
Provisional Notice of Determination

1. By an OPEN application and witness statement dated 12 June 2026 and CLOSED versions of that application and witness statement, the Met Office applied for:
 - A. The redaction of the name of the witness who has provided a statement to the Inquiry on behalf of the Met Office.
 - B. The redaction of the names of all other Met Office junior officials named in the statement or in exhibits or other supporting material.
 - C. The redaction of references to the “national security-facing element” at the Met Office within exhibits and supporting material (this means references to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] within exhibits and supporting material).
 - D. Redaction of a reference to a single location in a 2022 organogram (mans001:00028076).
2. Although the application is for the redaction of the name of the witness, it amounts to an application that the witness be granted anonymity. This is because the Met Office wants to withhold the identity of the witness from other Inquiry Participants and from the public. If the witness were required to give oral evidence in the Inquiry, then the Met Office would want their evidence to be given under conditions of anonymity. There is a very real distinction between seeking anonymity for a witness and seeking the redaction of the names of individuals which appear in underlying materials.

3. The content of the CLOSED versions of the application and witness statement are similar to the open versions. The OPEN versions redact some information which is unredacted in the CLOSED versions. The exhibit to the CLOSED statement is a [REDACTED], which reveals nothing beyond that which is contained in the statement itself.
4. The Met Office first disclosed material to the Inquiry on 24 July 2025. It raised the issue of the redaction of this material on 27 May 2026. It raised the anonymisation of the Met Office witness on 22 May 2026, after the witness statement had been finalised and signed.
5. For the reasons set out below, I am minded to reject this application (save in some limited respects). This is a provisional decision, and I will permit the application to be renewed subject to the conditions set out at the end of this determination.

The basis of the Met Office's application

6. On 29 May 2026, the Inquiry responded to an indication by the Met Office that it would seek the redaction of the name of all junior officials including the author of its corporate witness statement. The Inquiry indicated that, in relation to the redaction of the name of the witness, this would amount to an application for anonymity and would have to satisfy the legal tests for the grant of anonymity (for example by reference to Articles 8 and 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights or by reference to the common law test for the grant of anonymity (see Re Officer L [2007] 1 WLR 2135). In relation to the application to redact the names of officials, the Inquiry informed the Met Office that this would be determined by reference to the principles set out in IAB v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2024] 1 WLR 1916.
7. On 12 June 2026, the Met Office made the applications for redactions of the information set out above. The application was made by a different witness (not the witness providing a statement to the Inquiry about Manston). The Met Office separately seeks to withhold from Inquiry Participants disclosure of the name of the witness providing evidence about the need for anonymity and redactions.

8. The Met Office suggested (in a covering letter of 12 June 2026) that it is limited in terms of the level of detail it can provide in submissions at an OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE classification. It suggested that further information, in support of the application, could be provided to suitably cleared members of the Inquiry team. I note that the MOD was able to provide sufficient written evidence, in the form of OPEN and CLOSED statements (with an official-sensitive classification), to demonstrate a need for the redaction of the names of junior officials. I do not regard myself as able to take into account information provided only to members of the Inquiry Legal Team, outside the provision of evidence in a CLOSED process (and which presumably I could not refer to in any determination). I have not taken the course invited by the Met Office. For the reasons set out below, I do not accept that the Met Office could not have provided more information to the Inquiry to support its application for anonymity and redaction.

The witness statement

9. The witness in respect of whom the Met Office seeks anonymity has provided a seven-page statement to the Inquiry in which she states that she joined the Met Office in 2006 as an Operational Meteorologist “*working mainly in Defence Meteorology supporting Ministry of Defence (MOD) operations both in the UK and overseas*”. I will refer to this witness as ‘Witness X’ in order to distinguish her from the other anonymous witness that the Met Office seeks to rely upon to support its application for anonymity and redactions. I will refer to that witness as Witness Y.
10. The Inquiry sought a statement from the Met Office because it wanted evidence about the work which the Met Office did, in 2022, to support the forecasting of numbers of people crossing the English Channel from France by small boat. The statement of Witness X is focused upon evidence about the analysis and forecasting which the Met Office carried out about small boat arrivals and the support which the Met Office gave to the Home Office in this regard.
11. X’s witness statement produces two examples of the sorts of forecast which the Met Office generated for the Home Office. These examples include a section on “ *Comment*” but these are comments about whether the conditions might or might not be favourable for crossing. For example, the forecast at [mans001:000133691] states: “*The*

wind is likely to ease slightly and become more westerly leading to an overall reduction in significant wave heights, although conditions are likely to remain unfavourable for small boat crossings. The change to a westerly wind is likely to reduce the shelter along the northeast beaches leading to unfavourable launch conditions on all beaches. At the same time cloud bases are likely to lift slightly leading to slightly improved aviation conditions.”

12. These are comments on past weather conditions and there is nothing inherently sensitive about them. The Met Office also produced assessments for the purposes of Operation Deveran (a maritime operation to interdict and deter small boat crossings in the English Channel). However, Witness X’s statement simply explains that the Met Office analysed trends and patterns in crossings which were then applied to the forecast conditions to assess when small boats were likely to attempt crossings. The statement also produces some of these assessments and which contain [REDACTED] comments. Again, these comments do not contain any sensitive information - they are projections based upon past weather conditions.
13. In summary, the witness statement provided by Witness X contains information which is limited and anodyne. There is nothing inherently sensitive about it. Had the statement not referred to the witness having worked “*mainly in Defence Meteorology*”, there would have been nothing on the face of the statement to suggest that the witness’ work was related to defence or national security matters.

The basis upon which the Met Office seeks anonymity for this witness

14. As noted above, the Met Office provided a witness statement (by Witness Y) in support of the application for anonymity and for the redactions sought by a witness whose name does not appear in the OPEN application. This witness is the head of a national security-facing element at the Met Office. As I set out below, this national security part of the Met Office is publicly known about. Its existence is not a secret.
15. According to Witness Y if the name of Witness X became public or the names of junior officials were not redacted (or the other information not redacted) this would create, or materially increase, risks to the effective functioning and national security role of the

national security-facing element at the Met Office [§4]. Witness Y also states that the Met Office is concerned that disclosure of Witness X's name or the information (which the Met Office seeks redaction of), would create, or materially increase, risks to the security and effectiveness of Met Office analysts [§4].

16. Witness Y does not suggest that the Met Office work in supporting the Home Office to make forecasts about small boat arrivals, is particularly sensitive. Rather Witness Y states [§6]:

“While work relating to small boat crossings is undertaken at a lower level of sensitivity, the majority of the team’s work is undertaken in support of national security at higher levels of sensitivity. The national security-facing element at the Met Office supports a range of cross-government departments.”

17. Witness Y also states that the work relating to small boat crossings is only “*a small aspect*” of the national security-facing element of the Met Office’s overall responsibilities [§5].

18. It is thus clear that the Met Office is not seeking anonymity for Witness X because of her role or the role of the Met Office in relation to producing forecasts about small boat crossings. The concern is that the witness and the Met Office undertake *other* more sensitive work.

19. Witness Y goes on to state that the Met Office is “*extremely concerned*” that any further disclosure relating to the national security-facing element at the Met Office and its analysts would risk revealing the capabilities utilised within the department and would thereby prejudice the work carried out in support of those organisations. [§6].

20. In terms of explaining how any such risk would arise, Witness Y suggests that the Met Office has to maintain confidentiality around the identity of personnel undertaking national security related work, the internal structure of the team, and the locations from which certain elements of that work are undertaken [§7].

21. Witness Y suggests that the Met Office asks other organisations to treat identifying information about Met Office personnel or its structures sensitively. He states that where sensitive work is undertaken, even relatively basic identifying information, such as names, or organisational references, contribute to exposure to risk, especially when combined with other information [§10].
22. Witness Y characterises the application in relation to Witness X, as an application for redaction not an application that a witness be granted anonymity [§12]. Witness Y relies upon the fact that this witness has an appropriate level of security clearance and that they must fill in a form annually which confirms that they have not publicly discussed details of their role or security clearance in a way that could render them vulnerable to targeting or exploitation. Witness Y suggests that disclosure of Witness X's name through the Inquiry would contribute to a new and materially different association, namely between her identity, the work described in her statement, and the team structure within which she works (e.g., the 2022 Organogram (reference: mans001:00028076)). I note that this organogram does not contain the name of any individual [§§15-16].
23. Witness Y also states that disclosure of Witness X's name would also be likely to impede her ability to perform her current role effectively.

Redaction of Junior Officials' names

24. Witness Y's evidence as to why the names of junior officials ought to be redacted is that they are or have been engaged in sensitive work and hold security clearance at an appropriate level [§19]. The same general points are made in support of that application as are made in respect of the application concerning Witness X. For example, Witness Y states that these junior officials also have to make declarations as to whether they have publicly disclosed information about their security clearance in a way that would render them vulnerable to being targeted or exploited by hostile actors [§21]. Witness Y also relies upon the identity of those witnesses being of limited evidential value to the Inquiry.

Location Information

25. Witness Y states that the location-specific reference within the 2022 Organogram (reference: mans001:00028076) ought to be redacted because it would provide a more precise understanding as to where an individual or team operates from.

Met Office Written Submissions

26. The Met Office provided a three-page submission in support of the application for anonymity and redaction. That submission did not address the case law on the threshold which needs to be met before a witness is granted anonymity. The submission does not address IAB v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2024] 1 WLR 1916 in respect of the test to be met for the redaction of junior officials' names.

Inquiry Participant Responses to the Met Office Application

27. By letter dated 24 June 2026, the Ministry of Justice indicated to the Inquiry that it supported the Met Office's application on the basis of the OPEN material supplied and essentially for the same reasons as the Met Office advances.
28. Joint submissions were filed on behalf of those Inquiry Participants represented by Deighton Pierce Glynn, Bhatt Murphy, Bindmans, Duncan Lewis, Gold Jennings and Wilsons Solicitors on 26 June. As a preliminary matter, it was jointly submitted (in summary) that the open application did not provide sufficient information to enable Inquiry Participants to make submissions. Inquiry Participants were provided with the Met Office exhibits in OPEN form and permitted to make additional submissions having regard to these. Further joint submissions were received on 6 July 2026.
29. On the substantive application, it was jointly submitted, in response to the application that the witness be anonymised that this application should not be granted for reasons that include:
- A. Witness X is the only witness providing evidence on behalf of the Met Office.

- B. Witness X gives material evidence on issues including issues 39, 40 and 42 of the Inquiry's list of issues (forecasting and planning for arrivals, the foreseeability of the increases, and the decision-making in response [July submissions at §§6-8]).
- C. Following and testing her evidence depends in part on knowing who she is.
- D. Witness X's name is already in a published employment tribunal judgment and she can have no reasonable expectation of confidentiality in her name.
- E. The work she describes is not sensitive national security work and would not reveal the broader national-security work performed by the Met Office.
- F. The application does not identify any specific threat to the witness or how this would undermine her effectiveness in performing her current role.

30. In relation to the other aspects of the application, it was jointly submitted that:

- A. As regards the redaction of junior official's names, IAB requires that the names of officials below the Senior Civil Service are not routinely redacted from disclosable documents but that redaction is permissible only "where it is necessary for good and sufficient reason"; that such officials have no reasonable expectation of confidentiality because they exercise public functions; and that routine redaction imperils both the intelligibility of documents and, most importantly, public confidence in the ability of an Inquiry to scrutinise the evidence. The joint submission focuses (amongst other points) upon the absence of evidence as to what any good and sufficient reason for redaction is.
- B. In relation to the redaction of the national security-facing element, a blanket redaction of any reference to the element cannot be "necessary" or the case for it "properly made out" given that this information is in the public domain.
- C. A single reference to a genuinely operational location, the disclosure of which would, on evidence, materially increase identification risk, may in principle be a proper candidate for targeted redaction or ciphering. This would not be objected to if the Chair were satisfied that there was a proper basis for redaction.

Legal framework

- 31. It is a general principle of constitutional law that justice is administered by courts in public and is therefore subject to public scrutiny. This general principle also applies to inquiries which conduct their work in public. The concept of open justice is of obvious

importance in the context of any inquiry which has been instituted precisely because the events under investigation require objective and independent scrutiny and where witnesses will be examined in hearings.

32. In re Officer L [2007] UKHL 36; [2007] 1 WLR 2135 remains the leading authority on the threshold which must be met before a witness will be granted anonymity. In Officer L, the applicants were serving or former police officers who were due to be called as witnesses at a public inquiry into a death caused during an affray. The House of Lords held that under Article 2 ECHR, the tribunal had to ask itself whether there was a "real and immediate" risk to life which would be created or materially increased by compelling the witnesses to give evidence without anonymity. For the purposes of Article 2, a "real risk" is one that is "objectively verified" [§20].
33. The correct question to ask is whether, in respect of the applicant for anonymity, the risk to life would be materially increased if they were required to give evidence without anonymity [In Re Officer L at §24].
34. Where an Applicant for anonymity relies upon Article 8 ECHR (a qualified right), then the question is whether there is sufficient public interest in the witness being identified to justify any curtailment of his right (or the right of his family) to respect for their private and family life - see Secretary of State for the Home Department v AP [2010] 1 WLR 1652 (at §7).
35. The principles which apply to a tribunal's common law duty of fairness towards the persons whom it proposes to call to give evidence before it are distinct and different to those which apply under Article 2. They include concerns other than the risk to life. Subjective fears, even if not well-founded, can be taken into account [In Re Officer L at §22]. Other factors could make it unfair to require a witness to give evidence without anonymity [In Re Officer L at §22]. Whether a witness should be compelled to give evidence without anonymity is to be determined by balancing a number of factors in order to reach a determination [In Re Officer L at §22]. These factors include any need to protect the applicant's interests (on the one hand) and the need to ensure that evidence

is subject to public scrutiny and that inquiry proceedings attract public confidence, on the other [*In Re Officer L* at §26].

36. As regards the redaction of the names of junior officials, in *R(IAB) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2024] EWCA Civ 66; [2024] 1 WLR 1916, the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court’s decision that it was not permissible for Secretaries of State, as a matter of routine, to redact the names of civil servants outside the Senior Civil Service from documents disclosed in proceedings.

37. At first instance ([2023] EWHC 2930 (Admin); [2024] 1 WLR 1876), Swift J rejected the submission that the names of junior officials could be redacted on the basis that most of the names were irrelevant to the issues in the claim [§17]:

“A document that has been disclosed in judicial review proceedings ought not, absent good reason, be redacted on grounds of relevance in any way that impairs either the actuality or the appearance of a ‘cards face upwards’ approach.”

38. Swift J concluded at [§22]:

“Drawing these points together, the principle that ought to guide the approach in judicial review proceedings is that absent good reason to the contrary (which might, for example, include that the information in question was subject to a legal obligation of confidentiality), redaction on grounds of relevance alone ought to be confined to clear situations where the information redacted does not concern the decision under challenge. The names the Secretaries of State seek to protect are not in this class. Names of civil servants should not routinely be redacted from disclosable documents; redaction should take place only where it is necessary for good and sufficient reason. This conclusion is consistent with the obligation of candour and with the general principle of co-operation between public authorities and the court that is one foundation for judicial scrutiny. This approach will also guard against the practical difficulties caused by excessive redaction [...].”

39. The Court of Appeal upheld the first instance decision, concluding that there was no authority which supported the routine redaction of names, or other detail not directly

relevant to the outcome of the dispute [§24]. Judicial review was not akin to routine civil litigation in this regard. The Court of Appeal concluded as follows at §27:

“The redaction of the names of everyone taking part in discussions at meetings or sending or receiving e-mails, even if excluding ministers and the top 2% of civil servants, would result in disclosed documents which were covered in black spaces. Such documents are far more difficult to understand than documents which give the names of those involved. Without ciphers the documents, especially e-mail chains, might be barely intelligible; but the process of replacing the names with ciphers would often be extremely laborious. One would think that members of the Government Legal Department, even junior ones, had better things to do with their time. With respect to Sir James, I agree with Swift J that it is glib to say that the only argument against redaction is that it may make a document “a bit less easy to read” and that this counts for little when weighed in the balance against his arguments on relevance.”

40. The Court of Appeal accepted that there would be cases in which redactions were justified. This would include parts of a document (for example a note of a meeting) concerned with a *wholly* different subject matter from that in issue or for reasons of national security or where there was evidence of a real risk to the personal safety of the individual concerned. The extent of such risks did not justify a general practice of redaction [§29].
41. LAB thus provides clear authority for the following propositions:
- i. There is no general principle which justifies the redaction of junior civil servants’ names and that, to the contrary, there are important reasons why their names should not be redacted.
 - ii. Junior civil servants do not have a reasonable expectation of confidentiality.
 - iii. Whether specific information in a relevant document is irrelevant is to be construed narrowly by reference to whether it is a different subject matter to the matter being litigated.
 - iv. It may be justifiable to redact names for reasons of national security or where there is evidence of a real risk to the personal safety of the individual concerned.

42. In Dana Astra IOOO v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs [2025] EWHC 289 (Admin), Saini J permitted the redaction of 49 civil servants' names in underlying disclosure in a judicial review (related to the UK sanctions regime). He acceded to the application in short terms [at §§100-101]:

“100. I will summarise the position and my reasons for acceding to the application in OPEN. In short, the Government of Belarus poses a threat to UK national security, both directly and through its close relationship with Russia. The Belarusian security and intelligence apparatus has close operational and other links with its Russian counterpart, and has adopted a military doctrine which identifies the “Anglo-Saxon alliance” (understood as a reference to the US and UK) as Belarus’s main external security threat. Against that background, 15 four particular threats arise in relation to the disclosure of the names of officials working on the UK sanctions regime: (i) threats of hostile cyber activity (as to which a Belarusian cyber-espionage group with suspected links to Russian counterparts was identified in August 2023 with a focus on targeting foreign embassies and compromising the devices of embassy staff from a number of countries); (ii) threats of espionage (in circumstances where UK sanctions decisions, which represent a key pillar of UK foreign and security policy, are likely to be of interest to hostile foreign powers including Belarus and Russia); (iii) threats of retaliatory measures (which would be consistent with threats issued by President Lukashenko and the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, against the backdrop of suggestions by Dmitry Medvedev (Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council) that civil servants are considered legitimate targets for such retaliation, and evidence of a number of security incidents involving FCDO officials apparently relating to their work on Russia-related matters); and (iv) threats of reciprocal sanctions.

101. In my judgment, this evidence amply satisfies the requirement to show “good and specific reasons” of the type and nature contemplated by IAB. To be balanced against the risks to national security posed (in the particular context of this case) by disclosure of the names of civil servants is the peripheral relevance of those names to the issues in dispute. The identities of relevant officials are not themselves relevant to the pleaded issues. At best, they provide some context to the decision-making process and improve the overall comprehensibility of the disclosed documents. That marginal benefit is outweighed by the serious and concrete risks identified in the evidence.”

The Inquiry's Phase 2 Anonymity and Redaction Protocol.

43. The Inquiry's Phase 2 Anonymity and Redaction Protocol makes specific provision for the making of applications for anonymity. Paragraphs 20-22 read as follows:

"20. In considering applications for anonymity, the Inquiry will balance the need to protect individuals' rights and risks of harm against the public interest in transparently, openly and thoroughly investigating the matters and issues set out in its Terms of Reference.

21. In this regard, the Inquiry considers that the 'risk of harm' may include risks relating to death or injury to individuals as well as risks to the United Kingdom's national security, international relations and national economic interests which may arise from revealing an individual's identity.

22. The Inquiry's reference to 'individual rights' includes those rights enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 such as the right to life and the right to respect for private and family life (Articles 2 and 8 respectively of the European Convention of Human Rights). The Inquiry is also mindful of the requirement to respect persons' data protection and privacy rights in a manner which fulfils its obligations as a Data Controller under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018."

44. The Protocol also sets out the factors that I will take into account in considering applications for anonymity (at paragraph 25):

- A. The public interest in transparency, openness and thoroughly investigating the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
- B. The risk of harm to individuals and/or the United Kingdom occasioned by revealing particular identities.
- C. The potential impact of identification on the individual's human rights.
- D. Such other factors as I consider relevant to the determination.

Provisional determination of the application

45. I am minded to reject the Met Office's application that Witness X be granted anonymity. The Met Office has not addressed nor provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that naming Witness X would be incompatible with her Article 2 or Article 8 rights or otherwise be unfair (in accordance with the common law). The principal problem the Met Office faces is that Witness X is giving evidence about one small aspect of her work which is not particularly sensitive and is not conducted (as I understand from the Met Office application) under conditions of secrecy or under an official SECRET classification. The witness statement does not set out or explain that this witness undertakes *other* work which is more sensitive. The statement does not explain that Witness X is part of a broader team of people undertaking work which engages more significant national security considerations. The information that Witness X has a more sensitive national security role comes from the application for the redaction of Witness X's name, not from the witness statement itself. No one reading the statement would obtain any details about Witness X's other more sensitive work. As explained above, the statement is a limited one, which provides some information about the fact that the Met Office provided information analysis and forecasting to the Home Office to assist it to determine the numbers of people who might arrive by small boat in 2022.
46. The Met Office has not demonstrated how the provision of this limited evidence by Witness X could possibly lead to the wider risks the Met Office relies upon in relation to its other more sensitive work.
47. Witness Y does not explain how, if the witness were named in relation to Manston, it would be apparent to any observer that the witness undertook other, more sensitive work. Put another way: if the fact that the Met Office or Witness X undertake more sensitive work is not in the public domain, how does naming the witness in the context of this Inquiry add to any risk she (or the Met Office) might be exposed to?
48. Nor am I satisfied that the application provides sufficient evidence that the witness would be at an increased risk of being targeted by hostile actors if her role in relation to Manston were made public. This is asserted but no evidence is given about why this risk would arise. The fact that Witness X has an appropriate level of security clearance

is not sufficient to demonstrate this. Across government, many civil servants have higher levels of security clearance because of the sensitive nature of their work and the need for them to have access to (for example) SECRET information. That does not of itself entitle them to give evidence anonymously in any proceedings. In this Inquiry, the Met Office has provided no real evidence about the specific risks Witness X might be exposed to if her identity were known. For example, it has provided no evidence that Met Office staff are being targeted by foreign agents because of the nature of the work they undertake (and has not explained how Witness X's name being known in this Inquiry would increase the risk of such targeting).

49. I do not accept that this sort of information has been omitted from the application because the Met Office can only rely upon material cleared to OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE level. As noted above, the MOD was subject to the same restriction and yet was able to provide sufficient information to justify the grant of the application for the redaction of junior officials' names.
50. This application fails for the basic reason that it does not establish a nexus between naming the witness in relation to her evidence about Manston and the risks that would pertain to Witness X because of the *other* work Witness X undertakes. It also fails because the evidence does not demonstrate that Witness X would be at an increased risk of being targeted by hostile actors or that the Met Office's other sensitive work would be jeopardised if the identity of this witness were made known in this Inquiry.
51. Insofar as any risk might arise from the contents of the application for anonymity and redaction itself, the Inquiry can deal with that by not publishing the application on its website.
52. The grant of anonymity to a witness, in any proceedings, is a very significant step. Courts and Inquiries are expected to approach such applications with rigour. An application for anonymity is not something that any tribunal accedes to lightly. I would have expected the Met Office to consider other ways in which it could present its evidence so as to avoid seeking anonymity. For example, if the Met Office is concerned that the witness mentions that she has a background in defence-related work, a first step might have been to ask the Inquiry to redact that information on grounds that it is not

relevant. A similar application could have been made in respect of the assessments that Witness X exhibits and which mention Met Office defence-related work. An application to redact limited parts of these assessments on grounds of irrelevance could have been made.

53. As noted above, the Met Office has not sought to argue or to provide any evidence, for the purposes of Article 2 ECHR, that there would be a risk to Witness X's life in the event that she was named in these proceedings. I do not find that Witness X's Article 2 rights are engaged by this application.

54. Nor has the Met Office sought to argue that it would be incompatible with Witness X's Article 8 rights if she were identified in this Inquiry. Witness Y states that the identification of Witness X would impede her ability to perform her current role effectively and may necessitate reallocation of her responsibilities. Witness Y explains at §15 of the statement in support of the application, that public disclosure of sensitive roles or certain clearance-related information may render an individual vulnerable to targeting, exploitation, pressure or compromise by hostile actors. Witness Y suggests that disclosure of Witness X's identity, combined with contextual information about her role and organisational placement, would put her at risk of being the target of a hostile actor.

55. If I were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to support this contention, I would accept that it has the potential to engage Witness X's Article 8 rights. However, I am not satisfied that Witness Y's evidence adequately explains why the revelation of Witness X's name in this Inquiry (in the context of her giving very limited evidence about matters which are not particularly sensitive) would alert foreign actors to her undertaking other more sensitive work and that this work would potentially make her a target of hostile actors. I am unclear what *contextual information* Witness Y is referring to that increases any risk that Witness X would be subject to.

56. The application does not articulate any argument that, as a matter of common law, it would be unfair to name Witness X because of the implications for national security in

naming her or because of the consequences for Witness X personally (for example because of the impact on her career if she were named). I have nonetheless considered this but, for all of the reasons set out above, I am not satisfied that the Met Office has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate a risk to national security should Witness X be named. Nor am I satisfied that the Met Office has provided sufficient evidence that, if Witness X were to be named in these proceedings, she would be redeployed to a different role or that there is a serious risk of this occurring. I have therefore concluded that it would not be unfair to name Witness X in these proceedings.

57. Because this is a provisional decision, the Met Office has an opportunity to renew this application. If it does so I will expect it to address the case law which applies to such applications and to address my broader point as to whether it needs to make such an application at all when it could instead ask the Inquiry to make some limited redactions (on grounds of irrelevance) that would mean that the evidence could be given without reference to Witness X's or the Met Office's wider work.

58. In relation to the application to redact the names of other junior officials, neither the application nor the witness statement identifies what good and sufficient reasons exist for their redaction. The application does not actually specify that the named individuals are engaged in sensitive, national security-related work. It does not explain how naming these individuals, in the context of the limited evidence provided by the Met Office to this Inquiry, will alert hostile actors to the fact that these individuals are engaged in other more sensitive work. There is no evidence as to why hostile actors might be interested in targeting these individuals on account of the work they undertake.

59. As regards the application to redact the national security-facing element within the Met Office (i.e. the references to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]), as I have noted above, this part of the Met Office is known about publicly - it is not secret. It is extremely difficult to see how describing this part of the organisation as 'national security-facing' (as opposed to giving this part of the organisation its title) reduces any risk to which the Met Office might be exposed. Presumably what the Met Office is concerned about is the risk of it being more widely known that it undertakes national security work. I do not see how using the term 'national security-facing' remedies this concern.

60. As noted above, I have suggested that the Met Office consider whether it wants to pursue an application for anonymity for Witness X and whether its concerns can be met by redacting some irrelevant information about its wider national security work. I will not make a determination on the Met Office's application about references to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] pending its response to this suggestion. As set out above, the Met Office may wish to consider seeking redaction of references to its national security work rather than pursuing an application for the anonymity of Witness X.

61. I am content to redact the reference to a single location in the 2022 organogram (mans001:00028076). First, this information is not relevant to the evidence which Witness X provides about the Met Office contribution, in 2022, to the work of assessing the numbers of people who might cross the channel by small boat. Second, it is in any event a limited redaction. Third, it will reduce Met Office concerns about the provision of detail which may, in conjunction with other information, pose a risk to its wider national security related work.

Conclusion

62. For the reasons set out above, I am minded to reject the Met Office application save to the limited extent I have indicated above. I will permit the Met Office to renew the application or to make a different application for redaction (rather than anonymity) subject to the following directions:

- A. Any such application must be made within 14 days of service of this Determination.
- B. If the Met Office wishes to address any evidential points made in this Determination, it must do so in a further witness statement (which must also be served within 14 days of service of this Determination).

63. The Inquiry intends to circulate this Determination to Inquiry Participants but not to publish it subject to my giving further directions. Please inform the Inquiry within 48 hours of service if you object to the Inquiry circulating this Determination to Inquiry Participants. The words which are highlighted are words which the Inquiry would

redact before circulation in order to expedite it being circulated. You may notify the Inquiry if you consider that there are further redactions which ought to be made prior to circulation.

Sophie Cartwright KC

Chair to the Manston Independent Inquiry

17 July 2026