

PUBLIC INQUIRIES

Could you be involved and need our support?

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PUBLIC INQUIRIES

ABOUT PUBLIC INQUIRIES

- Public inquiries are convened by the Government to investigate events which have or could cause public concern. They often take place where people have suffered or lost lives.
- The inquiry will look at what happened; why; who may be to blame; and what can be done to prevent this happening again.
- The chairperson of the public inquiry may designate a person, a group, or an organisation who has a direct and significant involvement or interest in the subject of the inquiry as a core participant. The core participant will have rights to see evidence, attend hearings, make opening and closing submissions, and may be permitted to question witnesses.
- The output of a public inquiry will include lessons learned and recommendations, a select committee may follow up to make sure the government acts on recommendations.
- Public inquiries are almost always high profile and heavily scrutinised by the media, they often create public debate or even make headline news in the press.



SUPPORT WE CAN PROVIDE

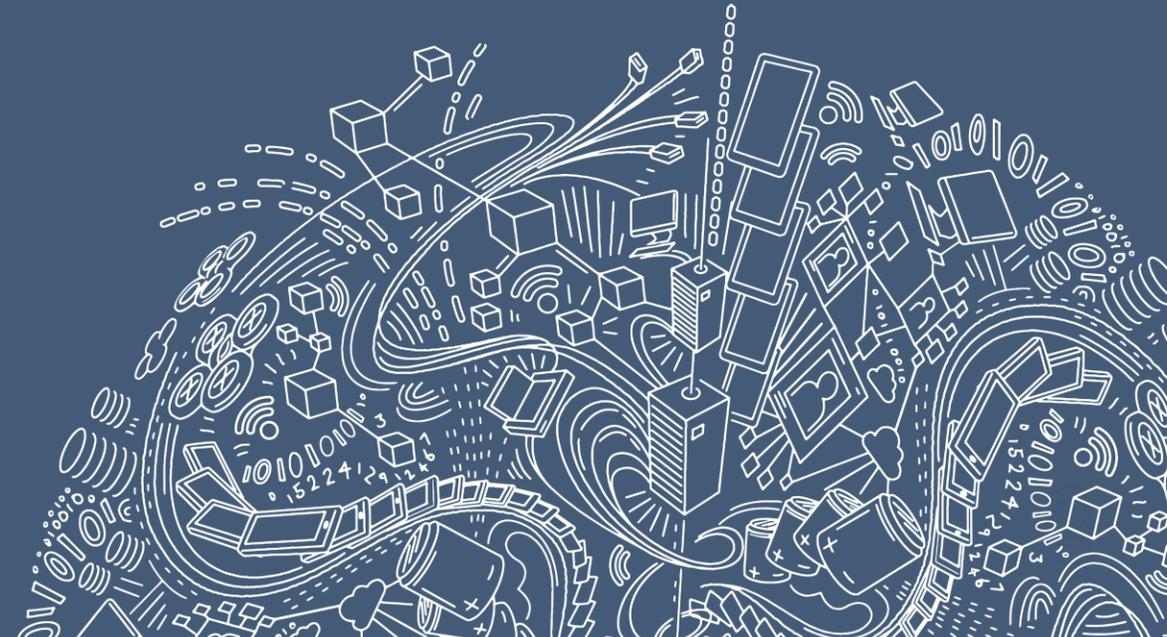
It can be a daunting prospect to find that you or your organisation are involved in a public inquiry. We understand this and can advise and assist those involved through the stages. That includes public bodies, organisations and individuals, whether as a core participant or a witness.

We provide support on the broad issues arising from a public inquiry including upon:

- governance, establishment documentation, process, sequencing and stakeholder communications
- documentation - capturing and reviewing large quantities of documentation on bespoke IT platforms
- witnesses - meeting and preparing witness evidence whilst sensitively handling highly emotive issues
- factual analysis and report drafting
- support ahead of public hearings, parliamentary committee appearances and the provision of oral evidence
- litigation, regulatory enforcement and criminal investigations arising from an inquiry
- reputation management
- funding to support participation
- insurance.

Our work and advice may attract legal professional privilege depending on our role.

We will work with you to understand your concerns and wider objectives and adopt an approach that focuses on these whilst seeking to protect your reputation. This may include trying to navigate the Inquiry to answer your questions or investigate particular issues important to you.



WHO WE ARE

Our public inquiries team, led by Erin Shoesmith, encompasses not only experience in providing representation at inquiries, but also expertise that extends across the full range of the firm's practice areas.

The team includes members with in depth knowledge of health and safety, corporate crime, dispute resolution, reputation management and contentious insurance disputes. It amounts to a large resource pool situated across the UK, which can be quickly mobilised, and has the breadth of expertise to manage the demands of a public inquiry.



Our experience in public inquiries:

We are advising several clients in connection with the UK Covid-19 set up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

We act on behalf of a Core Participant at the Scottish Covid Inquiry set up to establish the facts and learn the lessons of the strategic devolved response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Scotland

We are advising a witness in the Infected Blood Public Inquiry, an independent public statutory inquiry into the use of infected blood and the request relates to the development of research into screening for the detection of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) in humans

We act on behalf of a Core Participant in the Scottish Hospitals Public Inquiry, set up to investigate the construction of the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Campus, Glasgow, and the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People, and Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Edinburgh

We act on behalf of a Core Participant at the Grenfell Tower inquiry

We act on behalf of a leading care institution in Scotland who have leave to appear in phase 8 of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

We are advising a witness in the Post Office Inquiry, established to gather a clear account of the implementation and failings of the Horizon IT system at the Post Office over its lifetime

We represented three bereaved families as Core Participants at the Manchester Arena Bombing inquiry

OUR EXPERIENCE

Members of our team have also:

advised an organisation which gave evidence to the independent investigation into the maternity and neonatal services of the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

worked on the Jersey Care Inquiry in relation to historical abuse of children in care

acted as special advisor to a Parliamentary Inquiry into misconduct in the private investigations industry in the wake of the phone hacking scandal

prepared senior bank executive for appearances before the Treasury Select Committee

advised Sir Christopher Kelly on his independent public review of the causes of the capital shortfall at Co-operative Bank plc



KEY CONTACTS



ERIN SHOESMITH

Partner

+44 (0)161 934 6557 / 020 7160 3117

+44 (0)7738 023333

erin.shoemith

@addleshawgoddard.com



DAVID YOUNG

Partner

+44 (0)20 7788 5168

+44 (0)7884 115877

david.young

@addleshawgoddard.com



POLLY SPRENGER

Partner

+44 (0)20 7788 5167

+44 (0)7884116176

polly.sprenger

@addleshawgoddard.com



ALEXANDRA SEABRIDGE

Legal Director

+44 (0)161 934

+44 (0)7885 809354

alexandra.seabridge

@addleshawgoddard.com



ADRIAN MANSBRIDGE

Legal Director

+44 (0)113 209 2401

+44 (0)7827 082489

adrian.mansbridge

@addleshawgoddard.com



PRISCILLA ADDO-QUAYE

Managing Associate

+44 (0)161 934 6415

+44 (0)7592121671

priscilla.addo-

quaye@addleshawgoddard.com



LISA MCNEILL

Managing Associate

+44 (0)131 222 9545

+44 (0)7595 192562

lisa.mcneill

@addleshawgoddard.com



HELEN MATTINGLY

Managing Associate

+44 (0)161 934 6480

+44 (0)7540 558112

helen.mattingly

@addleshawgoddard.com



QUOTATIONS



The deeply impressive Erin Shoemsmith leads the team to truly brilliant effect. The practice works intensely with huge commercial awareness to the highest standards, leaving clients with the correct impressions that their every need has been factored in, addressed and sorted out

Legal 500 2023



The team's in-depth knowledge of the legislation but also their relevant experience and contact with relevant barristers and local courts was invaluable in this instance.

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Very good understanding of the issues and industry, excellent at strategy, very proactive and sensitive to the commercial and reputational issues.

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Priscilla Addo-Quaye has been faultless as liaison between the 3 counsel team, the AG team and the Manchester Arena Inquiry Legal Team. Her legal work is impressive and she is outstandingly good with clients. The whole team has worked to an extremely high standard over the past 12 months.

Legal 500 2022



Erin Shoemsmith, the senior partner, is at the very top of her game and this sector. Priscilla Addo-Quaye is an exceptional senior associate and a leader in her own right. The rest of the team works as one unit to get to the very bottom of every problem and solve it. The key is that this team has a completely genuine interest in their clients and an unparalleled track record of getting to the heart of the issues and solving them.

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Strength from top to bottom. Highly experienced team. Good strategic thinkers. Exceptionally experienced in complex cases.

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