

Elena Whitham
Social Justice and Social Security Committee
Scottish Parliament
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6 May 2022

Dear Ms Whitham,

Thank you for your letter to Lady Poole of 25 April 2022. I have been asked to reply on her behalf.

We agree that the inquiry should take into account the impact of the pandemic on women and girls when considering lessons learned. We consider that the range of issues set out in your letter are likely to fall within paragraph 2(b) of the inquiry's term of reference: "the decision to lockdown and to apply other restrictions". Depending on the nature of the evidence and the particular issue, other paragraphs may also be relevant.

To explain further, we are acutely aware, as you will be, of the range of people who have been affected by the issues being dealt with by the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry. Because there are so many issues arising, and so many people affected, it would be unworkable to try to set them all out in the inquiry's terms of reference. Instead, the terms of reference specify areas of investigation at a high level of generality, so they are capable of being interpreted flexibly. The consequence of the terms of reference not listing particular groups means that nobody is excluded.

As you may know from the inquiry's temporary web page ([Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)), it is currently in its establishment phase. However, we are pleased to confirm that the inquiry will publicly launch in the next few weeks, with its bespoke website going live. We are keen to encourage participation in the inquiry once we have the necessary processes in place. More information will be provided on the website about how this can be done in due course.

I hope this is helpful but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Watson
Secretary
Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry