

Opening Statements Hearings Attendance Guide

June 2025

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Introduction

1. The Omagh Bombing Inquiry will hold Opening Statements hearings for two days at the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh.
2. The hearings are currently scheduled to run on the 23 and 24 June, starting at 11am on the Monday and 10am on the Tuesday.

Support services

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

How to attend the Inquiry's hearings

6. 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 area for families to watch the hearings live in a private space.
7. The hearings will be held at the Silverbirch Hotel, 5 Gortin Road, Omagh, BT79 7DH. 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.
8. Tea and coffee refreshments will be available in the reception area.

Children and young people attending hearings

9. Anyone aged under 14 will not be permitted to attend the hearing room to observe. This is because the content of the hearings may be distressing and traumatic, which may be unsuitable for children or young people. The same rule applies to the additional family viewing room.

Press attendance at the hearings

10. We anticipate that journalists will attend the hearings. Members of the media may sit in the public gallery in the hearing room or in the separate media annex to follow proceedings.

11. Members of the press are not allowed to use recording equipment or conduct interviews inside of the hearing centre. However, for those attending the hearings it is important to be aware that you may appear in the background of news footage of media coverage when entering or exiting hotel front entrance.
12. Media have been asked to respect the wishes of those attending the hearings and anyone else using other facilities at the Silverbirch Hotel, who do not wish to appear on camera or be approached by journalists.
13. For members of the press who wish to attend the hearings please contact media@omagh.independent-inquiry.uk to accredit your attendance.

Getting to the Silverbirch Hotel

14. The Silverbirch Hotel has a large car park which will be available for all attendees.
15. The Silverbirch Hotel is wheelchair accessible and all rooms used by the Inquiry have lift or ramp access.
16. All those attending the Inquiry will enter through the main hotel reception and turn right to the Inquiry's reception desk.

The Inquiry's hearing room

17. 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 opening statements from all Core Participant teams.
18. 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.
19. Only water can be consumed in the hearing room.
20. Attendees can move in and out of the hearing room freely.

Core Participant Space

21. The Inquiry has a number of rooms available for Core Participants to use in the Business Centre within the Silverbirch Hotel. Inquiry staff will be present in the Business Centre to direct you:
- a. Family room – This room is available to all those impacted by the bombing, this room will not show a feed of the hearing and is instead a break- out space.
 - b. Family viewing room – A live feed of the hearing will be shown in this room, it is open to all those impacted by the bombing who do not want to sit in the hearing room.
 - c. Core Participant consultation rooms – these rooms are open to Core Participants and their legal representatives and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Security process and prohibited items

22. 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.
23. 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

24. 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 hearings and thereafter. The restriction order delays the YouTube broadcast of the hearing. 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.
 - 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.

Other ways to follow the Inquiry

25. The hearing will be livestreamed (subject to a short delay) on the [Inquiry's YouTube channel](#).

26. Transcripts of the proceedings will be published on the [Omagh Bombing Inquiry website](#) at the end of each day.
27. The Inquiry will publish updates and information on its social media feed on X: [OmaghBombingInq](#)

Queries about the hearings

28. If you have any questions about attending the hearings which have not been answered in this guide, please email operations@omagh.independent-inquiry.uk.