



INFORMATION SHEET FOR PANEL WITNESSES

INQUIRY HEARINGS SEPTEMBER 2022

1. This document provides practical information for witnesses invited to provide oral evidence on panels of people infected and affected at Inquiry hearings in the weeks of 26 September 2022 and 3 October 2022.
2. The panels will consist of up to six people infected and affected, who will be asked to give evidence on a specific theme related to the Inquiry's terms of reference.
3. All panel members will have the opportunity to meet Counsel to the Inquiry and to see the hearing room before they give evidence if they wish.
4. There will be reserved seats for family and others close to the witnesses giving evidence that day. Priority for the remainder of the central seating will, as usual, be given to people infected and affected.
5. Evidence will be given under oath or affirmation.
6. Regular breaks will be built into the hearing timetable, and all witnesses can request a break if they require it.
7. Applications for anonymity are determined by the Chair in accordance with his powers under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005 and the procedure set out in Statement of Approach – Anonymity and Redaction. A General Restriction Order has been made that prohibits the disclosure or publication of the name and address of, and any identifying information about, a witness who has been granted anonymity. A copy of the General Restriction Order is available on the Inquiry's website.

8. The written statements of witnesses giving oral evidence as part of the panels will be disclosed to Core Participants in advance of the witness giving oral evidence. Statements will be published on the Inquiry's website before the witness gives oral evidence. In the case of witnesses who have been granted anonymity, the statements will be disclosed and published in redacted form (i.e. with identifying information removed).
9. The Inquiry hearings will be available to the public with a short delay on the Inquiry's YouTube channel. After each hearing, a transcript and video of the proceedings will be available on the Inquiry's website after they have been reviewed for any redactions required for anonymity. People involved in the Inquiry also have the option to watch a live feed of the hearings without the short delay. This feed is covered by a Restriction Order available on the Inquiry's website.
10. Where a witness is granted anonymity and is invited to provide oral evidence as part of a panel with other people infected and affected at an Inquiry hearing, the following protections will be made available:
 - a) A further Restriction Order specific to the individual witness will be made by the Chair, prohibiting the publication or disclosure of the name or address of the witness or of identifying information about the witness.
 - b) Before the witness gives evidence, the Chair will explain that a Restriction Order is in place which prohibits the disclosure or publication of the name or address of the witness or of information which would identify the witness.
 - c) No mention will be made of any information which has been redacted from the witness's written statement.
 - d) No recognisable image of the witness (if the witness wishes) will be live streamed or shown on a video recording of the hearing. The hearing day

can be organised in such a way that no images are recorded during the sessions when anonymous witnesses are speaking and that Counsel to the Inquiry facilitates the anonymous witnesses in making their contributions to the conversation of the panel.

- e) The Inquiry is always willing to consider other ways of preserving anonymity if individuals consider that would help them to give the evidence they would particularly wish to give.
- f) If at any point during their evidence the witness accidentally says anything that could identify themselves, it will not be broadcast. There is a delay on the transmission to allow for the feed to be stopped and that portion omitted from the live stream and video recording.
- g) Before the transcript of the oral evidence of the witness is published, it will be checked to ensure that the witness's anonymity has been preserved.

11. The Inquiry's priority is to ensure the health and safety of witnesses and individuals participating in Inquiry proceedings, particularly in light of Covid-19. To reduce the risk of transmission in the hearing room the Inquiry asks everyone attending to take a daily lateral flow test and to wear FFP2/3 masks when in the hearing room or moving around. The ventilation systems in Aldwych House run with 100% external air intake and there is no recirculation of internal air.

12. The Inquiry Chair has said: *'The Inquiry's aim is that each witness is enabled to give the best evidence they can. Wherever possible I would like witnesses to give evidence in person. I recognise, however, that sometimes a witness will have to give evidence remotely (due to public health measures for coronavirus or existing health conditions) while I am in the hearing room. Where this has to happen, Inquiry Counsel and the technical team will do their best to make this process as straightforward as possible'*.

13. Those attending, whether press or individual, will not be permitted to film or take pictures in the hearing room.

14. Confidential psychological support will be available at the hearings by the Inquiry's British Red Cross team for any witness who would like to speak to them. Telephone support can also be accessed on 0800 458 9473 and 0203 417 0280.

Issued by the Chair on 12 August 2022.