

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BORIS JOHNSON

Decisions relating to the Second Lockdown

to the question posed before inviting the CSA and CMO to respond and then opening up group discussion.

462. At 17.30 on 20 September 2020, I held a Zoom Roundtable entitled: 'Covid-19 Small Group Scientific Discussion: 'Should the Government intervene now and if so, how?' **BJ/254 - [INQ000183965]**. This meeting was chaired by Simon Case and attended by:

- a. Patrick Vallance and Chris Whitty
- b. Professor John Edmunds, an epidemiologist and professor at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (paper: **BJ/255 - [INQ000146605]**)
- c. Professor Sunetra Gupta, an infectious disease epidemiologist and professor of theoretical epidemiology at Oxford University (paper: **BJ/256 - [INQ000146606]**)
- d. Professor Carl Heneghan, a physician and the director of Oxford University's Centre for Evidence Based-Medicine (paper: **BJ/257 - [INQ000146607]**)
- e. Professor Dame Angela McLean, MOD chief scientific adviser and professor of mathematical biology at Oxford University (paper: **BJ/258 - [INQ000146609]**)
- f. Dr Anders Tegnell, a Swedish physician/epidemiologist and the Swedish counterpart to the GCSA (paper: **BJ/259 - [INQ000146608]**) and
- g. (from No.10 and the Cabinet Office) Martin Reynolds, Stuart Glassborow, Ben Warner, Imran Shafi, Lee Cain, Henry Cook, Ed Lister, Dominic Cummings, Cleo Watson, Rishi Sunak, Simon Ridley, Catherine Cutts, Amy Prewer, Kate Joseph and Oliver Ilot.

463. Professor Edmunds and Professor Dame Angela represented the more conventional epidemiological view, Professors Gupta and Heneghan were there to present two opposing views while Dr Tegnell was to present the Swedish approach which had reportedly been very different to that of the UK (though perhaps not really as different as some liked to claim). Professor Edmunds advised that the response to the increase in cases at that time had to be fast and large. He considered the impact of an immediate circuit breaker or waiting to impose a circuit breaker. His data showed that waiting would result in far more cases. I greatly respected his views, but had always put him at the

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gloomier end of the spectrum. I wanted to give the Rule of 6 a chance to work, and to hear some alternative views.

464. In the meeting, I think we put all the scientists through their paces. By this point, I had a much better understanding of the data and evidence and was able – I think – to probe the different point of views being presented. I was certainly willing to be persuaded by the lockdown sceptics, but found that in reality they were reluctant to argue any such case, or not very hard. When pressed, the so-called dissenters actually seemed to agree with SAGE's position and did not present anything compelling to make me think it was sensible to change our approach. I thought that the exercise was worthwhile overall and it gave me further confidence in the scientific advice I was getting.
465. I have been shown an email that was sent on 21 September 2020 by Dr Gupta to the Cabinet Office, Chris and Patrick and No.10 in which she made some additional points and expressed that she felt she had not been able to respond to Professors Edmunds and McLean **BJ/260 - [INQ000183973]**. I have also been shown an email circulated internally with responses from 'GSO colleagues' I don't think I saw this at the time. **BJ/261 - [INQ000183982]**.

Circuit Breakers

Circuit Breakers Background

466. A 'circuit breaker' was the name given to a short-term, strict, set of measures implemented with the aim of quickly interrupting the cycle of transmission of Covid-19 to reduce the numbers of infections, hospitalisations and deaths and ultimately prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed. Typical measures were a combination of the closure of non-essential businesses and services, restricting gatherings and movement and imposing remote working. The term comes from an electrical circuit breaker which is designed to shut off the power supply automatically to prevent damage to the system.
467. We knew that internationally circuit breakers were being considered and implemented, with Singapore enforcing circuit breakers at the beginning of April 2020 **BJ/262 - [INQ000183919]**. We were continually drawing upon international comparators to ascertain what measures were working elsewhere, and whether we should or could be implementing such measures across the UK.
468. On 6 May 2020, Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, Operational sub-group ('SPI-M-O') produced a paper which considered the