



Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Day 280

May 18, 2022

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Phone: 020 4515 2252

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Wednesday, 18 May 2022

1 (10.00 am)
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
 3 today's hearing. Today we're going to begin by hearing
 4 evidence from a member of the Red Cross, who was
 5 involved in helping those affected by the fire, and
 6 after that we're going to hear evidence from
 7 a representative of the Cabinet Office.
 8 Yes, Mr Keating.
 9 MR KEATING: Good morning, Mr Chairman. Good morning,
 10 members of the panel.
 11 Could I call Emma Spragg, please.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.
 13 MS EMMA SPRAGG (affirmed)
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Please sit
 15 down, make yourself comfortable.
 16 (Pause)
 17 All right?
 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.
 20 Yes, Mr Keating.
 21 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 22 MR KEATING: Thank you, sir.
 23 Good morning, Ms Spragg. First of all, thank you
 24 very much for accommodating us by attending today and

1

1 assisting the Inquiry with its investigations.
 2 Just a few introductory matters.
 3 Firstly, if you have difficulty in understanding any
 4 of my questions, please do let me know and I'm sure
 5 I can rephrase them.
 6 Secondly, if I could invite you to keep your voice
 7 up, please, and amplify it as best you can, so that our
 8 transcriber, who sits to the right, can capture what you
 9 say. Equally, in that vein, if you could avoid nodding
 10 or shaking your head, because that's something which
 11 isn't picked up on the transcript.
 12 Finally, we will take a mid-morning break, but if at
 13 any stage you do need a break, please do let us know.
 14 Is that okay?
 15 A. Thank you, yes.
 16 Q. Turning to your evidence, first of all, by way of a
 17 couple of formalities, and identifying the two witness
 18 statements you have made to the Inquiry.
 19 Firstly, could we go, please, to {BRC00000050}.
 20 That's your first statement. We can see that's dated
 21 12 June 2019.
 22 If we could turn to page 19 of that statement,
 23 please, we see your name in print and the date, and
 24 could you just confirm that's your signature?
 25 A. Yes.

2

1 Q. Turning to your second statement, please, that's
 2 {BRC00000081}. Thank you very much. That's dated
 3 20 February 2020.
 4 If we go to page 5 of that document, again, could
 5 you confirm that's your signature?
 6 A. It is, yes.
 7 Q. Have you had the opportunity to read both those
 8 statements recently?
 9 A. I have, yeah.
 10 Q. Thank you. Can you confirm that the contents of those
 11 statements are true to the best of your knowledge and
 12 belief?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Thank you.
 15 Ms Spragg, we've already heard from your colleague
 16 Mr Adamson last week when he gave evidence, so I'm not
 17 going to trespass on the same areas.
 18 To assist you, I'm going to ask you a little bit
 19 about the role of the British Red Cross in the London
 20 Resilience framework, just a short part of your
 21 evidence. Then I'm going to focus upon your involvement
 22 and the involvement of the British Red Cross in events
 23 on 14 and 15 June thereafter.
 24 A. Okay.
 25 Q. If that assists you.

3

1 Dealing first of all with your background and your
 2 position, briefly, if I may.
 3 Professional background, Ms Spragg, is it right that
 4 you have worked in the charity sector for over 19 years,
 5 going back to February 2003?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. You have set out helpfully in your statement your
 8 employment history, which includes roles with the
 9 Help the Aged charity, and is it the case that you then
 10 joined the British Red Cross in January 2015?
 11 A. That's right, yes.
 12 Q. Since August 2016, you have held the position of
 13 director for London, independent living and crisis
 14 response; is that correct?
 15 A. That's true. The job title is slightly different now,
 16 but the role is the same, yes.
 17 Q. The job title might have changed, but is it right that
 18 you are still with British Red Cross?
 19 A. Yes, that's true. The job title, just for clarity, is
 20 director for health and local crisis response, but it's
 21 the same as the role was at that time.
 22 Q. Thank you.
 23 As part of that role back in June 2017, is it
 24 correct that you were responsible for the London
 25 emergency response team?

4

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Reading from your statement — I can summarise it — at
 3 paragraph 21 {BRC00000050/5}, you set out that there was
 4 a dual purpose for the London emergency response team,
 5 which included providing help to people in emergency
 6 situations, and, secondly, to work with partner
 7 organisations on plans and preparedness; is that
 8 correct?
 9 A. Yes, that's true, yeah.
 10 Q. So two aspects: one in terms of pre-emergency planning,
 11 and, secondly, actual dealing with emergency response.
 12 A. Yes, yes, and the pre-planning would be internally as
 13 well as with partners externally, yes.
 14 Q. You're just dropping your voice a little bit.
 15 A. Oh, sorry, apologies.
 16 Q. It's okay. Try and keep it up as best you can.
 17 At paragraph 29 of your statement {BRC00000050/6} —
 18 again, I can summarise it — you say that the work of
 19 the emergency response team during a response is,
 20 perhaps understandably, focused on supporting vulnerable
 21 people who are affected by matters that require
 22 emotional or practical support during or immediately
 23 after an emergency.
 24 A. Yes, that's right.
 25 Q. In relation to how the British Red Cross fits into the

5

1 London Resilience framework, let's just deal with that
 2 as a brief subheading.
 3 Is it right that British Red Cross is neither
 4 a category 1 or category 2 responder within the meaning
 5 of the Civil Contingencies Act?
 6 A. Yes, that's right.
 7 Q. If we could go to your statement, please, your first
 8 statement, at page 7, {BRC00000050/7}, paragraph 33,
 9 thank you. Perhaps we could just focus upon your role
 10 as chair of the voluntary sector panel.
 11 So you say this:
 12 "In my role at [British Red Cross], I am the Chair
 13 of the Voluntary Sector Panel, part of the Partnership.
 14 I have held this role since May 2017. The Partnership
 15 is led by the London Resilience Forum ... which sets out
 16 the strategy and work plan of the Partnership and meets
 17 quarterly."
 18 You mention how:
 19 "The Voluntary Sector Panel operates alongside a
 20 number of other Sector Panels which form part of the
 21 Partnership and promote collaboration across
 22 organisations ... [British Red Cross] representatives
 23 form part of the Voluntary Sector Panel, alongside
 24 representatives from, for example, First Aid Nursing
 25 Yeomanry, St John Ambulance, Victim Support ..."

6

1 And other teams which are set out in that statement.
 2 Is that a fair summary?
 3 A. Yes, that's right, yes.
 4 Q. How well, as of June 2017, did you consider the
 5 voluntary sector panel fitted in to the London
 6 Resilience framework?
 7 A. I'd say that we were well connected into the framework.
 8 So, as the chair of the panel, I had standing invites to
 9 all of the forum meetings and various other things that
 10 were happening as a result of that partnership, and we
 11 had, as a panel, opportunity to comment on various
 12 things that were coming out of the LRF, so
 13 an opportunity to be involved in training and
 14 exercising. So I think we were well connected, yes.
 15 Q. So your view was, as chair of the voluntary sector
 16 panel, that the voluntary sector was well connected
 17 within that framework.
 18 I just want to move on to one matter —
 19 A. Can I just — sorry, may I just clarify?
 20 Q. Of course.
 21 A. I think the panel was well connected. It's very
 22 difficult to say the sector as a whole was well
 23 connected. But the panel, as it consisted of those
 24 finite number of organisations, was well connected, yes.
 25 Q. As the chair, you were the conduit for the voluntary

7

1 sector panel; did you feel that you, at that stage, were
 2 connected to the wider voluntary sector?
 3 A. It's really difficult to be connected to the wider
 4 sector, so no, that was the challenge that we always
 5 were aware of. The members of the panel are
 6 substantively organisations with a pan-London remit and
 7 one with emergency response in their remit, so, by
 8 definition, that's not going to include all of the
 9 voluntary sector.
 10 Q. The membership and the organisations you would have most
 11 contact with would be more formal, perhaps even
 12 national, voluntary groups?
 13 A. Yes, national with regional presence, or
 14 London-specific, yes.
 15 Q. Yes.
 16 I'm just going to move to paragraph 44
 17 {BRC00000050/10}, if I may. We touched upon the role
 18 already of the British Red Cross, you mentioned in terms
 19 of emergency response, but also pre-emergency response,
 20 in terms of planning and preparedness.
 21 It says this:
 22 "References to the [British Red Cross] and the role
 23 it can play are frequently included in emergency plans
 24 prepared by local authorities and also referenced in LRF
 25 protocols and frameworks including the Humanitarian

8

1 Assistance Framework."

2 Just focusing on this last matter:

3 "The [British Red Cross] is often involved in

4 reviewing plans at borough level, via the London

5 [emergency response] team at local Borough Resilience

6 Forum ... and at pan-London level via the London

7 Resilience Partnership."

8 Just expanding upon that, could you assist with how

9 often would the British Red Cross be involved perhaps at

10 a borough resilience forum level?

11 A. So I had — have an emergency response team of five

12 members of staff, and we were trying to engage with all

13 of the BRFs, the borough resilience forums, across

14 London, so obviously there is quite a large number of

15 those. So our aim was and is to engage with all of the

16 forums at least once a year, but then potentially more

17 than that if we had the capacity. So often we would

18 attend — the team, not myself, but the team would

19 attend more than one a year.

20 Q. Did you find that, as of June 2017, participation of

21 different BRFs varied, in other words whether they would

22 take up your offer of assistance?

23 A. So the Red Cross was always invited to the BRFs.

24 Assistance wouldn't necessarily be offered there, but we

25 always — my team would always tell me that we were

9

1 always given opportunity to present what we could offer

2 in terms of our capabilities. So that was something

3 that happened at the BRFs. BRFs recognised the role

4 Red Cross could play, I would say, yeah.

5 Q. So there was a representation at BRFs, and there was the

6 opportunity to provide assistance or make contributions?

7 A. Yes, yeah.

8 Q. Turning to RBKC for a moment, can you recall whether the

9 British Red Cross had ever been invited to their borough

10 resilience forum prior to 2017?

11 A. I can't recall that personally. There may be records

12 that show it. I would have expected that we would have

13 had an invite before that time, yes.

14 Q. Well, it's not a memory test. Let me help you in

15 relation to that. Let's go to your second statement,

16 please, which is {BRC00000081/3}, and turn to

17 paragraph 10. Thank you very much. The question was at

18 paragraph 10:

19 "Question 4: Prior to the 14 June 2017, when was the

20 last time a BRC representative attended the appropriate

21 [Local Authorities Panel] Borough Resilience Forum?"

22 You say this in your statement:

23 "I have no recollection or record of [British Red

24 Cross] being invited to a RBKC Borough Resilience Forum

25 ... prior to 2017. In 2017, BRC was invited to a BRF

10

1 [Borough Resilience Forum] scheduled for 22 March 2017,

2 however, our records show this BRF was subsequently

3 cancelled. The next [meeting] we were invited to was

4 scheduled for 18 July 2017, but our records show that

5 this was then postponed."

6 So, drawing that together, there appears to be no

7 record of an invitation, although in 2017 there was

8 an invitation, but that was postponed on two occasions.

9 A. Yeah, I agree with that, yes.

10 Q. Would it follow from this that the British Red Cross

11 didn't have any review or input into RBKC's emergency

12 plans?

13 A. It does suggest that, yes. I mean, there may have been

14 communication through different routes, say for emails

15 into the team, but that's not normally something that

16 would happen, it would be normally discussion at the

17 BRF. So, yes, that does seem to be the case, yeah.

18 Q. So the BRF, from drawing together your evidence, seems

19 to be the location where that sort of input would come

20 from or stem from; is that fair?

21 A. Yes, yeah.

22 Q. If we have your first statement — well, actually, I can

23 just summarise. In your first statement, paragraph 41

24 {BRC00000050/10}, you refer to the relationship, in

25 general terms, with the local authority and the British

11

1 Red Cross would be governed by a memorandum of

2 understanding; is that correct?

3 A. Yes, that's right.

4 Q. At the time of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, can

5 you assist with whether there was a current memorandum

6 of understanding between RBKC and British Red Cross in

7 place?

8 A. No, it doesn't seem as if there was a current one at

9 that point.

10 Q. Your evidence, as you have set out in your statement at

11 paragraph 41, is that you were unable to locate one.

12 What memorandum of understanding you could locate was

13 dated September 2016; is that correct?

14 A. Yes, so it wouldn't have been in place at the time of

15 the fire, yeah.

16 Q. Yes.

17 Well, let's have a look at that document, if we may,

18 very briefly. It's at {BRC00000055}, please.

19 Thank you. We see a covering letter with the document.

20 It's dated 11 January 2016, sent to your colleague

21 Cristina Dalton:

22 "Please find enclosed a signed copy of the

23 Memorandum of Understanding. We are delighted to

24 confirm our continued commitment to this service."

25 It confirms that there will be a donation of £2,000.

12

1 Was that relatively standard, in terms of the
2 agreement or the understanding between British Red Cross
3 and a local authority at that stage was that there would
4 be a donation of that sum?
5 A. Yes. The memorandum was the same and the donation
6 amount was the same across all of the MOUs and the local
7 authority arrangements, yes.
8 Q. Was it unusual, in terms of an agreement with a local
9 authority, that in this case it had lapsed and it had
10 been out of date by nine months? Was that unusual back
11 in June 2017, with the relationships with local
12 authorities?
13 A. I think it's fair to say that, yes, some had lapsed.
14 They weren't — things were being renewed at different
15 times, it wasn't a constant — you know, everybody
16 starts on one day and everybody finishes — every
17 other — MOU finishes on another, so it wasn't wholly
18 unusual, but we did have memorandums of understanding in
19 place with the majority of local authorities at the time
20 of the fire. So I think that was just — well,
21 potentially it was a bit of an admin issue that that one
22 wasn't renewed, but I can't — I'm not — I don't know
23 for sure.
24 Q. Did the absence of a signed, current memorandum of
25 understanding for June 2017 in any way affect the

13

1 relationship between RBKC and British Red Cross?
2 A. Not in terms of the response, no, it didn't, no.
3 Q. No.
4 If we could turn to page 7 of this document
5 {BRC00000055/7}, there are a couple of features perhaps
6 you could assist us with.
7 Is it right that this is a standard document which
8 would have been used at the time for all local
9 authorities, or was it specific to British Red
10 Cross(sic)?
11 A. It was standard.
12 Q. Yes. In fact, if we could go to page 7 of the
13 memorandum of understanding, please, which is
14 {BRC00000055/7}, we see "Service Specifications".
15 "Preparedness" is set out there at 4.1, and I'm going to
16 focus on "Response", if I may, at 4.2. This is what it
17 says there in the standard MOU:
18 "A robust 24/7 on-call structure on-call structure
19 facilitates support to LAPs ..."
20 Pausing there for a moment, we've heard a lot of
21 LAPs. In this context, this is a local authority panel.
22 A. Panel, yes, that's right.
23 Q. In fact, local authority partner; is that correct?
24 A. Partner in this context, sorry, yes.
25 Q. Yes, ie the local authority, RBKC.

14

1 A. Yes.
2 Q. "... and enables [British Red Cross] deployments."
3 Secondly:
4 "Provision of personnel at Rest Centres,
5 Humanitarian Assistance Centres, Survivor Reception
6 Centres and Family and Friends Reception Centres."
7 If we could turn to overleaf, please, top of page 8
8 of this document {BRC00000055/8} as we look at it:
9 "Provision of practical and emotional support to
10 people affected by an incident (including multi-lingual
11 phrasebooks, registration forms and equipment,
12 inflatable beds, blankets, hygiene packs, refreshments,
13 and psychosocial care)."
14 I'm going to ask you just to keep in your mind that
15 reference to registration forms. We're going to come
16 back to that in a short while.
17 Lastly in relation to this document, at page 9
18 {BRC00000055/9}, please, middle of the page, it says:
19 "BRC personnel will work under the management of the
20 [local authority partner], but within the policies and
21 procedures of the [British Red Cross]."
22 Is that correct?
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. So having that context, the first question is this: in
25 an emergency situation, who would have responsibility

15

1 for setting up and operating a rest centre, if I could
2 use a generic term?
3 A. A local authority.
4 Q. Local authority?
5 A. Yeah.
6 Q. Even if there is a memorandum of understanding that you
7 would assist in relation to that?
8 A. Yes, our role as the Red Cross is there to support, but
9 it's the local authority's responsibility in that area
10 to set up the centre.
11 Q. In relation to registration, that feature, registration
12 of those who attend a rest centre — and, again, I'm
13 going to use a generic term — who would be responsible
14 for that process, as you understood it?
15 A. The same, the local authority.
16 Q. What was your understanding of the process of
17 registration in terms of an MOU? Let's say I'm a local
18 authority, I'm new to the department. Explain to me how
19 registration would work if British Red Cross were
20 deployed.
21 A. So we would expect that, when the team arrives — my
22 Red Cross team arrives at a rest centre, they would be
23 given various things to do, asked to perform various
24 functions, and one of those might be registration. We
25 could offer registration forms to be used, and then, on

16

1 the instruction of the authority to actually perform the
 2 registration , we would do that, and capture information
 3 as people arrived at the centre.
 4 Q. The thrust of your evidence would be, on attendance, it
 5 would be at the direction of the local authority?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. And what would happen in a situation where there was
 8 nobody from the local authority there and the British
 9 Red Cross were first on the scene?
 10 A. That's very difficult , because it's not our role to
 11 register people. So it's not a role that we would take
 12 on without that instruction.
 13 Q. In terms of registration as at June 2017, in the
 14 circumstances where the British Red Cross were asked or
 15 directed to take hold of the registration process, how
 16 would that take place? Would it be electronic, would it
 17 be paper?
 18 A. They were paper forms, and I believe at this particular
 19 incident we were asked to use the Red Cross forms, so
 20 they were paper triplicate forms.
 21 Q. So paper triplicate forms. So an attendee would come,
 22 they would meet somebody from British Red Cross, their
 23 details would be taken down by hand —
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. — in triplicate. Then what would happen to those

17

1 forms?
 2 A. The forms are the responsibility — because the data is
 3 the responsibility of the local authorities . So they
 4 would be collated and kept somewhere safe, and then
 5 given over to the local authority at various intervals .
 6 Q. And British Red Cross would keep a copy as well?
 7 A. We would sometimes — yes, we would sometimes keep
 8 a copy so that the data was secure in two places, if you
 9 like , but ultimately it's not our data to keep, and we
 10 would make arrangements to hand all copies over at
 11 a later point.
 12 Q. Were you aware of any process in which that paper
 13 information would ever be put into an electronic format?
 14 A. In this particular incident, do you mean?
 15 Q. Yes.
 16 A. I do recall that at some point later into the response
 17 and at the Westway Centre, there was a team run by local
 18 authorities that I think were inputting data into
 19 spreadsheets. But it's not something that we were part
 20 of. We were just handing the forms over.
 21 Q. So, in essence, British Red Cross would be there to
 22 assist but not lead in relation to the registration , and
 23 it was a manual process, noting details down on paper
 24 and providing a copy to the local authority?
 25 A. Yes, that's right.

18

1 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Can you just help me with this: you
 3 say you would take the information down on paper forms
 4 in triplicate ; what was the purpose of having two
 5 additional copies, so to speak?
 6 A. I'm not sure, to be honest, but I think the forms —
 7 having three copies of the same thing just facilitated
 8 different people having them if that was needed. So
 9 certainly the focus of that information was for the
 10 local authority. There could have been, in different
 11 incidents, that things — that those forms were used for
 12 different agencies.
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: But you wouldn't expect the
 14 Red Cross people to separate the forms out and
 15 distribute them to different recipients?
 16 A. No, because it's the local authority's responsibility to
 17 do that.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.
 19 MR KEATING: I think we will revisit registration briefly
 20 later on when we explore events on 14 and 15 June, which
 21 I'm just going to turn to now.
 22 Let's deal with the first topic, which is immediate
 23 deployment of the British Red Cross on 14 June.
 24 With your assistance, there's a document which you
 25 have provided I'm going to turn to, {BRC00000051}.

19

1 Thank you. It's called the British Red Cross emergency
 2 call receipt. Effectively a log, is that correct, what
 3 this document is?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. You have seen this before and you've obviously provided
 6 it to the Inquiry —
 7 A. That's right, yes.
 8 Q. — as one of your documents.
 9 We can see at the top that the request time is
 10 14 June, 03.10; isn't that correct?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. And that's what was noted as the first time that the
 13 British Red Cross were notified of this incident; isn't
 14 that correct?
 15 A. That's right.
 16 Q. And the panel have heard evidence that David Kerry was
 17 first informed by the duty LALO at 02.21 of the fire at
 18 Grenfell, just to put that into context.
 19 This is a document you produce, but it's done by
 20 your colleague Jon Pewtner, which we can see in the top
 21 left ; is that correct?
 22 A. That's right, yes.
 23 Q. And we see if you scroll down, "Community profile &
 24 numbers affected". At this early stage, "200 persons"
 25 is noted down; correct?

20

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Then we see, "Rest centre to be opened at Belushi's
 3 [Shepherd's] Bush Green".
 4 If we turn, please, to page 4 of that document
 5 {BRC00000051/4}. Thank you very much. There's a number
 6 of entries there and, with your assistance, I'm just
 7 going to draw out a few points which will put a few
 8 matters into context.
 9 We see at 03.10, as we touched upon already, "Call
 10 [received] from David Kerry RBKC", and that information,
 11 and the request to set up a rest centre at
 12 Shepherd's Bush for residents; isn't that correct?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. In relation to that theme, in relation to Belushi's, we
 15 see that colleagues of yours were notified at 03.15, at
 16 03.16; isn't that correct?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And then staying with Belushi's for a moment, the first
 19 official rest centre, at 03.45, we see those colleagues,
 20 Robyn Wheeler and Ewen Williams, arrive at Belushi's,
 21 and the entry is, "Nil persons present NIL RBKC";
 22 correct?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. If we go to 4.15, the next entry in relation to this, it
 25 would appear:

21

1 "Spoke to [Robyn Wheeler] — still zero persons in
 2 attendance. JB on scene."
 3 That must be Jean Bourlot, if I'm pronouncing his
 4 name correctly; is that correct?
 5 A. Yes, that's right.
 6 Q. Then at 4.35:
 7 "JP [who is the author of this log] on scene at
 8 Belushi's Zero attendance."
 9 What is "CL and central EEU arrive"?
 10 A. It's reference to — I think CL is another volunteer,
 11 person.
 12 Q. Correct.
 13 A. And the EEU is a vehicle.
 14 Q. And at that stage it states:
 15 "Decision made to redeploy [one of your colleagues]
 16 to Harrow club to assist ..."
 17 Correct?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Then if we go to the bottom of this page, we see at
 20 5.30:
 21 "Checked in with [Robyn Wheeler] and still nobody at
 22 the rest centre [this being Belushi's]. Contacted BECC
 23 at RBKC and advised nobody at the [rest centre],
 24 suggested it was too far away, community reluctant to
 25 leave area. Decision made by RBK[C] to close this

22

1 centre and the [British Red Cross] team ... were
 2 directed to Harrow Club to assist ..."
 3 The next entry is:
 4 "Asked where RC managers ..."
 5 That's rest centre managers?
 6 A. I think so, yes.
 7 Q. " ... were but did not get an answer."
 8 So just dealing with that, that's Belushi's, the
 9 first official rest centre.
 10 Is it normal, in your experience in this area, for
 11 an initial rest centre to be empty almost two and a half
 12 hours after it had been set up at 03.10?
 13 A. No, especially in the night like that, at the nighttime.
 14 Q. The location of Belushi's in Shepherd's Bush was
 15 approximately a mile away. Again, for an initial
 16 rest centre in an urban area, in your experience, is
 17 that normal or good practice?
 18 A. I would say it's not normal, no.
 19 Q. Perhaps common sense, you would want somewhere in a safe
 20 location, but in proximity to the incident; is that
 21 correct?
 22 A. Yes, it's obviously important that people can get there
 23 easily, they know where it is and that people can get
 24 there as easily as possible, so it needs to be somewhere
 25 that's relatively close by but, as you say, somewhere

23

1 safe.
 2 Q. Okay.
 3 Once we went, following that theme through in
 4 relation to Belushi's, there was reference to the
 5 Harrow Club, so we are going to go back in time again
 6 and just follow through the Harrow Club and references
 7 to mutual aid.
 8 So if you could go back to page 4 {BRC00000051/4},
 9 please. The first call was at 03.10, and at 03.25, so
 10 15 minutes later, we have:
 11 "David Kerry called to advise a 2nd Rest Centre
 12 would be required as scale of incident now larger.
 13 [Harrow] Club will be 2nd [rest centre]."
 14 Is that correct?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Again, very quickly, British Red Cross staff were
 17 notified to be deployed, and that's the reference to one
 18 of the vehicles, the EEU.
 19 Then we see at 3.40, "Cara Treasure UKO". Was she
 20 the crisis response co-ordinator?
 21 A. Yes, so Cara was in the central crisis response team.
 22 UKO is shorthand for UK office. It tends to be
 23 shorthand for our central team.
 24 Q. Okay. Was she advised or was she advising? It appears
 25 that she was "advised large incident possibly may

24

1 [require] Mutual aid".
 2 A. Yeah, so this will have been part of our notification
 3 procedure with a large incident with statutory partners
 4 involved. The London ER team will inform the central
 5 crisis response team.
 6 Q. So bearing in mind a second rest centre was opened up,
 7 the amount of people involved, within 30 minutes of
 8 notification, the view of British Red Cross was there
 9 was a flashing light here that we may need to draw in
 10 greater resources; is that correct?
 11 A. Yes, yeah.
 12 Q. Let's fast forward to 04.55 in relation to this:
 13 "Arrived at Harrow Centre. Approximately 25
 14 residents. No local authority but TMO representative
 15 present. [One of your colleagues] left to encourage
 16 residents from cordons to rest centre."
 17 There's other matters there regarding Sky TV.
 18 "MPS [Metropolitan Police] assistance requested.
 19 Staff had started to make a list of who was present and
 20 provide refreshments. Provided TMO with [British Red
 21 Cross] [rest centre] forms to register residents.
 22 "FULL SCALE OF INCIDENT BECOMES APPARENT.
 23 "CARA [Treasure] ... updated — Mutual aid
 24 requested."
 25 A lot there, and we'll unpack that in a moment, but

25

1 firstly in relation to that theme of mutual aid, was it
 2 the position then, by 5 o'clock, it was clear to those
 3 at British Red Cross that the scale of the incident was
 4 so big that greater resources from across the country
 5 and outside London were required?
 6 A. Yes, very much so.
 7 Q. Focusing again at that entry, 4.55, it says at that
 8 stage there was no local authority at this second
 9 rest centre, but there was the TMO representatives'
 10 presence, and in terms of the registration forms, they
 11 were provided to the TMO; is that correct? That's what
 12 the entry suggests.
 13 A. Yes. Yes, and I think that will have been because the
 14 staff at the centre were trying to make lists, and
 15 I think the team there were trying to be helpful and
 16 give them some proper paperwork to do that on.
 17 Q. You say at paragraph 59 of your statement
 18 {BRC00000050/14} — and I can read this out, rather than
 19 jumping between documents:
 20 "During this time, our teams were suggesting to
 21 staff at the rest centres that individuals should be
 22 registered upon arrival using registration forms."
 23 A. Yes, and we were doing that because — the team was
 24 doing that because there wasn't a local authority person
 25 to make that call, so we were making that suggestion on

26

1 their behalf, I suppose.
 2 Q. Nobody from the local authority was there at that stage.
 3 They were trying to assist, as you say in your evidence.
 4 Do you know what happened to those forms which were
 5 handed out at that stage?
 6 A. I'm afraid I don't, no.
 7 Q. If we go to 5.30, please, overleaf {BRC00000051/5}.
 8 Thank you very much. We see the second column, 05.30:
 9 "SE arrived [a colleague]. Directed to get people
 10 to come to the Harrow Centre. It became apparent that
 11 a spontaneous [rest centre] had opened at the Portobello
 12 Rugby Trust. SE attended and assessed how many people
 13 there, approx. 50. JP returned to Harrow Club
 14 [Metropolitan Police Service] now present outside and
 15 2 MPS DCs [perhaps detective constables, unclear]
 16 assisting with registration."
 17 Is that correct?
 18 A. Yes, and I agree with your assumption about what the DC
 19 stands for there.
 20 Q. We see at 05.45:
 21 "Fed back above to the BECC and went to RPT."
 22 So it appears that the information that there was
 23 a spontaneous rest centre was identified here by the
 24 British Red Cross, and that was notified to the BECC
 25 because there was nobody from RBKC at the Harrow Club at

27

1 that stage.
 2 A. Yes, I believe that's right.
 3 Q. "Contacted BECC again. Decision made by RBKC to move
 4 people from the Harrow Centre [Harrow Club] over to the
 5 [Rugby Portobello Trust] to be in one place and easier
 6 to provide support. RBKC spoke to the [Rugby Portobello
 7 Trust] management to agree this."
 8 At 06.15:
 9 "[British Red Cross] team now at the [Rugby
 10 Portobello Trust]."
 11 06.30:
 12 "Most residents now at the [Rugby Portobello
 13 Trust]."
 14 06.45:
 15 "Harrow club now empty."
 16 "...
 17 "Signage in place directing residents to [the Rugby
 18 Portobello Trust]."
 19 Then it moves on to the third theme I just want to
 20 draw out, which is — and we've touched upon it
 21 already — staffing or the lack of staff from RBKC.
 22 We see, again, an entry here at 06.45:
 23 "Contacted BECC — trying to locate RBKC LALO or
 24 [rest centre] staff."
 25 So by this stage, a number of hours had passed.

28

1 03.10 was the first notification of the British
 2 Red Cross. We're three and a half hours later, and
 3 there is no RBKC staff which are identifiable to the
 4 British Red Cross at those rest centres.
 5 Again, from your experience, was that something that
 6 you would expect at that stage?
 7 A. No.
 8 Q. Even at nighttime, giving every allowance, is that
 9 an acceptable period of time?
 10 A. In my experience, I suppose the difference would be as
 11 well that you would usually have one clearer place for
 12 local authority and residents to go to, and clearly that
 13 wasn't the case at this time. It was a much bigger
 14 incident than we'd been involved in before. But even
 15 then, if there was one place to go to, I would have
 16 thought, really, that the local authority would have
 17 representation there by that point, yes.
 18 Q. Specifically, we've heard evidence regarding rest centre
 19 managers, that being a specific role for a rest centre.
 20 Would you, from the British Red Cross perspective,
 21 expect, as part of your understanding with RBKC, that
 22 they send down a rest centre manager to the scene?
 23 A. Yes, that's part of the model that we would expect, yes.
 24 Q. The evidence of David Kerry, in summary, is there's
 25 an expectation that it would be the British Red Cross

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1 which would provide everything; they would provide the
 2 rest centre manager and really operate the rest centre.
 3 Is that a fair expectation as of June 2017?
 4 A. No, I would disagree with that. My team provide
 5 training on rest centre management to local authorities,
 6 and it's very clear that it's not our role to be the
 7 manager. We can support with that, but ultimately
 8 rest centres are the responsibility of the local
 9 authority.
 10 Q. So would it be the case, if I was a local authority and
 11 decided that I wanted to outsource this specific role
 12 with British Red Cross and make my donation to you, in
 13 the expectation that you would run the rest centre,
 14 would that be a realistic expectation back in June 2017?
 15 A. No. I think if specific requests had been made and
 16 specific arrangements for that had been put in place,
 17 then we could consider it, but, as far as I'm aware,
 18 that hadn't happened, and rest centre management is
 19 provided by the local authority and we support that, and
 20 I believe that's what's in the MOU.
 21 Q. Yes, and the MOU we looked at briefly, which you
 22 provided, is, as you described, a standard MOU which
 23 would be used with other —
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. — local authorities in London at that time.

30

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. So just returning back to this seeking the location of
 3 RBKC staff, we see at 08.15, which is at the bottom of
 4 this page, if we could scroll down, thank you so much:
 5 "Chased housing and Social care — advised on way."
 6 Would it be fair to infer from that entry that was
 7 your colleagues chasing RBKC housing and social care and
 8 advised by the BECC they're on their way?
 9 A. Yes, the communication from the team would largely be
 10 with the BECC, yes.
 11 Q. 9.15, in similar terms:
 12 "Chased housing and Social care — advised on way."
 13 That's at the bottom of the page.
 14 Then if we turn over to page 6 {BRC00000051/6},
 15 please, and the final entry in relation to this, 10.30:
 16 "Chased housing and Social care — advised on way."
 17 So we see an entry here 5 hours and 20 minutes after
 18 British Red Cross were first notified of the incident,
 19 the incident being some hours before then, but still
 20 nobody from RBKC at the rest centres the British
 21 Red Cross were at; is that correct?
 22 A. Nobody from housing and social care, and I suspect
 23 nobody from the council. That's what the records have
 24 shown me, yes.
 25 Q. Your position was oversight by your role, but are you

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1 able to say what sort of impact that would have on the
 2 operation of the British Red Cross in that sort of
 3 situation, when there is a long period of time where
 4 there's an absence of the local authority?
 5 A. Because the local authority is the lead for a centre and
 6 for centre management, they provide the — ultimately
 7 the co-ordination for what happens at that place. So
 8 for my teams it's, and it was, very difficult to know
 9 who was in charge and, therefore, the sorts of things
 10 that were needed, the various elements that were already
 11 there or that were going to be brought into the centre,
 12 so that our teams could then direct people who were
 13 arriving at the centre to the right support. So it was
 14 just a very uncoordinated picture, and that's the impact
 15 that it had for us. We were then — the team would find
 16 it difficult to know what was — information was right
 17 or where to send people for further help.
 18 So it had an impact on us, but ultimately it was the
 19 impact on the residents that was the greatest.
 20 Q. If we could go to your first statement, please, at
 21 paragraph 59 {BRC00000050/14}. We have touched upon
 22 this and seen from the log, but:
 23 "When the [British Red Cross] volunteers arrived at
 24 the scene of the Grenfell Fire, they found that there
 25 were several separate rest centres which had

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1 spontaneously been set up in local buildings, including
 2 mosques and churches. A location for an official rest
 3 centre had not been confirmed by the RBKC ..."
 4 Pausing there for a moment perhaps to clarify, we've
 5 heard about Belushi's and we've heard about the
 6 Harrow Club and we've heard about the movement over to
 7 the Rugby Portobello Trust; was that not
 8 an identification of the official rest centre?
 9 A. I suppose, looking back at the call log, there was
 10 a suggestion that there was an official rest centre, but
 11 it was apparent, through the reports that we were
 12 getting — that I was getting through the morning, that
 13 there was confusion, and there were several centres, so
 14 therefore which one actually was the official one?
 15 Q. I will continue from your statement:
 16 "... as a result, it was very difficult for the
 17 [British Red Cross] to identify which rest centre to
 18 support. Therefore, efforts were made to distribute our
 19 resources across all of the rest centre locations we
 20 were aware of in the interim. During this time, our
 21 teams were suggesting to staff at the rest centres that
 22 individuals should be registered upon arrival using
 23 registration forms."
 24 Was that the position, that the British Red Cross
 25 were spread probably thinly at this stage amongst the

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1 rest centres they were aware of on the morning of
 2 14 June?
 3 A. Yes, yeah.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Do you recall how many staff you had
 5 there? I mean, presumably the numbers built up over the
 6 course of some hours, but ...
 7 A. It's very difficult for me to say, I'm afraid. I don't
 8 recall that. But, yes, people were coming out as
 9 a result of additional calls that the duty team were
 10 making, and — yeah, so it's very difficult. It did
 11 grow quite quickly over the course of that morning and
 12 that day.
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I mean, are we thinking in terms of
 14 10s, 20?
 15 A. If I was to guess, I would say — it's difficult to
 16 get — but 10s, probably no more than 20 in the early
 17 stages.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, all right. Thank you.
 19 MR KEATING: Let's move on to the Westway.
 20 We have your statement in front of us, paragraph 60
 21 {BRC00000050/14}, and we're just going to deal with,
 22 as — you refer there to a reference to the Westway,
 23 that there was a number of rest centres, and in the
 24 middle of that document, that included the Westway
 25 Sports and Fitness Centre, the Westway.

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1 In terms of your attendance at SCGs, strategic
 2 co—ordination group meetings, it's right that you
 3 attended a meeting at 8.30 through your role as chair of
 4 the voluntary sector panel; is that correct?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And you also attended, thereafter, the 2 o'clock SCG
 7 meeting as well.
 8 A. 2.30, I think, yes, I did, yeah.
 9 Q. Yes. Thank you very much.
 10 I'm going to ask to refer to your notes for that
 11 meeting, please, which is {BRC00000046}. I say notes;
 12 it's an email which you created and sent. It's your
 13 name at the top, 14.50, and it's sent to your colleagues
 14 at the Red Cross, and it says, "RE: SCG update".
 15 We're going to focus really upon knowledge of
 16 rest centres. That's the theme we're examining.
 17 If we could scroll down, please, under "LA", local
 18 authority, we can see that there is highlighting and
 19 there's red text. That's how the document was provided.
 20 That's not done by us, that's your — it's provided by
 21 you in that way.
 22 As a result of this meeting, it appears that — this
 23 is what your notes are:
 24 "New rest centre at West Way sports centre + Clement
 25 Jane[sic] centre (do we know of this one?) Have

35

1 confirmed with BECC they want us at the three below and
 2 Latimer Christian Centre. We are doing this. Clement
 3 Jane Centre is same as St Clements Church."
 4 In relation to "do we know of this one?", was that
 5 in reference to the Westway or the Clement James Centre?
 6 A. From recollection, I think it was the Clement James
 7 Centre at that point, yeah.
 8 Q. Then if we look at the last entry in that paragraph:
 9 "[Local authority] management support now solved at
 10 the centres(?)."
 11 You're the author of this. Is there any
 12 significance to the fact that that's in a question mark?
 13 A. So this was an email that I was writing whilst the call
 14 was ongoing, as a way of capturing that discussion and
 15 sharing it quite dynamically with my team and
 16 colleagues, so I think that's reference to a report that
 17 was made on the SCG call to say that management support
 18 is now solved, and the question mark is mine, to check
 19 with the team: is that true from our experience?
 20 Q. So an internal query by you to follow up and check that?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. It says what the official rest centres are:
 23 "Rugby [Portobello] trust.
 24 "Clement jane [James] centre.
 25 "West way ...

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1 "Between 100–200 at each.
 2 "Respite centres ..."
 3 Again, just help us with that terminology. It's not
 4 one within the London Resilience framework, is it?
 5 A. No, it isn't. So, again, I think that is probably
 6 a term that was potentially used on the SCG call, as in
 7 places that are providing respite, and I've summarised
 8 it like that.
 9 Q. Yes. It's not a criticism of you, it's just
 10 a clarification of the terminology.
 11 A. Yeah.
 12 Q. It says:
 13 "... have set up sporadically eg churches. Council
 14 trying to get info to those to direct people for support
 15 to one of the 3 main centres."
 16 Is it the position, as of this 2 o'clock SCG, that
 17 there still was a lack of clarity as to the
 18 rest centres, what was official, and where people should
 19 go?
 20 A. Yes. I mean, the centres were defined as those three on
 21 the SCG call, so I suppose they can be defined as
 22 official, but the challenge was communicating that, and
 23 the obvious confusion that was existing with all those
 24 people at all the different places. So it was
 25 a confusing picture.

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1 Q. We know from your statement that, at the next SCG
 2 meeting at 19.30 that evening, you received confirmation
 3 that the Westway had been established as the official
 4 rest centre, with a view that there was going to be
 5 consolidation; is that correct?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. You have set out at paragraph 61 of your statement
 8 {BRC00000050/14}, which perhaps I can summarise, that
 9 once the Westway had been established as the official
 10 rest centre, that's where the British Red Cross
 11 co-ordinated its efforts from the evening of 14 June,
 12 and you state:
 13 "This included helping with registration, helping
 14 people to find necessities (such as clothing, bedding,
 15 food and other items) and to settle down for the
 16 night ..."
 17 Is that correct?
 18 A. Yes, that's right.
 19 Q. Just exploring the helping with registration at the
 20 Westway from the evening of 14 June.
 21 We've heard evidence of wristbands being used; is
 22 that something that is standard practice by the British
 23 Red Cross at rest centres?
 24 A. I don't remember the teams having worked with wristbands
 25 before, but that doesn't say it had never happened.

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1 But, again, it's not something that we would instigate;
 2 we would do that if the local authority or the — yeah,
 3 the organisation who was running the rest centre wanted
 4 that to happen. It's not something that we would make
 5 the decision on.
 6 Q. So you indicate it wasn't something that you remember
 7 being done before; is that correct?
 8 A. Yes, I don't remember that, but it doesn't mean that it
 9 hasn't happened before. I think potentially the
 10 incident of this size meant that it was something
 11 different, but I couldn't be sure on that.
 12 Q. In the sort of hours and days which followed, were you
 13 aware of any negative feedback in relation to the
 14 utilisation of wristbands by the British Red Cross at
 15 the Westway?
 16 A. Not specifically in terms of wristbands. I know there
 17 was frustration about accessing the centre, but I don't
 18 recall anything particular about wristbands. I could be
 19 wrong with that.
 20 Q. We will touch upon access in a moment — well, let's
 21 deal with accessibility now, and your awareness of any
 22 concerns regarding accessibility.
 23 Did you become aware of any concerns regarding
 24 people accessing the Westway?
 25 A. Well, there were the general concerns about: did people

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1 know that the Westway was a place to go, so was the
 2 communication clear on that? And from our experience at
 3 the Red Cross of supporting people in incidents, we know
 4 that not everybody would access an official centre
 5 that's run by authorities, so that was something that we
 6 were conscious could be an issue.
 7 I think they were the main things, I would say.
 8 Q. One of your colleagues, Colin Brown, refers to the
 9 police cordon, which formed a perimeter around the
 10 Westway. Was that something that was raised with you as
 11 an issue, that the cordon was having an adverse impact
 12 on accessibility?
 13 A. Yes, I do remember the team raising that with me, more
 14 from the perception — how it would feel for people
 15 arriving at the centre. It would feel like a blocker,
 16 rather than something that was enabling them to access
 17 it.
 18 Q. Do you know what steps were taken to try to improve
 19 accessibility in those early days of the response to the
 20 Westway?
 21 A. It's difficult for me to think of anything specific, but
 22 I know there was a lot of work going on to try and
 23 advertise the Westway as a place to go to, and for the
 24 police presence to be perhaps a little dialled back.
 25 I remember that's something that we were advocating for

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1 as an organisation.
 2 Q. We will touch upon communication, a theme you mentioned,
 3 and advertisement, for want of a better word, of the
 4 Westway and support which was available in a short
 5 moment.
 6 In relation to the operation of the Westway, perhaps
 7 we could have a look at your statement again, please,
 8 your first statement, at page 19 {BRC000000050/19}.
 9 These are your sort of concluding remarks. It's
 10 a significant statement in terms of length. Page 19,
 11 paragraph 78(c), you say this:
 12 "There also appeared to be a lack of leadership and
 13 coordination in the efforts in the first few days.
 14 Reports from my team on the ground in the first day
 15 after the fire reflected that it was difficult to
 16 identify RBKC personnel so people did not know who was
 17 in charge or who to ask for help."
 18 Is that correct?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Was that an issue, regarding identification and lack of
 21 leadership, which existed only the first day, or did it
 22 persist for longer than that?
 23 A. As I recall, it did go on for longer than just the first
 24 day. It was an issue of physical identification. So
 25 normally we would expect local authority staff to be

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1 wearing tabards, for example, something that made them
 2 clearly identifiable.
 3 Q. Yes.
 4 A. So it made it difficult for my team to know who to go
 5 and speak to, but also then people who were attending.
 6 I can't remember exactly when that changed, but it
 7 was an issue that my team told me about for the first
 8 few days.
 9 Q. Yes, first few days.
 10 In terms of source of information, you were perhaps
 11 the top of an apex from a strategic point of view,
 12 getting reports fed back from your colleagues, but is it
 13 right that you also attended the Westway?
 14 A. I did, yes.
 15 Q. Yes. Did you attend the Westway, is it right, on the
 16 Thursday?
 17 A. I believe it was on the Thursday, yes.
 18 Q. What was your impression of the Westway on the Thursday
 19 when you attended?
 20 A. I mean, I just remember going — firstly, the
 21 surrounding area was extremely busy, lots of people
 22 moving around, lots of food stalls, things, boxes being
 23 moved around, people standing in the streets, not really
 24 knowing what to do. On the way into the Westway Centre
 25 itself was where you started to see the donations being

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1 piled up. I do remember a police presence. And then
 2 I was able to access the centre with the Red Cross ID
 3 that I have.
 4 Again, that was extremely busy. It felt a little
 5 bit — well, disorganised. I think by the second day —
 6 when I was there, I should say — it felt like things
 7 were starting to be a bit organised, in terms of there
 8 were zones for — in which the centre was being used, so
 9 donations were starting to be gathered in one particular
 10 place inside, there was obviously the place where people
 11 were able to sleep in another part, so I could see sort
 12 of a pattern emerging, but it did feel still quite
 13 disorganised, and people able to sort of move around
 14 quite freely within the whole space, as I remember.
 15 Q. Your colleague Colin Brown, was he also down there on
 16 the Thursday?
 17 A. Possibly. I can't remember, to be honest. I went there
 18 on my own.
 19 Q. It's a long time ago and I'm putting you on the spot,
 20 but Colin Brown, is he the UK director of independent
 21 living and crisis response?
 22 A. He was at that time. He was my boss at the time, yeah.
 23 Q. Yes. Well, let's have a look at his statement, which
 24 might — there's a number of British Red Cross
 25 statements, and perhaps this might help enhance the

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1 picture. {BRC00000005/17}, thank you very much. If we
 2 could turn to paragraph 64 of his statement. 64 says
 3 that he personally attended the scene on the morning of
 4 15 June, and then we can go to paragraph 75
 5 {BRC00000005/20}, so that we can see 75 in context:
 6 "I would describe the manner in which the Westway
 7 was being operated as chaotic. I saw no visible
 8 leadership from anyone at a senior level within the
 9 RBKC, and it was clear the RBKC was, even with support
 10 from voluntary organisations such as the BRC, becoming
 11 overwhelmed by the task of running the Westway, and the
 12 outpouring of voluntary public support in the form of
 13 donations ..."
 14 Pausing there, that's his opinion. You were there
 15 on the Thursday, and you had information which was fed
 16 back; would you agree with that opinion?
 17 A. I would. Yeah.
 18 Q. Whilst we have his statement open, he gives a specific
 19 example at paragraph 78. By this stage he had returned
 20 home. At paragraph 77 he says:
 21 "... I was at home but acting as the Crisis Response
 22 Team Duty Manager ..."
 23 So he was on call, because of the exceptional time.
 24 He wouldn't normally do that, but he was stepping in.
 25 He says this:

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1 "Around 10pm, I received a phone call from the BRC
2 Duty Officer who was onsite at the Westway ... leading
3 the BRC Bronze effort on the ground. The Duty Officer
4 informed me that the BRC volunteers had been unable to
5 identify anyone from the RBKC who was seemingly in
6 charge of running the rest centre, although there were
7 a number of more junior RBKC members of staff on site."

8 That's what he raised as something which had been
9 escalated to him on the Thursday evening.

10 Was that something that you had knowledge of even
11 then, on the second day in the evening, that there was
12 a lack of senior RBKC staff at the Westway?

13 A. Yes. In the role that I had, I would have had those
14 things escalated to me as well.

15 Q. Perhaps, just whilst we have his statement open, can we
16 go to paragraph 101 {BRC00000005/26}, please, and it's
17 the last matter I'm going to mention in relation to
18 registration. It's something which we've touched upon
19 a couple of times already, but just out of completeness,
20 because we've asked you a number of questions regarding
21 registration, and you were asked the question: well,
22 what happens to the forms when they're completed? You
23 say they're given to — the process, they would be given
24 to the local authority.

25 This is what Colin Brown, your boss at the time,

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1 says:

2 "However, I got the sense that the RBKC was not
3 discharging this responsibility [in relation to
4 registration]. I came to this view because a BRC
5 volunteer found a box containing a number of the second
6 and third copies of the registration forms that had been
7 filled in by the BRC and provided to the RBKC left lying
8 around the Westway. It appeared that no efforts had
9 been made by the RBKC to collate the data in any
10 sensible manner. I asked the Bronze onsite Duty Officer
11 to report the presence of this box to the RBKC, to
12 express concern and dissatisfaction as to this state of
13 affairs, and to ask for clarification as to how the data
14 was being appropriately collated."

15 You're the first live British Red Cross witness
16 we've asked specifically about this. Were you aware of
17 this issue?

18 A. It would have been escalated to me at the time. I can't
19 recall it specifically though.

20 Q. Can you recall now what the outcome of that escalation
21 was with RBKC?

22 A. I can't, I'm afraid, no.

23 Q. Bearing in mind the matters regarding registration, and
24 British Red Cross would be doing it on behalf of the
25 local authority, would this be a matter of concern to

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1 you on the second day, that registration forms were left
2 lying around?

3 A. Yes, absolutely.

4 Q. I'm going to move on to a new topic, please, which is
5 the provision of support at the Westway. You mention
6 that's where the British Red Cross focused its support
7 in those days.

8 If we could look at your statement at paragraph 71,
9 {BRC00000050/16}, I'm going to briefly touch upon
10 psychological support, and it says this.

11 "[British Red Cross] staff and volunteers are all
12 given basic training in providing emotional help."

13 You refer to your colleagues, who:

14 "... are responsible for arranging and coordinating
15 more specialist psycho-social support services in an
16 emergency situation. In the days immediately after the
17 fire we made sure that [British Red Cross] personnel
18 trained in providing more specialist psychosocial
19 support (known as the psychosocial team, or PST) were at
20 the Westway. We offered to support other services in
21 this regard and teamed up with NHS outreach teams to
22 increase their capacity to reach people affected who
23 were in hotels and other locations."

24 So that provides an umbrella of the support which
25 was provided.

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1 Is it right that that wider support, that outreach
2 support, took some days to implement?

3 A. Yes, it will have done. I can't remember exactly when
4 it came into play, but it will have taken some time,
5 yes.

6 Q. Yes. Perhaps we can see that from other records and we
7 don't need to focus too much upon it, but it wasn't the
8 case that people from the British Red Cross were going
9 to hotels in the first few days of the response; is that
10 correct?

11 A. Not immediately, because we didn't have the information
12 as to where people were staying.

13 Q. Yes.

14 In relation to information about where people were
15 staying, was that an issue that was causing you concern,
16 that there wasn't that available to you?

17 A. Yes. So it wouldn't always be the case that we at the
18 Red Cross would be given that information, but what it
19 indicated was that there is a bigger issue, that there
20 was not a complete list of people affected and where
21 they were, because that then impacted on the support
22 that we or anybody else could give to them.

23 Q. If we move down to the next page, paragraph 74
24 {BRC00000050/17}, where you address catering for the
25 needs of specific groups of people, and you provide this

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1 opinion:
 2 "In the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Fire,
 3 I believe that there was insufficient regard given by
 4 the authority to catering to particular needs.
 5 Survivors turned to local churches and mosques for
 6 support. [British Red Cross] teams reported that in the
 7 Westway Rest Centre, there was very little private space
 8 including for example, for use by women or people of
 9 faith, or areas where people could break their Ramadan
 10 fast together. We pushed for items such as screens to
 11 provide some privacy to the survivors who were staying
 12 at Westway Rest Centre. We also arranged for furniture
 13 and furnishings to try and improve the surroundings."

14 Was that the position, that there were concerns
 15 identified by British Red Cross and, as a result, you
 16 pushed for changes to address those?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Are you able to assist now how long it took for those
 19 changes to be implemented?

20 A. I can't remember exactly. People were staying at the
 21 rest centre for a few nights, and I know that the
 22 conditions on the first night weren't as we would have
 23 wanted them to be.

24 Q. Is that normal? It's the first night, it's an emergency
 25 situation, it takes some time to bring matters together.

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1 When would you expect a rest centre which is
 2 accommodating people overnight to be at a suitable
 3 standard, an acceptable standard?
 4 A. It's really important to remember the scale of this.
 5 There were literally hundreds of beds that we'd helped
 6 to lay out within that space to make it into
 7 a rest centre. It's very difficult to make a space that
 8 size comfortable. The centre that had been identified
 9 was big enough, in a way, but it didn't have the
 10 facilities to make it comfortable and to create
 11 different private spaces. So whilst that potentially
 12 could have been thought about in advance, if the numbers
 13 had been smaller for that rest centre, the space could
 14 have been used differently.

15 So it's really difficult, I think. Ideally, we
 16 would advocate for everybody's needs to be considered as
 17 early as possible, but acknowledging that, with the
 18 scale of something like this, it could be difficult to
 19 get it as — within the first night. But that would be
 20 our hope, that people would have some privacy at least.

21 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Can I just ask you, you say that you
 22 pushed for items such as screens, and later that you
 23 arranged for furnishings. Who were you in contact with
 24 to do that?

25 A. So that will have been the team on the ground via the

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1 BECC, the borough command centre, who would then be
 2 liaising with the local authority to try and access
 3 things. But then also our arrangements. We have
 4 corporate partners at the Red Cross who were offering
 5 things like furniture and furnishings, and we were able
 6 to tap into that at a slightly later date.
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: We have seen some photographs of the
 8 rest centre at the Westway some days after the fire, and
 9 we saw that there were armchairs and sofas and so on.
 10 Is that the furnishing you provided or did that come
 11 from somewhere else?

12 A. It could have been. There was a mixture of providers
 13 a few days in, but we certainly had some partners who
 14 were providing things, yes.

15 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, thank you.

16 MR KEATING: RBKC were responsible as a local authority up
 17 until at least Friday, 16 June at 2 o'clock. By that
 18 stage, London Local Authority Gold were responsible for
 19 the response, and then we heard about the Grenfell fire
 20 response team, which Mr Adamson assisted us with, which
 21 was set up over that weekend.

22 Using that as a marker, Friday, two or three days
 23 after the incident, are you able to say, in your view,
 24 when the Westway or if the Westway improved?

25 A. I'd say it was a gradual improvement over several days,

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1 actually. It's difficult to pinpoint a particular day.

2 Q. Let's discuss the purpose of the Westway.

3 Were there issues regarding the understanding and
 4 promotion of what type of centre the Westway was?

5 A. Yes, and who it was for, so yes.

6 Q. Let's look at an email to assist you in relation to
 7 that, which you sent, {RBK00038595}. Thank you. I'm
 8 just going to focus on the 18.19, or 6.19.

9 So just in the middle we see the British Red Cross
 10 and an email that you sent on the Friday, 6.19 pm, to
 11 Tony Andrews and Sue Redmond, and the subject is
 12 "ISSUE — comms re immediate Temporary Community
 13 Assistance Centre for this weekend". It says this:

14 "Hi Tony, Sue

15 "Regarding promotion of the centre and your point
 16 below re Centre Manager to liaise with police running
 17 the Friends and Family Centre at Westway to ensure the
 18 above staff can support users of the FFRC as well as
 19 users of the CAC.

20 "We are picking up some issues in terms of how
 21 Westway is being promoted and what is happening on the
 22 ground."

23 And it gives a link there, and it says that the
 24 Westway Sports Centre is now the family and friends
 25 reception and is being staffed by police.

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1 You have copied into the text, it appears, here the
 2 second part:
 3 "There is a special centre at Salvation Army ... The
 4 Salvation Army is open until 11pm."
 5 So you were raising an issue regarding how the
 6 Westway was being promoted, and you're giving two
 7 examples, which are in the body of this email.
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And it states — your text, then:
 10 "Friends and family are not always being allowed in
 11 as people at Westway believe it to be a rest centre for
 12 displaced residents (CAC [community assistance centre])
 13 and that F&F [friends and family] are to go to the
 14 Salvation Army.
 15 "We have had some anger directed toward volunteers
 16 on the reception/registration desk.
 17 "Can we please make sure Comms is joined up and that
 18 information flows clearly to make sure anyone in
 19 distress who comes to the centre is able to access the
 20 support they need."
 21 So there's a lot in there, but you've raised the
 22 concern regarding how the Westway has been presented at
 23 that stage, and how it seems to be presented not as
 24 a community assistance centre but, on this information,
 25 it's been presented as a family and friends reception

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1 centre alone, and then it refers to a special centre at
 2 the Salvation Army, we've just seen.
 3 Does it follow that as of Friday, Friday afternoon,
 4 16 June, people who were seeking information were being
 5 wrongly turned away or refused entry to the Westway?
 6 Was that the concern you were raising?
 7 A. Yes, it does — that is the concern I'm raising there,
 8 where I say — describe that people weren't always being
 9 allowed in, and I think this was an example of the time
 10 where perhaps the Westway, the official function was
 11 starting to transition, but the communication around
 12 that wasn't joined up. The text in black there where
 13 I refer to somebody else's email, "Centre Manager to
 14 liaison with police running the Friends and Family
 15 Centre", that wasn't the way it was being described to
 16 us on the ground, so I think that just indicates that
 17 there was confusion about the definition and, therefore,
 18 who could access it.
 19 Q. Looking at those two texts which you — two different
 20 references, if an individual was looking for
 21 information, they were being directed to two different
 22 locations, one at the Westway or one at the
 23 Salvation Army; is that a fair summary?
 24 A. That was where people were being directed through the
 25 official communication, yes.

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1 Q. Yes.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. To assist you, we've got a number of sources of
 4 information, one from the Salvation Army, Adrian Clee,
 5 in his statement, {CFV00000059/4}, and his evidence is
 6 that the Salvation Army, which ran the friends and
 7 family reception centre, that closed at latest part—way
 8 through Thursday, 15 June.
 9 We have evidence from the Metropolitan Police that
 10 says that the friends and family reception centre was
 11 moved to the Westway by the evening of 14 June.
 12 On any basis, on the evening of 16 June, the
 13 Salvation Army was not where the friends and family
 14 reception centre was.
 15 A. Okay.
 16 Q. So drawing that together, there was still information
 17 where people were being sent to the wrong place; is that
 18 correct?
 19 A. Yes, that's how it seems, yes.
 20 Q. And that's the reason why you raised this issue
 21 regarding communications and clarity of communications.
 22 A. Exactly, yeah.
 23 Q. I'm going to move on to multi—agency
 24 information—sharing, which, in essence, is going to deal
 25 with SCG meetings, very briefly, and humanitarian

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1 assistance steering group meetings as well.
 2 A. Okay.
 3 Q. We've touched upon already that, because of your role as
 4 the voluntary sector chair, you attended those meetings,
 5 those SCG meetings. Is it fair to say that they're
 6 an important tool in information—sharing between
 7 different agencies during an emergency response?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. It follows from that, very important in building
 10 a sort of global situational awareness.
 11 A. Yes, that's right.
 12 Q. From your experience, is it right that you have been on
 13 multiple SCGs in the past?
 14 A. Yes, that's true, I have.
 15 Q. We've had sight of the minutes, and I'm not going to
 16 invite you to look at the minutes now, some years later,
 17 but did you have any general observations as to how the
 18 SCGs operated on 14 and 15 June in fulfilling that
 19 objective of sharing information and building
 20 situational awareness?
 21 A. I don't recall anything that was particularly different,
 22 so I remember them being organised, well chaired,
 23 an opportunity for all of the partners to feed in their
 24 information. So as far as I can remember, they
 25 fulfilled the purpose of building that situational

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1 update and they followed the same structure and agenda
 2 as I've been used to before.
 3 Q. Was it a theme, from your recollection of those
 4 meetings, the desire for greater clarity as to the
 5 numbers and identity of people who have been affected by
 6 the fire?
 7 A. Yes, I think that was a theme through the first day of
 8 those meetings, certainly, yes.
 9 Q. I'm just going to move on to the humanitarian assistance
 10 steering group.
 11 Again, that was another specific but important forum
 12 for information-sharing; isn't that correct?
 13 A. Yes, that's right.
 14 Q. You outline in your statement at paragraph 62
 15 {BRC00000050/14} — we don't need to turn to it — that
 16 the main purpose of that steering group is to oversee
 17 and co-ordinate the support provided in response to the
 18 needs of people affected by the Grenfell fire and lead
 19 towards recovery.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Is that a fair summary?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. We know that the first meeting was held on Thursday,
 24 15 June at 2 o'clock. In relation to that, from your
 25 experience of being on these meetings in the past, would

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1 you have expected a steering group meeting to have taken
 2 place before 2 o'clock on the second day of an incident?
 3 A. There isn't a particular timing specified for HASG, as
 4 far as I'm aware. I think for something this scale,
 5 I wasn't too surprised that it was happening the next
 6 day, because the situational awareness was still
 7 building.
 8 Q. Yes. You say correctly that there isn't any particular
 9 time specified. Is it right that you're referring to
 10 the London Resilience documents, the humanitarian
 11 assistance framework?
 12 A. That's right, yes.
 13 Q. And to assist everybody, at paragraph 4.17
 14 {RBK00019712/12} it says that HASGs are:
 15 "... expected to meet frequently in the immediate
 16 aftermath of an incident, but less often in later
 17 stages. In the initial stages meetings should be at
 18 least daily."
 19 But it doesn't say in the guidance that it should be
 20 held within the first 12 hours or 18 hours or 24 hours.
 21 It's not prescriptive in that sense. Is that correct?
 22 A. I believe so, yes.
 23 Q. In relation to that first meeting on 15 June at
 24 2 o'clock, it's right that you attended that meeting?
 25 A. I did, yeah.

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1 Q. Yes. Let's turn to paragraph 63 of your statement
 2 {BRC00000050/14}, please, in relation to that. We see
 3 at the bottom of the page the meeting took place. It
 4 was:
 5 "... attended by several members of RBKC, plus
 6 representatives from the NHS and Cruse Bereavement Care
 7 and Victim Support, among others. Sue Redmond [who we
 8 have heard evidence from] ... chaired the meeting. The
 9 main purpose ... was to identify immediate and urgent
 10 needs and establish a structure for meeting those
 11 needs."
 12 This is the part I'm inviting you to focus upon:
 13 "My impression of this meeting was that it could
 14 perhaps have been better organised, though I understood
 15 the extremely stressful and distressing situation
 16 everyone was involved in, especially the council staff."
 17 We can move down to paragraph 65 {BRC00000050/15}:
 18 "There was discussion about the provision of support
 19 and the roles different organisations at the site were
 20 performing, in an attempt to identify gaps in the
 21 services being provided. Topics raised included numbers
 22 of households affected, accommodation and welfare needs.
 23 At this stage there was still no confirmation of numbers
 24 affected nor confirmation of where all the survivors
 25 were located, whether in temporary accommodation or

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1 rest centres."
 2 That last part, was that a matter of concern, that
 3 there was still no confirmation of numbers affected or
 4 where survivors were located?
 5 A. Yes, because it meant that, without knowing how many and
 6 where people were, it was difficult to know what support
 7 was needed and where it was needed.
 8 Q. Was anything done in that meeting or suggested by you to
 9 address that lack of detail as to the numbers of people
 10 affected and their location?
 11 A. I don't recall. I don't think I would have said
 12 anything particularly about that, because it's just
 13 an issue that everybody was aware of, and we would be
 14 responding — once that detail was available, we would
 15 be able to do something with it. But I don't think it's
 16 something that I would particularly have been able to
 17 contribute to.
 18 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, we don't have a huge amount left,
 19 but we will go past the mid-morning break. It may be
 20 a natural break now.
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, all right. Well, we can stop
 22 at that point. Thank you.
 23 Ms Spragg, we have a break during the morning, as
 24 I think you were told, and this looks as though it's
 25 a good time to take it, so we'll stop there. We'll

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1 resume, please, at 11.35, and I have to ask you, while
 2 you're out of the room, not to talk to anyone about your
 3 evidence or anything relating to it. All right?
 4 THE WITNESS: I understand, yes. Thank you.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
 6 with the usher, please.
 7 (Pause)
 8 Thank you. 11.35, then, please.
 9 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 10 (11.20 am)
 11 (A short break)
 12 (11.35 am)
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Ms Spragg, ready to carry
 14 on?
 15 THE WITNESS: Thank you, yes.
 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
 17 Yes, Mr Keating.
 18 MR KEATING: Welcome back, Ms Spragg. Just a last few
 19 questions.
 20 We were dealing with the humanitarian assistance
 21 steering group, or the HASG — how would you pronounce
 22 that acronym?
 23 A. H—A—S—G. "HASG" is the alternative we use sometimes.
 24 Q. Okay. So I'm going to ask you about the HASG, then.
 25 You have already adduced by your statement your

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1 impressions of that initial meeting on 15 June. I want
 2 to turn to a document, which — if we just have in front
 3 of us now, which you provided. If we could look at the
 4 second page {BRC00000085/2}, please, we see there that
 5 it's a humanitarian assistance steering group impact
 6 assessment.
 7 We know from the records and your evidence in your
 8 two statements that this was prepared in advance of the
 9 meeting on 15 June, and then it was updated as a result
 10 of the meeting. So quite a current document, prepared
 11 on the 14th and then updated on 15 June.
 12 In relation to what a humanitarian assistance impact
 13 assessment is, perhaps the first paragraph assists:
 14 "Emergencies affect communities in a wide variety of
 15 ways. To understand what humanitarian assistance is
 16 required, one first needs to map out who is affected and
 17 how the emergency has affected them."
 18 Is that correct?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. We see in the third paragraph:
 21 "To understand how emergencies affect individuals
 22 and their communities — and thus prioritise and scope
 23 the humanitarian assistance effort — it is important to
 24 understand how emergencies impact upon the environment
 25 they live and work in."

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1 With that sort of background for an impact
 2 assessment, we can turn to the next page, page 3
 3 {BRC00000085/3}, please. We can see it's 21.27,
 4 14 June, then updated post this meeting on 16 June.
 5 What I'm going to ask you to do is — we can see at
 6 the bottom of that page, "Recommendations". So these
 7 are recommendations which you prepared in this document
 8 and fed into the steering group.
 9 If we could turn to the next page, page 4
 10 {BRC00000085/4}. So this document sets out the views of
 11 the British Red Cross as to what needed to be done to
 12 meet the needs of those affected.
 13 Number 1:
 14 "Engage community to identify what support they feel
 15 they need and would be helpful."
 16 Is that correct?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. "Establishment of HAC (or similar)."
 19 A humanitarian assistance centre. What was the
 20 benefit of having an HAC? What would that serve?
 21 A. The function of a centre like that is to bring together
 22 a wider variety of support that's available for people
 23 who attend the centre. So it's about a broader
 24 engagement and meeting needs in a wider way.
 25 Q. "Support line providing emotional support, practical

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1 support and signposting."
 2 Is signposting people to support available; is that
 3 correct?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. We will return to that in a moment.
 6 "Support to injured and bereaved families and
 7 friends."
 8 I'm just going to deal with the last matter:
 9 "Management of information and signposting to those
 10 displaced, particularly over next 24/48 hrs."
 11 In relation to that matter, the fact that it was
 12 emphasised, "particularly over the next 24/48 hrs", was
 13 there an identified need to manage information and
 14 signpost that support to those displaced in the short
 15 term?
 16 A. I think at the time that this was put together was the
 17 time when it was quite confused about what support was
 18 available where and where people should go, and also
 19 where people had been moved to, or where people were
 20 resting and staying. So I think that was reflecting of
 21 that time, and that's why we were emphasising
 22 particularly over 24/48 hours, as in it needs to be done
 23 as quickly as possible.
 24 Q. So those were the key matters in your mind and the
 25 British Red Cross's mind that needed to be addressed at

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1 that early stage as of the evening of 14 June?

2 A. Yes, but I think this one was the version that was

3 updated on the 16th as well.

4 Q. Okay, that's a fair point.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 I'd like you to turn to another email, please, which

8 is {RBK00022720}. If you look at the middle of page 1,

9 please, we see an email from Sue Redmond, which we've

10 seen once before, and you are copied in. If we could

11 scroll down, thank you very much. Sue Redmond, 20 June,

12 22.34, you're copied in, and it's Sue Redmond to

13 Carolyn Downs, and it says this:

14 "Carolyn the community engagement has been missing

15 from everything and we have been saying that from the

16 start. And yes everything in the support strand has got

17 to be about what the community want and recognising what

18 the community are already doing."

19 Then overleaf at the next page, please, page 2

20 {RBK00022720/2}, it says this:

21 "Not a criticism just a plea. I have cc in

22 Emma from red x as we have had this conversation a lot."

23 This is 20 June, so almost a week after the

24 incident. We know by this stage that the Grenfell fire

25 response team, London Gold, had now taken over the

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1 response, and Sue Redmond was still involved, and her

2 comment there that "community engagement has been

3 missing from everything and we have been saying that

4 from the start". Had you had conversations with her, as

5 this email suggests you did?

6 A. I do remember talking with Sue, not specifically, but

7 I do, particularly at the response team in Victoria,

8 yeah.

9 Q. Were there concerns expressed in your discussions

10 regarding the lack of community engagement?

11 A. Yes. Yes.

12 Q. Can you recall now what that issue was? We're talking

13 in very global terms. Can you give any more details as

14 to what the sort of — what was lacking?

15 A. I think it was — it's very difficult to recall

16 specifics from that time, but in my role as part of the

17 humanitarian assistance group, I was, on behalf of the

18 Red Cross and voluntary sector, I guess, trying to put

19 forward the point that to provide the right sort of

20 support means you need to understand better the people

21 who need the support, and hopefully ideally have that

22 shaped by the people and by the community, because that

23 makes the support as appropriate as possible and right

24 for them as individuals and as a community, and by that

25 time, as I remember, and looking at these emails, the

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1 structures weren't there to do that properly.

2 Q. What sort of structures would you need for that to take

3 place?

4 A. As an example — from my perspective at the Red Cross,

5 and one thing we've learnt from this, is to put roles in

6 place that specifically focus on community engagement,

7 for example, but that would need to be part of a bigger

8 structure, a bigger infrastructure, with representatives

9 from the local authority and others potentially getting

10 involved, because it's all about building a shared

11 picture. So I think really it's about roles that focus

12 specifically on community engagement and having that as

13 a channel to feed in to the humanitarian assistance

14 group.

15 Q. And those roles and that structure, would that be

16 something which should be pre-existing, rather than

17 being set up post-incident?

18 A. Ideally, I suppose, in my experience, and what I would

19 hope would be that, yes, there would be already existing

20 connections with communities and understanding of

21 communities and their likely needs in an emergency

22 situation, where they may go, what sort of places might

23 open their doors, it's all part of that. So, yes,

24 ideally at least some of that information would be in

25 place before.

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1 Q. Yes.

2 The final topic is public communication, and perhaps

3 we could open up your statement, please, at

4 paragraph 78(a). That's {BRC00000050/18}. We're going

5 to look at some of your closing remarks in your first

6 statement in a moment. Thank you.

7 You say this:

8 "Clear, accessible information should have been

9 provided to the survivors earlier, including on where to

10 go for help."

11 That's something you've told us this morning.

12 "There was a delay in providing information and this

13 heightened the difficulties for the survivors in their

14 ability to obtain the emotional and practical support

15 they needed."

16 Is that correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What we're going to do is we're just going to explore

19 the other changes in terms of the avenues as to

20 communication. One is the support line and then we'll

21 touch upon leaflets and newsletters very briefly.

22 To assist your recollection, I'm going to touch upon

23 some of the documentation you've provided and by British

24 Red Cross.

25 So the last of the two items is the telephone

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1 support line, and we can take this relatively quickly.
 2 Touched upon in your statement and in documents
 3 we've seen already before the panel, is it correct that
 4 one of the areas the British Red Cross was involved in
 5 providing information to those affected was through
 6 a support line?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And, again, is it right from an early stage on 14 June,
 9 you suggested opening the British Red Cross support
 10 telephone support line?
 11 A. I did, yes.
 12 Q. And that was a suggestion you made at an SCG level, at
 13 a strategic co-ordination group level.
 14 A. That's right, yes.
 15 Q. We know that a British Red Cross support line had
 16 already been opened in relation to the Manchester Arena
 17 incident, which had taken place on 22 May, a few weeks
 18 before this incident in North Kensington; is that
 19 correct?
 20 A. Yes, that's right.
 21 Q. Again, it's right — and we've seen documentation to
 22 support this — that you raised at the humanitarian
 23 assistance steering group meeting on 15 June again using
 24 the telephone support line?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And after that meeting, is it right that you received
 2 confirmation that the British Red Cross should use the
 3 helpline to assist Grenfell survivors?
 4 A. It is right, but I'm not — it wasn't immediately
 5 following that meeting. I think following that meeting
 6 is potentially a few days later than that.
 7 Q. Well, from records, it appears that it was operational
 8 from Friday, 16 June. Does that sound about right?
 9 A. Yes, it could be, if that's what the records show, yes.
 10 Q. Well, let's have a look at it, to assist you. It's
 11 {BRC0000087/25}, and this is a BRC operational update.
 12 If we could go to update 9, which is at the bottom
 13 page 25. Again, documents you have helpfully provided
 14 the Inquiry, and these update overviews, is it right
 15 that this is a sort of process that British Red Cross
 16 circulate to key members an operational update overview,
 17 sometimes on a daily basis, if not more than that?
 18 A. Yes, so this is something that the central crisis
 19 response team pull together based on all the different
 20 information that's coming together. So, yes, that's
 21 right.
 22 Q. It says there, under the date, operational update,
 23 17 June, which is the Saturday:
 24 "Please find updated information in red."
 25 If we go to the bottom of the page, we see under

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1 "Support Line", right at the bottom, in red:
 2 "> 13 calls relating to Grenfell yesterday, 4
 3 further calls today.
 4 "> BRC will be the only agency operating a support
 5 line for Grenfell Tower fire."
 6 Piecing it together, if there were calls yesterday
 7 to the support line, that means it was operational on
 8 Friday, 16 June. Does that sound about right?
 9 A. It must have been. I mean, I honestly can't remember
 10 exactly when the agreement was made for it to be the
 11 only telephone line, but given that it was already
 12 operational, it wouldn't surprise me that people were
 13 starting to ring a Red Cross support line relating to
 14 the Grenfell fire as well as the other incidents that it
 15 was there for.
 16 Q. Was there any reluctance that you sensed or that was
 17 expressed to you about using the British Red Cross
 18 support line?
 19 A. Reluctance from who, sorry?
 20 Q. Forgive me, reluctance from the local authority in
 21 accepting that offer.
 22 A. I don't know if it was reluctance, but there was a delay
 23 in accepting the offer, yes.
 24 Q. Was there any reason why that was expressed to you that
 25 there was a delay in accepting the offer?

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1 A. I don't remember a specific reason. I know that the
 2 local authority had other telephone lines that were
 3 available, but I don't know whether that was the reason
 4 they didn't accept our offer initially.
 5 Q. We've seen reference to a housing line being used
 6 initially as a conduit for support. Is that what you're
 7 referring to?
 8 A. Yes, and I remember — I do remember my team being asked
 9 to sort of signpost people on to that line, but then
 10 I believe it was quite quickly overwhelmed.
 11 Q. Okay. So you were aware at an early stage that the RBKC
 12 housing line was not coping with the volume of calls?
 13 A. That's my memory, yes.
 14 Q. Yes, okay.
 15 Let's touch upon another email, {RBK00021073}, which
 16 deals with the subject of the operation of the support
 17 line. It's an email from Tony Andrews on 17 June at
 18 17.28. It's addressed to you, amongst other people,
 19 Ms Spragg.
 20 The third line of the email, under "Key Points and
 21 Actions":
 22 "Tony to reinforce message from front line staff
 23 that the Help Line Number needs to be published
 24 immediately."
 25 So this was on 17 June in the late afternoon/early

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1 evening.
 2 Were you aware of any issues in relation to the
 3 publicising of the British Red Cross helpline number?
 4 A. Yes, and I think that email reflects it, yes.
 5 Q. So there was a support line, it was set up. You say
 6 there was a delay in setting it up, and then there
 7 appears to be a delay in publicising the fact that there
 8 was a support line.
 9 A. Yes, which I think reflects this confusion around: is it
 10 going to be the Red Cross, and if so, what's the number
 11 and how do we promote that on behalf of the response
 12 team and the local authority? Yes.
 13 Q. Were any provisions made on the British Red Cross
 14 support line for individuals who were non-English
 15 speakers?
 16 A. It's always something that we try to address. We, as
 17 the Red Cross, use facilities like LanguageLine,
 18 for example, and we will use those as part of our usual
 19 capability. It's not always something that is able to
 20 put in place really quickly, depending on languages and
 21 range of languages that are needed, but we always do try
 22 to do that.
 23 Q. So a feature that you're alive to, but there can be
 24 difficulties in putting in place that capacity?
 25 A. Yes, I think that's fair, yes.

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1 Q. Let's have a look at some records again to assist you.
 2 If we turn back to the operational update document,
 3 {BRC00000087/36}. We've already seen one of these
 4 documents. This is 21 June 2017.
 5 If we go down to "Support Line" and we turn over to
 6 the next page {BRC00000087/37}, please. Thank you. So
 7 we've identified the date, and we see the paragraph
 8 there, "Support Line", and it says that the amount of
 9 calls it received:
 10 "Support line operating from Norwich."
 11 That's in red text, so that's new, and then the
 12 bottom section:
 13 "Currently securing a process for providing
 14 interpreter services on the support line. The number
 15 will then be advertised in multiple languages."
 16 So the position would be on 21 June, it had been set
 17 up, it appears, on 16 June, but there was still no
 18 facility at that stage to provide support for
 19 non-English speakers; is that correct?
 20 A. It does look that way, yes.
 21 Q. You mention it's something that you're aware of. This
 22 indicates that there was an identification of that need
 23 and there was an effort to secure that process.
 24 Let's look to the last document. If we go, please,
 25 to page 38 of this document {BRC00000087/38}, thank you,

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1 this is 24 June, three days later, and if we turn to
 2 page 39 of that document {BRC00000087/39}, we see
 3 "Support Line" right down at the bottom. So three days
 4 later, 24 June, we see the entry I just read out
 5 a moment ago, "Currently securing a process", and then
 6 in red text, indicating it's new:
 7 "This has been arranged and leaflets are being
 8 translated in to the key languages identified."
 9 So drawing that together, support line set up on
 10 16 June, it appears; delay in setting up, delay in
 11 advertising; then we see that 21 June, still no ability
 12 to provide language translation for non-English
 13 speakers; and then 24 June is the first time there is
 14 that availability of the support line to facilitate
 15 those who don't speak English.
 16 A. From the date of that report, it does suggest that's the
 17 first time. I'm not sure if there was one in
 18 an intervening period, but that's the update on that
 19 period.
 20 I think as well the other thing to say is it was
 21 quite difficult to know all the languages that were
 22 needed, because that needs assessment wasn't something
 23 that was available, so we needed to make sure that the
 24 right languages were provided, but there were points at
 25 which we didn't know what they were.

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1 Q. Okay. There may be reasons why, but from
 2 a public-facing perspective, the difficulty was, in
 3 an ethnically diverse area, if a person didn't speak
 4 English, they wouldn't be able to utilise themselves
 5 individually the support line for a number of days; is
 6 that correct?
 7 A. Yes, and it's something that we were very well aware of
 8 as the Red Cross. We were trying to address it through
 9 the support line and also having things translated into
 10 different languages at the scene and at the various
 11 rest centres as well. So, yes, I think that's fair to
 12 say. It was a challenge, yeah.
 13 Q. In relation to the operation of the support line in
 14 English, were there issues that you were aware of in
 15 those early days as to its operation?
 16 A. There was — there were challenges around the
 17 information that was available for us to brief the
 18 support line with, yes, I think I've seen some evidence
 19 about as well.
 20 Q. You dropped your voice.
 21 A. Sorry, I think I've seen some evidence about that as
 22 well, about some specific instances, yeah.
 23 Q. Perhaps I could deal with it shortly. There were emails
 24 which were sent to you on 20 June indicating that they
 25 were testing the line, effectively, and the experience,

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1 and it's described that the person they spoke to was
2 warm and friendly, positive, but the negative was that
3 they were vague in their response, and the only thing
4 was that that person who called up was referred to the
5 Westway, which touches upon your concern that there was
6 that sort of lack of information to forward on.

7 Is it right that on 21 June, BRC staff were then
8 provided with a guidance pack to ensure that they had
9 further details to deal with queries? Is that correct?

10 A. Yes, I think that's right. We were provided with
11 basically a briefing document that was the place that
12 pulled together all that information that was available.

13 Q. Yes, and again, from other documentation, it would
14 appear that it took a few more days, at least up to
15 24 June, for those teething problems to be ironed out;
16 is that a fair summary?

17 A. Yes, I think it is. I think it's also fair to say that
18 it was still a very dynamic picture, there was still
19 lots of information to be collated and pulled together
20 in one place, so the briefing document will have been
21 updated at various points, I can remember in that time.
22 So having everything in one place that was a constant
23 picture to brief support line teams and others on was
24 quite difficult. But, yeah.

25 Q. No more support line. I'm going to turn to

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1 flyers / leaflets and newsletters.

2 You have previously mentioned, and we've seen, that
3 there were flyers or leaflets created to advertise the
4 support line, which we touched upon.

5 Were you aware prior to 16 June whether there were
6 any leaflets or flyers distributed in the community by
7 the British Red Cross or any other formal agency?

8 A. I'm not aware of anything that was formal, but I could
9 be wrong because I wasn't always there on the scene.

10 Q. The information probably suggests it wasn't, but I'm
11 just wondering if you had any independent recollection.

12 We saw at your statement, when we were looking at
13 paragraph 78(a) {BRC00000050/18}, that there was
14 an improvement in relation to communication made by the
15 Grenfell fire response team when they instructed the
16 British Red Cross to compile and produce daily
17 newsletters to provide information to survivors and to
18 make sure this information was distributed.

19 In relation to newsletters, was that something later
20 in the timeline which was created? Can you recall when
21 that was?

22 A. Not exactly, but I do remember it was a few days after
23 the fire itself, yes, and it was at the response team
24 that that happened.

25 Q. You say this at your statement, paragraph 78(b)

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1 {BRC00000050/18}:

2 " ... once the decision had been taken to provide
3 information by way of newsletters, these were initially
4 only produced in English. The BRC ensured that these
5 newsletters were translated into multiple languages to
6 try and reach as many people as possible, and at the
7 request of the BECC supported the delivery of the
8 newsletters to a number of locations including hotels
9 where survivors were known to have been relocated."

10 So, in essence, newsletters initially in English,
11 BRC then facilitated their translation, and then, in due
12 course, there was a request that they would be delivered
13 to hotels; is that correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. That's the sort of sequencing. You can't really help us
16 with the fine detail as to dates, I understand?

17 A. I'm really sorry, I wish I could, but I can't remember
18 those.

19 MR KEATING: Ms Spragg, I'm very grateful for your time
20 today and the hard copy information you provided us
21 which has allowed me to draw out those points today.

22 With the Chairman's leave, perhaps we could have
23 a short break.

24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

25 Well, Ms Spragg, Mr Keating thinks he's asked all

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1 the questions he needs to ask, but we always have
2 a short break at this stage to give him a chance to
3 check that he has not left anything out, and also to
4 allow others who are following the proceedings but not
5 from within the room to suggest questions that perhaps
6 we ought to ask you. So we'll break now.

7 Mr Keating, if I said 12.10, would that give you
8 enough time, do you think?

9 MR KEATING: That should be ample time.

10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, we'll see how we go. If you
11 need more time, you can indicate.

12 We'll break now, come back at 12.10, and then we'll
13 see if there are any more questions for you. All right?

14 THE WITNESS: Fine. Thank you.

15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. Would you go with the
16 usher, please.

17 (Pause)

18 All right, Mr Keating. Well, we'll say 12.10. If
19 it turns out that you need more time, just get the usher
20 to come and tell us.

21 MR KEATING: Thank you very much.

22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Thank you.

23 (12.03 pm)

24 (A short break)

25 (12.12 pm)

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, Ms Spragg. Well, we'll see
 2 if there are any more questions for you.
 3 Yes, Mr Keating.
 4 MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 5 There are a number of questions, and they can be
 6 distilled into three relatively brief areas perhaps you
 7 could assist us with, Ms Spragg.
 8 First of all, the Westway. So we know the Westway
 9 became the consolidated rest centre.
 10 The first question: did you think that the Westway
 11 was appropriate, in hindsight, as the location of the
 12 consolidated rest centre?
 13 A. I think in terms of location, it was quite appropriate,
 14 because it was near and it was a place that people could
 15 get to, people who were directly affected. As
 16 a building, it had its challenges, but many rest centres
 17 do.
 18 Q. In terms of challenges, what would you say were the
 19 challenges of the building?
 20 A. The fact that it was a big space, particularly for
 21 a rest centre with lots of people who were needing,
 22 therefore, to be together in that space, so lots of
 23 mattresses together. So that's where it potentially
 24 wasn't ideal.
 25 Q. You mentioned a lack of privacy being one of the

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1 features.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. The Westway transitioned to a community assistance
 4 centre, so the next question is: in hindsight, do you
 5 consider that the Westway was appropriate as a community
 6 assistance centre or a humanitarian assistance centre?
 7 A. I mean, it was big enough to house all of the different
 8 agencies that needed to come together to provide
 9 support, and big enough — well, it was of a good size
 10 to accommodate lots of people at once, so that was
 11 a positive. But, again, the space itself needed some
 12 adjustments to make it appropriate in terms of division
 13 of space and things like that, and to make it more
 14 comfortable for people.
 15 Q. So in terms of size, accessibility, good; but it's
 16 actually utilising the space within better.
 17 A. Yes. Yeah.
 18 Q. We know that the Westway, by the evening of 14 June, was
 19 the official consolidated rest centre. We've heard
 20 a number of other rest centres, spontaneous
 21 rest centres, remained open within the community, such
 22 as the Rugby Portobello Trust, the Clement James Centre,
 23 and they continued to be utilised by the community on
 24 15/16 June and thereafter.
 25 Was that something that you were aware of, that

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1 members of the community were utilising other locations?
 2 A. Yes, we were aware of that.
 3 Q. In terms of the support the British Red Cross provided,
 4 am I right in understanding your evidence that that
 5 support was solely focused, in those early days, within
 6 the Westway?
 7 A. That's where we — when the Westway was defined as the
 8 main centre, that's where we focused our efforts, but we
 9 weren't solely there, because we knew there were people
 10 in different places. So we had people operating almost
 11 in outreach roles or engagement roles, if you like, to
 12 try and build the picture of where people were. But
 13 predominantly we were focused at the Westway.
 14 Q. And in relation to that outreach work, is it right that
 15 that took place a number of days later, it wasn't
 16 immediate?
 17 A. Not immediate. I think over the weekend we had people
 18 who were going out and trying to find — going to the
 19 various hotels and places where we'd been told or we
 20 believed people were and trying to understand their
 21 needs. But immediately, it was focused on the centres.
 22 Q. Do you think, in retrospect, the British Red Cross
 23 should have perhaps provided more support on 15, 16 and
 24 17 June, as an example, at those other locations, such
 25 as the Rugby Portobello Trust, the Clement James Centre?

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1 A. I think ideally, and it's something we've definitely
 2 learned from as an organisation, that — to have people
 3 whose role it is to engage with different places in
 4 a community and talk to different community leaders and
 5 different organisations. That's something that would
 6 have been beneficial. It's not only our role to do
 7 that, and I would say that was the point at the time,
 8 that there could have been a number of organisations
 9 involved in that, and some of that information could
 10 have been known sooner, as we've discussed.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 A. But it's definitely something we've learned, that
 13 community engagement is something that — and we are
 14 investing more in that, because it was just so vital,
 15 and it was wonderful that those centres opened up and
 16 necessary that they did so, and we want to kind of be
 17 closer to that and understand it and help to connect it
 18 all together as part of a co-ordinated response.
 19 Q. The final point, and a discrete point, which flows from
 20 the support line we were discussing and the difficulties
 21 and the delay in relation to having that facility for
 22 language support to be available on the line. You
 23 described one of the difficulties was getting
 24 information as to the different languages which may be
 25 required.

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1 Just to follow up on that, can you recall what
 2 efforts, if any, you made to try to get that information
 3 as to the languages of those who were affected?
 4 A. My role in that will have been through the humanitarian
 5 assistance groups, to keep flagging the issue, that we
 6 would believe there's a number of languages and we need
 7 to know what they are to be able to provide the right
 8 support in those languages.
 9 Q. Do you have a recollection of raising that within those
 10 steering group meetings?
 11 A. I don't have a specific report — recollection of that,
 12 I'm afraid.
 13 Q. Ms Spragg, I'm very grateful for your time today.
 14 They're all the questions I have.
 15 Was there anything else that you consider was
 16 relevant to the Inquiry's investigation that you wanted
 17 to raise which I haven't covered?
 18 A. No, I think you have covered everything, thank you.
 19 MR KEATING: Thank you. Well, it just remains for me to
 20 say, on behalf of the Inquiry team, thank you so much
 21 for attending today and providing that documentation
 22 prior to today.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I should like to thank you as well
 24 on behalf of the panel, all three members of the panel,
 25 who have, I think, found it very interesting to hear

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1 what you have to tell us and very useful as well. So
 2 thank you very much for coming to give your evidence,
 3 and you're now free to go.
 4 THE WITNESS: Thank you. And thank you for everything
 5 you're doing as well. Thank you very much.
 6 (The witness withdrew)
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, now, Mr Keating, we're going
 8 to have another witness in a moment, but there's also
 9 a change of cast amongst the counsel, I think.
 10 MR KEATING: There is, yes.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: So, for the usual reasons, we'll
 12 rise for a couple of minutes while that happens.
 13 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And perhaps you would ask the usher
 15 to come and find us as soon as you're ready to continue.
 16 MR KEATING: Of course. Thank you very much.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.
 18 (12.18 pm)
 19 (A short break)
 20 (12.21 pm)
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
 22 MR MILLETT: Yes, good afternoon, Mr Chairman. Good
 23 afternoon, members of the panel.
 24 I now call Ms Katharine Hammond, please.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.

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1 MS KATHARINE HAMMOND (affirmed)
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Please sit
 3 down and make yourself comfortable.
 4 (Pause)
 5 All right?
 6 Yes, Mr Millett.
 7 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 8 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 9 Ms Hammond, good afternoon.
 10 A. Good afternoon.
 11 Q. Can I start by thanking you very much for coming to the
 12 Inquiry and assisting us with our investigations. We
 13 are extremely grateful to you.
 14 A. My pleasure.
 15 Q. A few points by way of introduction.
 16 If you could keep your voice up, so that the person
 17 who sits to your right over there can get your words
 18 down very clearly on the transcript, that would be very
 19 good. Please also avoid nodding or shaking your head;
 20 you have to say "yes" or "no" as the case may be,
 21 otherwise it doesn't come out on the transcript.
 22 I will be asking you a number of questions. If at
 23 any point you want me to repeat the question or you
 24 don't understand it, I can either repeat it or ask it in
 25 a different way.

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1 We will be taking breaks, apart from lunchtime
 2 today, mid-afternoon today and during the course of
 3 tomorrow in accordance with the usual schedule, but if
 4 you need a break at any other time, please just let us
 5 know.
 6 Now, you have made three statements to the Inquiry
 7 and I'm going to show them to you first. They will
 8 appear, as with all documents that we're going to look
 9 at together, on your screen.
 10 The first is dated 5 March 2019, and that's at
 11 {CAB00014764}, please.
 12 Is that the first page of your first witness
 13 statement?
 14 A. Yes, it is.
 15 Q. Can we please go to page 25. You will see above the
 16 date of 3 March 2019 is a signature. Is that your
 17 signature?
 18 A. Yes, it is.
 19 Q. If we go, please, to your second witness statement,
 20 {CAB00014799}. There is the first page, bearing the
 21 date 10 July 2020.
 22 Is that the first page of your second statement?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. If we go, please, to page 20, you will see a signature
 25 above the date, or next to the date. Is that your

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1 signature?
 2 A. Yes, it is.
 3 Q. Your third statement is at {CAB00014816}. That's dated
 4 30 August 2020.
 5 Is that the first page of your third statement?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. If we go, please, to page 35, you will see a signature
 8 above the date. Is that your signature?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Have you read each of these three statements recently?
 11 A. I have, yes.
 12 Q. Can you confirm for us that the contents of each of
 13 these three statements is true?
 14 A. It is.
 15 Q. Thank you.
 16 Now, you have also produced 96 exhibits marked KH/1
 17 to KH/96, which form part of your evidence; is that
 18 right?
 19 A. Correct.
 20 Q. Now, I want to start, if I may, please, with some
 21 background.
 22 At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower on
 23 14 June 2017, you were, I think, director of the civil
 24 contingencies secretariat, or CCS, within the
 25 Cabinet Office; is that right?

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1 A. That's right.
 2 Q. How long were you in that role before June 2017?
 3 A. I had joined the previous summer, August of the previous
 4 year.
 5 Q. I think you had in that role — is this right? —
 6 overall responsibility for CCS, and you reported to the
 7 Deputy National Security Adviser —
 8 A. Correct.
 9 Q. — who was, I think, Paddy McGuinness at the time.
 10 A. That's right, yes.
 11 Q. And I think his full title was Deputy National Security
 12 Adviser for Intelligence, Security and Resilience; is
 13 that right?
 14 A. That's right.
 15 Q. Before that, I don't think we have anything in your
 16 statement by way of a run-up, but could you give us
 17 a thumbnail sketch of your academic background and your
 18 qualifications?
 19 A. So my academic background is I'm a graduate in English
 20 literature and in public policy. I have spent most of
 21 my career working in and around the Home Office, in the
 22 criminal justice system, and prior to joining CCS I had
 23 worked for Sir John Chilcot on his Inquiry into the Iraq
 24 war.
 25 Q. Now, I'm going to ask you about the policies, procedures

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1 and plans that were put in place by central government
 2 to deal with a major emergency, and I'm going to ask,
 3 first, about the statutory framework.
 4 To be clear, I'm not asking you to interpret it; I'm
 5 asking for your contemporaneous understanding of how it
 6 worked.
 7 Now, is it right that you understood at the time
 8 that the framework for emergency planning and response
 9 arrangements in the United Kingdom was governed, and is
 10 still governed, by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004?
 11 A. That's right.
 12 Q. And also the subordinate legislation, the Civil
 13 Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning)
 14 Regulations 2005?
 15 A. Correct.
 16 Q. Yes.
 17 There were, I think, statutory and non-statutory
 18 sets of guidance: Emergency Preparedness being the
 19 statutory set and Emergency Response and Recovery being
 20 the non-statutory set; is that right?
 21 A. Yes, I think that's right.
 22 Q. Section 1 of the Act, did you understand, introduced the
 23 concept of an emergency, including an event or situation
 24 which threatens serious damage to human welfare in
 25 a place in the UK; yes?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Is it right that the Grenfell Tower fire satisfied that
 3 definition?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Now, part 1 of the Act, I think, also focuses on local
 6 arrangements for civil protection, and establishes
 7 a statutory framework of roles and responsibilities for
 8 what are designated as category 1 and category 2
 9 responders; is that correct?
 10 A. That's right, yes.
 11 Q. And that's how you understood it at the time?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Now, can I ask you to look, please, at section 5(1) of
 14 the Act, and we find that at {CAB00004616}. We'll have
 15 page 1 to start with, so we can be sure we're looking at
 16 the right thing. There it is, there's the Civil
 17 Contingencies Act 2004, and you can see on the first
 18 page, under section 1, "Meaning of 'emergency'", and the
 19 definition is there as I put to you.
 20 Now, if we go, please, to page 7 {CAB00004616/7},
 21 you can see a heading, "Civil protection", section 5,
 22 "General measures", and it says this under
 23 subsection (1):
 24 "A Minister of the Crown may by order require
 25 a person or body listed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to

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1 perform a function of that person or body for the
 2 purpose —of
 3 "(a) preventing the occurrence of an emergency,
 4 "(b) reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects
 5 of an emergency, or
 6 "(c) taking other action in connection with an
 7 emergency."
 8 What was your understanding of the powers available
 9 to ministers under that section in general terms at the
 10 time of the Grenfell Tower fire?
 11 A. I think that is the section of the legislation that
 12 gives ministers power, which is given effect through the
 13 regulations, to designate category 1 and 2 responders.
 14 Q. If we go to page 9 {CAB00004616/9}, you can see under
 15 "General", section 7, "Urgency":
 16 "(1) This section applies —where
 17 "(a) there is an urgent need to make provision of
 18 a kind that could be made by an order under section 5(1)
 19 or by regulations under section 6(1), but
 20 "(b) there is insufficient time for the order or
 21 regulations to be made."
 22 Did you have an understanding of or were you
 23 conscious of that power at the time of the
 24 Grenfell Tower fire?
 25 A. I was familiar with the Act, yes.

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1 Q. Right.
 2 My question is: first, was any consideration given
 3 during the days after the fire in which you were
 4 involved, so far as you know, to invoking or exercising
 5 the powers I've just shown you, both under section 5(1)
 6 and/or under section 7?
 7 A. I don't recall any consideration of invoking powers
 8 under section 7. Section 5, I think, refers to the
 9 regulations which were already in existence.
 10 Q. Right. So just to be clear, and to go back to page 7
 11 {CAB00004616/7}, please, subsection (1) of section 5, is
 12 it the case as a fact that no consideration was given by
 13 any minister during the days after the fire to making
 14 an order under that subsection?
 15 A. Not that I recollect, no.
 16 Q. Was the topic raised at all, to the best of your
 17 recollection?
 18 A. Not to the best of my recollection.
 19 Q. Right.
 20 Now, it's also right, I think, that part 2 of the
 21 Act makes provision for emergency powers, for example
 22 specific legislative measures that might be necessary to
 23 deal with the effects of the most extreme emergencies.
 24 Am I right in thinking that, as a fact, those powers
 25 were not used in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire?

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1 A. That is correct.
 2 Q. Yes.
 3 It's also right, I think — just confirm for us, if
 4 you would — that the Cabinet Office and other
 5 government departments are not responders for the
 6 purposes of the Act.
 7 A. That's correct.
 8 Q. Yes.
 9 Now, I want to ask you next about the Cabinet Office
 10 and its role in the broader policy framework.
 11 First, is it right that the Cabinet Office is
 12 responsible for formulating the policy framework within
 13 which emergency response arrangements in England and
 14 Wales are delivered?
 15 A. That's correct. The Cabinet Office is responsible for
 16 the Civil Contingencies Act and for the regulations and
 17 a number of pieces of the guidance that sit beneath it,
 18 although not all.
 19 Q. Within the Cabinet Office, is it right that the civil
 20 contingencies secretariat, the CCS, leads the work on
 21 emergency response and resilience?
 22 A. That's correct, particularly in relation to civil
 23 emergencies. There are other responsibilities in
 24 relation to different kinds of risks, particularly
 25 threat-based risks.

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1 Q. Yes.
 2 Just drawing that out a little further, could we
 3 please go to your first statement, page 9
 4 {CAB00014764/9}, paragraph 29. There you say, in the
 5 last sentence:
 6 "CCS is primarily a coordinating body in the
 7 planning, response and recovery phases and has no direct
 8 operational role in the local response to an emergency."
 9 That's right, is it? You can confirm that?
 10 A. That's correct.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 I think it's right also that the CCS itself is
 13 responsible for the guidance which accompanies the
 14 2004 Act —
 15 A. Correct.
 16 Q. — including Emergency Preparedness and Emergency
 17 Response and Recovery.
 18 A. That's correct.
 19 Q. Now, we'll come back to those guidance documents later.
 20 If you go, please, to page 6 of your statement
 21 {CAB00014764/6}, paragraph 21, you say, having confirmed
 22 the point that I've just put to you, in the second
 23 sentence:
 24 "It does not, however, have an 'inspectorate' role,
 25 that is, it is not the role of CCS to make sure that

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1 local responders fulfil their duties under the Act.”
 2 Then you continue in the same paragraph, and you say
 3 in the last sentence:
 4 “CCS has also developed Resilience Standards and is
 5 piloting an approach which allows LRFs to assess
 6 themselves against them.”
 7 Now, given that the CCS does not have
 8 an inspectorate role, can you just explain, what is
 9 meant when you say a non—statutory assurance role?
 10 A. It means a role working in support of local responders
 11 to help them understand their own level of preparedness,
 12 particularly through the resilience capabilities survey,
 13 which I think is also described in my statement, and
 14 some work subsequent to the Grenfell Tower fire to
 15 enhance that, particularly through the creation of
 16 resilience standards against which local areas can
 17 assess themselves.
 18 Q. Right. So you do refer to it in your statement. Let’s
 19 go to page 6 {CAB00014764/6}, please, paragraph — well,
 20 we’re in the paragraph itself. You say:
 21 “We draw together a picture of the level of
 22 resilience capabilities in place across England and
 23 Wales through the Resilience Capabilities Survey ...”
 24 I’ll come back to that if I need to in due course.
 25 Turning to the role of DCLG, if we go, please, to

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1 page 7 of your statement {CAB00014764/7}, paragraph 25,
 2 you say this:
 3 “As explained above at paragraph 21, responsibility
 4 for oversight of the local response capability is shared
 5 between CCS and the DCLG Resilience and Emergencies
 6 Division (DCLG RED) with CCS leading on policy
 7 development and RED on LRF engagement. DCLG RED’s role
 8 is to interact directly with LRFs and provide central
 9 government representation at LRF meetings during the
 10 planning phase and staff the Government Liaison Officer
 11 role during emergencies to provide Ministers, Government
 12 departments and the local area with situational
 13 awareness, act as a critical friend and to help identify
 14 and resolve any issues arising.”
 15 Now, assuming that’s correct, and focusing
 16 particularly on where you say “shared between CCS and
 17 the DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division (DCLG
 18 RED)”, before the fire in June 2017, did you yourself
 19 ever experience any problems or hear of any problems
 20 arising from that division of responsibilities between
 21 CCS on the one hand and DCLG RED on the other for
 22 overseeing local response capability?
 23 A. Not to my recollection. I think it’s a fairly clear
 24 division of responsibilities and teams that worked very
 25 closely together to resolve any shared issues.

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1 Q. If we go to page 10 of your statement {CAB00014764/10},
 2 then, paragraph 32, you provide an overview, I think,
 3 there of the role of the CCS, and you give us five
 4 instances there of the basic role.
 5 Then in paragraph 33 you say:
 6 “CCS’ work is focussed on three key areas: (i) risk
 7 assessment; (ii) preparation and planning (including
 8 building capability and training); and (iii) response
 9 and recovery.”
 10 Now, I’m going to examine each of those topics in
 11 detail with you, but I want first, then, please, to turn
 12 to risk assessment.
 13 Is it right that the CCS, as part of this role, is
 14 responsible for producing a national risk assessment, or
 15 NRA?
 16 A. That’s correct.
 17 Q. Yes, and that happens once every two years, does it?
 18 A. Correct.
 19 Q. It does, but did at the time of the fire?
 20 A. That’s right.
 21 Q. Now, is it right that the deputy director was
 22 Paul McCloghrie under your leadership at the time of the
 23 fire?
 24 A. That’s right.
 25 Q. Is this right: he was responsible for national risks and

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1 infrastructure, which would include producing the NRA;
 2 yes?
 3 A. That’s right.
 4 Q. If we look at his statement, please, {CAB00014798/3},
 5 and go, please, to page 3, paragraph 11, Paul McCloghrie
 6 says:
 7 “The NRA is a classified document. It identifies
 8 what the Government considers to be the most serious
 9 types of risks facing the United Kingdom over the next
 10 five years. In order for a risk to be included in the
 11 NRA it must constitute a civil emergency within the
 12 meaning of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the ‘2004
 13 Act’), be an event that could plausibly happen within
 14 the next 5 years, and exceed a minimum impact threshold.
 15 There are usually between 70 and 100 risks detailed in
 16 the NRA.”
 17 First of all, do you agree with that?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 Now, on that basis, is it right that the NRA informs
 21 capability development and provides a basis for
 22 allocating resources to particular capabilities?
 23 A. That’s right. Both the risk assessment and the set of
 24 planning assumptions generated from it, and they’re
 25 an important second part of the picture, are used to

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1 inform capability development.
 2 Q. Can I ask you, please, to keep your voice up a little
 3 bit?
 4 A. Of course, sorry.
 5 Q. That's all right.
 6 They inform capability development, and does that in
 7 turn inform the allocation of resources to particular
 8 capabilities?
 9 A. It's certainly part of the evidence base which is used
 10 to do that, yes.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 Now, is this right: the most recent edition of the
 13 national risk assessment, NRA, before the Grenfell Tower
 14 fire was the 2016 NRA; is that right?
 15 A. That's right.
 16 Q. I think that was released in the February of 2017; yes?
 17 A. Correct.
 18 Q. Yes. Now, if we turn to your second statement this
 19 time, page 2 {CAB00014799/2}, paragraph 6, you say --
 20 and it's at the foot of your screen:
 21 "The 2016 NRA provided information that Departments,
 22 Agencies, and local planners/responders could use to
 23 determine: (1) the scale, duration and severity of the
 24 consequences of emergencies, which can be used to inform
 25 generic planning and capability building; and (2) risks

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1 which may merit additional specific planning and/or
 2 capability building to supplement those generic plans
 3 and capabilities."
 4 So is it right that the NRA is the basis from which
 5 resilience forums should develop their own local risk
 6 assessments adapted to local circumstances?
 7 A. Yes, the NRA and the planning assumptions I think also
 8 play into that process.
 9 Q. Right.
 10 In relation to the preparation of the 2016 NRA, is
 11 it right, and I think you confirmed this -- let's go to
 12 paragraph 10, where we see this, on page 4
 13 {CAB00014799/4}. If we go to the top of page 4, you
 14 say:
 15 "For each risk within the 2016 NRA, there was
 16 a designated risk owner. The designated risk owner was
 17 a Government Department or Agency. Designated risk
 18 owners have a range of responsibilities for the risks
 19 that they own."
 20 Is it right that the designated risk owner was fixed
 21 as a particular government department or agency in each
 22 NRA?
 23 A. Yes, that's right. Usually the department or agency
 24 with the greatest expertise in relation to that
 25 particular risk.

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1 Q. Right. So for fire, was the risk owner the DCLG until
 2 it moved to the Home Office?
 3 A. As those responsibilities moved between departments,
 4 yes, the ownership would have moved with it. So in 2017
 5 it was with the Home Office.
 6 Q. Right. Did that involve a move of staff within one
 7 department familiar with contingency planning in respect
 8 of the risks owned by that department to another
 9 department?
 10 A. My recollection -- and apologies, this is some years
 11 ago -- is that the teams responsible for policy in
 12 relation to fire moved between the two departments, so
 13 moved from DCLG to the Home Office.
 14 Q. I see. And you say responsible for policy; did that
 15 include policy and planning for civil contingencies as
 16 part of the NRA exercise?
 17 A. It would include ownership of that risk in the NRA, yes.
 18 Q. Thank you.
 19 Let's then go back to Paul McCloghrie's first
 20 statement, {CAB00014798/4}, paragraph 13. He says here:
 21 "The relevant Department for each risk is
 22 responsible for collecting evidence to inform the risk
 23 assessment process. That may have been done internally
 24 or by consulting external experts either in other
 25 Departments or in academia/industry."

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1 Then he goes on:
 2 "The relevant Department is then required to use
 3 that evidence to identify for each risk type: the
 4 'reasonable worst case scenario' ('RWC'); the likelihood
 5 of the RWC occurring; and the potential impact if it
 6 does."
 7 Is that right? Do you agree with that?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Now, the RWC is the reasonable worst--case scenario.
 10 Does that mean, just expanding it, the worst outcome in
 11 terms of disruption, casualties and other relevant
 12 factors that can reasonably be expected to occur if the
 13 risk transpires?
 14 A. I think the way we usually describe it is a plausible
 15 but challenging manifestation of the risk. So not the
 16 absolute worst version, but something which would be
 17 extremely difficult, but is also reasonably likely
 18 within the next five years.
 19 Q. What is the yardstick or objective standard for
 20 "reasonably"?
 21 A. In relation to reasonable worst--case scenario?
 22 Q. Yes. Yes.
 23 A. So there is a plausibility yardstick which is used in
 24 the risk assessment. There's an awful lot of
 25 professional judgement and expertise which is used in

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1 creating these scenarios and then making a judgement
 2 about which one is the reasonable worst case.
 3 Q. Does worst case encompass the nature of the risk, but
 4 does it also encompass scale of outcome?
 5 A. Yes, it relates to the impacts of the risk should it
 6 occur.
 7 Q. Right. But in addressing the reasonableness of the
 8 worst—case scenario, are those impacts focused on kinds
 9 of impacts, categories of outcomes, if you like, or are
 10 they focused on the scale of outcomes in each category
 11 identified as reasonable?
 12 A. Both.
 13 Q. Both.
 14 McCloghrie says, if we can just pick this up at
 15 page 10 in his statement {CAB00014798/10}, please,
 16 paragraph 36, this is under the heading "Assessments of
 17 Fire Risk prior to Grenfell Tower Fire":
 18 "The 2016 NRA did include a significant fire as one
 19 of its risk types, but the specific scenario considered
 20 to be the reasonable worst case fire was a rural
 21 wildfire rather than an urban or tower block fire."
 22 Is that correct?
 23 A. That's correct.
 24 Q. Yes. He says:
 25 "That is not to say that an urban fire was not

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1 considered as part of the process of preparing the NRA,
 2 but rather that such a fire was not considered to be the
 3 reasonable worst case scenario."
 4 Then over the page {CAB00014798/11}:
 5 "The assessment of the relevant Department
 6 (Home Office) was that a wildfire was the risk that was
 7 likely to lead to the most severe consequences. Based
 8 on the information available at that time, the
 9 assessment was that an urban fire was unlikely to lead
 10 to the level of casualties and fatalities that sadly
 11 resulted from the Grenfell Tower fire."
 12 Now, it's right, I think, isn't it, that there was
 13 no mention of an urban or tower block fire within the
 14 2016 NRA?
 15 A. There was no distinct risk labelled as a tower block
 16 fire, but some of the consequences of such a fire were
 17 captured in the scenarios of other risks.
 18 Q. Some of the consequences?
 19 A. All of the consequences, actually, I think.
 20 Q. Did the Home Office, as the owner of the risk at the
 21 time, or the CCS perform any actual analysis of an urban
 22 or tower block fire to lead it or you, perhaps, to
 23 consider that such a fire was not a reasonable
 24 worst—case scenario?
 25 A. I'm afraid I can't give you evidence on the analysis

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1 performed by the Home Office at the time. I don't think
 2 we have been able to find specific evidence of that in
 3 the CCS files, to my recollection.
 4 Q. Yes. I mean, my question was whether it was considered
 5 and discounted or whether it wasn't considered at all.
 6 Can you help?
 7 A. I would have to go away and look again at the paperwork.
 8 Not to my recollection.
 9 Q. Can you not have one or more than one kind of fire which
 10 would meet the reasonable worst—case scenario?
 11 A. That is possible, but there is a strong incentive to
 12 make the NRA a usable document. So, as Mr McCloghrie's
 13 statement says, there are between 70 and 100 risks
 14 already on the risk assessment, so there's always
 15 a consideration where, if the impacts of a risk are
 16 already captured in other scenarios, we would try to
 17 keep the overall number of scenarios at a manageable
 18 level for local responders.
 19 Q. Right. So if somebody — maybe you, maybe not you,
 20 perhaps you can help — was asked, "Where do I find
 21 a risk assessment which covers the outcomes of an urban
 22 fire or a tower block fire, a tall residential building
 23 in a densely populated urban area, where do I find it?",
 24 is it right that the people who compile the NRA would
 25 not point to the wildfire risk, but would point to

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1 another kind of risk, and say the outcomes are all
 2 captured there? Is that how it worked?
 3 A. So with the benefit of hindsight, when we did add
 4 a tower block risk to the fire — to the NRA, forgive
 5 me, it did not move the planning assumptions that it
 6 generated, because we found that the impacts of that
 7 fire had already been captured. So if you're a local
 8 responder, perhaps, thinking about your own planning
 9 needs, and used the planning assumptions in the NRA, you
 10 would have covered those impacts.
 11 In relation to a specific description of
 12 a tower block fire, that may have appeared on local risk
 13 registers across the country, but it didn't appear in
 14 the NRA.
 15 Q. We'll come to look at this in due course, but in light
 16 of that answer, would there be a problem in ownership of
 17 the risk? By which I mean this: if the outcomes of the
 18 Grenfell Tower fire would not be found under any
 19 fire—related risk, but found under a different kind of
 20 risk for which another government department had
 21 responsibility, then which government department would
 22 own the risk or knew it owned the risk?
 23 A. So the Home Office would continue to own the assessment
 24 of the risk. For most risks in the NRA, responding to
 25 them engages capabilities for which responsibility is

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1 spread across a number of departments. So the ownership
 2 of the overall risk would not affect the deployment of
 3 the capabilities needed.
 4 Q. Let me see if I can understand that. Supposing — and
 5 it may or may not be the case — that when those
 6 compiling the NRA considered that all the risks making
 7 up the reasonable worst—case scenario, the RWC, the
 8 reasonable worst case, for an incident like
 9 Grenfell Tower were not to be found in the wildfires
 10 section, for obvious reasons, but could be found under,
 11 let's assume, structural collapse of a tall building —
 12 A. Yeah.
 13 Q. — the ownership of that risk would not rest with the
 14 Home Office, would it, it would rest with presumably
 15 DCLG?
 16 A. I think that's correct, but I'd have to check. But the
 17 capabilities you would deploy to deal with that, you
 18 would nonetheless expect to be in place because of the
 19 existence of that risk.
 20 Q. Right.
 21 Was there a system whereby each government
 22 department would know that when it owned a risk, it
 23 might be looking at a cause which didn't necessarily
 24 always fit within its ownership? For example, the DCLG
 25 might have to deal with a structural building collapse,

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1 but the Home Office would also have to deal with the
 2 same reasonable worst case when considering
 3 a tower block fire?
 4 A. So the process of creating the risk assessment is
 5 a cross—government one, led by CCS but with all
 6 departments with relevant responsibilities involved, and
 7 I think it is described in either my statement or
 8 Mr McCloghrie's statement, the layers of scrutiny and
 9 clearance that the risk assessment goes through. So
 10 there should be good visibility of both the risks and
 11 their consequences, as set out in the planning
 12 assumptions.
 13 Q. Let's continue with Mr McCloghrie's statement, please,
 14 page 4 {CAB00014798/4}. If we go back to paragraph 14,
 15 he says:
 16 "My team conducts a policy and assurance role in
 17 relation to the RWCs returned from other
 18 Department[sic]. We ask awkward questions, and
 19 critically challenge their assessments."
 20 Do you remember whether any concerns were raised by
 21 the CCS about the absence of a significant urban fire in
 22 the 2016 NRA or the process of compiling it?
 23 A. Not to my knowledge.
 24 Q. I think you say, if we go to your second statement at
 25 page 18 {CAB00014799/18}, paragraph 59:

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1 "As to whether there was any concerns on the part of
 2 CCS about the absence of a significant urban fire
 3 (including a tower block fire) in the 2016 NRA, I would
 4 again be surprised had issue been taken with that. As
 5 I have explained above, most, if not all, of the
 6 outcomes that would arise in relation to such a risk had
 7 been generated by other RWCSs and been incorporated into
 8 the 2016 NRPA as a result."
 9 Now, the PAs there is planning assumptions, is it?
 10 A. Correct.
 11 Q. Right. You go on:
 12 "That being so, the omission from the 2016 NRA of
 13 an urban fire RWCS [reasonable worst—case scenario]
 14 would not have given rise to any obvious gaps in the
 15 risk assessment and response framework. In those
 16 circumstances, there would have been no basis to take
 17 issue with the Home Office's assessment as to the need
 18 to include an urban fire risk in the NRA and, to the
 19 best of my knowledge, CCS did not do so."
 20 Now, do you know for a fact, just circling back to
 21 the point, whether actually the exercise had been done
 22 consciously, that there was no need to include an urban
 23 fire or tower block fire as a specific risk because the
 24 outcomes which needed to be planned for had been catered
 25 for under other risks?

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1 A. So I think in the paragraph below the one you just
 2 referred to, it does say we've not been able to find
 3 evidence in the documents of that consideration taking
 4 place, so I don't think I can assist further than that,
 5 unfortunately.
 6 Q. Right. But do I understand your evidence from before
 7 that it would have been normal to do so, it would be
 8 normal to consider that and discount it because it was
 9 covered by another risk?
 10 A. Yes, it would, and the way the process of compiling the
 11 risk assessment works is that often we would start with
 12 a much larger number of scenarios and they would be
 13 reduced to a core which formed the risk assessment. So
 14 it would be perfectly possible that that consideration
 15 took place, we just don't have evidence for it,
 16 I'm afraid.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Can you help me with this: I get the
 18 impression from what you've just been describing that
 19 actually what you're concentrating on is outcomes rather
 20 than events; is that fair? Or what you should be
 21 concentrating on is outcomes rather than events.
 22 A. Yes, so this is a very capability—led approach, which
 23 means the planning assumptions are a really crucial
 24 tool.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.

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1 A. With the theory being if you plan to be ready to deal
2 with all of the consequences set out in the planning
3 assumptions, in whatever configuration they appear and
4 from whatever cause, you should be in a good position to
5 deal with them.

6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I mean, it strikes me that the urban
7 tower block fire, the large building collapse and, just
8 to suggest another potential risk, an aircraft crash
9 into a tall building, would all generate very similar
10 outcomes — effects, if you like — but the planning,
11 the system, seems to start with the event and then look
12 at the outcomes, rather than seeking to stand back and
13 say, "Now, what are we likely to have to deal with for
14 one or other or any unforeseen reason"?

15 A. I think the system is intended to do both, which is why
16 we have both the risk assessment and the planning
17 assumptions, because the nature of the risk obviously
18 gives you some indications as to which consequences may
19 occur together, which obviously you would want to think
20 about in planning a response.

21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Thank you.

22 Yes, Mr Millett.

23 MR MILLETT: Now, if we go to your second statement, please,
24 at page 19 {CAB00014799/19}, let's look together at
25 paragraph 63. You say there:

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1 "It is not feasible for the NRA, or any document, to
2 describe all possible risk scenarios. Local responders
3 are expected to adapt the assumptions made in the NRA
4 and the NRPA to their local areas and particular
5 context. Clearly, a Local Resilience Forum based in
6 a rural area will be more likely to face a wildfire than
7 one based in a city centre."

8 Was it the case, did you understand it to be the
9 case, that the omission of an urban fire reasonable
10 worst-case scenario in the 2016 NRA affected the ability
11 of category 1 and category 2 responders to make a fully
12 informed local risk assessment?

13 A. I think the presence of the consequences in the planning
14 assumptions should have meant it did not have that
15 effect.

16 Q. But would that not mean or would that not require those
17 responsible for contingency planning in local areas to
18 operate on the same basis as the CCS, namely that when
19 looking at the risks, which are events rather than
20 outcomes, they would have to understand that there may
21 be other events which covered the same outcomes?

22 A. Yes, and I would expect, in compiling local risk
23 registers — and have seen examples of this — that
24 a good degree of local judgement is applied to what
25 might be the most plausible manifestation in that

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1 particular geographic area. So that expertise, that
2 judgement, is important.

3 Q. Well, the expertise and judgement is important, but what
4 is it specifically that a local resilience forum
5 responsible for compiling the local risk register apt
6 for its area would look at to know that it shouldn't
7 simply look at the register and work from that, but
8 actually would need to look into the individual risks in
9 the register and search for outcomes to make sure that
10 they were covered?

11 A. Well, two things, I think: firstly, the planning
12 assumptions, which, as I said, are a really key part of
13 this process; and then, secondly, the guidance referred
14 to in here, which sets out how to go about using
15 a product which is national and making it of best
16 utility for your local area.

17 Q. Now, in your second statement, again, if we can go back
18 to page 5 {CAB00014799/5}, please, paragraph 14, you
19 say:

20 "14. The latest version of the NRA could be amended
21 or updated if there was a justification for doing so.
22 A designated risk owner could propose a new risk or an
23 amendment to an existing risk on the basis of new
24 evidence emerging since the last NRA review cycle. New
25 evidence could include:

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1 "14.1. lessons from UK or international emergencies
2 or exercises;
3 "14.2. new research, analysis and/or data; or
4 "14.3. a change in circumstance which potentially
5 affects the UK's vulnerability to the risk, an
6 attacker's capability, intent, etc."

7 So is it right that — well, perhaps you can
8 explain. I mean, it's the case, I think, that even
9 following the Lakanal House fire in July 2009, the
10 Shirley Towers fire in Southampton in 2010, or the
11 Adair Tower fire until October 2015 within RBKC itself,
12 no consideration was given centrally by the CCS to
13 whether an urban tower block fire should be included in
14 the NRA.

15 A. It's correct that one was not added to the NRA.
16 I think, as I alluded to before, I'm afraid we couldn't
17 find evidence of consideration of it, so I can't be
18 definitive to say that that consideration didn't happen.

19 Q. Right. But on the assumption that no consideration was
20 given to the inclusion of an urban tower block fire
21 after those events, which would lead to lessons from the
22 UK, new research, analysis or data, can you explain why
23 no consideration was given to including an urban
24 tower block fire as a specific risk?

25 A. I think, in the absence of evidence of consideration or

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1 otherwise, I can't really assist on that point. That
 2 discussion may have taken place, but we just could not
 3 find evidence for it.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Is it not likely that if there had
 5 been a serious consideration of it, there would be some
 6 evidence of it?
 7 A. I think it depends what form that consideration took.
 8 It could have been lengthy conversation or it could have
 9 been on paper. I'm afraid I'm in some difficulty at
 10 diagnosing things I don't have evidence for.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, what I was suggesting was that
 12 the absence of evidence might lead to an inference.
 13 A. I think one might infer that, but I can't be definitive,
 14 I'm afraid.
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you.
 16 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, it's just gone 1 o'clock. I have
 17 really got two main questions to cover before I get to
 18 a new section.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, go on then, Mr Millett.
 20 MR MILLETT: May I? Yes, we have only been going ... Yes.
 21 Can we stick with the second statement, please, and
 22 go to page 18 {CAB00014799/18}, next. At paragraph 61
 23 you say, at the foot of the screen:
 24 "It is important to acknowledge that the impacts
 25 described in the Wildfire RWCS were at a level broadly

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1 equivalent to, or more severe than, the impacts
 2 experienced in the Lakanal House fire, and were
 3 therefore appropriate for contingency planning and
 4 capability building purposes."
 5 Was that a view, do you know, consciously adopted by
 6 the Home Office at the time and the CCS at the time that
 7 the 2016 NRA was compiled?
 8 A. So I think again this is — I'm in the same difficulty
 9 as with your last question, that I don't have evidence
 10 of that consideration or that view being taken.
 11 Q. Right. So this is your opinion about appropriateness,
 12 rather than your statement that it was considered
 13 appropriate?
 14 A. This is an analysis of the document and the impacts as
 15 they stood. So it's certainly a plausible rationale,
 16 but I'm afraid I don't have the documents which describe
 17 it.
 18 Q. Now, in terms of outcomes, whether it's a tower block
 19 fire or whether it's a building collapse, structural
 20 collapse, or whether it's an aircraft flying into a tall
 21 building, different risks, do you know whether anybody
 22 ever performed a comparison of the differences in the
 23 types of community displaced by these different
 24 incidents?
 25 A. I think it's unlikely we would have done that at

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1 a national level. It's the sort of consideration
 2 I would expect to happen in relation to local risk
 3 assessment.
 4 Q. Now, it's right, I think — and correct me if I'm wrong
 5 about this, Ms Hammond — Robert MacFarlane was another
 6 deputy director under your leadership at the time of the
 7 fire.
 8 A. Correct.
 9 Q. Yes. And he was responsible, was he, for UK resilience
 10 training, doctrine and standards within the CCS?
 11 A. Correct.
 12 Q. Let's look at his statement, please. It's at
 13 {CAB00014794/10}. I just want to look at paragraph 35
 14 with you. He says:
 15 "My team also works in partnership with the JESIP
 16 team on Joint Organisational Learning ('JOL'). This is
 17 a system for recording and disseminating lessons
 18 learned. The core part of the project is an online
 19 database (JOL Online) which acts as a single repository
 20 for the capture and collation of multi-agency lessons
 21 arising from incident, training, testing, and other
 22 external sources. Inputs into the system are obtained
 23 from a variety of sources including reports from
 24 responder agencies, recommendations from public
 25 inquiries, prevention of future death reports, and

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1 Health and Safety Executive recommendations."
 2 In his second statement {CAB00014803/3}, which
 3 I don't think we don't need to go to, he says:
 4 "At the time of the Grenfell Tower Fire no lessons
 5 learned from incidents such as the Lakanal House or
 6 Trelick Tower fires had been recorded on JOL."
 7 Now, can you explain why that would be the case?
 8 A. With some difficulty, I think. I mean, my assumption
 9 would be that no lesson had been distilled and recorded
 10 on that system by local responders. That is not to say
 11 that those lessons hadn't been learned and disseminated
 12 through other means. But I — it's difficult for me to
 13 explain otherwise, I think, why they had not chosen to
 14 do so.
 15 Q. No. Would you accept that the absence of previous
 16 incidents such as Lakanal or Adair from the JOL system
 17 would suggest that urban fires as a risk category was
 18 simply not on CCS's radar at all?
 19 A. I think it's evidence that they were not on the JOL
 20 system. Obviously wider consideration of fire certainly
 21 did take place as part of the NRA process. I don't
 22 think I can say much further than that.
 23 Q. But the absence from the JOL system would not indicate
 24 that they had been considered but consciously rejected
 25 as relevant material.

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1 A. No, I think that is only one of a very wide range of
 2 sources that would be used in the compilation of the
 3 risk assessment. So its absence there is not
 4 definitive, I think.
 5 Q. Do you know whether that incident, Lakanal, and other
 6 later fires, and the Grenfell Tower fire, were added
 7 later to the JOL system?
 8 A. I don't, I'm afraid, but very happy to go and ask that
 9 question and come back to you.
 10 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, is that a convenient moment?
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I think it is, Mr Millett. We have
 12 slightly overrun, but no matter.
 13 We're going to break now so we can all get some
 14 lunch, Ms Hammond. We will resume, please, at 2.05.
 15 I have to ask you, as everybody else, while you're
 16 out of the room, please don't discuss your evidence or
 17 anything relating to it with anyone. All right?
 18 THE WITNESS: Of course.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
 20 with the usher, please. Thank you.
 21 (Pause)
 22 Thank you. 2.05, Mr Millett.
 23 MR MILLETT: Thank you.
 24 (1.10 pm)
 25 (The short adjournment)

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1 (2.05 pm)
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right, Ms Hammond, ready to
 3 carry on, I hope?
 4 THE WITNESS: Yes, absolutely.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.
 6 Yes, Mr Millett.
 7 MR MILLETT: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman.
 8 Ms Hammond, I just want to explore one or two
 9 further aspects of the NRA process which we looked at
 10 before the break, and I think I asked you about whether
 11 anybody ever performed a comparison of the differences
 12 in the types of community displaced by different
 13 incidents, and you said you thought it was unlikely at
 14 a national level, but the sort of consideration that you
 15 would expect to happen in relation to a local risk
 16 assessment. You will recall that evidence.
 17 Two questions flow from that.
 18 The first is: would the CCS recognise that the
 19 impact of emergencies, and in this case mass
 20 displacement of residents from their homes, could affect
 21 different social and economic groups and localities in
 22 different ways?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. It would, would it? What was the mechanism for
 25 recognising that?

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1 A. Well, in a way, it is the basis for the principle of
 2 subsidiarity on which the system is based, which
 3 recognises that local knowledge is often crucial in
 4 a response. So in the example you've given, local
 5 understanding of the impact of a particular event on
 6 a community has been shown pretty regularly to be really
 7 important in delivering the right kind of response.
 8 Q. Did the NRA, given that it was leading nationally on
 9 risk assessment, recognise these differing socioeconomic
 10 factors and, consequently, include consideration of
 11 those potentially differing outcomes within it?
 12 A. I think in the NRA, risks are set out as single
 13 scenarios, intended to be usable everywhere in the
 14 country. The guidance which accompanies it for use by
 15 local planners I think does draw out the need to bring
 16 in those local factors, but they are not drawn out for
 17 every community in the UK, understandably, in the
 18 national document.
 19 Q. Was there any direction or instruction or guidance given
 20 to local planners to consider these different
 21 socioeconomic factors which might affect different
 22 groups in different ways when it came to outcomes?
 23 A. I would have to refresh my memory of exactly what the
 24 local guidance says, I'm afraid, but I'm very happy to
 25 do that. They would of course be subject to the public

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1 sector equality duty in the same way as anyone in the
 2 public sector is, so they would have had that in their
 3 minds.
 4 Q. I follow. So just to be clear about that, is it your
 5 evidence that when the local planners, the LRFs, created
 6 their own risk registers, in providing for planning
 7 assumptions and capabilities, they would be required in
 8 law — is this right? — to take account of the various
 9 different protected characteristics under the
 10 Equality Act?
 11 A. That's my understanding, yes.
 12 Q. Right.
 13 Now, then, let's turn to the national risk register.
 14 Is it right that the NRA forms the basis for the
 15 national risk register?
 16 A. Correct.
 17 Q. And that was a public document at the time; yes?
 18 A. Correct.
 19 Q. The most recent NRR, to use the acronym, before the
 20 Grenfell Tower fire, was, I think, published in
 21 March 2015, was it?
 22 A. I think that's correct, yes.
 23 Q. We can go, I think, to that document. It's at
 24 {CAB00007009}. That's the 2015 edition.
 25 We can see, if we go to page 4 {CAB00007009/4}, the

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1 contents page, or part of it.
 2 (Pause)
 3 We seem to be stuck. I would like {CAB00007009}.
 4 I can see there's a different — well, let me take it
 5 more quickly, because there may be a snag with the
 6 numbering.
 7 Do you recall that there was no mention in this
 8 document of an urban or tower block fire?
 9 A. I think that would be correct, as it wasn't a scenario
 10 identified in the NRA.
 11 Q. Right. But there was wildfire set out at pages 27 and
 12 28 {CAB00007009/27–28}. Perhaps we could have pages 27
 13 and 28 there. There you see it, there you don't.
 14 If we go to page 27, you can see "Severe wildfires.
 15 Risk outline", and if you turn to page 28, you can see,
 16 under 2.63:
 17 "Casualties from wildfires tend to be low, but there
 18 could be significant distress and health consequences,
 19 such as an increase in respiratory ailments due to smoke
 20 or fumes."
 21 Now, was any work ever done to establish whether
 22 a casualty bureau had ever been established as a result
 23 of a wildfire, or a friends and relatives reception
 24 centre, or a rest centre, or any other of the kinds of
 25 centre contemplated certainly by the London Resilience

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1 frameworks?
 2 A. I'm afraid I can't recall at this distance, but very
 3 happy to go away and look for the answer to that
 4 question.
 5 Q. Right.
 6 Now, following the Grenfell Tower fire, I think it's
 7 right that the NRR, the national risk register, had been
 8 updated, and is it right that the 2019 version of the
 9 assessment is now called the national security risk
 10 assessment?
 11 A. Correct.
 12 Q. That, I think, does include an example, by way of
 13 a risk, of a fire in a high-rise residential building as
 14 a reasonable worst-case risk.
 15 A. Yes, it does.
 16 Q. Yes.
 17 Now, let's go to your second statement at page 20,
 18 {CAB00014799/20}, where you cover this, at paragraph 67.
 19 You say:
 20 "I personally recall being involved in discussions
 21 about the inclusion of this risk in the 2019 NSRA.
 22 Although we continued to be of the view that the
 23 outcomes of this risk were already covered by the
 24 existing NRPAs, we nevertheless took the view that the
 25 prominence of the Grenfell Tower fire in the national

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1 consciousness meant that it could not be omitted. This
 2 was also underpinned by the knowledge that Local
 3 Resilience Forums would be looking at their own plans
 4 for tower block fires in response to the events at
 5 Grenfell, and we wanted to ensure such plans had
 6 a helpful and consistent basis for doing so."
 7 Now, just looking at that, in a nutshell, was it the
 8 case that you included the Grenfell Tower fire not
 9 because it wasn't adequately catered for in the 2016
 10 version of the NRA, but for political reasons?
 11 A. No, not for political reasons, but because we knew from
 12 contact between my colleagues and LRFs that they would
 13 be thinking specifically about this type of risk and, as
 14 it says in the statement, because we wanted to be
 15 helpful to them in doing so.
 16 Q. But the risk profile hadn't changed, had it, between the
 17 2016 version and the 2019 version?
 18 A. I think in a couple of paragraphs above the one you're
 19 referring to, it does set out some of the differences in
 20 our understanding of the risk that were drawn as lessons
 21 from the Grenfell Tower fire. Those differences and
 22 understanding still meant, however, that the risk was
 23 covered by the planning assumptions as set out in
 24 paragraph 67. So it was an enhanced understanding. The
 25 primary reason for including it was to be of assistance

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1 to local planners.
 2 Q. Right. So let's pick that up, then, at paragraph 65,
 3 higher up page 20. You say:
 4 "... our enhanced understanding (bolstered by
 5 updated Home Office modelling) of fire risk following
 6 the Grenfell Tower fire, meant that the consequences of
 7 a tower block fire were more significant than previously
 8 assessed."
 9 Now, was there a reason why that risk had not been
 10 assessed for the specific purpose of the NRA until after
 11 the fire?
 12 A. I think, Mr Millett, this goes to a question you asked
 13 me before about previous consideration of similar fires,
 14 where we have an absence of evidence. But following the
 15 Grenfell Tower fire, we of course used the knowledge
 16 gained there to look again at this kind of scenario and
 17 make sure we understood its impacts fully.
 18 Q. Right. Well, let me be more focused, then: what was it
 19 that enhanced your understanding?
 20 A. So I think that's quite a specialised question that
 21 I would defer to my more expert colleagues on, but the
 22 use of the cladding in particular is drawn out in the
 23 statement as an element which suggested more serious
 24 consequences than I think had previously been
 25 understood.

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1 Q. What was the updated Home Office modelling about, in
2 general terms?
3 A. Modelling of the impacts of a fire of that kind.
4 Q. Of what kind?
5 A. A tower block fire.
6 Q. Right. But, I mean, was it a cladding fire on
7 a high-rise or was it any kind of fire within
8 a high-rise that enhanced your understanding leading to
9 the inclusion of this risk in the 2019 NSRA?
10 A. My recollection is it was the modelling of a tower block
11 fire including cladding, but I would have to verify that
12 with my Home Office colleagues.
13 Q. So was it included because of the national consciousness
14 now being directed to towers like Grenfell, or was it
15 because an urban fire or tower block fire should have
16 been in the NRA before 2019 but was a historical
17 omission?
18 A. So, as I've said before, even with the addition of this
19 new scenario, it did not move the planning assumptions
20 for local responders to use, so, on that basis, we
21 wouldn't describe it as a historical omission. But
22 clearly the terrible events at Grenfell were very much
23 in the minds of planners, and we wanted to assist them
24 in reviewing their own plans for this type of scenario.
25 So that was the primary driver for its inclusion. But

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1 of course that drew on the knowledge gained in this
2 event.
3 Q. So does it come to this: that it was included not
4 because the risk profile was any different from how it
5 had been in 2016, but really for the look of the thing,
6 because a national risk register without a Grenfell in
7 it would look lopsided or incomplete?
8 A. No, not for the look of the thing, but to be of
9 assistance to planners focusing on that type of fire.
10 Q. Then I think it's right, isn't it, that the national
11 risk register of September 2017, which was after the
12 fire but only just, was updated to include the risk of
13 fire in a residential building; do you remember that?
14 A. Correct.
15 Q. That made specific reference to the Grenfell Tower fire
16 within it; yes?
17 A. Yes, for the same reason.
18 Q. For reference purposes, we can see that at
19 {CAB00000069}. I don't think there is a need to go to
20 it.
21 But let's go to the 2020 edition of the national
22 risk register at {INQ00015149}. If we go, please, to
23 chapter 4, which we're going to find on page 83
24 {INQ00015149/83}, under the heading "Major fires" within
25 the section "Major incidents", you can see there's

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1 a great deal there which is set out, and one of the
2 questions is:
3 "Have such events happened before?"
4 You can see that.
5 To the left of that, you see two chunks of text:
6 "Major fires can start for many reasons,
7 including ..."
8 Then:
9 "Consequences of major fires may include:
10 " ■ potential fatalities and physical and/or
11 psychological casualties.
12 " ■ potential evacuation and shelter of affected
13 people.
14 " ■ damage to property and infrastructure.
15 " ■ disruption to essential services (particularly
16 the availability of fire and rescue services).
17 " ■ economic costs, environmental damage, air
18 pollution and potential water contamination."
19 Then under "Have such events happened before?", as
20 I showed you, there is a reference to the Grenfell Tower
21 fire itself.
22 Now, under "Capability", if you go to the right-hand
23 side of the page, you can see there's a reference to
24 fire and rescue services having the capability to fight
25 high-rise fires; yes?

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1 A. Yes.
2 Q. If you turn to page 84 {INQ00015149/84}, you can see
3 a reference to other areas, including wellbeing support
4 under government action; do you see that?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. Then if you go to page 85 {INQ00015149/85}, you can see
7 a reference to independent inspection regimes for fire
8 and rescue services as part of independent inspections.
9 My question is, looking at all of those things: why
10 did the CCS not consider those issues for the purposes
11 of the NRR before the Grenfell Tower fire?
12 A. I think because this document is drawing on the much
13 greater understanding of a fire of this type drawn from
14 the Grenfell Tower experience in the way you would
15 expect us, I think, to learn those lessons and draw them
16 into future processes.
17 Q. Yes, and that prompts a question I asked you before:
18 what was it about the Grenfell Tower fire that prompted
19 lessons to be learnt such that they were embedded in
20 this document which had not been learnt from fires at
21 Lakanal House, Shirley Towers and at the Adair Tower
22 fire, and other high-rise fires before 2017?
23 A. And it's difficult for me to answer your question,
24 Mr Millett, because that is before my time in CCS and we
25 have not found evidence of consideration of those

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1 specific risks .

2 Q. Do you accept, looking back on it, that if an urban or

3 tower block fire had been included in the 2016 national

4 risk register as a result of the national risk

5 assessment, it would have provided a specific focus for

6 local planners to be able to assess and plan for?

7 A. Yes, I think they would have used it in that way.

8 Q. Let's then turn to a different topic, which is

9 preparation and planning.

10 I think you accepted earlier, as is obvious, that

11 the Emergency Preparedness document is the statutory

12 guidance which accompanies the 2004 Act, and

13 additionally there's the Emergency Response and Recovery

14 non-statutory guidance from October 2013.

15 On that, is it right that that required humanitarian

16 assistance to be provided in the event of an emergency?

17 A. Yes, that's one element of the response, and there's

18 specific guidance on human aspects of a response also.

19 Q. Are you able to assist with why Emergency

20 Preparedness — that's the title of the document — is

21 statutory guidance, but ERR, Emergency Response and

22 Recovery, is not, it's only non-statutory?

23 A. I'm afraid I can't recall that, but very happy to go

24 away and ask the question.

25 Q. Right.

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1 Now, turning to the second of those, then, the

2 non-statutory response, let's look at that. It's at

3 {CAB00004624}. That's the first page of it, and you can

4 see at the bottom of the page it's dated October 2013.

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Its full title is:

7 "Emergency Response and Recovery.

8 "Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil

9 Contingencies Act 2004."

10 If we go, please, in that to page 116

11 {CAB00004624/116}.

12 Can I just ask you, before we do: were you

13 reasonably familiar with this document at the time of

14 the fire?

15 A. Yes, at the time of the fire. I haven't studied it in

16 any detail for the past two years, however.

17 Q. No, I understand. But at the time of the fire, this is

18 something that you would have been reasonably familiar

19 with; can we proceed on that basis?

20 A. It would have been used by the CCS team and by local

21 responders, who are the primary intended audience for

22 this.

23 Q. Then let's go to page 116 {CAB00004624/116},

24 paragraph 7.1.1, "What is Humanitarian assistance". It

25 explains what it is, with a number of bullet points

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1 underneath that, if you just look at those.

2 Were you familiar with that provision, or at least

3 the gist of it, at the time?

4 A. Yes, those are consequences that are often

5 a consideration following a crisis event.

6 Q. Right. Yes, I don't want to read them all out, but you

7 can see them: basic shelter, information about what has

8 happened —

9 A. Of course.

10 Q. — medical assistance, financial and legal support,

11 psychosocial support, et cetera, and also, at the

12 bottom:

13 "Providing a point of contact for longer term

14 support and advice."

15 If we go to page 129 {CAB00004624/129}, a little bit

16 further on in the document, we see 7.7.1. "Meeting the

17 needs of specific groups" is the title, and 7.7.1 says:

18 "The care and support needs of a range of groups

19 require special consideration. This section focuses on

20 four groups which can make challenging demands on

21 responding agencies. These are: children and young

22 people; faith, religious or cultural groups; elderly

23 people and people with disabilities. For more

24 information on identifying vulnerable groups see: [and

25 there is a link] Identifying people who are vulnerable

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1 in a crisis."

2 Were you familiar with that principle or set of

3 principles?

4 A. With — set out in 7.7.1?

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Yes.

8 Now, if we then go to — to just pick up the point

9 you referred to earlier about the equality

10 legislation — Robert MacFarlane's third statement, we

11 find that at {CAB00014862/6}, please.

12 (Pause)

13 Right. I don't know why that's taking some time to

14 come up, but let me take it more shortly.

15 Was it your understanding, as it was his, that the

16 Equality Act 2010 required local authorities to have due

17 regard to the needs of people with relevant protected

18 characteristics?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Yes, and that may include specific groups when they

21 carry out emergency planning and emergency responses.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Yes.

24 Do you share his view — and I'll just give the

25 reference, paragraph 17 {CAB00014862/7}, we don't

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1 perhaps now need to go to it — that failure to comply
 2 with the public sector equality duty could lead to
 3 discrimination in the delivery of emergency responses,
 4 such that certain groups could receive a less effective
 5 service from the local authority and thus experience
 6 a greater degree of trauma?
 7 A. Yes, I think that is completely logical.
 8 Q. And a greater degree of distress and inconvenience —
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. — when compared with other groups. Yes, you do.
 11 Now, let's then go back to your first statement,
 12 please, {CAB00014764/7}, paragraph 26. You say there:
 13 "CCS also leads on the following capability
 14 workstreams ..."
 15 And that includes:
 16 "a. Evacuation and Shelter (with DCLG and Devolved
 17 Administrations as key delivery partners): CCS published
 18 the non-statutory Evacuation and Shelter guidance ... in
 19 2014."
 20 And that — we can look at that — is at
 21 {CAB00004627}, if we just look at that. There it is.
 22 If we turn on to page 2 and then page 4
 23 {CAB00004627/4}, you can see the contents on page 4. It
 24 has at annex A, page 57, "Scales of evacuation".
 25 My question was: was that document designed to help

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1 local planners write their local evacuation and shelter
 2 plans?
 3 A. Yes, it is intended for a local audience.
 4 Q. Right.
 5 I think there is a further document, {CAB00000036}.
 6 This is called:
 7 "Human Aspects in Emergency Management.
 8 "Guidance on supporting individuals affected by
 9 emergencies."
 10 And that's October 2016.
 11 Was that designed to support local responders'
 12 planning and co-ordination of human aspects activities,
 13 if I can put them that way, in the response and recovery
 14 phases of an emergency?
 15 A. Yes, that's correct.
 16 Q. Would it be fair to say, looking at those two documents,
 17 that the humanitarian needs of individuals in the
 18 context of an emergency is firmly embedded in the policy
 19 framework as something which must be catered for in
 20 an emergency response?
 21 A. I would say so, yes.
 22 Q. Yes, and always subject to the public sector equality
 23 duty —
 24 A. Of course.
 25 Q. — as you accepted.

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1 Now, a third document is what I think I can call
 2 ConOps, and you've heard of ConOps?
 3 A. I have.
 4 Q. Is its full title the "Central Government Arrangements
 5 for Responding to an Emergency: Concept of Operations";
 6 yes?
 7 A. Correct.
 8 Q. And that is — let's just have it up — at
 9 {CAB00000026}. There it is. This one is the one that
 10 was updated in April 2013, as you can see from the
 11 bottom of the screen.
 12 Am I right in thinking that that describes how the
 13 UK central government response will be organised, and
 14 the relationship between central, regional and local
 15 tiers in England?
 16 A. Yes, that's right.
 17 Q. Right.
 18 Now, I've shown you a swathe of documents and asked
 19 you about them. We'll come back to ConOps later. But
 20 my question for present purposes is this: how are these
 21 guidance documents and policy documents, such as those
 22 we have looked at, disseminated to local responders to
 23 make sure that they are properly taken into account
 24 locally for local emergency planning and response?
 25 A. So they are made available through an online platform

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1 which local responders can access, many of them will
 2 also have hard copies of these documents, and,
 3 of course, anybody struggling to find one could come to
 4 CCS and ask for it to be sent to them.
 5 Q. Right. Would you, centrally, expect those locally in
 6 the position of responsibility for planning and making
 7 assumptions about capabilities to be familiar with these
 8 documents?
 9 A. Yes, I would hope so. The purpose of them is to assist
 10 in that responsibility.
 11 Q. I now want to turn to — well, let me just ask you this:
 12 before the Grenfell Tower fire, had concerns been raised
 13 by responders about the complexity or quantity of
 14 guidance and policy documents out there?
 15 A. I can't recollect a specific concern being raised with
 16 me. There's certainly a lot of documentation, but
 17 I can't remember a complaint being made, no.
 18 Q. Right. Do you recall any occasion on which you received
 19 the complaint or criticism or heard others doing so that
 20 the civil contingencies framework was an architectural
 21 edifice which was of Byzantine complexity which defeated
 22 local or central planners?
 23 A. I can't recall anybody putting that point to me, no.
 24 Q. In that way or in any other?
 25 A. Not in my recollection.

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1 Q. Right.
 2 Let's turn to resilience, then.
 3 Now, Robert MacFarlane is someone I've tried you
 4 show you his evidence for before. He was the deputy
 5 director for UK resilience training in the CCS, wasn't
 6 he?
 7 A. Training, doctrine and standards, I think was his full
 8 title.
 9 Q. Right.
 10 Let's see if we can get back to his statement,
 11 please, {CAB00014794/3}. This is his first statement.
 12 If we go to page 3, paragraph 11, he says here:
 13 "The training aspect of my responsibilities can be
 14 divided into two main areas: (i) the direction, support
 15 and assurance of the Emergency Planning College (the
 16 'EPC') in its UK and international operations; and (ii)
 17 the development and provision of crisis management
 18 training to Central Government. Quantitatively,
 19 oversight of the EPC makes up the majority of this
 20 work."
 21 Do you agree with that?
 22 A. Yes, I'm sure Rob is correct.
 23 Q. Right.
 24 If we go to paragraph 14 on page 4 {CAB00014794/4},
 25 he says there:

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1 "Serco is responsible for the day-to-day operation
 2 of the EPC, but it is operated for and on behalf of the
 3 Cabinet Office."
 4 Do you agree with that?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. It's right, I think, also — and tell me if this isn't
 7 right — that the EPC provides training, exercising and
 8 advisory services to a wide range of different bodies,
 9 including government departments, but also public
 10 authorities and the private sector?
 11 A. That's right, yes.
 12 Q. And that includes, I think, but isn't limited to,
 13 category 1 and category 2 responders; yes?
 14 A. Absolutely not limited to, but it does include them,
 15 certainly.
 16 Q. It does include them.
 17 Is it right that the EPC courses are not mandatory
 18 for government departments or, indeed, category 1 or 2
 19 responders?
 20 A. That's correct. They could choose to use a different
 21 provider.
 22 Q. Right.
 23 Let's move to page 6 of this statement
 24 {CAB00014794/6}, paragraph 21, under the heading
 25 "Central Government Training". He says this:

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1 "Civil Servants from Central Government Departments
 2 can and do attend training at the EPC. Most new
 3 starters in CCS will attend training at the EPC. This
 4 is not just so that they will learn about the framework
 5 of emergency planning and response arrangements in the
 6 UK, and the allocation of duties under the 2004 Act.
 7 Participation in EPC training courses is also an
 8 opportunity for new CCS colleagues to learn alongside
 9 delegates from the emergency services, with whom most
 10 civil servants will have had limited experience prior to
 11 joining CCS."
 12 Do I take it you agree with that?
 13 A. Yes. The final statement, of course people come to CCS
 14 from a whole range of backgrounds, so we do have people
 15 from emergency service backgrounds and those with more
 16 experience, but there's a wide range of prior
 17 experience, I would say.
 18 Q. He goes on to say in paragraph 22:
 19 "The EPC also conducts quite a significant amount of
 20 resilience training and exercise work for other
 21 Government Departments. It is open to Departments to
 22 approach the EPC and request such training. The EPC
 23 will work together with the department to develop
 24 bespoke training and exercises to help the department
 25 improve its ability to respond to and recover from

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1 emergencies that might fall within their area of
 2 responsibility."
 3 Do you agree with that?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Now, against that background that I've shown you from
 6 his statement, can I show you his third exhibit, which
 7 is {CAB00014793}. This is a spreadsheet. If we can go
 8 to the native, please.
 9 This is a spreadsheet which records central
 10 government attendees at EPC courses in the years 2014 to
 11 2017. You can see that in the four right-hand-most
 12 columns there.
 13 If we go down together to row 119, we can see the
 14 entry for DCLG. Right?
 15 A. Mm—hm.
 16 Q. If you look across to columns E, F, G and H, you can see
 17 that in those years, two staff members went in 2014, one
 18 in 2015, one in 2016 — that's column G — and none in
 19 2017 — that's column H — to June. So only four
 20 delegates in total in those four years, or three and
 21 a half years.
 22 Similarly, if we go to row 202, which is the
 23 Home Office, we can see that, between 2014 and 2017, in
 24 total only four delegates attended training with the EPC
 25 from that government department, two in 2014 and two in

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1 2016, none in 2015 or in 2017 to June.
 2 Now, was it normal for that number of delegates from
 3 those government departments or government departments
 4 of that kind to go to attend EPC training?
 5 A. I'm not sure I quite understand your question. Normal
 6 in what sense?
 7 Q. Normal in the sense that these numbers, a handful, was
 8 that a standard number? Was it common that so few would
 9 attend EPC courses?
 10 A. I think to answer that question I would have to look
 11 back at records of previous years, which I'm afraid
 12 I don't have to hand.
 13 Q. Well, let's compare it, perhaps, with your own
 14 department, which you might be able to help with.
 15 If we go to row 7, Cabinet Office, there we see, in
 16 total — take it from me — 94 people from the
 17 Cabinet Office attending a training session, at least
 18 one, with EPC in those years: 18 in 2014, 26 in 2015, 36
 19 in 2016 and 14 in 2017.
 20 Can you account for the difference, at least on
 21 paper, in the sheer numbers of attendees that your
 22 office sent for training at the EPC in those years and
 23 the numbers that the Home Office and the DCLG sent in
 24 those years?
 25 A. I can certainly account for the Cabinet Office

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1 attendees. So Cabinet Office has a relatively high
 2 turnover of staff, so we would expect new starters every
 3 year, and as Rob said in his statement, the vast
 4 majority of them, unless they were in roles for which it
 5 was not relevant, would attend one or more of the EPC
 6 courses as a matter of routine, and because the EPC is
 7 operated from CCS, of course, that was the supplier we
 8 used. I think what I can't do, unfortunately, is
 9 describe the DCLG or Home Office practice, but I can
 10 certainly describe the Cabinet Office practice to you.
 11 Q. Well, at any given time, roughly how many staff members
 12 are there or were there during your time at the
 13 Cabinet Office?
 14 A. Around 100 in CCS.
 15 Q. Right. So over the four years a very — I mean, I use
 16 an expression which is a description, but would you
 17 agree that a very significant number of personnel in the
 18 Cabinet Office had attended EPC for training on
 19 a variety of topics?
 20 A. Yes, although I think some of — these are delegate
 21 numbers, so the same person may be represented multiple
 22 times, but I could certainly agree that quite a high
 23 number of courses were attended.
 24 Q. Yes.
 25 Were you aware that, in other departments, the

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1 numbers that you were sending to EPC courses were not
 2 matched?
 3 A. No, I wasn't monitoring those numbers.
 4 Q. Did you have, as it were — I use this expression
 5 here — a three-line whip within the CCS to send people
 6 on training courses at the EPC? Were there strong
 7 incentives for them to go?
 8 A. It was a part of normal induction and learning processes
 9 on arrival.
 10 Q. Did you attend any of the training sessions yourself?
 11 If we scroll down, you can cast your eye down the course
 12 names. Were any of these those which you attended, do
 13 you think?
 14 A. Do you know, it's very difficult to recall. I've
 15 certainly spent quite a lot of time at the EPC and
 16 dipped in and out of courses. I would have to go back
 17 and check if any of these represent me.
 18 Q. Right. But do you recall going to the EPC?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. You do.
 21 Let's go, then, to {CAB00014792}, this is RHM/2
 22 exhibited by Mr MacFarlane, different spreadsheet. Can
 23 we also have the native of this.
 24 What I'm showing you now is — that's it. There are
 25 two tabs, there's category 1 responders and category 2

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1 responders, and what these are are spreadsheets held by
 2 the CCS recording category 1 and category 2 attendees at
 3 EPC training in the same years, 2014 to 2017.
 4 If we go to the category 1 responders tab, you can
 5 see it there, if we go, please, to row 74, we can see
 6 the GLA, and in the first two years of the date range,
 7 ten go in 2014, four go in 2015 and none in 2016 or
 8 2017.
 9 At row 317 we can see RBKC, and they send two in
 10 2014, none in 2015, one in 2016 and none in 2017. We
 11 can see the three courses that those three delegates
 12 attended. Perhaps they were the same person between
 13 years 2014 and 2016, we don't know. But there are the
 14 three topics: one is crowd modelling, one is working in
 15 safety advisory groups and one is an evening lecture on
 16 event risk management.
 17 Compare that with Westminster. If you scroll down,
 18 please, to row 328, you can see very different numbers:
 19 47 in 2014, 38 in 2015, two in 2016 and one in 2017.
 20 You may not be able to help with the specifics, but
 21 are you able to help with why the numbers would have
 22 dropped off for a central urban LA, local authority,
 23 attending EPC for training on contingencies?
 24 A. I'm afraid I can't without investigating further.
 25 I don't know the profile and the existing qualifications

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1 of their staff or their turnover.
 2 Q. Right.
 3 Now, we've seen the figures for RBKC. Can I take it
 4 that you weren't yourself aware that RBKC had not
 5 undertaken any EPC civil protection training between
 6 2014 and 2017?
 7 A. No, I was not aware.
 8 Q. You weren't aware of that. Does it surprise you?
 9 A. It's really — I'm sorry, this sounds unhelpful and it's
 10 not meant to be, but it's very difficult to make
 11 an evaluation of the numbers without understanding the
 12 nature of the staff and their past experience in this
 13 snapshot of time. So it is obviously lower by
 14 comparison, but I don't have information as to the reasons
 15 for that, I'm afraid.
 16 Q. Well, I understand that, but it's not lower numbers;
 17 it's nil, isn't it?
 18 Would you expect a central London authority — RBKC
 19 is the case in point — to have had no EPC training to
 20 any of its staff on contingency planning in the
 21 four years or three and a half years before the
 22 Grenfell Tower fire?
 23 A. I would expect them to have staff trained to
 24 an appropriate standard, but the EPC is not the only
 25 supplier, and, as I say, I have no information on the

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1 existing qualifications of their staff, so I'm finding
 2 it difficult to draw an inference from it.
 3 Q. Now, that leads to another question, which is whether or
 4 not there was a system within the CCS for monitoring and
 5 supervising these outcomes.
 6 Was there a system whereby the CCS examined the
 7 figures and took the laggards and notified them that
 8 they were not keeping up with their EPC training and
 9 they should be doing more?
 10 A. No, not to my knowledge.
 11 Q. Can we go back to Mr MacFarlane's first statement,
 12 please, {CAB00014794/7}, paragraph 23. He says there:
 13 "In addition, since 2007 and working with CCS
 14 colleagues, my team has provided introductory training
 15 for civil servants in Central Government whose roles are
 16 likely to require them to work within, or work with,
 17 COBR. The course covers what COBR is, what their place
 18 in it is, what is expected of their departments, and
 19 what is expected of them as an individual in their
 20 particular roles. It also addresses behaviour: how you
 21 conduct your role in COBR to good effect under the
 22 considerable pressures of working in a crisis. The
 23 training is divided into two tiers: one tier is aimed at
 24 Senior Civil Servants (i.e. departmental principals);
 25 and one is aimed at junior Civil Servants (i.e. those

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1 supporting the principals and decision makers). The
 2 programme is, with very few exceptions, internal to
 3 Central Government Departments and agencies."
 4 Is that training mandatory, do you recall?
 5 A. I don't think it's mandatory, but it's very much
 6 expected for those who will be having a direct role in
 7 COBR.
 8 Q. Did you yourself undertake it?
 9 A. I think I did when I started in CCS.
 10 Q. When you started.
 11 Have you yourself undertaken any other training
 12 relating to resilience and emergency preparedness and
 13 response?
 14 A. I would have to go and refer back to my diaries,
 15 I'm afraid.
 16 Q. Right. So you can't say you definitely didn't; you
 17 might have done, but you can't remember?
 18 A. I'm afraid I had not refreshed my memory of that before
 19 today, apologies.
 20 Q. Let's turn, then, to the third aspect of CCS's focus,
 21 which is response and recovery.
 22 You referred to the concept of subsidiarity earlier
 23 on this afternoon, I think, and is it right that the
 24 UK's emergency planning and response arrangements are
 25 based on that concept, subsidiarity?

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1 A. Yes, it's one of the principles embedded.
 2 Q. I think you describe it — let's look at your own words,
 3 page 3 of your first statement {CAB00014764/3},
 4 paragraph 11. I think we've looked at this before, but
 5 you say there in the second line:
 6 "... local responders are best placed to identify
 7 the risks in their areas, and to put appropriate plans
 8 and capability in place to respond to these risks within
 9 the framework provided by the provided by the Civil
 10 Contingencies Act 2004 ..."
 11 Does that tell us that the presumption during
 12 emergencies is that they will be handled at a local
 13 level?
 14 A. So subsidiarity basically means that you take the
 15 decision at the lowest possible level and co-ordinate at
 16 the highest appropriate level. So it doesn't mean that
 17 you can only take decisions at a local level, but the
 18 default is that that is the starting position, with
 19 escalation upwards as required.
 20 Q. Yes, I see.
 21 If you go, please, to paragraph 10, just above that,
 22 you say:
 23 "The work of CCS is underpinned by the concept of
 24 Integrated Emergency Management. This recognises that
 25 many types of incident require broadly similar

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1 capabilities irrespective of cause, and that the
 2 response to such incidents should normally be locally
 3 led and delivered, in the main, by locally owned and
 4 managed capabilities. They should be supported, where
 5 necessary, by specialist assets provided through mutual
 6 aid arrangements or by national support."

7 What do you mean by national support there?

8 A. So often in a moment of emergency or crisis, local
 9 responders will ask for additional help. So a good
 10 example, for example, is asking for assistance from the
 11 military, for which there's a well established process.
 12 So that would come through to a national level body like
 13 COBR, who would authorise that request into the MoD.

14 Q. I see, so national support — is this right? — could
 15 only be secured by COBR, or were there other central
 16 government bodies who could do that?

17 A. No, not only by COBR, sometimes by direct discussion,
 18 but often, in a crisis, those discussions tend to be
 19 happening in the COBR room or in the ministerial meeting
 20 room.

21 Q. Now, you refer also there to specialist assets provided
 22 through mutual aid arrangements; what were those?

23 A. So a variety of different types of assets exist on
 24 a national basis, including, for example, capabilities
 25 to deal with large numbers of fatalities. That would be

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1 one instance. And there are a number of other types of
 2 assets which can be drawn on but which exist once
 3 nationally, rather than in every local area.

4 Q. Can you give me an example, please, of an asset which
 5 would be a capability to deal with large numbers of
 6 fatalities?

7 A. So there's a national mortuary capability intended to
 8 deal with a large number of fatalities.

9 Q. I see.

10 Now, I want next to ask you about ConOps, we looked
 11 at that before, and specifically look at annex B, if we
 12 can.

13 Can we go to that at {CAB00000026/68}, there's
 14 ConOps, and if we go to page 68 within it, I want to
 15 show you annex B.

16 Are you familiar with this?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Yes.

19 Now, it's called:

20 "Annex B: likely form of central government
 21 engagement based on the impact and geographic spread of
 22 an emergency in England."

23 The diagram, I think, shows five different types of
 24 emergency with a corresponding colour — is this
 25 right? — which indicates the form of central government

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1 involvement, escalating in seriousness.

2 A. Yes, so the colour represents increasing severity across
 3 the matrix.

4 Q. Yes.

5 Now, looking at it, it's really — is this right? —
 6 an indication; it's not a strict graph based on
 7 mathematical certainties, is it, fixed points?

8 A. Correct, it's a guide to aid judgement in particular
 9 scenarios as to what type of response would be
 10 appropriate.

11 Q. Right. Just to be clear, along the horizontal axis, you
 12 start on the left with "minimal parliamentary interest",
 13 "significant parliamentary interest", "dominating
 14 party/national debate", and then in the middle one,
 15 "Minimal LGD through RRT" — is that "RQ" or "RO"? What
 16 does that stand for?

17 A. Forgive me, are you on the second —

18 Q. Second row of arrows in the horizontal section.

19 A. I think RRT is rapid response team. RO, I would have to
 20 check.

21 Q. And then it goes on. It increases in severity: "crisis
 22 centre", "collective response", "central direction".

23 So central direction would be in the most serious of
 24 cases, would it?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And then in the bottom line, "Minimal LOD policy
 2 interest", and what's LOD? Is it LOD? It's difficult
 3 to see, but even if we expand it, it doesn't much help.

4 A. It is not clear on my screen.

5 Q. No, I'm sorry about that. Never mind, it increases in
 6 severity as well.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And then on the vertical axis, you start with "Single
 9 Scene", "Cross—Force", "Regional Coverage",
 10 "Cross—Region", "National Coverage", and the various
 11 different colours go up from green to yellow to ochre,
 12 to orange to red.

13 So what would happen if you had a single scene, but
 14 dominated national party or national debate and required
 15 central direction, and which was, you might call,
 16 overwhelming, at least locally? Where would that sit?

17 A. So there's — as you said before, there's no hard and
 18 fast boundaries in here, but clearly that would take you
 19 to the bottom right of the matrix, although the
 20 judgement is made specific to every event, so you'd want
 21 to take into account all of the specific circumstances
 22 in that moment.

23 Q. Right.

24 Now, there are two references to a local response,
 25 the green and the yellow, "Local response only" in green

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1 and "Local response with GO providing two—way channel to
2 central Govt/LGD" in yellow.
3 Now, LGD is lead government department. What is GO?
4 A. I think that's referring to the government liaison
5 officer. There may be an L missing in the middle.
6 Q. Oh, I see. Right.
7 In addition to local response, I think we see three
8 levels. Level 1 is:
9 "Significant ... LGD led central response. COBR not
10 involved."
11 Level 2:
12 "Serious ... Co—ordinated central response led by
13 LGD from COBR."
14 And then:
15 "Catastrophic — Level 3. Central direction from
16 COBR."
17 In red.
18 A. Correct.
19 Q. Yes.
20 Now, if we go back, then, to your first statement,
21 please, at page 12 {CAB00014764/12}, paragraph 37, you
22 say there:
23 "The response to an emergency is usually carried out
24 first and foremost by local organisations. In some
25 instances, however, the scale or complexity of an

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1 emergency means that some degree of central government
2 support or coordination is necessary. Where this is the
3 case, a government department will be allocated as the
4 lead for the overall management of the central
5 government response. Where necessary, the central
6 government crisis management machinery (also sometimes
7 referred to as COBR) will be activated to coordinate the
8 cross—government response in the aftermath of a major
9 emergency."
10 In that passage, are you referring there to the
11 levels on the diagram that we've just been through?
12 A. Yes, I think that diagram sets out, in pictorial form,
13 the text which is in paragraph 37. It's the same
14 concept.
15 Q. I see.
16 Now, you say that:
17 "Where necessary, the central government crisis
18 management machinery (... sometimes referred to as COBR)
19 will be activated ... in the aftermath of a major
20 emergency."
21 How is "major emergency" defined for the purposes of
22 triggering COBR responsibility?
23 A. So there isn't a specific trigger point. In the event
24 of an incident, there's always a conversation between
25 CCS, the lead government department for that incident

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1 and Number 10 to make the judgement whether to activate
2 the central machinery. So it's not an automatic point,
3 and that's to allow for flexibility, really, and ability
4 to adapt to circumstances as they arise.
5 Q. Right. Right, I may come back to that answer and unpick
6 that in that moment.
7 Just before I do, you say, I think, in your third
8 statement at paragraph 17 {CAB00014816/8} that COBR was
9 not formally called in response to the Grenfell Tower
10 fire; is that correct?
11 A. It's correct that the ministerial meetings were not
12 given the title of a COBR, but in their preparation and
13 content, they did exactly the same thing as a meeting
14 with that brand would have done.
15 Q. Right. So I think that takes us to the conclusion — is
16 this right? — that that doesn't mean that the
17 Grenfell Tower was considered to be a level 1 emergency?
18 A. No, we — it's not the case that at the start of
19 an event we would formally label an emergency at any one
20 of those levels. As you rightly said, Mr Millett, that
21 matrix is to guide judgement rather than a set of
22 hard—and—fast rules.
23 Q. Yes.
24 Can we go to your third statement, please, at page 8
25 {CAB00014816/8}. You say in paragraph 16 there:

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1 "There is no formal declaration of the level at
2 which an emergency is classified, which allows for
3 judgment to be applied about where an emergency lies on
4 the scale at any particular time. The levels provide
5 a guide to activity needed rather than activating
6 a specific set of action or resources, which allows for
7 a flexible and tailored approach depending on the
8 specific circumstances of an event. This is part of the
9 strength of the mechanism, in my view."
10 What's the purpose of having clearly defined levels
11 with corresponding actions as outlined in ConOps if
12 there's no specific reference to them?
13 A. The purpose is to help the people in that moment making
14 the judgement. It gives a framework within which to
15 consider where you might be on the spectrum, but then
16 of course the specific circumstances of the event are
17 always applied to that, which is why, as I say, it's not
18 a trigger point, but more a guidance document.
19 Q. Right. But who makes the judgement?
20 A. The judgement is made in the conversation I described
21 a second ago between the lead government department, CCS
22 and Number 10. That's in the case of a civil emergency.
23 Q. Is that a procedure which is provided for in ConOps or
24 anywhere else, or is it just how it is?
25 A. I would have to refresh my memory. I think it is

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1 referred to in the ConOps, but it's certainly a well
 2 tried and practised way of operating, and it allows for
 3 a very rapid response. That's the advantage.
 4 Q. Right. Because of the flexibility ?
 5 A. Because of the ability to make that judgement quickly,
 6 yes.
 7 Q. Can we go to page 4 of this statement, your third
 8 statement {CAB00014816/4}, please, and look at
 9 paragraph 4.5:
 10 "4.5. The role of Cabinet Office is, amongst other
 11 things to:
 12 "4.5.1. Decide whether and when the central
 13 Government response mechanism should be activated;
 14 "4.5.2. Ensure an LGD [lead government department]
 15 is in place."
 16 A. Correct.
 17 Q. Without a formal declaration of the level of
 18 an emergency, how would the Cabinet Office be able to
 19 carry out its role in ensuring that a lead government
 20 department was in place?
 21 A. So the fact of a lead government department is not
 22 triggered by a particular level of crisis event, and, in
 23 fact, as was the case for a fire of this nature, lead
 24 government department roles are, in the vast majority of
 25 cases, clear and pre-agreed, so there's no need to

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1 designate in the moment.
 2 Q. Right.
 3 Can we then go back, in light of that answer, and
 4 the one I wanted to come back to, to annex B, which was
 5 at {CAB00000026/68}. I wonder if you can just help me
 6 with this, because in it you can see that, as the
 7 colours change, so does the role of LGD.
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. You can see LGD is involved at yellow, centrally
 10 involved at ochre, and co-ordination being led by LGD in
 11 orange. Along the bottom, you can see how LGD becomes
 12 involved.
 13 Which comes first, the decision as to which colour
 14 you're in, in other words what the level is, or the
 15 LGD's involvement?
 16 A. So the change, as you move up the colours on this
 17 spectrum, reflects a different level of lead government
 18 department activity. The fact of being the lead
 19 government department remains unchanged and, as I said,
 20 would be pre-agreed. So there is no declaration of
 21 being in one colour or another; this is describing the
 22 likely change in the nature of response needed from that
 23 department as the severity of an event increases.
 24 Q. Right. But, for example, who decides that the incident
 25 is in an ochre colour, that in other words it's level 1

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1 and LGD should lead the central response?
 2 A. So it's not a decision that would be taken in that way.
 3 It would be part of — it would be the conversation
 4 I described a moment ago between the lead government
 5 department, CCS and Number 10 to decide whether the
 6 central government activity was needed and was going to
 7 be activated. That is the decision, rather than saying:
 8 we are in yellow or in amber or in ochre. The colours
 9 are intended to guide that process, rather than set hard
 10 boundaries for it.
 11 Q. So who would decide, given a local incident at a single
 12 scene, that this was green as opposed to yellow?
 13 A. So in an incident which fell within the green box on
 14 here, I would expect the local area would not be seeking
 15 support, I would expect the lead government department
 16 might well be aware of it, or DCLG colleagues might well
 17 be aware of it, but they would see no need for
 18 assistance, they would see no wider ramifications that
 19 government might need to deal with, they would see local
 20 responders having activated and dealing with that set of
 21 issues without the need for help. That's what something
 22 in the green box would look like, and, you know, the
 23 vast majority of emergency responses in this country
 24 fall into that category; they're dealt with ably by
 25 local responders with no engagement from the centre.

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1 Q. What would happen in a scenario where there were
 2 differences in understanding within central government
 3 about what level any given emergency was at?
 4 A. So I think that would be unlikely to take place, because
 5 the decision is not to designate a level, the decision
 6 is in what mechanism to activate, and if anybody was
 7 unclear as to whether the central machinery had been
 8 activated, they would simply contact CCS to clarify
 9 that.
 10 Q. I see. So CCS would be the arbiter of the rainbow, if
 11 you see what I mean? In other words, it would decide
 12 what level —
 13 A. I don't think there is an arbiter of the rainbow,
 14 because this is a guidance document, but if you were
 15 unclear what level of central response was taking place,
 16 we would certainly be the people who could tell you
 17 that.
 18 Q. Yes.
 19 Now, can we go to your first statement at page 12,
 20 {CAB00014764/12}, please, paragraph 38. You say there,
 21 in the second line, that:
 22 "When [COBR is] activated, CCS is responsible for
 23 their smooth operation and (in civil emergencies) acts
 24 as Secretariat to COBR; liaising with departments to
 25 understand and resolve issues; maintaining

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1 cross—government situational awareness; and briefing the
2 chair on issues to be addressed and progress against
3 previous actions.”

4 Do these responsibilities — —

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. — — only arise when COBR is activated?

7 A. They arise in relation to any ministerial meeting
8 convened to deal with a civil emergency, whether it is
9 branded COBR or not. So in the case of Grenfell Tower
10 fire, where those first two meetings were branded as
11 ad hoc ministerial meetings, exactly the same set of
12 responsibilities were engaged and the same procedures
13 were followed.

14 Q. I see.

15 So what difference would the formal calling of
16 a COBR make, in reality?

17 A. In practical terms, it would not.

18 Q. Right.

19 Now, let's then focus on the LGD.

20 If we go to page 12 {CAB00014764/12}, paragraph 37,
21 the paragraph above it — — I think we looked at this
22 before — — you said, this is the second and third lines:

23 “... the scale or complexity of an emergency means
24 that some degree of central government support or
25 coordination is necessary. Where this is the case,

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1 a government department will be allocated as the lead
2 for the overall management of the central government
3 response.”

4 How is it determined which government department
5 would lead in any given emergency?

6 A. That is pre—determined for the vast majority of risks,
7 and it normally reflects the policy responsibilities of
8 that department or their responsibility for particular
9 capabilities that will be critical in the response. So,
10 in the case of a fire, the Home Office is responsible
11 for fire and rescue services; it's therefore the logical
12 lead government department.

13 Q. Is it right that there will be an LGD for response and
14 an LGD for recovery?

15 A. Yes. Sometimes they are the same, sometimes they're
16 different.

17 Q. Right. What are the responsibilities of the LGD for
18 response?

19 A. Really to assist in drawing together situational
20 awareness, particularly in the early stages. They
21 provide policy advice into COBR or into the ministerial
22 meeting, and they are often, you know, the first point
23 of contact, essentially, for that particular event.

24 Q. And for recovery?

25 A. The same, but with the focus on the recovery phase,

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1 which really means returning to normal, or as close as
2 possible to normal, after the response phase of the
3 event has ended.

4 Q. Let's go to {HOM00013085}. This is entitled,
5 “Departments responsibilities for planning, response,
6 and recovery from emergencies”, and it's dated
7 March 2009.

8 First, was this the version current as at June 2017?

9 A. I think that's correct. Forgive me, I would have to
10 double check, but I think so.

11 Q. Yes. I mean, are you familiar with this document?

12 A. Yes, it's been some time since I looked at it,
13 I'm afraid, but I'm aware of it.

14 Q. Yes. I think I'm right that there was no specific LGD
15 for fire, or was there? You say it was the Home Office.
16 Is that right?

17 A. It was certainly the Home Office and there was no,
18 you know, quibble about that in the case of this event.

19 Q. It's the Home Office's role, I think, to decide whether
20 and when the central government response mechanism
21 should be activated and ensure that there is a relevant
22 LGD in place; have I got that right?

23 A. Not quite. It would be the Home Office working with CCS
24 and with Number 10 to make the decision about activation
25 of the central mechanism.

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1 Q. Would it always be the Home Office or just in this case
2 because it was a fire?

3 A. Purely because it was a fire in this case and the Home
4 Office was the lead government department for that risk.

5 Q. So just to correct the way I put it to you, is this
6 right: it would be the CCS plus the relevant
7 pre—determined lead government department — —

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. — — who would decide whether and when the central
10 government response mechanism should be activated?

11 A. Plus Number 10.

12 Q. And Number 10.

13 A. So a three—way conversation.

14 Q. At what stage would Number 10 as opposed to the CCS get
15 involved?

16 A. It would really depend on the incident. Normally we
17 would make contact at such point that it looked like it
18 was likely that the central mechanism might need to be
19 engaged, or we might make contact earlier just to keep
20 them, you know, apprised of discussions going on. But
21 normally very early.

22 Q. Right. So would that be at yellow level, going back to
23 the rainbow chart at annex B, or would it be higher up?

24 A. I mean, we wouldn't formally declare things as at yellow
25 level. It could be at any of those points, because,

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1 of course, not all incidents progress along the
 2 trajectory. But it would certainly be as soon as it
 3 seemed likely that we would need to use the central
 4 machinery.
 5 Q. Right, I see.
 6 Now, if we go to your third statement, please,
 7 page 15 {CAB00014816/15}, paragraph 36, you refer
 8 there — and I can take this shortly, given your last
 9 answer — to the pre-agreement arrangements which led to
 10 the Home Office being the lead government department for
 11 the fire, and for both response and recovery — well,
 12 for the response, I think, and DCLG for the recovery.
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. You say:
 15 "These roles were pre-agreed and so each department
 16 had responsibilities for their respective phases
 17 throughout ..."
 18 When were they pre-agreed? Was this an annual or
 19 periodic agreement, or was it ad hoc?
 20 A. No, I mean, there was a pre-agreed list of
 21 responsibilities. I'm afraid I can't tell you when the
 22 Home Office first took responsibility for fire response;
 23 I would assume when those responsibilities moved into
 24 the department from DCLG.
 25 Q. Right. Why would DCLG be the pre-agreed department for

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1 the Grenfell Tower fire?
 2 A. So the pre-agreed department for the recovery phase —
 3 Q. The recovery phase.
 4 A. — of an incident of this type, because that phase is
 5 most likely to heavily engage local authority
 6 responsibilities, for which DCLG is the lead department.
 7 Q. In knowing that, does the DCLG look at the NRR, the
 8 national risk register? What does it look at to know
 9 which incidents, which emergencies, it needs to be
 10 prepared to lead on the recovery phases for?
 11 A. So there's a pre-agreed list which both they and we
 12 held.
 13 Q. And is that list related in any way to the national risk
 14 register?
 15 A. Yes, it draws on the risk categories in there, yes.
 16 Q. I see.
 17 Can we look at the ConOps document, then, please, at
 18 page 15. This is {CAB00000026/15}. Here we have the
 19 title, "Role of the Lead Government Department for
 20 Response".
 21 2.16:
 22 "Where COBR is activated, the role of the Lead
 23 Government Department, in consultation with other
 24 government departments and with support from the
 25 Cabinet Office as necessary, will be to ..."

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1 And then there is a list, which goes over the page.
 2 I'll just show you three of these:
 3 "i. Produce a handling plan as soon as possible;
 4 "ii. Act as a focal point for communication between
 5 central government and the multi-agency, Regional and/or
 6 Strategic Co-ordinating Groups on the ground involving
 7 relevant government offices in the English regions or
 8 the devolved administrations as appropriate;
 9 "iii. Produce a brief, accurate situation report on
 10 the nature and scale of the emergency and submit this
 11 promptly to feed into the production of the Common
 12 Recognised Information Picture (CRIP) — along with
 13 central briefing for media purposes — to their Minister,
 14 copied to the Cabinet Office who will advise on wider
 15 distribution ...
 16 "iv. Ensure that responders and affected communities
 17 have access to the resources they need to manage the
 18 emergency and where shortfalls are required ensure they
 19 are addressed."
 20 Now, that role is prescribed in, as you can see,
 21 paragraph 2.16, "Where COBR is activated". Those are
 22 the opening words. What happens where COBR is not
 23 activated?
 24 A. If ministers are meeting in response to a crisis,
 25 whether or not it is branded as COBR, the same procedure

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1 and responsibilities would apply.
 2 Q. So what do we make of the words "Where COBR is
 3 activated"?
 4 A. I think that is — it's useful shorthand, if you like,
 5 for the activation of the central government crisis
 6 machinery, which most people would just refer to as
 7 COBR.
 8 Q. Was that a common use of the term?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. I see. So when people used COBR, they didn't mean this
 11 procedure, they didn't mean the room or rooms where
 12 Cabinet Office briefings took place, they meant
 13 activation of the central machinery for contingency
 14 responses?
 15 A. I would say that is very common usage, yes.
 16 Q. Right.
 17 Now, in light of that answer, I just want to see if
 18 I can understand this. So you could delete the words
 19 "Where COBR is activated", but then what would be the
 20 trigger which would lead to the role of the lead
 21 government department doing all the things I've read to
 22 you?
 23 A. It would be the convening of a group of ministers or
 24 perhaps officials to co-ordinate government support in
 25 relation to a particular event.

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1 Q. And I think you say that that convention would be
2 decided on after discussion between — is this right? —
3 the Cabinet Office, or the CCS, Number 10, and —
4 A. The lead department.
5 Q. — the putative lead government department.
6 A. Correct.
7 Q. Because you might not know which it was.
8 A. In most cases we would, because of that pre-agreed set
9 of responsibilities .
10 Q. Right. Putative, then, in the sense that until the
11 machinery is activated, they're not actually lead
12 government department.
13 A. No, they would still be lead government department in
14 relation to an event of that nature, whether or not the
15 machinery is activated.
16 Q. I see. So they're lead government department by prior
17 designation, as you've explained?
18 A. Exactly.
19 Q. And it's in that capacity the department participates in
20 the discussion about whether a line is crossed so that
21 they should do these things?
22 A. Whether further support might be needed, basically, is
23 the question we'd be asking.
24 Q. So can we take it, then — moving on, then, in the logic
25 and perhaps the time — that the Home Office, as LGD for

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1 the response to the Grenfell Tower fire, was supposed to
2 fulfil the requirements set out here at paragraph 2.16
3 of ConOps?
4 A. Yes, the responsibilities of an LGD were with the
5 Home Office for the response phase, yes.
6 Q. Even though there had been no formal COBR activation?
7 A. Correct.
8 Q. Right.
9 Now, from what point, can you recall, in the
10 incident was the Home Office required to fulfil these
11 functions as LGD?
12 A. So the point at which the crisis machinery was activated
13 was, I think, mid-morning on 14 June, where the
14 conversation happened between Stuart Wainwright in CCS,
15 Number 10 and in consultation with the Home Office.
16 That was the activation point.
17 Q. One more question before I ask the Chairman for the
18 break: did the absence of a formal COBR activation
19 affect or hamper or inform the Home Office's response?
20 A. In my view, no.
21 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, is that a convenient moment?
22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, it is, but I would like to ask
23 a question first .
24 It sounds to me as though there will never be
25 a formal activation of a procedure, there will simply be

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1 a decision to call a meeting of ministers and/or civil
2 servants in response to an emergency?
3 A. That is, in effect, what COBR is: a mechanism for
4 bringing people together to take collective action.
5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. So once someone — we can
6 discuss who, if necessary — decides to call that
7 meeting, then this machinery prescribes what will then
8 happen; is that right?
9 A. I think that is a perfectly reasonable description, yes.
10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, I hope it's reasonable, but
11 I hope it's accurate as well.
12 A. And accurate, yes.
13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good, thank you very much.
14 Well, we'll have a break at that point. We'll
15 resume, please, at 3.35, and as before, please don't
16 talk to anyone about your evidence while you're out of
17 the room.
18 THE WITNESS: Of course.
19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much.
20 Right, would you like to go with the usher, please.
21 (Pause)
22 Thank you, Mr Millett. 3.35, then, please.
23 (3.20 pm)
24 (A short break)
25 (3.35 pm)

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, ready to carry on,
2 Ms Hammond?
3 THE WITNESS: Yes.
4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
5 Yes, Mr Millett.
6 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, thank you.
7 Ms Hammond, I would like now to turn, if I can,
8 please, to 14 June 2017 and the events of that day in
9 2017.
10 A. Of course.
11 Q. Now, I think you tell us in your first statement at
12 paragraph 42 {CAB00014764/13} that you were notified
13 about the fire just after 3.00 am on morning of
14 14 June 2017; is that correct?
15 A. That's correct.
16 Q. I think you were the senior civil servant on duty that
17 night; yes?
18 A. That's right.
19 Q. Were you told at that point that a major incident had
20 been declared?
21 A. I can't recall those exact words being used. It was
22 clear that it was going to be a serious incident, and we
23 could see the scale of the blaze from media coverage.
24 So I can't recall exactly whether those words were
25 relayed to me.

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1 Q. Right. Did you assume that a major incident had been
2 declared by one or other or more, perhaps, of the blue
3 light services?
4 A. I think we certainly assumed it was going to be
5 an incident of that scale.
6 Q. Right.
7 Now, what made the band B duty officer call DCLG RED
8 at that time, as you tell us in paragraph 43
9 {CAB00014764/13}?
10 A. Because we assumed that a strategic co-ordinating group
11 would be called of local responders, and the RED would
12 provide the government liaison officer who would take
13 part in that call on behalf of central government and
14 provide that link.
15 Q. Right. Did you ask the band B duty officer to call RED
16 or did they do that of their own accord?
17 A. I think we had a conversation about it and he made the
18 phone call following that.
19 Q. Now, at 3.49, then, you emailed Stuart Wainwright, who
20 was one of your deputy directors, who was head of the
21 readiness and response team; yes?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. And you told him about the fire, I think. That's what
24 you say, in short, in paragraph 44 {CAB00014764/13}.
25 A. Yes. I emailed him in case anybody was calling him

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1 directly to say that the duty team were aware.
2 Q. What was it about the fire that you could see that
3 prompted you to send that email?
4 A. As I say, I sent the email because I suspected that the
5 scale of it may mean that somebody had called him
6 directly, rather than using the duty system — that can
7 sometimes happen, just a human error — and I wanted him
8 to be aware that the duty team were on the case.
9 Q. Right.
10 Then just before the middle of the paragraph, you
11 say:
12 "After making some small suggestions, at 4.33am
13 I instructed him to send it to No 10, the NSA, the DNSA
14 and the duty Private Secretary in the office of the
15 Minister for the Cabinet Office."
16 Now, that's basically the top of UK government,
17 isn't it, at least for contingency purposes?
18 A. Yes, so that notification was the facts as we knew them
19 at that point in anticipation that people would wake up,
20 see the events on the news and want to be assured that
21 they were being considered.
22 Q. Was it obvious to you at that point that the fire was
23 not a green local incident, but something far higher up
24 the colour bands in annex B?
25 A. Well, I think the information we didn't have at that

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1 point, obviously, was how the response might unfold. So
2 I think we assumed at that moment it was going to be
3 significant, but wouldn't have made a specific judgement
4 about where it sat in the colour bands, as you say.
5 Q. At any rate, not green?
6 A. I don't think I was thinking in terms of green or other
7 colours, but it was clear it was a significant incident.
8 Q. Right.
9 What particular characteristic or feature of the
10 fire, as you saw it, meant that you thought it was going
11 to be, or was already, a significant incident?
12 A. Well, we could certainly see the scale of the flames on
13 the building. I think we looked at where it would be on
14 a map and could see there'd be wider disruption to the
15 local area. So considerations like that.
16 Q. Now, the first strategic co-ordination group meeting, or
17 SCG meeting, took place at 5.00 am, and I think you say
18 that DCLG RED dialled in for central government; yes?
19 A. Correct, that's normal.
20 Q. Yes.
21 Now, is it right, in practice, that DCLG RED was the
22 mechanism by which CCS got SCG read-outs and found out
23 whether the SCG needed anything?
24 A. Yes, so the government liaison officer is the main
25 point. I think when I went back and reviewed the

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1 documents, there were also some read-outs provided
2 through the Mayor's Office, who would also have had
3 a presence at the SCG, but the GLO was the key link
4 point.
5 Q. Right. But DCLG was not the designated lead government
6 department.
7 A. Only for the recovery phase, not for the response.
8 Q. Quite right, in the response. So was it the case that
9 DCLG RED was automatically the department which would
10 send the GLO into an incident?
11 A. Yes, correct.
12 Q. Right.
13 Then let's go to {CAB00014082}. This is an email.
14 If you go to the second email down, you can see that
15 it's timed at 05.07.56, and it's Gill McManus, and she
16 says:
17 "Just to confirm DCLG RED duty officers are aware
18 and are currently dialled in to London SCG to receive
19 update following declaration of a major incident.
20 "We have informed CFRA duty officer and Home Office
21 are aware of the incident."
22 So it looks as if it was through DCLG RED and
23 Gill McManus, who had notified the Home Office or knew
24 that they were aware; is that right?
25 A. I'm afraid you would have to ask the Home Office to

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1 confirm that. I think Gill is just confirming that the
 2 Home Office are aware in this email, and I can't add to
 3 that evidence, I'm afraid.
 4 Q. Now, if we go, then, to {CAB00000157}, this is your
 5 exhibit 68. If you go, please, to page 2
 6 {CAB00000157/2}, top of page 2, it's an email from CCS
 7 on 14 June at 7.13, forwarding the read-out of the
 8 5.00 am SCG to Stuart Wainwright.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Do you see that?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Underneath that, you can see that Denise Welch at the
 13 DCLG had received that at 6.16, or before 6.16.06 on
 14 that morning —
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. — and sent an email, "Readout of the 05:00 Strategic
 17 Co-ordination Group: fire at Grenfell Tower", and you
 18 can see who was present at that, and there is
 19 a situation update which continues over some pages.
 20 Now, it appears to have taken CCS control almost
 21 an hour to forward the read-out to Mr Wainwright; do you
 22 know why that was the case?
 23 A. I don't know why that's the case. Mr Wainwright would
 24 have had access to CCS control and the ability to read
 25 it, so he, in all likelihood, would have read it before

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1 that in any case.
 2 Q. Right.
 3 Then if we go, please, to {CAB00000157/1}, we can
 4 see what happens a few minutes later. So
 5 Stuart Wainwright receives the email I've just shown you
 6 at 7.13, and then here we are, if you go, please, to the
 7 second email down, at 7.27 on the morning of 14 June,
 8 Stuart Wainwright to Alastair Whitehead.
 9 Now, Alastair Whitehead was the private secretary to
 10 the Prime Minister at the time; yes?
 11 A. Correct.
 12 Q. And he had responsibility for home affairs, I think.
 13 A. That's right, yes.
 14 Q. And he sends this email to Alastair Whitehead, does
 15 Stuart Wainwright, and he copies you in, as you can see:
 16 "Alastair — readout below from an earlier SCG at
 17 5am. There is another now (which clg and ho are dialled
 18 into). We'll get a readout from this and other sources.
 19 "Fatalities are now confirmed as 4 we understand."
 20 Is it right that this is the first update that you
 21 had received from DCLG RED since Gill McManus' 05.07
 22 email?
 23 A. Well, I also had access to CCS control, so it's
 24 perfectly possible I had read it as soon as it was
 25 received. I'm afraid I can't recall. This is Stuart,

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1 as you say, copying me in to an update, and Number 10.
 2 Q. Right. So you might have had, but you can't remember —
 3 A. I'm afraid not.
 4 Q. — updating communications through your access to the
 5 CCS control system; is that —
 6 A. I might have read the RED update sooner than this
 7 forward.
 8 Q. Right.
 9 Now, he goes on to say, after the — I suppose it's
 10 really a cut and paste from the SCG report. He says:
 11 "After the current SCG call we should be able to
 12 better determine any national support that is needed and
 13 any Whitehall coordination that is required."
 14 Is it right that, at this stage, no decision had
 15 been made about the need for national support?
 16 A. Yes, I think that's right.
 17 Q. Then if we go, please, to {CAB00010263/2}, top of
 18 page 2, we can see a further email from Mr Wainwright at
 19 08.35 to Gill McManus and to you, copied to
 20 Peter Holland, who was the CFRA, sitting within the
 21 Home Office:
 22 "Thank you CLG and HO colleagues.
 23 "Grateful for readouts from the latest SCG when
 24 available. I understand the situation is stabilising
 25 also, but do shout if things change and national

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1 resources are needed."
 2 Are you able to help with where Mr Wainwright's
 3 understanding that the situation was stabilising might
 4 have come from?
 5 A. I'm very happy to ask Mr Wainwright, but I can't help
 6 with that without doing so, I'm afraid.
 7 Q. No, but did you know at the time or do you know now,
 8 sitting there?
 9 A. I'm afraid not sitting here, but very happy to ask him
 10 if that would help.
 11 Q. Are you able to help us with what the national resources
 12 were which would have been available, as identified?
 13 A. So at this stage, obviously, this event is in the
 14 response phase, so it would have been anything that the
 15 fire and rescue service in particular might need to
 16 assist them. That could be mutual aid from another
 17 force, it could be other assets that they might need —
 18 it's the normal question that we would ask: do you need
 19 anything?
 20 Q. Now, you can see the reference there to
 21 Stuart Wainwright essentially asking for read-outs from
 22 the latest SCG. That was the 6.00 am.
 23 A. I think that's referring to the 7.00 am SCG, if
 24 I remember correctly.
 25 Q. I think we're probably both wrong, actually, I think

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1 it's the 6.30 SCG.
 2 Let's go, please, to {CAB00014771}. This is
 3 an email from Gill McManus at 9.15, later in the
 4 morning, but if we go, please, to page 2 of this email
 5 string {CAB00014771/2} -- and we'll come back to that
 6 email in due course if we need to -- here is the email
 7 from Gill McManus at 8.40. She is at DCLG, as we know,
 8 emailing CCS a read-out from the 6.30 SCG, and she says:
 9 "Stuart, RC
 10 "Please see read out from 6.30 SCG. GLO currently
 11 in 8.30 SCG so we will provide further information
 12 following that meeting."
 13 Now, does it look as if from this that the CCS
 14 wasn't receiving timely information about the situation
 15 on the ground?
 16 A. I think it looks to me like Stuart is making every
 17 effort to ensure that it comes through rapidly. That is
 18 really helpful in the early hours of a response like
 19 this. And, yes, I think there is an element of chasing
 20 here, but nothing particularly unusual.
 21 Q. Right. I mean, it looks from this that DCLG RED,
 22 Gill McManus, was sending read-outs from the SCG that
 23 had happened a little bit later than, or perhaps at the
 24 same time as, the next one that was in progress; yes?
 25 A. They're obviously happening, you know, in rapid

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1 succession at this time of the morning, so every
 2 two hours.
 3 Q. Had you ever experienced an incident where there were so
 4 many SCGs within such a short timeframe?
 5 A. Not at this point, I don't think, no.
 6 Q. Right.
 7 At the time, given the local authority's role,
 8 RBKC's role as a category 1 responder, did you have any
 9 concerns about the delay in receiving updates from DCLG?
 10 A. Not specifically in relation to RBKC's role, no.
 11 Q. Right.
 12 Do you agree that it was imperative that information
 13 was being received by the CCS promptly from the SCGs?
 14 A. Yes, that's always important.
 15 Q. Would you have expected SCG read-outs to be sent more
 16 promptly than they were from these initial meetings, as
 17 we've seen from these emails?
 18 A. Hard to make that judgement without knowing exactly what
 19 time the SCGs finished. Sometimes they can last some
 20 considerable time. But we would expect a very rapid
 21 read-out.
 22 Q. Now, I next want to ask you about the assessment that
 23 support was not needed, and we can start this topic, or
 24 subtopic, at paragraph 46 of your first statement on
 25 page 14 {CAB00014764/14}. You say there, in the second

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1 sentence, halfway down:
 2 "The message we consistently received was that the
 3 responders did not need any resources or assistance from
 4 national government."
 5 If we go to your third statement, please, at page 9
 6 {CAB00014816/9}, paragraph 20, there is a question,
 7 question 10, which picks up on paragraph 46 of your
 8 first statement, and the question is:
 9 "... what was the source(s) of the information that
 10 responders did not need any resources or assistance from
 11 national government?"
 12 You say this at paragraph 20:
 13 "This would primarily have been based on the absence
 14 of a request for assistance. We would expect local
 15 responders to be best placed to assess the requirements
 16 on the ground, and determine whether or not they had the
 17 resources to address them."
 18 At what point in time are you talking about there?
 19 A. So I think you -- your question referred to my 6.10
 20 email.
 21 Q. Yes, but you say in which -- or to which you refer to as
 22 saying, "The message we consistently received ..."
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. "... was that the responders did not need any resources
 25 or assistance from national government."

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1 A. Yeah.
 2 Q. At what point in time are you referring there?
 3 A. Oh, forgive me, I misunderstood your question. I think
 4 I'm referring to the course of the 14th, actually --
 5 Q. Right.
 6 A. -- when you can see from Stuart's emails he was asking
 7 the question: do you need national assistance? And the
 8 answer was consistently no.
 9 Q. From whom were you getting that message?
 10 A. Coming from the SCGs, in particular, where the
 11 government liaison officer would have been, you know,
 12 relaying that question.
 13 Q. Was there any proactive enquiry by CCS or by RED with
 14 RBKC to ascertain whether they might have needed
 15 resources or assistance from national government at that
 16 stage?
 17 A. CCS wouldn't normally make direct contact like that, we
 18 would go through the RED network, and I'm afraid I can't
 19 give evidence on their behalf.
 20 Q. Would it be normal practice that national assistance
 21 would only be provided if expressly asked for?
 22 A. That is normally the route by which it is deployed.
 23 Sometimes it's clear that people need help and it is --
 24 it's also offered, but normally responders are very
 25 rapid in saying, "We need some assistance here".

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1 Q. If we go, please, to {CAB00000159}, now, and look at the
 2 second email down, we now see Stuart Wainwright sending
 3 an email, and it's not clear to whom, but you certainly
 4 respond to it, if you scroll up to the top of page 1.
 5 But if you look at the second email down, as I'm
 6 showing you, this is at 8.09 on 14 June.
 7 Stuart Wainwright writes:
 8 "Bringing Lorna in to see the latest."
 9 Now, Lorna was Lorna Gratton, wasn't she?
 10 A. Correct.
 11 Q. And she was at Number 10; yes?
 12 A. Yes, that's right.
 13 Q. Right, so, "Bringing Lorna in to see the latest". So
 14 can we date or time the first involvement of Number 10
 15 Downing Street in the Grenfell Tower fire to about this
 16 time, just after 8.00 am on the morning of the 14th?
 17 A. I think there is a previous email to Alastair Whitehead,
 18 who was also in Number 10, so I think, from memory, that
 19 is the first --
 20 Q. The one we looked at before?
 21 A. -- engagement with Number 10.
 22 Q. I follow. And that, I think, we saw before at 7.27.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Right. So what was the purpose, then, of bringing
 25 Lorna Gratton in?

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1 A. So I think because Lorna's responsibilities in Number 10
 2 encompass DCLG's policy areas, and it would have been
 3 increasingly clear that there was a significant recovery
 4 operation that would be likely and that that would be
 5 a DCLG lead. So those recovery and response phases
 6 aren't distinct, you would start to think about both
 7 very early, so useful to have Lorna engaged and aware.
 8 Q. We see Mr Wainwright saying that the LFB was not seeking
 9 additional resources and that the NHS had capacity; do
 10 you see that?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Did you consider yourself specifically about asking
 13 whether RBKC had enough capacity or were seeking
 14 assistance?
 15 A. I can't recollect asking that specific question at this
 16 moment. I would have taken the absence of a request as
 17 reassurance.
 18 Q. Right. It doesn't look from the documents that you
 19 yourself considered specifically going to RBKC or asking
 20 RED to go to RBKC and ask them whether they needed
 21 national assistance.
 22 A. No, I would have expected that to come through the SCG
 23 if it was known to be needed.
 24 Q. Right. So it's a reactive arrangement, is it, that
 25 national assistance will only be provided if it's asked

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1 for by the category 1 responder through the SCG?
 2 A. Not exclusively, but, as I've said, in my experience,
 3 most responders are, you know, very prompt in saying
 4 where they need that assistance, so that is normally how
 5 it would work.
 6 Q. Right, I see.
 7 What would happen if you could see that the local
 8 council as a category 1 responder was in dire need of
 9 national assistance but simply wasn't asking for it for
 10 whatever reason?
 11 A. Then we would offer it, and I think when you come to the
 12 ministerial meetings, you know, you can see the question
 13 being asked: what can we do to help? I don't think it
 14 can be forcibly provided, but it's not an issue that has
 15 arisen, really.
 16 Q. Now, it's right to say that the decision was taken to
 17 convene a cross-government ministerial meeting; yes?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And I think we can see that in a document at
 20 {CAB00000337}. Let's have that up. I'm going to ask
 21 you to look at the second email on page 1 there.
 22 Before I ask you a question about it, is it right to
 23 say that a decision to convene a cross-government
 24 ministerial meeting is one usually taken jointly by the
 25 CCS, Number 10 and the relevant lead government

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1 department? I think you touched on that earlier, but
 2 have I got that right?
 3 A. You have.
 4 Q. Thank you.
 5 Let's look at this email from Alastair Whitehead to
 6 a range of respondees, including you, 14 June at 10.04,
 7 and if we turn to the very foot of that page, it says:
 8 "RE: Grenfell Tower fire: situation update ..."
 9 Then if we turn, please, to page 2 {CAB00000337/2},
 10 at the very top of the screen it says:
 11 "Thanks, I've discussed with Stuart and the
 12 Prime Minister has asked for a cross-Whitehall
 13 coordination meeting this afternoon -- given
 14 Home Secretary availability, I suggest we do this at
 15 Minister of State level, so chaired by Minister [for]
 16 Policing & Fire, with Ministers from Health, Transport,
 17 Housing, London, etc. attending with the Mayor of London
 18 and operational commanders."
 19 Was it the Prime Minister, therefore, that was the
 20 person who asked for the cross-Whitehall co-ordination
 21 meeting?
 22 A. I think what is happening in that email is Alastair is
 23 formally recording the conversation that would have
 24 happened between himself and Stuart and consulting the
 25 lead government department. So that is how it would be

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1 described.

2 Q. Well, as a fact, I mean, was it the case that it was the

3 Prime Minister who had asked for the cross—Whitehall

4 co—ordination meeting?

5 A. Well, I —

6 Q. It certainly suggests that, doesn't it?

7 A. I would assume that Alastair had spoken to her on the

8 back of that conversation and she had confirmed that she

9 would like that to take place. That would be my

10 assumption.

11 Q. All right. Well, I mean, how does that work? Is it the

12 case that Alastair Whitehead would have suggested to

13 Theresa May that she should have or convene

14 a cross—Whitehall co—ordination meeting, which she then

15 confirmed, yes, or is it the case that the

16 Prime Minister herself, of her own volition, asked for

17 a cross—Whitehall co—ordination meeting? I think you're

18 drawing a distinction between the two?

19 A. I'm not, for practical purposes, and I'm afraid that you

20 would have to ask Alastair which was the case in this

21 circumstance.

22 Q. Right. Either way, I think we can take it that whether

23 it was prompted by Alastair Whitehead or Theresa May

24 herself, the decision to ask for a cross—Whitehall

25 co—ordination meeting came from the very top of UK

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1 government.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Now, then let's go to ConOps again, please, if we can,

4 {CAB00000026/45}, and on page 45 there we can see

5 paragraph 4.2(iii), top of the page:

6 "Cabinet Office will convene a meeting (if

7 appropriate in COBR) if there is uncertainty over the

8 direction of the UK central government response to any

9 emergency or the effectiveness of the local response in

10 England and Wales, to assess the situation and advise

11 ministers as necessary."

12 Now, at this stage — so we are at just after

13 10.00 am on the 14th — as far as you were aware, was

14 there uncertainty about the direction of the UK central

15 government response?

16 A. I don't think I would have described it as uncertainty

17 over the direction. It was clearly only a small number

18 of hours into this event, so the scale of it was still

19 unfolding and we were still understanding what the

20 implications might be. That's how I would characterise

21 it.

22 Q. Right.

23 Now, you've told us there was no COBR meeting, as

24 such. What, within the ambit of COBR, the procedure in

25 it, was it that caused the Prime Minister or the

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1 Prime Minister's Office to convene the meeting?

2 A. I think recognition that there could be serious

3 implications here and a need to make sure we had

4 understood those correctly and were able to respond

5 rapidly to any requests for assistance.

6 Q. Right. Let me try this slightly more obliquely: did

7 ConOps play any part, or did the procedures set out in

8 ConOps play any part, in the processes adopted by

9 central government on 14 June?

10 A. So I'm not sure I understand your question correctly.

11 I mean, the ConOps sets out the processes which underpin

12 how CCS operates — forgive me, I may have misunderstood

13 your question.

14 Q. Well, let me be more specific.

15 You have told us earlier that there wasn't a COBR

16 meeting because this was a cross—government meeting —

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. — decided in the light of all the circumstances and not

19 to be regarded as a COBR meeting. I've shown you (iii),

20 which says the Cabinet Office will convene a meeting, if

21 appropriate in COBR — so not necessarily in COBR — if

22 there is uncertainty about the direction. You said

23 there wasn't. So that leads to the question: well, was

24 the ConOps procedure relevant, was it being used at all,

25 on the morning of 14 June?

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1 A. Yes, I think it was, but there's obviously a degree of

2 judgement involved here, and I think this paragraph is

3 not setting out the only reason for which

4 a cross—ministerial — cross—government ministerial

5 meeting can be convened.

6 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I have to say, I get the impression

7 that a meeting was convened because the Prime Minister

8 wanted a meeting to be convened and for no other reason.

9 I'm not saying it's — that's not a criticism, it's just

10 a fact, isn't it?

11 A. I don't think that is the case. I mean, I think there

12 was a conversation — that three—way conversation

13 I described. There was recognition that this could be

14 a serious incident that required government engagement

15 and, in those circumstances, bringing ministers together

16 would be a sensible thing to do.

17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you.

18 MR MILLETT: Let me ask it in a slightly different way.

19 Can you point to which bit of COBR I need to look at

20 to understand what process was being adopted which led

21 to the Prime Minister making her decision to convene

22 a cross—government meeting?

23 A. Sorry, when you say which bit of COBR —

24 Q. Which part, which section?

25 A. Do you mean of the ConOps?

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1 Q. Yes.
 2 A. Ah.
 3 Q. Sorry, you're quite right, of the ConOps procedure.
 4 A. I don't have the whole document in front of me, but in
 5 essence, it is the process by which that judgement is
 6 exercised about where we might be along the spectrum of
 7 colours you described before. So a judgement is taken
 8 whether it is likely that government responsibilities
 9 could be engaged. In these circumstances, where it
 10 looked to be, you know, a potentially very serious
 11 incident, it was sensible to bring ministers together.
 12 Q. All right. Did you yourself consult ConOps or think
 13 about which part of ConOps you needed to look at when
 14 yourself being involved in the decision to convene the
 15 meeting?
 16 A. I can't recollect doing that, forgive me.
 17 Q. Can we go to {CAB00000337}. We were there before.
 18 I just want to go back to the email, please, if we can.
 19 I don't think I've shown you the rest of it — well,
 20 I have, actually. It's back to the first paragraph.
 21 Now, is it right that the initial proposal was for
 22 the Home Secretary to chair the cross—Whitehall
 23 co—ordination meeting, but that a less senior minister
 24 be appointed because the Home Secretary was unavailable?
 25 That's the impression one gets from that paragraph. Is

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1 that correct?
 2 A. I think that is a reasonable inference from that
 3 paragraph.
 4 Q. Yes, it is, but is it factually correct?
 5 A. To the best of my recollection, I'm afraid I can't
 6 remember the details of the Home Secretary's
 7 availability.
 8 Q. If we go, please, to the top email, page 1, at 10.09,
 9 this is from Stuart Wainwright to Alastair Whitehead,
 10 and it says:
 11 "Thanks Alastair — and we just spoke.
 12 "Looking like 4pm for Nick Hurd chaired meeting
 13 which will be labelled as a 'Cross—Government
 14 Coordination Meeting'. Calling notice to issue
 15 shortly."
 16 So it looks as if — is this right? — Nick Hurd had
 17 been identified as the potential chair for that meeting;
 18 yes?
 19 A. Yes, he's the minister of state referred to in the
 20 previous email.
 21 Q. Right, and it was going to be labelled as
 22 a cross—government co—ordination meeting. Was that
 23 a thing, was that a known type of meeting recognised in
 24 the procedures?
 25 A. I think — yes, I think everybody would have known what

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1 that meant.
 2 Q. And what would they have thought it meant?
 3 A. I think the title it was actually given was an ad hoc
 4 ministerial meeting. It does exactly the same things as
 5 a COBR.
 6 Q. Right.
 7 Then moving on to that: was it COBR?
 8 Let's go to the next email in time, which is
 9 five minutes later, at {CAB00014775}. Stuart Wainwright
 10 to a number of individuals, including Gill McManus, as
 11 we can see, and Peter Tallantire in the Cabinet Office.
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. As well as cc to CCS and the Home Office fire duty
 14 officer:
 15 "All
 16 "Heads up — likely to be a Nick Hurd (Policing min)
 17 chaired Ministerial (not COBR) at 4pm today.
 18 "Details to come.
 19 "We'll be looking for Ministers from CLG, DH, DfT.
 20 Mayor invited also.
 21 "CLG — give me a call about boroughs and local MPs."
 22 So not COBR.
 23 Now, he makes a point, as you can see, that this is
 24 specifically not a COBR meeting. Can you explain why
 25 that is?

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1 A. I don't think I'd give you evidence on why Stuart wrote
 2 that in his email. It is factually correct that it
 3 wasn't being branded as a COBR meeting.
 4 Q. Yes. What's the rationale, though — I mean, I know you
 5 weren't on this email and you're not in his mind, but
 6 what would have been the rationale, to your way of
 7 thinking at the time, for going out of your way to say
 8 that this meeting was not a COBR meeting?
 9 A. Well, he may have just been attempting to be factually
 10 correct. I think in his statement to the Inquiry,
 11 Alastair Whitehead has given his description of the
 12 branding of the meeting, which to me reads — rings very
 13 true. But, as you say, I was not myself participating
 14 in this exchange.
 15 Q. I mean, the question really is: if it made no difference
 16 whether it was or wasn't branded a COBR meeting, as you
 17 put it, what was the point of making the point?
 18 A. Erm —
 19 Q. What was the significance of it not being a COBR
 20 meeting?
 21 A. Well, in practical terms, no significance at all. We
 22 did all of the same things. Alastair's evidence, if
 23 I can sort of paraphrase it —
 24 Q. Well, I think we can read it.
 25 A. Yeah. Well —

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1 Q. I think you agree with it.
 2 A. I mean, Alastair's explanation to me rings very true.
 3 Q. Right.
 4 Now, let's go back to the diagram, please, which is
 5 annex B on page 68 of ConOps, which is at
 6 {CAB00000026/68}, please. Now, there it is. This is
 7 designed, as I think you say, to chart the likely
 8 government engagement in response to an emergency.
 9 Now, as at mid-morning on 14 June 2017, after the
 10 meeting, the cross-government meeting, had been
 11 convened, but hadn't yet happened, where did you think
 12 the Grenfell Tower incident fell on this colour chart?
 13 A. Well, I think lots of information was still emerging at
 14 that point and that meant it was unclear whether it
 15 would land, if I can put it this way, to the left of the
 16 section you described as ochre or in the ochre section
 17 there, because we were still gathering information about
 18 the ongoing event.
 19 Q. So you thought it was significant, level 1; yes?
 20 A. I think roughly that is — that is the area which our
 21 understanding would have — would put you in on this
 22 chart.
 23 Q. Right. And I know the chart is not a mathematically
 24 accurate chart.
 25 A. Exactly.

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1 Q. I'm not asking you a mathematical question, really more
 2 one of impression, but you thought it was around about
 3 the level 1, significant, yes, with LGD leading the
 4 central response?
 5 A. So I think we weren't yet clear whether it would be
 6 there or on the other side of the line, and, in those
 7 circumstances, you know, it's sensible to bring people
 8 together to be prepared for the eventuality that it does
 9 require a central response.
 10 Q. Right.
 11 Now, given that a decision had been made not to
 12 activate COBR, but that nonetheless a cross-government
 13 ministerial meeting had been decided upon at the very
 14 highest level, where did that leave the COBR not
 15 involved description? COBR hadn't been involved, but
 16 something to all intents and purposes the same had.
 17 Does that tell you that this was ochre or something more
 18 serious, in other words orange?
 19 A. So, I mean, I think as I set out, perhaps not very
 20 clearly, before, this is not a set of hard-and-fast
 21 trigger points. So, applying judgement to it, we —
 22 you know, there is an element of — there was certainly
 23 a potential that it would end up being a more serious
 24 response. Information was still being gathered. So
 25 I think the COBR branding at that point was less

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1 important than bringing people together to understand
 2 the situation and make sure action that was needed was
 3 taken.
 4 Q. I mean, to your way of understanding this at the time,
 5 the importance of COBR — was this right? — was
 6 significant here, because in the ochre band, COBR is
 7 expressly not involved, and that's why it's underlined,
 8 the "not" is underlined.
 9 A. But that is not saying that COBR can never be involved
 10 in a response of this type. As I said before, this is
 11 a guidance framework for the sort of likely — and that
 12 word at the top of the page is significant — response
 13 that you would expect in this kind of scenario. It does
 14 not rule out calling any kind of meeting in any of these
 15 scenarios if judgement suggests it's required.
 16 Q. What was the basis of your assessment that it was, if
 17 I can use this expression, ochre-ish, perhaps tending
 18 towards the orange?
 19 A. Well, I think there were — obviously there had been
 20 confirmed fatalities by this point on the morning of the
 21 14th. I think it was considered to be likely that that
 22 number would rise. And there were still — we were
 23 still understanding the impacts on the surrounding area.
 24 So it was not an incident which had concluded and all of
 25 the impacts were known; they were still being

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1 understood.
 2 Q. Can we then go to {CAB00001129}. This is the agenda for
 3 the meeting at 4.00 pm that had been the subject of the
 4 Wainwright emails earlier in the day.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. You can see the title.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. "GRENFELL TOWER FIRE
 9 "Ad-Hoc Ministerial COBR."
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. "to be held in LG04, 10 Victoria Street.
 12 "Wednesday 14 June, 1600."
 13 Can you explain why the agenda circulated ahead of
 14 the 14 June 2017 ministerial meeting describes it as
 15 an ad hoc ministerial COBR meeting?
 16 A. I can't, I'm afraid. It may have been in the course of
 17 amending the template that that remained in there. But,
 18 no, I'm afraid I can't help more than that.
 19 Q. Now, I think you've said, and you say in your third
 20 statement certainly, that the meetings that took place
 21 in the days after the fire were described as "ad hoc
 22 ministerial meetings", and you say that made no
 23 difference in practice, and you've explained why that
 24 is, both in your statement and today.
 25 A. I think we're talking about the meetings on the 14th and

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1 the 15th only.
 2 Q. Yes. 14th and 15th.
 3 What's the purpose of having COBR if it makes no
 4 practical difference whether you have COBR or you have
 5 a ministerial group?
 6 A. Well, sometimes the brand of COBR has a great deal of
 7 power. It can provide a lot of reassurance, including
 8 publicly. On occasion, if it is, you know, difficult to
 9 galvanise a response, it guarantees an immediate
 10 reaction. It certainly wasn't the case on this occasion
 11 that there was any difficulty in that regard.
 12 Q. What do you mean by any difficulty? You mean you didn't
 13 need to have the brand to provide the reassurance?
 14 A. I mean that government departments were doing what
 15 I would expect them to do in these circumstances.
 16 Q. Well, you say, "do what I would expect them to do in
 17 these circumstances"; we know what they would do where
 18 COBR was activated, but what are you circumstances
 19 you're talking about where it's not activated?
 20 A. I mean in respect of an incident of this nature, they
 21 were doing the things that we would expect them to be
 22 doing.
 23 Q. Let's stick with ConOps and go back to that, please,
 24 {CAB0000026/22}. We have a flow chart, and it's the
 25 COBR flow chart, and it shows diagrammatically the full

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1 COBR structure. You can see how it's set out: you've
 2 got the strategy group/civil contingencies committee at
 3 the very top, and then you've got some cells below that,
 4 intelligence and situation, and then you've got
 5 operational response, impact management group, recovery
 6 group and public information, all fed into by
 7 scientific /technical, legal and logistics.
 8 Underneath that, it says:
 9 "The COBR structure is designed to be flexible to
 10 adapt to the circumstances at hand. Often there will be
 11 no need for all the supporting structures to be
 12 activated — indeed a full activation is likely only in
 13 the most complex emergencies, particularly where there
 14 is a need to manage a mix of highly and unclassified
 15 material or there are potentially wide ranging
 16 consequences flowing from the initial event (eg some
 17 terrorist scenarios)."
 18 Then in 3.4:
 19 "The Cabinet Office will, in consultation with the
 20 lead government department, decide on which components
 21 should be activated and how they might best be used."
 22 Now, there's nothing here which suggests — and
 23 I appreciate I'm only showing you a part of an 80—page
 24 procedure — that you could just not have COBR but have
 25 the same thing by way of an ad hoc ministerial meeting.

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1 On the contrary, what's suggested is that here is the
 2 COBR structure, but it can be used flexibly at the
 3 decision of the Cabinet Office in consultation with the
 4 LGD; yes?
 5 A. Based on the text in front of me, I think you're right,
 6 there's no reference to an ad hoc ministerial structure.
 7 Q. No, and so if the same procedures were going to be
 8 followed as, in effect, COBR, why not activate COBR?
 9 Then everybody would know where they were, could look at
 10 the structure chart and work on the basis of a known and
 11 accepted procedure.
 12 A. I think this is a question you've asked me a moment ago.
 13 I mean, practically speaking, it made no difference, is
 14 the assurance I can give you, and if you look at the
 15 elements of the structure described here, you know,
 16 a number of elements of this were activated in support
 17 of the ad hoc ministerial meeting. So whatever the
 18 branding, I think exactly the same things were done in
 19 support of the response here.
 20 Q. Yes, as a response. I'm sorry to repeat the question,
 21 but I'm not sure I really got an answer or understood
 22 the answer, in which case it's my fault.
 23 If it's not going to make a difference, why not have
 24 it? Why not have COBR?
 25 A. I don't think I can give you a clear answer to that

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1 question, not having been in that conversation.
 2 Q. Now, then, let's move on to another email. This is
 3 {CAB00013996}. If you go, please, to the third email
 4 down on page 1, this is from you, and it's to
 5 Camilla Marshall from the PM's press office, and she
 6 asks you — and I probably should show you the email
 7 below it, actually.
 8 Yes, let's look at page 2 {CAB00013996/2}. I'm
 9 hesitating only because it's very small on the screen,
 10 but let's look at it. It comes in at 12.47 to
 11 Camilla Marshall, and it's copied to you, as you can
 12 see, as well as Stuart Wainwright, and ...
 13 I'm so sorry, it's my fault entirely. Can we go to
 14 the bottom of the screen, page 2. The first question
 15 comes from Camilla Marshall. It's not clear who it's
 16 sent to. She's at the Prime Minister's press office,
 17 and she says:
 18 "If asked about the difference between a COBRa or
 19 CCS convened meeting what would the answer be?"
 20 So she's actually asked the question I've been
 21 asking you.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. If we scroll up, then, to the next email on page 2,
 24 Carol McCall, who is head of civil contingency
 25 communications at the NSC, sitting, I think, in the

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1 Prime Minister's Office — sitting in the
 2 Cabinet Office.
 3 A. In the Cabinet Office, yes.
 4 Q. Yes. Well, I think probably both. She says:
 5 "A very good question!
 6 "On the face of it is location, location, location
 7 BUT it is a fine line between this being an update for
 8 Ministers and [senior] officials to ensure all of the
 9 right capabilities are brought to bare in dealing with
 10 the incident as opposed to it being a start of a series
 11 of meeting to provide high level decision making on an
 12 ongoing basis."
 13 Then she says:
 14 "Do others [copied] agree?"
 15 So it looks as if Camilla Marshall has put her
 16 finger on the question, which seems to be a very good
 17 question, and then we can see, I think, your response,
 18 which is what I'd started with, but now let's go back to
 19 that. At the very bottom of page 1 {CAB00013996/1}, you
 20 say at 12:58:
 21 "Carol, Camilla
 22 "There's an oddity here, because CCS is involved in
 23 both formal COBRs and less formal meetings like this, so
 24 the 'CCS convened' tag may tie us in knots a bit.
 25 "I think that probably focusing on the difference

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1 between a formal crisis management response (the COBR
 2 process — technically a Cabinet sub-committee) vs a less
 3 formal co-ordination meeting would be more helpful. The
 4 thing which really determines the difference is whether
 5 central government has a leading role in the response —
 6 in this case clearly it's being managed extremely well
 7 by local responders and we are therefore checking in on
 8 resource requirements and looking ahead to what support
 9 arrangements are going to be needed from across the
 10 system in the next few days."
 11 Camilla Marshall comes back and says:
 12 "That's helpful, yes. And this is just for our
 13 internal awareness. I'll flag if a formal question
 14 comes to us."
 15 Is it right that, at the time, the difference in
 16 your mind, as this seems to demonstrate, between the
 17 formal COBR process and the less formal co-ordination
 18 meetings with ministers is whether central government
 19 has a leading role in the response?
 20 A. Yes. I mean, I think what that email reflects more
 21 eloquently than I am doing here is the uncertainty on
 22 which side of the yellow/ochre line, as you described
 23 it, this response would end up being on. So at that
 24 moment in time, in the response phase, clearly the
 25 fire service were on the ground and leading on

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1 extinguishing the blaze, the police service were on the
 2 ground leading on managing the area around the tower,
 3 and therefore what the requirement might be on central
 4 government in that moment was still emerging, and as
 5 I think I said before, we were beginning to understand
 6 that that was more likely to be needed in the recovery
 7 phase, which of course began two days later with the
 8 recovery taskforce on Friday of that week.
 9 Q. Well, you were at pains, I think, earlier to point out
 10 that there was no real difference between COBR and the
 11 4 o'clock meeting that was convened, named not COBR by
 12 Stuart Wainwright specifically, but in fact, looking at
 13 this, it appears that there was a difference in your
 14 mind — is this right? — that COBR, if activated, would
 15 have been a formal crisis management response, which is
 16 something you didn't want at that time; what you wanted
 17 instead was a less formal co-ordination meeting by way
 18 of information-gathering.
 19 A. I think I'm really clear that the practical operation of
 20 those two things was exactly the same. We did all of
 21 the things that we would have done for something branded
 22 a COBR meeting. This exchange is thinking about how to
 23 explain that difference, you know, in a press context,
 24 I think. But the basic point is the same. You know,
 25 the government — the central government role was at

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1 that point emerging and not yet clear.
 2 Q. Is it right to say that COBR wasn't activated on 14 June
 3 because it was understood, at least by you, on the face
 4 of this email, that the response was "being managed
 5 extremely well by local responders"?
 6 A. I think at that moment the — there was no indication
 7 that the responders on the ground were in need of
 8 additional assistance, and were doing, as far as it's
 9 possible to assess, exactly what we would expect them to
 10 be doing at that moment.
 11 Q. Was it a consequence that central government at that
 12 stage was thought, at least by you, not to need to play
 13 a leading role?
 14 A. I think at that moment there wasn't a clear decision for
 15 central government to take, there wasn't a clear ask for
 16 resources or for help. So we were certainly expecting
 17 that that might come in the days ahead, as it headed
 18 into recovery phase. But there was no immediate and
 19 urgent thing that we needed to do.
 20 Q. Had it been clear to you or the CCS at the time that
 21 RBKC was struggling in the response, would COBR have
 22 been called formally?
 23 A. It's certainly a possibility. It's very difficult to
 24 make the judgement without, you know, all the
 25 circumstances of the — of that moment.

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1 Q. And the distinction you're drawing here in this email is
 2 between the formal crisis management response versus
 3 a less formal co-ordination meeting. What, in practice,
 4 would have been different if COBR had been activated at
 5 that time?
 6 A. Nothing different in practical terms, as I've said. The
 7 meeting would have been convened in the same way, with
 8 the same agenda and the same attendees.
 9 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, we're going to turn to a different
 10 topic, which will take me more than five minutes to
 11 finish.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, would you rather break at that
 13 point? It might be sensible, I think, mightn't it?
 14 MR MILLETT: It might be sensible, yes.
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
 16 Well, it's slightly ahead of time, Ms Hammond, but
 17 rather than embark on a new topic at this stage and
 18 break it off after a couple of minutes, I think it would
 19 be wiser to stop at this point, so we'll do that.
 20 I'm going to have to ask you to come back for some
 21 more questions tomorrow, I'm afraid.
 22 THE WITNESS: Of course.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: But I think you were expecting that.
 24 THE WITNESS: I was.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So we'll resume, please, at

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1 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.
 2 Just to remind you, if I may, please don't discuss
 3 your evidence or anything relating to it with anyone
 4 overnight. All right?
 5 THE WITNESS: Understood.
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. We will see
 7 you tomorrow, then. Thank you.
 8 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 9 (Pause)
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Millett.
 11 Well, we break there, and we resume at 10 o'clock
 12 tomorrow, then, please.
 13 Thank you.
 14 (4.27 pm)
 15 (The hearing adjourned until 10 am
 16 on Thursday, 19 May 2022)
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