

# Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

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## Protocol on redaction and the Inquiry transcript

### Introduction

This protocol sets out the Inquiry's approach to redaction of information from documents before they are published.

This protocol also explains how the Inquiry prepares and publishes its transcript of hearings.

### Use of redaction

1. "Redaction" is the removal of information from a document. The Inquiry's redactions usually involve blacking out words. Redaction will be used to protect the identities of: people who have told us they were abused (and their relatives), people accused of abuse who have not been convicted, and some others where it is appropriate to do so. For further details, see the Protocol on [Information](#) and the [General Restriction Order](#) made by the Chair of the Inquiry.
2. The Inquiry uses redaction to protect a person's identity and also to exclude information not relevant to our Terms of Reference.
3. In addition to redacting information, the Inquiry will sometimes use ciphers. Ciphers are three letter codes which are generally personal to certain individuals: people who are protected by either the General Restriction Order (applicants and alleged abusers) or a specific restriction order. The Inquiry uses ciphers so that members of the public can link a protected person's transcript with their statement when both are published, and so that members of the public can understand where different applicants make allegations against the same person. The key to ciphers is not published by the Inquiry.
4. When redacting to protect a person's identity, the Inquiry will do so by removing, as necessary, the following from all documents (including witness statements) before they are published:
  - name;
  - date of birth;
  - other dates which might identify the person;
  - address(es);
  - other contact details;
  - names or other means of identifying other(s) who are members of the person's family such as their addresses, dates of birth etc.;
  - events from the person's life which might identify them;

- in the case of an alleged abuser, details of a person's role or job title where that might identify them.
5. Where a person was in a senior position and might be able to be identified from other material published by the Inquiry, the Inquiry will redact information about that position and will apply a generic cipher – SNR – to prevent disclosure of the identifying information while still allowing members of the public to understand that the person held a senior position.
  6. The Inquiry will decide what other information needs to be redacted. The Inquiry will not generally redact to protect the identities of people who are not protected by the General Restriction Order. This is because the Chair has a duty to make a record of the evidence given to the Inquiry available to the public, subject only to the General Restriction Order or any specific restriction orders she makes.
  7. Any person who wishes to have their identity protected because they are not protected by the General Restriction Order must make an application as soon as possible. See the protocol on [Restriction Orders](#) for more information.
  8. Documents which are not published by the Inquiry may not be redacted. Sometimes the Inquiry needs to disclose documents which are relevant to a case study to core participants or parties who have leave to appear in a particular case study, in the interests of fairness. Disclosure of any such documents would always be on a strictly confidential basis.

### **Recovery of documents by the Inquiry**

9. Documents recovered by the Inquiry in response to its requests and under its statutory powers can contain large amounts of personal information.
10. The current holders of such documents should provide the Inquiry with unredacted originals. We will redact the personal information in the documents if it is necessary to do so.
11. The current holders of the documents may propose redactions but the decision about what redaction is required will, ultimately, be ours.
12. All members of the Inquiry team must comply with the Inquiry's Protocol on [Information](#) and other internal policies to ensure that any personal data in the documents we handle are protected at all times.

### **Inquiry transcripts and statements**

13. Transcripts of all its hearings are published by the Inquiry on its website. Statements of the witnesses who gave evidence will also be published at the same time as transcripts, or shortly afterwards.

14. Transcripts are scrutinised on an ongoing basis and checked for accuracy before publication.
15. The identity of some people will not be published in transcripts and statements. Such transcripts and statements will be published using pseudonyms and ciphers. There is more information on this in the [Protocol on Restriction Orders](#).
16. The name of such a person, or other information which could help to identify them, may be mentioned during a hearing. If this happens the Inquiry Chair may, at the time, direct all those present at the hearing, including the press, not to disclose the identity or information in any way. In these circumstances, any such evidence which might identify the person will be redacted from the transcript in the usual way, before it is published.
17. If a hearing – or part of a hearing – was held in private the Chair may decide that no part of the transcript for that hearing or part of it will be published.