

OPUS2

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Day 276

May 11, 2022

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1 Wednesday, 11 May 2022
 2 (10.00 am)
 3 (Proceedings delayed)
 4 (10.10 am)
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
 6 today's hearing. Today we're going to hear evidence
 7 from more of those who were concerned in looking after
 8 people in the aftermath of the fire .
 9 Yes, Mr Keating.
 10 MR KEATING: Good morning, Mr Chairman. Good morning,
 11 members of the panel.
 12 Could I call Rupinder Hardy, please.
 13 MS RUPINDER HARDY (sworn)
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you very much. Now, please
 15 sit down and make yourself comfortable there.
 16 (Pause)
 17 All right?
 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Good, thank you.
 20 Yes, Mr Keating.
 21 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 22 MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 23 Good morning, Ms Hardy. Thank you so much for
 24 joining us today and assisting the Inquiry with its
 25 investigations .

1

1 Just a few preliminary matters, as we say to all
 2 witnesses.
 3 Firstly , if you have difficulty understanding any of
 4 my questions, please just ask me and I can rephrase
 5 those accordingly .
 6 Also, if I can invite you to keep your voice up, as
 7 best you can, so that the transcriber , who sits to your
 8 right , can capture what you say.
 9 A. Of course.
 10 Q. Also, it 's sometimes natural to nod or shake your head.
 11 Again, could I invite you to say "Yes" or "No", again so
 12 it can be captured by the transcriber .
 13 Lastly, at any time if you feel you need a break,
 14 just let us know and I'm sure we can accommodate that.
 15 A. Of course, thank you.
 16 Q. Just a few things by way of formalities .
 17 In relation to your statement, you have provided one
 18 witness statement to the Inquiry , and that's dated
 19 11 November 2020. Perhaps we could bring that up.
 20 That's {LBE0000025}. We have it there, thank you. We
 21 can see that's your statement there.
 22 If we could turn to page 31, please, when it turns
 23 to 31 we should see your signature.
 24 (Pause)
 25 Whilst we're waiting, can you confirm that you have

2

1 had the opportunity to read your statement?
 2 A. I have, thank you.
 3 Q. Thank you.
 4 (Pause)
 5 There we go. So we see at page 31 it's your name in
 6 print , the date, 11 November 2020, and can you confirm
 7 that's your signature?
 8 A. It is .
 9 Q. We see above that the statement of truth. Can you
 10 confirm that the facts stated in that witness statement
 11 are true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
 12 A. They are indeed.
 13 Q. Excellent.
 14 Just by way of overview, Ms Hardy, it's right that
 15 you became involved in the response to Grenfell Tower
 16 fire on Saturday, 17 June 2017, and you attended the
 17 Westway Sports Centre as a local authority liaison
 18 officer , LALO, on behalf of the London Borough of
 19 Ealing; is that correct?
 20 A. That's correct.
 21 Q. What we will do, with your assistance, is we will
 22 examine how you took, in your words, control of the
 23 Westway that day, on 17 June, and examine the days you
 24 worked there, which were 17 June, 18 June, so that
 25 weekend --

3

1 A. That's right .
 2 Q. -- and then on to 20 June, which was the Tuesday of the
 3 following week.
 4 A. That's right .
 5 Q. In terms of background, in June 2017 you were the
 6 manager for the business support service at the London
 7 Borough of Ealing; is that correct?
 8 A. That's right .
 9 Q. Prior to the Grenfell Tower incident, had you any
 10 involvement in any emergency incident?
 11 A. No, I didn't .
 12 Q. Looking briefly at the circumstances in which you became
 13 involved, is it right that you responded to an email on
 14 the evening of 15 June from Ealing's head of emergency
 15 management, Donna Wootton, asking for staff to
 16 volunteer?
 17 A. That's correct, yes. I had been asked to join the
 18 emergency management team prior to Grenfell, and I was
 19 on way -- on track to do that, with my training due on
 20 19 June. But obviously with the tower fire , I was on
 21 the email list of responders, and therefore I responded
 22 immediately.
 23 Q. So you had already expressed an interest in that area?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. You were due to have your training, and probably because

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1 of that lack of training, is it right that you replied
 2 to that email and suggested that Philip Lee—Morris, who
 3 was also a former member of the Ealing emergency team,
 4 work with you?
 5 A. That's right.
 6 Q. In other words, you two attend together.
 7 A. Absolutely.
 8 Q. Because of your lack of experience as you described in
 9 that area, it's right that you were provided with some
 10 training, short training, as it occurred on 16 June; is
 11 that correct?
 12 A. That's correct.
 13 Q. Short — not a criticism, but it was one hour; is that
 14 right?
 15 A. It was, yes.
 16 Q. In terms of your position, you had expressed interest on
 17 15 June, you had the training provided by the London
 18 Borough of Ealing on 16 June as a LALO —
 19 A. That's right.
 20 Q. — local authority liaison officer, and prior to your
 21 deployment the following day on Saturday, 17 June, had
 22 you been provided with any briefing documents, situation
 23 reports or any information in relation to the response
 24 and what you were about to enter?
 25 A. None at all. Nothing.

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1 Q. In relation to the absence of information, let's have
 2 a look at an email, please, which is {LBE00000029}.
 3 This is an email. We can see that it's
 4 Donna Wootton, who's the lady we mentioned already, who
 5 is the head of emergency management at London Borough of
 6 Ealing, to you, 16 June, 12.30, providing you some
 7 documents which we can see are attachments, but it
 8 refers to this:
 9 "Just so you're aware I've now escalated to our
 10 regional team for briefings, RVPs [rendezvous point] etc
 11 to be provided to anyone responding. There is a serious
 12 lack of information.
 13 "I know you'll be fine thrown in at the deep end but
 14 I hope to get you more information before [close of
 15 play]."
 16 So that was the position: there was an absence of
 17 information, a serious lack of information,
 18 notwithstanding the requests, and you attended, is it
 19 right, on the morning of 17 June with no information in
 20 advance?
 21 A. Absolutely correct.
 22 Q. So let's turn to your attendance, and I'm going to deal
 23 with it in sections, because you provided a very helpful
 24 and comprehensive statement with lots of supporting
 25 documents and emails.

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1 To help you and to help those who are watching and
 2 the panel, I'm going to give you some subheadings as we
 3 go through it, and the first area is: first impressions
 4 of the Westway on 17 June. So that's the area we're
 5 going to explore.
 6 A. Yeah.
 7 Q. So you arrived, as you say in your statement, at the
 8 Westway at about 7 o'clock in the morning —
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. — with Philip Lee—Morris.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. And both of you were wearing, is it right, high—vis
 13 tabards —
 14 A. That's right.
 15 Q. — so that you were identifiable; is that correct?
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. And you had your IDs, your London Borough of Ealing
 18 IDs —
 19 A. Absolutely.
 20 Q. — on display.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. I just want to ask you what your initial impression was
 23 of the appearance of the Westway, the rest centre, that
 24 morning on 17 June?
 25 A. It was quite — it was really quite shocking, to be

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1 honest. I remember arriving first of all at Westfield
 2 to park my car at 6.28 of the morning of the 17th, and
 3 then travelling in to the outer cordon, towards the
 4 outer cordon, to access the inner cordon, with Philip.
 5 So I have my precise timings because I'm a meticulous
 6 record-keeper. When we walked towards the Westway, so
 7 where the basketball courts are, we took that route in,
 8 and there were so many people so early in the morning.
 9 It was astounding. It was quite shocking, and I did
 10 turn to Philip — because I think it's fair to say that
 11 anybody that attended that weekend or in the days prior
 12 and especially up to that weekend, the mass of people,
 13 the number of people, was ... it was truly astounding,
 14 it was truly shocking, and I did turn to Philip, and at
 15 one point — you have a minute of doubt, and I wondered,
 16 and I turned to him and said, "I don't know if I could
 17 do this", because it felt big. It was overwhelming for
 18 a moment — and I have to stress that: for a moment.
 19 It's human nature to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of
 20 what we saw at the Westway as we approached, and then as
 21 we approached the leisure centre itself.
 22 So there was a lot of people. We saw the Red Cross
 23 desks outside, obviously taking names and handing out
 24 wristbands. There was a police cordon up, there were
 25 police vans. And obviously later on I hope I get to

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1 tell you there was the -- there were a lot of media as
 2 well which we then found in all parts around Westway
 3 itself .
 4 So it's fair to say it was shocking to see. My
 5 first impression was: what is this? What's going on?
 6 Q. Let's try and assist you a little bit more to build on
 7 that picture.
 8 A. Of course.
 9 Q. As you described it, it was quite shocking and
 10 overwhelming, I think were the phrases you used a moment
 11 ago.
 12 A. Yeah, yeah.
 13 Q. If we could turn to paragraph 34 of your statement
 14 {LBE00000025/6}, please, and the top line is this:
 15 "Looking at the Rest Centre, my first impression was
 16 that it looked a mess, it did not appear to be a safe,
 17 welcoming, or an inviting place and it failed to
 18 encourage residents to come in. There were no signs
 19 telling residents what the Rest Centre offered (services
 20 or help), who to speak to and so on."
 21 If we move down to 35, you describe that:
 22 "It was a chaotic situation. Confusion and a lack
 23 of any joined up working to meet the urgent and pressing
 24 needs of those who presented at the Rest Centre was
 25 rife. I felt overwhelmed by what I first saw, this

1 included but was not limited to the Rest Centre
 2 surrounded by Police tape, the Red Cross desks and some
 3 residents still sleeping inside the Rest Centre."
 4 So in relation to the police cordon, you described
 5 that as something that stood out.
 6 A. Yeah.
 7 Q. Just to visualise that, to assist the panel in
 8 visualising it, what do we mean by the police cordon?
 9 A. There was police tape up at the entrance of the Westway
 10 to the point where it limited the entrance and the exit,
 11 and obviously with police officers on duty as well, and
 12 just to the right of that, as you're, you know, facing
 13 Westway, there was a police van there as well. So it
 14 looked -- and I remember saying to -- Philip and
 15 I talking about it, saying it felt more like a crime
 16 scene than somewhere where you would actually actively
 17 want bereaved, survivors and residents to come in to
 18 seek help. It didn't invite people in because of that
 19 appearance. That general first impression was not,
 20 "I can go here and seek refuge or support"; "This is
 21 a police crime scene", that was the first impression
 22 I had.
 23 Q. In relation to the numbers of police officers, you
 24 mention there was a van and a cordon, can you form any
 25 recollection as to the number of police who were around

1 that morning and during the day?
 2 A. I didn't actually count the police officers. It's fair
 3 to say there were -- I think there were a couple on the
 4 door, but I -- to be honest, I dismissed seeing any
 5 police officers, because that was not my primary
 6 concern. My primary concern were the residents, the
 7 bereaved and the survivors.
 8 Q. Of course.
 9 In relation to the cordon, did you receive any
 10 feedback from those who attended the Westway on the
 11 impact of the cordon?
 12 A. It wasn't inviting, they didn't feel like they could go
 13 in, they didn't see the representative they would expect
 14 to see. I mean, obviously I went there in a high-vis
 15 and my ID on, so I was clearly visible to all that
 16 needed to see me, even from a distance, that I was in
 17 an official capacity. So obviously the officers on
 18 scene had their uniforms on, but anybody else, whether
 19 it's an official -- within an official capacity, were
 20 not readily identifiable as officers or within
 21 the council or other councils indeed.
 22 The impression that I got from the residents was
 23 that they didn't want to be there, but they were there
 24 because that's where the support services were being
 25 offered and that's where they were being directed.

1 Q. Of course.
 2 A. But they didn't want to be there.
 3 Q. So in relation to the cordon and its negative impact,
 4 summarising what you said, what steps were done, if any,
 5 to address that issue?
 6 A. Well, we took down the police cordon, we asked the
 7 police vans to be moved, so obviously as far out of
 8 sight as possible, and we tried to clear up the outdoor
 9 area to make it less -- it was just a jumble, to make it
 10 more accessible, open the doors. So those -- it's the
 11 little things to encourage people to come in, because
 12 you don't want people, especially individuals that are
 13 so adversely affected -- you know, this is such
 14 a shocking, devastating incident that you don't want to
 15 put people off from seeking the support they will need
 16 and the support that was on offer.
 17 Q. Yes.
 18 Let's go to paragraph 96 of your statement, which
 19 just flows from what you were saying about the
 20 impression and presentation {LBE00000025/18}. This is
 21 what you say:
 22 "The Rest Centre was busy and open to receive
 23 everyone. There were issues with bins overflowing, the
 24 removal of clinical waste, the heat and impact on food
 25 items, the surrounding area reported street bins

1 overflowing, so this was reported via BECC to action."
 2 A. Yeah.
 3 Q. Did the situation improve following the report to the
 4 borough emergency control centre, the BECC?
 5 A. It wasn't immediate. It's -- when we reported it to the
 6 BECC, it's not as if it happened within the next few
 7 hours. It did happen, but it shouldn't have been in
 8 that state from the get-go. There should have been more
 9 rigour.
 10 And if you recall, that weekend it was in the 30s.
 11 It was very hot, very sunny. Even with bins
 12 overflowing, you would have the smell, you'd have
 13 vermin, you would have flies. Within the rest centre,
 14 obviously Westway Sports Centre, it was still hot as
 15 well. With a lot of people, it increases the heat. You
 16 want it to be cooler and more comfortable and more
 17 inviting.
 18 The changing rooms and the toilets, you know, we
 19 asked for them to be cleaned as well, and just to have
 20 a system in place so they were managed on a regular
 21 basis without, you know, either one of us, Philip or I,
 22 going around just picking up, you know, bits of rubbish
 23 and putting them in the bin.
 24 Q. Yes. I'm going to move on, please, to the next stage,
 25 you had this initial impression, and it's the topic of

1 handover.
 2 So you arrived that morning and, on your account in
 3 your statement, reported to the reception desk.
 4 Who did you understand to be responsible for
 5 managing the rest centre that morning on 17 June?
 6 A. Really, when we got there, because there was such a lack
 7 of information provided, we had no situation reports, we
 8 had no details on who was there in an official capacity
 9 to support the bereaved and the survivors and the
 10 residents, I didn't really know who to expect and who
 11 would actually say, "Oh, okay, you're taking over from
 12 me, here's a report of what's going on", you know,
 13 someone to pass the baton from.
 14 Q. Sure.
 15 A. So there really wasn't anybody. It was just bizarre, if
 16 I'm honest, in terms of going into a situation where you
 17 know that you're there to help the bereaved and the
 18 survivors, because that is your primary focus, is to see
 19 what it is that's needed and what you can do, but not
 20 having that information passed on to you to say, "Right,
 21 okay, Rupinder, here's a list of actions, these are the
 22 things that we've done, these are the things that need
 23 doing". Nothing.
 24 Q. It probably flows from your last answer, but were you
 25 aware whether there was a rest centre manager in place

1 on the 17th?
 2 A. I believe there was, and that's just going on
 3 recollection from my statement in terms of the
 4 individual that I took over from, but that was just
 5 a brief -- and I make mention of it -- "Here's
 6 an envelope with lots of money in it".
 7 Q. Yes, we'll touch upon that a little bit later.
 8 A. Yeah. But that was it, really. I don't recall having
 9 had any meaningful conversations with anybody within the
 10 rest centre when Philip and I went in as LALOs.
 11 Q. Yes. So the position is, which you set out in your
 12 statement at paragraph 36 {LBE00000025/6}, that you took
 13 over from a colleague from Lewisham Borough Council.
 14 A. Yeah. That's right.
 15 Q. And on your account, there wasn't a useful handover, no
 16 documentation provided to you.
 17 Were you concerned by that, that you were there in
 18 person and this lack of information still continued to
 19 be --
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. -- a feature?
 22 A. Yes. And the reason why I was concerned, and obviously
 23 following on from the emails that you showed me earlier,
 24 the lack of information on the ground, I mean, to say it
 25 was sketchy would be generous; there was nothing.

1 When you go into a site, or when I expected to go
 2 into a site such as this after such -- you know, the
 3 fire, I expected to be met with somebody that gave me
 4 much more information than I received, and I also
 5 expected to have some sort of -- to see some sort of
 6 order, some sort of recognition of process and delivery,
 7 because it had been -- we were there day three, it was
 8 three days, and it felt like it was the first night, it
 9 felt like the first day, because I could not see -- and
 10 I don't -- I didn't expect everything to be flowing, you
 11 know, like clockwork, but I did expect to see some
 12 rigour, some -- something that I would recognise as:
 13 right, okay, so you're -- this is the process, this is
 14 what you're doing, this is what you've done. Didn't
 15 feel that at all, didn't experience it, didn't see it.
 16 Q. We'll examine that in more detail in a moment.
 17 In fact, it was day four.
 18 A. Day four, yes.
 19 Q. And day four, as you expressed, there was that lack of
 20 features as you mentioned a moment ago.
 21 In terms of information as to number and details of
 22 the residents who were using the rest centre, was that
 23 provided to you or available to you on the morning of
 24 17 June?
 25 A. No.

1 Q. Did you request that material? Did you request a list
2 of those who had been impacted and affected?
3 A. Yes, yes.
4 Q. Who did you request that from?
5 A. I know Philip and I discussed it, and I made mention of
6 it in -- I think it's one of the situation reports.
7 Q. Yes.
8 A. So it is within my statement.
9 Q. Yes.
10 A. As to whom I spoke, there were so many people involved
11 in the response, in the BECC, I can't give you a name.
12 Q. No. But it's something which you requested from
13 a number of sources, but still there was an absence of
14 that information?
15 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah, because we're blind as to who
16 everybody is. It is not our borough. Even within our
17 own borough, we're not expected to know every single
18 resident. But what I did expect was to have some
19 sort of list or some document to say, you know, "These
20 are the people that were housed in the tower", and then
21 when people presented themselves, I could actually
22 just -- it's your approach, isn't it? It's all about
23 how you approach people and your humanitarian response.
24 So we made the decision on site, Philip and I, that we
25 would treat everybody presenting at Westway as they

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1 were, because they clearly are, affected by the fire.
2 So we put that out, that everybody that presented --
3 because we did not know survivor, bereaved or resident
4 or volunteer; we would treat them with the same dignity
5 and respect.
6 Q. If we could turn to paragraph 37 of your statement
7 {LBE00000025/7}, please, just to follow this theme in
8 relation to details as to those who were affected. You
9 say that you asked for a list of those within the
10 rest centre, three lines down:
11 "... and was told the Red Cross were collecting this
12 information and that anyone coming inside had to be
13 given a paper wristband."
14 As far as you were aware, what was being done with
15 the information which was obtained by the British
16 Red Cross?
17 A. To be honest, without knowing, I would have expected
18 that to go to either the BECC or to RBKC. I didn't ask
19 where that information was going, because again,
20 you know, rightly or wrongly, I expected there to be
21 a process for that information to be retained and passed
22 on.
23 Q. Was that a feature in relation to registration, perhaps
24 people were assuming that somebody else was taking care
25 of it?

18

1 A. I think so. I think so. I mean, I wish I knew then
2 what I know now, because then I would have taken control
3 of this aspect as well.
4 Q. You talk about taking control. Registration had been
5 one of the features of a rest centre. Was there clarity
6 in your mind then as to who was responsible for
7 registration?
8 A. No, there wasn't, because when Philip and I attended
9 Westway, obviously we saw the Red Cross there, but we
10 still at that point weren't aware of what their
11 overarching responsibilities were in terms of the
12 response. That information on partner organisations was
13 missing as well. So it would have been useful to
14 understand what it was they were doing, rather than
15 making an assumption, and I think making assumptions in
16 these kind of situations is wrong. The clear direction,
17 the clear information on what the Red Cross were doing,
18 would have benefitted us in our response to the tower
19 fire on the fourth day.
20 Q. Did you yourself set up any process in relation to
21 collecting and collating information of those who
22 attended the Westway?
23 A. I didn't take anything from the Red Cross in terms of
24 registration of individuals. I did myself start, in my
25 contemporaneous notes and in some of the other documents

19

1 that I have, I did start writing down names of
2 individuals, and that was a mix of individuals, staff,
3 volunteers, so I would know who was present, and it also
4 gave me an indication of the numbers of individuals from
5 all walks of life, from all aspects within Kensington
6 and outside, as to who was present. But that wasn't
7 a formal process; that was something that I did to
8 inform myself.
9 Q. Let me show you a document which hopefully might assist
10 your recollection. It's {LBE00000039}. This is one of
11 the emergency situation reports, sitreps --
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. -- you have been mentioning, and this is one which is
14 created by Ealing.
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. And we see the date is 17 June, the day you attended,
17 and the number, number 1, and that's something that you
18 and your colleague Philip Lee--Morris set up; isn't that
19 correct?
20 A. That's right.
21 Q. We don't need to look at it now, but this document was
22 completed by Philip, in fact, Philip Lee--Morris, as we
23 can see at page 7 {LBE00000039/7}.
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. But let's turn to page 3 {LBE00000039/3}, please, and

20

1 six lines down, we'll see in a moment, on page 3, from
 2 the second approach, and it says:
 3 "Resident register and staff register created to
 4 account [for] those in Westway."
 5 Does that assist whether there was some process set
 6 up by Ealing and you and your colleague on 17 June?
 7 A. I think it's fair to say that whilst there was
 8 a register overseen by the Red Cross, there was also
 9 a register inside, but it was -- again, it was a manual
 10 record on pieces of paper. There wasn't anything
 11 official. There wasn't anything that was in one place
 12 which would have been ideal.
 13 So, yes, I do agree that there was a register, there
 14 was a staff list -- I think it was more of a staff list
 15 inside the Westway so we would know who was present. It
 16 wasn't a meaningful register. Who was responsible for
 17 it? You know, who was updating it? Where was it held?
 18 You know, was it the first thing that you did when you
 19 walked into Westway? Is it the first thing that you
 20 want to do when you walk into Westway when you're trying
 21 to support the bereaved and the residents and the
 22 survivors?
 23 So it was -- I'm going to be honest, it was really
 24 wishy-washy, the whole process of registration.
 25 Q. Thank you.

21

1 I'm going to move on to another document, just
 2 following through this issue regarding registration.
 3 It's {LBE00000037}. This is a tactical meeting you
 4 attended at Ealing Council and maybe by the phone. It
 5 appears to be a London Borough of Ealing internal
 6 meeting, and we know from other documentation it's dated
 7 Monday, 19 June. So it says "Tactical Meeting -- Ealing
 8 Control Room".
 9 The first question is this: is this an internal
 10 London Borough of Ealing meeting, or is this a wider
 11 tactical co-ordination group meeting involving other
 12 responders?
 13 A. It's an internal meeting.
 14 Q. Yes. We mentioned the date. We can confirm it is
 15 19 June, if you're happy to take that from me.
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Let's look at page 2 {LBE00000037/2}, please, and the
 18 fourth paragraph. We see:
 19 "RH [that's you] also asked questions about the
 20 availability of a list of residents -- JC confirmed that
 21 this has been sent and was accessible by Centre Managers
 22 and Social Care on site."
 23 So this is 20 June, as we mentioned a couple of
 24 times. Can you help as to whether, by that stage, being
 25 the Tuesday of the following week, a list of residents

22

1 was available to centre managers and you as indicated in
 2 this note?
 3 A. I didn't see it.
 4 Q. You didn't see it?
 5 A. I didn't see it.
 6 Q. If we could have a look at {LBE00000019}, please, and
 7 this is another sitrep dated 20 June. We see at page 1,
 8 under the entry at 12.40, please, which is the second
 9 time there, and it says just at the bottom of that entry
 10 at 12.40 and above 12.50, "There is no definitive list
 11 of V/S".
 12 Was that a reference to victims and survivors?
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. So that's the entry there on 20 June, that there still
 15 remains to be no definitive list.
 16 A. That's right.
 17 Q. And that accords with what your evidence was to us a few
 18 moments ago.
 19 A. That's right.
 20 Q. So is it the position from your evidence that issues
 21 obtaining a definitive list still existed a week after
 22 the fire, this being 20 June?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. If we continue and look at 13.15, we see:
 25 "Request by Roisin for another admin laptop to enter

23

1 Red Cross names."
 2 Was that anything in relation to any process which
 3 had been set up in relation to Red Cross names and
 4 registration?
 5 A. I think what was happening is that we weren't getting
 6 access to that information. We didn't have a list of
 7 names, it was being kept elsewhere. So the request --
 8 because this is my situation report -- the request for
 9 another laptop was to assist that process, for us to
 10 take some sort of ownership of that.
 11 Q. I'm going to move on now, please, to your initial
 12 impression, you have touched upon already, of the
 13 management of the rest centre, leadership and
 14 co-ordination, so quite a few things there.
 15 Perhaps we could look at paragraph 30 of your
 16 statement again {LBE00000025/5}, please. You state
 17 there:
 18 "It was clear there was a lack of 'grip' at the
 19 Rest Centre, it seemed disorganised and chaotic, with
 20 lots of people in it, but I could not tell who the staff
 21 were from residents. There did not appear to be a clear
 22 command structure that I could identify, or anyone with
 23 overall decision-making responsibility."
 24 Keeping that in mind, if we could move on to
 25 paragraph 57 {LBE00000025/11}, please, and four lines

24

1 down:
 2 "The difficulty in taking up our posts at the
 3 Rest Centre was compounded by the fact that there was no
 4 official handover [which you have mentioned to us], no
 5 walkthrough of the site, no introduction to any Local
 6 Authority officers, or those from other Boroughs.
 7 Organisationally, it was a shambles and not what I was
 8 expecting, certainly not what I am used to seeing from
 9 a Local Authority."
 10 Is that a fair description of your assessment of the
 11 management and co-ordination of the rest centre on
 12 17 June?
 13 A. Absolutely.
 14 Q. If we could go back to paragraph 31 {LBE00000025/5},
 15 please, and you say this:
 16 "As we were both fresh to the Rest Centre, it became
 17 apparent that visible leadership, a point of contact and
 18 a point of escalation were needed, with a structure that
 19 was robust, supportive, empathetic, needs focussed and
 20 collaborative, to work with the volunteers and partners
 21 already at the scene."
 22 Given that you and Philip Lee-Morris, to use your
 23 phrase, were fresh to the rest centre, what assessment
 24 had you undertaken in order to reach these conclusions
 25 which we have read out in the last couple of moments?

25

1 A. I don't think it really took us much of an assessment,
 2 because there was no process in place, there was no
 3 control, there was no authority, there were no people
 4 that we could identify, I didn't know who was making
 5 decisions, who was running the centre. So when I say
 6 the time taken, it was almost immediate, because you
 7 know from the type of work that you do, in the role that
 8 I did at Ealing, that it wasn't going to work unless
 9 somebody stepped up and said, "Right, this is what we
 10 need to do, this is how we're going to do it, this is
 11 how it's going to play out". Because the whole point of
 12 us being there was to support the bereaved and the
 13 survivors, that was our primary concern, and as local
 14 authority officers from another council, as public
 15 servants, it was our duty to make sure that the centre
 16 operated to the best of its ability, regardless of who
 17 was in command, to deliver to the immediate needs of the
 18 bereaved and the survivors. So the first impression
 19 was: it's not doing that; what can we do to make that
 20 happen?
 21 Q. If we could turn, please, to {LBE00000004}, please.
 22 This is an email which you have provided in your
 23 material. If we could look at the third email, please,
 24 which is at 9.36. You were the sender.
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. We can see it's to Donna Wootton again.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And it says this, in pretty short form:
 4 "I've assumed control of west way [sic]."
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. What did you mean by this, that you've assumed control?
 7 You went down there as a LALO --
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. -- rather than a rest centre manager.
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. And within a couple of hours --
 12 A. Yeah.
 13 Q. -- you've emailed your superiors at Ealing to this
 14 effect.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Why did you make that decision?
 17 A. Because there was no leadership on the ground. There
 18 was no -- and I'm going to bang on about this during my
 19 evidence, is that without clear systems, it's
 20 a free-for-all. We needed to build a structure pretty
 21 rapidly within the centre so we would -- we could focus
 22 on the bereaved and the survivors. You know, we
 23 couldn't run around asking staff, "Well, what are you
 24 doing? Who are you? What's your job?" It wasn't -- it
 25 didn't make sense. You wouldn't run a business like

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1 this, and you certainly wouldn't run an emergency
 2 situation like that either.
 3 So when I say, "I assume control -- I've assumed
 4 control of Westway", I meant that: I've taken charge,
 5 this is my site, we make the decisions now.
 6 Q. Whilst we have that email in front of us, can we scroll
 7 up to the next email in the thread, your colleague
 8 Philip Lee-Morris sending at 09.56, and he says:
 9 "Seems I've taken over the inner cordon."
 10 "Got various actions and there's been no sitrep !!!"
 11 A feature that you've mentioned already.
 12 A. Yeah.
 13 Q. Asks for a sitrep template so everything can be properly
 14 documented:
 15 "[By the way] -- BECC is quite chaotic but we are all
 16 from all over London."
 17 First, can you assist with what Philip Lee-Morris
 18 meant by, "I've taken over the inner cordon"?
 19 A. That was the -- obviously that is the inner cordon
 20 surrounding the tower, so it's making himself visible,
 21 available, and saying that he's the LALO in charge.
 22 Q. So around the tower rather than around the Westway?
 23 A. Yeah, so it was a 30-metre cordon, as I recall.
 24 Q. Yes.
 25 A. Yeah.

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1 Q. In terms of the information which has been fed back,
 2 Donna Wootton at the top of this thread says, third
 3 sentence:
 4 "Yes — Sophie [one of your colleagues, one assumes]
 5 ended up doing a 15hour shift yesterday and said much
 6 the same."
 7 A. Mm.
 8 Q. In relation to the BECC, there was reference to the BECC
 9 being quite chaotic.
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. At that time, we understand the BECC was located at
 12 Westminster City Council.
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. What was your experience of the BECC on 17 June and
 15 going forward on those days you worked at the Westway?
 16 A. Okay, so working with the BECC, taking calls and making
 17 calls, we had — I think I had about three different
 18 numbers for the BECC, which didn't make it easy. When
 19 I received calls from the BECC, it was from multiple
 20 individuals, sometimes asking for the same thing.
 21 I recall being asked for numbers of those still sleeping
 22 in the Westway, I think it was about four times. I've
 23 got all of my phone records as well, so I can quite
 24 easily identify that.
 25 The BECC didn't seem organised in terms of —

1 there's that command structure or that chain, that
 2 golden thread that follows up and down, whether it's
 3 a business or an incident. It didn't feel that there
 4 was anything resembling order within the BECC. And
 5 I did go off the book and went to our BECC multiple
 6 times, because it was far easier dealing with Ealing's
 7 borough emergency control centre than it was with
 8 Westminster.
 9 Q. You mentioned one of the features was multiple requests
 10 for the same thing from different people.
 11 A. Yeah. And may I add that when you're delivering
 12 a function as a LALO, the last thing you want to do is
 13 to be constantly on the phone asking for — being asked
 14 for information, having to run around finding that
 15 information. So we were far more effective doing the
 16 jobs that we were there to do as LALOs, rather than
 17 sitting on phone calls.
 18 Q. Yes. There's a balance because —
 19 A. There is a balance, yes.
 20 Q. — one of your tasks is to be the liaison officer.
 21 A. Yeah, I appreciate that, but it was the repetition of
 22 requests.
 23 Q. And in some respects, rather than being a LALO, your
 24 role was different; you were a de facto rest centre
 25 manager, isn't that correct?

1 A. Yes, it was.
 2 Q. In terms of structure, and you talk about bringing in
 3 structure, is it right that you brought in situation
 4 reports and that's something that you started to submit,
 5 two reports a day to cover morning and afternoon?
 6 A. That's right.
 7 Q. You also established what you term as all—staff meetings
 8 twice a day; is that correct?
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. What was the purpose? It may seem obvious, but what was
 11 the purpose of introducing all —staff meetings?
 12 A. There was — the reason for the all—staff meeting — and
 13 when I'm talking about all staff, I'm not talking about
 14 just the council or the response side, I'm talking about
 15 volunteers as well and partner organisations — it was
 16 to get everybody in the same room to hear the
 17 information at the same time. It was to seek feedback,
 18 and not just as an exercise, but to take away meaningful
 19 actions and start delivering against those. It was to
 20 build relationships with the people that we were working
 21 with, whether they're volunteers or from the official
 22 side, and it was to do — it was to deliver the response
 23 together, because there was no way we could deliver it
 24 on our own.
 25 And if we look back on the days prior to Philip and

1 I arriving at the Westway, it was the community that had
 2 organised themselves, it was the volunteers, the
 3 bereaved, the survivors, that had actually made
 4 meaningful inroads in defining their own roles and
 5 responsibilities in delivering to their version of the
 6 response. So for me, it was so obvious that they held
 7 the information, they held the intelligence, they had
 8 contacts and connections with those that were bereaved
 9 and survived, looking for loved ones. It was the right
 10 thing to do.
 11 Q. I'm going to return to that matter you mention about the
 12 role of the volunteers in a moment, but just before
 13 doing so, if I could just deal with one matter which is
 14 in relation to Silver meetings or tactical co—ordination
 15 group meetings —
 16 A. Yeah.
 17 Q. — TCGs.
 18 A. Yeah.
 19 Q. It's right, isn't it, that you and your colleague
 20 Philip Lee—Morris also ensured that you attended those
 21 meetings; is that correct?
 22 A. That's right.
 23 Q. In paragraph 67 of your statement {LBE00000025/13},
 24 perhaps we could quickly turn to that, please, this was
 25 your understanding:

1 "Another challenge was that no one from the Local
 2 Authority, or LALO prior to me and Philip had attended
 3 the Silver Meeting Briefings held twice a day at the
 4 North Kensington Leisure Centre. This is where
 5 communication and information from the Rest Centre
 6 should be provided and equally importantly, where
 7 messages cascaded from this group could be distributed
 8 to the Rest Centre."
 9 In relation to that, what made you believe that
 10 no one else had previously attended?
 11 A. Because they told us.
 12 Q. That's what you were told?
 13 A. Yeah, in the meeting.
 14 Q. And when you say they told you, it was the
 15 Metropolitan Police who were chairing those meetings?
 16 A. Yes, yes, that's right, sorry, yes.
 17 Q. Just to balance that, we do know that there's records
 18 which show for some of the meetings on 14 June that
 19 representatives from RBKC were there at those meetings.
 20 A. Okay.
 21 Q. The records in relation to 15 and 16 June are not very
 22 clear in relation to attendance.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. But your evidence today is that you were told by
 25 the chair of those TCGs that there was, on any basis,

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1 a lack of attendance by RBKC --
 2 A. Yeah, yeah.
 3 Q. -- or LALOs at previous TCGs?
 4 A. That's right.
 5 Q. Was anything else said about the impact of that lack of
 6 attendance?
 7 A. I don't recall anything saying -- said about the impact.
 8 All I recall was that it was important that a LALO
 9 attend those meetings for the reasons I've stated in
 10 this document.
 11 Q. Yes. It's touched upon in your statement at
 12 paragraph 67, but did you find attending those meetings
 13 helpful? Did it assist you?
 14 A. Immensely.
 15 Q. In what way?
 16 A. We knew what was going on with the tower, with the ...
 17 there's no simple way to put this, but with those that
 18 had passed.
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. We knew the structure of the building, what was
 21 happening with transport, we knew the structural
 22 integrity of the building, we knew the impact, because
 23 obviously there was a lot of firefighters still there,
 24 there was police, there was the HSE, there was the
 25 ambulance service. So we had access and information

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1 from the emergency services directly, and that would
 2 help us with information on: is the building okay? Is
 3 it going to fall down? You know, we can see body bags
 4 from Latimer Road station, so areas need to be covered.
 5 Information about the media. You know, even things like
 6 where the hoarding was put up and there were gaps in the
 7 hoarding, we found out -- I mean, one of the calls we
 8 made to BECC was to get some more hoarding in so we
 9 could fill in those gaps, so the media couldn't intrude
 10 and look to see what was going on.
 11 So we did have a lot of information, some of which
 12 we could take back to the rest centre and share, some of
 13 which was for LALO and we passed on through BECC.
 14 So it was -- it's critical that you attend those
 15 meetings, really, in my view.
 16 Q. Yes. You said it immensely assisted you, for the
 17 reasons you have mentioned a moment ago.
 18 A. Yeah.
 19 Q. On the morning of 17 June you talked about a lack of
 20 information, whereas on your account -- is this the
 21 case -- this really increased your situational
 22 awareness.
 23 A. Yes, absolutely.
 24 Q. Yes.
 25 A. Absolutely.

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1 Q. I promised I was going to deal with volunteers at the
 2 rest centre --
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. -- as a topic, and I'm just going to turn to that now,
 5 if I may.
 6 It may assist, perhaps -- you mentioned that you're
 7 a very good note-taker. I believe this may be one of
 8 your notes. Let's look at {LBE00000014}, please. This
 9 is your notebook, which you have helpfully provided
 10 the Inquiry to assist. Your writing is probably better
 11 than mine.
 12 A. Thank you.
 13 Q. We can decipher the first line. It's:
 14 "8.09. 17 June.
 15 "Council aren't helping. Volunteers are doing
 16 everything."
 17 This is page 1, and it appears to be the first line
 18 that you've written down on your notebook in relation to
 19 what you have been doing:
 20 "Council aren't helping. Volunteers are doing
 21 everything."
 22 What do you mean by this?
 23 A. I think if I just set the scene, if I may, very briefly.
 24 Bearing in mind that we are from another borough,
 25 bearing in mind that we were just deployed to the

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1 Westway, we have no vested interest in RBKC or the site
 2 prior to this, no view prior to this, this was within
 3 the first hour, and all I could see was the volunteers
 4 having had -- co-ordinated, been communicating amongst
 5 themselves and the bereaved and survivors, and were
 6 delivering the things that -- you know, from donations
 7 to food to emotional support. It just seemed that they
 8 were there. They were the response.
 9 Q. You mentioned already that the volunteers had taken this
 10 role, and perhaps I could summarise some of the matters
 11 which you have mentioned already. Paragraph 125
 12 {LBE00000025/23}, you said that they had:
 13 "... already organised themselves, assigned roles
 14 and were meeting the needs of the bereaved, survivors,
 15 residents and those displaced within the community and
 16 surrounding areas."
 17 Is that a fair summary?
 18 A. That is.
 19 Q. At paragraph 129 {LBE00000025/24} you say that:
 20 "The volunteers had already demonstrated they were
 21 organised, working on donations, deliveries, logistics,
 22 food, with residents still in the area and those in
 23 hotels."
 24 A. Yeah.
 25 Q. And that:

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1 "They were a reassuring presence to the residents at
 2 the Rest Centre and they were being effective. They had
 3 existing relationships with residents, they understood
 4 local, cultural and religious needs and had the language
 5 skills we needed to communicate effectively with
 6 residents."
 7 That perhaps complements what you have already told
 8 us today.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Some of this we heard you mention eloquently a few
 11 moments ago.
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Is that a fair summary of the effectiveness of
 14 volunteers?
 15 A. That's right, it is.
 16 Q. Your view was that it was necessary to utilise the
 17 knowledge and skills of the volunteers; is that correct?
 18 A. Absolutely. Absolutely.
 19 Q. Let's look at paragraph 134, please, of your statement
 20 {LBE00000025/24}, just to clarify one matter. We talked
 21 about an all-staff meeting. You also mention this:
 22 "I called the first meeting of this kind [ie
 23 meetings with volunteers] at ... 14:39 on the
 24 17 June 2017."
 25 Was that the same as the all-staff meeting or was

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1 this a separate meeting?
 2 A. This -- sorry, this was with the volunteers, because up
 3 until that point they had no real interaction with those
 4 on the response or those in charge of the rest centre.
 5 So this was the first meeting of its kind.
 6 Q. Is it correct from that meeting on 17 June in the
 7 afternoon that the volunteers raised a significant
 8 number of issues, which you have listed at paragraph 137
 9 of your statement {LBE00000025/25}?
 10 A. They did.
 11 Q. Perhaps we could look at that to help you.
 12 A. That's it, yes.
 13 Q. So what I'm going to do is not read it all out. We can
 14 see it there, and some matters there are sensitive, but
 15 let's read some of those:
 16 "▪ their view that we (the Response) were not fast
 17 enough.
 18 "▪ there were not enough communications from the
 19 Response.
 20 "▪ that 100s of people were in hotels and families
 21 were separated and the management of this was failing.
 22 "▪ [as we touched upon already] that the police tape
 23 outside the Rest Centre was putting people off from
 24 attending.
 25 "▪ that more support was needed."

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1 Then there is a matter you mentioned already in
 2 relation to matters which were visible.
 3 Then if we move down just towards the bottom:
 4 "▪ for staff to be more positive with residents."
 5 Is that correct?
 6 A. That's right.
 7 Q. What was meant by the last matter, for staff to be more
 8 positive with residents?
 9 A. The volunteers were telling me and telling Philip that
 10 they weren't being treated with the respect that people
 11 should be afforded, that staff were being rude to them,
 12 and they just weren't getting the type of support and
 13 response that they expected, the level of care that they
 14 expected, the collaboration and working together, taking
 15 on the intelligence from the volunteers, responding to
 16 that intelligence in a meaningful way with direct
 17 actions. They felt outside of the response, rather than
 18 an integral part of the response.
 19 Q. So there's two factors there from your evidence: one,
 20 interpersonal skills, being rude.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And, secondly, not being listened to.
 23 A. That's right.
 24 Q. Let's have a look at the situation report, which is
 25 {LBE00000057/19}. This is produced by the chief

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1 executive. It's a little bit dense.
 2 On the second page of the situation report that
 3 we're looking at {LBE0000057/20}, please, which will be
 4 22.23, we see "Fiona met" -- can you recall who Fiona
 5 was?
 6 A. Fiona Elliot was our head of hospitality and events.
 7 Q. At Ealing?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Okay. So I'm going to read it into the record:
 10 "Fiona met with lead volunteers and thanked them for
 11 their hard work [this being 18 June] and the love they
 12 have shown the community. Fiona gave an overview of the
 13 changes to the centre which will take place as of
 14 tomorrow as of 8am the centre will officially become
 15 a full Humanitarian Centre."
 16 There is a reference to payments which I'm not going
 17 to read out.
 18 A. Yeah.
 19 Q. "The volunteers raised a number of issues:
 20 -- Rude and inconsiderate housing officers from RBKC
 21 and stated that the Housing Officers continue to be
 22 problematic.
 23 -- Volunteers acting like a buffer zone between
 24 residents and government.
 25 -- Some families have said they do not want Social

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1 Workers.
 2 -- Loubna/Hagir (Volunteers) reported that some of
 3 the Housing staff were heard telling victims to 'fuck
 4 off'.
 5 And then at the end:
 6 -- Need more services to be compassionate."
 7 A. Absolutely.
 8 Q. 18 June was a day that you were there as well.
 9 A. Yes, yes, yes, yes.
 10 Q. Were you aware or did you observe or hear such
 11 behaviour, rude and offensive behaviour?
 12 A. I personally didn't, and that's not to say it didn't
 13 happen, because I spoke to several people, both
 14 volunteers and on the Ealing side, that assured me that
 15 it did. That's not acceptable in any situation in any
 16 circumstance.
 17 And looking back, it was -- with the RBKC staff
 18 being rude, the housing staff being rude to volunteers
 19 as well, I don't -- I just don't understand the need for
 20 that. There was absolutely -- we were all there
 21 supposedly trying to do the right thing and the only
 22 thing to support bereaved, survivors and residents that
 23 presented to the Westway. It was absolutely uncalled
 24 for. I'm sorry I did not witness it. I wish I had,
 25 because I would have taken more direct action. But

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1 I know Loubna very well, and it is something -- if she
 2 said it happened, it happened.
 3 Q. So we've got two sources: one, your notes from a meeting
 4 which was information which was relayed to you --
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. -- and then this is one of your colleagues who
 7 documented this and put it in a situation report the
 8 next day.
 9 A. Ah, yeah.
 10 Q. Do you know if this issue regarding -- I'm going to put
 11 it more neutrally -- rude and inconsiderate behaviour
 12 was addressed and improved over the days you were there?
 13 A. If I'm going to be completely blunt, it was the Ealing
 14 officers -- when we attended on the 18th is when we were
 15 in Gold Command, so we had an awful lot of officers from
 16 Ealing where it did improve. With the RBKC officers,
 17 I'm not saying every single one, but there was a degree
 18 of rudeness from what I've heard and what I've seen and
 19 what I've been told. I've not heard it personally, but
 20 what I've been told. And especially when it's
 21 documented by Fiona Elliot, I have no reason to
 22 disbelieve this. It will be 100% accurate.
 23 Q. Okay. We'll move on a little bit later to when the
 24 London Borough of Ealing --
 25 A. Yes, of course.

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1 Q. -- took control, not you taking control but the council
 2 took control --
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. -- on 18 June of the running of the rest centre.
 5 We don't need to look at it, but I'm going to go
 6 back in time to that first meeting you had with the
 7 volunteers, and we listed the matters --
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. -- which you noted, and one of those was in relation to
 10 the hundreds of people who were in hotels and families
 11 were separated, and the management of this was failing.
 12 A. Yeah.
 13 Q. You will recall that was something you noted down, and
 14 I want to deal with hotels for a moment if we can.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So that was complained to you, that there was
 17 a significant amount of people there were concerns being
 18 expressed about. What, if anything, did you do in
 19 relation to this?
 20 A. It was -- the volunteers had a really good grip on
 21 working with the bereaved and survivors and the hotels,
 22 in that they were organising rooms with families that
 23 weren't together, putting them together, and what we
 24 tried to do was complement that, and I can't recall if
 25 I actually escalated that to the BECC or if it's in my

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1 sitrep , because there's a lot of detail in my situation
 2 reports, but I was 100% aware, it's in my
 3 contemporaneous notes as well, about families being
 4 split up, families being put in high-rise accommodation
 5 as well, and that that had to stop.
 6 Q. Let's look at paragraph 117 of your witness statement
 7 {LBE0000025/22} in relation to this topic generally.
 8 It's really the second sentence or the second line of
 9 this paragraph, and you say that:
 10 "... the messages that I wanted to convey for
 11 residents to access services at the Rest Centre were now
 12 being carried by volunteers directly to the residents
 13 and to those in hotels."
 14 So just dealing with that process for a moment, what
 15 messages were you wishing to convey to residents in
 16 hotels?
 17 A. The first thing was that we were there as
 18 representatives of the pan-London response, part of
 19 mutual aid, that we were from Ealing. I think it was --
 20 there was a lot of mistrust, a lot of mistrust, between
 21 those in North Kensington and their local authority, and
 22 it was just creating a little bit of distance from that,
 23 if I'm being fair. But also that we were listening, we
 24 understood, that we had to deliver to their needs, that
 25 we were getting services in place, that we were taking

1 down cordons, we were making it more inviting for --
 2 you know, more welcoming for people to come and seek
 3 services. There were a range of services coming in.
 4 We'd -- so rather than having a shambles of desks just
 5 the other side of the turnstiles, we were creating
 6 a process where residents could come in and seek the
 7 services that they want. That we were offering empathy,
 8 compassion, we were being sympathetic to their needs.
 9 So we wanted to demonstrate that our approach was
 10 different, that we were here to listen and help.
 11 Q. You mention that you don't have a specific recollection
 12 of how you escalated specific concerns, but you believe
 13 it's likely that you would have relayed it to the BECC;
 14 is that --
 15 A. Oh, yeah, definitely, it would be in the sitreps or it
 16 would be via call to BECC, but we were aware of the
 17 situation, and the reason why I am confident in that is
 18 because we had a couple of families that we escalated
 19 through to BECC as well, one family that were sent to
 20 a high-rise -- I think it was a tenth floor building,
 21 and another family that was still sleeping at the
 22 Westway that we had to move into temporary
 23 accommodation. So we were very much aware of the urgent
 24 need for housing in terms of hotel accommodation,
 25 emergency housing, at that point.

1 Q. If we could turn to another document, which is
 2 {RBK00006878}, please. This is a little bit later in
 3 our timeline, 20 June.
 4 A. Yeah.
 5 Q. So we see that this is at 19.24. It's an email from you
 6 to the BECC --
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. -- copying in your colleagues, and it deals with this
 9 issue, "URGENT HOTEL ISSUE", and I wanted to deal with
 10 feedback from volunteers:
 11 "Hotels aren't feeding families three meals a day.
 12 They are refusing. Or worse, charging. See photo for
 13 specifics.
 14 "Can we ring round the hotels and fix this.
 15 Reputation damage. Worse still, not halal. Culturally
 16 insensitive.
 17 "Also, discretionary fund release for
 18 cab/transportation back to the TA [temporary
 19 accommodation, aka the hotels] from centres."
 20 Probably a short email you did on your phone. You
 21 were probably still in a rest centre then, so it's to
 22 the point.
 23 A. Yeah.
 24 Q. Is that a fair summary?
 25 A. Always to the point.

1 Q. And in relation to this updated urgent hotel issue, this
 2 is three days after your meeting with the volunteers
 3 when this was raised --
 4 A. Yeah.
 5 Q. -- and it appears that it's still an ongoing issue; is
 6 that a fair summary?
 7 A. Yes, it is.
 8 Q. We know from the top of this thread that it was
 9 forwarded, "Sent on to housing team to action", that was
 10 a response you got ten minutes later.
 11 A. Yeah.
 12 Q. Your time in the Westway, I think there was one more day
 13 on 22 June. During that time on 20 to 22 June, did you
 14 notice any improvement in relation to these matters?
 15 A. No.
 16 Q. No?
 17 A. (Shakes head).
 18 MR KEATING: I want to deal with volunteers and --
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, I'm sorry, you say you didn't
 20 notice any improvement; how would you have noticed it?
 21 A. Feedback via the volunteers. I think that was my first
 22 port of call into understanding what was going on with
 23 the residents in temporary accommodation or hotels.
 24 They were working with them on a daily basis, throughout
 25 the night, so if they were telling me it wasn't

1 improving, then it wasn't improving.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That was your source of information?
 3 A. Absolutely.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Thank you very much.
 5 MR KEATING: Just to complete that -- thank you,
 6 Mr Chairman -- this email was sent late on your
 7 penultimate day, that being Tuesday, 20 June, and then you
 8 weren't working at the Westway on 21 June, and then you
 9 returned for your last day on Thursday, 22 June. In
 10 relation to that, is that when you would have received
 11 feedback from those who were at the Westway, to form
 12 that opinion?
 13 A. They had my telephone number. I wasn't shy in sharing
 14 my number with the volunteers, primarily so they could
 15 call me at any time they needed. I was very serious
 16 about my role and what it is that I had to do, and I was
 17 very available to them. So it's not a case of that
 18 I would clock in and clock off. They knew how to get
 19 hold of me, so they would tell me.
 20 Q. So that was information which came back to you --
 21 A. Yeah.
 22 Q. -- both by telephone and from what you heard and saw
 23 when you were at the Westway on the 22nd?
 24 A. That's right.
 25 Q. I'm going to move on to just a small topic, which is the

1 volunteer co-ordination role. So we're going a little
 2 bit back in the timeline, back to that first meeting on
 3 17 June. That was part of your efforts to engage and
 4 harness the work of the volunteers at the Westway.
 5 Is it right following that first meeting that you
 6 set up a volunteer co-ordinator to assist with the
 7 organisation or indeed co-ordination with volunteers?
 8 A. That's right. From that first meeting it was really
 9 clear that there was a lot of things that we could learn
 10 working more closely with the volunteers in terms of
 11 need. So it was a role that we established to say,
 12 "Right, you know, when an officer comes in to and is
 13 deployed at Westway, we want them to partner up with the
 14 volunteers", just like we had somebody looking at
 15 donations. So it was partnering up with the community
 16 volunteers so you would add value. They would know the
 17 intelligence and the information from the bereaved and
 18 survivors, and we would bring that statutory backup that
 19 they needed, that support, that organisation, you know,
 20 the manpower. Not to say that they didn't have the
 21 manpower, because of course they did, but it was to be
 22 more collaborative, to build relationships that had
 23 frayed. Whether or not they existed prior to that, who
 24 knows, but they were certainly decayed by the time we
 25 got there. So it was doing our best to build those

1 relationships between us, Ealing Council, and the
 2 community, community volunteers.
 3 Q. In relation to volunteers, you used a generic umbrella
 4 term, but can you assist us with what was the
 5 composition of the volunteers? Were these members of
 6 the public, were they from formal volunteer
 7 organisations, were they from national volunteer
 8 organisations?
 9 A. The volunteers that I worked with directly were mainly
 10 from the community. They were from student age upward
 11 to working individuals. I don't know if they were part
 12 of any group. I didn't ask, because I didn't think to
 13 ask. I didn't have the time to ask what their
 14 background was. It was only later, as I sort of,
 15 you know, developed beyond the first seven days in terms
 16 of my working at RBKC, did I understand more about them
 17 and their roles. But at that point, did not know.
 18 Q. In relation to this role that you set up,
 19 a co-ordination role, was that the first time one was
 20 set up?
 21 A. I believe so.
 22 Q. Can you recall, who was that person who was given that
 23 role?
 24 A. I think the first person would have been from Ealing,
 25 Lee Baldwin, if my memory serves. I can't remember

1 exactly who.
 2 Q. So you can recall that somebody was appointed?
 3 A. Yeah.
 4 Q. I just want to ask for your assistance just to clarify
 5 one matter.
 6 The chief executive of London Borough of Ealing,
 7 perhaps you can assist me with the pronunciation, is it
 8 Paul Najsarek?
 9 A. "Najsarek".
 10 Q. "Najsarek"?
 11 A. "Najsarek", yeah.
 12 Q. He has provided a statement to assist the Inquiry. We
 13 don't perhaps need to look at it, but at paragraph 19
 14 {LBE00000058/3} he says:
 15 "RBKC were responsible for providing the volunteer
 16 coordination support."
 17 Is that correct?
 18 A. I've no idea of that.
 19 Q. No. Your recollection and evidence on the ground was
 20 that somebody was appointed in that role from Ealing on
 21 17 June?
 22 A. Yeah. Nobody told me or presented to me to say that,
 23 "I'm from RBKC volunteers, X, Y, Z, and this is what I'm
 24 doing", no.
 25 Q. Turn on to staff visibility, something which you've

1 mentioned before.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. When you arrived on 17 June, were you aware, when you
 4 arrived and during the day, how many staff members were
 5 at the rest centre?
 6 A. No. Not at all.
 7 Q. You mention that there was a lack of visibility of
 8 staff.
 9 A. Yeah.
 10 Q. Is it because they weren't readily identifiable?
 11 A. I couldn't tell staff from community members.
 12 Q. We know from one of the situation reports provided by
 13 Ealing on 17 June, if it assists you, that there were
 14 approximately 40 people who were there assisting
 15 formally with the response, RBKC staff, public health,
 16 housing, rest centre staff, British Red Cross,
 17 councillors, and NHS volunteers. So about 40 people
 18 noted down by Ealing in that situation rep. Does that
 19 sound about right?
 20 A. If that's what Ealing have written down, then I've got
 21 to take that at its word. In terms of -- when you --
 22 when -- let me just clarify a point. When you say
 23 staff, if we could break it down into the staff that
 24 were supposed to be leading the response from RBKC --
 25 Q. Yes.

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1 A. -- to the staff that were supporting the response, in
 2 terms of housing or finance. Those I separate mentally,
 3 because it's the leadership side that I was looking for,
 4 not the support staff, who granted were there, not the
 5 leadership that I expected.
 6 Q. The number I've given you is a global figure --
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. -- which includes those who were auxiliary and
 9 supporting, not just the leadership or key staff.
 10 A. Yeah.
 11 Q. In relation to that lack of identification, you mention
 12 in one of your documents that RBKC staff in tabards,
 13 those who were wearing the sort of high-vis vests, were
 14 being singled out and residents were very reluctant to
 15 approach them. What did you mean by that, that they
 16 were being singled out?
 17 A. When -- so the staff -- the RBKC staff that were there,
 18 I think they were given an instruction not to have their
 19 ID and not to be visible because of the degree of
 20 discontent and the animosity towards them because of the
 21 tower fire. We were in our high-vis and our tabards.
 22 The way in which RBKC staff, if they weren't
 23 wearing -- or if they were wearing their ID or their
 24 high-vis, I didn't see that, if I'm honest, I didn't see
 25 them. But there was a degree of -- the community would

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1 know the staff better than I would. At that point, we
 2 were fully identifiable in our high-vis and our
 3 lanyards, and if anybody stopped us or asked us where we
 4 were from, we were quite happy to tell them who we were,
 5 why we were there. But in terms of the RBKC staff, I'm
 6 not 100% sure on that.
 7 Q. Okay. In terms of increasing visibility of staff --
 8 A. Yeah.
 9 Q. -- you mention, of course, that you were visible. Were
 10 there efforts from 17 June to increase visibility?
 11 A. Yeah, there was. As part of my training, and it's
 12 something that I really did take on board, was to make
 13 sure you're visible at all times, that people know who
 14 you are, hence, you know, my name tag on a lanyard and
 15 my yellow high-vis jacket on at all times. And it's so
 16 people can see you in a crowd, people can focus on you
 17 and come to you if they need anything.
 18 We also, as part of the Grenfell fire response team,
 19 had our high-vis jackets -- sorry, tabards printed with
 20 "Grenfell fire response team" on the back, so we were
 21 clearly visible, front and back, as to who we were, and
 22 anybody from Ealing that attended wore a high-vis
 23 jacket -- a tabard rather.
 24 Q. That term, "Grenfell fire response team", that was
 25 a term which was to reflect the sort of pan-London

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1 response from 16 June; isn't that correct?
 2 A. From the 17th, I believe, is when Philip and I were
 3 there. That's when, you know, we were talking to
 4 Ealing, and it was Ealing that had the tabards printed
 5 and that's what we referred to ourselves as. Whether or
 6 not that name existed beforehand, I don't know.
 7 MR KEATING: Okay.
 8 We're going to move on to another topic, but I'm in
 9 the Chair's hands whether you'd like me to move on now
 10 or whether it's time --
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, we probably ought to have the
 12 break quite soon, shouldn't we?
 13 MR KEATING: Yes.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Is your next topic going to be
 15 a little while?
 16 MR KEATING: Probably about five minutes.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, I think it'd be better to take
 18 our break at this point. Is that all right?
 19 MR KEATING: Yes, of course.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, we do have a break during the
 21 morning, as you probably know, Ms Hardy, and we will
 22 take it now. We will break here. We'll resume at
 23 11.40, please.
 24 THE WITNESS: Lovely.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And while you're out of the room,

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1 I have to ask you, please, not to talk to anyone about
 2 your evidence --
 3 THE WITNESS: Of course.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: -- or anything relating to it.
 5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right?
 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
 9 with the usher, then, please.
 10 (Pause)
 11 Thank you. 11.40, please. Thank you.
 12 (11.22 am)
 13 (A short break)
 14 (11.40 am)
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right, Ms Hardy, ready to carry
 16 on?
 17 THE WITNESS: I am.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much.
 19 Yes, Mr Keating.
 20 MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 21 Welcome back, Ms Hardy.
 22 We were dealing with RBKC staff, and we touched upon
 23 their visibility , or lack of, on 17 June.
 24 I wonder if we could look at your statement at
 25 paragraph 60 {LBE00000025/11}, please. That's it:

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1 "There were some ... RBKC officers who did find me
 2 in the first couple of hours, but as they had no
 3 official role in the Response, I contacted BECC and
 4 asked for them to be removed from the site. I did not
 5 feel that were adding value, nor did I want to be
 6 hindered in my role as LALO."
 7 In relation to that, what did you mean by "they had
 8 no official role in the Response"?
 9 A. Well, because we weren't told who was doing what and why
 10 they were there, so when the officers -- and they were
 11 senior officers within the organisation itself --
 12 I remember them walking towards me as I was outside
 13 Westway, you know, with their notebooks and what have
 14 you, and I asked them what they were doing, you know,
 15 what role they had to play within the response, and
 16 because I didn't get anything meaningful or anything
 17 that I could think: oh, okay, you're adding value or
 18 you've got a role to play, it was just, "Well, I'm here,
 19 I'm from RBKC", but if you weren't part of the response
 20 as of the point when we took over, then you really
 21 didn't have a place in the response because you were
 22 just adding more confusion. You know, too much chiefs,
 23 too many bosses, too many people telling you what to do,
 24 when it was our job to ascertain what was going on and
 25 start the delivery process to identify the gaps, working

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1 with the people that we'd established or we were looking
 2 to establish working with. So when you are confronted
 3 by senior officers within the organisation saying -- and
 4 I do name some of them in my contemporaneous notes.
 5 When you're looking at individuals that come to you with
 6 their titles as to, you know, "We're senior officers,
 7 and, you know, this is what we want to see or what we
 8 want to do", if there's no place for it, there's no
 9 place for it. Because for me, what were they doing
 10 apart from stopping me from doing my job, from moving
 11 forward with what it is that we had planned to do or
 12 were looking to do, discovering the facts of the
 13 situation around Westway and the rest centre?
 14 So, quite simply, I didn't think they were adding
 15 value, therefore they shouldn't be there.
 16 Q. So your view was, for the reasons you set out, they
 17 weren't adding value, and you contacted the BECC --
 18 A. That's right.
 19 Q. -- and asked for them to be removed.
 20 A. Mm--hm.
 21 Q. One alternative would have been that you tried to bring
 22 them into this response and tried to integrate them to
 23 what you were implementing. Was that feasible?
 24 A. I think that's a very fair comment. If their approach
 25 had been anything other than adversarial, I probably

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1 would.
 2 Q. So you recognise integration was something which was
 3 logically available, but you mentioned a moment ago "if
 4 their approach had been anything other than
 5 adversarial"; what do you mean by that?
 6 A. When you are being approached by somebody that -- and we
 7 all know what it's like to be intimidated or to have
 8 somebody approach you in a way that isn't overly
 9 friendly, then your guard goes up and you ... my
 10 immediate priority at that point was: what can I do and
 11 how can I help? So having somebody approach me in that
 12 manner wasn't integrating enough for me. Whether that's
 13 a right decision or a wrong decision, it was a decision
 14 I made at the scene.
 15 Q. Was there anything else which led you to form the view
 16 that they, the RBKC staff you had contact with, were
 17 being adversarial?
 18 A. Just their approach on that Saturday.
 19 Q. I wonder if we could turn to paragraph 115, please, of
 20 your statement {LBE00000025/21}. It probably flows from
 21 what you have said, in terms of interaction:
 22 "Aside from perhaps a few RBKC staff, I did not
 23 interact with them, nor did I see them in significant
 24 numbers, and I did not direct them during my
 25 deployment."

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1 Is that correct?
 2 A. That's correct.
 3 Q. Is it the position that because of your view that you
 4 formed as to the utility of RBKC staff, you didn't
 5 interact with them?
 6 A. I didn't interact with them because I didn't know who
 7 they were. They weren't readily identifiable, as I've
 8 said earlier this morning. Had they been readily
 9 identifiable, had they come to us with meaningful
 10 exchanges or information, on what they were doing and
 11 how they were working to support the bereaved, survivors
 12 and residents, of course I would have brought them in.
 13 But I didn't experience that, and if I didn't experience
 14 that and I didn't see them and I didn't interact with
 15 them, how can I make use of them?
 16 Q. Okay.
 17 I'm going to move on now to the British Red Cross.
 18 We have already discussed your understanding of their
 19 role in relation to registration --
 20 A. Yeah.
 21 Q. -- and the issues in relation to that, as you have
 22 described.
 23 What was your experience of their wider contribution
 24 to the operation of the Westway during the days when you
 25 were present?

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1 A. Wasn't aware of very much in terms of the Red Cross.
 2 I did speak to a couple of individuals from the
 3 Red Cross, but from the desk that was located outside of
 4 the Westway, and, you know, they were all in their
 5 Red Cross uniforms with their insignia clearly on
 6 display. All I saw of them was at the front desk, and
 7 because they were there, there was a few of them, I did
 8 have to ask them to go into the community towards
 9 Maxilla itself and to -- if somebody's in uniform and
 10 they're easily recognisable as -- you know, whether
 11 they're emergency services or, you know, Red Cross with
 12 their Red Cross badges on, then it's easier for
 13 individuals within the community to say, "Okay,
 14 I recognise that uniform, maybe I should go and ask that
 15 person for support", or for that person in uniform, if
 16 they are to support the response, to say, "Is there
 17 anything I can do? How can I help? Did you know the
 18 Westway is operating and these are the services?"
 19 So the reason I asked the Red Cross to disperse is
 20 that they were there in numbers and they could go out
 21 towards the community and help shepherd people back to
 22 the Westway if they wanted the support services that we
 23 were starting to deliver from within the Westway, or if
 24 they wanted food or if they needed donations or if they
 25 wanted to come in and just get some rest.

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1 Q. In relation to that, is that something the
 2 British Red Cross did when you encouraged them to do so?
 3 A. They did, yes.
 4 Q. Was this something that was implemented on 17 June or
 5 was it later in the timeline?
 6 A. Oh, it was that first weekend. It probably was the --
 7 I can't tell you the exact time, but it was over that
 8 first weekend, and it was to make use of the resources
 9 that we had, and obviously the Red Cross are a huge
 10 resource, so I thought at that time maybe they can help
 11 get people and direct them back towards the Westway.
 12 Q. One other matter which I can summarise -- it's from
 13 paragraph 119 of your statement {LBE0000025/22}, five
 14 lines down -- is that:
 15 "One of the key changes we implemented, working with
 16 the volunteers, was to give direction to the Red Cross
 17 Team to allow all residents, bereaved and families to
 18 access the Rest Centre -- this was a significant bone of
 19 contention, where they were being stopped from
 20 entering."
 21 A. Yeah.
 22 Q. Who, as you understood it, was being stopped from
 23 entering the rest centre?
 24 A. The community. The community. So the Red Cross were
 25 taking the names and then issuing the different colour

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1 wristbands. So the wristbands were -- so they changed
 2 colour every day, and they were different for staff, for
 3 volunteers and the community, so we all had different
 4 wristbands according to our designation, let's say. But
 5 not everybody could get in to the rest -- and I didn't
 6 understand why, because the rest centre is there for
 7 anybody that -- it should be there for anybody and
 8 everybody within that area to come in and seek support,
 9 whatever that support looks like and feels like to them.
 10 That is the access point. So we did say just --
 11 you know, "Can you just let people in, don't bar them,
 12 let's not bar anybody from accessing us", whether it's,
 13 you know, Philip and I, or the services, or the food,
 14 you know, the donations, whatever it is that you need --
 15 even if you need to use the restroom, let people in.
 16 Q. In relation to that greater access, when was that
 17 implemented, can you recall?
 18 A. For the first weekend, and I think that kind of went
 19 hand in hand with taking down the police tape, making it
 20 more accessible so, as I said earlier, it didn't look
 21 like a crime scene, working with the Red Cross to say,
 22 "Look, you know, they're not coming to a party, they're
 23 coming for support, so let's let people in, let's be
 24 that change for the community".
 25 Q. I'm going to move on now to the time where you had

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1 contact with the London Local Authority Gold.
 2 A. Yeah.
 3 Q. That was on 17 June at around 7.30. Is it right that
 4 you and Philip Lee—Morris were asked to join a meeting
 5 with John Barradell, Eleanor Kelly and Alex Woodman?
 6 A. That's right.
 7 Q. Was this the first time you met with anybody this senior
 8 from RBKC or any other London council at that stage?
 9 A. Yes, it was.
 10 Q. And this meeting obviously was in person —
 11 A. It was.
 12 Q. — down at the Westway.
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. And perhaps we could open up paragraph 46 of your
 15 statement {LBE0000025/10}, dealing with this meeting on
 16 the evening of 17 June.
 17 We can see the background at paragraph 45, and at
 18 paragraph 46 it says this:
 19 "They [John Barradell, Eleanor Kelly and
 20 Alex Woodman] asked for an open and honest assessment,
 21 conversation and update. I told them both that things
 22 were chaotic and there was a high degree of mistrust
 23 with anyone on the Response and a lack of delivery to
 24 address the outcomes needed as well as service desks to
 25 support and meet those outcomes."

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1 Is that correct?
 2 A. It is.
 3 Q. What was John Barradell and Eleanor Kelly's response to
 4 this open and honest assessment?
 5 A. They asked the question, they asked for our first —hand
 6 view and thoughts of that initial day on the response,
 7 so it was by invitation that they sought a response from
 8 us, and in light of everything that Philip and I had
 9 experienced that day and everything we were feeding back
 10 to the BECC, everything we documented, whether it's in
 11 a sitrep or contemporaneous notes or the information and
 12 feedback that we've had from volunteers, our interaction
 13 with bereaved and survivors, it was critical that we
 14 gave John Barradell and Eleanor Kelly an honest view on
 15 what we had experienced that day and what was going on
 16 and the feedback directly from the community, what we
 17 saw, what we felt, what we heard.
 18 Q. Yes.
 19 We can see from your statement — and perhaps I can
 20 summarise — that you were asked by Mr Barradell what
 21 was needed and you responded, "for me to remain in
 22 control". You were thanked, and then at paragraph 48 we
 23 see that Mr Barradell confirmed that the rest centre was
 24 to be put under Ealing Council's command, who would take
 25 over the Gold Command for this site. But, in effect,

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1 Ealing Council would be responsible for the operation
 2 and management of the rest centre at the Westway?
 3 A. That's right.
 4 Q. You also mention at paragraph 50, which I can perhaps
 5 summarise, that you provided Mr Barradell and
 6 Eleanor Kelly with a list of resources and items
 7 required to help you and Mr Lee—Morris in your role; is
 8 that correct?
 9 A. It is.
 10 Q. Perhaps we could turn to {LBE0000055}. This is
 11 something you've provided, it's your exhibit, but the
 12 maker of the document is Eleanor Kelly, the lady who
 13 we've mentioned, the chief executive of the London
 14 Borough of Southwark.
 15 A. That's right.
 16 Q. These are notes setting out things that are needed.
 17 Starting at the top with "Structure", it talks
 18 about:
 19 "Roles and responsibilities .
 20 "Command & control.
 21 "Identification badges (with roles).
 22 "(Right people doing the right thing in the right
 23 way)."
 24 And the third line it states:
 25 "Some continuity of personnel and management."

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1 Those matters, were they addressed in the time that
 2 you experienced after that meeting, so on the 18th,
 3 19th, 20th and 22nd?
 4 A. Yes, they were.
 5 Q. You considered that there was an improvement in relation
 6 to those?
 7 A. There was, because we weren't reporting to or via
 8 a borough that we had no connection with and no
 9 understanding of how they operated in terms of their —
 10 or in terms of their staffing or who was who. So by
 11 bringing it under Ealing, obviously Philip and I are
 12 both from Ealing Council, we knew who was who from the
 13 chief executive down, who the personnel were. The roles
 14 and responsibilities, if I just take them, is something
 15 that we worked with, with the community, and we
 16 designated, for instance, you know, a donations lead,
 17 a volunteer lead, somebody to manage money, that kind of
 18 thing.
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. Command and control, that was the structure, having
 21 everybody easily identifiable with their Grenfell fire
 22 response tabards on.
 23 The right people — and, again, what I meant by the
 24 right people doing the right thing in the right way is
 25 that a council organisation is a vast entity, it's

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1 a vast organisation with lots of different specialisms
 2 and lots of different divisions and people doing
 3 different things, so when I'm talking about the right
 4 people is, you know, send me in or let me work with
 5 somebody that can set up the service desks the way that,
 6 you know, I'd envisioned.
 7 Q. Yes.
 8 A. And doing the right thing the right way is to keep the
 9 community at the core of all of the decisions that we
 10 made, because it was about them, it wasn't about us.
 11 Q. I'm just going to draw out a few more matters which are
 12 noted in Eleanor Kelly's note, and that derives from the
 13 meeting you had with her.
 14 "Proper physical arrangements", there's a lot of
 15 things listed there, but includes help desks, a quiet
 16 room, faith spaces and private meetings, and then if we
 17 turn over to page 2 in relation to other matters --
 18 well, we can see at the bottom of page 1:
 19 "Need accurate information on numbers using and
 20 visiting the centre.
 21 "Need log of people staying overnight."
 22 A matter which we have heard about already.
 23 At page 2 {LBE0000055/2} we see the issue regarding
 24 hotels being raised again:
 25 "Single point of contact for each hotel.

1 "Proper information as who is there.
 2 "Proper communication what they should do to access
 3 delivery of goods/food etc. to be delivered to them.
 4 "Follow-up calls mechanism."
 5 After raising these matters, and these were noted by
 6 Eleanor Kelly, did you notice from your experience in
 7 the next following days whether there was an improvement
 8 in relation to both the rest centre and its
 9 presentation?
 10 A. I definitely noticed a difference in terms of the
 11 rest centre, in ... and I think the reason for that is
 12 that when Ealing took Gold Command, and it was from that
 13 night and obviously it was more active and more visible
 14 from the morning of 18 June, and we had a corporate
 15 board presence, which was greatly received, especially
 16 by Philip and I, so we had the support, and we also felt
 17 empowered to do what it is that was necessary to take
 18 all of these decisions forward and make a difference.
 19 In terms of the staff that were involved, again,
 20 going back to my earlier point, we had the right people
 21 from the right teams, even all the way down to a loggist
 22 from the safer communities team that's used to taking
 23 notes at a very fast pace accurately. All of these
 24 little things helped. Corporate board being there, from
 25 the chief executive to the former leader of

1 Ealing Council, to the members of the executive
 2 directors group, including our borough commander, who
 3 was Keith Townsend at the time, was immense for us at
 4 that time.
 5 Q. Yes. So you have mentioned, from the 18th when London
 6 Borough of Ealing --
 7 A. Yeah.
 8 Q. -- took over control formally, that there was that
 9 senior leadership present. In terms of your dealings
 10 with Mr Barradell and Eleanor Kelly, is it right that
 11 that was the only direct communication you had with
 12 them, the night before, on the 17th?
 13 A. It was for that weekend, yes.
 14 Q. In terms of the support that they provided you, those in
 15 London Gold, John Barradell and Eleanor Kelly, how would
 16 you describe it?
 17 A. I was told later on that John Barradell and Eleanor
 18 coming to the site was unprecedented, and I know that's
 19 an overused word, but in this instance, when -- I really
 20 didn't have an idea who they were when I was asked to go
 21 into a meeting, until Philip informed me of the
 22 significance and the role that they played within the
 23 response. Obviously I knew that Gold were overseeing
 24 everything. But when they came down, we felt heard, we
 25 felt seen and we felt valued, and therefore we felt

1 empowered to carry on. You know, it was not as if
 2 I sought permission from anybody with all the decisions
 3 that I was making, rightly or wrongly, through the
 4 response on that first day, but when they turned up that
 5 evening, you feel that your actions are validated, and
 6 from the emails that I've seen from within Ealing to
 7 state that prior to our arrival it was chaos, and the
 8 only competent people were from Ealing. So when they
 9 came down and actually told us that face-to-face, we
 10 knew that we were doing something right and we just had
 11 to carry on doing it.
 12 Q. I'm going to move on to deal with a discrete item, which
 13 is central government support.
 14 During your time at the Westway Centre, were you
 15 provided with any support from central government, and
 16 that would include the Department of Communities and
 17 Local Government, DCLG, as it was known as then?
 18 A. Yes. I do remember meeting some individuals from the
 19 DCLG. They came down to set up some desks. But
 20 I didn't have an active or an in-depth relationship, or
 21 couldn't really afford anybody much time at that point,
 22 because we were so busy trying to get the centre up and
 23 running. But, you know, we needed desks for, you know,
 24 from postal services to driving licences to passports to
 25 visas, so that kind of thing we needed their support on,

1 but we just, you know, let them in, and like, "This is
2 your job, you set up the desk".

3 Q. In relation to that involvement, central government
4 departments who came down and attended --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- and set up help desks, did you consider that that
7 involvement assisted with the provision of support to
8 those who were affected?

9 A. Yeah, I did, all of those services that were there were
10 needed.

11 Q. I'm going to examine more the support which was then
12 thereafter provided at the rest centre.

13 You mentioned at paragraph 34 of your statement
14 {LBE00000025/6} -- we don't need to look at it -- that
15 when you arrived at the rest centre back on 17 June,
16 there were no signs telling residents what the
17 rest centre offered --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- services or help, who to speak to and so on.

20 What did you do, you and Philip Lee--Morris, to
21 remedy this issue regarding the lack of signage?

22 A. We got flipchart paper and wrote up that it was the
23 rest centre, we wrote out the services, that there was
24 donations, so we actually created those signs and stuck
25 them to the walls and the windows within the main area

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1 of the rest centre, and we used flipcharts to keep
2 ourselves updated on what was going on. So it was
3 literally marker pens and paper.

4 Q. Yes. So you did the best you could with --

5 A. We could, with the resources that we had. We had to
6 improvise, so we did.

7 Q. Yes. Is it fair to say, after those initial efforts
8 over the weekend of 17 and 18 June, that there were
9 still remaining issues regarding the presentation of
10 signs at the Westway?

11 A. There were. There were. But we did -- we were aware
12 that they were going to be printed and placed around
13 Westway and the site of Westway as well, you know, the
14 Grenfell assistance centre, to direct people and to
15 detail the services that were on offer. But for that
16 first weekend, it was pen and paper.

17 Q. We perhaps don't need to turn to it, but we've got
18 a situation report {LBE00000010/4}, an Ealing one again,
19 19.12 on 19 June, so the Monday evening, where within
20 that Keith Townsend, a name you mentioned, refers to
21 further work required to provide on-site signage --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- and general communication about the centre.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. So there was an awareness that this was an issue --

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1 A. Yes, of course.

2 Q. -- and there were efforts ongoing to address that.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Perhaps we could look at paragraph 98 of your statement
5 {LBE00000025/19}, please. It's something you've
6 mentioned a couple of times in passing: help desks. You
7 say this:

8 "When I arrived [this being 17 June] and as I have
9 stated, the helpdesks were a jumble of desks and just
10 beyond the turnstiles. These were manned by staff, but
11 it was difficult to know what was going on and what the
12 support being offered was. I did not know who was
13 managing these, but it was clear that a better, more
14 effective process was necessary and I worked on creating
15 [such a process]."

16 Is that fair?

17 A. That's correct.

18 MR KEATING: Perhaps to assist everybody, we could see some
19 images in relation to that. We're going to see a plan
20 and then we're going to see some photographs.

21 There shouldn't be anything in that, Mr Chairman,
22 which is distressing, but perhaps I should, out of an
23 abundance of caution, give a trigger warning that we're
24 going to look at the Westway.

25 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes, thank you.

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1 MR KEATING: So if there is anybody who may find this
2 distressing, just to give them the opportunity to leave
3 the room or not watch on the live feed.

4 So we're talking about the floor plan, and we're
5 going to move now on to {LBE00000040}, please. So this
6 is the "Grenfell Assistance Centre Standard Operating
7 Procedure". Pausing there for a moment, we know from
8 your statement that this is a document which was created
9 by you and your colleagues during your time at the
10 Westway to try to bring some order and some process; is
11 that correct?

12 A. That's right. It was under the jurisdiction of our head
13 of emergency management, Donna Wootton, and Philip and
14 I contributed towards this document.

15 MR KEATING: So in terms of --

16 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Can we be clear, when were the
17 photographs taken, do you remember?

18 A. Oh, gosh, that was the first weekend.

19 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, I think we might hopefully cover
22 those dates in a moment and bring some clarity.

23 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes, very well, thank you.

24 MR KEATING: If we could turn to page 27 {LBE00000040/27},
25 please. Thank you. So we see there -- so this is

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1 "Service Stalls" -- let's give everyone an opportunity
 2 just to acclimatise.
 3 So the floor plan, Grenfell assistance centre. The
 4 service stalls are on the right-hand side in a sort of
 5 U shape; is that correct?
 6 A. That's right.
 7 Q. It perhaps speaks for itself, there is a comfy seating
 8 area, a children's play area, a divider in the centre,
 9 and then we can see that there's other charities such as
 10 the CAB and a help desk on the opposite side, on the
 11 left-hand side of the divider; is that correct?
 12 A. Yeah, yes.
 13 Q. In relation to this plan, can you assist approximately
 14 when this was introduced?
 15 A. Going back to the situation of the array or the one or
 16 two desks beyond the turnstiles, and there was lots of
 17 people milling about, there was also people eating food
 18 there, so it wasn't conducive to even holding a degree
 19 of conversations in private or to understand needs. But
 20 because there was a need and there were a number of
 21 services that had to come in and support the bereaved
 22 and survivors, that small area wasn't going to be
 23 sufficient. So the idea was to have this horseshoe --
 24 I do business process for a living, so my idea was to
 25 have a process where people could come in from one side

1 and work their way round the services that were offered
 2 to receive the support, the advice, the help, that they
 3 required.
 4 This was put together -- again, it's again going
 5 back to the point of having the right people at the
 6 right time to do the right thing. This was put together
 7 by our hospitality and events team, this plan, but it
 8 was absolutely what we had envisaged that first day. So
 9 that would have started happening probably on the
 10 Monday, from the Sunday -- well, probably from the
 11 Monday, and I wasn't obviously on site on the Monday.
 12 Q. Just pausing there for a moment, it's a long answer.
 13 A. Sorry.
 14 Q. Probably on the Monday, and I'm keen that we capture all
 15 your evidence, but if you focus as best you can on the
 16 question, which was: when do you think it was
 17 introduced, which was the Monday, and I anticipate we
 18 will capture those other matters in a moment.
 19 A. Yeah.
 20 Q. If we could go to page 33 {LBE0000040/33}, please, and
 21 the bottom image on page 33 we can look at, and it says
 22 there:
 23 "... view of all services before screen dividers
 24 were installed."
 25 So, again, just to give everyone the opportunity of

1 what the Westway -- we have heard a lot about it -- what
 2 it looked like. So this would have been, on your
 3 account, at the weekend of 17th and 18th, if your belief
 4 was the horseshoe was introduced by the Monday, the
 5 19th.
 6 A. Yeah, it was in that week after that first weekend.
 7 Q. We see some signage there. Does that help you in terms
 8 of dating the document?
 9 A. Of dating the document? The document was created -- we
 10 contributed towards it on the Monday the 19th.
 11 Q. Okay.
 12 A. When this was created, I can't give you an exact date of
 13 when this look and feel was implemented.
 14 Q. Yes. It was probably an imprecise question from me.
 15 I was just trying to see if we could date the
 16 photograph. But we see that there's high-vis tabards
 17 visible there.
 18 A. Yeah.
 19 Q. And we can see some signage.
 20 A. Mm-hm.
 21 Q. Okay.
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Were those signs that you had put up
 23 or were they already there?
 24 A. It's signs that we -- that were created, so it's to
 25 designate what each area was delivering, whether it was

1 housing or social care or, you know --
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, I understand that, but were
 3 they signs that you had caused to be put up?
 4 A. I had not created them.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You hadn't done them?
 6 A. I hadn't created them.
 7 MR KEATING: So they were pre-existing?
 8 A. They were after that first weekend, so they were
 9 created.
 10 Q. Thank you.
 11 If we then scroll up to see the other image at the
 12 top of page 33, in some respects we're seeing a before
 13 and after. This is the after, and this is the barrier,
 14 the screen which has divided the room, which was
 15 implemented as one of your ideas in this new process; is
 16 that correct?
 17 A. Yeah. Yeah, that is right.
 18 Q. All right.
 19 You yourself took photographs, which you have
 20 provided to the Inquiry.
 21 A. I did.
 22 Q. Perhaps we could look at those as well, please, and
 23 that's {LBE0000051}. Perhaps we could, if possible,
 24 just blow it up a little bit more. As it says there,
 25 these are photographs taken during your deployment as

1 LALO at the rest centre, and you have helpfully dated
 2 them 22 June. So this is your last day.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Can you recall when those soft furnishings were
 5 provided?
 6 A. Oh, gosh, no, I don't know the precise day of delivery .
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, were they there when you first
 8 arrived?
 9 A. No.
 10 MR KEATING: It's probably likely that they weren't. It is
 11 something that was raised in your meeting with
 12 Mr Barradell, likely it was --
 13 A. Yeah, soft furnishings so people coming to the Westway,
 14 whilst they're receiving services or waiting, that they
 15 would be comfortable. You know, the priority was to
 16 make it welcoming, and having soft furnishings --
 17 you know, you can see rugs as well as sofas -- was
 18 really important.
 19 Q. One can understand why.
 20 Let's move on, please, to the next page, page 2
 21 {LBE00000051/2}, and we will see some more in terms of
 22 furnishings . The first image is the sports hall service
 23 desk and children's play area, again on 22 June.
 24 A. May I mention that the children's area or a crèche area
 25 where children could play while their parents or carers

1 were seeking support came directly from community
 2 volunteers to request that. So we implemented it on
 3 their request.
 4 Q. That was part of your listening brief --
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. -- that you have mentioned to us.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. If we see at the bottom of that page, page 2, we see
 9 signage as of 22 June, "Financial support for", and then
 10 it lists some addresses which we're familiar with.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Is that correct?
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. Overleaf, page 3 {LBE00000051/3}, I think in fact I can
 15 recognise two of the people there: that's you on the
 16 right --
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. -- and Mr Lee-Morris, is that correct, on the left?
 19 A. That's right.
 20 Q. And that's the food and donations table which we can see
 21 on 18 June from your date at the back; is that correct?
 22 A. That's right.
 23 Q. Then if we turn over to page 4 {LBE00000051/4}, please,
 24 we see signage outside the rest centre, and this is
 25 1 July.

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And that's one of the signs.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. We can see at the bottom of this, figure 7, "Assistance
 5 Centre", a bigger sign than the first one.
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. And that's directing people where to go, again dated
 8 1 July.
 9 A. That's right.
 10 Q. So you have mentioned already -- we don't need to have
 11 those images anymore, thank you very much -- in relation
 12 to the support, your intention -- you talk about
 13 process -- was to try to improve matters.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. And especially having the U shape for different --
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. -- desks, support desks.
 18 A. Yeah.
 19 Q. Were you aware of any criticism that one of the effects
 20 of that process, of having a number of different help
 21 desks, was that an individual who needed support would
 22 have to repeat their account more than once?
 23 A. Yes, I was aware. I was aware after -- a lot later,
 24 rather than at the time.
 25 Q. Yes. So in terms of the lesson learned, is there

1 a lesson learned there, perhaps, about the process?
 2 A. There is a tell us once process for me, that's a really
 3 big -- it's a really big lesson for me as well, and
 4 I think for anybody responding -- it's harrowing having
 5 to -- and I can only imagine, because, you know, whilst
 6 I was there, I was in support, but having to give your
 7 details from one desk to the next desk to the next desk,
 8 I can only apologise for that. I do think that a better
 9 system needs to be implemented, a tell us once, where
 10 the information is collated at a single point and then
 11 filtered through the emergency response, so that
 12 everybody that's delivering within those services has
 13 those details up, so the only thing that you should give
 14 is your name and then your details should flash up on
 15 a screen, and I wasn't aware of that at the time.
 16 Q. You have mentioned you had one hour of LALO training --
 17 A. Yeah.
 18 Q. -- and your intention of attending. But thank you very
 19 much for that contribution in relation to things to
 20 change or to bear in mind.
 21 I want to deal with a couple of other areas briefly ,
 22 if I may, because they're helpfully set out
 23 comprehensively in your statement, which is provision of
 24 food and drink.
 25 Is this a fair summary: that there was, when you

1 arrived, no food management or identification of food
 2 needs, apart from those which were recognised by
 3 volunteers?
 4 A. That's right.
 5 Q. After you assumed control of the rest centre, one of
 6 your processes which was implemented was to try to
 7 introduce outside seating?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. (1) it was very hot, but (2) to make it better for those
 10 who were breaking their fast during Ramadan to break
 11 their fast together outside the rest centre.
 12 A. That's right.
 13 Q. In relation to those who were observing Ramadan, were
 14 there any efforts to try to ensure that there was food
 15 available for those at that time once they were breaking
 16 their fast?
 17 A. There was a lot of food from local restaurants. There
 18 was food from the local gurdwara and the gurdwara in
 19 Southall, I believe. There was a lot of community-based
 20 food donations, lot of community-based food
 21 organisations that had come in to feed the bereaved and
 22 survivors, and feed those that were working there,
 23 I must admit their generosity was abundant. There were
 24 drinks and there were sandwiches. There was the Westway
 25 café as well that were giving out teas and coffees. But

1 there wasn't any process in place aside from what the
 2 community volunteers brought to it and what we wanted to
 3 piggyback off and support and develop.
 4 I think for me one of the biggest things is being
 5 aware of the fact that it was in the holy month of
 6 Ramadan, understanding that there were different dietary
 7 needs, understanding the importance of the iftar meal,
 8 understanding the importance of breaking fast together,
 9 and understanding that we were coming up towards Eid,
 10 and how important that is culturally within the area of
 11 North Kensington, something that I wasn't aware of when
 12 I went into the role of LALO, but something that
 13 I quickly learned, because of the support from certain
 14 volunteers, Loubna being one, Nadia being another,
 15 you know, so many, so many of them informed me. With
 16 that information, I could use that to support the
 17 bereaved and the survivors and hopefully do the right
 18 thing --
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. -- in terms of culture and cultural sensitivity.
 21 Q. I'm going to move on, please, to financial support.
 22 You say this in your statement at paragraph 36
 23 {LBE0000025/6}. Perhaps I could summarise it for you.
 24 When you first attended the Westway, the outgoing LALO
 25 handed you a brown envelope containing cash, with names

1 handwritten on the back indicating where they had been
 2 giving money to those that came to the rest centre.
 3 That was the position.
 4 What did you understand the process, if any, in
 5 relation to the distribution of financial assistance?
 6 A. Had no idea. Completely honestly, I had absolutely no
 7 idea that it was happening in terms of, you know, the
 8 cash handouts, and the way in which they were being
 9 managed or not managed.
 10 Q. In relation to introducing any guidance or strategy, was
 11 one implemented for discretionary payments?
 12 A. In terms of the £500 or the £5,000 or the ...?
 13 Q. Well, you mention that you were just given an envelope
 14 of cash --
 15 A. Yeah, oh, okay, yeah, yeah.
 16 Q. Did you change that or did you --
 17 A. I didn't. There was so much going on, what I did was
 18 I gave it back and I said, "Whoever's running or
 19 delivering the financial management side or the
 20 donations, just carry on, just" -- I didn't really --
 21 I didn't take that on board and I didn't change it
 22 because I was busy doing other things. If they had
 23 their own process where they were giving out money,
 24 because it was from RBKC -- it was still under RBKC at
 25 that point, it wasn't under Ealing, so on that first day

1 it was still RBKC. So if they were doing what they had
 2 to do in terms of ensuring the discretionary payments
 3 were getting to the residents, then carry on, because
 4 I'm busy doing all of the reconnaissance stuff and the
 5 other bits that I had to do. So that I didn't do
 6 immediately, no.
 7 Q. So in terms of your direct knowledge of the financial
 8 aspects, because of your focus on other matters,
 9 understandably, that wasn't an area which you had
 10 significant --
 11 A. No, no, but to be handed an envelope full of cash with
 12 names written on the back, I told them to, until they
 13 were passing it out to those that presented and
 14 requested it, keep it in a locked locker or something
 15 where it was safe.
 16 Q. Yes. Perhaps we could have your assistance in relation
 17 to one matter --
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. -- under this umbrella of financial assistance before we
 20 move on. It's {RBK00004144}, please. This is an email
 21 dated 18 June from Alex Russell, director of
 22 communication and community engagement at the
 23 Westway Trust, who was one of the officials at the
 24 Westway Sports Centre. So it's Alex Russell, we see
 25 there, the Westway, 18 June at 16.40, copied in to other

1 people. You were not a recipient in this email, but
 2 I just want to know whether you were aware of this
 3 issue:
 4 "We have a number of people contacting us for money
 5 today, which I have supported with the funds we have
 6 here.
 7 "Many people are either unaware of the opportunities
 8 for them at the sports centre or they do and they can't
 9 travel or are scared to go there because it feels too
 10 official. I have suggested to the Ealing team at
 11 [Westway Sports Centre] to make a team of people
 12 available who are working in the field going to people's
 13 accommodation and distributing funds. I have been told
 14 Keith [Townsend] is not prepared to do this because they
 15 do not have the resources.
 16 "I have had a request for me to go to the
 17 Premier Inn in Hammersmith to distribute money to
 18 survivors and those impacted. I can do this, but I have
 19 a limited amount of money to give out today."
 20 Were you aware of this need for emergency funds to
 21 be distributed to those in hotels on 18 June?
 22 A. No, I wasn't.
 23 Q. We know in relation to Premier Inn in Hammersmith that
 24 on 19 June, six days after the fire, we've heard already
 25 that the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

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1 undertook an independent check and found 12 families
 2 there who had no money and had not been visited by RBKC.
 3 A. Yeah.
 4 Q. But from your evidence today, is that something you
 5 weren't aware of?
 6 A. I wasn't aware of this.
 7 Q. Thank you.
 8 Let's move on to donations, please. Again, it's
 9 an important matter, but one we can deal with perhaps
 10 succinctly.
 11 Is this fair: there was a significant amount of
 12 donations which were at the Westway, both perishable and
 13 other matters which were non-perishable?
 14 A. That's right.
 15 Q. In relation to those, it was the volunteers, as you say
 16 at paragraph 108 {LBE0000025/20}, who were those who
 17 had co-ordinated themselves into sorting this and
 18 distributing items and requesting items that were
 19 needed; is that correct?
 20 A. That's right, yeah.
 21 Q. At that stage, were you aware whether RBKC or the
 22 Red Cross or any other local authority staff were
 23 assisting with the organisation of donations?
 24 A. At the time, I didn't identify who -- again, I'm going
 25 to say this again -- who was staff and who was

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1 a volunteer. I've later found out there were staff,
 2 because I recognised their faces, having seconded over
 3 to RBKC and, you know, working at The Curve. But at
 4 that point, no, my assumption was, from what I saw,
 5 there were a lot of volunteers sorting out. Especially
 6 in the basketball courts, there were masses of donations
 7 that needed to be sorted out, you know, clothes,
 8 et cetera.
 9 Q. So for somebody who was there on the ground and had
 10 direct experience of the donations, how would you
 11 describe the impact, whether positive or negative, of so
 12 many physical donations at the Westway?
 13 A. It was overwhelming. There was so much. There was so
 14 much there, there was so much coming in. We had calls
 15 from BECC saying not to accept any more donations, which
 16 we rejected, Philip and I rejected, based on the fact
 17 that it wouldn't come across well, it wouldn't be the
 18 right thing to do. People have travelled or are sending
 19 things from, you know, not only London but all around
 20 the country. We had one delivery, I think it was either
 21 Yorkshire or Wales, I can't remember, that came in
 22 a truck, and I'm not going to turn them away. So we
 23 took all donations in. It was overwhelming, but that
 24 could be sorted out later. It was the goodwill behind
 25 the donations that was important.

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1 Q. In terms of resources, looking at this from a managerial
 2 or personnel perspective, how much resource was used,
 3 whether it was volunteers or RBKC or London Borough of
 4 Ealing staff, to manage the physical donations?
 5 A. When Ealing took Gold, obviously we had a donations lead
 6 that worked with the volunteers. It was more volunteers
 7 from what I saw working within the basketball courts to
 8 try and sort out what was what and to pass on any
 9 donations to individuals in need of them. I can't tell
 10 you how many people were involved. There were just --
 11 it was so much and so many.
 12 Q. More than a handful of people?
 13 A. Gosh, yes.
 14 Q. I'm going to move on to the final section, and it's to
 15 deal with lessons learned, and it's something which you
 16 have reflected upon yourself and you've assisted us
 17 about that in your statement.
 18 You prepared a personal briefing document, which you
 19 produce as an exhibit, outlining those lessons learned,
 20 and perhaps we could have a look at that. It's
 21 {LBE0000056}. We can look at the first page. It's
 22 an aide memoire that you prepared; correct?
 23 A. Yeah.
 24 Q. Is this something you prepared after the event?
 25 A. It was, yes.

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1 Q. Yes, and your source of information for preparing this
 2 post-incident aide memoire, did that include the notes
 3 you made contemporaneously?
 4 A. Absolutely, yes.
 5 Q. Was that supplemented by recollections and reflections
 6 as well?
 7 A. Yes, it was learning on the job.
 8 Q. Yes. So there is a lot there, and what I'm going to do
 9 with your assistance is if we could turn to page 3
 10 {LBE0000056/3}, please, "Initial lessons learnt",
 11 there's about 20 bullet points, and I'm not going to
 12 take you through them all, we've considered them and
 13 will consider them, of course, with care. I will draw
 14 out some of those in the next few minutes.
 15 Lots of points there, but perhaps one way of dealing
 16 with this is this: if you were to highlight the most
 17 important lesson that you learned or could be learned
 18 from your experiences, what would it be?
 19 A. I would get involved and seek the assistance and the
 20 support and work more collaboratively with the community
 21 and the community volunteers. I would also seek out and
 22 work more collaboratively with the organisations that
 23 were already on the ground, Harrow, Rugby Portobello,
 24 et cetera, the organisations that have a presence for
 25 a very long time within the area. I didn't know of

1 their existence whilst I was at the Westway and we just
 2 got snippets of information.
 3 But it's to -- not to approach this response as
 4 a statutory entity, council or government, but to
 5 understand and realise that there are lots of bridges
 6 that need to be crossed and lots of gaps that need to be
 7 closed, and the only way you can do that is by working
 8 with those that live in the area, work in the area and
 9 are affected by what's gone on in the area.
 10 Q. So I'm just going to draw out a few matters. It says
 11 "Initial lessons learnt", or some of it, perhaps, is
 12 more a comment on the adequacy of the response. The
 13 first one we can see is:
 14 "Whilst the response for cross council had been
 15 triggered, there was an abject lack of operational
 16 control and assigned roles and responsibilities ..."
 17 You have mentioned that to us this morning.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Your second bullet point is:
 20 "Immediate and initial command presence on site is
 21 useful to calm residents and other parties involved."
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. You mentioned in your evidence to us already having the
 24 sort of Ealing corporate directive, those senior
 25 members --

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. -- from Ealing Council, both paid and representative
 3 councillors, those being on the ground on 18 June --
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. -- that made a material difference.
 6 A. 100%.
 7 Q. Was that material difference to staff who were there or
 8 was it to the public, or both?
 9 A. I think it's really important not to undervalue the
 10 significance of having your bosses there when you're
 11 delivering to a role, and especially in delivering to
 12 something as traumatic and as harrowing, because the
 13 things that we saw and the things that we heard, to have
 14 that presence of our corporate board and the leader of
 15 the council there is -- shows that they support us and
 16 that they have faith in what we were doing. To have
 17 that presence seen by the community and the residents,
 18 that there is a hierarchy within Ealing Council that is
 19 on the ground -- we treated Kensington,
 20 North Kensington, as if the disaster happened within
 21 Ealing. That's how seriously we all individually and
 22 collectively took our roles.
 23 Q. In relation to other matters you raised, we can see,
 24 about bullet point 4:
 25 "Notice boards on site to inform. (can be flip

1 charts to start with)."
 2 And it says this:
 3 "Information leaflets need to be distributed within
 4 hours to manage expectations. These need to be issued
 5 to all community centres acting a relief centres as well
 6 as communicated by social media/news/websites etc."
 7 A. Yeah.
 8 Q. So in relation to communication, this refers to.
 9 A. Yeah.
 10 Q. And leaflets, these are for the public; is that correct?
 11 A. Yes. I do believe and those that work with me know that
 12 I always say communication is king. It absolutely is.
 13 In this situation we -- for me, it was communicating
 14 what's on offer, what can we do, why are we there,
 15 you know, why's Ealing taken over, what services, what
 16 support is available to the community, the bereaved,
 17 survivors and residents. Why are we there, what are we
 18 doing to help, we need to communicate that pretty
 19 quickly, and I think one of the lessons is to have that
 20 social media, hit the button and it goes out, have it
 21 prepared.
 22 Q. Let's follow through on this theme, to use your phrase,
 23 "communication is king". Three bullet points from the
 24 bottom it says this:
 25 "Clear and regular communication by Gold Coms is

1 necessary to inform the public on the humanitarian
 2 relief effort being delivered.”
 3 By reference to Gold comms here, is that London
 4 Local Authority Gold comms you’re referring to?
 5 A. Yes, or the local authority in charge.
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 A. All local authorities have their own comms teams.
 8 Q. Of course.
 9 A. So it’s working in collaboration, depending on the size
 10 and the scale of the response, whether it’s local
 11 borough or pan-London, there should be a process in
 12 place.
 13 Q. Just picking up on the phrase “Gold comms” in this
 14 context, and looking back when you were involved, when
 15 the London local authority resolution had been
 16 activated, were there issues with regards to clear and
 17 regular communication by Gold comms to the public during
 18 the response that you experienced from 17 June?
 19 A. I think that’s reflected in the feedback from the
 20 volunteers and the community as to why we were there or
 21 who was — you know, what had — obviously everybody
 22 knew what had happened, but what had happened to decide
 23 that Ealing was now as Gold lead within the Royal
 24 Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but also where to go,
 25 what services, whether they’re central or peripheral to

1 the response on offer, so that clear strategic thread
 2 from Gold right down to the ground needs to be
 3 delivered, needs to be operated and delivered. So that
 4 was what I’m trying to say here, is that through Gold,
 5 whether that’s distributed to, you know, a local
 6 authority through their comms team, but that channel of
 7 comms — yes, sorry, yes, I know it was happening
 8 within — you know, Ealing’s executive director group
 9 were talking to Gold comms, but we did get some of that
 10 information, not all of that information. So if we’re
 11 getting sketchy information, what information is the
 12 community or those directly affected getting? So it was
 13 just — you know, you need to package it and deliver it
 14 in a way that it makes sense.
 15 Q. In relation to this, your chief executive, whose
 16 statement we’ve read out already, says at paragraph 35
 17 of his statement {LBE0000058/4}:
 18 “Communication to the community and families of
 19 public messages was a challenge throughout. This led to
 20 individuals and families attending the centre before
 21 processes were fully in place. Maintaining a reporting
 22 line with HASG [the humanitarian assistance steering
 23 group] assisted with meeting this challenge.”
 24 Do you agree with that assessment, that it was
 25 a challenge throughout, and sometimes families and

1 individuals attended the centre before processes were
 2 fully in place?
 3 A. Well, they should be attending the centre, regardless of
 4 whether or not a process is fully in place, and then we
 5 just have to deliver to the best of our ability. You
 6 can’t set up a process, which we saw at the first
 7 weekend, and say, “Right, okay, everything’s ready, you
 8 can come in now”. It doesn’t work like that in
 9 a disaster.
 10 Q. No.
 11 A. You have to have — you know, and a lot of the decisions
 12 and the way in which we operated, yes, they weren’t
 13 textbook pan-London response, but we used common sense,
 14 we used our initiative, and we used our experience as
 15 local authority officers in our designated roles to do
 16 the best that we could.
 17 So, yes, in an ideal world, which it wasn’t, you
 18 would have these systems and processes set up. You
 19 would probably have the systems and processes set up
 20 from the night of the fire, not on day four. So, yes,
 21 we were on a back foot. It would be — it would have
 22 been great for us to walk in and have everything set up,
 23 but we had to do that whilst dealing with everything
 24 else that was happening as well.
 25 So, you know, whether or not I agree with it, it’s

1 not what happened.
 2 MR KEATING: Well, Ms Hardy, I’m very grateful for your time
 3 today. They’re the questions I have for you.
 4 What I’m going to do, Mr Chairman, is ask for
 5 a short period of time to see if there’s any questions
 6 from those who are watching or those who are in the
 7 room.
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. How long do you think would be
 9 appropriate?
 10 MR KEATING: I think five minutes should be sufficient.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If we say 12.45, that will give you
 12 slightly more.
 13 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ms Hardy, when counsel gets to the
 15 end of his questions, we have to have a short break to
 16 enable him to take stock, and also to enable others who
 17 are following the proceedings from elsewhere to suggest
 18 questions that perhaps ought to be put to you. So we’ll
 19 break now until 12.45, and then, when you come back,
 20 we’ll see if there are any more questions for you.
 21 THE WITNESS: Of course.
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right?
 23 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So would you go with the usher,
 25 please.

1 THE WITNESS: I will, thank you.
 2 (Pause)
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Well, we'll come back at 12.45,
 4 unless you let us know that you need more time.
 5 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you very much.
 7 (12.38 pm)
 8 (A short break)
 9 (12.45 pm)
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right, Ms Hardy. Well, we'll
 11 see if there are any more questions for you.
 12 Yes, Mr Keating.
 13 MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 14 There is just one matter, really, which is this: is
 15 there anything else that you wanted to add to your
 16 evidence which may assist the Inquiry with its
 17 investigations?
 18 A. Not at this moment.
 19 Q. No?
 20 A. No, I can't think of anything.
 21 Q. Okay. Thank you so much.
 22 A. May I read my personal statement? Is that an option?
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: What is this personal statement?
 24 A. It's just a statement that I wrote prior -- as part of
 25 my witness statement.

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Have we seen it already?
 2 A. You've seen it.
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: You may have the advantage of us.
 4 MR KEATING: I'm not sure I'm familiar with the exact
 5 document you're referring to.
 6 A. So it's the first page of my witness statement.
 7 MR KEATING: Yes. Well, if you feel that there's a matter
 8 which you wanted to assist the panel with, perhaps you
 9 could refer to that, then.
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Shall we get the statement up so we
 11 can follow it? Would that be a good thing?
 12 A. Please, thank you. Yes, it's the ...
 13 MR KEATING: Of course, I now understand.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Right.
 15 MR KEATING: We have those in front of us {LBE0000025/1},
 16 paragraphs 2 and 3 are the matters you're referring to.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Yes.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Do you want to read it out or do you
 20 want us to read it?
 21 A. I don't mind reading it out.
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Well, you read it out if you want
 23 to, that's all right.
 24 A. Okay. So I wrote this and I just wanted to say that
 25 I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the

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1 bereaved and survivors who lost loved ones in the
 2 devastating Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017, many of
 3 whom I met, and Philip and I both met, during our
 4 deployment at the rest centre during 17 to 22 June, and
 5 my subsequent shifts from 10 to 20 July 2017, and then
 6 throughout my secondment with RBKC from that September
 7 to March 2018.
 8 It was my honour and privilege to have worked at the
 9 rest centre during the first weekend after the
 10 Grenfell Tower fire to 22 June 2017, and I have the
 11 utmost respect and admiration for you all, including the
 12 North Kensington residents and volunteers, all of whom
 13 rallied around each other, providing the help and
 14 support from the night of the fire which was otherwise
 15 missing. Under intense national and international media
 16 scrutiny, dealing with bereavement, loss, loss of
 17 property and possession, you have conducted yourselves
 18 with dignity, strength, love and resilience, and have
 19 continued to do so.
 20 It goes on to the following page.
 21 MR KEATING: If we could turn over {LBE0000025/2}, then,
 22 please, thank you.
 23 A. I was fortunate to have been deployed at the
 24 rest centre, to use my skills and experience, working
 25 closely with volunteers, in order to create a centre to

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1 cocoon those affected and meet their most urgent needs.
 2 From this experience, I will take away lifelong
 3 friendships and a deep love and respect for the
 4 bereaved, survivors and residents of Grenfell Tower and
 5 North Kensington. I may have left my official duties,
 6 both at the Grenfell fire response team, later as
 7 adviser to The Curve Community Centre, and finally as
 8 an Ealing Council officer, but I will always continue to
 9 support you.
 10 I would like to acknowledge and thank the Westway
 11 staff for allowing us to use their site and supporting
 12 us while we operated the rest centre.
 13 Finally, to Ealing Council, and obviously to Philip
 14 as well, to Ealing Council's executive board, leader,
 15 former leader of the council and colleagues during the
 16 period of 17 June to 22 June, we all came together to
 17 respond to a disaster as one team, helping our
 18 neighbouring borough in a time of great need, and
 19 together we made a difference, treating North Kensington
 20 residents as though they were our own.
 21 Thank you all for stepping up. I think it's fair to
 22 say that we made Ealing proud.
 23 Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Right, thank you.
 25 MR KEATING: Well, Ms Hardy, thank you so much. Firstly,

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1 thank you for your evidence today and coming, and also
 2 thank you for assisting the Inquiry with your written
 3 and oral evidence.
 4 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: It's right I should thank you on
 6 behalf of the panel as well. We have heard a lot about
 7 the Westway Centre, and I think you're the first person
 8 who has come to talk to us about the circumstances there
 9 and how it operated, and even to describe and show us,
 10 through your photographs, what it looked like inside, so
 11 we're very grateful. It's been very helpful to us, so
 12 thank you very much indeed.
 13 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you, panel.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Now you're free to go.
 15 THE WITNESS: Thank you so much.
 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right. Would you like to go with
 17 the usher, then, please, she'll look after you. Thank
 18 you.
 19 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 20 (The witness withdrew)
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Keating.
 22 Now, we have another witness, but —
 23 MR KEATING: I think 2 o'clock, probably, if that's
 24 acceptable to you.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: So long as that doesn't put you in

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1 any difficulty, that seems very sensible.
 2 MR KEATING: Not at all, thank you.
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you very much. We
 4 will break there, then, and resume at 2 o'clock, please.
 5 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 6 (12.51 pm)
 7 (The short adjournment)
 8 (2.00 pm)
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Keating.
 10 MR KEATING: Good afternoon, Mr Chairman.
 11 Could I call Michael Adamson, please.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.
 13 MR MICHAEL ADAMSON (affirmed)
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Please sit
 15 down, make yourself comfortable.
 16 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 17 (Pause)
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Keating, when you're ready.
 19 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 20 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 21 Mr Adamson, thank you so much for attending today
 22 and assisting the Inquiry with its investigations.
 23 Just a few words by way of introduction which we say
 24 to all witnesses.
 25 Firstly, if I could invite you to keep your voice up

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1 as loud as you can so that the transcriber can capture
 2 what you have to say. It also helps not to nod or shake
 3 your head, but to say "Yes" or "No".
 4 If any of my questions are unclear, please just say
 5 so and I'm sure it's my fault and I can rephrase those.
 6 We will take a break probably mid-afternoon, but if
 7 you need a break at any stage, please let us know and
 8 I'm sure we can accommodate that.
 9 In terms of formalities, could we just deal with
 10 your statement, please, which you provided to
 11 the Inquiry, and that's dated 15 July. It's
 12 {BRC00000075}. So we can see there your statement, the
 13 front page, dated 15 July, as we said, 2019.
 14 If you could turn to page 36, please, and we see
 15 your name in print, and can you confirm that's your
 16 signature?
 17 A. Yes, it is.
 18 Q. Are the contents of that statement true to the best of
 19 your belief and knowledge?
 20 A. Yes, they are.
 21 Q. Thank you.
 22 Have you had the opportunity to read your statements
 23 recently?
 24 A. I have, yes, thank you.
 25 Q. Excellent, thank you.

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1 Just to assist you and to assist the panel with
 2 where your evidence is going to cover, it's going to
 3 fall into three areas: firstly, your dealings with
 4 Nicholas Holgate on 15 June; secondly, your involvement
 5 with the London Gold response, also known as the
 6 Grenfell fire response team, and that occurred over the
 7 weekend onwards, so that would be 17 June onwards; and,
 8 thirdly, we're going to look forward and capture some of
 9 the lessons you consider the British Red Cross have
 10 learnt from the incident, and also the work that's been
 11 undertaken in the field, especially by the British
 12 Red Cross, in relation to the role of the voluntary
 13 sector.
 14 Is that okay?
 15 A. That sounds fine, thank you.
 16 Q. That's our pathway.
 17 Before we do that, just briefly matters by way of
 18 background and your position.
 19 Since 2014, is it right that you have held
 20 a position as chief executive of the British Red Cross?
 21 A. That is correct.
 22 Q. It's also correct, isn't it, that you are a trustee of
 23 the disasters emergency committee, which brings together
 24 14 leading UK agencies whose function is to raise money
 25 at times of humanitarian crises overseas?

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1 A. Yes, I am.
 2 Q. Since the Grenfell Tower fire, you have been appointed
 3 a trustee of the National Emergencies Trust, which was
 4 set up in late 2019 to collaborate with charities and
 5 other bodies to raise and distribute money and support
 6 at the time of a domestic disaster; is that correct?
 7 A. That's no longer the case. I was a trustee until the
 8 end of — towards the end of last year.
 9 Q. Okay. So you were a trustee, and this entity, the
 10 National Emergencies Trust, deals with emergencies and
 11 fundraising in terms of domestic contexts; is that
 12 correct?
 13 A. It is there to assist with the co-ordination of
 14 fundraising.
 15 Q. In relation to the British Red Cross, you have helpfully
 16 set out in your statement at paragraph 22
 17 {BRC00000075/5}, which we don't need to look at, that
 18 the British Red Cross has 4,000 members of staff and is
 19 assisted by over 18,000 volunteers in its humanitarian
 20 work; is that correct?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Perhaps we could look at paragraph 24 of your statement
 23 {BRC00000075/5}, please, as we examine the role of the
 24 British Red Cross and, as you describe it, its special
 25 status:

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1 "The [British Red Cross] does also have a special
 2 status which means that it neither forms part of
 3 government nor comprises a non-government organisation
 4 (which differs from many other charitable bodies active
 5 within the voluntary sector). This is its 'auxiliary'
 6 or support, function to the UK's public authorities in
 7 the humanitarian field."
 8 Then it goes on to mention the charter, which is the
 9 British Red Cross charter.
 10 Is that correct, that the British Red Cross is, in
 11 effect, an auxiliary to government?
 12 A. That is correct, yes.
 13 Q. And the effect of this perhaps can be seen at the bottom
 14 of paragraph 24, and you have written this:
 15 "This recognition establishes an automatic
 16 relationship between the [British Red Cross] and the
 17 government (such that the BRC is required to have regard
 18 to the considerations of the government, without being
 19 beholden to it, while carrying out its primary
 20 responsibility to alleviate suffering in emergencies)."
 21 Is that correct?
 22 A. That is correct.
 23 Q. So there is a special status, is what you're saying, of
 24 the British Red Cross within the voluntary sector?
 25 A. That's correct. Every Red Cross or Red Crescent

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1 organisation in every country in the world, 192
 2 countries, has that auxiliary status with its
 3 government, but its job is to support people in
 4 emergencies and times of crisis and to alleviate
 5 suffering, and make good judgements about how to do
 6 that.
 7 Q. Yes.
 8 In relation to local authorities, is it correct that
 9 the nature of support provided by the British Red Cross
 10 during an emergency would be with reference,
 11 for example, to the memorandum of understanding as
 12 agreed between the British Red Cross and that local
 13 authority?
 14 A. That would be typically the arrangement, yes.
 15 Q. The written evidence from your colleague Emma Spragg was
 16 that there was a memorandum of understanding between
 17 RBKC and the British Red Cross back in 2017. It perhaps
 18 was out of date, but there was that sort of pre-existing
 19 relationship.
 20 A. That's my understanding, yes.
 21 Q. We can perhaps deal with this matter now.
 22 If there was a memorandum of understanding which had
 23 lapsed, ie was out of date, would that inhibit or
 24 interfere with the support the British Red Cross would
 25 provide?

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1 A. Obviously our aim would be to ensure that memoranda of
 2 understanding are up to date, but fundamentally, no, we
 3 would respond in partnership with the authorities, while
 4 endeavouring to ensure that we were meeting need in the
 5 best way possible.
 6 Q. Yes. The effect, as we know, in relation to the
 7 Grenfell Tower response, is from 14 June, the
 8 British Red Cross was actively involved in the response;
 9 isn't that correct?
 10 A. That is correct.
 11 Q. Perhaps we can now turn to the first area which
 12 I mentioned, which was the 15 June contact with
 13 Nicholas Holgate.
 14 We'll hear later in the module from your colleague
 15 Emma Spragg, who was very much involved in the
 16 operational aspects of the British Red Cross response
 17 from 14 June, and for those reasons I can focus and
 18 touch upon your direct dealings, if that's okay.
 19 A. Of course.
 20 Q. We can capture that later on.
 21 Perhaps we could go to paragraph 64, please, of your
 22 statement {BRC00000075/14}, and this is what you've
 23 written here:
 24 "We had decided at the ELT meeting ..."
 25 Is that the executive leadership team meeting?

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1 A. That's correct.
 2 Q. "We had decided at the [executive leadership team]
 3 meeting that took place on Thursday 15 June 2017 that
 4 I should proactively get in touch with the then Chief
 5 Executive of RBKC, Nicholas Holgate, to obtain an update
 6 on the relief effort and to discuss additional ways in
 7 which the [British Red Cross] could potentially provide
 8 further assistance with the response."
 9 Is that right, was that the position?
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.
 11 Q. In terms of providing additional support, is it the
 12 position, and it was then, that the British Red Cross
 13 could offer to provide assistance, but couldn't really
 14 force upon a local authority its assistance?
 15 A. Yes, our aim would be — normally, in responding to
 16 an emergency, we are commissioned by a local authority,
 17 effectively, and in — but we can also be proactive in
 18 making offers to them if we think a broader range of
 19 capabilities might be useful.
 20 Q. But it's an offer which requires the acceptance of the
 21 local authority?
 22 A. That would be our preference.
 23 Q. Yes.
 24 Well, let's explore that a little bit more in
 25 relation to this meeting that you decided on 15 June it

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1 was necessary for you to proactively get in touch with
 2 Nicholas Holgate.
 3 Had the British Red Cross by that stage, on the
 4 morning of Thursday, 15 June, formed a view or had any
 5 concerns on how the local authority were leading the
 6 provision of emergency relief?
 7 A. I think by the Thursday morning, the scale and
 8 complexity of the emergency was starting to become
 9 clearer, both because the death toll was becoming
 10 clearer and the number of people being evacuated from
 11 the Grenfell Tower and, indeed, the surrounding streets
 12 was becoming clearer, and therefore that this was not
 13 a typical emergency, and therefore we — it is unusual
 14 for me to be proactive in getting in touch with the
 15 chief executive of a local authority in an emergency.
 16 In fact, I think this is the only time I have actually
 17 ever done it directly at that stage of an emergency, to
 18 say, "Is there any more that we can do to help?"
 19 Q. You took that unusual step because you considered the
 20 complexity of the incident was such that there was
 21 a need for offering more support?
 22 A. The combination of the messages from our team on the
 23 ground around what was happening, and also the — and
 24 the chaotic nature of the situation.
 25 Large emergencies are often chaotic. That doesn't

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1 mean that the leading authority is failing necessarily,
 2 it just means it is chaotic because that's — a lot of
 3 people are affected in a lot of very profound ways, and
 4 our aim at that stage was to say, "This is big and we
 5 want to offer as much help as we possibly can".
 6 Q. Perhaps we could go to paragraph 58 {BRC00000075/13},
 7 where you touch upon this. I'll read the first part of
 8 the paragraph:
 9 "In the hours immediately following the Grenfell
 10 Fire, it became increasingly clear to the [British Red
 11 Cross] and others that RBKC was struggling in its
 12 efforts to organise the response to the fire."
 13 Then if I move on:
 14 "The wider needs of those affected were also
 15 becoming more apparent, but, with it, also the capacity
 16 of the RBKC response, as it was being run, to coordinate
 17 how those needs were met."
 18 Then if we could move on to paragraph 60, which we
 19 can see on the same page, the second sentence:
 20 "It was becoming clear that the RBKC response, as it
 21 was, was not doing that to the extent that it needed to
 22 do so."
 23 In other words, provide humanitarian assistance; is
 24 that correct?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. So that was the environment where you decided that it
 2 was necessary to make a call to Nicholas Holgate.
 3 Perhaps we can move on to that call.
 4 You mention at paragraph 66 {BRC00000075/15} — we
 5 don't need to turn to it — that you first tried to call
 6 him but he wasn't available to take your call, but, in
 7 fairness, he returned your call very, very quickly
 8 thereafter.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Then if we could turn to paragraph 67, please, you say
 11 this:
 12 "On the phone call, I made a number of offers to
 13 Mr Holgate of ways in which the [British Red Cross]
 14 could further assist RBKC's response to the Grenfell
 15 Fire. These included: providing practical and emotional
 16 support; access to large tents to use outside of the
 17 Westway as reception areas; assistance with cash
 18 distribution in the form of small amounts of money to be
 19 given to those who had been affected to buy food and
 20 personal items; and help with coordinating the
 21 fundraising efforts ..."
 22 What was Mr Holgate's response with regard to the
 23 offers you made?
 24 A. It was a relatively short conversation in which he
 25 expressed gratitude for the support that we had already

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1 given in mobilising support and assistance for the
 2 rest centre, and his assessment at that time was that
 3 the only additional support that they would welcome was
 4 the support with the organising of the fundraising
 5 appeal for those affected.
 6 Q. One of the purposes of your call was to get an update on
 7 the relief effort. Did he provide you with any update
 8 as to what was going on in terms of the relief effort,
 9 what was occurring?
 10 A. I don't recall there being any detail to that.
 11 Q. How did the conversation end after he was polite
 12 regarding your offers but, for the majority of them,
 13 didn't take them up?
 14 A. I confirmed that the offer -- it was an open offer for
 15 that kind of -- the assistance I'd made directly --
 16 directly offered, and indeed anything else -- other
 17 areas where we might be able to help or to commission
 18 help with others, and he thanked me for that, and,
 19 you know, we ... the phone call concluded.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Can I just ask you this: this was
 21 all going on on the morning of the 15th?
 22 A. Correct.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: You already had some people involved
 24 in the response to the disaster; is that right?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: And really this was a case of
 2 saying, "There may be more we can do, would you like us
 3 to help?"
 4 A. Yes.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right, thank you very much.
 6 MR KEATING: Would you have expected Mr Holgate or a chief
 7 executive in that situation to take you up on your offer
 8 of assistance?
 9 A. Well, that all depends on the extent to which he
 10 feels -- he felt he was on top of the situation, and it
 11 wasn't at that stage for me to judge the relationship
 12 between the inevitably kind of chaotic and quite complex
 13 nature of the situation, and then the capability
 14 formally of, you know, Royal Borough of Kensington and
 15 Chelsea to handle that.
 16 Q. Yes.
 17 A. So I took his response at face value at that stage, but,
 18 you know, ensured that he knew that the offer was open,
 19 and indeed that we would then be, you know, continuing
 20 our support on the ground in order to attempt to
 21 continue to provide the right kind of assistance.
 22 Q. So your ongoing support was constant, and that open
 23 offer for additional support remained.
 24 Was there any further contact with Mr Holgate or
 25 anyone else from RBKC in those following days?

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1 A. There was no direct contact with me in those following
 2 days with Kensington and Chelsea, but obviously the team
 3 on the ground were working with colleagues from
 4 Kensington and Chelsea all the time.
 5 Q. Yes. But it wasn't the case that there was a further
 6 request to the senior leadership team at the British
 7 Red Cross for greater assistance from the British
 8 Red Cross?
 9 A. No.
 10 Q. If I could move on to the second of our three areas,
 11 which is your involvement in what became known as the
 12 Grenfell fire response team.
 13 So in terms of the chronology, it's Friday, 16 June,
 14 and is it correct that you learned that John Barradell,
 15 who was the town clerk and chief executive of the
 16 Corporation of London, the City of London, had been
 17 tasked to lead the pan-London response?
 18 A. That's correct.
 19 Q. And the term that's been used is the "Grenfell Tower
 20 response team", and that was to describe the sort of
 21 multidisciplinary team, the British Red Cross,
 22 governmental agents and local authorities; is that
 23 right?
 24 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. We know from your statement at paragraph 74

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1 {BRC00000075/16} that you spoke with him on the Friday
 2 evening, John Barradell, and he invited you to attend
 3 meetings at their offices over the weekend; is that
 4 correct?
 5 A. Yes, it is.
 6 Q. And it's right that you attended their offices over the
 7 weekend, staying to 10 o'clock each evening --
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 Q. -- that weekend --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- 17/18 June.
 12 Perhaps we could open up paragraph 76, please, of
 13 your statement {BRC00000075/17}. Paragraph 76, three
 14 lines from the bottom, in relation to what was asked of
 15 you:
 16 "He confirmed that they were seeking support from us
 17 with the GFRT's communications strategy, as well as the
 18 ongoing support in the rest centre at the Westway and
 19 with the establishment of a support line."
 20 Is that correct?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. So three areas: (1) communications strategy; (2) support
 23 in the rest centre; and (3) the establishment of
 24 a support line.
 25 A. At that time, yes.

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1 Q. At that time.
 2 A. Yeah.
 3 Q. In relation to the first of those three areas, what did
 4 you understand British Red Cross were being asked to do
 5 to assist in terms of communications strategy?
 6 A. Well, because GFRT had mobilised literally overnight and
 7 into a weekend, the -- I think they simply didn't have
 8 the communications capacity. So, in fact, there were
 9 Red Cross -- people from the Red Cross communications
 10 team were also in the Gold Command, in the GFRT
 11 offices --
 12 Q. Yes.
 13 A. -- providing support and working with the people who
 14 were there to try to frame communications, to use
 15 social media to share information, and my understanding
 16 is that they would welcome that support. In practice,
 17 I think they used that support for a short period of
 18 time into the early part of the next week, and then
 19 mobilised capacity from the local authorities across
 20 London.
 21 Q. Thank you.
 22 We could perhaps deal with the support line here by
 23 way of completeness.
 24 We have Emma Spragg's written evidence, and it
 25 appears on 15 June she received confirmation that the

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1 BRC should use a helpline which had already been in
 2 place since the Manchester Arena incident, and that
 3 existing helpline was there to assist Grenfell survivors
 4 and people affected by the fire. It appears -- this
 5 hopefully assists with your recollection -- that the
 6 support line was established and operating from 16 June;
 7 does that sound about right?
 8 A. It sounds about right, but I wasn't close to that
 9 decision-making.
 10 Q. No, no.
 11 I just want to deal with any initial issues which
 12 you observed with the Grenfell fire response team, and
 13 we can see it in front of us at paragraph 76
 14 {BRC00000075/17}, the paragraph we were just looking at.
 15 At the top, you said:
 16 "I found the position at the GFRT over that weekend
 17 still to be somewhat confused, and it was difficult for
 18 me to form an objective analysis of the situation."
 19 Pausing there for a moment, I wonder if you could go
 20 to paragraph 123 {BRC00000075/27}, please, which is
 21 another observation you make on similar lines.
 22 Thank you:
 23 "My experience of assisting with the GFRT response
 24 on the weekend of 17 and 18 June 2017 was that it
 25 remained chaotic right up until the Sunday evening."

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1 So there's two phrases we've touched upon in those
 2 two paragraphs; one of them was it was "somewhat
 3 confused" and the other one was "chaotic", which we've
 4 just seen at paragraph 123.
 5 Can you assist us, in what way did you consider that
 6 the Grenfell fire response team response over that
 7 weekend was somewhat confused or chaotic?
 8 A. I think the situation was confused and chaotic because
 9 GFRT were themselves mobilising from a standing start,
 10 you know, with no capacity in place to mobilise, and
 11 also then inheriting information that was very partial
 12 from Kensington and Chelsea. So that's an observation
 13 of fact as much as anything, that they were trying to
 14 make sense of a situation that was quite complex and
 15 chaotic, and pull the threads together into a plan for
 16 how assistance should be provided in the days to follow.
 17 MR KEATING: Yes.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you just tell us: how were you
 19 following this? Were you, in a sense, in telephone
 20 communication with the response team, or were you, as it
 21 were, located with them so that you could see what was
 22 going on and ... how did it work?
 23 A. I was -- the Grenfell fire response team established new
 24 office premises in Westminster from the Friday evening,
 25 from which they then operated in the weeks to follow,

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1 and I went to those offices from the Saturday late
 2 morning until late Saturday evening, and then same on
 3 Sunday from in the morning through to Sunday evening, so
 4 I was there seeing the operation, and I had also been to
 5 see the operation in the -- around the Westway, around
 6 the tower itself on the Friday, to try and -- you know,
 7 to get a picture of what was happening.
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
 9 A. So I was -- I felt that I was ... so these comments are
 10 made on the basis of what I was observing hour by hour.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: In effect, you were integrated with
 12 the team that was running the operation?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That's helpful, thank you very much.
 15 MR KEATING: We're just going to explore that integration
 16 and build upon your direct observations over that
 17 weekend.
 18 Perhaps we could look at paragraph 124
 19 {BRC00000075/27}, please. So you were expressing how
 20 you were at the scene -- at the scene, in other words at
 21 the offices:
 22 "At the same time, I was attempting to engage with
 23 those in comparable senior leadership positions heading
 24 the response, so that we would be able, with the benefit
 25 of our mutual professional experiences and capabilities,

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1 to sit down and diagnose the issues with the response
 2 (i.e., to consider what had been missing from the
 3 inherited RBKC response, so we could determine where the
 4 GFRT response needed to focus its efforts), but I found
 5 it initially difficult to engage with those
 6 individuals."

7 Why was it difficult to engage with those
 8 individuals over that weekend?

9 A. Would you mind if we scrolled through the rest of
 10 paragraph 124?

11 Q. Of course. Would you like me to read the rest of it or
 12 would you like to go overleaf?

13 A. Just go overleaf so I can just ...

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. So as I think paragraph 124 tries to get at, there was
 16 a sense of real urgency in understanding the immediate
 17 needs of the people directly impacted by the fire, and
 18 particularly those who were bereaved and had to be
 19 evacuated from the tower itself and Grenfell Walk, and
 20 that, perhaps understandably, was an absolute priority,
 21 and because GFRT itself was mobilising from a standing
 22 start, a lot of quite senior people were getting quite
 23 involved in that direct planning of trying to understand
 24 that situation. And while work was done over that
 25 weekend on, you know, the way forwards, which I'm sure

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1 we'll come to --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- in the resulting statement, it then made it difficult
 4 just to sit down and have a considered -- you know,
 5 a consideration, as partners, about: well, what's the
 6 medium-term way forwards?

7 Q. So those strategic leaders, on your account, were very
 8 much involved in some organisational matters on that --

9 A. Some very operational -- yes, they were very involved in
 10 some very operational matters.

11 Q. Yes.

12 In fairness, to balance your comments, which I was
 13 going to move to, you say:

14 "There was a difficult balance to be struck between
 15 a strategic needs assessment and planning on the one
 16 hand and the immediate action and communication of
 17 a position on the other."

18 A. Correct, yes.

19 Q. And you say:

20 "More emphasis on the former might have paid
 21 dividends in the long run."

22 A. Yes, but it's a difficult balance to strike in the
 23 moment.

24 Q. Correct.

25 As you anticipate, I was going to move on to the

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1 press statement, and we'll do that in a moment, but we
 2 know over that weekend that you were asked to issue
 3 a joint press statement on behalf of the British
 4 Red Cross with the Grenfell fire response team. That's
 5 mentioned at paragraph 125 {BRC0000075/28}. That's
 6 right in front of us. You say this:

7 "I was only willing to do so once I was clearer on
 8 how the needs of the affected individuals were going to
 9 be met by the [Grenfell fire response team]. By the
 10 evening of Sunday 18 June, I had formed the view that
 11 there was indeed some sense of coherence emerging, and
 12 that the right people were becoming involved, so I felt
 13 able to make that statement."

14 Is that correct?

15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. Is there anything else you wanted to add to that?

17 A. I felt that, you know, senior London -- senior leaders
 18 from across London were coming together to try to make
 19 sense of the situation and set some kind of plan in
 20 place, and, you know, on the Saturday, I felt that that
 21 wasn't clear enough for the Red Cross to be putting its
 22 name or being a partner in that visibly. By the Sunday
 23 evening -- but it was literally hour by hour, as things
 24 became clearer -- I felt that the -- you know, there was
 25 some greater coherence to our intentions, and it was

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1 also very important that we did communicate what our
 2 intentions were, because people need to know, in terms
 3 of both the local community and more widely, there was
 4 a lot of stakeholders, and the Red Cross in its
 5 auxiliary role, you know, needs to be part of that.

6 Q. Just to help perhaps us all to visualise the effort and
 7 resources which were being mobilised over that weekend,
 8 how would you describe it from your position, embedded
 9 within the offices that weekend?

10 A. I would describe it as earnest, busy, trying to make
 11 sense of complexity, and -- but a sense of -- that
 12 there's a very important -- there's very important work
 13 to do.

14 Q. Let's turn to the press statement, which we referred to.
 15 It's at {LFB00061258}, please. It's an email of the
 16 press statement. It's from John Hetherington, we see at
 17 the top, 18 June, so the Sunday, at 21.49, so late in
 18 the evening, and sent to all the chief executives, and
 19 if we scroll down, thank you, it says:

20 "Please see the press statement made today by the
 21 Grenfell Fire Response team.
 22 "...
 23 "Below statement by Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive
 24 of Southwark Council, on behalf of the newly established
 25 'Grenfell Fire Response Team' which includes London-wide

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1 local and regional government, central government,
 2 British Red Cross, Metropolitan Police and London Fire
 3 Brigade."
 4 Does that capture what the GFRT was?
 5 A. At that stage, yes.
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 This is the first time that we've seen this document
 8 during the Inquiry, so I'm just going to read the first
 9 paragraph:
 10 "We want to make clear that whilst the emergency and
 11 local community response was nothing short of heroic, we
 12 know that the initial response was simply not good
 13 enough on the ground. People are angry, and rightfully
 14 so.
 15 "Our focus is now ensuring those affected are being
 16 cared for and looked after."
 17 You're familiar with this press statement because
 18 one assumes that you had some input or you were
 19 consulted on its contents; is that correct?
 20 A. That's correct.
 21 Q. If we go down to the next page {LFB00061258/2}, please,
 22 and I just want to focus upon the role of the British
 23 Red Cross as set out in this document.
 24 We see paragraph 3, and I'm going to invite us to go
 25 a little bit further down the document, where it says:

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1 "I'm pleased that the British Red Cross are here to
 2 help us coordinate and provide assistance where it is
 3 needed. Red Cross personnel and volunteers have been on
 4 site 24 hours a day since early Wednesday."
 5 Is that correct?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. "This has so far involved a team of more than 66
 8 volunteers alongside trained psycho social support
 9 specialists .
 10 "From today the Red Cross will help support a more
 11 dedicated community assistance centre at the Westway
 12 Centre and will be part of the teams allocated to every
 13 household affected. Today they are doing outreach work
 14 to find people who need help and we have also asked them
 15 to be at airports to meet grieving relatives as they
 16 arrive . They can also help distribute donations that
 17 have poured in from the public."
 18 Then it sets out:
 19 "A Red Cross helpline is in action to help give
 20 practical or emotional support to anyone who needs it
 21 and capacity of this is being expanded to give people
 22 a central point of contact."
 23 Did that reflect the role at that stage, what was
 24 envisaged for the British Red Cross?
 25 A. Yes, from my memory, that would be an accurate

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1 statement.
 2 Q. Perhaps one matter of clarification was where it refers
 3 to "will be part of the teams allocated to every
 4 household affected". That sounds like a key worker
 5 role. Was it the case that the British Red Cross were
 6 involved in key worker roles?
 7 A. I -- you know, in my role, I wasn't directly involved in
 8 that, but the intention was to match up -- the intention
 9 was that the presence of the Red Cross is not only
 10 important in terms of capability to provide, you know,
 11 assistance, but also to show a more human-centred
 12 approach. So it wasn't simply about government
 13 response; this was about volunteers and, you know,
 14 people with experience of responding in emergencies,
 15 both in the UK and around the world, you know, being
 16 available, and I am, you know, aware that we were
 17 supporting the teams allocated just to work with the
 18 people affected. I can't comment on whether we were
 19 part of every team, but there was certainly a key worker
 20 philosophy behind it, and we were very -- we were part
 21 of that.
 22 Q. Okay.
 23 I want to move on to another section, which is
 24 labelled principal issues.
 25 You raise a number of issues regarding what you

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1 observed in those days, and I just want to draw out some
 2 of those with you.
 3 To assist you -- because it's, again, a very
 4 detailed, helpful, comprehensive statement -- one of the
 5 issues you raised was the accessibility of the Westway.
 6 I want to ask you some questions about the Westway.
 7 As you mentioned to one of the Chairman's questions,
 8 you actually did attend the Westway; is that correct?
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. Your evidence was that your first visit was on the
 11 morning of Friday, 16 June, and you attended the scene
 12 on a number of occasions thereafter; is that correct?
 13 A. That is correct.
 14 Q. If we have a look at your statement again at
 15 paragraph 94 {BRC00000075/20}, please, which hopefully
 16 might assist us all and your recollection, and I've
 17 summarised the first part there. Perhaps we could focus
 18 on the last three lines, where it says:
 19 "Attending the scene of the fire allowed me to take
 20 a view on what aspects of the response were working well
 21 (both from a GFRT and [British Red Cross]-specific
 22 perspective) and, also, and perhaps even more
 23 importantly, what was working less well."
 24 How would you describe the scene on 16 June, the
 25 Friday, when you attended the Westway?

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1 A. Well, it's important to look at the scene in the Westway
 2 in the context of what was happening in the surrounding
 3 community as well, and it is -- it was very --
 4 incredibly busy, chaotic, there was a lot of visible
 5 anger from people, a lot of people with microphones and,
 6 you know, talking to people, and huge numbers of people
 7 collecting boxes of clothes and unpacking boxes, packing
 8 boxes, so a very chaotic environment. Again, not
 9 unusual in a significant emergency.

10 And then, at the Westway itself, there was -- it was
 11 at a stage when there were still people in the Westway
 12 who had been evacuated from the tower or Grenfell Walk
 13 who were being accommodated there, including people who,
 14 you know, had tragically lost loved ones. So it was
 15 an incredibly -- it was a kind of frenetic setting, with
 16 a lot of people milling around, a lot of press interest
 17 as well, and then people who were also, as I say,
 18 themselves bereaved, tragically. So it was a very
 19 difficult environment.

20 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: When you use the word "chaotic", it
 21 conjures up in my mind, at least, a sense of an absence
 22 of direction or organisation. Not simply a lot of
 23 activity, but a lot of rather disorganised activity. Is
 24 that what you mean?

25 A. Well, I think in the surrounding community it felt --

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1 there was a lot of anger, and that was just -- that was
 2 being expressed both, you know, viscerally by
 3 individuals and groups, and in that sense that created
 4 a sense of -- there wasn't a great sense of order about
 5 it. It was -- it didn't feel threatening at all, but it
 6 felt just -- you know, there was a lot of emotion
 7 around. And then in the Westway itself, it was --
 8 you know, there were -- again, what happens in all
 9 emergencies, and it happened here, is the surge in
 10 donated goods, a lot of people tried to help, a lot of,
 11 you know, as I say, press interest. The area where
 12 people -- the people who were -- who had been evacuated
 13 from the tower and the surrounding walkway were in
 14 an area that was kept separate, but it wasn't suitable
 15 for long-term -- you know, for accommodation for people
 16 who are in -- have experienced that trauma. It was
 17 a big, you know, gym, and that's not -- clearly not the
 18 right environment for people.

19 But those people, they weren't -- it was not that
 20 everyone was milling around that area where bereaved
 21 people or people who had been evacuated were there, but
 22 just upstairs there was a lot of people milling around,
 23 and we're still very much in the phase of trying to help
 24 get the whole -- you know, in that transition from the
 25 immediate refuge, as it were, where people went, into

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1 the community assistance centre model, which is what
 2 then emerged over the weekend. That transition was
 3 happening in real time.

4 So it was incredibly busy, and lots of people, and
 5 it wasn't -- it was -- but I think it was -- it would be
 6 true to say we were yet to see a really ordered approach
 7 to the situation.

8 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes. Thank you, that's helpful.

9 MR KEATING: Your organisation and you as chief executive
 10 have huge experience in dealing with emergencies, both
 11 domestically and internationally; is that fair?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Yes. In relation to your expertise and your
 14 expectation, coming down on the third day after
 15 a serious emergency like the fire you've experienced,
 16 would you have expected to be greeted with the scene
 17 that you were met with?

18 A. No, I would have expected more order to be being
 19 established by then.

20 Q. What would you have expected? More order, but what
 21 should have happened, in your view, by the third day?

22 A. Well, I think by the third day you would hope that all
 23 the people who have had to be evacuated from the tower
 24 itself and people who had been bereaved would have been
 25 found more suitable accommodation, and that the

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1 rest centre itself would be ... perhaps more ordered,
 2 but you also have to bear in mind that the whole
 3 community was -- and lots of people beyond that
 4 community were -- wanted to express, you know, support,
 5 empathy, solidarity and/or -- the ripple effects of the
 6 trauma from the fire itself, you know, went much
 7 further. All those who could see the tower, which went,
 8 you know, for miles around, could be affected by it. So
 9 you're bound to have a lot of people milling around.

10 And some of the challenges around the -- therefore,
 11 the attempt to put order around it in terms of,
 12 you know, managing access into the building was
 13 important, and that was, you know, an attempt to do that
 14 in order to protect the people who were still there.

15 So I think you might expect to see a bit more order,
 16 but it's also not unusual in an emergency for that to
 17 take a few days to materialise.

18 MR KEATING: We were dealing --

19 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: I'm sorry to keep interrupting,
 20 Mr Keating.

21 MR KEATING: Sorry, Mr Chairman.

22 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: When you first visited the Westway,
 23 were you able to identify someone who was at least
 24 nominally in charge and giving directions, or was there
 25 no one holding that role?

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1 A. I don't recall meeting anyone who held that role.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Did you seek to find out who might
 3 be in that role?
 4 A. I'll be honest with you, I cannot recall, but I can't
 5 imagine that I wouldn't have done.
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Quite. That's what I thought. Yes.
 7 Anyway, you can't now remember identifying someone
 8 who was clearly in charge?
 9 A. No.
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right, thank you.
 11 MR KEATING: Did you consider from what you observed and
 12 what was being fed back to you on 16 June and thereafter
 13 that there was a reluctance by those who had been
 14 impacted by the fire accessing the Westway rest centre?
 15 A. I don't think I was aware of that specifically on the
 16 16th.
 17 Q. Thereafter, did you become aware of any issue in
 18 relation to that?
 19 A. I did become aware of that because some of that was what
 20 started to be fed back over the weekend from some of our
 21 teams or people that were visiting the site, and that
 22 information started to come through.
 23 Q. So, in other words, there was an awareness that there
 24 was a lack of access or people feeling comfortable about
 25 accessing the Westway?

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1 A. There was a concern beginning to be expressed over the
 2 weekend that the Westway operation itself was not
 3 sufficiently connected into the wider community.
 4 Q. Thank you.
 5 I just want to turn to paragraph 101
 6 {BRC0000075/22}, please, dealing with this topic of —
 7 you can see at perhaps paragraph 100 first, if you just
 8 scroll up slightly, you mention that:
 9 "In addition, the Westway was situated behind
 10 a police cordon, which was intended to keep people safe
 11 and the large media presence [which you've referred to]
 12 at bay. A number of those uncomfortable with the police
 13 and local authorities did not wish to cross the cordon
 14 to access the Westway, instead choosing to rely on
 15 pop-up centres that had been set up by churches,
 16 mosques, community organisations and charities in the
 17 local community. The diversity in support from such
 18 a large cross-section of the local community was
 19 remarkable but, to a certain extent, uncoordinated. It
 20 was not easy to work out who had been affected,
 21 particularly in absence of an efficient and
 22 comprehensive registration process, and those who were
 23 just there to help."
 24 Then you move on at paragraph 101 to say this, three
 25 lines down:

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1 "First, both the [British Red Cross] and those in
 2 charge of the response (whether RBKC or the [Grenfell
 3 fire response team]) should have realised at an earlier
 4 point that some of those affected were not accessing the
 5 Westway because they did not feel comfortable there.
 6 Although we sent community outreach teams from the week
 7 commencing 19 June 2017 out on the streets and to the
 8 locations where people were congregating, with hindsight
 9 it would have been better to have done this sooner to
 10 see how we could help and what was needed. We could
 11 then have made earlier decision about how best to use
 12 our resources."
 13 Is that a fair summary of what you were just saying
 14 about the Westway not being really embedded or
 15 integrated with the wider community?
 16 A. Yes, it is.
 17 Q. You say, in hindsight, that's something that both RBKC
 18 and the response team should have realised at an earlier
 19 point.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. How would they have realised at an earlier point? How
 22 would somebody be aware of this?
 23 A. Well, I think — well, as the Red Cross, we would have
 24 much more — this is where the — you asked me earlier
 25 about the auxiliary role.

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1 Q. Yes.
 2 A. And we touched on the — you know, does the auxiliary
 3 role simply mean that we respond to the request from the
 4 local authority, which is what we typically do in most
 5 emergencies, or do we additionally do needs assessments
 6 of our own and build connections with local communities
 7 and the organisations operating within them? We would
 8 now have a much broader interpretation of our role,
 9 which would continue to be to partner with the local
 10 authority, of course, but to make far more effort
 11 ourselves to build the relationship with the local
 12 community and the other organisations active within it.
 13 Had we done that, then we would have been feeding back
 14 information sooner to the local authority about the need
 15 to take — to have a more holistic view of the overall
 16 needs and the overall response and the incredible role
 17 being played by some of these other organisations.
 18 Q. So greater partnership, or at least engagement, with
 19 those local community faith and voluntary organisations?
 20 A. Absolutely.
 21 Q. I want to move on to a second issue, which is
 22 registration and data-sharing, which we've heard
 23 a number of aspects of evidence in relation to that.
 24 If we could go to paragraph 68, please, of your
 25 statement {BRC0000075/15}. Something you mention and

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1 place significant weight on in your evidence, written
 2 evidence, is the topic of registration. That's what
 3 I want to explore with you as well, please.
 4 We've touched upon this paragraph already.
 5 Hopefully it's the right paragraph. Yes, it's five
 6 lines down, which we may have read already, but you say:
 7 "This was in large part because, for the first few
 8 days following the Grenfell Fire, there had been no
 9 effective registration by RBKC of anyone who had been
 10 affected (with the process ultimately taking close to
 11 one week to be coherently organised). While the
 12 situation was undoubtedly difficult and confusing, the
 13 importance of this between the different statutory
 14 actors was not recognised sufficiently early."
 15 So it's a topic which you've touched upon a number
 16 of times, and we may have touched upon this paragraph,
 17 but I wanted to emphasise this and get your assistance
 18 in relation to the last line:
 19 "... the importance of this between the different
 20 statutory actors was not recognised sufficiently early."
 21 What did you mean by that?
 22 A. Well, the first step in almost any emergency response is
 23 really to understand the need, and then to capture the
 24 information about the people who are most affected so
 25 that you can understand with them what their needs are

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1 and then plan the support that you'll mobilise for them,
 2 either individually or as a group.
 3 Clearly in the case of something like cash
 4 distribution, if you haven't registered someone, you
 5 don't have the information about who they are to give
 6 them the cash, either -- you know, particularly if
 7 you're going to do it electronically, nor can you ensure
 8 that the people who most need cash get it, because
 9 you -- to make sure you don't miss anyone, and then you
 10 also make sure that you don't have multiple
 11 organisations giving the same person cash. So
 12 registration -- a registration process is very important
 13 about establishing -- needs assessment and then
 14 a registration process are very important in
 15 establishing -- as the first steps in the response to
 16 emergencies, so you can plan what support to give, both
 17 individually and then sometimes collectively.
 18 Q. When you say the "different statutory actors", who do
 19 you mean specifically?
 20 A. Well, I mean the local authority -- I mean the --
 21 Kensington and Chelsea.
 22 Q. Yes.
 23 A. And then I think over the weekend, in the Gold Command,
 24 the GFRT was then working very hard to try to establish
 25 who had been affected --

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1 Q. Yes.
 2 A. -- to secure -- to have the right list of names of who
 3 lived in the tower, who had been -- who had died, who
 4 was bereaved, who had been evacuated, and to work that
 5 through, and that would be the starting point for being
 6 able to tailor a response to the individuals affected.
 7 Q. I want to deal with the responsibility for registration
 8 as a subheading.
 9 In your view, who was responsible for the initial
 10 registration of those affected by the Grenfell Tower
 11 fire at the Westway?
 12 A. I think that that has to be the local authority had the
 13 responsibility for the registration, not least because
 14 they have the information about who lived in the tower,
 15 which was the starting point, and indeed in
 16 Grenfell Walk.
 17 Q. Yes. So we've heard already in terms of a rest centre,
 18 the responsibility for setting up a rest centre is the
 19 local authority's responsibility. That's material we've
 20 heard already. We have also heard from David Kerry, who
 21 is a member from RBKC, who mentioned that part of their
 22 agreement with the British Red Cross was that they would
 23 attend the rest centre and deal with the registration.
 24 I just want to tease that out a little bit more.
 25 So we have the local authority, on a very simplistic

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1 interpretation, saying, "Well, the British Red Cross are
 2 responsible for it"; we've a memorandum of understanding
 3 which says that the British Red Cross will attend and
 4 bring registration forms; but the ultimate
 5 responsibility, in terms of registration, whose do you
 6 consider that responsibility is?
 7 A. The first thing I would say is there's a distinction
 8 between the registration of the people directly affected
 9 by the fire, those who were -- those who died, those who
 10 were bereaved, those who were evacuated, and that is the
 11 first and most important task, and it is -- the only --
 12 it seems to me the only organisation that can do that is
 13 the local authority. They can commission assistance
 14 with that, but that -- it has to start there.
 15 There was then the issue of registration at the
 16 Westway where, in normal -- I can't speak for the
 17 specifics of this MOU, but normally what would happen is
 18 that the local authority would have the responsibility
 19 for the registration, and then commission help from the
 20 Red Cross, or indeed anyone else, to enable that to
 21 happen.
 22 Q. Your evidence is that it's the local authority who is
 23 responsible, and it may be that the British Red Cross
 24 would assist in that, but the responsibility remains
 25 with the local authority; would that be a fair summary

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1 of the position?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. In terms of the length of time it took to get the
 4 registration process, to use your words at paragraph 68
 5 {BRC00000075/15}, more coherently organised, it took
 6 a week. Was that just an unavoidable situation -- in
 7 other words, was it something which was a feature of
 8 this being an unprecedented incident -- or was it
 9 something which should have been done sooner?
 10 A. It should have been done sooner. It may be that the
 11 information might have been partial to start with, but
 12 it could have been built up as the information became
 13 clearer. However, different bits of information were
 14 held by different statutory authorities, and that made
 15 it -- for example, in terms of our ability to then
 16 distribute the cash that we had, we found it difficult
 17 to establish exactly who we should be trying to reach
 18 with that cash, because a lot of the information was
 19 held by the police for a long period of time and then --
 20 and not being shared with, as far as I could understand,
 21 the Grenfell Tower fire response team.
 22 MR KEATING: Okay.
 23 In terms of --
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can I ask -- I'm sorry to keep
 25 interrupting you.

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1 MR KEATING: Forgive me. Not at all.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can I ask you this: we know that in
 3 the immediate hours following the fire, quite a lot of
 4 places opened up as rest shelters, rest centres, and
 5 they were opened by local people, so that probably by
 6 the noon of the day of the fire, there were half a dozen
 7 or even more rest centres operating on an informal
 8 basis; was that, in your experience, unusual, to have so
 9 many different places operating on a parallel basis?
 10 A. It's not unusual in an emergency per se. So if you look
 11 at international emergencies, that would happen a lot.
 12 It's always the community who responds first. We've not
 13 tended to see that in UK emergencies because they've not
 14 been on this scale and required -- and created that --
 15 the scale -- the size of population affected and the
 16 density of that population meant that a lot of people
 17 were affected and for a long period of time. So I've
 18 not seen it in a UK context before, but it was a very
 19 striking feature of this emergency.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: But it does have implications,
 21 doesn't it, for the handling of the response, because
 22 it's one thing to register people at one location; it's
 23 another thing to register people who have gone to half
 24 a dozen different locations and to combine the
 25 information and to make sure you haven't got people on

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1 twice or missed people out?
 2 A. That's absolutely correct, and the -- and was one of the
 3 features of this emergency and made registration -- it
 4 didn't necessarily make the registration of the people
 5 directly -- who had been in the tower difficult, because
 6 that must have existed on a list, but in terms of the
 7 people who were affected through some of the ripple
 8 effects of the emergency, it did make it difficult, and
 9 we should have been more alert to that in the early days
 10 of, you know, the response.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. All right. Thank you.
 12 MR KEATING: In terms of the difficulties that the Grenfell
 13 fire response team had in relation to make a standing
 14 start -- from a standing start, as you have described
 15 it, perhaps we could just draw out something you have
 16 set out at paragraph 77 {BRC00000075/17}, please. You
 17 outline the weekend of 17 and 18 June, and this is what
 18 you observed:
 19 "I recall a number of Chief Executives sitting down
 20 in a room with their own handwritten tables, trying to
 21 establish lists of who had been affected by the Grenfell
 22 Fire, who had been bereaved, who had been made homeless,
 23 where people were being housed in temporary
 24 accommodation, what their needs were and whether (and if
 25 so, how) those needs were being met. There was not

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1 a clear picture ... It was therefore not ideal that the
 2 process remained ongoing (and without a clear
 3 methodology) more than three days after the fire had
 4 started. It would appear that RBKC had not been able to
 5 pass such information to [the Grenfell fire response
 6 team]."
 7 Does that accurately describe the position?
 8 A. Yes, it does.
 9 Q. In terms of the impact of those deficiencies in the
 10 registration process, again it's something you spend
 11 some time about, you've already mentioned that to us
 12 today, but also in your statement, and perhaps I could
 13 summarise. Paragraph 97 {BRC00000075/21}, you say:
 14 "... neither RBKC nor the GFRT knew who had been
 15 affected by the fire for too long a period of time."
 16 Then at paragraph 98 you say this:
 17 "Without a coherent registration process, it was
 18 difficult to identify who had been affected, their
 19 needs, and how best to address those needs. It was also
 20 sometimes not clear where those who had been affected
 21 actually were. Many people were being housed in
 22 temporary accommodation, but it was sometimes difficult
 23 to work out where they were so they could be checked on
 24 and offered further support."
 25 In relation to that latter part, that's those who

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1 were placed in hotels, there was a concern that there
2 wasn't an understanding of where they were and how they
3 could be supported; is that correct?

4 A. That is correct.

5 Q. I'm just going to move on to a subset of this topic of
6 registration, which is data-sharing or data protection,
7 whichever way you want to look at it from. You
8 mentioned about some of the difficulties in getting
9 information from other statutory actors, as you
10 described it.

11 Perhaps we could look at paragraph 97
12 {BRC00000075/21} in relation to this, please. The
13 second sentence:

14 "I believe this issue was further complicated by
15 concerns over data protection issues that had arisen,
16 which made it difficult for the police and other
17 agencies to share the information that they did have
18 with the [Grenfell fire response team] for fear of
19 breaching the relevant laws or regulations."

20 Something which we'll explore in our third section
21 is your view that this should be improved for the
22 future; is that correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Going back into those experiences in June 2017 and
25 efforts to address that at that time, were there any

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1 steps taken to address the data protection issues at
2 that time, to try to get more information shared?

3 A. We -- I'm -- in terms of what others did, I'm not sure.
4 What I was -- for us, it really mattered because we
5 wanted to be able to mobilise financial support to those
6 people directly affected, and if we didn't have the list
7 of names and contact details, we couldn't do that. And
8 so I was, you know, pressing my team for information
9 about: well, who are the decision-makers on this? And
10 I understood the information to be being held by the
11 police, you know, we -- to -- and trying to secure the
12 name of the lead police liaison officer or family
13 liaison officer who might be able to help us to resolve
14 the issue, and it just took a long time.

15 Q. It's probably very hard to put a figure on that, but can
16 you assist in relation to how long it took for you to be
17 confident that you had the sufficient information you
18 required?

19 A. Well, I can't recall, but I would think it was over
20 a week before we started to get that information, from
21 memory.

22 Q. Again, from your wider experience domestically, is that
23 unusual or is that one of the features even now of
24 multi-agency work?

25 A. Well, data-sharing is always an issue, and, as I'm sure

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1 we'll come on to discuss, I think that the burden of
2 proof should be to show why you wouldn't share
3 information, rather than the other way round.

4 Q. Let's perhaps explore those matters now, if we can,
5 discretely, perhaps starting from the Civil
6 Contingencies Act perspective.

7 Was there, in your view, an awareness of the CCA
8 regulations, which provide that category 1 or 2
9 responders may disclose information on request in
10 connection with the performance of their functions in
11 emergencies, specifically regulations 45 to 54? Was
12 there an understanding amongst those statutory actors of
13 that power?

14 A. Specifically in this context, I don't know.

15 Q. You describe data-sharing as always an issue. In what
16 ways do you consider that the registration and, perhaps
17 more importantly, the data-sharing process could be
18 improved for the future?

19 A. I think if there was a clearer understanding of why
20 registration and then the sharing of that information
21 with other partners is so important to be able to
22 provide assistance, then those people in those statutory
23 organisations would -- their bias would be to share the
24 information in the first place because of the help that
25 it would enable, and that requires some peripheral

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1 vision of what is -- you know, what each actor is part
2 of. And I can't -- I'm not a lawyer, I can't comment on
3 the specifics of the data protection legislation and
4 what was possible at that time or, indeed, what's
5 possible now, but I think that all actors should be
6 trying to share that information in order to enable
7 assistance to be provided, while paying due attention to
8 the confidentiality of the information overall with the
9 wider community.

10 Q. Let's draw out paragraph 117, where you've discussed
11 this, in your statement {BRC00000075/26}. You say this:
12 "A further area in which the response could have
13 been assisted was for greater clarity to have been given
14 by the government in relation to the exchange of
15 personal data in relation to affected individuals. It
16 was apparent to me that either data protection laws, or
17 the perception of the requirements of such laws,
18 inhibited the efficient exchange of personal data to
19 support the registration process and enable humanitarian
20 support."

21 We know that in relation to the work of the British
22 Red Cross, there were a number of reports which were
23 commissioned and published in the wake of Grenfell Tower
24 and other emergencies and tragedies which took place in
25 2017; is that right?

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1 A. Yes.

2 Q. In relation to one of those, perhaps we could open up
3 the documents. {INQ00015093}, we can see one of the
4 latter documents, which was dated November 2019, and
5 it's called "People Power in Emergencies", and it's
6 an assessment of voluntary and community sector
7 engagement and human-centred approaches to emergency
8 planning.

9 We're going to return to this a little bit later,
10 but if we could go to page 20 of the document
11 {INQ00015093/20}, please, and at the bottom left of the
12 screen, it says this. This is a report which you have
13 seen and commissioned; isn't that correct?

14 A. That is correct.

15 Q. "The British Red Cross recommends that the Data Sharing
16 Code of Practice of the Information Commissioner's
17 Office and the Cabinet Office's Data Protection and
18 Sharing Guidance for Emergency Planners and Responders,
19 endorse statutory authorities working with voluntary
20 sector organisations – to build more constructive
21 working relationships and agree new, clear protocols for
22 effective information sharing."

23 So it is something in the public sphere that the
24 British Red Cross have raised; isn't that correct?

25 A. That is correct.

1 Q. Just perhaps to bring this up to date, in relation to
2 the first part, which is the data-sharing code of
3 practice of the ICO, are you aware that, since this
4 report, which is November 2019, the Information
5 Commissioner's Office have published an update to its
6 data-sharing code of practice, which was published in
7 December 2020 and has come into force in October 2021?
8 Were you aware of that?

9 A. I wasn't personally aware.

10 Q. No. I'm not going to ask you any more in relation to
11 that, if you're not aware that that's come into force.
12 But, to an extent, one of the matters that you had
13 recommended has been addressed, which is the
14 data-sharing code. That's one factor.

15 The second factor your organisation have recommended
16 related to the Cabinet Office data protection and
17 sharing guidance for emergency planners and responders.
18 Now, in relation to that, there is, it appears, to be
19 non-statutory guidance issued by the Cabinet Office, and
20 the current version appears to be 2007. Does that sound
21 about right to you, the document that we're referring
22 to?

23 A. I'm not sure.

24 Q. No. So it's something which you don't now, being put on
25 the spot, have a direct recollection as to any changes

1 in relation to that?

2 A. I'm not familiar with — directly familiar with the
3 legal framework —

4 Q. Of course.

5 A. — other than in general terms. But it's the — what is
6 key is that people then are — that the actors in
7 an emergency act upon that guidance in order to share
8 information, and that they know that they can do that.

9 Q. So one aspect is understanding of the guidance, and then
10 it's the application of that which requires, one would
11 assume, better knowledge and training; is that correct?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. We can put the data-sharing to one side for a moment and
14 move on, please, to one of the issues you have raised,
15 which is the third one I'm drawing out, which is
16 community engagement.

17 The first British Red Cross report which was
18 commissioned in the advent of these incidents in 2017
19 was called "Harnessing the power of kindness", and that
20 was published in 2018. Perhaps we could have a look at
21 that. It's {BRC00000066}, please. It says there it's
22 designed to harness the power of kindness for
23 communities in crisis towards a more effective response
24 to emergencies in the UK.

25 In summary, there were significant reflections, is

1 this fair to say, by the British Red Cross, in the wake
2 of a number of terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower
3 fire, of British Red Cross and the voluntary sector and
4 how things — what lessons could be learnt?

5 A. That's correct. 2017 was a watershed year for
6 emergencies in the UK, and therefore for the way all
7 parties, I hope, think about emergencies, and certainly
8 for the British Red Cross, we learnt a lot, and our —
9 that we — you know, about the way in which we operate.

10 Q. Yes. Really that watershed is what we're going to
11 explore. We're now in our sort of third real area.
12 We're going to draw out some of those matters.

13 But perhaps we could turn to page 6, please, of this
14 {BRC00000066/6}, and looking backwards before we look
15 forwards, first of all. It says this at the top of the
16 page in the right-hand column:

17 "The British Red Cross has been upfront about where
18 our response did not meet our high standards."

19 This is perhaps making a reference to matters you
20 have mentioned in other media:

21 "The Grenfell Tower fire in particular showed that
22 some of our established ways of working are not
23 responsive enough to local need, and highlighted where
24 we did not communicate effectively enough with statutory
25 and other voluntary ... organisations."

1 Is there anything else you wanted to add in relation
 2 to that, that sort of reflective approach about the
 3 British Red Cross, and that view that arrived that
 4 certainly things didn't work?
 5 A. We recognised, particularly through the Grenfell Tower
 6 response, that we were not connected soon enough into
 7 that network of local organisations that were also, as
 8 we discussed earlier, opening their doors in the early
 9 hours of that Wednesday morning, and building
 10 an effective network of relationships with them in order
 11 to understand overall needs. Since that time, we have
 12 done a lot to correct that, both in the way in which we
 13 approach our response in an emergency, to be needs-based
 14 and inclusive, but also through the institutional
 15 structures that we have invested in and which we host
 16 and co-chair around a national and local partnership of
 17 voluntary organisations ready to respond in
 18 an emergency, and recognising that those small local
 19 organisations are often going to be better informed
 20 about a community's needs than we are, because they're
 21 rooted in it.
 22 Q. That may be a helpful way — and I'm going to go into
 23 the structures probably after the mid-afternoon break,
 24 but the last observation you made might be a helpful way
 25 to turn to paragraph 144 {BRC00000075/32}, please, where

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1 you talk about small local organisations and applying
 2 this back to the Grenfell fire.
 3 In fact, if we could turn to paragraph 145
 4 {BRC00000075/33}, please, thank you. You say this:
 5 "The question of how best to help might have also
 6 been better addressed had we engaged more quickly and
 7 more directly with the community leaders ..."
 8 And this is the part I'm trying to focus upon:
 9 "... the vast majority of whom were quietly and
 10 capably offering aid to those in need, without much, if
 11 any, input from RBKC or the [Grenfell fire response
 12 team]."
 13 And that was your assessment of the impact, was it,
 14 of the local organisations and the community leaders?
 15 A. Yes. That's not a formal, objective assessment, it's
 16 a sense of —
 17 Q. Yes.
 18 A. — the community responding, supporting its own and
 19 really stepping up.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Is it possible to translate these
 21 quite broadly-worded aspirations into how they might
 22 have been put into practical application in the
 23 particular circumstances of the Grenfell Tower fire?
 24 A. Yes, I think —
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: What do you think should have

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1 happened, in other words?
 2 A. Yeah. Well, I think the operational leadership of both
 3 the local authority response and, indeed, you know, the
 4 Red Cross response as well should have realised that,
 5 actually, the whole community had surged from the early
 6 hours of the morning. You know, I'll always remember
 7 speaking to the leader of one of the local youth
 8 organisations who had opened their doors at 3 o'clock in
 9 the morning, and they'd never been involved in
 10 an emergency ever before or ever thought of themselves
 11 as an emergency organisation, and the realisation —
 12 you know, once you realise that, and that actually —
 13 then the consequence is the leaders — the overall
 14 co-ordinators of the response need to be reaching out to
 15 those leaders of those other organisations and bringing
 16 them together, and that could be, you know, from the
 17 mosques or from churches or youth organisations, and
 18 then trying to make sense of need together and what the
 19 overall response should be, to make it more likely that
 20 that ecosystem will address the right things, while the
 21 formal response would still focus on, you know, the
 22 housing issues of those who have been evacuated from the
 23 tower. So you'd have a mix of the formal and informal,
 24 but being orchestrated in a more — in a much more
 25 informed way.

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, that I think I understand, but
 2 I'm just wondering how you would go about identifying
 3 the leaders of the community in, imagine, the first
 4 three or four hours, perhaps half a dozen hours, after
 5 the fire. I mean, would you go to the people who were
 6 opening the churches or Rugby Club or —
 7 A. Yes, you would, absolutely, because it's a very small
 8 geographical area. It's probably only a square mile or
 9 something like that. Actually, it's all within walking
 10 distance. This is not — it's very doable and
 11 reachable. And it would also continue to be complex, it
 12 wouldn't — but it — but you would be building the
 13 links with the people who would, in the medium term, be
 14 helping the people recover, because they're there
 15 before, during and after, and they would be helping you
 16 inform about both what people's needs are in general,
 17 and indeed of some of the people who had not come
 18 forward to the Westway but — because they were fearful
 19 of authority for whatever reason, but actually might
 20 need help, and therefore the overall response would be
 21 more coherent. But, yes, you would go and — we would
 22 assign people and capacity to go and have those
 23 conversations.
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. So your first team on the
 25 ground would spread themselves out and go and talk to

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1 any informal rest centres or those who were running them
 2 or opening them and move on from there; is that how you
 3 see it?
 4 A. Yes. Yes.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, okay, thank you.
 6 MR KEATING: Would the application of this principle be
 7 enhanced if there was better pre-existing relations with
 8 some of the local community faith or voluntary
 9 organisations?
 10 A. Yes. I mean, the key in an emergency, in a way, is to
 11 make friends before you need them, so to have connected
 12 people and organisations up in advance, and some of the,
 13 you know, practical steps we're taking to make that more
 14 likely through the institutional arrangements that we'll
 15 talk about later is all about trying to make those
 16 connections in advance of an emergency. And the same
 17 would then — there was a very — you know, in the
 18 parlance, there was a lot of social capital in that
 19 community, a lot of organisations, a lot of very dynamic
 20 people and leaders, who were — you know, who already
 21 knew each other and actually could have been harnessed
 22 more effectively earlier on in the process.
 23 Q. The final topic I just want to deal with, perhaps, with
 24 the Chairman's leave, would be donations, before we
 25 perhaps could have a break.

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1 Donations, physical donations. Very important area.
 2 We have heard a lot about the kindness and the
 3 outpouring of public generosity. In relation to that,
 4 did you consider that the volume of donations, physical
 5 donations, perversely had an adverse impact on the
 6 emergency response?
 7 A. Yes, and this is very common in emergencies of a sudden
 8 onset nature, where people want to show their kindness
 9 by giving something. The challenge is that that
 10 something that somebody wants to give may not be what
 11 the person who is affected by the emergency needs or
 12 wants, and in the early phase of an emergency, people
 13 often do prefer to get the physical goods, you know,
 14 because actually if you've just had to leave your home,
 15 you might want a change of clothing, that might be what
 16 you need, and you might need clothing there and then.
 17 But by day three or four, you're getting ready, you want
 18 to choose your own clothes, and actually, in this case,
 19 there were nearly 200 tonnes of donated goods of varying
 20 quality which were not what people wanted.
 21 Q. Yes. So in relation to that, you mention a couple of
 22 things which perhaps I could just deal with very
 23 briefly.
 24 You mention that the sheer volume of the physical
 25 donations overwhelmed those in charge of the response at

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1 RBKC. You say that at paragraph 154 {BRC00000075/35}.
 2 You add that a lot of time and resource was spent by the
 3 British Red Cross volunteers and others assisting with
 4 the response attempting to sort through those donations.
 5 That's at paragraph 105 {BRC00000075/23}. Is that
 6 a fair summary?
 7 A. Yes, it is.
 8 Q. You mention in your statement at paragraph 153
 9 {BRC00000075/34} that there would be limited
 10 circumstances, probably those early stages, where
 11 physical donations would assist, but you mention that,
 12 with the greatest respect, cash is both easier to handle
 13 and gives those affected by an emergency choice and
 14 dignity about the help that they need. Is that correct?
 15 A. That is correct.
 16 Q. The phrase "dignity and choice", is the view that if
 17 somebody has the financial support, that then they have
 18 a degree of control over what they choose to buy and
 19 feel that they have got some autonomy over their
 20 circumstances?
 21 A. That's exactly right, and if I just gave an example of
 22 meeting one of our volunteers who was helping in the
 23 Westway, and she described a situation of a mother who
 24 had been evacuated, I think, from one of the
 25 neighbouring streets, but who had three disabled

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1 children up to the age of 10, all of whom needed
 2 nappies, but the — you know, when you looked at
 3 everything that was in the Westway, it was only babies'
 4 nappies. She needed something different. We gave her
 5 cash, she could then go and get what she needed. It was
 6 all available. So it's a much better matching process
 7 of what people need and their ability to get it if you
 8 give them cash. Particularly after the immediate shock
 9 or period of the emergency, but that's within 24 hours.
 10 Q. The final point in relation to this is that in the
 11 "Harnessing the power of public kindness" report, that
 12 one we saw a moment ago, in 2018, it recommended that
 13 guidance should be issued to inform people early on as
 14 to which goods are most likely to be used, and give the
 15 information about supporting in other ways, ie financial
 16 support. So, in essence, recommending education of the
 17 public in relation to this; is that correct?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Are you aware whether any changes or guidance has been
 20 implemented or published in relation to this since 2017?
 21 A. Well, as the British Red Cross, we continue to promote
 22 and encourage people to give cash rather than donated
 23 goods. Indeed, in the context of the response to
 24 Ukraine, the same issues apply, of where goods are being
 25 shipped across Europe to a European Union country when

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1 cash would be much better. Government has also been
 2 supportive of that. But you're trying to change
 3 a practice and the desire to be kind by people, and it's
 4 not just about information, you have -- we have to keep
 5 chipping away with that information to help people to
 6 see why, and build up a community of people who realise
 7 why cash is better.
 8 Q. That's probably the reason why the title of the first
 9 report is called "Harnessing the power of public
 10 kindness".
 11 A. Exactly.
 12 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, is that a suitable moment?
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you very much.
 14 Well, we have a break during the session,
 15 Mr Adamson, and this is a good time to take it. So
 16 we'll stop now. We'll resume, please, at 3.40, and
 17 I have to ask you, please, as I have every other
 18 witness, please don't talk about your evidence or
 19 anything relating to it while you're out of the room.
 20 All right?
 21 THE WITNESS: Understood.
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
 23 with the usher, then, please.
 24 (Pause)
 25 Thank you very much, Mr Keating. 3.40, then,

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1 please. Thank you.
 2 (3.23 pm)
 3 (A short break)
 4 (3.40 pm)
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, Mr Adamson, ready to carry
 6 on, I hope?
 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, of course.
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
 9 Yes, Mr Keating.
 10 MR KEATING: Thank you, sir.
 11 Mr Adamson, welcome back. We're moving now to the
 12 third area we promised to deal with, which is the
 13 lessons learned and looking forward in terms of
 14 suggested changes to, in particular, the area in
 15 relation to the voluntary sector post-2017.
 16 You describe 2017 in general terms as a watershed
 17 year in relation to the experiences that BRC had; is
 18 that correct?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. The report which we had open and we referred to just
 21 before the break is the 2018 report, "Harnessing the
 22 power of kindness for communities in crisis". Perhaps
 23 we could open that up, please, and just deal with some
 24 general principles first which were identified by
 25 British Red Cross.

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1 At page 6 {BRC00000066/6} -- I'm very grateful, we
 2 have it already open -- if we could look at the right
 3 column, it says this in bold:
 4 "We are more convinced than ever that effective
 5 emergency response is truly human-centred, focussing on
 6 the individuals and communities at the heart of
 7 an emergency.
 8 "This means ensuring people in crisis have timely
 9 and compassionate access to the support they need in
 10 that moment, whether this be practical, emotional or
 11 financial."
 12 So that's an expression by British Red Cross where
 13 you're convinced more than ever that it needs to be
 14 human-centred; is that correct?
 15 A. That's correct.
 16 Q. Let's try to explore that expression by the British
 17 Red Cross and its application.
 18 If we turn over to page 7 {BRC00000066/7}, where
 19 eight principles are identified to form the framework
 20 for dealing with a crisis. They are set out there, we
 21 can see it in front of us, the summary of the
 22 principles, and I'm going to touch upon some of those,
 23 if we can.
 24 "Putting people first", principles 1 to 3, which is
 25 there, and we can see at principle 2:

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1 "People should expect a coordinated and high quality
 2 response in and after an emergency."
 3 Principle 3:
 4 "People should be supported in their local
 5 communities and local communities should be empowered to
 6 respond."
 7 Then we see in relation to principles 4 and 5
 8 ensuring people can access the support they need quickly
 9 and feel safe and confident to do so.
 10 One of the features in relation to the Westway we
 11 discussed was accessibility, wasn't it, and people
 12 feeling comfortable and able to access that
 13 ability (sic); isn't that correct?
 14 A. That's correct.
 15 Q. This is one matter which we have touched upon briefly
 16 during the Inquiry but have written evidence in relation
 17 to, principle 5, that people should have access to
 18 social and psychological support, as well as the
 19 practical help they need; is that correct?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Lastly, really, within the theme that you've mentioned
 22 before the break, "Harnessing kindness following a major
 23 incident", education where people should know how to
 24 give their financial support in an emergency, and people
 25 should be supported to give in ways that would help the

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1 most vulnerable; is that correct?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. So these are the expression of principles which are
 4 identified by the British Red Cross, and is it your view
 5 that this should be the framework that underpins
 6 an emergency response?
 7 A. Yes, we think there's so much learning from the events
 8 of 2017, and then indeed subsequent events — that's
 9 continued with COVID and other emergencies — that
 10 there's an opportunity to do it better, and that
 11 emergency response is often — and risk management are
 12 often quite technical disciplines, in fact, and some of
 13 the language can get technical and lose sight of the
 14 human beings who actually need help, and that once the
 15 fire's put out or once the ambulance has taken someone
 16 to the hospital, you know, the recovery process starts
 17 to take place from the first 24 hours onwards, and
 18 that's very much a very — that's a human process.
 19 Q. These were your learnings as an organisation, reflecting
 20 those incidents that you experienced as an organisation
 21 in 2017, and once identifying those principles, is it
 22 right that there was another report in 2019?
 23 If we could open up "Ready for anything: Putting
 24 people at the heart of emergency response",
 25 {INQ00015089}. So of the three reports, this is the

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1 second one in time, this is early 2019, and, in essence,
 2 what appears is that British Red Cross then undertook
 3 sort of surveys and consulted with a number of
 4 stakeholders, including the public, as to the
 5 application of those principles, and tried to get some
 6 more information as to what people wanted. Is that
 7 a fair summary?
 8 A. Yes, and the reason that we did that is that in the
 9 years up to 2017, with the exception of the London
 10 bombings of 2005, which were obviously enormous in their
 11 impact and implications, the characteristics of most of
 12 the emergencies in the UK had been relatively
 13 small scale, and we saw that, from the events of 2017,
 14 and then when you looked to the future with the
 15 potential impact of climate change, of cyber attacks, of
 16 terror attacks and so on, that emergencies in the UK
 17 were going to be much more of a feature of the lives of
 18 all of us, and therefore understanding how people
 19 thought about emergencies, both the public themselves
 20 and other stakeholders, was an important part of
 21 building a picture of how we could improve the
 22 resilience of the nation.
 23 Q. Yes, and of course this is all pre-COVID, this is 2019,
 24 the work you undertook. In essence, the report was
 25 based on interviews with staff, volunteers and people

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1 who had experienced emergency situations, as well as
 2 a survey of 5,000 members of the public; is that what
 3 underpinned this report?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. I'm just going to summarise matters which are set out in
 6 the report, and then we're going to turn to the
 7 executive summary. But, in essence, the report explored
 8 what people need and want before, during and after
 9 an emergency, and of course while it recognised needs
 10 can be highly individualised, is it fair that four broad
 11 themes of needs were identified?
 12 A. I'm sure that's the case.
 13 Q. Let me help you, because I know there's a number of
 14 documentation you have assisted us with. Let's open it
 15 up at page 4 {INQ00015089/4}, please, and this should
 16 assist you, "Executive summary".
 17 If you see "Immediate practical needs" — so there's
 18 four main areas which were drawn out:
 19 "Immediate needs when crisis hits include: food,
 20 shelter and medication, plus the need for privacy and to
 21 feel safe."
 22 Those basic needs was the first matter.
 23 Secondly, "Mental health and psychosocial support",
 24 and it says here this is:
 25 "... a hugely significant factor in the early stages

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1 of recovery. These psychological needs should be
 2 treated as equal to a person's physical health. This
 3 includes an empathetic need to be given time to reflect
 4 and to tell their story, to make sense of what happened
 5 and to feel in control of what happens next."
 6 Is that correct?
 7 A. Yes, it is.
 8 Q. I'm not going to invite us to look at it, but at page 34
 9 of the report {INQ00015089/34} it says this:
 10 "When we spoke to those who had been involved in
 11 emergency situations about what advice people might
 12 need, one issue that came up was how complicated the
 13 system [was] ..."
 14 And how there needed to be support, and that was one
 15 of the reasons underpinning the need for advice, support
 16 and advocacy, is that correct, which we see just at the
 17 top right-hand column?
 18 A. Yes, it is. Could I just reference the mental health
 19 and psychosocial support again?
 20 Q. Yes, of course.
 21 A. Just to — I can't remember whether it was this report
 22 or one of the other reports, but an important
 23 distinction — of course, all of us, the whole of
 24 society, has been on a — there's much greater
 25 recognition of mental health needs and their criticality

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1 now than there was five years ago or even three years
 2 ago. I think one of the most important things that we
 3 draw out in this suite of the reports -- because they're
 4 a set of connected reports, in fact -- is that while
 5 there is greater recognition of the need for mental
 6 health support in the aftermath of an emergency, there's
 7 less recognition of the immediate need for psychosocial
 8 support right in the moment. So mental health support
 9 by the NHS may get mobilised in the weeks following, but
 10 actually it's in the immediate aftermath of an emergency
 11 that often -- that may be missing in terms of the need
 12 for that -- for support right at that time.
 13 Q. Yes. Indeed, it is set out in the report that there is
 14 a danger that this is overlooked and not prioritised .
 15 A. Exactly.
 16 Q. And the psychological impact of a major incident is
 17 likely to affect not just those who have been physically
 18 injured , but a much larger number of people too. Is
 19 that a fair summary from the suite of reports about the
 20 importance of this type of help?
 21 A. Yes, and that the psychological effects can take -- may
 22 manifest themselves even years after the emergency
 23 itself , and for the people affected by the
 24 Grenfell Tower fire, of course, all those who could see
 25 the fire -- could see the tower, and can still see it ,

1 could be affected by it and the trauma that that could
 2 trigger .
 3 Q. So we had dealt with -- that was the second of the
 4 themes which were identified, and we were just touching
 5 upon advice, support and advocacy, and identifying how
 6 people affected by an emergency will need help with
 7 navigating systems. It says:
 8 " ... it is important that this help is both
 9 co-ordinated and consistent. Critically , support must
 10 empower those affected to take control of their own
 11 recovery. It must also provide a platform or voice for
 12 victims' and affected communities' needs."
 13 Just exploring that for a moment, in what way would
 14 you see that materialise , in how support must empower
 15 those affected to take control of their own recovery?
 16 A. Well, I think, in a way, there's two precursors to that.
 17 Firstly , every emergency is different , and how -- and
 18 every individual is affected differently by it, in terms
 19 of what their needs are, you know, and whether they --
 20 those are -- you know, they might have lost their
 21 livelihood , they might have lost their house, they might
 22 be affected by the trauma of what they've experienced,
 23 and -- or they may have not had a very high coping
 24 capacity to start with, they were disabled or frail and
 25 elderly or whatever, or marginalised and not feeling

1 able to access authority and trusting in authority. So
 2 all needs are different .
 3 So the key point we're making here is that,
 4 actually , we need to be engaging with people as
 5 individuals and getting alongside them, and that can be
 6 through, you know, well-trained volunteers with -- who
 7 have high degrees of empathy and who have been trained
 8 in handling situation -- supporting people who have been
 9 through traumatic situations, to explore where they are
 10 and what they want to be able to do and then putting
 11 together the packages of support that will help them get
 12 back, you know, on a stable path, you know, and take
 13 control of their lives .
 14 So that's all about understanding the individual and
 15 them having -- again, to use the parlance of the day --
 16 you having agency in actually managing, you know, the
 17 way forwards.
 18 Q. I skipped over, but not by accident, "Information and
 19 communication". I just wanted to deal with that one
 20 last , which is the bottom left-hand corner, and it says:
 21 "This includes the need for leadership and
 22 organisation; for accurate, accessible and timely
 23 information; and the ability to contact and communicate
 24 with family and friends."
 25 Later on in the report it says this , at page 28 of

1 the report {INQ00015089/28}:
 2 "Sharing information can also help lessen the
 3 psychological impact of an emergency by providing
 4 reassurance, clarity and managing expectations."
 5 Is that right?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. So the more important -- the impact communication can
 8 have, it can lessen the psychological effect of an
 9 incident.
 10 A. Yes. What's important is that all of the people who are
 11 affected by an emergency have information about what's
 12 happening and where they can get support, and that's
 13 important not only for the person or people directly
 14 affected , but also for their family and friends who will
 15 be worried and concerned about them, and so good
 16 information is key to helping support people through the
 17 recovery process -- well, you know, through the
 18 response, potentially , but then also through a recovery
 19 process.
 20 Q. One practical matter which has flowed from this is -- is
 21 this right? -- in relation to the general ability of the
 22 public to access support, is that post-2017 there is now
 23 a single support line which has been set up called
 24 a national emergency support line; is that correct?
 25 A. We have -- I don't think there's a standing national

1 emergency support line, but when there is
 2 an emergency -- actually, apologies, let me backtrack.
 3 We have a standard standing national emergency
 4 support line, but then what we do -- it may -- it then
 5 surges according to what the emergencies are that we're
 6 dealing with. So it surged during COVID and then it --
 7 you know, we put in extra capacity to handle the amount
 8 of -- number of calls coming in, and then it -- we
 9 scaled it back, and then it has -- well, in fact it's
 10 surging right now for the -- to support the arrival of
 11 Ukrainian refugees who are seeking support and cash and
 12 SIM cards and all that practical help that we're able to
 13 give.
 14 Q. So the difference now compared to back in 2017, where
 15 there was issues in relation to utilising and setting up
 16 a specific support line, is that the British Red Cross,
 17 as an auxiliary to government, has this infrastructure
 18 set up which, as you describe it, can be scaled up to
 19 reflect an incident?
 20 A. That's correct. It was a capability to create one
 21 before, which we did; it's now a permanent capability
 22 that we scale according to the emergency that we're
 23 dealing with at the time.
 24 Q. Thank you.
 25 The second of the three areas I wanted to explore in

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1 this last part of your evidence is under the label:
 2 multi-agency response and the role of the voluntary
 3 sector.
 4 You mention in your statement -- we don't need to
 5 turn to it -- at paragraph 127 {BRC00000075/28} that
 6 there is a need to strengthen working relationships
 7 between all those responding to emergencies on a scale
 8 in the future, and I just wanted to explore that
 9 a little bit more.
 10 Did you consider back in 2017 that there was
 11 an issue regarding how the voluntary and community
 12 sector was externally perceived or valued?
 13 A. I think it was -- pre-2017, it was a different world,
 14 because, as I observed earlier, there was a sense that,
 15 actually, the emergencies taking place in the UK were,
 16 with some notable exceptions, of relatively small scale,
 17 and actually the arrangements we had in place were fine
 18 for the kind of challenges that we faced.
 19 After 2017, and then I think intensified by all the
 20 events that we've seen since, there is a realisation
 21 that emergencies are going to be a feature of UK life
 22 for the years to come and, actually, we needed to
 23 revitalise the relationships and capabilities --
 24 relationships between and capabilities of the different
 25 actors in the voluntary and community sector, but also

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1 of central and local government.
 2 Q. So you have described how the world we're facing is
 3 changing. At paragraph 132 of your statement
 4 {BRC00000075/29} -- we don't need to turn to it -- it
 5 says this:
 6 "There is still inconsistent recognition by those
 7 authorities of the importance of the voluntary and
 8 community sector in any response to those communities
 9 and their recovery from an emergency."
 10 And you set out how that, in your view, was a wasted
 11 opportunity; is that correct? Or was it correct as of
 12 2017?
 13 A. I think that if you look at the documentation and words
 14 that are set out in various documents and from
 15 government about -- there is a clear recognition that
 16 the voluntary and community sector is important to
 17 assuming -- to enabling really good outcomes for the
 18 people who are recovering from an emergency, and this
 19 recognition of the distinction between the immediate
 20 response and then the actual recovery and people able to
 21 get back on with their lives again. And as the
 22 voluntary sector, and I think it's fair to say led by
 23 the British Red Cross, and certainly facilitated by us,
 24 we have put a huge amount of effort into building the
 25 connections between national and local voluntary

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1 organisations to make it -- through a collaboration
 2 called the voluntary and community sector emergency
 3 partnership, to make it more likely that organisations,
 4 such as some of those local ones that we discussed
 5 earlier that actually did open their doors in the middle
 6 of the night, make it more likely that they're familiar
 7 with what it takes to respond in an emergency and,
 8 indeed, that that might be asked of them.
 9 So we've formed a partnership, which is now 150
 10 partners, about 20 to 30 nationals and about 120 locals,
 11 who are committed to building the connections in advance
 12 of emergencies, doing joint training, seeking to build
 13 partnerships with central and local government, and also
 14 to make it easier for central and local government to
 15 work with our sector, because otherwise we can look
 16 quite diffuse, to try and make it easier for central and
 17 local government to work with us, so that genuinely we
 18 can form the type of partnership that will help the
 19 nation be more resilient in this more turbulent world
 20 that will result, in practical terms, in more
 21 emergencies, whether caused by cyber attacks, climate
 22 change, terror attacks or whatever.
 23 Q. There was a lot in there, which is very helpful,
 24 thank you, and we can probably distill it to a few
 25 things.

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1 In 2018, the "Harnessing the power of public
 2 kindness" report refers to a phrase "fragmentation", and
 3 how there is a need to heal the fragmentation between
 4 statutory and voluntary services, and between national
 5 and local voluntary organisations. That's page 6 of
 6 that report {BRC00000066/6}, that's in 2018.
 7 Just having that in mind, that fragmentation, and
 8 you've mentioned that the voluntary and community sector
 9 emergency partnership has been set up since then, and
 10 you're the chair of that organisation, isn't that
 11 correct, or you were the chair of that organisation?
 12 A. I'm co-chair --
 13 Q. Co-chair.
 14 A. -- with the chief executive of the umbrella body for
 15 local organisations, and that's symbolising the
 16 partnership between national and local.
 17 Q. Is that the National Association for Voluntary and
 18 Community Action?
 19 A. It is, yes.
 20 Q. NAVCA?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Yes. So as co-chair of that new partnership, something
 23 which is set up post-2017, do you think that has
 24 addressed the fragmentation which was identified in the
 25 2018 report?

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1 A. I think it's making progress in addressing the
 2 fragmentation, but that is a long journey, because there
 3 are, you know, many thousands of local voluntary
 4 organisations, and there is also a need to strengthen
 5 the relationships at every level with government and to
 6 build those relationships, and so the fragment -- so we
 7 are addressing the fragmentation, but it is a -- we're
 8 on a journey to do that.
 9 Q. So this partnership, would that have any engagement with
 10 national government, the voluntary and community sector
 11 emergency partnership? Would that be an organisation
 12 which would communicate with central government or be
 13 that sort of interplay, interface?
 14 A. It would not only communicate with central government,
 15 but it attempted to design in to the emergency
 16 partnership steering group membership by central
 17 government so that we are in the room together to try to
 18 look at: well, what are the threats, hazards and risks
 19 that the nation faces, and then how can we be better
 20 prepared for them?
 21 Q. Let's go down a level to another subheading, which is
 22 the local resilience forums, and query whether there's
 23 inconsistent partnership, which is something raised in
 24 the suite of reports we've discussed.
 25 Something which is set out as a summary -- and you

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1 can perhaps confirm is this correct in one of the
 2 reports -- is that the responsibility for crisis
 3 planning and response at a local level in England lies
 4 with 38 local resilience forums, bringing together,
 5 amongst others, emergency responders, local authorities,
 6 the NHS and local voluntary and community sector
 7 organisations. Does that accord with your recollection?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. We've heard about the local authority panel and sector
 10 panels; when it comes to the voluntary sector, there's
 11 also voluntary sector panels which feed in to these
 12 local resilience forums; is that correct?
 13 A. Yes. But the arrangements can vary quite a lot between
 14 different local resilience forums.
 15 Q. Okay. I think we've seen for London, as an example,
 16 that there is a voluntary sector panel and a number of
 17 other panels as well.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Perhaps I can lead in relation to this, in relation to
 20 the 2018 report. It says at page 8 {BRC00000066/8}:
 21 "Recent events show that there is no guaranteed
 22 consistency across areas in terms of the effectiveness
 23 of the structures and plans of emergency response. Some
 24 [voluntary sector panels] are not elected or
 25 representative and not properly included as part of the

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1 design and delivery of emergency response."
 2 So that is at page 8 of the "Harnessing the power of
 3 public kindness" report.
 4 So against that background, it's revisited again in
 5 the report that we have right in front of us, "People
 6 Power in Emergencies", which was published in late 2019,
 7 as we've heard. Perhaps we could turn, please, to
 8 page 9 for the executive summary of this. In fact, it's
 9 not the document. I'm going to give you the reference
 10 number, it's {INQ00015093/9}. I'm getting my reports
 11 mixed up.
 12 So the final report in the suite, late 2019, and if
 13 we could turn to page 9, please, we see an introduction,
 14 the reference to the 38 local resilience forums, and on
 15 the right-hand side, "Key findings", it says:
 16 "Local resilience forums typically only engaged with
 17 voluntary sector organisations that have experience of
 18 emergency response work, missing out on insight and
 19 expertise of a broader range of voluntary and community
 20 sector organisations."
 21 Then it says overleaf at page 10 {INQ00015093/10},
 22 top left:
 23 "There are barriers to communication and engagement
 24 between local resilience forums and voluntary and
 25 community sector organisations."

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1 It follows, doesn't it, that this co-report between
 2 you and the National Association for Voluntary and
 3 Community Action, they undertook a survey of local
 4 voluntary sector organisations, and we can see at
 5 page 17 {INQ00015093/17} the outcome in relation to this
 6 survey about this, these barriers to communication.

7 It says this:
 8 "All three strands of the research found that
 9 communication and engagement between local resilience
 10 forums and voluntary and community sector organisations
 11 was inconsistent."

12 That's the word we've used a number of times now,
 13 and it says:

14 "NAVCA [National Association for Voluntary and
 15 Community Action] survey of local voluntary sector
 16 organisations found 91 per cent (41 of 45) were not
 17 aware of their local resilience forum's plans, and
 18 62 per cent (28 of 45) said that there were barriers to
 19 good communications with local resilience forums."

20 It says a little bit later on that there was
 21 an issue regarding plans not being widely accessible
 22 online.

23 So in relation to this, these barriers to
 24 communication being, at best, inconsistent, is that
 25 something which, in your view, remains a concern?

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1 A. Yes, it does. You would expect -- you wouldn't expect
 2 everything to be the same, because the context --
 3 geographical contexts are different in rural areas,
 4 densely packed urban areas, richer areas, poorer areas,
 5 but you expect some consistency in terms of the ambition
 6 for partnership between the sectors to enable better
 7 preparedness and resilience to ensure better outcomes
 8 when an emergency takes place, and we still have some
 9 way to go in establishing the arrangements for that.
 10 Q. Is there some way that you can see that being improved?
 11 Is there a magic formula to bring consistency to an area
 12 where there's inconsistency?
 13 A. There is no magic formula. What there is -- but we have
 14 opportunities to do it better, and those opportunities
 15 include the current review of the Civil Contingencies
 16 Act and its guidance, and the work that is under way on
 17 the development of a national resilience strategy, and
 18 the impetus -- those are the practical things happening
 19 in central government right now, but in addition we have
 20 an opportunity because of the impetus created by the
 21 country's experience around COVID, but also the way in
 22 which people have actually shown great solidarity in
 23 responding to the arrival of Afghan refugees and,
 24 indeed, Ukrainian refugees now to create a different
 25 kind of dialogue about, you know, what would good look

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1 like, and the work that we're trying to do through the
 2 emergency partnership is all about trying to create the
 3 conditions for those kind of conversations --

4 Q. Yes.
 5 A. -- to develop at local and, indeed, at national level.

6 Q. I'm just going to move on to plans, local resilience
 7 forum plans, which are touched upon in this report at
 8 page 10 {INQ00015093/10}, please. I'm going to deal
 9 with it briefly and, I hope, fairly.

10 It says this at the left-hand column, second
 11 paragraph:

12 "Whilst most local resilience forum plans broadly
 13 covered the practical and psychosocial needs of
 14 individuals and communities at times of crisis, the
 15 plans did not offer detailed guidance on flexible
 16 approaches to support."

17 And it says:

18 "In particular:

19 "-- A lack of personalised support. Most plans
 20 covered basic humanitarian needs, yet did not consider
 21 how such support could be personalised."

22 And it gives an example:

23 "... 85 per cent of local resilience forums whose
 24 plans were reviewed mentioned providing food, yet only
 25 44 per cent considered dietary requirements."

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1 An illustration, perhaps a basic illustration of
 2 that point. And:

3 "Prioritisation of short-term needs. The emergency
 4 plans consistently prioritised short-term needs over
 5 longer-term support. Longer-term issues tended to be
 6 considered within the remit of other bodies such as
 7 local authorities, or were featured in other specific
 8 plans such as the Recovery Plan."

9 Just dealing with that for a moment and the tension
 10 between emergency response and emergency and recovery,
 11 effectively, and we've heard already in relation to
 12 recovery, that's something which is normally led by the
 13 local authority. There's statutory guidance in relation
 14 to the former, emergency response; there's non-statutory
 15 guidance in relation to the latter, recovery.

16 Do you think or have you a view in relation to the
 17 status of the guidance for emergency recovery?

18 A. I mean, we would like to see the review of the Civil
 19 Contingencies Act and its guidance and, indeed, the
 20 national resilience strategy put much more emphasis on
 21 that, about the recovery process and the need to
 22 recognise the different needs of different people in
 23 different circumstances. You know, that is our
 24 position. Where I would absolutely acknowledge there's
 25 challenges is when you have the interaction between

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1 long-term vulnerability and that is then -- when
 2 somebody who is vulnerable anyway or in -- or affected
 3 by very significant health inequalities , for example, as
 4 we've all realised during the COVID period, actually
 5 it's hard then to separate out the recovery process from
 6 the situation they were already in. So it is messy, and
 7 we see the same in our international work, but that
 8 doesn't mean we shouldn't have the ambition to do it
 9 much better by really focusing everything around people.
 10 The national risk register could be focused more around
 11 the impact on people of those risks. There is
 12 opportunities to build that into the frameworks and the
 13 ways in which we think and work and, therefore, into our
 14 training and the partnerships that we have.

15 Q. I'm going to just focus on one word you used,
 16 "vulnerability", because it was the last point I wanted
 17 to deal with in relation to plans, and then I'm going to
 18 deal with, finally, the wider recommendations which
 19 you've alluded to in your answer.

20 If we could go to page 24 {INQ00015093/24}, please,
 21 of this report, "People Power in Emergencies", and it's
 22 the point it makes here regarding vulnerability:

23 "The review found that local resilience forums
 24 needed to go much further to consider and address the
 25 varied vulnerabilities faced by local populations."

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1 It says:
 2 "Only 30% of local resilience ... plans which are
 3 examined (8 of 27) included a definition of
 4 vulnerability, and not all plans included measures for
 5 identifying and helping ... people."

6 Was that something which was drawn out from this
 7 report which was of significance?

8 A. Yes, it is very -- it's very significant that we're
 9 recognising the people who often get missed because
 10 they're not part of the big crowd that is affected by
 11 the emergency or the majority, and actually it's about
 12 addressing the vulnerability that individuals and groups
 13 have within the whole population.

14 Q. Perhaps we've got a pictorial illustration at the
 15 bottom, if you could scroll down a little bit. Of the
 16 plans from the local resilience forums which were
 17 examined -- there were 27 -- we see the local plans
 18 which cater for categories of vulnerability. At the top
 19 would be non-English speakers, but equally it shows that
 20 perhaps two-thirds of plans refer to that specifically,
 21 and then we see, towards the bottom, a number of areas
 22 of categories of vulnerability which have got little or
 23 no recognition; is that correct?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. I'm grateful for your patience, and the panel's

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1 patience. I'm going to move on to the final point,
 2 which deals with what you have said regarding changes to
 3 the Act and the framework. Indeed, this report calls
 4 for a wider review of the regulations and guidance, as
 5 you've said today, so that it outlines "a clearer role
 6 for the voluntary sector".

7 If we actually turn to page 11 of this report
 8 {INQ00015093/11}, we could see that, please, thank you.
 9 It's the top right-hand side of the page. It says:

10 "Enshrining a clearer role for the voluntary sector
 11 would also ensure that voluntary and community
 12 organisations were consistently and thoroughly embedded
 13 within local resilience forums, improving their ability
 14 to plan a human-centred approach."

15 So that's what the last report in this suite that we
 16 have gone through sets out, and the reasons why you
 17 consider it is necessary for that embedding to take
 18 place. It's how that's done I want you to perhaps try
 19 to assist the panel with.

20 Do you consider the Act and the regulations as
 21 insufficient, or is it a case that the enabling powers
 22 which we've just referred to, the Act and the
 23 regulations, are not being applied correctly? Is it the
 24 framework or is it the delivery, would probably be
 25 a simple way of putting it?

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1 A. It's both, because the framework uses the phrase that
 2 the local resilience forum should have regard to the
 3 role of the voluntary sector. We think there's
 4 an opportunity in the Civil Contingencies Act or its
 5 guidance to actually require a partnership with the
 6 voluntary and community sector in order to -- and we
 7 think that there is considerable evidence of the role
 8 the voluntary and community sector has played in
 9 practice in this series of emergencies to which the
 10 country's had to respond since 2017, or through 2017 and
 11 thereafter, and therefore that the framework could be
 12 considerably strengthened, and then that the assurance
 13 of the application of the framework could also be
 14 strengthened to, for example, begin to address and make
 15 more transparent the inconsistencies in the ways in
 16 which local resilience forums approach their task, their
 17 very difficult task, but to endeavour to shine a light
 18 on good practice and then -- but also to address and
 19 pull up poor practice, or where practice could be
 20 better, and we think -- and then to actually expect --
 21 create an expectation of leaders, both in our sector,
 22 the voluntary community sector, to act in responsible
 23 and engaging ways with their statutory sector partners,
 24 so it's an onus on us as well, but also on leaders in
 25 central and local government to engage with us and

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1 not -- you know, to engage with us properly so that we
2 can ensure a better co-ordinated response that is in the
3 interests of the people we're all here to serve.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 I'm just going to draw out a few things you
6 mentioned there.

7 You mentioned that the framework, the regulations,
8 make reference to that the category 1 responder or the
9 LRF should have regard to the role of the voluntary
10 sector, and that's regulation 23, is what you're
11 specifically referring to, and what you have said there
12 is that you consider that to be insufficient; is that
13 a fair summary?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you've suggested that there should be a firmer legal
16 basis where a category 1 responder or LRF is -- well,
17 a category 1 responder, actually -- under a duty to be
18 in partnership with the voluntary sector.

19 A. Yes, that is correct.

20 Q. I wanted to just explore what you were saying about
21 assurance in relation to that, to try to avoid the
22 inconsistency which is set out as an issue within the
23 reports we've referred to.

24 The panel have touched upon, in evidence, the, as it
25 then was, standards for London, which in due course

1 they'll hear have been superseded by the resilience
2 standards for London.

3 Focusing on London for a moment, do you consider
4 that the current either national resilience standards or
5 the London resilience standards is sufficient to provide
6 assurance of civil contingency capability?

7 A. I can't comment on the London resilience standards
8 specifically. What I would say is that I don't think
9 that the mechanisms for assurance in the round are good
10 enough, and, indeed, for -- it's an opportunity to
11 consider the status of local resilience forums, the
12 expectations of the resourcing of local resilience
13 forums, the standards for them, and to make that much
14 more transparent and ensure that it's regularly
15 reviewed, so that when an emergency does happen, all
16 parties and partners are ready to respond in
17 a co-ordinated way. And we have made suggestions about,
18 for example, peer review processes and so on that could
19 be used to help with some of those things, for example.

20 Q. And your basis for having concerns regarding the
21 assurance basis, where does that derive from?

22 A. It's from our experience of -- across the country, of
23 working with different local resilience forums, and
24 I think it would be a widely recognised view, in fact,
25 of the current situations, notwithstanding that some --

1 many local resilience forums are doing an excellent job
2 in very difficult circumstances, clearly.

3 Q. And have been particularly active, especially over the
4 last few years.

5 A. Exactly.

6 Q. In terms of your experience and representation on
7 a number of organisations at national level and at
8 regional level, do you see a greater role for national
9 government in relation to the resilience, assurance or
10 civil contingencies generally?

11 A. I think that ... it's a system between central -- about
12 the relationship between central government and local
13 government, central government and national voluntary
14 sector partnerships, such as ours, and then between us
15 and the local level and then the local level engagement.
16 All of those, if that was a square of relationships,
17 connect -- we can strengthen all of them, and central
18 government itself is made up of many departments who
19 have different roles in an emergency. There's
20 an opportunity to connect up the government departments
21 better centrally, and then to have an expectation of
22 them that they will engage in the kind of partnerships
23 that enable us to work together to be better able to
24 respond, and we're very committed, which is why we've
25 created the emergency partnership, to trying to create

1 the conditions in which that relationship can be built,
2 can be deepened and developed, in the interests of
3 people we're all here to serve.

4 MR KEATING: Mr Adamson, I'm very grateful. You'll be
5 pleased to know they're all the questions I have at this
6 stage.

7 What I'm going to do is, with the Chairman's
8 permission, is ask perhaps for five minutes just to
9 allow if there's any additional questions from those who
10 are watching or within the room, and then we can bring
11 you back in, if that's okay.

12 THE WITNESS: Of course.

13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, we do have a break at
14 this stage, Mr Adamson, because counsel sometimes
15 overlooks something that he ought to have put to you, or
16 more likely that those outside the room who are
17 following the proceedings may want to suggest questions
18 that we should be asking you, so we'll break now.

19 Is five minutes going to be enough, Mr Keating?

20 MR KEATING: I think it will be, and if I need more time,
21 I'll ask for it.

22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Well, we'll come back at
23 4.30, and then we'll see if there are any more questions
24 for you then. All right?

25 THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you.

1 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right, thank you very much. If
 2 you would like to go with the usher, please.
 3 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 4 (Pause)
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you. 4.30, unless you tell us
 6 you need more time.
 7 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 8 (4.24 pm)
 9 (A short break)
 10 (4.30 pm)
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Yes, please sit down. Yes.
 12 MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Well, we'll see if there are any
 14 more questions for you, shall we, Mr Adamson?
 15 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right.
 17 Yes?
 18 MR KEATING: Just one question, actually.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you.
 20 MR KEATING: If we could have a look at {BRC00000066/10},
 21 which is the first report we've seen in the suite of
 22 reports, which was issued in 2018, and we're looking at
 23 the page already at page 10. I'm very grateful.
 24 You will recall, just after the afternoon break, we
 25 were dealing with the principles in relation to having

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1 a human-focused, people-focused approach, and
 2 principle 3, that people should be supported in their
 3 local communities and local communities should be
 4 empowered to respond, and it says this:
 5 "Local and diverse emergency response
 6 "... should be as local as possible ... Our
 7 experience is that local community organisations in
 8 emergencies – whether in the UK or internationally –
 9 have a critical role to play."
 10 As you have said to us already:
 11 "They are always first on the scene and the British
 12 Red Cross is committed to supporting and nurturing that
 13 role, harnessing its national and global expertise."
 14 This is the area which the question stems from.
 15 "We already provide some training and advice to
 16 others in the sector to upskill them to play a greater
 17 role themselves."
 18 And it refers to providing free training for Islamic
 19 Relief volunteers, and mentions how it was the intention
 20 to advise on how others can provide support following
 21 a crisis.
 22 The question is this: what else has the British
 23 Red Cross done or considers it will do to meet the
 24 diverse ethnic and cultural needs of those who are
 25 impacted by an incident? So, in other words, how else

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1 would they support those voluntary organisation to meet
 2 the diverse ethnic and cultural needs?
 3 A. So, as the British Red Cross, as an organisation, we put
 4 huge amounts of emphasis on our own approach to
 5 inclusion and diversity, and strengthening both the
 6 diversity of the organisation and the inclusivity of the
 7 approach to all our work, and so when we look at the way
 8 in which we responded, for example, to the COVID crisis,
 9 our specific aim was to focus on some of those groups,
 10 for example, that you highlighted earlier in the table
 11 from the report that might otherwise get missed, the
 12 people who wouldn't have come forwards, the people who
 13 didn't -- who don't speak English, people who might have
 14 uncertain migration status, to ensure, for example, that
 15 they were coming forward to get vaccinated, and that
 16 help, and that they were getting the practical help that
 17 they needed.
 18 So we were very systematic in using data and
 19 a vulnerability index that we developed, for example,
 20 for COVID to target the postcodes where those situations
 21 were most likely to be, as one example, and in the
 22 context of the voluntary and community sector emergency
 23 partnership which we co-host -- which we host and
 24 I co-chair, again we are building an inclusive approach
 25 into the way in which we engage with the 150

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1 organisations that are part of that partnership now, and
 2 we've all signed partnership agreements which include
 3 commitments to actually working in a needs-based way,
 4 and where we're using -- it's networks of networks to
 5 connect then into local organisations, who will have --
 6 may have direct access to groups that would otherwise be
 7 forgotten, be they people from ethnic minorities, where
 8 they're particularly -- groups, for example,
 9 particularly targeted at diaspora communities, who might
 10 otherwise get missed, or indeed it could be it's not
 11 ethnicity but around disability. And then we're doing
 12 community work -- then going back to the British
 13 Red Cross, we're also doing work specifically,
 14 for example, in some of the London boroughs to
 15 understand what the experience of people who are
 16 otherwise marginalised is in an emergency and, again,
 17 how we can connect.
 18 So there's a lot of effort going into creating the
 19 conditions, again, in which we can take a much more
 20 inclusive approach, and that's built into the way we
 21 think as the British Red Cross and the way we think as
 22 the emergency partnership. Think and act, I should say.
 23 MR KEATING: Yes.
 24 Mr Adamson, thank you so much for that answer, and
 25 thank you very much for your evidence today. I have no

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1 further questions. It just remains for me on behalf of
 2 the Inquiry team to thank you so much for attending
 3 today.
 4 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Yes. Well, I must add my thanks on
 6 behalf of the panel, if I may, Mr Adamson. It's been
 7 very interesting to hear what you have to tell us. Your
 8 evidence seems to have ranged far and wide over the
 9 course of the last few hours, so thank you very much
 10 indeed, we're very grateful to you for coming, and now,
 11 of course, you're free to go.
 12 Thank you.
 13 THE WITNESS: It's my pleasure, and I wish you good luck
 14 with your incredibly important endeavour, sir.
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you very much.
 16 (The witness withdrew)
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Well, Mr Keating, that is it for the
 18 day.
 19 MR KEATING: Yes.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: But tomorrow there will be another
 21 witness for us; is that right?
 22 MR KEATING: Yes, Mr Millett is back tomorrow.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Right.
 24 Well, thank you very much. We will break there and
 25 we'll resume at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, please.

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1 10 o'clock tomorrow.
 2 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 3 (4.35 pm)
 4 (The hearing adjourned until 10 am
 5 on Thursday, 12 May 2022)
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