



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1262  
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/00394/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN  
[Petitions@Senedd.Wales](mailto:Petitions@Senedd.Wales)

22nd July 2022

Dear Jack,

I am writing in response to your letter on 27 May in relation to a petition from the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice (Cymru) calling for a Wales-only public inquiry into the pandemic.

I understand many people – including members of the group – have strong feelings about the public inquiry, and I have had an opportunity to discuss these with members of the group on a number of occasions.

I have set out my reasons in Plenary about why I believe the best way to scrutinise decisions made in Wales during the pandemic is by being part of a UK-wide inquiry. There has been no further action since that time which would persuade me that this decision should be reconsidered.

I have been involved at the relevant stages as the UK-wide inquiry has been set up; most recently, the Welsh Government has been consulted about the terms of reference put forward by Baroness Hallett following the public consultation which she led. I was pleased to see a good response to this consultation.

It is important to recognise that Ministers commission and agree the terms of reference for a public inquiry, before the inquiry itself is undertaken independently by the appointed chair. The inquiry, once formally set up, will be wholly independent of government. The chair will decide how the inquiry is run and the nature of its reports. The terms of reference are broad and will enable proper scrutiny of events and decisions made in Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It remains important that the inquiry will be visible in Wales and that the inquiry team should come to Wales to take evidence. I am encouraged that the inquiry team held its first consultation events in Wales; that the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru group has met the chair and the inquiry team and that people from organisations across Wales were invited to sector-based consultation events. The inquiry has also been taking the Welsh language into account in its work.

In January, the Minister for Health and Social Services provided £4.54m over two years to support health boards and the NHS Delivery Unit to take forward an important and complex programme of investigative work into cases of hospital-acquired Covid-19. This work started on 1 April and, to date, more than 3,000 investigations have commenced.

The establishment of the Scottish inquiry was a manifesto commitment by the Scottish National Party. There is no indication a separate inquiry will be taking place in Northern Ireland at this time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**