

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CLAIM NO: KB-2025-CDF-000046

CARDIFF DISTRICT REGISTRY

KING'S BENCH DIVISION

BETWEEN:-

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

Claimant

-and-

**(1) PERSONS UNKNOWN OCCUPYING LAND (AS SHOWN FOR
IDENTIFICATION EDGED RED ON THE ATTACHED PLAN 1)**

WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CLAIMANT

**(2) PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTEST (i) ENTER,
OCCUPY OR REMAIN UPON; (ii) BLOCK, OBSTRUCT OR INTERFERE
WITH ACCESS TO; OR (iii) ERECT ANY STRUCTURE (INCLUDING TENTS,
GAZEBOS OR SLEEPING EQUIPMENT), ON THE SITES (AS SHOWN FOR
IDENTIFICATION EDGED BLUE ON THE ATTACHED PLAN 2)**

WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CLAIMANT

Defendants

-and-

EUROPEAN LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE

Intervener

WITNESS STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR WENDY LARNER

**I, Professor Wendy Larner of Cardiff University, University Secretary's Office, Cardiff, CF10 3AT,
will state as follows:-**

INTRODUCTION

1. I am the Vice-Chancellor at Cardiff University ("**the University**").
2. I make this Witness Statement for the purpose of the Review Hearing listed for 21 July 2026, to update the Court on the contemporaneous position following the Order made by Sir Peter Lane on 13 June 2025 granting an injunction (as detailed below) until the end of the current academic year on 31 July 2026.

3. I am duly authorised by the University to make this Witness Statement on its behalf.
4. Insofar as the facts and matters referred to herein are within my own knowledge, they are true and in so far as they are not within my own direct knowledge, they are true to the best of my information and belief, acquired in the course of acting in my capacity as Vice-Chancellor of the University.
5. I have been assisted with drafting this witness statement following discussions with the University's externally appointed solicitors, Shakespeare Martineau LLP.
6. There is now produced and shown to me a paginated bundle of copy documentation to which I shall refer in the course of this Witness Statement, marked "**WL1**".
7. I have had sight of the Witness Statement of John Bayley dated 23 May 2025 ("**Bayley 1**"), the Witness Statement of Natalie Frances Gilbert dated 27 May 2025 ("**Gilbert 1**") and the Witness Statement of Dr Paula Sanderson dated 28 May 2025 ("**Anderson 1**"), and I adopt the definitions that are contained within those Witness Statements.

BACKGROUND

8. As set out in **Anderson 1**, on 14 May 2024 a group known as "Cymru Students for Palestine" ("**the Group**") established an unauthorised encampment on Horseshoe Drive, one of the University's principal thoroughfares, which persisted for approximately nine weeks until 17 July 2024 ("**the 2024 Encampment**"). During this period, the University experienced significant disruption and escalating conduct, including large influxes of protesters following external rallies and marches, the display of an Israeli flag bearing the words "Wipe your Feet," and masked protesters blocking access to the Main Building. The encampment disbanded on 17 July 2024 following an agreement to enter into dialogue, though upon leaving, two members of the Group entered the Main Building, ripped off a window restrictor, and raised a Palestinian flag from the roof.
9. The impact on the University's operations was severe. Examinations had to be relocated at short notice, Horseshoe Drive was rendered unavailable for University events throughout the period, and graduation celebrations had to be moved behind fencing, significantly diminishing the experience for students and their families.

10. As set out in Anderson 1, almost a year later in May 2025, protest activity once again significantly escalated, in particular:
 - (a) On 6 May 2025, protesters occupied the Glamorgan Building;
 - (b) On 9 May 2025, a second encampment was established on Horseshoe Drive (“**the 2025 Encampment**”);
 - (c) On 16 May 2025, building blockades were imposed at multiple University buildings.
11. Given the escalation of the protest activity and the significant costs that were incurred during the academic year 2024-2025 in response to the 2024 Encampment, on 30 May 2025, the University issued its claim for possession and a precautionary injunction against persons unknown. Following service of the proceedings, the 2025 Encampment was disbanded but the real and imminent risk of unlawful direct action remained at large.
12. On 13 June 2025, Sir Peter Lane granted an injunction across eleven University sites (“**the Injunction Land**”) prohibiting without the University's consent (i) entering, occupying, or remaining upon the Injunction Land for the purposes of protest; (ii) directly blocking, obstructing, or interfering with access to the Injunction Land; or (iii) erecting any structure (including tents, gazebos, or sleeping equipment) on the Injunction Land (“**the Injunction**”). As the 2025 Encampment had been disbanded by that time as noted above, Sir Peter Lane adjourned the claim for possession generally.
13. A copy of Sir Peter Lane’s judgment, which sets out in detail the circumstances leading up to the grant of the Injunction, can be found at **pages 2 to 25 of WL1**.

EVENTS SINCE THE INJUNCTION WAS GRANTED

14. Since the Injunction was granted, the frequency and severity of incidents on University land have markedly decreased. I set out below the protest-related incidents of which the University is aware since 13 June 2025. In fact, on the occasions when protest activity has occurred on Injunction Land since the Injunction was granted, the protesters have complied upon being informed of the Injunction. For example:
 - a. On 13 September 2025, two separate protests occurred on the same day (**see pages 26 to 47 of WL1**). First, an animal rights protest involving six people took place at the Sir Martin Evans Building. When informed of the Injunction, the protesters complied immediately and moved off University land. Second, a pro-life group of four persons

set up a stall outside the Main Building gates. Upon being shown the terms of the Injunction, they responded that they would "*move it off your property and on to public highway*" and did so.

- b. On 12 November 2025, Time to Act Cardiff, wrote to the University stating its intention to hold a protest in front of the Main Building on 29 November at 6pm, enclosing a risk assessment form. The University subsequently granted consent to Time to Act Cardiff to hold their protest on Injunction Land subject to a series of safeguarding conditions. These conditions included: acknowledgement that the University reserved the right to enforce the Injunction if necessary; a requirement that organisers and attendees follow reasonable directions of University Security Staff; restriction of the event to the car park area outside the Main Building between 6pm and 7pm (with contingency to 8pm); provision of a safety briefing; appointment of sufficient stewards; a requirement that entrances and exits not be blocked; a requirement that the site be left litter-free; a prohibition on attaching materials to University buildings or fixtures; and a requirement that promotion be aimed at students rather than the wider community.
 - c. On 10 March 2026, during the Spring Careers Fair at the Centre for Student Life, 5-6 students distributed anti-Gaza leaflets inside the building (**see pages 48 to 85 of WL1**). Three of those students disrupted an exhibitor's stand. Security assessed this as a potential breach of the Injunction. The students initially refused to leave but complied once shown the Injunction notice. They moved to public land to continue their leafleting without further incident.
 - d. On 15 May 2026, a demonstration organised by Caerdydd Students for Palestine took place on Park Place (Council-owned land), with 26 participants. The demonstration was peaceful. Police attended following an anonymous call but left without taking action. Critically, the Group acknowledged the Injunction in their publicity material, stating that the protest would be "*held in a public space outside the university to avoid their injunction.*" (**see pages 86 to 87 of WL1**).
15. The above demonstrates that the Injunction has provided the security team with clear parameters and expectations regarding the monitoring and management of protest activity, enabling personnel to identify, track, and respond to such activity in a consistent and controlled manner without overstepping protesters' freedoms. Additionally, the Injunction has not prevented protest on University land; instead, it has channelled protest through a process that

safeguards the interests of the wider University community. As the Time to Act Cardiff protest demonstrated, the Injunction has not prevented that process from being engaged with by event organisers and/or ‘protestor’ groups.

IMPACT OF THE INJUNCTION

16. The broad consensus that the University has received on an ad-hoc basis is that the Injunction has had a significant positive impact on the University's operations and campus environment.
17. The reduction in protest activity has allowed the University to maintain business continuity across teaching, research and operational services with fewer unplanned interruptions to scheduled activities. This stability has enabled the University to maintain consistent service delivery for students, staff, and external partners, while reducing the need for reactive operational response. With fewer protests requiring reactive response and management, reliance on enhanced or short notice security deployments has decreased. This has reduced operational costs and improved longer term security planning and resource allocation. Reduced protest activity has lowered anxiety levels, particularly for staff in frontline, academic, and student facing roles. A calmer and more controlled campus environment has increased confidence in the University's ability to provide a safe and supportive workplace.
18. The consistent themes are that the Injunction has reduced disruption and anxiety, improved staff wellbeing and morale, enhanced confidence in campus safety, enabled more effective resource planning, and provided a clear framework for managing protest-related risks—all without negatively affecting the wider campus experience. Notably, even those who were initially sceptical of the measure, acknowledge that it has proved effective in practice, particularly in restoring staff confidence and reducing intimidation.
19. On 3 June 2026 the University were contacted by South Wales Police (“SWP”) where SWP noted that since the Injunction has been in force there has been a de-escalation of incidents (see **pages 88 to 89 of WL1**).
20. As is demonstrable from the above, the Injunction has had the desired effect, and the University is grateful for the Court's assistance in this regard. Since the Injunction was granted, there has been continued engagement with the University's established processes to ensure that any events or demonstrations are planned and held in a manner that enables the University to comply with its duties to all members of its community.

STRATEGY GOING FORWARD

21. The decision by the University to seek the Injunction was in response to the marked escalation in conduct that necessitated Court intervention. It has always been the University's intention to engage with its own policies, procedures and student bodies in order to mediate the 'protestor' forum. The University recognise that the composition of the student body had changed since the Injunction was first obtained, such that there appears to be more engagement and it is hoped that the new policies and procedures outlined below will help with the University in managing protest activity and upholding free speech. After careful consideration, the University Executive Board has decided not to apply for an extension of the Injunction beyond its expiry on 31 July 2026. The University consider that the original purpose for which the injunction was sought, which was commensurate to the risk at the time, has now been sufficiently mitigated such that the Injunction is no longer necessitated beyond the end of the current academic year on 31 July 2026.
22. Going forward, I have outlined below the University's strategy for managing protest activity and upholding freehold of speech in the new academic year.
23. In advance of the Injunction coming to the end of its term on 31 July 2026, the University has developed and updated a suite of policies, procedures, and guidance documents that collectively provide a robust framework for managing protest and upholding freedom of speech (see **pages 90 to 97 of WL1**). The updated Cardiff University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (Version 3.2), is to be issued in compliance with Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and informed by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. The Code is underpinned by the Event and Speaker Booking Procedure (Appendix 1, Version 3.2), which establishes a clear, transparent approval process for all events and meetings on University premises, including protests.
24. Under this framework, requests are received via an online booking form (see **pages 98 to 102 of WL1**), assessed for risk, and approved subject to any necessary conditions, with a presumption in favour of consent. Both the updated Cardiff University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and the booking form can be found on the University's website, which I exhibit at **page 103 of WL1**.
25. The University also intends to publish detailed guidance on expectations regarding legal protest, setting out clearly what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct during protests, including notification requirements, expected behaviours, and the consequences of

non-compliance. Importantly, this guidance was developed with input from the Students' Union and is consistent with approaches taken by other UK universities.

26. The University's approach to managing protest activity without the injunction relies on several key mechanisms. Firstly, the established event and protest booking process provides a proven, fair, and timely mechanism for approving protests, with only very rare instances where bookings have not been accommodated and none refused on the basis of subject matter or speaker. Secondly, the University retains the ability to carry out dynamic risk assessments for spontaneous or unplanned protests and to take proportionate action where health and safety, access, or the rights of others are at risk. Thirdly, the University's Student Conduct Regulations and staff disciplinary procedures provide existing mechanisms for addressing misconduct arising from unlawful or disruptive protest activity.
27. The above has also been developed by the University on the basis that should escalated activity re-emerge, the University reserves the right to seek further legal remedies should circumstances warrant it. The University hopes that this will not be necessary and that the improved picture that has emerged over the last academic year will continue going forward but reserves the right to do so if necessary to protect the University community, should similar activity occur as that which led to Sir Peter Lane granting the Injunction.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed:  ..

Name: Professor Wendy Larner

Position: Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University

Dated: 6 July 2026