

## INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF DAWN STURGESS

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### OPEN HMG POSITION STATEMENT ON CONTEMPLATED APPLICATIONS FOR RESTRICTION ORDERS/NOTICES

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1. The following position statement is made in accordance with the direction of the Chair dated 4 April 2022 that 'HMG and Op Verbasco are to provide a position statement on any further contemplated restriction order applications/notices by 31 May 2022'. A CLOSED version has also been provided.
  
2. HMG will not be in a position to make most restriction notices or applications for restriction orders until disclosure to ILT has been completed and ILT are in a position to provide views on relevance of the material. HMG hope it assists the Chair and parties to indicate now that HMG is contemplating the following applications for restriction orders or restriction notices to cover part or all of the following themes, issues or information:
  - a. The UK's capacity and capabilities for identifying, responding to and recovering from the use of Novichok or chemical weapon attacks, including methods for detecting the chemical, protecting personnel, and decontaminating individuals who have been exposed and affected sites;
  - b. Some of the factual matters preceding the attack on the Skripals;
  - c. Details of operations and capabilities, including in relation to the identification of the attackers and attributing the attack to Russia;
  - d. details of the UK's specific scientific capabilities and capacity;
  - e. the international engagement that followed the attack;

- f. certain aspects of the wider HMG response to the attack and remediation work (much of which does not appear sensitive when considered in isolation but which becomes highly sensitive when collected together);
  - g. matters concerning Cabinet Collective Responsibility.
3. This list is not comprehensive, nor does it indicate that restriction notices or applications for restriction orders *will* be made. HMG takes its responsibility to be as open as possible in these proceedings very seriously and detailed consideration is being given to these matters as the disclosure exercise is underway. This list is proffered only by way of a preliminary indication of HMG's current areas of concern.

31 May 2022