



## **RULING ON RECALL OF VAUGHAN GETHING**

### **Background**

1. On 28 June 2023, Module 2B sent Mr Vaughan Gething a Rule 9 request. One of the disclosure requests was for his informal communications relating to the Welsh Government's response to the pandemic including text Messages and WhatsApps. On 30 June 2023, the same request was made to Baroness (Eluned) Morgan and Ms Julie Morgan. Each of these individuals provided witness statements to Module 2B as well as disclosure including informal communications.
2. The Module 2B public hearings took place between 27 February and 14 March 2024.
3. In May 2024, the Inquiry was made aware through reports in the media of an iMessage exchange dating from August 2020. In the exchange, Mr Gething was reported as stating "*I'm deleting the messages in this group. They can be captured in an FOI and I think we are all in the right place on the choice being made.*" The Inquiry had not received disclosure of this iMessage exchange.
4. The Welsh Government informed the Inquiry that Baroness Morgan and Ms Julie Morgan were members of the iMessage exchange and were in possession of the iMessage.
5. Module 2B therefore issued Rule 9 requests to (a) Mr Gething in relation to his comments in the exchange on deletion and (b) Baroness Morgan and Ms Morgan in relation to why they had not disclosed the iMessage exchange to the Inquiry. The Inquiry received witness statements in response to this request together with additional disclosure of informal communications from Ms Morgan. Given this late disclosure, the Inquiry sent a Rule 9 request to the Welsh Government for details on the guidance given to witnesses on their disclosure obligations to this Inquiry.

6. In January 2025, the Inquiry was informed that Mr Gething had located three additional notebooks which contained relevant materials to this Inquiry. The Inquiry therefore issued a Rule 9 request to Mr Gething for disclosure of the notebooks and a witness statement in relation to the searches he carried out for hard copy documents when preparing for disclosure to this Inquiry.
7. In light of the comments on deletion made by Mr Gething in the iMessage exchange and the late disclosure of notebooks, I invited submissions from Module 2B Core Participants on whether I should recall Mr Gething. I have received submissions from Covid Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru ('CBFJ Cymru').

## **Ruling**

8. I am grateful for and have carefully considered the submissions provided by CBFJ Cymru. I have also reconsidered the evidence given by Mr Gething to this Inquiry on informal communications and disclosure namely his witness statements (dated 4 January 2024, 15 July 2024 and 6 May 2025) and his oral evidence in Module 2B of 11 March 2024. I have also considered the witness statements provided by Baroness Morgan (dated 9 August 2024) and Ms Morgan (dated 1 August 2024) as well as that of Ms Stephanie McGarry, the Welsh Government's recognised legal representative (dated 10 September 2024).
9. I have considered all the above material and the material gathered by Module 2B in its detailed investigation and examination of informal communications used in the Welsh Government. This includes witness statements from numerous individuals and the oral evidence called during Module 2B's public hearings, addressing this issue.
10. I have also borne in mind the impact of gathering further evidence on the progress of the report for M2, 2A,2B and 2C and the Inquiry as a whole.
11. I am satisfied that I have sufficient evidence to make findings or recommendations and that any further investigation into these issues, including sending Rule 9 requests to all members of the iMessage exchange on whether they acted on Mr Gething's comments regarding deletion, would not be reasonable or proportionate.

12. I am further satisfied that it would not be reasonable or proportionate for Mr Gething to be recalled to answer questions on the iMessage exchange and / or his disclosure to the Inquiry.

13. However, I do direct that the Module 2B publishes on the Inquiry's website the witness statements of:

- a. Mr Gething (dated 5 July 2024 and 6 May 2025);
- b. Baroness Morgan (dated 9 August 2024);
- c. Ms J Morgan (dated 1 August 2024); and
- d. Ms McGarry (dated 10 September 2024).

**The Right Honourable Baroness Hallett**  
**Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry**  
**4 August 2025**