

# THE MANSTON INQUIRY

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## DEIGHTON PIERCE GLYNN INQUIRY PARTICIPANTS SUBMISSIONS FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING 15 January 2026

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### INTRODUCTION

1. These submissions are made ahead of the first Preliminary Hearing on 15 January 2026. They are made on behalf of the group of 20 Inquiry Participants (“IPs”) represented by Deighton Pierce Glynn (“DPG”) who were detained at, and survived, the conditions and mistreatment at Manston during the period which this Inquiry is investigating.
2. Our clients welcome the Inquiry’s efforts to examine the circumstances of their ill-treatment, how and why they were detained in such deplorable conditions, to identify and hold to account those responsible, and to ensure that lessons are learnt and real changes are made to prevent future recurrence. They wish to assist the Inquiry in its vital endeavours, and these submissions are informed by that intention. We have set out below some brief, focused submissions on issues that we consider are likely to assist the Inquiry Team at this stage.
3. Our clients are grateful to the Chair for designating them as IPs within the Inquiry, and for the opportunity to provide these submissions. They also wish to recognise the hard work of the Inquiry Team in progressing the Inquiry. We look forward to working with the Inquiry Team to assist the Inquiry’s important work. As has been the case in previous inquiries in which we have acted, it is our intention to work closely and collaboratively with the other legal teams representing detainee IPs in order to advance the Inquiry’s work, while minimising duplication, and indeed such collaboration is already underway.

## PROVISIONAL LIST OF ISSUES

4. The DPG IPs are grateful for the provisional list of issues. It contains a helpful starting point for the Inquiry's work, we agree in principle with its content and we of course note that it is a provisional and flexible document, and that the Inquiry will follow where the evidence leads.
5. An annotated version with some suggested additions shown in red is annexed to these submissions. These additions are intended to assist the Inquiry's work; we invite the Chair and her Team to consider and, where they consider appropriate, to incorporate them into the existing list of issues.
6. The reasons for our proposed inclusions will, we hope, be self-explanatory. In broad terms, we have suggested the following additions/amendments:
  - 6.1. **Section II (legal framework)**, to ensure that this covers the applicable policy obligations and broad topics relevant to the Inquiry's terms of reference (detention, search and seizure, non-discrimination, the heightened protections applicable to vulnerable sub-groups, legal minimum requirements relating to the adequacy of accommodation, access to healthcare and legal advice, amenities, and communications with the outside world).
  - 6.2. **Section III (initial entry)**, to ensure that the decision-making and screening activities at Western Jet Foil ("WJF") relating to the identification of vulnerable persons, age-assessments, registration of asylum claims and the making of NRM referrals are covered (on the basis that decisions at WJF bore directly on who was detained (and encountered the conditions) at Manston during the relevant period).
  - 6.3. **Section IV (operation of Manston)**, to ensure focus upon (a) the processes and systems at Manston to identify and support individuals of heightened vulnerability in detention and (b) the processes which bore directly on the lengths for which individuals were detained (for authorising, reviewing and extending detention).
  - 6.4. **Section V (staffing)**, to include focus upon how staff (and sub-contractors) were procured, vetted, trained; how their performance was monitored and reviewed; and the effectiveness of those systems and disciplinary procedures. All of these

topics bore directly on how detainees were treated and supported and the conditions they encountered at Manston.

- 6.5. **Section VI (conditions at Manston)**, to include in the illustrative list of “how those at Manston were treated” themes relating to access to legal advice and communications with the outside world, the extent to which detainees were subjected to discriminatory, abusive and/or racist behaviour by staff, and provisions for accommodating religious belief and health-based dietary requirements. We have also suggested that the list of issues make explicit that the Inquiry will cover outbreaks of diseases and other illnesses at Manston (and not just steps taken to prevent such outbreaks).
  - 6.6. **Section VIII (Manston’s capacity and resources)**, to include, as a sub-topic, decision-making and the response to concerns expressed about overcrowding, outbreaks of disease and illness, sanitation, duration of detention and safeguarding of vulnerable groups at Manston. It is vital that the Inquiry’s examination of the difficulties at Manston includes and is informed by the perspective of detainees at the time, the attempts they made (however successful) to raise their concerns and mistreatment, and how they were treated in response.
7. For completeness, we confirm that the DPG IPs have no suggestions at this stage to Sections I and IV to XI. They will keep that under review, noting the flexible nature of the list of issues, and will provide further submissions in due course, as appropriate. In relation to section VIII (the tragic death of Hussein Ahmed), they make no suggestions on the basis Mr Ahmed’s next of kin are not represented by DPG. We wish, however, to place on the record our condolences to his family, we consider that a full, fair and fearless examination of the events and circumstances that led to his death is vital (including to understanding the deplorable state that was allowed to develop at Manston), and we wish to offer to assist in any meaningful way possible (for example, to the extent that our clients’ periods of detention overlap with that of Mr Ahmed, in providing evidence relating to specific events and conditions at Manston at the time of his death).

## **INQUIRY PARTICIPANTS**

8. The list of IPs to date, at CTI §19, does not include a number of organisations that appear to meet the criteria for IP status, including the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (who undertook an inspection of initial processing at WJF in July 2022 and a reinspection of processing at WJF and Manston in June 2023), the British Red Cross (who conducted a Channel Crossing Pilot Performance-Review in September 2022), the relevant NHS Trust(s), NHS England and the medical sub-contractors operating at Manston during the relevant period (including Medevent and IPRS Aeromed). While we anticipate that the Inquiry is already seeking material from those organisations, the Inquiry may wish to consider their designation as IPs given the important role of those bodies in events, and given that they are likely to be subject to the Inquiry's investigation.

## **DISCLOSURE**

9. The DPG IPs welcome the indications from the Inquiry that (a) it has already sought disclosure from a number of organisations and individuals, including UK Government departments, contractors and sub-contractors, local authorities, healthcare providers and individuals, and (b) it will provide monthly updates to Inquiry Participants on the progress of its requests for statements and disclosure.
10. It would be helpful for IPs to be provided with:
  - 10.1. a list of all organisations and individuals from whom Inquiry has sought disclosure and witness evidence to date;
  - 10.2. a copy of the requests already made; and
  - 10.3. in future, updates on the further organisations and individuals from whom Inquiry seeks disclosure and witness evidence, and copies of those requests.
11. This will enable our clients to seek to identify further requests, organisations and individuals in order to assist the Inquiry's work, without the risk of duplication (because we will have sight of the Inquiry's extant requests). Taking such an approach to disclosure would, we submit, properly recognise the central role that our clients have in this Inquiry, and the importance of ensuring their effective participation. For such participation to be effective, disclosure must be both sufficient (with all relevant

material being disclosed) and timely (with disclosure provided to our clients as quickly as possible, and – so far as possible – avoiding last-minute and ongoing disclosure prior to and during the Inquiry’s hearings).

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS / HEARING DATES**

12. The DPG IPs welcome the Chair’s indication that she is minded to commence oral hearings in Autumn of 2026. There is, of course, a balance to strike between achieving promptness, ensuring that the Inquiry has sought and obtained necessary material and witness evidence, and affording IPs sufficient time to review and consider disclosure so as to participate meaningfully in the process. We have no issue in principle with Autumn hearings, so long as some flexibility is retained if it becomes clear that the set date is not achievable while ensuring an effective and fair process.
  
13. We note the suggestion of a start date in early September. That will – very likely – mean a requirement for IPs to conduct substantial disclosure review, preparation and IP questioning pro forma work throughout August. That is likely to pose difficulties given the Summer break and childcare commitments. We therefore invite the Chair to keep the start date under review, and to consider whether a date for commencement at the start of October is preferable.
  
14. In terms of participation, we welcome the indication that questions on behalf of IPs will be permitted (subject to the Chair’s discretion), following CTI’s questioning: CTI §45. It is essential that those with lived experience at Manston are empowered to suggest questions to be put to witnesses. With an early indication, those representing former detainees will be able to liaise to ensure a process which removes duplication and respects the need for the Inquiry Team to ensure that witnesses are questioned appropriately and proportionately.

**Jesse Nicholls**  
**Zoe McCallum**  
Matrix Chambers

**Emily Soothill**  
**Nkiru Okafor**  
**Tabatha Pinto**  
Deighton Pierce Glynn  
13<sup>th</sup> January 2026

## ANNEX

### DPG SUGGESTED ADDITIONS TO LIST OF ISSUES

(marked in red text)

#### **I. Pre-Disembarkation**

1. The physical and mental condition of people upon disembarkation in the UK.

#### **II. Legal Framework.**

2. The legal **and policy** framework which applied to people who arrived by boat spanning the point of their arrival to the point at which they left Manston, **to include:**
  - a. **The frameworks for authorising, documenting, monitoring and reviewing detention, including the legality of detention.**
  - b. **Special requirements applicable to detention of vulnerable sub-groups (e.g. unaccompanied asylum-seeking children ('UASCs'), PVOTs, families with children, pregnant women, disabled persons).**
  - c. **Key Equality Act 2010 provisions and protections.**
  - d. **The frameworks for screening and safeguarding vulnerable detainees.**
  - e. **The frameworks regulating the use of force upon detainees and alternatives use of force (e.g. segregation and isolation).**
  - f. **Rules and safeguards in relation to searches of the person.**
  - g. **Rules and safeguards in relation to handling, confiscation and return of detainees' property.**
  - h. **Processes for notifying detainees of intention to remove them and for removing them.**
  - i. **The registration and processing of asylum and human rights claims for detained individuals.**
  - j. **Basic minimum requirements as to the quality of accommodation and amenities in detention (furniture, sanitation, access to facilities personal hygiene, access to education, exercise and leisure, communications with family).**
  - k. **Access to legal advice and communication with lawyers in detention.**
  - l. **Access to physical and mental healthcare in detention.**

### III. Initial entry

3. The treatment and processing of people at Western Jet Foil ('WJF') prior to transfer to Manston, **including:**
  - a. Searches of the person at WJF.
  - b. Confiscation of belongings (including medication and mobile phones) and the subsequent use and return of them.
  - c. Duration of detention at WJF.
  - d. Conditions at WJF.
4. The **effectiveness of** screening (including the use of age assessments, **the registration of asylum, human rights claims, trafficking/modern slavery referrals and screening for pre-existing health conditions**) of people at WJF **and processes in place at WJF to support individuals identified as vulnerable.**
  - 4b **The effectiveness of decision making at WJF regarding arrest and onward detention.**
  - 4c. **The journey from WJF to Manston STHF.**

### IV. The operation of Manston

5. The background to the establishment of Manston as a Short-Term Holding Facility.
6. The framework which governed the establishment, operation and governance of the Manston Short Term Holding Facility and the detention of people.
7. Manston's maximum capacity (in respect of different categories of people).
8. The facilities and services provided to people at Manston.
9. Identification of those who provided those services or carried out key functions.
10. Responsibility and, or accountability for
  - The strategic operation of Manston.
  - The operational aspects of Manston.
  - The provision of different services.
  - The oversight of different services.
11. The key processes undertaken at Manston in respect of people who arrived by small boats and how effectively those processes were carried out, **including decision making in respect of authorising, reviewing and extending detention in accordance with statutory requirements.**
12. How those processes ought to have been documented or recorded.

12a The effectiveness of screening (including the use of age assessments, the registration of asylum, human rights claims, trafficking/modern slavery referrals and screening for pre-existing health conditions) of people at Manston.

12b Processes in place at Manston to support individuals identified as vulnerable.

13. The processes and associated decision making in relation to accommodating people leaving Manston, **safeguarding them and providing post-detention support.**

14. Any impediments which existed in accommodating people who had been processed at Manston (and how these contributed to the deterioration in conditions at Manston).

14a. **Transfer into IRC detention following Manston.**

## **V. Staffing**

15. How Manston was staffed (including by staff provided by contractors), **to include processes to advertise for and/or procure staff at Manston.**

16. Staffing levels.

16a. **Procedures for vetting staff prior to appointment (including staff provided by contractors).**

17. Training provided to staff (including staff provided by contractors) in relation to key aspects of their functions, **to include training in relation to safeguarding vulnerable groups, policies in relation to use of force, non-discrimination, monitoring detainees' health and welfare, control of outbreaks of disease and illness.**

18. The working conditions and support provided to staff (including staff provided by contractors).

19. How staff from different organisations or contractors worked together at Manston.

19a. **Systems for monitoring staff performance and disciplinary procedures at Manston and the use and effectiveness of those systems.**

## **VI. Conditions at Manston and the treatment of people.**

20. The physical conditions at Manston during the relevant period for people who arrived by small boats.

21. How those at Manston were treated. For example:

- a. How the physical and welfare needs of people were met during the relevant period.
  - b. The adequacy of healthcare provision (in relation to physical and mental health needs) **and food catering to special dietary needs.**
  - c. The adequacy of safeguarding systems at Manston.
  - d. How people who were detained or worked in Manston were kept physically safe
  - e. The use of force against people.
  - f. The use of segregation and / or isolation.
  - g. The handling and protection of people's property.
  - h. Allegations of staff misconduct and the response to it.
  - i. **Whether and the extent to which detainees were subjected to discriminatory, abusive and/or racist behaviour by staff.**
  - j. **Provision to accommodate for religious belief (such as appropriate food and space for prayer).**
  - k. **Access to legal advice.**
  - l. **Communications with the outside world (e.g. visitors, access to the internet and telephones).**
22. The detention of people at Manston and their release, including the duration of detention and compliance with the legal framework for detention.
  23. Steps taken to keep conditions at Manston sanitary and to control infections. **Outbreaks of disease and other illnesses at Manston.**
  24. Measures taken to improve conditions at Manston.
  25. To the extent not covered by the issues set out at 10 above, responsibility and accountability for the conditions at Manston and how people were treated.

## **VII. Manston's capacity and resources during the relevant period.**

26. Forecasting and planning for the numbers of people who might arrive by small boats (during the relevant period) and need to be processed through Manston.
27. Reasons for the increasing numbers of people passing through Manston during the relevant period and whether these increases were foreseeable.
28. Causes of significant delays in processing people out of Manston.

29. Decision making and the response to increased numbers of people needing to be processed at Manston.

29a. Decision making and the response to concerns expressed about overcrowding, outbreaks of disease and illness, sanitation, duration of detention and safeguarding of vulnerable groups at Manston.

30. The steps taken to reduce the numbers of people in Manston.

31. The steps taken to shorten periods of detention at Manston.

#### **IX. Manston's closure on 22 November**

38. The main factors leading to the decision to close Manston on 22 November 2022 (and the decision to re-open Manston).

39. The main changes (if any) implemented at Manston upon its reopening (to the extent required to inform recommendations).

#### **X. Leadership in relation to Manston**

40. To the extent not captured by the issues above:

- a. The broader context which informed the use of and decision making about Manston as a Short-Term Holding Facility.
- b. Ministerial decision making and/ or senior civil servant decision making about Manston.
- c. Ministerial and/ or senior civil servant decision oversight of Manston.

#### **XI. Recommendations/lessons learned from the events at Manston during the relevant period**

41. The key conclusions about the treatment of people at Manston.

42. Recommendations in response to these findings.