

Guidance on attending a hearing

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance provides practical information about the arrangements for the Eljamel Inquiry hearings. It also details the support available for those attending.

If you have any questions about attending a hearing, please contact the Inquiry on enquiries@eljamelinquiry.scot

Where is the hearing venue?

Hearings will take place at Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EG (level -2).

How do I get there?

By train: Edinburgh Waverley Station is just a 5-minute walk away from Waverley Gate.

By bus: There are several bus stops on Princes Street and John Lewis, both eastbound and westbound. These stops service Lothian Buses, Lothian Country Buses, East Coast Buses and the Airlink 100. For more information and for bus timetables visit: <https://www.lothianbuses.com/>.

By tram: The closest tram stop for Waverley Gate is St. Andrew Square. This stop is a 5-10 minute walk from the venue. For more information and for tram timetables, visit <http://edinburghtrams.com/>

By car: The postcode for the venue is EH1 3EG. There is **no car parking available at the hearing venue**. However, there is available parking at the Edinburgh Waverley Station car park located at New Street EH8 8BH which is only 10 minutes' walk from the venue. The car park has accessible spaces available.

If you have a particular interest in the proceedings or outcome of the Inquiry and you need financial help in order to attend the hearing, then you can submit a claim for the Inquiry to assist with your travel costs. Further information can be found in [the expenses factsheet](#).

What happens when I arrive?

A member of the Inquiry team will greet you on arrival and guide you to the hearing suite. The Inquiry team will be wearing navy blue lanyards with the Inquiry logo. If you need any help a member of the team will be happy to assist you.

What time will the hearing start?

The hearing day will generally begin at 10am and finish by 5pm. There will be breaks throughout the day, usually including an hour for lunch. Times will be clarified by the Chair on the day.

What happens if I arrive late for the hearing?

In the event you arrive late for the hearing, you will be allowed into the room at an appropriate break in proceedings.

Can I bring a bag into the hearing room?

For security reasons we advise that you do not bring a bag, though small bags (such as handbags and backpacks smaller than A4 size) are allowed. Bags may be subject to search on arrival.

Lockers are also available for storing items and the Inquiry team can assist with this.

Can I take my phone into the hearing room?

Phones and electronic devices are allowed, though they should be switched off at all times.

Can I eat or drink in the hearing room?

Only water is allowed in the hearing room, other drinks and food are not permitted.

Who will be in the hearing room?

The Chair of the Inquiry, Lord Weir, sits at the front of the hearing room. He listens to all the evidence and makes any necessary procedural decisions. All attendees are kindly asked to stand, if they are able, when the Inquiry Chair enters and leaves the hearing room. A member of the Inquiry Team will direct when to do so.

The Counsel to the Inquiry and the witnesses sit directly opposite each other, in front of the Chair. Counsel to the Inquiry is the person who will lead the witnesses through their evidence and will be the primary person to ask them questions.

Other Inquiry representatives, including additional counsel and members of the legal team, will be in the room sat behind the Counsel to the Inquiry to assist with the running of the hearing.

Core participants who are participating in the hearings and their legal representatives will also be present in the Inquiry hearing room, in the main seating area. Members of the public or other interested parties may also attend.

For the safety of everyone present, security guards will be in attendance at hearings.

Is the hearing being recorded?

Yes, the hearing will be filmed and will be broadcast live on the Inquiry's website with a slight delay. After proceedings have finished for the day, the recording will be made available on the Inquiry's website.

There isn't a camera on the public gallery, but if attendees stand up and walk forward there is a chance they may end up being recorded. If you have any concerns about this, please speak to a member of the Inquiry team.

Emotional & Participant support from The Spark

The wellbeing and safety of everyone participating in the work of the Inquiry is extremely important to the Chair and the Inquiry team. To ensure this, [The Spark](#) will be on site to provide emotional support. The Spark is a charity that provides counselling and mental health support for people across Scotland and the UK.

There are two distinct types of support available from The Spark for those involved in the Inquiry: **emotional support** and **participant support**. Both types of support sessions with The Spark are designed to help you manage your wellbeing during the process of engagement with, or participation in, the Inquiry.

Emotional Support Sessions

Counsellors from The Spark will be available during Inquiry hearings. Anyone in attendance who is distressed or emotionally impacted by the hearing can approach The Spark counsellors and request a confidential emotional support session. There will be a dedicated room onsite for sessions to take place in private, if you wish. These sessions are also available online for those watching the hearings via YouTube.

Participant Support Sessions

Participant support sessions from The Spark are for witnesses and other people who are engaging directly with the Inquiry, beyond the Inquiry hearings. For example;

- Witnesses may need to seek specialist emotional support when they are drafting a written statement which has been requested by the Inquiry.
- Witnesses who are called to give oral evidence may need to access emotional support when preparing in the lead up to the hearing.
- Witnesses may need emotional support to help debrief after their evidence session has concluded.
- There may be other situations where this type of support is would be of assistance.

Typically, up to three one-hour sessions of participant support can be provided by The Spark for individuals who feel they would benefit from it.

If you would like more information about these sessions, you can contact the Witness & Engagement Manager on enquiries@eljamelinquiry.scot