



Welcome. I am Lord Bracadale, chair of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry.

It is now five months since my team and I began our work. In my opening statement I made a point of saying that transparency and openness would be at the heart of this Inquiry.

With that in mind I want to update you on progress and outline the approach we will be taking in the months to come.

I am acutely aware that almost six years have passed since the death of Sheku Bayoh and, consequently, a lengthy period of time has elapsed without his family receiving answers to fundamental questions.

I want to assure them, and all who have an interest in the inquiry, that we are moving forward with focus and determination and I hope that that is reflected in what I am about to tell you.

## **Evidence gathering**

Let me begin with the gathering of evidence. Following the setting-up of the Inquiry on 30 November 2020 the solicitor to the Inquiry immediately issued legal notices requiring the Chief Constable, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner and the Lord Advocate to hand over documents related to the terms of reference.

Much of my team's effort during the last five months has been focussed on working with these parties to identify the documents the Inquiry needs, take possession of these, meticulously catalogue them, and check their relevance. This work is ongoing. The Inquiry team is also requesting documentation from various other parties.

And I repeat my earlier call for all those who believe they may have information relevant to the Inquiry to contact us via the website.

### **Core participants**

At the same time, on 30 November 2020 I invited applications for core participant status. Core participants are individuals, groups or organisations with a significant interest in the work of the Inquiry.

After carefully considering the applications, I designated a number of individuals and organisations as core participants. The full list is on the Inquiry website.

Relevant documents retrieved by the Inquiry will in due course be disclosed to the core participants and they will have the opportunity to make opening and closing submissions during the public hearings.

In addition, my legal team has held constructive meetings with legal representatives of all the core participants. The meetings are used to advise on progress, outline the approach the legal team is taking to retrieval and analysis of evidence and, importantly, take into consideration the views of core participants on that approach.

I am confident that working in this collaborative way will ensure that everyone involved will have the opportunity fully to engage with the work of the Inquiry.

### **Assessors**

In addition to working with the core participants, my team and I are drawing on the experience of the Inquiry's assessors, Raju Bhatt and Michael Fuller. As I explained in my opening statement, their respective experience and expertise in relation to the issues in the Inquiry are of great assistance. I anticipate that their involvement will only increase as the documents retrieved provide details of the events leading up to, surrounding, and following the death of Mr Bayoh.

### **Framework Document**

My legal team, led by senior counsel to the Inquiry, has begun working on a framework document. The framework document will work through the terms of reference in detailed chapters, including, for example:

- a timeline of events;
- the cause of death;
- post-incident management;
- liaison with the family;

- and race and equalities.

The framework document will be developed from the information available in the evidence gathered; comments and input from core participants and the assessors; and relevant information from any other source that is brought to our attention. It will continue to evolve and be modified as more evidence is collated. As I described earlier, discussion with core participants has already begun.

This framework document will act as a roadmap for the Inquiry's investigation.

I consider that this phase of the Inquiry is vitally important. It lays the foundation for later stages of the Inquiry, including public hearings on evidence.

### **Inquiry hearings**

I can confirm that the public hearings will be held at Capital House, Festival Square, just off Lothian Road in central Edinburgh. Capital House will also house the Inquiry's offices.

It is not possible at this stage to say when the hearings will take place, which I appreciate will be frustrating for some. While it is inevitable that the hearing stage will garner most attention, as I have explained, it is vital that thorough investigation and preparation takes place ahead of any hearings.

As soon as we are able, we will provide information about timescales for hearings and how members of the public can attend. The hearings will also be broadcast on the Inquiry website and its YouTube channel so everyone can view proceedings.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide further updates via our website to ensure that everyone is kept informed of the progress being made. Thank you.