

Witness Name: Gareth Davies

Statement No.: 3

Exhibits: GD03/001

Dated: 3 February 2026

**UK COVID-19 INQUIRY
MODULE 9**

**MODULE 9 THIRD WITNESS STATEMENT OF GARETH DAVIES
(PERMANENT SECRETARY DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE)**

I, GARETH DAVIES, will say as follows:

- 1.1. I make this statement further to the oral evidence I provided to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry on 17 December 2025.
- 1.2. On 26 January 2026, representatives of the Department of Business and Trade informed the Inquiry that I had inadvertently misspoken during my evidence. I make this short statement to clarify the position.
- 1.3. As the Inquiry is aware, DBT has developed the Small Business Finance: Emergency Playbook [GD03/001 – INQ000659856]. During my evidence, I mistakenly stated that the Playbook had been developed in collaboration with the Public Sector Fraud Authority (**PSFA**) [15/34/8-11].
- 1.4. The PSFA was not directly involved in the development of this Playbook. Instead, it has provided indirect input, in that DBT drew on PSFA's existing counter-fraud guidance and expertise when shaping the Playbook, particularly on developing fraud-risk assessments, early engagement with enforcement partners, and setting clear expectations for lender fraud-prevention obligations.
- 1.5. Going forward, DBT intends to consult the PSFA on the development of the Playbook's forward-looking fraud strategy, including how future schemes should be designed, as part of the next round of consultation with other Government departments, which is envisaged to take place around late Winter 2026.
- 1.6. I apologise for any confusion caused by my earlier evidence. I hope this clarification assists the Inquiry, and I remain committed to providing accurate and transparent information to support its work.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Personal Data

Signed:

Dated: 03/02/26