

IN THE MATTER OF THE INQUIRIES ACT 2005

THE UK COVID-19 INQUIRY – MODULE 1

NOTE FOR THE SECOND PRELIMINARY HEARING

ON BEHALF OF

THE CABINET OFFICE (AS A CORE PARTICIPANT)

1. The Cabinet Office is grateful for the opportunity to participate in Module 1 of the Covid 19 Inquiry, and reiterates its commitment to the Inquiry and its objectives. We welcome the opportunity to fully engage in the process.
2. The Cabinet Office also provides the Inquiry with support in its role as sponsor to the Inquiry: such support is strictly independent from its role as a Core Participant.
3. As set out in Counsel to the Inquiry's note dated 30 January 2023 at Annex A, the Cabinet Office has already provided corporate statements to the Inquiry and significant disclosure of documents. There continues to be an enormous amount of work to be done working towards the proposed hearing start date of 2 May 2023, which will include preparation of further witness statements, further disclosure, consideration of other Core Participants' witness statements and disclosure, and review of the expert reports. Very substantial work is also being carried out by the Cabinet Office staff and legal team with regard to Module 2. The Cabinet Office will continue to work with the Inquiry Legal Team to discuss how this work can be achieved within the timescales that have been set down: we remain committed to that end.
4. The Cabinet Office acknowledges the points made in CTT's note about disclosure and parliamentary privilege, and will continue to assist the ILT on these issues. The Cabinet Office notes CTT's proposed timetable for supplying names of witnesses and evidence proposals, and acknowledges the short period of time between those dates and the start of the hearings. Again, the Cabinet Office will discuss with the ILT as to how these dates can

best be met. The Cabinet Office notes the points made in relation to opening/closing statements. As to expert witnesses, the Cabinet Office looks forward to receiving their reports at the earliest possible opportunity, given the breadth of their instructions, the likely overlap with evidence that will be given by witnesses from the Cabinet Office, and anticipation that Core Participants will be given an opportunity to make any appropriate representations on their contents, as well as to raise any requests for clarification/amplification.

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