

1 like supply of food and medical equipment. There would
2 be hard choices and they should be made by elected
3 Ministers."

4 Is that part of this disagreement that you had with
5 this phrase of "following the science"?
6 **A.** Yes, I thought it was unfair in two directions. So
7 never mind the point about what science and which
8 scientists and does anybody understand the science, but
9 this was going to be huge for the whole country and for
10 everybody, and it wasn't right to abnegate
11 responsibility to effectively an unelected group of
12 people and put everything on their shoulders, both
13 because it wasn't fair and right for them but, probably
14 more importantly, it's not fair and right in terms of
15 who these choices belong to.

16 **Q.** Let's just look at a document where you raised this
17 issue at the time. So it's tab 6 in the bundle, and
18 it's INQ000285980. It's the top of that page.

19 You're emailing Mark Sweeney in early March, and at
20 the second paragraph there's a conversation about
21 something else and then you say:

22 "btw [by the way] apart from my mini-rant about the
23 masculine tone, i have some VIEWS about the way we are
24 treating 'science' like it's the word of God. We don't
25 always go where the science leads us...Chris [Whitty] is

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1 clear.

2 **Q.** Well, thank you. We see that.

3 The last thing I wanted to ask you about this,
4 though, is what we see here is you talking to
5 Mark Sweeney, who was another senior civil servant in
6 the Cabinet Office, about following the science. Is
7 this something you took up with Boris Johnson or elected
8 politicians, saying, expressing the type of views you've
9 described today and which you seem to have been emailing
10 Mark Sweeney about?

11 **A.** I don't remember raising it with Mr Johnson, but I did
12 see him regularly and felt very comfortable with being
13 able to say what I thought to him and ask him questions.
14 So it's perfectly possible that I would have said: what
15 does this even mean, what is the science, or something.
16 I don't think -- I can't remember a specific instance,
17 but it would be very surprising to me to have felt so
18 clearly about something for a number of weeks and not to
19 have said it to him. I would have done.

20 **Q.** Yes.

21 Let's move on in the chronology, Ms MacNamara.
22 I want to ask you about that period in the middle of
23 March. We've certainly heard a lot of evidence
24 yesterday about that time when the strategy changed.

25 As you subsequently discovered, you were in fact

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1 exceptional [by the way] so this is not a pop at him but
2 the answer isn't just what is rational."

3 There is another email, which I won't bring up, at
4 about the same time where you make a similar point that
5 this idea of following the science is giving too much
6 weight to scientific advice?

7 **A.** Yeah.

8 **Q.** So does this reflect the type of concerns you were
9 expressing at the time?

10 **A.** It does. It does. And, Mr O'Connor, would you mind if
11 I made a similar point? I don't know whether later in
12 my evidence we're going to get to talking about the
13 Grenfell fire, but I can see that that's on the screen.

14 **Q.** No, do.

15 **A.** I just want to -- you may see through my evidence that
16 I am referring back to the learning I had from having
17 been the Director General for Housing and Planning at
18 the time of the fire. I just am always conscious that
19 is not -- it's not just a policy experience, it was
20 a tragedy that happened in our city and 72 people lost
21 their lives and a lot of other people's lives were
22 profoundly changed by that, and I wouldn't want anybody
23 to see what I was saying or hear what I'm saying and not
24 think that I don't acknowledge that as a separate thing.
25 It's not -- I think it's just important to make that

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1 coming down with Covid yourself, weren't you --

2 **A.** Yes.

3 **Q.** -- on Friday 13th and Saturday 14 March. And I think
4 it's right that, was it the Saturday that was your last
5 day in the Cabinet Office and you dialled in to some
6 meetings on the Sunday and --

7 **A.** So I worked from home all day Sunday, yeah, but decided
8 not to go to the office because I was worried that
9 I might have the virus by then.

10 **Q.** Yes. So we'll bear that in mind. But with that in
11 mind, let's look at page 32 of your statement, please,
12 and paragraph 60 at the bottom of the page. You quote
13 there the account which Mr Cummings has given of that
14 occasion towards the end of the day on Friday, 13 March
15 where you walk in. As we'll come to see -- perhaps we
16 should have touched on this earlier -- we've heard about
17 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office being, as it were,
18 places very close to each other but with separate
19 organisations. You were based in the Cabinet Office,
20 were you not, but spent much of your time in
21 Downing Street?

22 **A.** Yes.

23 **Q.** The account that Mr Cummings has given is of you walking
24 from the Cabinet Office into Downing Street and in fact
25 into the Prime Minister's study that evening -- he

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