

Witness Name: Jane Elizabeth Ellison
Statement No.: WITN3904008
Exhibits:
Dated: [05.05.2022]

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN RESPONSE TO RULE 13 BY JANE ELIZABETH ELLISON

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I am providing this written statement in response to criticism under Rule 13 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 04 June 2021.

I, Jane Elizabeth Ellison, will say as follows:-

Section 1: Response

The criticism is as follows:

(a) At page 25, paragraph 132 of witness W1210's statement, the witness states: "I have generally found the responses from Ministers and Prime Ministers do not address the issues raised in my correspondence and the standard response is usually to divert from the difficult points being raised, deflect responsibility and generally obfuscate" and names you as one of "the Ministers" he has found to be "particularly unhelpful and/or [to] give a masterclass in smoke and mirrors".

1. I note from witness W1210's statement that he states that he generally found the responses from ministers and Prime Ministers did not address the issues raised in his correspondence and the standard response is usually to divert from the difficult points being raised, deflect responsibility and generally obfuscate. The witness names me as one of "*the Ministers*" that he has found to be "*particularly unhelpful and/or [to] give a masterclass in smoke and mirrors*". Noting that the term 'smoke and mirrors' is often used to imply deliberate deceit, I can say there would have been no attempt to dissemble or mislead on my part.
2. I do not have any recollection of my correspondence with witness W1210 whilst I was a minister and I have not been provided with a copy of this correspondence. I am aware that witness W1210 mentioned correspondence to me during his oral evidence but this was sent on the 21 June 2018, when I was no longer the minister or a Member of Parliament.
3. It is difficult for me to provide a specific response to this criticism without knowing what it was that I wrote that witness W1210 found to be unhelpful and/or "*a masterclass in smoke and mirrors*". As I have explained in

paragraphs 32 and 33 of my Second Written Statement, I felt it was important to wait until the publication of the Penrose report before developing policy on reforming the ex-gratia financial assistance schemes. I wanted to make sure that any recommendations were taken into account. This may have meant that I was not in a position to respond substantively to W1210's correspondence. However, without knowing the detail of the correspondence this is just speculation.

4. I accept that campaigners found the government's position frustrating and unsatisfactory. I am sorry if witness W1210 found my correspondence unhelpful. I would have been expressing government policy as it stood at the time.
5. Notwithstanding the understandable frustration of campaigners, throughout my time in this ministerial role I endeavoured to improve the situation of those infected and affected, principally through reform to the financial support schemes, in the context and circumstances as described in my Second Written Statement.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed GRO-C

Dated 5.5.22