



Darren Tierney
Director General, Propriety & Ethics

Ben Connah
Via email

08 February 2022

COVID-19 INQUIRY - RECORD RETENTION

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January regarding the retention of material of potential relevance to the inquiry.

As you know, I wrote to permanent secretaries in June last year - following the Prime Minister's confirmation that a statutory inquiry into the pandemic would be established - to request that they take steps to ensure that Departments and relevant arms length bodies will be ready to meet their obligations to provide relevant records, information and data to the inquiry as requested. I made clear that this includes ensuring that no material of potential relevance to the inquiry is destroyed. As you have requested, I have now written again to permanent secretaries - both of Whitehall departments and the devolved administrations - reiterating that message and reminding them of their obligations under the Inquiries Act (2005).

Aside from my letter, you will know that well-established records management processes are in place across government and all government organisations are aware of the need to keep a full and clear record of their part in events. This includes the decisions taken, the process by which those decisions were reached, the reasons for those decisions and the evidence and data used to support them, and applies whatever the format in which that information is held and on whatever device or system.

I will write to permanent secretaries again once the inquiry's draft terms of reference are published.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Tierney'.

Darren Tierney

Director General, Propriety & Ethics