

Witness Name: Alison Allen

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits:

Dated: 26/04/23

## **UK COVID-19 INQUIRY**

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### **WITNESS STATEMENT OF ALISON ALLEN**

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I, Alison Allen, will say as follows: -

#### **1. The Association of Local Authorities of Northern Ireland**

- 1.1 The Association (ALANI) was established following the re-organisation of local government in 1973, and it took the place of earlier organisations which had represented the different kinds of local authority previously, viz, The Ulster Association of County Councils, the Association of Municipal Authorities of Northern Ireland and the Association of District Councils of Northern Ireland - formerly the Association of Rural District Councils (Northern Ireland).
- 1.2 According to the Association's Constitution membership was open to all councils in NI.
- 1.3 Each council was entitled to appoint between three and nine representatives to serve on the Association depending on the population of each council's area. Belfast, as the largest council, was entitled to 20 representatives.
- 1.4 The Clerk of each council was entitled to attend meetings in an advisory capacity and all Clerks served on an advisory group which corporately advised on the business coming before the Association.

- 1.5 ALANI did not make policy for individual councils nor had it the right to enforce acceptance of any advice it gave. It provided a forum for debate on issues which were of interest to local authorities generally and it could undertake research into matters which were of common concern. This is likely to have included emergency preparedness, with council involvement in civil contingencies work at that time focusing on response to civil disturbance, such as clean up after bomb blasts.
- 1.6 No debate was permitted at ALANI meetings on matters which were not related to local government functions. This provision was introduced into the Association's constitution in 1989 to prevent discussion of contentious political issues.
- 1.7 Government departments frequently consulted the Association on such matters as proposed new legislation. Environmental Health and Consumer Protection featured prominently in this formal consultation. Contact was maintained between the Association's secretariat and departmental civil servants to provide a basis for more informal consultation. Similar informal arrangements existed between the secretariat and the officers of other statutory agencies. Councils were materially involved in communicable disease control investigations (mainly related to foodborne illness, food poisoning) and e.g. legionnaires disease prevention and investigation.
- 1.8 ALANI appointed representatives, or submitted nominations for appointment, to various statutory bodies and voluntary organisations. It also provided "Employer Side" representation on the various Joint Councils which negotiated terms and conditions of service for local authority employees.
- 1.9 At national level the Association was in membership of the national local government employers' organisation and had one place on the

Management Committee of LACOTS (the national co-ordinating body on food and trading standards – later LACORS).

- 1.10 Because of the impact of European legislation and directives upon all parts of the United Kingdom, and the availability of regional development and social funding, the Association participated fully in several international and European organisations, through membership of the Local Government International Bureau in London. ALANI was disestablished in October 2001, when NILGA formally came into being.

## **2. The Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

- 2.1 When the 'Troubles' came to an end and the Belfast 'Good Friday' Agreement was signed (1998), councillors across parties and the 26 district councils began to discuss the future of regional cross-party local government collaboration in NI, and further to formalisation of these discussions, involving senior political party representatives, a new Association – the Northern Ireland Local Government Association – was formally launched in October 2001, with the first Chief Executive, Heather Moorhead, commencing work in April 2002.
- 2.2 The original constitution of NILGA was developed in 2001, setting out objectives for the new Association including representation of member authorities, formulation of sound policies for the development of local government; provision of a forum for the discussion of matters of concern to member authorities and a means whereby joint views may be formulated and expressed.
- 2.3 A key objective was included, to ensure that members of all political parties in Northern Ireland were accorded the opportunity to contribute to the Association's activities and to the development of policies which represented, as far as possible, consensus between parties.

- 2.4 Much of the early work of NILGA focussed on anticipated local government reforms brought forward via the Review of Public Administration (NI) <sup>1</sup>, including the transfer of development planning and other functions.

#### *RPA*

*The RPANI was launched in 2002, with the aim of reviewing the existing arrangements for the accountability, administration and delivery of public services in NI, bringing forward options for reform. This progressed to a series of final announcements in 2005 and 2006 from direct rule Ministers, followed by (on return of devolution) a Review of Local Government by the NI Assembly Environment Minister, which reported later in 2007. A strand of this work focussed on the number of councils. In April 2008, the Secretary of State announced that the scheduled 2009 district council elections were to be postponed until the introduction of eleven new councils in 2011. The Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 was passed by the NI Assembly, creating a framework for the creation of eleven new district councils.*

*In May - June 2010 it emerged that the process of bringing the new authorities into existence would be delayed, due to the failure of members of the Northern Ireland Executive to agree on boundaries for some district electoral areas. Elections due in May 2011 were to the existing 26 district councils.*

*NILGA was materially involved in working with member councils and the Department (of Environment) to co-design the policy for the Planning (NI) Act 2010, the Local Government (NI) Act 2014, and relevant secondary legislation. An election to eleven shadow councils took place in 2014, with councils formally instituted in 2015, and a suite of powers transferred (including development planning). Councils had some*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/committees/2007-2011/environment/research-papers/2007-2008/review-of-public-administration.pdf>

*emergency planning responsibilities prior to reform and have maintained these responsibilities since 2015.*

- 2.5 Each political party with five or more representatives on the Association can appoint an Office Bearer, and the Presidency of the Association is held by these Office Bearers, with the position rotating annually. The Office Bearer from the party with the greatest political strength at the most recent election, takes the first year of the mandate as president at the AGM immediately following the election, with the presidency handed over to the Office Bearer of the next strongest party at the following AGM. The current President of NILGA is Cllr Martin Kearney of the SDLP.
- 2.6 The membership of NILGA is open to all eleven district councils in Northern Ireland, represented at meetings by nominated councillors. Ten of the councils are entitled to nominate 8 members, with Belfast entitled to 10 nominees, to the 'Full' membership of NILGA. These nominations must proportionally reflect the political balance and diversity of the council.
- 2.7 The business of NILGA is focussed at an Executive Committee, comprised of the office bearers, office bearer alternates, and 23 ordinary members, derived from Full member nominations from member councils. The Association shall, in conjunction with the regional d'Hondt process and political parties, ensure that two members from each Council (three from Belfast) are represented on the Executive.
- 2.8 The Chief Executive of each council is entitled to attend, but not to vote at, NILGA meetings.
- 2.9 NILGA promotes, develops and champions local government by developing regional, all council, approaches to key issues affecting the sector. This includes elected member development, collective lobbying,

policy formulation, best practice events and campaigns, all aimed at improving democracy and public services.

- 2.10 By ensuring a collective framework for and with councils, NILGA communicates the importance of local government as a growing, sustainable and contemporary part of government in Northern Ireland, ensuring that the sector is a partner of equal, equipped with an informed, strong, unified voice when dealing with central government, the EU and other legislative bodies.
- 2.11 Since the earliest days of NILGA (and prior to local government reform) the Association had some involvement in the development of local government emergency planning and civil contingencies policy in Northern Ireland, participating on a regional structure involving emergency services, councils and government departments, and contributing to policy consultations (e.g. the Civil Contingencies Bill in 2003). Much of our activity was focussed on ensuring that local government emergency planning was appropriately resourced, multi-year.
- 2.12 Key groups of relevance to this inquiry include the Local Government Emergency Management Group (LGEMG) and the Civil Contingencies Group (NI). A regional Resilience Team was appointed in 2019 and since this work became much more firmly embedded, with government support and operational leadership from council CEOs, NILGA has been less regularly involved, although kept informed of progress and this work is detailed later in the submission.
- 2.13 NILGA receives regular updates from the Regional Resilience Officer, and we work to provide regular training for elected members and officers on emergency planning. This training began in 2017 as NILGA began to offer formal elected member training post local government reform. Emergency planning training for elected members was incorporated into our formal regional elected member development programme when it commenced

after the 2019 local government election, and remains an important part of this programme, delivered on an annual cycle. NILGA has also support the multi-agency work via the Regional Community Resilience Group to promote community preparedness for severe weather.

2.14 Latterly (2015 – 2020) NILGA's resilience emphasis has been on climate adaptation and issues such as flood prevention.

2.15 The Local Government Climate Action Network (LGCAN) aims to develop a cohesive and collaborative regional approach to climate action within local government, and act as a forum for cross-council support and training on climate adaptation and wider climate action. LGCAN also aims enable councils to work together, and with external agencies to develop a strategic regional approach for climate action.

2.16 NILGA has also maintained a close relationship with Red Cross, further to their publication of 'Living in Fear of the Rain' in 2016 and in view of their continuing focus on assisting those experiencing hardship.

2.17 In 2016, NILGA worked with council officers and DAERA officials to create a central-local partnership, focussed on the development and implementation of a collaborative action plan for central and local government to manage Northern Ireland's municipal waste, agreed by 11 councils and the DAERA Board. The NI Strategic Waste Partnership and the strong working relationships that it had cemented, in spring 2020 became vital to addressing the impacts of COVID-19, as council waste management provision became a critical 'front line' service.

2.18 NILGA does not work directly with sister associations on emergency preparedness, the leading members of NILGA meet regularly with their counterparts in the other UK LGAs via the UK Local Government Forum, with the Association of Irish Local Government and other subnational Associations from the Republic of Ireland, and from time to

time, meets with sister Associations in Europe. These meetings focus on issues of strategic mutual concern and may include discussions on climate action.

2.19 Between 2002 and 2014, NILGA held a Board position on the Local Authority Coordinators for Regulatory Standards (previously known as LACORS) and the then 26 NI district councils participated in collaborative activity dealing with issues such as national food safety incidents, zoonotic diseases, and national/sub-national outbreaks of infectious disease.

2.20 LACORS was wound down by the LGA in 2014, with the understanding given that LGA would continue to provide transparent and specific contacts at policy level, including teleconferencing if necessary; and that they would continue to work with NI council officers in emergency situations e.g. if there is a national food safety incident, to establish procedures and provide national support.

### **3. Legislative Context**

3.1 The structures in Northern Ireland have changed significantly since 11 June 2009. In 2009, there were 26 District Councils. In April 2015 Local Government Reform occurred reducing the number of councils in Northern Ireland to 11.

3.2 Central Government also reformed in May 2016 leading to a complete revision of responsibilities between the new central government nine departments.

3.3 The Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdfM) produced the NI Civil Contingencies Framework (2005) (NICCF) in response to the introduction of Civil Contingencies Legislation across the UK. The Framework notes “In November 2004 Civil Contingencies legislation was enacted across the United Kingdom. Part 1 of the Act



specifies Civil Contingencies duties for local response organisations listed in Schedule 1 of the Act. For a range of practical and constitutional reasons it was not appropriate to use the Act to place statutory duties on organisations delivering transferred functions in Northern Ireland.”

3.4 The NI Civil Contingencies Framework (NICCF) notes that its aim was to ensure civil protection standards in Northern Ireland were in line with those provided by the Civil Contingencies Act. In terms of governance it is complementary to the Act and provides guidance rather than a legislative basis. The NI Civil Contingencies Framework (NICCF) has been refreshed a number of times including significant revisions in 2011 and most recently in 2021. The statutory position remains unchanged as shown in the updated NI Civil Contingencies Framework Version 2021 (AA1).

3.5 In relation to local government in Northern Ireland, the Local Government (NI) Order 2005 Part III Miscellaneous Provisions Article 29 provides individual councils with legislative vires to plan and respond to emergencies. This remains the current statutory position in 2022.

3.6 Guidance in relation to civil contingencies was also provided by the Department of the Environment in April 2006 via LG Circular 07/06 Departmental Guidance to District Council in relation to Emergencies (AA2) and outlined a range of discretionary provisions.

#### **4. Local Government Emergency Planning Structures in Northern Ireland 2009-2015**

4.1 In 2009, 25 of the councils in Northern Ireland were supported by Environmental Health Group Systems. One aspect of the Environmental Health Group system was to provide emergency planning support to the 25 councils. This was resourced by one full

time Emergency Planning Co-ordination Officer in each of the four Group Systems. Belfast City Council was outside of the Group model and had its own emergency planning resource.

4.2 As at 2009 and until 2015, the Group system also facilitated the Northern Ireland wide multi-agency multi-disciplinary working group Local Government Emergency Management Group (LGEMG) which was set up to:

- Provide expertise in emergency planning for District Councils;
- Give guidance to District Council on emergency planning issues;
- Liaise with government departments on emergency planning issues; and
- Facilitate communication between central government departments and District Councils.

4.3 LGEMG included representation from local government, central government, NILGA, environmental health, policing representatives and a number of other partners.

4.4 In 2005 Belfast Resilience Forum, which was a voluntary partnership unlike its counterparts in Great Britain, was formed to consider multi-agency emergency arrangements for the Belfast City Council area. Additional funding was also provided to appoint the Belfast Resilience Forum programme manager in 2009.

4.5 In February 2014 the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdfM) provided recommendations to the Northern Ireland Executive on measures to enhance civil contingencies arrangements at local level. This included the formation of a sub-group of the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) (Northern Ireland's principal strategic group) entitled Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness (SCEP) to provide overarching governance to multi-agency Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness Groups (SCEPGs), with Belfast Resilience

Forum becoming the SCEPG for Belfast. A chart outlining the structure in 2014 is attached (AA3).

- 4.6 Civil Contingencies Group (NI) also developed a range of protocols, but due to the impending local government reform these were not fully endorsed and implemented across all Councils in Northern Ireland.

## **5. Local Government Emergency Planning Structure in Northern Ireland 2014/15-2019**

- 5.1 As part of the process of Local Government Reform and in consideration of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdfM) recommendations, the Local Government Chief Executives Group which was leading the transition to the new eleven councils sought an independent review of the local government civil contingencies arrangements in Northern Ireland. The subsequent report (AA4) issued in November 2015 provided a range of recommendations to improve local government and multi-agency emergency planning arrangements in Northern Ireland and included the recommendation that all councils should have their own internal emergency planning resource at the level they deemed appropriate based on their local assessment of risk in addition to participating in multi-agency emergency planning structures. The report also concluded that the programme management of the multi-agency structures could not be funded by local government and recommended that this be funded via central government.
- 5.2 Between 2016 and 2019, local government and multi-agency partners continued to liaise and implement the recommendations of the independent review as well as progressing the establishment of the proposed five Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness Groups. Following a change to policing boundaries in 2017, the governance group SCEP agreed to reduce the number of Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness Groups from five to three to align to the

three policing areas. This remains the current structure and a list of EPG partners at present is attached (AA5).

**6. Local Government Emergency Planning Structure in Northern Ireland  
January 2020 - present**

- 6.1 By 21 January 2020 a regional resourcing model to support local multi agency arrangements had been established which included a Local Government Regional Officer and three Resilience Managers to support the three Emergency Preparedness Groups. The team members were transferred from various councils to Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon District Council in December 2019 to form a regional resilience team with updated uniform job descriptions. Recruitment of three Resilience Officers and an administrative officer for the Regional Officer was underway, but they were not in post until May/June 2020. Each Resilience Manager and Officer is hosted by a different council across Northern Ireland.
- 6.2 By this time, all local councils also had an emergency planning resource in place at the level they deemed appropriate and were participating in their relevant local Emergency Preparedness Group. A cross council Emergency Planning Officers group was also operating in line with the new regional arrangements.
- 6.3 Agreement had been made to change the Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness Group to become the Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group (NIEPG) with secretariat provided via the newly established Regional Resilience Team. The first meeting of this group took place in March 2020.
- 6.4 Members of the Regional Resilience Team continued to participate with other partners in structures which had previously existed including the Regional Community Resilience Group (established in 2013), the Cross Border Emergency Management Group (established 2013,

membership from Ireland/Northern Ireland border area partners) and the Northern Cross Border Forum (NI, Scotland, North of England border area partners).

- 6.5 Individual local government officers also participated in a range of central government led emergency planning groups including the Civil Contingencies Group (Northern Ireland), the Northern Ireland Pandemic (Excess Deaths) Working Group and the Northern Ireland Port Health Forum.

## **7. CIVIL PROTECTION DUTIES**

- 7.1 As noted above the statutory duties from the Civil Contingencies Act do not apply to local government in Northern Ireland. In relation to the specific queries re the civil protection duties, we would note:

- **Risk assessment**

Belfast Resilience Forum partners created a local community risk register which was updated a number of times, including in 2010 and 2014. Participating organisations completed a standardised template in relation to the risks within their remit and a multi-agency group reviewed the local assessment. A Northern Ireland Risk Register was produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) in 2013 but as it was marked official sensitive this was not shared with all local government representatives, nor were local councils involved in its creation. In 2014 the regionalisation of the Belfast Resilience Forum community risk register was discussed, but this was not adopted.

- **Business continuity management**

Business continuity management is the responsibility of each organisation. Each council has its own internal business continuity arrangements in place.

- **Maintaining public awareness and arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public**

All Councils have arrangements in place to communicate with the public as part of their normal service provision. Belfast Resilience Forum established a public information and media working group and following the regionalisation of structures, this group became the EPG Public Information & Media Working Group. Most of the organisations involved in the emergency planning structures have an officer on this group and an emergency distribution list exists to share public messaging as quickly as possible in emergencies. This was in place at 21 January 2020 and all councils were members of the group.

## **8. VULNERABLE GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS**

8.1 Vulnerability is always a consideration in preparedness, response and recovery. The Belfast Resilience Forum plans were all subject to a s75 consideration via the Belfast City Council Equality Screening in 2014 which included engagement with the local Equality Forum.

8.2 In 2016 the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFDMDM) provided all partners with the CCG(NI) Vulnerable People Protocol which is to be considered in all emergencies and is a normal part of all activations. The Northern Ireland definition of vulnerable is within the protocol but an incident specific assessment is also required. A copy of this protocol is attached (AA6). The protocol has now been incorporated into the new NICCF 2021 which has a chapter focused on vulnerability.

8.3 All Councils in Northern Ireland have regular engagement with voluntary and community partners in their area in relation to normal service delivery. This does not generally extend to emergency preparedness, although this position has changed post COVID19.

8.4 Multi-agency engagement with voluntary and community partners in relation to emergencies has been undertaken via a number of groups, including:

- Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) Voluntary and Faith Working Group (regular meeting with voluntary and faith representatives specifically in relation to emergency arrangements)
- Regional Community Resilience Group, focussed on communities affected by severe weather. This group facilitates the development of community emergency plans and currently engages with approximately 30 community resilience groups.
- Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) Humanitarian Assistance Working Groups (some core voluntary organisations attend these meetings e.g. Red Cross).

## **9. EMERGENCY PLANS**

9.1 Post local government reform, each new Council in Northern Ireland developed its own internal emergency plan and business continuity arrangements. In relation to multi-agency plans, each Council participates as a partner in its local Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) and can contribute to the writing and review of the multi-agency emergency plans.

9.2 Due to the structures in Northern Ireland, there are a range of NI strategic emergency plans which are managed by central government departments or their arm's length bodies and are not therefore devolved to the local level.

9.3 The Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) have a range of plans in place, many of which were originally produced via Belfast Resilience Forum plans and then regionalised via the enhanced arrangements.

All Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) plans are subject to continuous review from learning following incidents or exercises, as well as having a review period. Each Emergency Preparedness Group has its own work programme which is influenced by the work programme of the overarching governance structures including CCG(NI) priorities if a local aspect of delivery is required. On a continuous basis, prioritisation is reconsidered by individual organisations and collectively. This includes refocussing emergency preparedness efforts on imminent issues of concern e.g. a local emergency response/recovery or wider preparation for issues which have been raised via horizon scanning which could pose a particular risk e.g. Winter preparedness, EU Exit, a large scale public event.

9.4 During the period 2009-2020, it is our understanding that local government were involved in the following areas of pandemic planning:

- 2009/10 engagement in relation to H1N1 Swine Flu preparations.
- NI Pandemic (Excess Deaths) Working Group: Local government were represented at the Department of Justice led Northern Ireland Pandemic (Excess Deaths) Working Group and were consulted on the plan entitled 'A Framework for Managing Excess (Pandemic) Deaths in Northern Ireland' and the associated potential legislative asks in relation to emergency legislation. Councils also provided a baseline estimate in relation to burial/cremation capacity in 2017 and again in 2020.
- Public Health Agency led Port Health Forum which includes the Port Health Plan and associated arrangements such as cruise ships.
- Situational Awareness in relation to planning for Ebola in 2014.

## **10. EMERGENCY EXERCISES**



10.1 Exercises take place on an ongoing basis with some organisations being required to undertake periodic exercises due to statute. Topics may also be requested by partners.

10.2 It is our understanding that local government were involved in the following exercises which had a pandemic theme:

- Exercise Cygnus facilitated by the DHSSPSNI ( Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety (NI)) for CCG(NI) members which was initially scheduled for 2014, then moved to 2016.
- Exercise Shamrock Responder in 2018 (an MoD Exercise which partners were invited to observe and some partners provided subject matter expertise to aid delivery).

## **11. COVID19 AWARENESS & PREPARATION**

11.1 We believe local government officers first became aware of COVID19 via a briefing at the NI Public Health Agency led multi-agency Port Health Forum on 28/1/2020 which is post the date of the Module 1 timeframe.

11.2 Each Council is an autonomous body with its own responsibility to assess risk. The focus of pandemic planning in local government pre 2020 was on business continuity with a pandemic being one potential cause of disruption to staffing and the ability to continue to deliver frontline services. Specific planning in relation to bereavement services was undertaken as a result of the NI Pandemic (Excess Deaths) Working Group. Councils also had the ability to work flexibly to tailor their response as all emergency planning in Northern Ireland at this time was based on core principles of working together with partners to assess the risk and respond as required in the circumstances.

## **12. FUNDING OF CIVIL CONTINGENCIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

- 12.1 As at 21 January 2020, individual councils in Northern Ireland do not receive specific funding to undertake emergency planning. It is for each council to determine the resource they will internally provide based on their local assessment.
- 12.2 The funding model was revised following the Independent Review in 2016 and now funds the regional resilience team in addition to an allocation to fund multi-agency co-ordination, training/exercises, co-ordination facilities and business continuity/community resilience promotion. This funding, known as the Civil Contingencies Grant is currently £680k pa. This is allocated on a year-to-year basis and is provided via the Department for Communities Local Government & Housing Regulation (Department of Environment prior to central government reform). In the period from 2009-2017, local government received funding via a similar mechanism but at differing amounts per annum.
- 12.3 In relation to current year and future funding for the Civil Contingencies function, the Department for Communities has noted that the Executive did not agree a budget for 2022/23 but has allocated £680k per annum since 2018/19 and the function remains a priority service going forward.
- 12.4 In relation to funding response and recovery arrangements of local government, the Department for Communities can provide a Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance. While historically focussed on flooding, there is the option to open a non-flooding scheme and this is what was put in place for COVID19.

## **13. PLANNING FOR FUTURE PANDEMICS**

13.1 Since March 2020, local government has contributed to a number of reviews and further planning in relation to COVID19. This has included:

- Some councils have undertaken their own internal debrief of their response to COVID19 at various times since 2020.
- July 2020: The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives NI collated feedback via the cross council Regional Internal Recovery Group in relation to shared learning.
- May 2022: The Executive Office led a collation of lessons learned.
- Participating in the Executive Office led scenario planning for COVID19 for Autumn/Winter 2022/23.

13.2 A number of plans were written or updated since January 2020 due to COVID19. This included a range of regional plans and COVID related guidance was also produced throughout 2020-2022 by various organisations and specialisms. Specific multi agency plans that we are aware of include:

- “An Operating Model for Council Co-ordination Hubs” in relation to the distribution of food parcels in April 2020.
- Interim Guidance to take cognisance of Covid19 mitigation measures was added to the existing Generic Protocol for the Establishment of Emergency Support Centres incorporating emergency rest centres ( ERC), survivor reception centres (SRC) and friends and relatives reception centres (FRRC) in May 2020.
- An Interim Multi-Agency Plan re Variants under Investigation/Variants of Concern was developed in May 2021 to link existing PHA internal plans with external partner arrangements.
- The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework was refreshed in 2021.

- The EPG Public Information & Media Plan was refreshed in January 2022.
- The Northern Ireland Risk Register was revised in June 2022.

### **Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

**Signed:**

**Personal Data**

**Dated:** 26/04/2023