

## **Sabrina Sullivan – written evidence (CIC0368)**

### **House of Lords Constitution Committee**

#### **Inquiry into the Constitutional Implications of COVID-19**

1. I have over 16 years' experience, working in social welfare law, with particular experience in workers' rights, community care, healthcare and disability rights. I have worked for legal charities including CABs, Law Centres and the Disability Law Centre. I have a master's in Human Rights Law. The focus of my submission will be on how the emergency legislation has impacted on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society.
2. The Coronavirus Act 2020 does not strike the right balance between the powers of our Executive and our Parliament. The Act effectively makes Parliament redundant. There is absolutely no justification for this. Many of the electorate, myself included, have questioned what has been the role of Parliament this year? We have not lived in a Parliamentary democracy this year. The consequences of that have been devastating for our country.
3. No – it was not necessary. The Government should have used existing legislation, that is the Civil Contingencies Act. It would have given the same powers to the Government but the Government would have had to bring it before Parliament for approval within seven days.
4. No- the emergency powers were not needed and certainly not proportionate. As early as March 2020, Professor Levitt had proved that Professor Ferguson's predictions were completely wrong. Covid 19 was nowhere near as deadly as the Spanish flu as described by the Government. Professor Levitt wrote to SAGE to tell them this before the first lockdown, but his e-mail was ignored.
5. The Government should not have made policy based on wholly unrealistic predictions that were proven without any doubt to be wrong. Throughout the year, there has been further research to prove that 80% of the population already had T cell immunity and that Covid 19 has somewhere between 99.85% and 99.97% survival rate. It also has a median death age above our life expectancy age. Overall, it has little if any impact on life expectancy.
6. All good news but the Government never changed its approach throughout. It failed to listen to the 10,000 public health experts that signed the Great Barrington Declaration stating clearly that lockdowns don't work. It continues irrationally to this day to pursue a policy to try to rid the country of a virus, which is clearly already endemic.
7. The emergency legislation has had a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged in our society. The lockdowns are predicated to lead to a 7.7% - 10% unemployment rate. This disproportionately has impacted the working class –who work mainly in the hospitality, catering, cleaning, security sector etc...
8. This means that millions of people who were once happily employed will be unemployed. This has had a devastating impact on their lives. I have many clients who were perfectly happy in March, now suicidal, unable to get out of beds. Their lives completely ruined by the ongoing lockdowns.

9. The emergency legislation has had a severe disadvantage on people with disabilities. The mandating of masks has had a devastating impact. It was shocking to me that despite 0 scientific evidence to support mandating masks and indeed after Prof Jenny Harris told us that masks could lead to an increase in spreading the virus, the Government decided to introduce draconian legislation mandating their use, in anyway.
10. Wearing a mask, particularly for long periods of time as workers and students must do is harmful to both their physical and mental health. It is inhumane and degrading. It has had the most devastating impact on the lives of people with disabilities. I'll provide a few examples in para 11- 13 to illustrate this point.
11. Ben is 11 years old and has mild autism. He went to his local primary school and was looking forward to going to his local secondary school with his friends this year. However, when he was told he must wear a mask, it proved too difficult and he became very distressed. Therefore, he was given an exemption but put into an isolation room away from his classmates. He felt humiliated. He became very depressed, has since left school and is on anti-depressants.
12. Rose is 13 years old. She has asthma. She loved school and was eager to return to school this year. However, Rose was forced to wear a mask. She had problems breathing so she moved the mask so that she could get some air. Her teacher shouted at her to wear it properly. She wore the mask all day but when she got home, she had a severe asthma attack. She was rushed to hospital. She has been off school for months. Her mum says that she has gone from being the happiest girl in the world to the saddest.
13. Kellie, aged 54 has had lung disease all her life. She can't wear a mask because she has difficulty breathing wearing one. John aged 44, who suffers from panic attacks can't wear one as it causes an attack. Both have been refused entry to shops. They have had buses refuse to let them on. Both have had people shout at them and have even been physically threatened. Both are afraid to go out anymore.
14. The Government's sole focus on Covid, which is responsible for a tiny % of deaths in the UK is wholly disproportionate. Cancer kills 1/3 people, yet the Government shut down cancer services to focus on Covid, meaning that many people will die from cancer as a result. Heart disease kills 1/3 also. Stress aggravates heart disease, yet the Government shut down gyms and has caused severe stress by making many people unemployed.
15. Although all deaths are tragic, however nothing is worse than a young child losing a parent. As a consequence of the lockdowns, my client Kellie lost her life to breast cancer. She left her young daughter Chloe behind. Chloe recently celebrated her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday without her mummy. My client Paul is dying from throat cancer and will leave two young sons- Daniel, 6 and Conor, 4 behind. Paul is unlikely to survive to Christmas.
16. It is reported that suicides are at an alarming rate. The Government has caused an enormous amount of unnecessary fear & anxiety in the country by funding nonstop scaremongering campaigns to terrorise the nation. Further, pushing people into unemployment and poverty has a devastating impact on their mental health and the Government has not given any (or adequate) consideration to that. Many people, particularly young men have taken their lives.
17. The emergency legislation has also had a severe impact on the human rights of those in care homes. In refusing the elderly the right to see their families or go

for Sunday lunch, the Government has breached their right to liberty, their right to respect for private and family life & their right not to be treated inhumanely and degradingly. It is shocking to me that for a virus that is seasonal, the Government kept the elderly locked up in the Summer. It was cruel and inhumane. Even prisoners are treated better.

18. This has impacted so many families. For example, Josie and Dave who have been married for 62 years. Josie is 89 years old and has dementia. She has been a resident at a care home for 4 years. Dave went to see her through a window once, but it was too distressing for her. They have been unable to meet since March. Dave used to bring her to see her grandchildren once a week but has been told since March that he can't and that he won't be able to do so for the foreseeable future. Both are heart-broken. Dave tells me that he wishes they had both died pre-March so that they would not have had to experience the cruelty of this year.
19. It was unnecessary to introduce new criminal penalties. The legislation is unconstitutional and many of the fines have already been struck down by the courts. The Government should have taken the approach of Sweden and advised people how to behave. They should have treated us with respect.
20. The approach it took has led to an undermining of trust in the police. The police have behaved appallingly. They have had a total disregard for the human rights of citizens this year. People who in March would have had enormous respect for the police, now view them with contempt.
21. It is almost unbelievable how the police have behaved this year. To give you just a few examples: they arrested a man for buying chocolate eggs, a woman for sitting under a tree reading, a couple for walking in the country side, a man for walking too slowly, a nurse for trying to take her mother home, a rape victim for not wearing a mask (due to trauma of the rape), a man with lung disease for not wearing a mask, a man for coughing, a priest for administering a baptism and a group of citizens for meeting locally to discuss the erosion of their civil liberties.
22. It is doubtful that any of this draconian legislation is constitutional. The British State this year has acted not as a constitutional democracy. It has eroded the civil liberties of its citizens in a way never seen since the Magna Carta in 1215. Further the Government seems to have no desire to restore those civil liberties.

*18/11/2020*