



Naomi McAuliffe  
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Our Reference: 202100179639

Your Reference: Joint Civil Society Letter to FM on COVID Inquiry

29 March 2021

Dear Naomi McAuliffe ,

Thank you for your correspondence to the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, regarding a Public Inquiry into Scotland's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pre-election period has now begun, I have been asked to reply on her behalf.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to write to outline the key areas you would like to see covered in a Public Inquiry. You will appreciate that our focus is currently on responding to the challenges of this unprecedented public health emergency, its impact on our society and how we safely ease the country's lockdown restrictions. This will continue to be our priority at present.

Parliament has made clear its desire to see an immediate inquiry however, and it is right that a process of scrutiny should take place once it is possible to determine the scope and scale of such a process. At the appropriate time, it will be the role of the Lord Advocate to identify the questions of public interest. It is important that we take time to develop the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry in discussion with those most directly affected, including the Chair once appointed.

I will pass the points you raise in your letter to the Lord Advocate and the Chair asking for them to be considered in the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.

I hope this information is helpful.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



Yours sincerely

Colin McKnight  
**MHSC : Responding to the Pandemic**

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