

## **Annex to Protocol on April 2025 Hearing**

### **Principles of Engagement for the April Hearing**

As part of the April Hearing the Inquiry will hear evidence about some of the specific and serious issues that resulted in its being established. These issues are of a difficult and sensitive nature, and often gave rise to tragic circumstances. The Chair recognises that for many of those attending, there may be parts of the hearing that are extremely difficult or distressing to hear.

The Chair expects all those attending the public hearings to honour the Principles of Engagement by treating all parties with courtesy. Those who are giving evidence, or presentations, must be given the opportunity to be heard and must be afforded respect throughout. 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 engage with the Inquiry's April Hearing.

To that end, in the hearing room:

- Those attending will listen quietly and respectfully to the opening statements the evidence and the presentations 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. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available in the café area.
- 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.

The wellbeing of those participating in the Inquiry is extremely important to the Chair and the Inquiry team. We understand engaging with the Inquiry can be emotionally difficult. The Inquiry has contracted Hestia, an experienced provider of emotional support, to ensure that there is access to support while engaging with the Inquiry process. Specialist emotional support provided by support staff and overseen by the Inquiry's Chief Psychologist will be available on site. Attendees who feel they need the support should make their needs known to a member of the Inquiry team.

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