

Witness Name: Lesley Fraser

Statement No: WITN7351001

Exhibits: WITN7351002 -

WITN7351005

Dated: 27/10/2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LESLEY FRASER

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 October 2022.

I, Lesley Fraser, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

1. *Please set out your name, address, date of birth and any relevant professional qualifications relevant to the role you currently discharge.*

1.1. My name is Lesley Fraser. My address is care of GRO-C  
GRO-C Edinburgh, GRO-C and my date of birth is GRO-1964.

2. *Please describe, in broad terms, your role and responsibilities as Director General Corporate in the Scottish Government.*

2.1. I am a member of the Scottish Government's Executive Team, working closely with the Permanent Secretary. I oversee and lead the work of the following Scottish Government Directorates: Communications and Ministerial Support, Corporate Transformation and Workplace, Covid

Inquiries Response, Digital, Financial Management, Legal Services, People, Propriety and Ethics, and Procurement and Property.

2.2. I should note that, while I have a general awareness of key health issues as a member of the Executive Team, I do not have responsibility for health policy. Apart from working briefly as head of the Primary Care Division from late 2012 to mid-2013, I have never had responsibility for health policy.

3. *Please set out your membership, past or present, of any committees, associations, parties, societies or groups relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, including the dates of your membership and the nature of your involvement.*

3.1. I am not a member of any committees, associations, parties, societies or groups which are relevant to the Inquiry's terms of reference.

4. *Please confirm whether you have provided evidence to, or have been involved in, any other inquiries, investigations or criminal or civil litigation in relation to human immunodeficiency virus ("HIV") and/or hepatitis B virus ("HBV") and/or hepatitis C virus ("HCV") infections and/or variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease ("vCJD") in blood and/or blood products. Please provide details of your involvement and copies of any statements or reports which you provided.*

4.1. I have not provided evidence to or been involved in any other inquiries, investigations or litigation relating to any of these topics.

## **Section 2: Candour and Objectivity**

5. *What measures and incentives support candour in the civil service and what more could or should be done?*

6. *What mitigates against groupthink in the civil service and what more could or should be done?*

7. *What helps the civil service guard against approaching issues with a closed mind, or what Jeremy Hunt described as ‘memory illusion’ and the ‘institutional closing of ranks’, to protect those people who were judged to have been trying to do ‘the right thing’? What more could or should be done?*

7.1. There is overlap between these three questions so I have provided a combined response to all three, grouped into a number of themes below.

#### The Civil Service Code, the Scottish Ministerial Code

7.2. The Civil Service Code (CS Code)<sup>1</sup> [RLIT0001819] requires civil servants to act in accordance with its values of objectivity, honesty, impartiality and integrity in the provision of advice to Ministers. The requirements for objectivity and honesty are key for civil servants having the confidence to provide candid advice to Ministers, even when the message may be difficult. Objectivity requires providing information and advice on the basis of the evidence, and accurately presenting options and facts. Civil servants are required to exercise objectivity in making decisions on the merits of the case, while taking due account of expert and professional advice. This requires not ignoring inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when providing advice or making decisions, or frustrating the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action that flows from those decisions. Honesty involves setting out the facts and relevant issues truthfully, and correcting any errors as soon as possible. The incentives to support candour in the civil service are in working in accordance with these values.

7.3. There is a high degree of awareness across civil servants working in the Scottish Government about how to raise a concern under the CS Code (92% from the last UK-wide Civil Service People Survey) and regular

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/civil-service-code/>

reminders are issued to colleagues about the Code and escalation routes for concerns to be raised. We wish to maintain and improve upon these scores by seeking to continue to refine the ways of working that we have in place.

- 7.4. There is a clear relationship between the Scottish Ministerial Code (SMC)<sup>2</sup> [RLIT0001739] and CS Code that civil servants use as their guide. The two Codes are mutually reinforcing and provide the measure for civil servants' behaviour in dealing candidly with Ministers and with each other. The SMC requires Scottish Ministers to give fair consideration and due weight to informed and impartial advice from civil servants, as well as to other considerations and advice in reaching policy decisions. The SMC requires Ministers uphold the political impartiality of the Civil Service and not to ask civil servants to act in any way that would conflict with the CS Code.
- 7.5. In 2017, the Scottish Government developed specific guidance for officials supporting Scottish Ministers on collective decision-making. The protocol reflects the SMC with the addition of particular steps intended to unpack good practice by officials when helping Ministers reach collective agreements. Officials must make every effort to spell out areas of tension between different policy objectives. Policy development must be based on evidence and ensure that Ministers are advised of both the positive and negative implications of decisions so that resulting policies can be agreed on the basis of full information and that frank advice ensures that policies are sufficiently robust.
- 7.6. The Scottish Government continually seeks to improve the ways in which candour can be maintained between civil servants and Ministers. For example, on arrival in office and at the start of each new Parliamentary session, all Scottish Ministers are briefed on the provisions of the SMC and the CS Code to ensure there is a high awareness of the content and

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<sup>2</sup> Available online at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-ministerial-code-2018-edition/>

relationship between them. Following the most recent Scottish election in May 2021, this was accompanied by a series of induction sessions for Ministers, which also included advice on working with the Civil Service. In the event that civil servants need to raise a problem, for example, about a Minister's behaviour towards them, new procedures have been put in place to address that. Ministers received a briefing on this new procedure so the expectations on what is and is not acceptable are clear from the outset and there will be subsequent sessions following updates to the procedure.

- 7.7. In these examples, the Civil Service values and the interaction between the CS Code and the SMC provide the guide for working relationships to be characterised by participants having the trust and confidence to work together with frankness and respect.

#### The National Performance Framework

- 7.8. A good antidote to groupthink is to widen the approach and factors considered in discussions or decision-making processes. In Scotland's case, this is embedded in the National Performance Framework (NPF, 'National Outcomes')<sup>3</sup> [WITN7351002]. The NPF is a long-term, outcomes-based vision, setting out a strategic direction for Scotland. The NPF promotes a Scottish approach to public services – encouraging holistic government, with a focus on outcomes, prevention, collaboration and localism – that can be referred to as a wellbeing approach. This is the way of working expected in Scotland across business services. The NPF aims to reduce inequalities and gives equal importance to economic, environmental and social outcomes. NPF supports balanced decision-making by bringing together data and reporting systematically and objectively across a range of economic, social and environmental indicators. These indicators incorporate a range of different types of data – from social attitudes and perceptions to economic and environmental

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<sup>3</sup> Available online at <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

statistics – to paint a broad picture of Scotland’s performance. All three of these factors must be considered by policy makers and colleagues delivering services across the public sector. The NPF is also our main vehicle to deliver and localise the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The NPF and SDGs share the same aspirations in seeking to encourage transformational change and improvement in social, environmental and economic outcomes.

- 7.9. The NPF values describe a society characterised by openness and transparency, in which people and organisations treat each other with kindness, dignity, compassion and respect the rule of law. The values inform the behaviours that people in Scotland should see in everyday life and are part of a commitment to improving individual and collective wellbeing by national and local government, businesses, voluntary organisations, and people living in Scotland. They provide a common purpose and shared vision by aligning the whole public sector around a common set of outcomes, and are designed to respect diversity and challenge.
- 7.10. Actions to encourage candour and avoid groupthink are to an extent active in the pursuit of the NPF. NPF encourages participation and collaboration with citizens and communities. The National Outcomes are underpinned by statute by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which places a duty on public authorities to have regard to the National Outcomes in carrying out their functions. A review of the National Outcomes is required by the Act; the next review must begin no later than May 2023.
- 7.11. In determining the National Outcomes, Scottish Ministers must consult representatives of the communities’ interests, therefore public involvement is crucial in defining what matters in Scotland. The National Performance Framework is overseen by the Finance and Public Administration Committee in the Scottish Parliament and is subject to scrutiny by Audit Scotland, which has increasingly sought to hold the

Scottish Government to account through the lens of an outcomes-based approach. A key area of development for the Scottish Government in this respect is to develop a performance framework that sets intermediate outcomes that align with and demonstrate the contribution to the NPF; this is currently a work in progress.

7.12. Although advances have been made across Scotland over the last ten years, the NPF is a long-term strategic performance framework. Change is taking time and involves considerable shifts in culture, systems and practice. A mixture of bottom-up and top-down approaches continues to be essential, with commitment to and ownership of an outcomes-based approach required at every level across the whole of the public sector and more widely into civic society.

7.13. There is more that we are doing to change the culture, training and systems for the next revised National Performance Framework. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and wide-ranging impact across the National Outcomes. The pandemic has widened existing inequalities and produced disproportionate impacts, especially for those who were already struggling, e.g. households in low incomes or in poverty. There are also positive impacts and opportunities resulting from experiences during the pandemic, such as an acceleration of the shift towards digital technologies and services, responsive and agile partnership working between the public sector and other partners in an attempt to improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups, and potential shifts in the empowerment of communities to make decisions for themselves. Government does not have all the answers to these challenges - the need to be receptive to those impacted by our policies and the way in which they are delivered is evident.

7.14. The Scottish Government conducted a series of public, expert and internal consultation exercises in 2017-18 to help shape the updated NPF that was published in June 2018 with help from partner organisations and key stakeholders, including the Carnegie UK Trust,

Oxfam Scotland and the Children's Parliament. We intend to produce a review in 2023 that meets the statutory requirement to consult on and review the National Outcomes, and engage communities in Scotland in a conversation about wellbeing, building on recent participative democracy initiatives. This will inform our ongoing policy development on reforming Scotland's public services to achieve better outcomes. We endeavour to ensure that there is no place for 'closed minds' in improving outcomes in the National Performance Framework. It is not static. It is an iterative framework that will capture what we want to achieve in the future and where, with the emphasis on collaboration and respecting different points of view while working towards the same outcomes, we aim to hear more and diverse views from all our citizens to shape the delivery of services in the future.

#### *In the Service of Scotland*

- 7.15. As part of the organisational transformation of the Scottish Government, the *In the Service of Scotland* vision and *A Modern Civil Service* vision (the UKG equivalent) were developed in parallel and use the Civil Service Code as their basis; both were published in June 2021.
- 7.16. As an organisation, the Scottish Government recognises the NPF as its 'North Star', guiding its long-term direction; *In the Service of Scotland* is therefore framed around the delivery of the National Performance Framework. The Civil Service values are central to *In the Service of Scotland* and were the starting point for the work in 2020-21 to develop the Scottish Government organisational values of integrity, inclusivity, kindness, innovation and collaboration. These values guide how we act, the decisions we take and how we work together, across all parts of government, to improve the lives of people in Scotland.
- 7.17. In particular, the value of integrity requires advice to be evidence-based, which also helps mitigate the risks of groupthink and the 'closing of ranks' in difficult periods. The values of inclusivity and collaboration are



also important contributors to a culture in which we avoid groupthink. The value of inclusion makes clear that we aim to listen to the voices of everyone and respect uniqueness. The value of collaboration requires us to work with others to improve our effectiveness and make things happen, to share connections, ideas and knowledge across boundaries, and to actively listen and respond to the needs of our people, partners, Ministers and colleagues.

7.18. The Scottish Government continues to champion person-centred approaches to addressing problems. A user-centred, co-production approach to research and design reflects the *In The Service of Scotland* values of inclusivity, kindness and collaboration and endeavours to make sure we minimise the risk of wasting time and money on developing services that do not work, do not meet policy intentions or that do not produce equitable outcomes valued by the users of these services. Without a user-centred approach, the work is riskier, more costly and can cause unintended harm. This is not the sole responsibility of any one team but for everyone across the Civil Service. In adopting this approach to policymaking, civil servants want to build trust, empower people, improve wellbeing and resilience and find more sustainable ways to deliver public services, as well as provide frank, realistic and evidence-based advice to Ministers. This approach exposes civil servants to external points of view and challenges any collective assumptions they may have. Co-production requires service users to be involved in design and delivery, engaging in active and ongoing dialogue, and using mutual strengths to solve complex problems together.

7.19. While this approach is subject to ongoing improvement and development, there are a number of examples of lived experience work that have made a significant impact upon policy outcomes. Social Security Experience Panels<sup>4</sup> [WITN7351003] is one such example. These were established in 2017 to work with people who have

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<sup>4</sup> Available online at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-experience-panels-publications/>

experience of one or more of the relevant benefits due to be devolved. More than 2,400 people registered as panel members and were involved in all aspects of the development of Social Security Scotland and each of the devolved benefits.<sup>5</sup> There are other examples of participatory approaches that have been undertaken across a wide range of policy areas including Covid Recovery, Housing, and Health that have contributed to providing full and frank advice to Ministers and that have broken down received assumptions and established ways of working. Because of this work, there is compelling evidence on how these approaches improve policies, better meet people's needs and should be the norm. Colleagues across the organisation are sharing experiences and learning from each other as they gain experience in applying participatory approaches.

- 7.20. *In the Service of Scotland* is being embedded in the organisation. An annual all-staff event offers the opportunity for staff to find out how their colleagues have lived the values in their work and offers the opportunity to reflect on how the organisational vision can influence more of the work that we do. Action continues to be required at all levels of the organisation. At a corporate/SG-wide level, a range of work is being taken forward, this is complemented by activity that will be needed to support and drive organisational change in directorates and teams. Activity at these levels takes into account the local context, with change taking place at the level that delivers greatest impact or benefit. At the individual level, activity is focused on how each of us do our jobs. Everyone is asked to consider how they can meet the aspirations of the *In the Service of Scotland* vision and what needs to change in order to make that a reality.

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<sup>5</sup> Details of the panels, their deliberations and how they contributed to the creation of Scotland's social security system are available in the table of evidence section

## Analysis and Evidence

- 7.21. The Scottish approach to policy development and delivery is underpinned by the use of objective evidence and analysis including that gathered through lived experience [WITN7351004]. It recognises that evidence can come from a range of sources and be gathered and analysed using a variety of methods. This diversity guards against groupthink and memory illusion.
- 7.22. The Analytical and Science professions in the Scottish Government provide evidence based, objective advice and analysis across all areas of policy development and delivery. Members of the professions come from a wide range of disciplines and all analysts and scientists are bound by the CS Code. Analysts and scientists work closely alongside the policy teams they support and are engaged in key meetings with senior leaders and Ministers. This provides regular opportunities for Ministers to be appraised of evidence and analysis and what this may mean for policy development and delivery. Evidence is routinely included in Ministerial and Cabinet Briefings and is influential in decision-making. Statistics are published under the requirements of the Statistics Code, which emphasises the need for independence. These approaches support open, honest debate internally and externally. The trust and confidence that Ministers, stakeholders, and colleagues in the public sector place in these analyses incentivise civil servants to achieve and maintain high professional standards of excellence.
- 7.23. Drawing on the NPF and *In The Service of Scotland*, multi-method approaches are preferred, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques and combining theoretical and empirical insights to triangulate and test the robustness of findings. Alongside internal analysis, research is commissioned from external providers that include universities and research consultancies bringing in alternative external perspectives. The Scottish approach to policymaking and service design is constructed, as far as possible, to mitigate against groupthink because

it uses candour and the direct, continuous involvement of people's lived experiences to function as a check on our approach to problem solving. It emphasises co-production with those who use services, designing public services with, rather than for, people in Scotland.

### Learning and Development

- 7.24. Career-long learning and development is an incentive that supports candour in the Civil Service as it builds the skills and confidence in our workforce to set out frank, objective and impartial evidence to Ministers. Learning and development sets colleagues on a path to continuous improvement, rather than relying on things that have always been done or resorting to 'memory illusion'.
- 7.25. Training is available for civil servants specifically in relation to decision-making and policy development through the Scottish Government training portal and through Civil Service Learning. Colleagues are also encouraged to take courses such as de-biasing decision-making in Government, financial management and decision-making, and decision-making under pressure.
- 7.26. All staff in the Scottish Government are expected to engage with evidence-based policy-making. Where more specialist knowledge is required, evidence and analysis can be provided by professional analysts in government. Analytical specialists receive training on leadership, statistical packages, logic modelling, survey design, and software tools in qualitative and complex evaluation, amongst other areas. Non-specialists are provided training on how to get the most from analytical specialists and all new non-analysts receive an introduction to evaluation as part of their induction. Events that are available to all staff highlight the benefits of evaluation for critically appraising and drawing learning from Scottish Government policies and other interventions. An example is 'Innovate to Evaluate', an *In The Service of Scotland* all-staff session on evaluation to demonstrate how evaluation is used to improve

policies and offer an oversight of future plans to continue to strengthen our approach.

- 7.27. 'Evidence in Policy Fortnight' is an annual event that celebrates the role evidence has played in improving the lives of people in Scotland. The last event involved more than 1,000 members of staff attending a variety of events. These training opportunities are accompanied all year-round by a wealth of online guidance and courses, as well as blogs from analytical experts.
- 7.28. Learning and development and knowledge sharing events such as these are critically important in empowering civil servants to provide evidence-based policy options, enabling challenge in the form of frank and informed exchanges of views and winning the confidence of Ministers that the policy options on which they must base their decisions have been thoroughly thought through. The programme is regularly refined and reviewed to be up-to-date with the latest professional thinking and to address any gaps that have been identified in the workforce's skills and knowledge.

#### Diversity and inclusion

- 7.29. The Scottish Government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion to ensure diverse experiences and to support an environment where everyone can speak up. Our employer equality outcomes are that our workforce increases in diversity to reflect the general Scottish population by 2025 and that we foster an inclusive workforce culture and value the contribution of employees from all backgrounds. Our People Survey results for staff experiencing discrimination, bullying or harassment fell to historic lows in 2021. Staff surveys, routes to share diverse voices and views, staff networks, awareness raising events, and mutual mentoring all help to create a culture of open, positive and constructive dialogue. The CS Code value of impartiality means that civil servants must carry out their responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and

equitable. This reflects the Civil Service commitment to equality and diversity on not unjustifiably favouring or discriminating against particular individuals or interests.

- 7.30. The NPF provides a detailed breakdown of equality data, which shows where people with protected characteristics are progressing and how they compare to other groups of people, and this information helps in designing policies and services. There may also be circumstances where Scottish Ministers wish to obtain additional advice because it may offer a perspective beyond that which officials can provide (e.g. lived experience), or because they feel it offers a further degree of independence that may be of importance. Scottish Ministers value diversity within governance structures and have worked to ensure that public appointments appeal to a wide range of people.
- 7.31. This advice may take the form of setting up short-life advisory groups to offer advice or options to Scottish Ministers, working groups that may include those with lived experience, project boards, commissions, or appointing an adviser who has technical expertise in a particular subject. Examples of advisory groups include the Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Poverty, National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, and the Drugs Death Taskforce.
- 7.32. Of more direct relevance to this Inquiry, Ministers have also sometimes used short-life working groups to provide advice on particular infected blood issues. Examples of this include groups involving specialist experts and stakeholders representing the infected and affected, such as: the Clinical Review of the Impacts of Hepatitis C [GGCL0000168], an independent clinical review assessed the impacts of chronic hepatitis C infection on health and wellbeing of individuals, and the short-life working group on the Penrose Inquiry recommendation on infection of people with Hepatitis C from NHS treatment [PRSE0005299].

- 7.33. The context and functions of such groups and roles will vary according to the policy context and objectives, but where such advice is obtained through a Scottish Ministerial appointment, it is made in compliance with equalities and other legislation, and will meet the 'on merit' test outlined in section 5 of the SMC.

#### Checks, balances, and scrutiny

- 7.34. Different ways of measurement and scrutiny are important in proofing the evidence and analysis presented to Ministers from 'the institutional closing of ranks'. In addition to the NPF as an example of accountability, there is also audit and parliamentary accountability, statutory reporting and a variety of checks and balances through which performance is scrutinised and lessons are learnt.
- 7.35. The Civil Service values of integrity and impartiality are key to ensuring that we are candid in all our dealings as civil servants. This involves speaking up for what is right even when it feels difficult. The establishment of the Propriety & Ethics Directorate in the Scottish Government in 2021 resulted from external reports and an internal lessons-learned exercise into the handling of complaints about the former First Minister. The Propriety & Ethics Directorate provides corporate overview of, and coordination on, sensitive issues affecting the organisation. It also provides specialist and dedicated support to other parts of the Scottish Government in handling complex or cross cutting cases of alleged breaches of propriety and ethics. The Directorate is a point of contact for colleagues who are trying to 'do the right thing' and who may need support.

#### Whistleblowing

- 7.36. The Scottish Government is committed to managing the organisation in the best way possible. Part of that is creating an open and supportive working environment where colleagues feel able to speak up about any

suspected wrongdoing. We expect individuals who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns by using the procedures detailed within the *Raising a Concern under the Civil Service Code and Whistleblowing* policy, available on the staff intranet. There are a number of situations that may cause concern and could be raised under this policy, including concerns that an individual may believe go against the core values in the Civil Service Code or concerns relating to a breach of conduct policies, criminal or unlawful activity by others, or any security risks or breaches. Some of these concerns may be regarded as a "qualifying disclosure" (sometimes known as whistleblowing) under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). Concerns can be raised informally or formally. The policy is designed to protect colleagues from detriment as a consequence of raising their concern.

- 7.37. The Scottish Government continually strives to improve how we manage any concerns raised under the whistleblowing policy. The last full review was in 2017; however, minor amendments have been made since then to reflect any changes in procedure. Regular reviews of concerns raised with Nominated Officers (NOs) are undertaken, which have resulted in improvements to whistleblowing procedures and case handling. The NO team has built good engagement with the Propriety & Ethics Directorate with a view to strengthening decision making on difficult cases.

### Lesson learning

- 7.38. Lesson learning is as fundamental as learning and development in preventing memory illusion and incentivising candour because it is focused on confronting the past and making improvements for the future. An example of this is the Continuous Improvement Programme for culture and behaviours in the Scottish Government that was established as part of the Propriety & Ethics Directorate. The programme recently produced measures of success to be scrutinised by the Finance and Public Administration Committee in the Scottish Parliament. These



measures of success track the extent to which the programme has contributed to an improved culture of openness and inclusion across the Scottish Government and are part of a wider framework of assurance and monitoring of people management practices and culture within the Scottish Government. The measures are largely drawn from the UK-wide Civil Service People Survey and were chosen because they focus on staff trust and confidence in the policies and procedures in place to address and build a culture where it is safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour. The People Survey provides the most comprehensive data set available on the experiences and attitudes of staff across the Civil Service. This allows for an evidence-based assessment of staff experiences and perceptions about our organisational culture and behaviours.

- 7.39. As an example of where lessons learned have had a significant impact is in the NHS, John Sturrock KC carried out a review into NHS Highland in 2019 [WITN7351005] in response to allegations of a bullying culture - 340 people came forward to share their views with him. The key themes that resulted from the report were the importance of person-centred leadership, including collaboration, compassion, kindness, communication and engagement, and of the need for acceptable behaviour and civility. The mental health and wellbeing of staff was highlighted, as were improvements needed to governance arrangements and structures. Improving staff representation was also found as being central to rebuilding workplace relations. As a result, the Scottish Government continues to assess progress on cultural improvement in NHS Highland through a staff governance monitoring exercise, a staff experience continuous improvement programme and through seeking feedback from Whistleblowing Champions. The implications and actions from the report are relevant more widely for government and other NHS Boards. This is a reflection of the NPF approach in that different organisations from across the public sector can work together in changing workplace culture and improving relationships.

## Conclusion

- 7.40. In reflecting on the Scottish Government approach to the questions 10-12, I am reminded that in 2018 the then Scottish Government Permanent Secretary endorsed *The Good Operation*, a handbook resulting from the Chilcot Inquiry [WITN7351006], as a contribution to better decision-making by those working in large organisations who are making high-stakes decisions in high-pressure contexts. In particular, she supported the message about challenge: “Everyone can challenge: appropriate challenge is about the issue, not the person...This is not optional: it is your *duty* to invite and offer challenge in the interests of good decisions.” (p.13) and welcomed the “Guide to Reasonable Challenge” (p.62) as a succinct, practical, and important antidote to groupthink.
- 7.41. By stepping up to make constructive challenges and for it to be received in an open and receptive manner, examples of closing ranks, reticence and falling back on false memories should become fewer. Those who ultimately benefit will be service users, patients and people living and working in this country. As civil servants who follow the Civil Service Code and the values of the Scottish Government’s organisational transformation, that is certainly a compelling incentive to continually improve how we work.
8. *Do you have any comments on the recommendations made by the Psychosocial Expert Group?*
- 8.1. I do not have particular comments specific to my remit, although I do recognise the importance of understanding the lived experience of infected and affected patients. As set out above, understanding people’s lived experience is very important across a wide range of Scottish Government policy areas, including this one.

9. *Do you have any comments on the evidence of the Public Health and Administration Expert Group?*

9.1. I do not have any further comments, although some of the points made above in response to questions 10 to 12 are relevant to the group's findings.

10. *Do you have any additional reflections on the evidence drawn to your attention?*

10.1. I do not have additional reflections at this stage, but am happy to answer any further questions the Inquiry may have during my oral evidence.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 27/10/22

## **Table of exhibits**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Exhibit number</b>
16 March 2015	Civil Service Code: <u>The Civil Service code - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>	RLIT0001797
2010	Scottish Civil Service Code: Civil Service Code - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)	RLIT0001819
Undated	National Performance Framework	WITN7351002
2017	Social Security Experience Panels: publications	WITN7351003
February 2018	Scottish Ministerial Code <u>Scottish Ministerial Code: 2018 edition - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</u>	RLIT0001739
December 2018	Evaluation for Policy Makers – A Straightforward Guide	WITN7351004
April 2019	Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport into cultural issues related to allegations of bullying and harassment in NHS Highland	WITN7351005
January 2018	The Good Operation – Policy Handbook: <u>The good operation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>	WITN7247004