

Witness Name: Dr Jim Elder Woodward OBE

Statement No.: 2

Exhibits: 3

Date: 9 January 2024

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF

DR JIM ELDER-WOODWARD OBE ON BEHALF OF INCLUSION SCOTLAND

I, Dr Jim Elder-Woodward OBE will say as follows: -

1. In addition to my statement on behalf of Inclusion Scotland dated 15 December 2023, I would like to bring to the Inquiry's attention the following matters and exhibits. As noted at paragraph 45 of my first statement, in providing that statement to the Inquiry, Inclusion Scotland had conducted an extensive search of their records within a tight timeframe and it was therefore possible that further key documents would come to our attention at a later date.
2. Upon further review, I would like to draw to the Inquiry's attention the extraordinary work of the Independent Living Fund in Scotland (the 'ILFS') to support Disabled people during the pandemic. The ILFS is a body that was set up by the Scottish Government to support Disabled people who had been supported by the UK Fund before it closed in 2015. In contrast to the many local authorities, which failed to provide effective support to meet the changing needs of Disabled people during the pandemic, the ILFS stepped up to assist their recipients by flexibly applying their policies and offering additional funding to recipients to cover furlough, staff absences and other requirements. Such flexible support was often not available through local authorities.

3. To demonstrate the work of the ILFS, I have included at JEW/112 [INQ000397355] a personal reflection written by myself, setting out my own experiences of trying to secure the support I needed during the pandemic. This includes an appendix of my communications with my own local authority (whose name I have redacted to preserve confidentiality as to my own address) and others seeking information and support. I have also included an unpublished article, which I wrote during the pandemic, garnering the studies the Disabled People's Movement made on the plight of Disabled people during the pandemic (JEW/113 [INQ000397356]). This summarises the results of surveys conducted by Disabled People's Organisations in Scotland during the pandemic on how the Covid-19 pandemic and non-pharmaceutical interventions impacted Disabled people. Finally, at JEW/114 [INQ000397357], I exhibit a pamphlet prepared by the Social Work Action Network and The Jimmy Reid Foundation setting out the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, also contrasting the support between local authorities and the ILFS. As I said at an ILFS Board training day: "The local authority gets me out of bed in the morning. The Fund gives me a reason to get me up."

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: 09 January 2024