

Press Release – for immediate release

One month on, bereaved families still shut out from dialogue with the PM

Members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group yesterday visited the gates of Downing Street to register their upset and dismay at having been shut out from dialogue with the Prime Minister and Health Secretary. The group which now represents 1,200 bereaved family members of those lost to Covid-19 are calling on the pair to meet with them to discuss their call for an immediate public inquiry, having now been kept waiting a month for a response to their formal request for an immediate public inquiry sent on the 11th of June¹. The group has yet to receive anything more than a two-line acknowledgement from an anonymous correspondence officer².

The group's [petition for an immediate public inquiry](#) has now gathered over 150,000 signatures and in recent days [Amnesty International and 70 other civil society organisations have also come out in support](#), adding their voices to those of [health leaders](#), [the Health Ombudsman](#) and [the recently formed All Party Parliamentary Group](#).

The group believe that an immediate inquiry will help to learn the lessons from the early part of the pandemic and help to prevent more unnecessary deaths should the country be faced with a second wave.

Co-founder Jo Goodman said:

“Our hearts are broken from the loss we’ve suffered and we don’t want thousands more people to experience the pain we’re going through. That’s why we’re urging the government to learn lessons now from the missteps we all know have been made. It is very concerning to see the UK lifting lockdown measures while daily new case numbers linger in the hundreds and with questions remaining about the ability of the test and trace system to identify and isolate cases and contacts. Around a thousand families are still joining us in mourning every week. We need a focused public inquiry now to ensure that we as a country can learn from what went wrong in the early stages of the pandemic and ensure that more families don’t needlessly have to lose loved ones before their time.

We find it unbelievable that the government considers it acceptable to effectively blank hundreds of bereaved families and doesn’t even have the decency to give us a proper response. To receive two impersonal lines of acknowledgement from an unnamed correspondence officer, without even an expression of condolence just adds to the hurt our members are feeling. We are calling on the Prime Minister and Health Secretary to meet with us to discuss our concerns and the way forward for the country.”

Group member Jean Adamson explained her reasons for attending Downing Street:

“I went to Downing Street for my beloved father and on behalf of the thousands of bereaved families, who are victims of this human tragedy. Yesterday marked an important milestone in our campaign for an

¹ See attached BCF4J Petition for Public Inquiry and Letter to the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson

² See attached Gov Acknowledgement 29 June

inquiry as we sent out a powerful message to the very heart of government. We can no longer be ignored!"

Becky Kummer, another group member who attended on Saturday said:

"I went to Downing Street as it's important to put pressure on our government and make them accountable for the poor decisions I feel they made. Not being able to grieve in the 'normal' way has been so difficult. Helping raise awareness of the petition, and push for a public inquiry, makes me feel that I'm doing something to honour dad's memory, and those of all the other covid victims too."

Jade Foster-Jerrett said:

"I attended Downing Street so I could show the government that this virus is more than just figures. Thousands of families have had their world torn apart and a public inquiry is essential to give us some hope that our loved ones didn't die in vain."

Ends

Contact:

Email: press.covid19bereaved@gmail.com

Phone: If you would like to discuss the release by phone, please send your phone number to the above email address and someone will call you as soon as possible.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CovidJusticeUK>

Twitter: @CovidJusticeUK

Website: www.covidfamiliesforjustice.org

Notes:

The group who attended Downing Street are:

Becky Kummer, who lost her father, Peter Owen, 77

Cleo Burgon, who lost her father, Martin Burgon, 71

Ellis Tustin, who lost his grandfather, Berrice Moore, 88

Jade Foster-Jerrett, who lost her father, Larry Foster, 65

Jean Adamson, who lost her father, Aldrick (Cleo) Adamson, 98

Sioux Vosper, who lost her father, John David Leigh, 80