

sections as Scotland? For example, it has already been stated by Scotland that the impact on covid on the education system will be part of the inquiry, but this might not a given as far as the Westminster Government is concerned.

There are of course practical issues as well to consider, and to consider now, before the inquiry starts. Often a Government Department will take charge of the setting up of an inquiry. In the Infected Blood Inquiry, campaigners did **not** want the Department of Health in such a position. Responsibility was given to the Cabinet Office. With any Covid Inquiry touching on a large number of Government departments, this could be a thorny issue. Who will administer the inquiry? Would it be the Government Legal Department, or will it be better to be effectively outsourced to an independent law firm or something else entirely? Where will the inquiry actually be based and have hearings? The Infected Blood Inquiry is based in London but did travel to other parts of the UK and Northern Ireland

to hear victim's evidence. Can one Judge possibly control such a huge inquiry on his or her own? Which victims' groups and other the stakeholders will be afforded participation in the inquiry (known as, core participants status)? Is the inquiry going to be liberal and generous in that regard, allowing a large number of victims and victims groups to partake or – in order to save time and costs – will it seek to limit such representation?

All of the above will have to be considered, debated and decided **before** the inquiry opens its doors on its first day. Therefore, there is a lot to play for. Things might move very swiftly in the next few months. The lessons we take, at Watkins & Gunn, from our experience in the infected blood inquiry, is that those individuals, campaigners and organisations who have taken advice, and really began to formulate their thoughts as to how the inquiry should work, will be best placed.