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BMA ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

Covid-19: Doctors call for public inquiry into UK government's handling of pandemic

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The UK government's handling of the covid-19 pandemic, including its testing strategy, must be subject to a public inquiry, doctors have said.

Delegates attending the virtual BMA annual representative meeting on 15 September voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion that called for an inquiry to allow the UK to be better prepared for future pandemics.

It said that the inquiry should cover, as a minimum, the mismanagement of care homes; the purchase, delivery, quality control, and guidelines for personal protective equipment; the UK testing strategy; the wellbeing of health and care staff; the timing of interventions; and the timing of the easing of restrictions.

Proposing the motion, Stephen Millar, a retired consultant anaesthetist, said, "I call for an inquiry so that the nation can learn from this experience. We owe it to the nation to ensure that lessons are learnt, not to do so would be a betrayal."

BMA chair Chand Nagpaul said the motion was important. "We will have future pandemics, so we have to have a proper, full review of all elements of what it means to prepare." He said that the BMA had already called for a rapid review of the UK's preparedness for a second wave¹ alongside other health organisations.

"The BMA has called for a rapid inquiry so that we can plan properly, learning from all the things that didn't go right the first time around," he said. "I hope that is reported on in the next month or so, so that the government is given the right information for the coming months."

Correction: On 1 October we corrected Stephen Millar's name and job title.

¹ Adebawale V, Alderson D, Burn W, et al. Covid-19: Call for a rapid forward looking review of the UK's preparedness for a second wave-an open letter to the leaders of all UK political parties. *BMJ* 2020;369:m2514. doi: 10.1136/bmj.m2514 pmid: 32576551