

Witness Name: David Crossman

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits: DCC

Dated: 11 May 2023

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT of Professor David Christopher Crossman CBE, FRSE FRCP

In relation to the issues raised by the Rule 9 request dated 27th March 2023 in connection with Module 1, I, Professor David Christopher Crossman, will say as follows: -

1. I am David Christopher Crossman of School of Medicine, University of St Andrews. I am Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of St Andrews. I am no longer employed by the Scottish Government having been employed from November 2017 until April 2022, during which time I was Chief Scientist (Health) on a 2 day a week secondment.
2. This statement has been prepared by myself, with the support of factual information supplied by the Scottish Government Covid Inquiries Response Directorate, referenced in this statement, and have received appropriate assistance to enable the statement to be completed. As I have left the Government my access to documents and information has been partial and, therefore, I have not been able to reference documents that may well give additional context.
3. Unless stated otherwise, the facts stated in this witness statement are within my own knowledge and I believe to be true. Where they are not within my own knowledge, I state that I cannot comment. Where I give an opinion, this is to the best of my knowledge and belief.

4. *Responsibilities of the Chief Scientist Health(Scotland) (CSH) during the “proposed date range”.* The CSH in Scotland is a role which advises the Chief Medical Officer (Scotland) and the Scottish NHS as well as wider aspects of government on Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) in the NHS in Scotland. It is attached to an office, The Chief Scientist Office (CSO) which oversees Research, Development & Innovation in the NHS in Scotland including the management of the budget for this. As such, in the “proposed date range” this role had neither a part in pandemic preparedness nor the wider aspects of public health or NHS Scotland service organisation. Therefore, I am not able to express an opinion on matters relevant to module 1 of the inquiry that are within the proposed date range. Please see the provided job description as at the time I commenced the CSH role [DCC/1 – INQ000178214] confirming the exact nature of that role.
5. During the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. start March 2020 in Scotland) and until I demitted from the post in April 2022 I transferred a number of my activities from outside of the government and expanded my roles specifically to help with the response to the pandemic. I have highlighted in a response to module 2 what my roles were, and verbatim from my submission, these were:

A list of the groups (i.e. Scottish Covid-19 Advisory Group (SCAG) and/or any of its sub-groups) in which you have been a participant, and the relevant time periods.

Scottish Covid-19 Advisory Group (SCAG)

6. I was Vice Chair, April 2020 – April 2022. Materials from the COVID-19 Advisory Group, including minutes, papers, and advice have been provided to the Inquiry by the Covid-19 Advisory Group Secretariat. These can be found in the following return: Scottish Inquiry - Tranche 6 - Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group.

Scottish Scientific Advisory Board on Testing (SABoT)

7. I was Chair, April 2020- March 2022. First meeting 01.04.2020. Materials from the Scientific Advisory Board on Testing, including minutes, papers, and advice have been provided to the Inquiry by the Covid-19 Advisory Group Secretariat. These can be found in the following return: Scottish Inquiry - Tranche 6 - Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group.
8. In addition, in my capacity as CS(Health), I attending the following meetings:
- **SAGE COVID-19** attendee and observer- occasional meetings April 2020 – March 2022
 - **COVID-19 Science Coordination Group** Scottish Representative April 2020 – March 2022. Weekly Monday morning meetings
 - **Go Science 4 Nation Co-ordination Group**. Fortnightly mid 2020 to Spring 2022. Scottish representative.
 - **Scottish COVID-19 Genomics Oversight Group**. I was Chair. Meetings started February 2021 – April 2022. Weekly initially then fortnightly
9. Therefore, through these roles I have some experience that allows me to comment on some of the questions you have asked me, but those involve the issues that are not precisely related to “proposed date range”.

Issues of preparedness of the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland in the proposed date range.

10. As laid out, I had no exposure to this, and I am not going to speculate or offer an opinion on this area. There is a request for my opinion on simulation exercises (Cygnus, Silver Swan and Iris). I was not involved with these, and I was not involved in any response to these. The Rule 9 letter sent to me asks for any remarks on pages 20-22 of the Audit Scotland Report, *NHS in Scotland 2020* [DCC/2 – INQ000148761]. I was in post when this was published, and the conclusions seemed reasonable.

Pandemic preparedness during and after my time in post.

11. As I was coming to the end of my post in 2022 I was aware of Scottish Government's commitment to the formation of the Committee on Pandemic Preparedness. I was not asked to be a member of that Committee.

My view of Scotland preparing better for another pandemic based on my experience.

12. My view is that Scotland, along with the rest of the UK, should overtly establish a way of prospectively working together as it seemed that such structures needed to be put together (which they were) as the pandemic developed. Infectious agents do not respect borders or different healthcare systems. The impact of fully devolved structures of government presents some challenges. There should be a prospective plan for how the devolved nations will work with the UK decision making bodies and funders to manage pandemics on issues ranging from data sharing, procurement and management of borders and the general population. In turn those UK bodies need to respect the devolved status of the devolved nations. A truly UK plan and structure that all parties could agree with, as a preparedness plan, in my opinion would seem sensible.

13. During the pandemic it was not entirely clear how the Scottish Government wanted to use its Chief Scientific Adviser and CSH. Certainly, there were times where I was uncertain where I fitted into the structures which provided advice to Scottish Government.

Developments that the Scottish Government should be taking into account.

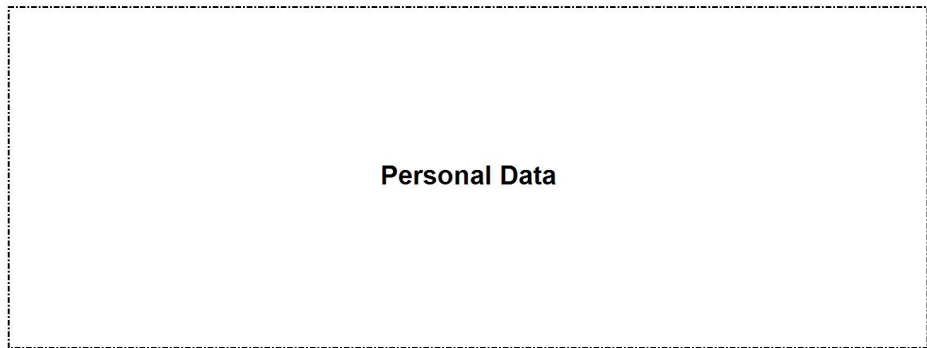
14. During the pandemic (and whilst I was in office) Public Health Scotland (PHS) was formed. My understanding is that this functions as a specialist Board within the NHS in Scotland. Its formation was undoubtedly a big and positive step forward for public health in Scotland and brought together parts of a distributed system. As with all new organisations their formation prompts other considerations. I think there are two issues that Scottish Government might consider. The first concerns which single organisation collects, analyses, communicates and allows access to health data in Scotland. During the pandemic this appeared to me to be distributed between PHS, Scottish Government analysts and the Chief Statistician in

Scotland. A single unified data source for information, analysis and research might be a desirable aim. The second is a governance issue around the NHS in Scotland. It is my understanding that NHS Boards in Scotland are to some extent autonomous and there is no 'NHS Scotland' as an entity. Planning and control across the specialty and territorial Boards might be facilitated with an over-arching authority that could develop unified strategy and common delivery.

- 15. References to exhibits in this statement are in the form [DCC/XX- INQ000000].
- 16. I have considered the Module 1 List of Issues dated 4 April 2023 and shared with me on 13 April 2023. I confirm that I have included all relevant comments in relation to those issues, within the context of the questions asked of me as Chief Scientist (Health) between April 2017 and November 2022 in the Rule 9 Request issued to me on 27 March 2023.

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: _____

Dated: _____ 11th May 2023 _____