

**Press release on behalf of Keep Our NHS Public - for IMMEDIATE use**

**Michael Mansfield KC: “The official Covid Inquiry is confirming - at enormous public cost - what the People’s Inquiry established four years ago.”**

Renowned human rights barrister Michael Mansfield KC, who chaired the 2021 People’s Covid Inquiry [1], set up and run by campaigning group Keep Our NHS Public [2] has responded to the second report of the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry, stating that its findings on governance and decision-making merely repeat what his independent panel concluded years earlier - without state powers, government cooperation or major public funding.

The second Judicial Inquiry report, published this week, has already faced criticism for offering little new insight and for its spiralling cost - now estimated at more than £200 million. With the Inquiry not expected to conclude until 2027, Mansfield argues that the public is paying heavily and waiting too long for lessons that were clear in 2021.

The People’s Covid Inquiry conducted months of online hearings in 2021, producing two reports - Misconduct in Public Office (interim and final). Forty witnesses gave live evidence, supported by additional written and video testimony. Despite lacking the legal powers and resources of the statutory Inquiry, the work was completed within nine months. Recommendations were submitted to the Metropolitan Police and to the official Inquiry in December 2021 [3]. A response did not arrive until June 2023 [4].

**Michael Mansfield KC, leading human rights barrister and Chair of The People’s Covid Inquiry, said:**

*“The People’s Covid Inquiry established - unequivocally - that the Government was shockingly unprepared, that decision-making was grossly negligent, and that lockdown was dangerously delayed. These conclusions were delivered swiftly, transparently, and at a fraction of the cost. The public deserved action then - not years later. We urgently need fast-track statutory inquiries capable of producing timely findings while those responsible are still in office. Justice delayed is justice denied. When lives are at stake, years-long processes are simply inexcusable.”*

**Dr Tony O’Sullivan, Co-Chair of Keep Our NHS Public and retired Consultant Paediatrician, said:**

*“When the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK group demand accountability not apologies, this goes to the heart of the issue. Who will be held responsible for the failures before and during the Pandemic, which resulted in tens of thousands of lost lives? Michael Mansfield KC concluded at the end of the People’s Covid Inquiry in June 2021 (four years ago), that there was a case for a charge of ‘Misconduct in Public Office’. That is the title of the final report of the Panel that he chaired. We wrote to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in December 2021,*

*lodged the report and asked them to investigate this charge. The reply came over two years later in June 2023, passing responsibility to the UK Public Inquiry. Now that Baroness Hallett has concluded that there were gross failures of political leadership, will the Metropolitan Police respond to investigate one of the worst failures of state in a generation?"*

**[ends]**

Spokespeople are available for interview. Contact Samantha Wathen, Press officer for Keep Our NHS Public [press@keepournhspublic.com](mailto:press@keepournhspublic.com) or call/WhatsApp: 07776047472

**Notes to editors**

The People's Covid Inquiry was set up and devised by Keep Our NHS Public and chaired by renowned human rights barrister Michael Mansfield KC. It was counselled by lawyer, Lorna Hackett. The Inquiry began in February 2021 and concluded in July 2021, hearing from a number of key expert and lay witnesses and producing a final report:

<https://www.peoplescovidinquiry.com/>

Keep Our NHS Public is a national independent organisation campaigning for a well-funded, publicly owned and provided NHS [www.keepournhspublic.com](http://www.keepournhspublic.com)

Letter submitted to Met Police by The People's Covid inquiry:

[https://36085122-5b58-481e-afa4-a0eb0aaf80ca.usrfiles.com/ugd/360851\\_c4d173a6e0314cd0916c7199e3fc0513.pdf](https://36085122-5b58-481e-afa4-a0eb0aaf80ca.usrfiles.com/ugd/360851_c4d173a6e0314cd0916c7199e3fc0513.pdf)

Response received from met Police to People's Covid Inquiry letter:

[https://36085122-5b58-481e-afa4-a0eb0aaf80ca.usrfiles.com/ugd/360851\\_0dd820d5c8bd434ebf1717d4043b61d7.pdf](https://36085122-5b58-481e-afa4-a0eb0aaf80ca.usrfiles.com/ugd/360851_0dd820d5c8bd434ebf1717d4043b61d7.pdf)