

# Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2023

## Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry's autumn/winter 2023 newsletter.

The Inquiry team has been busy since the last update, with much progress being made to continue our investigations at pace.

In October 2023 we began our public hearings, looking at the impact of COVID-19 on health and social care in Scotland. We will pause these hearings in mid-December and continue again in March, to allow for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to progress its Scotland hearings in January 2024.

Our impact hearings signify a pivotal moment in the Inquiry and we are grateful to those who have given, and will give, evidence during these hearings.

Next year we will continue with our impact hearings and move on to looking at the impact of the pandemic in Scotland on our other themes: education and young people, and business, finance and welfare.

### **Let's Be Heard**

Our listening project, Let's Be Heard, will close its national engagement phase on 20 December 2023.

Let's Be Heard is the main way in which people in Scotland can contribute to the Inquiry and tell us your experiences of the pandemic, as well as the lessons you believe should be learned from these experiences.

I would encourage everyone who has not yet done so to participate in Let's Be Heard in these final few weeks. It is important that we hear from as many people as possible so we can understand the different ways people have been impacted by the pandemic in Scotland.

More information about the listening project can be found below.



The Hon. Lord Brailsford, Chair of the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry

# Let's Be Heard

The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry's listening project, Let's Be Heard, has published its first report, [Let's Be Heard: Sharing Respondents' Pandemic Experiences, Impacts, and Lessons to be Learned in Scotland](#).

The publication shares preliminary findings from responses received since the start of the project's national engagement phase on 23 May 2023.

Let's Be Heard is urging people across Scotland to share their experiences of the pandemic before the project's national engagement phase ends on 20 December 2023.

Those who take part will be asked three core questions:

1. What were your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What impact did these experiences have on you or people you know?
3. What lessons do you think should be learned from your experiences?

The Inquiry is investigating Scotland's devolved strategic response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help inform its investigations and recommendations, the Inquiry is inviting anyone who was in Scotland, or affected by decisions made in Scotland, between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022 to share their experiences through Let's Be Heard.

More than 4,000 people have already shared their experiences of the pandemic, and the lessons they believe should be learned so that Scotland is better prepared in future.

Before the end of its national engagement phase, Let's Be Heard would like to hear more from some specific groups across Scotland, including:

- men;
- people from minority ethnic communities;
- LGBTQ+ people;
- people from minority religious communities;
- people aged under 20 and over 70; and
- people who don't feel financially secure.

And from people living in:

- North and South Lanarkshire;
- Renfrewshire;
- Glasgow City;
- West Lothian; and
- Highlands and Islands.

Anyone who does not fit into any of the above groups but would like to share their experience can still do so [by visiting the Let's Be Heard website](#).

You do not need to have had COVID-19 to take part, however you must have lived in Scotland, or been affected by the decisions made in Scotland during the period the Inquiry is investigating.

## Applications for core participant status

The Inquiry is accepting applications for core participant status from those with an interest in the Inquiry's term of reference 2(k), which is education and certification.

Applications can be submitted **until 11.59pm on 21 December 2023**. Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Inquiry's Core Participant Protocol, which includes information on the matters that the Chair will take into consideration when determining whether to grant core participant status.

After the closing date, the Chair will consider the applications and applicants will be notified of his decisions in January 2024.

The application form is available in the Inquiry's [Core Participant Protocol](#), which also sets out the additional rights granted to parties designated by the Chair as core participants.

To apply for core participant status, please complete the application form and email it to [coreparticipants@covid19inquiry.scot](mailto:coreparticipants@covid19inquiry.scot).

The [current list of core participants](#) can be found [on the Inquiry website](#). To apply, please download [a copy of the application form](#).

# Impact Hearings Begin

The first tranche of the Inquiry's health and social care impact hearings began in October in Edinburgh.

Pausing in mid-December to allow for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to start its Scotland hearings in January, the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry will continue with its second tranche of impact hearings in March 2024.

The Inquiry's hearings can be viewed via the Inquiry website or the [Inquiry's YouTube channel](#) and witness statements, as well as transcripts, can also be found on the Inquiry's website.

The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry has adopted a thematic approach to its hearings, giving priority to evidence from those most impacted by the pandemic in Scotland.

The three themes are:

- Health and social care;
- Education and young people; and
- Business, finance and welfare.

The Inquiry will first look at the **impact** of the COVID-19 pandemic across all these themes, before moving to examining the **implementation** of measures, and finally, **key-decision making**.

After completing its impact hearings on health and social care, the Inquiry will move to impact hearings on education and young people.

For more information on the Inquiry's hearing structure, please visit [the Hearings section of the website](#).

# Get in touch

As the Inquiry progresses, we will publish news updates and information on our website, including details on how you can provide evidence and share your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For general enquiries and correspondence for the attention of the Chair of the Inquiry, please email us at [contact@scottishinquiry.scot](mailto:contact@scottishinquiry.scot).

You can also write to the Inquiry using this address:

**Freepost  
SCOTTISH COVID-19 INQUIRY**

If you require accessible versions or a translation of any of the website's content, please contact using the email address above.

If you are a journalist and have a media enquiry, please email us at [media@scottishinquiry.scot](mailto:media@scottishinquiry.scot).

To have the Inquiry's latest news and announcements delivered to your inbox, [sign up on our website](#).