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for Culture,  
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Dear Leader,

### **Publication of the UK government's response to the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration**

Five years ago the world as we knew it stopped. The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone and in so many different ways.

As recommended by the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration, the government has announced a programme of commemorative activity to honour the lives lost and the sacrifices made by so many. My thoughts are with the many families who suffered the loss of a loved one during the pandemic in the most devastating circumstances, with many unable to be with the loved one or to say goodbye.

In contrast to the experiences of separation we felt during the pandemic, our commemorative programme will allow us to come together to remember those we lost and the acts of service from so many. We will continue to support the UK-wide COVID-19 Day of Reflection and on **Sunday 8 March 2026** we hope that local authorities across the country will join us in marking the day with activities in your communities.

The pandemic also saw our communities come together in extraordinary ways to help and support each other in the most difficult of times. We saw acts of courage and dedication from the key workers who kept vital services running, and the millions who volunteered to support others in their time of need. We thank all those who worked so hard to keep our country going and these acts of service will be remembered as part of this commemorative programme.

We have created dedicated webpages on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) to provide information on COVID-19 commemoration. These include a repository of oral histories to ensure that the experiences of the pandemic are not forgotten, as well as details on the many COVID-19 memorials. We will provide financial support to create new memorials that reflect the importance of green spaces throughout the pandemic and provide spaces for contemplative reflection.

In Parliament we look across the River Thames to the National Covid Memorial Wall as a reminder of the scale of loss we encountered. A wall of hearts, created by the bereaved for the bereaved with each heart hand painted by a team of volunteers to remember a life lost. It is an incredibly powerful and moving tribute and we know how much it means. The government, working with Friends of the Wall and local partners, will support the preservation of the National Covid Memorial Wall as a national memorial to the lives lost to COVID-19.



This government is determined to learn the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and build our national resilience. DCMS has worked closely with the bereaved families in the development of this programme and we have heard movingly that they do not want others to experience their suffering. As recommended by the UK Commission, we will launch a new UK-wide fellowship scheme led by UK Research and Innovation on natural hazards to support future national resilience as part of the commemorative programme to honour the loss and sacrifice.

There are a number of ways that local authorities can take part in the COVID-19 commemoration programme:

- **Support Day of Reflection 2026** - We are grateful for the activities coordinated by local authorities to mark the Day of Reflection this year and the support given to communities to enable them to come together to remember the pandemic in a way that was meaningful to them. We saw a range of different activities: hosting commemorative events for the public to attend in civic spaces or local memorials, making use of cultural and civic amenities as spaces available for reflection, and sign-posting existing support services and networks to help those bereaved. We welcome your support for marking the 2026 Day of Reflection and more information will be available on the Day of Reflection website in due course. Many support groups are keen to work with local authorities more closely, and please do get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.
- **Memorials** - We are gathering information on existing COVID-19 memorials to present to the general public on GOV.UK. If you are aware of a memorial in your area that you would like to be included on the Covid Commemoration webpages, please share with us the official name of the memorial, its specific location (including postcode or what.three.words details), and an image of the memorial (if you have one) with permission from the image owner for us to use it on the GOV.UK webpages.
- **Oral Histories:** We are also collating a list of oral histories related to COVID-19 that are accessible to the public to create a comprehensive repository that reflects the diverse experiences of the pandemic. If you are aware of oral histories that reflect the experiences of your community, we would be grateful if you could share their details with us.

My officials are very happy to discuss any of the above or wider areas of the commemorative programme with your teams if this would be helpful. You can get in touch with us by emailing [covid.commemoration@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:covid.commemoration@dcms.gov.uk).

Thank you for your support in helping to honour the loss and remember the sacrifice and public service of so many during this time.

With best wishes,

Baroness Twycross  
**Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling**