

Dear Prime Minister,

As you will be aware, the APPG on Coronavirus I chair has been conducting an inquiry into the UK government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, to urgently learn lessons ahead of any potential second wave this winter.

On August 5th, the APPG heard harrowing first-hand accounts from those most affected by the coronavirus pandemic: the bereaved families of those who have tragically lost their lives, and the survivors who now find themselves living with 'long covid'. Their accounts were heart-breaking, and their concern for the future was palpable.

The APPG was shocked to learn that despite numerous attempts, you have so far refused to meet with the bereaved families or shown any willingness to listen to their pleas. They need recognition, compassion, and support. They deserve better. Because of the loss they have suffered combined with isolation, many are now dealing with prolonged grief and in need of mental health support tailored specifically to them. They also need closure, which can only be provided by you agreeing to their calls for a public inquiry.

The APPG was also alerted to concerning reports that the NHS 111 service had asked black people "are your lips blue?" as one of the questions to establish the severity of a coronavirus case. It is imperative that you order an urgent review of the NHS 111 service, to ensure appropriate processes and guidance are being issued ahead of winter.

An additional unaddressed matter concerns the health, wellbeing and employment arrangements of the growing number of people living with 'long covid'. We received many hundreds of submissions from people describing how they continue to live with the debilitating symptoms of the virus months after first being infected. It is therefore imperative, especially with schools reopening soon, that you move to formally recognise 'long covid', commit resource to a rapid, comprehensive study of this condition, and provide the necessary support as a matter of urgency.

To summarise, the APPG on Coronavirus recommends that you urgently:

- Meet with bereaved families and commit to providing mental health support tailored specifically to them.
- Commit to a judge-led public inquiry in writing to the bereaved families for justice group.
- Call an immediate inquiry into the advice given by the NHS 111 service.
- Formally recognise people living with 'long covid' and expand research on the long-term effects of coronavirus on people's health to include those who were never hospitalised or tested.
- Set up a working group to address the needs of people living with 'long covid', including developing new guidelines for employers and GPs.

It is also crucial that the government starts collecting and publishing regular figures on the number of people living with 'long covid' and those who have received support under the NHS England Covid Recovery service.

I hope that you will honour the commitment you made to me at Prime Minister's Questions on July 22nd and will take these recommendations seriously.

I look forward to reading your response.

