

SCOTTISH COVID-19 INQUIRY

OPENING STATEMENT

on behalf of Healthcare Improvement Scotland (“HIS”)

in advance of the Hearing commencing on 24 October 2023 on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on Health and Social Care

1. As the Inquiry knows, but the public at large may not, Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) is a body within the NHS in Scotland. It is a national improvement organisation within the Scottish health and social care landscape. Its purpose is to enable the people of Scotland to experience the best quality of health and social care with a specific focus on safety. There is no organisation elsewhere within the UK with an identical combination of functions. HIS uniquely combines a range of statutory duties and other functions including quality assurance, regulation, service redesign and strategic planning, evidence-based advice, guidelines and standards for health and care professionals, and community engagement.
2. HIS works with over one hundred partner health and social care organisations, taking a quality management systems approach, in a range of different ways to strategically redesign and continually improve services. It provides advice and shares knowledge that enables people to get the best out of the services they use and to help services improve. It provides quality assurance that gives people confidence in services and supports providers to improve, always making the best use of resources. HIS is not a healthcare provider nor is it responsible for the performance management of any NHS or social care body which provides care. More information about HIS can be found on the HIS website.
3. HIS adjusted its work programme dynamically during the pandemic to accelerate some areas of work, refocus some, and cease others. These were strategic decisions in the deployment of HIS workforce aimed both at directly supporting frontline services and at minimising unnecessary pressures at a time of emergency measures.

4. HIS can give an account of its actions in response to the pandemic and the impact upon it of pandemic related decisions. HIS has a strong interest in both adding to and learning from the additional intelligence that will emerge from the Inquiry to inform its future strategic and operational planning. HIS will be particularly interested in any recommendations made by the Inquiry in respect of health and social care improvement, quality management and safety of care.
5. Specifically in relation to the impact Hearing, HIS has arranged to be represented at that Hearing for its duration. HIS appreciates the significant effect the pandemic had on the people of Scotland and will carefully consider all of the evidence given at the impact Hearing, and indeed at the Inquiry going forward. HIS will assist the Inquiry with its work, and will work collaboratively with it.

11 October 2023