

Boris Johnson Faces COVID Inquiry as Long Covid Children Demand Recognition and Accountability

Tuesday 21 October, 2025

Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson will appear before the UK COVID-19 Inquiry on Tuesday, 21st October, to answer questions about his government's pandemic decisions - decisions that left tens of thousands of children disabled by Long Covid. The ONS states that 1 in 165 children and young people, that's c.72 000, reported Long Covid symptoms after a second COVID-19 infection.

For families living with the long-term consequences of infection, this moment is not just political; it is deeply personal. Under Johnson's leadership, the government failed to prepare schools for the pandemic and neglected the risks to children, leaving them without protection, clear guidance, or access to necessary medical support.

"The government's failure to prepare schools for COVID-19 wasn't accidental - it was ideological. When Boris Johnson compared Long Covid to 'Gulf War Syndrome,' he exposed a belief system that dismissed biological illness as psychologically influenced. That same mindset drove policies that left children unprotected, unresearched, and unheard." Claire Every, Long Covid Advocacy.

LCA warns that these failures contributed to delayed diagnoses, disrupted education, and devastating isolation for affected children. The organisation is calling for the Inquiry to hold political leaders accountable for the long-term disability crisis now affecting thousands of UK families.

The UK has one of the largest populations of children with post-acute viral disability in Europe, yet with little medical understanding or effective treatment. Many children are still being denied accommodations for access to education, and medical investigations, due to a culture stuck in a psychosomatic framing that has dogged post-viral illnesses such as ME/CFS.

"Johnson's contempt for the truth is written in the bodies of our children. We're not interested in apologies - children and young people deserve justice, recognition, and change. That means accountability for the past, and prevention for the future." Dr Rupert Higham, University College London, Institute of Education.

"Instead of being offered support, understanding, or medical care for our child with Long Covid, we were referred to social services. The experience left our family traumatised and fearful of seeking help again - a reflection of the dismissive attitudes we've seen at the highest

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levels of government.” Anonymous, parent of a child with Long Covid.

Prevention must include measures to protect children in schools, such as clean air through effective ventilation and air filtration. Recent initiatives, such as Mayor Sadiq Khan's investment in air filtration for London schools, show that protecting children's health is both achievable and urgent. LCA calls on the UK Government to implement these protections nationwide.

Long Covid Advocacy will continue to monitor the Inquiry closely and amplify the voices of children and families living with the long-term effects of infection.

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