

**Second Witness Statements of Chris Llewelyn  
Chief Executive Welsh Local Government Association**

**Second Witness Statements of Mark Lloyd  
Chief Executive the Local Government Association**

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**IN THE MATTER OF MODULE 1 OF  
THE UK COVID-19 PUBLIC INQUIRY  
RULE 9 REQUEST  
REFERENCE: M01/LGA/01-ANNEX B**

--

**JOINT WITNESS STATEMENT  
OF**

**CHRIS LLEWELYN**

**MARK LLOYD**

**ON BEHALF OF  
THE WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

**ON BEHALF OF  
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

--

**CONCERNING THE SURVEY OF  
ALL MEMBER CATEGORY 1 RESPONDER  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

--

We, **Chris Llewelyn and Mark Lloyd**, jointly say as follows –

## ***Introduction***

1. Chris Llewelyn is the Chief Executive of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) of One Canal Parade, Dumballs Road, Cardiff, CF10 5BF, and Mark Lloyd is the Chief Executive of the Local Government (LGA) Association of 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HW.

We have each made our own witness statements in relation to Module 1 of the COVID19 Inquiry and we refer generally to those statements which speak to the issues raised by Module 1 in relation to our respective organisations. This is our further joint statement to supplement our individual Module 1 statements and relates to Annex B: Specific Requests for LGA and WLGA Membership.

2. This statement exhibits (CL/ML01/INQ000082855) the product of an online survey carried out by the LGA on behalf of both organisations between the 11 and 21 November 2022. The survey was addressed to all the local authorities in England and Wales being members of the WLGA or the LGA and having functions as Category 1 Responders, as defined by schedule 1 to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

## ***The survey***

3. The purpose of the survey was to gather information in response to a Rule 9 Request from the Chair of the COVID-19 Inquiry for the purpose of Module 1. The questions in the survey had been previously discussed and agreed with the Inquiry legal team.
4. Not all the local authorities that were surveyed responded within the period initially allowed. A total of 298 authorities responded, giving a response rate of 84 per cent. A follow up ensued and ultimately there has been a 100% response.

The full response of all 100% will be analysed and submitted to the Inquiry as soon as it is done. In the meantime we have attached as an annex to this statement the result of the survey in so far as it has been currently analysed and will be submitted to the Inquiry team on completion.

5. The Inquiry is referred generally to the explanation of the way in which the survey has been carried out and analysed as set out in the report of the survey.

6. The following are the points which seem particularly relevant to the Inquiry which emerged from the survey as at the time of writing this statement. If further or different points emerged from the final analysis these will be set out in the final document.

### ***Key findings***

7. By 21 January 2020, the majority of authorities' risk assessments and local risk registers included a reference to an influenza-like pandemic. In England, 93 per cent of councils had references, while in Wales, the proportion was 82 per cent. Authorities had included pandemic risk in their registers for a long time: over four-fifths of Welsh authorities had included it for more than eleven years; while over a third of English authorities had included it for more than eleven years and another third for five to ten years. (Table 4)
8. A high proportion of authorities had a specific emergency plan relevant to an influenza-like pandemic in place. Three-quarters of English authorities had one in place five to ten years before January 2020, and four-fifths of Welsh authorities. (Table 5)
9. In general, special consideration in emergency plans had been given to vulnerable people. Just under four-fifths of English and Welsh authorities had done this recently by January 2020, and an even higher proportion had done it in the previous one to five years. (Table 5)
10. Similarly, high proportions of authorities reported having a systematic and continuous process for development and iteration of their emergency plans. Nine out of ten English and Welsh authorities had undertaken it in the previous one to five years, while four-fifths had done so even more recently. (Table 5)
11. In both England and Wales, more than nine out of ten of respondents had emergency plans for an influenza-like pandemic in place by January 2020. (Table 6)

12. Around half of councils (52 per cent in England and 45 per cent in Wales) had undertaken training and exercising relevant to an influenza-like pandemic just before January 2020. More (around seven in ten) had undertaken it in the 1-5 years before then. Councils who reported that they not undertaken such training or exercising commonly reported that training and exercising were carried out, but not specifically relating to influenza or other infectious diseases. (Table 8)
13. Almost all respondents thought that, as a Category 1 Responder, their authority was compliant with its statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the wider legislative framework. Ninety-four per cent of English and 91 per cent of Wales authorities said this. The remainder noted they were 'partially' compliant. Most of these reported that they felt they were broadly compliant, but they had some areas which needed improvement and prevented them from saying they were fully compliant. In some cases, the authority noted one or two (at most) areas where they felt they were not fully compliant. (Table 12)
14. Most authorities (87 per cent in England and 91 per cent in Wales) felt they had been prepared or fully prepared for an influenza-like pandemic in January 2020. (Table 13)
15. When asked whether they had been prepared or fully prepared for a COVID-19 pandemic, fewer authorities considered themselves to have been (69 per cent in England and 77 per cent in Wales). A number of those who did not say they were prepared noted that it was the scale of the impact and the unexpected challenges which they were not expecting. Some noted, though, how they were able to adapt quickly. (Table 14)
16. Nearly nine out of ten English and Welsh respondents (87 per cent for both) agreed that their authority's preparations by January 2020 meant that it was able to adapt and respond well to COVID-19. Of these, 25 per cent of English and five per cent of Welsh authorities strongly agreed. (Table 15)

17. Authorities were asked whether their emergency plans and risk assessments in place at January 2020 had considered the risk factors and potential impacts on the groups of people with a range of protected and other characteristics. In England, the characteristics most commonly considered in plans were people living in care homes (79 per cent), homeless and vulnerably housed people (78 per cent), clinically vulnerable people (77 per cent), age (76 per cent), , , , and people with a disability (74 per cent). In Wales, these groups were also most likely to have been considered, but the corresponding percentages were in all cases lower. (Table 16)
18. When asked about the adequacy of the information, support and guidance their authority had received from the UK central government or Welsh Government by January 2020, around half of authorities in England and in Wales felt the information and support was neither adequate nor inadequate. Welsh authorities were more positive than English authorities, however, with nearly two-fifths saying it was fully or fairly adequate, compared to three in ten in England. Nearly a quarter of English authorities said it was fairly inadequate. (Table 17)
19. Less than a fifth of respondents (18 per cent in England and 14 per cent in Wales) considered that in January 2020 they were adequately funded for a national emergency. In England, the proportion was slightly higher in shire districts (24 per cent) than single-tier authorities and counties (11 per cent).
20. Authorities were asked to identify any factors which, between 2009 and January 2020, positively affected their state of readiness for the COVID-19 pandemic. The most commonly mentioned factor was good engagement/ relationships/protocols between Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners (noted by nearly all authorities), followed by overall effective corporate emergency planning and response capability (over nine out of ten English and Welsh authorities) and strength of local authority's overall business management processes and capability (around nine in ten English and Welsh authorities). (Table 19)

21. When asked to identify factors which negatively affected their state of readiness for the COVID-19 pandemic, the most commonly mentioned ones were that national guidance relating to pandemic preparation did not anticipate the nature of challenges provided by COVID-19 (just under nine in ten English and Welsh authorities noted this) and that full lockdown was never anticipated as a reasonable worst-case scenario, so plans did not reflect the challenges (also around nine in ten English and Welsh authorities). (Table 21)

We,

**Chris Llewelyn**  
on behalf of the  
**Welsh Local Government Association**

**Mark Lloyd**  
on behalf of the  
**Local Government Association**

**declare that the contents of this our joint statement are true and accurate to the best of our respective knowledge and belief,**

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Personal Data</b> | <b>Personal Data</b> |
| Signed               | Signed               |
| Dated 20 April 2023  | Dated 19 April 2023  |