

# 12. Covid lessons must be addressed

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The UK [Covid-19 Inquiry](#) has already proven that tens of thousands of Covid deaths were preventable. According to [The Lancet](#) 'Amid the claims of extreme misogyny, profanity, and chaos .... [there] is a story of complete government breakdown'. The Covid pandemic revealed profound problems with the UK's health and care system – see [People's Covid Inquiry](#) (PCI). Deepening social inequalities exacerbate the impact of chronic underfunding of public health, preventive healthcare and mental health services. Covid-19 exploited these failings and social inequalities ensured fatally unequal outcomes.

## WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- **233,000 people have [died from Covid \(end-2023\)](#) - [2nd worst outcome in Western Europe](#)**
- Government policy has led to life expectancy stagnating and, for some groups, declining
- Before the pandemic, health, care and support services had been undermined by a decade of underfunding relative to need (See [PCI](#) for these facts)
- **PPE was not available for staff, care homes and vulnerable people – procurement of PPE had been outsourced to private corporations who failed to supply what was needed**
- **47,000 care home residents died from Covid after 25,000 untested patients were discharged to care homes without testing**
- Six out of ten deaths from Covid in 2020 were disabled people
- Over 2000 Health and Care frontline staff died from exposure to Covid
- **Government bypassed the NHS, universities, public health and local authorities and squandered £billions on failed Test & Trace, giving to incompetent private sector cronies**
- Our current health and care services have no spare capacity and are now in an even worse position than pre-pandemic to cope with emergencies

## WHAT MUST HAPPEN NOW?

- Restore a national and local public health service able to cope with the [next pandemic](#)
- Act on the lessons of social inequality - investment in public services, mental health and illness prevention delivers [healthier population and economy](#) and saves lives
- Pandemic plans must rely on universal access to an equitable, comprehensive, high quality, free at the point of use, publicly funded and provided NHS
- Effective planning to ensure that material resources, staffing and infrastructure can maintain essential services in times of emergency

- Much greater priority given to using evidence-based approaches to reducing inequalities in all services
- Services and procurement of equipment under direct control of government
- The pandemic is not over - clean air, ventilation, masks in healthcare settings must be established alongside wider access to vaccines