

Public Inquires

United Kingdom

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Background

A public inquiry can be triggered solely by the existence of "public concern" in order to investigate, make findings for improvements and hopefully prevent a certain set of events happening again. Our highly skilled team can assist with conducting this delicate and complex process, recognising, where it is felt important, the principle of candour and transparency throughout.



Public inquiries are usually high profile lengthy and highly complicated, and they are becoming more prominent than ever (around **69 commenced** in the UK between 1990 and 2017, **three times more** than in the previous 30 years).



Although in the UK such inquiries are initiated and partly funded by the government, but run independently, their findings (outcomes) can lead to criticisms, which often result in **criminal or civil liabilities**.



The Inquiry Act 2005 is the governing piece of legislation in the UK that covers (amongst other things) who has the power to establish a public inquiry, the rules governing evidence, statements and disclosure as well as the appointment of the inquiry panel.

How can DWF help?

Drawing on our experience working on, and being actively involved in, some of the most significant public inquiries in the UK our expert lawyers can navigate you through the importance of handling the requirements of the inquiry with candour and transparency.

Our clients benefit from:

Highest quality of legal and technical advice with **24/7 support** of our Tier 1 ranked Health & Safety team, specialist healthcare, police, public and other sector experts and our unparalleled Investigations expertise.

Fast, cost-effective review, collection and disclosure of huge volumes of evidence and documents (up to millions) – we can quickly scale our capacity by utilizing AI and our Relativity product, coupled with our [Mindcrest offering](#).

Network of **specialist chambers and barristers** to support both organisations running public inquiries or those in question.

Regular **client briefing sessions** and upfront discussions about costs.

Assistance with **witness statements**.

Strong media and reputational management support from the outset through our [Crisis Response offering](#) and specialist PR partners.

Response to complex document requests and questions from **authorities and police**.

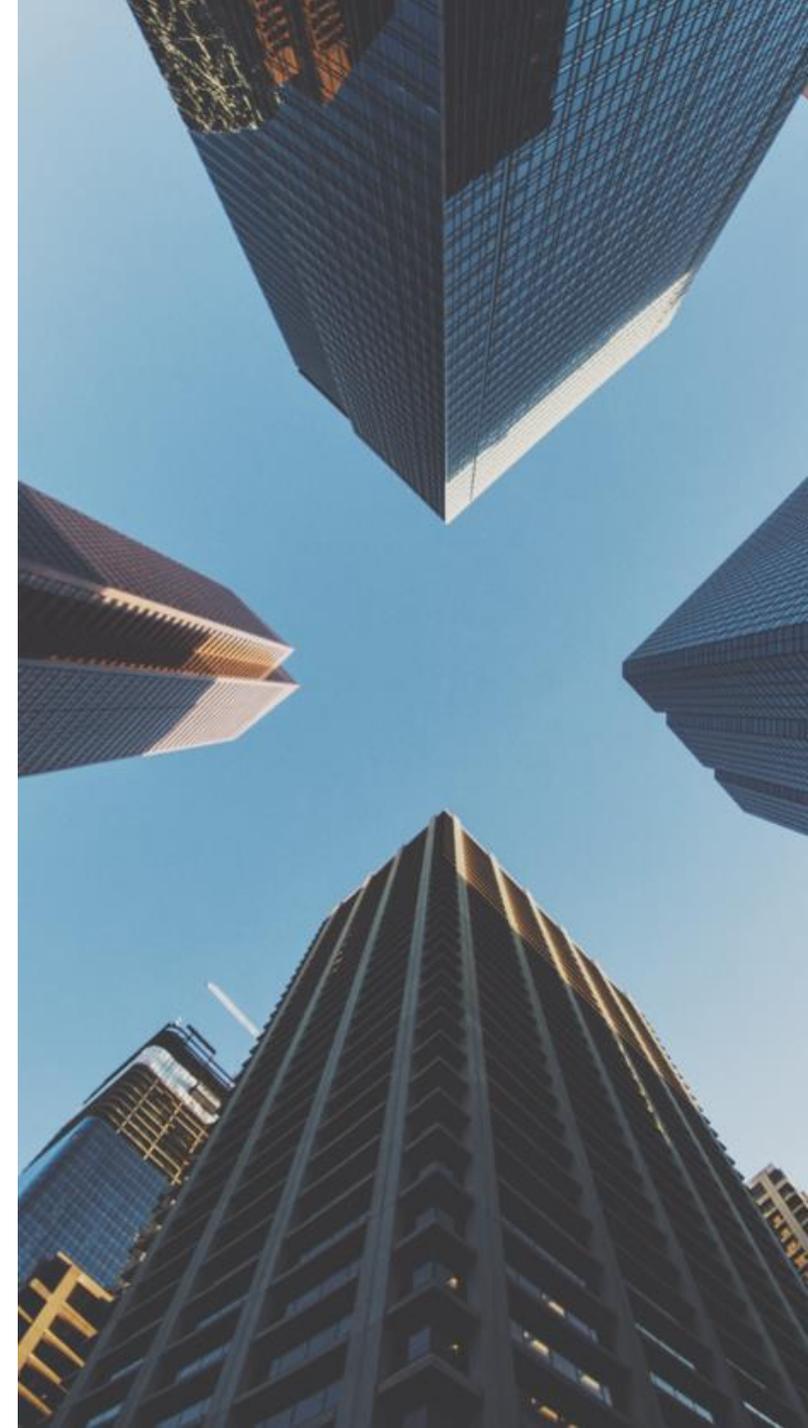
For public sector clients we offer advice to Executive Officers and elected members, based on our intimate knowledge of the **internal workings of local authorities**.

Case study: Grenfell

We are acting on behalf of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) in relation to the Public Inquiry and Metropolitan Police Investigation arising from the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017, which resulted in 72 fatalities. This incident is the biggest health and safety case in the UK's history.

Results:

- A collection and disclosure process spanning 2.5 years resulting in excess of 14 million documents being collected and provided to the Police.
- Disclosing over 57,000 documents to the Inquiry and preparing over 70 witness statements.
- Responding to 11 complex and wide ranging document requests from the Public Inquiry.
- A substantive document provided to the Police responding to over 100 questions posed.
- Advising Executive Officers and elected members, as well as managing and guiding RBKC and its employees through Phase 1 of the Public Inquiry.
- Advising on and assisting with a large number of FOI requests.
- Application of an open, transparent approach in line with RBKC's commitment to candour, which is helping the client to rebuild trust with residents of the Borough.



Case study: Brook House

The Brook House public inquiry was initiated in order to investigate and report on the circumstances surrounding the mistreatment of detainees in the BBC Panorama programme "Undercover: Britain's Immigration Secrets" broadcasted on 4 September 2017.

We are acting for G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Ltd. who operated the Brook House Immigration Removal Centre. As G4S have been granted Core Participant status by the Chair to the Inquiry, DWF has been nominated as the client's official legal representative.

We are advising G4S accordingly to very strict instructions and were able to scale up and carry out legal work including the preparation of a substantial number of detailed witness statements, through a challenging remote process in a digital environment.



Key contacts

If you have any queries, concerns or doubts about public inquiries, or whether you might be facing one, please contact:



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