1	Monday, 12 May 2025	1	"mute" or exit the live stream.
2	(10.30 am)	2	After the film has been played, we shall reassemble
3	Opening remarks by THE CHAIR	3	and Sophie Cartwright King's Counsel, Counsel to the
4	LADY HALLETT: Good morning.	4	Inquiry, will begin her opening submissions. She will
5	Today we begin the public hearings into Module 7,	5	set the scene, provide some background, and explain the
6	investigating the test, trace and isolate policies of	6	issues we shall be examining in this module in more
7	the United Kingdom Government, the Scottish Government,	7	detail.
8	the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.	8	Very well. Play the film, please.
9	The hearings will last for three weeks, and	9	(Impact film was played)
10	41 witnesses will be called to give oral evidence. As	10	LADY HALLETT: Thank you. I don't know if anyone did leav
11	ever, we have a lot to get through in a short time so	11	I think maybe one bereaved left.
12	l shall keep my remarks brief.	12	Ms Cartwright.
13	In all our modules we start the hearings with an	13	Opening statement by LEAD COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
14	impact film to remind everyone why we're here. I'm very	14	MODULE 7
15	grateful to all those who have contributed to making the	15	MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.
16	films. I understand how difficult it must have been for	16	My Lady, the impact films that are shown at the
17	them.	17	beginning of each module are just one of the ways in
18	As with the previous impact films, this one is	18	which the Inquiry ensures a wide range of accounts are
19	extremely moving, and the contributors refer to	19	heard. On behalf of Module 7 we thank all of those who
20	sensitive topics such as bereavement and end-of-life	20	contributed to the extremely moving impact film we've
20 21	care. There will be those who will find it too	20	just watched.
21 22	distressing to watch. I will pause in a moment to allow	21	The last of those who told their stories on the
		22	
23	those who are in the hearing room who wish to do so to		video, Hazel, Hazel Gray, who lost both parents within
24 25	leave, for the length of the film, which is just over	24 25	just over a month of each other, will give further impact evidence on behalf of Covid Bereaved Families f
20	20 minutes, and those who are following online to press 1	25	2
1	Justice Northern Ireland tomorrow, followed by impact	1	I'll now abbreviate to TTI, that echo those described on
2	evidence from Nicola Boyle on behalf of Scottish Covid	2	the impact film as to structural injustices,
3	Bereaved.	3	marginalisation and barriers and issues of
4	This afternoon we will hear impact evidence from	4	accessibility.
5	Professor Fulop, on behalf of Covid Bereaved Families	5	My Lady, I will quote just four examples at the
6	for Justice UK, and Anna-Louise Marsh-Rees for Covid	6	outset and again, as within the impact videos, some of
7	Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru.	7	the content of these four accounts, some may find
8	Turning then to deal with Every Story Matters	8	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	records. The Module 7 Every Story Matters record	8 9	distressing.
9			A clinically vulnerable person stated:
10	analyses and brings together 44,775 stories submitted	10	"When information came to light about government
11	online and 340 people's stories shared during research	11	scandals and people were getting tired of strict
12	interviews and group discussions.	12	isolation rules, I think that's when it got to a stage
13	We are grateful to the individuals, groups and	13	where people started rebelling and people started sayin
14	organisations who have given us feedback, ideas and	14	no, enough's enough. I think it got to a stage, I'll be
15	helped us to hear from a wide range of people. They	15	totally honest with you, people were going, Do you know
16	include FEMHO, the TUC, Long Covid Kids, Long Covid	16	what? If I'm going to die, I'm going to die with all my
17	Scotland, Long Covid SOS, Long Covid Support, Clinically	17	family around me.'"
18	Vulnerable Families, SignHealth, and the Royal National	18	A domestic abuse survivor stated:
19	Institute of Blind People.	19	"I self-isolated for myself for 11 days. Isolation
20	My Lady, may I formally seek your permission to	20	is really hard compared to anything, you know. Taking
21	adduce the record into evidence and to be published?	21	tests is even okay. You know going to hospital is okay,
22	LADY HALLETT: It may be published. Thank you.	22	but isolating yourself away from everybody is not okay,
23	MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, my Lady.	23	because you know you can't live without talking to,
24	Contributors to the Every Story Matters record	24	without looking at anybody, without talking."
25	describe experiences of test, trace and isolate, which	25	From a carer:
	3		4

(1) Pages 1 - 4

1	"I suppose that if you did have to isolate you would
2	still get paid rather than there's an awful lot of
3	people in industry that don't have sick pay, so you're
4	having to isolate for whatever reason, they just weren't
5	paid for two weeks."
6	And finally from another Every Story Matters
7	contributor:
8	"I remember people saying, 'I can't test because if
9	I test and I'm positive, I can't work, and if I can't
10	work, I can't support my family'. You can understand
11	them making those choices, rightly or wrongly. You can
12	understand, they've got to provide for their family."
13	My Lady, having made those few introductory remarks,
14	may I introduce those who appear before you.
15	The representation of the Core Participants in no
16	particular order are the following: Covid Bereaved
17	Families for Justice UK represented by Mr Weatherby
18	King's Counsel; Northern Ireland Covid-19 Bereaved
19	Families for Justice, represented by Mr Wilcock King's
20	Counsel; Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru
21	represented by Ms Parsons; the Federation of Ethnic
22	Minority Healthcare Organisations represented by
23	Mr Thomas King's Counsel; the Trades Union Congress
24	represented by Mr Jacobs; the Cabinet Office by
25	Mr Strachan King's Counsel; the Department of Health and 5

1 cooperate with the requests made by the Module 7 Inquiry 2 legal team, and the competing demands caused by the 3 module and nature of this Inquiry. 190 witnesses, 4 including many organisations, have provided statements 5 and as you've already said, my Lady, 41 of them will 6 give oral evidence over the next three weeks. 7 We are grateful to each and every person or 8 organisation for their contribution to Module 7's 9 substantial amount of evidence, especially to those who 10 have contributed and/or will contribute to other 11 modules. 12 My Lady, when you opened the Module 2 main evidence 13 hearings on 3 October 2023 you said as follows: 14 "The need for me to reach conclusions and make 15 recommendations to reduce suffering in the future, when 16 the next pandemic hits the UK is pressing. I say 'when 17 the next pandemic hits the UK' because the evidence in 18 Module 1 suggested it is not if another pandemic will 19 hit us, but when. The more witnesses we call in any 20 module and the longer the hearing takes, the greater the 21 delay in making recommendations, and the greater the 22 delay in hearing other important modules investigating, 23 for example, care homes and children and young people." 24 Module 7 is grateful for the care and thought that 25 has clearly gone into the witness statements and 7

1	Social Care represented by Mr Stein King's Counsel; the
2	Northern Ireland Department of Health represented by
3	Ms Murnaghan King's Counsel; the Welsh Government
4	represented by Mr Kinnier; Local Government Association
5	and the Welsh Local Government Association represented
6	by Ms Stober; the Department of Education represented by
7	Ms Ward King's Counsel; the Chancellor of the Duchy of
8	Lancaster represented by Mr James Strachan King's
9	Counsel; the Department for Transport represented by
10	Mr Glason King's Counsel; His Majesty's Treasury
11	represented by Mr Block King's Counsel; UKHSA
12	represented by Mr Rawat King's Counsel; Baroness Arlene
13	Foster of Aghadrumsee and Paul Givan represented by
14	Ms Ellison; Ms Michelle O'Neill MLA, the First Minister
15	of the Northern Ireland Executive represented by
16	Ms Quinlivan King's Counsel; NHS National Services
17	Scotland and Public Health Scotland both represented by
18	Mr McConnell King's Counsel; Scottish Health Boards
19	represented by Mr Pugh; Public Health Wales represented
20	by Ms Powell King's Counsel; NHS England represented by
21	Mrs Crabtree; and the Scottish Ministers represented by
22	Ms Drysdale King's Counsel.
23	Module 7 has been particularly conscious, during the
24	preparations for these hearings, of just how hard all of
25	the legal teams and witnesses have been working to
	6
	6
1	submissions that have been provided. Core Participants
2	submissions that have been provided. Core Participants and a great many witnesses, informed by significant
2 3	submissions that have been provided. Core Participants and a great many witnesses, informed by significant expertise, with relevant knowledge and experience of
2 3 4	submissions that have been provided. Core Participants and a great many witnesses, informed by significant expertise, with relevant knowledge and experience of matters relating to the system of test, trace and
2 3 4 5	submissions that have been provided. Core Participants and a great many witnesses, informed by significant expertise, with relevant knowledge and experience of matters relating to the system of test, trace and isolate, have provided insightful comments as to the
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- 22 equalities, private suppliers, societies, associations
- and academic institutions, SAGE and Independent SAGE
- 24 scientists, and data and statistics.
- 25 My Lady, you have stated your commitment in meeting 8

entire Inquiry.

outbreak."

view that:

three weeks.

Thank you.

and Protect (Northern Ireland).

Module 1 report you stated:

My Lady, your observations of the need to make recommendations as soon as possible was never more prescient. Nearly five years ago, in May 2020, separate TTI strategies began to be launched across the four nations of the United Kingdom. My Lady, within your

"The building blocks and essential structure of the test and trace systems established by the UK Government and devolved administrations during the pandemic should be maintained so that these systems can be rapidly restored and adapted for use in the event of a future

Lord Bethell, Minister for Technology, Innovation

"The work of this module is of critical importance,

three years we have gone backwards, not forwards. The diagnostic infrastructure is dismantled. The data spine is closed down. The UK diagnostic infrastructure has 10

My Lady, could I very briefly display on the screen the outline of scope for Module 7, which is well known to you, my Lady, and all of those in the hearing room.

The outline of scope for Module 7 states that it will look at and make recommendations on the approach to

And again, in high-level summary, my Lady, this module considers the policies and strategies developed, decisions made by key bodies, the availability, use and effectiveness of different test, trace and isolate technologies, the structure of the test, trace and

12

testing, tracing and isolation adopted during the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, from January 2020 until 28 June 2022. This includes Test and Protect (Scotland), Test and Trace (England), Test, Trace, Protect (Wales), and Test, Trace

and Life Sciences, and who had junior ministerial responsibility for the establishment of TTI, and from whom we will hear evidence in week 2, in his statement for Module 7 dated 16 April of this year, provides his

possibly the most important module for our future response to the pandemic. Because in the last

with a three-minute delay. This provides the opportunity for the feed to be paused if anything unexpected is aired which it should not be, and we do not expect that to arise over the course of today, but I mention it so that those who are following proceedings from further afield can understand the reason for any such short delay during the course of Module 7's next

1	the aims of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to investigate the	1
2	unequal impact of the pandemic on different categories	2
3	of people across the UK, including but not limited to,	3
4	those with protected characteristics under the Equality	4
5	Act 2010 and equality categories under the Northern	5
6	Ireland Act 1998.	6
7	My Lady, you've been absolutely clear that the vital	7
8	issue of the impact of the pandemic and the response to	8
9	it on at-risk or vulnerable people or marginalised	9
10	people and on ethnic minority groups has been at the	10
11	heart of the Inquiry since its inception.	11
12	Module 7 has asked all witnesses to provide relevant	12
13	evidence of that, which is outlined in the Inquiry's	13
14	equalities and human rights statements. Namely, did	14
15	decision makers consider the impact of policy decisions	15
16	on each of these groups? And were the decisions taken	16
17	as a result adequate in mitigating the impact of the	17
18	pandemic on these groups?	18
19	It has been said by a number of witnesses and was	19
20	said to you in the written submissions of Covid Bereaved	20
21	Families for Justice UK prepared for the first	21
22	preliminary hearing of Module 7 in June 2024 and	22
23	repeated in the number of written submissions you have	23
24	received, my Lady, for this hearing, that the work of	24
25	Module 7 was one of the most critical modules in the	25
	9	
1	reverted to a small-scale, under capitalised,	1
2	science-led cottage industry. Our public health	2
3	infrastructure, particularly the local representation,	3
4	is weaker than ever. There is little surveillance of	4
5	domestic or foreign pathogens and the social habits	5
6	around home testing and regular health screening have	6
7	gone backwards."	7
8	My Lady, in the words of Anna, who we saw on the	8
9	impact video, who was working in a testing laboratory,	9
10	TTI capacity needs to be resourced, and we can't run on	10
11	the fumes forever.	11
12	My Lady, a brief observation on the practicalities	12
13	of this hearing and all of the hearings over the next	13
14	three weeks: Module 7 hearings over the next three weeks	14
15	are being recorded and live streamed to other locations.	15
16	This allows the hearing to be followed by a greater	16
17	number of people than would be able to be accommodated	17
18	within this hearing room.	18
19	My Lady, as you well know it goes a considerable way	19
20	to satisfying the obligations set out in section 18 of	20
21	the Inquiries Act to take such steps as you consider	21
22	reasonable to ensure that members of the public are able	22
23	to attend or see and hear a simultaneous transmission of	23
24	these proceedings.	24
25	The broadcasting of this hearing will be conducted 11	25
	11	

11

(3) Pages 9 - 12

How effectively were the adopted policies and strategies communicated to the general public?

How did available data and strategies or expert advice inform the development of the policies and

How effectively was technology used in the rollout of the test, trace and isolate system? How effective was contact tracing? And did it adequately utilise

How effective were the tools in place for enforcing

Were appropriate steps taken to support people to

My Lady, a more detailed list of the issues in Module 7 has been shared with the Core Participants. My Lady, I will now provide a brief summary of some of the facts which are by no means exhaustive, but I'm simply going to try and pick out some of the things that provide some of the foundation for the thematic issues.

United Kingdom Government and the devolved

administrations in Scotland. Wales and Northern Ireland with an unprecedented challenge in respect of testing 14

My Lady, this is a high-level summary of test, trace and isolate across the United Kingdom in response to the pandemic. My Lady, I'll display it for a little time as I continue. It will then be taken down but a lot of the dates that form part of my summary are from this summary, but I won't keep asking for it to be displayed. But essentially these are the dates that are being used

Developing diagnostic tests is an urgent priority for the international community once a novel infectious disease emerges. The same was true for Covid-19. In January 2020, just after the publication of the first

genetic sequences of SARS-CoV-2, researchers used the

The coronavirus Covid-19 testing programme was developed during the pandemic. You have already heard evidence pertaining to preparedness in Module 1 and published your findings in your Module 1 report on resilience and preparedness of the UK in July 2024. Within that report you found there was a damaging absence of focus on the measures, interventions and infrastructure required in the event of a pandemic. In particular, a system that could be scaled up to test, trace and isolate in the event of a pandemic.

16

data to build molecular tests for the virus.

Finally, what recommendations can be made for future

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic presented the

strategies?

pandemics?

for this opening.

existing and local infrastructure?

comply with test, trace and isolate?

and monitoring isolation?

1	isolate system and the cost, enforcement, financial and	1
2	practical support to those required to isolate, and the	2
3	availability and use of data in decision making. And	3
4	finally, by way of the fifth paragraph and perhaps of	4
5	significant importance, the preservation of	5
6	infrastructure, capacity, and research to improve and	6
7	develop test, trace and isolate schemes for future	7
8	pandemics.	8
9	Some of the questions that the Inquiry and Module 7	9
10	will be exploring in the evidence include sorry, that	10
11	can be removed from the screen, thank you what	11
12	policies and strategies for test, trace and isolate were	12
13	developed and deployed between January 2020 and	13
14	June 2020 in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern	14
15	Ireland, and how did they vary across the four nations.	15
16	Were the policies and strategies deployed effective	16
17	at meeting their stated objectives? Were the strategies	17
18	and policies adopted developed with sufficient knowledge	18
19	and regard had to asymptomatic transmission?	19
20	Did the development of the overarching strategies	20
21	and policies take account of the Public Sector Equality	21
22	Duty? And how effective were any steps taken to	22
23	mitigate unequal impacts on the general population	23
24	across the United Kingdom and in particular, vulnerable	24
25	groups?	25
	13	
1	strategy and the structure and response. The response	1
2	to the Covid-19 pandemic required the expertise,	2
3	knowledge and research of medical clinicians and the	3
4	scientific community, including from specialists in	4
5	infectious disease, virology, pathology, the	5
6	microbiology community, epidemiologists, modellers,	6
7	statisticians, behaviourists, and public health to	7
8	inform decision making.	8
9	The devolved nations of the United Kingdom have	9
10	authority and responsibility for public health in their	10
11	own jurisdiction, and Module 7 provides an opportunity	11
12	to examine the coordination between the devolved nations	12
13	and Westminster to achieve an effective test, trace and	13
14	isolate response.	14
15	We will need to consider the full range of	15
16	circumstances when designing a shared testing system.	16
17	Data and health systems differ across the four nations.	17
18	— <i>и</i> – и – и – и – и – и – и – и – и – и –	4.0
	Testing policy and delivery is complex, with multiple	18
19	l esting policy and delivery is complex, with multiple interacting systems and needs and the need to work	18 19
19	interacting systems and needs and the need to work	19
19 20	interacting systems and needs and the need to work collectively with colleagues from across the	19 20
19 20 21	interacting systems and needs and the need to work collectively with colleagues from across the United Kingdom, across the relevant sectors or	19 20 21
19 20 21 22	interacting systems and needs and the need to work collectively with colleagues from across the United Kingdom, across the relevant sectors or organisations involved, and while enabling appropriate	19 20 21 22

15

Module 7 will focus on the development of TTI and

(4) Pages 13 - 16

1	the timing of that development in response to the	1	able to develop a specific PCR test for Covid-19 without
2	Covid-19 pandemic.	2	any biological virus material.
3	During the pandemic, a number of types of Covid-19	3	Public Health England as it then was in 2020 was an
4	tests were used. These were initially the reverse	4	executive agency of the Department of Health and Social
5	transcription polymerase chain reaction tests, more	5	Care until it was replaced by the UK Health Security
6	commonly known as PCR tests, which were developed early	6	Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
7	in the pandemic in the UK with tests available in small	7	in October 2021.
8	numbers from January 2020.	8	It was responsible for all aspects of public health.
9	Later tests include the rapid antigen or lateral	9	The PHE assay was available and in use from
10	flow device, LFD, an antibody blood test. Other testing	10	21 January 2020, and the methodology was shared publicly
11	methods including reverse-transcription loop-mediated	11	on 23 January 2020. Testing had been among the topics
12	isothermal amplification, RT LAMP, and other testing	12	discussed at a precautionary Scientific Advisory Group
13	functions were also explored, such as wastewater	13	for Emergencies (SAGE) meeting on 22 January 2020.
14	testing.	14	My Lady, you've heard much about the SAGE
15	Work to develop testing capabilities began as soon	15	organisation and its subgroups but for a moment can
16	as the genetic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 was published in	16	I briefly display an organogram of SAGE and its
17	January 2020 and the work-up of a new PCR diagnostic	17	subgroups, please. INQ000587458.
18	test was commenced.	18	My Lady, it needs no introduction to yourself but it
19	China released the first viral genome sequence on	19	might assist those following.
20	10 January 2020, and on 12 January 2020 deposited four	20	The minutes noted that the UK was "days away from
21	further genomes in the viral sequence database curated	21	a specific test, which is scalable across the UK in
22	by the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data.	22	weeks. The sensitivity of the test", it was said in
23	Using this genome sequence and information from	23	that meeting of 22 January, "is currently unknown.
24	related viruses, Public Health England, in collaboration	24	There are conflicting reports of the sensitivity of
25	with lab partners in Europe, the UK and Hong Kong, were 17	25	diagnostic tests from upper respiratory tract sampling", 18
1	and SAGE agreed that the criteria proposed by DHSC and	1	government constitutes and industry, began on
2	PHE for testing "potentially infected individuals" were	2	17 February 2020 as soon as the material was available,
3	appropriate, namely, those presenting with symptoms of	3	supporting the development of commercial diagnostic
4	what was then being called WN-CoV, and a history of	4	assays and wider capability.
5	travelling to or living in Wuhan in the 14 days prior to	5	At this point there were still challenges relating
6	the symptom onset.	6	to how the SARS-CoV-2 virus could be handled. The
7	By 28 January 2020, SAGE had confirmed that a PCR	7	Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens, ACDP, sets
8	test would be available within days. This was initially	8	the classification of biological agents according to
9	limited to 400 to 500 tests per day.	9	their level of risk of infection to humans.
10	Throughout the initial phase, the decisions taken by	10	Biological agents are categorised into four hazard
11	the DHSC and PHE were supported by advice from SAGE,	11	groups from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest.
12	Scientific Pandemic Infections Group on Modelling,	12	Categorisation allows for measures to be put in place to
13	SPI-M, Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours,	13	control substances that are hazardous to health.
14	and the available data at the time.	14	In January and February 2020, laboratory work on
15	That can be taken down, please.	15	SARS-CoV-2 was being done at containment level 3, one
15 16	That can be taken down, please. The Public Health England assay was used at the PHE	15 16	SARS-CoV-2 was being done at containment level 3, one step down from the highest containment level.
15 16 17	That can be taken down, please. The Public Health England assay was used at the PHE Colindale laboratory to diagnose the first case in	15 16 17	SARS-CoV-2 was being done at containment level 3, one step down from the highest containment level. On 13 February 2020, the Advisory Committee on
15 16 17 18	That can be taken down, please. The Public Health England assay was used at the PHE Colindale laboratory to diagnose the first case in England on 31 January 2020.	15 16 17 18	SARS-CoV-2 was being done at containment level 3, one step down from the highest containment level. On 13 February 2020, the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens provisionally classified SARS-CoV-2
15 16 17 18 19	That can be taken down, please. The Public Health England assay was used at the PHE Colindale laboratory to diagnose the first case in England on 31 January 2020. PHE isolated and grew the SARS-CoV-2 virus from the	15 16 17 18 19	SARS-CoV-2 was being done at containment level 3, one step down from the highest containment level. On 13 February 2020, the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens provisionally classified SARS-CoV-2 as a containment level 3 pathogen. This meant that
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1	Covid-19.	1	The addition of NHS labs in all 29 pathology regions
2	The need to work at commitment level 3 was a break	2	was predicted to add an additional 3,000 to 4,000 tests,
3	on the expansion of testing. On 28 February 2020, PHE,	3	giving a total of 7,100 to 8,000 tests per day.
4	through the Health and Safety Executive, formally asked	4	Throughout this period, Public Health England had
5	the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens for	5	been working with large-scale diagnostic manufacturers
6	permission for testing to be carried out at a lower	6	to develop scalable diagnostic tests.
7	level of containment, provided certain conditions could	7	My Lady, you may recall that, in Module 3, you asked
8	be met to ensure safety.	8	Sir Chris Wormwald if the UK had the necessary
9	On 1 March 2020, the Health and Safety Executive and	9	infrastructure to be able to put into place swiftly
10	ACDP agreed to a PHE recommendation that work on the	10	a scaled-up system of test and trace.
11	virus could be done at that lower containment level	11	Module 7 will fully explore this issue.
12	of 2, on the condition that appropriate controls were	12	On 12 March 2020 the risk level to the
13	put in place at testing laboratories.	13	United Kingdom was raised from moderate to high as
14	This decision meant that PCR tests could now be	14	a consequence of the increase in transmission.
15	processed more widely across the National Health	15	The Inquiry is now well aware, from the work of
16	Service, universities, and commercial laboratories,	16	earlier modules, that widespread testing and contact
17	giving more options for increasing testing capacity,	17	tracing stopped on 12 March 2020.
18	ultimately allowing for a significantly increased level	18	Testing is a vital tool in responding to a pandemic,
19	of community testing.	19	yet the Government for the United Kingdom abandoned
20	On 8 March 2020, Public Health England reported to	20	community testing at this early stage of the pandemic.
21	the Secretary of State for Health that the current	21	At COBR, on 12 March 2020, Professor Whitty stated
22	testing capacity within PHE was 2,100 tests per day. It	22	that:
23	was predicted that with the addition of a first phase of	23	"Once the policy of seven days self-isolation was in
24	NHS laboratories, the capacity would increase to	24	place, the plan would be to stop all testing of people
25	4,500 tests per day over the next four weeks.	25	entering into self-isolation and to stop all contact
1	tracing from other geographical areas."	1	needs to be seen in the context of the announcement on
1 2	tracing from other geographical areas." Before the Covid-19 pandemic, PHE and NHS contact	1 2	needs to be seen in the context of the announcement on 16 March 2020 of the Director General of the World
2	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, PHE and NHS contact	2	16 March 2020 of the Director General of the World
2 3	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, PHE and NHS contact tracing systems were designed to respond to outbreaks	2 3	16 March 2020 of the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus stating that:
2 3 4	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, PHE and NHS contact tracing systems were designed to respond to outbreaks and incidents, including those of national and	2 3 4	16 March 2020 of the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus stating that: "We have a simple message to all countries: test,
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1	from PHE, Public Health England. The Inquiry will	1	can
2	examine in detail what followed. On 23 March 2020, the	2	me
3	first nationwide lockdown was announced.	3	trac
4	Until May 2020, only those hospitalised or included	4	lade
5	within specific outbreaks were tested, and at that point	5	insı
6	all symptomatic individuals became eligible for testing.	6	avo
7	Statistics from DHSC indicated that by 23 March the	7	
8	number of cases verified by a positive test in the UK	8	the
9	was 6,650, with 77,295 negative tests.	9	
10	Estimates from the First Few 100 study and the	10	
11	Covid-19 Hospitalisation in England Surveillance System	11	ING
12	showed the true number to be in the region of 500,000,	12	
13	with over 100,000 of those infections occurring on the	13	intr
14	day that lockdown began.	14	gra
15	New cases were doubling approximately every	15	for
16	2.8 days.	16	self
17	Priorities for testing of health care workers and	17	
18	frontline workers will be explored in Module [7].	18	Sep
19	Could I ask, please, to be displayed INQ000587459.	19	Gra
20	My Lady, it has been said that to implement	20	Sup
21	effective test, trace, isolate and support systems, or	21	
22	to "win the game", countries must ensure that those with	22	sch
23	Covid-19 progress as quickly as possible from the start	23	of t
24	to the finish. If this does not happen, new cases will	24	nat
25	appear and another lockdown will be needed. Countries 25	25	
1	PHE continue to lead work to develop an expanded contact	1	to t
2	tracing system, including continuing to develop the	2	
3	contact tracing and advice service system for	3	laui
4	implementation once wider testing was available, CTAS.	4	test
5	The Contact Tracing and Advice Service worked with	5	
6	a digital tool in February 2020 to help manage the	6	the
7	increasing demand for contact tracing. Contact Tracing	7	pro
8	and Advice Service enabled PHE to contact confirmed and	8	ope
9	possible cases of Covid-19, their contacts and returning	9	and
10	travellers, to complete contact tracing.	10	pro
11	Cases and contacts were directed to a web-based form	11	mili
12	to answer contact tracing questions and, where	12	
13	straightforward, they could complete the contact tracing	13	esta
14	journey through CTAS which provided advice on	14	
15	self-isolation as required. This formed a part of	15	Mr
16	a broader programme of work for which DHSC was	16	by t
17	responsible, including the National Testing Programme,	17	
18	as part of the United Kingdom Government's test, trace	18	larg
19	and isolate strategy.	19	Eur
20	In April 2020, the Department of Health and Social	20	Sir
21	Care created the National Testing Programme as part of	21	wee
22	the government's ambition to scale up testing capacity	22	intr
23	and distribute tests more widely through a phased	23	pric
24	approach beginning with patients, NHS workers and their	24	des
25	families, other critical key workers, and then expanding	25	fror

27

an do this most effectively by putting in place easures that enhance the availability to find, test, ace, isolate and support -- that is, landing on dders -- and by avoiding setbacks that occur due to sufficient capacity in the health system and beyond -oiding snakes. My Lady, we will look at this snakes and ladders and e approach with Professor McKee tomorrow. That can be taken down, please. Could I ask again for the chronology to be displayed Q000587455. My Lady, on 25 March 2020, Northern Ireland troduced the Discretionary Support self-isolation ant, the expert report from Professor Machin provided Module 7 provides a detailed analysis of elf-isolation support schemes developed over time. Test and trace support in England was introduced in eptember 2020. In Scotland, the Self-Isolation Support rant in October 2020, and in Wales. Self-Isolation upport Scheme in November 2020. Module 7 will examine how the isolation support hemes operated, and the effectiveness of these as part the system of test, trace and isolate across the four ations Continuing with the chronology, from 25 March 2020. 26 the wider community over time. In April 2020 the government's testing strategy was unched, linked to the opening of the first Lighthouse sting laboratory. The National Testing Programme, NTP, refers to both e programme and the unit charged with delivering that ogramme. The National Testing Programme initially perated within the Department of Health and Social Care nd brought together supply chain, logistics and ocurement expertise from across government, the ilitary and private sector. It was integrated into the TTI strategies upon their stablishment in May 2020 across the four nations. My Lady, as you're well aware, on 2 April 2020 Hancock set the target of running 100,000 tests a day the end of April. The Francis Crick Institute. "the Crick", is the rgest biomedical research institute under one roof in urope. The Inquiry will hear evidence from r Paul Nurse, the Crick director, on Thursday this eek, that this large-scale big-ships approach

2 introduced by the Lighthouse laboratory new scheme was

- 23 prioritised and the little boats approach ignored,
- 24 despite the suggestions of Crick scientists and others
- 25 from universities and laboratories with testing

1	facilities who were available and ready to support
2	complementary small-scale efforts throughout the country
3	in the provision of PCR testing, and with the equipment,
4	skills and expertise.
5	In a statement provided to Module 7 from the Royal
6	College of Pathologists, it is detailed how many NHS
7	clinical diagnostic laboratories, and also universities,
8	could have had capacity to carry out more testing than
9	they did, but testing was outsourced to private
10	laboratories which were not all subject to the same high
11	pre-symptomatic, asymptomatic and post-symptomatic
12	transmission of SARS-CoV-2 joint British Infection
13	Association, Healthcare Infection Society, and the
14	Infection Prevention Society and Royal College
15	of Pathologists guidance standards of quality assurance
16	routine in NHS laboratories.
17	The Royal College of Pathologists provide the view
18	that use of existing clinical laboratories and of
19	university laboratories and their skilled staff would
20	have been much more financially efficient and that there
21	was a missed opportunity to invest this resource in
22	equipment and infrastructure for existing NHS labs, with
23	huge resources going to temporary, often lower-quality,
24	facilities in the private sector instead.
25	The government strategy was to support Lighthouse
	29
1	capacity itself was not used universities would have
1 2	capacity itself was not used universities would have been well placed to support reagent production."
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2 3	been well placed to support reagent production." My Lady, that quote from the Microbiology Society
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laboratories and not smaller local, more agile testing.
It is still unclear and will be investigated by Module 7
who proposed this approach, who approved it, and why
full consideration was not given to more local
small-scale efforts which could have been put in place
more rapidly.
Similarly, a statement provided to Module 7 from the
Microbiology Society records:
"The Society believes that the Government did not
sufficiently engage with universities and research
institutes to understand their capacity and ability to
support in the scaling up of testing, despite offers
from the Society and its members. When Mr Hancock
announced the five pillars of testing, including the
intention to develop a UK-wide diagnostic
infrastructure, frustration was felt at the delay, for
the community was willing and prepared to support.
However, a lack of clarity on how to help and a lack of
support by the Government on local testing systems to
overcome the lack of communication between NHS and other
laboratories meant that there was still significant
capacity wastage by the autumn of 2020.
"The Society further does not understand why the
Government did not consider capacity in universities for
the development of reagents, even if the diagnostic
30
diagnostics industry substantially and to rapidly create
a new mass testing capacity. This relied heavily on the
introduction of lateral flow device tests which were
developed, tested and trialled during mid-2020 and
introduced for use in the National Testing Programme in
00
late 2020.
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specialists and other specialist stakeholders.

(8) Pages 29 - 32

1	The first such laboratory was set up in Milton	1	It is clear that from the middle of March 2020 the
2	Keynes, followed by laboratories at Alderley Park,	2	Department of Health and Social Care and Lord Bethell,
3	Cheshire and Glasgow in April 2020.	3	who was mentioned earlier, were engaging with a number
4	The Lighthouse laboratories later became part of the	4	of private companies, including Deloitte, to establish
5	NHS Test & Trace laboratory network.	5	the infrastructure for the system of TTI.
6	Increasing access to tests required a commensurate	6	Could I ask, please, for INQ000587457 to be
7	increase in laboratory capacity so that the return tests	7	displayed.
8	could be analysed. PHE played a key role in supporting	8	And, my Lady, this gives a snapshot of the number of
9	the national testing project to establish the Lighthouse	9	private companies that were involved in the
10	laboratories.	10	establishment of the test, trace and isolate system,
11	Could that be taken down, please.	11	including those who were set up and responding in
12	Briefly in respect of mobile testing units, these	12	respect of testing, and those companies and
13	were manned by military personnel and first piloted on	13	organisations assisting with contact tracing.
14	17 April 2020 with the first unit becoming operational	14	My Lady will see within that image companies, Royal
15	on 19 April 2020. The use of mobile testing units meant	15	Mail and Amazon. There was a delivery service that was
16	that those who could not drive to a regional testing	16	set up for sending PCR testing kits to homes, designed
17	site had access to testing. They were deployed in	17	with Deloitte and industry partners, including Royal
18	response to a request from local authorities or to	18	Mail and Amazon. The home delivery service meant that
19	locations such as care homes, prisons or factories,	19	those not able to travel to a test location, such as
20	where there was a demand for testing. Once on site they	20	a regional testing site, could still take the test.
21	could begin work within 20 minutes. Mobile testing	21	The Inquiry will examine the timeline of eligibility
22	units played a role in investigating hot areas of new	22	for tests, how effective the systems were, and how
23	variants and/or rapid epidemiological increases, so	23	accessible tests really were.
24	providing additional support, it is said, at a local	24	PHE provided public health guidance and expertise to
25	level.	25	the National Testing Programme, initially as testing
	33		34
1	became accessible to staff across the NHS and their	1	also identified within the elderly aged over 75, acute
2	household members, including individuals working in the	2	confusion could be the only presenting symptom requiring
3	NHS, outside acute care, for example in mental health,	3	differing guidelines for testing in frail, older people.
4	primary care and community services.	4	One of the issues Module 7 will explore is why it
5	Please can that be taken down and can we return to	5	took until 18 May 2020 for a loss or change sense of
6	the chronology.	6	normal smell or taste to be recognised formally as
7	My Lady, perhaps if I can briefly deal with	7	a symptom of Covid, and whether the presentation of
8	symptomology before we take the morning break.	8	symptoms in older people was recognised. We will also
9	My Lady will see from the overview chronology that	9	explore the knowledge and understanding in respect of
10	on 18 May 2020, all symptomatic individuals were	10	asymptomatic transmission of Covid.
11	available for testing. Anosmia, meaning loss of smell,	11	My Lady, would now be a convenient moment to take
12	and ageusia, loss of taste, was adding to the list of	12	the morning break?
13	symptoms that require seven-day isolation, on	13	LADY HALLETT: Certainly.
14	18 May 2020.	13	MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, my Lady.
14	On Monday next week the Inquiry hear from	14	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much. I shall return at
16	Professor Tim Spector. The ZOE Covid symptoms study was	16	midday.
17	initiated in March 2020 and provided data from those who	17	(11.43 am)
18	joined through an online app and self-reported their	18	(A short break)
19	presence or absence of symptoms, a subset of which were	19	(12.00 noon)
20	confirmed through diagnostic tests.	20	LADY HALLETT: Ms Cartwright.
			-
21 22	On 24 March, one of the symptoms for selection added	21 22	MS CARTWRIGHT: My Lady, thank you.
22 23	to the ZOE symptom study was loss of smell or taste.	22	Before moving to the TTI strategies, can I apologise to Ms Mitchell King's Counsel and Scottish Covid
23 24	By 27 March 2020, the ZOE study had identified that	23 24	to Ms Mitchell King's Counsel and Scottish Covid
24 25	the symptoms of loss of smell or taste were strongly		Bereaved. In doing the introductions, I omitted to
25	associated with testing positive for Covid-19, and it 35	25	welcome her to the room. So I apologise sincerely to 36

(9) Pages 33 - 36

1	here and her team.	1
2 3	LADY HALLETT: How could you, Ms Cartwright?	2 3
4	MS CARTWRIGHT: My Lady, then, for the purposes of concluding my address, I want to focus finally on the	4
5	TTI strategies developed in May 2020 and then give an	5
6	indication of some very top-line things in respect of	6
7	the system to its conclusion.	7
8	My Lady, the scale of the task of test, trace and	8
9	isolate was underpinned by SAGE agreeing at its 32nd	9
10	meeting on 1 May 2020 that in developing an effective	10
11	test and trace system at least 80% of contacts of an	11
12	index case of Covid-19 would need to be contacted for	12
13	the system to be effective. SAGE had high confidence	13
14	that isolation of those contacts within 48 hours would	14
15	be desirable.	15
16	On 4 May 2020, the Department of Health and Social	16
17	Care announced the first phase of "test, track and	17
18	trace", a programme aimed at controlling the spread of	18
19	Covid-19 as the UK began to ease lockdown restrictions.	19
20	The programme was designed to work alongside	20
21	existing local public health teams and emerging digital	21
22	solutions to enhance contact tracing efforts.	22
23	The government launched a trial of the NHS Covid-19	23
24	app alongside traditional contact tracing methods on the	24
25	Isle of Wight to assess its effectiveness before a wider	25
	37	
1	the systems and strategies that were implemented across	1
2	the four nations in May 2020.	2
3	Can I start, please, with Scotland and can we please	3
4	display INQ000587500. Thank you.	4
5	On 4 May 2020, Scotland published its test, trace,	5
6	isolate, support strategy. Nicola Sturgeon set out that	6
7	the Scottish approach to test, trace, isolate, support,	7
8	and the extensive work that was under way to prepare for	8
9	its implementation on 4 May stating:	9
10	"Our behaviour matters, and our choices and	10
11	willingness to make sacrifices to help keep people in	11
12	Scotland safe will be crucial.	12
13	"A key aspect of this next phase is a 'test, trace,	13
14	isolate, support' approach. We will test people in the	14
15	community who have symptoms consistent with Covid-19.	15
16	We will use contact tracing, a well-established public	16
17	health intervention, to identify the close contacts of	17
18	those cases who may have had the disease transmitted to	18
19	them. We will ask and support those close contacts to	19
20	self-isolate, so that if they do develop the disease,	20
21	there is less risk they will pass it on to others. And	21
22	we will make sure that support is available to enable	22
23	people to isolate effectively.	23
24		<u>01</u>
25	"However, it is important to stress that 'test, trace, isolate, support' will be most effective when	24 25

rollout. The Isle of Wight was a suitable first test location because it was an island with a sizeable population served by a single NHS trust. The app was designed to integrate with enhanced contact tracing services and swab testing for those with potential Covid-19 symptoms to help minimise the spread of Covid-19. The original NHS version of the app faced challenges relating to bluetooth accuracy and compatibility across devices. New technology developed by Apple and Google altered approaches which could be taken to app-based contact tracing. As a result, NHS Test & Trace went on to work with external contractors on a new NHS Covid-19 app using the new available technology. My Lady, we will hear from Professor Christophe Fraser in respect of the app development tomorrow, and Mr Gould and Mr Thompson on Friday. We will explore in Module 7 how the apps developed and implemented different across the four nations and the systems of contact tracing utilised, including digital and manual contact tracing and if it suitably and effectively utilised the existing role for the associate directors of public health. My Lady, I'm now going to give a summary of each of 38 levels of infection are low -- lower than now -- and stay low, and that its success relies on all of us knowing and agreeing what to do if we have symptoms, and being prepared to self-isolate when advised to do so." Can that be taken down, please. And my Lady, you can see a very high-level summary on that image that related to Scotland's systems. Turning then, please, to Wales -- thank you. On 13 Wales 2020, Wales published its Test, Trace, Protect plan. And on that date, Mr Gething, then Minister for Health and Social Services said: "We all want to be able to return to normal life as quickly as possible and to ease restrictions further -the science will guide us about when that happens. "Our Test, Trace, Protect strategy will be a key element in enabling us do that by enabling us to quickly identify people with coronavirus symptoms; to identify any new hot spots and to isolate as many contacts as possible." And it was said that that plan included: increasing testing of critical workers to enable them to return to work; a new system of home testing for the public if they have coronavirus symptoms; a new app to track

who have symptoms or have tested positive; and it 40

symptoms in the general population and contact others

1	detailed at that time in Wales that the testing capacity	1	0
2	stood at more than 5,000 tests a day with six	2	
3	drive-through testing centres, eight mobile units, and a	3	,
4	number of community testing centres throughout Wales.	4	ĺ
5	It was said that testing capacity was to be	5	
6	increased by up to 20,000 tests per day by drawing on	6	,
7	the UK-wide scheme as the Test, Trace, Protect strategy	7	Ì
8	is implemented.	8	
9	Could that please be taken down, and could I ask	9	
10	that the similar image for Northern Ireland be	10	
11	displayed. Thank you.	11	,
12	In Northern Ireland, on 27 May 2020, the "Covid-19	12	
13	Test, Trace and Protect Strategy: Saving lives by	13	
14	minimising SARS-CoV2 transmission in the community in	14	
15	Northern Ireland", was published by the Northern Ireland	15	,
16	Department of Health.	16	i
17	The strategy as of 27 May 2020 detailed that:	17	
18	"In line with the rest of the [United]Kingdom, the	18	
19	PHA were conducting rigorous contact tracing for all	19	
20	cases of COVID-19 until the 12th March 2020. On the	20	
21	12th March, the UK moved from the containment phase to	21	
22	the delay phase. The focus of our efforts then shifted	22	
23	from individual contact tracing to wider measures,	23	
24	including advising all of the public to immediately	24	
25	self-isolate if they had even mild symptoms, prevention 41	25	
1	NHS England. The Secretary of State for Health and	1	
2	Social Care can designate an organisation as "NHS", and	2	
3	decided to do so in the case of NHS Test & Trace.	3	
4	Baroness Dido Harding was appointed to lead the	4	,
5	UK Government's programme of testing and tracing	5	,
6	following her appointment on 7 May 2020 as executive	6	
7	chair.	7	
8	Professor Newton of Public Health England continued	8	i
9	to provide the professional link into public health	9	
10	expertise, and we will hear from Baroness Harding in the	10	
11	third week of the Inquiry.	11	
12	My Lady, you're already aware that there was	12	!
13	a unique reporting structure within NHS Test & Trace.	13	ł
14	The Department of Health and Social Care had ministerial	14	
15	accountability for NHS Test & Trace and reported	15	
16	directed to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary	16	į
17	until 2 December 2020. From 3 December 2020 until	17	,
18	7 May 2021, the executive chair then reported to the	18	
19	Secretary of State.	19	
20	My Lady, in respect of NHS Test & Trace strategy in	20	
21	May 2020, it was to: test, first of all, increasing	21	
22	availability and speed of testing; to trace when someone	22	i
23	tests positive for coronavirus using the NHS Test &	23	
24	Trace, with a dedicated contact tracing staff, online	24	
25	service, and local public health experts.	25	,
	13		

43

of spread, and social distancing." And that policy detailed that the four key elements of Test, Trace, and Protect were: early identification, isolation of possible cases, clusters and outbreaks; rapid testing of possible cases; tracing of close contacts of cases; and early, effective and supported isolation of close contacts to prevent onward transmission of infection. And it was said that chains of transmission can only be broken if those who could transmit the disease to others are isolated and get the support they need to maintain that isolation. My Lady, in the third week of the hearing we will hear evidence from Professor Arden in respect of her opinion as to the analysis of adherence to behaviours associated with the TTI system. But it was clear that the Northern Ireland strategy had identified the need for support for isolation. My Lady, can we then please display, in respect of England, INQ587506. Thank you. On 27 May 2020 Matt Hancock announced that the NHS Test & Trace service would be launched on 28 May 2020. NHS Test & Trace was funded and supported by the Department of Health and Social Care, and notwithstanding its name, it was not part of 42 In respect of contain, a national Joint Biosecurity Centre was to work with local authorities and public health teams in Public Health England, including local directors of public health, to identified localised outbreaks and support effective local responses, including plans to quickly deploy testing facilities to particular locations, and it was said that local authorities had been supported by £300 million of new funding to help local authorities develop their own local outbreak control plans. Finally, in respect of the strategy, enable: for the government to learn more about the virus, including as the science developed, to explore how it could go further in easing infection control measures. My Lady, that is a summary of testing strategies as at May 2020. And each of those diagrams give an overview of the systems that were then adopted across the four nations. My Lady, briefly we will hear further in Module 7 in respect of the development of the Operation Moonshot programme. We will also examine the development into the Community Testing Programme, which was published on 23 November 2020 as part of the Covid-19 Winter Plan.

Module 7 will look at the differing approaches to enforcement of isolation across the four nations. We 44

1	will also look and examine the Universal Testing Offer	1	sector companies to scale up testing and effectively
2	as announced in April 2021.	2	implement contact tracing.
3	My Lady, at its peak, NHS Test & Trace was capable	3	My Lady, finally by way of my opening submissions,
4	of processing 800,000 PCR tests a day and distributing	4	a brief comment as to costs. My Lady, figures as to
5	900,000. My Lady, as part of the Universal Testing	5	costs you've already heard in earlier modules, but,
6	Offer, lateral flow devices became key, and, my Lady,	6	my Lady, the initial budget for the NHS Test & Trace
7	from its conception to winding down in 2022,	7	service, made up predominantly of funding for testing,
8	15.8 million individuals who tested positive for	8	was 15 billion for April 2020 to March 2021. The
9	Covid-19 were contacted, with 31.3 million close	9	November 2020 Spending Review introduced a further
10	contacts of those 15.8 million people traced as part of	10	7 billion of funding to support the rollout of mass
11	the contact tracing effort.	11	testing, as well as the continued increase in testing
12	And, my Lady, you're already well aware that on	12	capacity.
13	24 March 2021 the government announced that NHS Test &	13	This raised the total budget to 22 billion from 2020
14	Trace would form part of the newly created UK Health	14	to 2021. In practice, NHS Test & Trace spent
15	Security Agency, with that transfer happening at an	15	13.5 billion in 2020 to 2021, of which 10.4 billion was
16	operational effectiveness commencing on 1 October 2021.	16	on testing. A further 15 billion was allocated to NHS
17	My Lady, the total value of contracts awarded to the	17	Test & Trace in 2021 to 2022.
18	suppliers of consultancy services is a matter you've	18	In conclusion, my Lady, Module 7 will investigate
19	already heard some evidence about. My Lady, you will	19	each of these systems, Test and Protect (Scotland), Test
20	recall from Module 5 and the evidence of Lord Agnew that	20	and Trace (England), Test, Trace, Protect (Wales) and
21	there are mixed views as to the operation of some of the	21	Test, Trace and Protect (Northern Ireland), and any
22	private contracts used as part of the TTI system and the	22	variations in the measures adopted by the governments to
23	cost of the same. The Inquiry will explore the use of	23	contain the Covid-19 virus, the reason for any
24	the private sector and ask if existing infrastructure	24	variations, and the timing and implementation of
25	could have been better utilised rather than the private	25	decisions, and the effectiveness of the systems
1	implemented. We will further consider the consistency	1	the comparative outcomes of the UK and east Asian
2	of decision making across the four nations		
	of decision making across the four nations.	2	countries from the outset of the pandemic, he asserts
3	But, my Lady, principally we will do so through the	3	this and I quote:
3 4	But, my Lady, principally we will do so through the lens of informing required recommendations that will	3 4	this and I quote: "Over the next three years East Asian death rates
3 4 5	But, my Lady, principally we will do so through the lens of informing required recommendations that will flow from Module 7 and to help public health efforts to	3 4 5	this and I quote: "Over the next three years East Asian death rates were five times lower than the UK. Demographics cannot
3 4 5 6	But, my Lady, principally we will do so through the lens of informing required recommendations that will flow from Module 7 and to help public health efforts to stem the spread of viruses across the UK in any future	3 4 5 6	this and I quote: "Over the next three years East Asian death rates were five times lower than the UK. Demographics cannot explain these huge differences. Notably Japan and
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(12) Pages 45 - 48

1	time, but an illustration of just how catastrophic the	1
2	UK's approach to TTIS really was. It started with no	2
3	planning, no capacity, no contact tracing, lab analysis	3
4	or isolation infrastructure for anything other than the	4
5	occurrence of a limited high-consequence disease	5
6	outbreak, and perhaps most significantly, too little	6
7	support for those most likely to spread the virus if	7
8	they did not test and isolate.	8
9	Compounding the lack of planning was the	9
10	incompetence of the UK Government response and the	10
11	attempts to pretend that the UK was well prepared. At	11
12	the Downing Street press conference on 3 March,	12
13	Mr Johnson told us, the public, that the UK had, and	13
14	I quote "fantastic testing systems and fantastic	14
15	surveillance of the spread of the disease".	15
16	This was very far from the truth.	16
17	Well before the pandemic, in early 2019, a BMJ	17
18	article had flagged the lack of diagnostics as "one of	18
19	today's most serious health security blind spots". The	19
20	problem was longstanding, underinvestment and lack of	20
21	planning, all political choices.	21
22	By about the time of Mr Johnson's March press	22
23	conference, as we pointed out in Module 2, South Korea,	23
24	a comparable country on many metrics, had undertaken	24
25	five times the number of tests undertaken by the UK. 49	25
1	public officials were apparently deflecting the real	1
2	problems of lack of capacity and just about zero	2
3	pre-pandemic planning by suggesting that the WHO advice	3
4	was really for others.	4 5
5	The importance of testing is, of course, all too	
6 7	obvious to see with hindsight. It's clearly set out in	6 7
	some of the expert evidence that you have and will hear in this module, in simple terms, those countries which	8
8 9	• •	o 9
9 10	had good testing provision from the outset had far lower mortality rates, and far lower economic damage and	9 10
11	social upheaval than those which did not.	10
12	l've said all this is clear to us in hindsight, but	11
13	in fact this was not only obvious at the time, but it	12
14	had been obvious to many countries for years before the	13
15	pandemic struck. Professor Pillay says, in the final	14
16	paragraph of his witness statement, and I quote:	16
17	"Some areas of the world, including China, South	10
18	Korea and Taiwan were able to rapidly respond to the	18
19	Covid pandemic through infrastructure and testing	10
20	protocols developed in response to SARS some 20 years	20
20 21	protocols developed in response to SARS some 20 years previous."	20 21
21	Why had the UK not learnt those lessons? They were	21
23	hardly hidden.	22
23 24	Professor Costello outlines that the failure to plan	23
2 4 25	test and trace was partly because what planning there	24
_0	51	20

1	At about this time, as we've heard this morning, the
2	Director General of the WHO, Dr Tedros, very publicly
3	urged the world to test, test and test. As we heard in
4	an earlier module, Dame Jenny Harries, then DCMO for
5	England and now chief executive of UKHSA, told the
6	Downing Street press conference, again in March 2020,
7	that the WHO directive was aimed at low and
8	middle-income countries.
9	She told this Inquiry that the UK had indeed been
10	testing but had no tests left.
11	In his witness statement, Professor Pillay says that
12	at the time, the suggestion that the WHO appeal was
13	aimed at less well-developed countries was "derided by
14	many" and suggested to us that the UK Covid response was
15	both "complacent" and based on a "UK exceptionalism".
16	Dame Jenny Harries suggested in her evidence that
17	her comments had been misinterpreted. That, of course,
18	is a matter for you, but the important point for
19	Module 7 is how did the UK, a high-income country, not
20	have adequate testing capacity by March 2020? What Dame
21	Jenny was actually intimating was that having run out of
22	testing capacity, UK policy on testing was led by
23	shortage, not public health strategy or need.
24	As you'll hear, Professor McNally indicates that the
25	UK was "trying to manage Covid blind", whilst senior
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1	was, was for flu and a view, correct or not, that such
2	was, was for flu and a view, correct or not, that such a pandemic could not be suppressed. That minimal effect
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1	This is what happens when there's an absence of	1	
2	planning and where there has been severe chronic	2	
3	underresourcing for emergencies. Testing, and,	3	
4	particularly, contact tracing are not easy to put in	4	
5	place from a standing start. In our submission, the	5	
6	Inquiry should question closely why there was the need	6	
7	for such outsourcing and, in particular, how companies	7	
8	with no relevant experience got the contracts? A point	8	
9 10	which obviously overlaps with the last module. Was it	9 10	
10	a fair and efficient process or was it more cronyism and	10	
12	lobbying? The evidence will show that the UK was quick off the	12	
13	mark in developing tests for Covid, but even here there	12	
14	were problems. Despite what has been said about PHE	13	
15	sharing control material, Professor Pillay asserts that	15	
16	PHE were in fact reluctant to share control material	16	
17	with others including himself. Why? A sensible	17	
18	solution, of course, was to encourage different	18	
19	approaches anticipating that some may fail.	19	
20	Indeed, that's what happened when PHE's own assay	20	
21	was found to be flawed with many false negative tests.	21	
22	Even with available tests, the UK had insufficient	22	
23	capacity to manufacture or source what was needed for	23	
24	testing, insufficient labs for test analysis and	24	
25	insufficient infrastructure to deliver testing.	25	
	53		
1	work with adequate financial and practical support.	1	
2	As the evidence will show, the UK were slow off the	2	
3	mark in this regard. They had very low Statutory Sick	3	
4	Pay comparable to similar countries, and according to	4	
5	Professor Costello, initially, at least, it that the	5	
6	lowest financial provision for those needing to isolate	6	
7	of any OECD country.	7	
8	As a result, it had low compliance rates. It's	8	
9	clear why workers in insecure employment and those on	9	
10	low incomes will be reluctant to test, never mind	10 L	L
11	isolate if positive. The corollary of this is that the	11	
12	failure to provide such support from the outset not only	12	
13	impacted on the spread of the virus but resulted in	13	
14	massively increased public spending on furlough	14 I	M
15	later on.	15	
16	You will hear from Professor Fulop later who will	16	
17	tell not only her own account but refer to those of	17	
18	other bereaved. I won't trespass on that evidence,	18	
19	except to note that it will illustrate that after	19	
20	failing to use TTIS to suppress the spread of the virus	20	
21	initially, the UK compounded that, and as	21	
22	Professor Pagel will tell us, by repeating the mistake	22	
23	and ignoring the urging of the Academy of Medical	23	
24	Sciences, an independent SAGE, to ramp up its approach	24	
25	before the second wave was upon us, once again to 55	25	

1	Once again, with insufficient capacity came errors.
2	Of course, once it was realised that the UK had too
3	little lab capacity it was right to ramp up that
4	capacity, howsoever it could be done, but instead of
5	fully utilising existing university and other labs
6	whilst sourcing and outsourcing for other capacity it
7	appears that the emergency response was to put all its
8	eggs in the basket of the Lighthouse labs still being
9	established.
10	As we've heard, local public health teams and
11	Directors of Public Health were overlooked with respect
12	to operating test and trace in favour of a national
13	approach, despite these resources fitting with the
14	general civil emergency policy of localising response,
15	and despite the expertise in terms of testing that they
16	already had.
17	Localised approaches taken in countries including
18	South Korea and Germany, not only built on existing
19	resources and expertise, but utilised local knowledge
20	and built trusts with local populations, essential to
21	a collaborative approach, which included contact tracing
22	and isolation.
23	A factor emphasised by many witnesses and in
24	particular by the bereaved families is that with even
25	the best test and trace systems, isolation could only
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1	devastating human effect.
2	And finally, as in all other modules, we draw
3	attention to the failure of policy and planning in this
4	area, to recognise, let alone counter, structural and
5	institutional race and other forms of discrimination,
6	including disability, which led to underserved and
7	vulnerable communities being disproportionately
8	impacted.
9	Thank you.
10	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Weatherby.
11	Mr Wilcock.
12	Submissions on behalf of Northern Ireland Covid Bereaved
13	Families for Justice by MR WILCOCK KC
14	MR WILCOCK: Forgive me. We're just having to fight over
15	the lectern.
16	My Lady, as you know, I appear on behalf of the
17	Northern Ireland Covid Bereaved Families for Justice,
18	and I'm going to keep my address to you short for four
19	reasons: one, you already have our written submissions;
20	two, as those written submissions make clear, many of
21	the broad points made on behalf of other bereaved Core
22	Participants clearly apply to those from the north of
23	Ireland and we adopt them.
24	Thirdly, you are already aware of the unique
25	differences between the healthcare and political systems
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1 in Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom 2 from your time in Belfast this time last year. Uniquely 3 underfunded and governed by an, at times, dysfunctional 4 mandatory coalition of parties who share widely 5 divergent views on some of the issues inherent to many 6 of the issues you will examine in this module, such is 7 the nature of acceptable health interventions and 8 policies, let alone the role of the state and national 9 identity. 10 Fourthly, some of the evidence you heard in M2C has 11 already touched upon one of the major controversies in 12 Northern Ireland, in the Northern Irish approach to test 13 and trace or to testing, rather, during the pandemic, 14 namely the decision to, some would say blindly, follow 15 the decision of the UK Government to suspend community 16 testing in the early/mid March -- on 12 March of 2020, 17 in spite of the fact that at that time, as 18 Professor McBride has told you in the statement he has 19 failed for this module, in contrast to other parts of 20 the United Kingdom, there were a relatively small number 21 of confirmed cases in Northern Ireland and therefore 22 contact tracing there had the potential to have 23 a significant impact on the course of the pandemic and 24 delaying community transmission. 25 This was not a one-size-fits-all situation. 57 1 directorates, such that", remarkably, you may think, 2 "the corporate risk register had to include risks 3 reflecting the seriousness of this position". 4 My Lady, you may think this depletion in staffing 5 that you will have read about in the reports must 6 inevitably have affected the Public Health Agency's 7 ability to not only carry out its core functions in 8 relation to public health, never mind the additional 9 tasks that were imposed on it by the role it was given 10 during the pandemic. 11 But Dr McClean has also told you in her written 12 statement that her understanding is that the Public 13 Health Agency weren't even consulted when Northern 14 Ireland suspended community testing on 12 March of 2020. 15 But furthermore, that had they been consulted, she says, 16 in effect, that whilst everyone recognised the burdens 17 that testing was placing on the PHA and that they would 18 have to carry if testing were to continue in breach of 19 the decision made by COBR on 12 March, the decision to 20 follow the English lead on this issue was, and I quote, 21 "counterintuitive to public health practitioners". 22 As I say, the one-size-fits-all approach was not

23 appropriate, you may think.
24 But, my Lady, the political system in Northern
25 Ireland only came back to life, after a prolonged

The evidence the Inquiry will be hearing in relation to the specific Northern Irish response to test, trace and isolate in the next few weeks is confined to four witnesses who will all be called on 21 May.

My Lady, my clients have noted that none of those witnesses come from the Public Health Agency, which was the lead operational and coordinating body in Northern Ireland for both the testing and contact tracing programme.

10 But having made that observation about the Northern 11 Ireland witnesses, you have been able to call as part of 12 this wide-ranging UK Inquiry, can I make clear that 13 whilst it is plainly unfortunate, we entirely accept 14 that your Ladyship has had to deal with the fact that 15 there was, as you will know from M2C, at the time of the 16 start of the pandemic, actually no Director of Public 17 Health available in Northern Ireland from the agency. 18 And furthermore, we appreciate that not only have 19 vou heard evidence from the present incumbent of that 20 position in M2C, but you have obtained a statement from 21 her in relation to this module in which she has told you 22 that, in the context of the chronic underfunding of the 23 health service in Northern Ireland you know so much 24 about, "prior to the pandemic, the Public Health Agency 25 was carrying a number of vacancies across its

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1 hiatus, on 11 March 2020. This time last year you heard 2 Professor McBride tell you that at that stage testing 3 capacity in Northern Ireland stood at only 40 tests 4 a day. In deciding whether enough was done early enough 5 in the chronology that Ms Cartwright and Mr Weatherby 6 have told you about to expand this capacity, you may, on 7 21 May, want to ask yourself: who particularly in the 8 political system asked what about that capacity and when did they ask it, in order to decide whether the approach 9 10 they were taking to expanding capacity inevitably in an 11 emergency situation was appropriate? 12 And given its size and limited existing testing 13 capacity, I don't think that there would be many people 14 in Northern Ireland who would be surprised that the 15 Northern Irish authorities were forced to rely on its 16 existing established relationships with the UK Public 17 Health Laboratory network when it became apparent that 18 the Northern Irish capacity was sadly so insufficient to 19 adequately combat the spread of our mutation of Covid. 20 And to that extent, even if we choose to make our 21 observations in writing rather than in oral questioning, 22 the evidence you will hear on the expansion of the UK 23 laboratory system is of some relevance to Northern 24 Ireland, and the development -- analysis of the development of what was called in Northern Ireland Test, 25 60

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1 Trace, and Protect. 2 My Lady, you will hear that across the four nations 3 of the UK, the aims of test, trace and isolate, whatever 4 the programme was called, were consistent, and there 5 were broad similarities in the approaches which were 6 taken, with some exceptions, of which I shall at this 7 stage outline just three. 8 First exception was, inevitably, given its status on 9 a separate island with a shared border with another 10 government in Ireland, the Northern Irish authorities had to use different phone apps and take a different 11 12 approach, and you will hear about that when you deal 13 with what I'm going to call the computing evidence in 14 this case. 15 Secondly, you will hear that, unlike other regions, 16 adherence to and enforcement of test, trace and protect 17 regulations in Northern Ireland were not 18 straightforward. Possibly because of a combination of 19 its recent history and the wider range of views amongst 20 Northern Irish politicians as to the nature of 21 acceptable interventions, Northern Ireland relied merely 22 on what they called "very strong advice" to isolate, 23 rather than any legal duty for domestic cases and 24 contacts 25 My Lady, the third difference has been indicated by 61 1 However, as the last witness you will hear from in 2 this Inquiry, Professor Deenan Pillay, has put in his 3 written statements to the Inquiry, when speaking about 4 the UK overall, but the remarks plainly transcend all 5 jurisdictions, one of the most disappointing -- indeed, 6 in his view, disgraceful -- outcomes of the test and 7 trace programme is the lack of any meaningful legacy or 8 strategy for the next pandemic threat. 9 Disappointing is an understatement, given the rest 10 of that statement, and we know that you will regard it 11 as your duty to do everything you can to counteract such 12 a legacy, whether it's in the whole of the UK or 13 Northern Ireland in particular. 14 We also know that you will appreciate that this will 15 not be achieved without the Inquiry and the health and

political systems concerned asking themselves searching
questions. We see our role to do everything we can to
assist you and your team in that task, and look forward
to continuing to do that over the next three weeks.
LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Wilcock. Very
grateful.
Ms Mitchell.

Submissions on behalf of the Scottish Covid Bereaved by

24 DR MITCHELL KC
 25 DR MITCHELL: I appear as instructed by Aamer Anwar & 63

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•	We cartwight this morning. In relation to infancial
2	support, Northern Ireland implemented a non-repayable
3	Discretionary Support self-isolation grant, which one of
4	your experts, Professor Machin, has described
5	as significantly different and broader in scope than
6	those delivered across the UK.
7	My Lady, this morning we heard the heartrending
8	evidence from one of my clients, Hazel Gray, about the
9	circumstances in which she lost both her parents, and
10	the role that the absence of testing can reasonably be
11	thought to have played in their deaths.
12	Tomorrow morning she will tell you not only her
13	story but some of the lived experiences of other
14	bereaved families in Northern Ireland in relation to
15	this module and the pandemic.
16	You will be moved by those stories, but we don't ask
17	you to listen to them to be moved, and nor do we intend
18	by putting that evidence before you foursquarely to
19	minimise the difficulties or tremendous effort the
20	Northern Irish health and political systems had to put
21	into ramping up testing in Northern Ireland during the
22	pandemic. Because, in spite of the inevitable mistakes,
23	neither do we suggest that there were not some things
24	that were actually done well in this module in Northern

Ms Cartwright this morning. In relation to financial

that were actually done well in this module in Northern Ireland.

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Company on behalf of the Scottish Covid Bereaved. Chair, you have already in Module 1 found that the UK was ill prepared for dealing with the catastrophic emergency of the pandemic. Our system of building preparedness for the pandemic was found to have suffered from several significant flaws, but perhaps one of the most critical failures was the lack of attention to the systems that would help test, trace and isolate infected individuals.

In the event, there was no system that could have been scaled up. Planning guidance was insufficiently robust and flexible, policy documentation was outdated, unnecessarily bureaucratic, and infected with jargon.

The failures to have in place the essential tools to combat the pandemic meant that the UK entered 2020 far behind where it ought to have been. My learned friend, Counsel to the Inquiry, Ms Cartwright KC, has outlined the issues to be examined. The Scottish Covid Bereaved would like to highlight some of the matters which are of great importance to them:

The failure to put in place proper processes and procedures for the testing of those being sent from hospitals to care homes and vice versa.
The lack of routine testing in care homes for

25 residents or staff.

1	• Visitors to family members not being given advice,	1	comes, no one should unnecessarily suffer as they did.
2	far less being tested, when visiting.	2	The Scottish Covid Bereaved look forward to the
3	Staff being moved between care homes without being	3	evidence that will be heard by the Inquiry in this
4	tested.	4	module and are ready to assist the Inquiry in any way
5	Residents, carers, patients and staff only being	5	they can.
6	tested if they were symptomatic, with no consideration	6	These are the opening submissions on behalf of the
7	given to older people, not always presenting with	7	Scottish Covid Bereaved.
8	the so-called "cardinal" symptoms.	8	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much indeed, Ms Mitchell.
9	 The financial and practical support offer to those 	9	Very grateful.
10	who were required to isolate. This is of particular	10	Next we have, is it Ms Parsons? There you are.
11	importance in relation to care homes, where many	11	I'll move across. There we go.
12	underpaid staff may have felt a measure of financial	12	Submissions on behalf of Covid-19 Bereaved Families for
13	compunction to attend work even when ill.	13	Justice Cymru by MS PARSONS
14	 The track and trace system being inadequate and 	14	MS PARSONS: Thank you, my Lady.
15	unable to keep up with the virus, too quickly becoming	15	These opening submissions are made on behalf of t
16	overwhelmed during the pandemic.	16	Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru. The
17	The Inquiry will hear evidence from a member of the	17	submissions highlight aspects of the test, trace and
18	Scottish Covid Bereaved, Nicola Boyle, as well as the	18	protect programme in Wales that are of particular
19	bereaved from other nations. Sadly, the experiences of	19	importance to the group.
20	the Scottish Covid Bereaved are all too similar. There	20	It is important to note at the outset that the
21	was an abject failure of testing and tracing, and as	21	programme was specific to Wales and it diverged
22	a result, the most vulnerable amongst us suffered and,	22	significantly from the programmes in other nations of
23	in the case of Scottish Covid Bereaved, they died.	23	the United Kingdom.
24	While the bereaved cannot bring their own loved ones	24	It is the experience of many of the group's members
25	back, they are determined that when the next pandemic	25	that the programme in Wales was chaotic. Policies
1	appeared ill thought out and ineffective, messaging was	1	were also restricted. There was evidence as early as
2	confused and confusing, and implementation was late and	2	April 2020 that Covid-19 involved a broader range of
3	inconsistent.	3	symptoms than the cardinal three: fever, cough, and loss
4	The group are keen to understand why this was the	4	of smell. But the failure to expand the range of
5	case, why policies diverged as they did, and why	5	symptoms for testing in Wales, even when the wider
6	policies were implemented late.	6	symptoms were widely known, is unexplained, and likely
7	Within the programme in Wales, the key concern	7	resulted in the further transmission of the virus.
8	relates to testing. From very early on, Wales went down	8	Turning now to some specific testing issues in care
9	its own path. First, its value was denied or	9	homes. The failure of the Welsh Government to provide
10	overlooked. Then, when accepted, implementation was	10	routine testing in care homes is a priority issue for
11	delayed. Concerns were raised in a letter from MPs on	11	the group. Mr Drakeford's comments on this issue are
12	30 April 2020 to the then First Minister,	12	concorning On 20 April 2020 he told the Senedd that
	•	12	concerning. On 29 April 2020 he told the Senedd that
13	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this:	13	routine tests were not offered in care homes because,
13 14	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity	13 14	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no
13 14 15	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity that now exists in Covid-19 testing availability between	13 14 15	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no value in doing so".
13 14 15 16	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity that now exists in Covid-19 testing availability between England and Wales."	13 14 15 16	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no value in doing so". His own Head of Science, Robert Hoyle, wondered w
13 14 15 16 17	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity that now exists in Covid-19 testing availability between	13 14 15	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no value in doing so". His own Head of Science, Robert Hoyle, wondered w the rationale, evidence and advice was behind
13 14 15 16 17 18	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity that now exists in Covid-19 testing availability between England and Wales."	13 14 15 16 17 18	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no value in doing so". His own Head of Science, Robert Hoyle, wondered w
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Mr Mark Drakeford. They wrote this: "We write with alarm in respect of to the disparity that now exists in Covid-19 testing availability between England and Wales." The letter then went on to outline the headline disparities. In Wales, availability of testing was limited to	13 14 15 16 17 18 19	routine tests were not offered in care homes because, and I quote, "the clinical evidence tells us there is no value in doing so". His own Head of Science, Robert Hoyle, wondered w the rationale, evidence and advice was behind Mr Drakeford's comment. Then again, on 6 May 2020, Mr Drakeford told the
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1	its position, almost three weeks after England, and	1
2	introduced some routine testing in care homes. It was	2
3	confined to large care homes for reasons not at all	3
4	clear to those working in care homes, and only expanded	4
5	to all care homes in mid-June 2020.	5
6	In the context of this most vulnerable population,	6
7	these delays are significant, as explained by care home	7
8	owners in Wales. The owner of one care home in Newport	8
9	reported how she first observed symptoms on the	9
10	20 March 2020. She requested tests from Public Health	10
11	Wales but none were available. Three days later, the	11
12	care home had its first death. Within a few weeks, 14	12
13	residents had died. Public Health Wales had visited the	13
14	care home in that period just once, testing just three	14
15	patients residents.	15
16	Similarly, the owner of a care home in North Wales	16
17	reported how she had campaigned extensively for routine	17
18	testing because of the risks of asymptomatic	18
19	transmission. She knew that her residents were falling	19
20	ill and dying within 48 hours of becoming symptomatic.	20
21	No testing had been made available by Public Health	2
22	Wales, not even for those with symptoms.	22
23	The delays in testing, in particular routine	23
24	testing, are unexplained.	24
25	Turning to testing issues in hospitals, my Lady.	25
	69	
1	one was admitted to hospital with a non-Covid related	1
2	issue and his health rapidly deteriorated. However, he	2
3	was not tested until his fourth day following admission.	3
4	Instead, he underwent a series of intrusive and invasive	4
-	tests during that period. When eventually tested for	
5		5
5 6	Covid, it was positive. He was discharged without	
	Covid, it was positive. He was discharged without a further test and later died from Covid.	6
6		6 7
6 7	a further test and later died from Covid.	5 6 7 8 9
6 7 8	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls	6 7 8
6 7 8 9	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital	6 7 8 9
6 7 8 9 10	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst	6 7 8 9 10
6 7 8 9 10 11	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was	6 7 8 9 10 1 ⁷
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was not tested again for another ten days, despite her ward	6 7 8 9 10 1 ² 12
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was not tested again for another ten days, despite her ward being closed due to a Covid outbreak. When eventually	6 7 8 9 10 1 ¹ 12 13
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was not tested again for another ten days, despite her ward being closed due to a Covid outbreak. When eventually tested again, she was positive, and died just a few days	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
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6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was not tested again for another ten days, despite her ward being closed due to a Covid outbreak. When eventually tested again, she was positive, and died just a few days later. As the Inquiry will be aware, so many of the group's members lost loved ones as a result of nosocomial infection acquired in hospital or in a care home	6 7 8 9 10 12 13 14 14 15 16 17
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	a further test and later died from Covid. Theresa, who appeared in the impact video, recalls how in February 2021 her mother was admitted to hospital for a non-Covid related matter. She was tested whilst in her ward and the test result was negative. She was not tested again for another ten days, despite her ward being closed due to a Covid outbreak. When eventually tested again, she was positive, and died just a few days later. As the Inquiry will be aware, so many of the group's members lost loved ones as a result of nosocomial infection acquired in hospital or in a care home setting. This was particularly during the second wave.	6 7 8 9 10 1 ¹ 12 14 14 14 14 14 15 15 20
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quiry	12 may 2020
1	Testing in hospitals in Wales followed a similar
2	pattern, with delays in the introduction of routine
3	testing, insufficient levels of testing, and patchy
4	implementation. This was the case both for healthcare
5	workers and for patients.
6	As to healthcare workers, the British Medical
7	Association have described the wait to introduce routine
8	healthcare testing in Wales as "inordinate". It was not
9	until 14 December 2020 that Wales commenced a policy of
10	routine testing twice weekly for health care workers,
11	that same policy having been introduced in England
12	a month earlier. However, most health boards in Wales
13	did not implement routine testing of healthcare workers
14	until March 2021 and in one case as late as July 2021.
15	Furthermore, whilst the policy mandated testing twice
16	weekly, in practice it only took place every five days.
17	As for patients, whilst the Welsh Government
18	announced routine testing on admission in June 2020, in
19	practice, routine testing was not done until much later
20	on and even then not consistently. It was not until
21	28 January 2021 that the Welsh Government introduced
22	repeat testing every five days for asymptomatic
23	patients. However, many patients waited many more days
24	for repeat testing in what felt like a testing lottery.
25	One member recalls how, in December 2020, her loved 70
	70
1	implemented consistently and in accordance with the
2	levels required by policy?
3	The answer to those questions may be multifaceted.
4	Vaughan Gething, as we heard from Counsel to the Inquiry
5	this morning, said "science will guide us". But the
6	group invites the Inquiry to pay careful scrutiny to the
7	claim by the Welsh Government that their testing
8	policies, particularly in relation to asymptomatic
9	testing, were based on science.
10	The questions arise: why was that evidence and
11	science any different to that which was available and
12	applied elsewhere in the United Kingdom? What processes
13	were in place in Wales to ensure that decisions were
14	science led? In a text message in March 2021, the Welsh
15	Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Dr Rob Orford,
16	asks a colleague this: "Do we need some emergency
17	science for cabinet discussion?"

8 Whatever the precise meaning of "emergency science",
9 the casual approach to scientific advice is alarming.
0 To adopt the question asked by Counsel to the Inquiry in
1 Module 2B, was the Welsh Government's position on
2 asymptomatic testing, and I quote "a position that could
3 have been genuinely or sensibly held?"
4 It is a critical issue, my Lady, and one which the
5 group invites you to revisit during the course of this

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1	module.	1	F
2	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much for your help,	2	е
3	Ms Parsons.	3	tl
4	Mr Thomas.	4	а
5	Submissions on behalf of the Federation of Ethnic Minority	5	t
6	Healthcare Organisations by PROFESSOR THOMAS KC	6	
7	PROFESSOR THOMAS: My Lady, before we begin to understand	7	li
8	what went wrong with test, trace and isolate during the	8	v
9	pandemic, we must first address the fundamental	9	tl
10	question: inclusion. A truly effective public health	10	ir
11	response is one that serves all communities equitably.	11	tl
12	It's not enough for a system to work only for some	12	r
13	communities. It must work for all. The ability to	13	s
14	identify and respond to a health crisis hinges on how	14	lo
15	well we understand and address the needs of every	15	n
16	individual, regardless of their background, their	16	C
17	ethnicity or socioeconomic status. This Inquiry is not	17	
18	just about uncovering what went wrong; it's about	18	s
19	ensuring that in the future, every voice is not just	19	v
20	heard but listened to, and acted upon.	20	b
21	When we speak of test, trace and isolate, we're not	21	v
22	just talking about a system that exists in a vacuum.	22	d
23	It's a system that intersects with real lives, lives	23	d
24	shaped by various experiences of access, vulnerability,	24	
25	and trust in public institutions. For our members, 73	25	а
1	to reach minority ethnic communities fails to achieve	1	
2	its fundamental goal: to protect public health.	2	p
3	If this Inquiry is to contribute meaningfully to	3	е
4	public future health strategies, it must begin by	4	v
5	embracing the principle that equity must be embedded in	5	d
6	every decision made in the design, implementation and	6	tl
7	communications of such systems.	7	а
8	So while the TTI system was intended to ensure that	8	
9	everyone who needed to get a test could get one, this	9	a
10	was not the experience for many of our members and those	10	is
11	in their communities. Testing sites were often located	11	p
12	far from areas where communities lived, creating	12	tl
13	a physical barrier to access. The lack of outreach and	13	ir
14	engagement with these communities meant that people	14	ir
15	didn't even know where to get tested, or didn't trust	15	ir
16 17	the process enough to participate.	16 17	+1
1/		1 /	

17 For our members, there was a lack of clarity about 18 availability of testing and the degrees of enforcement 19 for non-compliance. NHS trusts differed in their 20 approaches, leading to confusion and frustrations about 21 how the systems worked. And even when testing was 22 available, the system failed to account for specific 23 needs of minority ethnic groups, inadequate translation of vital information, limited digital access and 24 25 language barriers created additional obstacles. 75

1	FEMHO, and their communities, many of whom faced
2	entrenched inequalities in health and social outcomes,
3	the system was not just about testing positive for
4	a virus. For them, it was about survival in a system
5	that too often overlooked their specific needs.
6	So I ask, what would an effective TTI system look
7	like for everyone? For the minority ethnic healthcare
8	worker worried not just about the virus but also about
9	the lack of culturally competent PPE, and perhaps the
10	inability to isolate safely in overcrowded housing? For
11	the essential worker of colour struggling with the
12	reality that financial support for isolation was not
13	sufficient to cover basic needs, let alone the risk of
14	losing one's job? For the migrant worker excluded from
15	mainstream systems of support due to immigration status
16	or language barriers?
17	You see, as we're examining the failures of the TTI
18	system, we must ask ourselves, how do we ensure that
19	when we respond to the next crisis, no one is left
20	behind? How do we make sure that the voices of the most
21	vulnerable, those who experience multiple layers of
22	disadvantage, are not just heard but central to the
23	decision-making process?
24	Inclusion is not just a matter of fairness; it's
25	also a matter of effectiveness. A TTI system that fails
	74
1	Our members were not consulted during the design
2	phase. As such, the system assumes that everyone had
3	equal access to digital devices and the Internet. But
4	we know that many minority ethnic households were
5	disproportionately impacted by digital exclusion and
6	this resulted in further disparities in testing rates
7	and a lack of equitable participation.
8	Moving beyond testing, the failure to provide
9	adequate support for isolation was another glaring
10	issue. For many minority ethnic healthcare workers,
11	particularly those in low-paid, precarious employment
12	the financial support offered for isolation was simply
13	insufficient. The £500 payment for isolation was
14	inadequate for those who had to take time off work and
15	in many cases it was difficult to access.
16	Our members were also likely to be the staffers with
17	,
	the least access to Statutory Sick Pav. For individuals
18	the least access to Statutory Sick Pay. For individuals living in overcrowded conditions, often in
18 19	

a practical option. The very design of the system

How could individuals comply with isolation when

they were already struggling to make ends meet? How

could they isolate when their living conditions simply

76

failed to take into account these socioeconomic

20

21

22

23

24

25

realities.

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7

1	didn't allow for it?
2	The failure to address these socioeconomic factors
3	relevant to the black ethnic minority communities not
4	only left these communities vulnerable, but also
5	exacerbated existing inequalities: communities which
6	were already at high risk of poor health outcomes found
7	themselves not only more likely to contract Covid-19 but
8	also more likely to suffer its effect due to inadequate
9	support in place.
10	The failure, my Lady, to design a system to take
11	these issues into account speaks of a fundamental
12 13	oversight in the planning and the execution of a TTI
13	system.
14	Ultimately, what we're left with is a TTI system
15 16	that was not fit for purpose when it came to serving
10	minority ethnic healthcare workers and their communities more broadly. It was not designed with inclusivity in
18	mind, and as a result, these communities were left
19	exposed to the worst of the pandemic. They were not
20	just sidelined; they were excluded from a system that
20	failed to take their needs into consideration at the
22	
23	This is a crucial point. The inadequacies in the
24	TTI system were not just as a result of operational
25	oversights; they were as a result of systemic failings
	77
1	policymakers. These issues were compounded by a lack of
2	engagement with the very communities most affected.
3	So, my Lady, the absence of targeted interventions
4	and the pursuit of a one-size-fits-all approach proved
5	ineffective and, frankly, exacerbated existing
6	disparities.
7	At its very core, my Lady, the failure of
8	operisation (sic) of the TTI involved trust, effective
9	public health interventions, which cannot succeed
10	without the trust and active participation of the
11	communities they are designed to protect.
12	If we are to safeguard public health in a future
13	crisis, we must prioritise community engagement at every
14	step, ensuring that community leaders, especially those
15	from marginalised groups, are not just consulted but are
16	integral to the design and implementation of the system
17	itself.
18	Thank you, my Lady.
19	LADY HALLETT: Thank you for your help, Mr Thomas.
20	Right. We'll break now. I shall return at 2.05.
01	
21	(1.02 pm)
21	5
	(1.02 pm)
22	(1.02 pm) (The Short Adjournment)
22 23	(1.02 pm) (The Short Adjournment) (2.05 pm)

to address health inequalities and structural racism. 1 2 One of the most glaring features we've seen 3 throughout this Inquiry is the government's failure to properly implement the Public Sector Equality Duty. The 4 5 PSED is not just a tick-box exercise, as I've said many 6 times before, but it's a means by which public policies are required to serve all communities fairly. The 8 failure to consider the impact of multi-generational q households in the context of TTI, for example, resulted 10 in all kinds of challenges for those who lived in such circumstances. Compliance of the rules about TTI could 11 literally put entire families at risk of infection. 12 13 And there is likely to be no buy-in to a set of 14 rules that seemingly was inimical to the very existence 15 of one's community. 16 Let me finish by then saying this: there then was 17 a lack of disaggregated data on ethnicity and race, and 18 even when there was data, it was often not clear whether 19 the research was being conducted into testing, tracing 20 or isolation as distinctly different areas of inquiry. 21 In matters of race and ethnicity there was a huge 22 reliance on anecdotal information, which was 23 unsophisticated to say the least. Worryingly, it was 24 not clear what channels existed for feedback from 25 frontline or senior leaderships to the desks of 78 1 Submissions on behalf of the Trades Union Congress by 2 **MR JACOBS** 3 MR JACOBS: My Lady, these are the submissions of the Trades 4 Union Congress, I'm instructed by Thompsons solicitors 5 and I appear with Ms Ruby Peacock and Ms Natalie Lucas. 6 We address two issues, the first of which is supporting 7 self-isolation. 8 My Lady, without self-isolation a test and trace 9 system is but an elaborate means of monitoring the 10 exponential spread of a virus. The evidence suggests 11 that the motivation in the pandemic to self-isolate was 12 generally high, but for many the ability to self-isolate 13 was low. 14 As in the account from Every Story Matters read by 15 Ms Cartwright King's Counsel this morning, "I can't test because I have to work, and if I can't work, I can't 16 17 support my family". We know from Module 2 that in addition to the public 18 calls made by the Trades Union Congress and others, 19 20 behind the closed doors of Westminster there were many 21 arguing for much greater support for self-isolation. 22 The instincts that prevailed, however, was one focused 23 on enforcement: of fines rather than support. 24 That approach abandoned those on low and modest pay

25 for whom losing two weeks of work created insurmountable 80

1	problems, including those who continued to work in the	1	the coun
2	pandemic in food processing, in manufacturing, in	2	applicati
3	transport, and many other sectors. It fed and	3	required
4	exacerbated the pre-existing health inequalities about	4	determin
5	which the Inquiry has heard.	5	lt wa
6	In fact the focus on enforcement simply created	6	accessib
7	another disincentive: a disincentive from taking a test	7	see in th
8	at all.	8	as "too c
9	As those in Westminster were, in response to	9	variable
10	pressure, designing tepid support schemes, the virus was	10	local aut
11	spreading. As the MP George Freeman relayed to the	11	Awa
12	government in October 2020, staff at processing plants	12	its existe
13	faced with self-isolation were moving to work at nearby	13	around 2
14	processing plants in order to make ends meet.	14	may in p
15	He wrote in the wake of 150 of 300 workers testing	15	authoritie
16	positive at Cranswick Country Foods plant in Norfolk.	16	it was the
17	From September 2020, a financial support scheme was	17	meeting
18	introduced which provided for payments of £500, and	18	"It w
19	similar schemes were introduced across the UK.	19	governm
20	The chosen mechanism for delivering the scheme in	20	artificially
21	England was that there would be a component based on	21	My I
22	eligibility and a discretionary component. It would be	22	behaviou
23	administered in England by 314 councils, each with the	23	under-th
24	freedom to operate the application process and	24	Eligi
25	discretionary component as it sees fit. That is, across 81	25	self-emp
1	common problems being difficulty in evidencing loss of	1	with the
2	income and being marginally above the income criteria.	2	provide 1
3	In a quarter of councils, just 10% of applications	3	The
4	for discretionary payments were granted. In some	4	from its
5	councils, that figure was as low as 2%.	5	if tempor
6	The payments were also insufficient. £500 for 14	6	employe
7	days was equivalent to earning £6.25 per hour,	7	well-und
8	substantially below the minimum wage.	8	My I
9	The amounts spent on the scheme, 285 million in	9	support
10	England in its lifetime of almost two years, was low,	10	resolved
11	far less even than that spent on the six weeks of Eat	11	First, los
12	Out to Help Out.	12	self-isola
13	There is also evidence described by Professor Machin	13	for those
14	that financial support for self-isolation is most	14	Sec
15	effective if provided alongside a range of other	15	effective
16	support. In Singapore, for example, those	16	disincen
17	self-isolating could receive \$100 per day in support,	17	Thir
18	delivery of food and other supplies could be arranged	18	aware th
19	through a designated hotline, and for individuals in	19	Fou
20	multi-occupancy homes not suitable for self-isolation,	20	access.
21	hotels were offered as alternatives.	21	And
22	Professor Machin suggests that financial support in	22	non-fina
23	the next pandemic should be delivered through nationwide	23	My I
24	and centrally-delivered schemes, similar to the job	24	issue of
25	retention scheme and the self-employed support scheme, 83	25	My I

1	the country, 314 slightly different ways of making an
2	application with different rules as to the form and
3	required evidence, and 314 slightly different ways of
4	determining it.
5	It was a recipe for a low visibility and poorly
6	accessible scheme. So it was hardly surprising that we
7	see in this module a Covid-O paper describing the scheme
8	as "too complex" with the postcode lottery due to
9	variable criteria and a resource-intensive process for
0	local authorities.
1	Awareness of the scheme was low. Nine months into
2	its existence in June 2021, a TUC survey found that only
3	around 20% of workers were even aware it existed. That
4	may in part have been a feature of having local
5	authorities run the schemes, but there is also evidence
6	it was the intent. Meeting minutes from a Covid-O
7	meeting in January 2021 stated:
8	"It would be important to be clear on how far the
9	government would go to publicise the offer so as to not
20	artificially and unnecessarily stoke demand."
21	My Lady, that was a wrong-headed approach. National
22	behaviour isn't influenced by a designedly
23	under-the-radar support scheme.
24	Eligibility was low. One study showed that for the
25	self-employed, 57% of applications were rejected with 82
	02
	with the constant lighting there are to be a located with a to
1 2	with the system linking through to local authorities to provide the non-financial support.
2 3	The TUC says there is a lot of force in that, albeit
3 4	from its perspective, amending Statutory Sick Pay, even
5	if temporarily, is most appropriate, at least for those
6	employed, in order to make the most of an existing and
7	well-understood structure for delivering sick pay.
8	My Lady, ultimately what went wrong in the UK
9	support for self-isolation and the lessons to be learned
0	resolved to some important but straightforward points.
1	First, losing income will be a disincentive to
2	self-isolate and that disincentive will be most powerful
3	for those in insecure work and on low incomes.
4	Second, financial support for self-isolation, to be
5	effective, must be sufficient in amount to remove the
6	disincentive.
7	Third, those who need the support must actually be
8	aware that it exists.
9	Fourth, the financial support must be easy to
20	access.
21	And fifth, it should be supplemented by
22	non-financial support.
23	My Lady, we turn to our second issue, which is the
24	issue of test, trace and isolate in education settings.
25	My Lady, across the four nations there are over
	84

1	12.5 million pupils attending 40,000 education settings	1	
2	served by 700,000 teachers and support staff. Examining	2	
3	how test, trace and isolate operates, in that sizeable	3	
4	cohort, is an issue which we say warrants careful	4	
5	attention of this Inquiry. And my Lady, we eagerly	5	
6	await the disclosure of the Department of Education's	6	
7	statement which we understand is with the Inquiry.	7	
8	But we have been able to see already that the	8	
9	response in education was chaotic and it was ineffective.	9	
10 11		10 11	
12	The evidence shows that decision makers considered the value in implementing an asymptomatic testing regime	12	
12	in schools similar to that carried out in Germany as	12	
13	early as June 2020. However, when a scheme was devised	13	
14	in December 2020, not only was it delayed, but it relied	14	
16	significantly upon education settings planning,	16	
10	administering, disposing of and recording the results of	10	
18	the tests.	18	
19	The communication to secondary schools of the plan	10	
20	to introduce mass asymptomatic testing occurred on the	20	LA
21	last day of term in 2020 with the idea that it would be	21	
22	reintroduced immediately following the Christmas break.	22	
23	It was a last-minute request to public sector	23	s
24	workers who were not trained or specialist in delivering	24	
25	testing regimes, let alone at incredibly late notice.	25	MS
	85		
1	my Lady. I represent the interests of the Local	1	
2	Government Association and the Welsh Local Government	2	
3	Association, together referred to as WLGA and LGA. The	3	
4	LGA is the voice of local governments, representing all	4	
5	but two local authorities in England. Both authorities	5	
6	applied to become Core Participants in this module	6	
7	because, across England and Wales, officers of local	7	
8	authorities played a major role in the process of	8	
9	defeating the pandemic by testing and then tracing and	9	
10	isolating those who were, or were thought likely to be	10	
11	vectors of the virus.	11	
12	This work was of very first importance in stopping	12	
13	the stop of the disease and protecting the population,	13	
14	including those who were clinically or socially	14	
15	vulnerable.	15	
16	There were many significant features of the two	16	
17	nations' approach to testing, tracing and isolation	17	
18	during the pandemic. However, they did not follow the	18	
19	same path, as the statements of the chief executive,	19	
20	Ms Killian of the LGA and Dr Llewelyn of the WLGA show.	20	
21	In England, neither the LGA nor local authorities	21	
22	were engaged in the process of making sensible, national	22	
23	plans for contact tracing until well into the pandemic.	23	
24	By contrast, in Wales there was better coordination and	24	
25	cooperation between local government and the Welsh 87	25	

1	Too few pupils and students took part. From
2	1 March 2021 to 4 April 2021, participation was recorded
3	as being 43% of primary school pupils, 27% of secondary
4	school pupils, and just 8% of college students.
5	That is not to undermine the importance of
6	establishing mass asymptomatic testing in places of
7	education. Indeed, that was something called for by
8	TUC-affiliated unions. But in a future pandemic,
9	government must not effectively pass all responsibility
10	to schools and staff, who must retain the capacity to
11	perform their primary task of delivering education to
12	children in the challenging circumstances of a pandemic.
13	Fundamentally, test, trace and isolate needs to be
14	part of a coherent plan for complementary
15	non-pharmaceutical interventions in education settings,
16	and to that end, my Lady, a number of recommendations
17	for the education sector as set out in our written
18	opening.
19	My Lady, those are our submissions.
20	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much for your help, Mr Jacobs.
21	Very helpful.
22	Ms Stober.
23	Submissions on behalf of the Local Government Association
24	and the Welsh Local Government Association by MS STOBER
25	MS STOBER: [Inaudible: microphone off]. Thank you, 86
1	government in co-designing a contact tracing system.
2	In England, by contrast, the extraordinary thing
3	about test, trace and isolation during the pandemic is
4	that local authority officers had been working on the
5	front line of health protection for a great many years,
6 7	carrying out statutory public health functions that can
7	be traced back to the 19th century.
8 9	These officers had great skills and local
9 10	experience, but this seems to have been passed by central government. Ms Killian, the chief executive of
11	the LGA, explains in her statement:
12	"Contact tracing is a recognised public health
13	activity used to identify and break the chains of
14	transmission, to help reduce the spread of infectious
15	disease. It has been used for many decades in response
16	to infectious decease outbreaks and epidemics, usually
17	alongside other public health activities and control
18	measures."
19	Its purpose, which is to identify people with an
20	infection or are potentially infected, and isolate them
20	before infecting others, is widely accepted and work in
22	many but not all infectious diseases to a greater or
23	lesser extent.
24	Local UK Health Security Agency health protection
25	teams and local authorities have longstanding
	5
	88

1	relationships with the community and a history of	1
2	handling infectious disease outbreaks via contact	2
3	tracing, amongst other responses. Public health	3
4	officers in local authorities have extensive experience	4
5	with contact tracing and a strong understanding of the	5
6	need and best methods for contact tracing.	6
7	For example, contact tracing is routinely carried	7
8	out during local outbreaks of communicable diseases such	8
9	as norovirus, salmonella, or Legionnaires' disease.	9
10	So a starting question for this Inquiry is: why was	10
11	the swiftest and best possible use of knowledge and	11
12	skills of those local authority officers not used in the	12
13	outset?	13
14	Overall, where isolation is called for in	14
15	a pandemic, local authorities and their public health	15
16	teams must be fully engaged in the national planning and	16
17	used to the utmost in the local operational deliver of	17
18	these plans.	18
19	Briefly, my Lady, drilling down into the events	19
20	during the pandemic, there are several areas which the	20
21	LGA's evidence especially addresses, and each concerned	21
22	learning from what happened to ensure that the best use	22
23	is made of local authority resources in the future.	23
24	The need for central government to understand fully	24
25	what councils do and how they are responsible for local 89	25
1	with local directors of public health, and that the data	1
2	collected often was not fit for the purpose of test,	2
3	trace and isolate that local authorities were expected	3
4	to use it for.	4
5	This hampered local steps to support those affected	5
6	and to control outbreaks. It must not happen again.	6
7	Three: the economic social and financial and	7
8	consequential implications of isolation.	8
9	It should also have been obvious that the initial	9
10	legal obligations to self-isolate, and the latest	10
11	(unclear) recommendations to do so would have had very	11
12	significant economic, financial and social consequences,	12
13	not just for those isolating but for local authorities	13
14	tasked with ensuring isolation occurred and supporting	14
15	those who were doing so.	15
16	As we have heard in previous modules, Covid-19 had	16
17	a disproportionate effect on people from deprived	17
18	populations, the vulnerable, and black and ethnic	18
19	minorities. Not only were case and fatality rates	19
20	higher among people living in less deprived areas, but	20
21	also policies aimed at preventing spread, such as social	21
22	restrictions and lockdown, had a greater effect on	22
23	vulnerable populations.	23
24	Ms Killian's statement highlights the difficulties	24
25	local authorities faced in working effectively and at	25
	91	

public health. The statement of Ms Killian is truly shocking, in exposing the ignorance of central government about the longstanding responsibilities and critical role of local public health officials. Even allowing for the fact that this pandemic was much work that had to be done at pace and without the same kind of due deliberation that would be expected in more normal times, this was quite unacceptable failure. The response to the pandemic has too often been national default. Systems and provides designed from Whitehall and limited engagement and understanding of the value and role of local councils and directors of public health. The government did not document the basis for the delivery model it chose for the national test and trace programme. Closer working between central government on public health is vital. Data sharing. The need to control and prevent the spread of a virus in a pandemic is a paradigm of those situations where efficient data sharing between central and local government is for the public good. That should have been obvious, yet Ms Killian's statement evidences central government's reluctance to share detailed data 90 speed to carry out their functions in respect of isolation, not least in respect of those on low incomes. Again, it is obvious that the close involvement of local authority leaders in the planning of isolation as a measure of disease control would again be essential. The issue of compliance and enforcement. Policies for compliance and enforcement of isolation would never be optimal without an understanding of the problems and issues that would arise when put into operation. Again, Ms Killian's statement explains the difficulties local authorities faced in ensuring compliance, because central government did not engage the LGA and local authorities in the development of legislation and controls, and made frequent changes to regulations. The detail of these difficulties will be important to the Inquiry, in terms of understanding what happened, for the future. The key point, again, is the importance of close working between policymakers and those with operational experience and responsibility. Five: capacity and resources. Over and again during the different modules of this Inquiry, the LGA has pointed out that local government lacked resources and that where they are lacking, councils can only act within the constraints arising

2Ms Killian points out that councile Directors of23Public Health were seriously affected by these3out4constraints and environmental health teams were4th5stretched very thinly. It is well understood that there56are limits to the extent that a local authority can67carry capacity and resources for an emergency over and7st is8above that needed for ordinary times. Nonetheless,8eff9preparedness and resilience depend on resources being9m10allocated properly and provision made for emergencies.10allocated authority funding over the preceding years had1311The stary of the pandemic response to the need for11fm12testing, tracing and isolation shows that the cuts to12tu13local authority funding over the preceding years had13oid14gone too far to allow for adequate emergency cover.14is15The LGA asks that the lnquiry points this out in its1516report, and do what it can to ensure that this is not1617repeated.17th18Six: coordination and communication.1820a gandemic is the need for excellent coordination and2021communication between central and local government2424evidence shows that much improvement in respect of this2225affected the design and implementation of schemes such25<	1	from the lack of finance and personnel.	1	a
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lan y	12 May 2020
1	as contact tracing.
2	Likewise, the LGA asks that the Inquiry point this
3	out in its report, and do what it can to ensure that
4	this does not happen again.
5	Testing and tracing.
6	The last point is that Ms Killian's witness
7	statement shows that central government did not
8	effectively engage with local government in shaping the
9	national testing strategy leading to frustrations such
10	as inadequate testing of patients before discharging
11	from hospitals to care homes and slow test result
12	turnaround. Testing was the first step in the process
13	of controlling the pandemic by TTI. Getting this right
14	is therefore very crucial for another pandemic.
15	My Lady, I will now turn to the WLGA.
16	As you know, my Lady, I represent the WLGA, which is
17	the voice for all 22 local authorities in Wales.
18	Across Wales, local authorities played a major role
19	in the process of defeating the pandemic through the
20	process of testing and then tracing and afterwards
21	isolating and protecting those who were, or were thought
22	likely to be, vectors of the virus.
23	WLGA welcomes this module also because there's been
24	no national review in Wales of the steps taken to
25	develop a national programme for testing and tracing and
	94
1	and WLGA and local authorities was very important, it is
2	also a fact that there had been no such plan before the
3	pandemic occurred. He explains how important this
4	deficit was, and how it meant that the strategy had to
5	develop be developed by the Welsh Government at great
6	speed. That there was no such prior plan is very
7	regrettable.
8	A key learning from this module should be the need
9	to plan now for a future pandemic event when national
10	testing, tracing and protection of individuals will be
11	a key part of plans to overcome such a crisis.
12	In making this point, WLGA does recognise the very
13	good work that was done in developing the TTP strategy
14	and the work and the good level of communication between
15	the Welsh Government, WLGA, and local authorities.
16	This enabled local authorities to build their
17	capacity at speed and to make a major contribution to
18	the national efforts.
19	They unlocked undertook a central role in the
20	delivery of the strategy in their localities, working
21	closely with Public Health Wales and their respective
22	local health bodies to establish the system at speed,
23	and at scale, far exceeding existing contact tracing
24	arrangements for localised outbreaks of much smaller and

- arrangements for localised outbreaks of much smaller and
 - shorter duration.
- 96

1	Above all else, it was the knowledge and versatility
2	of local government workforce that provided the
3	flexibility to respond as needed to the waves of the
4	pandemic at short notice, and as when the need arose.
5	The evidence submitted on behalf of WLGA explains
6	how local expertise in managing and operating
7	large-scale contact centres enabled quick and successful
8	establishment of tracing arrangements across Wales.
9	Local authority officers were able to provide specialist
10	advice working with colleagues from Public Health Wales
11	and the local health boards to ensure consistency of
12	advice and advise on managing on outbreak management.
13	Local authorities were able to then give priority to
14	the safety and protection of the most vulnerable people
15	in communities, as best as they could, and provide
16	a trusted source of advice and communication within and
17	across communities, local communities.
18	However, as Dr Llewelyn explains in his statement
19 20	that there was a significant constraint in the work that
20	local authorities could do. While local authorities
21 22	enforced TTP procedures wherever they could, like local
22	authorities in England, they lacked the constraints they were constrained by the lack of effective legal
23 24	enforcement powers for breach of TTP restrictions. The
24	Inquiry is asked to note that local authorities could
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	isolation so that lives will be saved
-	isolation, so that lives will be saved. Thank you, my Lady.
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quiry	12 May 2025
1	have been more effective if they had the legal powers to
2	issue, for example, fixed penalty notices on individuals
3	and to invite a review of the legislation to consider
4	the benefits of granting such powers.
5	WLGA asks that the Inquiry recognise the importance
6	of removing such constraints to enable an even fully
7	contribution from Welsh local authorities in future.
8	In conclusion, my Lady, overall the Welsh local
9	authorities should be proud of the work that they
10	undertook in relation to testing, tracing and protection
11	during the pandemic. The commitment of officers to work
12	cooperatively and collaboratively and over very long
13	hours, to find relevant and imaginative solutions to the
14	critical task of tracing and protection was of the
15	utmost importance and a significant factor in bringing
16	the disease under control.
17	WLGA is pleased it was able to assist in
18	coordinating this response.
19	Finally, my Lady, both the LGA and the WLGA extend
20	their deepest sympathy to the families of those who lost
21	loved ones, and very much hope that the lessons learned
22	from this Inquiry with the lessons learned from this
23	Inquiry, the UK will be better prepared for a future
24	pandemic by placing at its heart of any preparation an
25	effective tracing, testing and protection system, and 98
	30
1	account of developments in the Test and Trace programme.
2	To do this, the Cabinet Office worked in collaboration
3	with other departments and most notably the Department
4	of Health and Social Care and its agencies. These
5	included NHS Test and Trace, which was established in
6	May 2000 (sic) to lead on the supply and procurement of
7	testing equipment, as well as the vast majority of the
8	delivery and rollout of the Test and Trace programme,
9	and in accordance with the Lead Government Department
10	model, ministerial accountability for testing, tracing
11	and isolation policies remained with the
12	Health Secretary throughout the pandemic.
13	At the start of 2020, the UK's existing test and
14	trace capabilities were not sufficient to cope with the
15	demands created by Covid-19. Only NHS pathology
16	laboratories, a few research sites, and public health
17	laboratories in the UK had the scientific ability to
18	test for Covid-19 using the only widely recognised
19	testing methodology available: reverse transcription
20	polymerase chain reaction, or RT-PCR, if I could be
21	allowed to abbreviate it to.
22	In line with scientific advice at the time, the
23	initial focus was therefore on expanding RT-PCR capacity

- with a view to testing and tracing symptomatic cases.
- But as the scale and potential impact of the pandemic

became more apparent, the government initiated a huge cross-government effort quickly to build rollout and maintain a new system of national level capabilities. And given the scale and importance of this work, the Cabinet Office took a close interest in its progress, both to understand existing testing capabilities, and to explore opportunities to support and accelerate the Department of Health and Social Care's work to scale up testing capacity. And as work on testing capabilities increased in scale and complexity, the Cabinet Office sought to ensure effective and innovative governance structures were in place, and that included appointing an external expert chair, Baroness Dido Harding, to lead the programme that became NHS Test and Trace, and the Cabinet Office also established the necessary structures to facilitate discussion and collective decision making by ministers as the pandemic progressed, most notably the Covid strategy and Operations Committees. Coming out of the first lockdown in May 2020, as NHS Test and Trace was established, the UK Government's aim could be summarised as seeking to reopen the economy and society as extensively as possible while keeping the reproduction number below 1, therefore avoiding exponential growth of the virus. relaxing of restrictions in the absence of an effective vaccine for drug-based treatment. As capacity for testing increased, the Cabinet Office was involved in helping determine who would be eligible for tests, and exploring the channels through which tests could be delivered most effectively. An increased understanding of asymptomatic transmission, as well as advances in rapid testing technologies, prompted new ideas about how testing could both continue to protect public health, while enabling those who did not have the virus to participate in economic and social activities. And given its role in considering the wider impacts across different sectors, the Cabinet Office was particularly interested in accelerating the large-scale availability of rapid testing technologies in order to support the government's overarching objective to control the spread of the virus. And this work became a key focus for the Cabinet Office between mid-2020 and April 2021, when a universal testing offer was made available in England. A particular role of the Cabinet Office was its work to consider and provide advice to ministers on the constraints and trade-offs of different test, trace and isolation approaches. While other government

1	Estimates from the UK Health Security Agency's
2	September 2021 Canna model study of the impact of
3	testing, tracing and isolation on Covid-19 transmission
4	suggests that, in several periods of the pandemic,
5	testing, tracing and isolation played a critical role in
6	reducing the reproduction number to below 1 and helping
7	to reduce both the duration and the economic impact of
В	non-pharmaceutical interventions such as lockdowns.
9	The data collected by the test, trace and isolate
0	system were also vital for the government's
1	understanding of the prevalence of the virus and
2	emergence of new variants, which helped to inform the
3	development and evolution over time of the overarching
4	strategy for managing the pandemic.
5	With the governance structures set out, the Cabinet
6	Office worked to ensure that the overall strategy
7	continued to take account of progress of NHS Test and
8	Trace, and provided oversight and assurance for the
9	Prime Minister as the testing programme was rolled out.
20	And given the importance of testing, tracing and
1	isolation to the government's overarching strategy,
2	a key role of the Cabinet Office was to seek to ensure
3	that all parties involved were challenged to maximise
4	the scale and effectiveness of the programme in order to
.5	minimise the spread of the virus and thereby enable the
	102
1	departments focused on the impacts of test, trace and
2	isolation policies in their specific areas, the Cabinet
3	Office's role at the centre of government was to look
4	across the board and support decision makers to
5	understand and balance, where possible, the different
6	trade-offs of different response options.
7	Examples of those relevant constraints and
8	consequential trade-offs that were considered during
9	this time include the following: first, the inevitable
0	scientific constraints (which evolved) - the tests
1	needed to detect the virus effectively, but consistently
2	effective lateral flow devices for Covid-19 were not
3	developed until the summer of 2020.
4	Secondly, there were operational constraints. For
5	example, building testing laboratories takes time, as
6	does procuring lateral flow devices internationally at
7	a time of huge global demand.
8	Third, there were enormous fiscal costs. The test,
9	trace and isolation budget in the financial year 2020 to
20	2021 exceeded that of the Home Office. Even then, there
!1	were limits on testing capacity and at times, therefore,

a need for prioritisation of access to testing. Fourthly, throughout the period, the effectiveness of the test, trace and isolation programme relied on public uptake of the testing offered and compliance with

1	tracing and isolation policies. Public engagement was	1
2	not guaranteed and individuals' ability and willingness	2
3	to engage with the test, trace and isolate programme was	3
4	not equal.	4
5	And fifthly, the test, trace and isolation strategy	5
6	had implications for the wider economy, as illustrated	6
7	most notably in what was referred to as the "pingdemic",	7
8	when so many people were asked to self-isolate as	8
9	a result of tracing technology that risk to the staffing	9
10	of critical sectors and infrastructure emerged.	10
11	In this context, the Cabinet Office's role was	11
12	threefold: first, to provide advice to the	12
13	Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy of	13
14	Lancaster; second, to provide constructive feedback to	14
15	NHS Test and Trace on policymaking and delivery,	15
16	challenging assumptions and identifying opportunities	16
17	for improvements to be made; and thirdly, to facilitate	17
18	cross-government collaboration and decision making,	18
19	particularly where the constraints, trade-offs or	19
20	consequences reached beyond the remit of the lead	20
21	department.	21
22	The Cabinet Office coordinated across government	22
23	response to overcome the challenges that emerged in	23
24	relation to testing, tracing and isolation, where the	24
25	input of multiple government departments was required.	25
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1	Northern Ireland, and by this opening statement, I aim	1
2	to outline some key points pertaining to that	2
3	Department's role in test, trace and isolate in Northern	3
4	Ireland.	4
5	However, my Lady, before doing so, I would like to	5
6	take this opportunity to place on record on behalf of	6
7	the Department its thanks to all of those in	7
8	Northern Ireland who supported the delivery of test,	8
9	trace and isolate.	9
10	The policy and the supporting operational delivery	10
11	arrangements which underpinned the testing and contact	11
12	tracing programmes were extremely complex and were	12
13	introduced into a fast-moving situation.	13
14	There were also significant logistical challenges	14
15	associated with implementing programmes of	15
16	population-wide testing and contact tracing, which were	16
17	entirely new, and which operated on a scale that had not	17
18	previously been undertaken.	18
19	Both programmes, my Lady, were key strategic	19
20	elements of the pandemic response in Northern Ireland,	20
21	and the Department's view is that these played	21
22	a critical role in interrupting and helping to reduce	22
23	community transmission.	23
24	I would like to focus attention on testing in the	24
25	first instance, if I may. 107	25
	107	

1	For example, the Cabinet Office worked to understand the
2	financial, practical and social barriers preventing
3	people from following self-isolation guidelines,
4	collaborating with experts and reviewing international
5	approaches to consider what could be done to address
6	such issues. And one outcome of this was the
7	Cabinet Office's work with the departments to design and
8	obtain ministerial approval for the test and trace
9	support payment, intended to alleviate the financial
10	burden of self-isolation on the lowest-income families,
11	which was announced in September 2020 and expanded in
12	January 2021.
13	My Lady, the scale of the challenge to expand test
14	and trace capabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic was
15	unprecedented and the Cabinet Office welcomes the
16	opportunity to contribute evidence to this module and is
17	keen to learn lessons to support the response efforts to
18	any such emergency in the future.
19	Thank you very much.
20	LADY HALLETT: Thank you, Mr Strachan.
21	Ms Murnaghan, I think you are expecting to go next.
22	Submissions on behalf of the Department of Health in
23	Northern Ireland by MS MURNAGHAN KC
24	MS MURNAGHAN: Good afternoon, my Lady.
25	As you know, I represent the Department of Health in
	106
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1	Whilst undoubtedly Covid-19 tests were developed
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	rapidly, the time taken to scale up testing was a particular issue in the initial stages of the pandemic. The ability to scale up testing was not unique to Northern Ireland, and was largely impacted by the dual factors of (a) the increasing demand for testing products and (b) the global supply chain challenges in relation to the availability of reagents and other consumables. These factors often led to extremely difficult choices regarding the need to prioritise available limited capacity. The department decided to prioritise available capacity for clinical care and to protect those who were most vulnerable and at most severe risk. If unlimited testing capacity had been available early in the pandemic, it is quite likely that different decisions could have been made. However, the Department worked at pace, with much innovation, and kept eligible groups under continuous review, taking account of emerging scientific, clinical, and public health approaches and evidence, as well as keeping abreast of emerging policy across the four nations and globally.

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1	Department's clear view is that Northern Ireland	1	effective coordination, alignment and oversight, and
2	citizens benefited greatly from the National Testing	2	served to optimise the public health expertise and the
3	Programme.	3	capacity that was available at that time.
4	The National Testing Programme was delivered locally	4	Turning next, my Lady, to contact tracing. In
5	through close joint working with the department and with	5	Northern Ireland, and across the UK, undoubtedly a key
6	the PHA in Northern Ireland, which was our lead	6	part of the pandemic response included the tracing of
7	operational delivery body working with the Department of	7	contacts. As already outlined, the department retained
8	Health and Social Care.	8	strategic and policy responsibility for contact tracing
9	My Lady, I would like to just briefly touch on the	9	throughout the pandemic, whereas the PHA was responsi
10	close working relationship between the department and	10	for the operational delivery and was supported by the
11	PHA, which was a strong and collaborative approach which	11	department.
12	we contend was central to the delivery of the test and	12	As was the case across the UK, community testing a
13	trace programmes.	13	contact tracing in Northern Ireland was paused on
14	The PHA, of course, in Northern Ireland, in common	14	12 March 2020. This was in line with the policy
15	with all other public health bodies across the UK, and	15	decision that was taken at the COBR meeting to move fro
16	indeed internationally, faced significant and sustained	16	the containment phase to the delay phase. This, of
17	challenges in responding to the pandemic. It was, we	17	course, was a UK-wide decision and all of the devolved
18	believed, appropriate and efficient to take a collective	18	administrations participated in the meeting and
19	integrated policy and operational approach, which was	19	concurred with the position.
20	coordinated and strategically led by the Department.	20	At the time when the decision was made to pause
21	It was appropriate also for the PHA, in keeping with	21	contact tracing, there was sustained community
22	its extant health protection roles and responsibilities,	22	transmission. Testing capacity was insufficient to
23	to have retained overall operational responsibility and	23	identify all cases that needed to be traced, which meant
24	leadership for testing and contact tracing.	24	that the impact of contact tracing as an effective
25	This collective approach, my Lady, sought to ensure	25	mitigation to limit the spread of the virus was
	109		110
1	substantially reduced.	1	overall population management approach, the virus may
2	Available testing capacity had to be prioritised for	2	have spread more rapidly across Northern Ireland. With
3	those who required clinical care and the vulnerable in	3	the benefit of hindsight, the department maintains that
4	hospitals and care homes.	4	pausing community test and contact tracing was prudent
5	From 12 March 2020, public health advice for those	5	and appropriate at that time in the context of what we
6	who had symptoms was that they should isolate for seven	6	then knew.
7	days, and from 16 March the advice was that household	7	The general contact tracing service remained paused
8	members of those with symptoms were advised to stay at	8	in Northern Ireland until it was reintroduced by the PHA
9	home for 14 days.	•	
0	,	9	on 27 April 2020. Initially, this was reintroduced in
10	In addition, people were advised to work from home,	9 10	on 27 April 2020. Initially, this was reintroduced in a pilot phase and then fully launched on 18 May 2020.
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1	offective coordination, alignment and eversight, and
	effective coordination, alignment and oversight, and
2	served to optimise the public health expertise and the
3	capacity that was available at that time.
4 r	Turning next, my Lady, to contact tracing. In
5	Northern Ireland, and across the UK, undoubtedly a key
6	part of the pandemic response included the tracing of
7	contacts. As already outlined, the department retained
8	strategic and policy responsibility for contact tracing
9	throughout the pandemic, whereas the PHA was responsible
0	for the operational delivery and was supported by the
1	department.
2	As was the case across the UK, community testing and
3	contact tracing in Northern Ireland was paused on
4	12 March 2020. This was in line with the policy
5	decision that was taken at the COBR meeting to move from
6	the containment phase to the delay phase. This, of
7	course, was a UK-wide decision and all of the devolved
8	administrations participated in the meeting and
9	concurred with the position.
20	At the time when the decision was made to pause
21	contact tracing, there was sustained community
22	transmission. Testing capacity was insufficient to
23	identify all cases that needed to be traced, which meant
24	that the impact of contact tracing as an effective
25	mitigation to limit the spread of the virus was
	110
1	overall population management approach, the virus may
2	have spread more rapidly across Northern Ireland. With
3	the benefit of hindsight, the department maintains that
4	pausing community test and contact tracing was prudent
5	and appropriate at that time in the context of what we
6	then knew.
7	The general contact tracing service remained paused
8	in Northern Ireland until it was reintroduced by the PHA
9	on 27 April 2020. Initially, this was reintroduced in
0	a pilot phase and then fully launched on 18 May 2020.
1	The resumption of general contact tracing was
2	earlier in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the
3	United Kingdom.
4	In general terms, contact tracing is most effective
5	when prevalence and the number of cases are relatively
6	low. While, following its reintroduction, the PHA
7	maintained contact tracing throughout the pendemia it

1	played a key role in the pandemic response.
2	Turning then, my Lady, to the final pillar of
3	Module 7, that of isolation policy. The department was
4	responsible for setting policy in relation to the
5	isolation of those who had symptoms, suspected cases,
6	positive cases, and close contacts.
7	The evolution of Northern Irish guidance was
8	informed by knowledge of the virus, its transmission and
9	behaviour, the emergence of new variants, awareness of
10	particularly vulnerable individuals and populations, and
11	the availability of vaccinations and epidemiological
12	data.
13	The department had to, and indeed did, act on the
14	best available information and evidence in a rapidly
15	changing and complex environment, factors which only
16	served to compound the challenges for those making these
17	decisions.
18	The department's advice to the Northern Ireland
19	Executive ultimately led to the implementation of
20	various measures, including self-isolation for positive
21 22	cases and their close contacts, which is a focus of
22	Module 7.
23 24	The department remains mindful, my Lady, of the potentially disproportionate impact of the pandemic and
24 25	its restrictions on those with health inequalities, and
25	113
4	
1	you very much.
2	LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much indeed, Ms Murnaghan.
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1	for that reason, it believes that these inequities and
2	inequalities should form an integral part of any future
3	pandemic preparedness and planning.
4	Of course, my Lady, as has already been stated this
5	morning, in Northern Ireland the self-isolation rules
6	were never law but rather were classified by the
7	department as "very strong guidance".
8	Despite this, it should be noted that the overall
9	level of adherence in Northern Ireland was good, as
10	elucidated in the department's statement to this
11	Inquiry.
12	The citizens of Northern Ireland are to be commended
13	for the actions that they took to protect others.
14	While there were no easy or straightforward
15	solutions to many of the challenges, we contend that the
16	collective endeavour of all ensured that, through
17	research, innovation and operational logistics, the
18	delivery came together in what was an unprecedented
19	local and national effort.
20	We consider, my Lady, that the evidence submitted by
21	the department has shown how continuous learning
22	occurred throughout the department.
23	In conclusion, therefore, the department reiterates
24	its ongoing commitment to this Inquiry and its work and
25	stands ready to assist in any way that it can. Thank 114
1	control to that
1	central to that.
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1	encourage self-isolation.	1	the UK Government and the other devolved
2	The effectiveness of the Scottish Government's	2	administrations, then that was adopted.
3	strategy depended on compliance. It considered that the	3	Ultimately, the Scottish Government's responsibility
4	best approach was to encourage and persuade the	4	was to take decisions in the best interests of the
5	population to comply, rather than to force them to	5	people of Scotland. High-level clinical advice on the
6	comply by imposing large fines.	6	use of testing was broadly aligned across the four
7	Recognising the challenges that compliance posed for	7	nations and approaches to testing policy was similar.
8	many was key. A range of financial and practical	8	The testing programme was built as a four nations
9	support was introduced to support ordinary people, and	9	programme. The Scottish Government and the
10	to remove barriers to compliance. This included the	10	UK Government worked together collaboratively and the
11	pre-existing Scottish Welfare Fund, introducing the	11	programme was later formalised through a memorandum of
12	Self-Isolation Support Grant, the Local Self-Isolation	12	understanding.
13	Assistance Service which provided access to a range of	13	In relation to contact tracing the test and trace
14	practical support, the Local Government Hardship Fund,	14	service in England was operated directly by the
15	food fund, and business support schemes.	15	UK Government. In Scotland, delivery was predominantly
16	The Scottish Government worked out in partnership	16	carried out by NHS special and territorial health board
17	with the convention of Scottish local authorities	17	employees. The Scottish Government believed that the
18	focusing on persuasion and support along with clear	18	optimal structure was locally driven, with the ability
19	public health messaging.	19	to draw on central surge capacity.
20	Turning to the second theme: evidence-based decision	20	NHS NSS was the central coordinator of contact
21	making. The Scottish Government's response was based on	21	tracing alongside local health boards as part of a hub
22	the best available information and advice of clinical	22	and spoke model. The key difference when compared with
23	advisers. It made decisions tailored to the needs of	23	the UK Government's delivery model was that the Scottish
24	Scotland's population. Where this pointed to an	24	Government preferred to use the existing health
25	approach for Scotland which aligned with that taken by 117	25	workforce to deliver contact tracing. 118
1	Moving on to the third theme, my Lady: how testing	1	capacity are already in place.
1 2	Moving on to the third theme, my Lady: how testing capacity was increased. Through an extraordinary	1 2	capacity are already in place. Turning to the fourth theme, my Lady: the evolution
2	capacity was increased. Through an extraordinary	2	Turning to the fourth theme, my Lady: the evolution
2 3	capacity was increased. Through an extraordinary expansion effort, the Scottish Government built	2 3	Turning to the fourth theme, my Lady: the evolution of test, trace and isolate interventions. The Scottish
2 3 4	capacity was increased. Through an extraordinary expansion effort, the Scottish Government built a national testing infrastructure from scratch,	2 3 4	Turning to the fourth theme, my Lady: the evolution of test, trace and isolate interventions. The Scottish Government's approach to testing adapted as the pandemic
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1	start, and initial funding and its growth relied on
2	decisions made by the UK Government.
3	The Scottish Government announced its Self-Isolation
4	Support Grant in September 2020 before it had confirmed
5	funding from the UK Government. Advance agreement of
6	funding for public health would enable clarity in any
7	working.
8	In early 2022 the UK unilaterally announced it would
9	stop population testing in England. While the Scottish
10	Government continued to run testing in Scotland for
11	a short period it had little choice but to end mass
12	population testing.
13	Moving to the final theme: the Scottish Government's
14	reflections, my Lady.
15	The Scottish Government endorses the recommendations
16	of the technical report of the CMOs on the Covid-19
17	pandemic in the UK. It recognises that equality,
18	inclusion and human rights require to be essential parts
19	of future testing. The Scottish Government's future
20	pandemic preparedness programme of work will ensure that
21	policy across government is better able to respond to
22	the next pandemic. It is committed to working with the
23	UK Government, other devolved administrations, and key
24	partners to review the test, trace and isolate functions
25	and ensuring that equality is embedded in everything
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1	Mr Kinnier.
2	Submissions on behalf of the Welsh Government by
3	MR KINNIER KC
4	MR KINNIER: My Lady, prynhawn da.
5	Today, the Welsh Government's submissions
6	concentrate on four particular issues: first, discharge
7	from hospitals to care homes; secondly, asymptomatic
8	testing in care homes; thirdly, testing capacity; and
9	finally, the self-isolation support scheme.
10	During the early stages of the pandemic, based on
11	advice from Public Health Wales and SAGE, it was not
12	Welsh Government policy for patients to be tested for
13	Covid-19 infection before being discharged from
14	hospitals and care homes.
15	On 15 April 2020, the Technical Advisory Cell
16	advised caution about discharging patients with the
17	virus from hospitals to care home settings. As

virus from hospitals to care home settings. As 18 a result, the decision was made to test patients being 19 discharged from hospitals to care homes. 20 That decision was communicated to Public Health 21 Wales by email in the late afternoon of 15 April. On 22 17 April, Welsh ministers were advised that the 23 UK Government had committed to testing patients on

- 24 discharge from hospital before returning to care homes.
 - Also on that day, local health board chief

25

- that it does.
- 2 In conclusion, my Lady, the delivery of testing and 3 contact tracing in Scotland was a remarkable achievement 4 delivered by the Scottish Government in partnership with the whole system of public agencies. A sophisticated 5 6 and high-capacity programme was put in place with 7 outstanding speed, which evolved with the pandemic and 8 as testing requirements changed. The Scottish Government worked closely with the UK Government but was 9 10 also able to take evidence-based decisions relating to 11 Scotland's characteristics. 12 The Scottish Government pays tribute to all those 13 clinical, scientific support and administrative staff 14 who showed such dedication and continuous effort in 15 delivering Test and Protect. 16 It also wishes to reiterate its appreciation of the 17 vital role of the public. The cooperation, trust and 18 commitment shown by people across Scotland in coming 19 forward for testing, sharing contacts, and 20 self-isolating when asked, was fundamental to the 21 success of Test and Protect. Their collective effort 22 was a cornerstone of Scotland's pandemic response and 23 helped to save lives. 24 Thank you, my Lady. LADY HALLETT: Thank you, Ms Drysdale. 25
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1	
-	executives were told that Wales would align its approach
2	to care home testing with England, and revised guidance
3	would be released soon.
4	My Lady, the Welsh Government recognises it should
5	have acted more swiftly in respect of testing of
6	patients being discharged from hospital to care home
7	settings. In short, there ought not to have been
8	a delay between 15 April 2020, when the risk came to the
9	fore, the announcement of the new approach in joint
10	letters of 22 and 24 April 2020, and the ultimate
11	publication of guidance on 29 April.
12	The Welsh Government is sorry for that delay, and
13	most particularly to those affected by it.
14	Asymptomatic testing in care homes was introduced on
15	16 May 2020. The Welsh Government received updated
16	advice on asymptomatic transmission and adjusted its
17	policy as the scientific assessment and understanding
18	developed, and advice changed in favour of asymptomatic
19	testing.
20	Knowledge of asymptomatic transmission continually
21	developed as the pandemic progressed. It is now
22	accepted that it is an important factor in the spread of
23	the virus.
24	The Welsh Government has carefully reflected on
25	whether it could have acted differently by including 124

1	asymptomatic individuals when prioritising tests, or	1	communicated b
2	indeed sooner.	2	negotiating with I
3	The question is undoubtedly complex, but the Welsh	3	900 of the expec
4	Government's considered view is that asymptomatic	4	available for test
5	testing for certain individuals was introduced at the	5	domestic testing
6	appropriate time, bearing in mind the contemporaneous	6	hoped. This low
7	state of knowledge of asymptomatic transmission and the	7	expected numbe
8	available testing capacity in Wales.	8	was not met.
9	To have introduced asymptomatic testing sooner,	9	Alongside th
10	while knowledge was still developing, was likely to have	10	Health Wales, W
11	moved resources away from identified and understood	11	of the testing cap
12	priorities.	12	laboratories avai
13	That said, undoubtedly this question will be the	13	programme.
14	subject of careful examination both in this module and	14	The UK Gov
15	Module 6.	15	testing during tim
16	Testing capacity was initially provided by	16	Auditor General
17	laboratories in Public Health Wales's network. On	17	Protect, the fact
18	21 March of 2020, testing capacity was 800 tests per	18	over all elements
19	day. That was expected to expand to 9,000 tests per day	19	caused some op
20	by the end of April 2020. A further expansion by	20	UK National Test
21	5,000 tests per day anticipated on 1 April 2020 was	21	opportunities for
22	based on an expected agreement between Public Health	22	For example
23	Wales and Roche Diagnostic Limited.	23	enabled pilot sch
24	Regrettably, that agreement did not materialise	24	about alternative
25	because Wales's position had not been correctly 125	25	Although the
1	the final analysis, more than 8 million PCR tests were	1	support is an inte
2	processed for people in Wales during the pandemic and	2	self-isolate, parti
3	testing was central to the Welsh Government's response	3	incomes. It was
4	to the pandemic.	4	support was mad
5	Looking ahead, the Welsh Government believes that	5	the Welsh schen
6	laboratory capacity and sampling facilities will be	6	My Lady, in
7	important to any future pandemic. To that end, it has	7	supporting your v
8	maintained significant laboratory testing capacity and	8	learning the less
9	infrastructure and it has also invested in testing	9	LADY HALLETT: Th
10	technology to be prepared for future hazards.	10	Very gratefu
11	My Lady, the self-isolation support scheme was	11	And may I al
12	introduced in October 2020. As in England, eligible	12	been making sub
13	claimants were entitled to receive £500 per week and its	13	I will, of course, a
14	introduction was timed to coincide with the entry into	14	those who haven
15	force of legislation requiring contacts of positive	15	submissions of the
16	cases to self-isolate when notified by a contact tracer.	16	obviously that ha
17	Alone among the four nations, Wales increased the level	17	you all very mucl
18	of the support payment in August 2021 to £750, following	18	the break now.
19	concerns about the adequacy of a £500 payment to cover	19	MS CARTWRIGHT:
20	living expenses for ten days.	20	LADY HALLETT: An
21	Professor Machin considered this to be good	21	you will call the fi
22	practice. Significantly, the increase was made after	22	MS CARTWRIGHT:
23	the evidence made it clear that an increase would help	23	(3.12 pm)
24	to promote positive behaviour.	24	
25	Professor Machin also concluded that financial 127	25	(3.30 pm)

by the UK Government, which was also Roche at the time. Consequently, only ected 5,000 daily tests were made sting in Wales, and the expansion of g was certainly slower than had been wer rate of expansion meant that the er of 9,000 daily tests by the end of April the testing capacity provided by Public Wales had access to its population share apacity through the Lighthouse ailable under the UK's national testing overnment placed constraints on laboratory mes of high demand. As detailed in the for Wales's report on Test, Trace, that Wales did not have sole control ts of the Test, Trace, Protect programme perational difficulties. That said, the sting Programme also provided valuable r new testing technologies. le, Wales's share of lateral flow devices chemes which helped inform decisions es to self-isolation. ere were initial supply difficulties, in 126 tegral part of encouraging people to ticularly in the case of those on lower s right, therefore, that financial de available and that Wales strove to make me amongst the most generous. conclusion, we look forward to work in this module and in particular, sons for the future. Thank you. hank you very much indeed, Mr Kinnier. ful. also thank every one of those who have ubmissions, timekeeping has been superb. also read the written submissions of en't made oral submissions and the written those who have made oral submissions but ave summarised their effect. So thank ch. I think it's probably time to take Thank you, my Lady. and then we will call the first witness or first witness, Ms Cartwright, at 3.30. I'm grateful. Thank you, my Lady. (A short break) 128

(32) Pages 125 - 128

1		DY HALLETT: Ms Cartwright.
2	MS	CARTWRIGHT: Good afternoon.
3		My Lady, Professor Naomi Fulop is the witness in the
4		witness box. Can I ask, please, that Professor Fulop be
5		sworn, please.
6		PROFESSOR NAOMI FULOP (affirmed).
7	LAI	DY HALLETT: I hope you were warned that we wouldn't get
8		to you until quite late in the day. I'm sorry if you've
9 10	ты	been kept waiting. E WITNESS: That's okay, thank you.
11		Questions from LEAD COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY FOR MODULE 7
12		CARTWRIGHT: Can we start, please, could you give the
13	1110	Inquiry your full name.
14	Α.	Professor Naomi Judith Fulop.
15	Q.	Thank you. Professor Fulop, you should have in front of
16	_ .	you a copy of your witness statement. Can I take you to
17		the last page of that, please, page 14. It's
18		a statement dated 28 March of this year.
19		Can I ask you to confirm that the contents of that
20		statement are true to the best of your knowledge and
21		belief.
22	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
23	Q.	Thank you. Now, Professor Fulop, you have already
24		identified yourself as a professor. Could you confirm
25		to the Inquiry, please, what you are a Professor in.
		129
1	Q.	And I think it's right also, isn't it, that you identify
2		that one of the goals of the organisation is to
3		establish the truth of what happened to their loved ones
4		and to ensure accountability and to learn lessons to
5		prevent future deaths?
6	Α.	That's correct.
7	Q.	Thank you. You are not only a member of the group, but
8		it's right, isn't it, that you have been on the board of
9		directors since July of 2022?
10	Α.	That's right.
11	Q.	Thank you. Now, we're going to come on to look at the
12		thematic issues, and it's right, isn't it, that as part
13		of that, you are identifying issues that happened in
14		respect of your own mother's death and infection,
15		Christina Fulop?
16	A.	Mm-hm.
17 10	Q.	Which identifies relevant issues relating to test, trace
18 19	٨	and isolate? Yeah, that's right.
19 20	A. Q.	Can we then, before dealing with the overarching
20 21	પ.	thematic issues, could you perhaps give us some context
21		to the death of your mother and the relevance of TTI?
22	Α.	Yes, of course. So, actually, I'd like to start by
24		taking just a few moments to talk about my mum and her
25		life, just briefly, because I think it's really
		131

1	Α.	Yes, I'm a Professor of Health Care Organisation and
2		Management at University College London.

- 3 Q. Thank you. Now, you attend today, essentially, as the
- 4 corporate or the spokesperson for Covid Bereaved
- 5 Families for Justice UK?
- 6 A. That's right. 7 **Q.** And it's correct, isn't it, that the witness statement 8 that's been prepared essentially identifies the thematic 9 issues of concern to Covid Bereaved Families for Justice 10 UK and is the combination of collaboration of the 11 membership? 12 A. That's right. 13 Q. Now we'll turn to look at those thematic issues in the 14 moment. The Inquiry is already well aware who Covid Bereaved Families for Justice UK are, but can we just 15 16 identify together, it's right, isn't it, that you are an organisation of approximately 7,000 members? 17 That's correct. 18 Α. 19 Q. All of whom have lost a loved one to Covid-19? 20 Α. Yes. Q. You were founded in March of 2020? 21 22 Yes. Α. 23 Q. And the primary aim is to ensure lessons are learned 24 from the pandemic to prevent further loss of life? 25 A. Yes, that's all correct. 130

1		important that we remember, and the whole Inquiry
2		remembers, who we've lost. So my mother was a really
3		remarkable woman. She broke glass ceilings before they
4		were called glass ceilings. She was born into a working
5		class family in East London where none of her siblings
6		stayed at school past the age of 12.
7		She won a scholarship to a prestigious school but
, 8		unfortunately due to the circumstances of the Second
9		World War she had to leave aged 14. So she then worked
		C C
10		in the day and went to night school and studied for the
11		equivalent of GCSE and A levels and that's where she met
12		my dad, who had arrived here in 1939 on the
13		Kindertransport.
14		She took her degree at LSE and, in later years,
15		a PhD from Brunel University, and her career culminated
16		in being professor of marketing at City University
17		Business School. She combined professional life with
18		raising three children and my parents were married for
19		69 years.
20	Q.	Thank you.
21	Α.	So, moving on to the pandemic and the circumstances of
22		her death.
23		She lived at home, supported by wonderful, dedicated
24		domiciliary carers, who were absolutely fantastic and
25		went above in beyond their duty. In the first wave, for 132

1		example, when we couldn't get her supermarket
2		deliveries, they went in their own time to buy her food.
3		They had inadequate PPE. In March and April
4		of 2020, they had no PPE. At the beginning of May, my
5		mother was sent a week's worth of PPE to give each carer
6		one mask as they came through the door. At the end of
7		that week, my mother got a notification from the
8		care agency to say that was ending, and they were now
9		the carers were going to have one thin medical mask per
10		shift. So they worked for 8 hours, going from frail
11		elderly person to frail elderly person, with one thin
12		medical mask.
13		And when I rang the care agency to ask them about
14		this, they said it was a change in policy by Public
15		Health England.
16		So I felt my mother was a sitting duck for Covid.
17		However, she survived the first wave, so scroll forward
18		to autumn and winter 2020, 2021, she started showing
19		symptoms on New Year's Day, and then she became very
20		unwell on Monday, 4 January. And the ambulance was
21		called, paramedics were called, and they I didn't take
22		her into hospital because they said there was such
23		a long wait.
24		The following day, the Tuesday, 5 January, they did
25		take her into hospital once the carer had found her
		133
1		way during autumn 2020 and despite warnings from
1 2		way during autumn 2020 and despite warnings from experts. In particular I include in the statement the
2		experts. In particular I include in the statement the
2 3		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in
2 3 4		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which
2 3 4 5		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in
2 3 4 5 6		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were
2 3 4 5 6 7		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8		experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored. And then, in my mother's case in particular, the
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored. And then, in my mother's case in particular, the lack of an effective test, trace and isolate support system meant that the care workers who looked after her so diligently were exposed due to both inadequate PPE and an ineffective test, trace and isolate system. They weren't able to test regularly, there was no asymptomatic testing at that time, and it was difficult for them to isolate without adequate financial and practical support. So they were risking themselves, their families, and the people they cared for. Thank you.
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q.	experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored. And then, in my mother's case in particular, the lack of an effective test, trace and isolate support system meant that the care workers who looked after her so diligently were exposed due to both inadequate PPE and an ineffective test, trace and isolate system. They weren't able to test regularly, there was no asymptomatic testing at that time, and it was difficult for them to isolate without adequate financial and practical support. So they were risking themselves, their families, and the people they cared for. Thank you. Now, thank you for drawing out some particular thematic issues from the test, trace, isolate and support that you believe played a role in your mother's
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored. And then, in my mother's case in particular, the lack of an effective test, trace and isolate support system meant that the care workers who looked after her so diligently were exposed due to both inadequate PPE and an ineffective test, trace and isolate system. They weren't able to test regularly, there was no asymptomatic testing at that time, and it was difficult for them to isolate without adequate financial and practical support. So they were risking themselves, their families, and the people they cared for. Thank you. Now, thank you for drawing out some particular thematic issues from the test, trace, isolate and support that you believe played a role in your mother's death on 8 January.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Q.	experts. In particular I include in the statement the report from the Academy of Medical Sciences in July 2020, "Preparing for a challenging winter", which set out detailed recommendations overall but in particular about test, trace and isolate, which were ignored. And then, in my mother's case in particular, the lack of an effective test, trace and isolate support system meant that the care workers who looked after her so diligently were exposed due to both inadequate PPE and an ineffective test, trace and isolate system. They weren't able to test regularly, there was no asymptomatic testing at that time, and it was difficult for them to isolate without adequate financial and practical support. So they were risking themselves, their families, and the people they cared for. Thank you. Now, thank you for drawing out some particular thematic issues from the test, trace, isolate and support that you believe played a role in your mother's death on 8 January.

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4		
1		unresponsive.
2		On Thursday, 7 January, we were informed she was
3		moved to end-of-life care, and we were informed that one
4		of us could visit. And we are there are three of us.
5		So a difficult decision had to be made.
6		And in the end, unfortunately, we weren't able to be
7		there when she died, on Friday, 8 January. And that is
8		a source of great pain to me personally. And I hadn't
9		seen her since the end of September, because we were
10		trying to protect her from Covid, and I regret that now.
11	Q.	Thank you. And
12	Α.	If I could just finish by saying the following week she
13		receive a letter inviting her to have her vaccine, and
14		it was dated the day of her death.
15	Q.	Thank you.
16	Α.	So those were the circumstances. And if I can now go
17		into the connection with the lack of an effective test,
18		trace, isolate and support system, which could have
19		played a really crucial role in protecting her, and it's
20		at two levels: the first is that, as we've heard today,
21		a centralised system was set up in May 2020 which
22		sidelined local public health, which we'll say more
23		about, and had too heavy a reliance on an app.
24		It meant that the second wave was much worse than
25		the first one. The virus spread in an uncontrollable
20		134
1		permission for the statement to be published, please.
2	LA	DY HALLETT: That will be the default setting.
3		CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.
4		And we're not going to deal with details of the
5		other personal accounts of thematic issues that are
6		contained within the statement but it's right to
7		identify they are provided from Kathryn De Prudhoe,
8		Cleo Scrivener, Professor Fudge, Saila Ahmed,
9		Elaine Seaton, Jackie Lancaster, Stuart Wright,
		-
10		Sylvia Ferro, and also an individual named as Karen, but
11		it's right to say that there are too many other
12		individuals from the group that have also contributed to
13		these thematic issues?
14	Α.	That's right, many people included.
15	Q.	Can we then, please, look together at five of the
16		overarching issues, appreciating that many, many others
17		are identified in this statement.
18		Could I ask you, please, first of all to detail and
19		set out the group's concerns, by reference to test,
20		trace and isolate, relating to preparedness and lack of
21		capacity, please.
22		Vec. and newhere I can start that any even in the start of

A. Yes, and perhaps I can start that our group is concernedin an overall way by the lack of an effective test,

- 24 trace, isolate and support system, because what that
- 25 meant was, not only an increase in the number of deaths,

1		but also it meant that we had more and longer lockdowns,	1	
2		and therefore the economic and social impact was much	2	
3		greater.	3	
4		And I feel that this has come out today somewhat in	4	
5		the Inquiry and it will come out more, but our group	5	
6		feels it's really, really important that people	6	Q.
7		understand: it's not either many, many people dying or	7	
8		lockdowns. Actually, if you have an effective test,	8	
9		trace, isolate and support system, you can both reduce	9	
10		the number of deaths and reduce the number and length of	10	
11	~	lockdowns.	11	Α.
12 13	Q.	Thank you.	12	
13	Α.	So in terms of sorry in terms of preparedness and	13 14	
14		lack of capacity, so as we've heard this morning, we weren't prepared prior to the pandemic. We hadn't	14	
15 16			15	
17		learned from what happened with SARS, the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s. And we weren't even using the	10	
18		capacity that existed in, for example, the Crick	17	
19		institute and the universities. And the government	18	
20		ignored the warnings of experts, so we know we heard	20	
20 21		this morning that community testing stop on	20 21	
22		12 March 2025 2020, sorry. 12 March 2020 we stopped	21	
23		community testing.	22	
23		On 15 March, Professor Mark Woolhouse, who we've	23	
24		heard from in an earlier module, wrote to Chris Whitty,	24	
20		137	20	
1 2		But I'd also like to bring out an example from one of our members, Karen, who didn't want her surname to be	1 2	
3	~	used	3	
4	Q.	Yes.	4	
5	Α.	whose husband worked as a maintenance engineer at	5	
6 7		a company where staff were dismissed if they had more	6	
7		than two absences a year. As a result, a colleague	7	
8 9		awaiting the results of the PCR test felt too afraid to	8 9	
9 10		isolate and instead attended work. There was minimal social distancing measures in place and Karen's husband	9 10	
10		was exposed to the virus. Despite being advised to	10	
12		shield due to his underlying health conditions, he	11	
12		feared the financial consequences of taking time off and	12	
13 14		continued working. He later contracted Covid and	13	
14		tragically died on 8 February 2021.	14	
16	Q.	Thank you. And with thanks to Karen for sharing that	16	
17	ч.	deeply personal experience.	10	
18		Could we then move, please, to the third overarching	18	
19		thematic issue of concern to the membership, namely the	19	
20		failure to utilise, as part of TTI, local expertise,	20	Q.
21		please.	20	-
22	Α.	Yes, so this is a fundamental failing of the policy.	22	
23		We've heard already today, and have already said, that	23	
24		a centralised system was established in May 2020, which	24	
25		sidelined local public health expertise. Local public	25	Α.
		139		

1		the Chief Medical Officer, and he said:
2		[As read] "Many of us are at a loss to understand
2		
		why the government has abandoned intensive population
4		surveillance, contact tracing and quarantine, which is
5	~	the bedrock of WHO advice for epidemic control."
6	Q.	Thank you.
7		Can we then please move on to one of the other
8		significant issues for the membership of Covid Bereaved
9		Families for Justice UK, and that's the issue of lack of
10	•	financial support, please.
11	Α.	Yes, so we're very concerned by the inadequate financial
12		and practical support that people were given to isolate.
13		So, for the system TTIS to work, all elements of it
14		have to work. So even if you were very good at testing
15		and tracing, if you can't help people facilitate them
16		to isolate, you're not going to help them control the
17		spread of the infection.
18		So, for example, people on minimum wage, on
19		zero-hour contracts, were found it incredibly
20		difficult to isolate. They were forced to choose
21		between earning a living or spreading the virus. And
22		TUC research found that I've included in the
23		statement that more than two times, twice as many
24		people on zero-hour contracts were likely to die. And
25		naanla lika mu mum'a aarara ara an ayamnla hara
25		people like my mum's carers are an example here. 138
25		people like my mum's carers are an example here. 138
		138
1		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities,
1 2		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had
1 2 3		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had undergone cuts, had they been given the resource, they
1 2 3 4		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had undergone cuts, had they been given the resource, they could have undertook contact tracing with which they are
1 2 3 4 5		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had undergone cuts, had they been given the resource, they could have undertook contact tracing with which they are so expert. But also, they understand their local
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7		138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had undergone cuts, had they been given the resource, they could have undertook contact tracing with which they are so expert. But also, they understand their local communities. Every community is different, and those public health experts understand their community and
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 23 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	138 health teams from 2012 were based in local authorities, and whilst unfortunately, due to austerity, they had undergone cuts, had they been given the resource, they could have undertook contact tracing with which they are so expert. But also, they understand their local communities. Every community is different, and those public health experts understand their community and could have been much more successful than test, trace and isolate was. So for example, the National Audit Office report found that between May and November of 2020, only 66% of contacts of infected people were contacted and asked to isolate, and SAGE as we've heard earlier today, SAGE's recommendations were that at least 80% of contacts have to be contacted. So this is a deep failure and it could have been different, and it could have been that the funds that were used, as we've heard about on test, trace and isolate, could have been used in a much more effective way. Thank you. Can we then, please, move on to topic 4, which we're aware is a significant issue for Covid bereaved families

25 **A.** Yes. So, again, that's something we've heard about 140

1		today but it's of great concern to our members. So
2		South Korea and the UK developed a test for Covid on the
3		same day in early 2020, but by March, South Korea had
4		conducted five times as many tests as we had because
5		they had a very proactive testing process. So even in
6		March, we could have been looking at those data and
7		asking: how have they done that? What can we learn from
8		it?
9		And closer to home, in Germany, who implemented
10		a widespread testing, contact tracing and quarantine
11		system, which was successful, there were publications,
12		including in the BMJ in May and June 2020, outlining
13		their system and how and the successes of it. Why,
14		again, why didn't we learn from that?
15	Q.	Thank you. Then could I ask you, please, to detail the
16		membership's concerns in respect of nosocomial infection
17		and testing, and testing in care homes, please.
18	Α.	Yes. These are of great concern to our members, many of
19		whom have lost loved ones due to nosocomial infections,
20		and the lack of testing, even though testing was
21		confined to hospitals after March 12, there was still
22		shortages, and in particular, asymptomatic patients were
23		not tested, and healthcare workers also did not have
24		good access to testing, which meant, and as we've heard
25		and my Lady has heard in previous modules, infection 141
		141
1		lockdowns and economic and social damage.
2	Q.	Thank you very much.
3	Α.	And there was just one final point I wanted to raise to
4		my Lady, if I could. Our group was really heartened by
5		your letter to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,
6		Pat McFadden, about the government's response to your
7		Module 1's recommendations, which we wholeheartedly
8		support, and calling for a radical reform in planning
9		and resilience, and that there'd been too little detail
10		so far in the government response.
11		And we've also seen his response, which was quite
12		short, and we eagerly await the publication of the
13		Cabinet Office's resilience review, which we hope will
14 15		provide the detail that both you and our group are
15		looking for. But if I may, we'd like, really like you
16		to consider, following the example of chairs of other
17 19		inquiries such as Sir Brian Langstaff and Sir John
18 19		Saunders, who called in government and other officials
		to hold them to account, and it would be really great if
20 21		you would call in the Chancellor of the Duchy of
21 22		Lancaster for a hearing to ask him to go through the
		detail that you have requested. Thank you. CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.
23	WC	

- 24 My Lady, did you have any questions?
- 25 LADY HALLETT: No, I don't. Thank you very much indeed,

1		rates were very high in hospitals, and which led to
2		deaths of many of our members' loved ones.
3		Secondly, as we've heard before and we'll hear in
4		the next module, the decision to discharge hospital
5		patients into care homes without testing in April 2020,
6		and there weren't enough tests to do so, was absolutely
7		disastrous, and again, many of our members lost their
8		loved ones, who died, sadly, tragically, in care homes.
9	Q.	Thank you. Professor Fulop, I know those are
10		overarching issues of concern for the membership, but
11		before concluding my questions, are there any other
12		thematic issues you wish to draw out, and in the
13		knowledge that your statement, the full statement, will
14		be published and available for all to read?
15	Α.	There's just a couple of things. One is that I just
16		want to emphasise this message, again, about the link
17		between test, trace, isolate and support being
18		effective, and being able to reduce deaths as well as
19		having fewer and shorter lockdowns. Our concern as
20		a group is that lockdowns has become an ideological
21		football in a really unhelpful way, and it's our hope
22		the Inquiry can bring cool, calm, rational evidence to
23		this discussion to show how test, trace, isolate and
24		support, together with other pandemic preparedness and
25		responses can mitigate both the number of deaths and the 142

 17 LADY HALLETT: Hello again, Ms Marsh-Rees. Sorry to keep 18 you waiting until the end of the day. I hope you were 	1	Professor Fulop, I understand how difficult it must be
 I can only imagine how difficult it must have been, but if I may say so, you and your fellow members have made some really constructive points and raised some very important issues which I undertake, as I hope I've done before, to consider really carefully. So thank you so much for your help. THE WITNESS: Thank you. MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you. LADY HALLETT: Ms Cartwright. MS CARTWRIGHT: My Lady, the next witness is Anna-Louise Marsh-Rees. Please could she be called. MS ANNA-LOUISE MARSH-REES (affirmed) Questions from LEAD COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY FOR MODULE LADY HALLETT: Hello again, Ms Marsh-Rees. Sorry to keep you waiting until the end of the day. I hope you were 	2	for you. My mother was 94 when she died and she didn't
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	17	LADY HALLETT: Hello again, Ms Marsh-Rees. Sorry to keep
10 worned	18	you waiting until the end of the day. I hope you were
is wained.	19	warned.
20 THE WITNESS: I'm fine.	20	THE WITNESS: I'm fine.

- 21 LADY HALLETT: Thank you.
- 22 MS CARTWRIGHT: Could I ask that you please give your full
- 23 name to the Inquiry.
- 24 A. It's Anna-Louise Marsh-Rees.
- 25 **Q.** Ms Marsh-Rees, do you have a copy of that witness 144

1	statement in front of you?	1		end your evidence with just briefly dealing with the
2 A .		2		recommendations that Covid Bereaved Families for
3 Q .		3		Justice Cymru have set out in their statement.
4	to the last page of that, page 21. Could I ask you to	4		So could I ask you, first of all, to deal, please,
5	confirm that the contents of that statement are true to	5		first of all with the issue of preparedness, please.
6	the best of your knowledge and belief?	6	Α.	,
7 A .		7		preparedness, despite numerous pandemic preparatory
8 Q .	Thank you. Ms Marsh-Rees, you've given evidence on	8		exercises. The one that is of most interest to us is
9	a number of occasions to the Inquiry and thank you for	9		Exercise Shipshape, which was an exercise that was
0	attending today on behalf of Covid Bereaved Families for	10		carried out in 2003 and was specific to a SARS
1	Justice Cymru to give evidence again in respect of	11		respiratory virus and it was undertaken by Wales and
2	Module 7.	12		southwest England. There were a number of
3	Can I ask you, then, first of all, if we just	13		recommendations that were made, including being able t
4	briefly confirm that Covid Bereaved Families for	14		effectively contact, trace and isolate. Clearly none of
15	Justice Cymru was established in July 2021 and	15		that seemed to be taken on board in subsequent years.
16	essentially it looks through a perspective uniquely of	16	Q.	Thank you.
17	Welsh experience to identify learning from the deaths of	17		Now, you have also identified that a thematic issue
8	your loved ones in your membership.	18		of concern to the membership is, again, the learning
19 A .	That's correct.	19		from international examples or other countries. Could
20 Q .	Thank you. Now, again, it's right to say that there is	20		I ask you to deal with the issues of concern relating to
21	a wide range of thematic issues that your witness	21		that topic, please.
22	statement identifies, but can we perhaps focus together	22	Α.	Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we can see from countries
23	on five of those in the knowledge, again, that this	23		like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, that particularly
24	statement will be published for all to see. And once	24		following the MERS outbreak where they were profoundly
25	we've looked at those five topics together, I hope to 145	25		impacted, that they really did learn lessons. That they 146
1	were able, when SARS-2 emerged, to ramp up their testing	1		delay in discharging those from care homes to hospitals.
2	laboratory facilities quickly. They had a robust	2		You know, it was a massive impact, but what we'd like an
3	all-encompassing testing and contact tracing capability,	3		apology for and an explanation for is why there was no
4	and they didn't do it piecemeal. They were looking, you	4		testing of anyone in care homes, neither staff nor
5	know, across the piece. They were looking at people	5		residents. We have one of our members who ran a care
6	that were asymptomatic and symptomatic. They were	6		home in Wrexham, and she had no tests at all. It wasn't
7	looking at a range of symptoms, none of which appeared	7		a case of there wasn't any asymptomatic testing, there
8	to happen, you know, in Wales. And what's very	8		were just no tests at all.
9	interesting to hear, as well, is that Wales had	9	Q.	Thank you. And are you able to identify what time
10	a very had a discreet relationship with people like	10		period she had no access to tests in her care home?
11	the World Health Organisation and we read from	11	Α.	This would have been April 2020.
12	statements that they had, you know, an ongoing dialogue	12	Q.	Thank you. Now, you've already touched upon
13	with southeast Asian countries like South Korea, but	13		asymptomatic transmission and testing but that also, I
14	we're not seeing how any of that translated into what	14		think, is an issue of concern you've spoken about before
15	subsequently happened in Wales and, you know, we hope	15		but is another thematic issue identified in the
16	we would hope that we would find out why that's the	16		statement. Is there anything additional you'd like to
17	case.	17		say about that thematic issue?
18 Q .	Thank you. Can we then, please, move on to another	18	Α.	Sorry, which one?
19	thematic issue of concern, which is identified, and	19	Q.	Asymptomatic transmission.
20	I think you've spoken about this before in other	20	Α.	Yes, that's a difficult one, because there's so much to
21	modules, but it's the issue, please, of testing and	21		say
22	testing in care homes, please.	22	Q.	l appreciate
23 A .	Well, there wasn't any in wave 1. And, you know, we're,	23	Α.	about that. It is almost preposterous for
24	as a group, we are very pleased to hear just now that	24		a government to say they did not know Covid was
25	the Welsh Government have finally apologised for the 147	25		asymptomatic, you know, even as late as October '23 we

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1		were there was a Frank Atherton was still only	1		April for
2		advocating testing for those with symptoms and only the	2		there wa
3		top three symptoms. Because there was no asymptomatic	3		had. Ar
4		testing, and as we know, Korea, South Korea, Taiwan,	4		that test
5		Germany, all testing asymptomatic, this meant that you	5		particula
6		were not seeing the whole picture of Covid. There's	6		there wa
7		it's almost like no point doing it if you're just	7		there we
8		picking out bits of who you're doing it and where, and,	8		fatigue,
9		you know, moving in a on a related subject, you know,	9		know, al
10		with not testing asymptomatic, you're limiting the pool	10		that just
11		of people you're testing, therefore you're limiting the	11	Q.	Thank y
12		way to, you know, stop the spread, but also, if you're	12		giving th
13		only focusing on well, it was top two symptoms and	13		helpfully
14		then eventually three you're, again, limiting those,	14		Athertor
15		you know, the way to find out what, you know, who'd got	15		spoken
16		it, isolate them.	16		and wer
17		And, you know, to hear Mark Drakeford throughout	17		where y
18		that time saying there was no value to asymptomatic	18		father re
19		testing, what was that where was you know, we will	19		and I thi
20		look forward to finding out where he got his clinical	20		the sym
21		advice from, because it seemed like everyone else	21	Α.	And only
22		differed in that clinical judgement.	22		it's as
23		Now, of course, this meant that many people weren't	23		but it's ju
24		tested, that they didn't know they had it, and then they	24		And
25		spread it. Now, they even knew that in, I think it was	25		situatior
		149			
1		he'd been exposed to 20 other Covid patients. But when	1		no regul
2		he was discharged, there was a week where my mother was	2		Wales u
3		calling the GP we had for out of hours doctors. Now, it	3		as far as
4		was clear on his documentation that he had potentially	4		time, no
5		been exposed to Covid but he did have all of those other	5		member
6		symptoms, apart from the three cardinal ones, but not	6		our fami
7		one person joined the dots in any shape or form and	7		and had
8		said, "Actually, not only has he been exposed to Covid	8		you kno
9		but he's exhibiting a range of other Covid symptoms."	9		asympto
10	Q.	Thank you. And I think you've previously identified	10		have be
11		that your father, I think who'd been in hospital for	11		introduc
12		a gallbladder infection, was then discharged without	12		England
13		having been tested for Covid but having been exposed to	13		Anc
14		Covid whilst in hospital?	14		makes o
15	Α.	That's correct, yes.	15		lateral fl
16	Q.	I know I'm highly summarising it but I am conscious that	16		healthca
17		we have access to the transcript of the detail of what	17		twice a v
18		happened to your father in an earlier module.	18		March 2
19		Can we then, please, before moving to dealing with	19		was no i
20		recommendations, deal with the concern that the	20		they we
21		membership have around what was happening with the test,	21		spreadir
22		trace and isolate in wave 2, please.	22		highest
23	Α.	Yes, and this again aligns with my personal experience	23		I should
24		and my father's experience.	24	Q.	Thank y
25		So, although he was tested on admission, there was 151	25		Car

1		April for some symptoms and then June for others, that
2		there was a whole range of symptoms that you could have
3		had. And we're not for one minute suggesting, you know,
4		that testing should be undertaken for a sniffle but when
5		particularly our group's focus is on older people,
6		there was, it became very clear quite early on that
7		there were a whole range of other symptoms like extreme
8		fatigue, diarrhoea, nausea, headaches, that were, you
9		know, absolutely, you know, silent hypoxia, for example,
10		that just weren't tested, weren't factored in.
11	Q.	Thank you. And I think you mentioned a moment ago, in
12		giving that answer, the letter, that you've also
13		helpfully provided with your statement, from Dr Frank
14		Atherton from October 2020. I know it's a letter you've
15		spoken about before when you gave evidence to the chair,
16		and were taken in evidence by Mr Keith King's Counsel
17		where you referenced that was a letter I think your
18		father received, Ian, who we know died in October 2020
19		and I think your concern is that even in October 2020,
20		the symptoms being identified were still very limited.
21	Α.	And only to have a test with those three symptoms,
22		it's as I say, I use the word "preposterous" again,
23		but it's just alarming.
24		And bringing it back to my own my dad's
25		situation, he wasn't tested in hospital, even though
		150
1		no regular testing or repeat testing of patients in
2		Wales until January 2021. Now, there was no lack of
3		as far as we're aware, no lack of PCR tests at that
4		time, nor capacity to test. But, you know, other
5		members also experienced the same thing. Many, many of
6		our families lost loved ones during that second wave,
7		and had there been repeat testing, there would have
8		you know, it would have identified that they were either
9		asymptomatic, and segregated them, or other people would
10		have been. And even when they introduced it, they only
11		introduced it to re-test every five days, whereas in
12		England it was every three days.
13		And then the really big issue, which is the one that
14		makes our group so angry and sad, is that despite
15		lateral flow tests being available from November 2020,
16		healthcare workers in Wales were not tested regularly,
17		twice a week, in most cases until February and
18		March 2021. That is the whole of wave 2, where there
19		was no regular repeat testing of healthcare workers. So
20		they were probably coming to work asymptomatic and
21		spreading the virus, and this is why Wales has the
22		highest nosocomial rate in the UK. Highest percentage,
23		I should say.
24	Q.	Thank you.
25		Can we then, please, together look at the
-		152

1		recommendations that Covid Bereaved Families for	1
2		Justice Cymru have sought to offer to the chair. And	2
3		I'm looking now at your paragraph 59 of the witness	3
4		statement, please.	4
5		Do you want to, please, detail the recommendations	5
6		informed by participation in other modules but	6
7		consideration of the documentation in Module 7 as to the	7
8		group's views as to potential recommendations, please.	8
9	Α.	Well, the group's views are it should have started	9
10		already, but, you know, and we know the chair would	10
11		has already recommended this, and we are hoping that	11
12		this is in flight, but don't believe it is, but there	12
13		should already be in place a whole strategy around	13
14		ramping up the scalability of testing and lab	14
15		capability, a complete strategy around how testing is	15
16		undertaken, how contact tracing is done.	16
17		There needs to be people that understand tech, that	17
18		understand how data privacy works. It can't just be an	18
19		app. Although if it works, then that's good, but there	19
20		have to be consideration for people that can't use	20
21		digital or are not familiar or comfortable with using	21
22		digital means. You know, look at South Korea. Look at	22
23		those places.	23
24		But get the experts in, listen to the experts. Do	24
25		you know, we can't have a repeat again of somebody	25
		153	
1		is, in Wales it was chaos. Test, trace, you know,	1
2		moving from England to Wales, the app pinging when you	2
3		hadn't been in contact, and getting the wrong results.	3
4		You know, it was chaos.	4
5		It was also you know, whether it's a centralised	5
6		approach or a decentralised approach, our view is very	6
7		much that it should probably you need to tap into the	7
8		sort of local expertise. And, you know, we've heard in	8
9		a previous module about, you know, there's really robust	9
10		contact tracing in place for sexual health, for example.	10
11		Utilise those. But there needs to be, you know, not	11
12		just nationally coordinated in Wales but a UK	12
13		coordinated approach to this. And it needs to be	13
14		thought out now.	14
15		If I can just say, last week in Wales, 178 people	15
16		had contracted Covid in hospital. Five years on,	16
17		178 people. That doesn't sound like any lessons have	17
18		been learnt.	18
19		Testing has been forgotten. Well, it's proactively	19
20		not undertaken. And it's almost felt throughout that	20
21		the Welsh Government didn't want to know whether someone	21
22		was positive. That's how we feel. It's like	22
23		a concerted effort not to find out, because then you	23
24		have to take a proactive you know, do something to	24
25		save lives and protect people. 155	25
		100	

Iquii	y	12 Way 2023
1		saying that they've got nothing is of clinical value,
2		that there isn't when, you know, those decisions or
3		that outlook caused thousands of people to die.
4	Q.	Thank you. And I think you've already touched upon some
5		of the other recommendations. So you have identified
6		a robust testing and tracing system be developed and be
7		ready to put in operation prior to any future pandemic.
8		That you also make comment on the lack of a scalable
9		testing system being the key reason for contact tracing
10		being abandoned in Wales in March 2020, as we've heard
11		today.
12		
		And you also identify, and perhaps if you want to
13		speak a little bit this, at paragraph 62 you identify
14		that the group consider it imperative that exercises are
15		carried out to ensure that communications between the
16		United Kingdom Government and other devolved
17		administrations are improved in relation to testing and
18		tracing infrastructure and the appropriate sharing of
19		information.
20	Α.	Absolutely. We are an island, you know, with a porous
21		border with England. You know, we can't call it we
22		even call it different things, you know, Test, Trace,
23		Protect, rather than Isolate. It has to be, you know,
24		a coordinated approach to test, trace and isolate.
25		Again, we just can't have a you know, all I can say
		154
1	Q.	Thank you.
2		Then I'm looking at the final recommend in
3		paragraph 63 of your statement, it details that:
4		"[Covid Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru]
5		recommend that the UK Government conducts
6		a comprehensive analysis of international best
7		practices, with a particular emphasis on South Korea's
8		approach."
9		Do you want to indicate or assist as to why the
10		experience of South Korea is identified as one that
11		gives an idea of best practice, please.
12	Α.	And I think that's well recognised that it did.
13		Now, I know there are concerns around I mean,
14		obviously they did it properly. They thought it
15		through. There was a strategy. They had critical
16		thinkers, they had experts, and people that made, you
17		know, evidence-based decisions. But I think they've
18		just understood what they were trying to achieve, and
19		they did it for the right reason. It felt like any
20		politics or any point scoring was you know, it went
20		politics of any politic scoring was you know, it went

right thing. And, you know, we want to take the best of that.

away. They were a hundred per cent focused on doing the

- What I was going to say was we are fully cognisant
- that there were -- there will be criticisms that their 156

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1 data protection laws or data privacy laws wouldn't --2 you know, that they weren't as robust as they were in 3 Europe, but that's the sort of thing we need to start 4 thinking about now. You know, work out what you can 5 anonymise, what you can -- there's lots of good ways to 6 do it, but let's get the experts in to do this. 7 Q. And I think that's, in fact, how you end your witness 8 statement on behalf of the group. You say this: 9 "A review of these methods should engage with 10 international public health experts to determine which components are transferable to the [United Kingdom] 11 12 context. This should enable the [United Kingdom] to 13 develop a more agile, efficient, and resilient framework 14 for testing, tracing and protection, thereby 15 strengthening its capacity to manage challenges in 16 future public health emergencies." 17 A. Absolutely. 18 Q. Ms Marsh-Rees, is there anything else you wish to say in 19 respect of the helpful recommendations set out in the 20 witness statement? 21 A. No, that's captured it. I just would like to say this 22 module is incredibly important to our group because so 23 many of our loved ones and even ourselves were not 24 tested, and we, you know -- and I also want to 25 personally thank people like Paul Nurse and --157 1 LADY HALLETT: We should be. 2 THE WITNESS: Yeah. 3 LADY HALLETT: Thank you so much for your help. 4 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much. Thank you. 5 LADY HALLETT: Does that conclude the evidence for today? 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: It does. We start again at 10.00 tomorrow 7 with more impact evidence, my Lady. 8 LADY HALLETT: Thank you very much. 10.00 tomorrow, please. 9 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. 10 (4.13 pm) 11 (The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am the following day) 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

- and McKee, people that actually stood up and said this
- 2 is not right and did the right thing, and we look
- 3 forward to hearing over the next three weeks, you know,
 - the real experts and, you know, what -- you know,
 - hopefully they will back up some of the things that we
 - are asking for and the chair can make the appropriate
- 7 recommendations.
 - Q. Thank you. We'll ensure your thanks are passed on to
- Sir Paul Nurse, and Professor McKee, when he attends
 tomorrow.
- 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 12 MS CARTWRIGHT: My Lady, do you have any questions?
- 13 LADY HALLETT: No, I've no more questions.
- 14 Thank you so much, Ms Marsh-Rees. A number of times
- 15 you said about how we've got to look at this now and,
- 16 you know, the more evidence I hear in this Inquiry, the
- 17 more convinced I am it's all about preparedness. So
- 18 I think you're absolutely right.
- 19 THE WITNESS: It is.

20 LADY HALLETT: And I promise you that argument -- I firmly

- 21 take it on board, as you know from the Module 1 report,
- 22 but it's not just going to end with Module 1 because the
- 23 preparedness aspect goes on in every single module.
- 24 THE WITNESS: We are in a constant state of preparedness -
 - well, we should be. 158

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