



This client newsletter has been published openly as there is nothing confidential to communicate at this stage. Once the Inquiry process officially starts or there is a need for confidentiality, these client group communications will become private. If you have lost a loved one to Covid-19, you have a right to be part of the public inquiry process. There is strength in numbers, so that as a group we can apply pressure to government and the inquiry. We represent our Covid Inquiry clients pro bono, this means at no cost or financial commitment to you. [Find out more](#)

Who we are

I thought it might be helpful to give a little more information about the people who are running your case.

I am the Solicitor leading the team. My name is Elkan Abrahamson.

I specialise in major public Inquiries and Inquests and in challenging decisions made by authorities like City Councils and Government. I'm proud to have represented 20 families during the Hillsborough inquests and continue to support them in the aftermath, I also act for families involved in the Birmingham Pub Bombings Inquest and The Manchester Arena Bombings Inquest. I provided pro bono consultancy to one of the family firms involved in the Grenfell Inquiry.



A little about me

I'm a firm believer that people struggling with powerful bodies need empowering. We all need to be able to 'speak truth to power' without fear of the consequences. I'll continue to seek justice and protect those in need, with an ongoing passion to promote and help deliver 'The Accountability Bill' (introduced to Parliament under the 10 minute rule on 29th March 2017), a piece of legislation that aims to make it a legal duty for public authorities and public servants to tell the truth.

My experience

My earliest experience of controversial cases started with my work arising from the 1981 Toxteth riots and subsequently, enabling many of those wrongly arrested to sue the police for abusing their powers. I followed two years practising in Hong Kong with various civil rights firms in Liverpool and joined Broudie Jackson Canter in 2010. I'm Chair of Trustees for 'The Bloom Appeal', a charity dedicated to helping patients with blood cancer. I am a previous member of the Law Society Children's Panel, and continue to act as an advocate in complex care and family proceedings. I am also a founder trustee of a new charity which is being set up to support victims of terrorism. I am a non-executive director of Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust, one of England's 3 cancer specialist hospitals. I should say I have considered carefully whether this causes any problems when dealing with the Covid Inquiry. I do not believe it does, but if any client had concerns about the treatment offered by Clatterbridge I would be unable to act in that particular case.

The Barrister leading the team is Pete Weatherby Q.C.

Pete is a human rights barrister who practices domestically in public inquiries, inquests, criminal, public, prison and police law. He is both a trial and appellate lawyer, and has regularly appeared in judicial review claims. Pete has appeared at all domestic court levels and before the European Court of Human Rights, including the Grand Chamber. He specialises in cases involving miscarriages of justice, freedom of expression, extradition and 'terrorism', and he has a particular expertise in statutory interpretation.

Pete led the team representing 22 of the bereaved Hillsborough families at the new inquests, and continues to act for them in a number of matters, including their campaign to get 'The Accountability Bill' enacted. He was one of the drafters of the Bill which seeks to provide a lasting legacy and prevent what happened to the families happening to others.



Since the conclusion of the Hillsborough inquests, Pete has appeared for the partner of Anthony Grainger at the Public Inquiry into his death (a police shooting), and represented 80 of the victims of the Grenfell disaster during phase one of the Inquiry. He is now appearing for bereaved victims of the Manchester Arena bombing outrage at the inquests.

Over the course of Pete's career as a barrister, he has also:

- Advised ministers and shadow ministers regarding a number of high profile cases and he has regularly spoken publicly on matters of law reform particularly with regard to inquiries and inquests, opposing legal aid cuts, and for changes to prison and sentencing law, notably with regard to imprisonment for public protection (IPP) and other indeterminate sentences.
- Practiced internationally. He has appeared or advised in matters relating to Bulgaria, Japan, Spain, Mauritius, and the Maldives, and has pro bono international human rights experience in matters relating to the US, Kashmir, Bahrain, UAE, Turkey and elsewhere.
- Appeared and advised in a number of criminal, prison and human rights cases in Mauritius, and is currently challenging the legality of its ID Card system before the UN Human Rights Committee. Pete has undertaken pro bono international human rights work for the Bar Human Rights Committee, particularly regarding Turkey, Kuwait and Bahrain.
- Pete is a regular commentator on legal and human rights issues in the media. Recent media comment has related to the Grenfell disaster and Inquiry, and show trials of journalists in Turkey.
- Represented Robert Brown (conviction quashed after he had served 26 years of a life sentence for a murder he did not commit), Michael Shields (the football fan wrongly convicted of attempted murder in Bulgaria, who is the only person ever pardoned with respect to a foreign conviction) and Robert Kray (parole).

Where we are up to

Terms of Reference

The Prime Minister has, after much campaigning work by the Facebook group and legal work by us, agreed to hold a statutory public Inquiry. The word 'statutory' is significant – it gives the Chair of the Inquiry powers to compel witnesses to give evidence under oath and produce documents.

We have now drafted terms of reference (ToR) for the Inquiry – these will be put to the government as a proposal. No doubt many others will have their own ideas about what should be considered by the Inquiry and at the end of the day it is up to ministers to decide. We may not get everything we want but the more pressure the group is able to exert the better the likely outcome.

Next steps

The next steps, in addition to discussing the ToR, will be putting in suggestions about the Chair and others who might sit on the Inquiry.

We are also considering the devolved nations – we have identified lawyers in Scotland and Northern Ireland whom we will recommend to you for Inquiries which may take place there and we will work with them to coordinate our efforts. We have yet to identify lawyers in Wales, and if any of you have suggestions please do let us know.

Terms of Business

We appreciate instructing a lawyer can be a daunting process. Following some concerns about incurring any future client costs, we have merged our Costs Explanation Letter into our Standard Terms of Business by adding a specific Public Inquiry Charges section.

We hope this helps to make things clearer and reassures our clients that we are committed to support you pro bono (without charge) until the Inquiry is set up and a Government costs scheme is put in place.

For those that have already signed our Standard Terms of Business and instructed us, there is no action required as the Costs Explanation Letter provided the same information and assurance. If you have any concerns or questions about client costs or instructing us, please do let us know by calling our team on Freephone [0808 296 5839](tel:08082965839) or emailing covidinquiry@broudiejacksoncanter.co.uk.



Call for Questions

We have a Frequently Asked Questions resource on our website and will continue to update this as new client questions come in. View the current [FAQs list](#).

If there are any general questions which you think would be usefully shared with others please send them to me at elkanabrahamson@broudiejacksoncanter.co.uk.

Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Group Mailing List

If you haven't already, we recommend that you join the Group's email list to ensure you always keep up to date with all the latest news and activity. Just send an email to: covidfamiliesforjusticeuk@gmail.com and the team will add you to the list. For more information visit the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK group on Facebook.

Newsletter No.2

In our next newsletter I will say more about what an Inquiry involves and what to expect.

Should you have any questions, please contact our dedicated Covid Inquiry team on Freephone [0808 296 5839](tel:08082965839) or email us direct on covidinquiry@broudiejacksoncanter.co.uk