

22/11/2025

Email: [I/S]

Dear Sophie,

Please submit the following as my personal submission to the Lampard Inquiry regarding the draft Statement of Approach – Investigating Illustrative Cases of Those Who Have Died.

Introduction

I am writing this as a bereaved mother and bereaved partner. I lost my son, Matthew Leahy, and my partner, Colin Flatt, and both of their deaths fall within the scope of this Inquiry. I have spent more than a decade fighting for the truth about what happened to them, dealing with missing records, conflicting accounts, and system after system that has failed us.

The comments below reflect my personal experience, my concerns, and my hopes for this Inquiry. I ask that they be submitted as my own submission, in my own voice.

1. The plan to examine only 140 deaths is not enough

With the very high number of deaths over 23 years, limiting detailed investigation to “around 140” cases feels far too small. Families need reassurance that their loved ones’ stories will not be lost or overlooked.

We need to understand:

- why the number is so low,
- how the 140 will be chosen, and
- how all major themes and failures will be represented.

2. The criteria for choosing cases are unclear

The draft criteria are broad and do not explain how choices will be made in practice. This leaves families anxious and uncertain.

We need a clear explanation of:

- how cases will be selected,
- how fairness will be ensured, and
- how decisions will be communicated to families.

3. Many previous investigations were flawed and should not be relied on

The draft suggests that the Inquiry will not re-investigate earlier work unless there are strong reasons. But in many Essex cases, including Matthew's and Colin's, previous investigations were incomplete, inconsistent, and in some parts simply wrong.

These earlier investigations must not be taken at face value. Families deserve a fresh, honest look at what happened.

4. The Inquiry needs a clear plan to find former staff and key witnesses

The draft does not explain how former staff, agency workers, retired employees, or whistleblowers will be traced.

Many people who hold vital information have moved on. The Inquiry must actively seek them out and ensure they give evidence.

5. The November 2026 deadline seems unrealistic and worrying

Many families have not been spoken to yet. Survivors have not been contacted. Whistleblowers haven't been approached. Key witnesses have not been identified or traced.

I am concerned that the Inquiry may feel pressured to meet a deadline rather than take the time needed to get to the truth.

6. The document does not deal properly with post-death failures

For many families, including mine, the biggest failings came after our loved ones died.

These include:

- missing or altered records,
- misleading information,
- failures in communication,
- issues with inquests,
- poor complaint handling,
- lack of honesty and transparency.

These post-death experiences must be properly investigated.

7. Families must be allowed to check and correct their Case Summaries

The Inquiry plans to write Case Summaries and group cases into clusters, but it does not explain:

- when families will see their summary,
- whether we can correct mistakes,
- how our input will be used, or
- how clusters will be decided.

Families cannot be sidelined again. We must be involved in this process.

8. Matthew and Colin's cases must both be included

Both Matthew and Colin's deaths raise serious issues, both have Core Participant status, and both involve major concerns before and after death.

I ask for confirmation that both of their cases will be included in the set of cases examined in detail.

9. Families need clarity on how we can keep contributing

The draft says family input is important, but it does not explain how we will be included in the next stages of the investigation.

We need clear guidance on how families can continue to provide information and raise concerns.

Closing Statement

These points come from my own lived experience and from the long, painful journey of trying to get answers for Matthew and Colin. I am asking the Inquiry to ensure that the voices of bereaved families are not lost and that our loved ones' stories are fully and fairly examined.

Please submit all of the above as my personal submission.

Kind regards,

Melanie Leahy

Core Participant

Mother of Matthew Leahy

Partner of Colin Flatt