

Annex to Protocol on September 2024 Opening Hearings: Code of Conduct

The opening hearings will involve deeply personal accounts of the utmost sensitivity, often describing tragic circumstances. The Chair recognises the resilience and courage of those witnesses who are willing to share their accounts and asks everyone attending hearings to do the same.

The Chair expects all those attending opening hearings to honour the principles of the Inquiry by treating all parties with courtesy.

Those who are giving commemorative or impact evidence, as well as those who are making opening statements, must be given the opportunity to be heard and must be afforded respect throughout.

The wellbeing of people participating with the Inquiry is extremely important to the Chair and the Inquiry team. The Inquiry has specialist emotional support available on site offered by independent counsellors and overseen by the Inquiry's Chief Psychologist. Attendees who feel they need the support of a counsellor should make their needs known to a member of the Inquiry team, who will be wearing purple inquiry branded lanyards.

The Chair recognises that for many of those attending, there may be parts of the hearings that may be extremely difficult or distressing to hear. It is vitally important that all legal representatives and witnesses, whatever their role or their perspective on the Inquiry's work, are afforded the time and the appropriate environment in which to give their evidence and that they can do so as comfortably as possible.

To that end, in the hearing room:

- Those attending will listen quietly and respectfully to the opening statements and the evidence being given.
- There will be no disruptions, shouting out or disturbances of any kind.
- Mobile phones must be switched to silent within the hearing room and no recording or filming devices of any kind will be permitted. Laptops for legal representatives, the Inquiry team and the media are permitted.
- Filming or taking pictures, including on a mobile phone, will not be permitted.
- Food and drink (other than water) will not be permitted.
- Anyone who needs assistance during a hearing should leave the hearing room quietly and alert a member of the Inquiry team if support is needed.

In the event that anyone does not follow the code of conduct, they may be asked to leave the hearing room. If necessary, the Chair may also consider holding hearings in private, with limited attendance.

- August 2024