

Establishment of the Scottish COVID-19 Public Inquiry

Islands Communities Impact Assessment

March 2022

<p>differ in the islands?</p>	<p>learning how to respond to future pandemics. But this is ultimately dependent on the independent functioning of the inquiry itself once established, and the response to any recommendations. Both these aspects fall outwith the scope of this assessment, which covers only the establishment of the inquiry by Ministers.</p>
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Step Two – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data is available about the current situation in the islands? • Do you need to consult? • How does any existing data differ between islands? • Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place? 	<p>There is no specific evidence that a decision to establish a public inquiry under the 2005 Act, in itself, has variable impacts on island communities. However, it is recognised that experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic varied in island communities compared with mainland communities because of rural and geographical variances</p> <p>It is also recognised that experiences of interacting with public services (including public inquiries) can vary if someone lives in a remote and rural area, including island communities.</p> <p>Specifically on this public inquiry, as discussed below a period of engagement has taken place that has yielded a range of qualitative data relevant to establishment decision-making. This has informed decisions made by Ministers and has ensured they are seized of relevant issues.</p>
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Step Three – Consultation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you need to consult with? • How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales? • What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities? 	<p>There is no statutory duty to consult as part of the Inquiries Act 2005 when setting up a public inquiry.</p> <p>However, Ministers are keen to go beyond statutory duties. An Engagement Strategy was set up which involved the launch of a range of engagement channels, aiming to reach a high number of stakeholders, including those in island communities. This incorporated a five-week call for views from 24 August to 30 September. This aimed to capture a range of views, and different perspectives on the aim, scope, reporting and timeframe of the inquiry:</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities? • Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We invited submissions by email, receiving submissions from a range of organisations and a large number of individuals. This included bodies such as island local authorities. b. In addition to meetings between DFM and a number of key organisations we hosted 12 stakeholder engagement events in addition to attending workshops and meetings of organisations that were discussing the Aims and Principles. Taken together, these encompassed a number of parties and have allowed us to meet over 70 different stakeholders from various groups. c. We hosted a Dialogue challenge on the Scottish Government website from 23 September to 30 September. This attracted 87 distinct ideas and 187 comments from members of the public. <p>Responses have been analysed and views have been taken into consideration, informing our suggested approach about the scope and remit of the inquiry as outlined in terms of reference.</p>
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Step Four - Assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities? (Further detail in the Guidance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demographic ○ Economic ○ Gaelic ○ Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement work discussed above has been subject to analysis, which has fed into such matters as terms of reference development. • The work yielded the following key insights related to scope of the public inquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The need to examine the impacts on communities from across Scotland, including islands, of decisions made during the pandemic was recognised. Examples of where island stakeholders felt the scope should extend include: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">The handling of restrictions across geographical boundaries, particularly where these involved island communities. Specifically the impacts of</p>
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	<p>lockdown on our isles communities and the consequences of the decision taken at a national level may have a particular and unique angle for these areas. More broadly, for all of the county, there was a narrative that developed about the difficulty of enforcing a one-size fits all national response framework to Orkney where for a long period there were no cases, and the conflicting options of “cutting us off” while maintaining essential supply chains. This was problematic until the introduction of “tiering” (public sector body)</p> <p>Did government directives fully take into account a remote and rural model to enable an equitable experience of health and social care and needs of island based communities (public sector body)</p> <p>The Inquiry itself should consider the impacts on Gaelic and Gaelic speaking communities as part of its review of the “four harms” (public sector body)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was noted that impacts extended into economic impacts, and these may be differential. For example lockdown had particular economic impacts on island communities, given the fall in visitor numbers at the height of the tourist season. Stakeholders were interested to examine whether the arrangements within other countries could have been adopted, which have been perceived to allow their island economies to continue to a greater extent.
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Is a full Islands Communities Impact Assessment required?

<p>You must now determine whether, in your opinion, your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities</p>	<p>It is not considered that decisions made to establish the public inquiry will, in themselves, lead to effects on island communities which are significantly different in their effect on other communities.</p> <p>It is recognised that the inquiry will need to consider the impacts on a range of geographic</p>
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<p>(including other island communities).</p> <p>If your answer is NO to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and you can proceed to Step Six. If the answer is YES, an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step Five.</p> <p>To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)? • Are these different effects likely? • Are these effects significantly different? • Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the mainland or between island groups? 	<p>and other communities within Scotland, including islands.</p> <p>However, even though a full ICIA is not considered necessary, this point (including points raised by stakeholders from island communities) have been assessed, analysed and borne in mind in making decisions to establish the inquiry.</p>
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Step Five – Making adjustments to your work

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities? • Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations? 	<p>Not applicable but see note above concerning how Ministers are seized of island issues.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process? • Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring? • How will outcomes be measured on the islands? • How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities? • How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery? 	
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Step Six – Publishing your ICIA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format? • Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language? • Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it? 	<p>The ICIA is written in an easy-to-read format.</p> <p>The ICIA will be published in due course, and can be translated into Gaelic as required.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm appropriate level of sign off? 	
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ICIA Completed by	Ian Donaldson
Position	Deputy Director, COVID Inquiry Establishment Division
Signature & Date	Approved electronically December 2021
ICIA Authorised by	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for COVID Recovery
Position	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary
Signature & Date	Approved electronically December 2021



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