

Witness Name: Amanda Croft

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits: AC

Dated: 17 October 2023

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF AMANDA CROFT

In relation to the issues raised by the Rule 9 request dated 20 June 2023 in connection with Module 2A, I, Amanda Croft, will say as follows: -

1. I am Amanda Croft of Personal Data. I am currently retired and do not work within the Scottish Government at this time. I was previously the Chief Nursing Officer for Scotland, employed by the Scottish Government during the period of 1st February 2021 and the 10th August 2021. I resigned from the post after such a short time due to Irrelevant & Sensitive
Irrelevant & Sensitive
2. I have prepared this statement myself from memory and by reference to records and material provided to me by the Scottish Government. I have also received assistance from the Scottish Government Covid Inquiry Information Governance Division.
3. Unless stated otherwise, the facts stated in this witness statement are within my own knowledge and are true. Where they are not within my own knowledge, they are derived from sources to which I refer and are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Background and qualifications

4. Prior to January 2020 I was a qualified nurse; I have a variety of clinical, leadership and managerial qualifications as well a Master of Science in Nursing. I worked for the National Health Service and at that point in time I was in a Chief Executive role; prior to this I had held a number of professional and management positions, as well as a previous executive director position.

5. I worked for the Scottish Government as the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) between 1st February 2021 and the 10th August 2021. Key responsibilities were as follows:
 - Policy advice for ministers
 - Student nursing, midwifery, allied health professions and health care science student intakes
 - Leading on all aspects of healthcare associated infection policy and antimicrobial resistance
 - Leading on health professionals and workforce regulation

6. I worked closely with the team in the Health Directorate in relation to anything Covid related.

My time in the role

7. I was in the CNO role for a very short period of time from 1st February 2021 to the 10th August 2021, although I was not at work at all from the 7th July 2021. I resigned from my post from the 10th August due to **Irrelevant & Sensitive**
Irrelevant & Sensitive I give this background as it is important to explain, in response to your request, I am limited due to a number of factors:
 - A short time in the role
 - Some of that time was spent in induction and understanding the role
 - My memory of that time is limited due to my personal circumstances during that period and beyond.

I will endeavour, however, to give my account to support this important inquiry, albeit it will be quite short and more generic rather than specific.

8. As CNO I was part of the Health Directorate and this was the team that looked at the data and intelligence for the pandemic relating to the clinical harm it had or could cause the population. This was then used to form advice and opinions to pass on to the First Minister, other Ministers, Health Board and Health and Social Care partnerships.
9. I do not recall any situation where I was the sole decision maker, discussions and decisions were made collectively with the relevant people and these were always well documented, as far as I was aware.
10. The various forums and meetings that I was a participant in are as follows;
 - Daily Health Directorate meetings, I was asked to attend as a participant.
 - Four Harms meetings, frequency could vary, I was asked to attend as a participant.
 - Senior clinical leaders UK wide, from memory the frequency was usually fortnightly, I was asked to attend as a participant.
 - Meetings with the UK wide CNO group, frequency varied, I was asked to attend as a participant.
 - Media briefs, frequency varied depending on the current situation, I was asked to attend as a participant.
 - I attended one of the media briefs with the First Minister, I cannot recall the date. I was asked to attend to participate, where appropriate.
11. Due to me being new in the role, I would suggest that my influence and contribution at the various forums and meetings was quite low at this point in time.

General comments from my experience

12. From my experience at the time, I do feel that the Scottish Government kept the public well informed. Information and data was regularly sought and received.

During my time in the CNO role, Covid was taken very seriously and much time was spent on ensuring the best course of action was taken with the information and evidence that was available at the time. I think this was the correct approach, because although there was more knowledge of the virus, it was still evolving and continuing to cause harm, not only in health terms.

13. The First Minister and other Ministers were kept up to date and the advice they sought did appear relevant, to me at the time. The communication between the Scottish Government and the First Minister and her teams was frequent and constructive, from what I witnessed. I was not party to any messaging platforms directly with the First Minister or her team.

14. From memory and where I was involved, as a senior clinician, the Scottish Government teams and the UK Government teams communicated frequently.

15. Many of the questions asked in the annexes I feel I am unable to contribute to. I apologise I am not able to offer more; my recollection of that time is difficult for the reasons explained previously. I first became aware of Covid in a professional capacity in a previous role, that of Chief Executive for a Health Board in Scotland. I was in this post prior to and at the start of Covid from April 2018 to December 2020.

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: _____ 17/10/2023 _____