

Witness Name: Lord Leigh of
Hurley

Statement No.:1

Exhibits:

Dated: 7/12/24

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF Lord Leigh of Hurley

I, Lord Leigh of Hurley, will say as follows: -

1. I am Lord Leigh of Hurley a Tory backbench Peer, Senior Treasurer of the Conservative Party and Senior Partner of Cavendish Corporate Finance LLP. I have not had any formal role in any procurement activities for either HM Government or any potential or actual supplier.
2. In view of my perceived relationship with HMG and Lord Feldman of Elstree I was contacted in early 2020 by several people and organisations who wanted me to introduce them to Lord Feldman or other appropriate officials. At the time there were lots of people who wanted to help and claimed to be able so to do, none I can find were seeking to go to the HPL other than the two listed and described below. Others were, I believe, picked up by the likes of the Treatment Taskforce or usual supply channels. Lord Feldman had been Chairman of the Party while I was Senior Treasurer, and our relationship was well known.
3. Lord Feldman and I talk regularly on a variety of matters and therefore I was aware of his role and was also aware of the HPL through Press reports. I understood that HMG had an urgent need of certain product and was seeking to source it in fierce competition to every other country in the world affected by Covid. I was aware that Lord Feldman had run a sizeable business involved in sourcing and was therefore well placed to assess opportunities.
4. I had no involvement whatsoever in the creation or running of HPL.
5. I never reached out to any supplier or potential supplier, I was only ever the recipient of requests. In every case I simply passed on the names with the information that they had sent me. I was not in a position to assess or advise on the credibility of any offer of help and did not in fact know which ones had been successful until I received the request for a witness statement in August 2024. Once the request had been passed on, I had no further involvement other than to ensure it had been properly received, as evidenced by the enclosed email traffic:INQ000520826

6. I was never offered and never sought and never received any direct or indirect benefit from any potential supplier in respect of HMG contracts. This applies to me, my family and any commercial organisations connected with me. Neither me nor any company I am connected with has received any fees or payments in respect to their contacting me or in respect to any other matters then or since that time, directly or indirectly.
7. Some potential suppliers engaged in further emails, but they quickly moved on to others as they realised I had no influence or involvement.
8. I did not at any time intervene in the process which was run by others.
9. I don't recall any suppliers I refused to pass on although it is possible some conversations did not lead to any further action.
10. There were 2 suppliers who were awarded contracts so I will deal with each in turn.
11. Skinnydip is a fashion accessories and related products supplier. The CEO Leon Blitz, who I knew through some charity work and business networking, contacted me on 20 March as his firm was supplying retailers such as Boots with hand sanitizers and he felt he could source them for HMG.
12. As the email traffic shows I introduced him to Lord Feldman although it took a little time to engage and the last email I had on the subject was on 28 March. There was no further discussion about this matter thereafter. I was not aware that Skinnydip had been successful. The documents relating to this matter are found at INQ00050302/303/306-309
13. The other supplier was Mazima Markets. I was approached by Majid Sadjadi of Rostrum Capital on 28th March. I had first met him in 1987 when we both worked for what was then Deloitte Haskins + Sells in their Corporate Finance department. We have had limited contact since then and have not worked together on any transaction or had any commercial relationship. The name Mazima Markets was never mentioned but I know he was active in financing international transactions. He advised me that his medical business was supplying the USA with large volumes of urgent "Crono – 19 " supplies and that these could be similarly supplied to HMG. I asked for more details which he supplied and then passed him on to Lord Feldman. I wasn't aware that his company had been successful, and the subject was never discussed again. The documents relating to this matter are INQ000503297-301

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: _____

7/12/24