

Let's Be Heard summary



What is Let's Be Heard?



The **Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry** is a review into what went well and what could have been done better during the COVID-19 **pandemic** in Scotland.

A **pandemic** is an infectious disease that has spread across the world.

Let's Be Heard is the listening project of the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry.

The Inquiry is **independent**.

This means it does not work for the Government or any other organisation.



The Inquiry is investigating how Scotland dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022.

It will:

- establish the **facts** – things that are true
- find out what we need to learn
- make **recommendations** to Scottish Ministers so we are better prepared in the future

A **recommendation** is what we think should happen.

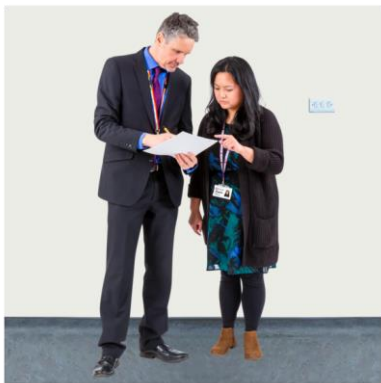




Let's Be Heard was set up for people living in Scotland or affected by decisions made in Scotland during the pandemic.

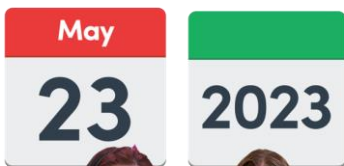
It gives them a way to:

- share their experiences
- say what information should be learned from their experiences



It is the main way that people can give information to the Inquiry to help it with its investigations, reporting and recommendations.

What is this report about



Let's Be Heard started a National Engagement Period on 23 May 2023.

More than 4 thousand people have given information so far.

This is the first report and it shows the first information we have found out.



This includes information from people living in each of Scotland's council areas.

We will put more reports online before the Inquiry ends.



Let's Be Heard hopes that people in Scotland who have not given information to the project will see some of their experiences in what people have already shared with us.

We hope it encourages them to take part before the National Engagement Period ends on 20 December 2023.

Main findings: We asked and you said



When we use 'you' or 'your' in this report, we mean the people of Scotland who responded to Let's Be Heard.

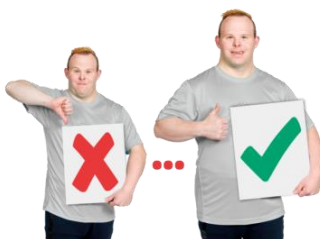
During its National Engagement Period, Let's Be Heard is asking 3 main questions:



1. what happened to you in the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland?

2. how did the COVID-19 pandemic change your life?

3. what do you think could have been done better or differently by the people making decisions?





We asked: What would you like to tell us about what happened to you in the COVID-19 pandemic?

You said:

- it was difficult to not be able to see loved ones, especially people in care or nearing the end of their lives



People felt **isolated** – this mean not having much contact with people.



- many people felt Scottish Government communications gave information that did not stay the same, or that disagreed with information that had been given earlier, particularly guidance about:

- rules
- **restrictions** – things they were not allowed to do
- personal protective equipment (PPE)



- **key workers** had difficulties:

- getting **vaccinated** – being given a vaccine to protect them from COVID-19
- getting **childcare** – a person or organisation to look after their child or children while they were working



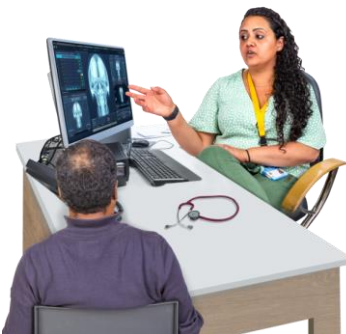


A **key worker** is a worker who does a job that is important for the community, especially in health services, education, and services that keep the country running like electricity and gas services.

Key workers felt very stressed and under a lot of pressure.



- Health care was very important, especially:
 - being able to speak face-to-face with a doctor or other healthcare staff
 - diagnoses that were delayed or missed



A **diagnosis** is how healthcare staff decide what your illness is.

- healthcare services stopping



- almost every part of people's lives changed

People worked and did learning from homes.



We asked: How did these experiences affect you or people you know?

You said:

- experiences were different across the country but people experienced similar things to do with:
 - trust
 - mental health
 - **life events** - things like birthdays, weddings and funerals
 - and **financial security** - having enough money to live on and not being worried about money



- many children and young people felt bored and isolated



Many said their mental health and **wellbeing** had suffered.

Wellbeing means feeling comfortable, healthy and happy.



- the rules and restrictions made older people feel isolated and lonely

This included older people living on their own, as well as people living in care and nursing homes.



- many people of all ages reported mental health issues, including anxiety, depression and **suicide** – wanting to kill themselves



- lockdown had big **economic** impacts on both individuals and small businesses

Our **economy** is how the country produces and uses goods, services and money.



- families were affected a lot

Some people enjoyed having more time together.



Some people found it difficult to balance the responsibilities of:

- working from home
- being a parent
- supporting their children with **homeschooling** – learning at home

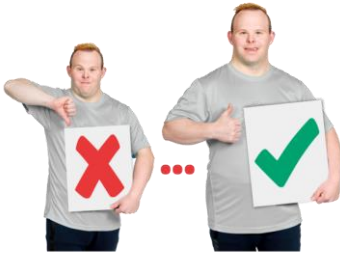


Many people found it very difficult to be separated from loved ones.

Many people felt very isolated.



- many people do not trust science and government as much as they used to



We asked: what do you think could have been done better or differently by the people making decisions?

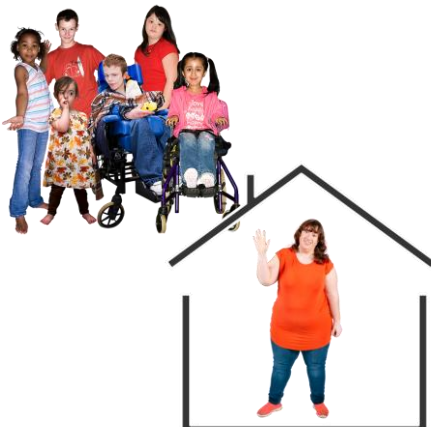
You said: there are ways to make sure Scotland can deal with future pandemics in a better way including:



- having clear long-term plans for the emergency response to any future pandemic



- keeping important **primary health care** services open and available, like GPs, community pharmacy, dentists and eye health services



- mental health and wellbeing should be the most important thing, especially for children, young people and people living alone



- **Public health messaging should be:**
 - clear
 - be based on facts, figures and information

Public health messaging is how government tells the public about ways to be healthy and to understand the risks of doing unhealthy things.



- Government must have better ways to balance protecting people from the virus and avoiding harm

What will happen next



Let's Be Heard is grateful to all those who have shared their experiences so far, and to the organisations which have supported and facilitated this engagement.



An important part of the Inquiry and Let's Be Heard, is to see how different people and groups were affected in different ways.

It is important that Let's Be Heard hears from as wide a range of people as possible, to help with this.



We would like to get more responses from:

- **minority ethnic** communities

Ethnicity is the word we use to describe our background.

People from an ethnic group might have the same language, culture or religion.



Minority means a smaller group of people in a community or country who are different from the main population in ethnicity, religion, language or the political party they vote for.

- minority religious communities



- **LGBTQ+** people

LGBT+ means people who are:

- lesbian
- gay
- bisexual
- transgender

+ means people who feel part of the LGBT community but are not listed above



- men



- people aged under 20 and over 70



- people who do not feel **financially secure** – this mean they do not feel like they have enough money to live on and they are worried about money

Let's Be Heard is also keen to hear more from:



- **frontline workers** –employees in an organisation that gives an important service to the public



- **migrant** keyworkers

A **migrant** is a person who moves from one place to another to find work or better living conditions



- teachers and school staff



- children under the age of 6 and people working in the care and education of children before they start school



- students at college or university



- young carers and **unpaid carers** – this means anyone who cares for a friend or family member who cannot cope without their support.

They are not paid to do this.



- disabled people



- people who work in small businesses and self-employed people



- people on benefits



- the relatives of people who got **end of life care** – this means care as they were dying



- people with **long COVID**

Long COVID is the health problems that last or develop after someone has had COVID-19.

DNR



- people who had Do Not Resuscitate Orders (**DNRs**) and their relatives

If you have a **DNR** document it means healthcare staff will not try to bring you back to life if your heart stops beating.



Everyone's experience is important to the Inquiry.



We want to hear about good experiences and bad experiences.



You do not need to have had COVID-19 to tell us what you think.

Let's Be Heard wants to hear from you.

