1	Tuesday, 18 March 2025	1	desire to help run a hospital in which all patients were
2	(10.00 am)	2	safe, and in all their actions and decisions this was
3	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Good morning, everyone.	3	their primary motivation.
4	Apparently there's a problem with the feed to the	4	Ordinarily, hindsight imposes a clarity where at
5	media room, which is currently being looked at.	5	the time there was simply none for those trying to
6	I'm sorry, I think this is only the second day when we	6	understand the factors at play. However, as I stand
7	haven't started on time.	7	here today, ten years after events began to emerge,
8	What I've suggested is that we're given updates,	8	there remains an ever-growing concern about what was in
9	but I'll come back into the room at 10.15 and we will	9	fact happening at the NNU demonstrating that the picture
10	start then.	10	has not entirely resolved.
11	So I'm sorry to inconvenience you all.	11	The senior managers hope that through their
12	THE HEARING MANAGER: My Lady, I believe there's an interim	12	evidence they have been able to convey that the actions
13	solution found if you wish to proceed.	13	they took were undertaken in good faith. Their aim at
14	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So we can	14	all times was to understand what was causing or
15	THE HEARING MANAGER: Yes, I'm told that there's a, albeit	15	contributing to the increase in deaths and collapses,
16	interim, solution.	16	and to address any potential cause, to keep patients
17	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Whatever an interim solution is, if	17	safe. Honest reflection has enabled them to see,
18	it means we can start then let's start.	18	however, that there were things that they got wrong.
19	Ms Blackwell.	19	It has been difficult for the individuals we
20	Closing submissions by MS BLACKWELL	20	represent to read some of the written closing
21	MS BLACKWELL: My Lady, the senior managers wish to express	21	submissions, and difficult to hear the oral closing
22	their deepest condolences to the Families of all the	22	submissions made on behalf of some of the
23	babies who died or suffered a collapse at the Countess	23	Core Participants, difficult because of the depth and
24	of Chester Hospital in 2015 and 2016. They stand by and	24	ferocity of criticism, difficult because the closing
25	repeat their contention that it was only ever their	25	submissions reflect what may be hardened positions
1	adopted well before the start of the evidential	1	potentially prejudicing future investigations or
2	hearings, but reflection has brought clarity on what the	2	proceedings, and it was this tension with which the
3	senior managers got wrong, and so now I turn to address	3	senior managers wrestled throughout 2016 and 2017.
4	these matters, not in any particular order.	4	They got it wrong, and they're sorry for the hurt
5	Communication with the Families could and should	5	and anxiety that this has caused.
6	have been better. The senior managers have explained	6	I will address later in my submissions the actions
7	how they struggled to identify what ought to be shared	7	and decisions that were take following the escalation of
8	with families during the period of immense uncertainty	8	concerns in late June 2016. However, the senior
9	about the cause of deaths and collapses. It was never	•	
		9	managers would like to make clear from the outset that
10	the case that the senior managers had any desire to hide	9 10	managers would like to make clear from the outset that they accept that the police should have been involved at
10 11	the case that the senior managers had any desire to hide information from the Families and keeping them in the		0
		10	they accept that the police should have been involved at
11	information from the Families and keeping them in the	10 11	they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to
11 12	information from the Families and keeping them in the dark. In part, the senior managers feared compounding	10 11 12	they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to formally document and clearly explain the concerns, they
11 12 13	information from the Families and keeping them in the dark. In part, the senior managers feared compounding the grief of the families at a time when they couldn't	10 11 12 13	they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to formally document and clearly explain the concerns, they could have approached the police for advice on the best way forwards.
11 12 13 14	information from the Families and keeping them in the dark. In part, the senior managers feared compounding the grief of the families at a time when they couldn't provide them with solid answers. They recognise in	10 11 12 13 14	they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to formally document and clearly explain the concerns, they could have approached the police for advice on the best way forwards.
11 12 13 14 15	information from the Families and keeping them in the dark. In part, the senior managers feared compounding the grief of the families at a time when they couldn't provide them with solid answers. They recognise in hindsight that this approach was misguided, and for this	10 11 12 13 14 15	they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to formally document and clearly explain the concerns, they could have approached the police for advice on the best way forwards. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: And when do they say that should
11 12 13 14 15 16	information from the Families and keeping them in the dark. In part, the senior managers feared compounding the grief of the families at a time when they couldn't provide them with solid answers. They recognise in hindsight that this approach was misguided, and for this they offer their sincere apologies to the families.	10 11 12 13 14 15 16	 they accept that the police should have been involved at an earlier stage. Even in the absence of evidence to formally document and clearly explain the concerns, they could have approached the police for advice on the best way forwards. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: And when do they say that should have happened?
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1	position.	1
2	It has been suggested that Mr Chambers actively	2 3
3	sought to stall and obstruct the police being called.	
4	This is not accepted by him, nor is it supported by the	
5	evidence of the other senior managers. Their concern	
6	was that they went to the police at the right time when	6
7	the reason for increased mortality had some clarity	7
8	around it and could be fully articulated. They wanted	8 9
9 10	to be in a position to assure the police that other	9 10
10	factors had been more thoroughly investigated and eliminated as potential explanations. Furthermore, they	10
12	had been given clear advice from Stephen Cross that	11
13	calling in the police would have significant	12
14	consequences for the hospital and, therefore, the	13
15	Families that it served.	15
16	The legitimacy of these concerns was reflected in	16
17	the evidence of Simon Medland KC (as he then was), as	10
18	set out at paragraph 9 in our written closing	18
19	submissions.	10
20	It is also accepted by the senior managers that	20
21	there was a breakdown in the relationship between them	21
22	and the paediatric consultants towards the end of 2016	22
23	and into 2017, and Mr Harvey told my Lady:	23
24	" one of the greatest regrets of my career is	24
25	the breakdown in the communication between the	25
	5	
1	breakdown in the relationship, and he emphasised the	1
2	need to address that, to fix it, and he had already made	2
3	some effort to identify a team of people who were	3
4	professional mediators who might be able to help"	4
5	The Countess of Chester	5
6	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So I understand the apology about	6
7	communication and there should have been more pastoral	7
8	care for the doctors. What are they talking about	8
9	there? What's meant?	9
10	MS BLACKWELL: Well, in hindsight, the managers accept that	10
11	the consultants were struggling to get their point	11
12	across and that perhaps there should have been some sort	12
13	of process within the hospital, a pastoral process, in	13
14	order to support them, other professionals to whom they	14
15	could have spoken and who could have supported them.	15
16	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: But that's only with hindsight, is	16
17	it	17
18	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	18
19	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: that they say that? It wasn't	19
20	clear to them at the time?	20
21	MS BLACKWELL: Well, at the time they were struggling to	21
22	understand the depth of feeling held by the paediatric	22
23	consultants in the lack of what appeared to be any	23
24	direct evidence of what they said that they feared.	24
25	The Countess of Chester Hospital has submitted in	25
	7	

1	paediatricians and the Executives and with me in
2	particular. I recognise how intense and difficult
3	a situation that was. I recognise the strength of
4	feeling they had and the suffering they had associated
5	with the grieving process, and I can fully understand
6	their anger in terms of the perception of the
7	Royal College report because it didn't reflect what they
8	felt and recalled [what] they had reported to the
9	College."
10	The senior managers were clear in their evidence
11	to the Inquiry that it was not their intention to create
12	or to perpetuate a culture of fear. There was a good
13	relationship in place between the senior managers and
14	consultants prior to the end of June 2016, but this
15	became strained as problems grew.
16	It is acknowledged that the consultants should
17	have received more pastoral care and that more could and
18	should have been done to support the paediatric
19	consultants who were feeling under immense pressure at
20	the time. Efforts were made to address the breakdown in
21	the relationship as it was always appreciated that
22	patient safety could well be affected by a lack of
23	cohesion between the teams, as acknowledged to my Lady
24	by Dr Gilby, who told the Inquiry that:
25	"Mr Chambers was very concerned about the
	6
1	its written closing document at paragraph 283 that
2	Ms Hodkinson described Mr Chambers' style as one that
3	could be interpreted as intimidating and aggressive. In
4	fact, what she said in evidence to the Inquiry was:
5	"He was passionate he got emotional and
6	I think sometimes those emotions meant that he said
7	things that came across [that way] Some people
8	might see it like that but I don't think he meant to
9	come across as intimidating."
10	She also said:
11	"He couldn't have cared any more about making
12	a difference within the Countess."
13	And:
14	" he was a fantastic Chief Exec."
15	How the Inquiry seeks to determine this issue has
16	become problematic, we submit, because throughout the
17	course of the evidence Counsel to the Inquiry asked
18	questions of the senior managers on the basis of the
19	written evidence received from the consultants, in
20	particular Dr Brearey and Dr Jayaram, and it appeared to
21	the senior managers, rightly or wrongly, that the
22	Inquiry may have had a narrative which it was determined
23	to follow, rather than seeking the truth from these
24	witnesses.
25	The consultants were repeatedly described and
	8

(2) Pages 5 - 8

1	presented as experts, and the senior managers as having		
2	deliberately ignored their advice. But at paragraph 13		
3	in our written submissions we set out that the senior		
4	managers' concern with a line of questioning which		
5	accused them of deliberately and knowingly protecting		
6	a murderer, which is vociferously denied.		
7	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Shall we just have a look at that,		
8	Ms Blackwell.		
9	MS BLACKWELL: Yes, my Lady.		
10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: The phrase "harbouring a murderer"		
11	that came, I think, and you'll correct me if I've got		
12	this wrong but my memory of it is that that was evidence		
13	given by Eirian Powell that she had heard Dr McCormack		
14	say that in a meeting.		
15	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.		
16	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So that's that. I think Dr		
17	McCormack says he didn't say that he said something		
18	different		
19	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.		
20	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: so that's something if it		
21	matters, it's something I'll have to resolve.		
22	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.		
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So the questions were about that.		
24	MS BLACKWELL: Well, Counsel to the Inquiry had adopted that		
25	phrase and suggested to Mr Harvey		
20	9		
1	Letby and the difficult position in which the		
2	consultants found themselves.		
3	Mr Harvey is recorded as stating in his interview		
4	for Letby's grievance procedure that this "was by far		
5	the most difficult situation I have ever had to deal		
6	with", which accurately reflects the feelings of the		
7	senior managers both then and now. They were attempting		
8	to balance a situation whereby the consultants didn't		
9	want Letby working on the NNU but they believed that		
10	there was no evidence to support the allegations made		
11	against her.		
12	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I'm sorry, so they understood the		
13	consultants did not want Lucy Letby on the unit		
14	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.		
15	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: and the reason for that was?		
16	MS BLACKWELL: The reason for that, by the time at which we		
17	are talking, which is post-June 2016, because they were		
18	concerned that she was deliberately harming babies.		
19	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, and the evidence for that was		
20	the fact of the unexpected, unexplained collapses, the		
21	increase in the number of deaths. It's just when you		
22	said there's no evidence to support the allegations,		
23	I was just wondering where that was coming from.		

- 24 MS BLACKWELL: No, they believed at the time that there was
- 25 no evidence because nobody had seen Letby do anything,

- 1 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: We know then she said, in fact,
- 2 something like "That's what was happening."
- 3 MS BLACKWELL: Yes, "That's what you were doing in the
 4 hospital."
- 5 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, yes, but, I mean, one just
- 6 ought to keep a bit of perspective that what matters to
- 7 me is the answers to the questions --
- 8 MS BLACKWELL: Yes.
- 9 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: -- not the questions, but I just
- 10 wanted to be clear that that's what we're talking about.
- 11 MS BLACKWELL: It is.
- 12 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, all right. Well, we can move13 on, then.
- 14 MS BLACKWELL: Yes, my Lady.
- 15 The senior managers accept that the grievance
- 16 procedure concerning Letby ought to have been paused
- 17 whilst investigations concerning the increase in
- 18 neonatal mortality were ongoing. It is acknowledged
- 19 that the continuation of this procedure contributed to
- 20 tension and feelings of mistrust between the paediatric
- 21 consultants and the senior managers and duly impacted
- 22 the ability and willingness of staff to raise concerns.
- 23 The senior managers accept that they could and should
- 24 have better reflected on how the grievance procedure
- 25 might have had an impact on those raising concerns about 10

1	the thematic review in May of 2016 had not identified
2	any deliberate harm, although there had been association
3	with Letby raised in the annex to that document. But
4	after the deaths of Child O and Child P, when we suggest
5	for the first time deliberate harm was being suggested
6	by the consultants, the senior managers accept that at
7	that time any grievance procedure brought by Letby
8	should have been paused.
9	The grievance was ultimately upheld, as my Lady
10	knows, by an independent Chair and, as the Inquiry is
11	aware, it was recommended that the paediatric
12	consultants provide Letby with a letter of apology and
13	engage in mediation, which is not an unusual outcome in
14	the context of a grievance. Mediation is also common,
15	as my Lady will be aware, within NHS organisations where
16	there's been a breakdown in relationships between staff
17	members.
18	The senior managers have read what other
19	Core Participants have had to say about the suitability
20	of Mr Green in this process, but the choice of his
21	involvement was made in good faith.
22	The senior managers also acknowledge that
23	safeguarding procedures were not followed, and they

23 safeguarding procedures were not followed, and they
24 should have been in circumstances where concerns were
25 raised about a staff member potentially harming babies.

1 A common theme throughout the oral evidence in the 2 Inquiry was that concerns about deliberate harm by 3 a staff member were not recognised by anyone as 4 a safeguarding issue per se, including those with 5 safeguarding responsibilities, and in light of this 6 witnesses didn't consider initiating safeguarding 7 procedures. 8 In addition, as the Inquiry has heard, many 9 clinicians didn't appreciate that the SUDIC system 10 applied to deaths in healthcare settings. We know from the submissions made to your Ladyship yesterday by 11 12 Mr Sheldon on behalf of the DHSC that that organisation 13 is intending to take forward improvements to the system 14 and our clients support this, of course. 15 The senior managers endorse a recommendation to 16 clarify and raise awareness of the application of 17 safeguarding procedures in cases where an unspecified 18 allegation of deliberate harm has been made in 19 circumstances and where evidence of wrongdoing may be 20 arowina 21 The Inquiry has obtained many thousands of 22 documents, received hundreds of witness statements and 23 called live evidence from a significant number of 24 witnesses in order to answer my Lady's Terms of 25 Reference as set by the Secretary of State, and in 13 1 Simon Medland KC (as he then was) recognised this

2 in what he described to my Lady as the duties of care 3 which were "not always aligned". 4 There is also a wider context which ought to be 5 taken into consideration, we submit. As Jeremy Hunt 6 described to the Inquiry, death and indeed collapse is 7 not unusual in a hospital and he noted that the risk is 8 that death becomes normalised, although he conceded that 9 it is often traumatic for clinicians personally and this 10 may affect their ability to accept that they may have 11 made a mistake. 12 And on the number of deaths the Inquiry has heard 13 from Professor David Spiegelhalter, who described the 14 neonatal mortality rates at the Countess of Chester 15 Hospital in 2015 and 2016 as being high but not 16 indicative of being an outlier, observing that Blackpool 17 hospital had eight deaths compared to the Countess of 18 Chester's nine. Second, hindsight bias and exceptionality. 19 20 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: But that's part of Dr Spiegelhalter's evidence, isn't it? 21 22 MS BLACKWELL: Yes. 23 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: And he then went on to say, given 24 the number, you would expect an investigation. MS BLACKWELL: It should have alerted, yes. 25 15

consideration of all of this material, we invite my Lady 1 2 to take account of the following general matters which 3 make up, we say, the whole picture. 4 First, the context in which the witnesses were 5 operating. The Inquiry must guard against ignoring the 6 full real-world context in which the witnesses were 7 working. It would be all too easy to ignore the fact 8 that the senior managers were responsible for the 9 operation and running of a busy, 600-bed hospital, 10 treating thousands of patients on a daily basis with 11 a staff body of well over 4,000 people. As with many 12 working in a hospital setting, their responsibilities 13 were carried out during lengthy office hours and often 14 in the evenings and weekends. 15 It is impossible to judge any of these 16 professionals' actions without regard to this. None of 17 the managers, clinicians or nurses called to give 18 evidence had the luxury of time or the wealth of 19 resources available to the Inquiry legal team to inform 20 their decision-making. 21 The senior managers' responsibilities involved the 22 balancing of differing duties and obligations, including 23 the obvious duty of care to the patients, a duty of care 24 to staff, and duties of care and candour to the patients 25 and parents. 14

MS BLACKWELL: Second, hindsight bias and exceptionality.		
Throughout the Inquiry there have been repeated		
references to the Beverley Allitt case, the suggestion		
being that as a fact there is always a possibility that		
a health professional might be causing deliberate harm		
or even murdering patients and, therefore, this is		
something that ought to be in the minds of nurses,		
clinicians, managers, senior managers and board members		
if there is unexpected or unexplained patient outcome.		
When asked about the Beverley Allitt case,		
Dr Brearey told my Lady that it is one thing to be aware		
of the case historically and another thinking to be		
considering that it might be happening on your unit.		
The Inquiry has heard that cases such as		
Beverley Allitt are extremely rare and in virtually all		
incidents where there is an unexpected or initially		
unexplained patient outcome, the root cause will lie in		
the state of care and treatment. The inherent		
improbability of deliberate harm perhaps explains why		
there is no published guidance for senior managers or		
healthcare professionals in what do in this situation.		
As Professor Mary Dixon-Woods observed in her		
evidence to my Lady, the procedures for dealing with		
these kinds of transgressive unusual incidents have 16		

1 remained underdeveloped in the NHS and there needs to be 2 clarity in what to do. She also described the common 3 phenomenon of cultural entrapment, which she observed as 4 being "normal behaviour" which can happen anywhere, any 5 time, not necessarily the result of bad people being in 6 management, but, rather, normal people becoming trapped 7 in their first understanding of a situation, not 8 realising that they're stuck in a loop of their first 9 understanding or appreciation of a situation. 10 Equally, what might appear more obvious over 11 nine years after the final death and after three and 12 a half years of police investigation, a ten-month 13 criminal trial and retrial and the Inquiry's own 14 18-month investigation was simply not obvious at the 15 time. Hindsight bias may well have unfairly founded much of the criticism of those who were operating in the 16 17 real-world context of the hospital at the time. It is easy with the benefit of hindsight to identify features 18 19 of each child's collapse or death which were 20 significant. These were far less obvious, perhaps, in 21 real time, in isolation, in the context of a neonatal 22 unit treating and caring for babies in great need of 23 medical care. The Inquiry must ensure, we submit, that 24 hindsight bias does not permeate into its conclusions 25 and its report.

17

1 any member of the senior management staff that there was 2 a concern that a member of staff was deliberately 3 harming babies. If having heard the evidence the 4 Inquiry finds that a clinician or clinicians harboured 5 real concerns that Letby was deliberately harming babies 6 prior to the death of Child P at the end of June of 7 2016, fundamental questions for your Ladyship to resolve 8 will be: why it was these individuals did not clearly 9 and unambiguously report these concerns either to the 10 police or anyone else; why they did not act on their 11 concerns, given their professional duties and codes of 12 conduct; why relations between senior managers and some 13 clinicians became strained in the latter part of 2016 14 and 2017 when there had been no previous history of 15 difficulty. 16 This is touched upon at paragraph 40 of the 17 written closing submissions provided to your Ladyship on 18 behalf of the DHSC and repeated by Mr Sheldon in his 19 oral submissions yesterday: 20 "... that the evidence received by the Inquiry 21 does not generally suggest that the culture at the 22 [hospital] was poor or unusually bad before this 23 point ... many members of staff praised ... [the] 24 friendly and supportive atmosphere and said that they 25 would have felt comfortable to raise concerns."

1 Similarly, the Inquiry needs to be alert to 2 relying upon sweeping statements not based on fact, 3 an example of which is the evidence of 4 Detective Chief Superintendent Nigel Wenham referred to at paragraph 97 in the written closing submissions of 5 6 the DHSC who told the Inquiry: 7 "... a lot of the doctors ... did raise concerns 8 repeatedly and continued to raise those concerns [that] 9 they were shut down, sadly." Whilst there may be some strength in suggesting 10 11 that this happened from the end of June 2016, there is 12 no reliable evidence, we submit, my Lady, that these 13 concerns were being raised with the senior managers 14 before this time. 15 And so I now turn to the contemporaneous evidence 16 of growing concerns in order to address in part the 17 written and oral submissions made by Mr Kennedy KC 18 yesterday on behalf of the Countess of Chester Hospital. 19 On the timing of disclosure to them of concerns in 20 relation to Letby's actions, the senior managers have 21 been consistent throughout their evidence to the 22 Inquiry. The first time concerns of deliberate harm 23 being caused to the babies on the NNU were articulated 24 followed the death of Child P at the end of June 2016. 25 Prior to that point, it had never been stated starkly to 18

1 Indeed, as the Inquiry is aware, in 2016 the Care 2 Quality Commission produced a favourable inspection 3 report rating the Trust is good and had commented and 4 commended the leadership and managers at the hospital 5 saying: 6 "There was clear leadership ... Senior Managers 7 were visible, approachable, and staff were supported in 8 the workplace." It remains unclear from the evidence when such 9 10 concerns about deliberate harm began to crystallise. 11 When Dr Brearey was asked about this during his 12 evidence, he was not able to identify a point at which 13 he was of the mind that Letby was harming babies telling 14 the Inquiry that he: "was aware of her association from 15 the first three" deaths, after which "it was more of 16 a growing nagging concern than any one seminal moment". 17 We submit that Dr Brearey's conduct suggests that 18 it was after the death of Child P. 19 As regards to Dr Jayaram, the picture is far less 20 clear. For example, in relation to the collapse of 21 Child K on 17 February 2016, the notes from the 22 transport team who transferred the child out of the 23 hospital was: 24 "The baby dislodged the breathing tube." 25 During his evidence at the first criminal trial he

20

confirmed that at that time, as he allegedly walked in 1 2 on Letby standing over Child K's cot failing to assist, 3 the alarm inexplicably failing to go off and noting that 4 the feeding tube had been inexplicably dislodged he had 5 a lot of suspension in his mind. 6 By the time of the second criminal trial he had 7 concluded that the tube had been deliberately dislodged 8 by Letby, that he had seen and concluded that she had 9 deliberately harmed Child K, but he neither acted on 10 those conclusions nor reported this deliberate harm to 11 anyone, this in spite of having a meeting with Dr Odeka 12 of the Care Quality Commission that very afternoon 13 during its February 2016 inspection. Rather, Dr Jayaram 14 waited after over 12 months, until March 2017, before 15 communicating anything about his assessment at that cot 16 that she had deliberately harmed Child K to the senior 17 managers. 18 The Inquiry will have to resolve the issue of why 19 it was that Dr Jayaram did not act on what he now says 20 he saw and believed to have happened. It is notable, 21 perhaps, that Dr Jayaram gave evidence before the 22 Coroner at the inquest of Child A in October 2016 and 23 raised no concerns about deliberate harm then either. 24 If he was concerned that Child A had been deliberately 25 harmed, that information should have been explicitly 21 1 those Rule 9 responses that were received by the Inquiry 2 up to ten years after the relevant period. There is 3 an overpowering likelihood that, to a greater or lesser 4 extent, these recollections have been tainted by the 5 convictions of Letby. 6 The wisdom of undertaking such a careful 7 consideration of historical recollections is underlined 8 by the number of witnesses whose evidence has included 9 the qualifying statement of "If I had known then what 10 I know now" on topic of Letby's convictions. Equally, 11 the Inquiry ought to guard against ignoring the apparent 12 reluctance of certain witnesses to give evidence which 13 may be viewed as supporting Letby in an Inquiry whose 14 starting point was her guilt and in relation to which on 15 more than one occasion my Lady made it clear that the 16 role of the Inquiry was not to question these 17 convictions because my Lady was bound by the Terms of 18 Reference. 19 In addition to which, and despite being pressed by 20 certain parties to postpone the start of the public 21 hearings, concerns about the safety of Letby's 22 convictions were dismissed as noise, and others, 23 including Counsel for the [Families], had insisted that 24 anyone raising concerns ought to be ashamed of 25 themselves. 23

1	shared with the Coroner, rather than trying to sort of		
2	throw as many breadcrumbs as possible for the Coroner to		
3	pick up without explicitly saying what that suspicion		
4	was, a failing accepted in his evidence by Dr Jayaram to		
5	the Inquiry.		
6	Whilst Dr Jayaram's explanation for his reticence		
7	in October of 2016 might be that he had been ignored and		
8	bullied by the senior managers, this cannot be suggested		
9	in February 2016 when there was no evidence of		
10	a breakdown in relations between the clinicians and the		
11	senior managers.		
12	The evidence received by the Inquiry is that,		
13	prior to the death of Child P, the deaths and collapses		
14	were being treated by all, clinicians, nurses, staff,		
15	and those senior managers who were made aware of the		
16	increase in mortality as matters which were explicable		
17	by a combination of issues around care, treatment and		
18	the sickness of babies. That is evident, we submit,		
19	from the contemporaneous records, including emails,		
20	minutes of meetings and reviews, and by what was done by		
21	the individuals involved and, of course, what was not		
22	done by them.		
23	The Inquiry ought to be guided, so far as		
24	possible, by such contemporaneous material, rather than		
25	the recollections contained in witness statements of 22		
1	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I just ask you, Ms Blackwell,		
2 3	the apparent reluctance of certain witnesses, which		
3 4	witnesses do you have in mind? Are you talking the clients that you represent?		
4 5	MS BLACKWELL: No.		
6	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So these are different		
7	MS BLACKWELL: Some of the nursing witnesses, yes.		
8	As my Lady is aware and I was coming on to deal		
9	with this but will wait		
10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: No, take your own time. As long as		
11	it's dealt with.		
12	MS BLACKWELL: All right.		
13	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes.		
14	MS BLACKWELL: Thank you, my Lady.		
15	The serious incident panel that was convened after		
16	the deaths of Child A, C and D records nothing in		
17	respect of any concerns about the deaths being		
18	unnatural. Of the six clinicians in attendance only		
19	one, Dr Brearey, has subsequently recalled that there		
20	was a reference to Letby and of her being present in		
21	relation to the deaths. And on this point, in his		
22	Rule 9 statement he states that he was not, in his		
23	words, "overly concerned at that time".		
24	At the conclusion of that Serious Incident Panel		
25	it was agreed by all that no further investigation was		
	24		

(6) Pages 21 - 24

1 required, nor any additional action to be taken, and 2 my Lady will remember that, following that meeting, 3 Ms Kelly sent Dr Brearey an email inviting him to 4 contact her with any further matters he wanted to 5 discuss but he confirmed in his evidence to the Inquiry 6 that he didn't contact her with anything or any 7 concerns. 8 In August and September, no concerns about 9 deliberate harm being the cause of the death of Child E 10 or the collapses of Child F and Child H were reported by any clinician to the senior managers, and indeed there 11 12 were other deaths in September on the unit which did not 13 appear on the indictment in relation to Letby about 14 which Dr Brearey was aware, but about which he had no 15 concerns. 16 Child I died in October. Again, as with the other 17 babies, no concerns in respect of deliberate harm were articulated then. Dr Brearey produced a mortality 18 19 review for Child I on 31 October, cognisant of the 20 deaths of Children A, C, D and E, which summarises the 21 cause of Child I's death as likely to have been: 22 "... from abdominal pathology, probably NEC or its 23 complications." 24 And which then goes on to criticise the movement 25 of Child I from hospital and back again. 25 1 involving, amongst others, Dr Brearey, Dr Subhedar and 2 Eirian Powell is perhaps inconsistent with the 3 suggestion that any clinician involved at this stage 4 held the belief that a member of staff was deliberately 5 harming babies. Rather, it suggests that the cause of 6 the rise in mortality was believed to be clinical in 7 nature. 8 Whilst the recollections of those who attended the 9 meeting differ, they are consistent about the fact that 10 at no stage was it suggested or discussed that these 11 deaths could have been the result of deliberate acts 12 perpetrated by a member of staff. 13 Dr Subhedar, the external independent participant, 14 did not identify anything untoward about the cases 15 reviewed. He could not recall in his evidence, staffing 16 or a concern about a particular member of staff, being 17 discussed. If that was a belief held by any participant 18 at the meeting, there can be no justification for not 19 clearly and unambiguously communicating this to 20 Dr Subhedar either formally in the meeting or informally 21 outside of the meeting. If such a concern had been 22 raised, it is reasonable to conclude, we submit, that he 23 would have recalled this, and Dr Subhedar told the 24 Inquiry that if Dr Brearey had been concerned that 25 a member of staff was harming babies, he would have 27

1	This review goes beyond a deferential diagnosis.			
2	It asserts a likely cause. If the Inquiry finds that at			
3	the time of writing this review Dr Brearey had real			
4	concerns that the cause of Child I's death may have been			
5	as a result of deliberate harm by Letby, which he			
6	appeared to suggest in his oral evidence, then the			
7	Inquiry may wish to resolve the question of: why he			
8	failed to refer to this in his review; why, as the			
9	neonatal lead, he failed to clearly articulate such			
10	concerns and, moreover, escalate them.			
11	So when the Countess of Chester Hospital submit,			
12	my Lady, that by the end of October 2015 it would have			
13	been appropriate to have excluded Letby from the ward			
14	pending its own investigations, this is not, we say,			
15	a realistic conclusion based upon the contemporaneous			
16	evidence which Dr Brearey himself believed and recorded,			
17	and it is certainly not, we say, something which can			
18	attach to the senior managers who were not on notice of			
19	any of these matters.			
20	Between the death of Child I and the thematic			
21	review meeting held on 15 February 2016 there were no			
22	further deaths. However, there was the collapse of			
23	Child J, although not a child in respect of whom Letby			
24	was found guilty of attempting to harm.			
25	The fact that the thematic review was convened			
	26			
1				
1	expected him to raise a safeguarding issue at local			
2	expected him to raise a safeguarding issue at local level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further			
2	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further			
2 3	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or			
2 3 4	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or care management cause, namely to do another review of			
2 3 4 5	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or care management cause, namely to do another review of the 12-hour period prior to death or collapse. There			
2 3 4 5 6	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or care management cause, namely to do another review of the 12-hour period prior to death or collapse. There was no action in relation to exploring the events being			
2 3 4 5 6 7	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or care management cause, namely to do another review of the 12-hour period prior to death or collapse. There was no action in relation to exploring the events being reviewed and the action of any particular staff member.			
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	level. Indeed, at the conclusion of the meeting further steps were agreed which were directed at a clinical or care management cause, namely to do another review of the 12-hour period prior to death or collapse. There was no action in relation to exploring the events being reviewed and the action of any particular staff member. Whilst it has been asserted by Dr Brearey that he sought an urgent meeting with Mr Harvey on 15 February 2016 following the thematic review meeting, there is no documentary evidence to support this, nor does Mr Harvey recall this, nor would this be in any way consistent with the tenor of subsequent emails from Dr Brearey of which the Inquiry is in possession, nor did Dr Brearey make any attempts to speak to Mr Harvey in person or indeed any other members of the senior management team following the meeting. On 17 March, as the Inquiry is aware, Eirian Powell emailed Ms Kelly in relation to the thematic review copying in amongst others, Dr Brearey and Dr Jayaram. She included references to "high mortality" and "commonalities" of a particular nurse and doctor.			

them any sense of urgency. There's nothing within this 1 2 email that expresses a concern that a member of staff is 3 deliberately harming babies. And all those copied into 4 the email had an opportunity to either write 5 an additional email or clarify the concern. If that was 6 a concern or a belief held by any of the individuals 7 copied into the email, there is no reasonable 8 explanation for failing to communicate further by email, 9 by telephone, or by personal approach. 10 It is, we submit, particularly striking in light of the evidence given by Dr Jayaram in relation to what 11 12 he says he witnessed on 17 February in relation to 13 Child K, only nine days after the review meeting, the 14 absence of this urgency is something that influenced and 15 informed the decision-making of Ms Kelly and Mr Harvey. 16 The thematic review was sent to Ms Kelly on 17 21 March. Some three weeks passed between the receipt 18 of the report and a follow-up email from Ms Powell 19 asking for Ms Kelly's thoughts. There should have not 20 been such a delay. 21 But it is notable that there were no emails sent 22 by Dr Brearey or Jayaram in the intervening period, 23 those who have suggested that by this time they 24 entertained concerns about Letby deliberately harming 25 babies, nor did anyone go to Ms Kelly's office or to any 29 1 effect of focusing minds on issues of care. Nobody asked for additional training or supervision of Letby or 2 3 even removing her from a patient-facing role within the 4 hospital at that time. 5 If the Inquiry accepts the submissions made at 6 paragraph 62 of the written closing document submitted 7 on behalf of the Countess of Chester Hospital that Dr Brearey's hesitancy in making his concerns more 8 9 explicit across the Trust as reasonable, then we submit 10 that this excuse cannot extend to him being too coy to 11 raise them with the senior managers at this time. If he 12 had formulated a real concern of deliberate harm, then 13 he should have said so and with clarity. His behaviour 14 suggests that he had not formulated such concerns 15 because on 4 May he sent an email to Ms Kelly and 16 Mr Harvey, and nothing in that email suggests a belief 17 on his part that Letby was deliberately harming babies. 18 This would be completely inconsistent with the statement 19 that he made in the email "Eirian has sensibly put her 20 on day shifts" without any suggestion of Letby requiring 21 supervision or some of the mitigation or indeed being 22 removed from the ward. Accordingly, it was reasonable, 23 we submit, for Ms Kelly to form an impression that this 24 email related to support for Letby and concerns around 25 her welfare. Indeed, Dr Brearey's email suggests that

1	of the senior managers' offices or contact them in		
2	anyway. This behaviour, we submit, is not consistent		
3	with a belief that there was a murderer on the ward.		
4	This is important contextual information which Ms Kelly		
5	and Mr Harvey took into consideration when making their		
6	decisions.		
7	Nowhere in the thematic review is there		
8	a suggestion of a possibility of deliberate harm as		
9	an explanation for the increase in mortality rates.		
10	Absent such an assertion, the only reasonable		
11	interpretation of its contents is that the causes or		
12	factors being considered are care-related, not criminal.		
13	It indicated a natural cause of death in respect of all		
14	the babies, save for Child A. It goes on to identify		
15	themes, not causes, which connected some of the deaths,		
16	including sudden and unexpected deterioration, but, as		
17	my Lady is aware, that as a theme was not included by		
18	Dr Brearey until a second iteration of the thematic		
19	review was prepared and after suggestions being made to		
20	him by Dr Subhedar. The timing of arrests, delayed cord		
21	clamping and the use of UVCs are identified as themes.		
22	However, absent is a clear articulation of any		
23	concern that a member of staff is harming babies in		
24	combination with the actions identified along with the		
25	areas to improve practice. This had the inevitable		
	30		
1	he anticipated Letby's return to night shifts at some		
2	point when he wrote:		
3	"It would be very helpful to meet before she is		
4	due to go back upon night shifts. There is some		
5	pressure regarding staff numbers with this at the		
6	moment."		
7	There is nothing to suggest that at this point in		
8	time Dr Brearey had in mind that Letby was murdering and		
9	deliberately harming patients.		
10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Ms Blackwell, I think a few minutes		
11	after that Ms Kelly emailed Karen Rees, didn't she,		
12	enclosing that email from Dr Brearey?		
13	MS BLACKWELL: She did.		
14	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: And she says well, you know what		
15	the email says.		
16	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.		
17	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Perhaps you can just take us		
18	through it.		
19	MS BLACKWELL: Well, the email, my Lady, confirmed that she		
20	had identified that Letby was a common feature, that		
21	Letby was an association, but not that there was any		
22	consideration in her mind because there had been no		
23	identification by any of the clinicians that Letby was		
24	deliberately harming patients.		
25	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: But she says in terms:		
	32		

32

31

(8) Pages 29 - 32

1	"If there's a staff trend here and we've already	1
2	changed her shift patterns because of this, then this is	2
3	potentially very serious!! I'll check the report they	3
4	send through. I did not notice there was a staff	4
5	trend!!"	5
6	MS BLACKWELL: Yes, but, my Lady, the email	6
7	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I don't want to take a lot of time	7
8	on it but it does appear at that point Alison Kelly was	8
9	concerned about it.	9
10 11	MS BLACKWELL: She was concerned but the concern stretched	10
12	and extended only to Letby's welfare, because that is	11 12
12	the manner in which Dr Brearey had emailed her, concerned about the staffing problems that were caused	12
13	by taking Letby off night shifts, concerned about the	13
15	movement of Letby on to day shifts, and in expressing	14
16	the expectation that she was going back on to night	16
17	shifts, there was nothing in the way in which he	17
18	expressed himself either to Eirian Powell or to Ms Kelly	18
19	to indicate that he had any concern that she was	19
20	deliberately harming or murdering babies.	20
21	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you.	21
22	MS BLACKWELL: At the thematic review meeting on 11 May of	22
23	2016 there were a number of possible factors discussed	23
24	to explain the increase in mortality.	24
25	If Dr Brearey held the suspicion at that meeting	25
	33	
4	and Finian Davielli una seconduira nacente de una una	4
1 2	and Eirian Powell was reassuring people there were no performance issues regarding Letby. Is it not	1
2	a reasonable inference for me to draw, and I would like	2
4	your help about this, that the reason they were doing	4
5	that was precisely because everyone knew, however it was	5
6	articulated to use your word, however it was	6
7	"articulated", people understood that Letby was under	7
8	suspicion?	8
9	MS BLACKWELL: With hindsight and looking at the situation	9
10	now, that might be a conclusion that the Inquiry can	10
11	draw, but at the time	11
12	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: No, I'm asking about at the time	12
13	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	13
14	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: whilst sitting there, why are	14
15	these people making a defence of Lucy Letby?	15
16	MS BLACKWELL: Because they genuinely believed and felt that	16
17	she was a good nurse. The fact that they are supporting	17
18	her competency does not necessarily leave us the only	18
19	alternative the fact that Letby was causing deliberate	19
20	harm, because it may equally have been the fact, and in	20
21	our respectful submission this was the tenor of the	21
22	meeting, that there was simply an unfortunate	22
23	association of her being on duty. And as my Lady is	23
24	aware, she was a well-qualified nurse. She was on the	24
25	ward more often than other nurses because she did 35	25
	•••	

1	that Letby was murdering babies, then the Inquiry may			
2	want to ask why he didn't articulate this in the			
3	clearest of terms. The issues again being highlighted,			
4	as they had been in the written document, related to			
5	care and possible competency issues.			
6	There was a follow-up email after the meeting,			
7	which my Lady is well aware of, in which Dr Brearey			
8	described the meeting as having been helpful. And the			
9	Inquiry has not disclosed to any of the			
10	Core Participants any emails from any of the recipients			
11	of that email, including Dr Jayaram, taking issue with			
12	its contents or querying the absence of any action being			
13	taken in relation to Letby.			
14	Between that meeting and the death of Child P at			
15	the end of June of 2016, there was no further contact			
16	from Dr Brearey or any of the clinicians to any member			
17	of the senior management team.			
18	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Just before you continue,			
19	Ms Blackwell, in your written submissions and			
20	I appreciate you're omitting quite a lot for perfectly			
21	good reason			
22	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.			
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I'm sure, but just you refer to			
24	the meeting on 11 May and the fact that Eirian Powell			
25	and Ann Murphy were speaking with emotion about Letby,			
	34			
1	overtime. Those were the sorts of matters that were			
2	being discussed, not a determination to even consider at			
3	that time that she was deliberately harming babies.			
4	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you.			
5	MS BLACKWELL: Between the meeting on 11 May and the death			
6	of Child P at the end of June, there was no further			
7	contact from Dr Brearey or any other clinician with any			
8	member of the senior management team, and Dr Brearey in			
9	his email to Ms Kelly on 28 June says that there had			
10	"been a watchful waiting approach since" the thematic			
11	review but now there was a consensus that Letby "should			
12	not have any further patient contact".			
13	It is perhaps worthy of note, my Lady, that in the			
14	same email Dr Brearey is suggesting that other measures			
15	should be employed which, in his words:			
16	" I think would be helpful [to] include a deep			
17	clean and reducing the number of allocated cots on the			
18	NNU, at least temporarily [to] improve nurse			
19	staffing ratios and reduce the risk of infection by			
20	[improving] the space around the cots"			
21	And so he was in his role as neonatal lead			
22	conscious that there were improvements to clinical care			
23	that needed to be considered.			

- And the Inquiry has heard, my Lady, that
- 25 immediately after the death of Child P in the hot 36

1	debrief that was being led by Dr Rackham, Dr Brearey sat	1	my Lady that they had no concerns regarding Letby.
2	next to Letby and told her that he hoped she was going	2	It has been suggested, my Lady, that the senior
3	to have a good rest over the weekend. No clinician had	3	managers were more concerned with protecting their own
4	ever witnessed her doing anything untoward in relation	4	reputations than ensuring the safety of babies, and it
5	to a baby or at least not escalated that to any senior	5	has been suggested by Mr Baker KC on behalf of Family
6	manager, and by this time nothing had been identified in	6	Groups 2 and 3 that there may have been a financial
7	respect of any concerning insulin results or rashes or	7	motivation, that is the success of or the flow of funds
8	skin discolouration. These undefined concerns about	8	into the Babygrow Appeal in the decision-making in the
9	Letby, as I have touched upon, were not shared by the	9	aftermath of the deaths of Child O and P. The Inquiry
10	nursing staff, in particular Eirian Powell, who was	10	has received no evidence which supports that assertion.
11	firmly of the view that she was a good and competent	11	The suggestion that the senior managers were
12	nurse.	12	reluctant to act on concerns about Letby for
13	The collective view of the senior managers was	13	reputational reasons appears to have been prompted by
14	that a better understanding of what was going on was	14	an entry made in the risk register by Karen Townsend in
15	required and, given how extremely rare acts of	15	July of 2016, which read:
16	deliberate harm by healthcare professionals are, we	16	" potential damage to reputation of neonatal
17	submit that it was entirely reasonable to approach the	17	service and wider Trust due to apparent increased
18	undefined concerns raised by the clinicians with an open	18	mortality within the neonatal unit"
19	mind and have regard to all possible explanations, both	19	Both Mr Chambers and Mr Harvey gave evidence to
20	likely and unlikely.	20	my Lady that they could not specifically recall that
21	Many doctors on the NNU were unaware of suspicions	21	entry on the risk register. But insofar as reputation
22	of deliberate harm until the end of June 2016, and, as	22	was concerned, their only concern, we suggest, was
23	my Lady is aware, a significant number of nurses	23	maintaining public confidence that the NNU was safe at
24	considered the increase in mortality to be due to	24	that time.
25	natural causes, many having explained in statements to	25	The senior managers have emphatically refuted the
	37		38
4			
1	proposition that either their own reputation or that of	1	identifiable common factors or failures that might in
2	the Trust was prioritised over safety. This suggestion	2	part or in whole explain the apparent increase in
3	begs the question, how was knowingly keeping a suspected	3	mortality.
4	killer on the neonatal unit likely to enhance the	4	The senior managers respectfully maintain that the
5	reputation of either the managers or the Trust?	5	commissioning of an independent review was a sensible
6	The Inquiry has heard evidence about the internal	6	course of action at that stage. Rightly or wrongly,
7	and external reviews commissioned by Mr Harvey following	7	Mr Harvey's expectation at the time of instruction was
8	the meeting with the paediatric consultants to better	8	that this review would incorporate a Casenote Review and
9	understand the concerns, and these are summarised in	9	he could not foresee how they could fulfil their belief
10	paragraphs 67 to 91 of our written closing submissions.	10	without doing one. My Lady is also aware that attached
11	In addition, a decision was taken to downgrade the unit	11	to the report was annex 4, which confirmed that medical
12	to a level 1, and undertake some internal	12	situations of each of the babies reviewed had been
13	investigations. If the senior managers had not kept	13	considered by the RCPCH, but there was misunderstanding
14	an open mind and had acted instead without question on	14	on both sides as to what could be achieved.
15	the allegations made by the consultants that Letby was	15	And once it was completed, there was further
16	deliberately harming babies, then there would have been	16	misunderstanding, in Mr Harvey's mind, as to the
17	no downgrading of the unit, no internal or external	17	identity of those with whom the report could be shared.
18	investigations, and this may well have increased the	18	He was reliant on the expertise of the RCPCH and
19	risk of more babies collapsing and/or dying and hampered	19	followed what he understood to be their advice.
20	the search for the truth about what happened.	20	Notwithstanding that, it is now accepted that the report
21	My Lady, the Inquiry is aware that the RCPCH	21	should have been shared with the paediatric consultants
22	report was commissioned by Mr Harvey to conduct what was	22	at an earlier stage than transcribed.
23	in fact a service review in light of the increase of		LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So when is it accepted it should
24	unexpected incidents. The Terms of Reference requested	24	have been shared?
25	that the RCPCH consider whether there were any 39	25 I	MS BLACKWELL: It should have been shared when it landed 40
			70

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1	back with Mr Harvey, because the paediatric consultants	1	
2	had been part of the review. They had provided	2	
3	interviews and additional material for the RCPCH to	3	
4	perform its function.	4	
5	As to why the RCPCH report was not shared with the	5	
6	Families sooner, Mr Harvey explained in evidence that	6	
7	until a full case review had been completed, he didn't	7	
8	consider that the requirements of the report had been	8	
9	fulfilled, and he explained that he felt uncomfortable	9	
10	sharing the report until he was able to provide a much	10	
11	fuller picture.	11	
12	It is a matter of deep regret to the senior	12	
13	managers that some parents become aware of the report	13	
14	when it was leaked by others to the press and in some	14	
15 16	cases were not aware of it until it was raised in other	15 16	
17	legal proceedings. The senior managers are profoundly sorry that this was how some families came to learn of	10	
18	the report. This should not have been the case.	17	
19	At the time the report was leaked, the senior	10	
20	managers and others had been in the process of	20	
20	formulating a detailed communication plan to ensure that	20	
22	all parents and other stakeholders were notified of its	22	
23	completion but matters were overtaken.	23	
24	My Lady is also aware of the circumstances in	24	
25	which the reports of Dr Hawdon and Dr McPartland were	25	
	41		
1	misled by any of the senior managers. As such, any	1	
2	suggestion is refuted by the senior managers in the	2	
3	strongest terms.	3	
4	My Lady, the former managers support the	4	Μ
5	initiatives which are now in train to implement learning	5	L
6	from the Kark and Messenger reviews, as referenced in	6	
7	the submissions made on behalf of NHS England. They	7	Μ
8	note and welcome the Government's consultation on the	8	
9	regulation of managers and the steps taken in	9	
10	preparation for that consultation.	10	
11	And the Inquiry called evidence from, amongst	11	
12	others, Professor Judith Smith on the importance of	12	
13	senior managers being adequately supported and trained	13	
14	to properly equip them for the challenges of managing	14	L
15	a health organisation, including ensuring an open,	15	
16	positive and safety-focused culture.	16	
17	The senior managers agree with the submissions	17	
18	made on behalf of NHS England as regards the importance	18	
19	of proper training and support for managers and welcome	19	
20	the steps being taken in this regard.	20	_
21	My Lady, may I now turn to address you on the	21	M
22	application to pause proceedings.	22	L
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, of course. Just before you go	23	
24	there, can I just ask you about one section of your	24	
25	submissions, perhaps 63 and 64, which is a criticism of 43	25	

1	undertaken. The Inquiry has sought to examine whether
2	the commissioning of these external reviews was
3	appropriate or not. Mr Harvey accepts that none of the
4	external reviews were specifically designed to identify
5	deliberate harm, and it is a matter of regret to
6	Mr Harvey and to other senior managers that the police
7	were not contacted sooner. But we submit that it was
8	not unreasonable for the senior managers to have regard
9	to the professional conclusions of those experienced in
10	neonatal matters.
11	In relation to a number of the indictment babies,
12	as my Lady is aware, there were post-mortems identifying
13	natural causes of death and in relation to many it was
14	determined by the Coroner that no further investigation
15	was necessary.
16	My Lady is aware of the circumstances in which the
17	senior managers went to the police and the meeting that
18	they had with the Coroner and Assistant Coroner at which
19	it is right to note that the letter from the
20	paediatricians dated 10 February of 2017 was handed over
21	to both Mr Rheinberg and Mr Moore.
22	It is acknowledged that there's a difference in
23	recollection as to what was discussed at that meeting,
24	but there is no evidence before the Inquiry, we
25	respectfully submit, that the Coroner was deliberately
	42
1	one of the barristers who was on the Inquiry team in
2	relation to the summary that she gave of the evidence of
3	the nurses. You haven't repeated that.
4	
~	MS BLACKWELL: No.
5	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I assume that you no longer
6	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I assume that you no longer rely on it?
6 7	 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I assume that you no longer rely on it? MS BLACKWELL: My Lady, I had sought to deal with that when
6 7 8	 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I assume that you no longer rely on it? MS BLACKWELL: My Lady, I had sought to deal with that when I addressed my Lady in terms of the nurses who had in
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1	website.	1	exercised whether or not the investigation or
2	MS BLACKWELL: Of course, it's quite so that the witness	2	proceedings have begun, and subsection (3) confirms that
3	statements were uploaded to the system.	3	before exercising that power, the Minister must consult
4	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, so there was no misleading of	4	the Chair.
5	anybody about anything that the nurses had had to say;	5	Section 17 of the Act
6	is that right?	6	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: And you've written to the Minister
7	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	7	as well, haven't you?
8	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, thank you.	8	MS BLACKWELL: Yes, we have, yes.
9	Now to the application	9	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes. So section 17.
10	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	10	MS BLACKWELL: Section 17 deals with the duty of the Chair
11	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: or to the letter.	11	in relation to the Inquiry's evidence and procedure, and
12	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	12	confirms that:
13	My Lady, the senior managers wrote to the	13	" the procedure and conduct of an inquiry are
14	Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and to	14	to be such as the [Chair] of the Inquiry may direct."
15	your Ladyship on 21 February of this year requesting	15	And in relation to subsection (3):
16	that the Inquiry either be suspended under section 13 or	16	" as to the procedure or conduct of an inquiry,
17	paused under section 17.	17	the [Chair] must act with fairness and with regard also
18	My Lady, section 13 of the Inquiries Act of 2005	18	to the need to avoid any unnecessary cost"
19	provides the Minister with a power to suspend the	19	Section 43 of the Act provides definitions in
20	Inquiry at any time if it appears to him to be necessary	20	relation to some of the words used within the course of
21	to allow the completion of any investigation relating to	21	the Act. It offers no further explanation or assistance
22	any of the matters to which the Inquiry relates or	22	in relation to procedure or conduct, and so it is our
23	the determination of criminal proceedings arising out of	23	respectful submission that those two words should have
24	any of those matters.	24	their ordinary meaning applied.
25	Sub-paragraph (2) confirms that the power may be 45	25	The "procedure", then, is the way or particular 46
1	way in which the Inquiry accomplishes its aims, fulfils	1	the Inquiry will be conducted by the Inquiry Chair,
2	its Terms of Reference.	2	therefore echoing what it is in section 17, that the
3	And "conduct" is the manner in which the Inquiry	3	Terms of Reference are decided by the Secretary of
4	is managed.	4	State, that the order in which the issues are to be
5	As my Lady is well aware, the Terms of Reference	5	considered at the time that the Terms of Reference were
6	have as its introduction the convictions and sentence of	6	drafted had not been decided but the priority was to
7	Letby and confirms that the offences took place at the	7	conduct a thorough inquiry as swiftly as possible.
8	Countess of Chester Hospitals. Those are, therefore, we	8	And the final paragraph of the Terms of Reference
9	respectfully submit, the bedrock, the foundation of the	9	confirmed that the Inquiry Chair will provide a final
10	Terms of Reference.	10	report and, if appropriate, interim reports to the
11	The Terms of Reference are then split into three	11	Secretary of State as soon as is practically possible.
12	areas of investigation (a) the experiences of the	12	When that is practically possible it proves to be
13	parents at the Countess of Chester Hospital of the	13	a matter for the Chair in her conduct of the procedure
14	babies named on the indictment, (c) the effectiveness of	14	and conduct of the Inquiry.
15	NHS management and governance structures and keeping	15	The request for the suspension under the power of
16	babies safe, and (b) the conduct of those working at the	16	section 13 or the pause under my Lady's duty of
17	hospital with regard to the actions of Letby in terms of	17	section 17
18	whether suspicion should have been raised earlier, the	18	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Which is it so far as
19	responses to concerns raised and whether the Trusts	19	I'm concerned?
20	culture, management and governance structures and	20	MS BLACKWELL: so far as you're concerned, my Lady, the
21	processes contributed to the failure to protect babies	21	pause is under section 17, the duty to act with fairness
22	from Letby.	22	and to avoid unnecessary cost was made pending the
	Dut the Terres of Deference we are and confirm that	00	subserves of the CCDCIs consideration of an amplication
23	But the Terms of Reference go on and confirm that	23	outcome of the CCRC's consideration of an application
23 24 25	the Inquiry will in operate within the legal framework of the Inquiries Act, that the procedure and conduct of	23 24 25	made by Letby in respect of her criminal convictions. We understood at the time of writing from what had

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1	been publicly stated and has now been confirmed in the	1	carry on at this point may lead to unfairness or the
2	letter received by the Inquiry yesterday from	2	expenditure of unnecessary costs.
3	Ms Mortimer at Bhandal Law, Letby's solicitors, that the	3	It is understood that the application touches upon
4	application relates to all of her convictions and it was	4	many aspects of new evidence, including evidence as to
5	received by the CCRC on 3 February of this year.	5	the causes of deaths and collapses, together with
6	The CCRC has begun working in assessing the	6	complaints of disclosure around the original trial, part
7	application and it anticipates further submissions being	7	of which is supported by the opinion evidence of
8	supported by further experts' reports, which we know	8	an international panel of independent experts who, it
9	from Ms Mortimer's letters are in the process of being	9	appears, have considered the evidence presented at
10	provided.	10	Letby's trial. These experts are distinguished and
11	The CCRC has set up a team to consider the case.	11	recognised leaders in their field, and include
12	So this is not a case of waiting in a queue for	12	Neena Modi, professor of neonatal medicine at
13	consideration. It is actively being considered.	13	Imperial College, a past President of the RCPCH and the
14	A meeting has been set up between Letby's defence	14	BMA and the current President of the UK Medical Women's
15	team and the allocated commissioner to talk through what	15	Federation who was served with two Rule 9 requests by
16	is described as being a large authoritative body of new	16	my Lady's Inquiry legal team and has provided two
17	clinical evidence, and although the CCRC is not able to	17	witness statements to the Inquiry.
18	determine how long it will take to review the	18	This evidence suggests that there is
19	application, the balance of which we understand will be	19	an alternative explanation for all of the deaths and
20	submitted this week, it is assessed by Letby's	20	unexplained collapses, namely poor clinical management
21	solicitors that it is being undertaken expeditiously.	21	and care and natural causes. And we also now understand
22	We submitted in our letter that in relation to	22	that several of these experts have confirmed their
23	your Ladyship, section 17(3) provides the opportunity,	23	determination to give evidence at the Court of Appeal
24	should your Ladyship deem it appropriate, to pause the	24	and at any retrial should that become necessary.
25	procedure and conduct if my Lady is concerned that to 49	25	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Sorry, seven of the experts on the 50
1	panel	1	of Letby, so the midwives, the nurses, the doctors, the
2	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	2	managers, the senior managers.
3	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: have said	3	Where there are as we say there has to be
4	MS BLACKWELL: That they are prepared and ready to give	4	accepted now, given the stage that the CCRC are at
5	evidence at the Court of Appeal and, if necessary, at	5	real concerns over the fact that Letby has been wrongly
6	any retrial.	6	convicted, then for the Inquiry to progress any further
7	At face value, the new evidence merits and is,	7	in assessing the actions of those midwives, those
8	therefore, being given serious consideration by the	8	nurses, those managers and those senior managers is
9	CCRC. However, it is for the CCRC alone to assess the	9	potentially unfair to them, as witnesses to the Inquiry,
10	evidence, and it would be wholly inappropriate either	10	as people whose conduct will be criticised in terms of
11	for the Inquiry or Core Participants to seek to usurp	11	their handling of Letby.
12	the function of the CCRC in that regard.	12	If the Inquiry is determined to continue to its
13	But where there is a real possibility, my Lady,	13	conclusion, considering the closing submissions which
14	that Letby's convictions may be referred by the CCRC to	14	have been provided over the course of the last two days,
15	the Court of Appeal and there quashed, to ignore this	15	engaging in what may well be a protracted and costly
16	procedure which is now in process, we say, would	16	warning letter process and drafting its report, it will
17	potentially lead to an unfairness. The convictions of	17	currently do so in the absence of considering these
18	Letby are the very cornerstone of this Inquiry.	18	alternative hypotheses that are now being raised, and in
19	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So what would the unfairness	19	doing so it may be disregarding serious issues that have
20	MS BLACKWELL: Well, my Lady.	20	been identified in the provision of care at the Countess
21	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: the potential unfairness	21	of Chester Hospital.
22	MS BLACKWELL: Yes, potential unfairness. When one looks at	22	It defeats the very purpose of this public
23	paragraph (b) or Part B of the Terms of Reference, the	23	inquiry, which must be to fully and fearlessly
23 24 25		23 24 25	inquiry, which must be to fully and fearlessly understand the circumstances in which these babies came to die or suffer unexplained consequences and the

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1	reaction of those around the events when they were
2	happening. If there is evidence to indicate that there
3	are alternative explanations, then it is wrong, we
4	respectfully submit, for the Inquiry to ignore this
5	because it is inconvenient.
6	It seems to us, my Lady, that there are several
7	choices for the Inquiry from today.
8	Firstly, to carry on with its business and to
9	refuse this application.
10	Second, to pause or suspend the Inquiry until the
11	decision of the CCRC is made
12	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Can I just ask you at some point to
13	come back to whether I have the power to suspend.
14	I think at least two other Core Participants have said
15	I don't.
16	MS BLACKWELL: No, I agree with that, my Lady. There is no
17	power to suspend within the Act.
18	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes.
19 20	MS BLACKWELL: But this application is made on the basis
20 21	that there is a duty for you to pause if continuing would lead to either unfairness or an expenditure of
21	
23	Of course, if my Lady is not with us on that, then
24	we would nevertheless invite my Lady to consult with the
25	Secretary of State, as he is duty-bound to do with the
	53
1	I had the power to do so
1 2	I had the power to do so MS BLACKWELL: Yes.
1 2 3	
2	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.
2 3	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to
2 3 4	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to the Secretary of State.
2 3 4 5	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to the Secretary of State. MS BLACKWELL: Quite so.
2 3 4 5 6	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to the Secretary of State. MS BLACKWELL: Quite so. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I follow. Thank you.
2 3 4 5 6 7	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to the Secretary of State. MS BLACKWELL: Quite so. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I follow. Thank you. MS BLACKWELL: The option which I was going to turn to,
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	 MS BLACKWELL: Yes. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: then I should pass that on to the Secretary of State. MS BLACKWELL: Quite so. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: I follow. Thank you. MS BLACKWELL: The option which I was going to turn to, my Lady, is a hybrid position, which would be pending the consideration of Ms Letby's appeal by the CCRC to
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quir	y 18 March 2025
1	Chair of the Inquiry, and to pass on any concerns that
2	my Lady has about the continuing of the Inquiry
3	following on from the submissions today.
4	So, in other words, if my Lady isn't persuaded
5	that you have the power to pause, nevertheless the
6	submissions which we make are capable of being passed on
7	to the Secretary of State through the Chair, because he
8	has a duty to consult with you before he considers
9	whether to suspend.
10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes. Well, you've written to the
11	Secretary of State
12	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.
13	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: and if he is considering
14	suspending, then he obviously will have to consult with
15	me.
16	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.
17	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: But I think what you're suggesting
18	is something rather different, which is that if I don't
19	think that I should pause, I should nonetheless tell him
20	what I think.
21	MS BLACKWELL: If you have concerns that to continue would
22	lead to unfairness
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Oh, I see.
24	MS BLACKWELL: or to an expenditure of unnecessary costs.
25	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: So if otherwise I would pause if
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1	published in relation to these two parts of the Terms of
2	Reference, including recommendations for change and
3	improvement, so that those may be implemented as soon as
4	practicable.
5	At that stage, or by that stage, the Inquiry may
6	very well be in a position to know what the outcome of
7	the CCRC process has been, and if the decision of the
8	CCRC is to refer Letby's convictions back to the Court
9	of Appeal, then the appeal process would be fully
10	reinstated and the Inquiry would have to consider and
11	the Secretary of State would have to consider how that
12	issue might impact on future events.
13	My Lady, the senior managers have been accused by
14 15	some of attempting opportunistically to suspend the
15 16	Inquiry's work. This is not the case. A consideration
16 17	of the alternatives to murder and the extent to which
17 19	the senior managers may well be held responsible for
18 19	poor clinical care and the state of the NNU demonstrates that this would not necessarily exonerate them. On any
19 20	view, there were significant issues affecting the
20 21	Countess of Chester Hospital at the relevant time which
22	led to the deaths of babies on the neonatal unit, which

ultimately quashed, questions will, of course, remain for the senior managers, but these questions will then

led to the deaths of babies on the neonatal unit, which

should not have happened. If Letby's conviction are

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1	be based on a wholly different factual scenario, so	
2	there is no attempt here at an evasion of	
3	accountability.	
4	My Lady made reference at the outset of these	
5	closing submissions yesterday to the letters that have	
6	also been written to my Lady from Sir David Davis MP and	
7	now also from Letby's legal team, and it stands to	
8	reason that those requests for the Inquiry to pause have	
9	been done entirely independently of the senior managers.	
10	To do nothing, we respectfully submit, leaves the	
11	Inquiry in danger of being seen as ignoring the reality	
12	of what is happening outside of its doors, thereby	
13	ignoring the risk that the Terms of Reference for this	
14	Inquiry might unravel. We considered that it was better	
15	to raise these matters and ventilate them before my Lady	
16	in order for the Inquiry to make an active decision	
17	about this, rather than simply carry on regardless.	
18	It may be that the Inquiry considers that the	
19	action point will arise and will only arise when the	
20	CCRC refers the case back to the Court of Appeal.	
21	Mr Kennedy KC on behalf of the Countess of Chester	2
22	Hospital in his oral submissions to my Lady yesterday	2
23	did not confirm the position of the Countess of Chester	
24	Hospital that was set out in their written document if	
25	the CCRC does refer Letby's convictions back to the 57	4
	57	
1	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Do you want to say anything else	
2	about cost?	
3	MS BLACKWELL: Yes. I have addressed my Lady about the	
4	ongoing cost of	
5	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, because effectively the hard	
6	yards have been done and the costs	
7	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	
8	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: have been spent.	
9	MS BLACKWELL: That's right, but	
10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: The hard yards for everybody else.	
11	I am not saying	
12 13	MS BLACKWELL: Quite so.	
13 14	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: there aren't some more to come. MS BLACKWELL: Yes. There is still work, of course, for	
14	my Lady's Inquiry legal team to complete. The warning	
16	letter process, which I've referred to as being	
17	protracted and possibly costly, we don't know, but also	
18	the drafting of the report and the costs that are	
19	incurred in that procedure too.	
20	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: But I infer from what you're saying	
20	that one could do A and C and the cost argument would	4
22	not prevail but B we shouldn't do because	4
23	MS BLACKWELL: Significant	
24	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: it's the fairness argument.	2
25	MS BLACKWELL: Yes.	
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nquing	
4	
1	Court of Appeal. In the written document, they
2	submitted to my Lady that, at that stage, the Countess
3	of Chester Hospital may wish to revisit its stance on
4	supporting a pause of proceedings, but we hope that our
5	submissions will be borne in mind, my Lady, as matters
6	progress onwards from today. This is, of course, the
7	final opportunity for Core Participants to make
8	submissions on this issue, which it seems to us is
9	an ever-evolving picture.
10	If this Inquiry is a search for the truth, then,
11	my Lady, there is now, it seems, evidence being provided
12	to the CCRC that the causes of death may be different,
13	that the juries in the Crown Court proceedings may have
14	been presented with a misleading and incomplete picture,
15	and this Inquiry should consider carefully, we
16	respectfully submit, before producing a report based
17	upon the bedrock of Letby's convictions.
18	Whilst the awaited decision of the CCRC cannot be
19	predicted in time or decision, the increasing concern
20	expressed by world-class experts that the prosecution
21	case was based on medical misunderstandings and poor
22	expert evidence and other concerns raised that evidence
23	was withheld from the jury are in real danger of
24	dissolving that bedrock into a beach of shifting sands.
25	My Lady, those are our submissions unless I 58
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1	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, all right.
2	Thank you. We'll take the break now and we'll
2	start again at quarter to 12.
4	(11.21 am)
4 5	(A short break)
6	(11.44 am)
7	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Mr Skelton.
8	Closing submissions by MR SKELTON
9	MR SKELTON: My Lady, I represent the Families of
10	Children A, B, I, L, M, N, and Q.
11	It's the Families' primary position that when
12	concerns arise that a healthcare professional may have
13	deliberately harmed a patient, immediate steps must be
14	taken to prioritise and protect the safety of patients.
15	For obvious reasons, that response becomes evermore
16	pressing and necessary where the harm in question is
17	murder.
18	It does not require a sophisticated risk
19	assessment to tell you that if there is even the
20	remotest possibility that a murder has been committed in
20	a hospital and there is a risk that further murders may
21	occur, the gravity of that harm is such that urgent
23	intervention is required to protect other patients and
23 24	to identify and stop the culprit.
24 25	This is not a mandate for alarmism or
20	This is not a mandate for alarmism of

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1	overreaction. Rather, it is the rational exercise of	1	therefore, that they did not notify the police, initiate
2	common sense and basic moral duty, two of the axioms of	2	safeguarding procedures and remove Letby from the
3	medical professionalism, for which no policy, no	3	neonatal unit when they first became concerned or aware
4	guidance and no training should be necessary.	4	of others' concerns that she may have killed babies.
5	But there are in any event, my Lady, policies and	5	Between 8 and 22 June 2015, three babies died in
6	procedures that do tell healthcare professionals what	6	quick succession in the NNU, Child A, Child C and
7	they must do in such circumstances, and in 2015 and 2016	7	Child D. None of these children had been expected to
8	the most important of these related to safeguarding,	8	die and staff on the unit were rightly concerned that
9	which mandated that when a doctor, nurse, manager or	9	there may have been some common cause between the
10	anyone else in a hospital was concerned that a child may	10	deaths.
11	have been harmed, they were obliged to proactively refer	11	At the time of Child D's death, Dr Brearey, the
12	that concern to their organisation's safeguarding team,	12	lead neonatal consultant, and Eirian Powell, the unit's
13	to the local authority designated officer, the LADO, and	13	manager and a senior nurse, had already identified that
14	to the local authority safeguarding board.	14	Letby was present for all three deaths. In their oral
15	The principles that underpin these obligations	15	evidence to this Inquiry, Dr Brearey said that by the
16	were set out in the clearest terms in the 2015 policy	16	time he met Ms Powell to discuss the three deaths on
17	"Working together to safeguard children", most obviously	17	2 July 2015, he had a concern that someone might be
18	the needs of children are paramount. Everyone has	18	harming babies. Ms Powell said that when she discussed
19	responsibility for safeguarding, and nothing can stand	19	the possibility that a member of staff had harmed the
20	in the way of sharing information and taking steps that	20	babies with her nursing colleagues, this was just after
21	will protect the safety of children.	21	June 2015, and then, as she put it, "all the time", and
22	My Lady, as the Families have set out in their	22	those colleagues were Yvonne Griffiths, Yvonne Farmer
23	written closing statement, the foremost and the gravest	23	and Ann Murphy.
24	failure by the medical, nursing, managerial and	24	So the possibility of murder and the possibility
25	executive staff at the Countess of Chester is,	25	that Letby was the murderer were already being
	61		62
1	considered and discussed at the Countess of Chester	1	come to light that would provide alternative
2	Hospital from July 2015 onwards.	2	non-criminal explanations for what had occurred, but
3	Given the seriousness of the potential conduct and	3	they were all experts in the health and treatment of
4	harm and the risk that it could reoccur, it is,	4	sick babies, and individually and collectively they all
5	therefore, extraordinary that these two senior	5	recognised that there were common themes that raised at
6	healthcare professionals and those to whom they spoke	6	least the possibility of deliberate harm and made it
7	did not exercise common sense and recognise their moral	7	impossible for them to rule it out.
8	duty was to protect their patients. They should have	8	These factors are now very familiar to you, the
9	notified the police, initiating safeguarding procedures	9	babies' collapses and deaths occurred suddenly and
10	and remove Letby from the unit. These were the only	10	unexpectedly, they didn't respond as expected to
11	safe and rational steps to take unless and until Letby	11	emergency resuscitation efforts, medical causes of death
12	had been conclusively ruled out as the cause of the	12	were not identifiable, or were unclear, and Letby was
13	baby's deaths.	13	the one member of staff who was always there.
14	Having heard the evidence from Dr Brearey and	14	Second, the consultants themselves and those they
15	Ms Powell, the families are disappointed that the	15	spoke to had professional and cultural values that made
16	hospital has not conceded these important early findings	16	the possibility of murders and more so multiple murders
17	in its closing statements to you.	17	difficult to accept.
18	My Lady, you've heard many witnesses give various	18	It is extremely rare for healthcare professionals
19	reasons why they didn't take the basic steps that	19	to murder patients and so far outside the experience and
20	I've outlined. Some of these have interlocking themes.	20	response skill set of the vast majority of doctors,
21	First, the consultants who first became concerned	21	nurses and hospital managers. Such murders are also an
22	about Letby initially doubted their own judgment and	22	anathema to a system and culture that is devoted to
23	didn't at that early stage consider they had enough	23	improving lives by the provision of high-quality medical
24	information to be sure that she had attacked children.	24	care.
25	They may have even hoped that other information would	25	As Professor Mary Dixon-Woods explained early on
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1 in this Inquiry, it can be very difficult for healthcare 2 professionals to accept that transgressive conduct has 3 occurred on the part of a colleague, particularly where 4 that conduct is extreme. To do so runs contrary to 5 human and organisational sense-making, and cultural 6 entrapment can occur when positions become embedded and 7 overlaid with denial, defensiveness and the inability to 8 accept challenge, as was seen amongst Letby's supporters 9 at the time and can still be seen today. 10 Doctors and nurses in acute care also work very 11 closely and intensely in small teams, which gives rise 12 to powerful relationships and loyalties and esprit de 13 corps that is necessary for effective work but which may 14 make it even harder to comprehend such conduct. 15 Third, it was obvious that a draconian and 16 unpleasant step for senior managers to take would be to 17 impugn the integrity of a competent junior colleague 18 with whom they worked intensely in a team for 19 several years. While worrying they were wrong, they 20 would also have been anxious that Letby's forcible 21 removal from the unit would have a negative impact on 22 her emotional state and her mental health, and would 23 potentially damage her future career if their concerns 24 proved to be permission placed. There are obviously 25 associated concerns in some guarters that Letby could 65 1 In the worst-case scenario, this could have led to 2 a loss of jobs or even careers, or at least a fear that 3 that might take place, and these concerns proved to be 4 borne out by the treatment of the consultants by senior 5 nursing managers and the executives in and after 2016. 6 Therefore, my Lady, to a degree it is 7 understandable that each of these four broad factors 8 arose and inhibited the thinking and actions of the 9 consultants and lower level managers, but the critical 10 question is whether in the circumstances that presented 11 in 2015 and 2016 they justified not calling the police, 12 not initiating safeguard and not removing Letby. The

13 answer, my Lady, without equivocation is no. As I have 14 said common sense and moral courage were required. It 15 should have been recognised that the safety of 16 vulnerable child patients was the paramount and only 17 operative concern, and that while there was a risk that 18 harm could recur, steps needed to be taken to protect 19 patients. 20 Excuse me. 21 In other words, there was categorically not, as 22 Tony Chambers the former chief executive has sought to

argue, a balance to be struck between competing duties
to patients and duties to staff at the hospital. It was
and should have been obvious that the possibility of

bring a legal claim for constructive dismissal, with all the associated negative consequences and costs. There would also have been a concern that her removal could have compromised the effective delivery of care in the unit by damaging strong relationships between staff, and sowing worry, insecurity and gossip and distraction. And, of course, there was a misplaced worry, planted and exploited by Stephen Cross, the director of corporate and legal services, that the unit would become a police crime scene, unable to operate and forced to reject its patients.

13 Finally, one of the most significant concerns on 14 the part of those raising the concerns or suspicions in 15 2015 and 2016 was that they would find themselves 16 criticised, ostracised and censured as a result. This 17 could have been by way of accusations by colleagues and 18 managers that they were wrong and were scapegoating and 19 victimising Letby. It could also have been by way of 20 formal counter-accusations that the facts were being 21 misrepresented, that Letby was being bullied and that 22 medical staff were covering up their own substandard 23 care, with possibility that these matters could have 24 escalated to disciplinary proceedings internally at the 25 hospital, or externally at the GMC and NMC.

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1 murder and the risk of recurrence outweighed all other 2 considerations. 3 My Lady, the failure on the part of the 4 consultants and unit managers to contact the police and 5 initiate safeguarding processes and remove Letby in and 6 after July 2015 became more acute and chronic and 7 indefensible as time went on and more babies were harmed 8 and died The full narrative of specific failings is set out 9 10 in the written statements of the Families I represent 11 and in compelling detail in the submissions put in by 12 Families Group 2 and 3. I cannot do justice to it today 13 but there are five obvious events where clear-headed 14 intervention was also needed. 15 In August 2015, Child F's grossly abnormal blood 16 results were indicative of a substantial and deliberate 17 overdose of insulin but were wrongly dismissed by Dr ZA 18 as "fantastical" without discussion with the wider 19 medical team. This was a grave error. 20 It was also a serious collective failure, as 21 Dr John Gibbs, a fellow consultant and the former 22 paediatric clinical director, accepted. 23 In October 2015 you've heard that Child I's 24 repeated collapses and eventual death led to 25 a significant increase in the level of suspicion on the 68

1	part of the consultants, individually and collectively,	1
2	that Letby was killing babies, leading to the repeated	2
3	discussions between them, but again nothing was done.	3
4	This is now accepted by the hospital as being	4
5	a critical inflection point that should have led to	5
6	robust intervention. As I have stated, the Families'	6
7	position remains that this should have occurred	7
8	several months earlier.	8
9	In February 2016, Child K was found by Dr Jayaram	9
10	with a dislodged endotracheal tube, deteriorating while	10
11	Letby stood by doing nothing. He accepted that this was	11
12	not communicated to anyone at the time and should have	12
13	resulted in a Datix report. But given the seriousness	13
14	of his own concerns by this stage, those concerns that	14
15	he was already harbouring about Letby, which prompted	15
16	him to go back and check the baby at the time, you may	16
17	find it extraordinary that he did not recognise that she	17
18	had tried to kill the child and take the necessary	18
19	action.	19
20	In April 2016, Child L's grossly abnormal blood	20
21	results which, like Child F's results in August,	21
22	indicated deliberate insulin overdose were also	22
23	overlooked by the medical team. Again, this failure was	23
24 25	accepted by Dr Gibbs. Lastly, in June 2016, even after the deaths of	24 25
25	69	25
1	outlined.	1
2	SUDIC is the national system for investigating	2
3	sudden and unexpected child deaths. In accordance with	3
4	the policies applicable at the time, the obligation to	4
5	conduct a Joint Agency Response applied as much to	5
6	deaths in hospital as it did to deaths in the community,	6
7	so individuals who should have been triggered after the	7
8	deaths of Child A, C, D in June 2015 and thereafter	8
9	Child E, Child I, Child O and Child P.	9
10	But the evidence indicates that the staff at the	10
11	hospital didn't review view it in that way, and several	11
12	witnesses have explained that they were not alone in	12
13	doing so. This is lamentable, because it is precisely	13
14	these types of death, unusual deaths, that may be caused	14
15	by deliberate harm that may be difficult to detect that	15
16	the SUDIC system is designed for. It is also indicative	16
17	of a failure of national governance for which	17
18	NHS England, not the hospital, is ultimately	18
19	responsible.	19
20	The hospital staff did, however, fail to use the	20
21	serious incident investigation procedure appropriately.	21
22	According to the applicable framework at the time,	22
23	serious incidents were events in healthcare where the	23
24 25	potential for learning is so great or the consequences	24
25	to patients, families and carers, staff of organisations 71	25
	••	

Child O and Child P, when the consultants finally
insisted that Letby be removed from the unit to protect
other babies, neither they nor anyone else contacted the
police or started the safeguarding process. Many
witnesses, even the executives, accept that this should
have been done.
My Lady, the second major criticism of the
consultants and NNU managers is that they failed to
investigate the deaths and collapses of babies on the
unit using the applicable systems, sudden unexpected
death in infancy and childhood, SUDIC, serious incident
investigations and Datix.
The Families have also included detailed analysis
of these systems in their written statements, so again
I will only focus on the key points.
The medical, nursing and managerial staff were
right to want to identify any common themes within and
between the cluster of deaths and collapses that
occurred on the neonatal unit. Where they fell into
error was given precedence to and pursuing their own
investigations, which were insufficiently comprehensive
and robust. The standard processes for reporting and
investigating sudden deaths and collapses should have
run in parallel to and have been co-ordinated with the
police and safeguarding investigations that I've already
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are so significant that they warrant using additional
resources to mount a comprehensive response.
Serious incidents can be isolated single events or
multiple, linked or unlinked events signalling systemic
failures.
As I have stated, by the end of June 2015, there
had been a cluster of unexplained and unexpected death
on the unit. There was also a concern that these deaths

	had been a cluster of unexplained and unexpected deaths
	on the unit. There was also a concern that these deaths
	were linked by some systemic or common cause, and
)	the registrars and consultants had raised the concern
l	that unusual rashes had been seen on Child A, Child B
2	and Child D. The consultants failed to recognise that
3	these factors warranted a joined-up investigation to
Ļ	find the causes for the sudden increase in deaths and to
5	ensure that they identified any common causes.
6	This failure is accepted by Ruth Millward in her
7	written statement to this Inquiry. It should have been
3	conceded by the hospital in its closing statements.
)	Finally and briefly, insufficient professional
)	curiosity was paid to the subsequent unexpected
l	collapses of babies that occurred after that of Baby B.
2	In May 2016, Dr Brearey asked that these types of
3	collapse be reported to him and Ms Powell but this
ŀ	request was too late and too weak. Instead of
5	encouraging an improvised and arbitrary reporting
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system, the senior doctors and managers should have 1 2 ensured from the start that all such deteriorations were reported using the Datix system. This was designed to 3 capture such information for the purposes of identifying 4 and managing risks. The build-up of information on 5 Datix would have proved more and more valuable as time 6 went on 7 My Lady, the third criticism of the consultants 8 9 and the neonatal unit managers is that they failed for 10 many months to escalate the consultants' concerns and 10 11 growing suspicions to the hospital's executives or to 11 12 any of their internal governance committees in the 12 13 clearest and most urgent terms. 13 14 It is a remarkable feature of the contemporaneous 14 15 documents, including the 2016 thematic review and 15 16 associated emails, that the true and awful nature of the 16 17 consultants' suspicions about Letby were never 17 18 18 articulated properly. Phrases like "deliberate harm" 19 and words like "murder" are never mentioned, nor do they 19 20 appear to have been uttered during many of the informal 20 21 21 and formal meetings that took place in the weeks around 22 22 July 2015. Instead, for many weeks, concerns were not 23 communicated at all or not communicated explicitly. It 23 24 24 was left to the recipients to work out what was meant by 25 "staffing issues", or for managers and executives to 25 73 what went wrong. So it is with the Countess of Chester 1 Hospital's executives in this Inquiry, Tony Chambers, 2 lan Harvey, Alison Kelly and Sue Hodkinson. 3 In their evidence and in the submissions made by 4 5 their counsel to the Inquiry, they appear to have lived in and to still be living in an alternate and internal 6 7 contradictory reality, one where no murders and attempted murders occurred, or, if they did, the 8 executives did everything reasonably in their power to 9 10 protect patient safety and it wasn't their fault because 10 11 no one else told them or stopped them from happening. 11 12 12 This is arrogant, self-serving fantasy. 13 The Families' written closing statement sets out 13 14 the many ways in which the executives failed them and 14 15 indeed their own staff, particularly the paediatric 15 16 consultants. 16 17 17 First and foremost, in February and March 2016 18 when Alison Kelly and Ian Harvey first became aware of 18 19 the thematic review into the untoward increase in 19 20 neonatal deaths and the basic nature of the consultants' 20 21 concerns about Letby's apparent association with the 21 22 deaths, they failed to approach the situation with 22 23 independence and objectivity. 23

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24 They failed to take an immediate grip on the 25 situation and arrange an urgent meeting with the 75

deduce that it was suspicious that Letby, who was generally thought of to be a competent nurse, was nevertheless associated with many unexplained deaths. I've already sought to explain why it was that the consultants were unable to voice their concerns and suspicions, but these explanations cannot stand as excuses, given the seriousness of the situation they were presented with. Dr Brearey rightly recognised this in his oral evidence. Likewise, they do not excuse the executives' failure to intervene decisively. It was their job to proactively find out precisely what the consultants were concerned about. There is no reason to think that doctors would have been anything other than transparent about why they suspected Letby. The basis for their suspicions was not a secret, nor was it difficult to explain or to understand. Turning then to the executives, it's often the way in public inquiries, as it is in other legal proceedings, that particular opprobrium attaches to those participants and witnesses who show the least insight into their own actions and motivations, who cannot bring themselves to take responsibility for their own mistakes, who seek to blame others and who try to the end to avoid being held personally accountable for 74

consultants to list their suspicions. They failed to exercise clear-headed judgment and to accord credence to the consultants' concerns, which were based on specialist medical knowledge and experience that none of the executives had. They failed and still appear to fail to understand the many factors that may have made it difficult for the consultants to voice the true reality that they suspected Letby of murder. They placed far too much reliance on the more convenient judgments of the unit's manager and other non-executive nursing managers that Letby herself was the innocent victim, without recognising the lack of objectivity or expertise that underpin that judgment and how unreliable and unsafe it, therefore, was. In truth, contrary to what they assert in their submissions, they lost sight of their duties to protect patients. They failed to remove Letby from the unit pending on conclusive determination that she did not present a serious ongoing risk to patients. They failed to follow their own policies, safeguarding, whistleblowing, SUDIC, serious incident 24 investigation, which are designed to assist, not hinder, 25 an effective response to what was obviously a difficult

1	and complex situation for the staff in the neonatal	1	and protracted process of independent investigation, the
2	unit.	2	Royal College of Surgeons' review, the consequent
3	They failed to notify the police, which they now	3	reviews by Dr Hawdon and Dr McPartland was embarked on
4	accept.	4	with the approval of the executives. In the meantime,
5	Not only this, but the executives withheld	5	the consultants were effectively sidelined and muted,
6	critical information about the spike in neonatal	6	lan Harvey having told them:
7	mortality and the consultants' concerns from the CQC,	7	"All emails cease forthwith."
8	whose inspectors were present in the hospital in	8	These reviews, as you have heard, were initiated
9	February 2016, from their commissioning body,	9	and tightly controlled by Mr Harvey in a way that is
10	NHS England, and from the local Senior Coroner. This	10	deserving of serious censure. He deliberately decided
11	pattern of information evasion and control demonstrate	11	not to instruct the reviewers to address the most
12	poor judgment, misplaced priorities, reputation	12	important and pressing issue, the possibility that
13	management and fear of external scrutiny.	13	babies had been killed by Letby, which in any event he
14	These omissions became even more indefensible	14	knew was beyond their competence, as the reviewers
15	following the deaths of Child O, on 23 June, and	15	themselves ruefully acknowledged in their oral evidence.
16	Child P, on 24 June. By that point, the consultants	16	He deliberately excluded the consultants from the
17	were, finally, insisting that Letby be suspended from	17	process of instruction, which was indefensible, given
18	the unit, and in various meetings they did, finally,	18	the gravity of the suspicions and concerns that they had
19	articulate their suspicions of murder in clear and	19	raised and their direct knowledge of the care given to
20	unambiguous terms.	20	the babies who had died.
21	But, as the Families set out in their written	21	He also withheld the consultants' views about
22	statement, it is extraordinary that basic good judgment	22	deliberate harm from Dr Hawdon and Dr McPartland. He
23	was not exercised by the executives in those meetings	23	then controlled and edited the content of the reviewers'
24	and that the police were not called immediately.	24	reports, removing, for example, explicit references in
25	Instead, over a period of several months, a pointless	25	the Royal College report to the consultants'
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1	allegations, as it was put, about the link between Letby	1	actions summarised above is that the true purpose of the
2	and the deaths.	2	reviews was not to accord credence to the consultants'
3	Finally and perhaps most egregious, given	3	suspicions about Letby and investigate them robustly,
4	Mr Harvey's manipulation of the review process, he and	4	but to proactively seek alternative non-criminal causes
5	Tony Chambers misrepresented the reviewers' findings to	5	for the babies' deaths, including poor care by the
6	their own hospital, stating that they effectively	6	consultants themselves.
7	disproved the consultants' concerns and thereby	7	The executives were effectively gambling that the
8	exonerated Letby. That same false message was	8	various reviews would provide irrefutable, independent
9	communicated about the outcome in respect of Letby's	9	support for their true and unanimous view that the
10	grievance, which was presented as a further proxy for	10	consultants' concerns were in fact baseless and
11	a proper investigation of the consultants' concerns.	11	vexatious. When this did not happen, and despite the
12	Throughout this period, although	12	false spins that Ian Harvey and Tony Chambers repeatedly
13	Sir Duncan Nichol, the Chair, was aware of the	13	attempted, the executives' plan ultimately derailed.
14	consultants' concerns, the board members never heard	14	By early 2017, the consultants could no longer be
15	directly from the consultants themselves, both about	15	appeased and became increasingly and rightly aggrieved
16	their concerns and their views on the value of the	16	by the inconclusive and secretive reviews, the inaction
17	investigations that had been conducted by the	17	of the executives, the criticisms made against them
18	executives. In a properly functioning Trust, this would	18	during Letby's grievance procedure, and the threat of
19	have been seen as essential.	19	referral to the GMC. Only then, reluctantly and boxed
20	At the Countess of Chester Hospital, the opposite	20	into a corner, did the executives decide to contact the
	was the case. The consultants and the board were kept	21	police.
21	and caper conservation and the bound work hope		
21 22	apart to protect the executives' strategy of avoiding	22	
22	apart to protect the executives' strategy of avoiding police involvement and external scrutiny of multiple	22 23	And, my Lady, all of this process, this sorry tale, was facilitated by a weak and incurious board, led
22 23	police involvement and external scrutiny of multiple	23	tale, was facilitated by a weak and incurious board, led
22			

1 consultants' concerns about Letby, should have insisted 2 on being fully and fairly briefed on the available 3 information and views, should have challenged the 4 executives' biases and scepticism, should have rejected 5 their decision to focus solely on noncriminal 6 explanations, and should have insisted that the LADO and 7 the police be notified immediately. 8 My Lady, before turning to other issues, it is 9 worth pausing to consider briefly the question of 10 causation. In other words, what would have happened if the many failures I've identified had not occurred. 11 12 The Families do not know if Child A, Child B, 13 Child C and Child D were Lucy Letby's first victims, or 14 if she started harming children earlier, and, if so, 15 whether she could have been stopped sooner. But 16 assuming that they were, then proper intervention in 17 July 2015 would have included removing Letby from the 18 unit pending the outcome of any investigations by the 19 police, the safeguarding team, the SUDIC team and those 20 charged with conducting the serious untoward incident 21 investigation. 22 The precise outcome of those investigations, 23 singly and collectively, is difficult to determine 24 conclusively, though removal would, of course, have 25 stopped any further offending. And given how police 81 1 intervention by the Countess of Chester Hospital it is 2 likely that no more children would have been harmed 3 after June 2015 and Child E, Child I, Child O and 4 Child P would still be alive. 5 My Lady, you heard a lot of evidence, including 6 authoritative views from Sir Robert Francis KC about the 7 importance of a duty of candour and the value of the 8 principles of honesty, openness and transparency in the 9 NHS, but those principles of are no value if they are 10 not applied in practice. 11 The evidence you've received demonstrates that the 12 duty of candour was systematically ignored while Letby 13 was harming babies and afterwards during the period that 14 the executives were looking in vain for medical 15 explanations that would rule out the possibility that 16 multiple murders had occurred in their hospital. 17 Parents were not told that their children had 18 suffered unexpected collapses. 19 They were not told about the consultants' concerns 20 and suspicions about Letby, even as those concerns 21 escalated and caused staff in the unit to break into 22 factions. 23 They were not told about the thematic review. 24 They were not told about the Royal College review 25 or the consequent reviews by Dr Hawdon and 83

1	notification in 2017 evolved inexorably into a formal
2	murder investigation, it is logical and reasonable to
3	conclude that a similar course would have been followed
4	based on similar information at any time in 2015 and
5	2016.
6	At the very least, even if Letby had not been
7	suspended immediately or a formal murder investigation
8	had not been commenced by the police, she would have
9	been disincentivised from further offending by the
10	knowledge that formal processes were well under way.
11	It must also be expected that the net would have
12	closed rapidly around her as all the available
13	information, the inexplicable nature of the collapses
14	and deaths, the unusual rashes, the abnormal insulin
15	results, the suspicion results to Child K's
16	deterioration and her general connections to the deaths
17	became evermore obvious and evermore glaring.
18	Importantly, you may feel, the parents of babies
19	would also have been closely involved in the
20	investigation processes, which would have afforded them
21	the opportunity to provide vital information, to ask
22	questions, and to insist on candid answers.
23	In short, my Lady, there were many missed
24	opportunities throughout 2016 and 2015 to stop Letby,
25	and the painful reality is that with proper and timely
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1	Dr McPartland.
1 2	Dr McPartland. Their input was never sought into any form of
2 3	Their input was never sought into any form of internal investigation.
2	Their input was never sought into any form of internal investigation. During the preparatory phase for Child A's
2 3	Their input was never sought into any form of internal investigation. During the preparatory phase for Child A's inquest, counsel for the hospital advised that the
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1	whom had survived a near fatal collapse, both caused by	1	conduct. Objective, sensible decision-making was
2	Letby.	2	overridden by countervailing rational and irrational
3	You may also wish to consider the straightforward	3	motivations. There's no perfect solution for this but
4	approach articulated by Dr Susie Holt, another	4	one important and invaluable step would be for the
5	consultant, in her oral evidence, whose benchmark of	5	Department of Health and Social Care to publish a single
6	good treatment was how she, her friends and her family	6	short document that clearly and unambiguously sets out
7	would want to be treated. That basic principle extends	7	the steps that must be taken immediately when
8	not just to substantive care, but to all of the	8	information arises indicating that a healthcare
9	communications that surround and are consequent upon	9	professional has or may have harmed a patient. This
10	that care.	10	would apply to any and all concerns, suspicions or
11	My Lady, in their written closing statements the	11	allegations of deliberate harm unless they are
12	Families have set out 12 basic recommendations that in	12	demonstrably irrational or malicious.
13	their view derive from the events that you have	13	My Lady, I wish to emphasise this recommendation
14	investigated and will help future patients and their	14	for several reasons. The first is human fallibility.
15	families. For present purposes, I wish to highlight	15	I've already outlined some of the principal reasons why
16	just two of them.	16	healthcare professionals at the Countess of Chester
17	Recommendation 1 is that it should be mandated to	17	Hospital struggled to respond appropriately to Letby's
18	report the possibility of deliberate harm by	18	crimes, self-doubt, incredulity, loyalty and so on. You
19	a healthcare professional. As the Families say in their	19	may feel that any policy needs to be explicit that those
20	closing statement, the repeated failures of individual	20	reasons can never outweigh the need to take urgent
21	healthcare staff at the hospital to exercise good	21	action to address serious patient safety concerns.
22	judgment in response to the concerns and suspicions	22	But there are also some familiar human
23	about Letby indicates that existing policies and	23	characteristics at work. Some of the staff at the
24	training on patient safety and safeguarding may be	24	hospital were weak and lacking moral courage. Some were
25	ineffective when confronted by extreme transgressive	25	incompetent and ill-equipped to grapple with a complex
	85		86
1	situation. Others, most obviously the executives,	1	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: the fact that you can't believe
2	demonstrated a raft of negative qualities, arrogance,	2	that this is true is neither here nor there, the fact
3	deceit, manipulation, bullying, lack of insight, that	3	that it may be true is what matters or something along
4	made them unfit for the senior positions they held.	4	those lines?
5	So, in formulating your recommendations, you must	5	MR SKELTON: Yes, the types of countervailing factors
6	proceed on the basis of a cold and realistic assessment	6	I've talked about, the sort of unconscious and conscious
7	that future healthcare professionals and managers will	7	biases, prejudices and loyalties which exist need to be
8	continue to demonstrate these type of fallibilities and	8	recognised and placed in the document so that those who
9	faced with a similar situation will fail again unless	9	start to have those biases and begin to feel that they
10	there are the strongest mechanisms in place to stop them	10	can't speak up or voice their concerns are told in no
10	from doing so. That is why, when it comes to dealing	11	uncertain terms that they do not outweigh their duties
12	with the possibility of deliberate harm, the most	12	to the patients, their duty to safeguarding, and that,
13	serious consequence to patient safety, the Families	13	likewise, there must be teeth to this guidance because
14	argue that the new policy must be short, clear and	13	otherwise people will not follow it.
15	compulsory, leaving no room for doubt about what should	15	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you.
16	be done and highlighting the personal consequences that	16	MR SKELTON: My Lady, recommendation 2 is that access to
17	will follow for anyone who does not take appropriate	10	administration of insulin on neonatal units be
18	action.	18	restricted and more effectively controlled. There's
19	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Mr Skelton, thank you.	10	an equally strong case, as the other Family Group set
20	I understand short, clear, all of which is very	20	out in their submissions, for the presence of exogenous
20	persuasive, but I just wonder how such a document copes	20	insulin to be flagged in blood results as requiring
21	when people can't believe it and want, as it were, to	21	immediate attention of the treating consultants.
22	see it with their own eyes. Are you submitting, perhaps	22	My Lady, insulin may be a common drug in hospitals
20	see a mar alon own eyes. The you submitting, perhaps	20	my Lady, mount may be a common drug in hospitals
	you are, that you need to make that explicit	24	and in the community, but it must be recognised that it
24 25	you are, that you need to make that explicit MR SKELTON: Yes.	24 25	and in the community, but it must be recognised that it is also an extremely dangerous drug in the hands of

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1	a malevolent actor. Letby tried to kill two children	1
2	with insulin. Beverley Allitt and Victorino Chua used	2
2 3	-	2
3 4	insulin to kill multiple patients. These are Never Events that take and ruin lives.	4
4 5	attract national attention and damage confidence in the	4 5
6	NHS, so it shouldn't be left to local hospitals to	5 6
7	institute controls over access to and administration of	7
		8
8	insulin. That is a recipe for inconsistent and	o 9
9 10	non-existent safety standards. Instead, whichever unit	9 10
10	in the Department of Health and Social Care takes over	10
12	policy responsibilities for this area of medical	12
	practice must mandate or work with others to mandate	. –
13	that hospitals implement basic standard safety measures,	13
14	such as electronic access and records, that will ensure	14
15	that everyone who accesses insulin in hospital can be	15
16	identified and their actions checked where necessary.	16
17	My Lady, I turn now, finally and briefly, to the	17
18	issue of suspension or pause, as it has been put.	18
19	The Families' position is that Lucy Letby has been	19
20	convicted after a protracted trial during which she had	20
21	access to the finest criminal legal team and numerous	21
22	medical experts across all relevant specialisms, none of	22
23	whom were ultimately called to give evidence to support	23
24	her defence. The Court of Appeal have twice dismissed	24
25	her applications to appeal, in the first instance 89	25
1	compared to the instability of both the outcome and the	1
2	timing of any appeal that may take place at some	2
3	indeterminate time in the future.	3
4	From the Families' perspective, the only fair and	4
5	sensible course is for you to complete your work and	5
6	submit your report based on the established facts of the	6
7	criminal convictions and the many additional facts that	7
8	you have carefully adduced over the last seven months.	8
9	These provide a comprehensive picture of individual,	9
10	collective and systemic failures to respond	10
11	appropriately to Letby's suspected offending between	11
12	2015 and 2017. Otherwise, the Families, the	12
13	Core Participants, the NHS and the public will be	13
14	waiting indefinitely for your assessment of what went	14
15	wrong at the hospital, and the recommendations that you	15
16	need to make for the immediate improvement of patient	16
17	safety in the NHS.	17
18	These, the Families argue, are compelling reasons	18
19	why you should complete your work.	19
20	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: What do you say about the	20
21	submissions in respect of unfairness?	21
22	MR SKELTON: Clearly you have a duty of fairness, whether	21
23	one finds it within the statute or as a common law	23
24	public duty as a public body. Fairness applies to	20
		25
25	everybody. It applies to the Families, it applies to	20

1	comprehensively, having heard evidence from the Canadian
2	neonatologist Professor Shoo Lee, who is now
3	spearheading her latest team of medical experts.
4	Cursory analysis of the report published by those
5	experts identifies multiple problems with their
6	analysis. What has been presented with great fanfare as
7	new and incontrovertible evidence turns out to be old
8	and full of analytical holes. Critical medical and
9	non-medical evidence and expert medical evidence from
10	the trial and from this Inquiry is ignored or dismissed,
1	and medical hypotheses are advanced based on fragile
2	towers of speculation.
3	Little or no thought has also been given, it
4	appears, to the dignity and privacy of the Families and
15	the babies that the experts have publicly discussed, by
16	stark contrast to the way this Inquiry has proceeded.
17	My Lady, I make these points not with a view to
8	encouraging you to assess the merits of Letby's
19	application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission or
20	any subsequent appeal. That is not a matter for you and
21	it is not ultimately a matter for the Families or any of
22	the other Core Participants in your Inquiry. But I do
23	make them with a view to emphasising the thoroughness
24	and stability of Letby's convictions and the failed
25	appeals, which form part of the bedrock of this Inquiry, 90
1	the consultants, it applies to all of the beapital staff
1 2	the consultants, it applies to all of the hospital staff
2 3	and it applies to the executives as well. You inevitably need to balance it. It is always a balancing
3 4	exercise. But we say in the circumstances where there
4 5	are established stable convictions and you have heard
6	evidence supportive of the convictions in fact and heard
7	also evidence of multiple failures that do require
8	urgent attention, that fairness to the Families, to the
9	hospital, to the NHS, to the public, outweighs any
9 10	unfairness that may materialise, we say will not
10	materialise but may materialise, in the future should
12	Letby's appeal proceed.
12	So the balance is firmly in favour of proceeding.
14	My Lady, likewise in respect of the hybrid
15	proposal of producing an interim report, this does not
16	work. The facts of the murders are woven into the
17	factual narrative that you will need to consider. The
18	Families want you to make findings as to when
19	intervention should have taken place, what it should
20	have entailed and what its effect would have been. The
21	recommendations you make are reliant on those findings
22	and will lose most of their force if they are
23	disassociated from their factual consequences or the
<u>2</u> 4	true facts of what happened.
25	My Lady, finally, as was said in the written
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1	closing submission, the Families wish to thank you and	1	entirety but what I would like to do is look at themes
2	your counsel, solicitor and administrative team for the	2	that emerge from the submissions.
3	diligence with which you have conducted this complex	3	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Certainly.
4	Inquiry. Hearing and reading the evidence has been	4	MR BAKER: Before I go through those themes, I would like to
5	extremely difficult for the Families I represent, but it	5	say something about the Families whom I represent,
6	has been made easier by the respect and sensitivity	6	although this statement could apply equally as well to
7	which you and your staff have treated them and the	7	everyone whom Mr Skelton represents as well.
8	conspicuous rigour that has been brought to bear on the	8	Before the events of 2015 and 2016, these Families
9	evidence and indeed on the statements that you have	9	had no common connections, save for the fact they were
10	received over the last few days.	10	looking forwards to bringing into their lives babies who
11	Thank you.	11	they were anticipating with love and hope. They now
12	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you, Mr Skelton.	12	share a common link created through a terrible
13	Mr Baker.	13	chronology of events. Eight Families have struggled
14	Mr Baker, we'll break at a convenient moment of	14	with the grief of losing their babies before their lives
15	your choosing, sometime around 1 o'clock.	15	had begun, and for others they have continued to care
16	MR BAKER: Yes.	16	for children with severe disabilities with the knowledge
17	Closing submissions by MR BAKER	17	that those disabilities were caused deliberately. All
18	MR BAKER: My Lady, I appear on behalf of Family Groups 2	18	of the Families have been severely affected by these
19	and 3, so that's Child C, Child D, Child E, Child F,	19	events. All of them carry permanent scars that bond
20	Child G, Child H, Child J, Child K, Child O, P and R.	20	them together.
21	We've prepared lengthy written submissions which	21	Almost all of the submissions made before you
22	address the factual background and our submissions in	22	refer to the dignity of the Families in these
23	relation to the chronology of the case	23	proceedings and they have undoubtedly been very
24	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, thank you.	24	dignified in the way that they've approached this, but
25	MR BAKER: and I don't propose to read those out in their	25	we should not overlook their courage and bravery. They
	93		94
1	have sat together through two trials, two failed appeals	1	Whatever side of the debate people are on, people
2	and this Inquiry, and they've done that with one common	2	should remember that the dead and harmed are not public
3	goal. Firstly, to discover the truth and achieve	3	property to be dissected on television or on the
4	justice for their children but also to make sure that	4	Internet.
5	others don't have to experience the same harm that they	5	People are entitled to hold opinions but should
6	did.	6	bear in mind the subject matter of what they talk about,
7	Their common voice before this Inquiry has been	7	and opinions can be vocalised just as well with
8	a plea to ensure that this should never happen again,	8	sensitivity and humanity towards victims.
9	not to allow other people to experience what they have	9	As identified in my opening submissions before
10	experienced, not to allow the list of victims to	10	this Inquiry, the anonymity of victims, important as it
11	accumulate. And in saying this, they stand alongside	11	is, can sometimes dehumanise them in the eyes of those
12	a legion of other victims whom have shown the same	12	who read about their experiences, and I'm sad to observe
13	courage through other inquiries, whose voices have too	13	in closing that this observation seems more true when we
14	often been overlooked, leaving us doomed to repeat	14	look back on the last few months.
15	history and add yet more to the numbers of that host.	15	This Inquiry by its Terms of Reference and in the
16	In engaging with this process, they have not set	16	way in which it has been conducted has never involved
17	out to force people to change their minds. They've not	17	an analysis of Letby's convictions. Instead, the
18	had press conferences or appeared on the news or in	18	Inquiry has looked at how an NHS Trust investigates
19	documentaries or in the media. They followed the	19	suspicions of deliberate harm and then how it reacts
20	process with open minds and have asked only a few things	20	when allegations of deliberate harm are made.
21	in return, that they be afforded dignity, that they be	21	The Families would hope that the one thing that
22	allowed to grieve in private and that the public	22	should unite everyone who reads the evidence given
23	remember they are real people who have suffered real	23	before this Inquiry is a sense that the NHS should do
24	loss that they will have to live with for the remainder	24	better when faced with these issues. The Families'
25	of their lives.	25	submissions highlight that the evidence before the
	05		06

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patients and to their families by many different routes. This is a harm that it is in everybody's interests to avoid. There will be countless people on both sides of the debate, no doubt, who will or will be the victims of harm due to failures of safety culture within the NHS. This Inquiry provides an opportunity to address those issues now, not at some indeterminate point in the future, not at a point when the NHS will be able to sit back and comfort itself that these events occurred in a distant history where the past was a different country

Having heard the submissions on behalf of the Department of Health and NHS England, the Families are particularly concerned about whether the lessons from this case will be ignored. They did not perceive a clear motivation for change in those submissions. They saw reflected in them the same momentum towards inertia that has followed previous inquiries into NHS failures. They have asked me to say on their behalf that this is not good enough, that the submissions by those organisations provide them with no hope that

To them promises to consider or review or discuss

It has been suggested to you already, and we would

or consult are not promises to bring about change. Lessons need to be learned, or else another group of 98

repeat, that it is not within your powers to suspend the

Secretary of State alone, pursuant to section 13 of the

It is applied before you or said to you that you may also have a power pursuant to section 17 of the Inquiries Act to pause or suspend the Inquiry. Those submissions to us are not entirely clear, my Lady, because section 13 of the Inquiries Act is particularly clear, that the power to suspend rests only with the

Inquiry. That is a decision that rests with the

about which nothing needs to be done.

anything will change.

Inquiries Act.

1	Inquiry demonstrates a number of things.	1
2	There were poor systems for investigating unusual	2
3	deaths.	3
4	There was a failure to reach or to react to	4
5	unusual blood tests.	5
6	There was a failure of safeguarding structures,	6
7	a failure to listen to concerns when raised and	7
8	a deliberate cover-up.	8
9	There was a suppression of evidence, a lack of	9
10	candour with Families, and then the persecution of	10
11	whistleblowers.	11
12	The message coming through the evidence is that	12
13	there was a total and absolute failure of culture at the	13
14	Countess of Chester Hospital, and on the part of	14
15	individuals a total failure to meet the basic standards	15
16 17	to be expected of senior, powerful and well-paid NHS	16
	executives.	17
18	The volume of the noise surrounding this Inquiry should not be allowed to distract from the message at	18
19	6	19
20 21	its heart. The failure of basic patient safety mechanisms within NHS trusts cannot be allowed to	20 21
21 22	continue in this way. Many features of this case are	21
22	common and have been repeated through multiple inquiries	22
23 24	and investigations into healthcare disasters. If they	23 24
24 25	are not addressed they will continue to cause harm to	24 25
20	97	20
1	injured families will find themselves in the same	1
2	position, begging for the same things and adding their	2
3	names to the host of bereaved or injured.	3
4	Before I move on to dealing with the themes,	4
5	I think I would rather say something about the	5
6	application that has been made	6
7	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Yes, certainly.	7
8	MR BAKER: and then give time to the Families.	8
9	I've set out within the annex to my submissions	9
10	a full response to that application, addressing in	10
11	detail the issues that we have within it or the evidence	11
12	presented.	12
13	My oral submissions before this Inquiry are	13
14	intended to be about the Families, their experiences and	14
15	their wish for change.	15
16	From the moment that she faced accusations at the	16
17	Countess of Chester Hospital, Lucy Letby cynically tried	17
18	to change the narrative away from the suspicions that	18
19	were levelled against her by pleading for her own	19
20	victimhood and seeking to recruit others to support her.	20
21	The Families see nothing different in the approach	21
22	taken in response to appeals, nothing different in	22
23	a decision to hold a press conference just before	23
24	Christmas and nothing different in decisions to hold	24
25	press conferences during pauses in this Inquiry.	25
	99	

Secretary of State. To suggest that you would also have
a power to suspend under section 17 arising out of the
fact that it would cause unfairness to a party to
continue would strike us as being entirely inconsistent
with the decision under section 13 to grant the power to
suspend solely to the Secretary of State.
So we would say, my Lady, that any suggestion that
you might pause and pause for these purposes would mean
suspend an Inquiry pursuant to section 17 cannot be
correct.
Now, my Lady has been asked to communicate our
views and your own views to the Secretary of State and
so we will set out what our views are on the

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application.

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1 The first point that's made against the 2 application is that the purpose of this Inquiry has 1 never been to look into the question of whether Letby's 2 convictions were sound. Although that point has been 5 made a number of times in applications by Letby's legal 6 team that the scope should be expanded and they should 7 be allowed to be involved, that has never been part of 8 the scope of the Inquiry. 9 looks at various common patient safety themes, which 10 have been discussed in other inquiries, and the findings 11 of this inquiry will be valuable, whatever the outcome 12 of an appeal, if indeed there is one. 13 Now, this is a valid point and it means that the 14 scope of the Inquiry is unaffected by the outcome of any 15 appeal, although it is right to observe, of course, if 16 there had been no convictions, there would never have 16 there had been to convictions are correct or not, because for the most 17 part the actions of the executives arises 18 obviously unaffected by the question of whether thase 19 forward <t< th=""><th></th><th></th><th>4</th></t<>			4
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5 made a number of times in applications by Letby's legal 6 team that the scope should be expanded and they should 7 be allowed to be involved, that has never been part of 8 the scope of the Inquiry. The scope of the Inquiry 9 looks at various common patient safety themes, which 10 have been discussed in other inquiries, and the findings 11 of this inquiry will be valuable, whatever the outcome 12 of an appeal, if indeed there is one. 13 Now, this is a valid point and it means that the 14 scope of the Inquiry is unaffected by the outcome of any 15 appeal, although it is right to observe, of course, if 16 there had been no convictions, there would never have 16 there had been no convictions, there would never have 17 been an inquiry. 18 The Families would observe that the actions of the 19 executives in response to concerns being raised is 10 obviously unaffected by the question of whether those 11 part the actions of the executives arises 12 part the actions on the executives arises 13 my Lady, for you to assess the prospects of an appeal in </td <td></td> <td></td> <td>4</td>			4
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22 CCRC or indeed the Court of Appeal that this is fresh			20
		C C	21
23 evidence. The prosecution at Letby's trial called			22
			23
24 numerous experts to give evidence, a paediatrician,			24
25 a neonatologist, a professor of haematology, a professor 103)		25

1	committed, and the analysis of that conduct goes to the
2	heart of assessing culture within the Trust, and
3	cultural issues have broad relevance across a number of
4	different issues.
5	Now, the Families would say there are two more
6	obvious points against pausing the Inquiry.
7	The first is that Letby's rights of appeal to the
8	Court of Appeal have been exhausted. She has already
9	brought two appeals, both of which have failed, and her
10	only remaining chance is an application to the CCRC.
11	The CCRC's role is not to retry the case but
12	rather to consider whether there is new evidence which
13	would give rise to a real possibility that the Court of
14	Appeal might quash a conviction. Only then does any
15	form of appeal process begin. And it is clear from the
16	press conferences and indeed from the communication from
17	' Letby's legal team that this process will be based upon
18	the suggestion that fresh evidence has been obtained.
19	It has been suggested by the executives that the
20	evidence produced gives a real prospect that the CCRC
21	will refer the matter back to the Court of Appeal.
22	Ms Blackwell suggested in her submissions that it would
23	be wholly inappropriate, though, for you or the
24	Core Participants to look at the evidence.
25	I agree that it would be wholly inappropriate,
	102
1	of paediatric endocrinology, a radiologist, a paediatric
1 2	of paediatric endocrinology, a radiologist, a paediatric
	of paediatric endocrinology, a radiologist, a paediatric pathologist. Letby had available to her a similar range
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	of paediatric endocrinology, a radiologist, a paediatric pathologist. Letby had available to her a similar range of experts and, as the Court of Appeal noted at paragraph 5 of its judgment: The defendant mounted a robust approach to the evidence that was called. Serious allegations were put to the numerous professional witnesses, including expert witnesses who were called on behalf of the prosecution. "Two points may be noted at the outset. First, though the defence instructed a number of expert witnesses of their own and many reports were served from them before and during the trial, no evidence was called on the applicant's behalf. The entirety of the evidence called for the defence consisted of the applicant's own testimony and that of an estate plumber who worked at the hospital since 1986. He gave evidence about certain plumbing problems that had occurred at various points in the unit and of two particular incidents in the unit but not on the date or around the time of any incident on the indictment.

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1	suggestions made in cross-examination which were not	1
2	accepted by the prosecution witnesses and were not	2
3	supported by evidence called on behalf of the applicant	3
4	are, as the respondent has submitted, irrelevant."	4
5	The elephant in the room, my Lady, and the one	5
6	which neither Letby nor her legal team are prepared to	6
7	explain, is why she didn't call the evidence at trial.	7
8	The Families note that her counsel appears regularly in	8
9	the media, is rarely asked a question, and when he is	9
10	asked a question, refuses to answer. It is, we're	10
11	afraid, a question that needs to be answered. The only	11
12	reason why a defendant would choose not to call their	12
13	own experts to give evidence is because they know that	13
14	those experts, if tested in court, would be likely to	14
15	convict them. A defendant cannot choose not to call	15
16	their experts at trial and then ask for permission to	16
17	roll the dice again when the gamble doesn't pay off.	17
18	That is the definition, my Lady, of "expert shopping".	18
19	The next obstacle for Letby is that the Court of	19
20	Appeal has already considered Dr Shoo Lee's evidence as	20
21	part of the first appeal, to the extent that he was	21
22	called to give evidence during the appeal, and concluded	22
23	that this evidence directed itself towards a wrong	23
24	issue: see paragraph 187 of the judgment or	24
25	paragraph 537 of my submissions.	25
	105	
1	discussed before the Court of Appeal, who refer to the	1
2	breadth of the evidence heard by the jury in support of	2
3	conviction.	3
4	The Families would say, for all the bells and	4
5	whistles that might be attached to a press conference,	5
6	there is nothing remarkable or new about the evidence	6
7	being presented. The theories may have altered, but	7
8	this could hardly be said to be new evidence.	8
9	Sadly, whilst it is not uncommon for genuine	9
10	miscarriages of justice to be highlighted through the	10
11	CCRC, it is also not uncommon for cases of alleged	11
12	miscarriages of justice to be brought before the media	12
13	in a blaze of publicity only for the evidence in support	13
14	of them to flicker and falter.	14
15	It is entirely unclear what progress Letby's	15
16	lawyers have genuinely made with their applications.	16
17	She has filed a preliminary or outline application with	17
18	the CCRC, but has yet to file her evidence. The letter	18
19	from Bhandal Law received yesterday, a firm that was	19
20	mentioned for the first time yesterday, suggests that	20
21	evidence will be filed with the CCRC imminently, and	21
22	that would expect a quick referral back to the Court of	22
23	Appeal.	23
24	My Lady, this should not be taken at face value.	24
25	In December 2024 at a press conference, Mr McDonald,	25
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The evidence produced in support of the application to adjourn does not cover the same range of issues that were heard by the jury at the trial and which were covered by the prosecution experts. There is no evidence from a radiologist to explain why air would be found in the hearts and blood vessels of babies who died from air embolism. There is no evidence from the pathologist to explain why bubbles of gas would be found in the brains of babies who were alleged to have died from air embolism. There is evidence from an engineer, albeit one the panel accept is not an independent expert, about insulin, but there is no evidence from a paediatric endocrinologist. The panel, my Lady, have conducted a Casenote Review, which my Lady heard from the evidence of Dr Hawdon in this Inquiry is, by its nature, superficial and ill-placed to identify homicide. It doesn't take into account all of the issues. It doesn't review the experience and evidence of eyewitnesses, or consider about notes being falsified, searches for families on Facebook, hoarded handover sheets, or the multitude of other evidence heard by the jury. In limiting its perspective to neonatal evidence, it doesn't even cover all of the relevant clinical or forensic issues. These issues have already been 106

Letby's barrister, assured the assembled press that he had prepared documents that were ready to go to the Court of Appeal and the CCRC. Nothing was submitted to the Court of Appeal, and the most we have is a statement that is envisaged that evidence will be submitted to the CCRC this week. Given that a preliminary application was filed with the CCRC on 3 February 2025, the day before a planned press conference, the Families have no faith that genuine progress will be made with any application. It is notable that the same process is being followed by the same team in relation to Ben Geen and has been stagnating in the CCRC for the last ten years. It seems highly unlikely that Letby's statement that the CCRC will not take long to consider the application before referring it back to the Court of Appeal is correct. The CCRC is likely to want to understand why Letby chose not to call her own expert evidence in trial. As those who representing her don't

appear to be able to provide a coherent answer to that
 question, it is difficult to see how they will overcome
 it. It is fanciful, we would say, to suggest that this

- will be a quick or easy process, or that a successful
- appeal is anything like a probability.
 - This is not a case, as I said in submissions 108

1	a moment ago, where unequivocally new and determinative
2	evidence has been found which demonstrates innocence.
3	The Families will say that the applications to
4	stop the Inquiry are, on Letby's part, an attempt to
5	control the narrative on the part of the executives to
6	avoid criticism. Neither should stand in the way of the
7	important work that you are undertaking.
8	Finally, my Lady and I will suggest pausing in
9	a moment before I move on to more substantive
10	submissions the suggestion that this will bring about
11	any real saving in costs is fanciful, my Lady. We're
12	here making our closing submissions to an inquiry. The
13	question that any real saving in costs will be achieved
14	at this stage is unrealistic.
15	Submissions in relation to prejudice and fairness,
16	again, cut across a number of different parties. The
17	Families have committed to this Inquiry in the hope that
18	real change will be achieved that will protect other
19	Families in lots of different contexts. The prospect of
20	bringing about improvement in the NHS to avoid harm
21	being caused to other people is a real prospect, much
22	realer, we would say, than any fanciful appeal on behalf
23	of Letby. We cannot let the noise in the background
24	stop the work that this Inquiry can achieve.
25	If we pause this Inquiry now and it's another
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1	(12.53 pm)
2	(The luncheon adjournment)
3	(2.02 pm)
4	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Sorry to keep you all waiting.
5	MR BAKER: Before the short adjournment, I said I was going
6	to move on to the themes, and I can summarise those in
7	outline as follows: that babies were allowed to die or
8	be harmed because of failures to identify that crimes

1	(12.53 pm)	1
2	(The luncheon adjournment)	2
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4	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Sorry to keep you all waiting.	4
5	MR BAKER: Before the short adjournment, I said I was going	5
6	to move on to the themes, and I can summarise those in	6
7	outline as follows: that babies were allowed to die or	7
8	be harmed because of failures to identify that crimes	8
9	were being committed and to stop them; the Trust and its	9
10	leaders put reputation ahead of patient safety; that the	10
11	culture within the Trust, which should have prioritised	11
12	safety failed; that the Trust and its leaders lied to	12
13	Families, misled external organisations, misled its own	13
14	board of directors and ultimately tried to avoid	14
15	a police investigation at all costs; that the Trust	15
16	persecuted and bullied those who brought these issues to	16
17	its attention.	17
18	Going to the opportunity to avoid harm, there	18
19	appears to be little doubt that Letby's attempt to	19
20	poison Child F with insulin in August 2015 provided	20
21	a clear opportunity to detect her actions and prevent	21
22	further crimes. I've referred to that as a bright line	22
23	within the chronology after which point no further harm	23
24	should have been allowed to occur.	24
25	Within the alphabetical chronology, that is from	25

•		
	1	

1	ten years or even five years or even a year before
2	anything can resume again, momentum will be lost.
3	Momentum to change will be lost. The opportunity to
4	make a difference exists now, and pausing will cause
5	serious harm to that opportunity.
6	That is the greatest fairness, not only to all the
7	Core Participants but to the wider public.
8	Insofar as fairness to the executives are
9	concerned and the hybrid approach, it's unworkable. As
10	Mr Skelton said, the events and the reactions of the
11	executives are all interwoven into questions of culture
12	that you need to look at. The reactions of the
13	executive board to the complaints and issues that were
14	raised to them go to the very heart of whether this was
15	a failing culture at an NHS Trust. In analysing whether
16	something is a failing culture or not, that is the
17	crucible out of which recommendations will come. If we
18	take that out of the equation, then it leads to nothing
19	being achieved.
20	So, my Lady, that's all I would propose to say
21	about the application and, with your permission, I will
22	pause there and resume after lunch.
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Very well. Thank you, Mr Baker.
24	So we'll rise now and start again at 2 o'clock.
25	Thank you.
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Child G to Child P.

2	The Families are concerned not only with the
3	bright line but also with missed opportunities that
4	existed before then. The deaths of Children A, C, D and
5	E were not adequately investigated and that a lack of
6	professional curiosity or incompetence or both on the
7	part of individuals who treated them and/or inadequate
8	systemic structures for the investigation of sudden
9	death prevented crimes from being identified sooner and
10	provided an environment within which Letby operated
11	unhindered.
12	My Lady, Mr Skelton has already addressed you in
13	his written submissions in relation to Child A and
14	Child B, so I will begin with Child C.
15	Child C died in June 2015. His collapse and death
16	were sudden, unexpected and unexplained.
17	Letby's behaviour surrounding Child C was
18	extraordinary. She left the baby she was allocated to
19	care for in nursery 3 unattended, in order to repeatedly
20	intrude into a family room where Family C were caring
21	for Child C. This behaviour concerned her colleagues.
22	She had no place to be there and because of this the
23	condition of the child that she had been allocated to
24	look after deteriorated and they became more unwell.
25	This is part of a pattern of odd and ghoulish

1	behaviour by Letby which troubled some of her colleagues	1	to be understood and the reasons for them need to be
2	and which is identified throughout this Inquiry. It	2	understood, and that should prompt investigation.
3	also forms part of a picture of evidence that was there	3	Child D also collapsed and died in June 2015, the
4	to be found if questions had been asked.	4	third baby to die that month. The unusual features
5	Child C's death was ascribed to a cardiac	5	surrounding Child D's death should have been fully
6	condition that we say was actively doubted by his	6	investigated. It should have been appreciated that it
7	treating clinician Dr Gibbs and which was subsequently	7	did not accord with what ordinarily would have been
8	proven to be incorrect.	8	expected for sepsis or infection. It should have been
9	The circumstances leading up to Child C's collapse	9	noted that there had been a highly unusual episode of
10	and complexities surrounding his resuscitation should	10	transient skin discolouration at the time of her
11	have been investigated more thoroughly. His death	11	collapse, and this should have been investigated
12	should have been categorised as unexpected and	12	and considered alongside similar reports involving
13	unexplained. Care should be taken not to allow	13	Children A and B. It is clear that these events were
14	unexpected or unexplained deaths to be treated as	14	considered unusual at the time and not consistent with
15	normal, and there should be a greater index of suspicion	15	the signs and symptoms normally seen in paediatric
16	where unexpected and unexplained deaths occur in	16	practice.
17	clusters and, of course, my Lady, this brings us back to	17	Now, my Lady, you will recall that when Child D's
18	the point made by Professor Spiegelhalter that sometimes	18	death was reviewed by Dr Mecrow, an independent
19	events occur that remain within a curve of expected	19	consultant paediatrician instructed by the Coroner,
20	outcomes from a statistical point of view but appear to	20	Mr Rheinberg, he described her death as disturbing for
21	be at one extreme end of the scale or not. Sometimes	21	being so sudden and unexpected, that she had been
22	statistics can draw to our attention something that	22	treated with a regime of antibiotics that should have
23	needs to be investigated and no more.	23	been completely effective against neonatal sepsis at or
24	In this case a cluster of deaths doesn't	24	shortly after birth, that she had been making good
25	axiomatically prove murder, but clusters of deaths need 113	25	progress and had collapsed in a wholly unexpected and 114
1	unpredictable way. On analysing the papers and	1	that point or since. Now, this formed basis of concerns
2	documents in her case, he could find no evidence of	2	raised by junior doctors and escalated to more senior
3	deficiencies in care provided to her, and he observed	3	clinicians.
4	that the circumstances of her death were disturbing for	4	Ms Blackwell KC urged you to guard against
5	being so sudden and unexpected.	5	hindsight bias in analysing past events. The term was
6	As we said in opening, those features were there	6	used without specificity and sounds as, we say, a dog
7	to be seen at the time.	7	whistle to the defence theory that all these deaths were
8	Child E died in August 2015. His given cause of	8	thought to be obviously caused by natural causes until
9	death, necrotising enterocolitis, was not consistent	9	police investigations commenced.
10	with his condition prior to or following his collapse.	10	Now, that is simply not correct. The
11	A post-mortem should have been arranged which would have	11	contemporaneous evidence shows a discolouration was
12	identified that he did not have NEC, further	12	regarded at the time as being highly unusual by people
13	investigation would have revealed that his death was	13	who had seen it for the first time then and had never
14	unexpected and unexplained, and accounts surrounding the	14	seen it since. It was the subject of concern and
15	patches of skin discolouration noted prior to his death	15	discussion at the time by the junior doctors. It was
16	would have correlated with skin discolouration noted in	16	simply the fact that these features were never put
17	the cases of Children A, B and D. It would or should	17	together and analysed at the time.
		18	Why wasn't there greater curiosity? Why were
18	have been recognised that this transient discolouration	4.0	
19	was highly unusual and not consistent with the	19	deaths written off without proper investigation? And
19 20	was highly unusual and not consistent with the discolouration commonly or uncommonly seen in paediatric	20	why were these parents not treated better?
19 20 21	was highly unusual and not consistent with the discolouration commonly or uncommonly seen in paediatric practice.	20 21	why were these parents not treated better? A particular feature of Child E's death warrants
19 20 21 22	was highly unusual and not consistent with the discolouration commonly or uncommonly seen in paediatric practice. My Lady, the unusual transient skin discolouration	20 21 22	why were these parents not treated better? A particular feature of Child E's death warrants closer analysis. You heard, my Lady, evidence that
19 20 21 22 23	was highly unusual and not consistent with the discolouration commonly or uncommonly seen in paediatric practice. My Lady, the unusual transient skin discolouration seen with Child A, Child B, Child D and Child E which	20 21 22 23	why were these parents not treated better? A particular feature of Child E's death warrants closer analysis. You heard, my Lady, evidence that Child E along with his twin brother were being fed with
19 20 21 22	was highly unusual and not consistent with the discolouration commonly or uncommonly seen in paediatric practice. My Lady, the unusual transient skin discolouration	20 21 22	why were these parents not treated better? A particular feature of Child E's death warrants closer analysis. You heard, my Lady, evidence that

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1	a regular basis with their milk.	1	perceived a distinct change in her attitude. To her
2	During the evening of 3 August 2015 she made her	2	Letby appeared abrasive and would not look her in the
3	usual journey to the neonatal unit, arriving there at	3	eye.
4	about 2100 hours. She was confident in her recollection	4	When asked to reflect on what she had witnessed
5	about the time because she was working to a feeding	5	when she walked into nursery 1 on 3 August, she said
6	schedule.	6	before this Inquiry:
7	In her evidence before the Inquiry she recalled	7	"An attack on my son. An interrupted attack.
8	that as she came on to the corridor of the unit she	8	I thought I caught her off guard. Something had
9	heard screaming and crying. She had been visiting the	9	happened for him to be bleeding. Stable babies don't
10	neonatal unit for almost a week by this time and said:	10	bleed."
11	"I'd never heard a baby cry like that"	11	Mother EF went back to the maternity ward from
12	In her evidence before the criminal trial, she	12	where she called her husband. She wanted to speak with
13	described the sound as more of a scream than a cry. As	13	him because she knew that something wasn't right. He
14	she walked into the room, she realised the cry was	14	reassured her that Child E was in hospital and would be
15	coming from Child E. Child E had blood around his mouth	15	safe.
16	and was screaming. Letby was standing close by, between	16	During the criminal investigation it was
17	the incubator and the workstation, but not providing	17	confirmed, using Mother EF's mobile phone records, that
18	support to Child E. Mother EF recalled that Letby was	18	a call to Father EF was made at 2111 hours, consistent
19	"dismissive" of her concerns. She told Mother EF that	19	with her account that she went to the neonatal unit at
20	she had contacted the registrar who was on his way. She	20	about 2100 hours, and saw Letby then.
21	said:	21	Letby's clinical notes record that Child E
22	"Go back you go back to the ward and if	22	suffered a gastric bleed at 2140 hours and that the
23	there's any problems I'll ring you."	23	registrar was called at 22.10, an hour after Mother EF's
24	Mother EF had encountered Letby before and	24	visit.
25	previously felt that she was kind, but on this occasion 117	25	The timing in the notes is confirmed by 118
1	Dr Harkness, a registrar who attended. Dr Harkness	1	getting further and further behind, and it looks as if
2	recalled that he was called by Letby to attend at around	2	it's all right now. So we'll continue. If anyone has
3	2200 hours to 22.30 on 3 August 2015.	3	a difficulty, please will you just raise your hand and
4	Mother EF gave evidence before the Inquiry that:	4	we'll pause while it's sorted out.
5	"I found out that the notes had been changed to	5	Sorry, Mr Baker.
6	suit a different narrative of when Child E's bleed	6	MR BAKER: Thank you, my Lady.
7	started and that's why the registrar hadn't been	7	That information was there to be found. If
8	contacted, because he didn't know I'd been there and he	8	Mother EF had been questioned at all about what she had
9	didn't know that Child E was bleeding at just before	9	experienced and what she had seen, she would have
10	9 o'clock."	10	explained that the timings in the medical notes do not
11	Mother EF lives with her decision to follow	11	correlate with her experiences. The only reason they
12	Letby's instruction to leave the ward. Her sense of	12	wouldn't correlate is that Letby had doctored the notes.
13	guilt is real, if unfounded, and it echoes a common	13	Now, that was evidence, if it had been found out
14	experience for all the parents who we represent. She	14	at the time, that would have been regarded as extremely
15	struggles to come to terms with a sense of if she had	15	suspicious and extremely serious.
16	refused to leave, her son would be alive.	16	Dr ZA gave evidence that she categorised Child E's
17	That information, my Lady, was there to be found	17	death as due to necrotising enterocolitis, a diagnosis
18	at the time.	18	that she now accepts was unjustified and contradicted by
19	Dr ZA	19	the evidence that was available to her, not least the
20	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Mr Baker, just before you continue,	20	pre-mortem X-rays that effectively ruled the condition
21	there's a problem with the transcript. It seems to be	21	out. In this respect her actions went beyond a lack of
22	because of coming and going. Do we know why that's	22	curiosity and instead amounted to a total absence of
23	happening?	23	insight.
24	I think we're now up to date. Sorry, I just felt	24	Miscategorising Child E's death removed the input
25	it was necessary to interrupt you because we seem to be 119	25	of the Coroner, prevented a post-mortem and stalled 120

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1 further investigations. It led to Child E's death being 1 2 2 regarded as being by natural causes. It influenced 3 Dr Brearey's actions subsequently and it took him out of 3 4 4 the cohort of suspicious deaths. 5 Ms Blackwell KC in her submissions again addressed 5 6 you on the risk of hindsight bias affecting how we 6 7 review the decisions of others. 7 8 8 Now, hindsight bias is, of course, real but it's 9 9 also a lazy smokescreen thrown up in clinical cases. We 10 do not need to worry about hindsight bias when looking 10 11 at issues like this. It is and would be known at the 11 12 time that it was obviously wrong to give a cause of 12 13 death without confirming that this was accurate. 13 14 If these events and their timings had been 14 15 discussed with Mother EF at any point, it would or 15 16 should have led to a realisation that her account 16 17 contradicted the events documented in the clinical 17 18 18 notes, raising the suspicion that the notes had been 19 falsified. During the course of the Inquiry that 19 20 evidence was there to be found. If NEC hadn't been 20 21 21 given as a cause of death, then a post-mortem would have 22 22 been carried out. That would have been found that NEC 23 wasn't the cause of death, it would have led to further 23 24 24 investigations, opened also the potential for this 25 account of Mother EF to have been discovered. 25 121 1 Countess of Chester Hospital 26 years later. 1 2 The suggestion that we might be clouding our 2 3 judgments with hindsight bias when judging the response 3 4 to those insulin results is brought into sharp focus by 4 5 5 this observation. Dismissing abnormal blood test 6 results would have been as wrong in 1991 as it was in 6 7 2015, as it would be now. No hindsight bias comes into 7 8 it. 8 9 The case of Beverley Allitt, since I mentioned it, 9 10 provides a consistent parallel through the evidence in 10 11 11 this case, and a key recommendation of the Clothier 12 Report was that the crimes of Beverley Allitt should 12 13 serve to heighten awareness in all those caring for 13 14 children of a possibility of a malevolent intervention 14 15 as a cause of unexplained clinical events. 15 16 Having considered the universal revulsion to the 16 17 crimes of Beverley Allitt alongside the sense of hope 17 18 contained within the Clothier Report that such events 18 19 should not be repeated, the Families cannot help but 19 20 feel a profound sense of sadness that a little over 20 21 20 years later that recommendation had been wiped out 21 22 not only from the collective memory of the NHS but from 22 23 those who were working within the Countess of Chester 23 24 Hospital. 24 25 LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Mr Baker, just before you continue, 25 123

Child F collapsed with hypoglycaemia in August 2015. The results of Child F's insulin tests in August 2015 were noted by Dr ZA but disregarded. She concluded that they must have been due to a technical error with the laboratory. That possibility was ruled out by Anna Milan, a clinical scientist working at the Liverpool Clinical Laboratories who was highly concerned that the result showed a high level of insulin and undetectable C-peptide, a finding that demonstrated that manufactured insulin had been given. Dr ZA never spoke with the laboratory to ask whether the laboratory error was possible. Had she done so, she would have been reassured that it was not. These results, we submit, represented clear evidence of a malevolent force at work within the unit and provided the clearest opportunity to detect and stop Letby. The Families will say that this represents a bright line within the chronology, after which no babies should have been harmed. The failure to detect and act upon these findings represents a clear missed opportunity to stop further harm. Most disturbingly it was receipt of the same results in the Grantham and Kesteven Hospital in 1991 that halted the crimes of Beverley Allitt. They failed to achieve the same result in the 122 because obviously I want everyone to hear what you're saying. Apparently we need a restart of the transcript because if it's not restarted it will just keep doing what it's doing, which is not acceptable, so I'm very sorry. How long will it take, the restart? Five minutes. So if you don't mind, shall we say we'll break until half past 2? MR BAKER: Thank you, my Lady. LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you. (2.20 pm) (A short break) (2.34 pm) LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Mr Baker. MR BAKER: Thank you, my Lady, I was just saying before we broke that the memory of Beverley Allitt had been wiped out by the time we come to these events, both in the collective memory of the NHS but also in the memories of the individuals working at the Countess of Chester Hospital. Now, of course, as events recede into history their impact diminishes, but it's also right that while it may be easy to learn from the lessons of historical disasters, it's quite another thing to appreciate that the same events are unfolding on your doorstep, and we do recognise that on behalf of the Families. But whilst 124

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1	the crimes of Beverley Allitt may have appeared to be	1
2	a remote event, even though they occurred 20 years	2
3	before, there would have been warnings from the more	3
4	recent for those working at the Countess of Chester.	4
5	At the start of the relevant chronology, so	5
6	a little before these insulin results were received,	6
7	Victorino Chua, a nurse working at a local trust, was	7
8	convicted of murdering two patients and attempting to	8
9	cause 21 other patients grievous bodily harm with intent	9
10	by poisoning them with insulin.	10
11	Again, hindsight bias falls away, my Lady.	11
12	A few months before the test results were received,	12
13	a nurse had been convicted of murdering and harming	13
14	patients with insulin in a local trust. These types of	14
15	crimes, the fact that these events could occur, should	15
16	have been very clearly in the minds of those who were	16
17	living these events.	17
18	Now, although categorised by Dr Gibbs as	18
19	a collective failure on the part of the entire	19
20	paediatric team, most of the blame for the failure does	20
21	rest with Dr ZA. She ultimately decided to disregard	21
22	the more abnormal results, and that decision had serious	22
23	consequences for all of the victims who followed	23
24	Child F.	24
25	Now, although Dr ZA's decision is ultimately 125	25
	125	
1	a consultant reasonable for the nationt's care, then	1
1 2	a consultant responsible for the patient's care, then the opportunity for Dr ZA to attribute the result to	1 2
2	a lab error, if that's what she did, would have been	2
4	greatly reduced.	4
5	The Families will say that any recommendations	4 5
6	made mirroring the recommendation in the Clothier Report	6
7	that the possibility that unexpected or unexplained	7
8	deaths are caused by deliberate harm should be embedded	8
9	through the creation of clear, mandatory duties.	9
10	I would agree with Mr Skelton in that respect that	10
11	mandatory duties need to exist where one raises	10
12	a suspicion about deliberate harm, but other mandatory	12
13	duties need to exist for cases where people might not	12
14	quite make that leap. For example, if a test result is	14
15	obtained that raises the possibility of deliberate harm,	15
16	it should be a mandatory requirement that the person	16
17	reporting that test to the hospital and the person	17
18	receiving the result of that test discuss the	18
19	possibility that the result represents evidence of	19
20	deliberate harm and ensures that it is further	20
21	investigated.	20
22	A third check and balance might also be necessary	22
23	to counter the possibility that the individual receiving	23
24	the test results might deliberately seek to suppress	24
25	them.	25
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1	a case of human error, it is important to consider how
2	such an error might occur and how it might be avoided in
3	the future. It's perhaps inevitable, my Lady, that
4	doctors or nurses will be slow to accept the possibility
5	that their colleagues are deliberately harming patients.
6	Cases of deliberate harm are thankfully very rare and
7	entirely at odds with the behaviour that you would
8	ordinarily expect from individuals working in
9	a healthcare setting.
10	Whilst it was helpful for the Clothier Report to
11	highlight a need to be wary about the possibility that
12	a colleague is causing deliberate harm, this is the type
13	of recommendation that might be quickly lost within the
14	real world.
15	In this case, Dr ZA was provided with direct
16	evidence that her patient had been administered with
17	unprescribed exogenous insulin but failed to recognise
18	it as a possibility or act upon it.
19	The laboratory passing that test result on to the
20	hospital believed that they had discharged their duty in
21	notifying them of the result, but took no action to
22	ensure that there was a direct dialogue between the
23	clinical scientist and the consultant who was
24	responsible for decision-making. Had there been
25	a mandatory requirement that a laboratory speak with 126
1	During the latter part of 2015, a number of
2	clinicians working within the neonatal unit began to
3	suspect the possibility that somebody might be causing
4	deliberate harm to babies, and the Families would submit
5	that by the time we get to October 2015, by the point of
6	Child I's death at the latest, there were active
7	suspicions regarding Letby's involvement in the deaths.
8	This should have led to effective safeguarding action,
9	but did not.
10	We note that in their submissions the Countess of
11	Chester Hospital agree that Letby should have been
12	suspended pending investigation at that point, ie by
13	October 2015. We agree when looking at that issue in
14	isolation but would add that Letby's presence at the
15	deaths of Child A, C, D and E had already been noted and
16	similarly appropriate action should have been taken
17	then.
18	In his written submissions on behalf of the
19	Countess of Chester Hospital, at paragraph 48,

Mr Kennedy KC answers it is an unanswerable hypothetical as to whether investigations at that time would have resulted in referral to police. In response to that we

Firstly, the Inquiry will recall the evidence of Dr Gilby and her concern on being taken through the

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would make three observations.

1	records by Dr Brearey that the collapses were highly	1
2	unusual and to her eyes suspicious. She felt that one	2
3	of those incidents in isolation would have concerned	3
4	her.	4
5	The Inquiry should note the resonance between this	5
6	observation and that of Dr Mecrow, the independent	6
7	expert who reviewed the death of Child D for the	7
8	Coroner. These were not common deaths but seen at the	8
9	time and properly regarded since as highly unusual.	9
10	Secondly, that the suggestion that the deaths were	10
11	thought to have plausible natural explanations is not	11
12	something that would necessarily have stood up to a more	12
13	rigorous analysis. Indeed, when those deaths were	13
14	investigated subsequently, they were not simply written	14
15	off as a collection of natural deaths linked by	15
16	coincidence.	16
17	Finally and more importantly, had those	17
18	investigations commenced after the collapse of Child F	18
19	and had they involved Child F, as they should have done,	19
20	they would have revealed that he had been poisoned with	20
21	exogenous insulin.	21
22	These factors individually and collectively were	22
23	more than capable of triggering the intervention of the	23
24	police. They would not have led competent investigators	24
25	to rule out malevolent intervention. The outcome then	25
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1	regarding Dr Kokai's conclusion of the cause of death	1
2	for Child C to the Coroner, something that may have	2
3	prompted further investigations.	3
4	Dr ZA advised the Coroner that Child E died from	4
5	NEC and the diagnosis was not properly supported by the	5
6	evidence, seemingly with a view to sparing the family	6
7	the distress of a post-mortem.	7
8	Child D's death was not reported to the Coroner	8
9	but the fact that her death had occurred amongst a group	9
10	of other deaths that became linked to suspicions	10
11	regarding Letby's conduct was not reported and the	11
12	inquest continued on the basis that the death was	12
13	natural, albeit perhaps influenced by clinical	13
14	negligence until the police investigation was triggered.	14
15	Only then was the Coroner's investigation suspended.	15
16	Although Child A is represented by a different	16
17	Family Group, the Families within this group consider	17
18	that the Countess of Chester Hospital actively misled	18
19	the Coroner with regard to suspicions surrounding	19
20	Letby's role in the death by withholding key	20
21	information.	21
22	Both the SUDIC procedure and the coronial process	22
23	provided opportunities to highlight common links between	23
24	the cases and reveal suspicions regarding Letby's role	24
25	in the deaths. Neither could function properly because	25
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would or should have been a decision to call the police. The commencement of a review into neonatal deaths in October 2015 took place within the context of suspicions regarding unexpected and unexplained deaths and collapses in the neonatal unit. These events should have triggered a more co-ordinated formal response. The process appears to have been undertaken informally by Dr Brearey and Eirian Powell, without defined goals beyond investigating the rise in neonatal deaths. The analysis did not consistently incorporate unexpected collapses and deteriorations in children, even where the child who suffered the collapse was linked to one of the deaths being investigated. For example, the investigation examined the case of Child E but did not review the records of Child F, his twin brother, who also suffered an unexpected deterioration in his condition at or about the same time. The SUDIC procedure, although in place locally, was not effectively followed. It is unclear why the procedure was not adopted or adhered to. It would have provided an effective framework within which to investigate unexpected and unexplained deaths. The local Coroner was not provided with consistent evidence regarding the deaths or the suspicions arising from them. Dr Gibbs did not communicate his concerns 130 they were not utilised, or else misleading information was fed into them. It does not take much imagination to conclude that either mechanism could have led to the earlier involvement of the police. Insofar as awareness of the executives are concerned, on behalf of the Families we believe that Alison Kelly was aware by December 2015 at the latest that there had been a rise in neonatal deaths and that this was the subject of a review. We know that that position is also adopted by the Countess of Chester Hospital in their submissions, and we also adopt the position that Mr Harvey was aware of the same issues shortly thereafterwards. During the early part of 2016, the outcome of the thematic review was escalated to senior executives, namely lan Harvey and Alison Kelly. The Families will say that it was clear by the time that these escalations took place that a substantial number of paediatric consultants had genuine concerns about the possibility that babies had been deliberately harmed. It is, of

course, for the Inquiry to determine when those concerns were first escalated to the senior executives but there

- is no doubt, in our view, that those concerns existed.
- They should have been escalated clearly and withoutdelay.

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1	If they were escalated at the time that the	1
2	thematic review was finalised, the response from the	2
3	executives was slow and inadequate in taking until	3
4	May 2016 before a face-to-face meeting was arranged.	4
5	However, we make no submissions as to whether they were	5
6	in fact escalated effectively. It is, in our	6
7	submission, one or the other. Either they were	7
8	ineffectively escalated or the consultants did not shout	8
9	loudly enough, or alternatively the executives didn't	9
10	listen.	10
11	A further opportunity to escalate arose in	11
12	February 2016 with the collapse of Child K. Dr Jayaram	12
13	in giving evidence before this Inquiry was at pains to	13
14	say that he did not walk in to see Letby in the act of	14
15	harming Child K. But it is clear, if his evidence is	15
16	accepted, that he must have felt at the very least that	16
17	he either walked in on the aftermath of some event or	17
18	that he saw Letby failing to intervene to assist a baby	18
19	who was obviously in distress.	19
20	His reasons for not acting more decisively at the	20
21	time are difficult to understand, even with the benefit	21
22	of hindsight, but most probably represent a failure of	22
23	courage on his part. As he now implies reluctantly, he	23
24	probably thought more about his own reputation and	24
25	standing and preferred not to be the person who put his	25
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1	only appropriate response to this information was	1
2	an immediate safeguarding exercise to prevent Letby	2
3	causing further harm to babies on the NNU. The	3
4	watch-and-wait policy encourage by Mr Harvey and	4
5	Ms Kelly was entirely inappropriate and put further	5
6	lives at risk. In the circumstances, it led to the	6
7	deaths of Child O and Child P at least.	7
8	There were further opportunities to avert harm.	8
9	The attacks on Child N accurred after this meeting and	0
	The attacks on Child N occurred after this meeting and	9
10	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained	
10 11	-	9
	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained	9 10
11	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for	9 10 11
11 12	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey	9 10 11 12
11 12 13	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email	9 10 11 12 13
11 12 13 14	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported.	9 10 11 12 13 14
11 12 13 14 15	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had	9 10 11 12 13 14 15
11 12 13 14 15 16	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report concerns that they might have had.	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report concerns that they might have had. It is clear throughout this period that strong	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report concerns that they might have had. It is clear throughout this period that strong divisions had arisen between doctors and nurses and that	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report concerns that they might have had. It is clear throughout this period that strong divisions had arisen between doctors and nurses and that this impaired the ability of the system to react to	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	involved a series of unexpected and unexplained collapses of the sort that had become typical for Letby's victims. Dr Saladi failed to notify Dr Brearey of Child N's collapses despite having received an email from Dr Brearey asking for such events to be reported. The nursing staff involved in Child N's care had not received a similar communication for Eirian Powell and were, therefore, not given the opportunity to report concerns that they might have had. It is clear throughout this period that strong divisions had arisen between doctors and nurses and that this impaired the ability of the system to react to concerns when they were raised.	9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

1	head above the parapet. This might be regarded as
2	a failure of Dr Jayaram's character, a failure of the
3	culture in the Trust that made him reluctant to point
4	the finger, or a combination of both.
5	The Families consider that it is likely that
6	concerns regarding Letby's connection with the deaths
7	were either beginning to filter through to the senior
8	executives by March and April 2016, or were being
9	explicitly blocked by Eirian Powell.
10	On 7 April 2016, a decision was made to move Letby
11	from working night shifts to working day shifts.
12	Whatever reasons were offered for that decision by
13	Eirian Powell, the Families will say that it is clear
14	that this was done because of inferences that had been
15	drawn from the thematic review. This resonates with
16	Dr Brearey's account that he had been struck by the fact
17	that all of the unusual deaths had occurred at night,
18	a fact which appeared to him to be suspicious. It is
19	another factor that lends weight to Dr Brearey's account
20 21	and diminishes the credibility of Eirian Powell's account.
22	The evidence suggests that whether or not they had
23	been communicated in clear terms before, the meeting on
24	11 May 2016 involved a discussion surrounding Letby's
25	potential involvement in the collapses and deaths. The
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1	against her. This undoubtedly influenced the response
2	of the executives at the meeting on 11 May 2016.
3	Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that lobbying by
4	Eirian Powell and her colleagues in advance of that
5	meeting may have led to the outcome of the meeting being
6	a foregone conclusion before it occurred.
7	It is axiomatic that individuals within any
8	workplace will struggle to accept that their friends or
9	favoured colleagues could be guilty of wrongdoing.
10	A proper response to safeguarding issues, my Lady,
11	should seek to bypass the impact of personal loyalties
12	or gut instincts which are potent forces for derailing
13	an effective safeguarding response and should be
14	excluded from the process. The Families will say that
15	the key factor in determining an effective safeguarding
16	response should be the mandatory duty to escalate and
17	follow process once concerns have been raised.
18	Those who might hesitate from pursuing
19	an allegation because of a fear that it might trigger
20	an adverse reaction from colleagues or managers could be
21	empowered by mandatory duties. A clearly defined
22	algorithm for response would have avoided the
23	potentially disrupting effects of emotion-based human
24	factors had a clear framework been in place supported by
25	clearly defined mandatory duties, and an effective 136

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1	neutral response. The divisions between doctors and	1
2	nurses would have been neutralised. There would have	2
3	been no debate as to the process which should have been	3
4	followed, or of the respective duties of the individuals	4
5	involved in decision-making.	5
6	The additional benefit of mandatory duties within	6
7	that scenario is that those reporting their concerns and	7
8	those co-ordinating the response would have appreciated	8
9	the potential legal or professional consequences of not	9
10	following the defined procedure. A response to	10
11	a defined procedure would also appear more neutral and	11
12	non-judgmental with regard to the individual who is the	12
13	subject of the allegation. It would involve the clear	13
14	implication of a clear framework without an apparently	14
15	negative judgement on the part of the decision-makers.	15
16	The Families will say there were multiple	16
17	opportunities to stop Letby, stop harm being caused to	17
18	the babies in her care and that those opportunities	18
19	continued even following the death of Child O. Prompt	19
20	action by Dr Brearey following Child O's death may not	20
21	have made a difference, given what in fact happened	21
22	following Child P's death. However, within a properly	22
23	functioning patient safety organisation, they should	23
24	have done. With each successive failure from June 2015	24
25	until June 2016, babies and families were let down. 137	25
1	that challenges its own sense that it is doing	1
2	everything right. It persecutes whistleblowers who	2
3	challenge that viewpoint.	3
4	The evidence before the Inquiry from some	4
5	witnesses described how historically the Countess of	5
6	Chester was regarded as a good NHS Trust. It had	6
7	an open culture and safe practices.	7
8	Now, of course, my Lady, we cannot assess that	8
9	effectively based upon the evidence that we have, but it	9
10	is what people say. It was a place where people wanted	10
11	to work. The Families will say that in the period being	11
12	discussed here, whatever culture had existed before it	12
13	failed completely	13

13 failed completely. 14 The suspicions regarding the crimes of Letby were 15 covered up and hidden from the Families, from external 16 bodies, from the Coroner and from the public at large. 17 This was done to preserve the reputation of the Trust 18 and of the executives. In prioritising those factors 19 over patient safety, there was an absolute failure of 20 candour, honesty, openness and transparency, all key 21 components of an effective patient safety-driven 22 culture. 23 Senior executives deliberately deceived family

24 members and allowed important information to be withheld 25 from external bodies, such as the Coroner.

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Harm was allowed to continue. Lives were lost and others irrevocably altered. Following the deaths of Child O and Child P, there was a period when concerns were being raised forcefully, but there continued to be delays before Letby was moved away from the neonatal unit. I'm now going to look, my Lady, at failures of culture. Following the death of Child P, the behaviour of the senior executives demonstrated a total failure in the culture of the Countess of Chester Hospital. You've heard evidence as to what the paradigm of good culture within the NHS is. It's one that promotes patient safety above everything else. Another feature of the healthy, safe, just culture is, as Sir Robert Francis highlighted, one that acknowledges the need for absolute openness and honesty. This encompasses a culture that accepts and respects the need to raise concerns about the actions of others without fear of criticism. The antithesis of a good culture is one that puts reputational or financial gains above the need for patient safety. It covers its mistakes and wrongdoing. It gaslights its victims. It lies, it denies, it defends and dissembles. It is unwilling or unable to seek out or accept information 138

1	We've set out within our submissions the specifics		
2	of cultural failings, but we want to highlight those		
3	failings as typified by the actions of three of the		
4	executives.		
5	Even when viewed alongside the evidence of his		
6	colleagues, the performance of Tony Chambers in the		
7	witness box was notably poor. The Inquiry should		
8	disregard any account that he gives that is not		
9	corroborated by a more obviously reliable witness. He		
10	was combative, angry, lacking in insight. He avoided		
11	answering any question which did not fit within his		
12	pre-prepared narrative. At times the Families were to		
13	suggest that he was disingenuous, he dissembled and he		
14	blamed others.		
15	We would say, my Lady, his presence in the witness		
16	box made it easy to understand accounts by		
17	paediatricians of his bullying and intimidating		
18	behaviour. If further corroboration for that behaviour		
19	were needed from a source other than his performance in		
20	the witness box, it can be seen in Ms Hodkinson's		
21	letter note, sorry, of 12 May 2017, a note of his		
22	plan to dismiss the consultants, bypass Speak Out Safely		
23	protocols and report them to the GMC. When he was		
24	questioned about this, he sought to deny that this had		
25	been his plan, accepting that it would be particularly 140		

1	reprehensible behaviour if it had been his plan.	1
2	In attempting to deny that note, my Lady, he	2
3	showed himself not only to be reprehensible but also to	3
4	be dishonest. The submissions, we would say, as	4
5	Mr Skelton has said, on behalf of the senior executives	5
6	for this Trust enter into the realms of fantasy.	6
7	Tony Chambers failed to accept personal	7
8	responsibility for anything that happened following his	8
9	involvement in June 2016, now or at any time. The	9
10	Families will say that he was almost biologically	10
11	instinctive towards self-preservation. He showed	11
12	himself to be incapable of being reflective or	12
13	self-critical thought and that the contemporaneous	13
14	accounts recording his inability to understand why he	14
15	faced a vote of no confidence or why he could not be	15
16	appointed a chief executive elsewhere demonstrate	16
17	a staggering lack of insight. This carried through into	17
18	his evidence before this Inquiry.	18
19 20	In the face of everything, when asked whether he	19
20 21	took personal responsibility for any failures, he failed to identify anything of substance.	20
21	, , , ,	21 22
22	Although apologies have been offered today about	22
23 24	the failure to call the police in 2016, those apologies were not reflected in the evidence given by Mr Chambers	23
24	before the Inquiry. That apology is, even if coming	24 25
20	141	20
1	was driven in that by a desire to preserve his own	1
2	reputation and/or by an inability to understand and	2
3	reflect properly on the issues that were being raised	3
4	with him.	4
5	His approach may have been influenced by profound	5
6	tribalism that drew battle lines between doctors and	6
7	nurses. In Tony Chambers' case, however, it is tempting	7
8	to conclude that his main priority was himself.	8
9	lan Harvey was a more intelligent witness than	9
10	Tony Chambers but should not escape criticism. Analysis	10
11	of his role and events shows him at the heart of the	11
12	cover-up, misleading Dr Hawdon and the RCPCH and	12
13	misleading the Families when he interacted with them.	13
14	Although Mr Skelton has addressed in detail the	14
15	issues surrounding the inquest into the death of	15
16	Child A, we would echo his submissions. It is	16
17	inconceivable, in our view, that Mr Harvey was unaware	17
18	of the issues surrounding Letby's potential involvement	18
19	in the death of Child A and the relevance of those to	19
20	the coronial process.	20
21	Alison Kelly, who sits alongside Mr Harvey in	21
22	these submissions, was a similarly unimpressive witness	22
23	who failed to accept any personal responsibility for any	23
24	of the failings in management or direction.	24
25	In his submissions at paragraph 281, Mr Kennedy KC	25
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from Mr Chambers, as with most statements made by Mr Chambers, tainted with a caveat. He didn't apologise for obstructing contact with the police, but rather he apologised for not calling the police soon enough. The suggestion the executives had always intended to call the police but were just waiting for the right time is, the Families would suggest, pure fantasy. The Families will say that Tony Chambers was doing his best to prevent the police commencing a formal investigation, right up until the point when it actually commenced. His response when the consultants effectively bypassed him was to create a plan to dismiss them, as revealed in his note of 12 May 2017. His were not the actions of someone who was working collaboratively with the consultants to find the right time to contact the police. His were the actions of somebody who was outraged at having been bypassed. That Tony Chambers ever reached the position of a chief executive in an NHS Trust is of the greatest concern to the Families, secondly only to a concern there might be other versions of him within similar positions of power, entirely free from regulation. The Families will say that he spearheaded the culture of cover-up and deceit that followed the decisions in June 2016 not to contact the police. He 142 highlights a number of examples of her tendency to blame others rather than to accept personal responsibility. We would adopt that analysis and add to it. The quality of a good leader in any organisation is the ability to accept responsibility when things go wrong. A common charge that could be levelled at all of the senior executives is that their desire for self-preservation and instinctive need to avoid responsibility permeates their actions throughout the period being discussed by the Inquiry and their conduct towards the Inquiry. Their application to stop the Inquiry, to avoid any criticism, is entirely typical of that attitude. There are two key examples in relation to Ian Harvey and Alison Kelly and their role in what we describe as the cover-up. The first is the interactions with the Families. The precipitating cause of the interactions with the Families appears to have been the completion of the RCPCH report which was referred to by The Sunday Times in around February 2017. No parent or clinician had been shown either final versions of the report before that time, despite it having been in the hands of the

- executives for many weeks and months by that time.
 - That Ian Harvey's reply to the press enquiry had 144

1	been disingenuous was immediately obvious, but still	1
2	nothing he would accept. He said:	2
3	"This was a report that we had asked for and	3
4	invited from The Royal College. At the time of	4
5	requesting the review and in the interests of	5
6	transparency we were open with our board, our governors,	6
7	our staff, patients and a wide range of stakeholders	7
8	including the local media. We received a final report	8
9	in December 2016 and it is due to be published next	9
10	week. We have carried out additional independent	10
11	reviews as requested as part offer this process.	11
12	Medical Director at The Countess of Chester Ian Harvey	12
13	said: 'We have done all we can to keep parents informed	13
14	and our clinical teams will be contacting them again	14
15	ahead of the review being published"	15
16	The impending publication of The Sunday Times	16
17	piece forced the Countess of Chester Hospital to	17
18	communicate the outcome of that service review to the	18
19	parents. The Families believe that had this piece not	19
20	been published by The Sunday Times, they would never	20
21	have learned of the existence of the report, nor the	21
22	substance of the complaints raised.	22
23	The impact of the release of that story might have	23
24	on the Families only appears to have been appreciated by	24
25	the Countess of Chester at the last minute, leading to	25
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1	not answered, concerns were explained away, despite the	1
2	obvious anxiety and distress she was exhibiting.	2
3	Mother C had previously been informed, unlike the	3
4	other parents, of concerns surrounding the NNU in the	4
5	summer of 2016 and attended an impromptu meeting with	5
6	Sian Williams and Alison Kelly, who told her that the	6
7	investigation was just a formality to check staffing	7
8	levels because there had been a small increase in the	8
9	number of deaths, but they didn't think it was	9
10	significant. They said there was nothing more to say at	10
11	that stage and they could find out more once a report	11
12	had been done.	12
13	In evidence Sian Williams accept that this was	13
14	untrue and it was misleading but told the Inquiry the	14
15	executives had given her instructions about the limits	15
16	of what she could say. As was put to her, she had been	16
17	given those words of reassurance at the same time	17
18 10	Sian Williams herself considered that police should have	18
19 20	been called in, and this was cover-up in the name of	19
20	kindness.	20
21	Alison Kelly's evidence was that she simply could not recall the meeting. She offered no explanation or	21
22	non recail the meeting is the offered to explanation of	22
	-	00
23 24	excuse beyond her reflection that:	23
23 24 25	-	23 24 25

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late disclosure and further stress and anxiety for family members. The delivery of a letter to Mother EF by black cab, 30 minutes before publication, is entirely indicative of the executive management's approach to the parents, their duties of care, candour and honesty towards them. The claim in that letter there had been previous attempts to contact them is simply untrue. The only contact that Mother EF had at all from the Countess of Chester Hospital to that point was a repeated request to return a breast pump that had been given back before she even left the hospital. Since then, Mother EF had not been provided with any bereavement support whatsoever and nor had her consent been sought for the inclusion of her child in Dr Hawdon's case review. Neither were any of the Families warned of potential impact of the RCPCH report, its publication or told about the impact of it being published upon them. The imminent publication of The Sunday Times report also prompted a cryptic phone call to Mother C from Sian Williams. This immediately aroused suspicion and anxiety within Mother C about what had been found. Following the posting of the report, Mother C made a further telephone and in person contact with Sian Williams on 6 February 2017 and her guestions were 146 Those words of apology are inadequate. Mother C was lied to by Alison Kelly at that meeting. After meeting with Sian Williams on 6 February, Mother C wrote to Ian Harvey by letter dated 7 February 2017. She set out for him in the clearest terms just what the impact had been from the Trust's disgracefully poor efforts to inform or update her in relation to the emergence of concerns about the NNU and the progression of the investigations. She immediately recognised and set out the facts that he and the other executives were seeking to conceal and suppress, by saying: "The report does strike me as having some suspicion that there were some unusual features in the deaths ... and that perhaps there was something going on in the unit that caused or at least contributed ..." This was a without context reaction from a bereaved mother to a redacted version of the RCPCH

> report. It demonstrated immediately the obvious advantages to treating patients and families with candour and respect and as partners in the investigation of safety concerns and, on the other hand, just what a self-justifying echo chamber the Countess of Chester

> > The approach to Mother C was essentially

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Hospital management had become.

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1	patronising, hoping that she would not have the	1
2	intelligence to see through the features missing from	2
3	the redacted report and ask further questions.	3
4	It is the context of Mother C's reaction to the	4
5	RCPCH report that makes Ian Harvey's subsequent	5
6	correspondence and meeting conduct so egregious. His	6
7	first strategy was to delay. When Mother C received no	7
8	reply to her letter, she telephoned the hospital on 13	8
9	and 14 February without success, eventually successfully	9
10	obtaining an appointment to meet Ian Harvey a week later	10
11	on 20 February 2017.	11
12	Extraordinarily, no note of that meeting has	12
13	emerged from the disclosure provided to the Inquiry by	13
14	the Countess of Chester Hospital at odds with normal	14
15	practice. No letter was ever sent to Mother C to	15
16	summarise and record the events discussed, and no	16
17	contemporaneous note has ever been provided. This is in	17
18	variance with Mr Harvey's usual practice, which is	18
19 20	revealed through various notes of meetings and	19
20 21	interactions that he engaged in.	20
21 22	Mother C set out her recall of the meeting: "Ian Harvey apologised to us for poor	21 22
22	communication. He advised that some small areas that	22
23 24	could be improved upon had been noted in the review of	23
25	Child C's care, but nothing of concern there was	25
20	149	20
1	which omitted references to that issue.	1
1 2	which omitted references to that issue. Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with	1 2
	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with	
2		2
2 3	lan Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest	2 3
2 3 4	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken.	2 3 4
2 3 4 5	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the	2 3 4 5
2 3 4 5 6	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had	2 3 4 5 6
2 3 4 5 6 7	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to	2 3 4 5 6 7
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was	2 3 4 5 6 7 8
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by Ian Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death. Mother EF was able to appreciate for the first time that the information in the records was wrong and that Letby had falsified the notes. Thankfully and by	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death. Mother EF was able to appreciate for the first time that the information in the records was wrong and that Letby had falsified the notes. Thankfully and by chance she was able to obtain her mobile phone records	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death. Mother EF was able to appreciate for the first time that the information in the records was wrong and that Letby had falsified the notes. Thankfully and by chance she was able to obtain her mobile phone records and corroborate her own recollection. This valuable	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Ian Harvey's subsequent correspondence with Mother C reinforced the misleading and dishonest approach he had taken. If his evidence is accepted on the point, by the time of his letter to Mother C on 28 April 2017 he had reached a point where he knew that police were going to be called and an investigation undertaken but, as was put to him, he told her none of that, he gave her a completely misleading impression of the state of affairs. The Families were informed about the Hawdon report in April 2017. Even then, they were not provided with more than extract pages from her case note. The extracts had themselves been substantially amended by lan Harvey, a fact which he did not disclose, and this was the first point where Mother EF saw the contents of the records created by Letby on the night of Child E's death. Mother EF was able to appreciate for the first time that the information in the records was wrong and that Letby had falsified the notes. Thankfully and by chance she was able to obtain her mobile phone records	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

1	nothing that could be changed about [the] care that
2	would have affected the outcome and prevented his death.
3	We were relieved to hear this. This is what we had
4	wanted to hear, and we were aware that nothing ever goes
5	perfectly so we had expected some areas of improvement
6	to be noted. The conclusion of the investigation would
7	allow us to move forward and not to have this
8	investigation and uncertainty hanging over us"
9	When Ian Harvey gave evidence he stated that he
10	could not recall the detail of the conversation.
11	Mother C's account was unchallenged when she gave
12	evidence and remains undisturbed. The inference,
13	therefore, stands that the Families raised in opening.
14	If the Inquiry accepts Mother C's evidence on this
15	issue, Ian Harvey lied to her. At the time of the
16	meeting he was in possession of a report from
17	Jane Hawdon that criticised the quality of the care
18	provided to Child C and concluded that his death may
19	have been preventable had the standard of care been
20	better. Ian Harvey was aware at the time of this
21	meeting that serious concerns had been expressed by
22	consultants in the unit that Lucy Letby had been
23	deliberately harming babies on the unit, including
24	Child C. He was aware that Mother and Father C had been
25	provided with an incomplete version of the RCPCH report, 150

1	out the reports.
2	Dr Hawdon was personally shocked that her report
3	had been provided to the Families in the way that it
4	was, insufficient covering information and explanation
5	had been provided. It was inappropriate to share them
6	outside of a face-to-face meeting, particularly in
7	a time of grief.
8	We should not lose sight of the fact that the
9	version of the Hawdon report that Ian Harvey provided to
10	Mother C was one he had amended from the original. He
11	did not tell Mother C that he had done this, nor did he
12	inform Dr Hawdon that he was passing off his amendments
13	to her reports as the original.
14	Moving then on interactions with external bodies.
15	On 22 December 2016 the Care Quality Commission
16	held an engagement meeting with the hospital. The
17	hospital was represented by Ian Harvey, Alison Kelly,
18	Sian Williams and Ruth Millward and Julie Hughes and
19	[Deborah] Lindley from the Care Quality Commission. The
20	agenda for the meeting noted neonatal services to be
21	a key risk area under the heading "Strategic Update For
22	[the] Trust". There was discussion of the RCPCH report
23	but it was not disclosed to the CQC. There is no
24	mention of Letby nor of the consultants' concerns, which
25	mirrored the approach taken by Alison Kelly when first

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1	reporting the fact of the RCPCH review on 30 June 2016.	1	that:
2	The CQC were not informed that Dr Hawdon had been	2	" [perhaps we] should have shared a bit more
3	instructed to conduct a forensic Casenote Review, let	3	information that time, but we were still gathering the
4	alone that she had reported that she had been unable to	4	information internally"
5	fulfil her instructions.	5	She agreed that the CQC had been told nothing of
6	The first person outside of the Countess of	6	Dr Hawdon's instructions nor that she had reported that
7	Chester directorship to be shown the final redacted	7	four of the deaths remained unexplained and required
8	disseminated version of the RCPCH report was Letby	8	further investigation, but she denied that the effect of
9	herself on 31 January 2017.	9	those omissions was to mislead the CQC.
10	On the day before she was given that special	10	On 14 February 2017, at a meeting of the executive
11	treatment, the consultants had taken the opportunity of	11	directors three days before the CQC had visited it, it
12	reiterating their requests to be shown both the RCPCH	12	had been noted that having now seen the RCPCH and Hawdon
13	report and Dr Hawdon's report. Again, Tony Chambers	13	reports, the consultants were adopting a "firmer
14	refused to accept that the delay in communicating and	14	position" that the neonatal deaths were "not natural
15	implementing the RCPCH's immediate recommendations put	15	causes", yet not a hint of this was communicated to the
16	patient safety at risk, even when it was pointed out to	16	CQC. Quite the opposite.
17	him in evidence.	17	Perhaps the most revealing of Alison Kelly's
18	There were further engagements with the CQC in	18	answers came when it was put to her it would have been
19	February 2017. The minutes recorded the picture	19	perfectly appropriate to tell the CQC that a consultant
20	communicated to the CQC on that occasion was that the	20	neonatologist had recommended more investigations for
21	outcomes of the investigations were limited to "lessons	21	four babies, and she replied simply:
22	to be learned around transport processes and the	22	"We could have told them, but we didn't have the
23	incident reporting system".	23	answers at the time so"
24	This might be thought to be something of	24	In that answer there was a direct echo of
25	an understatement. Alison Kelly was prepared to concede	25	a managerial culture and tone set by Mr Tony Chambers.
	153		154
1	Since there was no pleasing PR-appropriate answer	1	were presenting good news rather than problems".
2	available, the problem was not disclosed.	2	Here, as elsewhere, Ms Kelly repeated her defence
3	Ms Kelly displayed no reflection or understanding	3	that the misleading of NHS England about the
4	of the danger of that approach even to the point of her	4	availability of the report was not done intentionally,
5	appearance in the witness box before the Inquiry.	5	an explanation we would say simply cannot stand in the
6	The inappropriate culture and tone set within the	6	light of the consistent and deliberate strategy to avoid
7	Countess of Chester Hospital under Mr Chambers'	7	scrutiny.
8	management had become indelible.	8	My Lady, these cultural failures sit amongst
9	It is not only the CQC who were misled during this	9	a number that are set out within our written
10	period. In November of 2017 Alison Kelly wrote to NHS	10	submissions. They are also reflected clearly in
11	England explaining why the Countess would not share the	11	cultural failings and problems found in other Trusts at
12	RCPCH report with them at that time. The terms of that	12	previous inquiries, and we've drawn your attention in
13	letter advanced as part of the justification was that	13	our submission to the Mid Staffordshire Report, the
14	a review team had assured the Trust that there were no	14	Bristol Report and the Ockenden Reports, the Kirkup
15	immediate actions or concerns. That entirely ignored	15	Reports.
16	and obscured the fact that the report made a series of	16	The evidence of Helené Donnelly we found to be
17	recommendations under the heading "Recommendations:	17	particularly important on this point, and the points
18	Immediate". The clear intention of the letter was to	18	where she was describing her experiences from
	delay provision of the RCPCH report to NHS England at	19	Mid Staffordshire a number of years before these events
19	a time when the executives had it to hand, and could	20	occurred. She was asked the questions:
19 20		21	"Is it your experience that Trust managers, on
	easily have provided if they had chosen to.		
20	easily have provided if they had chosen to. As with the CQC, Ms Kelly's justification for that	22	occasion, are resistant to taking such a step?"
20 21		22 23	occasion, are resistant to taking such a step?" Which is about going to the police. And she said:
20 21 22	As with the CQC, Ms Kelly's justification for that		
20 21 22 23	As with the CQC, Ms Kelly's justification for that approach was that the executives collectively "wanted to	23	Which

1	reputations of either themselves or the Trust,	1
2	is that a problem?"	2
3	And she said:	3
4	"Yes, absolutely. I do think this harks back to	4
5	my concerns around HR practice as well, [in] that the	5
6	focus is on reputation of the organisation and	6
7	protecting the organisation and not necessarily on doing	7
8	the right thing and having transparency and openness to	8
9	make sure we can all be assured that either there is	9
10	a problem and therefore it needs to be addressed through	10
11	the appropriate routes and channels or actually there	11
12	isn't a problem but we looked into it robustly and	12
13	thoroughly and transparently and everybody can then be	13
14	assured. And those things don't necessarily happen."	14
15	The culture and the problems and the failures	15
16	involve a collision between the need for patient safety	16
17	as a priority in one direction and the pragmatic	17
18	pressures that appear to be applied to managers to	18
19	protect reputation of themselves and the Trust and	19
20	ensure finance streams into the Trust, and those things	20
21	seem to be brought into tension in a way that often	21
22	causes managers to act in a way that is contrary to	22
23	patient safety, and that issue appears to have arisen in	23
24	every single inquiry in one form or another that's ever	24
25	been undertaken into a healthcare disaster, and it is 157	25
1	My Lady, those are clear from here but it is	1
2	sometimes not enough to say to a Trust, "You need to be	2
3	candid." There was a duty of candour in place in 2015	3
4	when these events happened, and in their opening	4
5	statement to the Inquiry the Countess of Chester	5
6	Hospital said, "We've entirely failed to follow the duty	6
7	of candour." Why did that happen? Why is it ignored?	7
8	Because it is ignored for the same reasons that if	8
9	patient safety fails and you don't have an honest and	9
10	open culture, then people seek to take steps to sidestep	10
11	the duty of candour. People seek to take steps to	11

sidestep the Speak Out Safely policies, and they do that
because the things are a hindrance to what they are
trying to achieve by way of protecting reputation.
The people who are able to do that with impunity

16 are unregulated hospital managers, and unless you embed 17 into the system a means of regulating hospital managers, 18 of bringing them to task when they don't fulfil these 19 duties, then these duties are empty because there may 20 well be a strong impetus from those who are regulated by 21 the GMC or the NMC to be candid because their 22 regulations tell them to be. If they are told or 23 bypassed by a hospital manager who is unregulated to not 24 follow the duty of candour, or it is ignored, there is 25 nothing that anybody can do about that because that 159

clear here it cannot keep happening. 1 2 Briefly with regard to the duty of candour, the 3 duty of candour, my Lady, is a subset within patient 4 safety. Patient safety requires openness, honesty and 5 transparency. In order to create a culture that is 6 safe, one needs to have openness and transparency. You 7 need to be honest and recognise failures. People need to be able to come to you and say, "There is a problem. 8 We're worried about the practice of this individual. q 10 This needs to be done to make things better." If 11 a culture is open and allows that, that protects patient 12 safety. 13 If people are allowed to go to patients and say, 14 "We are sorry, something has happened. It's gone wrong. 15 It has affected you and we are sorry about that and it's 16 happened for this reason", it shows openness towards 17 patient safety. So we can't view these things in silos. 18 We have to recognise that they're all part and parcel of 19 the same thing. 20 When things go wrong, though, we see them go wrong 21 in every single area. Where patient safety fails, 22 candour fails. Whistleblowers are persecuted. Openness 23 and transparency disappears. And those are all the 24 hallmarks that are easy to spot in a failing toxic

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culture.

1 person isn't regulated and they can't be brought task 2 for it. 3 And that underpins in all of this the importance 4 of there being regulation and accountability for senior 5 hospital managers, individuals who are very well paid 6 and hold positions of great power and responsibility. 7 It was pointed out during the course of the Inquiry that 8 it is somewhat anomalous that out of everybody operating 9 within this hospital, the only senior important people 10 who are unregulated are the hospital managers, unless 11 they happen to be doctors or nurses by registration and 12 still registered. 13 The position has now been reached, my Lady, where 14 it is not enough to simply say this cannot happen again. 15 We need to be aware of risks like this. We need to 16 prioritise patient safety. People have been saying that 17 for a long time and it hasn't changed. 18 We now need something tangible that forces change, 19 and the position we say has now been reached where regulation of hospital managers with proper 20 21 prioritisation of patient safety is the only way 22 forward 23 I want to end as I began by saying some words 24 about the Families or some words from the Families. All 25 of them have expressed their gratitude to this Inquiry

1	for the way it has been conducted by yourself, by the	1
2	Inquiry team, by Counsel to the Inquiry, by everybody	2
3	involved and the empathy that has been shown towards	3
4	them.	4
5	Their common goal is to seek change so that other	5
6	people don't have to go through what they have been	6
7	through, and that isn't limited simply to avoiding the	7
8	next serial killer in a healthcare setting but that is	8
9	about changing patient safety culture so that	9
10	individuals who come into NHS hospitals are saved from	10
11	risks posed by a number of sources, whether that be poor	11
12	medical care, whether that be deliberate harm or indeed	12
13	whether that might be a culture that doesn't value or	13
14	empathise towards them.	14
15	Mother C in her comments before the Inquiry said:	15
16	"The last ten years have been filled with grief,	16
17	pain, trauma and confusion. We have been horrified to	17
18	learn how the woman who murdered our son was protected	18
19 20	by a pack mentality and afforded so much support without	19
20	scrutiny, whilst ourselves and other families were left	20
21 22	in the dark and at times actively lied to. There is	21 22
22	absolutely no doubt that the actions of senior management delayed justice and their accounts and weak	22
23 24	words of condolence demonstrate their lack of true	23 24
24 25	reflection on the mistakes they made. The executives'	24 25
20	161	20
4	and a 10 and have a big a second factor and second to its	4
1 2	and selfless by speaking up and facing adversity is	1
2	always the right thing to do. "For the doctors that spoke up on behalf of our	2 3
4	babies to stop a monster at work, for their relentless	4
4 5	effort despite being disrespected, threatened and not	4 5
6	valued I am grateful and this has brought me	6
7	reassurance that good people do exist and can make	7
8	a difference.	8
9	"Thank you."	9
10	Mother and Father J said:	10
11	"Throughout the whole process, from criminal	11
12	investigations, trial and even more so through the	12
13	public inquiry, I couldn't understand why it took the	13
14	Trust so long to act. The main responsibility that the	14
15	executive team had was to protect their patients. This	15
16	should have always been their main priority and not	16
17	staff budgeting and reputational concerns. Any staff	17
18	member who was under suspicion of unexpected events or	18
19	babies deteriorating or dying should have been removed	19
20	at that point following their own safeguarding policy.	20
21	This would have allowed to protect patients first but,	21
22	secondly, protect that individual while investigations	22
23	and policies were followed and protected those who	23
24	raised concerns. The executive head has the overall	24
25	responsibility to ensure this training and guidance is 163	25

attempt to halt the Inquiry shows their own self-serving intentions and ongoing lack of respect or care for the Families. The media PR campaign aimed to garner public sympathy for Letby demonstrates a complete lack of understanding for Letby's crimes and the complexity of the case. The misinformed and inaccurate media circus surrounding this case, our son and the babies is potentiating the distress of all the Families involved. "We are forever affected not only by Lucy Letby's crimes but by the way we have been treated by the Trust." Mother D wrote a very evocative, beautiful, poetic piece that we've attached within the written submissions and I won't be able to do it justice by reading it out, but I would like to say this part of that: "I would like to remind every single person who hears or reads our message we are here today because our babies lost their lives ... My baby died, my child did not survive the attacks and my heart did not make it through either. "I am deeply affected every day, and broken beyond my tears. "I sincerely hope this Inquiry will help in avoiding anything of this nature ever to happen again. I want people to remember that being brave, responsible 162 pushed down the teams on the ground and carried on. They failed to push the button when they learned of concerns being raised. Their own policies stated that no evidence was required, just concern. This was a huge failure. In view of this and the other concerns of how the executives behaved and handled this situation, calls for personal accountability to be imposed at this level. The executive board of any hospital are responsible for thousands of people's lives and care. They need to understand that they will be held personally accountable for their decisions leading to financial implications, removal from professional activities and potentially prison." I want to finish finally with words of evidence of Mother and Father K. It's Mother K's evidence before the Inquiry, and she gave evidence on 23 September 2024. She said: "There's no accountability for anybody in a senior position to make -- if they don't make the decisions based on the information that they're given, they need to be personally accountable for it. There's many organisations out there that have that in place. They're not dealing with lives but they're held personally accountable, they will be fined, they can be

5 put into prison, because they haven't followed

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1	procedures that are put in place to safeguard against	1	take a break now and then take your submissions.
2	these issues.	2	MS LANGDALE: Is 15 minutes acceptable, my Lady? To have
3	"That's exactly the same as what happened in the	3	a break for 15 minutes?
4	Countess, but they're dealing with people's lives and	4	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Certainly. So we'll start at
5	the impact is forever. It doesn't stop. It doesn't	5	quarter to 4.
6	stop. For myself and my husband, the ripples are	6	(3.30 pm)
7	unbelievable and I never appreciated that and, you know,	7	(A short break)
8	you're around and you hear it but you don't appreciate	8	(3.45 pm)
9	until you're in it and it has scarred your life. It's	9	Closing submissions by MS LANGDALE
10	changed you. You look and you don't only just grieve	10	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Ms Langdale.
11	your daughter, you're grieving who you were. I grieve	11	MS LANGDALE: My Lady, on 21 February 2025, a request to
12	for who we were as a husband and a wife.	12	pause the Inquiry was made by the former executives
13	"It just completely destroys what's around you and	13	under section 17(3) of the Inquiries Act 2005. At the
14	you have to pick yourself up and find out who you are	14	same time a parallel request was made by them to the
15	again in this new world and it just doesn't go away	15	Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to suspend
16	and we live with it every single day and for nobody to	16	the Inquiry under section 13 of the Inquiries Act 2005.
17	take accountability for that or ownership for that is	17	The latter application is not under consideration by
18	not right. It can't continue to be like that because	18	you, my Lady, as it is a decision for the Secretary of
19	this will happen again because what's the reason to stop	19	State, but it is plainly connected as it relies on the
20	them? There's no reason. They just protect	20	same facts.
21	themselves."	21	As a starting point there is, we submit,
22	My Lady, unless I can assist any further.	22	an important difference between a power to pause and
23	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: No, thank you very much indeed,	23	a power to suspend a statutory inquiry. The power to
24	Mr Baker.	24	suspend an inquiry is vested in the Minister, not the
25	Ms Langdale, it occurs to me we could probably	25	Inquiry Chair. The explanatory notes to the 2005 Act
	165		166
1	ovalain agation 12, and that a supposed may be for	1	"(d) the period of suspension is until the day
2	explain section 13, and that a suspension may be, for example, to ensure that an inquiry does not prejudice	2	specified in the notice or until further notice is given
3	a criminal investigation. Section 13 says that the	3	by the Minister.
4	Minister may, at any time by notice to the Inquiry	4	"(e) if the Minister suspends an inquiry, they
5	Chair, suspend the Inquiry for such period as appears to	5	must provide their reasons and lay a copy of the notice
6	the Minister to be necessary to allow for (a) the	6	before the relevant Parliament or Assembly."
7	completion of an investigation into any of the matters	7	The Supreme Court was of the view that there were
8	to which the Inquiry relates or (b) the determination of	8	two possible interpretations of section 13(1). On one
9	any civil or criminal proceedings arising from those	9	view "for such period as appears to him to be necessary"
10	matters.	10	only qualified the period of suspension and not the
11	The wording of section 13, in particular the test	11	decision to suspend an inquiry. On another view, "for
12	of necessity, has recently been considered by the	12	such period" may be read as a phrase within a sentence
13	Supreme Court in the matter of an application by JR222	13	so that the qualifier of necessity applies both to the
14	for Judicial Review (Appellant) (Northern Ireland).	14	purpose of suspending the inquiry and the period of
15	Lord Stephens made the following observations at	15	suspension.
16	paragraphs 60 to 65:	16	Applying the ordinary principles of statutory
17	"(a) the purposes of a suspension were limited to	17	interpretation as set out in R (Project for the
18	those set out in sections 1(a) and 1(b) as set out	18	Registration of Children as British Citizens) v
19	above.	19	Secretary of State for the Home Department [2023] AC
20	"(b) the existence of discretion to suspend	20	255, Lord Stephens concluded, at paragraph 82, in
21	an inquiry presupposes the ability to continue	21	agreement with the High Court and the Court of Appeal
22	an inquiry while criminal proceedings are ongoing.	22	that:
23	"(c) the power to suspend is vested in the	23	"The true interpretation is that section 13(1)
24	Minister who must consult the Chair of the Inquiry	24	naturally reads as one question which must be considered
25	before doing so.	25	and answered as a whole. On this basis necessity
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1	applies to both the purposes in section 13(1)(a) and (b)	1
2	to the period of suspension."	2
3	It follows that the threshold for suspension of	3
4	an inquiry is a high one, based on necessity to allow	4
5	another investigation or proceedings to go ahead of the	5
6	inquiry.	6
7	As with the power to suspend, the power to set up	7
8	an inquiry is vested solely in the Minister. The	8
9	Inquiries Act section 1 says that an inquiry can be	9
10	established to investigate a matter of public concern.	10
11	After an inquiry is announced, the Minister retains key	11
12 13	responsibilities. The Minister appoints the Chair or	12
13	Panel in accordance with sections 4 and section 10, sets the Terms of Reference in consultation with the Chair	13 14
14	under section 5, has the primary duty to publish	14
16	an inquiry report, section 25, and to end the inquiry,	16
17	section 14, when it has fulfilled its Terms of	10
18	Reference.	17
19	These powers available to the Minister are	10
20	relevant, as they make clear the intention of Parliament	20
21	in passing The Inquiries Act to give the Minister	20
22	specific powers throughout the duration of an inquiry.	22
23	With that legal context in mind, an application to	23
24	pause has been made by the former executives team under	24
25	section 17(3) of The Inquiries Act. Section 17 provides	25
	169	
1	deaths, and unexplained collapses, namely poor clinical	1
2	management care and natural causes. The Inquiry will,	2
3	therefore, be acting in breach of the duty to act fairly	3
4	to individuals and witnesses, and if there is another	4
5	explanation about how the babies can be harmed it would	5
6	be wrong to ignore it.	6
7	And, finally, to continue to hear oral evidence	7
8	and to publish a report runs the risk of incurring	8
9	further significant costs on a false basis.	9
10	On the point of costs, the oral hearings have now	10
11	been completed and you may consider that the majority of	11
12	the costs in this public inquiry have already been	12
13	spent. It is right that the preparation of your report	13
14	will incur further costs, for example the preparation of	14
15	warning letters to those who may be criticised and	15
16	publication costs. However, albeit difficult to	16
17	quantify, we submit there would also be significant	17
18	costs incurred if the Inquiry were to be paused, because	18
19	it will continue to exist for an unknown period of time.	19
20	We note at the outset that the request for you to	20
21	pause before writing and completing your report is	21
22	currently made for an indefinite period of time. There	22
23 24	is some force you may think, my Lady, in the point made	23
24 25	by Mr Baker KC that in practice the request made by the former executives is for a suspension.	24 25
20		

that the procedure and conduct of the inquiry are such as the Chair may direct, and that: "In making any decision as to the procedure or conduct of an inquiry, the [Chair] must act with fairness and with regard also to the need to avoid any unnecessary cost (whether to public funds or witnesses or others)." It is submitted by the former executive team that you should pause the Inquiry for the following reasons: Firstly, a preliminary application has been made to the Criminal Cases Review Commission based on new evidence from a panel of international experts who have considered the medical evidence given at Letby's trial. The submission made is that "this new evidence merits and is therefore being given serious consideration by the CCRC." Secondly, it is said there is a real possibility that Ms Letby's convictions may be referred by the CCRC to the Court of Appeal and there quashed, and the Inquiry proceedings must be paused. Thirdly, not to pause the Inquiry will create a "real risk" that you are not acting with fairness and/or avoiding any unnecessary cost because rather than proceeding on the basis of guilt, there is, I quote, "a real likelihood" of alternative explanation for these 170 Given the express power granted to the Minister pursuant to section 13 is subject to such a high bar when suspending an inquiry, we agree with the written

and oral submissions of Ms Jenni Richards KC and Mr Andrew Kennedy KC that a decision by the Chair of an inquiry to pause under section 17 should be similarly constrained. It is uncontroversial that it is open to the Chair

of an inquiry to adjourn an inquiry for a particular purpose. That would normally be for a relatively short defined period. But if you were concerned the Inquiry should be paused for an indefinite period of time, or pending the resolution of any criminal process, then we submit that it would be for you to inform the Secretary of State of your view and to inform that, in your view, the Inquiry should be suspended.

Sir David Davis MP wrote to the Inquiry on 28 February 2025. He did not refer to section 17 but asked that, and I quote:

20 "Considering the extensive new evidence available, 21 your Inquiry be paused until Ms Letby's avenues of 22 appeal have been fully exhausted and the new evidence 23 has been allowed to be fully tested before a court." 24 There is currently no appeal outstanding. If the 25 Criminal Cases Review Commission exercises its power to

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1	refer the case to the Court of Appeal, an appeal would	1
2	be commenced in respect of any conviction in accordance	2
3	with the Criminal Appeal Act 1995, section 9(2).	3
4	Yesterday you also received a letter, my Lady,	4
5	from Bhandal Law, a firm of solicitors who now represent	5
6	Letby. The letter asked you to suspend the Inquiry	6
7	under section 13 of the Inquiries Act 2005. That	7
8	request is mistaken in law for the reasons we have just	8
9	outlined, the power to suspend is a power the Minister	9
10	has, not you.	10
11	Sir David Davis also wrote to the Inquiry in	11
12	August 2024. He raised concerns then about the	12
13	convictions and expressed the view that the Terms of	13
14	Reference should be broadened so as to not depend on the	14
15	presumption that Letby's convictions were safe.	15
16	Sir David Davis said that the deaths may not have been	16
17	caused by murder but rather, firstly, the result of	17
18	a systemic failure in a unit that was overstretched and	18
19	underfunded. Secondly, by bad medical management of	19
20	vulnerable neonatal babies on the unit.	20
21	Sir David Davis wrote:	21
22	"Both of these alternative hypotheses are	22
23	supported by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child	23
24	Health's investigation in November 2016."	24
25	We now know, of course, that they were not.	25
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1	providing explanation for deaths of babies should read	1
2	the transcript of Ms Scolding KC's address with care.	2
3	Ms Scolding made reference to the fact that the review	3
4	team thought that the police should be called at the	4
5	time. Ms Scolding said that any suggestion that the	5
6	review exculpates Letby was simply wrong and not	6
7	a reasonable conclusion to make. Furthermore, she was	3 7
8	clear that the review was never going to answer the	8
9	question of why there was an increase in unexplained and	9
10	unexpected deaths, and that the review did not provide	10
11	those answers.	11
12	Doctors, nurses and managers in this Inquiry were	12
13	variously asked about a number of issues related to the	13
14	care provided in the hospital, including whether sicker	10
15	babies were being admitted to the neonatal unit,	15
16	pseudomonas, infection and staffing levels. Some nurses	16
17	were also asked about a newspaper article which	10
18	described them picking out names from a hat to decide	18
19	who could leave early despite being in charge of a baby.	10
20	You have oral evidence on all of these topics to assess,	20
21	my Lady, including whether witnesses considered them	20
22	explanations for the concerning rise in unexpected	21
	supranatione for the concerning nee in unexpected	~~~

explanations for the concerning rise in unexpected
 neonatal deaths and collapses at the time.
 As you said when opening this loguiny, you are no

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	The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
	are a Core Participant in this Inquiry. Its
	investigation of the neonatal unit at the Countess of
	Chester in 2016 and any underlying material was heavily
	scrutinised by the Inquiry legal team. Seven statements
	were obtained from those involved in undertaking the
	RCPCH review. A number came to give oral evidence. The
	underlying documentation was disclosed to all
	Core Participants.
)	The RCPCH witnesses accepted in terms that its
1	investigation or review should never have taken place,
2	and would not have taken place had full information been
3	provided by the hospital. Professor Stephen Turner,
1	current President of the RCPCH, said in evidence that
5	the review "went wrong from the start".
6	Professor Turner accepted that the exploration of the
7	causes of specific neonatal deaths was unsuitable for
3	an invited review; that, ultimately, the report compiled
9	did not identify any common factors or failings
)	responsible for deaths, and the Terms of Reference were
1	doomed to fail from the outset.
2	Ms Fiona Scolding KC, who represents the RCPCH in
3	this Inquiry, made significant concessions in her
1	closing address yesterday on behalf of the RCPCH. Those
5	who place any reliance upon the RCPCH's report as 174
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	rather what the response of those at the time was and
	should have been to what they knew or should have known
	at the time. You made it clear that the purpose of the

Inquiry was to examine the wider circumstances, including the Trust's response to clinicians who raised the alarm, and the conduct of the wider NHS and its

Core Participants in detailed Rule 9s to offer frank assessment of systemic deficiencies in patient safety,

that that there are in fact "19 detailed reports prepared by 16 experts" in support of her CCRC application. Any application will require rigorous

analysis of the transcripts of evidence in the criminal

case, including the evidence of Letby herself. Any

alternative hypotheses for deaths or deteriorations 176

particularly as it affects babies.

With that in mind, we asked all organisational

It would not be appropriate for this Inquiry to make a determination about the international expert panel report and its evidential value. Whether the international expert panel report contains fresh or new evidence in respect of any or all of the deaths or deteriorations of the babies named on the indictment is currently a matter for the CCRC. As an aside, the letter on behalf of Letby received yesterday suggests

regulators.

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1	obtained subsequent to the convictions will be a matter
2	for the criminal proceedings if there is a reference to
3	the Court of Appeal.
4	In a public statement on 4 February 2025, the CCRC
5	stated:
6	"At this stage it is not possible to determine how
7	long it will take to review the application.
8	A significant volume of complicated evidence was
9	presented to the court in Ms Letby's trials."
10	The public statement noted that it usually
11	receives around 1,500 applications for reviews (that is
12	convictions and/or sentences), my Lady, each year.
13	Ms Kate Blackwell KC says that the CCRC has begun
14	work in assessing the application and that it
15	anticipates further submissions and reports being made
16	to it. Furthermore, she says that a meeting has been
17	set up between Letby's defence team and an allocated
18	commissioner. No time period has been given for this.
19	If the case is referred by the Criminal Cases
20	Review Commission to the Court of Appeal, the listing
21	and hearing of any appeal in the Court of Appeal will
22	also take time. On any view, the pause requested is for
23	an unknown period in circumstances where currently
24	matters have proceeded no further than an application to
25	the CCRC.
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1	safeguarding were overlooked. We heard from
2	Dr Garstang, a clinical associate professor of child
3	protection at the School of Nursing, who gave evidence
4	on safeguarding and the child death review process, that
5	NHS England had not yet agreed to funding for the RCPCH
6	to update the Kennedy guidance. We heard yesterday from
7	NHS England and the RCPCH that a commitment has now been
8	made in respect of funding for that work.
9	There is clearly work to be done in 2025 to ensure
10	that all those working in the NHS understand their
11	duties and responsibilities towards babies in hospital,
12	and that deliberate harm being caused on their ward or
13	in their hospital is always a possibility.
14	We agree with the submissions made by

15 Ms Fiona Scolding KC yesterday that the culture of 16 safeguarding within education and schools appears far 17 more developed than the culture within the NHS when it 18 comes to evaluating any risks posed to children or 19 babies from staff. 20 It is significant that where it was relevant to do 21 so, all of the Core Participants in their submissions 22 agree that the police should have been called earlier to 23 investigate suspicions and concerns about Letby, and the 24 increase in sudden and unexpected neonatal deaths at the

- Countess of Chester. Furthermore, there is general 25
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Set against delaying your work now, my Lady, is a central purpose of your report. That purpose is to help keep babies safe in hospital in the future. You will only achieve that purpose by identifying shortcomings, failures in safeguarding, oversight and culture, and by making recommendations where it is necessary to do so. Those recommendations will, of course, be influenced by the facts as you find them to be. We agree with Mr Skelton KC that there is a risk 10 recommendations lose force when they are dissociated 11 from facts. 12 The convictions of Letby resulted in this public 13 inquiry being ordered. Unsurprisingly, the Inquiry 14 legal team addressed the issues and questions raised in 15 the Terms of Reference upon the basis of her guilt. As 16 a matter of fact, Letby stands convicted of multiple 17 murders and attempted murders. We submit that it would 18 have been wrong in law to have approached this Inquiry 19 in any other way. Throughout we have observed the 20 requirement for the need to act with fairness towards 21 all parties, not least Letby's victims and their 22 families 23 It is recognised by all Core Participants that 24 sudden unexpected death in infancy protocols were not 25 followed, and basic principles and practice of 178 consensus that a safeguarding culture within the hospital and more widely did not adequately address the possibility of deliberate harm being caused by a member of staff. The Families' teams and most of the Core Participants have given great assistance to the

Inquiry on the important topic of recommendations. You were clear, my Lady, that existence of this Inquiry should not prevent any organisation from understanding 10 internal investigations or implementing any changes 11 aimed at improving safeguarding and culture. For 12 example, we received evidence during the Inquiry about the Nursing and Midwifery Council's reviews of its own 13 14 internal processes and the role of its Employer Link 15 Service. NHS England, meanwhile, have undertaken 16 a review on the control of insulin. 17 In all of the circumstances, whether or not there 18 is a prospect of a referral by the CCRC to the Court of 19 Appeal or any successful appeal by Letby, we submit 20 there is no need to pause this Inquiry in the terms 21 requested. It is not unfair to the former executives 22 for you to complete your task. My Lady, you will arrive 23 at your conclusions and judge all of the witnesses by 24 what they knew and did at the time, and not with the 25 benefit of hindsight. Where you are able and consider

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1 it necessary to make recommendations which will 2 contribute to keeping babies safe in hospital in the 3 future, we submit that there is an obligation to do so. 4 On matters beyond the pause application, there is 5 some suggestion in the submissions of the former 6 executives that the narrative of the Inquiry was to 7 accept the doctors' accusations of bullying against them 8 without the necessary scrutiny required. That is 9 rejected. Both doctors and senior managers faced 10 difficult and challenging questions, and it is the 11 answers that were given which you will assess. 12 As the submissions of the Family Groups 13 demonstrate in particular, omissions or actions by both 14 doctors and senior managers were scrutinised. All of 15 the witnesses from whom we heard evidence were sent 16 detailed requests for evidence by the Inquiry legal 17 team. They were in most cases provided with extensive 18 documentation, including previous accounts they had 19 given, in order to assist their recollection of events. 20 They had seen every document they were referred to in 21 the witness box in advance. Where witnesses were 22 represented, their own counsel were able to ask 23 questions of the witness at the end, in order to pick up 24 issues as they saw fit. Some witnesses were more 25 reflective than others about the challenges that arose 181

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1It is also important to make clear about our2process that Core Participant legal teams have had3access to a vast amount of underlying documents on4Relativity. Core Participants were able to identify5documents that they considered to be of relevance and6documents that they believe should be explored in oral7evidence.

8 The closing submissions refer to materials adduced 9 in evidence and which are published on the website. 10 They also refer in some cases (the CQC, for example) to materials disclosed to Core Participants as part of the 11 12 Inquiry's investigation but which have not been adduced 13 in oral evidence. Often, that cohort of material 14 includes information that is sensitive and irrelevant. 15 Realistically, it is neither proportionate nor necessary 16 to spend further time and cost publishing these 17 documents on the website. 18 The Inquiry witness process relies on extensive

collaboration between all of the legal representatives,
and the Inquiry has benefited and is grateful for the
assistance of all counsel and solicitors with this. The
Inquiry received 364 written statements, 18 statements
in respect of Part A of the Terms of Reference, 250
statements in respect of Part B, and 96 statements in
respect of Part C.

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1 at the time in the hospital and how they responded. 2 Most accepted they should or could have acted 3 differently. The significance of their reflections, 4 my Lady, and how they expressed them is ultimately 5 a matter for you. 6 In its opening last September, the Inquiry legal 7 team set out details of the written evidence received 8 and many of the questions or issues to be addressed by 9 the witnesses. The role of the Inquiry legal team was 10 to test the evidence of all of the witnesses who gave 11 oral evidence, particularly where documents and 12 contemporaneous records were inconsistent with what was 13 being said, and where there were conflicting accounts 14 between witnesses. As Chair of this Inquiry (and having 15 listened to every witness), my Lady, it is for you alone 16 to assess the totality of the evidence and the role of 17 each witness in the events as they unfolded. 18 When writing your report, where you decide that 19 any person or organisation should be criticised for any 20 reason, they will have the opportunity to respond to 21 a confidential warning letter in the summer outlining 22 potential criticisms to be made. You will consider each 23 response to any warning letter before you finally 24 determine what comments or criticisms you make in

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a published report.

1 The oral hearings began on 10 September 2024, and 2 concluded on 17 January 2025. A final witness gave 3 evidence on 24 February 2025 (as it was more appropriate 4 to hear the evidence of this witness after employment 5 proceedings had completed). 6 All Core Participant legal teams were invited to 7 comment on a provisional witness list and identify any 8 further witnesses they wished you, my Lady, to call. Some Core Participants did identify further witnesses to 9 10 be called, and witnesses were added. 11 The Inquiry heard oral evidence from 134 12 witnesses. As with all public inquiries, and pursuant 13 to a Rule 10 process under The Inquiry Rules, what 14 witnesses were to be asked about involved a review, week 15 by week, and collaboration between legal teams. Where 16 Core Participant advocates applied for permission to 17 question any witness themselves, this was agreed by 18 Counsel to the Inquiry in every case. My Lady, you were 19 not asked to adjudicate on any such application. 20 In addition to the questions asked directly by the 21 Core Participant advocates, Core Participants can and 22 did submit a number of questions, topics or documents 23 that they sought Counsel to the Inquiry to explore or 24 ask a witness about on their behalf. 25 In conclusion, my Lady, the Inquiry legal process 184

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1	has worked as it should and has been a fair and
2	collaborative one. Counsel and Solicitor to the Inquiry
3	would like to acknowledge that from the Core Participant
4	teams.
5	Finally, we submit that you should not accede to
6	the request to pause in your report writing or warning
7	letter process. Letby's convictions result from a full
8	and lengthy judicial process. Delaying report writing
9	and your consideration of recommendations would not be
10	fair to the Families where they have given evidence to
11	you and are motivated to prevent the suffering of others
12	in the future. It would not be fair to organisational
13	Core Participants where they seek to improve the culture
14	and safety of babies in hospital.
15	And contrary to the assertion made, we submit it
16	is not unfair to the former executives either. They
17	will be judged by what they did and said at the time,
18	and not the benefit of hindsight.
19	The matter of the timing or publication of your
20	report and/or sections of your report, of course, remain
21	a matter that you should and are able to keep under
22	review.
23	Those are our submissions, my Lady.
24	LADY JUSTICE THIRLWALL: Thank you very much indeed,
25	Ms Langdale.
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1	So that concludes all the submissions and
2	counsel's response. We'll adjourn now. I'm going to be
3	sitting at 12 o'clock tomorrow to give some closing
4	remarks and, if appropriate, I'll give you my decision
5	on the application, but you'll be told about that some
6	time tomorrow morning, but whatever form the hearing
7	takes, I don't foresee that it will take more than
8	an hour for those of who you have to plan your lives.
9	So thank you all very much for the submissions
10	today and yesterday and I'll see you tomorrow.
11	(4.13 pm)
12	(The Inquiry adjourned until 12.00 pm
13	on Wednesday, 19 March 2025)
13 14	on Wednesday, 19 March 2025)
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