding, are you aware of any post-pandemic research
 12 on its use as a public health concept or disease
 13 mitigation strategy other than the work yourself that
 14 you've referred to? Is there anything else that we can
 15 point to?

16 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Not that I have found, in terms of, you
 17 know, preparing for today to see what else had been
 18 written, and I couldn't find very much --

19 **Q.** Again, is there a need for that, in terms of it being
 20 a new concept, a neologism as you term it?

21 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yes, I think -- yes, although it doesn't
 22 exist any more, in a way. So the difficulty is going
 23 back and tracing what it was. That's the methodological
 24 problem with understanding what shielding was, where it
 25 came from, who came up with the term, why they did.

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1 So I think it would be more interesting to
 2 understand the consequences of that experience on
 3 people, so how -- you know, in terms of mental health
 4 outcomes, physical health outcomes. That would be very
 5 important and interesting research to do.

6 **MR WEATHERBY:** Yes, thank you very much.
 7 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you Mr Weatherby.

8 Mr Wagner, who is down opposite you.

9 **Questions from MR WAGNER KC**

10 **MR WAGNER:** Good afternoon, Professors. My name is
 11 Adam Wagner and I act for the Clinically Vulnerable
 12 Families.

13 First of all, a question for Professor Herrick. You
 14 say at paragraph 3.5 of your statement that -- I'll just
 15 let you get to that -- that public support for shielding
 16 "arguably weakened" from June 2020 onwards.

17 Is that proposition based on any particular studies
 18 or evidence?

19 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Sorry, paragraph?

20 **Q.** 3.5.

21 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** 3.5. Sorry, can you repeat the
 22 question.

23 **Q.** So, about halfway down that paragraph you say, from
 24 after June 2020:

25 "... the public sense of moral obligation and duty

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1 to protect the vulnerable arguably weakened."

2 That's the full statement.

3 Is that based on evidence or is that something that
 4 you are sort of taking from general knowledge?

5 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** I mean, I think that's the general
 6 backdrop of what was going on at that time, in the sense
 7 that in June, as far as I recall, digging back into my
 8 memory, things were starting to open up again. That was
 9 the end of the lockdown.

10 **Q.** Right. But it's not based on a study or --

11 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** No, it's not necessarily based on
 12 a study but it would have been based, when I wrote the
 13 paper, on media analysis of what was being reported at
 14 that time in terms of what was going on, what was being
 15 said, what were politicians saying. You know, it was
 16 a time of a lot of press conferences.

17 **Q.** I just want to ask next, Professor Majeed, please, about
 18 data collection. And you say at paragraph 9 of your
 19 statement:

20 "However, in areas like data collection, overlaps
 21 between these two groups [that's clinically vulnerable
 22 and clinically extremely vulnerable] made separation
 23 challenging, as NHS electronic health records did not
 24 always flag Clinically Vulnerable and CEV [clinically
 25 extremely vulnerable] status consistently."

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1 Have you got that there? I'm not reading from
 2 something you can't see?

3 (No audible answer)

4 Do you agree, in that respect, that a clear
 5 nationally consistent way to define and record clinical
 6 vulnerability, using, for example, datasets like flu
 7 vaccine eligibility, would allow protections and
 8 communications to be activated quickly and consistently
 9 in a future emergency?

10 **PROFESSOR MAJEEED:** I think it would be helpful. So in a --
 11 in the pandemic we saw that these groups were advised at
 12 several points during the pandemic, so in general, as
 13 the data got better, they were expounded somewhat. As
 14 you got more data. I think it would be -- you know,
 15 ideally you would have these groups categorised in
 16 advance of any future health crisis, with the caveat
 17 that, for each different crisis, they may differ. So
 18 for the measles currently, it's children mainly at risk,
 19 not older people. So it would vary, for example, on the
 20 actual health crisis. But in general it would be
 21 helpful to have the groups defined in advance so that on
 22 day one you can press a button and go with any
 23 intervention you want to run for those groups.

24 **MR WAGNER:** And I see Professor Herrick nodding there in
 25 agreement. And, Chair, may I just ask a follow-up

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1 question to something that Professor Herrick said about
 2 that earlier?

3 **LADY HALLETT:** You may.

4 **MR WAGNER:** Professor Herrick, you said, entirely fairly,
 5 that clinically vulnerable groups in the next pandemic
 6 may not be for the same, as it could be, you know,
 7 something that affects children or whatever it would be,
 8 and you went on to say that it's not necessarily
 9 possible to draw general lessons from the very specific
 10 situation of Covid-19, and the pandemic that arose from
 11 that.

12 May I just explore that with you quickly? Might it
 13 be possible to draw some general lessons in relation to
 14 groups, for example, immunocompromised people who
 15 generally will be clinically vulnerable to lots of
 16 different pathogens and probably to whatever pandemic
 17 comes next? Might it be possible to draw some -- with
 18 the caveat that there will be differences around the
 19 edges -- that there might be groups that are generally
 20 clinically vulnerable in the sense that we now
 21 understand it to mean, not just to Covid but to other
 22 pathogens? And you might draw a lesson, for example,
 23 relating to the workplace, where you'd have better air
 24 quality as a requirement, some things like that, that
 25 don't -- can apply to peacetime and not just pandemic

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1 time, if I put it like that?

2 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, I mean, there are certainly groups
 3 that are clinically vulnerable regardless of what is
 4 going on, that -- you know, cancer treatment,
 5 immunocompromised, suppressed, organ transplant. Those
 6 people are always vulnerable, wherever they are and
 7 whatever conditions are being faced, and always have to
 8 be very careful.

9 To link that then to the workplace is a question of
 10 employment law that I'm not qualified, perhaps, to
 11 comment on. Obviously we would all like to have clean
 12 air, we should all have access to clean air, so, yes,
 13 I would in theory agree with that. In practice, whether
 14 or not that can be delivered within every environment is
 15 a different question.

16 **Q.** Yes, it would require a variety of expertise in addition
 17 to your own?

18 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah, exactly.

19 **Q.** Just staying with you, Professor Herrick, you refer in
 20 your statement, at paragraph 2.5, to the categorisation
 21 of CEV (clinically extremely vulnerable) people who
 22 would be on the shielding list at the time in 2020, when
 23 the list began, and this system whereby GPs could
 24 categorise somebody if they asked them to, if they, for
 25 example, had been missed off -- as many people were --

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1 the algorithm that used medical records.

2 Would you agree that the -- what -- the actual way
 3 the system worked was not that someone self-declared, it
 4 was that they would go to the GP and ask to be declared
 5 as clinically extremely vulnerable and then have access
 6 to the protections if the GP agreed?

7 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yes. I mean, depends how you're
 8 defining "self-declared". I mean, self-declared
 9 declared themselves to the GP --

10 **Q.** Yeah.

11 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** -- yes. But there were also people that
 12 decided to shield even if they weren't actually on that
 13 list. So there were plenty of people that decided to
 14 shield because of their own personal risk calculation.
 15 But yeah, people were omitted from a letter. There were
 16 later communications and broad understandings of what it
 17 was, how vulnerability was defined at that point, and
 18 then people would say -- understand -- "I think I would
 19 fall in that category, and therefore what do I need to
 20 do to have the letter?" Which became the passport to
 21 the things that you needed to support yourself while
 22 shielding.

23 **Q.** Yes. And that's the difference, is that you could
 24 self-declare if you weren't on the list, but you
 25 couldn't -- you didn't have the passports --

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1 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah.

2 **Q.** -- to the benefits that would allow you to do it until
 3 it was confirmed by the GP?

4 **PROFESSOR HERRICK:** Yeah.

5 **MR WAGNER:** Thank you.

6 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you, Mr Wagner.

7 That completes the questions we have for you
 8 Professors, thank you both very much indeed for your
 9 witness statements. So don't worry if there's something
 10 you wanted to say but you didn't quite -- if it's in
 11 your witness statement, I take the written material into
 12 account as well. So thank you very much for what you've
 13 said in your witness statements and for coming along
 14 today to help. I'm really grateful to you.

15 We'll now take a break I think before the next
 16 witness and I shall return at 3.10.

17 **MS BLACKWELL:** Thank you, my Lady.

18 (2.55 pm)

19 (A short break)

20 (3.10 pm)

21 **LADY HALLETT:** Ms Rahman.

22 **MS RAHMAN:** My Lady, may I call the next witness,
 23 Professor Jayati Das-Munshi.

24 **PROFESSOR JAYATI DAS-MUNSHI (affirmed)**

25 **LADY HALLETT:** Professor, I hope you were warned you're the

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1 last witness of the day so I hope you haven't been kept
 2 waiting.

3 **THE WITNESS:** Yes.

4 **Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY**

5 **MS RAHMAN:** Professor, can you give the Inquiry your full
 6 name, please.

7 **A.** It's Jayati Das-Munshi.

8 **Q.** Thank you. And, Professor, you should have in front of
 9 you a copy of a report with the reference INQ000588210.
 10 Can you confirm that that is an expert report you have
 11 provided for the purposes of the Inquiry?

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** And can you confirm that any facts stated in the report
 14 are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

15 **A.** Yes, I can.

16 **Q.** And can you also confirm that any opinions you have
 17 stated in the report represent your true and complete
 18 professional opinions?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** Thank you.

21 Professor, I'm going to go through report largely in
 22 the order in which you present your conclusions. There
 23 is also going to be a few slides that will go up on the
 24 screen in front of you -- I'll give the paragraph
 25 numbers -- sometimes touching on things that come up

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1 later or earlier.
2 If you need a moment to refresh your memory, please
3 take the time to time you need. Thank you.
4 Turning to page 4, first, of your report, and your
5 professional background. In summary, you are
6 a professor of social and psychiatric epidemiology at
7 King's College, London?
8 **A.** Yes.
9 **Q.** And you're also an honorary consultant psychiatrist with
10 the South London and Maudsley Trust and the
11 St Christopher's Hospice, UK?
12 **A.** Yes.
13 **Q.** And your clinical work covers psychiatry of general
14 adult and older adult populations in a liaison
15 psychiatric setting?
16 **A.** Yes.
17 **Q.** And finally, you have also researched and published
18 extensively on health inequalities impacting people with
19 severe mental health problems?
20 **A.** Yes.
21 **Q.** Thank you.
22 Now, Professor, at paragraph 1 of your report you
23 touch on the instructions you received from the Inquiry
24 to provide a report on the impact of the Covid-19
25 pandemic on people living with severe mental conditions?

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1 **A.** Yes.
2 **Q.** And in your report you cover two elements of that
3 impact. Is it right to say, first, it's the impact on
4 physical health and mortality?
5 **A.** Yes.
6 **Q.** And second, the impact on the mental health symptoms
7 experienced by those with the conditions?
8 **A.** Yes.
9 **Q.** And I understand that you've drawn on your own research
10 as well as those of others, including some international
11 research?
12 **A.** Yes.
13 **Q.** And you also acknowledge the contribution of Dr Dario
14 Moreno-Agostino?
15 **A.** Yes.
16 **Q.** And it's correct that he conducted research on the
17 population mental health trends and trajectories over
18 time, including during the Covid-19 pandemic.
19 **A.** Yes.
20 **Q.** Thank you.
21 Moving to the substance of your report, I want to
22 touch first on how you have defined severe mental
23 illness, and it will be helpful to have up on the screen
24 what you have set out at paragraph 17.1 which starts on
25 page 8 of the report. It's INQ000588210 and it's at

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1 page 8, paragraph 17.1.
2 And you've set out there a number of illnesses and
3 disorders:
4 "Schizophrenia-spectrum and delusional disorders;
5 "Mood (affective) disorders, including severe
6 depression and bipolar affective disorder;
7 "Neuroses, including phobias, panic and obsessive
8 compulsive disorder ...
9 "Behavioural disorders, including eating and stress
10 disorders."
11 And finally:
12 "Personality disorders."
13 The last, I think is the only one where you've not
14 given an example. Could you give an example of
15 a personality disorder?
16 **A.** So personality disorders are essentially longstanding
17 ingrained ways in which people relate to others, and
18 that -- and personality disorders can have an adverse
19 impact on people's relationships and their functioning,
20 and there are many types of personality disorders such
21 as borderline personality disorder, narcissistic
22 personality disorder, and so on.
23 **Q.** Thank you, Professor.
24 Now, turning to paragraph 17.2 which is, again, the
25 same INQ number, INQ000588210 at page 9, what you touch

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1 on there is that some definitions of these conditions
2 also consider a second element relating to the level of
3 functional impairment, and you've said there that this
4 aspect is somewhat fuzzy, and I understand that's
5 because, as well as severe mental disorders, it seems
6 that these criteria also include some common mental
7 disorders such as depression and anxiety; is that
8 correct?
9 **A.** Yes, that's correct.
10 **Q.** Later in your report, I don't need to take you to it
11 just now, but it's at paragraph 21, you say that common
12 mental disorders tend to exist along a continuum. Could
13 you briefly describe what you mean by that?
14 **A.** So common mental disorders are distinguished from severe
15 mental illnesses as being highly common, as the name
16 suggests, in the population, and include conditions like
17 depression and anxiety. So in the population people may
18 have symptoms of depression and anxiety, which exist as
19 a sort of continuum, as a spectrum, with people with
20 more symptoms potentially having -- being more impacted
21 in terms of their functioning, needing to seek care and
22 so on.
23 So I suppose the point I was making is that
24 depression can be more common and less severe, or can
25 also be more severe and therefore included within the

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1 purposes of this report.

2 **Q.** And some people can experience symptoms across
3 a continuum, so some mild, some severe, so that it isn't
4 necessarily the case you can say they have a disorder or
5 not, it's not a tick-box exercise and you can have some
6 common aspects and some more severe aspects?

7 **A.** Yes, exactly.

8 **Q.** Just again in terms of your approach to that, fuzziness,
9 as I understand it, where there's a lack of evidence
10 relating to severe illness you have included some
11 studies that consider both severe and less severe
12 conditions in your research?

13 **A.** Yeah, I think it's fair to say that the risk factors for
14 mental disorders whether it's a sort of milder form of
15 depression or a more severe depression, they're still
16 going to be similar. So where there was an absence of
17 evidence for severe mental illnesses, I may have looked
18 to the evidence for common mental disorders.

19 **Q.** Thank you. And just coming back finally to personality
20 disorders again, it's right to say that some definitions
21 of severe mental illnesses don't include those
22 conditions?

23 **A.** Yes.

24 **Q.** But again, you've included those for the purposes of
25 your report because specifically that group is known to

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1 experience markedly adverse impacts, including on
2 physical health and mortality?

3 **A.** Yes.

4 **Q.** Thank you. Professor, I now just want to ask you a few
5 questions about the quality of the evidence generally
6 that you've considered and draw out a few points from
7 paragraphs 23 to 26 of your report, which starts on
8 page 10.

9 Now, you've said that ideally, you would have data
10 collected on the same individuals over a period of time,
11 which is known as longitudinal data. So would I be
12 right to say it would be quite helpful to have
13 information about the same individuals both before and
14 after the pandemic?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** But you've said that people with severe mental illnesses
17 can be unrepresented in studies of that type?

18 **A.** Yes, that's true.

19 **Q.** Is one of the issues there that the effect of the
20 illnesses themselves makes it quite difficult to recruit
21 and retain individuals in the studies?

22 **A.** That can be a concern, but I think the other element is
23 that the population-level cohorts, or longitudinal
24 studies, might include people with severe mental
25 illnesses but, because they're less common, they're not

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1 represented in these data sources to a sufficient extent
2 where it's possible to look at the sort of size and
3 scale needed -- (overspeaking) --

4 **Q.** Draw solid conclusions from that sort of data?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** Thank you. You also described cross-sectional data, and
7 that captures data on a number of individuals at
8 a single point, so what you've said is it's useful as
9 a snapshot in time of what those people are experiencing
10 at that point?

11 **A.** Yes.

12 **Q.** So, for our purposes, looking at a group of individuals
13 with severe mental illnesses and considering the data at
14 a certain point after the pandemic started?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** Thank you. A couple more points on limitations, you've
17 pointed out that the symptoms of severe mental illnesses
18 are usually assessed through questionnaires, and is it
19 right that the quality of those can vary?

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** And you also say, and we heard from Professor Osborn
22 about this a little this morning, that some of the
23 studies and research may not be generalisable beyond the
24 participants who took part. What do you mean by that?

25 **A.** So what that means is that the study sample might be

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1 from one region, for example, and it might be difficult
2 to then generalise to other regions, so it becomes
3 difficult to make inferences that might apply to other
4 context.

5 **Q.** Thank you. We will return later to the issue of
6 particular data gaps, but, as a general point, despite
7 these limitations, Professor, it's right to say you have
8 managed to reach some conclusions on the way people with
9 severe mental illnesses were impacted by the pandemic?

10 **A.** Yes.

11 **Q.** We'll consider those findings now.

12 Professor, I want to turn to the first point in your
13 report, the first section, that's on excess mortality.
14 And that's addressed at section 3 of the report starting
15 at page 12.

16 The first really important point that you make, at
17 paragraph 29, is something I understand is extremely
18 well known in your field, but may not be more widely
19 known, and that is that people with severe mental
20 illnesses are known to have a significantly reduced life
21 expectancy, of up to 15 to 20 years compared to the
22 general population; is that correct?

23 **A.** Yes, that's correct.

24 **Q.** And that is across the UK?

25 **A.** Yes.

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1 Q. And also internationally?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Now, Professor, you've noted in your report an increased
 4 risk of suicide amongst these groups?
 5 A. (Witness nodded)
 6 Q. But it's right to say that that's not an explanation of
 7 the reduced life expectancy when you look at the causes
 8 of death?
 9 A. (Witness nodded)
 10 Q. Can you expand on that.
 11 A. Yes, we've known, actually, for decades prior to the
 12 pandemic, this very large 15 to 20-year gap in life
 13 expectancy. Most causes of death are from common,
 14 preventable conditions, like cardiovascular disease,
 15 type 2 diabetes, and so on. So, although death by
 16 suicide is more common in this group, actually most
 17 causes of death are through common, preventable
 18 conditions.
 19 Q. Thank you.

You've mentioned in your report, you deal with this in a lot of detail, a number of factors at play. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about what I understand to be the main ones, and I've drawn conclusions about that from what you've highlighted in your executive summary at paragraph 4.

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1 level of health systems, and you note longstanding
 2 concerns about funding for mental health services and
 3 a lack of parity of esteem. Could you explain a little
 4 bit more about that term?
 5 A. So parity of esteem simply refers to the fact that --
 6 well, we would want good parity of esteem for mental
 7 health, to be given the same status of physical health.
 8 And a lack of parity of esteem implies that mental
 9 health is given a lower status compared to physical
 10 health. And as I've detailed in the report, this then
 11 plays out at a health systems level, for example through
 12 lower funding for mental health services compared to
 13 physical health services, that then have an impact in
 14 terms of the quality of care that people with mental
 15 health problems might be able to receive.
 16 Q. A related point, which you touch on at paragraph 33 of
 17 your report, is what you describe as siloed care
 18 delivery. As I understand it, that's the problem that
 19 could arise where you've got physical health care being
 20 delivered by mental health providers or vice versa. So
 21 can that create the problem of someone who's got
 22 a preventable physical health condition but they're
 23 falling between two stools?
 24 A. Yes, exactly.
 25 Q. The next way in which you describe stigma is operating

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1 First, the direct effects of the condition itself,
 2 including an inability to self-manage physical health
 3 and health seek. Could you expand a little on what that
 4 last term means.
 5 A. So health seek refers to the ability to seek care when
 6 somebody needs it. And as I've highlighted in the
 7 report, the symptoms of the condition might have an
 8 impact, but also stigma may also play a role in terms of
 9 people feeling that they are unable to health seek when
 10 they might need to.
 11 Q. I'm going to come back to stigma in all its forms in
 12 a moment. Just before I do that, there's another factor
 13 that you've highlighted, again in your summary, and
 14 I summarise that as a higher risk of health-related
 15 behaviours. So could you summarise the sorts of
 16 behaviours we might be looking at here which might
 17 impact mortality.
 18 A. So we know that certain health-related behaviours like
 19 tobacco use or alcohol and substance use disorders are
 20 more prevalent in people with severe mental health
 21 conditions.
 22 Q. And finally, mental health stigma, I will deal with this
 23 in a little bit more detail. And you say -- this is
 24 picking up from around paragraph 32 of your report --
 25 that this operates at three levels. The first is the

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1 at an individual level, and you've referred to
 2 diagnostic overshadowing and self-stigma, and
 3 Professor Osborn also referred to those sorts of issues
 4 this morning. Can you briefly explain those terms and
 5 how it could impact on mortality?
 6 A. So, diagnostic overshadowing references to the situation
 7 where somebody with a mental condition presents for
 8 a physical problem, but the clinician attributes the
 9 symptoms to the mental health condition rather than the
 10 actual underlying physical health condition.
 11 So what that then means is that that person is
 12 unable to access evidence-based care, good quality care
 13 for their physical health need. And there is evidence
 14 widely reported in the literature that this can directly
 15 lead to poorer health and -- you know, and adverse
 16 outcomes for people with severe mental health problems.
 17 Q. And self-stigma?
 18 A. And self-stigma is another process where people
 19 internalise beliefs about themselves, which might then
 20 impact how far they're able to seek care when they need
 21 it or seek out relationships and so on. So, self-stigma
 22 is an internalisation of the processes that are
 23 otherwise at play.
 24 Q. Finally, you say stigma operates at a research level due
 25 to the exclusion of those with severe mental health

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1 conditions from clinical trials. Is there a reason for
2 that?
3 A. So yes, I mean, when people are -- when clinical trials
4 are operating, there's usually a set of inclusion or
5 exclusion criteria, and very frequently, people with
6 severe mental health conditions will be excluded from
7 those trials. So that then means that research is
8 generated which might not be so applicable to those
9 populations. There's lots of reasons for it. Some of
10 it might be to do with when we're sort of doing drug
11 trials, the industry might want a sort of quicker
12 pathway to regulation and so on.

13 But what it actually leads to is a sort of
14 scientific neglect for these populations, and we find
15 that when we're trying to develop guidelines, for
16 example, that relate to these groups in terms of
17 clinical management, the evidence for people with severe
18 mental illnesses might be lacking compared to other
19 populations.

20 Q. Thank you.

21 Professor, you've also noted at paragraph 34 of your
22 report that people with severe mental illnesses appear
23 to have a greater risk of comorbidities such as
24 cardiovascular disease, but it's right to say there are
25 some important differences about those between ethnic

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1 groups; is that correct?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. And you also refer to the effects of social deprivation,
4 at paragraph 36, which you say is associated with
5 reduced life expectancy, and you say that people with
6 severe mental illnesses are more likely to experience
7 this, for instance, because of high levels of
8 unemployment?
9 A. Yes.
10 Q. And lastly, at paragraph 37, you touch on the impact of
11 the medications that are prescribed for the conditions,
12 but it's right to say that whether or not they overall
13 have an adverse or beneficial impact, it's not well
14 understood?
15 A. No, it is understood. So, many of the medications that
16 are used to help people with severe mental health
17 conditions are associated with some effects, adverse
18 effects around weight gain, a high risk of developing
19 diabetes, and so on. So they can have an impact in
20 terms of physical health but we know from studies that
21 have been done that actually the same medications when
22 people are taking them seem to be associated with
23 improvements in mortality outcomes.
24 So it's a sort of mixed and slightly complicated
25 association. It might be that the medications are

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1 needed to help people stay well, but they are still
2 associated with physical health problems that also need
3 to be considered and managed.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 So Professor, drawing all of that together, you've
6 identified many reasons why people with severe mental
7 illnesses are at risk of early death, but it's your
8 evidence that these are all factors that were
9 essentially pre-existing, and they impacted on the death
10 rates we've heard about prior to the pandemic.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Thank you, Professor.

13 I now want to turn to mortality figures
14 post-pandemic and how people with severe mental illness
15 were impacted. At paragraph 40 of your report, you've
16 drawn on your own research, as I understand it, and also
17 on the Clinical Practice Research Datalink. Can you
18 briefly describe what that is, as a resource?

19 A. So the Clinical Practice Research Database -- Datalink,
20 CPRD, is essentially a dataset of general practice
21 records across -- and it's fairly representative of
22 England -- we use data from CPRD to look at levels of
23 mortality in people with severe mental illnesses
24 following a Covid-19 infection.

25 Q. And I think you said although that data doesn't cover

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1 Scotland and Wales and different parts of the UK, your
2 view is that if you look at the pre-existing patterns of
3 mortality, there's no reason to believe that this isn't
4 UK-wide even though that resource doesn't cover the
5 whole of the UK?

6 A. Yes, exactly. And actually in the study that we did do,
7 we were able to look at Northern Ireland and I think it
8 was seven regions across England, and we looked for
9 variation, and we didn't find any evidence of variation.
10 So a higher risk of death following a Covid-19 infection
11 in people with severe mental illnesses, that was the
12 same irrespective of where they resided.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 And your conclusion, again from that research, at
15 paragraph 40 is that across the two initial waves of the
16 pandemic, people with schizophrenia and bipolar
17 disorders were more likely to die following a Covid
18 infection than the general population?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. I'm going to obviously deal with that in a bit more
21 detail, but adjusting for other factors, you found a 53%
22 higher risk, and we're talk about any cause --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- not just Covid, and that's across the UK? That's
25 your conclusion?

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1 A. It's across England and Northern Ireland, yes.
 2 Q. But you believe it should be --
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. -- consistent but across the UK, given --
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. -- in effect, the control you've done by looking at
 7 different regions, and one in Northern Ireland?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And at paragraph 43, you also look at this in
 10 a different way. You look at data from one UK trust,
 11 which you point out is one of Europe's largest, and you
 12 compare the deaths in a sample of people with a number
 13 of different severe mental health conditions,
 14 essentially alongside a control group; is that the way
 15 I should understand that?
 16 A. So yes, we looked at deaths during the -- well, prior to
 17 the pandemic and then during the pandemic, across nine
 18 different diagnostic groups and we compared their
 19 experiences to a reference dataset that was collected
 20 prior to the pandemic.
 21 Q. And it's right to say, I'll come back to some of the
 22 specific conditions, but it's right to say that across
 23 the conditions, the severe mental health conditions that
 24 you analyse, there was a sharp rise in mortality
 25 following the outbreak of the pandemic for all of them;

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1 is that correct?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And again, we're looking now at all causes of death, not
 4 simply Covid-related deaths?
 5 A. So we looked at all-cause mortality and we also looked
 6 at Covid-19 deaths.
 7 Q. We'll come back to that, but this is your figure 2. I'm
 8 not putting that up on the slide because it's an
 9 extremely intricate figure, but it's figure 2 in your
 10 report. But thank you very much for describing that.
 11 Would it be fair to say or to summarise that as
 12 evidence of the gap widening, the gap you've already
 13 described, in terms of mortality for people with severe
 14 mental illness, during the pandemic, would you say the
 15 gap widened?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. For at least some of these diagnoses?
 18 A. Across the board. It was actually for all diagnoses.
 19 Of course there are some issues with precision of
 20 estimates, which I can go on to talk about, but
 21 ultimately there was a similar pattern across each of
 22 the nine conditions that we looked at.
 23 Q. Could you perhaps explain for which diagnoses we can be
 24 the most confident about that?
 25 A. So I think the most striking rise in deaths was in

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1 people with intellectual disabilities. That was outside
 2 of the scope of the report but it's worth noting that,
 3 and these were people who were under the care of
 4 secondary mental health services.
 5 We also noted a rise in people with dementia and
 6 schizophrenia-spectrum disorders. Also, actually, with
 7 affective disorders, substance use disorders, and so on,
 8 so actually most of the conditions showed a stark rise
 9 following the onset of the pandemic.
 10 Q. Just finally, the point that you've made is illustrated
 11 another way at paragraph 43 through figures that show
 12 deaths in the second quarter of 2020 during the pandemic
 13 were significantly elevated compared to the same point
 14 in the previous year in this cohort; is that correct?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Thank you.

17 **LADY HALLETT:** I'm sorry to interrupt. Can I just ask,
 18 going back to the point about those that suffered from
 19 dementia, as I understand it, although albeit you can
 20 get early onset dementia, the vast majority of people
 21 with dementia are likely to be over a certain age and
 22 they were of course at high risk from the virus anyway
 23 because of their age?
 24 A. Yes, that's true. Yes.
 25 **LADY HALLETT:** Sorry.

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1 **MS RAHMAN:** Moving on to Covid-specific deaths, that would
 2 be your figure 3, which is at paragraph 46 onwards. And
 3 we're still, as I understand it, we're looking at 2020
 4 here.
 5 So moving on to excess deaths from Covid itself, the
 6 previous figure was all-cause mortality, this honed in
 7 on Covid itself, you have said that that also was
 8 increased across all the conditions covered, and perhaps
 9 coming back to my Lady's point, you highlight that
 10 dementia is one of the ones where it was much higher
 11 than the general population.
 12 Is that perhaps because of some of the features that
 13 my Lady has pointed out, that they'd be at higher risk
 14 of the Covid pandemic.
 15 A. **(Witness nodded)**
 16 Q. It's not simply the mental illnesses?
 17 A. I think just to come back to that point, so, yes, there
 18 was a higher risk in the dementia group. These figures
 19 are also standardised by age, actually, I should say, so
 20 that should take into account differences by just being
 21 older. And so actually this should tell us what the
 22 deaths from Covid-19 were doing in that group, taking
 23 into account age and gender.
 24 Q. Thank you. And you've also identified, I think,
 25 schizophrenia and eating disorders in particular, at

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1 paragraph 47 of your report, where deaths were much
 2 higher than in the general population?
 3 **A.** Yes.
 4 **Q.** And are you able to help us with the reasons for that?
 5 **A.** So I think there's potentially a range of reasons. As
 6 I've highlighted throughout the report, many of the
 7 factors that were a concern prior to the pandemic
 8 continued to be a concern during the pandemic. There
 9 were other factors that came into play. So what the
 10 figures show is that, going into the pandemic, each of
 11 these conditions, people had a higher risk of death.
 12 And those deaths from other causes continued to be
 13 a concern during the pandemic, but then during the
 14 pandemic, there was an added extra risk from contracting
 15 Covid-19 and a heightened risk of death as well.

16 **Q.** Thank you.

17 Now, you have mentioned in your evidence before that
 18 people with severe mental illnesses are also at
 19 increased risk of comorbidities and behaviours affecting
 20 mortality. I don't need to take you to it, but at
 21 paragraphs 103 and 104 of your report you do confirm
 22 that if you look at it from the perspective of those
 23 with comorbidities, they were also more likely to die
 24 during the pandemic?

25 **A.** Yes.

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1 **Q.** And finally on this, you told us earlier on that this
 2 group is at an increased risk of suicide. Is it right,
 3 however, that there isn't any confirmed increase in
 4 suicides during the pandemic, as you say at
 5 paragraph 104?
 6 **A.** We couldn't find any evidence to support that, but
 7 I think, as I've highlighted in that paragraph, having
 8 a severe mental illness like schizophrenia means that
 9 people are at increased risk of suicide just from
 10 a clinical perspective, so I have no reason to believe
 11 that that would have changed during the pandemic, but we
 12 couldn't find any data that
 13 directly -- (overspeaking) --
 14 **Q.** You do say that you consider that that group would have
 15 been at increased risk, during the pandemic, of suicide?
 16 And we will be hearing, my Lady, tomorrow from Mind
 17 about some of services they offer to people who were
 18 experiencing suicidal ideation.
 19 And again, finally, Professor, is it right to say
 20 that the increased deaths are broadly in keeping with
 21 the international data on the same groups, as you say at
 22 paragraph 48?
 23 **A.** Yes.
 24 **Q.** Thank you. We've already -- you've already highlighted
 25 that, although it was outside the scope of your report,

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1 it did seem to say earlier on in your report that those
 2 with learning disabilities were at very increased risk
 3 too?

4 **A.** Yes.

5 **Q.** Thank you.

6 Professor, I want to move on to the latter stages of
 7 the pandemic, because I think that your studies were
 8 focused more at the earlier two waves, essentially.

9 Now, dealing with vaccination, you've pointed out in
 10 your report that this group were prioritised for
 11 vaccination, and you've pointed out that, despite that,
 12 excess mortality continued to be a concern, and you note
 13 studies both in the UK and internationally that suggest
 14 that lower vaccine take-up might be a cause of that.

15 At paragraph 51 of your report you have noted that
 16 measures could be taken to improve vaccine uptake in
 17 this group.

18 Could you just summarise your suggestions, please,
 19 from paragraph 51.

20 **A.** So I think it was a really good thing that Britain
 21 prioritised people with severe mental illnesses for
 22 vaccination. I think we were one of only a few
 23 countries across Europe to do that, and that was really
 24 important. But I think what we're starting to note is
 25 that despite that, and despite actually then reaching

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1 higher levels of vaccination in these groups, it was not
 2 as good as the general population. So, in order to
 3 enhance vaccine uptake, and I think more research is
 4 needed to try to understand what we can do, but it could
 5 be that we can more proactively encourage vaccine
 6 uptake, which might be through health services, it might
 7 be through incentivising general practice to offer that
 8 as part of a health check. It could be through other,
 9 sort of, public health measures, such as health
 10 education, health promotion, and so on.

11 So I think lots more can be done, but we did manage
 12 to achieve reasonable levels of uptake initially for
 13 these groups just down to having prioritised vaccination
 14 in the early stages of the pandemic.

15 **Q.** Thank you.

16 Moving on to a subject that you touch on at
 17 paragraphs 53-58 of your report, and you considered
 18 whether any particular effects on mortality were evident
 19 for those with severe mental illness from minority
 20 ethnic backgrounds and other protected characteristics.
 21 Is it fair to say that essentially there's insufficient
 22 data to enable you to reach any firm conclusions here?

23 **A.** So I think what I've stated in that bit of the report is
 24 that the gap in life expectancy that had been documented
 25 in white British people with severe mental illnesses had

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1 been demonstrated to a similar extent in ethnic minority
 2 groups prior to the pandemic.

3 During the pandemic, many of the risks that we've
 4 already talked about were experienced to a similar
 5 extent amongst each of the ethnic minority groups where
 6 studies have been conducted.

7 So there is a bit of evidence that seems to suggest
 8 that higher excess risks from contracting Covid-19 and
 9 death was experienced to a similar extent across ethnic
 10 minority groups living with severe mental health
 11 conditions.

12 **Q.** You've said that given pre-existing factors like stigma,
 13 these groups may well have faced an element of double
 14 jeopardy leading to higher death rates?

15 **A.** There has been a suggestion of that, yes.

16 **Q.** But you can't really put it any higher than that, given
 17 the evidence base?

18 **A.** There hasn't been much work done, but of the work that
 19 has been done, there's a suggestion that there are
 20 similar trends, definitely, at play in ethnic minority
 21 groups living with severe mental health conditions.

22 **Q.** Thank you, Professor.

23 Drawing, then, together the evidence in relation
 24 to -- on mortality, you've said there's pre-existing
 25 reasons for reduced mortality including factors like

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1 stigma in all its forms?

2 **A.** Yes.

3 **Q.** And it's your evidence that those pre-existing factors
 4 are likely to have persisted throughout the pandemic?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** And then there are also more pandemic-specific factors.

7 Just touching on what we heard from Professor Osborn
 8 this morning, he explained the impact of availability of

9 PPE and testing and inpatient settings was a factor.

10 And I think you say, and you've highlighted it in your
 11 executive summary at paragraph 5, and you deal with it
 12 in more detail at paragraphs 99 and 100, you think this
 13 issue will have contributed to higher risks of infection
 14 and mortality in this group?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** Just dealing with infection control in these settings,
 17 we've heard again from Professor Osborn about the
 18 challenges, for instance close proximity when
 19 caregiving, patients not understanding distancing rules.
 20 Are these factors that make it particularly difficult to
 21 control infection or made it difficult to do that during
 22 the pandemic?

23 **A.** Yes, it would have done.

24 **Q.** Just in terms of that, and prioritisation of people with
 25 mental health illnesses in hospitals, would it be fair

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1 to say that it's not surprising that people with
 2 physical conditions like respiratory conditions might be
 3 prioritised for PPE, but what you're saying is that
 4 there are particular features with those with severe
 5 mental illnesses that also needed to be prioritised or
 6 at least recognised?

7 **A.** Yes, exactly.

8 **Q.** Is there -- I think you link this to the idea of parity
 9 of esteem, have you got any -- could you expand on why
 10 you think that the need for PPE in these settings wasn't
 11 fully appreciated in the way you've described?

12 **A.** So as I've highlighted in my report, there was a study
 13 done looking at inpatient mental health services across
 14 London, which seemed to indicate that access to PPE and
 15 testing, actually for Covid-19, was quite delayed on
 16 those wards. It was a study of older people with severe
 17 mental health conditions, and the study essentially
 18 found that those delays led to people coming into the
 19 wards when they didn't have a Covid-19 infection,
 20 contracting the infection, and then being more likely to
 21 die. The authors of that study speculate that the
 22 levels of deaths as a result of contracting Covid-19
 23 were higher for those who were admitted to those units.

24 And I suppose the main kind of -- one of the bigger
 25 elements to sort of pick up, which is -- which I'd

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1 raised earlier is around parity of esteem. So the
 2 authors suggest that because mental health services were
 3 given a lower parity of esteem compared with general
 4 medical services at this time of intense national
 5 pressure, it had an impact which then led to these
 6 adverse effects in older people admitted to mental
 7 health units.

8 **Q.** So that's one study. Is it the Livingston study at
 9 paragraph 99 of your report?

10 **A.** Yes.

11 **Q.** And it is one study looking at a particular cohort of
 12 older adults?

13 **A.** Yes.

14 **Q.** But it is across five trusts --

15 **A.** Yes, in London, yeah.

16 **Q.** -- where that was found. And so they are suggesting
 17 that that can be fitted into the idea of lack of parity
 18 of esteem --

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** -- and understanding of risks to this particular cohort?

21 **A.** Yes.

22 **Q.** Thank you.

23 You've also considered other pandemic factors, we've
 24 discussed them: lower vaccine uptake --

25 **A.** (Witness nodded).

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1 Q. -- despite prioritisation of the group. And a final
 2 question on this section, which you may or may not be
 3 able to answer, to what extent do you consider the
 4 primary drivers of excess mortality within these groups
 5 to be pandemic-specific and to what extent rooted in
 6 pre-existing structural inequalities that you've
 7 set out?

8 A. So I think it's a bit of both. I think that the
 9 pre-existing risk factors continued during the pandemic
 10 but I also think that during the pandemic other
 11 pressures such as reduced access to services, some of
 12 the stresses of -- that we all experienced during the
 13 pandemic, some of the issues around PPE and so on, had
 14 an impact too, in terms of mortality during the
 15 pandemic. And of course, there's that study that you'd
 16 already raised: well, we know that when people with
 17 severe mental illnesses are infected with Covid-19,
 18 certainly in the early stages of the pandemic, prior to
 19 vaccination rollout, they had a higher risk of death.

20 So I think it's a bit of both, pandemic-related
 21 factors and pre-existing risks which continued.

22 Q. Thank you very much, Professor.

23 I'm now going to move to the second part of your
 24 report, that's section 5 from paragraph 99. And this is
 25 about the changes and symptoms experienced by people

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1 with these illnesses and you say at the outset that many
 2 of these studies are very limited in terms of their
 3 quality and generalisability so it's fair to say that
 4 your findings here do have significant caveats; is that
 5 correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So I will take you to what I understand to be the main
 8 points you have reached.

9 Again, we've heard from Professor Osborn and from
 10 yourself that there is a reduction in people presenting
 11 or seeking care for severe mental illnesses, and he's
 12 described that as a treatment gap because just because
 13 they didn't present, doesn't mean that they still didn't
 14 have the symptoms's?

15 A. (Witness nodded)

16 Q. And he's also described people delaying seeking help and
 17 then presenting in a worse condition.

18 It seems to me that you agree with that analysis,
 19 essentially at paragraph 62 of your report.

20 A. Yes, I do.

21 Q. Moving on to the issue of online care, similarly to
 22 Professor Osborn, you seem to say that it was welcomed
 23 by some, but some people found that it adversely
 24 impacted on their symptoms; is that correct?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And I think you also highlight those with severe mental
 2 conditions from minority ethnic groups?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And you talk about lack of, or poor internet connection,
 5 insufficient computer equipment and skills, and loss of
 6 clinical face-to-face contact? Those are the sorts of
 7 issues that they experienced?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Now, I'm going to, given what you've said about really
 10 the lack of evidence, taken specific diagnoses in fairly
 11 short order. There are two or three where you've made
 12 quite a lot of detailed findings, and the first is
 13 people with schizophrenia, delusional disorders and
 14 severe depressive and bipolar disorders, and this is
 15 from paragraph 63 onwards, section 4.1.

16 Again, what you're saying is that there is a lack of
 17 data and, it seems, inconsistent findings on the impact
 18 on symptoms. Is it fair to say some studies didn't
 19 report deterioration and some did?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And I'd just like to ask you about one study, then, that
 22 you've mentioned at paragraph 68 of your report. And
 23 you've said that it didn't cover those from the UK.
 24 It's an international study. But it says people with
 25 some of these conditions were more likely to report

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1 greater self-isolation, distress, anxiety, depression
 2 and Covid-19-related stress. And it highlighted social
 3 isolation, and loneliness during lockdowns, and
 4 disruption to healthcare were cited in those studies as
 5 causes for deterioration?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So I'd just like to put on screen a couple of the
 8 accounts that are part of our Every Story Matters report
 9 on mental health and wellbeing, which are of course from
 10 the UK. The first is someone from England who describes
 11 that they had a schizoaffective disorder and that the
 12 lockdowns hit them hard, and describes specifically the
 13 limit to phone contact for a two-year period, and they
 14 believe this had a devastating impact on mental
 15 wellness, and felt abandoned.

16 Then, on the next page, we've got somebody from
 17 Wales, who says:

18 "As somebody who lives with bipolar disorder, I am
 19 used to regular face to face sessions with
 20 a psychiatrist. This stopped and was replaced with six
 21 monthly calls for five minutes. I have not had
 22 a medication review or face to face meeting since the
 23 end of 2019 and have suffered with a major depressive
 24 episode in that time, and no help was made available."

25 Professor, do these sorts of issues reported to us

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1 chime with the sorts of issues that the international
 2 studies capture?
 3 **A.** Yes, this absolutely resonates, and I think later on
 4 I go on to talk about some of the qualitative studies
 5 which have been done in this area, and they -- both of
 6 these quotes align with what those qualitative studies
 7 also report.
 8 **Q.** The study that you describe suggests a number of
 9 strategies that might be used to mitigate this sort of
 10 impact, including frequent phone calls, home visits, or
 11 even exemptions to restrictions based on certain
 12 diagnoses. What's your view on that?
 13 **A.** I think it's a balance of -- and I understand it was
 14 a very difficult time in terms of needing to control the
 15 spread of the virus, but I think what a lot of the
 16 evidence seems to indicate is that people were really
 17 severely impacted in terms of their mental health,
 18 through some of the measures that were taken.

19 You raised the issue of, you know, difficulties in
 20 accessing digital online consults. We know from some of
 21 the evidence which we've reviewed that community
 22 centres, for example, helped people with severe mental
 23 health conditions to get online to, you know, have their
 24 clinical assessments, and so in some situations it may
 25 have been preferable to have supported that maybe

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1 earlier on in the pandemic.
 2 But I suppose it's that balance against needing to
 3 protect the population from the spread of the virus
 4 against the needs that people with severe mental health
 5 conditions may have had at that time.
 6 **Q.** Thank you very much.
 7 Can I turn now to eating disorders and this is from
 8 paragraph 69 onwards in your report, section 4.2.
 9 You've said, in summary, that several systematic
 10 reviews suggest symptoms did get worse, but you have
 11 quite significant reservations about the quality of that
 12 evidence; is that correct?
 13 **A.** Yes.
 14 **Q.** And why is that?
 15 **A.** I think, for the reasons that we've -- that we've
 16 already discussed, many of the studies didn't
 17 necessarily have data on people's mental health
 18 conditions prior to the pandemic, the longitudinal
 19 studies may have suffered with lost follow-up, the way
 20 that the diagnosis was also made is a concern.
 21 However, of the studies that I have included in that
 22 section, I think it's broadly consistent with what we
 23 know, which is that there does seem to have been
 24 a decline for people with eating disorders in terms of
 25 some of their -- in terms of their condition, and

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1 I think that's also consistent with what potentially
 2 Professor Osborn reported in terms of service use for
 3 people with eating disorders, in the session this
 4 morning.
 5 **Q.** Yes, and in terms of the sorts of impact that we're
 6 talking about in terms of eating disorders, if I can
 7 just run through that list, it's at paragraph 70 of your
 8 report. What you're talking about is changes in
 9 routines, such as physical activity, which could lead to
 10 an overfocus on exercise. Is that one of the problems?
 11 **A.** That was one of the issues raised in one of the studies,
 12 yeah.
 13 **Q.** And loss of control?
 14 **A.** **(Witness nodded)**
 15 **Q.** Changes of relationship with food. So for this
 16 particular group that could mean difficulties getting
 17 hold of what might be classed as safe foods?
 18 **A.** **(No audible answer)**
 19 **Q.** Distress from the media, including messaging about
 20 avoiding weight gain during the pandemic; was that
 21 something that you saw in these studies?
 22 **A.** Yeah.
 23 **Q.** And finally, reduced social support and disruption to
 24 healthcare provision which we've touched on.
 25 **A.** Yes.

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1 **Q.** Now, that was one of the issues that has also come up
 2 again in Every Story Matters. This issue of support.
 3 Is there a particular factor for people with eating
 4 disorders, which is around monitoring their own weight,
 5 which the pandemic and the restrictions had an effect
 6 upon?
 7 **A.** Well, again, it came out in one of the studies that we
 8 reduced and I think that's highlighted in paragraph 71.
 9 So people with eating disorders were reported in this
 10 study as having to monitor their own weight in order to
 11 inform remote clinical management. So I suppose that in
 12 itself can be distressing but it also means that people
 13 might have been able to hide the fluctuations in their
 14 weight in a way that had they been able to see the
 15 clinicians face-to-face might not have been the case.
 16 **Q.** Again, if I could get up on the screen something from
 17 the report, Every Story Matters, it's INQ000659895
 18 at page 41.
 19 What is said there by a contributor from Scotland is
 20 that they found it easy to hide their eating disorder,
 21 their family was shocked when they saw them for the
 22 first time due to the loss of weight, and not being able
 23 to have them checking up on them was really the big
 24 issue there.
 25 And then below that, there's something about

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1 struggling with mental health since the age of 11, from
 2 another contributor. And again, a description of the
 3 eating disorder worsening and going unnoticed because
 4 everybody was so stressed and busy, and there's
 5 a description of daily fights at dinner, depression
 6 worsening because of a lack of social connection, not
 7 seeing of friends and family, and this person has said
 8 that they began to self-harm multiple times a day.

9 Again, do these accounts chime with what you saw in
 10 the research, despite its limitations about how eating
 11 disorders were impacted by the pandemic?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 I want to turn now to obsessive compulsive disorder.
 15 Again, you highlight very limited research in the UK,
 16 but is it right, Professor, that outside the UK, studies
 17 suggest certain features would likely have impacted on
 18 symptomatology, such as over-exposure to news, leading
 19 to fears of contamination, and compulsive behaviour
 20 around cleaning and hand washing.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Thank you. I don't have any more points. I think
 23 that's the only point you make about that.

24 Turning then to paragraph 78 of your report, people
 25 with neurodevelopmental disorders. Most of that

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1 evidence is out of scope, as you point out, as it's
 2 focused on children and their caregivers, but you do
 3 point out that there's one study that suggests increased
 4 depressive and anxiety symptoms in adults with autism.
 5 And, as I understand it, the distress is particularly
 6 due to disruption in normal routines, such as shopping,
 7 and lack of clarity around lockdown. Is that something
 8 that would cause particular distress potentially?

9 A. Yes, as reported in this study.

10 Q. Though, conversely, the lack of stimuli and social
 11 overload and increased sense of solidarity were reported
 12 by some as positives, I understand?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Professor, finally, you've touched in your report on
 15 some other conditions like panic disorders,
 16 post-traumatic stress, and personality disorders, but
 17 it's right to say that there's too little evidence on
 18 that to base any firm conclusions?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. I want to move on now to some observations you've made
 21 at paragraph 83, 88 and 91 about evidence of
 22 disproportionate impact, in terms of deterioration of
 23 symptoms, on people from minority ethnic groups.

24 You refer at paragraph 88 to the Hildersley paper,
 25 and I think you had some involvement in that paper; is
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1 that correct?

2 A. Yes, that's the paper from my group.

3 Q. Thank you.

4 So this was a large population-level study, and but
 5 it was right -- it's right to say it was focused on
 6 secondary mental health service users in one
 7 geographical area; is that correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And it found that while overall admissions to mental
 10 health units dropped, a larger proportion of admissions
 11 were compulsory, so detentions essentially?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. We've already heard this morning from Professor Osborn
 14 about what a compulsory or involuntary admission is, and
 15 essentially he's confirmed it means people being
 16 detained, justified because they require treatment under
 17 legislative powers. So not on a voluntary basis. Do
 18 you agree broadly with that description?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And he's also described how some people were presenting
 21 later essentially in crisis. Does that accord with your
 22 understanding of this increase during the pandemic?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And this particular study, Professor Osborn referred to
 25 another one, but you referred to black Caribbean service

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1 users being 1.54 times more likely to be compulsorily
 2 admitted in that study during the first lockdown; is
 3 that correct?

4 A. Yes, first and second lockdown in 2020.

5 Q. And the second lockdown it was elevated for both black
 6 Caribbean and black African groups; is that right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And, again, it's right to say that both black Caribbean
 9 and black African groups were already known to be more
 10 likely to be compulsorily detained; is that correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. But you've suggested that these findings may suggest
 13 that the pandemic has magnified pre-existing
 14 inequalities; is that correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Now, Professor, we've heard a lot of evidence on this
 17 theme, but what do you mean by it when you say it
 18 magnified pre-existing inequalities?

19 A. So what I mean is that, as you've highlighted, we knew
 20 about these inequalities prior to the pandemic, there'd
 21 been a Modernising the Mental Health Act review in 2018
 22 that picked up exactly these issues, and what I mean by
 23 "magnified" is that these issues continued to be
 24 a concern during the pandemic but got worse for some of
 25 those groups that had been highlighted prior to the

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1 pandemic, due to a range of factors.

2 So, in effect, amplified -- Or, you know, the same
3 problems continued with the addition of inequalities
4 being exacerbated through the pandemic.

5 **Q.** In terms of learning, Professor, one of the issues
6 you're highlighting is a rise in crisis-driven
7 detentions. Are there any practical safeguards or
8 interventions that could be considered to prevent this
9 in a future pandemic or civil emergency?

10 **A.** So there are moves at the moment, really arising from
11 the Modernising Mental Health Act review, to improve
12 services in terms of access to care. So there's
13 a Patient Care and Race Equality Framework which is
14 currently being rolled out across England and so I think
15 some of those sorts of interventions to try and make
16 mental health care more accessible for minoritised
17 groups may start to shift the dial a bit.

18 **Q.** Thank you, Professor.

19 Now, you mentioned earlier on that you've considered
20 some qualitative studies, that's involving more in-depth
21 individual accounts, and you talk about those at
22 paragraph 93 onwards. And they did specifically
23 consider the experiences of those with severe mental
24 illnesses from minority ethnic groups -- and other
25 minority groups; is that correct?

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1 that data but we're unable to make any assessment
2 because we don't have the information to allow us to
3 understand what is happening for people from racially
4 minoritised backgrounds or who have other protected
5 characteristics living with severe mental health
6 problems.

7 **Q.** And is it right to say, I think you might say this
8 somewhere in your report, those missing from the data,
9 they were possibly the people in the worst situations --

10 **A.** Quite -- (overspeaking) --

11 **Q.** -- and we can't learn without knowing what happened?

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** One group you do mention in the report is might groups,
14 refugees and asylum seekers.

15 **A. (Witness nodded).**

16 **Q.** Are you aware of any data recording the impact of the
17 pandemic on the mental health of such groups who also
18 have severe mental illnesses?

19 **A.** I didn't come across any studies that had looked
20 specifically at people with severe mental illnesses.

21 **Q.** So, Professor, in conclusion to your report at
22 paragraph 110, you say that the pandemic exposed and
23 exacerbated pre-existing inequalities but it's fair to
24 say when it comes to the impact on ethnic and other
25 minorities, that conclusion has been based on quite

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1 **A.** Yes.

2 **Q.** And you say that they are more in-depth but is it fair
3 to say that there are more limits in terms of
4 generalisability?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** However, you have noted here, and again later in your
7 report, at 110, that when you look at those accounts,
8 many of those interviewed did complain of stigma and
9 discrimination in the way they were treated; is that
10 correct?

11 **A.** Yes.

12 **Q.** That's something you've highlighted about their
13 experiences in your executive summary as well, as
14 a significant finding?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** Despite the fact it's a qualitative source.

17 **A.** Yeah.

18 **Q.** Overall, though, as against that, again from your
19 executive summary, you say that there is a dearth of
20 data relating to the impacts of -- in people with
21 serious -- severe mental illness and other protected
22 characteristics, and you say that is a major concern to
23 you. Can you expand on why?

24 **A.** Because -- so it's a major concern because we may assume
25 that things might be worse if we were able to collect

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1 limited data?

2 **A.** Yes.

3 **Q.** However, is it also right to say that that in itself is
4 part of what you've already described to us as part of
5 stigma at research level?

6 **A.** Yes.

7 **Q.** Thank you.

8 Leading on to that and some other points about it,
9 you say that concerns about data collection had been
10 longstanding. Can you give us an idea, from your
11 recollection, how longstanding? When were these
12 concerns first raised, to your recollection?

13 **A.** So there's been fairly longstanding concerns around the
14 quality of data for ethnicity and other protected
15 characteristics, even prior to the pandemic. So as an
16 example, the last nationally representative survey of
17 mental health in ethnic minority groups was done a few
18 decades ago. So these are longstanding issues. There's
19 been concerns around the quality of data collected for
20 ethnicity and, again, other protected characteristics,
21 and health records, as well. There have been moves to
22 try and improve things and I think since the pandemic,
23 some of those measures are better collected but there
24 has been, across the field, concerns that we don't
25 really collect the information to be able to understand

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1 how mental health and other associations might play out
 2 for some of these groups.
 3 Q. Are there any specific reasons why this hasn't been
 4 collected over this long period of time?
 5 A. So, for health records, those are records that are
 6 collected routinely in the process of delivering care,
 7 so they need concerted effort to ensure that data
 8 relating to ethnicity and other protected
 9 characteristics are indeed captured. So that requires
 10 potentially additional funding, it involves working with
 11 the people that are delivering care to collect that sort
 12 of data, and so, to a certain extent, although there
 13 have been moves to try to improve things, it might be
 14 that more needs to be done in order to support people to
 15 collect that data on, you know, people in contact with
 16 care.

17 In terms of the national surveys, there had been
 18 moves to boost one of the more recent mental health
 19 surveys by ethnicity, but there were some challenges
 20 with recruiting people to those studies, and in the end
 21 it was decided that it would not be feasible to continue
 22 to collect that data on ethnic minority people and their
 23 mental health.

24 Q. Thank you very much.

25 Professor, at section 5 of your report, you draw
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1 together factors that impacted on outcomes, both in
 2 terms of mortality rates and symptoms. So, both parts
 3 of your report. I just want to pick up on a few points,
 4 and I'm not going to focus on once we've discussed
 5 before, or that Professor Osborn has already dealt with.

6 At paragraph 106 of your report, you touch on
 7 pre-existing factors. We've heard a lot about these in
 8 various ways:

9 "... financial insecurity, unemployment, alcohol and
 10 substance misuse and intimate partner violence were
 11 known to increase in frequency during the pandemic and
 12 [you say that] may have played a role in exacerbating
 13 mental disorders for some groups ..."

14 I just want to ask you about one of those and one of
 15 the comments you make in terms of intimate partner
 16 violence. You may or may not know that the definition
 17 under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 encompasses, physical,
 18 sexual, psychological, economic and controlling
 19 behaviours. Does your comment about that extend to all
 20 of those different sorts of behaviours?

21 A. I wasn't aware of that definition, so I'm not sure, to
 22 be honest.

23 Q. That's fine.

24 A. The sentence relates to a study that I've referenced
 25 there by Chandan and colleagues in the British Journal
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1 of Psychiatry, which essentially found an association
 2 between people experiencing intimate partner violence
 3 and then their subsequent risk of developing mental
 4 health conditions.

5 Q. Thank you. And at paragraph 107 of your report you've
 6 highlighted the importance of social support from
 7 community organisations such as mental health charities,
 8 places of worship, or support networks. As a general
 9 point, would you agree that factors such as social
 10 isolation, loss of routine and disrupted support
 11 impacted specifically on the people with severe mental
 12 illnesses?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And you've also said that people with these illnesses
 15 who had access to networks were protected to some degree
 16 from a deterioration in mental health, that's also drawn
 17 from your research?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. You've touched on one issue in your report at
 20 paragraph 82, I don't need you to go back to it, but
 21 it's on the experience of those living with mental --
 22 within mental health residential settings and, on the
 23 same thing -- on the same theme, the impact of a lack of
 24 access to the usual networks and routines. Are you
 25 aware of anything that would explain to us the impact

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1 from visiting restrictions on the mental health of
 2 psychiatric inpatients?

3 A. I didn't come across any studies which specifically
 4 explored that from the perspective of service users.
 5 There was one study that we identified which looked at
 6 challenges that mental health service providers
 7 identified during the early phases of the pandemic, and
 8 that was raised as a concern.

9 Q. Thank you.

10 Professor, leading to the end of my questions,
 11 summarising your overall conclusion in lessons learned,
 12 which is from paragraphs 113 onwards in your report, in
 13 section 6, essentially you're saying that the pandemic
 14 has deepened mental health challenges in this group, and
 15 that's beyond mortality?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And you've set out a number of lessons learned at the
 18 end of your report, which could inform future pandemic
 19 responses?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. I won't go through all of them but is it correct to say
 22 that some of them are to the effect that the pandemic
 23 has reinforced the need to tackle pre-existing
 24 inequalities such as in relation to reduced life
 25 expectancy?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Are you essentially saying that without taking on board
 3 these lessons now, you can't be confident that issues
 4 such as excess mortality would not be replicated in the
 5 event of another pandemic or civil emergency?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. We've already established that one of your main concerns
 8 is lack of data, meaning some impacts are not fully
 9 understood. In terms of Covid-specific lessons, we've
 10 also discussed the importance of prioritisation for
 11 vaccination and improving vaccine take-up, that's one of
 12 the big lessons I think from your report?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. You also highlight the importance of access to PPE,
 15 testing, and training for those working with people with
 16 severe mental illnesses; is that right?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And that's given the particular challenges of infection
 19 control that we've discussed?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Thank you, Professor.
 22 In relation to non-pharmaceutical interventions like
 23 lockdown, you, like Professor Osborn, have noted the
 24 issue of delayed presentation and you suggest that
 25 community organisations can play an important role in

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1 mitigating the effects of social isolation and digital
 2 exclusion. That seemed to be another of your main
 3 lessons learned.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And finally, you suggest that experts on mental health
 6 and neurodevelopmental conditions, including people with
 7 lived experience, could help with designing
 8 interventions, guidelines, and public messaging?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Is there anything else specific to the pandemic that you
 11 would like to highlight as a lesson learned?
 12 A. No, I think that's covered all of it.
 13 **MS RAHMAN:** Professor, those are all my questions but there
 14 may be some more for you.
 15 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you, Ms Rahman.
 16 Ms Weeraratne. Over that way.
 17 **Questions from MS WEERERATNE KC**
 18 **MS WEERERATNE:** Good afternoon, Professor, I ask questions
 19 on behalf of the Migrants' Rights Consortium.
 20 One of our key concerns is the lack of understanding
 21 of and planning for migrant groups excluded from
 22 essential services.
 23 A. (The witness nodded)
 24 Q. Now, you've already been asked, quite helpfully, some
 25 questions around data collection specifically in

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1 relation to migrant groups and you've already said that
 2 there hasn't been any, as far as you're concerned or
 3 you're aware of.
 4 Your report, you've just been taken to part 6, which
 5 is about lessons learned, and one of the points at
 6 paragraph 119, you refer to the need for improve data
 7 collection for vulnerable groups, including those with
 8 protected characteristics.
 9 The bit I wanted to ask you about now is towards the
 10 end of paragraph 119 where you talk about innovative
 11 data collection strategies. Do you recall that?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And really, the simple question, firstly, is: to what
 14 extent those innovative strategies which you say are now
 15 being implemented are being implemented with regard to
 16 migrant groups including refugees and asylum seekers?
 17 A. So there have been developments since the pandemic in
 18 terms of large-scale linked data which brings together
 19 electronic health records with other types of
 20 administrative data. In terms of migration, that would
 21 require bringing together datasets like Census 2021
 22 which does ask a question about country of birth and
 23 years residing in the UK, linked to health records, for
 24 example.
 25 I'm aware that that linkage has been done. It's not

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1 yet readily available outside of the ONS. So those
 2 datasets are being curated, they're being developed.
 3 Whether or not they could be used in a future pandemic
 4 would need to be seen because they're sort of static
 5 data linkages. So they wouldn't necessarily tell us
 6 about a future event, but nonetheless bring in data on
 7 migration status and have the ability to inform future
 8 research using those sorts of data sources.
 9 Q. So if I'm right, what I understand you've just said is
 10 that those data linkages are important to understand the
 11 situation as it is now, let's say, and that would inform
 12 any future pandemic, should there be one?
 13 A. Yes, it could be used, yeah.
 14 Q. Right. And just finally, then, just to wrap that up,
 15 I've understood you to be saying that it's a major
 16 concern of yours that there should be improved data
 17 collection in this group of those with severe mental
 18 illness in particular, but it must include all
 19 vulnerable and marginalised groups, including the
 20 migrant groups that I've identified, in order to better
 21 understand and hopefully to rectify health inequalities
 22 now and for future pandemics; is that correct?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 **MS WEERERATNE:** Thank you very much.
 25 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you very much.

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1 Ms Davies, who is that way.

2 **Questions from MS DAVIES KC**

3 **MS DAVIES:** Professor Das-Munshi, can you hear and see me
4 all right?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** My name is Liz Davies and I ask questions on behalf of
7 the Domestic Abuse Group, which is a group of three
8 organisations in the violence against women and girls
9 sector.

10 You were asked by Ms Rahman a few minutes ago about
11 paragraph 106 of your report. You don't necessarily
12 need to look at it, but you record that intimate partner
13 violence was known to increase in frequency during the
14 pandemic, and that may have played a role in
15 exacerbating mental disorders for some groups. You put
16 that in with a number of other factors but that's one of
17 the factors.

18 It's right and fairly obvious, isn't it, that being
19 subject to domestic violence can impact a person's
20 mental health such that severe and enduring mental
21 illness can develop?

22 **A.** Yes.

23 **Q.** Yes. And, therefore, one could say that the rise in
24 domestic abuse that happened during the pandemic may be
25 one of the contributing factors to the increased severe

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1 and enduring mental illnesses during the pandemic, or is
2 that too simplistic?

3 **A.** That might be a little bit too -- so I think trauma,
4 including intimate partner violence, has been associated
5 with an increased risk of developing some mental health
6 conditions, but I think as a single factor on its own
7 leading to a rise in mental health problems is perhaps
8 a little bit too simplistic, and there are probably
9 other contributors that have contributed to a rise, if
10 indeed there has been a rise since the pandemic.

11 **Q.** Can I just ask you about a number of factors that might
12 contribute to a decrease in mental health for somebody
13 who is a victim-survivor of domestic abuse in the
14 context of the pandemic? One might be difficulties in
15 securing support during lockdown; that might contribute
16 to an increase in mental ill health?

17 **A.** Yes.

18 **Q.** Yes, another one might be a difficulty in finding safe
19 places to stay in lockdown as compared to pre-pandemic,
20 non-pandemic times; again, that might be a contributing
21 factor?

22 **A.** Yes.

23 **Q.** And another might be where the pandemic produced new
24 patterns of abuse, and specifically abuse around
25 coercive control. For example, we have evidence that

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1 perpetrators of domestic abuse were limiting victims'
2 access to technology, exploiting the fear of the virus,
3 and even deliberately infecting their victims at times.
4 Any of those would potentially be a contributing factor
5 to an increase in severe and enduring mental illness?

6 **A.** These can all potentially contribute to a decline in
7 somebody's mental health.

8 **MS DAVIES:** Thank you very much. I'm grateful.

9 I'm grateful my Lady.

10 **LADY HALLETT:** Thank you, Ms Davies.

11 That completes the questions we have for you,
12 Professor. Thank you very much indeed for your help.
13 You haven't got too far to go, have you?

14 **THE WITNESS:** No.

15 **LADY HALLETT:** I thought we'd acquired you from somewhere
16 relatively local. So thank you very much for your
17 written report, obviously, and for coming along today to
18 help us. Very grateful.

19 **THE WITNESS:** Thank you.

20 **LADY HALLETT:** And I shall return at 10.00 tomorrow.

21 (4.19 pm)

22 (The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)

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