



Rt Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Deputy Prime Minister and
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
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To: Secretaries of State

6 December 2023

Dear colleagues,

The Hillsborough stadium disaster on 15 April 1989 cost 97 people their lives. The Government has today published its response to Bishop James Jones' report on the experience of the Hillsborough families in the aftermath of the disaster.

I am grateful to Bishop James for his report, which provides insight into what the bereaved Hillsborough Families endured in both the immediate aftermath and over the many years that followed. I am grateful to the Hillsborough families who shared their experiences with Bishop James. They did this in the hope that any families bereaved through future national tragedies would be better served and supported by the state. I pay tribute to the unwavering dedication, determination, and tenacity of the Hillsborough families and commend them for the legacy they have built for their loved ones who were lost.

Bishop James' report, "*The patronising disposition of unaccountable power – A report to ensure that the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families is not repeated*" contains 25 points of learning for the Government, the coroners and the police. The first point of learning proposes the creation of a Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy, or as it will now be known, the Hillsborough Charter. I will today be signing the Hillsborough Charter on behalf of the Government, signalling our ongoing commitment to being open to challenge and reaffirming our commitment to lasting cultural change.

The Charter is set out in full below. The Government strongly agrees with the principles of the Hillsborough Charter and the importance of organisations acting responsibly, honestly, and transparently following a major disaster.

The Government has also published a Ministerial Statement that sets out how the commitments in the Hillsborough Charter are reflected in existing rules, obligations and codes that apply to those who work in government. Many of these have been put in place since the Hillsborough disaster.

It is imperative that all of us in government understand and exhibit the principles set out in the Charter and described further in the Written Ministerial Statement. To that end, I would urge you to share this letter and accompanying WMS within your departments and encourage your staff to take up the wider training available on these subjects.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Dowden', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Rt Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Deputy Prime Minister**