

PRESS RELEASE

Children with Long Covid Demand Truth and Accountability

UK Covid Inquiry – Module 8 Begins 29 September 2025

On 29 September 2025 Module 8 of the UK Covid Inquiry opens before Baroness Hallett at Dorland House, children and young people living with Long Covid will be present, represented by Long Covid Kids and Long Covid Kids Scotland. They are demanding answers to the devastating impact of a disease that has reshaped their lives — and the government's failure to protect them.

A New Childhood Disease Ignored

Long Covid in children is not rare. It is a disabling, multi-organ condition that emerged in 2020 and continues to affect thousands. The World Health Organization describes its impact as “changes in eating habits, physical activity, behaviour, academic performance, social functions and developmental milestones.” Yet, despite this, children's suffering was minimized, dismissed, and disbelieved — even at the highest levels of government.

Government Disregard

In the Department of Education a consultant paediatrician at Public Health England advised a Permanent Secretary Stakeholder Group on Education against “*labelling*” children and young people as having Long Covid.

The then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, on 9 October 2020, expressed the view that the scientific data on Long Covid was “*BOLLOCKS*”, and akin to the “*gulf war syndrome*.”^[1] In response to the draft Spring Road map in 2021 he repeated “*Do we really believe in Long Covid? Why can't we hedge it more? I bet it is complete gulf war syndrome stuff.*”^[2] On 1 June 2021 in response to advice from Professor Whitty on Long Covid that post-acute sequelae was well established from viruses and prevalence in children was around 7% according to the ONS he wrote, “*so not exactly gulf war syndrome?*”^[3]

^[1] [INQ000251910 – Document titled Box Return – Next Week's Grid, dated 09/10/2020.](#)

^[2] [INQ000251918 – HM Government document titled 'Vaccines Deployment Meeting – Long Covid' with annotations from Boris Johnson, dated 01/06/2021](#)

^[3] [INQ000214216 – WhatsApp messages sent in a group chat titled PM Updates between No.10 colleagues including Henry Cook and Boris Johnson, dated 21/02/2021](#)

These comments, documented in the UK Covid Inquiry, reveal a culture of denial that permeated government decision-making — including the Department for Education.

Children Ask the Covid Inquiry Four Critical Questions:

- 1. Why was the physical impact of the virus on children deprioritised, despite evidence of harm?**
- 2. Why was the severity of Long Covid deliberately downplayed?**
- 3. Why did the government fail to develop policies to protect children from Long Covid?**
- 4. Why were parents, schools, and carers not warned about the risks to children?**

Children's Voices Must Be Heard

Behind the statistics are real lives. As of April 2024, an estimated 65,988 children aged 3–17 in England and Scotland were living with symptoms lasting 12 weeks or more. Over 111,000 children had symptoms of any duration¹.

“One day he said, ‘I am a little nobody just sat on the stair on my own. Everyone forgets me. No one wants to play with me as I am always ill.’”

— B., age 6, infected at age 3, with three reinfections

“I’ve been mostly housebound for three and a half years. If I need to walk more than five minutes, I need a wheelchair. It’s unrecognisable from how I was in 2019.”

— A., age 17

These children are not statistics. They are voices of a generation failed by silence and disbelief.

Contact for Media Inquiries:

Helen Goss – hgoss@longcovidkids.org

Sammie McFarland – smcfarland@longcovidkids.org

Long Covid Kids and Long Covid Kids Scotland are represented by Jane Ryan of [Bhatt Murphy Solicitors](#), Sarah Hannett KC of [Matrix Chambers](#), and Sangeetha Iengar of [Garden Court Chambers](#).

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/adhocs/2101selfreportedlongcovidenglandandscotland>