

5 August 2022

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry is in its establishment phase, and work is underway to enable investigation of the Terms of Reference to progress. This process will involve calls for evidence to be provided to the Inquiry. We anticipate that your organisation is likely to hold information relevant to the Inquiry's work.

In advance of calls for evidence being made, I write on behalf of Lady Poole to request that you take steps to ensure your organisation is properly prepared to fulfil its obligations when those formal calls begin.

I want to take the opportunity to reiterate the importance of you and your organisation taking steps to make sure that no material of potential relevance to the Inquiry is destroyed, deleted or disposed of. Please communicate this message consistently across your agencies or arm's length bodies, or any other related bodies exercising public functions / your organisation to ensure that records are preserved, and that the same approach to record retention is taken across all relevant bodies.

Your organisation must ensure that a full and clear record of its part in events remains intact and accessible, and as such you must take a cautious approach. This should involve retaining all material that could be relevant to the Inquiry under any of the Terms of Reference, including emails, text or WhatsApp messages and other communications.

You will be aware that there is an offence under section 35 of the Inquiries Act 2005 of altering, destroying or preventing relevant documents from being provided to the Inquiry. You may wish to remind departments/your staff not only of the importance of preserving all relevant documents but also of this offence and the related criminal sanctions – for more information on this see [www.covid19inquiry.scot/retention-documents](http://www.covid19inquiry.scot/retention-documents).

Yours sincerely,