



RE: APPGDC INQUIRY INTO POLICING OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS, CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, AND THE PCSC BILL

QUESTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

Many thanks for considering a submission to the inquiry. The APPG is seeking to understand whether and/or how important rights, including the right to free expression and peaceful assembly, are respected and facilitated by the police during public gatherings. The APPG sees this as particularly relevant to its consideration of the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill. The APPG is taking views on the below points from experts in a variety of disciplines. We are interested in your perspective as an expert in your own discipline and would be grateful if you would frame your answers in that context (there is no need to attempt an “exhaustive” response).

You may wish to structure your response around the following questions so far as you feel they are relevant from your expert perspective:

- 1. Do you consider the law and guidance in place at the time to be sufficiently clear in respect of public gatherings for the purpose of protest/free expression/peaceful assembly during the coronavirus pandemic?**
- 2. What elements of national/international best practice in balancing, maintaining, and/or facilitating the rights to free expression and peaceful assembly (a) during the pandemic and (b) after the pandemic were relevant to (a) the Clapham Common vigil on 13 March (b) the Bristol protests between 26 and 29 March?**
- 3. How does the police approach and conduct at (a) the Clapham Common vigil and (b) the Bristol protests compare with relevant best practice?**
- 4. What, if anything, do the events at Clapham Common and in Bristol tell us about the propriety of the extension of police powers in the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill?**

Please add anything else you consider relevant.

Please submit your answers in writing to Sam Fowles, Counsel to the Inquiry at sfowles@icdr.co.uk.

The deadline for submissions is Wednesday 14 April.