

# MAHI Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry

## CHAIR'S STATEMENT ON DELAY TO THE INQUIRY ISSUED ON 19 FEBRUARY 2024

1. After this week the schedule of the Inquiry is going to be altered and there will be a delay in further sittings, and I will explain why that is going to happen.
2. As you all know the Panel had intended to finish the evidence by the end of June this year. That would have been a significant challenge but not an impossible one.
3. The reason there is going to be a delay relates to my health and I want to be as open as possible.
4. I have been diagnosed with a heart condition that requires surgery that should not be delayed. It will take place in the week of 26 February (next week). I have been told that physical recovery from the operation may take at least six weeks, however I expect to be able to make any necessary decisions and make any orders that require my authority during my recovery period.
5. I want to apologise to all core participants and especially to the relatives and patients concerned, and also to all those who may have been preparing to give evidence and will no doubt be anxious. If I could have avoided this delay, I would have done.
6. However, I want to state clearly that the current timescales for the receipt of evidence must be adhered to unless there are exceptionally good reasons not to do so. The work of the Inquiry teams, counsel, Inquiry Solicitor and the Administrative team, as well as the solicitors working on our behalf taking statements, will continue to proceed at the same pace. The deadlines for the organisational statements must also still be adhered to. This is not a reason to slow down the pace of preparation in any way.
7. We will hear the evidence this week with our last witness being on Wednesday. We will then pause and we propose to restart hearings on the 7 May 2024 all being well.

8. When we restart, we are likely to revert to continuing with the staff evidence. Before the end of June, I intend that we will have completed Evidence Module 6 and modules M1 - M6 of the organisational evidence.
9. We will then be sitting in September and October to hear the remainder of the evidence relating to Organisational Modules M7 - M10.
10. I have written to the Minister of Health to explain why this delay is having to take place.
11. I will not make any further comment on what I know you will all understand is a personal matter.

Tom Kark KC

MAHI Chair