

Board of Directors - Public

Subject:	Covid-19 Inquiry - Process		Date: 4 th August 2022	
Prepared By:	Shirley A Higginbotham, Director of Corporate Affairs			
Approved By:	Shirley A Higginbotham, Director of Corporate Affairs			
Presented By:	Shirley A Higginbotham, Director of Corporate Affairs			
Purpose				
The purpose of this paper is for the to receive assurance regarding the process the Trust is undertaking in response to the publication of the Covid-19 Inquiry Terms of Reference			Approval	
			Assurance	x
			Update	
			Consider	
Strategic Objectives				
To provide outstanding care	To promote and support health and wellbeing	To maximise the potential of our workforce	To continuously learn and improve	To achieve better value
x	X19	x	x	
Identify which principal risk this report relates to:				
PR1	Significant deterioration in standards of safety and care			x
PR2	Demand that overwhelms capacity			x
PR3	Critical shortage of workforce capacity and capability			x
PR4	Failure to achieve the Trust's financial strategy			x
PR5	Inability to initiate and implement evidence-based Improvement and innovation			x
PR6	Working more closely with local health and care partners does not fully deliver the required benefits			x
PR7	Major disruptive incident			x
PR8	Failure to deliver sustainable reductions in the Trust's impact on climate change			x
Committees/groups where this item has been presented before				
N/A				
Executive Summary				
<p>The Government announced in May 2021 there would be an independent public inquiry into the governments handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>At the announcement of the Inquiry the Trust developed a Covid-19 Inquiry working group, the first meeting was July 2021. The Director of Corporate Affairs is the Chair of the group.</p> <p>The working group met twice during 2021 to ensure the preservation order was enacted and was then temporarily paused awaiting confirmation of the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry were published in June 2022 and the working group has had a meeting in July to identify areas of focus.</p> <p>On 21st July 2022 the Covid-19 Inquiry launched its first investigation, identifying three modules, the public hearings for the first two modules will take place in the spring and summer of 2023.</p> <p>The third module will focus on healthcare systems, timings for this module will be published in the coming weeks.</p>				

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The Government announced in May 2021 there would be an independent public inquiry into the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Chair of the inquiry, Baroness Heather Hallett was appointed in December 2021, the Terms of Reference were consulted on, and the final version published on 28 June 2022.

At the announcement of the Inquiry the Trust developed a Covid-19 Inquiry working group, the first meeting was July 2021. The Director of Corporate Affairs is the Chair of the group.

The first task was to implement a preservation order, to ensure no documents were destroyed. Also, all staff who were involved in any Covid 19 meetings or correspondence and were leaving were asked to leave their contact details should they be required for anything in relation to the inquiry.

The working group met twice during 2021 to ensure the preservation order was enacted and was then temporarily paused awaiting confirmation of the Terms of Reference. These have now been re-instated and the latest meeting was in July 2022.

The Terms of Reference identify the aims of the Inquiry as:

Aim 1 Examine the Covid-19 response and the impact of the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and produce a factual narrative account, including:

- The public health response across the whole of the UK
- The response of the health and care sector across the UK
- The economic response to the pandemic and its impact, including governmental interventions

Aim 2 Identify the lessons to be learned from the above, to inform preparations for future pandemics across the UK

A link to the full Terms of Reference is here [UK COVID-19 Inquiry: terms of reference - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104121/UK_COVID-19_Inquiry_terms_of_reference.pdf)

The key areas of focus for the group, as identified in the Terms of Reference are:

The Public health response across the whole of the UK

- a) Preparedness and resilience
- b) How decisions were made, communicated, recorded and implemented
- c) The impact on health and care sector workers and other key workers
- d) The safeguarding of public funds and the management of financial risk. – Covid-19 expenditure details

The response of the health and care sector across the UK

- a) Preparedness, initial capacity and the ability to increase capacity and resilience – Documentation as b) above.
- b) The management of the pandemic in hospitals, including infection prevention and control, triage, critical care capacity, the discharge of patients, the use of 'Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation' (DNACPR) decisions, the approach to palliative care, workforce testing, changes to inspections and the impact on staff and staffing levels.

- c) Antenatal and post-natal care
- d) The procurement and distribution of key equipment and supplies, including PPE and ventilators
- e) The development, delivery and impact of therapeutics and vaccines
- f) The consequences of the pandemic on provision for non-Covid related conditions and needs
- g) Provision for those experiencing long-Covid

The group are collating and reviewing:

- Business Continuity Plans.
- documentation from the Incident Control Team meetings and other governance meetings, including the executive team meetings and decisions and the items reviewed discussed and approved at Board of Director meetings.
- Health and well-being support offers to staff and volunteers.
- Covid-19 expenditure details

These areas of focus may expand as the inquiry progresses.

On 21st July 2022 the Covid-19 Inquiry launched its first investigation, identifying three modules

Module 1 – which opened on 21st July will examine the resilience and preparedness of the UK for the coronavirus pandemic

Module 2 – will be split and will examine core political and administrative governance and decision making by the UK government. Modules 2A, 2B and 2C will address the same overarching and strategic issues from the perspective of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Module 3 – will investigate the impact of Covid, and the governmental and societal responses to it on healthcare systems, including on patients, hospital and other healthcare workers and staff.

Procedural hearing for Modules 1 and 2 will begin in September and October 2022, with public hearings for Module 1 commencing in spring 2023 and summer 2023 for Module 2. The timings for Module 3 will be released in the next few weeks.

Further modules will be announced in 2023 and these are expected to cover both the system and impact of issues including: Vaccines, therapeutics, anti-viral treatment, the care sector, Government procurement, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing and tracing, Government business and financial response; health inequalities and the impact of Covid-19 on education, children and young people and the impact of Covid-19 on other sectors.

The Chair of the Inquiry has pledged to deliver reports with analysis, findings and recommendations whilst the Inquiry's investigations are ongoing, so that key lessons from the pandemic are learned quickly.