

Witness Name: Adrian Crompton

Statement No: 1

Exhibits: 33

Dated: 30 August 2023

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ADRIAN CROMPTON

I, Adrian Crompton, will say as follows: -

1. I am the Auditor General for Wales. The Auditor General for Wales is a corporation sole with powers and duties to audit most Welsh public bodies, including the Welsh Government, Welsh NHS and local government bodies.
2. I was appointed on 21 July 2018 by Her Late Majesty the Queen on nomination by the then National Assembly for Wales (now Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru).
3. The Auditor General is supported by a separate legal entity, the Wales Audit Office, which takes the form of a board. The main duties of the Wales Audit Office are the provision of resources, including staff, for the Auditor General to undertake his/her powers and duties, and to monitor the exercise of his/her functions.
4. On a statutory basis (the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013), as Auditor General, I am the chief executive and accounting officer of the Wales Audit Office. The 2013 Act requires the board to consist of five non-executive members, one of whom is the chair of the board, who are appointed by the Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru, one employee member nominated by the Auditor General and two employee members elected by the employees of the Wales Audit Office.
5. With the Wales Audit Office, I have adopted the brand "Audit Wales" for the whole organisation for ease of reference in most circumstances. Audit Wales is, however, not a legal person, so in contexts such as this, where it is necessary to be clear about who exercises particular functions, I use the respective names given in statute.

The functions of the Auditor General for Wales: the annual audit of accounts

6. The main duties of the Auditor General are the annual auditing of the accounts of Welsh public bodies. In essence, as with private sector audit, this is a matter of examining records and testing systems so as to provide an opinion on whether the audited body's financial statements (its published accounts) provide a "true and fair" view of the financial affairs of the body.
7. Beyond this common feature, however, the particular statutory requirements for the audit of accounts varies between types of bodies.
8. In the case of Welsh central government bodies—the Welsh Government and its sponsored bodies, such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and other bodies such as His Majesty's Inspector of Training & Education Wales (styled Estyn) and the Senedd Commission—I must also give a "regularity opinion", i.e., state whether the body's expenditure has been incurred for the purposes intended, is lawful and in accordance with the authorities that govern it. (I am required to audit the Welsh Government by section 131 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. Most other Welsh central government bodies are audited under the legislation that establishes them. For example, NRW is audited under paragraph 23 of the Schedule to the Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) Order 2012.)
9. In the case of local government bodies, in addition to the "true and fair" opinion, I must also provide a statement as to whether I am satisfied that the body has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The statement is known in Wales as the "proper arrangements" conclusion. The equivalent in England is often called "the value for money (vfm) conclusion". (Welsh local government bodies' accounts are audited under Part 2 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. Local government includes unitary authorities, joint committees, community councils and particular purpose bodies, such as police and crime commissioners.)
10. In the case of NHS bodies, such as health boards, trusts and special health authorities, I must provide both a regularity opinion and a proper arrangements conclusion, as well as an opinion on the truth and fairness of the accounts. As a matter of practice (rather than statutory requirements), the work undertaken to support the proper arrangements conclusion in NHS bodies is called the "structured assessment". NHS bodies are audited under section 61 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.
11. There are some Welsh public bodies for which I do not have a function of auditing their accounts. Notable examples are bodies that are constituted as companies,

owned by Welsh Ministers and able to distribute profits—particularly Transport for Wales and the Development Bank for Wales.

Functions of the Auditor General: studies and examinations

12. As Auditor General, I have powers and duties to undertake various forms of studies and examinations of Welsh public bodies.
13. Section 135 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 gives me a power to examine the economy, efficiency and effectiveness (which together are usually referred to as “value for money”) with which resources “have been used in the discharge of functions”. There is similar provision for other central government and NHS bodies elsewhere in legislation.
14. Section 145A of the Government of Wales Act 1998 gives me powers to undertake studies of “relevant bodies” (i.e., all Welsh central government and NHS bodies) designed to enable recommendations for improving value for money, and other studies on the provision of services.
15. Somewhat similar provisions to those of section 145A of the 1998 Act are set out for studies of local government bodies in section 41 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. A key difference, however, is that studies designed to enable recommendations for improving value for money are an annual duty rather than a power.
16. I must also carry out examinations of bodies designated as “public bodies” under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to “assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle” when setting and pursuing their well-being objectives. (“Public bodies” under the 2015 Act encompasses most major Welsh public bodies, but there some notable exceptions, currently including the Ambulance Trust and Social Care Wales.) Acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle involves acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, including by taking account of the importance of long-term needs, taking an integrated approach, involving people, acting in collaboration and prevention. I must carry out such an examination of each public body at least once every five years.
17. With the main exception of studies of local government bodies under section 41 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, my study and examination functions include a power to lay reports before the Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru, which leads to their

publication and may lead to their consideration by the Public Accounts & Public Administration Committee of the Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru. In the case of section 41 study reports, I am required to publish such documents, but there is no provision for them to be laid before the Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru.

Independence and professional standards

18. So that people can rely on the objectivity of my and other auditors' work, professional standards (particularly the Revised Ethical Standard 2019 issued by the Financial Reporting Council) require auditors to be independent of the bodies that they audit. Section 8 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013 also supports my independence as Auditor General by providing that:

“The Auditor General has complete discretion as to the manner in which the functions of that office are exercised and is not subject to the direction or control of the National Assembly or the Welsh Government.”

19. Section 8, however, also makes the Auditor General's discretion subject to having regard to:

“the standards and principles that an expert professional provider of accounting or auditing services would be expected to follow”

20. And section 10 requires the Auditor General to issue and comply with a Code of Audit Practice setting out the manner in which his functions are to be exercised, which must:

“embody what appears to the Auditor General to be the best professional practice with respect to the standards, procedures and techniques to be adopted in carrying out functions.”

Other functions of the Auditor General

21. I have various other specific audit-related functions, including a power under Part 3A of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 to do data matching exercises, i.e., the comparison of data sets for the purposes of preventing or detecting fraud.
22. In addition, section 19 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013 empowers the Wales Audit Office to arrange with other public bodies for it, or for me, as Auditor General, to provide professional, technical or administrative services. In practice, however, professional independence requirements significantly restrict such arrangements, as

the Revised Ethical Standard prohibits the provision of most non-audit services to audited bodies.

23. I also have supplementary powers under section 9 of the 2013 Act to do things that “facilitate, or which are incidental or conducive to,” carrying out my functions. These powers enable me, for example, to publicise my work through press notices and social media.
24. I should note that among my functions, there is no power or duty to advise the Welsh Ministers or any other audited body. Such a function, or the use of my supplementary powers to provide advice, would be problematic given the need to protect audit independence and the Ethical Standard’s prohibition of most non-audit services.

The role and responsibilities of the Auditor General over the course of the pandemic

25. In the main, the statutory functions of the Auditor General remained unchanged over the course of the pandemic. With a commencement timetable starting on 21 January 2021, the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 repealed the duties of the Auditor General under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to assess arrangements to secure improvement in county and county borough councils and national park authorities. Secondary legislation made under that Act also created four new local government bodies—Corporate Joint Committees—requiring their accounts to be audited and engaging additional duties, including sustainable development examinations.
26. Of more widespread significance, given the pervading requirement to have regard to best professional practice, the coming into effect of the Financial Reporting Council’s Revised Ethical Standard 2019 on 15 March 2020 led to tightened restrictions on supplementary activities. In particular, the Ethical Standard prohibited, and continues to prohibit, most secondments of staff to audited bodies. The only exceptions are for trainees undertaking secondments of less than six months and other non-management staff undertaking secondments of less than three months, and which, in either case, do not involve exercising any management functions or any other prohibited service. This curtailed our ability to provide secondees to help the Welsh Government and other audited bodies to deal with the pandemic, though such secondments would have tended to have undermined audit independence even if the Standard’s prohibition had been absent.

The work of the Auditor General over the course of the pandemic

27. While my statutory functions did not change to any significant extent, lockdown requirements had significant practical implications for the exercise of my functions. The immediate need to change to remote home working created an initial hiatus, but my staff worked quickly and diligently to establish remote working links with audited bodies, such as remote electronic access to ledgers. In person meetings with audited body finance staff were replaced by Microsoft Teams calls and additional emails. After some initial disruption, the audits of accounts proceeded in substance largely as normal.
28. Through these efforts, I was generally able to perform my audit duties and provide timely reporting on accounts. For example, I reported at pages 99 to 104 of the *Welsh Government's Consolidated Accounts 2019-20*, 30 October 2020, (AGW/19 – INQ000214249) my qualification of those accounts, i.e. my opinion that they did not give a true and fair view. I came to this view on the grounds that the Welsh Government's announcements and actions taken prior to 31 March 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic to ensure that cash was paid to businesses as soon as possible created a constructive obligation, and that the related costs should have been included in the 2019-20 financial statements. The Welsh Government had the responsibility of managing the schemes, with payments to businesses being administered by local authorities. Had such costs been included, reported expenditure and provisions would have increased by £739 million.
29. I provided more detailed explanation of these matters in my *Commentary on the Welsh Government's Consolidated Accounts 2019-20* in November 2020 (AGW/20 – INQ000214248) and further coverage in my report on the following financial year at pages 172 and 178-182 of the *Welsh Government's Consolidated Accounts 2020-21*, August 2022 (AGW/21 – INQ000214250), which set out my qualified opinion on the 2020-21 accounts because they contained £0.7 billion of expenditure, that should have been included in the 2019-20 accounts (as set out above). I also referred to the effects of my qualification of the 2019-20 accounts in my report, *Covid-19 business support in 2020-21*, October 2022, (AGW/22 – INQ000214220).

Discretionary work completed during the first year of the pandemic

30. With discretionary work, such as studies undertaken under powers rather than duties, I adjusted my programme so as to give audited bodies sufficient space to deal with the crisis, particularly during 2020. I suspended publication of value for money examination and study reports until July 2020. I also adjusted the work programme

so as to give an appropriate focus on pandemic-related matters that presented risk to value for money and to be supportive of audited-bodies' efforts.

31. The first study reports that I published during 2020, while in large part concerning earlier work also addressed the early effects of the pandemic. For example, in *Rough Sleeping: Everyone's problem; no-one's responsibility*, July 2020 (AGW/29 – INQ000214237), I described how in the early weeks of the pandemic, the Welsh Government introduced emergency measures, including guidance to the shelter sector and an initial allocation of up to £10 million to local authorities to enable them to get rough sleepers off the streets and into accommodation. This helped local authorities to help over 800 people be housed as lockdown began. I noted the Welsh Government's desire to build on this response to change how public bodies approached homelessness in the long term and how in May 2020 Ministers announced new funding of up to £20 million to help ensure that no-one placed in emergency shelter during the crisis had to return to the streets or unsuitable accommodation. I noted that the Welsh Government required local authorities to draw up plans to help those in temporary accommodation to move to a longer-term home.
32. In *"Raising our Game": Tackling Fraud in Wales*, July 2020 (AGW/15 – INQ000214236), in a broad examination of themes for public bodies to focus on in tackling fraud, I set out some of the ways in which fraudsters had moved rapidly to exploit the pandemic. I noted some good practice in dealing with fraud risks, including in response to the pandemic, with, for example, the Welsh Government issuing a fraud risk bulletin early in April 2020 highlighting the emerging risks to the Welsh public sector.
33. In *Financial Sustainability of Local Government as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, October 2020 (AGW/23 – INQ000214225), I reported that councils and the Welsh Government worked well together to mitigate the impact of the pandemic but that the future sustainability of the sector was an ongoing challenge. I noted that the Local Government Hardship Fund made nearly £500 million available to support local government. (I reported further on the extent of Welsh Government financial support to local government in, *Financial Sustainability of Local Government COVID-19: Impact, Recovery and Future Challenges*, in September 2021, (AGW/30 – INQ000214226).)
34. My report, *Welsh Community Care Information System*, October 2020 (AGW/10 – INQ000214247), looked at delays in implementing that system, which had initially

intended to be in use by the end of 2018. I did, however, also note (at para 2.13) how the system had been used to support the pandemic response.

35. In *Doing it differently, doing it right?* January 2021 (AGW/3 –INQ000214222), I described how NHS bodies had revised their arrangements to enable lean, agile and rigorous governance. I found that NHS bodies had quickly adapted governance arrangements in line with their emergency plans and the Welsh Government guidance note “Discharging Board Committee Responsibilities during COVID19 response phase”.

Subsequent discretionary work covering key Welsh-Government decisions

36. Over the course of the pandemic, adjusting the discretionary work programme to give an appropriate focus to pandemic-related matters in terms of risk to value for money meant that I examined matters that are now relevant to the Inquiry. I did not, however, set out to specifically examine Welsh Government decision-making in relation to the pandemic as a matter in itself, but considered it in the course of the matters addressed in the work programme. Accordingly, I have not made any reports specifically on the subject of Welsh Government core political administrative decision-making in response to the pandemic *per se*, but I did cover important decisions in some of my reports, including in the following examples.
37. In *Test, Trace, Protect in Wales: An Overview of Progress to Date*, March 2021 (AGW/14 – INQ000214244), I found, among other things, that the TTP programme saw different parts of the Welsh public and third sector work together well. The TTP system in Wales had several strengths, such as blending national oversight and technical expertise with local and regional ownership of the programme, and the ability to use local intelligence and knowledge to shape responses.
38. In *Procuring and Supplying PPE for the Covid-19 Pandemic*, April 2021 (AGW/13 – INQ000214235), I focused on the national (Wales-wide) efforts to supply health and social care services in Wales, led by the Welsh Government, working with NHS Wales Shared Services (which provides a range of professional, technical and administrative services for NHS Wales) and local government. I found that in collaboration with other public services, Shared Services overcame early challenges to provide health and care bodies with the PPE required by guidance without running out of stock at a national level. But I also noted that some frontline staff had reported that they had experienced shortages of PPE and some felt they should have had a higher level of PPE than that required by guidance.

39. I found that the Welsh Government and Shared Services had put in place good arrangements overall to procure PPE, but that Shared Services did not publish contract award notices for all its PPE contracts within 30 days of them being let. I made several recommendations to the Welsh Government to address these findings.
40. In *A picture of Social Care*, October 2021 (AGW/11 – INQ000214234), I set out that from April 2020 to March 2021, the Welsh Government enabled councils to suspend assessments and plans under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. I also noted that between April 2020 and April 2021, Care Inspectorate Wales (which is the Welsh Ministers exercising regulatory functions) paused routine inspections and instead carried out 'check in calls' with service providers to maintain contact and provide support, undertaking physical inspections where deemed necessary to address safety and wellbeing concerns.
41. In *Taking care of the carers?* October 2021 (AGW/5 – INQ000214239), I found that all NHS bodies in Wales placed a strong focus on staff wellbeing throughout the crisis in line with their operational plans and Welsh Government guidance (WHC/2020/019). I found that all bodies introduced and promoted the use of the All-Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool, but completion rates across bodies varied (between 2% and 81% of staff). I recommended that the Welsh Government evaluate the national staff wellbeing services and programmes it commissioned during the pandemic to assess their impact and cost-effectiveness, and that it should evaluate the All-Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool in terms of its development, roll-out, and effectiveness.
42. In relation to operations of the Welsh Government itself, in *Welsh Government Workforce Planning and Management*, September 2022 (AGW/32 – INQ000214251), as well as looking at the historic context of Welsh Government workforce trends relevant to the pandemic capacity position, I noted the increases in staffing and stronger centralisation of decision-making in workforce planning in response to the pandemic.

Work covering the impact of the pandemic on healthcare in Wales

43. Several of my reports over the pandemic period and subsequently have looked at the impact of the pandemic on healthcare in Wales. Fairly early on following my resumption of discretionary study reporting, in *10 Opportunities for Resetting and Restarting the NHS Planned Care System*, September 2020, (AGW/2 – INQ000214218), I set out the substantial increases in waiting times and outlined how

there were opportunities to align the target and accountability regime of the planned care system with “what matters”.

44. In *Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee Governance Arrangements*, May 2021 (AGW/4 – INQ000214252), I noted an immediate challenge for the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) was to develop a clear strategy for recovering specialised services following the pandemic. I noted that during the height of the pandemic, WHSSC stood down service level agreement monitoring in line with the Welsh Government’s practice. Only essential specialised services were being delivered, and the WHSS team found it difficult to engage with both Welsh and English providers who were heavily focused on the pandemic. WHSS adopted a direct monitoring system, reviewing available performance data and challenging providers on the findings. Where they were able to engage with providers, they were able to negotiate the continuation of some services. Welsh Government officials told us of the additional capacity and capability they received from WHSSC planning officers to help drive review of health board and trust quarterly plans during the first wave of the pandemic.
45. My report, *A picture of Healthcare*, October 2021 (AGW/6 – INQ000214231), summarised key information on healthcare in Wales, including funding, performance and capacity. It set out issues such as whole system change being overdue, that learning from the Covid-19 response offered opportunities to overcome barriers to transformation, opportunities to better focus the health system in Wales around outcomes for patients and the wider population, and that transforming services at the same time as tackling backlogs and the ongoing Covid-19 response would be challenging.
46. In *Tackling the Planned Care Backlog in Wales*, May 2022 (AGW/7 – INQ000214238), I reviewed how NHS Wales was tackling the backlog of patients, which had been made much worse by Covid-19. I recommended that Welsh Government work with health bodies to set appropriate milestones and an accompanying plan with a clear funding strategy.
47. In *Orthopaedic Services in Wales: Tackling the Waiting List Backlog*, March 2023 (AGW/8 – INQ000214228), I noted that the already challenging pre-pandemic position had further deteriorated because of the impact of Covid-19 on planned care. I recommended that the Welsh Government prepare a clear national delivery plan to set out the priority actions to be taken over the next three to five years.

Work covering inequalities in terms of the impact of Covid-19

48. In terms of inequalities and the impact of Covid-19, in *Rollout of the vaccination programme in Wales*, June 2021 (AGW/9 – INQ000214245), among other things, I noted a need for a longer-term plan to address, among other things, uptake rates especially among hesitant groups, such as certain ethnic minorities.
49. In *A picture of local government*, September 2021 (AGW/24 – INQ000214232), I noted that the indirect impact of Covid-19 would further increase demand on local government services. I referred to the March 2021 Public Health Wales NHS Trust health equity report, which said that the pandemic had widened the socio-economic gap, exposed flaws in the housing system and caused educational disruption harming children in the intermediate and long-term.
50. In *A picture of schools*, October 2021 (AGW/25 – INQ000214233), I noted evidence of the pandemic increasing inequality in terms of learning, such as a widening the gap in attainment between those eligible for free school meals and others. I noted that the Welsh Government had committed some £370 million (at publication date) for schools and early years to recover from the pandemic and prepare for reforms but that the Education Policy Institute estimated that £600 million to £900 million could be needed over three years to support education recovery in Wales.

Work covering the Welsh Government's business and finance responses

51. In terms of the Welsh Government's business and finance responses, my report *Regenerating Town Centres in Wales*, September 2021 (AGW/16 – INQ000214243), set out that the Welsh Government and local government responded well to support town-centre businesses during Covid-19, with 90% of businesses applying for and receiving emergency funding to help them survive.
52. In *Third Sector Covid-19 Response Fund*, July 2022 (AGW/17 – INQ000214219), I looked at the £41.79 million allocated by Welsh Government through that Fund during 2020-21 and 2021-22. I considered, among other things, how it administered its support, and how it balanced requirements to ensure public funds were managed properly with the need to respond quickly.
53. In *National Fraud Initiative in Wales 2020-21*, October 2022 (AGW/18 – INQ000214241), I noted in relation to the Welsh Government's provision of grant funding through Welsh local authorities to support businesses that one such local authority had, on a voluntary basis, used our National Fraud Initiative tools to identify 41 cases of fraud and error in relation to such support, with a value of £575,000.

Work in relation to the care sector

54. In terms of the care sector, in *Direct Payments for Adult Social Care*, September 2022 (AGW/12 – INQ000214221), I noted that as with other frontline staff working in NHS or care settings, the pandemic had major effects on people providing care services organised under Direct Payments, especially Personal Assistants. I found that where a service could not continue due to Covid-19, most local authorities arranged alternative provision. Direct Payment managers noted difficulties in maintaining services, particularly lack of availability of Personal Assistants when people were self-isolating. Local government officers highlighted work to ensure social care staff were supported and equipped to work from home, but in our survey of people receiving Direct Payments 57% said that their local authority did not help source PPE for their care or support provider. Some service users and carers said that on occasion lack of PPE resulted in services being suspended. In addition, 40% of the Direct Payments recipients we surveyed said they had received no contact from their local authority specifically to check if they had any problems resulting from the lockdown and restrictions.

Work in relation to education

55. In *A picture of schools*, October 2021 (AGW/25 – INQ000214233), in addition to the equality-related matters that I have already mentioned, I noted that in the context of schools being closed in spring 2020 to all but the children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils that the Welsh Government provided digital equipment and worked with schools to provide remote learning, with guidance on its expectations in July 2020. I noted a report by the Education Policy Institute and Nuffield Foundation had found that the Welsh Government led the UK in providing digital equipment, but schools' provision of remote learning was variable. I also noted the Welsh Government's interventions in 2020 in relation to the absence of GCSE and A level exams in May/June 2020 and subsequent arrangements in 2021.

56. In *Providing Free School Meals During Lockdown: How councils responded to the challenge in the spring and summer of 2020*, November 2022 ((AGW/27 – INQ000214227), I mentioned that the Welsh Government made some £52 million of additional funding available to support provision of free school meals up to the end of the 2021 Easter holidays.

57. In *The New Curriculum for Wales*, May 2022 (AGW/28 – INQ000214240), I found that the pandemic affected schools' ability to plan for the implementation of a new curriculum, prompting the Welsh Government to offer secondary providers flexibility

to delay starting to teach the new curriculum until September 2023. I noted that despite the disruption, the pandemic led to some changes that benefitted the developing curriculum. For example, suspending the curriculum in 2020 allowed schools to be more experimental, resulting in schools giving priority to pupils' health and wellbeing, and improving teachers' and pupils' digital skills.

58. In *A picture of higher and further education*, October 2021 (AGW/26 – INQ000214230), I noted that in May 2020, as a response to the pandemic, that the Welsh Government published a Resilience Plan for the post-16 sector, which identified priority groups for support and planned co-ordination with schools. I also noted that the Welsh Government provided additional funding to support the FE and HE sectors: £23 million and £27 million respectively in July 2020, followed by an additional £95.5 million for HE later in 2020-21, of which £50 million was for student welfare services and students facing financial hardship, £1.5 million to provide work experience for recent graduates and £44 million for capital spending by universities.

Broader reviews of public services in relation to the pandemic

59. My report, *A picture of public services 2021*, September 2021 (AGW/31 – INQ000214229), summarised trends in public finances, including in response to Covid-19. I looked at how after a decade of squeezed budgets and rising demands, many services were already stretched before the pandemic. I also looked at how public services had had to adapt rapidly to the pandemic, including the Welsh Government allocating over £5 billion in 2020-21 in response. I noted how public services faced the need to manage the ongoing response to the pandemic and start to recover while adapting to new demands.
60. In *'Together We Can': Community resilience and self-reliance*, January 2023 (AGW/33 – INQ000214242), I examined how local authorities had changed ways of working to increase community resilience, not just in terms of the pandemic and future emergencies but also more broadly in tackling poverty. My report provided examples of local authorities' support for community self-help activities, such as the Pembrokeshire Community Hub.

Work on Wales' emergency preparedness, resilience and planning for a pandemic

61. While the Inquiry is already aware of it, for completeness I should mention that my predecessor published, *Civil Emergencies in Wales*, December 2012, (AGW/1 – INQ000203383), which set out that many of the arrangements to deliver the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 worked well, but the role of the Welsh Government was

unclear and that there were opportunities for increased efficiency in local delivery. My predecessor recommended that the Welsh Government work with the Cabinet Office to agree how to strengthen strategic oversight of the delivery of civil contingencies legislation in Wales.

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.

Personal Data

Signed: _____

30 August 2023

Dated: _____