

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2021

*Dear Constituent*

Thank you for your email about the public inquiry on Covid-19. I was sorry to learn that you are unhappy with the timeframe that has been announced.

The Covid-19 outbreak has been one of the most significant and consequential periods of our lifetimes. It has led to a tragic loss of life in this country and around the world and has given rise to previously unthinkable restrictions to our way of life.

The fortitude and courage of the British people and the bravery of our NHS and key workers means that we have now passed the peak of infections and I welcome the announcement by the Prime Minister of a full independent public inquiry on a statutory basis. You will be glad to learn that the inquiry will have full powers under the Inquiries Act 2005 and will have the ability to compel the production of relevant material and to take oral evidence in public under oath. Discussions with the devolved administrations will ensure the inquiry can take into account the full scope of the UK response to the pandemic.

I recognise that you wish to see the inquiry begin sooner, however, I must emphasise, that the pandemic situation is not over. Hospitalisations of Covid patients may be reduced and restrictions on our daily life are being lifted but the public health and economic situation is serious and fragile. The threat of new, more transmissible Covid variants remains and the Prime Minister has warned of a likely surge in cases this winter.

That is why the right time for an inquiry is the spring next year. I understand calls for an inquiry to be held sooner but this timetable will avoid inadvertently distracting those whom we continue to need this year in the fight against the virus including our NHS workers, officials and scientific advisers. I have no doubt that the inquiry will make sure to have the widest possible consultation and engagement.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

*Member of Parliament for Darlington*

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: [peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk) Website: [www.petergibson.org](http://www.petergibson.org)

@gibbo4darlo