

# **Omagh Bombing Inquiry: Commemorative Hearings Attendance Guide**

January 2025

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## Introduction

1. The Omagh Bombing Inquiry will commence four weeks of Commemorative and Personal Statement Hearings in the Strule Arts Centre in Omagh on 28 January 2025.
2. The Commemorative and Personal Statements hearings are the first substantive oral hearings held by the Inquiry. The hearings have two key purposes:
  - a. First, to commemorate publicly each person who was killed in the bombing. This will take the form of 'pen portraits' to explain who each person who died was in life, recognise their individuality and allow family members to set out the impact of their death and the atrocity.
  - b. Second, to hear personal statements from those who were injured or were directly affected by the bombing. This will recognise the wider impact of the atrocity on the community in Omagh and beyond.
3. The hearings are currently scheduled to run from 28 January to 20 February 2025. The Inquiry will sit for four days a week Monday to Thursday and will hear approximately four commemorations or personal statements a day.
4. The exception to this is the first week which will run from Tuesday 28 January to Thursday 30 January. Hearings will ordinarily start at 10am.

## Background

5. This important phase of the Inquiry allows the Chairman to hear evidence from those affected by the bombing in Omagh on 15 August 1998. You can read more about the Commemorative Hearings in the [Protocol for the commemorative and personal statement hearings](#).

## Support services

6. The Inquiry is working with WAVE Trauma Centre to provide support to all those affected by the proceedings. Counsellors will be available inside the Strule Arts Centre to provide private 1:1 support to any attendees.
7. WAVE are also available to provide support to anyone watching proceedings online and can be contacted on 028 8225 2522.
8. Further information is available [here](#).

## How to attend the Inquiry's hearings

9. The hearings are open to anyone aged 14 or over who wishes to attend. There are seats available in the public gallery in the hearing room and an additional space for families to watch the hearings live in a private space.

10. The hearings will be held at the Strule Arts Centre, Townhall Square, Omagh, BT17 1BL. A link to the venue can be found [here](#). The venue will be open from 09:00 and the hearing room will open at 09:30.

11. Tea and coffee refreshments will be available in the reception area.

## **Children and young people attending hearings**

12. Anyone aged 14 or younger will not be permitted to attend the hearing room to observe the Inquiry's commemorative pen portraits and personal statements being read. This is because the content of the commemorative hearings will be distressing and traumatic, which may be unsuitable for children or young people. The same rule applies to the additional family viewing room in the Arts Centre. Children are permitted into the Arts Centre, but we would advise against bringing children generally due to the traumatic nature of the Inquiry proceedings.

## **The Inquiry's hearing room**

13. The hearing room will have space for the Inquiry Chairman, Counsel to the Inquiry, Solicitor to the Inquiry, Core Participants and their Legal Representatives and members of the public and press to hear the experiences of those affected by the Omagh bomb.

14. Filming, photography and live reporting, including on social media, is not permitted in the hearing room. Those seated in the public gallery are also asked not to use their electronic devices.

15. Only water can be consumed in the hearing room.

16. People can move in and out of the hearing room freely.

## **Schedule**

17. The weekly timetable for the Inquiry's hearings is available on the [website here](#). Please note this may change. A copy of the weekly timetable will be uploaded each week.

## Security process and prohibited items

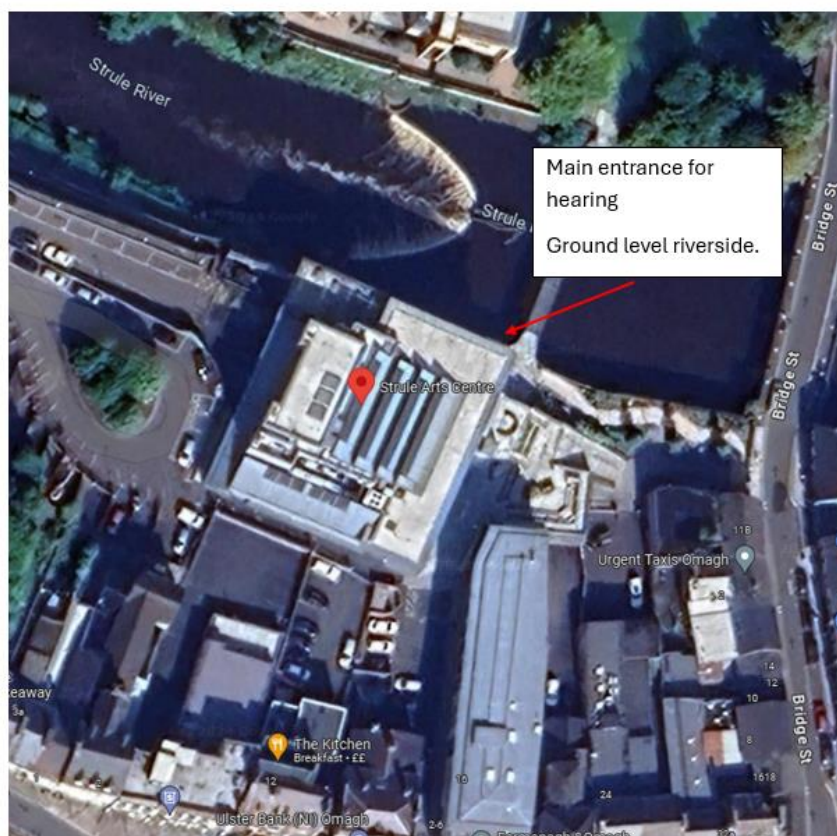
18. Before entering the hearing room, you will go through a brief security check including a wand check and a bag search. Please let the security team know if you have any concerns about this.
19. There are a number of prohibited items, including:
  - a. Weapons of any kind
  - b. Sharp items including blades, scissors and razors
  - c. All photographic, audio and video recording equipment, whether digital or analogue - with the exception of mobile phones which must be switched off

## Restrictions on viewing the hearings

20. The Chairman to the Inquiry has made a restriction order subject to section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005 which remains in force throughout the Commemorative Hearings and thereafter. The restriction order includes restrictions on the disclosure or publication of evidence. You can read the full restriction order on the [Inquiry's website](#). Restrictions include:
  - The YouTube broadcast of the hearings shall be subject to a 3-minute delay. The YouTube broadcast shall not be available on a playback facility.
  - Any evidence given to the Inquiry during the Commemorative Hearings must be kept confidential and must not be disclosed, published or reported on in any form unless and until such evidence is broadcast on the time-delayed YouTube broadcast and/or a transcript published on the Inquiry's website.
  - Any information that is redacted from the time-delayed feed and/or the transcript of proceedings must not be repeated, disclosed or duplicated to any third party.
  - No contemporaneous reporting, including Tweeting and other forms of live blogging, shall be permitted from the hearing room.

## Getting to the Strule Arts Centre

21. The Strule Arts Centre has two entrances: one by the riverside and a second off the High Street. Members of the press may be positioned near the riverside entrance so those wanting to enter the hearing centre more privately are invited to enter through the High Street entrance and make their way down the stairs to the Omagh Bombing Inquiry reception.
22. The closest car parks are the Church Street North Car Park, BT78 1DG and the Drumragh Avenue Car Park, BT78 1EE. The Strule Arts Centre also has dedicated parking for Blue Badge Scheme users.
23. The Strule Arts Centre is less than 10 minutes' walk to Omagh Bus Station.



## Other ways to follow the Inquiry

- 24. The hearing will be livestreamed (subject to a short delay) on the [Inquiry's YouTube channel](#).
- 25. Transcripts of the proceedings will be published on the [Omagh Bombing Inquiry website](#).
- 26. The Inquiry will publish updates and information on its social media feed on X: [OmaghBombingInq](#)

## Queries about the hearings

- 27. If you have any questions about attending the hearings which have not been answered in this guide, please email [enquiries@omagh.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:enquiries@omagh.independent-inquiry.uk).