

Southport Inquiry

1.1 What does the undertaking mean?

The undertaking means that the evidence given to the Inquiry will not be used in any investigation or prosecution of the witness who gave it, either generally or for specific offences.

Undertakings prevent witnesses from relying on the privilege against self-incrimination to decline to give evidence.

This strengthens the Inquiry's powers to compel evidence and meet the Inquiry's timelines as set out in the terms of reference.

1.2 Why does this need to take place?

To fulfil Phase 1 by the January 2026 deadline, the Chair of the Southport Inquiry will need to obtain evidence from many individuals and hear or read evidence from a large variety of witnesses.

For the Inquiry to fully uncover the truth, it is essential that all witnesses provide complete and honest evidence. These substantive hearings will start on 22 September.

1.3 What does 'acting in the public interest' mean?

The Attorney General performs several duties in the public interest, independently of Government. The public interest in this case includes considering:

- The importance of the public inquiry finding out what caused the Southport attacks and making recommendations so that a similar tragedy does not happen again.
- The risk to the public occasioned by such attacks is arguably increasing, such that any possible improvements to prevent them are required as quickly as possible.

1.4 What happens now?

The undertaking has now been granted to the Inquiry so that it can continue hearing evidence from witnesses.

1.5 Has the Attorney General issued an undertaking previously?

Former Attorney Generals have granted undertakings for previous inquiries including: the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the Ladbroke Grove Inquiry.

1.6 What is the legal basis for this request?

As set out in law, statutory inquiries have the power to compel witnesses to give evidence. However, the privilege against self-incrimination applies to inquiries. This

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allows a person to refuse to answer questions if to do so might incriminate them or their spouse, even where compelled to do so.

Undertakings allow evidence given to an inquiry not to be used in any investigation or prosecution of the witness who gave it, either generally or for specific offences.

1.7 What type of evidence is covered by the undertaking?

“Evidence” includes oral evidence, any written statement made by that person preparatory to giving evidence to the Southport Inquiry or during the course of his or her testimony to the Southport Inquiry, or any document or information produced to the Southport Inquiry solely by that person.