



Anna-Louise Marsh-Rees
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Dear Anna-Louise,

Thank you for your recent enquiries about the modules recently announced by the Inquiry, and about the Core Participant statement. I know that we will be meeting in the coming weeks, where we can discuss recent developments in relation to the Inquiry.

Before I turn to the issue of Core Participant status, I wanted to place on record my gratitude to you for our continued engagement. It has been tremendously useful for me to hear direct testimony from you as a group about the various issues arising from your experiences with Covid. I understand how difficult it can be for your members to participate in that exchange and this only increases my appreciation.

As you know, the Terms for Reference for the Covid Inquiry have now been published. I am encouraged to note, both in the Terms of Reference and in the public comments of the Chair, Baroness Hallett, that the experience of bereaved families will be placed at the centre of the Inquiry's focus.

I very much hope that your group will engage directly and pro-actively with the Inquiry in order to communicate how you may be able to support it to deliver on its mandate, and assist it to fully understand the experiences of Welsh citizens and how those citizens experienced the management of the pandemic by Welsh institutions.

You will know, from our previous discussions, that the advice I have received is that it would be inappropriate for the Welsh Government to make representations to the Inquiry on your behalf or to signal directly its support for your application for core participant status for Module 1. This is a statutory process with such decisions falling exclusively to the Chair and to be determined in the light of her assessment of the evidence that she requires and the source of that evidence. It is important that the Welsh Government does not encroach upon those statutory responsibilities. Currently we are ourselves still a prospective core participant for this first module and would wish to avoid any suggestion that we are seeking

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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.

to influence who the other core participants should be, particularly in circumstances where we are likely to be one of the key participants being scrutinised.

However, I do want to wish you all success in your own efforts to secure core participant status.

As you are aware, the Welsh Government has been firm and consistent in its general representations to the Inquiry that attention and scrutiny should be afforded to Wales and its citizens. The assessment that the Inquiry will shortly be undertaking with regard to core participation in Module 1 will be undertaken in light of those representations.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely,

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

MARK DRAKEFORD