

*As per the Written Ministerial Statement made by the Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Publication of the Government Response to the House of Lords Statutory Inquiries Committee report *Public Inquiries: Enhancing public trust*) on 10 February 2025.*

Government response to the House of Lords Statutory Inquiries Committee's Report on "*Public Inquiries: Enhancing public trust*"

The Government is grateful to the House of Lords Statutory Inquiries Committee for their inquiry into the efficacy of the law and practice relating to public inquiries.

Recent years have provided ample demonstration of the value of public inquiries - they are widely considered to be an independent, legitimate and trusted method of investigating complex issues of deep public concern. They have shown to be a way to shed light on injustices of the past, provide a means for victims and survivors to finally have their voices heard, and to help rebuild trust in national institutions.

The Government recognises, though, that there is serious and growing criticism of their cost, duration and effectiveness. In the financial year 2023/24, the direct public cost of live UK inquiries was more than £130 million. Statutory inquiries that have produced their final report in the last five years took on average nearly five years to complete their work. Too often, there has been insufficient transparency and accountability for implementation of inquiry recommendations that have been accepted by previous governments.

The Government therefore agrees with the Committee's finding that, "The 2005 Act and the wider governance structure of public inquiries must be improved."

The Government responds in detail to each of the Committee's findings in the response below. In addition, given the importance of the issues identified by the Committee, the Government is actively considering whether there is scope for wider reforms to the frameworks within which inquiries are set up, run and concluded. We are considering this particularly within the context of both the Independent Public Advocate and a statutory duty of candour, which are important additions to the wider system of administrative justice.

Specifically, the Government will examine whether there are further changes that could enable inquiries (whether statutory or not) to deliver outcomes for those directly affected and enable lessons to be learnt more swiftly and at lower cost, while preserving the vital public trust that has built up since the introduction of the Inquiries Act 2005. The Government will also examine how best to ensure more effective transparency and accountability around the response to inquiry recommendations and the implementation of those which are accepted.

The Government will give a further update to Parliament on this work in due course.

DETAILED RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishment and conduct of Inquiries

Recommendation 1. Ministers should select the legal basis and chair of an inquiry on a case-by-case basis and not feel tied to a particular model. Guidance on models other than

statutory or judge-led inquiries should form part of the early advice of the Inquiries Unit to the department and Minister setting up an inquiry. Ministers should keep in mind the option of holding a non-statutory inquiry (given its relative agility) and then converting it if witnesses fail to cooperate. Ministers should also consider selecting non-judge chairs or appointing a panel. Ministers should meet and consult victims and survivors' groups before publishing the terms of reference. (Paragraph 46) – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that there should not be a "one-size-fits-all" approach to establishing public inquiries. Ministers should select the format, chair and/or panel on a case-by-case basis, based on guidance from the Cabinet Office Inquiries Unit. The type, shape and leadership of an inquiry should be appropriate to the particular issues the inquiry is examining. Sometimes it will be appropriate to establish a statutory inquiry led by a judge or senior legal figure, but this should not be regarded as a "gold standard"; statutory inquiries can be led by a non-legal chair with the relevant expertise and experience. The Government agrees that a non-statutory inquiry can be an effective and more flexible model, and may achieve its terms of reference more swiftly and at lower cost. The Government will publish guidance on inquiries for Ministers, chairs and secretaries, including the appropriate considerations around their establishment, drawing on the helpful work of this Committee.

Recommendation 2. Ministers should, where appropriate, consult with victims and survivors on the overall terms of reference. Guidance should be given by the Inquiries Unit to Ministers and departments setting up a new inquiry on the options available for involving and consulting with victims and survivors. New inquiries should normally contain provisions in the terms of reference for the appropriate involvement of victims and survivors. (Paragraph 55) – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that the engagement of those directly impacted by an issue is crucial to the success of an inquiry. The guidance to be published on inquiries will include advice on engaging victim and survivor groups, where appropriate, and ensuring that support for them is explicit in an inquiry's work from its inception. This will include consideration of when it is most appropriate for a Minister, departmental officials, the chair, the Independent Public Advocate, the coroner or another party to lead engagement with impacted individuals and groups.

Recommendation 3. When establishing an inquiry, the sponsoring Minister should consider including an indicative deadline in the terms of reference, keeping in mind the particular purpose and aim of the inquiry. A deadline should concentrate the efforts of the inquiry chair and secretariat, while also reassuring victims and survivors that redress is forthcoming. Inquiry chairs should aim to report within this time and must seek the permission of the Minister if they wish to exceed it. (for example, in the event that the inquiry discovers evidence which leads to new lines of inquiry). Inquiries which are conducted more quickly will also be more cost-effective. (Paragraph 59) – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that in some circumstances, including an indicative deadline in the terms of reference may be appropriate, taking into account the circumstances and potential scope of the inquiry. The Government also recognises that the duration of an inquiry is difficult to determine with accuracy at the point it is established, before evidence has been collected and assessed and before the number of witnesses is known, and therefore such indicative deadlines may need to be revised. In all cases, however, a chair should ensure that there is sufficient public transparency on the progress that they are making in delivering their terms of reference, and this will be reflected in the published guidance.

Recommendation 4. When an inquiry is likely to be of long duration, Ministers may consider including the requirement to publish interim reports in an inquiry's terms of reference, along with a requirement to publish updates on the inquiry's website about inquiry activity. This will help maintain public trust and ensure there is accountability to both individuals and Parliament. (Paragraph 63) – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that interim reports have proved to be a helpful way of inquiries ensuring that lessons are learned and implemented as swiftly as possible, and maintaining public trust and confidence. Published guidance will ensure that ministers consider making provision for interim reports in an inquiry's terms of reference.

Running and Sponsoring an Inquiry

Recommendation 5. Recommendations 2–5, 8, 10–11, 13–24, 26–30 and 32 of the 2014 report are put to the Government again. Recommendation 9 remains relevant in principle and will be put to the Government again in modified form. If the Government accepts this recommendation, the Committee expects that they will be implemented in a timely manner. In order to effect this, the Government should:

- (a) Introduce primary legislation to implement those recommendations from 2014 which require it;
- (b) Identify and draft changes to the Inquiry Rules required to implement the recommendations from 2014;
- (c) Swiftly implement those recommendations from 2014 which do not require any primary or secondary legislation. (Paragraph 74) (See Annex A)

The Government agrees with the Committee that many of the remaining recommendations still have merit in principle and we have set out our detailed response to each in Annex A. While the Government cannot commit to making primary or secondary legislative changes at this time, it is actively considering whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries, and will clarify whether it intends to implement these recommendations alongside wider reforms in due course.

Recommendation 6. The Liaison Committee of the House of Lords should monitor the implementation of this Committee's recommendations over the coming months and years, as recommended by the Liaison Committee's report, Towards a New Thematic Committee Structure. This is desirable because - as a special inquiry committee - the Statutory Inquiries Committee ceased to exist on the publication of this report. (Paragraph 75)

This recommendation is for Parliament, but the Government can commit to publishing guidance on inquiries that will implement a number of these recommendations. The Government is also committed to providing a further update to Parliament on its intentions for any wider reforms of the frameworks around inquiries.

After the Inquiry – Implementation Monitoring

Recommendation 7. We recommend to the Liaison Committee that formal implementation monitoring should be undertaken by a new, joint, select committee of Parliament: the Public Inquiries Committee. Should a new joint committee not be desired, then it should be a sessional committee of the House of Lords. Until such a committee is established, the need to monitor the implementation of public inquiry recommendations should be borne in mind by the Liaison

Committee when establishing new committees, including special inquiry committees. A new committee on public inquiries should be resourced to discharge the following functions:

- (a) Publish inquiry reports and government responses in one place, online.
- (b) Monitor the implementation of accepted public inquiry and major inquest recommendations through policy research, correspondence with Government departments and evidence sessions with Ministers and officials.
- (c) Publish reports on recommendation implementation and maintain an online, publicly available, tracker. This would show the status of individual recommendations, perhaps using a “traffic light” grading system.
- (d) Make recommendations to the Inquiries Unit of the Cabinet Office on best practice for establishing and running public inquiries, based on evidence from experts on inquiries.
- (e) Scrutinise the Government’s sponsorship of and formal response to individual inquiries.
- (f) Conduct thematic research and meta-analysis of recommendations common to multiple inquiries, so as to identify systemic policy failures and prevent future disasters. (Paragraph 116)

This recommendation is for Parliament. The Government is committed to providing a further update to Parliament on its intentions for any wider reforms of the frameworks around inquiries.

The Inquiries Unit

Recommendation 8. Inquiry terms of reference should contain an obligation on Chairs and Secretaries to produce (at a minimum) a lessons-learnt paper (on legal and policy challenges) and a working paper (on logistics), detailing what went well for the inquiry and what could be improved in the future. This requirement should also be included in the chair’s terms of appointment so that their full salary cannot be paid until the documents have been presented. The reports should be written as the inquiry progresses and submitted with the inquiry report, so that they can be considered by the Inquiries Unit and shared at the regular meetings of inquiry practitioners. This way, best practice would be disseminated and avoidable mistakes averted. They should also be supplied to (but not published by) the new Public Inquiries Committee of Parliament, so the Committee can undertake meta-analyses of the successes and failures common to inquiries and make recommendations for improvement. (Paragraph 139) - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that it is vital to learn lessons from inquiries. The Government agrees that 'lessons learnt' papers have value as part of this, and we will continue to require secretaries to produce them at the conclusion of an inquiry, alongside case studies through its duration. The Inquiries Unit is currently in the process of strengthening guidance on this requirement and providing a more detailed template for secretaries. The Government would be happy to share themes from these reports with the appropriate parliamentary committee. The published guidance on inquiries will reflect the Committee’s view of the importance of this.

Recommendation 9. The Inquiries Unit in the Cabinet Office should be sufficiently resourced, so it can establish a wider “community of practice” for public inquiries, which includes more non-governmental experts. There should be a forum so that inquiry chairs can also share best practice, as well as inquiry secretaries. A form of the Handbook for Inquiry Chairs and Secretaries should be publicly available. The Unit should also use policy-making and Civil Service expertise to support chairs in making practicable recommendations. (Paragraph 140) – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that there should be an active 'community of practice' for teams involved in working on public inquiries, and welcomes the Committee's recognition of the good work of the Inquiries Unit in establishing this community. Building the networks and systems which enable and encourage lesson learning and sharing of best practice between and across inquiry and sponsor teams will remain a priority for the Inquiries Unit. The Inquiries Unit already engages with non-governmental experts, and will continue to do so. The Government agrees that inquiry chairs should welcome support in ensuring that inquiry recommendations are practicable and implementable, and will continue to offer this support. The Unit will also consult chairs about the benefits of a chair's forum. We will make guidance on inquiries publicly available in due course.

2014 Report Recommendations and 2024 Reiterations

How can the decision to establish an inquiry be improved?

2014 Recommendation 2: Ministers should have to explain to Parliament why they have ignored a recommendation from an official body to hold a public inquiry. **2024 Reiteration:** Ministers should be accountable to Parliament about the decisions they take in relation to public inquiries. The present Committee recommends that a new committee of Parliament should scrutinise a Minister's decision not to hold a public inquiry (see chapter 4) - **ACCEPT**

This recommendation is for Parliament, but the Government can commit to publishing guidance on inquiries that will implement a number of these recommendations. The Government is also committed to providing a further update to Parliament on its intentions for any wider reforms of the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 3: Ministers should always give reasons why they have denied a request from a coroner to convert an inquiry to an inquest. **2024 Reiteration:** Ministers should be accountable to Parliament about the decisions they take in relation to public inquiries. The present Committee recommends that a new committee of Parliament should scrutinise a Minister's decision not to hold a public inquiry (see chapter 4) - **ACCEPT**

The Government will continue to make every effort to ensure that there is a seamless transition from one type of investigation to another. This recommendation is for Parliament, but the Government can commit to publishing guidance on inquiries that will implement a number of these recommendations. The Government is also committed to providing a further update to Parliament on its intentions for any wider reforms of the frameworks around inquiries.

How can the chronology of establishing an inquiry be improved?

2014 Recommendation 4: The Act should be amended so that the minister is obliged to announce the establishment of the inquiry and the selection of an inquiry chair separately. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard new, significant evidence on this topic. However, HMG committed to implementing this in 2014 and should do so - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

It is already standard practice for a minister to announce their intention to establish an inquiry before confirming the identity of the chair, and therefore the Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 5: The Act should be amended so that the minister must seek the consent of a senior judge if they want to appoint a serving judge to an inquiry. **2024 Reiteration:** Ministers are relying excessively on serving judges for chairing inquiries, to the detriment of the courts system - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

This is already standard practice, and therefore the Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the framework around inquiries, and will consider whether the Act requires amendment in the way described.

2014 Recommendation 8: The Act should be amended so that assessors can only be appointed with the consent of the chair. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

It is already common practice that assessors are appointed with the consent of the chair or, as is more often the case, by the chair alone. Therefore the Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 9: The Act should be amended so that consent of the chair is needed for the minister to set (or amend) the terms of reference. **2024 Reiteration:** (in modified form) The Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence. The Minister should need the consent of the chair to change the terms of reference of the inquiry once it is underway, as this helps maintain the independence of the inquiry. However, the Minister should be able to set the terms of reference at the outset of the inquiry. A new Public Inquiries Committee can write to the Minister regarding the terms of reference - **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation, and considers that the current legislative requirement to consult the chair is sufficient. The terms of reference are invariably discussed and agreed with the chair but it remains appropriate for ministers to retain the final say on their detail, and *in extremis* to modify the terms of reference during an inquiry, for example where circumstances significantly change.

2014 Recommendation 10: The Act should be amended so that when the minister announces an inquiry, they set out only draft terms of reference. The final terms of reference should (when agreed with the chair) be the subject of a further statement. **2024 Reiteration:** this would give time for interest groups and parliamentarians to consider the terms of reference - **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation. Current practice encourages the minister to set out the broad scope of an inquiry at the point that the inquiry is publicly announced. This enables further discussion and consultation before more detailed terms of reference are formally agreed and announced to Parliament. Having two formal sets of terms of reference in the public domain risks confusion when clarity is key.

2014 Recommendation 11: Interested parties, particularly victims and victims' families, should be given an opportunity to make representations to the minister about the final terms of reference. **2024 Reiteration:** we have heard how the involvement of victims and survivors can increase the overall legitimacy of an inquiry - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that the engagement of those directly impacted by an issue is crucial to the success of an inquiry. The guidance to be published on inquiries will include advice on engaging with victim and survivor groups, where appropriate, and ensuring that support for them is explicit in an inquiry's work from its inception. This will include consideration of when it is most appropriate for a Minister, departmental officials, the Chair, the Independent Public Advocate, the coroner or another party to lead consultation with impacted individuals and groups.

How can the practicalities of running an inquiry be improved?

2014 Recommendation 13: A new inquiries unit should ensure that at the end of an inquiry, the secretary delivers a full 'lessons learned' paper. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 5 - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that it is vital to learn lessons from inquiries. The Government agrees that 'Lessons Learnt' papers have value as part of this, and will continue to require secretaries to produce them at the conclusion of an inquiry, alongside case studies through its duration. It is currently in the process of strengthening guidance on this requirement and providing a more detailed template for secretaries. The Government would be happy to share themes from these reports with the appropriate parliamentary committee. The published guidance on inquiries will reflect the Committee's view of the importance of this.

2014 Recommendation 14: A new inquiries unit should update Cabinet Office inquiries guidance and publish it on the Ministry of Justice website. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 5 - **ACCEPT**

As above, the Government will publish guidance on inquiries for Ministers, Chairs and Secretaries, including the appropriate considerations around their establishment, drawing on the helpful work of this Committee.

2014 Recommendation 15: A new inquiries unit should also retain the contact details of previous secretaries and solicitors and be prepared to put them in touch with staff of new inquiries. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 5. - **ALREADY IMPLEMENTED**

The Government has already implemented this recommendation, subject to data protection requirements. The Government agrees that there should be an active 'community of practice' of teams working on public inquiries, and welcomes the Committee's recognition of the good work of the Inquiries Unit in building this community.

2014 Recommendation 16: A new inquiries unit should collate protocols of procedure issued by inquiries and make them available to subsequent inquiries. **2024 Reiteration:** See chapter 5. - **ALREADY IMPLEMENTED**

The Government has already implemented this recommendation. The Government agrees that there should be an active 'community of practice' of teams working on public inquiries, and welcomes the Committee's recognition of the good work of the Inquiries Unit in building this community.

2014 Recommendation 17: Inquiry officials should consult the new inquiries unit and the Treasury Solicitor to ensure that counsel are appointed on terms which give the best value for money. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 5 - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees and will reflect this in the guidance on inquiries that will be published.

2014 Recommendation 18: A scoping exercise should be carried out by the staff involved in planning a new inquiry to examine all the key issues, in particular to address matters of timescale and cost. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 5 - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees and will reflect this in the guidance on inquiries that will be published.

2014 Recommendation 19: The Act should be amended to remove the minister's power to restrict public access to an inquiry, as the chair's power to do this is sufficient. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard any compelling evidence on this topic specifically, but the Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence generally – **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation. Ministers remain best placed to understand the nature of sensitive information and to assess accurately the potential impact of its public release. It is not appropriate, or advisable, that this duty is delegated.

How can the independence of an inquiry be guaranteed?

2014 Recommendation 20: The Act should be amended so that (apart from cases of national security) only the chair can withhold information from publication. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard any compelling evidence on this topic specifically, but the Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence generally – **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation, because doing so would conflict with Government's wider legal obligations such as those which may impact on human rights. Ministers remain best placed to understand the nature of sensitive information and would be held accountable for the impact of its public release. It is not appropriate or advisable that this duty is delegated. In practice, this power is rarely used and the Government will always work with the chair to minimise any necessary restrictions.

2014 Recommendation 21: The Act should be amended so that if a minister wishes to dismiss a panel member, they must first seek the permission of the chair. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard any compelling evidence on this topic specifically, but the Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence generally – **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation. Although the sponsor minister would always work with the inquiry chair to ensure that the Inquiry has the resources it requires, the Government continues to be of the view that ministers should retain some flexibility to make and terminate appointments.

2014 Recommendation 22: The Act should be amended so that if the minister wishes to terminate the appointment of the chair, they should explain the reasons for this to Parliament. **2024 Reiteration:** the Minister should write to the new Public Inquiries Committee to explain the reasons for their decision - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

This would already be standard practice, and therefore the Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

How can the procedure of inquiry hearings be improved?

2014 Recommendation 23: The Act should be amended so that only the chair can appoint counsel to the inquiry. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has heard some new evidence on the importance of inquiry independence – **UNABLE TO ACCEPT**

The Government is unable to accept this recommendation. The Committee heard evidence from several witnesses expressing concern at the significant and escalating cost of inquiries. This is a concern that the Government shares. Inquiries need the resources required to pursue a thorough investigation of the issues, but Government and inquiry chairs also have a duty to ensure that inquiries offer value for money to the taxpayer. It is for this reason that ministers should retain some minimal influence over issues such as the appointment of counsel, which can have a significant impact on the cost of an inquiry.

2014 Recommendation 24: The fourth and sixth Salmon principles (right to examination by one's own counsel and cross-examination of evidence) are over-prescriptive and led to an adversarial, rather than inquisitorial, approach. They should be disregarded and the Chair should be relied on to ensure that the inquiry is carried out fairly. **2024 Reiteration:** the Committee received considerable evidence on adversarial procedure. Inquiries should be primarily inquisitorial and chairs should use the flexibility inherent in the rules to avoid adversarial proceedings. This should be the subject of guidance – **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that inquiries should be inquisitorial rather than adversarial. Rule 10 of the Inquiry Rules sets out very limited circumstances under which these rights might be exercised and rightly places the responsibility for arbitrating this on the chair. This is proportionate and provides the chair with wide discretion to ensure that its work is conducted fairly. The Government accepts and agrees with the remaining recommendations and where appropriate, will ensure they are reflected in the inquiries guidance.

2014 Recommendation 26: Rules 2 and 18 should be amended to give discretion on which documents should be included in a permanently archived record, to reduce the quantity of unimportant documents preserved. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard new, significant evidence on this topic. However, HMG committed to implementing this in 2014 and should do so - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

The Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 27: Rule 9 should be amended so that the inquiry can take written evidence directly from a witness, rather than having to go via a witness's solicitor. **2024 Reiteration:** This continues to be a problem. HMG committed to implementing this in 2014 and should do so - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

The Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 28: Rules 20–34 (on awarding expenses) are over-prescriptive and should be simplified. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard new, significant evidence on this topic. However, HMG committed to implementing this in 2014 and should do so - **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

The Government is minded to accept this recommendation in principle. The Committee heard evidence from several witnesses expressing concern at the significant and escalating cost of inquiries. This is a concern that the Government shares. Inquiries need the resources required to pursue a thorough investigation of the issues, but Government and inquiry chairs also have a duty to ensure that inquiries offer value for money to the taxpayer. Any changes in an inquiry's cost regime must be considered on the basis of

whether it increases or reduces costs. The Government is reviewing whether wider changes are needed to the frameworks around inquiries.

2014 Recommendation 29 Rules 18 and 20 should be repealed and amended, respectively, to continue FoI exemption for inquiry records beyond the conclusion of the inquiry. **2024 Reiteration:** The Committee has not heard new, significant evidence on this topic specifically. However, the Committee has heard evidence advocating that proceedings should be inquisitorial in nature and that witnesses should be able to speak candidly to inquiries, without fear of reputational damage as result – **UNDER CONSIDERATION**

(The Government notes that the 2014 committee's recommendation was to amend sections of the Act, rather than the Rules.) The Government agrees that inquiry proceedings should be inquisitorial in nature and that it is important witnesses should be able to speak candidly to inquiries. These are important principles. Transparency and consistency with regard to the long term management of inquiry records is also important and the Government will reconsider these issues as part of any wider reforms.

Government responses to inquiries

2014 Recommendation 30: When Government responses are laid before both Houses, they should be accompanied by a statement. The response should also clearly state which recommendations are accepted. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 4 - **ACCEPT**

The Government agrees, and notes that this is already common practice. It will be reflected in the guidance on inquiries to be published.

2014 Recommendation 32: Responses should be published within three months, with reasons being given when recommendations are not accepted. HMG should explain how recommendations should be fulfilled. Reports should have an implementation plan and there should be follow-up reports issued to Parliament annually. **2024 Reiteration:** see chapter 4 - **PARTIALLY ACCEPT**

The Government agrees that responses should be published as swiftly as possible. In practice, the design and costing of policy, and the seeking of cross-Government agreement on complex areas of reform, can take longer than three months. In response to the House of Lords 2014 report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Act, the then government suggested that six months was a more realistic timeframe. The Government can commit to publishing guidance on inquiries which will address this recommendation. The Government is also committed to providing a further update to Parliament on its intentions for any wider reforms of the frameworks around inquiries.