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UK Inquiry – Module 2A – Personal Statements – Notebooks and Informal Communications - Updated (as of 13 October 2023)

The attached table provides a summary of information pertaining to the use and retention of personal notebooks (both electronic and physical) in addition to the use of WhatsApp or other informal messaging platforms (including but not limited to text, Signal, Slack etc.) during the period of 21 January 2020 to 30 April 2022.

Information pertaining to members of each of these informal messaging system groups, as well as current estimates of retained messages and the purpose of these groups can be identified by cross-referencing with the Annex A of the DG Corporate Statement ref: SG/WHA/01.

Code	Individual	Relevant role during pandemic	Notebooks	WhatsApp/Other informal communication systems
M2A/NS/01	Nicola Sturgeon MSP	First Minister	<p>Has confirmed did not use at any point during the period physical or electronic notebooks or diaries.</p> <p>Nothing to return</p>	<p>Would exchange information or views with colleagues by text or WhatsApp, but notes anything of significance or requiring action would be raised at formal meetings and recorded appropriately as per Scot Gov policy on messaging platforms</p> <p>John Swinney - Teams/Zoom meetings and telephone calls/text for primarily informal conversations. Does not believe they used WhatsApp but may have very occasionally. Informal chats were in the main discursive not decision making and would discuss the challenges presented by the pandemic and options available.</p> <p>Humza Yousaf - Teams/Zoom meetings as well as telephone and WhatsApp, no other messaging platform. Informal calls and discussions were mainly follow-ups to decisions made in formal settings and updates on operational matters.</p> <p>Jeane Freeman and I met mainly in person, or on Teams/Zoom meetings, also communicated by telephone and text. We used no other messaging platform.</p> <p>Kate Forbes, Fiona Hyslop communication by telephone and text, no other messaging platform.</p>

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				<p>Communicated in person and telephone and text with CMO - Catherine Calderwood, Gregor Smith, CNO - Fiona McQueen and NCD - Jason Leitch</p> <p>Liz Lloyd - Text, WhatsApp and telephone. These informal communications were discursive or for feeding views/responses/requests to be conveyed to civil servants. Anything substantive would be recorded in emails.</p> <p>Did not use informal or private communications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Viber or Slack to facilitate 4 nations decision-making with the Prime Minister, Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers, or the UK CMO. Had occasional text message exchanges with the First Minister of Wales and the then deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, but these did not result in decisions being taken.</p> <p>Messages were not retained, they were deleted in routine tidying up of inboxes or changing of phones, all substantive issues were recorded by Private Office emails Auto delete was not active. Unable to retrieve messages.</p> <p>Nothing to return</p>
M2A/JS/01	John Swinney MSP	Deputy to the First Minister, Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery (from May 2021), Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (to May 2021)	<p>Does not have any hard copy or electronic notebooks or diaries for the period.</p> <p>Nothing to return</p>	<p>Has confirmed that no WhatsApp or similar messages retained</p> <p>During the period communicated via WhatsApp, text and/or telephone with Nicola Sturgeon, Jeane Freeman, and Humza Yousaf for the purposes of raising urgent information and preparing for formal meetings.</p> <p>Messages would have been deleted by auto-delete functions or by themselves manually deleting them as they do on a regular basis.</p>

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				<p><b>WhatsApp Groups identified as having been in:</b> (membership details included in Annex A to corporate statement ref SG/WHA/01) <b>Certification Debate:</b> 12 messages (provided by another member of the group)</p>
M2A/JF/01	Jeane Freeman	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (to May 2021)	<p>No notebooks used</p> <p>Nothing to return</p>	<p>We understand that some WhatsApp and text messages have been retained – we are clarifying the volume but do not expect this to be large</p> <p>WhatsApp group of Cabinet Secretaries for Health of the four nations to facilitate meeting running.</p> <p>They confirm no other WhatsApp groups or other informal messaging with key decision makers.</p>
M2A/HY/01	Humza Yousaf MSP	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (from May 2021), Cabinet Secretary for Justice (to May 2021)	<p>No hard copy or electronic notebooks or diaries used during the period.</p> <p>Nothing to return</p>	<p>Used WhatsApp with Nicola Sturgeon and John Swinney to discuss matters. Any decisions made were recorded through the appropriate channels as per Scot Gov guidance. No other informal communication platforms were used.</p> <p>Communicated with Kevin Stewart and Maree Todd through WhatsApp.</p> <p>WhatsApp used to discuss information and advice relating to Covid-19, more frequently at the beginning of the pandemic due to restrictions on in person meetings. Deleted all messages after a month for cyber security purposes as per their understanding of the Scottish Government Mobile Messaging Apps Usage and Policy. Does not recall being part of any decision making via WhatsApp.</p> <p>Part of “Health 4 Nations” WhatsApp administered by Matt Hancock, and this was disbanded after Matt Hancock left office. Used for information sharing as opposed to decision making, such as number of Cases, R number etc. Messages not retained</p>